

**A STUDY ON THE MECHANISM OF WORKLOAD ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF YOUNG TEACHERS IN JIANGXI PROVINCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT**

**Lingmin Rao\***

China International College, Dhurakij Pundit University, 10210, Bangkok, Thailand

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between work demands, work-family conflict, and job performance among young teachers in Jiangxi Province, China. A questionnaire survey was conducted with 594 young teachers from six universities in Jiangxi Province. The findings indicated that increased work demands negatively affected job performance, suggesting that excessive work demands had detrimental effects on young teachers' performance. Moreover, work demands positively influenced work-family conflict, indicating that higher work demands were associated with increased work-family conflict. Work-family conflict, in turn, negatively impacted job performance, indicating that greater work-family conflict led to decreased job performance. Furthermore, work-family conflict was found to mediate the relationship between work demands and job performance, highlighting its crucial role. Comparative analysis based on demographic variables revealed significant differences in work demands, work-family conflict, and job performance among young teachers in Jiangxi Province. In conclusion, this study provided practical recommendations for managing work demands, promoting work-family balance, and addressing the career development and training needs of young teachers.

**Key Words:** Young Teachers; Workload; Job Performance; Work-family Conflict.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

During the rapid development phase of China's higher education sector, there has been a structural change in the composition of university faculty. Increasing numbers of young intellectuals are entering the field of higher education. According to statistics from the Ministry of Education up until 2018, the total number of teachers in Chinese regular institutions of higher education was 1.57 million, with approximately 560,000 young teachers below the age of 35, accounting for around 40% of the total. This number is rapidly growing each year, making them a new driving force in university organizations and a key factor in ensuring ongoing competitiveness (Wang, 2018). However, statistical data reveals that the number of young teachers holding the position of associate professor or above is less than 30,000 nationwide, constituting only about 5% of the total number of young teachers. Moreover, in terms of their teaching and research status, most young teachers have limited early achievements and face difficulties in project applications (Gao & Qin, 2019).

It is evident that when faced with significant pressures from both work and family, such as insufficient research funding, difficulties in promotion, narrow career development paths, limited early academic achievements, teaching evaluations, taking care of elderly parents, and getting married and having children, most ordinary young university teachers fail to attain corresponding social status. These various pressures force them into an "in-between" and awkward position,

becoming a major cause of talent loss in universities (Li & Bian, 2020). Therefore, improving the overall quality of young university teachers in China, strengthening their management, promoting their research output, and inspiring their potential have become urgent issues for university administrators.

For young university teachers, the era they live in and their individual characteristics drive them to invest a significant amount of energy in teaching and research, resulting in reduced time and energy dedicated to their families. This imbalance leads them to experience higher levels of work-family conflict compared to regular teachers, further impacting their subjective well-being (Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001). At this point, the focus of high-performance work systems shifts from "how to improve organizational performance" to "how to mitigate work-family conflict," transforming into a study on how high-performance work systems can alleviate work-family conflict.

In summary, the choice to study young teachers in universities in Jiangxi Province is to gain an in-depth understanding of the relationship between workload, work-family conflict, and job performance in the educational field of that region. This research aims to provide valuable insights and suggestions for educational management and policy-making in the area.

Based on the research background and motivation, this study proposes the following research questions:

Questions 1. What is the relationship between workload and job performance of young teachers in China?

Questions 2. What is the relationship between workload and work-family conflict of young teachers in China?

Questions 3. What is the relationship between work-family conflict and job performance of young teachers in China?

Questions 4. Can work-family conflict of young teachers in China mediate the relationship between workload and job performance?

