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Determinants of Academicians' Mental Health in Higher Education Institutions: A Systematic Literature Review

[1]Siti Rosnita Sakarji*, [2]Abdul Kadir Othman, [3]Bagus Shandy Narmaditya, [4]Raja Mayang Delima Mohd Beta, [5]Azuati Mahmud
[1]Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kelantan Campus, Malaysia
[2]Institute of Business Excellence (IBE), Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
[3]Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia
[4]Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Negeri Sembilan Campus, Malaysia
[5]Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Selangor Campus, Malaysia
*rosnita507@uitm.edu.my, abdkadir@uitm.edu.my, bagus.shandy.fe@um.ac.id, drmayang@uitm.edu.my, atiemahmud74@gmail.com

Abstract: Due to the nature of the demanding working circumstances, most academicians at higher education institutions have therefore been vulnerable to experiencing mental health issues. This present study aims to investigate the prominent factors that influence academics' mental health in higher education through systematic reviews. In detail, this study is intended to analyze the trends, patterns, and knowledge gaps on the factors affecting mental health. Using the PRISMA protocol to identify and analyze datasets from the Web of Science (WoS), Scopus, Google Scholar, and Science Direct. In this present study, twenty-one papers were selected and analyzed. The findings indicate a robust influence of job demand on mental health among academicians in higher education. These review papers reveal that there is an increasing amount of research on the factors influencing the mental health of academicians in higher education. The findings highlight a worrying pattern of increasing job pressures and an increase in the frequency of mental health issues among academicians. Thus, there is a critical need for focused treatments and academic support networks to mitigate the increasing demands placed on faculty members and protect their mental health. This study contributes to the literature by focusing on mental health, primarily the job demands of academicians in the context of higher education institutions.

Keywords: *Job demand, mental health, academicians, systematic literature review*

1. Introduction and Background

A person's mental health may range from optimal to severely impaired. In addition to being free from mental illness, a state of good mental health is characterized by the development of adaptive patterns of thought and behavior that allow for successful interaction with one's surroundings. The foundation of an individual's emotions, thinking, communication, studying, sturdiness, and self-esteem is their mental health (The American Psychiatric Association, 2022). One's mental health affects relationships, their emotional and personal well-being, and their ability to positively impact society. Having good mental health allows individuals to be efficient in everyday functioning which leads to productive activities (caregiving, employment, and education), good connectivity, and the capacity to deal with change and confront adversity. A study by Peng and Surat (2021) emphasized that the everyday lives and future of an individual can be robustly influenced by their mental health. Employees' mental health is a major determinant of their overall health, which in turn promotes their quality of life and productivity (Sutarto, 2021). Organizations that foster mental wellness in their workers are essential to sustaining productive businesses and, by extension, flourishing communities. This motivates people to be stronger, more active, and healthier (Tisu et al., 2020). However, an escalating group of people are dealing with mental health concerns at work, which has an impact on academics and businesses alike.

The rate of mental illness among academic employees was three to four times greater than the overall population (Razali et al. 2019). It is because academicians face a heavy workload, mental health issues, and emotional exhaustion (Prado-Gascó et al., 2020) and these influence their mental health. The mental health of academicians has become a major issue because of increased job demand during online learning. Employees reported psychological health problems when they were chronically fatigued with their work (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). A study revealed that the burnout and stress faced by academicians are associated with their job demands and resources (Bottiani et al., 2019; Fiorilli et al., 2019; Sandmeier et al., 2022). Teaching is commonly acknowledged to be a stressful profession (Huang et al., 2019; MacIntyre et al., 2020). Increased accountability

in higher education has prompted several research examining the negative impacts of workload, role conflict and work-life imbalance on university academicians' performance and outcomes (Han et al., 2020). High levels of job demand in the teaching profession might eventually result in mental health, and leaving the profession (Burić et al., 2019). Academicians are reported to be stressed out and leave the profession in alarming numbers (Burić & Kim, 2020). An ongoing issue in the academic sector has been the significant proportion of qualified academicians quitting their jobs within five years (García & Weiss, 2019; Perryman & Calvert, 2020; Toropova et al., 2021).

