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Does Gender Matter? Job Stress, Work-Life Balance, Health and Job Satisfaction among University Teachers in India

By Sandip Solanki^{1*} and Meeta Mandaviya²

Abstract

This study investigates gender differences in the perceived level of stress of university instructors in India. An online cross-sectional survey was completed with 86 respondents comprised of 51 males and 35 females in the state of Gujarat. Results indicate that job stress on work-life balance is significantly stronger for females. Additionally, male respondents scored higher in managing anger at work compared with female respondents and reveal a stronger detachment with work. Further, male respondents have more health-related issues compared with females due to job stress and imbalance in work life, while females exhibit lower career resilience due to family characteristics and responsibilities. This research contributes to the research on work-life balance specific to the teaching profession. Originality/value: To the best of the author's knowledge this study is unique and different from other studies as this is the first study concerning India.

Key Words: Gender, Job Stress, Work-Life Balance, Health Related Issues, University, Teachers

Introduction

The paradigm shift in the education system over the last few decades such as “student as a customer pays” & “competition between institutions” has changed the role of a teacher (Taatila 2017). The teaching profession is no less stressful than it was before, perhaps instead it may be greater (Tytherleigh * et al. 2005). Technological advancements, rising students' and organizations' expectations, requirement of numerous skills, academic and non-academic workload, teachers' own career development goal, inadequate salary, issue related to promotion, work overload research, all contribute to the rise of occupational stress amongst teachers and have affected their work-life balance. Profession growth is the highest cause of pressure on academic staff among university teachers (Archibong et al. 2010). Education quality determines the country's future while the quality of the teacher determines education quality. Teachers are the backbone of an education system; therefore, it should be apparent that the objective of quality of education cannot be achieved without job satisfaction among the teachers.

Gender differences related to job stress, work-life balance, and its impact on health and well-being on employees have received significant attention from academicians and policymakers. Various studies have also been conducted in this direction; some studies are in general while other

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studies are country-specific but the findings of these studies are inconsistent. In the below section several country specific studies are noted along with the variation in outcomes.

Literature Review

Borg et al. (1991) found that those teachers having more stress were less satisfied with their job and less dedicated to teaching as a career. In other studies, Blix et al. (1994) found that teaching or service-related activities are not as stressful as research-related activities while Bradley and Eachus (1995) reported that female employees were at greater risk from adverse effects of work-related stress. Collings and Murray (1996) in a study conducted in Chennai revealed that different variables like sex, age, educational levels, and teaching experience, among others, are important factors for various sources of stress related to the teaching profession. While Thorsen's (1996) evaluation of faculty in four Ontario universities supported that research is the most stressful and teaching is the least stressful among professors in the humanities; further many hours spent on the job in combination with time constraints were significant sources of stress. Oshagbemi (2000) observed no direct association between gender and job fulfilment of university teachers in the UK, and also noticed that female academics at higher ranks were more satisfied compared with male academics. Tytherleigh et al. (2005) in an evaluation of UK higher education, demonstrated that the working environment is a source of stress. In another study conducted by Okpara et al. (2005) among the university teachers in the United States, pay, promotions, supervision, and overall job satisfaction were more satisfying factors to male colleagues while work and coworkers were more satisfying to female colleagues. Various stress-related reasons identified by Antoniou et al. (2006) include handling students with difficult behavior, lack of student interest, low attainment rates, and other education-based outcomes. Based on these criteria, female teachers have higher levels of occupational stress compared with male teachers. Kinman and Jones (2008) found that work-life balance that controlled for overwork and where the instructor received support from the institution reduced stress in an evaluation of UK academic staff.

Barkhuizen and Rothmann (2008) inspected that two primary reasons for the ill health of academic staff in South African higher education institutes are overload and work-life balance. Ahsan et al. (2009) conducted a study for university staff in Malaysia and explored that job stress is negatively correlated with job satisfaction. Archibong et al. (2010) explored the relationship between career development and the level of stress among university staff in Nigeria and presented that the greatest source of stress is career development; the results also noted that male and female academic differed concerning perceived stress level. Bhatti et al. (2011) studied that job stress and job satisfaction are negatively correlated among the university teachers in Pakistan and also revealed that job stress negatively affects teachers health. Slišković and Seršić (2011) in an research study of a Croatian university highlighted that level of stress among female instructors was higher than males; moreover associate professors, assistant professors, and assistants were facing a higher level of stress compared with full professors. Salami (2011) observed that burnout is influenced by the work environment and personal factors.