## 2. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Jamal (1984) suggested that there is a conflicting relationship between job stress and job efficiency, which can be negative or zero. In a system, stressors can lead to information overload, resulting in the neglect of relevant information, improper control of incorrect information, information escape, and inappropriate information processing. In order to avoid the concentration of stress, individuals may ignore potential relevant information. Therefore, excessive stress can cause employees to make mistakes, leading to a decrease in job performance. Additionally, Carayon and Zijlstra (1999) also argued that in most cases, stress may create resistance and have a contrary effect on the expectation of outstanding performance. Subsequently, Russell et al. (2009) validated this perspective from the viewpoint of job stressors and found that individuals whose abilities exceed or fall short of the demands hinder their job performance. Their job performance is poorer than individuals whose abilities match the demands. Thus, there is a negative relationship between job stressors and job performance. Based on the above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Workload negatively affects job performance of young teachers in Jiangxi Province.

Bunk et al. (2012) found that the more time individuals invest in their work, the greater the impact on their families, leading to work-family conflict and subsequently resulting in job stress. Ma and Luan (2021) pointed out that high workloads increase the likelihood of work-family conflict. Workload brings about stress, which is a negative emotional and physical reaction (Gryna, 2004). Excessive job stress has negative effects on individuals' mental and physical health, job satisfaction, and even their family conflicts (Allard et al., 2011). Miao and Shi (2015) conducted a study with employees in the service industry and found that individuals experiencing higher job stress also experienced greater work-family conflict. Byron (2005) reviewed 60 relevant studies and found that variables related to the work domain are the most effective predictors of work-family conflict. Among them, job stress in the work domain is highly correlated with work-family conflict, indicating that job demands (including job stress) are important antecedents of work-family conflict (Aijaz et al., 2020). Therefore, based on the above literature, this study aims to examine the relationship between workload and work-family conflict and proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Workload positively affects work-family conflict of young teachers in Jiangxi Province.

When employees take on multiple roles simultaneously, insufficient resources can lead to teachers' resource pressure, emotional exhaustion, and behavioral misalignment (Santavirta et al., 2007). According to the conservation of resources theory, employees utilize their limited resources to cope with the challenges they face when experiencing conflicts. These resource depletions can hinder employees from effectively fulfilling their work or family responsibilities (Wang, 2019). For instance, when employees experience work-family conflict, they expend resources to resolve the conflict, resulting in insufficient time, energy, and emotional resources for their work, thus reducing work engagement (Akoensi & Annor, 2021) and leading to ineffective task completion (Hakanen et al., 2006). Based on the conservation of resources theory, this study posits that young teachers, when experiencing work-family conflict, will experience a decline in job performance due to resource depletion and constraints. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Work-family conflict negatively affects job performance of young teachers in Jiangxi Province.

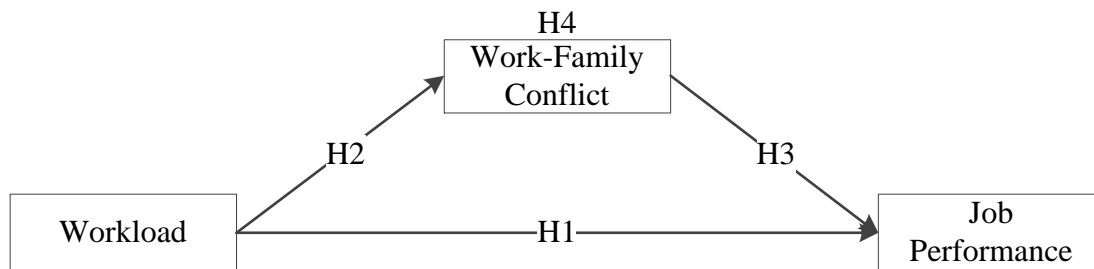
According to the conservation of resources theory, individuals in stressful situations use their existing resources to acquire new resources in order to reduce net resource loss (Wang, 2019). High workloads for young teachers in universities can reduce their personal time, leading them to allocate less time for household chores in order to obtain new resources. This can trigger work-family conflict, which further depletes the psychological resources of young teachers and reduces their performance in the workplace. Taking the above literature into consideration, this study posits that workload positively affects work-family conflict (Gryna, 2004; Allard et al., 2011; Miao & Shi, 2015; Byron, 2005), and work-family conflict negatively affects job performance (Santavirta et al., 2007; Hakanen et al., 2006). Therefore, this study proposes that work-family conflict mediates the relationship between workload and job performance. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Work-family conflict mediates the relationship between workload and job performance of young teachers in Jiangxi Province.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Research Framework