Furthermore, current education reports have highlighted the effect of online learning on academician's mental health and indicate that job demand is a significant predictor of mental health problems among academicians (Ng et al., 2019). Indeed, another study remarked that academicians' mental health was influenced by work overload, working hours, and a lack of autonomy (Sandmeier et al., 2022), while other studies pointed out that it can be impacted by high stress, work-life imbalance, and emotional exhaustion (Boström et al., 2020), and role conflict (Burić et al., 2019). The resources that academicians obtain in their job such as autonomy (Sandmeier et al., 2022), social support and supportive leadership (Fiorilli et al., 2019), were thought to continuously provide happier feelings, improved well-being, and fewer intentions for academician attrition. (Wang et al., 2022). Most of the previous studies focus on the factors contributing to academician's job performance, job satisfaction and employee engagement (Capone & Petrillo, 2020; Fathi & Derakhshan, 2019; Johari et al., 2018). Scholars have repeatedly emphasized the critical role of individuals' proactive reactions toward their increasing job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). However, most of the studies focus on the job demand in the job context and do not explore the vital factors toward academic's ability to face mental health problems.

2. Literature Review

Previous studies have conducted empirical investigations on mental health (MacIntyre et al.2020; Guthrie et al., 2018; UrbinaGarcia, 2020; Camp et al., 2020; Bérubé et al., 2021; Nair & Otaki, 2021; Diendorfer et al., 2021; Karim et al., 2020). Moreover, empirical research demonstrates the impact of employment demand on the mental health of academics. From these previous studies, it can better understand how job stress affects the mental health of academics. Bakker et al. (2004) noted that job demand can be predictive of in-role performance through their link with weariness. According to research by Cordes and Dougherty (1993), conflict, ambiguity, and overload are the three most important elements of job demands. Demand in the workplace has been attributed to misalignment between what a person in a certain role is told to expect and what the person experiences (Kahn et al., 1964). One's demand for clarity and predictability, particularly about one's goals and methods of achieving those goals, is correlated with role ambiguity. It can happen if there is not sufficient knowledge for someone to carry out necessary tasks (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Similarly, those who are juggling too many responsibilities may worry that they do not have the minimum skills or abilities required to get the job done.

Indeed, MacIntyre et al. (2020) confirmed the findings of prior research. The majority of those who responded are teachers at various levels of education. Workload, family health, loss control work, lack of recreation, blurred lines, and other stressors were among the 15 factors measured in this study, along with 14 coping techniques. Approach coping has been shown to have a positive correlation with positive psychological outcomes (well-being, health, happiness, resilience, and growth), while avoidant coping has been documented to have a negative correlation. In addition, a study performed by Guthrie et al. (2018) focusing on understanding mental health among academicians in the United Kingdom discovered that work-related stress and mental illness are major concerns for the labor market because they hurt attendance and productivity and have high costs for employees, businesses, and the whole economy. Academicians also reported higher levels of work satisfaction when they had more job autonomy, participated in decision-making, and had supportive managers. Stress reduction was also linked to professional growth opportunities. According to earlier studies, academicians' high levels of stress are primarily caused by their heavy workloads (MacIntyre et al., 2020). According to a preliminary paper by Pace et al. (2021), academicians are expected to work very hard and take on an increasing number of administrative duties, either with or without extra pay. The researchers stressed that among academicians working in higher education nowadays, mental health is a significant risk dimension for occupational stress. Academicians have been known to have high rates of early career dropout because of

an overwhelming workload (Palma-Vasquez et al., 2021).

3. Methodology

This article provides a systematic review of the literature by analyzing the influence of job demand on mental health based on twenty-one studies, to find the common themes from the past literature in the domain of mental health (Table 1). This study followed procedures proposed by Sanchez-Meca (2010) and Suarez et al (2017), including formulating the questions and research questions. In detail, this study will deal with two focuses which are to identify what are the characteristics of the selected articles. and investigating the influence of job demand on mental health among academicians in higher education institutions.

Formulating the Question

This section introduces the theoretical framework, or "constructs and concepts," and specifies the research questions that could be answered by conducting a systematic literature study.

Research questions

a) What are the characteristics of the selected articles?
b) Does job demand influence mental health among academicians in higher education institutions?

