Examining the Relationship Between General Work Stress Levels and Organizational Identification Levels of Academics in Sports Sciences

Faik Orhun TAPŞIN[1]* , Sermin AĞRALI ERMİŞ[2]

[1] Dicle University, Diyarbakır, Türkiye
[2] Aydın Adnan Menderes University, Aydın, Türkiye

Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between general work stress levels and organizational identification levels of academics working in the field of sports sciences. Increasing workload, administrative responsibilities, and limited resources in academic settings contribute to work stress, making it important to understand how this stress interacts with organizational commitment. Organizational identification is defined as the process by which individuals perceive themselves as part of their institution and internalize that identity. The research was conducted using a quantitative method, and data were collected from 216 academics through an online survey. In addition to a demographic information form, participants completed the General Work Stress Scale and the Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale. The data were analysed using parametric tests and Pearson correlation analysis. According to the findings, general work stress levels were moderate, while organizational identification levels were high. A significant negative correlation was found between work stress and organizational identification. Academics with high levels of organizational identification were observed to experience lower levels of work stress. Female academics reported higher stress levels compared to male academics. Married academics have demonstrated lower stress levels and higher levels of organizational identification. Academics working at public universities reported more favourable outcomes than those at private universities. In conclusion, organizational identification is considered an important factor that helps reduce work stress. Accordingly, it is recommended that academic institutions develop strategies to strengthen the sense of belonging among their staff.

Keywords: Academics, Organizational identification, Work stress

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* **Corresponding Author:** Dr. Faik Orhun Tapşın, **E-mail:** tpsnorhun@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Today, research on local and private sector employees continues to increase (Ayyıldız & Şahin, 2024; Deniz & Haşıl Korkmaz, 2024; Ermiş et al., 2025). In the field of sport sciences, the relationship between academicians' work stress levels and organizational identification has received increasing attention in the fields of organizational psychology and sport management in recent years. This relationship offers a potential interaction that may affect key aspects such as academic performance, job satisfaction, and general professional well-being in sport sciences. Factors such as teaching and research responsibilities of academics in sport sciences, administrative duties, and limited institutional resources may cause academics' work stress levels to increase in academic settings. In this context, understanding how work stress interacts with organizational identification becomes crucial to assess its impact on institutional productivity and academic well-being.

Organizational identification refers to the process by which employees adopt themselves as a part of their organizations and internalize this identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Organizational identification can affect employees' commitment to their organizations, their sense of belonging and their motivation. Employees with high levels of organizational identification tend to contribute more to the goals of their organizations (Steffens et al., 2017). However, the relationship between this identification and work stress has not been sufficiently investigated (Eriş & Kökalan, 2022).

Organizational identification also encompasses the emotional and cognitive bond that academic staff have with their institutions, which can have a direct impact on the quality of academic life (Ciampa et al., 2019). Academics face multisituational stressors such as the severity of their working conditions, i.e., excessive workload, changing circumstances and, administrative demands. Coping with these challenges depends not only on individual resilience but also on the degree of belonging they feel towards their institutions. Academics with a high sense of belonging who strongly identify with their institution see themselves not only as employees but also as value-adders who reflect the mission and vision of the institution well. The high sense of belonging of employees develops a sense of purpose, increases intrinsic motivation, and this leads to an increase in job satisfaction of academics. Moreover, organizational identification encourages a greater willingness to contribute to the organization's goals and strengthens the intention to stay in the organization. It can be thought that employees with a high sense of organizational identification will increase their intention to stay in their institutions for a long time. Thus, stability and continuity are encouraged in the academic workforce (Haslam et al., 2020; Van Dick & Kerschreiter, 2018).

On the other hand, individuals experience stress arising from their perception of situations (Küçükalpelli et al., 2025). In academia, numerous factors such as teaching load, research obligations, administrative tasks and resource constraints can lead to high levels of stress (Ciampa et al., 2019). These conditions can negatively affect job satisfaction, mental health, and academic performance.

