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The Effect of Workload Pressure on Creativity in Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs)

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Abstract

This study examines the determinants of employee creativities among the educators of private higher education institutions in Malaysia (PHEI). This study explored the relationship of workload pressure with creativity. Partial Least Squares (PLS) method and bootstrapping techniques were employed to test the hypotheses in this study. A total of 760 questionnaires was distributed among the educators represents PHEIs located from all the States in Malaysia to participate in the study. Questionnaires was created using Google form and administered through email to the respondents. Result supported the hypothesized relationship for the study. Therefore, significant effects of workload pressure suggest that the variables are essential in encouraging creativity among educators. As such, these findings supported the view that workload pressure can be obstacles for an educator to practice creativity in daily routine even though their personality and job skill shows the interest to be creative specifically in PHEIs. Contributions, limitation, and implication in terms of managerial and theoretical are discussed.

Keywords: Creativity, Workload Pressure, Private Higher Education Institutions

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1. Introduction

Concerns on creativity and innovation received scrutiny from our leaders since our nations are working to achieve our goal towards becoming an economic powerhouse, in which educator's role in this context is far reaching and crucial. For an example, creativity issue has been acknowledged by Malaysian government by including it as one of the primary focuses of the National Key Result Area (NKRA) under the government's transformation program. It has been structured to improve the flow of continues skilled and creative graduates into the job market (Pemandu.com.my, 2011). Thus, it is the educator's responsibility to teach, guide and produce creative graduates. Subsequently, during the launching of the National Education Blueprint, Prime Minister Datuk Seri NajibTunRazak also emphasized on the creative aspect of future graduates (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013). It's clearly described that creativity is a factor which will determine the quality of graduates that will be entering Malaysia's labor market in the near future.

Furthermore, higher education's educators' creativity also has become a concern as their end products which are graduates, facing issues related with creativity. For an example, there has been a continuous stream of criticism leveled at the graduates of higher education institutions, the gist of the criticism is focuses on graduates that are lacking of creativity and innovation mentality (TheStar, 2012; Hanapi & Nordin, 2014). Similarly, according to the news published in TheStar (2012), based on the feedback received from the employment market, graduates entering the job market are lacking of quality and creativeness.

In view from the above commentaries, even though this research is carried out to examine the creativity aspects of the educators, however some discussion on creativity of graduates was included too. It's serve the purpose to highlight on the educators' role since they are the conduits who are directly involved in educating future graduates. The role of educators especially in the higher education sector is perceived as the beacon of creative purveyors. Even, Mustapha (2013) also acknowledged on the importance of lecturers role in producing excellent graduates.

Abu Bakar et al. (2010) also explained that in order to encourage students' creativity, educators need to inculcate creative methods in the process of teaching and learning environment. These researchers report that educators will not be able to encourage and induce students' creativity if educators' creativity level was not fully enhanced and clearly discovered. Hence, it explains on the necessity of the educators as the key contributors to produce creative students. Therefore, creativity among educators is essential to be taken into consideration. Subsequently, Ayob, Hussain, and Majid (2013) have added that the creative educators can nurture and encourage creativity among students. Moreover, higher education educators need to be creative and innovative which indirectly will influence and induce students to be creative in their thinking. Eventually, creative employees or specifically educators can be described as an individual that handles or manage a given task in a manner which is out of the norm or "thinking out of the box".

Apart from the creativity issues, in line with this present study workload pressure among the educators discussion was included. Even though, creativity is an important aspect for the educators, balancing with the workload will be another element that influences educators in performing their duties. Generally, educators in higher education globally and specially in universities are expose with the excessive stress due to high demanding working environment (Makhbul & Khairuddin, 2013).

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The evolution of education sector which is becoming more competitive among each other in same industry could be the contributing factors of the raise of the demands for the job. Similarly, management of PHEIs in Malaysia also already taking up the challenges by involving in the internal competitions for recruiting well qualified and experiencing educators since it is an important resources or assets for the institutions. Previous research as reported by Kordzadze (2013) did state that managing educators efficiently will contribute to the interest of the institutions wellbeing and allowing personnel's growth of the academics. Moreover, the workload issues also reported by Idris (2009) by highlighting on the Malaysian public higher institutions educators that are facing increase of job demand pressure.

Further, in order to fulfill the higher education globalization's demand, institutions expectation on educators to build the international reputation is indeed a huge pressure. Hence, overload pressure eventually, obstruct the performance of educators in terms of classroom delivery, supervising students, produce publications as well as other administrative duties (Makhbul and Khairuddin, 2013). Hereafter, attention on workload pressure hitch has to be taken into consideration as rapid increase of the student numbers in the higher education sector needs to be balance out between number of students and the quality of the education.

