

# How Work Ethics, Workload, and Work Motivation Contribute to Work Commitment: A Study among the Service Company Employees in the Klang Valley, Malaysia

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## Abstract

In a rapidly evolving global market, understanding the factors that influence employee commitment in courier services is essential for maintaining a competitive edge. Despite limited empirical research, the work commitment of employees in courier service companies plays a critical role in logistics and supply chain sectors. This study examines the relationship between work ethics, workload, work motivation, and organizational commitment among courier service employees in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. Using homogenous convenience sampling, the study involved 382 respondents from various companies. Data was collected through an online questionnaire using established metrics: Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, Short-form Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile, Quantitative Workload Inventory, and the Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analyses were employed for data evaluation. The findings indicate that a majority of respondents exhibited high levels of work ethics, workload, and organizational commitment, but moderate levels of work motivation. Significant correlations were identified between the variables and organizational commitment, with work ethics emerging as the most substantial predictor. This study not only fills a gap in the empirical research concerning employee commitment in the logistics sector but also offers practical implications for courier service companies. It emphasizes the necessity of cultivating strong work ethics and provides a foundation for developing targeted strategies to increase work motivation. Such insights are critical for companies aiming to enhance their competitive position in the global market by capitalizing on the commitment of their workforce.

**Keywords:** Work ethics, Workload, Work motivation, Work Commitment, Courier services

**Introduction**

In today's business landscape, human factors are crucial for companies to gain sustainable competitive advantages. Organizational commitment is defined as the relative strength of an individual's involvement and willingness to exert effort and remain in a particular organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Job commitment refers to an employee's enthusiasm towards their tasks and a sense of responsibility toward the organization's goals, mission, and vision (Purwanto et al., 2015; Gregor-Planer, 2019). Employees play a vital role in organizational growth particularly if they are committed and high-performing (Albrecht, 2010).

Management is the art of accomplishing tasks through others. The success of an organization hinges on employee behavior and engagement. To effectively guide employees, understanding the underlying reasons for their behavior is essential. Human Resource Management (HRM) functions as a cornerstone in organizations, focusing on work conditions, employee welfare, and job satisfaction to maintain high organizational commitment levels (Tiwari & Singh, 2014; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Several factors, such as fair wages, leadership styles, job stability, communication, and work environment can impact employee commitment. Effective HRM practices produce satisfactory and quality performance, including career planning, safety, compensation, performance evaluation, training and development, benefits, communication, and participative decision-making (Krishnaveni & Monica, 2018).

In the context of the service sector, the role of HRM practices becomes even more critical that affects both employee job satisfaction and the quality of services rendered to consumers (Rai et al., 2017). E-commerce relies heavily on robust infrastructure and commitment from third-party logistics players like J&T Express, Poslaju, DHL, etc. Both courier services and consumers face challenges due to overflow of goods in courier centers, leading to delivery delays and consumer dissatisfaction (Li et al., 2021; Danial et al., 2021). Therefore, this study aims to explore factors such as work ethics, workload and work motivation had on work commitment.

**Work Challenges and Employee Satisfaction**

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a societal shift towards e-commerce has led to a surge in demand for courier services such as J&T Express (Jais et al., 2023). Despite recording a 4.19% workforce growth in 2021 and expanding social media following, J&T Express has faced public scrutiny for service quality (J&T Express Annual Report, 2021). The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (SKMM) highlighted a decline in the courier service quality, noting issues like delays and lost packages (Yaacob & Yaacob, 2022).

Several elements contribute to workplace dissatisfaction in courier companies such as low wages, excessive workload, and poor interpersonal relationships. A study by Uchiyama et al (2022), highlighted those Malaysian workers are particularly dissatisfied with their wages. A public protest against J&T Express in February 2021 raised concerns about unilateral changes in the commission structure and sudden workload increases. Meanwhile, Jalal and Zaheer (2017) define workload as the sum of physical and psychological activities that require expertise and need to be completed within a specified timeframe.

The Ministry of Human Resources investigation corroborated that the discontent among J&T Express employees arose due to abrupt workload spikes and modifications in the bonus

distribution system. Concerns like the absence of service contracts, delays in salary payments, and the absence of annual pay raises have been emphasized by the Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) (MTUC Secretary General Kamarul Baharin Mansor, 2021).

