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How does role overload effect burnout: The mediating role of job stress?

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***Abstract*---**This study aims to analyze and explain the effect of role overload on burnout, with job stress as a mediating variable among lecturers at Primakara University. The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory, which assumes that job demands exceeding an individual's capacity can trigger work-related exhaustion. This research employs a quantitative explanatory design and uses a census method involving all active lecturers at Primakara University, totaling 100 respondents. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS). The results indicate that role overload has a positive and significant effect on job stress and also exerts a significant direct effect on burnout. Furthermore, job stress is proven to act as a partial mediator (complementary partial mediation) that strengthens the effect of role overload on burnout. These findings suggest that the higher the role overload experienced by lecturers, the higher the level of job stress, which ultimately leads to more severe burnout. The conclusion of this study emphasizes that efforts to address burnout among lecturers should begin with the rational management of role demands. Based on these findings, the management of Primakara University is advised to conduct periodic evaluations of workload distribution, clarify job descriptions to minimize role ambiguity, and

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provide psychological support programs to mitigate job stress in order to maintain lecturers' productivity and well-being within the institution.

***Keywords*---**Role Overload, Job Stress, Burnout, JD-R Theory, Lecturers.

Introduction

Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) play a vital role in expanding access to higher education and improving human resource quality in Indonesia. According to BPS (2024), out of 2,937 higher education institutions under the Ministry of Education, 2,812 are private universities accommodating more than 4.58 million students, with 67% of lecturers employed in the private sector. Indonesian Law No. 12 of 2012 and Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020 require lecturers to fulfill the *Tridharma Perguruan Tinggi*, which includes teaching, research, and community service.

These institutional demands require private university lecturers to perform multiple academic and administrative roles simultaneously, exposing them to **role overload,** defined as work demands that exceed an individual's time, energy, and capability (Huang et al., 2022). Prolonged role overload is a major source of **job stress** (Zhao et al., 2022) and increases the risk of **burnout** (Xu & Wang, 2023). This condition is exacerbated in private universities due to limited funding and unequal resource distribution compared to public institutions (Alimin, 2025).

Burnout is a psychological syndrome resulting from prolonged exposure to chronic work stressors and consists of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Prior studies confirm that role overload directly increases emotional exhaustion (Huang et al., 2022) and that job stress mediates the relationship between workload and burnout (Zhao et al., 2022). Xu and Wang (2023) further reported that lecturers with high administrative and research responsibilities experience higher burnout, leading to lower job satisfaction and academic effectiveness.

Primakara University, a rapidly growing private university in Bali, faces similar challenges. Its lecturers are required to fulfill *Tridharma* while simultaneously carrying structural and administrative responsibilities. In addition, many lecturers also teach at affiliated institutions, such as Alfa Prima, under the same organizational network. Preliminary interviews with 30 lecturers (March 2025) revealed excessive workloads due to overlapping academic and administrative tasks, including accreditation preparation and performance reporting, resulting in emotional fatigue, declining motivation, and reduced focus.

Initial observations showed declining performance in the Lecturer Performance Evaluation System (EKIN), increasing absence from academic meetings, and delays in research and community service reports. Students also reported reduced lecturer responsiveness. These findings align with Schaufeli and Bakker

(2004), who state that burnout emerges when job demands exceed available resources. A pre-survey revealed dominant burnout symptoms: emotional exhaustion (63.3%), depersonalization (56.7%), and reduced personal accomplishment (46.7) (Pre-survey, 2025).

According to Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory, job demands such as excessive workload and role pressure consume individual energy, while limited resources hinder recovery (Demerouti et al., 2001). Role overload has been consistently linked to burnout (Huang et al., 2022; Li et al., 2021; Pitchford, 2022) and is a primary driver of job stress (Verburgh, 2017; Katoch & Sidhu, 2021; Rahman et al., 2023). In turn, job stress significantly increases burnout (Zhao et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023; Jin et al., 2024).

