

Between Workload and Well-Being: Evaluating Work-Life Balance and Occupational Stress in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the working conditions, organizational support structures, and psychological well-being of personnel at Aldersgate College Inc. during the 2024–2025 academic period. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design, the study gathered empirical data through a standardized survey instrument distributed to 41 teaching and non-teaching respondents. Descriptive statistics, including percentage distributions and mean scores, were computed to profile demographic traits and workplace patterns, while correlation analyses evaluated statistical relationships among variables. Findings reveal a predominantly young, full-time workforce averaging nearly 49 hours per week, with widespread overtime. Although institutional support and supervisory backing are perceived as strong, employees report high levels of job stress, frequent feelings of workload strain, and persistent difficulties with off-hour psychological detachment. Statistical testing indicates that employment status is significantly related to how often employees feel overwhelmed by workload, while gender and years in service show statistically significant relationships with overall satisfaction with work-life balance. Conversely, age and job role demonstrated no significant impact on stress or detachment levels. Based on these outputs, the study underscores the need for clear digital boundary protocols, active promotion of flexible work policies, and targeted workload management to mitigate burnout and support long-term institutional sustainability.

Keywords: *Work-life balance, perceived organizational support, boundary theory, occupational stress, academic personnel*

INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance is a fundamental determinant of holistic personal health and occupational effectiveness. In academic and institutional settings, achieving a stable equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal commitments directly impacts job satisfaction, psychological well-being, and institutional productivity. When employees achieve work-life balance, organizations see higher retention, reduced absenteeism, lower burnout rates, and stronger organizational commitment.

Higher education institutions have unique workplace dynamics in which academic and administrative personnel face distinct demands, from teaching and administrative duties to tight deadlines and extended working hours. This study examines the current state of work-life balance among employees at Aldersgate College Inc. during the 2024–2025 school year. By

assessing workplace demands, institutional support mechanisms, and personal well-being, this research provides empirical insights to inform evidence-based human resource policies and supportive institutional interventions.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to examine the work-life balance among employees at Aldersgate College Inc. during the 2024–2025 school year.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Age;
 - 1.2 Gender;
 - 1.3 Job Description (Teaching / Non-Teaching);
 - 1.4 Years in Service; and
 - 1.5 Employment Status (Full-time / Part-time)?
2. What is the current state of working conditions among the respondents in terms of:
 - 2.1 Average work hours per week;
 - 2.2 Frequency of working overtime;
 - 2.3 Availability of flexible work arrangements;
 - 2.4 Use of flexible work arrangements;
 - 2.5 Level of support from unit heads; and
 - 2.6 Provision of wellness programs or benefits?
3. What is the level of employee satisfaction and stress in terms of:
 - 3.1 Satisfaction with workload;
 - 3.2 Frequency of feeling overwhelmed by workload;
 - 3.3 Frequency of feeling stressed due to work demands;
 - 3.4 Ability to disconnect from work outside regular working hours; and
 - 3.5 Overall satisfaction with work-life balance?
4. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profiles (Age, Gender, Job Description, Years in Service, and Employment Status) and the following work-life variables:
 - 4.1 Satisfaction with workload;
 - 4.2 Frequency of feeling overwhelmed by workload;
 - 4.3 Frequency of feeling stressed due to work demands;
 - 4.4 Ability to disconnect from work outside regular working hours; and
 - 4.5 Overall satisfaction with work-life balance?

Scope and Delimitations

This study focused on the academic and administrative personnel of Aldersgate College Inc. during the 2024–2025 school year. The scope covers full-time and part-time teaching and non-teaching employees across various organizational units.

The study is delimited to a quantitative sample of $n = 41$ staff members who completed the work-life balance survey. Key evaluation dimensions include demographic profiles, hours

worked, overtime patterns, institutional flexibility, leadership support, perceived stress levels, off-hour disconnection capability, and overall work-life satisfaction. Qualitative interviews and longitudinal tracking are beyond the scope of this investigation.

