

**JOB DEMANDS, JOB RESOURCES AND WORK-
LIFE BALANCE AMONG THE ACADEMICIANS
IN THE PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN EGYPT:
THE MODERATING ROLE OF SELF-EFFICACY**

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by

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

July 2024

I Would Like to Dedicate my Thesis to

“My Beloved Grandfather, Ezz EL-Din El-Naggar”

May His Soul Rest in Peace

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAST-MT	Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport
AUC	American University in Cairo
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BUE	The British University in Egypt
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics
COPSOQ	Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire
COR	Conservation of Resources Theory
DA	Decision Authority
ED	Emotional Demands
EM	Expectation-Maximisation Algorithm.
FSSB	Family Supportive Supervisor Behavior
FUE	Future University in Egypt
GUC	German University in Cairo
HRM	Human Resource Management
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JD-C	Job Demands and Control Theory
JD-R	Job Demands and Resources Theory
JCQ	Job Content Questionnaire
MIU	Misr International University
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
MSA	Modern Sciences and Arts University
MTI	Modern University for Technology & Information
MUST	Misr University for Science and Technology
NUB	Nahda University in Beni-Suef
OBSE	Organizational Based Self Esteem
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling
SE	Self-Efficacy
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SS	Supervisor Support
QEEW	Questionnaire on the Experience and Evaluation of Work

QS	Quacquarelli Symonds
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia
VIF	Variance Indicator Factor
WDQ	Work Design Questionnaire
WL	Workload
WLB	Work-Life Balance
WLC	Work-Life Conflict

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**TUNTUTAN KERJA, SUMBER PEKERJAAN DAN KESEIMBANGAN
KERJAYA DAN KEHIDUPAN DALAM KALANGAN PENSYARAH DI
UNIVERSITI SWASTA DI MESIR: PERANAN EFIKASI KENDIRI
SEBAGAI MODERATOR**

ABSTRAK

Keseimbangan kerjaya dan kehidupan adalah penting bagi semua individu; ia meningkatkan kepuasan bekerja dan kepuasan hidup serta mengurangkan tekanan, mewujudkan kebahagiaan dan kesejahteraan dalaman. Walau bagaimanapun, keseimbangan kerjaya dan kehidupan merupakan masalah yang ketara dalam kalangan pensyarah yang bekerja di 10 universiti swasta terkenal di Mesir. Oleh itu, mengenal pasti faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi keseimbangan kerjaya dan kehidupan pensyarah adalah penting. Pertama, kajian ini membangunkan satu model integratif menggunakan Teori Tuntutan dan Sumber pekerjaan (JD-R) dan Teori Pemuliharaan Sumber (COR) untuk menguji kesan tuntutan kerja: beban kerja, tuntutan mental, dan tuntutan emosi terhadap keseimbangan kerjaya dan kehidupan. Kedua, ia menyiasat kesan sumber kerja: sokongan penyelia, sokongan rakan sekerja, dan kuasa membuat keputusan terhadap keseimbangan kerjaya dan kehidupan. Kajian ini juga mengiktiraf kepentingan sumber peribadi dalam kalangan pensyarah; oleh itu, ia mengkaji kesan moderate efikasi sendiri terhadap hubungan antara tuntutan kerja, sumber pekerjaan dan keseimbangan kerjaya dan kehidupan. Data dikumpul daripada 504 pensyarah yang bekerja di 10 universiti swasta terkenal di Mesir. SPSS dan Partial Least Square-Structure Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa beban kerja, tuntutan mental dan emosi memberi kesan yang signifikan dan negatif terhadap keseimbangan kerjaya dan kehidupan. Selain itu,

sokongan rakan sekerja dan kuasa membuat keputusan mempunyai kesan yang signifikan dan positif terhadap keseimbangan kerjaya dan kehidupan. Walau bagaimanapun, sokongan penyelia mempunyai hubungan yang tidak signifikan dengan keseimbangan kerjaya dan kehidupan. Untuk pemboleh ubah moderate, efikasi sendiri menguatkan hubungan positif antara sokongan penyelia, sokongan rakan sekerja, dan keseimbangan kerjaya dan kehidupan. Namun, dapatan kajian melaporkan bahawa efikasi sendiri tidak moderate hubungan antara beban kerja, tuntutan mental, tuntutan emosi, dan keseimbangan kerjaya dan kehidupan. Juga, ia tidak moderate hubungan antara kuasa membuat keputusan dan keseimbangan kerjaya dan kehidupan. Implikasi kajian ini adalah penting kerana mencapai keseimbangan kerjaya dan kehidupan meningkatkan prestasi, komitmen, dan kepuasan pelajar. Oleh itu, kajian ini bermanfaat kepada pensyarah dan pengamal yang ingin meningkatkan keseimbangan kerjaya dan kehidupan pensyarah dengan mengurangkan tuntutan kerja dan meningkatkan sumber pekerjaan. Ia juga meningkatkan kesedaran pensyarah untuk menggunakan dan membangunkan sumber peribadi mereka dengan betul untuk mencapai keseimbangan kehidupan bekerja. Kajian ini berguna kerana ia menyumbang pada literatur dalam bidang tuntutan kerja, sumber pekerjaan, dan sumber peribadi yang kurang dikaji dalam industri pendidikan tinggi. Ia juga menyediakan kerangka penyelidikan yang holistik yang merangkumi faktor kerja dan peribadi.