Moreover, empirical evidence suggests that job stress mediates the relationship between role overload and burnout (Verburgh, 2017; Katoch & Sidhu, 2021; Jin et al., 2024). However, studies focusing specifically on private universities—characterized by high workloads, limited resources, and role accumulation—remain limited and show inconsistent findings.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effect of role overload on burnout, with job stress as a mediating variable, among lecturers at Primakara University. This research contributes to the extension of JD-R Theory in the private higher education context and provides practical implications for managing academic workload and lecturer well-being.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that role overload has a positive and significant effect on burnout across various occupational contexts. Huang et al. (2022) found that excessive role demands hinder psychological recovery and increase emotional exhaustion, while Zhang et al. (2025) reported that digitalization intensifies role overload, thereby accelerating burnout. Malik and Siddiqui (2022) confirmed this relationship among teachers, noting that supervisory and collegial support can mitigate its impact, and Pitchford (2022) observed a strong correlation between role overload and burnout among nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar findings were reported by Mohamed (2016), Li et al. (2021), and Al'Ararah et al. (2024), who emphasized role overload as a direct trigger and mediator of burnout. Furthermore, Miller (2024) and Pertiwi and Rachmawati (2025) showed that complex role structures and excessive task demands deplete personal and organizational resources, reinforcing burnout.
H1: Role Overload has a positive and significant effect on Burnout.

A strong body of evidence indicates that role overload is a primary antecedent of job stress. Verburgh (2017) demonstrated that role overload significantly increases job stress among employees in the Netherlands, while Al-Ghamdi (2017) identified role overload as a major predictor of job stress among female lecturers in Saudi Arabia. Rahman et al. (2023) confirmed a direct relationship between role overload and job stress that subsequently influenced turnover intention among Malaysian nurses. Additional studies by Katoch and Sidhu (2021),

Chaudhary and Panda (2020), and Sutanto and Wiyono (2017) further validated that excessive role demands are a central source of work stress across academic, IT, and commercial sectors. More recent findings by Kord and Nastiezaie (2024) and Rostami et al. (2025) also showed that high role demands intensify job stress, reduce psychological resilience, and impair emotional regulation. Moreover, Baer et al. (2015) and Ye et al. (2021) explained that perceived trust and moral obligation to reciprocate can amplify role pressure, thereby strengthening stress reactions.
H2: Role Overload has a positive and significant effect on Job Stress.

Numerous empirical studies confirm that job stress is a significant predictor of burnout. Zhao et al. (2024) revealed that job stress among teachers increases burnout through work–family conflict, while Jia et al. (2023) found that stress correlates positively with all burnout dimensions, moderated by genetic vulnerability. Costin et al. (2023) reported that remote work demands during the COVID-19 pandemic intensified stress and emotional exhaustion, leading to burnout. Wang et al. (2023) and Xu and Wang (2022) also showed that job stress significantly increases burnout among university lecturers and weakens organizational commitment and life satisfaction. Physiological evidence by Von Känel et al. (2022) and sectoral studies by Wu et al. (2023), Rezai (2024), and Vapur and Dere (2024) further confirmed that chronic stress depletes emotional and physical resources, resulting in severe burnout symptoms. Jin et al. (2024) reinforced this by demonstrating that need for recovery mediates the stress–burnout relationship.
H3: Job Stress has a positive and significant effect on Burnout.