This study establishes a theoretical model of workload → work-family conflict → job performance. The research framework diagram, as shown in Figure 1, is proposed in this paper. Workload is the independent variable, work-family conflict is the mediating variable, and job performance is the dependent variable, forming the research model.



**Figure 1:** Research Framework

#### 3.2. Study Participants

The main participants in this study are teachers from undergraduate universities in Jiangxi Province. Convenience sampling was used to select participants to ensure an adequate sample size for testing the structural hypotheses. A total of 617 questionnaires were collected, and after excluding invalid questionnaires (e.g., those with consistent responses or excessively short completion time), 594 valid questionnaires were obtained, resulting in a valid response rate of 96.27%.

Demographic variables analysis was conducted for the 617 valid questionnaires in this study. The analysis of demographic variables provides information about the characteristics of the survey participants and ensures the representativeness of the collected valid questionnaires. From the analysis of demographic variables, it was found that the majority of respondents were female, with 355 individuals accounting for 59.8% of the sample. In terms of age distribution, the highest number of respondents fell into the age group of 26-30, with 324 individuals representing 54.5% of the sample, followed by the age group of 36-40, with 126 individuals accounting for 21.2%. Regarding work experience, the majority of participants had 6 or more years of experience or 2-3 years of experience, with 288 and 180 individuals, respectively, representing 48.5% and 30.3% of the sample. The highest educational level reported was a master's degree, with 358 individuals accounting for 60.3%, followed by a doctoral degree or above, with 176 individuals representing 29.6%. In terms of marital status, the highest number of participants were married with children, with 324 individuals accounting for 54.5%, followed by unmarried individuals, with 216 individuals representing 36.4%. The most common disciplinary backgrounds were in education and humanities and social sciences, with 141 and 136 individuals, respectively, representing 23.7% and 22.9% of the sample. In conclusion, the sample of this survey is generally consistent with the actual situation, indicating that the sample is representative and does not exhibit significant structural bias.

### 3.3. Research Instruments

#### 3.3.1. Workload

Workload is the independent variable in this study. The measurement of workload is based on the Workload Scale developed by Caplan et al. (1980), consisting of 11 items. The scale uses a Likert 5-point scale to assess individuals' perceived workload. Through reliability analysis, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient was found to be 0.899, which is greater than 0.70, indicating good reliability of the questionnaire. The KMO coefficient was 0.908, exceeding 0.8, and Bartlett's sphericity test had a significant  $\chi^2$  value of 1983.715, demonstrating good validity of the questionnaire.

#### 3.3.2. Job Performance

The measurement of job performance for university teachers refers to the job performance composition theory proposed by Borman and Motowidlo (1997). The questionnaire was appropriately modified based on the university context and consists of two dimensions: Research performance with 5 items and teaching performance with 4 items. The scale uses a Likert 5-point scale to measure the dimensions. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient was 0.923, indicating extremely high reliability of the questionnaire. Analyzing the items within each dimension, the results showed that both research performance (0.836) and teaching performance (0.871) exceeded 0.70, demonstrating good reliability within each dimension. The KMO value for the job performance questionnaire was 0.886, exceeding 0.70, and Bartlett's sphericity test had a significant  $\chi^2$  value of 2057.324, indicating good validity of the questionnaire.