In conclusion, organizational identification can be considered a critical factor for enhancing academics' professional productivity, psychological resilience, and institutional commitment. In this context, the impact of organizational identification on work stress emerges as an important area of investigation. Particularly, questions regarding whether academics with high levels of identification exhibit greater resistance to work stress, and how this affects their academic performance, highlight a significant gap in the current literature. This study aims to explore this relationship specifically within the population of sports sciences academics.

METHOD

Research Model
In line with the scope of this research, the study was conducted with a relational survey design. It is a research technique applied when it is desired to reach a general judgment by examining the relationship between a large number of variables in relational survey designs (Büyüköztürk, 2011).

Study Population
The study group of this research consists of academicians in the field of sports sciences. A total of 216 academicians with different titles voluntarily participated in the study. When examining the age range of participants, it was determined that the lowest age was 25 and the highest age was 64. The average age was found to be 41. The average professional experience of participants was found to be 13 years.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample group

	Variables	N	%
Gender	Female	67	31.0
	Male	149	69.0
	Total	216	100
Marital Status	Married	131	60.6
	Single	85	39.4
	Total	216	100
Administrative Role	Yes	39	18.1
	No	177	81.9
	Total	216	100
Type of University	Public	183	84.7
	Private	33	15.3
	Total	216	100
Academic Department	Physical Education and Sports	46	21.3
	Sport Management	64	29.6
	Recreation	31	14.4
	Coaching Education / Exercise and Sports Sciences	75	34.7
	Total	216	100
Academic Title	Professor	34	15.7
	Associate Prof.	61	28.2
	Assistance Prof.	59	27.3
	Research Assistant	30	13.9
	Lecturer / PhD Research Assistant / Instructor	30	14.8
	Total	216	100

Upon examining Table 1, it is observed that 31% of the participants in the study were female and 69% were male academics. In terms of marital status, 60.6% of the participants were married, while 39.4% were single. Regarding administrative duties, 18.1% of the respondents held an administrative position, whereas 81.9% did not. Concerning the type of university, 84.7% were employed at public universities, while 15.3% worked at private universities. In terms of academic departments, 21.3% of the participants were from the Physical Education and Sports, 29.6% from Sports Management, 14.4% from Recreation, and 34.7% from Coaching Education / Exercise and Sports Sciences. Regarding academic titles, 15.7% of the participants held the title of Professor, 28.2% were Associate Professors, 27.3% were Assistant Professors, 13.9% were Research Assistants, and 14.8% were categorized as Doctoral Research Assistants, Lecturers, or Instructors. A total of 216 voluntary participants took part in the study.

Data Collection Tools

Demographic Information Form: Demographic data were collected anonymously, without requesting any personal or identifying information from the participants. The demographic information form included questions regarding age, gender, marital status, whether the participant held an administrative position, years of professional experience, type of university (public or private), academic department, and academic title.

General Work Stress Scale: The General Work Stress Scale, originally developed by De Bruin (2006), was adapted into Turkish with validity and reliability testing conducted by Teleş (2021). The scale consists of 9 items designed to assess the emotional, cognitive, social, and motivational consequences of the interaction between employees and workplace demands, as experienced or perceived by the individual. The scale uses a 5-point Likert-type format with response options ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Higher total scores indicate higher levels of perceived stress, while lower scores indicate lower levels of stress. The scale does not include any reverse-scored items. In the original adaptation study, the Cronbach's Alpha value of the whole scale was reported as 0.91, with a Spearman-Brown reliability coefficient of 0.89. In the present study, the scale demonstrated a similarly high level of internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.91.

Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale: Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale was developed by Eker (2015) to determine the level of organizational identification among academic staff. The scale comprises 13 items and is structured as a 5-point Likert-type instrument. Items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 13 correspond to the Cognitive–Behavioural–Emotional Organizational Identification subdimension, whereas items 3, 10, and 11 pertain to the Perceived External Prestige of the Organization subdimension. There are no reverse-scored items on this scale. In the original study, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the whole scale was 0.934. The Cronbach's Alpha for the cognitive-behavioral-emotional organizational identification subdimension was 0.910, while the Perceived External Prestige subdimension yielded 0.821. In the current study, the overall scale also showed high reliability ($\alpha = 0.88$), with the cognitive-behavioral-emotional subscale demonstrating strong internal consistency

(α=0.87), and the Perceived External Prestige subscale showing an acceptable, though relatively lower, reliability (α=0.62).