Review of Related Literature

Workload and Work-Life Equilibrium

Organizational behavior literature consistently highlights excessive workloads and long working hours as primary drivers of work-family conflict and job burnout (Amstad et al., 2011; Maslach et al., 2001). Studies show that employees working beyond standard full-time hours frequently experience cognitive fatigue, higher stress, and diminished personal time (Sonnentag & Frese, 2003; Spurgeon et al., 1997).

Institutional Support and Supervisory Leadership

Perceived organizational support (POS) and supportive leadership play a vital buffering role in mitigating occupational strain (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Kossek et al., 2011). Research indicates that when line managers and unit heads actively support employees' personal needs and offer flexible work options, employees report significantly higher job satisfaction and lower intention to quit (Hammer et al., 2009; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Boundary Theory and Digital Disconnection

Boundary theory explains how individuals construct, maintain, or cross boundaries between work and personal life roles (Nippert-Eng, 1996; Ashforth et al., 2000). In modern workplaces, pervasive digital communication often blurs these boundaries, making after-hours psychological detachment difficult (Derks et al., 2015; Park et al., 2011). Literature emphasizes that the ability to fully disconnect during off-hours is essential for physical and emotional recovery (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007; Sonnentag, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

This study was grounded in two primary theoretical frameworks:

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model proposes that employee well-being depends on a balance between job demands (physical, psychological, or organizational costs such as overtime and heavy workloads) and job resources (supportive leadership, flexibility, and wellness benefits). High demands without adequate resources lead to exhaustion and stress, whereas adequate resources foster job satisfaction and work-life balance.

The Border Theory explains how individuals manage domain boundaries (work vs. home). The degree of permeability and flexibility across these borders determines how effectively an individual navigates dual roles without experiencing severe role conflict.

Conceptual Framework

The research utilized an Input-Process-Output (IPO) conceptual model to guide the investigation:

