



Antecedents and Consequences of Academic Pressure Among Faculty Members at World-Class Universities From Scopus Database: A Narrative Review

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ABSTRACT

World-Class University (WCU) is a goal for universities around the world, including those in Indonesia, to demonstrate excellence in various fields, resources, and faculty measured by all relevant criteria as well as academic excellence and quality, as evidenced by a range of achievements. Academic pressure is one of the challenges faced by faculty members in the context of achieving various academic goals, with a focus on the antecedents and consequences of this issue within the WCU. The purpose of this article is to identify and synthesize the antecedents and consequences of academic pressure on WCU faculty members using a narrative review approach. Data were obtained from the Scopus database using the keywords “international ranking,” “World Class University,” or “academic,” yielding a total of 376 articles, of which 141 were suitable for in-depth analysis start at 2005-2024. This study examined the antecedents of academic pressure, including external factors such as the Tri Dharma, scientific publications, administrative workload, and frequently changing policies, as well as internal factors such as self-efficacy, personal capacity, time management, and work-life balance and the ambivalent consequences that trigger stress, burnout, a decline in work-life balance, and a deterioration in academic quality; yet, on the other hand, they can also enhance faculty competence, strengthen research culture, and accelerate global competitiveness. This research provides a comprehensive conceptual framework grounded in empirical evidence to help policymakers and strategists design faculty management approaches that are more supportive and focused on long-term academic performance. The conclusion of this study is that the consequences of academic pressure on lecturers not only have a negative impact but can also be a trigger for lecturers to improve their performance. Based on the background, this study has a different focus from previous research, namely related to the antecedents and consequences of academic pressure on lecturers at world-class universities as a novelty.



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INTRODUCTION

Becoming a world-class university (WCU) is a goal shared by educational institutions worldwide, including those in Indonesia. In this competitive global context, universities around the world are vying to be the best based on various parameters that serve as benchmarks for world-class university (WCU), such as the university's productivity in terms of international publications, research productivity, and overall academic quality, as well as how the institution demonstrates its ambition by positioning faculty members as the primary agents responsible for meeting these demands namely, the continuous improvement of academic standards. Academic pressure on faculty members refers to a situation in which institutional demands, professional expectations, and academic requirements are perceived to exceed an individual's capacity or available resources. In the context of universities oriented toward becoming World Class Universities (WCU), this pressure becomes increasingly complex because faculty members are not only required to carry out the Tri Dharma of Higher Education—namely teaching, research, and community service—simultaneously, but are also expected to meet quantitative performance indicators such as the number of international publications, citation indices, research grant acquisitions, and contributions to improving the university's ranking. These conditions

create a multidimensional dynamic of pressure, which, if not managed properly, can hurt faculty members' psychological well-being, academic quality, and career sustainability (Altakhaineh and Zibin, 2021; Davarpanah *et al.*, 2021).

Previous studies have identified that academic pressure on faculty members stems from a variety of factors, including both external factors such as publication demands and institutional bureaucracy and internal factors such as self-efficacy, personal capacity, and work-life balance. However, the literature that comprehensively maps the antecedents and consequences of academic pressure on faculty members, particularly in the context of world-class universities, remains limited. Most studies focus on a single dimension of stress, without providing a comprehensive view of these various interacting factors and how to create a more enjoyable and relaxing academic experience for faculty members (Gao and Zheng, 2018; Gao and Li, 2020). Based on this, the question of this research is what are the factors that trigger academic pressure on lecturers at world-class universities. The purpose of this article is to identify and synthesize the antecedents and consequences of academic pressure on WCU faculty members using a narrative review approach.

