

Job Strain and Well-being of Teaching Professionals: An Empirical Investigation

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Abstract— The aim of the current study was to examine job strain and well-being in a group of male and female teaching professionals. The main objectives of the current study were to (i) Examine the difference between male teachers with low job strain and female teachers with low job strain on general well-being. (ii) Examine the difference between male teachers with high job strain and female teachers with high job strain on general well-being. (iii) Examine the difference between male teachers with low job strain and male teachers with high job strain on general well-being and (iv) Examine the difference between female teachers with low job strain and female teachers with high job strain on general well-being. A sample of 100 senior secondary teachers were selected from one of the Central Universities at Aligarh City using convenience sampling method of 32 were male and 58 were female teachers. The measures used were PGI Well-being scale (Moudgil et al, 1986) and Job Strain Questionnaire (Singh, 1989). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics like mean and SD and inferential statistics like t-test. The findings of the current work indicate that mental health of males is better than of their female counterparts. The findings also indicate that high job strain effects the mental health of both the groups and male teachers are influenced more than females on their well-beings. Finally, significant difference was not found between the mean scores of female teachers with low job strain and high job strain on their general well-being. The study has implications for stress management programs for the teachers at senior secondary level to enhance their well-being and specific job related performance.

Keywords— Job strain, well-being, stress,

I. INTRODUCTION

Psychologists have relatively recently started studying the concept of well-being. It is concerned with people's feeling about their everyday life activities. Such feelings range from negative mental states (Anxiety, depression, dissatisfaction, unhappiness etc.) to positive aspects of life (good health satisfaction, happiness, etc.)

The concept of Well-being is difficult to define since it

includes affective, cognitive, and motivational aspects of life experiences with subjective feeling of satisfaction. There are so many terms such as 'satisfaction', happiness, hope, optimism, positive mental health, and quality of life, which are often interchangeably used as equivalent of well-being. It is to be noted that happiness and satisfaction are two words, which are often regarded as equivalent of well-being. Happiness and satisfaction include many life situations, such as health, marriage, family work, financial situation, educational opportunity, self-esteem, creativity, belongingness and-trust in others. There are a number of ways of defining well-being. Some of the earlier definitions in psychology and sociology focused on well-being as the ultimate goal of life. Bradburn is often credited for initially demonstrating the relative independence of positive and negative affect in a general population sample. He further showed that it was the critical balance between positive and negative affect that was an important component of well-being. Research has also shown that in addition to the importance of positive and negative affect, an independent aspect of well-being is cognitive evaluations. This tripartite model of well-being has enjoyed much support and popularity and while other conceptualizations of well-being have also been considered has been as widely accepted.

The work on subjective well-being or psychological well-being is carried out under the broad topic of quality of life. Well-being is viewed as a harmonious satisfaction of one's desires and goals (Chekola, 1975). According to Campbell and others (1970), the quality of life is a composite measure of physical, mental, and social well-being. Levi (1987) defined well-being as a dynamic state of mind characterized by a reasonable amount of harmony between an individual abilities, needs and expectations and environmental demands and opportunities. Okun and Stock (1987) have identified three features of subjective well-being. These are as follows:

- a) It is based on subjective experience instead of objective condition of life.
- b) It has a positive as well as negative affect, and It is a global experience as opposed to experience in particular domains such as work.

General well-being is defined as “the subjective feeling’ of contentment, happiness, satisfaction with life experience and of one’s role in the world of work. Sense of achievement, utility, belongingness and absence of distress, dissatisfaction or worry, etc.” (Verma & Verma, 1989). They put emphasis on the term “subjective” well-being because they attribute that the above mentioned aspects cannot be evaluated objectively. General well-being is a part of the broad concept of positive mental health, which is not a mere absence of disease or infirmity (Verma, 1988). Verma (1988) opines that the absence of psychological ill-being / ill-health does not necessarily mean presence of psychological well-being. A person can have both the conditions poor, both the conditions good and any one of them good, with all its accompanying results. Psychological well-being is a person’s evaluative reactions to, his or her life either in term of life satisfaction, ‘cognitive evaluation’ or affect ongoing emotional reaction (Diener & Diener, 1995).

Good life can be defined in terms of “subjective wellbeing” (SWB) and in colloquial term is sometimes libeled “happiness”. According to Diener (2000) “SWB refers to people’s evaluations of their lives-evaluations that are both affective and cognitive. People experience abundant SWB when they feel many pleasant and little unpleasant emotion when they are engaged in interesting activities, when they experience many pleasures and few pains and when they are satisfied with their lives” (p.34). The field of SWB focuses on people’s own evaluations of their lives. Diener, Sapyta, and Suh (1998) say that SWB is not sufficient for the good life but it appears to be increasingly necessary for it.