#### 3.3.3. Work-Family Conflict

The measurement of work-family conflict is based on the Work-Family Conflict Scale developed by Carlson et al. (2000), which assesses time-based, strain-based, and worry-based conflicts between work and family. The scale was adapted to capture the unidirectional conflict from work to family, resulting in 5 items. The scale uses a Likert 5-point scale to measure teachers' work-family conflict and was modified to fit the current study. The reliability of the scale was assessed with Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , which was found to be 0.89. The  $\alpha$  values for the different constructs and factors ranged from 0.74 to 0.87, and the test-retest reliability was  $r = .73$ , indicating good reliability and validity of the scale.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Correlation Analysis

As shown in Table 1, this study utilized a Likert 5-point scale. The average score for workload was 3.424, which is higher than the midpoint value of 3, indicating that the workload of the survey participants is slightly above the moderate level. The average score for work-family conflict was 3.715, also higher than the midpoint value of 3, indicating that work-family conflict is slightly above the moderate level for the survey participants. The average score for job performance was 2.996, which is close to the midpoint value of 3, suggesting that job performance is at a moderate level for the survey participants.

Workload exhibits a significant negative correlation with work-family conflict and a significant negative correlation with job performance. Work-family conflict also shows a significant negative correlation with job performance. These findings provide preliminary support for the research hypotheses proposed in this study. The diagonal values represent the square root

of AVE (Average Variance Extracted), which is higher than the correlation coefficients, indicating good discriminant validity of the scales.

**Table 1 Summary Table of Means, Discriminant Validity, and Correlation Matrix**

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3
1 Workload	3.424	0.717	<b>0.782</b>		
2 Work-family conflict	3.715	0.976	0.586**	<b>0.884</b>	
3 Job performance	2.996	0.354	-0.375**	-0.485**	<b>0.782</b>

Note: \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; diagonal represents the square root of AVE

#### 4.2. Hypothesis Testing

In examining the mediating effect, most domestic and international academic studies have adopted the causal step regression test method proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). This method provides a logical and intuitive analysis of the mediating effect, making it easier for researchers to explain and readers to understand.

As shown in Table 2, In Model 1, workload is introduced as the independent variable in the second step, with job performance as the dependent variable. The coefficient indicates that workload has a negative effect on job performance ( $\beta = -0.460, p < 0.001$ ), supporting Hypothesis 1: Workload negatively affects job performance of young teachers in Jiangxi Province. In Model 3, the control variables are included in the first step of the regression analysis. In Model 4, workload is introduced as the independent variable in the second step, with work-family conflict as the dependent variable. The coefficient shows that workload has a positive effect on work-family conflict ( $\beta = 0.563, p < 0.001$ ), supporting Hypothesis 2: Workload positively affects work-family conflict of young teachers in Jiangxi Province.

Model 2 incorporates the mediating factor, work-family conflict, based on Model 2. The coefficient indicates that work-family conflict has a negative effect on job performance ( $\beta = -0.462, p < 0.001$ ), supporting Hypothesis 3: Work-family conflict negatively affects job performance of young teachers in Jiangxi Province. By comparing the coefficients of workload on job performance in Model 2 and Model 1, it is observed that the coefficient decreases from -0.460 in Model 2 to -0.107 in Model 2 after adding the mediating variable, indicating a reduction in the impact of workload on job performance. Based on the causal step regression test method proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), this suggests that work-family conflict mediates the relationship between workload and job performance. This finding is consistent with Hypothesis 4.

**Table 2 Summary of Regression Analysis**



	DV: Job performance		DV: Work-family conflict	
	M1	M2	M3	M4
Workload	-0.460***	-0.107*		0.563***
Work-family conflict		-0.462***		
R <sup>2</sup>	0.440	0.513	0.198	0.559
Adj R <sup>2</sup>	0.413	0.486	0.178	0.514
F	57.500***	68.394***	19.358***	81.049***
D-W	1.996	2.117	1.980	2.018

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

### 5. CONCLUSION

The empirical analysis in this study found that workload has a negative impact on job performance of young teachers in Jiangxi Province. This conclusion is consistent with previous findings by scholars such as Jamal (1984), Carayon and Zijlstra (1999), and Russell et al. (2009). Excessive workload negatively impacts young teachers' time management, work quality, and efficiency, leading to stress, lack of preparation, and decreased concentration. It causes psychological and physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and diminished motivation. Inadequate support and resources result in frustration and feelings of helplessness. Insufficient teaching materials, training, and guidance affect teaching quality and personal development. Overload increases the risk of negligence and errors due to rushed tasks, impacting job performance and teaching effectiveness.

