

Workplace problems

[Business](#), [Work](#)



A: Britani Franklin, Kellie Johnson, Jennifer Vendura, & Rob Vendura PSY/435
August 7, 2013 Carla Kuhiman I/O Psychology and Workplace Problems Many individuals struggle with feeling overworked on the job. Unbalanced workloads lead to several negative aspects that can hurt an organization's ability to function as a cohesive unit. In this analysis, Team A will relate Kellie's issue of feeling overworked. Team A will then choose a research method that will best solve the issue, while applying more specific methods to gain the clearest picture possible of the problem at hand.

Finally, Team A will relate the ethical considerations that must be included in providing an applicable solution. Work Related Problem: Unbalanced Workload- Kellie Speaks Working in one of the largest school districts in Colorado, one would think the communications department would be at the top of the priority list when it comes to the number of people they would have to keep those gears moving. Being a five-year veteran of the establishment, I have seen people come and go. I am what you call the utility player.

I spend my day trying to figure out what everyone else needs to be happy. My technical job title is ' Community Relations Coordinator. ' I spend 40 to 50 hours a week supporting the public information officer and the community relations officer- setting their meetings, filling their calendars, and reminding them of what they need to do and where they need to be. I need to make them look good. A great deal of my job consists of answering the phone for them and the Superintendent of Schools.

These phone calls usually are upset parent's that want to talk about why little Johnny didn't get into the special art class they requested or, ' did you realize there is 3 inches of snow on the ground and why didn't we cancel school today? ' I also have two videographers that I have to send out to shoots at locations throughout our 900 mile district. We have over 84 schools. The Superintendent runs the district like a Fortune 500 company. This can have its positives and negatives. I understand that having over 6,000 employees could compel an individual to run things like this- but sometimes it can also make it very impersonal. I am the only support staff these people have. I do, however, get a 30 minute lunch that I usually take at my desk. This is usually a delicious frozen entree or leftovers of some sort that I bring from home. Even when I skip lunch I still cannot find enough time in the day to finish my tasks, which means they get pushed back to the next day. This can be very frustrating as the tasks pile up. By the end of the week, sometimes I have more than I started with and I end up taking work home.

For these reasons, my case is relevant to the study of I/O psychology; unbalanced workloads are not limited to my job and solutions to this will be welcomed by individuals in every employment sector. Analyzing the Issue: Research Method(s) If Team A was composed of Industrial/Organizational psychologists, we would begin our analysis of Kellie's workplace problem with a research question. Research questions can be general or specific, but to ascertain a better understanding of the problem a specific question is of greater benefit (Spector, 2012).

To this end, our research question would likely be ‘ What is causing employees to feel overburdened by an unbalanced workload? ’ In this way, Team A has defined the objective of the study and identified the specific problem at issue (Spector, 2012). Our next step is to decide what research method is most appropriate in addressing the issue. Although a thoroughly balanced study generally includes qualitative and quantitative research methods- with quantitative methods used to garner empirical support for qualitative findings- Team A will opt to employ only qualitative methods at this point (Mahoney ; Goertz, 2006).

We must also take into account that the issue will be perceived differently by employees, supervisors, and ourselves as the psychologists researching the issue (Stagner, 1982). Our research question has a high degree of subjectivity; what is considered too much work by one employee can be considered entirely manageable by another. For these reasons, Team A will use more than one method of qualitative research with the goal of reaching a realistic and applicable solution. Qualitative methods involve several means of studying organizational issues.

Among these are observational studies, case studies, interviews (Spector, 2012). Team A will begin by conducting structured oral interviews of employees and supervisors. In this way, we will begin to paint a broad picture of the issue with the goal of identifying different employee perspectives to be reconciled through other research methods in the future (Rojon, McDowell, ; Saunders, 2011). Conducted face to face with staff members, Team A will pose specific questions in the interviews.

Likely questions include: What is your hourly wage or salary? How many hours per week do you work? What are your specific tasks and duties? Do you have support staff? Does your company have an employee break/lunch policy and if so, is it enforced? Do you have one supervisor, or do you report to several? Do you feel you have adequate technological resources and/or support? How well do you get along with your fellow employees? How many, if any, tasks are left incomplete each day? Why are those tasks left unfinished?

