

## **Role Overload and Job Stress among the Female University Teachers- Saudi Context**

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### **Abstract**

The present world is full of challenges and busy routines, the responsibilities and tasks carried by a teacher are physically and mentally demanding. The teachers are required to utilize loads of energy in their daily duties in the educational institutes along with their personal and family commitments. Especially in the case of a female, the responsibilities are doubled as a female has to strike a balance between her job and family life. This balancing act of hers put piles of stress on her. More than ever before excessive work is seen as a mean of job stress. The main objective of the current study was to investigate role overload as a predictor of job stress among university teachers. The study also intended to find the differences that may exist among the married and unmarried females in experiences of role overload and job stress. The study sample consisted of 100 university female teachers from two campuses of King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah. The study variables of role overload and job stress were measured by Reilly Role Overload Scale and Job Stress Survey. A demographic sheet was used to collect the demographic variables. Results of the study were analyzed through SPSS ver 21. Statistical tools applied for analysis consisted of correlation analysis and t-tests. The results of regression analysis indicated that role overload is a significant predictor of job stress. The findings of the t-test revealed that there is no significant difference in the role overload and job stress among the married and unmarried female university teachers.

**Keywords:** Role-overload, Job stress, University teachers, Correlation Analysis

### **Introduction**

Job stress is a trend that indicates some characteristics of work that creates a threat for employees. Job requirements can be the chief reason of stress at workplace in which the employees are unable to manage themselves and their tasks in order to meet the necessities of the job. Stress related to job has negative penalties on the individual as well as the organization (Malik, 2011).

Role overload is characterized as a state of conflict that occurs when the degree of demand go beyond the resources that are available to individual and the individual is confronted with completion of a lot of tasks that call for attention (Reilly, 1982). In present world women persistently attempt to balance the demands in their multiple roles and once there is equilibrium among these roles women can keep away from living through role overload (Stuart & Garrison, 2002).

Roles associated demands, requirements and management of resources and limited availability of time are commonly described as major sources of stress and anxiety among the academicians (Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Dua & Stough, 2001). Job related stress is getting more and more attention as it has considerable financial consequences for the educational institutes through job dissatisfaction, inferior quality of employee productivity and impoverished physical and

psychological health (Dua, 1994). In general, it is believed that some degree of stress is effective as it may fuel creativity and performance, but excessive and undue amount of stress may inhibit creativity and also affect the performance of the employee.

University and other educational institutes necessitate academic excellence, responsibility and competitiveness. Stressed teachers and academicians can be a huge charge to a university due to absenteeism, lethargy, belatedness and turnover. They may not be able to furnish good quality of graduates, skilled lectures and research work. Taris and colleagues (2001) stated that academicians under stress reported having withdrawal behaviors like cynical attitude towards work, lowered organizational commitment and intention to quit university (turnover intention).

Literature research reveals that teachers experience higher level of stress in comparison to other occupational clusters (Winefield, 2000; Kinman & Jones, 2004). Teaching is rated as one of the most stressful professions today. A study reported that 41.5% teachers reported higher levels of stress, while 58.5% reported low levels of stress, whereas 36% of teachers reported to feel stressed almost all or most of the time. Such statistics are alarming and indicate that an important factor for quitting the job or a need to seek professional psychological help to deal with stress (Smith, Brice, Collins, Matthews & McNamara, 2000). Quick and Quick (1984) anticipated that job demands, role requirements, physical challenge and interpersonal responsibilities are the most major stressors related to job.

There has been less focus on the impact of role overload on job stress. For that reason, it is essential to scholarly contribute to this space in the literature. The main objective of the present study is to investigate the impact of role overload on Job stress among Female university teachers. Notionally, the present research adds to body of knowledge and the findings of the study would be valuable and helpful to guide policy makers and academicians in Saudi Arabia to avert or decrease job stress among university teachers.

## **Methodology**

### ***Hypotheses***

- There is a positive relationship between role overload and job stress among female university teachers.
- Role overload is a significant predictor of Job stress among female university teachers.
- Married teachers will have higher role overload and job stress as compared to Unmarried teachers.

### ***Sample***

The sample of the present study comprised of 100 female university teachers from two campuses of the King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah. The data was collected from married and unmarried teachers. The sample age ranged from 25 to 60 years. Sampling technique used for the collection of the data was purposive sampling.

### ***Instrument***

#### ***Demographic Data Sheet***

The demographic information sheet was used to collect the data of the participants regarding Age, Marital Status, and Length of Service.

