



**Emotional Exhaustion on Lecturers in the VUCA Era: The Influence of Job-Competencies Compatibility, Leaders' Support, and Workplace Friendship.**

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**INFO ARTIKEL**

**Abstract**

**Keywords:**

*Emotional exhaustion, job and competency compatibility, leaders' support, workplace friendship.*

The digital revolution has changed many aspects of higher education since the era of Society 5.0 and post-COVID-19. The changes have led to a paradigm shift in higher education, including curriculum changes, contemporary learning methods, and demands for achieving key performance indicators. The rapid changes without rapid competencies enhancement and preparation could make some lecturers emotionally exhausted. Thus, this study examined several factors influencing emotional exhaustion, including job and competency compatibility, lecturers' development supports, and workplace friendship. This study used a quantitative method by distributing online questionnaires to 180 university lecturers. The data were analyzed by SEM-SmartPLS software. The results showed that job and competency compatibility and lecturers' development supports have an insignificant negative effect on lecturers' emotional exhaustion. Meanwhile, workplace friendship has a positive but insignificant effect on lecturers' emotional exhaustion. This study also provides recommendations for future research.

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**Introduction**

The advanced changes in the world since the globalization era, the 4.0 revolution era, the COVID-19 pandemic era, the society 5.0 era, and the post-COVID-19 era have upgraded the digital revolution. All human activities use technology, including education, health, and economic transactions. This phenomenon makes everything seem more practical, but technological advances can replace many human jobs with robotics and artificial intelligence. The era of globalization is always marked by rapid changes in overall economic conditions which cause a number of demands to emerge in response to the changes that occur (Safrizal et al. 2020). Human resources are by far the most important asset for an organization (Safrizal et al. 2020). Employee performance is a stage of achievement as an employee's work achievement (Safrizal et al. 2020). Focus on technologies that enable MCS to be implemented in smart cities, such as task management, data

collection, incentive systems, monitoring, and cost-saving tools (Wildan et al., 2023). The current sources of competitive advantage are innovation and creativity (Safrizal, 2023). The technology advancement can also affect the sustainability of an organization. High Quality of Service and client-based communication with AI-enabled services is determined by Quality of Experience (QoE), (Padmapriya et al., 2023). Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, business and leadership experts from America, call the world condition we are now facing a world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity known by the acronym VUCA. As a financial institution that has an intermediary function, the role of banks is very important in the economic activities of a country, where banks become institutions that distribute funds and as a place for financial transactions, this makes banks unchanged like the pulse in the human body which is very much needed to support the smooth running of a country's economy (Ryandono et al., 2022). Human Activity Recognition has been researched for the past few years (Victoria, et al., 2022). Inevitably, the situation will affect human lifestyle and decision-making, including any organizations nowadays. Many organizations have changed work methods, processes, and evaluations to adapt to the VUCA era. International trade is one of the efforts to increase economic growth and development (Priyadi et al., 2022). The changes create high work demands that urge target achievements, workload increases, and limited resources, which can make policies ineffective (Amin & Raudhoh, 2021), leading to emotional exhaustion.

Previous studies found that emotional exhaustion influences employee attitudes towards their work including less engagement to the organization (Lebrón et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2020), job satisfaction (Han et al., 2020), affective commitment organizational, intention to quit, quality of service performance (Grobelna, 2021) and employee performance (Ali & Haseeb, 2020). Previous research found that CSR can increase company value (tarjo et al., 2022). Considering the negative impacts of emotional exhaustion, investigating the causes of emotional exhaustion is essential. According to the Job Demand-Resource Model (JDR) theory pioneered by Bakker and Demerouti (2017), most studies linked work overload as the main cause of emotional exhaustion. Employees who consider lots of workload must be done by high responsibility could easily get emotional exhaustion (Ali et al., 2020).