Ethics Approval

Ethical approval for this research was obtained from the Dicle University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with its letter dated February 6, 2025.

Data Collection

Research data collection began on February 15, 2025, and was completed on April 20, 2025. Participants were invited to complete the study voluntarily through a Google Forms survey. No personal or identifying information was collected, and the study was conducted anonymously.

Data Analysis

When examining the skewness and kurtosis values of the scale scores, they were found to be within the ±1 range (Table 2). It has been stated that the normal distribution range of the data is ±1.5 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013). Therefore, parametric statistical tests were used in the data analysis. Independent Samples t-test was used for comparisons between two groups and One-Way ANOVA test was used for comparisons between more than two groups. In the ANOVA test, in cases where there were significant differences between more than one group, Scheffé post hoc test was applied to determine the source of the difference. Pearson correlation analysis was used to analyse the relationship between the scales.

Table 2. Information regarding the distribution range of the scales used in the study

Scales	Skewness	Kurtosis
General Work Stress Scale	.752	.083
Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale	-.406	-.854
Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subscale	-.312	-.883
Perceived External Prestige Subscale	-.528	-.454

FINDINGS

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the general work stress scale, instructor's organizational identification scale and, its subdimensions

Dimensions	Items No.	n	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
General Work Stress Scale	9	216	19.75	7.64	9.00	43.00
Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale	13	216	41.22	9.55	20.00	60.00
Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subscale	10	216	30.88	7.99	12.00	47.00
Perceived External Prestige Subscale	3	216	10.34	2.42	4.00	14.00

The participants' mean score on the General Work Stress Scale was 19.75±7.64. The mean score on the Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale was 41.22±9.55. For the Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Identification subdimension, the mean score was

30.88±7.99, while the mean score for the Perceived External Prestige subdimension was 10.34±2.42. When the participants' average score (19.75) is compared with the maximum possible score (43.00) on the General Work Stress Scale, it can be concluded that participants reported below-average work stress levels. In contrast, the mean score on the Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale (41.22 out of a possible 60) indicates a relatively high level of organizational identification among the participants. Similarly, the mean scores in both subdimensions, 30.88 out of 47 in the Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Identification subdimension, and 10.34 out of 14 in the Perceived External Prestige subdimension suggest high levels of identification with their institutions.

Table 4. Independent samples t-test results for the general work stress scale and instructor's organizational identification scale by gender

Variables	Gender	n	Mean	SD	t	p
General Work Stress Scale	Female	67	23.88	8.65	5.691	.00**
	Male	149	17.90	6.34		
Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale	Female	67	40.14	9.14	-1.112	.25
	Male	149	41.71	9.72		
Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subscale	Female	67	29.59	7.58	-1.635	.11
	Male	149	31.46	8.13		
Perceived External Prestige Subscale	Female	67	10.55	2.42	.853	.39
	Male	149	10.24	2.42		

**p<0.01

There is a statistically significant difference was observed in General Work Stress Scale scores based on gender (t=5.691, p<.05), with female participants (M=23.88) reporting significantly higher work stress levels than male participants (M=17.90). However, no significant differences were found in the scores for the Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale or its subdimensions. The mean score for female participants on the Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale was 40.14, compared to 41.71 for male participants (t=-1.112, p=.25). Similarly, in the Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Identification subdimension, females scored 29.59 while males scored 31.46 (t=-1.635, p=.11). In the Perceived External Prestige subdimension, the mean scores were 10.55 for females and 10.24 for males (t=0.853, p=.39). These results indicate that gender did not have a significant effect on organizational identification levels or their subcomponents.