#### ***Reilly Role Overload Scale***

The construct of role overload was measured through the usage of Reilly overload scale developed by Reilly (1982). It consists of 13 items that are scaled on Likert type scale with the response category ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The scale has well-established reliability where Cronbach's alpha is .88 and item total correlations vary range from .50 to .80. It

also has good validity as reported by the correlations of the scale with women's work attitude and work status to be .15 and .17 respectively.

#### *Job Stress Scale*

Job Stress Scale developed by Parker and Decotiis in 1983 was used to measure job stress in the present study. It is comprised of 13 items scored on a 5-point Likert scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It consists of two dimensions: time stress and anxiety. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.71 to 0.82 which indicates good internal consistency of the scale. Job stress was negatively correlated with organizational commitment and job satisfaction and positively correlated with role ambiguity and overload. This reveals a good validity of the scale.

#### *Procedure*

The respondents were carefully selected according to the characteristics required for the study utilizing purposive sampling technique. The consent was taken from the respondents for the participation in the study. They were informed regarding the purpose of the study. They were asked to first fill the demographic sheet and then proceed to other study scales for the measurement of role overload and job stress. Respondents were instructed regarding the completion of the scales. They were assured about the confidentiality of the information obtained through the present study and were thanked for their cooperation. The data analyses were conducted by SPSS ver 21.

### **Results**

**Table 1. Reliability Analysis of Job Stress Scale and Role Overload Scale (N=100)**

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
Job stress scale	.85	13
Role overload scale	.78	13

Table 1 presents that Cronbach's alpha reliability of Job Stress Scale and Role Overload Scale is highly reliable to be used with sampled population.

**Table 2. Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Role Overload and Job Stress (N=100)**

	Role Overload	
	<i>R</i>	<i>p</i>
Job stress	.75**	.000

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between role overload and job stress. The findings are significant at 0.01 level. This reveals that female university teachers having role overload experience more job stress.

**Table 3. Linear Regression Analysis indicating Role Overload as the predictor of Job Stress (N=100)**

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Constant	.54	3.83		.14	.887
Job Stress	.90	.07	.75	11.3	.000
$R^2 = .75$					
$\Delta R^2 = .56$					

Table 4 exhibits the values of  $\Delta R^2$  to be .56 which indicates that a 56% variance in the Job stress is attributable towards Role Overload ( $F = 129.21$   $p < .001$ ). Thus, Role Overload has a significant impact on job stress ( $\beta = .75$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Table 4. Mean, Standard deviation and t-value of married and unmarried female university (N=100)**

Scale	Marital Status	N	M	SD	t	p
Job Stress	Married	45	43.488	11.079	.01	.95
	Unmarried	49	43.449	10.072		
Role Overload	Married	45	48.333	8.573	.67	.49
	Unmarried	49	47.122	8.709		

$df = 98$

Independent t-tests were computed to study the differences between the means of the married and unmarried university female teachers' viz-e-vis the levels of Job stress and Role Overload. The findings revealed that there is no difference in the role overload and job stress among the married and unmarried female university teachers.

### Discussion

As a matter of fact research has indicated that employees with overloaded tasks produce lower levels of efficiency and furnish poor job satisfaction. The critical demands of organizations and administration to fulfill the targets would be unrewarding in case if the outcome of work exercise is poor performance which will eventually result in substandard products and services as well as loss of credibility in the market. Additively it would lead to stress related to job, psychological strain, physical diseases, job dissatisfaction and low morale among the employees. Attention to quality details, adequacy and satisfactoriness of the service user are what gives credibility to an organization. Vanishree (2014) found that work overload produces job stress among workers that results in poor concentration, mental illnesses and poor performance.

University teachers have received little or no attention in the job stress literature. The research further reveals that female workers are more susceptible to role overload than male workers (Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Stuart & Garrison, 2002).

Therefore, the present research aimed at investigating the impact of role overload and job stress among the female university teachers. Academician and faculty members face problems in completing their assigned tasks appropriately due to role overload (Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Dua, & Stough, 2001). They perform under tight schedules and are accountable for completing various diverse tasks in a limited time frame. These might be the reasons for experiencing role overload at university which may lead to job stress.

Centering on the results of the present study, a significant positive relationship was found between role overload and job stress. Somewhat, similar findings were found in another study conducted at University of Dammam which indicated that role overload relates significantly to psychological strain among university lecturers. The findings of the present study are also consistent with research studies conducted by Kebelo (2012), Posig & Kickul (2003), and Rath (2011).