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance is essential for all individuals; it increases job satisfaction and life satisfaction and reduces stress, leading to internal happiness and contentment. However, work-life balance is a significant problem among academicians working in Egypt's top 10 private universities. Thus, recognising the factors that affect the academicians' work-life balance is essential. Firstly, this study developed an integrative model using the Job Demands and Resources (JD-R) Theory and the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory to test the effect of job demands: workload, mental demands, and emotional demands on work-life balance. Secondly, it investigates the effect of job resources: supervisor support, co-worker support, and decision authority on work-life balance. This study also recognises the importance of personal resources among academicians; hence, it examines the moderating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between job demands, job resources, and work-life balance. Data were collected from 504 academicians employed in the top 10 private universities in Egypt. SPSS and Partial Least Square-Structure Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) were used for data analysis. The findings showed that workload, mental and emotional demands significantly and negatively affected work-life balance. Moreover, co-worker support and decision authority had a significant and positive effect on work-life balance. However, supervisor support had an insignificant relationship with work-life balance. As for the moderating variable, self-efficacy strengthened the positive relationship between supervisor support, co-worker support,

and work-life balance. Nevertheless, the findings reported that self-efficacy did not moderate the relationship between workload, mental demands, emotional demands, and work-life balance. Also, it did not moderate the relationship between decision authority and work-life balance. The study's implications are essential because achieving work-life balance improves academicians' performance, commitment, and student satisfaction. Therefore, this study benefits academics and practitioners who wish to enhance academicians' work-life balance by reducing their job demands and increasing job resources. It also increases academicians' awareness to correctly utilise and develop their personal resources to achieve work-life balance. This study is helpful as it contributes to the literature on less studied areas of job demands, job resources, and personal resources in the higher education industry. It also provides a holistic research framework that includes job and personal factors.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, the problem statement, the research objectives, the research questions and the study's theoretical and practical significance. After that, the definition of the key terms and the organisation of the thesis are presented.

1.2 Background of the study

Higher education is a valuable cultural and scientific asset that supports human growth and drives economic, technical, and societal transformation (UNESCO, 2023). It fosters rationality in society and the state, creating new organisational structures led by professionalised individuals, fuelled by schooled ideologies, and promoting globalisation. Furthermore, higher education has experienced substantial growth worldwide, creating a global community of individuals with a shared status who can communicate, engage, and collaborate internationally (Schofer et al., 2021).

The global higher education market was valued at USD 477,122.7 million in 2021 and is expected to reach USD 853,287.4 million by 2030, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.03% between 2023 and 2030 (Verified Market Research, 2022). Currently, nearly 200 million students are enrolled in higher education globally, which continues to increase annually. This growth is attributed to the expanding youth population and rising graduation rates in elementary and secondary schools, especially in regions like South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and North Africa (The World Bank, 2021).

The Middle East has a unique educational heritage, and in Egypt, several trends are reshaping the higher education industry. These include a focus on research and innovation, implementing blended learning, and expanding universities (Brilliantz Digital, 2023). Among Middle Eastern countries, Egypt is known to have the most esteemed universities in the Arab world (Sawahel, 2022). The American University in Cairo (AUC) was the first private university in Egypt, and its success led to the establishment of more private universities (Abdelkhalek & Langsten, 2019). This growth was driven by the increasing number of secondary graduates, as public universities could not accommodate all students, creating an opportunity for the private sector to contribute to the educational industry by establishing private universities (Salem, 2022).

Private universities in Egypt are witnessing significant growth, as confirmed by UniRank, a leading international education directory and search engine (UniRank, 2022). These private universities play a substantial role in shaping the higher education system in Egypt and beyond (Barsoum, 2014). Notably, the private sector has experienced rapid growth in higher education across several nations (Abdelkhalek & Langsten, 2019). In the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Ranking, four Egyptian private universities have demonstrated a noteworthy presence in the global ranking (Table 1.1, p.3). The American University in Cairo has consistently maintained its ranking from 2019 to 2023 among more than 1500 institutions worldwide. As a result, academicians in these universities face the risk of work-life conflict as they strive to secure and improve their world university ranking.

Table 1.1 (p.3) below reveals that the presence of private universities in the QS world ranking is on the rise, with Egyptian universities making a notable representation among the top 1000 (Enterprise, 2021; Kigotho, 2022; University World News, 2020).

QS utilises six indicators to determine the world ranking, each contributing a certain percentage to calculate the university's overall rank. These indicators include academic reputation (40%), employer reputation (10%), student-to-faculty ratio (20%), research citations per faculty member (20%), the proportion of international faculty (5%), and the proportion of international students (5%). In addition, seven private Egyptian universities have been featured in the QS Arab Region University Ranking. As shown in Table 1.2, the AUC has successfully maintained its position among nearly 200 universities in the Arab region.