Prior research strongly supports job stress as a key psychological mechanism linking role overload to burnout. Verburgh (2017) found that excessive role demands significantly elevate job stress, while Zhao et al. (2024) demonstrated that stress triggers burnout through emotional and role-based conflicts. Rahman et al. (2023), Katoch and Sidhu (2021), and Chaudhary and Panda (2020) further confirmed that role overload increases stress, which subsequently diminishes work–life balance, job satisfaction, and performance—early indicators of burnout. Similar mediation patterns were observed by Sutanto and Wiyono (2017), Kord and Nastiezaie (2024), and Rostami et al. (2025), who reported that role pressure and stress jointly erode resilience and promote psychological exhaustion. Jin et al. (2024) identified need for recovery as a stress-driven pathway to burnout, while Wu et al. (2023), Vapur and Dere (2024), Rezai (2024), and Wang et al. (2023) emphasized that job stress acts as the central channel through which excessive work demands lead to burnout across professional contexts.
H4: Job Stress positively and significantly mediates the effect of Role Overload on Burnout.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory causal design to examine the cause–effect relationships among variables based on the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Theory, which posits that excessive job demands combined with limited resources lead to stress and exhaustion. The research model positioned role overload (X) as the exogenous variable, job stress (Z) as the

mediating variable, and burnout (Y) as the endogenous variable. The hypotheses tested included the direct effect of role overload on burnout, the effect of role overload on job stress, the effect of job stress on burnout, and the mediating role of job stress in the relationship between role overload and burnout. The study was conducted at Primakara University, Denpasar, Bali, from October to December 2025, with the research scope limited to full-time academic staff.

Data were collected through a cross-sectional survey using structured questionnaires measured on a five-point Likert scale, distributed to all 100 active lecturers at Primakara University using a census (total sampling) technique. In addition, semi-structured interviews with university management were conducted to support and contextualize the quantitative findings. Burnout was measured using the Maslach (1981) dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment), role overload followed Schaubroeck et al. (1989), and job stress was adapted from Crank et al. (1995). Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4.0. The analysis included descriptive statistics, evaluation of the measurement model (convergent validity, reliability, and discriminant validity), and assessment of the structural model (R^2 values). Hypotheses were tested through bootstrapping procedures, and the mediating effect of job stress was evaluated to determine full, partial, or no mediation following the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2022).

Result and Discussion

Convergent Validity
Convergent validity is an indicator assessed based on the correlation between the item score/component score and the construct score, which can be seen from the standardized loading factor that describes the magnitude of the correlation of each measurement item (indicator) with the construct. An individual reflective measure is considered high if it correlates more than 0.70 with the construct to be measured.

Table 1. Outer Model Results (Outer Loading)

Variable	Dimension	Item	Outer Loading Value	Cut Off	Remarks
Role Overload		XP1	0.957	>0.7	Valid
		XP2	0.934	>0.7	Valid
		XP3	0.843	>0.7	Valid
Burnout	Emotional Exhaustion	YD1P1	0.837	>0.7	Valid
		YD1P2	0.835	>0.7	Valid
		YD1P3	0.868	>0.7	Valid
		YD1P4	0.905	>0.7	Valid
		YD1P5	0.891	>0.7	Valid
		YD1P6	0.861	>0.7	Valid
		YD1P7	0.909	>0.7	Valid
		YD1P8	0.877	>0.7	Valid
		YD1P9	0.868	>0.7	Valid

	Depersonalization	YD2P1	0.805	>0.7	Valid
		YD2P2	0.780	>0.7	Valid
		YD2P3	0.799	>0.7	Valid
		YD2P4	0.837	>0.7	Valid
		YD2P5	0.912	>0.7	Valid
	Reduced Personal Accomplishment	YD3P1	0.875	>0.7	Valid
		YD3P2	0.832	>0.7	Valid
		YD3P3	0.777	>0.7	Valid
		YD3P4	0.788	>0.7	Valid
		YD3P5	0.836	>0.7	Valid
		YD3P6	0.823	>0.7	Valid
		YD3P7	0.817	>0.7	Valid
		YD3P8	0.802	>0.7	Valid
Job Stress		ZP1	0.902	>0.7	Valid
		ZP2	0.967	>0.7	Valid
		ZP3	0.923	>0.7	Valid
		ZP4	0.948	>0.7	Valid

Primary Data, 2025

Based on Table 1, the outer loading test results indicate that all indicators in this study have met the convergent validity criteria. This is evidenced by each indicator's outer loading value being above the cut-off value of 0.70. Thus, all indicators are declared valid and are able to represent the constructs they measure properly.