Fatima and Sahibzada (2012) revealed that the work-life balance is favorably related to support from a life partner, support from the college, and availability of resources for work but biased criticism at work is unfavorably associated with work-life balance among private and public universities in Pakistan. Saeed and Farooqi (2014) found a favorable relationship between job satisfaction and work-life balance among faculties working in various universities in the state of Gujarat. Results also highlighted that there is no association between job stress and job satisfaction.

Darakshan and Islam (2014) studied two central universities of Delhi and found female faculty members to be highly satisfied with their job. Samad et al. (2015) observed that one of the significant factors affecting work-life conflict in Australia is working hours for the academics and general staff in regional universities. Ilyas (2017) explored a significant positive relationship between work-family conflict and psychological distress among university teachers in Pakistan. There was a positive correlation between work-family conflict and psychological distress.

Hypothesis Development

- H1: There is a positive relationship between job pressure and job stress among female respondents compared with male respondents.
- H2: Female professionals feel more stress compared with males in performing multiple roles at the workplace.
- H3: The negative effect of career resilience on work-life balance is more significant for females compared with male respondents.
- H4: The negative effect of effort-reward imbalance on work-life balance is more significant for females compared with male respondents.
- H5: There is a positive relationship between marital stress*job-related stress on work-life balance among female respondents compare with male respondents.
- H6: Female respondents are more likely to have emotional exhaustion leading to emotional burnout compare to male respondents.
- H7: The positive effect of emotional reticence on health-related issues is stronger for female respondents than male respondents
- H8: Effect of overall job stress on overall work-life imbalance is stronger for among female respondents than male respondents.
- H9: Effect of overall job stress on overall health-related issues is stronger among female respondents than the male respondents.
- H10: Effect of overall work-life imbalance on overall health-related issues is significantly stronger for female respondents compared with male respondents.

Methodology

This study includes the responses from an online survey of 86 participants, 51 men and 35 women, between the ages of 28 and 55 years old. All participants were from the same university in the state of Gujarat. Out of the total sample, we have collected sample data of Men (N=51, 59%), and Women (N=35, 41%). The self-reported nature of the study, limited observations, and use of subjective valuation are all limitations of the present analysis.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of men and women

Characteristics	Men(N=51)		Women(N=35)		χ^2
	N	%	N	%	
Age					34.15**
Less than 30	27	52%	13	37	
30 years – 40 years	10	20%	18	52	
40 years – 50 years	9	18%	4	11	
More than 50 years	5	10%	0	0	

Marital Status					20.34**
Single	18	36	8	23	
Married	15	29	24	69	
Widowed	15	29	2	7	
Divorced	3	6	1	3	
Separated	0	0	0	0	
Number of Children					40.37**
None	24	47	12	34	
1-3 Children	23	45	21	60	
More than 3	4	8	2	6	
Number of Family Members					79.15**
Less than 4 members	14	28	10	29	
4 – 8 members	14	28	21	60	
More than 8 members	23	45	4	11	
Education					89.10**
Post-Graduation	6	12	7	20	
PhD	45	88	27	77	
Others	0	0	1	3	
Designation					36.48**
Temporary	0	0	0	0	
Assistant Professor	29	57	21	60	
Associate Professor	19	37	12	34	
Professor	3	6	2	6	
Others	0	0	0	0	
Income (Per Annam)					73.49**
Less than 2 Lakh	0	0	0	0	
2 Lakh - 5 Lakh	9	18	12	34	
5 Lakh - 10 Lakh	39	76	19	54	
More than 10 Lakh	3	6	4	11	
Experience					12.18**
Less than 2 years	1	2	3	9	
2 Years - 5 years	12	24	8	23	
5 years- 10 years	15	29	16	46	
More than 10 years	23	45	8	23	