Constructs and Concepts

Job demands are "those physical, social, or organizational components of the job that require continuous physical or mental effort and, thus, are associated with specific physiological and psychological costs,". Workplace stresses include heavy workloads, tight deadlines, and difficult client encounters (Bakker et al., 2010). Anxiety and depression are just two of the symptoms that have been connected to job stress, which is caused by the demands of any employment (Tremblay & Messervey, 2011; Diestel & Schmidt, 2009; Griffin et al., 2007). While work overload will impact long-term job strain (Tremblay & Messervey, 2011).

Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion of Articles

This study focuses on the most recent articles that include the latest four (4) years from 2020 to 2023 because of the difficulty and the constraints of researchers to review every published paper that has ever been published. It was found that from 2020 to 2023, there was more research examining the linkage between job demand and mental health, according to the search results obtained from the selected database. In detail, the paper included in this review includes the articles that have been included from the year 2020 to 2023 that are retrieved from highly reputable journals included in Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, and Science Direct. The selected articles are in the area of knowledge to be studied which is job demand and mental health. All articles are published in English. This study excluded all non-peer-reviewed articles, books and conference papers. At this stage, the article inclusion and exclusion criteria are determined to search (Siva et al., 2016):

a) Articles have been included from the year 2020 to 2023.
b) Quality of Research: Articles from highly reputable journals included in Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, and Science Direct.
c) Area of knowledge: Job demand and mental health.
d) Language of publication: English.
e) Keywords: “Job demand”, workload”, “mental health”, “academics”, “academicians”, “university” and “higher education”.
f) Excluded: All non-peer-reviewed articles, books and conference papers.

Article Search and Selection

At this stage, publications were selected according to the study questions and inclusion/exclusion criteria:

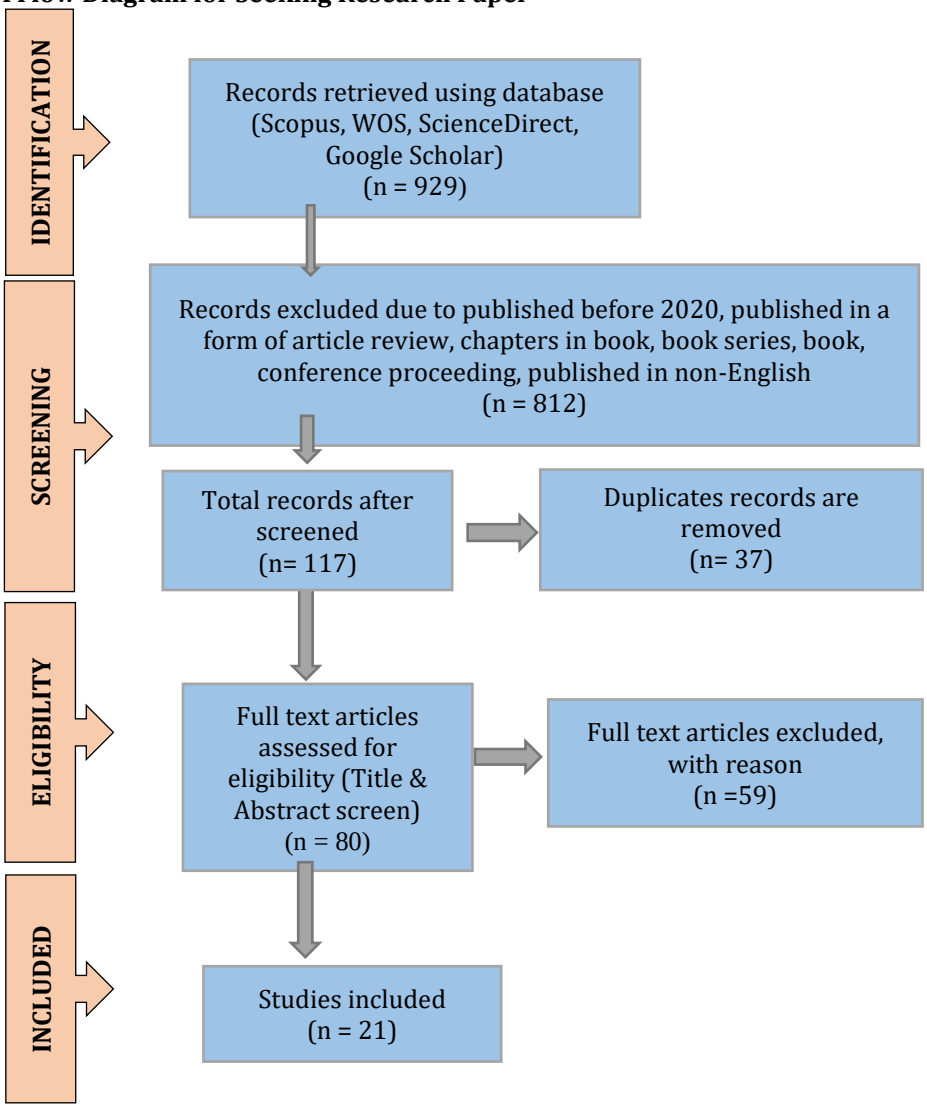
a) Databases: Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, and Science Direct.
b) Database search method involving title-based combinations of keywords relating to job demand and