Nishizawa (1996) interpreted the term “psychic wellbeing as the same as “happiness along with one’s cognitive appraisal of how satisfying his or her life has been and is, also encompassing positive future prospect of life “hope”. Diener, (1984) suggested that these definitions could be grouped into three categories. The first involved the assignment of the qualities of individuals (for instance, virtuousness, success) by others, hence it cannot be thought as a subjective state. The second encompasses the individual’s assessment of satisfaction with life. Shin and Sohnson (1978) have defined this term of happiness as “a global assessment of a person’s quality of life according to his own chosen criteria” (p.478). Finally, the third meaning of well-being is defined as denoting a preponderance of positive affect over negative affect (Brad burn, 1969).

According to Diener (1984), there are three characteristics in the study of subjective well-being. First, it is subjective. According to Campbell (1976), it resides within the

experience of the individual. Notably absent from definitions of subjective well-being are necessary objective conditions such as health, comfort, virtue or wealth (Kammann, 1983). Second, subjective well-being includes positive measures. It is not just the absence of negative factors, as is true of most measured of mental health. However, the relationship between positive and negative indices is not completely understood. Third, subjective well-being measures typically include a global assessment of all aspects of a person’s life. Although affect or satisfaction within a certain domain may be assessed, the emphasis is usually placed on .an integral judgment of the person’s life. Nonetheless, measures may cover a period ranging from a few weeks to one’s entire life. There is not a prior way to decide what time period is best. Rather researches must uncover the correlates of subjective well-beings varying frames.

Components of subjective well-being (SWB). There are three components of SWB: Satisfaction, pleasant affect and low levels of unpleasant affect. For Diener, Suh, and Oishi (1997), each of the three components of SWB can be split into subdivisions. Global satisfaction can be divided with the various domains of life such as reaction, love, marriage, friendship, and so forth, and these domains can in turn be divided into facts. Pleasant affect can be divided into specific emotions such as, say, affection, and pride. Finally, unpleasant affect can be described in specific term of emotions and moods such as shame, guilt, sadness, angers, and anxiety. Each of the sub-divisions of affect can also be further sub-divided.

The contemporary cut throat competition in job market and pressure to outperform others for gaining better positions in an organization has significantly affected the well-being of employees. Job stress is an ongoing process which often resulted in many behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and physiological and job related performance difficulties in the employees which in turn influence their well-being. It is a common perception that working life is changing across the world, and these changes have led to new challenges and problems for organizations and employees. The majority of these changes mean that workers are under growing pressure to compete, adapt and learn new skills in order to meet the demands of their work. The relationship between job characteristics and employee well-being has attracted considerable attention in the job stress literature. A number of conceptual models have been developed that relate job characteristics to the health and well-being of working populations (Cooper,1998). Two of the most common models related to job stress research are:

1. **Job Demand-Control Model:** The Job Demand-Control (JD-C) Model is a situation-centred model on which much of the current job stress research is based. In its basic form, the JD-C Model postulates that the primary sources of job stress lie within two basic characteristics of the job itself: (1) "psychological job demands" and (2) "job decision latitude" or "job control". Psychological job demands, or workload, are defined by Karasek (1979) as psychological stressors present in the work environment (e.g. high pressure of time, high working pace, difficult and mentally exacting work). The term "job decision latitude" has been described as the worker's ability to control his own activities and skill usage. Psychological strains are a consequence of the joint effects of the demands of a job and the range of job control available to the employee. These joint effects are also called interaction effects.

2. **Effort-Reward Imbalance Model:** This model puts emphasis on reward gained by an employee rather than control structure of work. Besides, it also gives importance to personality pattern of employees like coping styles, etc.

II. Aims & Objectives

The aim of the current study was to examine job strain and well-being in a group of male and female teaching professionals.

Objectives

The main objectives of the present study were to examine:

1. The difference between male teachers with low job strain and female teachers with low job strain on general well-being.
2. The difference between male teachers with high job strain and female teachers with high job strain on general well-being.
3. The difference between male teachers with low job strain and male teachers with high job strain on general well-being.
4. The difference between female teachers with low job strain and female teachers with high job strain on general well-being.

III. METHODOLOGY

Sample

Thirty two male teachers and fifty eight female teachers were drawn from senior secondary school certificate for boys and girls. Both the groups of teachers were working in the capacity of temporary. Male and female teachers were further categorized into two groups, namely, low job strain and high job strain. The basis of classification was

medians score. Male subjects who have obtained below 37 and above 37 were placed into the categories of low job strain (N=17) and high job strain (N=15) groups respectively. Median score of female teachers on job strain questionnaire was found to be 42. Subjects whose score falls below and above than this value were categorized into two groups: Female Teachers with low Job strain (N=33) and female Teachers with High Job Strain (N=25).

Procedure

The researcher first met the University management and informed them about the current study and its possible implications for the students. The permission was sought from them and details about the administration of the psychological tests and possible time taken was explained. Having sought the permission, the administration of the tests was done in group and in some cases individually. The management and the students were assured about the confidentiality of their responses and that the name of the University will not be disclosed in subsequent publications without their prior written permission. The data were collected individually from temporary teachers at their schools. After data collection, the scoring was done manually.