Similarly, Kordzadze (2013) has reported that academic workload delegation in terms of fair allocation of tasks has to be appropriate as it will lead to more productive outcomes from the respective educators. In which, it will contribute on quality enhancement in the education systems especially in the private educations sector. Equitable workload of educators will ensure them to perform on their obligations towards the students and other job commitments effectively.

Similarly, Basarudin, Yeon, Yaacob, and Rahman (2016) has performed research on educators' workload for the Public universities in Malaysia and consequently reported that due to the education transformation aspect it has caused educators workload has increased rapidly. Therefore, based on the issue highlighted above this study examined effect of workload pressure on creativity in PHEIs in Malaysia.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Creativity in Education Institutions

According to Robinson (2001), creativity is the pillar for a knowledge based economy. Creative and innovative employees will ensure the nation is well geared to handle the current technological challenges that the global environment is facing. Creativity among employee is a crucial element for success in any organization including in education sector. Consequently, Malaysia's education sector is also going thru a paradigm shift in the way it is evolving. Education sector is currently undergoing a paradigm shift with the implementation of Education Blueprint 2013.

Runco (2006) also acknowledged that creative instructors' have a crucial part to play in developing student's creativity. Essentially, creative educators will be able to create constructive classroom environment with effective teaching strategies. Creative instructors normally will manage to apply existing knowledge with new approach that can nurture cognitive ability. Davis et al. (2010), added that individual's creativity can be taught and improved. Hence, in this context the way educators convey their teaching methods can be taught or trained to be more creative and innovative. Similarly, Mahmud, Alwi, and Sulaiman (2014), also reported that lecturers basically are required to be creative in their teaching besides merely applying their knowledge and experience. Creativity in education plays the role of a driving force towards knowledge and innovation creation.

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2.2 Workload Pressure

Workload pressure is a common situation which occurs in any current job environment. It's a condition an employee feels when facing with multiple task that are apart from the normal routine in their workplace. The continuous demand for high expectations in a job from the top management may cause employees to feel too much pressure that may cause an individual to be put under stress.

The influence of work overload pressure may be varying compared to each and every other individual in an organization. As Fakir (2010) reported, that the workload perception will be different for every individual as the way it's perceived are very subjective. It indicates, workload pressure can be positive if an employee is able to handle the situations even in a demanding environment but for certain employees any overwhelming task may induce negative responses.

Workload pressure in earlier research is mostly referred as work overload. It was defined by an early researchers namely Kahn et al in 1964 as a situation whereby the employees are given too much work that need to be accomplished within a limited time. Eventually, imbalance between amount of work and time constraint forces the quality of deliverables to be effected. Hon and Kim (2007), also reported that high workload with time constrain will not be useful neither for employees nor to their organization. Nevertheless, in the current uncertain environment, employees are required to accept any changes and be able to continue with their duties as usual. Dominguez (2013) detailed that being able to adopt new ideas and be flexible will determines the sustainability and survival of the establishment.

2.3 Workload Pressure and Creativity

Review on the positive impact was acknowledged by LePine, Podsakoff, and LePine (2005) that suggested on work overload faced by an employee will possibly have positive influence towards their contributions and outcomes. Hon and Kim (2007) also mentioned that individual's creativity may influence positively by the presence of higher work load. Previously, well known researcher in creativity Amabile (1997) had acknowledged that workload pressure will initiate creative performance under certain situations. Positive effect of workload pressure might due to the possibilities of employees accepting pressure as a challenge instead of a burden for completing the work.

Meanwhile, there are also reviews on employees' feedback that assumes workload caused negative effect in their lives. Similarly, earlier research on negative impact by Joo, McLean, and Yang (2013), suggested that there are certain factors which will suppress creativity such as unrealistic expectations, extreme datelines or environment distraction, which induces work load pressure. In addition, Kandiko (2012) also stated that further research need to be carried out to determine on environments that may not be very supportive towards creativity or towards creative individuals. Issues related to the environment was also highlighted in the research by Ayob et al. (2013), that found that one of the factors that influence creative teaching is organizational environment. Meanwhile, there are also reviews on employees' feedback that assumes workload caused negative effect in their lives. Similarly, earlier research on negative impact by Joo, McLean, and Yang (2013), suggested that there are certain factors which will suppress creativity such as unrealistic expectations, extreme datelines or environment distraction, which induces work load pressure.