mental health.

4. Results of the Search

This study involved four datasets from Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, and Science Direct, and found 929 publications that discuss the impact of job demand on the emotional well-being of university academicians. A total of 904 articles were omitted because did not fulfill the criteria for this study. Other 21 articles focused on how job demands affect academicians' mental health, while adhering to the guidelines for analysis and conclusions provided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement (refer to Figure 1).

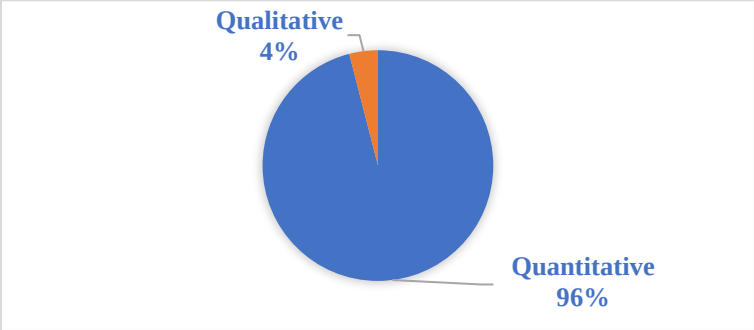
Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram for Seeking Research Paper



Qualitative Studies and Quantitative Studies

Figure 1 shows the correlation between job demand and mental health research. Most of these studies applied a quantitative approach (96%) rather than a qualitative approach (4 percent, 1 study). The only qualitative study employs manual analysis of coding the themes of the data collected via interview and triangulation.

Figure 2: Types of Research Approach in the Study

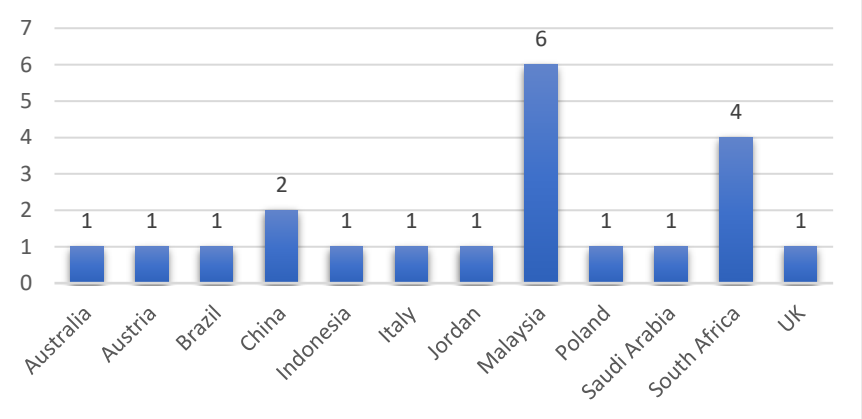


Countries Involves in the Study

With regards to research connecting job demand and mental health, Malaysia leads the pack with six studies, followed by South Africa with four, and China with two studies. Australia, Austria, Indonesia, Itali, Jordan, Poland, Brazil, and the UK tie for fourth place with one (1) study each. With six publications, Malaysia appears to be a focal point for research on the mental health of academicians in higher education institutions. The results indicate that there is increasing awareness and concern for mental well-being among Malaysian scholars and academicians, which can be impacted by various factors, including increasing workloads, shifting institutional dynamics, or cultural matters. In addition to Malaysia, China has two papers that deal with mental health among scholars. This result remarks that the topic is rising in China, and this is because China is known for its large higher education sector and rapidly evolving academic landscape.