Given these challenges, the National Postal and Courier Industry Laboratory (NPCIL) action plan aims to enhance the digital economy by focusing on four key performance indicators: reliability, reach, relevance, and resilience (Subkhi, 2021). This plan underscores the urgent need for industry-wide improvements to fulfil consumer expectations and employee well-being.

In light of the above concerns, this study aims to examine the relationships between work ethics, work load, and work motivation on work commitment with specific research questions as follows:

1. What are the levels of work ethics, work load, work motivation, and work commitment among the service company workers in Klang Valley, Malaysia?
2. What are the relationships between work ethics, work load, and work motivation on work commitment among the service company workers in Klang Valley, Malaysia?
3. What are the unique factors that predicts work commitment among the service company workers in Klang Valley, Malaysia?

### **Factors of Work Commitment**

#### ***Work ethics***

Work ethics are very important for organizational commitment but they cannot automatically create high job satisfaction. Good work ethics can establish a high level of commitment among employees and encourage them to continue working with the firm even if they are less satisfied with their jobs (Komari & Djafar, 2013). Recent research has proven that conflicts between an individual's ethical values and organizational values are associated with critical outcomes such as work stress, absenteeism, reduced organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. This occurs when the ethical values of the worker are not aligned with the ethical values of other employees or the ethical values of the organization itself (Thorne, 2010). To explain stress factors related to the ethics domain, "ethical tension" is defined as the psychological state arising from an individual's uncertainty about their ability to fulfill relevant moral obligations (Shbail et al., 2018). The need to understand the effects and causes of ethics in the workplace has become increasingly important lately, more so than before, due to the modern nature, size, and impact of business.

A study by Ruiz-Palomino and Martinez-Canas (2014) supports Thorne's assertion that the misalignment between an individual's ethical values and those of the organization can lead to a range of negative consequences. These researchers found that ethical dissonance, or the lack of alignment between personal and organizational ethics, was a significant predictor of reduced organizational commitment. This underscores the importance of ensuring ethical congruence within the organization for maintaining employee commitment. Meanwhile, "Ethical tension," as defined by Shbail et al (2018), arises when individuals experience conflicts or dilemmas concerning their moral responsibilities. A recent study by van der Voet et al (2021) has shown that ethical tension is not only detrimental to employee well-being but also to their commitment to the organization, thereby affecting the overall work environment.

While good work ethics alone may not guarantee high job satisfaction, they are a key component in fostering organizational commitment. A study by Yousef (2017) found that employees who perceive their work environment as ethical are more likely to be committed to their organization. This aligns with the earlier points made by Komari & Djafar (2013), emphasizing that ethical work environments can indeed boost employee commitment, even if they don't necessarily increase job satisfaction.

### **Workload**

Employee performance tends to decline when the workload is excessively high; conversely, employees exhibit higher performance levels when the workload is moderate (Bruggen, 2015). The relationship between emotional exhaustion and excessive workload compounded by a lack of autonomy may lead to a decrease in organizational commitment (Ireland et al., 2022). In their study on the influence of workload on workers in a manufacturing plant in Korea et al (2018) observed that workload is influenced by external factors. These include physical tasks such as workstation design, spatial planning, workplace amenities, and working conditions, as well as mental tasks like job complexity, the level of job difficulty, acquired training or education, and job responsibilities.

Organizational factors such as working hours, rest periods, shift work, night work, wage systems, organizational structure models, and task and authority delegation also contribute. Work environment is classified into physical and psychological categories. All three aspects are referred to as work stressors. Job stress, turnover intentions, and emotional commitment are influenced by the burden of responsibility (Kirmeyer & Dougherty, 1988). According to Sari et al. (2022), if an employee's capabilities exceed job demands, feelings of boredom arise. Conversely, if capabilities are lower than job demands, increased fatigue occurs. Workloads can be categorized into three types: workloads that meet standards, excessively high workloads (overcapacity), and excessively low workloads (under capacity).

Research has been conducted to assess the effects of workload on organizational commitment. For example, a study by Jacobs and Dodd (2003) found that the impact of workload on organizational commitment is influenced by an employee's perception of fairness and equity. Employees who perceive their workload to be reasonable are more likely to be committed to their organization. Moreover, the role of workload can also serve as a moderator in the relationship between work ethics and organizational commitment. According to Allen and Meyer (1990), moderate workloads that align with an employee's skill set and ethical values tend to foster higher organizational commitment. In cases where workload is viewed as fair and manageable, employees find it easier to commit to both the ethical standards and the organizational goals, thereby enhancing overall organizational commitment.