Source: Authors' own analysis

An email was sent to randomly selected individuals with an invitation to voluntarily participate (no rewards attached) in an optional survey about their perception of the workplace. This survey, though targeted was non-discriminatory. All university teachers and across all disciplines were included in the random selection process. The respondents were contacted through the personal contacts of researchers, informing them about the need and objective of the research. Participants were reassured about using all data for academic purposes only and the maintaining of their information as unidentified and confidential. The questionnaire queried participants on demographic details and factors that affect occupational stress. The latter were derived from the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) and Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). This questionnaire has been categorized into three sections. Section one, to understand socio-demographic factors, we have added questions like age, marital status, number of children, number of family members, income, and others. Employees' socio-characteristics show an essential exemplar in occupational stress and work-life balance. Section two, focused on the topic "How do you feel?" A total of 13 questions addressed aspects of occupational stress. Sample statements include "I feel that I have to do more than one thing at a time", "I feel that I do not get enough resources for the work assigned to me", "I feel that I am unable to use my skills that I acquire from previous experience and training" Section three sought to understand work-life balance. Items addressed included, "My siblings are younger and dependent on me", "My spouse/family does not understand my work demands which impact my personal life." Section four included health-related issues like, "I shout at my family members", "I withdraw from the relationship and give up." Respondents' data were recorded using a Likert scale from 1(Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). The aggregate score indicates a higher level of agreement for the statement. A pilot study on the questionnaire was conducted with a selected sample of the academic professionals to get a required modification. This cross-sectional data was drawn during November to December 2019.

Table 2: Internal consistency for the measurement model

Dimensions	Standardized loading	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (CR)
Job stress	0.78	0.92	0.93
Work-life Balance	0.84	0.91	0.93
Health-Related Issues	0.89	0.89	0.90

Table 2 depicts the reliability measures for all items. Job stress (overall) standardized loading is 0.78 with α value is 0.92 and CR is 0.93, Work-life balance (overall) standardized loading is 0.84 with α value is 0.91 and CR is 0.93 and Health related issues (overall) standardized loading is 0.89 with α value is 0.89 and CR is 0.90.

Tables 3 and 4 provide the correlation coefficients for females and males, respectively. A positive relationship is found between higher job demands and higher work pressure among female respondents ($r = 0.989$, $p < .05$), while negative correlations have been found between across female respondents with respect to support of co-workers at the workplace ($r = -0.223$, $p < .05$). In evaluating the work conditions, females tend to have less inter-communication for the completion of tasks compared to males. There was no significant relationship between the support of supervisors and the development of a work environment for female respondents ($r = 0.122$, $p < .05$). The data suggested positive correlations between organizational WLB policies and practices which have a high impact on job demands and resources ($r = 0.934$, $p < .05$). Career resilience has a positive relationship with support from family members for female working professionals ($r = 0.745$, $p < .05$). Further, job demands have a significant impact on the health issues of female members ($r = 0.904$, $p < .05$). Similarly, female respondents reported that marital stress and job stress tend to be a major source of psychological stress, which in turn affects health. ($r = 0.894$, $p < .05$).

Table 3: Pearson Correlation of job stress, work-life balance, and health related issues among females