In the Role Overload variable, all indicators have high outer loading values, ranging from 0.843 to 0.957. Indicator XP1 has the highest outer loading value of 0.957, so it can be explained that this indicator is the strongest indicator in reflecting the Role Overload variable. The Burnout variable, which consists of three dimensions—Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Reduced Personal Accomplishment—also shows good results. In the Emotional Exhaustion dimension, the outer loading values of the indicators range from 0.835 to 0.909, with indicator YD1P7 having the highest value of 0.909, thus becoming the most dominant indicator in reflecting the emotional exhaustion dimension. In the Depersonalization dimension, the indicators have outer loading values between 0.780 and 0.912. Indicator YD2P5 shows the highest outer loading value of 0.912, indicating that this indicator is the strongest reflector in describing the depersonalization dimension.

Furthermore, in the Reduced Personal Accomplishment dimension, the indicators' outer loading values range from 0.777 to 0.875. Indicator YD3P1 has the highest outer loading value of 0.875, thus becoming the strongest indicator in reflecting the reduced personal accomplishment dimension. In the Job Stress variable, all indicators also meet the validity criteria with outer loading values ranging from 0.902 to 0.967. Indicator ZP2 has the highest outer loading value of 0.967, so it can be explained that this indicator is the strongest reflector in describing the Job Stress variable.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant Validity shows the extent to which a variable is truly different from other variables based on empirical evidence (Hair et. al., 2017:115) (Hair et al., 2017). Discriminant validity is measured based on the cross loading values of the measurement with the construct and the Fornell-Larcker criterion by comparing the value (√AVE) that is larger in each construct with the correlation with other constructs (Hair et. al., 2017:115).

Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Table 2. Fornell-Larcker Criterion Values

	Burnout (Y)	Job Stress (Z)	Role Overload (X)
Burnout (Y)	0.843		
Job Stress (Z)	0.826	0.835	
Role Overload (X)	0.779	0.803	0.813

Primary Data, 2025

Based on the discriminant validity test results in Table 5.6, it can be seen that the square root value of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) in each construct is higher than the correlation values among other constructs. The Burnout (Y) construct has a square root AVE value of 0.843, which is greater than its correlation with Job Stress (Z) of 0.826 and with Role Overload (X) of 0.779. Furthermore, the Job Stress (Z) construct shows a square root AVE value of 0.835, which is also higher than its correlation with Burnout (Y) of 0.826 and with Role Overload (X) of 0.803. Likewise, the Role Overload (X) construct has a square root AVE value of 0.813, which is greater than its correlation with Burnout (Y) of 0.779 and with Job Stress (Z) of 0.803. Thus, it can be concluded that all constructs in this research model have met the Fornell–Larcker criteria, so the discriminant validity among constructs is declared good, indicating that each variable is able to measure different concepts and does not conceptually overlap with one another.

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Table 3. HTMT Results

	Burnout (Y)	Job Stress (Z)	Role Overload (X)
Burnout (Y)			
Job Stress (Z)	0.848		
Role Overload (X)	0.743	0.828	

Primary Data, 2025

Based on Table 3, which presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) results, it can be concluded that all HTMT values among the constructs are below the recommended threshold of 0.85. The HTMT value between Job Stress (Z) and Burnout (Y) is 0.848, indicating a relatively strong relationship; however, it remains within the acceptable limit, suggesting that both constructs still

demonstrate adequate discriminant validity. Furthermore, the HTMT values between Role Overload (X) and Burnout (Y) (0.743), as well as between Role Overload (X) and Job Stress (Z) (0.828), are also below the threshold. This indicates that each construct can be empirically distinguished from the others. Therefore, the HTMT test results confirm that all constructs in the research model meet the criteria for discriminant validity and are suitable for further structural analysis.