One of the jobs that has many workload demands is lecturer. Today's lecturers are not only required to implement teaching, researching, and doing community services, also known as Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi in Indonesia. Lecturers are also required to achieve various key performance indicators. The focus of provision for students in this era involves 4Cs: Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication, and Collaboration (Risdianto, 2019). Lecturers are demanded to promote and generate students to have the 4Cs. As a result, lecturers have additional duties and responsibilities that could cause them to get prolonged emotional exhaustion.

Job Demand-Resource Model (JD-R) theory and the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory define an overview of emotional exhaustion mechanisms. COR theory says that people will experience stress when losing their resources from their personal and surroundings. For a lecturer, the resources from their personal can be their competencies and work compatibility, and the resources from the surroundings can be leaders' support to develop their competencies and workplace friendship.

A description of the mechanism for forming emotional exhaustion that combines these resources has yet to be widely tested. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between competency and job compatibility, leadership support for competency development, and workplace friendship on lecturers' emotional exhaustion. The research question is as follows:

*How do job and competency compatibility, development support, and workplace friendship influence lecturers' emotional exhaustion?*

Previous studies showed that many factors cause emotional exhaustion, and the mechanism of the occurrence is not always direct. It can be happened through mediating variables that are strengthened or weakened by moderator variables. It is concluded that the factors that influence emotional exhaustion come from the individual himself/herself and the surrounding environment, such as job-competence compatibility, workplace friendship, and leadership support for development as antecedents of emotional exhaustion, affecting work quality and performance. Based on the theoretical framework and previous studies, the research hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Job and competencies compatibility has a significant positive effect on emotional exhaustion.

H2: Leaders' Support has a significant positive effect on emotional exhaustion.

H3: Workplace friendship has a significant positive effect on emotional exhaustion.

### RESEARCH METHODS

This study is a quantitative research using a survey research method. The data were collected directly from respondents. The respondents were 180 lecturers in Sumatra, Indonesia from public universities and private universities. The data were collected by distributing online questionnaires to lecturers with civil servant and non-civil servant status who had been working as a lecturer for at least five years. The questionnaire includes the characteristics of respondents, such as gender, age, education level, and respondents' perceptions of emotional exhaustion, job-competence compatibility, leaders' development support, and workplace friendship. The data were analyzed by using two software; 1) SPSS version 17 software to see whether the level of value (score) for the variable is in the very low to very high category, and 2) Structural Equation Model (SEM) with PLS Smartplus software to test the research hypotheses.

#### Operational Variables

To provide clear boundaries for the variables, operational definitions are as follows: 1) Job-competency compatibility (X1) is a self-assessment regarding the compatibility of one's own competence with the job as a lecturer who must implement the Tri Dharma of Higher Education; 2) Leaders' developmental supports (X2) is the perception of leadership behavior that supports lecturers to improve their competency by providing opportunities and financial support fairly and openly; 3) Workplace friendship (X3) is a work atmosphere supported by friendly and collaborative colleagues; and 4) Emotional exhaustion (M) is a feeling of emotional exhaustion due to a mismatch between personal competence and the workload. Each variable is measured based on respondents' perceptions with dimensions that have been tested based on the support of theoretical studies and empirical evidence from previous studies in reputable journals. Alternative answers are provided with each score referring to a Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (10).

### RESULT

The respondents of this study were 180 lecturers in Sumatra, Indonesia who were willing to answer the online questionnaires. The following table shows the respondents' profile.

Table 1. Respondents' Profile

Characteristics		Frequency (180)
Gender	Male	89
	Female	91

Age	23-32	45
	33-42	73
	43-52	37
	>52	25
Education Level	Bachelor Degree	1
	Master Degree	113
	Doctorate	66
Working Period	1-10	109
	11-20	44
	>20	27
Lecturer Job Status	PNS	104
	Contract	50
	PPPK	22
	Private/Foundation	4
Position	Expert Assistant	80
	Lector	75
	Associate Professor	19
	Professor	6
Working Unit	Public University	141
	Private University	39
University Location	Northern Sumatra	2
	Central of Sumatra	160
	Southern Sumatra	18
Additional Job Tasks	Structural	29
	Non-Structural	151

Source: *The results of questionnaire data processing, 2023*

Table 1 shows that the respondents were dominated by female lecturers aged between 33-42 years, with the functional position of Expert Assistant, coming from universities in Central of Sumatra with no additional duties.