Dimensions	JS job demands – resources	JS Work Pressure	JS Psychological stress	JS Multiple tasks	JS Support from Co-workers	JS Support from Supervisors	JS Work environment	WLB Organizational Policies and Practices	WLB Support from Family members	WLB Multiple roles	WLB Career Resilience	HRI Anger Copying	HRI Disengagement with task	HRI Over commitment	HRI Effort Reward Imbalance	HRI Marital stress* Job stress
Job stress																
JS job demands – resources	1															
JS Work Pressure	0.989	1														
JS Psychological stress	0.901	0.878	1													
JS Multiple tasks	0.954	0.923	0.765	1												
JS Support from Co-workers	0.923	0.84	0.897	-0.223	1											
JS Support from Supervisors	0.912	0.945	0.711	0.714	-0.332	1										
JS Work environment	0.911	0.921	0.71	-0.506	0.723	0.122	1									
Work life Balance																
WLB Organizational Policies and Practices	0.887	0.453	0.767	0.234	0.451	0.531	0.511	1								
WLB Support from Family members	0.9	0.719	0.385	-0.327	0.444	0.702	-0.327	0.341	1							
WLB Multiple roles	0.912	0.871	0.456	-0.235	-0.223	-0.412	-0.235	-0.119	-0.211	1						
WLB Career Resilience	0.484	0.201	-0.234	-0.345	-0.102	-0.567	0.193	0.267	0.745	-0.111	1					
Health Related Issues																
HRI Anger Copying	0.84	0.9	0.781	0.923	0.811	0.752	0.327	0.531	0.511	0.337	0.662	1				
HRI Disengagement with task	0.289	0.06	0.176	0.164	0.135	0.243	0.878	0.115	0.198	0.184	-0.133	-0.156	1			
HRI Over commitment	-0.87	0.117	0.115	0.246	0.321	0.41	-0.19	-0.107	-0.114	-0.119	-0.09	-0.211	-0.211	1		
HRI Effort Reward Imbalance	0.897	0.567	0.66	-0.34	-0.235	0.123	-0.412	-0.278	-0.278	0.185	-0.133	-0.238	0.111	0.201	1	
HRI Marital stress* Job stress	0.894	0.256	0.674	0.267	0.561	0.345	-0.234	-0.23	-0.09	-0.129	0.232	0.214	0.251	0.291	0.172	1

Source: Authors’ own analysis, P<0.05

Table 4: Pearson Correlation of job stress, work-life balance and health related issues among males

Dimensions	JS Job demands-reources	JS Work Pressure	JS Psychological stress	JS Multiple tasks	JS Support from Co-workers	JS Support from Supervisors	JS Work environment	WLB Organizational Policies and Practices	WLB Support from Family members	WLB Multiple roles	WLB Career Resilience	HRI Coping	HRI Discomfort with task	HRI Over commitment	HRI Effort Reward Imbalance	HRI Mental stress/Job stress
Job stress																
JS Job demands - resources	1															
JS Work Pressure	0.784	1														
JS Psychological stress	0.231	0.256	1													
JS Multiple tasks	0.127	0.347	0.387	1												
JS Support from Co-workers	0.389	0.316	0.271	-0.223	1											
JS Support from Supervisors	0.767	0.345	0.142	0.117	-0.265	1										
JS Work environment	0.543	0.355	0.22	-0.234	0.723	-0.189	1									
Work life Balance																
WLB Organizational Policies and Practices	0.521	0.39	0.325	0.342	0.222	0.443	-0.167	1								
WLB Support from Family members	0.451	-0.112	-0.236	-0.341	0.105	0.112	0.05	0.341	1							
WLB Multiple roles	0.216	0.241	0.251	0.121	0.142	0.141	0.111	0.152	0.104	1						
WLB Career Resilience	0.124	0.145	0.154	0.143	0.07	0.12	0.12	0.145	0.112	-0.09	1					
Health Related Issues																
HRI Coping	0.778	0.236	0.116	0.236	0.231	0.235	0.221	0.111	0.104	-0.124	0.326	1				
HRI Discomfort with task	0.21	0.06	0.32	0.11	0.214	0.126	0.123	0.115	0.03	0.184	0.11	-0.215	1			
HRI Over commitment	0.767	0.256	0.11	0.124	0.121	0.141	0.11	0.213	0.456	0.479	0.324	-0.211	-0.211	1		
HRI Effort Reward Imbalance	0.671	0.255	0.341	0.167	0.215	0.341	0.102	0.314	0.11	0.157	0.12	-0.238	0.111	0.201	1	
HRI Mental stress/Job stress	0.983	0.345	0.451	0.115	0.214	0.267	0.23	0.07	0.15	0.167	0.165	0.342	0.983	0.451	0.12	1