Composite Reliability

Table 4. Composite Reliability Results

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Remarks
Job Stress (Z)	0.952	0.952	0.965	0.875	Reliable
Role Overload (X)	0.899	0.907	0.937	0.833	Reliable
Burnout (Y)	0.981	0.981	0.982	0.711	Reliable

Primary Data, 2025

Based on the Composite Reliability test results in Table 4, all constructs in the research model show a very good level of reliability. This is indicated by the values of Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, and Composite Reliability, all of which are above the recommended minimum threshold of 0.70. The Job Stress (Z) construct has Cronbach's Alpha and rho_A values of 0.952 and a Composite Reliability value of 0.965, indicating very high internal consistency of the instrument. Likewise, the Role Overload (X) construct shows strong reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.899, rho_A value of 0.907, and Composite Reliability value of 0.937.

The Burnout (Y) construct and its dimensions, namely Y1, Y2, and Y3, also show very high reliability, with Composite Reliability values of 0.982; 0.985; 0.943; and 0.989, respectively. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs in this study show very good results. The Job Stress variable has an AVE value of 0.875, the Role Overload variable has an AVE value of 0.833, and the Burnout variable has an AVE value of 0.711. All AVE values are above the minimum threshold of 0.50, so it can be concluded that each construct has met the convergent validity criteria. This indicates that the indicators in each variable are able to explain the construct variance adequately and represent the measured concept well. Thus, it can be concluded that all constructs in this study have met the criteria of reliability and convergent validity, so the instrument used is feasible and can be relied upon for analysis at the next stage.

R-Square

Table 5. R-Square Results

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Job Stress (Z)	0.745	0.734
Burnout (Y)	0.983	0.982

Primary Data, 2025

Based on the R-Square test results in Table 5, the ability of the independent variables to explain the dependent variables in this research model is categorized as very strong. The R-Square value of Job Stress (Z) of 0.745 with an Adjusted R-Square of 0.734 indicates that 74.5% of the variation in Job Stress can be explained by the predictor variables in the model, while the remaining 25.5% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. This value indicates a high explanatory power of the model for the Job Stress construct.

Furthermore, the Burnout (Y) construct has an R-Square value of 0.983 and an Adjusted R-Square value of 0.982, meaning that 98.3% of the variation in Burnout can be explained by the exogenous variables influencing it in the structural model. This value reflects a very strong level of model explanation. At the dimension level, the R-Square values for Y1 of 0.874, Y2 of 0.907, and Y3 of 0.723 indicate that each Burnout dimension can be well explained by the Burnout latent construct, with explanatory contributions ranging from 72.3% to 90.7%. Overall, these R-Square results confirm that the structural model built has very good predictive power and is feasible to be used for further hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 6. Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	T-Statistics	P-Values	Result
Job Stress → Burnout	0.318	4.620	0.000	Significant	
Role Overload → Burnout	0.704	11.009	0.000	Significant	
Role Overload → Job Stress	0.863	20.187	0.000	Significant	
Role Overload → Job Stress → Burnout	0.274	4.749	0.000	Significant	

Primary Data, 2025

Direct Effect

The Effect of Job Stress (Z) on Burnout (Y)
Based on the hypothesis testing results, a correlation coefficient value of 0.318 was obtained with p-values = 0.000, which is smaller than the significance level of 0.05. This result indicates that Job Stress (Z) has a positive and significant effect on Burnout (Y). This means that the higher the level of job stress experienced by an individual, the higher the level of Burnout perceived. Thus, the hypothesis stating that there is an effect of Job Stress on Burnout is accepted.