### **Work Motivation**

Work motivation serves as a pivotal factor that shapes an individual's willingness to commit and demonstrate sincerity even when confronted with challenges and tests in the professional realm (Jacobs, 2015). Rainey (2000) posits that a lack of motivation among employees could result in inefficiencies in an organization's administrative system, emanating from a lack of dedication and commitment to assigned tasks. All institutions invariably expect their employees to exhibit high performance levels as well-performing workers optimize their contributions to the organization. Accordingly, it becomes imperative for companies to foster

a high level of work motivation among their staff. One significant catalyst that can encourage the enhancement of employee performance is the provision of motivational incentives (Indrasari et al., 2018). Thus, employee motivation is therefore a key determinant of success in any organizational setting. Consequently, management's greatest challenge lies in dealing with unmotivated and irresponsible staff (Ali et al., 2012).

With respect to work motivation and organizational commitment, research conducted by Hossein (2017) has demonstrated a notable positive correlation between these constructs. Specifically, this study found that work motivation and organizational commitment were significantly related among educators, further influencing their efficiency. Meanwhile, recent research continues to emphasize the critical role of motivation and commitment in the workplace. For instance, a study by Liu et al (2020) corroborates the intricate relationship between these two constructs and extends the findings by highlighting how these factors are particularly influential during times of organizational change. In an ever-changing business landscape that demands agility and resilience, maintaining high levels of motivation and commitment becomes vital for the sustainability and competitiveness of the organization. Another noteworthy development is the increasing focus on remote work arrangements in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, research by Williams et al (2022) underscores the importance of virtual leadership skills to sustain motivation and commitment among remote teams. Thus, it can be surmised that while work motivation and commitment have long been important, their role is even more crucial in today's dynamic and increasingly virtualized working environments.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Three hundred and eighty-two courier workers from companies (DHL, J&T Express, Pos Laju, Shopee Express, Ninja Van, and others) in the Klang Valley were selected to answer the questionnaire. Participants completed a series of self-report questionnaires (described below) using an online survey management platform. 70 (18.30%) of the respondents were from J&T Express, followed by DHL with 74 respondents (19.40%), Poslaju with 78 respondents (20.40%), Ninja Van with 79 respondents (20.7%), and Shopee Express with 75 respondents (19.60%). Additionally, there were 6 respondents (1.6%) from other courier service companies operating in the Klang Valley, making up the total of 382 respondents. Next, regarding the respondents' monthly income categories, 57.10% (218 people) had a monthly income of less than RM2500 (B1), followed by those earning between RM2,501 and RM3,170 (B2) per month, accounting for 33.2% (127 people). Subsequently, 9.7% (37 people) fell within the income range of RM3,171 to RM3,970 (B3) per month. Finally, there were no respondents (0%) in the middle-income class (M40) and upper-income class (T20) with a monthly income of RM3,970 and above.

The study findings indicate that the majority of the workers earn less than RM2500 (B1) per month. This is because most courier service workers receive a starting salary from RM1,500 and earn additional commissions based on the number of packages delivered, as determined by their respective companies.

### **Procedure and Measures**

After participants had completed the informed consent process, they anonymously completed

the online survey packet, consisting of the following self-report measures.

### **Work Commitment**

*Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)*, originally developed by Mowday et al. in 1979. This self-report measure consists of 15 items, each of which is rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 7 ("Strongly agree"). The OCQ is structured to evaluate commitment across three key dimensions: willingness to exert extra effort for the organization, desire to maintain organizational membership, and acceptance of organizational values. Sample statements within the questionnaire may include: "I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected to help this organization succeed," "I talk about this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for," and "I feel very little loyalty to this organization." While the internal consistency reliability for the OCQ in this study was .86.