This research is a comprehensive study of the direct and indirect impacts on faculty members and their performance in relation to the university's ambition to become a World-Class University (WCU), with a tangible consequence being academic pressure that brings about a significant number of problems faced by faculty members as implementers of academic activities that must be continuously monitored. Faculty members must continuously produce scholarly works, such as those indexed in Scopus or with global reputation, and maintain consistently improving academic quality, accompanied by various other indicators, such as student achievements on the global stage and other forms of excellence resulting from institutional academic pressure driven by the pursuit of a global orientation or World Class University (WCU) status. University leaders must be able to foster a positive environment, particularly for faculty members. Recognizing high-performing faculty as part of a strategy to improve institutional quality and support academic growth toward becoming a World-Class University (WCU) involves creating a healthy and constructive academic environment that takes into account all relevant institutional parameters, maintains balance, and fosters mutual support. Figure 1 shows that the parameters or criteria for world-class universities are essential (Harty and Leiringer, 2017; Hauptman Komotar, 2020; Hong, 2022).



Figure 1. The criteria for world-class universities are essential

Based on this background, this study aims to examine and analyze the antecedents and consequences of academic pressure on lecturers at world-class universities. This research was designed to explore and analyze in-depth and critical perspectives on the antecedents and consequences of academic pressure on lecturers at world-class universities. The research question was "What are the factors that trigger academic pressure on lecturers at world-class universities"

Previous research has explained the antecedents and consequences of academic pressure on students (Li *et al.*, 2025). This distinguishes this study from previous research. Based on the background explained above, this study has a different focus from previous research, namely related to the antecedents and consequences of academic pressure on lecturers at world-class universities as a novelty.

METHOD

Data collection began with the process of identifying keywords related to academic pressure. Before finalizing the keywords to be used, the researcher first reviewed various studies on academic pressure in the context of world-class universities to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of academic pressure at world-class universities. At this stage, the primary focus of the research was directed toward identifying the antecedents and consequences of academic pressure on faculty members within the context of world-class higher education institutions (Rhoads and Hu, 2012; Nazarzadeh *et al.*, 2016). Article data was collected through a search of the Scopus database using the keywords "international ranking" OR "world-class university" AND "academic." Articles were selected based on inclusion criteria: articles published between 2005 and 2014, articles in English, and articles with similar topics. Exclusion criteria included duplicate articles, articles not in line with the research topic focus, and articles not fully available (open access). Data were then extracted and managed using Microsoft Excel to facilitate the coding and organization process. Analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques with stages of data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, theme review, and narrative synthesis. This process enabled the identification of key patterns and themes emerging from the reviewed literature.

The data crawling process was conducted using the Scopus database at 6 August 2024 to ensure that the data used in the research and analysis were of high quality and credibility. Additionally, Scopus allows researchers to access data details down to more specific aspects (Gaitán-angulo *et al.*, 2018). The results of the data crawling process based on the keywords described earlier yielded 376 articles. Subsequently, a screening phase was conducted on 212 articles, resulting in the elimination of 71 articles irrelevant to the research topic, 68 articles with abstracts inconsistent with the intended purpose of the search, and 3 articles with context mismatches. Consequently, the final dataset used in the analysis comprised 141 articles. The research process is illustrated in detail in the flowchart shown in Figure 2 (Muller, 2017; Li and Xue, 2021; Kang and Mok, 2024).

After analyzing and sorting articles relevant to the topic, the researchers then conducted a more in-depth analysis of the antecedents and consequences of academic pressure experienced by lecturers, grouped according to antecedent and consequence factors. This analysis was conducted by calculating the percentage of each factor.