The findings of the current study support that role overload leads to job stress in female university teachers. The significant role of work overload in predicting job stress was found in the present study. The findings are supported by the other studies (Idris 2011; Posig & Kickul 2003).

Literature research reveals that there is difference in experience of role overload between married and unmarried females (Griffith, Steptoe, & Cropley, 1999). But the present study found opposite results indicating no significant difference in role overload among married and unmarried females. Literature reveals that there is a significant difference on role overload and job stress among married and unmarried women. Some studies reflect that single women have higher job stress as compared to married women (Khan, Aqeel & Riaz; Osmany & Khan, 2003). Whereas other studies report that married females have higher job related stress as compared to unmarried women (Freudenberger, 1992; Parveen, 2009). The findings of present research contradict some other studies which found that there were differences in job stress among married and unmarried females. The present findings indicate no significant difference in job stress among married and unmarried female university teachers.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Future Study**

There is the limitation in generalization and inference making about the entire population. Our research sample is not very large Enlarging sample size may provide more insight in the issue at hand. This study was only conducted on working females. Further research could be done on nonworking females.

### **Conclusions**

From this paper, it can be concluded that to be effective, organizational members must recognize that work overload is detrimental to work output and organizational success. To control stress related to job, the jobs may be properly planned and designed for the university teachers so that quality of education, student and institutes should improve.

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## **Appendix**

### **Questionnaire**

#### **Questionnaire on Job Stress and Work Load**

Following are some items related to job stress and work load. Please rate each question from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree by encircling the corresponding number.

Please answer these questions as honestly and accurately as possible.

1. **Strongly Agree**
2. **Somewhat Disagree**
3. **Not Sure**
4. **Somewhat Agree**
5. **Strongly Agree**

<b>Job Stress items:</b>	
1: Working here makes it hard to spend enough time with my family.	1 2 3 4 5
2: I spend so much time at work.	1 2 3 4 5
3: Working here leaves little time for other activities.	1 2 3 4 5
4: I frequently get the feeling I am married to the company.	1 2 3 4 5
5: I have too much work and too little time to do it in.	1 2 3 4 5
6: I sometimes dread the telephone ringing at home because the call might be job related.	1 2 3 4 5
7: I feel like I never have a day off.	1 2 3 4 5
8: Too many people at my level in the company get burned out by job demands.	1 2 3 4 5
9: I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job.	1 2 3 4 5
10: My job gets to me more than I should.	1 2 3 4 5
11: There are lots of times when my job drives me right up the wall.	1 2 3 4 5
12: Sometimes when I think about my job I get a tight feeling in my chest.	1 2 3 4 5
13: I feel guilty when I take time off from my job.	1 2 3 4 5

<b>Work Load items:</b>	
14: I have things to do which I don't really have the time and energy for.	1 2 3 4 5
15: There are too many demands on my time.	1 2 3 4 5
16: I need more hours in the day to do all the things which are expected of me.	1 2 3 4 5
17: I can't ever seem to get caught up.	1 2 3 4 5
18: I don't ever seem to have any time for myself.	1 2 3 4 5
19: There are times when I cannot meet everyone's' expectations.	1 2 3 4 5
20: Sometimes I feel as if there are not enough hours in the day.	1 2 3 4 5
21: Many times I have to cancel commitments.	1 2 3 4 5
22: I seem to have to overextend myself in order to be able to finish everything I have to do.	1 2 3 4 5
23: I seem to have more commitments to overcome than some other women I know.	1 2 3 4 5
24: I feel I have to do things hastily and maybe less carefully in order to get everything done.	1 2 3 4 5
25: I find myself having to prepare priority lists (lists which tell me which things I should do first) to get done all the things I have to do. Otherwise I forget.	1 2 3 4 5
26: I just can't find the energy in me to do all the things expected of me.	1 2 3 4 5

- Reilly (1982) ROLE OVERLOAD SCALE is composed of 13 Likert-type items scored on a 5-point basis from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

Reliability of role overload scale: Coefficient alpha for the scale was 0.88, and item-to-total correlations ranged from 0.50 to 0.80. Correlations with other construct showed some evidence of validity. For example, correlations of the scale with women's work attitude and work status were 0.15 and 0.17, respectively

- Decotis JOB STRESS SCALE is composed of 13 Likert-type items scored on a 5-point basis from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

Job stress scale was developed by Parker and Decotiis (1983). The measure uses 13 items to measure job stress along two dimensions. One dimension is time stress and the second dimension is anxiety.