The Effect of Role Overload (X) on Burnout (Y)
The analysis results show that Role Overload (X) has a correlation coefficient value of 0.704 with p-values = 0.000, meaning that the effect is statistically significant. The relatively large coefficient value indicates that Role Overload has a positive and strong effect on Burnout. This indicates that the higher the role overload received by an individual, the greater the likelihood that the individual will experience Burnout. Thus, the hypothesis regarding the effect of Role Overload on Burnout is accepted.

The Effect of Role Overload (X) on Job Stress (Z)
Based on the testing results, a correlation coefficient value of 0.863 was obtained with p-values = 0.000, which indicates a positive and significant effect between Role Overload and Job Stress. This finding indicates that an increase in role overload experienced by an individual will directly increase the level of job stress. Thus, the hypothesis stating that there is an effect of Role Overload on Job Stress is accepted.

Indirect Effect
The Indirect Effect of Role Overload (X) on Burnout (Y) through Job Stress (Z)
The indirect effect test results show a coefficient value of 0.274 with p-values = 0.000, meaning that the effect is significant. This indicates that Job Stress acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between Role Overload and Burnout. In other words, Role Overload not only directly affects Burnout, but also indirectly increases Burnout through an increase in Job Stress. Thus, the hypothesis regarding the indirect effect of Role Overload on Burnout through Job Stress is accepted, and Job Stress can be stated to partially mediate (complementary mediation) the relationship between Role Overload and Burnout, because both the direct and indirect effects are significant and in the same direction and significant in this research model.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the effect of role overload on burnout, with job stress as a mediating variable, among lecturers at Primakara University. The results of the SEM-PLS analysis confirm that role overload has a strong and significant direct effect on burnout. In addition, role overload also significantly increases job stress, and job stress, in turn, has a positive and significant effect on burnout. These findings indicate that excessive role demands experienced by lecturers not only directly trigger burnout, but also indirectly intensify burnout through increased levels of job stress.

Furthermore, the mediation analysis reveals that job stress plays a complementary partial mediating role in the relationship between role overload and burnout. This means that even when job stress is taken into account, role overload still has a direct influence on burnout, while also exerting an indirect effect through job stress. Overall, the findings support the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory, which states that high job demands combined with limited resources contribute to psychological strain and emotional exhaustion. The structural model also demonstrates very strong explanatory power, indicating that role overload and job stress are critical determinants of burnout among higher education lecturers.

Managerial Implications
The findings of this study provide several important managerial implications for higher education institutions, particularly university leaders and human resource managers. First, the strong effect of role overload on burnout indicates the need for institutions to review and rebalance lecturers' workloads. This can be done by clearly defining job roles, distributing academic, administrative, and managerial

responsibilities more proportionally, and avoiding the accumulation of multiple roles on the same individuals.

Second, since job stress has been proven to mediate the relationship between role overload and burnout, universities should implement stress management and well-being programs. These may include counseling services, stress management training, peer support systems, and the provision of flexible working arrangements. Creating a supportive work environment can help lecturers cope more effectively with high job demands.

Third, institutional policies should emphasize adequate job resources, such as access to teaching support staff, technology, professional development opportunities, and recognition systems. By strengthening job resources, universities can reduce the negative impact of role overload and job stress, thereby improving lecturers' performance, job satisfaction, and long-term retention.

Research Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, the study was conducted at a single private university, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other higher education institutions with different organizational cultures, structures, or workloads.

Second, the use of a cross-sectional design means that the data were collected at one point in time, so causal relationships cannot be fully confirmed. Future research is encouraged to use longitudinal designs to better capture changes in role overload, job stress, and burnout over time.

Third, the data were collected using self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to response bias, such as social desirability or common method bias. Future studies could combine survey data with qualitative interviews or objective workload indicators to strengthen the validity of the findings.

Finally, this study only focused on three variables. Other factors such as organizational support, leadership style, work-life balance, and psychological resilience may also play an important role in influencing burnout. Future research is encouraged to include these additional variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of burnout in higher education contexts.

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