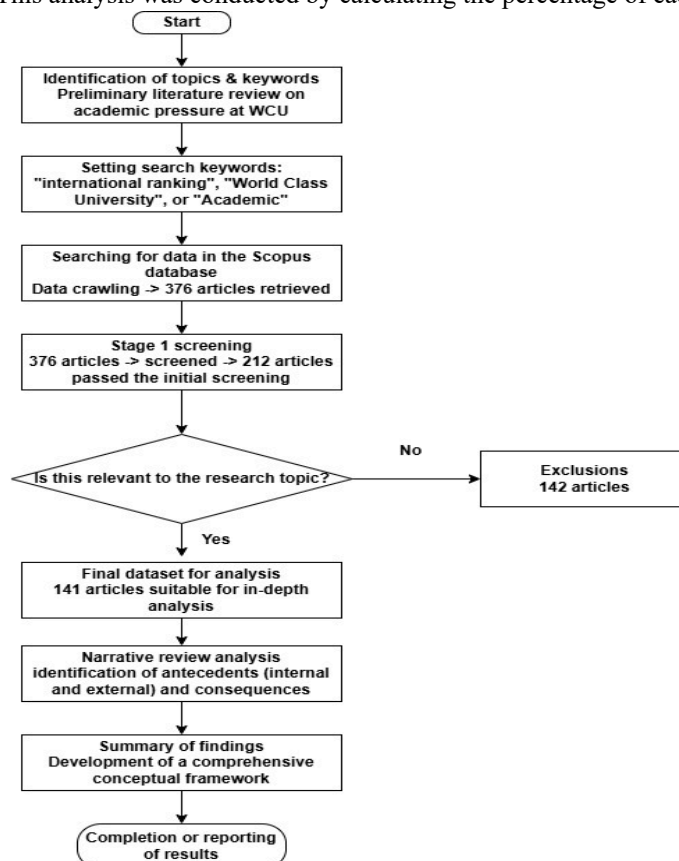


Figure 2. System flowchart for this study

RESULTS

A. Academic Pressure Experienced by Faculty Members

The factors influencing faculty members' academic stress are a combination of individual internal factors and external institutional factors that interact to shape their academic work experience. Academic stress arises when institutional demands, changes in the higher education environment, and professional expectations are perceived to exceed the faculty member's capacity or available resources. In the context of modern universities, particularly those oriented toward becoming world-class universities, academic pressure has become increasingly complex due to rising standards of quality, productivity, and academic competition. Based on the articles obtained through the methodology described earlier, the factors influencing faculty members' academic pressure include both internal and external pressures.

1. External factors

First, a factor influencing lecturers' academic stress is the performance demands of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education (Tian & Lu, 2017). Lecturers are required to carry out the functions of teaching, research, and community service simultaneously (Gao & Li, 2020). This workload is often unbalanced because faculty members must meet learning objectives, manage course administration, conduct research, produce scholarly publications, and simultaneously engage in community service activities (Tang, 2019). When all these demands are imposed simultaneously, faculty members may experience work overload, which triggers academic stress and mental exhaustion (Gabdrakhmanov *et al.*, 2019).

Second, the pressure to publish scientific papers and maintain research productivity (Ertas, Kozak and Kirlar-Can, 2023). Higher education institutions currently place great emphasis on publication achievements in nationally and internationally reputable journals as indicators of institutional and faculty quality. This situation subjects faculty members to pressure to continuously produce scholarly work, secure citations (Harty and Leiringer, 2017; Muller, 2017), attend international conferences, and obtain research grants. Contradictory findings suggest that receiving research grants (Altakhaineh and Zibin, 2021) and collaborating with productive colleagues can enhance an individual's scientific productivity (Zhe, Lu and Xiong, 2021). The pressure intensifies when faculty members face limitations in research methodology, academic writing, foreign language proficiency (Gao & Li, 2020), or access to research collaboration networks. However, conversely, collaboration with researchers from developed countries or prestigious universities significantly enhances research performance due to abundant resources (Zhe, Lu and Xiong, 2021). Furthermore, the "publish or perish" culture makes publication not only an academic necessity (Li and de Costa, 2021) but also a career requirement (Ertas, Kozak and Kirlar-Can, 2023) and a marker of professional recognition.

Third, the burden of administrative and academic bureaucratic tasks. In practice, faculty members not only carry out academic duties but are also burdened with various administrative tasks such as completing BKD forms, program accreditation, preparing evaluation reports, managing quality assurance documents, and administering digital-based learning (Li & de Costa, 2021). Many faculty members feel that excessive administrative demands reduce their focus on scholarly development and research activities. The accumulation of these administrative tasks is a primary source of academic work-related stress.