Table 5. T-Test results for general work stress scale and instructor's organizational identification scale subdimensions by marital status

Variables	Marital Status	N	Mean	SD	t	p
General Work Stress Scale	Married	131	18.48	6.77	3.095	.00**
	Single	85	21.71	8.48		
Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale	Married	131	44.23	8.58	6.223	.00**
	Single	85	36.58	9.14		
Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subscale	Married	131	33.28	7.48	5.884	.00**
	Single	85	27.18	7.36		
Perceived External Prestige Subscale	Married	131	10.95	2.09	4.843	.00**
	Single	85	9.40	2.59		

**p<0.01

The General Work Stress Scale scores showed a significant difference between married and single participants. Married participants had a lower average score (18.48) than single

participants (21.71), indicating that single participants experience significantly higher work stress (t=3.095, p<.05). For the Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale, married participants had a higher average score (44.23) compared to single participants (36.58), showing that married participants exhibit significantly higher organizational identification (t=6.223, p<.05). The Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subdimension also revealed a significant difference, with married participants scoring higher (33.28) than single participants (27.18) (t=5.884, p<.05). Similarly, the Perceived External Prestige Subdimension scores were higher among married participants (10.95) than single participants (9.40) (t=4.843, p<.05). Overall, the results suggest that marital status significantly affects both work stress and organizational identification, with married participants generally scoring higher on organizational identification and lower on work stress.

Table 6. T-Test results for general work stress scale and academic staff organizational identification scale subdimensions by administrative position

Variables	Admin. Position	n	Mean	SD	t	p
General Work Stress Scale	Yes	39	20.61	8.09	.772	.44
	No	177	19.57	7.54		
Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale	Yes	39	39.25	10.42	-1.426	.19
	No	177	41.66	9.32		
Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subscale	Yes	39	29.23	8.64	-1.430	.18
	No	177	31.24	7.82		
Perceived External Prestige Subscale	Yes	39	10.02	2.66	-.903	.36
	No	177	10.41	2.36		

The General Work Stress Scale scores do not show a significant difference between participants with administrative positions and those without. The average score for those with administrative positions is 20.61, while those without administrative positions have an average score of 19.57 (t=.772, p>.05). For the Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale, participants with administrative positions scored an average of 39.25, while those without administrative positions had a higher average of 41.66 (t=-1.426, p>.05). No significant differences were observed between these groups. In the Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subdimension, those with administrative positions scored 29.23, while those without scored 31.24 (t=-1.430, p>.05), indicating no significant difference. Finally, for the Perceived External Prestige Subdimension, the average score for those with administrative positions was 10.02, while those without administrative positions scored 10.41 (t=-0.903, p>.05), showing no significant differences. Overall, the results indicate that administrative position does not significantly affect the scores for general work stress or organizational identification and its subdimensions.

Table 7. T-test results for general work stress levels and instructor's organizational identification and its subdimensions based on the type of university

Variables	Type of University	n	Mean	SD	t	p
General Work Stress Scale	Public	183	19.25	11.27	-2.324	.02[*]
	Private	33	22.57	14.19		
Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale	Public	183	42.17	3.72	3.524	.00[**]
	Private	33	35.96	4.65		
Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subscale	Public	183	31.66	4.15	3.472	.00[**]
	Private	33	26.54	4.92		
Perceived External Prestige Subscale	Public	183	10.50	4.27	2.393	.01[**]
	Private	33	9.42	5.64		

*p<.05, **p<.01

According to the variable of the type of university participants work in, the mean score for General Work Stress was 19.25 for those working in state universities and 22.57 for those working in private universities (t=-2.324; p<0.05). For the Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale, the mean score for state university workers was 42.17, while it was 35.96 for private university workers (t=3.524; p<0.05). For the Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification subscale, the mean score for state university workers was 31.66, whereas for private university workers it was 26.54 (t=3.472; p<0.05). For the Perceived External Prestige subscale, the mean score for state university workers was 10.50, while for private university workers it was 9.42 (t=2.393; p<0.05). The results indicate that the mean scores for each group differed significantly.