Table 1.1 Quacquarelli Symonds World University Ranking

	University Name	2019 Ranking	2020 Ranking	2021 Ranking	2022 Ranking	2023 Ranking
1.	American University in Cairo	420	395	411	455	416
2.	The German University in Cairo	-	1001+	1001+	1201+	1201-1400
3.	British University in Egypt	-	-	-	1001-1200	1201-1400
4.	Future University in Egypt	-	-	-	-	1001-1200

Source. Quacquarelli Symonds (2019b, 2020b, 2021b, 2022b)

Table 1.2 Quacquarelli Symonds Arab Region University Ranking

	University Name	2019 Ranking	2020 Ranking	2021 Ranking	2022 Ranking	2023 Ranking
1.	American University in Cairo	8	9	11	11	11
2.	The German University in Cairo	111-120	51-60	61-70	71-80	71-80
3.	Future University in Egypt	-	111-120	71-80	51-60	51-60
4.	British University in Egypt	91-100	71-80	81-90	101-110	91-100
5.	Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport	71-80	91-100	101-110	101-110	91-100
6.	University of Modern Sciences and Arts	-	-	-	151-180	151-170
7.	MISR University for Science & Technology	-	-	-	-	171-200

Source. Quacquarelli Symonds (2019a, 2020a, 2021a, 2022a)

Table 1.2 above presents the Egyptian private universities listed from 2019 to 2023. It is undeniable that Egyptian private universities are establishing a significant presence in the QS Arab Regional Ranking, and the number of recorded private

universities is increasing almost yearly. Therefore, universities must meet 10 indicators to improve their ranking in the QS Arab Region Ranking. These indicators include academic reputation (30%), employer reputation (20%), student-to-faculty ratio (15%), international research network (10%), web impact (5%), the proportion of staff with a PhD (5%), citations per paper (5%), papers per faculty (5%), the proportion of international faculty (2.5%), and proportion of international students (2.5%) (Writer, 2021).

Private universities in Egypt face a considerable challenge to maintain their position in the QS World and Arab Regional Rankings. This challenge places a burden on academicians working for these universities. Also, it increases pressure on academicians working in other private universities that aspire to be listed in the QS ranking. Consequently, academicians working in private universities in Egypt experience multiple job demands and long and inflexible working hours. For instance, the German University in Cairo (2021) reported that academic staff members work an average of 42 hours per week on campus. This includes teaching responsibilities, administrative tasks, and other teaching-related duties. Similarly, the Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport (2019) requires an average of 40 hours per week on campus, with a division between the teaching load and other administrative responsibilities. These demanding working hours leave little time for research, which is a primary role for academicians.

To gain further insight into academicians' working life in private universities and its impact on their work-life balance (WLB), the researcher interviewed 10 academicians at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport (AAST-MT), a private university in Egypt. The interviews provided valuable information about the challenges they face, including heavy workloads, lack of personal

and job resources, and increased stress. Many academicians mentioned the need for counselling to cope with the multiple job demands. Some even reported working from home at night and on weekends to meet their responsibilities, which impacts their work-life balance.

In addition to the interviews conducted, the researcher found it essential to conduct more interviews with academicians working for both private and public universities to explore their experiences further. The first interview was conducted with the Head of the Marketing and International Business Department at Modern Sciences & Arts (MSA) University, who previously worked at Cairo University, a well-known public university in Egypt. The findings indicated that working in a private university is more stressful due to rigid working hours and the need to invest more effort in students with lower grade point average (GPA). The competition between private universities to attract students and gain accreditations also pressures academicians.

The second interview was conducted with the Vice Dean of Student Affairs at the College of Management and Technology at AAST-MT, who previously worked at a public university. The interviewee mentioned that working in a private university is more tiresome than working for a public one due to the heavier workload and numerous administrative tasks.

The third interview was conducted with an assistant lecturer at the Conservative Department of the Faculty of Dentistry at MSA University. The interviewee explained that working in a private university involves more job demands, impacting work-life balance. Although higher supervisor support exists in private universities, some supervisors may not be adequately qualified to provide the necessary support.

According to Mohamed Helmy El-Ghor, the general secretary of Egypt's Council of Private Universities, private universities in Egypt encounter significant

workplace pressures in comparison to public institutions. This is primarily attributed to intense rivalry and the imperative to align with the requirements of the labour market. The limited number of employed academicians is also a significant issue for private universities (El Hawary, 2022).

Based on the interview findings and the challenges private universities face, especially the top 10, this study examined private universities in Egypt. UniRank issued a list of Egypt's top 10 private institutions in 2021 that met particular requirements for selection, such as Ministry of Higher Education accreditation and a face-to-face learning method (Saeed, 2022; UniRank, 2021). Table 1.3 displays the list of these universities and the breakdown of the number of academicians in each.

Table 1.3 List of Top 10 Private Universities in Egypt and The Number of Academic Staff Members

Rank	University Name	Number of Academicians
1	American University in Cairo (AUC)	408
2	Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport (AAST-MT)	1441
3	German University in Cairo (GUC)	812
4	Misr University for Science and Technology (MUST)	756
5	Misr International University (MIU)	427
6	The British University in Egypt (BUE)	716
7	Modern Sciences and Arts University (MSA)	1054
8	Future University in Egypt (FUE)	405
9	Nahda University (NU)	91
10	Modern University for Technology & Information (MTI)	712
Total		6,822

Source. CAPMAS (2020); UniRank (2021)

Academicians at top-ranked universities often face numerous job demands as they strive to maintain their position in the market and provide the best educational services among other universities. This situation can have a negative impact on their work-life balance. Consequently, it becomes crucial for top-ranked universities to provide their academicians with various job resources that enhance the education process and support them in achieving a better work-life balance.