The empirical analysis in this study found that workload has a positive impact on work-family conflict among young teachers in Jiangxi Province. This conclusion aligns with previous findings by scholars such as Gryna (2004), Byron (2005), Bunk et al. (2012), Allard et al. (2011), Aijaz et al. (2020), and Miao and Shi (2015). Excessive workload for young teachers limits time with family, leading to work-family conflict. It hinders time and energy management, affecting work-family balance. Family gatherings, leisure activities, and interactions suffer. Work pressure causes emotional tension and fatigue, impacting family dynamics. Balancing multiple roles becomes challenging, increasing work-family conflict.

The empirical analysis in this study found that work-family conflict has a negative impact on job performance among young teachers in Jiangxi Province. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of scholars such as Hakanen et al. (2006), Santavirta et al. (2007), Akoensi and Annor (2021), and Wang (2019). Work-family conflict diverts young teachers' attention, impairing work focus. It affects efficiency and quality. Emotional and psychological stress arise, affecting well-being and performance. Job satisfaction decreases as work and family demands clash. Lack of support hampers conflict resolution and impacts performance.

The empirical analysis in this study found that work-family conflict mediates the relationship

between work load and job performance among young teachers in Jiangxi Province. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of scholars such as Gryna (2004), Byron (2005), Hakanen et al. (2006), Santavirta et al. (2007), Allard et al. (2011), Bunk et al. (2012), Akoensi and Annor (2021), Aijaz et al. (2020), Miao and Shi (2015), Wang (2019), and Ma and Luan (2021). Excessive workload depletes young teachers' resources, leading to work-family conflict. This conflict affects job performance, causing psychological pressure and negative emotions. Work-family conflict distracts teachers and divides their attention, leading to delays, errors, and reduced work quality. It forces them to make sacrifices, hindering skill development and career growth.

## **6. RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS**

### **6.1. Theoretical Contributions**

This research on the work load, work-family conflict, and job performance of young teachers in Jiangxi Province offers valuable contributions in several areas. Firstly, it combines work-family balance research with the education field, providing new insights and perspectives for theoretical development. Secondly, the study addresses specific issues in the teaching profession and offers practical recommendations for policy-making and implementation. Moreover, it contributes to knowledge sharing by disseminating research findings through academic channels and promoting collaboration between academia and educational practice. Overall, this research enhances our understanding of the relationship between work load, work-family conflict, and job performance among young teachers, and provides theoretical support for the education field.

### **6.2. Practical contributions**

**Policy-making and management practices:** The research findings provide guidance for educational management departments and schools in Jiangxi Province to implement targeted policies and measures for reducing work-family conflict, work load, and improving job performance among young teachers. This contributes to enhancing teachers' work environment and quality of life. Educational management departments and schools can develop policies to mitigate work-family conflict and work load for young teachers. This may involve promoting flexible work arrangements, such as flexible working hours and remote work options. Family-friendly policies, including parental leave and family support services, can also be established to assist young teachers in meeting their family needs. Moreover, the research findings can inform the design of support measures and resources. Tailored training programs in time management, stress management, and conflict resolution can be provided to help young teachers develop skills for better work-life balance and improved efficiency. Support mechanisms, such as mental health counseling services, can be established to assist young teachers in coping with work and family pressures. **Career development and training practices:** The research findings offer specific advice and training programs for the career development of young teachers in Jiangxi Province. These programs address challenges related to work-family conflict and work load, providing the necessary support and guidance for young teachers in their career advancement.



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