Fourth, changes in higher education policy and institutional transformation. Higher education institutions striving for international recognition typically adopt higher quality standards (Komotar, 2020), including curriculum internationalization (Takagi, 2018), digital learning, global collaboration (Yang & You, 2018), and improvements in university ranking indicators (Gao & Li, 2020). These changes require faculty members to continuously adapt through upskilling and reskilling (Takagi, 2018). When changes occur rapidly without adequate training and facilities, faculty members may experience uncertainty, resistance, and psychological stress due to the high demands of adaptation.

2. Internal factors

Individual internal factors also have a significant influence on the academic stress experienced by lecturers. Self-concept (Takagi, 2018), self-efficacy, achievement motivation (Yang & You, 2018), time management skills, and psychological resilience determine how lecturers perceive the stress they face. Faculty members with high self-efficacy tend to view academic demands as surmountable challenges, whereas those with low self-efficacy are more prone to anxiety and burnout (Gao & Li, 2020). Additionally, age (Yang & You, 2018), academic experience (Rhoads & Hu, 2012), career stage (Ertas, Kozak & Kirlar-Can, 2023), and technological competence also influence faculty members' ability to cope with changes in the higher education environment (Nazarzadeh *et al.*, 2016).

The organizational environment and work culture are also important factors. A competitive academic culture (Davaranah *et al.*, 2021), a lack of collaboration (Zhe, Lu and Xiong, 2021), and a lack of social support from the institution can increase academic stress among faculty members (Takagi, 2018). Conversely, a supportive work environment, participatory leadership, and a healthy research culture can help faculty members manage stress more

adaptively. Institutional support in the form of training (Kang & Mok, 2024), research funding (Altakhaineh & Zibin, 2021), mentoring (Takagi, 2018), and academic recognition can also reduce faculty members' psychological burden.

Additionally, work-life balance factors also influence academic stress (Xie, 2018). Many faculty members face conflicts between job demands and their personal and family lives. Heavy workloads often force faculty members to work outside of formal working hours, such as completing research, revising articles, or handling academic administration in the evenings and on weekends. This imbalance can lead to emotional exhaustion, a decline in quality of life, and prolonged stress (Ertaş, Kozak & Kırlar-Can, 2023).

Thus, the academic pressure faced by faculty members is influenced by a variety of multidimensional factors, ranging from institutional demands, academic culture, and higher education policies to individual psychological factors. Understanding these factors is essential so that universities can design human resource management strategies that are more appropriate, supportive, and focused on sustaining faculty members' academic performance (Takagi, 2018; Tang, 2019). "The Model for Strategic Drive of Thai Higher Education Institutions toward World-Class Universities (Tian & Lu, 2017; Xie, 2018).

B. The Impact of Academic Pressure on Faculty Members

The consequences of academic pressure on faculty members in the context of world-class universities are a multidimensional phenomenon that affects individual faculty members, organizational culture, and the sustainability of the higher education institution itself. Universities oriented toward becoming world-class institutions generally set high academic standards in terms of scientific publications, internationalization, research innovation, quality of learning, and global recognition (Xie, 2018). In this situation, faculty members become the primary actors bearing the burden of the institution's performance demands (Gao & Li, 2020). Consequently, academic pressure is not merely a personal experience for faculty members but evolves into organizational dynamics with far-reaching implications for the quality of higher education (Harty & Leiringer, 2017).

One of the main consequences of academic pressure is the emergence of academic work-related stress and psychological exhaustion (Ertaş, Kozak & Kırlar-Can, 2023). Faculty members are expected to simultaneously fulfill various roles, ranging from teaching (Zhou & Wu, 2016), research (Zhou & Wu, 2016), community service (Nazarzadeh *et al.*, 2016), academic administration (Takagi, 2018), to engagement in international networks (Chaeddhananan & Dhirathiti, 2022). The high intensity of work and continuously rising performance targets often lead faculty members to experience emotional exhaustion (Ertaş, Kozak & Kırlar-Can, 2023) and a loss of psychological energy in their work. However, academic promotion can motivate faculty research performance (Yang & You, 2018). At world-class universities, this pressure intensifies because faculty success is evaluated not only by teaching quality but also by international publication productivity (Ertaş, Kozak & Kırlar-Can, 2023), the number of citations (Muller, 2017), success in securing grants, and contributions to the institution's global reputation (Harty & Leiringer, 2017). When faculty members feel these demands exceed their capacity, academic pressure can escalate into academic burnout, which impacts mental health and work quality.