Maintaining a healthy working environment for university staff members is essential, as academicians are vital resources for society, and their efforts contribute to the country's prosperity (Joythi et al., 2020; Saufi et al., 2023). El Said (2014) further explains that faculty members are perceived as a priority because they possess the ability to create knowledge that benefits society. Hegazy (2016a) emphasises that faculty members in Egypt are considered role models for their students. Suppose students observe their professors effectively managing their time and achieving a balance between work and personal life. In that case, it will positively impact the upcoming generations and increase their awareness of the importance of time management in their daily lives.

Hence, this study examines the impact of job demands and job resources on the work-life balance of academicians employed in the top 10 Egyptian private universities. This study also seeks to investigate the moderating role of personal resources on the relationship between job demands, job resources, and work-life balance.

1.3 Problem Statement

"I perceive the concept of a healthy workplace as encompassing not only the direct improvement of workers' health within the workplace but also utilising the workplace as a valuable platform to promote overall personal health and healthy lifestyles." - Egypt, Occupational Health Services (OHS) Professional (Burton, 2010). Research studies have examined the interaction between work and non-work roles as a growing number of individuals integrate both work and non-work responsibilities (Bakker et al., 2023). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report in 2020 revealed that individuals in Italy enjoy the best work-life balance, with employed Italians having significant time for leisure and personal

interests. In contrast, Mexico, Colombia, the United States, and the United Kingdom struggle with work-life balance ranking low among the 38 OECD member countries (Buchholz, 2022b, 2022a). Forbes Advisor (2023) identified factors contributing to high work-life balance, including average working hours, maternity leave policies, and proportionate hybrid work, with Copenhagen, Denmark, excelling in these areas.

On the other hand, a study conducted by Bayt.com in 2022 on 4,012 employees from various Middle East/North Africa (MENA) countries, including Egypt, revealed a lack of work-life balance due to high work demands. The findings indicated that 52% of employees have contemplated leaving their current jobs for a better work-life balance, and 23% have neglected personal and family duties due to work. The study also highlighted long working hours and overtime labour, with 47% of professionals working between 40 and 60 hours per week, 21% working more than 60 hours, 19% working between 20 and 40 hours, and 8% working fewer than 20 hours per week. Moreover, over 50% of MENA employees believe work-life balance is a myth (Haddad, 2022). Employees in Egypt are concerned about the absence of work-life balance, as the value they place on family time makes it challenging to strike a balance between work and personal life (Burke & Elkot, 2010).

In 2023, the topic of work-life balance gained prominence in contemporary debates, mainly due to excessive work demands that require attention. Within the education sector, job demands are exceptionally high as education leaders strive to adapt to a rapidly changing environment characterised by increased globalisation and internationalisation. Simultaneously, they face the task of envisioning and shaping the future of education, which presents challenges that can negatively affect educators' personal-professional lives (Blessinger et al., 2022). Urbina-Garcia (2020) pointed out several stressors significantly impacting academicians' well-being, including university

ranking, teaching, supervising students, conducting research, handling heavy workloads, working long hours, and managing part-time contracts.

Egypt shares similar stressors with employees who work in teaching, which is regarded as one of the most demanding occupations in the world (Desouky & Allam, 2017). Private universities in Egypt encounter multiple job demands, such as increased competition (Ayoubi & Loutfi, 2018; El Hawary, 2022; El Sheikh et al., 2020), enhanced work pressures affecting employees' well-being (Mansour & Zayed, 2024; Selim & Kee, 2020), high productivity expectations leading to heavy workloads and long hours (Selim & Kee, 2020), quality assurance and accreditations (Barsoum, 2022), and the importance of academicians' reputation measured by their publications (Ayoubi & Loutfi, 2018). Additionally, family obligations in the face of an accelerated pace of living add emotional stress and guilt, particularly for working mothers (El-Kot et al., 2021).

Moreover, in a study conducted by Mansour and Zayed (2024) on academicians employed in private universities in Egypt, findings revealed that retaining academics is very hard in their job, lots of challenges to achieve WLB and ambiguous roles of organizational support towards the academicians' well-being, all these are considered factors that increase the job demands in the academia. In another study conducted by Aboudahab et al. (2022) who conducted interviews among academicians in multiple Egyptian private universities results showed that: 53% of academicians suffered from workload, 66% would leave their job because of a lack of supervisor support, and 66% suffer from a lack of WLB, which all could be critical factors that could lead to academicians' high turnover rate.

Furthermore, a significant challenge private universities face in Egypt is the increasing number of students enrolling in higher education each year. The Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS) reported that the number of student applications is outpacing the growth of faculty members due to the expanding population (CAPMAS, 2023). For instance, Figure 1.1 (p.10) shows that in 2022/2023, the number of students reached 296,868, compared to 14,414 faculty members. This growing disparity places considerable pressure on academicians and results in a lack of work-life balance.