Furthermore, this review paper discovered that four papers concerned in South Africa. The results indicate that the topic of mental health is also challenging in this nation. The included papers indicated that the concern of this study is caused by some factors, including socio-political issues, economic concerns, and unique stressors within the South African higher education system. Some papers identified also a concern addressing the well-being of academics and scholars within a historically complex and diverse academic circumstance. The remaining countries (e.g., Australia, Austria, Brazil, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Poland, Saudi Arabia, and the U.K.) each have one publication to deal with mental health among academicians. While these countries have contributed to the discourse on academicians' mental health, the lower number of publications suggests either a lesser focus on this topic within their respective academic communities or a relatively smaller academic output compared to countries like Malaysia and China. In summary, the distribution of publications across different countries reflects varying levels of attention and research focus on the mental health of academicians in higher education institutions. Factors such as cultural attitudes towards mental health, institutional support systems, and academic pressures likely influence the prevalence and depth of research in this area within each country. Figure 3 illustrates the list of publications in the respective countries.

Figure 3: List of Countries Involved in the Study



The Influence of Job Demand on Mental Health

The review in Table 1 indicates that 21 studies show the linkage between job demand on mental health among academicians in higher education. Most of studies reviewed are related to job demand in the context of the higher education institutions from a quantitative perspective (Teixeira, Marqueze & Moreno, 2020; Zhang et al, 2022; Brondino et al., 2022; Springer et al., 2023; Damayanti et al., 2020; Alwaely & Jarrah, 2020; Awang et al., 2021; Akunne et al., 2021; Kabito et al., 2020; Hussin et al., 2022; Jonge & Huter, 2021; Anees et al., 2021; Isa & Palpanadan, 2020; Mohamed et al., 2021; Shen & Slater, 2021; Adebayo, 2022; Nasution et al., 2022; Esteban et al., 2022; Almhdawi et al., 2021; Liu & Yan, 2020).

Preliminary papers examined the influence job demand on mental health such as anxiety (Zhang et al., 2022; Liu & Yan, 2020), stress (Teixeira, Marqueze & Moreno, 2020; Brondino et al., 2022; Springer et al., 2023; Damayanti et al., 2020; Awang et al., 2021; Akunne et al., 2021; Kabito et al., 2020; Anees et al., 2021; Isa & Palpanadan, 2020; Mohamed et al., 2021; Shen & Slater, 2021; Nasution et al., 2022; Almhdawi et al., 2021; Liu & Yan, 2020) and depression (Nasution et al., 2022; Almdawi et al., 2021). In addition, findings indicated that there is a link between feeling pressured to write academic papers and publishing them (Teixeira, Marqueze & Moreno, 2020; Springer et al., 2023), non-academic responsibilities (Awang et al., 2021), online teaching (Zhang et al., 2022) and stress.

Some of the studies argued that academic staff with high workloads negatively affect their well-being (Shen & Slater, 2021: Zhang et al., 2022). Furthermore, studies show that academicians in higher education institutions have a high stress level (Hussin et al., 2021; Kabito et al., 2020; Esteban et al., 2022; Almdawi et al., 2021). Moreover, academicians in South Africa (Naidoo-Chetty & du Plessis, 2021) and China (Zhang et al, 2022) revealed that challenges encountered in the academic setting were caused by job demands such as unfavorable working circumstances, restricted opportunities for career advancement, elevated levels of work overload, and inadequate resources. Therefore, the results indicate that job demand is a robust predictor of mental health among academicians in higher education institutions.