A further consequence is a decline in work-life balance. In a competitive academic environment, faculty members often have to work beyond their formal working hours to complete research articles, journal revisions, grant proposals, accreditation paperwork, and course preparation. It is not uncommon for academic work to spill over into personal and family life. This situation blurs the line between professional and personal life. In the long term, this imbalance can lead to family conflicts, a decline in quality of life, social exhaustion (Li & Xue, 2021), and psychological distress among faculty members. In some cases, faculty members experience decreased job satisfaction because the academic profession is perceived more as a burden than as a space for self-actualization (Ertaş, Kozak & Kırlar-Can, 2023).

Academic pressure also impacts changes in academic behavior and culture at universities (Tang, 2019). In systems that place excessive emphasis on quantitative metrics such as the number of publications, citation indices, or university rankings a pragmatic tendency emerges in academic activities (Zhou & Wu, 2016). Faculty members may become more focused on pursuing administrative targets and performance indicators rather than the substance of scientific development. Consequently, research quality risks declining as research orientation shifts toward the quantity of output rather than deep scientific contributions (Zhou & Wu, 2016). In some extreme situations, academic pressure can even trigger unethical behavior, such as plagiarism, manipulation of research data, publication in predatory journals, and authorship practices that violate academic ethics. This indicates that academic pressure that is not properly managed can threaten the academic integrity of higher education institutions (Davarpناه *et al.*, 2021).

In addition to affecting the quality of research, academic pressure also impacts the quality of teaching (Kang & Mok, 2024). Faculty members who are overburdened by research and administrative targets often lack the time (Kang & Mok, 2023) and energy needed to prepare for classes optimally (Fu & Larbi, 2022). Faculty members' primary focus

may shift from the educational process of students toward meeting institutional targets. Consequently, academic interaction with students decreases, the mentoring process does not function optimally, and the quality of students' learning experiences may decline (Kang & Mok, 2024). At world-class universities, this situation creates a paradox because institutions pursue global reputation through academic productivity, yet simultaneously risk diminishing the humanistic dimensions of higher education (Gabbrakmanov et al., 2019).

From an organizational perspective, academic pressure can foster a highly competitive culture among faculty members. Competition for research grants (Takagi, 2018), academic promotions, international publications, and institutional recognition can lead to individualistic working relationships. In an overly competitive environment, academic collaboration and collegial solidarity are likely to weaken. Faculty members tend to focus more on individual achievements than on the collective development of the academic community. This situation can affect the organizational climate of higher education institutions, particularly in fostering a healthy and sustainable research culture. However, if collaboration is implemented appropriately, it can enhance faculty productivity in generating research (Yang & You, 2018).

However, academic pressure does not always lead to negative consequences. Under certain conditions, academic pressure can also serve as a positive stimulus that drives the enhancement of faculty members' capabilities (Gao & Zheng, 2020). Academic demands can motivate faculty members to engage in upskilling and reskilling, improve research competencies, expand international collaboration networks, and develop innovative teaching methods (Nazarzadeh et al., 2016). Academic pressure, when accompanied by strong organizational support, can foster a productive academic culture that is adaptable to global changes in higher education (Li & Xue, 2021). Faculty members become more motivated to improve their professional development, build their academic reputation, and produce more significant scholarly contributions (Li & de Costa, 2021).

In addition, academic pressure can also accelerate institutional transformation toward a performance-based academic culture (Hong, 2022). Higher education institutions are becoming more focused on developing quality assurance systems, internationalization, a culture of research, and strengthening human resource capacity. In this context, academic pressure can serve as a driver of organizational change toward institutions that are more globally competitive (Rhoads & Hu, 2012; Tang, 2019). However, this transformation can only proceed healthily if the institution can provide adequate support for faculty members, such as access to research funding (Chaeddhananan & Dhirathiti, 2022), academic training (Altakhaineh & Zibin, 2021), mentoring, performance awards (Zhou & Wu, 2016), and a supportive work environment.