Therefore, on the basis of above mentioned discussions, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1:- Workload pressure will significantly influence creativity among the educators in private higher education institutions in Malaysia.

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2.4 Underpinning Theory

The componential theory of creativity by Amabile (1996) was adopted for this present study as an underpinning theory to elaborate on the factors involved in creativity processes and also to explain creativity among the educators in PHEIs. This researcher also acknowledged that this model consist of all factors that could possibly contributes towards creativity. Hence, it accommodates the idea behind the formulation of research framework in this study.

Basically, this model introduces three components that contribute towards creative performance, namely domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant processes, and task motivation. It is one of the frequently cited models for relating influence of social and environment variables concerning individual creative behavior that was developed by Amabile in 1983 which was revised in 1996. According to Amabile (1996), each identified component is important to encourage creativity, especially when the level in each components are increasing thus possibility of overall creativity is higher. The above researcher also added that the highest level of creativity represented in the components with overlapping sections.

Figure 1: Research Framework



3. Methodology

3.1 Sample and Data Collection

Probability simple random sampling was used for this study. Probability sampling was selected because according to Sekaran (2009), the probability sampling design allows representativeness of the sample to be generalized. Sekaran (2009) also acknowledged that probability sampling techniques allows every individual an equal chances being selected as the sample. Another reason for this techniques, according to Salkind (2003) it has the ability to reduce the biasness of selecting sample object by the researcher while Cavana, Dalahaye, and Sekaran, (2001), acknowledged as the high generalizability technique. Based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a total of 380 respondents were indicated to be sufficient for the above state population. Krejcie and Morgan's table also was based on generalized scientific guideline. Moreover, even Roscoe (1975) rule of thumb did stated that to determine the sample size it is appropriate if the sample is bigger than 30 and less than 500 for most of the research. Data was obtained from Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE, 2013) which consists of total teaching staffs in PHEIs and was categorized by highest academic qualifications, total institution per states and number of universities, university colleges, foreign university branch campuses and colleges per states. Unit of analysis consist of individual educators from PHEIs. The selections of educators as a sample are expected to contribute to comprehend on the creativity issues in a private higher education sectors in Malaysia. Individual educators were selected since they are the individuals who are in the forefront in encompassing creativity in educating students and in other relevant research activities. Moreover, Amabile (1996) did underline that creativity

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measurement is much more applicable if the observers consist of individuals whom are expert in their domain.

3.2 Measurement

3.2.1 Creativity

Creativity variables was measured using 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1= not at all characteristic, 2= a little bit, 3= neutral, 4= characteristic to 5= very characteristic. Creativity scale was adapted from Zhou and George (2001) with total of 13-items scale with the Cronbach alpha .96. As stated by Zhou and George (2001) which was declared in the research done by Khalid and Zubair (2014) that the above mentioned 13-items scale can be used for both supervisor and self-reported ratings of creativity.

Even though there are many definitions being used, accurate definition of creativity depends on the instruments characteristics that were selected to measure creativity (Walton, 2003) in a particular research. Actually, creativity measures will be accepted if it is from appropriate observers which are individuals that are expert in a particular domain (Amabile, 1996).

3.2.2 Workload Pressure

Workload pressure independent variable measurement scale was adapted from 8 items from Dutch scale that was developed and validated by researcher Van Veldhoven and Meijman in 1994 as stated by Janssen (2001). This measurement are using 4 points Likert scale ranging from 1=never; 2=sometimes; 3=often to 4= always with the Cronbach alpha of 0.79. Item number 5 out of 8 items are reverse coded as suggested by the researcher Janssen in 2001.

3.3 Analysis Method

Partial Least Sequential, structural equation modelling (PLS SEM) approach was used as a main analysis technique for the data analysis. Smart PLS 3.0 software application (Ringle et al., 2015) was employed in the analysis and reporting the results.

Descriptive analysis was conducted since Sekaran and Bougie (2010) stated that, it is used to describe the phenomena of interest. Therefore, for the analysis of descriptive information on frequency, mean and standard deviation were analyzed. Frequency determine the frequency of the phenomena occur, mean for the average score and standard deviation for the extent of variability. Overall, descriptive analysis was employed for the respondents' characteristics and for the construct.