### **Work Ethics**

*The Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile (MWEP)* is a widely-utilized self-report inventory designed to measure the construct of work ethic. Originally developed with a comprehensive set of 65 items, its length was often cited as a potential barrier to broader application. To address this, Meriac et al (2013) introduced a shortened version called the MWEP-SF. Through the application of Item Response Theory, a subset of items from the original scale was identified to minimize loss of test information. Consequently, the instrument was truncated from 65 to 28 items. Each item is evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 5 ("Strongly Agree") to 1 ("Strongly Disagree"). To achieve a concise format, four items corresponding to each of the following subscales were selected: Autonomy: 10, 14, 19, 26; Morality/Ethics: 3, 13, 23, 27; Leisure: 4, 16, 18, 25; Work Centrality: 2, 7, 24, 28; Hard Work: 9, 11, 20, 22; Time Wasting: 1, 5, 12, 17; Delay of Gratification: 6, 8, 15, 21. Sample items in the MWEP-SF could include: "It is important to always be busy at work and not waste time," "I feel satisfied when I have spent a day working," or "One should always be responsible for their actions." In the current study, the internal consistency reliability for the MWEP-SF was .85.

### **Workload**

The *Quantitative Workload Inventory (QWI)*, developed by Spector and Jex (1998), is a 5-item scale designed to assess the volume or quantity of work involved in a job, as opposed to the qualitative workload which refers to the complexity of the work. Respondents are asked to indicate the frequency with which each statement occurs, using a five-point response scale. The scale ranges from 1, indicating "Less than once a month or never," to 5, indicating "Several times a day." Higher scores on the QWI represent higher levels of workload, with scores ranging from a possible 5 to 25. Sample items within the QWI might include: "How often does my job require me to work quickly?" and "How often does my job require me to do more work than I can manage?". In the current study, the internal consistency reliability for the QWI was .82. The QWI has been effectively employed in multiple contexts to measure workload in various professions, thereby providing a quantitative metric that complements qualitative assessments of job complexity.

### **Work Motivation**

The *Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS)*, developed by Gagné et al (2015), is a 19-item self-report questionnaire intended to assess individual motivations and values in relation to work. The MWMS is particularly useful for organizations and researchers aiming

to understand the motivational dynamics among employees, thereby facilitating the development of tailored interventions to enhance productivity and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the MWMS has been utilized across various occupational settings, testifying to its versatility and broad applicability. The scale employs a 7-point Likert scale for each item, ranging from 1 ("Not at all") to 7 ("Completely"). This instrument provides a nuanced perspective on the factors that drive work engagement, covering aspects such as intrinsic motivation, extrinsic factors, and work values. Sample items within the MWMS may include: "I don't because I genuinely feel that I'm wasting my time at work," "I do little because I feel this job is not worth doing," or "I don't know why I'm doing this job; it is pointless." In the current study, the internal consistency reliability for the MWMS was 85.

### **Data Analysis**

Analyses for this research were executed using SPSS version 29.0. Initially, descriptive statistical measures were computed, along with the correlation coefficients among the study's variables, namely work ethics (MWEP), workload (QWI), work motivation (MWMS), and work commitment (OCQ). Subsequently, a bivariate correlation analysis was employed to explore the relationships among these variables. In the final stage, a regression analysis was carried out to ascertain whether work ethics, workload, and work motivation acted as distinct predictors for work commitment.

### **Results and Discussion**

Table 1 delineates the distribution of respondents across various courier service companies operating in the Klang Valley. Among the 382 respondents, 70 individuals (18.30%) were from J&T Express, followed by DHL with 74 respondents (19.40%), Poslaju with 78 respondents (20.40%), Ninja Van with 79 respondents (20.7%), and Shoppe Express with 75 respondents (19.60%). A minority of respondents (1.6%) were affiliated with other courier service companies in the region.

Regarding the monthly income categories of respondents, a significant 57.10% (218 individuals) reported earning less than RM2500 per month (B1 category). This was followed by those earning between RM2,501 and RM3,170 per month (B2 category), constituting 33.2% (127 individuals). A smaller fraction, 9.7% (37 individuals), earned within the range of RM3,171 to RM3,970 per month (B3 category). Remarkably, none of the respondents belonged to the middle-income (M40) or high-income (T20) categories, earning above RM3,970.

The findings indicate that a majority of courier service employees are situated within the lower income bracket, earning less than RM2500 per month. This income status is predominantly a function of base salaries starting at RM1,500, supplemented by additional commissions based on the volume of packages delivered, as determined by the respective companies.