Thus, the consequences of academic pressure on faculty members at world-class universities have complex and ambivalent effects. On the one hand, academic pressure can trigger stress, burnout, a decline in psychological well-being, and a degradation of academic quality if not managed properly. On the other hand, however, this pressure can also serve as a transformational force that drives improvements in faculty competence, strengthens research culture, and accelerates the global competitiveness of universities (Nazarzadeh et al., 2016). Therefore, universities need to establish an academic management system that is not only performance-oriented but also prioritizes faculty well-being as the key actors in the success of higher education institutions.

C. A More In-Depth Analysis

A more detailed analysis reveals the consequences of academic pressure among lecturers at WCU (Ambivalent), the proportional distribution of themes across 141 articles, the intensity of academic pressure dimensions as depicted in the radar chart, and the frequency of factors contributing to academic pressure among lecturers at WCU, including both external and internal factors. Additionally, the article selection process via a funnel or narrative review can be seen from the 376 articles identified in the initial crawl (Scopus), 212 articles that passed the initial screening, and 141 articles included in the final list for analysis. The frequency of antecedent themes related to academic pressure among faculty members at WCU is divided into two categories: external antecedents and internal antecedents. The specific values and parameters are shown in Figure 3. Among the external antecedents, the most significant factors are publication pressure (42 percent), Tri Dharma demands (35 percent), administrative burden (28 percent), and policy changes (20 percent). Among the internal antecedents, the most significant factors are work-life balance (38 percent), self-efficacy (30 percent), motivation and time management (25 percent), and capacity and experience (22 percent).

Antecedents and Consequences of Academic Pressure Among Faculty Members at World-Class...

Laili Qomariyah, Dian Ekowati, Mohammad Fakhruddin Mudzakkir, Fiona Siska Dinda Nadia
Vol 4, No 3, 2026



Figure 3. Frequency of Academic Pressure Antecedent Themes Among Faculty Members at WCU