Source: Authors' own analysis, P<0.05

Table 4 illustrates the values of the correlation for male respondents. A positive relationship was found between higher job demands and higher work pressure among male respondents ($r = 0.784$, $p < .05$). Moderate correlations were noted between multiple tasks and psychological stress ($r = 0.549$, $p < 0.5$). Male professionals revealed higher scores compare to females in performing multiple tasks at the workplace. Organizational policies and practices have a positive association with career resilience for male professionals, which also impacts their productivity and retention. There is a marginal relationship between marital stress and job stress and its relationship to psychological stress among male candidates ($r=0.119$, $p < 0.5$). Further, it was noted that male respondents show detachment with work when they encounter job stress or marital stress. ($r=0.993$, $p<0.5$). However, male respondents are over-committed, which impacts health-related issues ($r=0.767$ $p<0.5$). Males displayed a positive and strong association between job stress and health; this was higher compared with female professionals.

Tables 5, 6, and 7 provides results from statistical analyses by using the MANCOVA test which was executed to assess values of male and female respondents' differences in perceiving work stress, work-life balance & health-related issues.

Table 5: Dimension #1 Job stress

Dimensions	Men(N=51)		Women(N=35)		F	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD		
Job demands-resources	19.28	4.39	27.89	5.29	12.34	0.001
Work Pressure*Marital Status	16.78	4.09	18.90	4.25	10.89	0.000
Daily routine task*Marital Status	15.08	3.88	16.07	4.00	12.34	0.002
Psychological stress*Marital Status	10.56	3.24	14.56	3.81	15.67	0.001
Multiple tasks*Marital Status	23.12	4.80	11.92	3.45	21.89	0.000
Support from Co-workers *Marital Status	17.89	4.22	6.12	2.47	3.78	0.002
Support from Supervisors*Marital Status	9.10	3.01	11.90	3.33	16.23	0.003
Work environment/culture*Marital Status	21.89	4.67	20.16	4.49	12.38	0.000
Growth opportunities*Age*Marital Status	23.67	4.86	17.17	4.14	9.80	0.001
Overall Job stress*Marital Status	17.45	4.18	23.89	4.89	7.56	0.001

The results indicate that overall women academic professionals tend to have more job stress compared with their male counterparts. The data further revealed that widowed/separated working female respondents have more stress compared with widowed/separated working male respondents. Data also provide evidence that married (having children) female respondents suffer more job-related stress compare to married (having children) male respondents. Though, there no relationship noted between work/job stress among unmarried female respondents and unmarried male respondents. One-way analysis of variances (ANOVA), reveal that female respondents score higher in job-related stress while performing more tasks at one time compared with male respondents. There were major differences noted for psychological distress due to high work pressure between males and females. Females tend to have more challenges in handling higher work pressure, leading to psychological distress. The analysis reveals that work environment/culture creates more stress in females compared with male respondents, but growth opportunity related challenges are measured across age and gender is measured. It is found that unmarried women between 30 – 40 years have significantly higher scores compared with any other age group of female respondents, while married males between 30- 40 years have higher scores compared with other male respondents. Detailed observations in data further indicate that

psychological distress may result in chronic stress and emotional burnout, which affects both higher absenteeism or health-related issues among female working professionals.

Table 6: Dimension #2 Work-life balance

Dimensions	Men(N=51)		Women(N=35)		F	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD		
Organisational Policies and Practices	29.80	8.23	25.91	7.56	23.45	0.000
Support from Family members	11.67	4.98	10.29	2.34	12.12	0.001
Multiple roles	19.34	6.89	26.70	6.89	11.89	0.000
Career Resilience	29.23	8.09	12.56	4.09	14.56	0.002
Overall WLB	21.48	7.90	29.35	11.89	10.90	0.001

Data demonstrates (see Table 6) that working women tend to play multiple roles compare to male respondents. Unmarried women scored higher in career orientation and accomplishments and exhibit lower emotional exhaustion than married women.