Table 8. Anova test results of the participants' general work stress levels and instructor organizational identification levels and sub-dimensions according to your academic unit variable

Variable	Your Academic Unit	n	Mean	SD	F	p	Source of the difference (Scheffe)
General Work Stress Scale	Physical Education and Sports	46	19.45	7.07	.077	.97	-
	Sports management	64	19.67	9.98			
	Recreation	31	20.29	6.34			
	Coaching education/ Exercise and sport sciences	75	19.80	6.13			
Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale	Physical Education and Sports[1]	46	39.71	11.08	3.395	.01[**]	3<4
	Sports management [2]	64	40.50	9.25			
	Recreation [3]	31	38.51	10.94			
	Coaching education/ Exercise and sport sciences[4]	75	43.89	7.53			
Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subscale	Physical Education and Sports[1]	46	29.82	8.86	3.617	.01[**]	3<4
	Sports management [2]	64	30.12	8.13			
	Recreation [3]	31	28.45	9.05			
	Coaching education/ Exercise and sport sciences [4]	75	33.18	6.28			
Perceived External Prestige Subscale	Physical Education and Sports	46	9.89	3.06	1.242	.29	-
	Sports management	64	10.37	2.11			
	Recreation	31	10.06	2.65			
	Coaching education/ Exercise and sport sciences	75	10.70	2.08			

**p<.01

There was no significant difference between groups in terms of mean scores on the General Work Stress Scale and the Perceived External Prestige Subscale according to the participants' academic unit variable. However, significant differences were found between the groups in the Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale and the Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification sub-dimensions. The mean score of participants in the Coaching Education/Exercise and Sports Sciences department (43.89) on the Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale was significantly higher than that of participants in the Recreation department (38.51). The average score for the Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification sub-dimension was 29.82 for the Department of Physical Education and Sports, 30.12 for the Sports Management department, 28.45 for the Recreation department, and 33.18 for the Coaching Education/Exercise and Sports Sciences department. A significant difference was observed, with participants in the Coaching Education/Exercise and Sports Sciences department (33.18) scoring significantly higher than those in the Recreation department (28.45).

Table 9. Anova test results for general work stress levels and academic staff organizational identification levels and subdimensions based on the academic title variable

Variables	Academic Title	n	Mean	SD	F	p	Source of the Difference (Scheffe)
General Work Stress Scale (GJSS)	Professor	34	17.88	6.55	.703	.59	-
	Associate Prof	61	20.37	8.24			
	Assistance Prof	59	20.32	8.22			
	Research Assistant	30	19.43	6.64			
	Lecturer / PhD Research Assistant / Instructor	32	19.84	7.37			
Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale	Professor	34	42.85	10.64	1.432	.22	-
	Associate Prof	61	42.01	7.94			
	Assistance Prof	59	40.08	10.77			
	Research Assistant	30	38.40	7.84			
	Lecturer / PhD Research Assistant / Instructor	32	42.75	9.94			
Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subscale	Professor	34	32.29	8.69	1.351	.25	-
	Associate Prof	61	30.85	6.95			
	Assistance Prof	59	30.33	8.84			
	Research Assistant	30	28.56	6.52			
	Lecturer / PhD Research Assistant / Instructor	32	32.62	8.48			
Perceived External Prestige Subscale	Professor[1]	34	10.55	2.68	3.245	.01**	3<2
	Associate Prof[2]	61	11.16	1.99			
	Assistance Prof[3]	59	9.74	2.64			
	Research Assistant[4]	30	9.83	2.39			
	Lecturer / PhD Research Assistant / Instructor[5]	32	10.12	2.12			

**p<.01

The ANOVA test results indicate no significant difference between groups in terms of overall work stress level, Instructor's Organizational Identification, and Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification levels, with respect to academic title. However, the mean score for the Perceived External Prestige sub-dimension was 10.55 for Professors, 11.16

for Associate Professors, 9.74 for Assistant Professors, 9.83 for Research Assistants, and 10.12 for PhD Research Assistants, PhD Lecturers, and Lecturers. As a result of the ANOVA test, a significant difference was found between the groups. Following the Scheffe test conducted to determine the source of the difference, it was found that the mean score of Associate Professors was significantly higher than that of Assistant Professors.