As stated earlier, this study employed PLS SEM techniques employing PLS path modelling (Wold 1974) using SmartPLS 3.0 (Ringle et al., 2015) to test the theoretical model. PLS path modelling was considered because this technique can examine the relationship between constructs and between latent constructs and indicators simultaneously (Chin, Marcolin, &Newated, 2003).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Based on the demographic results it shows 192 (49.7%) were male respondents, while 194, representing 50.3% were females. The age group consists of, 43.5% or 168 were in the age group of 25-35 years. This is followed by those in the age group of 36-45 years with 132 (34.2%), 46-55 years accounted for 64 (16.6%), greater than 55 years were 19 respondents, representing 4.9%. The smallest age group ranged

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between less than 25 years, which accounted only 3 or 0.8%. Based on this data, the respondents between the age group of 25-35 years are the biggest group of employees in PHEIs. Subsequently, in terms of education level, results shows most of the respondents are with master degree qualification (60.4%), doctorate degree (20.2 %), bachelor degree (18.1 %) and participants with professional training and certification amounting to 1.3%. In terms of occupational status, 95.9 % of the respondents are full time staff, 3.6% part timer and 0.5% consists of contract full time staff. This result explains that most of the educators' qualifications presented are with master degree whereby in future they may want to upgrade their qualifications. (see table 1)

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	192	49.7
Female	194	50.3
Age		
Less than 25 years	3	.8
25 years to 35 years	168	43.5
36 years to 45 years	132	34.2
46 years to 55 years	64	16.6
Greater than 55 years	19	4.9
Education		
Professional training and/or certification	5	1.3
Bachelor degree	70	18.1
Master degree	233	60.4
Doctorate degree	78	20.2
Occupational status		
Full time	370	95.9
Part time	14	3.6
Contract full time	2	.5
Senior lecturer	107	27.7
Lecturer	245	63.5
Tutor / instructors	12	3.1
Academic department head/ lecturer	2	.5
Head of section/ lecturer	3	.8
Coordinator	1	.3
Associate professor	7	1.8
Professor	3	.8
Management/ lecturer	5	1.3
Principal lecturer	1	.3
Working Experience		
Less than 1 year	40	10.4
1 year to 3 years	80	20.7

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More than 3 years but less than 5 years	84	21.8
5 years to 8 years	88	22.8
More than 8 years	94	24.4
Location		
Perlis	1	.3
Kedah	9	2.3
Penang	69	17.9
Perak	62	16.1
Selangor	96	24.9
Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur	43	11.1
Pahang	11	2.8
Sarawak	26	6.7
Johor	4	1.0
Sabah	11	2.8
Malacca	33	8.5
Terengganu	5	1.3
Kelantan	9	2.3
Negeri Sembilan	7	1.8
Organization category		
University	176	45.6
University College	19	4.9
Foreign University Branch Campus	10	2.6
College	181	46.9
Department		
Education	31	8.0
Health Sciences/ Allied Health Sciences	26	6.7
Business/ Management	61	15.8
Accounting/ Finance	31	8.0
Foundation/ Pre-University	21	5.4
Mass Communication/ Communication Related Studies	9	2.3
Language Related Studies	21	5.4
Computing/ Information Technology	52	13.5
Engineering Related Studies	75	19.4
Design/ Creative Arts	11	2.8
Multimedia/ Creative Media	6	1.6
Hospitality/ Tourism	18	4.7
Culinary Arts	4	1.0
Law	1	.3
Medical Related Studies	5	1.3
Early Childhood	4	1.0
Post Graduate Studies	1	.3
General Studies/ MPU/ Compulsory Subjects	4	1.0

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Geosciences	3	.8
Psychology	2	.5

Source: The Researcher

4.2 Evaluation of PLS-SEM results

In the present study, two step approach has been adopted which comprises on the first assessment on measurement model and second is on the assessment of a structural model following the guidelines from Hair et al. (2014) and Henseler et al. (2009)**.** Basically this study employed PLS structural equation modelling (SEM) to evaluate on the theoretical model using SmartPLS application (Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2005). PLS application was used for all the analysis of the direct moderating analysis to obtain the results. Hair et al. (2010) also stated that PLS mainly focuses on the factor analysis and multiple regressions as main two important techniques in the multivariate analysis. Initial step in this section was to assess on the measurement model which emphasized on outer models to determine the goodness of measure.

4.3 Measurement Model

Measurement model in this section is intended for ensuring that the model specification is valid and reliable. Therefore, in line with Hair et al. (2010) it clearly pointed out the rule of thumb as, for an outer loading to be considered such a model should be 0.5 and above and for the average variance extracted (AVE), it should be greater than 0.5 also. Outer loading basically is assessing the individual's items reliability for each construct. On top that, in this path model assessment section, it is important to take note that according to Hair et al. (2014) goodness-of-fit index is not that appropriate for model validation.