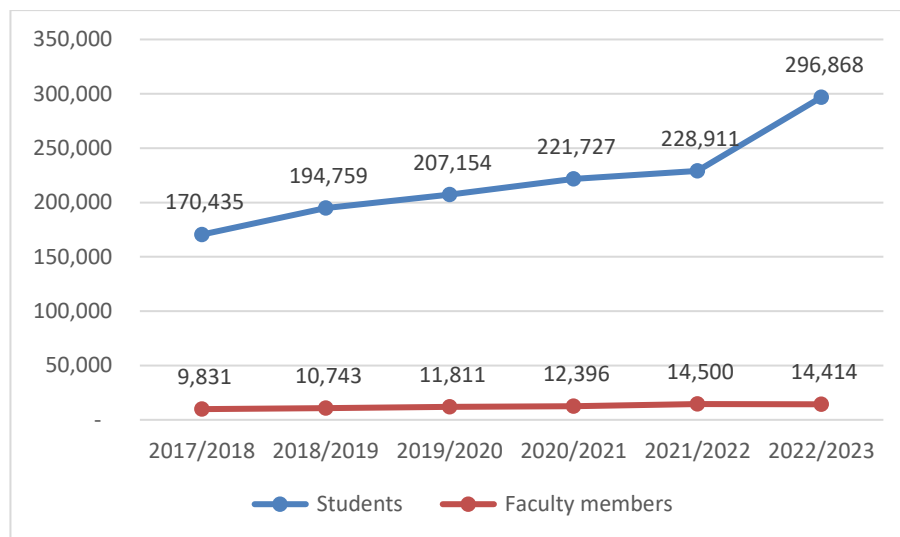


Figure 1.1 The Number of Students Compared to the Number of Academicians from 2017/2018 to 2022/2023

Furthermore, global pressures for higher education are expanding, owing mainly to the transition created by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has harmed academics' working environments in Egypt (Aboudahab et al., 2022; Salem, 2022). Previous studies on COVID-19 have shown that employee workloads have increased, impacting their well-being at work (Lilja et al., 2022; Ryan et al., 2023). The pandemic has particularly affected the work-life balance of millions, including those in the education sector. "Stay at home" regulations implemented by several countries have significantly shifted towards remote work, transitioning from traditional face-to-face classroom

instruction to online education (Akanji et al., 2022; Kirby et al., 2023). Notably, academicians with children have experienced increased household work and childcare responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic (Komlenac et al., 2022).

Evidence from previous studies Akanji et al. (2022); Kirby et al. (2023); Komlenac et al. (2022); Lilja et al. (2022); Ryan et al. (2023); Winiarski (2023) supports the idea that the COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in an increase in workload and disrupted the usual work routines, affecting the work-life balance of millions, including those in the education sector. Moreover, the economic consequences of the pandemic, coupled with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, have caused inflation and economic downgrades, adding additional pressure on employees and their work-life balance (Georgieva, 2022).

In this context, the researcher of this study proposes that universities in Egypt must provide job resources such as social support and decision authority to academicians to alleviate the negative impact of job demands and enhance their ability to achieve work-life balance (Haar et al., 2019; Liu & Cheung, 2015; Sarwar et al., 2021). The collectivist nature of Egyptian society also emphasises the significance of social relations in helping individuals achieve work-life balance, providing them with energy and fulfilment (Alsuwailem, 2023; Hamouda et al., 2018). However, previous studies explained that academicians in private universities in Egypt suffer from a lack of academic freedom, lack of autonomy, and freedom of expression is severely prohibited compared to public universities (World Education News, 2019). Moreover, those hired by a private university do not have the luxury of working at another university at the same time unlike those employed at public universities (Aboudahab et al., 2022).

Job resources could help academicians overcome the job demands that affect their profession (Haar et al., 2019). When individuals utilise their job resources, they are more likely to view their work and family duties as compatible and interconnected, leading to better integration of both spheres (Liu & Cheung, 2015). Job resources, including social support and job control, significantly influence academicians' ability to achieve work-life balance (Sarwar et al., 2021). Previous studies have also highlighted the positive impact of social support in reducing the adverse effects of job demands on job outcomes (Bakker et al., 2004; Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005; Sarwar et al., 2021). Additionally, decision authority has been found to influence academic professionals in better managing and balancing work and personal commitments (Khawand & Zargar, 2022). This empowerment positively affects individuals' personal and professional outcomes (Deci et al., 2017; Thai et al., 2023).

On the other hand, a high-resource work setting can potentially develop employees' personal resources (Liu & Cheung, 2015). Psychological resources, such as self-efficacy, enhance an individual's resilience to adversity and enable efficient resource utilisation, thereby increasing the capacity to handle work-family interface challenges (Sarwar et al., 2021). Liu et al. (2023) explained in their study that there is a scarcity of addressing the role of self-efficacy among academic staff members in non-western countries. Also, Salem (2022) argued that little is known about the specific context of Egypt's private universities and the role of personal resources in shaping this relationship.