Table 10. Correlation analysis results for the relationship between general work stress scale and instructor's organizational identification scale

	General Work Stress Scale	Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale	Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subscale	Perceived External Prestige Subscale
General Work Stress Scale	1	-.355** .000 216	-.409** .000 216	-.052 .448 .216
Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale		1	.978 .000 216	.718** .000 216
Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subscale			1	.555** .000 216

*p<.05,**p<.01, A correlation between 0.000-0.300 indicates a weak relationship, 0.301-0.700 indicates a moderate relationship, and 0.701-1.00 indicates a strong relationship.

The Pearson correlation analysis reveals the following relationships: There is a negative and moderate relationship between the General Work Stress Scale and the Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale (r=-0.355, p<0.05), as well as with the Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subscale (r=-0.409, p<0.05). No significant relationship was found between the General Work Stress Scale and the Perceived External Prestige Subscale (r=-0.052, p>0.05). A strong positive correlation was observed between the Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale and the Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subscale (r=0.978, p<0.05). The Perceived External Prestige Subscale showed a moderate positive relationship with both the Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale (r=0.718, p<0.05) and the Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Organizational Identification Subscale (r=0.555, p<0.05). From these results, it can be concluded that lower general work stress levels and higher organizational identification levels among participants are associated with a negative relationship between work stress and organizational identification.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In our country, academicians in sports sciences bear most of the responsibility of training qualified personnel for the sports sector at higher education level (Parasız, et al., 2021). This situation is important in terms of the general work stress levels of the employees and their identification with the institution they work for.

Based on the data obtained from 216 academics who voluntarily participated in the study, the mean score on the General Work Stress Scale was found to be 19.75 (±7.64). This result indicates that, when compared to the maximum possible score on the scale, the academics' overall work stress levels are below average, reflecting generally low levels of job-related stress. On the other hand, the mean score on the Instructor's Organizational Identification Scale was 41.22 (±9.55), indicating that participants demonstrated a high level of organizational identification.

When examining the sub-dimensions, the average score for the Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Identification subscale was 30.88 (±7.99), while the score for the Perceived External Prestige of the Organization subscale was 10.34 (±2.42). These findings suggest that academics have established a strong emotional and perceptual connection with their institutions. Numerous studies in the literature support this outcome. The combination of low stress levels and high organizational identification among academics implies that they find their work meaningful, perceive their organizations as reputable, and feel a strong sense of identification with their institutions. This psychological bond may function as a protective factor that buffers the effects of stress (Güzel & Sığırcı, 2022; Keser & Dzhalalov, 2024).

Comparisons based on marital status revealed that married academics reported both significantly lower levels of work stress and higher levels of organizational identification (p<0.05). This finding underscores the potential impact of social support systems on work stress and organizational commitment. It is likely that married individuals cope with stress more effectively due to emotional and practical support from their spouses and families, and this positively influences their professional lives (Salam, 2017; Ullah et al., 2022). Furthermore, marriage may in still a greater sense of responsibility and stability, which in turn could enhance commitment and organizational identification (Powell & Greenhaus, 2006). In short, strong social bonds and support mechanisms not only help reduce work stress but also reinforce attachment to the organization, which is consistent with our findings.

Regarding administrative duties, no significant differences were found in work stress or organizational identification levels. This result suggests that administrative responsibilities may not have a unidirectional or determining effect on academics. Although the literature reports mixed findings, the voluntary nature of most administrative roles and the perception of these roles as opportunities for personal or professional development may account for the lack of significant differences (Inayat & Jahanzeb-Khan, 2021; Öztoprak & Aydoğan, 2025; Van Waeyenberg et al., 2022).

When evaluated in terms of university type, it was found that academics working at private universities reported significantly higher levels of work stress and significantly lower levels of organizational identification compared to those working at public universities ($p<0.05$). This finding suggests that the structural characteristics of universities may influence both academics' work experiences and their sense of organizational commitment. The organizational structure and managerial approach of a university appear to play a determining role in shaping employee experience. In private universities, stress levels may be elevated due to performance-based working systems, increased competitive pressure, uncertainty regarding job security, and intensified administrative demands (Yıldırım, 2011). In contrast, the presence of a more stable working environment, greater academic autonomy, and job security in public universities may help to reduce stress and foster stronger organizational commitment (Kara & Koç, 2009; Şimşek & Koç, 2020). Additionally, the frequent use of contractual employment in private universities may hinder the development of long-term organizational loyalty. Therefore, the institutional structure and working conditions offered by a university can directly affect both work stress levels and the process of organizational identification.