Table 2: Construct Cross Loadings

	Creativity	**Workload Pressure**
EC1	**0.848**	-0.376
EC10	**0.809**	-0.298
EC11	**0.853**	-0.328
EC12	**0.825**	-0.292
EC13	**0.867**	-0.333
EC2	**0.864**	-0.377
EC3	**0.799**	-0.389
EC4	**0.857**	-0.395
EC5	**0.851**	-0.283
EC6	**0.703**	-0.238
EC7	**0.835**	-0.336
EC8	**0.817**	-0.308
EC9	**0.792**	-0.292
WP5R	-0.447	**0.785**
WP6	-0.12	**0.626**
WP7	-0.212	**0.785**
WP8	-0.267	**0.83**

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Source: The Researcher

The convergent validity can be established, based on structural equation modeling (SEM) literature, by using items reliability, composite reliability, and the average variance extracted. That is, the item of each construct are highly loaded and statistically significant in measuring their respective constructs with at least 0.5 factor loadings, composite reliability is at least 0.7 and the average variance extracted (AVE) is at least 0.5 (Bagozzi et al., 1991; Hair, et al., 2013).

Table 3: Convergent Validity

Construct	Items	Standardized Loadings	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Creativity	EC1	0.849	0.682	0.965	0.961
	EC2	0.865			
	EC3	0.799			
	EC4	0.858			
	EC5	0.851			
	EC6	0.703			
	EC7	0.835			
	EC8	0.817			
	EC9	0.791			
	EC10	0.809			
	EC11	0.853			
	EC12	0.825			
	EC13	0.867			
Workload Pressure	WP4	0.541	0.521	0.842	0.816
	WP5R	0.785			
	WP6	0.626			
	WP7	0.785			
	WP8	0.830			

Source: The Researcher

Hair et al. (2010) explained that discriminant validity as the degree to which a set of construct can actually be dissimilar from other variable. In examining discriminant validity of the measurement model, the Fornell and Lacker (1981) criteria is employed for this study. As referred by Fornell and Lacker (1981) discriminant validity process is completed by comparing the correlations between the latent constructs AVE square roots. This researcher also suggested that the square root of the AVE values must be more than the latent construct's correlations. indicated in the table below ensures that the discriminant validity is confirmed.

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Table 4: Discriminant Validity

Construct	Creativity	Workload Pressure
Creativity	**0.826**	
Workload Pressure	-0.399	**0.722**

Note: The bolded values in diagonals represent the square root of the AVE while those off the diagonals represent latent variable correlations
Source: The Researcher

4.4 Structural Model Assessment

Hair et al. (2011) viewed structural model as a model that test the hypothesized direct relationship between endogenous and exogenous variables. Whereby, in partial least squares, structural model explains on the directional association between the constructs and their t-values as well as the path coefficient. Referring to the path coefficient, partial least squares are considered by Argawal and Karahanna (2000), are the same as the standardized beta coefficient in regression analysis.

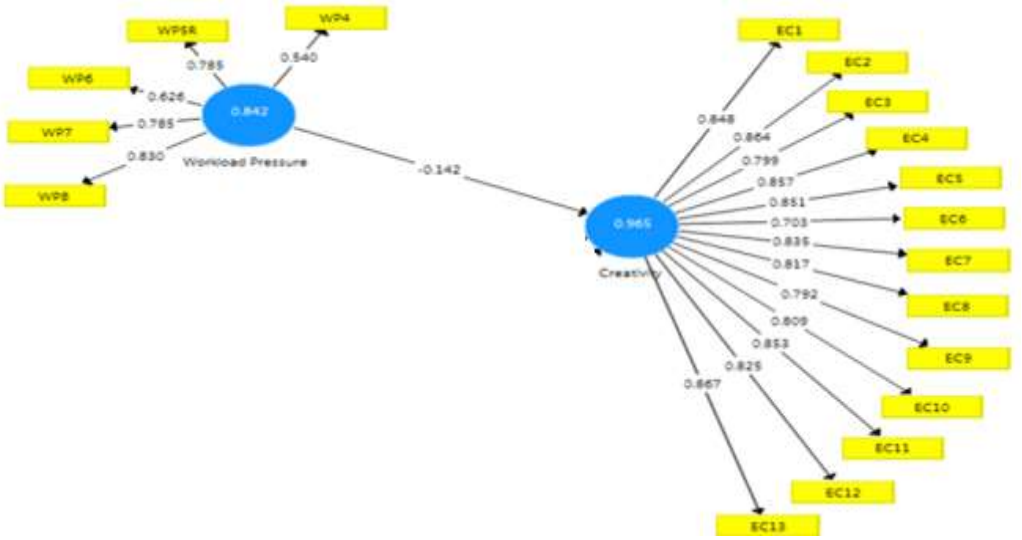
Therefore, the fundamental objective of structural model is to test the hypothesized relationships among constructs. The structural model evaluation begins with an examination of the direct relationships in this study. Two hypotheses that posed a direct relationship in this study were tested out of which the entire hypotheses were supported. The direct path relationship is shown in Table 5 which described the direct effect of every latent variable on the dependent variable.