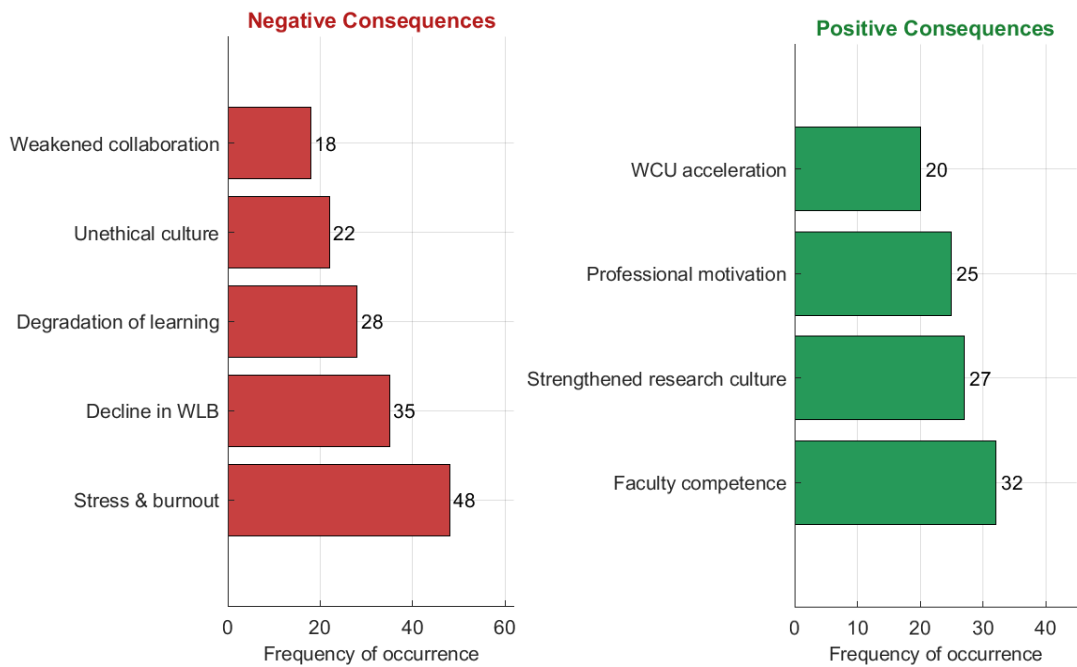


Figure 4. Consequences of Academic Pressure Among Faculty Members at WCU (Ambivalent)

In addition, as shown in detail in Figure 4, the impact of academic pressure among lecturers at WCU (Ambivalent) encompasses two aspects: Negative Impacts and Positive Impacts. Stress and fatigue were identified as one of the negative impacts of academic pressure among faculty members at WCU (Ambivalent), accounting for 48 percent, while the remaining impacts included a decline in work-life balance (WLB) at 35 percent, a decline in the quality of teaching at 28 percent, an unethical culture at 22 percent, and weakened collaboration at 18 percent. As for the positive impacts, these include teaching staff competence (32), strengthening of the research culture (27), professional motivation (25), and acceleration of the WCU initiative (20).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study can provide a deeper understanding of the complexities of academic pressure on faculty members and the context of world-class universities. This is an argument that leads to a transformation in the concept of a world-class university one that is not merely viewed from an institutional perspective but also examined in detail and focused on faculty members, who are an essential component in the development of a World-Class University (Tian & Lu, 2017; Gao & Li, 2020). And if institutions compete with one another for the highest global rankings, the workload of faculty members will inevitably become increasingly global and multidimensional.

Moreover, based on this study, the Tri Dharma of Higher Education has become more consistent, and significant pressure has emerged. In this context, faculty members are under pressure from the university to be increasingly productive in various areas, including teaching, publishing in internationally reputable scientific journals, and actively engaging in community service. Faculty members must also participate in an ever-evolving administrative process (Li & de Costa, 2021). In pursuing these goals, faculty members are certain to experience overload, which will disrupt their academic careers as administrative processes conflict with other achievements. Furthermore, if faculty members focus solely on one area such as writing scholarly papers while neglecting collaboration, professional networks, or lacking sufficient academic experience, internal disruptions are inevitable (Ertaş, Kozak and Kırlar-Can, 2023).

And every phenomenon presented here may reveal a fundamental paradox within the modern academic system, as illustrated by the “publish or perish” principle in this study. Furthermore, while publication productivity serves as an indicator that a field of knowledge is more advanced than before, some factors can undermine integrity—such as the venue or purpose of journal publication, for example, predatory journals, which inevitably damage the reputation of faculty members and the university, as well as research misconduct (Davaranpanah *et al.*, 2021). This necessitates a double or even triple oversight system at the institutional level within universities through the Research and Community Service Office (LPPM) or peer review, especially since the use of faculty members’ articles is a primary requirement in the process of functional promotion or administrative activities for faculty members. Otherwise, this will contradict the noble goal of research development that needs to be fostered.

Internally, lecturers’ self-efficacy and psychological capacity are essential for coping with the growing and increasing academic pressures. Lecturers with high self-efficacy can complete all tasks by maintaining a balance between their work and personal lives, enhancing their professional competence, employing problem-solving approaches, and overcoming various threats that could otherwise paralyze them. Thus, from a positive psychological perspective, these findings highlight the importance of enhancing personal cognitive abilities or resources when facing existing challenges (Gao & Li, 2020). Furthermore, this implies that universities can be designed to prioritize faculty capacity building not only in technical skills but also in psychological well-being and mental health.