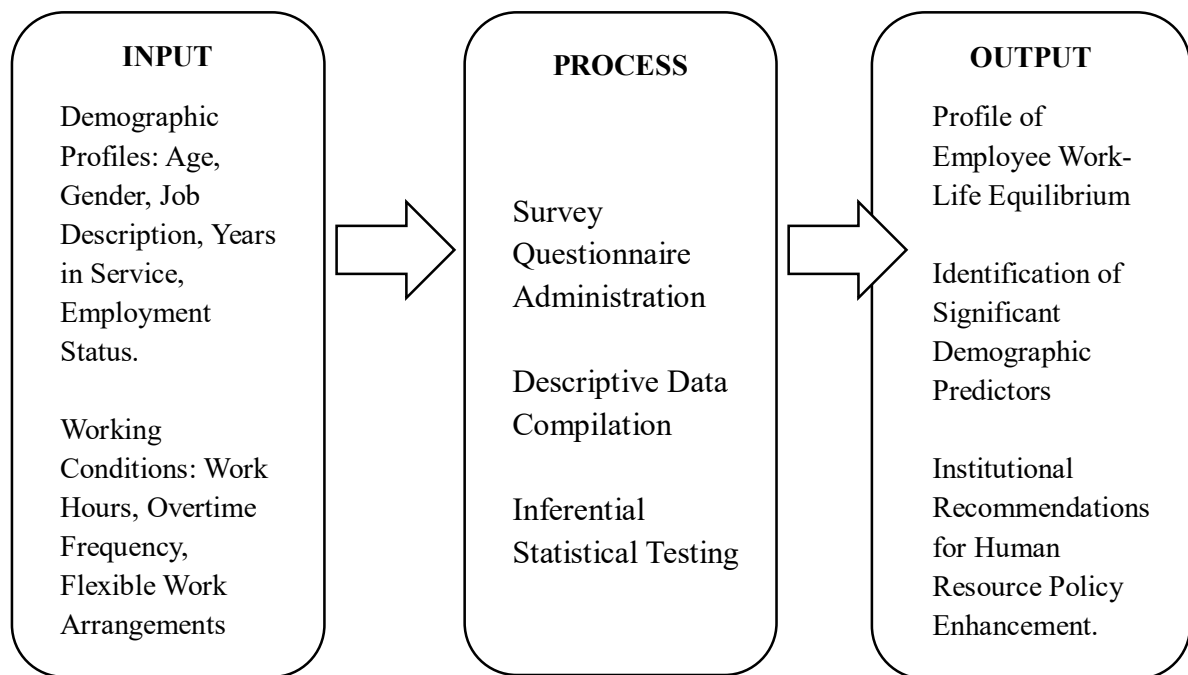


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilizes a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive approach summarizes respondents' demographic profile, working conditions, and levels of work satisfaction/stress. The correlational approach evaluates the direction and statistical significance of relationships between demographic attributes and work-life balance dimensions without manipulating variables.

Research Steps

The research process began with instrument development, during which structured survey items were created to capture demographic profiles, workplace patterns, supervisory support levels, and stress indicators. After validation, the researchers distributed the standardized survey instrument to the faculty and staff of Aldersgate College Inc. during the 2024–2025 academic year. After collection, data tabulation organized raw responses into descriptive frequency tables, percentage distributions, and mean scores. Next, statistical tests were conducted using correlation analyses to generate p-values for formal hypothesis testing. Finally, the process concluded with synthesis and discussion, where the empirical outputs were thoroughly interpreted to formulate meaningful conclusions and actionable organizational recommendations for institutional leadership.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

The study evaluated a non-probability convenience sample of $n = 41$ active employees from Aldersgate College Inc. during the 2024–2025 school year. The sample includes representatives across teaching (41.46%) and non-teaching (58.54%) roles, as well as full-time (92.68%) and part-time (7.32%) personnel.

Data Analysis Methods

We used frequency distributions (f), percentages (%), and mean calculations (e.g., mean age) to summarize baseline demographic and institutional data.

Correlation testing was conducted to compute p -values for evaluating relationships between demographic independent variables and key work-life dependent variables. Significance levels were evaluated against standard threshold limits ($p < 0.05$ indicating statistical significance).

Research Hypothesis and Validation

This study tested the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between the demographic variables (Age, Gender, Job Description, Years in Service, Employment Status) and the key work-life balance variables (Workload Satisfaction, Frequency of Feeling Overwhelmed, Frequency of Stress, Disconnection Ability, and Overall Work-Life Satisfaction).

If the computed p -value < 0.05 , the null hypothesis will be rejected, indicating a statistically significant (S) relationship. If the computed p -value > 0.05 , the decision will be to accept the null hypothesis, meaning the relationship is Not Significant (NS).

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The study relies on a total sample of $n = 41$, which represents a localized cohort within one institution. Findings should be generalized with caution to other academic contexts.

Survey responses rely on subjective self-reporting, which can be susceptible to social desirability bias or temporary individual moods.

All respondents participated voluntarily after receiving clear explanation regarding the purpose of the study. Personal identifying information was strictly separated from data collection to guarantee anonymity in accordance with data privacy guidelines.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOP 1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:

1.1 Age;

Over half of the respondents, 56.10% (23 individuals), fall within the 23–32 age bracket, followed by 21.95% (9 individuals) in the 33–42 age group, 14.63% (6 individuals) in

the 43–52 age group, and 7.32% (3 individuals) in the 53–58 age range. The overall mean age of the sample is 34 years.

1.2 Gender;

A large majority of respondents are male (73.17%; 30 individuals), while female respondents account for 26.83% (11 individuals).

1.3 Job Description (Teaching / Non-Teaching);

Non-teaching personnel make up 58.54% (24 individuals) of the surveyed population, whereas teaching faculty represent 41.46% (17 individuals).