Table 5: Results of Hypothesis Testing

Path coefficient	Std Beta	Standard Error	T Value	P Values	Decisions
Workload Pressure -> Creativity	-0.142	0.047	3.055***	0.002	**Supported**

Note: ***Significant at 0.001 (2-tailed), **significant at 0.005 (2-tailed)

Figure 2: Structural Model



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The above Table 5, and Figure 2, indicates that all the study hypotheses were accepted and possess a t-value which is greater than 1.96 and it's adequate to support the two direct hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 predicted workload pressure will influence creativity. Whereby, the results revealed a significant relationship between workload pressure and creativity (β = -0.142, t = 3.055), hence it supports Hypothesis 1.

4.5 Discussion

This finding is congruent with the Ambile (1996) componential theory that explains the influence of workplace environment that eventually effect employees' creativity levels. Hence, as stated by Tang and Chang (2010), part of the workplace environment factors that influences creativity is workload pressure.

Furthermore, workload pressure that indicates negative coefficient relationships is also consistent with the findings from Yusoff, Khan, Rasheed, and Aamir (2014), who demonstrated on the negative effect of the workload towards academic staff in a university in Pakistan. Consistently, negative significant relationship of workload pressure on the academic staff was also parallel with finding by Awang, Ahmad, and Zin (2010) and Mustapha, (2013). They have reported that university academic staffs do feel pressure from the work overload that significantly influences their performance at workplace.

In this paper, respondents may feel the mounting pressure of multitasking is expected from educators. In which it has created an environment of stressful work culture that has definitely taken a heavy toll on the educator's creativity endeavors. The educators of all these PHEIs have been subjected to many requirements which might not be directly related to education or academic in nature but more towards business orientated tasks. Moreover, the amount of workload private educators are facing is not only limited to their teaching responsibilities but it also encompasses the business structure such as recruitment of new students, marketing and branding activities. Their job performance is not only rated on the ability to educate but on their marketing endeavors. Thus, their creativity inclination in future might severely erode.

5.0 Conclusion, Implications, Limitations, and Suggestion for Future Research

The present study, overall has contributed important gaps to the growing body of knowledge. The contribution provides empirical evidence of the significant relationship between workload pressure and creativity. Results from this study also support the needs for the research to assess educators' creativity in the contexts of Malaysia's higher education environment. While there have been number of research examining the relationship of workload pressure with creativity, however the present study incorporating the result with educators in PHEIs in Malaysia.

The limitation is focused on a cross-sectional survey. This present study adopts a cross-sectional study design which restricts cause interference from the populations. In this method data was collected within the duration of three months. Considerable studies variables namely (i.e., workload pressure, person-job-fit, innovation trust and creativity) influences might change over time. Possible changes in PHEI's administrative policy might impact on the research variables.

Therefore, future research might consider longitudinal design to explore the theoretical constructs at different points of time to examine the findings of the study. Future research can also consider exploring, the causality influence which can add in qualitative method by integrating interview designs. Moreover, Schwab (2005) stated that in order to reduce common method variance bias, researchers are required to

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employ longitudinal data to measure causal relationship. Longitudinal data essentially will shows the changing patterns of educators' creativity in the long term due to the working environment factors.

Taken together, this study will practically be relevant to Malaysia PHEIs employees, specifically on their educators. Results of this study will assist the PHEI's management to understand and take appropriate step to curb educators from leaving the institutions. Results indicated that the positive environment factors will encourage educators in PHEIs' in Malaysia to exercise more creativity in their job. In conclusion, the present study had incorporated valuable practical and theoretical implications to the growing body of knowledge in the field of creativity among educators in Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia.

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