Therefore, understanding the role of personal resources as a potential moderator is crucial. First, it can shed light on the protective effects of personal resources in mitigating the harmful impact of excessive job requirements on academics' work-life balance. Second, it can highlight how leveraging job resources, such as social support

and decision authority, in combination with personal resources, can lead to a more positive work experience and enhanced work-life balance. Given the collectivist nature of Egyptian society, which emphasises interpersonal relationships and social support, exploring the influence of personal resources becomes even more relevant. The exponential increase in student enrolment places an additional strain on individuals in the academic profession, hence prompting a need for a more comprehensive analysis of the elements that might assist academicians in managing these demands while simultaneously preserving a harmonious equilibrium between their professional and personal lives.

Hence, the present study aims to examine the relationship between job demands, job resources, and work-life balance among academic professionals working at the top 10 private universities located in Egypt. Additionally, this study aims to investigate the potential moderating influence of personal resources on the aforementioned relation. By addressing these gaps, this study will contribute to developing targeted interventions and support strategies that promote the well-being and work-life balance of academicians in Egypt's private universities.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the relationship between job demands (workload, mental demands and emotional demands) and work-life balance.
2. To examine the relationship between job resources (supervisor support, co-worker support and decision authority) and work-life balance.
3. To investigate the moderating role of personal resources (self-efficacy) on the relationship between job demands (workload, mental demands and emotional demands) and work-life balance.
4. To examine the moderating role of personal resources (self-efficacy) on the relationship between job resources (supervisor support, co-worker support and decision authority) and work-life balance.

1.5 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Do job demands (workload, mental demands, and emotional demands) have a negative relationship with work-life balance?
2. Do job resources (supervisor support, co-worker support and decision authority) have a positive relationship with work-life balance?
3. Do personal resources (self-efficacy) moderate the relationship between job demands (workload, mental demands, and emotional demands) and work-life balance?
4. Do personal resources (self-efficacy) moderate the relationship between job resources (supervisor support, co-worker support and decision authority) and work-life balance?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study can be regarded from the theoretical and practical aspects of the work-life balance among academic staff members at Egyptian private universities.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This study adds to the just growing field of research that has begun to investigate the impact of job demands, job resources and personal resources on the academicians' work-life balance employed in the higher education industry since the topic is gaining the attention of researchers (Asfahani, 2021; Rashid et al., 2022). Hence, this study will have a theoretical significance for several reasons. Firstly, there are limited studies on work-life balance done in Egypt because most research is conducted in developed nations, such as Western countries and North America (Alsuwailem, 2023). These countries have distinct backgrounds, values, and customs from those found in the MENA region (Asfahani, 2021; Burke & Elkot, 2010; Gopalan et al., 2020; Mousa, 2018; Zakhem et al., 2022). This argument is further seconded by Eshak (2019); Forster et al. (2014), who argued that more studies are required to examine the critical and influential predictors of work-life balance in the Middle East.

Furthermore, a recent study by El-Kot et al. (2021) revealed the need for additional research to understand the practices of Egyptian organisations towards implementing work-life balance policies and culture and developing a human resource (HR) model in organisations that support employees' work-life balance. Leung et al. (2020) explained that the work-life conflict perspective is receiving much attention; however, the work-life balance construct that has received less attention is being called for in the literature. Therefore, this study enriches the body of knowledge on the work-life balance issue in Egypt.

Secondly, this study is also significant through testing the direct effect of job demands and job resources on work-life balance. In their recent studies, Gaffoor et al. (2023) highlighted that more studies are needed on the organisational factors of work-life balance in the higher education industry. Also, McCarthy and Dragouni (2020) acknowledged that very few studies addressed the Job Demands and Resources (JD-R) theory in the higher education sector. Accordingly, this study focuses on the dimensions of job demands and job resources to deepen the work-life literature. For example, investigating the effect of workload on academicians is crucial, Urbina-Garcia (2020) explained the importance of addressing the negative environment of higher education arising from the multiple stressors, such as heavy workload and its impact on academicians' mental health and well-being.

Focusing on mental demands that affect academicians' work-life balance is also essential, as those demands add a lot to the work-life literature among academicians. Based on the call for examining the effect of mental demands on employees' well-being (Meyer & Hünefeld, 2018; Then et al., 2014), this study investigates this relationship. Because the new technological advancements and the shift happening in the teaching profession due to COVID-19 significantly impact academicians' mental demands. Academicians are working with new methods of teaching, examinations, and invigilation by using technology that requires cognitive learning and thinking that could affect their ability to effectively manage their work and life.

Moreover, there is considerable interest in studying the impact of emotional demands and their link with the employees' well-being, as studies are scarce in this part (Duarte et al., 2020). Emotional demands were previously addressed among healthcare and call centre workers. However, the teaching profession was overlooked

and needed to be addressed because dealing with emotionally disturbing situations and hiding emotions are common in this profession (Suh & Punnett, 2022; Xanthopoulou et al., 2013). These emotional demands can arise from an emotionally exhausting discussion with the department head due to unfavourable student feedback or job insecurity that affects academicians' work-life balance (Sarwar et al., 2021). In short, mental and emotional demands are currently the most common job demands in the workplace (Wang et al., 2023). Therefore, these job demands are discussed in this study to focus on their harmful effects on academicians' work-life balance.