1.4 Years in Service; and

Most respondents are relatively new to the institution, with 70.73% (29 individuals) having 0–5 years of service. Those with 11 years and above account for 24.39% (10 individuals), and 4.88% (2 individuals) have 6–10 years of service.

1.5 Employment Status (Full-time / Part-time)?

The vast majority of respondents are employed on a full-time basis at 92.68% (38 individuals), while part-time employees constitute 7.32% (3 individuals)

SOP 2. What is the current state of working conditions among the respondents in terms of:

2.1 Average work hours per week;

Full-time staff log an average of 48.95 hours per week, whereas part-time employees average 11.67 hours per week.

2.2 Frequency of working overtime;

Most employees work extra hours on a regular basis: 60.98% (25 individuals) state they "sometimes" work overtime, 24.39% (10 individuals) work overtime "often," 12.20% (5 individuals) "rarely," and only 2.44% (1 individual) "never" works overtime.

2.3 Availability of flexible work arrangements;

90.24% (37 individuals) report that flexible work options are available to them at the institution, while 9.76% (4 individuals) indicate they are not.

2.4 Use of flexible work arrangements;

Over half of the workforce, 51.22% (21 individuals), actively utilize available flexible working arrangements, while 48.78% (20 individuals) do not.

2.5 Level of support from unit heads; and

A strong majority perceive positive supervisory support: 51.22% (21 individuals) find their unit head "very supportive," and 31.71% (13 individuals) describe them as "somewhat supportive." Conversely, 12.20% (5 individuals) feel their leadership is "somewhat unsupportive," and 4.88% (2 individuals) feel it is "very unsupportive."

2.6 Provision of wellness programs or benefits?

97.56% (40 individuals) confirm that the institution provides wellness programs or benefits, with only 2.44% (1 individual) indicating otherwise.

SOP 3. What is the level of employee satisfaction and stress in terms of:

3.1 Satisfaction with workload;

Overall workload satisfaction is predominantly positive: 63.41% (26 individuals) are "somewhat satisfied," and 26.83% (11 individuals) are "very satisfied." Only 7.32% (3 individuals) report being "somewhat dissatisfied" and 2.44% (1 individual) "very dissatisfied."

3.2 Frequency of feeling overwhelmed by workload;

Feeling overwhelmed is widespread: 68.29% (28 individuals) experience this "sometimes," 21.95% (9 individuals) feel overwhelmed "often," 7.32% (3 individuals) "rarely," and 2.44% (1 individual) "never."

3.3 Frequency of feeling stressed due to work demands;

Over half, 51.22% (21 individuals), report feeling work-related stress "sometimes," 31.71% (13 individuals) experience stress "often," 14.63% (6 individuals) "rarely," and 2.44% (1 individual) "never."

3.4 Ability to disconnect from work outside regular working hours; and

Off-hour detachment is a notable challenge: 53.66% (22 individuals) can only disconnect "sometimes," 26.83% (11 individuals) can "rarely" disconnect, and 19.51% (8 individuals) report being "never" able to disconnect after working hours.

3.5 Overall satisfaction with work-life balance?

60.98% (25 individuals) report being "somewhat satisfied" with their overall work-life balance, 12.20% (5 individuals) are "very satisfied," 21.95% (9 individuals) are "somewhat unsatisfied," and 4.88% (2 individuals) are "very unsatisfied."

SOP 4. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profiles (Age, Gender, Job Description, Years in Service, and Employment Status) and the following work-life variables:

4.1 Satisfaction with workload;

No demographic variables show a statistically significant relationship with workload satisfaction.

4.2 Frequency of feeling overwhelmed by workload;

Employment Status displays a statistically significant relationship ($p = -0.0444300$, S). All other demographic profiles show no significant relationship

4.3 Frequency of feeling stressed due to work demands;

No demographic variables show a statistically significant relationship with perceived work stress.