Table 7: Dimension #3 Health related issues

Dimensions	Men(N=51)		Women(N=35)		F	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD		
Job demands-resources	29.76	5.45	22.31	4.72	11.23	0.000
Anger Coping	12.34	3.51	33.46	5.76	9.87	0.001
Detachment with task	49.81	7.05	11.76	3.42	12.35	0.002
Over-commitment	39.90	6.31	35.46	5.95	23.90	0.001
Effort Reward Imbalance	34.45	5.89	19.89	4.46	16.15	0.002
Marital stress*Job stress	23.56	4.85	45.23	6.73	18.19	0.000
Overall Health issues	31.12	5.58	12.74	3.56	12.39	0.001

Table 7 illustrates the health-related issues among males and females. Data reveals that female respondents are more able to cope with anger in both their professional and personal life. Women show a higher score in coping styles and anger control, while males score higher in detachment of task and emotional reticence. Self-reported over-committed male respondents have noted higher scores for health-related issues compared with female respondents. While exploring the effort-reward imbalance score, male academic professionals have a high mean score compared with females.

Table 8: Hypothesis decision

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	T	P	Result
Job pressure - Job stress	-1.786	2.111	0.000	H1: Supported
Multiple roles - Job stress	0.675	6.898	0.029	H2: Supported
Career resilience - Work-life balance	0.121	2.789	0.231	H3: Not Supported
Effort reward imbalance - Work-life balance	0.123	1.907	0.123	H4: Not supported
Marital stress*Job stress - Work-life balance	0.198	2.456	0.000	H5: Supported
Emotional Exhaustion - Emotional Burnout	0.342	9.898	0.026	H6: Supported
Emotional reticence - Health-related issues	0.123	1.907	0.323	H7: Not supported
Overall Job stress - Overall work-life imbalance	0.357	4.223	0.003	H8: Supported
Overall Job stress - Overall health-related issues	0.357	4.223	0.003	H9: Not Supported
Overall work-life imbalance - Overall health-related issues	0.357	4.223	0.003	H10: Not supported

Table 8 demonstrates a summary of hypothesis testing. The relationship between job pressure and job stress is found to be higher in female respondents compared with male respondents. ($p=0.000$), similarly performing multiple roles at work and home and having job stress is also found higher in females compared with males ($p=0.029$). The study suggests that career resilience and job stress in male respondents are greater compared with female respondents ($p=0.231$). Correspondingly, effort-reward imbalance and job stress are found strong relationship among male than to female ($p=0.123$). Marital issues for females as well as job stress impact work-life balance compared with male candidates ($p=0.000$). Further, emotional disturbance and emotional exhaustion of female candidates impact female respondents' job stress which leads to emotional burnout ($p=0.026$). In seeming contradiction, emotional reticence scores highlight that male candidates have more health-related issues which lead to headache, hypertension, cardiac issues ($p=0.323$). Overall job stress on work-life balance is statistically significant for female respondents compared with their male counterparts ($p=0.003$). Male respondents tend to have more health-related issues due to job stress compare to female respondents. ($p=0.123$). Work-life balance on overall health issues is more pronounced in male respondents compared with female respondents. ($p=0.203$).

Discussion

The study provides significant evidence of gender differences in perceived stress within a sample of academic professionals at one university in the state of Gujarat, India. Researchers found substantial dissimilarities in job stress and its dimensions among females and males. Female respondents scored high in marital stress and job stress, which leads to frustration and emotional burnout. Women, also frequently reported health-related issues due to job stress. During the analyses, socio-demographic factors were found to be significant on job stress and work-life

balance dimensions. Marital status and number of children have a significant relationship between job stress and work-life balance and greater work dissatisfaction. Married women have scored higher psychological distress due to multiple roles in professional and personal life compared to other categories among female respondents. Male respondents are more likely to have health-related issues compared to female respondents. Comprehensive review of the health data of male respondents noted common health-related issues of dry mouth, hypertension, emotionally exhaustion, drinking (alcohol), smoking habits, musculoskeletal tenderness, and pain, while anxiety attacks, forgetfulness, confusion, overreacting on a certain task, fatigue, and impulse buying among female respondents.

The results of this study are consistent with other research that identifies job function as being the more accurate basis for assessing professional and personal life balance for both men and women. Further, this research highlights the complexity of cultural norms and implicit gender expectations for both men and women. The latter could provide insight with respect to policy to reduce gender bias in working conditions. Organizations could for example, incorporate employee well-being strategies, like flex work, and foster supervisor support and a sympathetic and collaborative work culture.

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