Table 1: Studies Selected for Review

Authors	Research Design	Country	Sample Size	Findings
Teixeira, Marquese & Moreno, 2020	Quantitative	Brazil	64	Working from home promotes work stress which shows the perception of significant pressure to deal with academic work.
Naidoo-Chetty & du Plessis, 2021	Qualitative	South Africa	23	Mental health is often linked with proper management of job demands and resources that can drive negative setbacks
Zhang et al, 2022	Quantitative	China	1060	There is a robust linkage between job demands and online teaching anxiety, job resources and online teaching anxiety, as well as subjective well-being and online teaching anxiety
Brondino et al., 2022	Quantitative	Italy	1481	Academic quality is prominent to enable university management to manage work-related stress and to mitigate the potential for harm to academics, which in turn can promote economic well-being
Springer et al., 2023	Quantitative	Poland	340	There is a robust connection between stress from a highly demanding work circumstance and burnout
Damayanti et al., 2020	Quantitative	Indonesia	70	The determinant dimension of work stress is often linked with age and higher workload
Alwaely & Jarrah, 2020	Quantitative	Saudi Arabia	60	Educators tend to have moderate burnout, while female educators are more likely to have higher burnout than males as it is directly connected with

Authors	Research Design	Country	Sample Size	Findings
				home activities
Awang et al., 2021	Quantitative	Malaysia	391	Stress is not influenced by academic responsibilities instead of non-academic responsibilities
Akunne et al., 2021	Quantitative	South Africa	940	Work stress is a robust predictor of mental health among academicians
Kabito et al., 2020	Quantitative	South Africa	535	Work-related stress often causes some behaviors, such as smoking cigarette
Hussin et al., 2022	Quantitative	Malaysia	328	The academicians experienced more than 50% depersonalization and 46% low-level accomplishment
Jonge & Huter, 2021	Quantitative	Australia	96	High emotional resources buffered the positive association between emotional demands and successively emotional, cognitive, and physical fatigue
Anees et al., 2021	Quantitative	Malaysia	140	There is a robust relation between job stress and workload, which affects turnover intention
Isa & Palpanadan, 2020	Quantitative	Malaysia	609	Educators' work stress is linked to workload, work environment, networking, health, and financial factors
Mohamed et al., 2021	Quantitative	Malaysia	411	Educators faced a greater burnout level and psychological distress
Shen & Slater, 2021	Quantitative	UK	87	Work stress has robustly promoted mental health and emotional welfare
Adebayo, 2022	Quantitative	South Africa	115	There is a robust link between role ambiguity, over time workhours, working circumstances, and job performance
Nasution et al., 2022	Quantitative	Malaysia	129	Educators from science and technology faculties have higher anxiety of depression compared to general lecturers
Esteban et al., 2022	Quantitative	Brazil	157	There is a robust link between psychological distress and workload, which in turn affects life satisfaction
Almhdawi et al., 2021	Quantitative	Jordan	299	Higher depression, stress, neck disability, and weight are acquainted with lower life quality
Liu & Yan, 2020	Quantitative	China	256	Stress, professional title and age were predictors for educators' anxiety, while teaching experience and its subscales were predictors for educators' stress

Several previous studies shed light on the factors affecting the mental health of academicians in higher education institutions. For instance, Teixeira et al. (2020) highlighted the pressure to publish academic papers, exacerbated by the blurred boundaries between work and home environments. Naidoo-Chetty and du Plessis (2021) emphasized the critical importance of effectively managing job demands and resources to mitigate negative setbacks. Additionally, research by Zhang et al. (2022) revealed intricate relationships between job demands, resources, subjective well-being, and online teaching anxiety, emphasizing the mediating role of subjective well-being in this dynamic. Indeed, Brondino et al. (2022) introduced a practical tool, the Academic Quality at Work Tool, which aimed at enhancing the quality of life and managing work-related stress among academics, providing a potential framework for intervention.

Furthermore, some previous studies (e.g., Springer et al., 2023; Kabito et al., 2020) underscored the detrimental effects of an overly demanding work environment, linking it to burnout, turnover intention, and chronic fatigue.