Although the above list of questions is hardly exhaustive, Team A will get an idea of the varying perspectives bound to be held by different employees in this manner. Following the collection of interviews, Team A will attempt to interpret the results through content analysis (an evaluation of the details and implications of the answers received) and thematic analysis in which recurring themes among responses will be identified (“Siop.org”, 2013). Because Team A wants to get the clearest picture of the issue possible, observational research methods will also be used.

Team A will rely on the participant observation method whereby we will become members of the workplace group by conforming to the collective culture of the cohort. In this way, sharper insight will be gained into the cohort’s methods, group and individual motivation, behavior, and emotions (Mahoney ; Goertz, 2006). This method has inherent problems Team A will try to avoid. For example, observer bias can come into play; events are often interpreted through the lens of an individual’s unique experiences and are not always objective in relation to solving problems.

Team A is also aware of the problem of reactivity- a phenomenon by which an observer inadvertently influences the environment he or she is observing ("Ucdavis.edu", n. d.). Team A hopes that by utilizing structured oral interviews and participant observation enough data will be gathered in relation to the problem of an unbalanced workload. The data gathered will then be subjected to more quantitative methods to garner empirical support for our findings (Mahoney ; Goertz, 2006). Throughout the process, Team A will remain cognizant of the ethical considerations to be taken into account.

Ethical Considerations When considering the problem of unbalanced workloads in the workplace, Team A came across some ethical considerations. According to Industrial and Organization Psychology, there are six ethical codes an I/O psychologist must consider when researching an issue (Spector, 2012). These are competence, integrity, professional and scientific responsibility, respect for others and dignity, concern for others' welfare, and social responsibility. Competence describes the work an I/O psychologist has the ability to perform.

Integrity describes that an I/O psychologist is fair and honest when he or she deals with others. Professional and scientific responsibility describes an I/O psychologist's ability to maintain professional behavior. Respect for rights and dignity describes that an I/O psychologist respects the confidentiality of other's privacy. Concern for others' welfare describes an I/O psychologist's attempt in helping others through professionalism. Social responsibility describes that an I/O psychologist uses his or her professionalism to benefit society (Spector, 2012).

In studying these principals, Team A decided that the ethical considerations most important in this research case are competence, professional and scientific responsibility, and concern for others' welfare. Competence in this research case is the most important ethical consideration. To begin, Team A has to make sure that they are all willing and able to carry out this study. In being competent, one shows that he or she is able and ready to carry out tasks necessary to complete and carry out the goal- which is in this case how to remedy an unbalanced workload in Kellie's workplace.

The second consideration, professional and scientific responsibility, is important because in researching this case it may be easy to gain biased opinions of views. It may be hard to remain unbiased and consider how the people being overworked can benefit from figuring out how to give the people being underworked more tasks. Team A could easily gain a biased opinion of those not carrying their weight and slant the research unfairly. In remaining professional, all parties will be heard and spoken for, and professionalism can help to make sure that happens.

The last element, concern for others' welfare, is the best way to describe how Team A can come to a conclusion in this case study. The main goal is to make life easier for those in the workplace. Team A believes that helping those who do not carry their weight means to show them the value of hard work and how they can continue this lesson in life to better themselves. That is what this last ethical consideration entails. Team A, as professionals, commits to the ethical consideration of using their professionalism to help and better others.

In this case study, the end goal is to help and improve others by taking some pressure off those who have been given heavy loads of work and giving more work to those individuals deemed underutilized. In conclusion, Kellie is hardly alone in feeling overworked on the job. Although Kellie's story is a common one, solutions need to be found. In this analysis, Team A related in detail the ways in which Kellie feels overburdened at her place of employment. Team A then went on to choose qualitative research methods, including structured oral interviews and participant observation, to further analyze the issue.

Finally, Team A highlighted specific ethical considerations- competence, professional and scientific responsibility, and concern for others' welfare- to take into account while conducting research on the issue. References Mahoney, J. , ; Goertz, G. (2006). A tale of two cultures: Contrasting quantitative and qualitative research. *Political Analysis*, 14, 227-249. Rojon, C. , McDowell, A. , ; Saunders, M. N. (2011). On the experience of conducting a systematic review in industrial, work, and organizational psychology: Yes, it is worthwhile.