In terms of consequences, the impact of academic pressure is ambivalent; that is, academic pressure that can improve performance and strengthen a research culture must be appropriately addressed or emphasized. Academic pressure can be a positive factor if supported by institutional support, research funding, mentorship, and recognition, as these elements serve as motivation for faculty members (Li & Xue, 2021). to improve their actual performance. Otherwise, the result is burnout, decreased performance, decreased teaching quality, a loss of the humanistic dimension of education, and other potential negative factors (Gabbrakhmanov *et al.*, 2019; Kang & Mok, 2024). This condition can be explained through dynamic capabilities theory, which explains that a lecturer’s ability to sense, seize, and reconfigure significantly influences the consequences of academic pressure on them. Lecturers who have the ability to understand weaknesses and opportunities and then make changes to mitigate the impact of academic pressure will be able and successful in producing individual performance.

This study also reveals a decline in the quality of the educational system one of the most essential aspects and there is concern that academic pressure may lead to alarming turmoil. Academic pressure will challenge faculty members in various ways, leading to a lack of focus on completing their tasks; for example, the frequency of meetings with students may decrease, thereby disrupting the mentoring process and preventing it from being optimal (Kang & Mok, 2024). This can become a paradox that requires careful and serious attention: while universities compete to achieve the highest reputation, they must also consider the academic aspects and faculty productivity, as well as providing high levels of motivation to faculty, recognizing their dedication, and continuously improving the quality of student instruction the very essence of the mission of higher education itself.

Indonesia is currently in a favorable and strategic position in terms of education, and universities in the country are competing to improve their standing on the international stage by participating in various flagship programs designed to make universities and their faculty members excel and compete globally. The faculty performance index, as indicated by the H-Index in Scopus and Stanford University’s “Top 2% of Global Researchers” list, for example, is a key indicator used to assess faculty performance. The phenomenon of academic pressure places a significant

burden on faculty members. Therefore, to achieve the status of a world-class university, it is essential to have faculty who are motivated, healthy, and highly dedicated.

CONCLUSION

This narrative review synthesizes findings from 141 Scopus-indexed articles to explain the antecedents and consequences of academic pressure among faculty members in universities pursuing world-class status. The findings indicate that academic pressure emerges from the interaction between external demands and individual resources. The major external antecedents include publication expectations, the simultaneous responsibilities of teaching, research, and community service, administrative workload, institutional performance targets, and continuous policy changes. Meanwhile, internal antecedents include self-efficacy, achievement motivation, time-management capacity, academic experience, psychological resilience, and work-life balance.

The consequences of academic pressure are ambivalent rather than uniformly negative. Excessive or poorly managed pressure is associated with stress and burnout, impaired work-life balance, declining teaching quality, weakened collegial collaboration, and increased risks to academic integrity. However, when academic demands are accompanied by adequate resources and organizational support, they may encourage professional development, strengthen research culture, expand academic collaboration, and contribute to institutional internationalization. Therefore, the consequences of academic pressure depend not only on the intensity of performance expectations but also on how universities allocate workloads, provide resources, recognize faculty achievement, and protect faculty well-being.

The findings extend the literature on world-class university initiatives by positioning faculty members as central actors whose capacity, motivation, and well-being determine the sustainability of institutional excellence. Universities should therefore adopt balanced and supportive performance-management systems that include realistic workload allocation, streamlined administrative procedures, research funding, mentoring, professional development, psychosocial support, and institutional safeguards for teaching quality and research integrity. The pursuit of world-class status should be based on sustainable academic governance rather than on performance pressure alone.

This review is limited by its narrative design, its reliance on a single bibliographic database, and the concentration of the reviewed evidence in particular national and institutional contexts. Future research should employ systematic review or meta-analytic procedures involving multiple databases and investigate the proposed relationships through longitudinal, comparative, and mixed-method studies. Further empirical research is particularly needed to examine how faculty members in Southeast Asian and other developing-country universities experience and respond to academic pressure associated with world-class university initiatives.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Author Contributions: Laili Qomariyah, Dian Ekowati, Mohammad Fakhruddin Mudzakkir, and Fiona Siska Dinda Nadia contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, validation, investigation, formal analysis, data curation, supervision, project administration, and writing original draft, review, and editing. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors declare that this research was prepared, researched, written, and edited without the aid of artificial intelligence (AI) techniques.

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