When comparing academic units, no statistically significant differences were found in General Work Stress Scale scores. However, academics working in the departments of Coaching Education and Exercise and Sport Sciences exhibited significantly higher levels of organizational identification compared to other departments ($p<0.05$). This finding may be explained by the inherent nature of these fields, which often involve team collaboration, shared goals, and a field-based, interactive work structure. Academics in these disciplines are more likely to form close relationships with students, play active roles in hands-on educational processes, and integrate their professional identity with the institution more easily, which may in turn strengthen their organizational commitment. In this context, it can be concluded that differences in organizational identification levels are closely related to the dynamics and work culture of the academic field in which one is employed. This conclusion is supported by findings from various other studies (Asif et al., 2019; Çutuk & Özcan, 2024; Özdemir, 2023).

The study also found a moderate, statistically significant negative correlation between general work stress levels and organizational identification levels among academic staff. This indicates that as work stress increases, organizational identification tends to decrease or conversely, that individuals who identify more strongly with their organizations experience less job-related stress. Similarly, a moderate negative correlation was observed between work stress and the Cognitive, Behavioural, and Emotional Identification sub-dimension. This suggests that as individuals strengthen their mental, emotional, and Behavioural bonds with their institutions, their levels of work-related stress tend to decline. However, no statistically significant relationship was found between work stress and the Perceived External Prestige of the Organization sub-dimension. In other words, academics' perceptions of how their institutions are viewed by society are not directly related to their levels of work stress. This implies that perceived external prestige is more closely associated with overall institutional satisfaction or public image, rather than internal factors such as workload or stress. This interpretation is supported by existing literature (Pekkan & Yeloğlu, 2021; Şantaş et al., 2016).

CONCLUSION

The results of the study revealed that participants' overall general work stress level scores were low, while their levels of organizational identification were above average. Furthermore, the correlation analysis revealed a negative and moderate relationship between participants' overall work stress levels and their levels of organizational identification.

IMPLICATIONS

Considering the results of the study, it is thought that high levels of organizational identification among academic staff reduce general work stress. This situation can contribute to an improvement in employees' psychological well-being, a reduction in the risk of burnout, and an increase in work satisfaction, along with a strengthening of their sense of belonging to the organization. Additionally, it can be said that low work stress and high organizational identification can positively impact academic performance, productivity, and organizational sustainability by increasing academic staff's commitment and motivation to the institution. This situation can increase organizational identification by further reducing the stress levels of academic staff, as university administrations strengthen their participatory management approach, fair workload distribution, and institutional support mechanisms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the findings of this study, several strategies can be developed to reduce work stress and enhance organizational identification among academics at universities. First and foremost, in order to alleviate work-related stress among academic staff, institutions should implement stress management programs, provide access to psychological support services, and offer professional guidance. Given that female academics reported significantly higher levels of stress than their male counterparts, it is particularly important to develop family-friendly policies targeting women, such as flexible working hours and childcare support. To strengthen organizational identification, universities should adopt a participatory management approach, involve academics in decision-making processes, and establish platforms where they can actively contribute to institutional governance. Considering the higher stress levels and lower organizational identification observed among academics working in private universities, it is necessary for these institutions to revisit their employment practices. Reforms in work security, fair compensation, and opportunities for professional development are essential to fostering a more supportive work environment. In addition, institutional communication strategies and community engagement projects aimed at enhancing the university's external prestige can also help reinforce employees' sense of belonging to the institution.

Finally, the high levels of organizational identification observed in departments such as Coaching Education and Exercise/Sport Sciences should be further examined. The positive organizational culture found in these departments can serve as a model, and efforts should be made to disseminate this culture across other academic units as a means of strengthening institutional commitment more broadly.

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Ethics Approval
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