Other scholars (e.g., Damayanti et al., 2020; Awang et al., 2021) identified specific dimensions, (age, workload, and non-academic responsibilities) as prominent contributors to work stress among academicians and scholars. Similarly, Alwaely and Jarrah (2020) highlighted gender disparities in occupational burnout, with female academicians facing more pressures from household and family concerns and having higher stress instead of males. Akunne et al. (2021) and Zhang et al. (2022) found occupational stress to be a robust predictor of mental health outcomes among academicians, while Awang et al. (2021) and Kabito et al. (2020) identified specific stressors such as smoking and job dissatisfaction. These findings collectively emphasize the need for comprehensive strategies to address the diverse array of factors impacting the mental health and well-being of academicians in higher education institutions.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that most of the articles are quantitative studies. However, only one qualitative study was found, and it manually analyzed the data. It reflected that quantitative studies are more frequently used in identifying the influence of job demand on mental health among academicians. Moreover, it can also be summarized that there are many studies from some countries like Malaysia, South Africa, and China. The search results indicate that job demand influences mental health, which are in agreement with part of the literature (Zhang et al., 2022; Liu & Yan, 2020; Teixeira, Marqueze & Moreno, 2020; Brondino et al., 2022; Springer et al., 2023; Damayanti et al., 2020; Awang et al., 2021; Akunne et al., 2021; Kabito et al., 2020; Anees et al., 2021; Isa & Palpanadan, 2020; Mohamed et al., 2021; Shen & Slater, 2021; Nasution et al., 2022; Almhdawi et al., 2021; Liu & Yan, 2020; Nasution et al., 2022; Almdawi et al., 2021). Academics will be able to better manage the demands and resources of their careers if they have a more in-depth and nuanced grasp of both. And it can help businesses provide benefits to their staff.

When employers do not provide workers with the tools they need to do their jobs well, those workers may get disengaged and start having mental health problems (Zhang et al., 2022; Liu & Yan, 2020; Teixeira, Marqueze & Moreno, 2020; Brondino et al., 2022; Springer et al., 2023; Damayanti et al., 2020; Awang et al., 2021; Akunne et al., 2021; Kabito et al., 2020; Anees et al., 2021). Nonetheless, there is conclusive proof that job demands lead to stress and strain, while job resources are associated with job satisfaction. Consistent studies have shown that failing to account for the efficient handling of job requirements and resources of one's employees can bring detrimental effects. Because academic management has not been adequately explored in studies on mental health at work, our results show that work organization and professors' mental health are related. It is crucial to stress the connection between academics' job demands and their mental health, both directly and indirectly. In conclusion, one's state of mind on the job improves as one's sense of the degree to which one must exert effort increases.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, a thorough review of the prior research on the influence of job demand on mental health was carried out. A thorough examination of 21 research articles related to job demand and mental health was conducted using data derived from the four datasets (Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, Science Direct). To reduce mental health among academicians, it is crucial to reduce the workload of academic' staff. Several studies on the impact of job demand on mental health were found in the results of the systematic literature review. Since this research was conducted in 2023, the researchers on studies published in the four years (2020-2023) to recoup timely outputs and up-to-date knowledge concerning the linkage between job demand and mental health.

The findings from the present study can be used by the government to address mental and emotional health issues and save a lot of costs to cure mental health problems, especially by improving support, counselling, and psychological services; expanding advocacy initiatives; expanding the role of non-governmental organizations as drivers of mental health programs are all steps identified by academics as being important. The present study is intended to examine the association between job demand and mental health among those in the teaching profession, particularly in developing countries and can contribute to evidence-based policy-making and informed public discussion and awareness about policy and practice. Therefore, the result of this study can help propose the right procedure for handling mental health problems thus it can improve the healthcare administration and would ensure that mental health services are provided to needed persons. Moreover, the

findings will specifically help the government develop psychological interventions and mental health programs for the affected academicians.

Researchers currently rely on databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, and Science Direct, but this list may grow in the future. In this analysis, the researchers factored in how occupational pressure may affect individuals' psychological well-being. More elements that affect academician mental health could be investigated in future research. Additional mediating or moderating variables, such as religious belief, could be incorporated similarly. Despite the dearth of studies that empirically investigate these interrelationships, it may be desirable to conduct future research that examines the direct and indirect connections between all these factors.

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