Measures

- i. **Sociodemographic Data Sheet:** It was developed by the investigators to obtain information about respondents' name, age, gender, qualification and marital status.
- ii. **PG1 Well-being Scale** (Moudgil et.al., 1986) was used to measure positive mental health (subjective well-being). The scale consisted of 20 items. The scale is highly reliable and valid.
- iii. **Job strain Questionnaire** (JSQ, Singh, 1989): It was used to study the level of job strain. It is a 14 items questionnaire consisting of both positively and negatively keyed items. In which each statement is rated on a five-point scale. In all three dimensions of job strains - latent hostility depression and physical strain - in measured. It has standardized alpha reliability. Content and concurrent validity are also established.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics like mean and SD and inferential statistics like independent t-test.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analyzed by means of the test have been

presented in the following tables.

Table 1: Showing comparison between the mean scores of Male Teachers with Low Job Strain (MTWLJS) and Female Teachers with Low Job Strain (FTWLJS) on general well-being.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P
MTWLJS	17	16.64	3.65		
				5.27**	< 0.01
FTWLJS	33	11.58	2.17		

** Significant at 0.01 level ($p < 0.05$)

Male teachers scored significantly higher than the female teachers representing the low job strain group on general well-being. This finding implies that the mental health level of male teachers is higher than that of the female teachers. In the case of female teachers low job strain affects their general well-being or mental health. Chassie and Bhagat(1980) reported the differential effects of role stress experienced by women were exam index in terms of commitment to the organization, overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with specific aspects of the job, and personal-life satisfaction. Role stress was significantly and negatively related to organizational commitment; overall job satisfaction; satisfaction with pay, work, co-workers, and supervision; and personal-life satisfaction. The t-tests analysis revealed significant mean differences between high and low role-stress groups on organizational commitment, overall job satisfaction, and satisfaction with extrinsic aspects of the job. The results are discussed in terms of their implications for role management in the integration of women into modern work organizations. In one study, Nathawat & Mathur (1993) compared marital adjustment and subjective well-being in Indian-educated housewives ($N = 200$) and working women ($N = 200$) who were administered a Marital Adjustment Questionnaire (Kumar & Rastogi, 1976) and 10 measures of subjective well-being. Results indicated significantly better marital adjustment and subjective well-being for the working women than for the housewives. Specifically, working women reported higher scores on general health, life satisfaction, and self-esteem measures and lower scores on hopelessness, insecurity, and anxiety, compared with the housewives, although the housewives had lower scores on negative affect than the working women. Findings were insignificant on positive affect and depression.

Table 2: Showing comparison between the mean scores of

Male Teachers with Low Job Strain (MTWHJS) and Female Teachers with High Job Strain (FTWHJS) on general well-being.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value
MTWHJS	15	11.06	1.84	
				0.93
FTWHJS	25	11.64	1.98	

Male teachers with high job strain and female teachers with high job strain did not differ significantly on general wellbeing. That is, the mean and SD scores of both the groups of subjects are of almost the same level. This finding suggests that high job strain affects the mental health of male and female teachers. The perceived level of job strain of part-time teachers implies that they are more anxious, helpless and have job insecurity.

Table 3: Showing comparison between the mean scores of Male Teachers with Low Job Strain (MTWLJS) and Male Teachers with Low Job Strain (MTWHJS) on general well-being.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P
MTWLJS	17	16.64	3.65		
				5.58**	< 0.01
MTWLJS	15	11.06	1.84		

** Significant at 0.01 level ($p < 0.05$)

Significant difference was found between the mean scores of male teachers with low job strain and male teachers with high job strain on general well-being. This finding suggests that high job strain significantly influences the wellbeing of the male teachers more than their counterparts.

Table 4: Showing comparison between the mean scores of Female Teachers with Low Job Strain (FTWLJS) and Female Teachers with High Job Strain (FTWHJS) on general well-being.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value
FTWLJS	33	11.58	1.56	
				0.23
FTWHJS	25	11.69	1.98	

Significant difference was not found between the mean scores of female teachers with low job strain and high job strain on general well-being. Result suggests that levels of job strain did not affect the general well-being of the female teachers.

Although the relationship between job strain and

psychological distress has been explored in many studies (Roxburgh, 1996), till date results have been inconsistent. In addition, gender has been evaluated as a control variable. In other studies, conclusions vary. As a result, it remains unclear whether the relationship between psychosocial characteristics of work and psychological distress differs for men and women. It is, therefore, important to understand the gender differences in the qualities of work environment that contributes to health and well-being.

V. CONCLUSIONS

1. Male teachers scored significantly higher than the female teachers representing the low job strain group on general well-being.
2. Male teachers with high job strain and female teachers with high job strain did not differ significantly on general wellbeing.
3. Male teachers with low strain and high strain group differ significantly.
4. Female teachers with low strain and high strain group did not differ significantly.

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