### The Validity Test

Before doing SEM analysis, the analysis began with conducting confirmatory factor analysis to ensure the accuracy of the data (Goodness of Fit) by reducing several indicators that did not meet the requirements. The *loading factor value* for each variable is shown in the following table.

Table 2. The Validity Test					
	Job-competence Compatibility (JCC)	Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	Leader's Support (LS)	Workplace Friendship (WF)	Information
JCC1	0.852				VALID
JCC2	0.861				VALID
JCC3	0.833				VALID
JCC4	0.816				VALID
JCC5	0.869				VALID
JCC6	0.879				VALID
JCC7	0.873				VALID
EE1		0.832			VALID

EE2	0.800		VALID
EE3	0.877		VALID
EE4	0.894		VALID
EE5	0.921		VALID
EE6	0.906		VALID
EE7	0.939		VALID
EE8	0.886		VALID
EE9	0.905		VALID
LS1		0.824	VALID
LS2		0.819	VALID
LS3		0.915	VALID
LS4		0.919	VALID
LS5		0.827	VALID
LS6		0.876	VALID
LS7		0.909	VALID
WF1		0.871	VALID
WF2		0.890	VALID
WF3		0.881	VALID
WF4		0.776	VALID
WF5		0.915	VALID
WF6		0.890	VALID
WF7		0.777	VALID

According to the rule of thumb, an indicator is reliable if it has a loading factor value equal to or greater than 0.7. After the data were analysed and calculated three times, it was found that the loading factors for all indicators in this study were above 0.7, indicating that the data were reliable and that the next step of PLS analysis could be obtained. All indicators are valid which means that further analysis can be taken to measure the reliability of the data.

**Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**

Table 3. AVE

Variable	AVE	Information
Job-competency Compatibility	0.731	QUALIFIED
Emotional Exhaustion	0.784	QUALIFIED
Leader's Support	0.661	QUALIFIED
Workplace Friendship	0.758	QUALIFIED

**Reliability Test**

Table 4. Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Cronbachs Alpha	Information
Job-competency Compatibility	0.938	QUALIFIED
Emotional Exhaustion	0.965	QUALIFIED

Leader's Support	0.970	QUALIFIED
Workplace Friendship	0.947	QUALIFIED

All indicators had been tested and the analysis showed that the variables are qualified. Then, the hypothesis test are applicable.

### Hypothesis Test

Table 5. Total Effects (Mean, STDEV, T-Values)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Job-competency Compatibility- > Emotional Exhaustion	-0.136	-0.148	0.104	1.300	0.194
Leader's Support - > Emotional Exhaustion	-0.096	-0.100	0.098	1.979	0.328
Workplace Friendship - > Emotional Exhaustion	0.073	0.075	0.141	0.518	0.605

The table shows that the influence of job-competency compatibility on emotional exhaustion is not significant at -0.136 with a t-statistic of 1.300 > 1.96 and a p-value of 0.194 > 0.05, meaning that the hypothesis is rejected. Job-competency compatibility has a negative effect on emotional exhaustion, but the effect is not significant.

Moreover, the effect of the leader's support on emotional exhaustion is not significant at -0.096 with a t-statistic of 1.979 > 1.96 and a p-value of 0.328 > 0.05, meaning that the hypothesis is rejected. Leader's support has an insignificant negative effect on emotional exhaustion.

Furthermore, the effect of workplace friendship on emotional exhaustion is not significant at 0.073, with a t-statistic of 0.518 > 1.96 and a p-value of 0.605 > 0.05, meaning that the hypothesis is rejected. Workplace friendship has a positive but insignificant effect on emotional exhaustion.

To sum up, the data of this study indicated that job-competency compatibility has a direct, insignificant, and negative effect on emotional exhaustion; leader's support has a direct and insignificant negative effect on emotional exhaustion; workplace friendship has a direct, positive, but insignificant effect on emotional exhaustion. Therefore, a good relationship, including the solidarity of workplace friendship, can influence the reduction of emotional exhaustion but not in significant effect.