Thirdly, this study is noteworthy through investigating the direct effect of job resources on work-life balance. Gordon and Hood (2021); Törnquist Agosti et al. (2017) explained that more research on the importance of job resources is needed because resources are perceived as psychological assets that enhance employees' well-being. Thus, job resources could help academicians in private universities in Egypt to overcome their multiple job demands and to be able to counterbalance their work and life roles. Job resources, such as social support and their effect on individuals' well-being, have attracted attention in the literature (Leung et al., 2020).

Hence, in their study, Elsaid and Elsaid (2012); Gordon and Hood (2021) explained the need for examining the role of supervisors in maintaining the employees' well-being in the Middle East as it needs further investigation. Also, Haar et al. (2019); Uddin et al. (2021) demonstrated that introducing co-workers' support to the JD-R theory is recommended as limited research is conducted on it. Also, Norling and Chopik (2020) explained that more research is needed in this part because the work-life literature does not focus on the role of co-workers in the work setting as a source of providing support to help decrease work-life interference.

In addition, this study aims to examine the influence of decision authority on work-life balance among academicians, as there is a lack of research on this topic (Badri & Panatik, 2020). Lange and Kayser (2022) acknowledged the importance of decision authority among employees. As a result, this study contributes to the literature by adding supervisor support, co-worker support and decision authority as job resources to deepen the JD-R theory and develop the work-life literature among academicians.

Fourthly, in recent years, scholars have been more interested in looking at individual factors (Bakker et al., 2023). It was highlighted by Liu et al. (2023) that the investigation of the link between self-efficacy, job stress, and organisational results in the higher education business, particularly in non-Western nations, is limited in scope. Therefore, this study proposes more complex relationships through the link between job demands, job resources, and work-life balance that might be influenced by personal resources acting as a moderator. Complex relationships were recommended to generate more accurate results (Haar et al., 2019).

Also, Wójcik et al. (2022) recently explained the importance of adding personal traits in the JD-R theory, especially self-efficacy, to assess an individual's well-being comprehensively. Self-efficacy enables employees to solve problems and deal with multiple job demands while maximising the utilisation of job resources (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Hence, based on the call of previous studies, such as Bakker et al. (2007); Chen (2022); Gordon and Hood (2021); Mayerl et al. (2016), personal resources are investigated in this study and added to the JD-R theory because of their importance and scarcity.

Fifthly, This study gains significance by employing the Job Demands and Resources (JD-R) and Conservation of Resources (COR) theories to construct the suggested research framework. Bakker et al. (2023) explained that the JD-R theory is one of the most prominent theories that support employees' welfare, and there is a need for more research to increase the knowledge of organisational life and enrich the JD-R theory. Also, Jakubik (2018); Jayarathna (2019) proposed that scholars enhance and expand the JD-R theory to encompass the matter of work-life balance. Moreover, Lange and Kayser (2022); Westman et al. (2005) recommended that researchers continually expand on any recent study with the analysis of numerous variables to strengthen the COR theory.

McCarthy and Dragouni (2020) demonstrated that establishing a unified model with various variables is recommended to generate holistic outcomes. Therefore, by adopting these two theories, this study established a unified model that includes organisational, social and psychological factors that will provide a better understanding of how job demands, job resources and personal resources may affect individuals' attainment of work-life balance. Overall, the objectives of this study are fourfold: first, to investigate how job demands negatively influence academicians' work-life balance; second, to identify how job resources positively influence academicians' work-life balance; third, to examine the moderating role of personal resources as a moderator between job demands and work-life balance; fourth, to investigate the moderating role of personal resources as a moderator between job resources and work-life balance. All these provide valuable insights into the importance of work-life balance and provide empirical evidence emphasising its importance for universities and academicians in private universities in Egypt.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

The practical significance of this study lies in its potential to offer actionable insights and recommendations for Egyptian private universities to improve the academicians' work-life balance. First, gaining insight into the significance of personal resources in buffering the negative effects of job demands and enhancing the positive effects of job resources on work-life balance can help university management create a supportive and nurturing work environment. The findings of this study will encourage university management to consider the psychological variables and design programs that could enhance the individual's personal resources. An individual with a high amount of personal resources may regard a particular circumstance as less demanding than a person with little personal resources, feeling that the resources available to him/her would be sufficient to deal with stressful situations (Mayerl et al., 2017). On the other hand, employees with adequate personal resources can utilise their job resources. They will feel effective, valuable to the business, enthusiastic about their future and interested in their workplace (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Thus, universities can foster employee well-being and job satisfaction by implementing strategies that promote personal resource development, such as resilience-building programs and well-being initiatives.

Second, this study can inform the design and implementation of targeted work-life balance interventions for academicians. Universities can use this study's findings as a guide to tailor support programs that address how to minimise the negative impact of specific job demands and utilise the available job resources and enhance personal resources. This could be done by encouraging open communication and information sharing that could help academicians brainstorm new methods to enrich their relationship between work and life (Bakker et al., 2023).

These interventions can contribute to reducing work-related stress and improving overall work-life balance (Asfahani, 2021; Dollard & Karasek, 2010).

Moreover, this study could enhance the universities' management to design work in a way that helps academicians manage their multiple demands, known as Dual Agenda. The Dual Agenda requires the management team to look at the big picture and consider ways to help them balance their demands. Hammer et al. (2009) believed this was a win-win situation because academicians and universities would benefit. This could help universities create a healthy working environment for their academicians and promote a culture of flexibility and support that could increase their happiness and well-being. Saufi et al. (2023) explained that effective and sustainable people management techniques depend on maintaining and putting into practice an excellent work-life balance for employees.