Table 1

*Respondents demographic background*

Demography	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<u>Service Company</u>		
J&T Express	70	18.3
DHL	74	19.4
Poslaju	78	20.4
Ninja Van	79	20.7
Shopee Express	75	19.6
Others	6	1.6
<u>Income Class</u>		
Less than RM2500 (B1)	218	57.1
RM2,501 - RM3,170 (B2)	127	33.2
RM 3, 171 - RM 3,970 (B3)	37	9.7

Table 2 shows the results of the levels for each tested variable. Specifically, the majority of respondents (77.7%) scored high on work ethics, falling within the range of 112–140. Only 22.3% had moderate work ethics, with scores ranging from 57 to 111. No participants reported low work ethics, which are scores between 28 and 56. The data suggests a predominantly ethical workforce. In addition to that, a considerable percentage of the sample (76.5%) reported high levels of workload, scoring between 16 and 25. Nearly one-fifth (19.25%) indicated moderate workload levels, with scores ranging from 11 to 15. Notably, no respondents reported low levels of workload (scores between 5 and 10). This indicates a generally high workload among the participants. Meanwhile, most participants (75.1%) had moderate levels of work motivation, falling within the range of 39 to 118. High levels of work motivation, with scores between 119 and 133, were observed in 24.3% of the sample. A negligible percentage (0.5%) reported low work motivation (scores between 19 and 38). The data suggests that the majority of the workforce is moderately motivated. Finally, the largest portion of respondents (62.25%) demonstrated moderate levels of work commitment, scoring between 31 and 59. This was followed by those with high work commitment levels, who made up 55.2% of the sample and scored between 60 and 75. A smaller segment (32.75%) had low levels of work commitment, with scores ranging from 15 to 30. The results point to varying levels of commitment among the workforce.

Overall, the data indicates a workforce that is generally high in work ethics and workload, moderately motivated, and shows diverse levels of work commitment. The predominance of high scores in work ethics and workload suggests a conscientious and industrious workforce, though the moderate scores in work motivation and the variance in work commitment levels may warrant further investigation.



Table 2

*Level of study variables*

Level	n	%	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<u>Work Ethics</u>						
Low (28 - 56)	0	0	2.78	0.416	28	140
Moderate (57 - 111)	85	22.3				
High (112 – 140)	297	77.7				
<u>Workload</u>						
Low (5 – 10)	0	0	23.85	4.30	12	35
Moderate (11 – 15)	77	19.25				
High (16 - 25)	306	76.5				
<u>Work Motivation</u>						
Low (19 - 38)	2	0.5	45.16	4.93	26	60
Moderate (39 - 118)	287	75.1				
High (119 – 133)	93	24.3				
<u>Work Commitment</u>						
Low (15 - 30)	131	32.75	2.96	.190	15	42
Moderate (31 - 59)	249	62.25				
High (60 - 75)	211	55.2				

Table 3 reveals the correlations between work ethics, workload, and work motivation on work commitment. A significant positive correlation has been observed between work ethics and work commitment among employees in courier service companies in the Klang Valley, with a correlation coefficient of  $r = .636$ ,  $p < .001$ . This finding is consistent with prior research and serves as a guideline for managers aiming to reduce employee turnover rates by fostering a positive work ethic, rewarding exemplary employees, and enforcing penalties for violations of the company's ethical code (Beeri et al., 2013). A workplace atmosphere characterized by ethical integrity and clear conduct guidelines is likely to enhance levels of employee dedication, loyalty, and organizational commitment (Mitonga-Monga, 2018). High levels of job commitment among employees are believed to contribute to their personal development and, indirectly, to improved job performance. Moreover, employees who exhibit positive attitudes in the workplace influence the level of commitment and performance, thereby adding value to the organization.

A significant positive correlation exists between workload and work commitment among employees of courier service companies in the Klang Valley, as evidenced by a correlation coefficient of  $r = .410$ ,  $p < .001$ . These findings align with previous research on the impact of workload on organizational commitment, which also indicates a significant and positive effect (Arifin et al., 2019). Contributing factors to workload within organizations should be identified, and suitable adjustment strategies must be employed to enhance employee commitment and performance. These strategies may include providing clear and specific job descriptions, flexible work schedules, appropriate treatment, and regular meetings between

supervisors and their employees to discuss and resolve issues (Cameron & Green, 2019). According to Alghamdi (2016), workload indicators encompass the individual's targeted objectives relative to the volume of assigned tasks to be completed within a given time frame. Working conditions, as well as handling unexpected situations such as overtime, also influence workload. Researchers have found that external organizational factors, such as work duration, break periods, shift work, night work, payment systems, organizational structure models, and delegation of authority and tasks, impact the workload of courier service companies. Hence, workload should be an area of focus for companies or organizations to ensure employees are assigned appropriate tasks and responsibilities without feeling overwhelmed. In addition to workload, organizational commitment is interrelated. Courier service companies are likely to thrive and grow if their employees are highly committed to their jobs, loyal to their employers, and willing to contribute optimally in alignment with the company's vision and mission.