## DISCUSSION

Emotional exhaustion has been highlighted by many researchers since the awareness of mental health issues increased. Most studies on emotional exhaustion focus on employees who need to deal with their workload. Indeed, it is also crucial to take a deep look at emotional exhaustion among lecturers, specifically today's lecturers, who are not only responsible for teaching. Hence, this study examined some factors that can influence emotional exhaustion among Indonesian lecturers, such as job-competency compatibility, leaders' support, and workplace friendship.

The results of the study show that the influence of job-competence compatibility on emotional exhaustion is not significant and has a negative effect. The result indicated that a lecturer's emotional exhaustion could not be reduced by the compatible job and competence of the lecturer. The result is in line with Konkel and Heffernan's (2021) study that mentioned emotional exhaustion is not

related to job security, including feeling secure about the job and competence compatibility. However, Schoeps, Tamarit, Barrera, and Barron (2019) found that teachers who got training for their competencies are less likely to experience stress, including emotional exhaustion. It means that the teachers' training program can reduce their emotional exhaustion. The contradictory results of those studies indicated that the compatibility of lecturers' jobs and their competencies cannot directly influence the lecturers' emotional exhaustion. It is because not all lecturers have the same way to overcome their emotional state. A lecturer might find that their emotional state can be fine if their job and their competencies are compatible, but other lecturers might not. Individual needs a quite long process to heal their emotional state and needs more than only their personal factor (Schoeps et al., 2019).

This study also found that leaders' support of development has a negative and insignificant effect on emotional exhaustion. This result is in contrast with Liu, Zhang, and Lu's (2021) study that found leaders' support can significantly reduce the emotional exhaustion of university teachers. On the other hand, Lee, An, Lim, and Sohn (2021) found a similar result to this study that mentioned that a leadership style was negatively related to employees' emotional exhaustion. The contradictive results of those studies indicated that it is necessary to understand what specific action and support the lecturers need from their leaders to reduce their emotional exhaustion. This study defined leaders support as providing opportunities and financial support for lecturers to develop. Meanwhile, the leaders' support that Liu et al. (2021) promoted was the leaders' care and mindfulness. It means that as a human being, a lecturer who is emotionally exhausted needs more psychological support than development support. It might be the reason why the result of this study shows negative and insignificant influence from the leaders' support.

Moreover, the results of this study illustrated that the effect of workplace friendship on emotional exhaustion is positive but not significant. Of the three factors, only workplace friendship has a positive effect on emotional exhaustion. This result is in line with Singh and Srivastava's (2020) study that found that workplace friendship can improve employees' mental health. Han, Hu, Zhao, and Shan (2023) also found that workplace friendship minimized employees' emotional exhaustion. These findings strengthen the idea of how essential an individual's social life is for their mental and emotional state. This study's results, along with the previous studies, clarify that emotional exhaustion could mostly be minimized by surrounding resources, as the Job Demand-Resource Model (JD-R) theory proposed (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

## **CONCLUSION**

Lecturers with extra workloads, especially in this rapidly changing era, have the potential to experience emotional exhaustion. As an educator who is also an agent of the youth's national change, it is essential for lecturers to have a stable emotional state in order to maintain the credibility of their work. For that reason, this study examined how job-competence compatibility as the internal factor and leaders' support and workplace friendship as the external factors influence emotional exhaustion among lecturers. The results showed that two of the three factors, job-competency compatibility and leaders' support, negatively and insignificantly affect emotional exhaustion. Meanwhile, workplace friendship has a positive but insignificant effect on lecturers' emotional exhaustion. The results indicated that the three factors significantly cannot reduce the lecturers' emotional exhaustion. Therefore, this study recommends that future researchers examine other factors that can influence the reduction of lecturers' emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, future researchers can use qualitative methods by conducting in-depth interviews to

investigate lecturers' emotional exhaustion from psychological and personal perspectives.

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