Third, universities can use the study's findings to revise and develop organisational policies prioritising work-life balance and supportive culture. For example, universities may consider implementing workload management strategies, providing greater decision authority to academicians, and offering family-friendly policies, such as parental leave and childcare support (Komlenac et al., 2022; Sarwar et al., 2021; Yang & Islam, 2020). Academicians should be aware of the availability of these programs and encouraged to use them without fearing negative career consequences. Hence, achieving a work-life balance cannot be reached by academicians without the support of the university.

Lastly, improving work-life balance can enhance talent retention and attraction for universities. A positive work environment that prioritises employees' well-being and fosters work-life balance will likely make the universities more appealing to prospective faculty members and reduce turnover among existing staff. Universities can contribute

to a sustainable and resilient academic workforce by promoting work-life balance by providing job resources and cultivating personal resources. Faculty members with enhanced job and personal resources are better equipped to cope with challenges and thrive in their roles, leading to improved productivity and long-term commitment.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on examining the effects of job demands and job resources on the work-life balance of academic staff members working in the leading private institutions in Egypt. It also investigates the importance of personal resources in moderating the interaction between job demands, job resources, and work-life balance. The participants involved in this study were employed as full-time faculty members at the top 10 private institutions in Egypt, with a minimum tenure of one year.

As a consequence of this, this study is primarily focused on private Egyptian institutions for several reasons: First, after the development of the New Administrative Capital in Egypt, the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education is presently preoccupied with expanding the number of private universities in Egypt. It was disclosed that approximately 450 acres have been designated for the establishment of universities within the New Administrative Capital; this region will be known as the City of Education (Al-Diyar Al-Asarea, 2024). Additionally, the Egyptian Financial Minister previously clarified that an amount of 3.8 billion Egyptian pounds had been allocated by Egypt towards the establishment and enhancement of private universities in Egypt (Ahram Online, 2020).

In addition, CAPMAS (2023) publishes its annual report on the number of students enrolling in private universities; this report indicates that the enrollment rate of Egyptian private universities is increasing annually, as the number of students enrolling

in private universities in Egypt rose from 94,488 in 2012/2013 to 296,868 in 2022/2023. This rate of growth may be attributable to the fact that private universities currently hold a substantial market share (Enterprise, 2022; Sywelem, 2020). They possess notable advantages over public universities, including well-appointed facilities, and play a significant role in influencing the Egyptian higher education system (Barsoum, 2014; Salem, 2022). However, despite the importance of private universities in Egypt, there is a scarcity of research that examines this setting and the association between it and work-life balance. (Aboudahab et al., 2022; Mansour & Zayed, 2024)

In addition, there are several reasons why this study focuses on the top 10 private universities in particular: First, the Egyptian top 10 private universities were selected for this study based on their reputation and status in the academic community. These universities are known for their commitment to academic excellence, research output, and providing high-quality education. As a result, they are likely to have rigorous academic programs and high expectations for their faculty members (Enterprise, 2022).

Second, the fundamental objective of this research is to analyse the connection between academics' job demands, available job resources, and their ability to strike a work-life balance at Egypt's private institutions. Therefore, it is essential to choose universities known to have significant job demands, as these factors directly relate to the research topic. In these reputable institutions, academicians are often required to juggle various responsibilities, including teaching, conducting research, publishing papers, attending conferences, and mentoring students. Thus, this study seeks to capture the experiences of academicians because the academic environment in these universities is competitive, and faculty members may feel pressure to meet institutional expectations and maintain their professional reputations (Hegazy, 2016b). Moreover, the increasing number of students enrolled in higher education each year further adds to the workload

of academicians in these universities. As student numbers rise, so does the demand for course offerings, grading, and academic advising (Adel-Ghafar et al., 2022; Salem, 2022). All these factors collectively contribute to the presence of multiple job demands, including high workloads and long working hours, which may have a detrimental impact on academics' work-life balance at Egypt's leading private universities.

Third, top-ranked universities should be able to provide their academicians with the needed job resources. Since the academic staff serves as the university's backbone in attaining its objectives, the university must take special care of them by creating an atmosphere that will boost morale and enable them to solve any challenges they may encounter at their workplace (Elsayed, 2022). Job resources could be characterised by social support, autonomy, and learning and development. Providing job resources at the workplace would help academicians achieve their goals, increase their morals, and, most importantly, achieve work-life balance. On the other hand, when universities fail to provide adequate job resources, this may result in disengaged employees, leading to burnout (Naidoo-Chetty & du Plessis, 2021).

To summarise, by focusing on these universities, this study intends to explore the experiences of academicians in an environment characterised by intense job demands. It seeks to identify how these demands impact their work-life balance, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. This study may also provide insight into how job resources affect the work-life balance of academics. Moreover, it aims to investigate the role of personal resources in buffering the relationship between job demands, job resources and work-life balance. Therefore, the findings from this study can have practical implications for university management and policymakers in understanding the challenges faced by academicians and developing strategies to promote a healthier work-life balance in the academic setting.