4.4 Ability to disconnect from work outside regular working hours; and

No demographic variables show a statistically significant relationship with off-hour disconnection.

4.5 Overall satisfaction with work-life balance?

Gender ($p = 0.010187$, S) and Years in Service ($p = -0.075300$, S) both demonstrate statistically significant relationships. The remaining demographic attributes are not significant:

SUMMARY

The empirical findings show that the survey sample consists primarily of a young, relatively new workforce, with over half of respondents aged 23 to 32 and an overall average age of 34 years. A notable majority of participants have five or fewer years of service at the institution. The demographic distribution is predominantly male, with non-teaching personnel making up a larger share of the group than faculty members, and almost all participants are employed full-time.

Regarding working conditions, full-time employees log an average of nearly 49 hours per week, with a vast majority reporting that they work overtime either regularly or occasionally. Although almost the entire workforce has access to flexible work options, only about half of employees actively use them. At the organizational level, respondents report strong institutional and supervisory backing, citing high support from unit heads and widespread access to institutional wellness programs.

In terms of psychological well-being and satisfaction, the data present a nuanced dynamic. While most employees express general satisfaction with their overall workload and work-life balance, high levels of workplace pressure remain prevalent. A large majority of respondents frequently experience feeling overwhelmed by their workload and report job-related stress. Furthermore, boundary management presents a prominent challenge, as most staff members report difficulty achieving psychological detachment from work duties during non-working hours.

Finally, statistical hypothesis testing indicates specific demographic influences on employee experiences. Employment status shows a statistically significant relationship with how often employees feel overwhelmed by workload demands. Similarly, both gender and length of service show statistically significant relationships with overall satisfaction regarding work-life balance. Conversely, demographic variables such as age and job description display no statistically significant relationships with general workload satisfaction, work-related stress levels, or off-hour disconnection.

CONCLUSIONS

The empirical findings offer meaningful insights into the interplay between working conditions, institutional support, and employee well-being within the academic institution.

The data illustrate a dedicated, full-time workforce that shows overall satisfaction with their roles and values the strong supervisory support and institutional wellness benefits available.

However, this positive sentiment exists alongside significant operational strain. The combination of extended weekly hours, frequent overtime, and persistent difficulty achieving psychological detachment during off-hours signals a growing risk of cognitive fatigue and long-term burnout among personnel.

Furthermore, the gap between the high availability of flexible work arrangements and their moderate utilization suggests that institutional policies alone are insufficient unless accompanied by an organizational culture that actively normalizes their use.

Ultimately, while institutional support acts as a vital buffer, targeted interventions are necessary to address workload intensity and protect personal boundaries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address these challenges and foster a more sustainable working environment, the organization should first evaluate baseline operational requirements and reallocate workloads to reduce reliance on excessive overtime.

While wellness programs are widely accessible, administration may focus on establishing clear digital boundary protocols, such as encouraging off-hour disconnection, to help employees fully recover outside regular working hours. Additionally, unit heads should actively promote and streamline existing flexible work options, ensuring staff feel empowered to use these arrangements without fearing negative professional perceptions.

Because employment status, gender, and length of service significantly influence perceptions of workload stress and work-life balance, management can tailor support mechanisms to the specific needs of these distinct employee groups.

Finally, continuous monitoring through periodic institutional surveys will enable leadership to track the long-term effectiveness of these initiatives and maintain an optimal balance between organizational goals and employee well-being.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

In accordance with institutional guidelines on academic integrity and responsible research conduct, the author(s) declare the following regarding the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies in the preparation of this manuscript:

Generative AI tools were used solely for language editing, stylistic revisions, narrative structuring, and preliminary citation formatting.

AI tools were not used to fabricate, alter, or manipulate primary research data, empirical results, or statistical outputs. All survey responses, statistical analyses (p-values, frequency distributions, and correlations), interpretations, conclusions, and institutional recommendations were independently conducted, reviewed, and finalized by the researchers

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