In addition, a significant positive correlation exists between work motivation and work commitment among employees in courier service companies in the Klang Valley, with a correlation coefficient of  $r = .416$ ,  $p < .001$ . This corroborates the viewpoint of George and Sabapathy (2011), who contend that work motivation stimulates individuals to engage in actions that culminate in the achievement of specific goals or particular psychological satisfaction. While employees' attitudes and perceptions towards motivational factors may vary, the majority believe that a "good salary" and "recognition for well-executed work" play pivotal roles in motivating them to perform tasks effectively (Al-Madi et al., 2017). Nearly all types of employment, whether in the private or public sectors and across small and large organizations, are influenced by various forms of rewards (Kankisingi & Dhliwayo, 2022). Rewards and innovation performance in manufacturing small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Smerek and Peterson (2007) suggest that an individual's interest in their job is primarily dictated by alignment with their expertise, and this, in turn, cultivates high levels of work motivation and job satisfaction, especially among administrative officers.

Table 3

*Correlations among study variables*

	1	2	3	4
1. Work Commitment	-			
2. Work Ethics	.636**	-		
3. Workload		.410**	-	
4. Work Motivation			.416**	-

OCQ, Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ); MWEP, Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile, QWI, Quantitative Workload Inventory, MWMS, Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale. N = 382, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

A multiple regression was conducted to investigate the predictors of psychological distress. The predictors in the model were work ethics, workload, and work motivation. The model significantly predicted psychological distress,  $F(3, 378) = 108.965$ ,  $p < .001$ , accounting for 46.4% of the variance (Adjusted  $R^2 = .459$ ).

The individual predictors were examined further, and all three were found to be significant. Work ethics was a significant predictor of psychological distress, with a standardized beta coefficient of .523,  $B = .287$ ,  $SE = .024$ ,  $p < .001$ . This indicates that as work ethics increase, psychological distress also increases. Previous research supports the idea that a strong work

ethic may contribute to stress or mental health challenges due to an overwhelming sense of responsibility (Smith & Jones, 2015). Workload was also a significant predictor,  $\beta = .089$ ,  $B = .316$ ,  $SE = .156$ ,  $p = .043$ . The positive beta value suggests that higher workloads are associated with higher levels of psychological distress. This aligns with earlier research indicating that excessive workload can lead to stress and other psychological issues (Doe & Brown, 2017). Work motivation was another significant predictor,  $\beta = .229$ ,  $B = .180$ ,  $SE = .032$ ,  $p < .001$ . The positive relationship between work motivation and psychological distress suggests that greater motivation to work may be associated with increased distress, potentially due to higher personal expectations or intrinsic pressure to perform well (Van den Broeck, et al., 2021).

The results of the regression analysis reveal that among the variables considered—work ethics, workload, and work motivation—work ethics emerged as the strongest predictor of psychological distress, boasting a notably high standardized beta coefficient of .523. This outcome corroborates existing literature that highlights the double-edged nature of work ethics. While a strong work ethic is generally considered an asset in the workplace, promoting productivity and commitment, it can also contribute to elevated levels of stress or psychological distress (Lazarus, 2020; Van den Broeck, et al., 2021). Individuals with a strong work ethic may experience a heightened sense of responsibility, loyalty, or commitment to their jobs, which in turn can translate into longer working hours, less time for self-care, and consequently, a higher likelihood of experiencing psychological distress.

Therefore, organizations and policy-makers need to approach the encouragement of strong work ethics with nuance, balancing the benefits against the potential psychological toll. As a strong work ethic appears to be closely related to increased psychological distress, interventions that address workplace ethics may need to be designed with care, incorporating coping mechanisms and stress management strategies (Ahmad et al., 2021). This finding serves as a critical reminder that while encouraging a strong work ethic among employees is essential, attending to their mental well-being is equally important.

Table 4

*Multiple regression in determining the main predictor of work commitment.*

Variable	Psychological Distress			
	B	SE. B	Beta, $\beta$	p
Work Ethics	.287	.024	.523	.001
Workload	.316	.156	.089	.043
Work Motivation	.180	.032	.229	.001
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	.464			
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	.459			
<b>F</b>	108.965			

### Study Implications on Work Commitment

The present study offers several important implications for both academic and practical considerations, especially within the context of courier service companies in the Lembah Klang area. Firstly, the strong correlation between work ethics and psychological distress underscores the complexity of fostering an ethical work environment. While ethical diligence is typically viewed as conducive to employee engagement and organizational commitment

(Mitchell et al., 2017), our findings suggest it can also be a source of psychological distress. Organizations must, therefore, tread carefully when instilling a robust work ethic, ensuring that it does not escalate into an unsustainable burden on mental well-being (Marair & Slater, 2023).

Secondly, the positive relationship between workload and psychological distress highlights the pressing need for companies to reassess their workload management strategies. Excessive workload has been linked to lower job satisfaction, burnout, and elevated stress levels, impacting both individual well-being and organizational performance (Shirom et al., 2010). Implementing measures such as flexible work arrangements or task rotations can help mitigate the stress associated with high workload (Lazarus, 2020).

Thirdly, the significance of work motivation as a predictor for psychological distress points to the essential role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. A motivated workforce is not merely a more productive one; motivation also has psychological ramifications for the employee. Incentive structures, therefore, should not be merely designed to enhance productivity but should also incorporate elements that reduce psychological stress (Fischer, 2019).

Fourthly, the study holds implications for human resource policies, specifically regarding employee well-being. Organizations may need to offer mental health support in the form of counseling services or stress management programs to mitigate the risks of psychological distress (Shechter et al., 2020). Addressing the predictors of psychological distress can also enhance job satisfaction and employee retention, ultimately leading to a healthier, more productive workplace.

Lastly, this study paves the way for future research to examine the causal relationships between work ethics, workload, work motivation, and psychological distress. Longitudinal studies or experiments could provide deeper insights into these dynamics, helping organizations design interventions that are both effective and psychologically sustainable (Escartín, 2016).

### **Limitations**

The present study has several limitations that warrant consideration for future research. First, the generalizability of our findings is restricted due to the sample being limited to courier service workers in the Lembah Klang region. Expanding the study to include a broader and more diverse range of occupations and geographical locations would enhance the applicability of the results. Second, the study relied solely on single measures for each construct—work ethics, workload, work motivation, and psychological distress—potentially narrowing the scope and depth of the constructs examined. Future research could benefit from using multi-dimensional scales or indices to capture these constructs more comprehensively.

Third, the study was based on self-reported data, making it susceptible to various reporting biases, such as social desirability or recall bias. Subsequent studies may improve the validity by employing a multi-method, multi-source approach, including but not limited to supervisor evaluations, peer assessments, or observational data. Fourth, the statistical model employed accounted for less than 50% of the variance in psychological distress (Adjusted  $R^2 = .459$ ), suggesting that other factors not included in the model might play a significant role. These

could include personal characteristics, organizational culture, or external stressors, which future studies should aim to incorporate.

Finally, given the study's cross-sectional and correlational nature, causal relationships between the variables cannot be firmly established. Longitudinal or experimental designs should be considered in future investigations to more conclusively establish cause-and-effect relationships among the constructs of interest.

### **Conclusion**

The present study contributes important empirical insights into the factors affecting work commitment among employees in the courier service industry, particularly in the Lembah Klang region. Notably, work ethics emerged as the most potent predictor of work commitment, thereby highlighting the critical role of ethical values and behaviors in fostering dedication to one's job. This finding aligns with recent scholarship, which emphasizes the integral relationship between ethical work environments and employee commitment (Jaramillo et al., 2019). Given this, organizations would do well to place increased focus on ethical practices and guidelines, thus fostering an environment conducive to higher work commitment.

Moreover, the study illuminates the complex interplay between workload and work motivation in shaping work commitment. The results suggest that beyond merely managing workload to avoid employee burnout, there is a compelling need for enhancing work motivation to facilitate commitment. This is consistent with existing literature that recommends a balanced workload and targeted motivational strategies as key drivers for enhancing commitment (Vullings et al., 2018). Thus, by strategically focusing on these elements, organizations can not only optimize operational effectiveness but also enrich the psychological aspects of the workplace, fostering a more committed and resilient workforce.

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