

Impact of Job Stress on Mental Health and Work-Life Balance: Cross-Sectional Study

Ayesha Malik^{1*}, Fatima Javaid², Syeda Bisma Batool Gardezi¹**Abstract**

This study examines the impact of job stress on university teachers from government and private universities in Multan, and how it affects their mental health and work-life balance. Data was collected from ($N=140$) university teachers using a convenience sampling method. The scales used were Workplace Stress scale (Rosenfeld, 1988), Psychological Wellbeing scale (Ryff et al., 2007) and Work Balance Questioner (Brough et al., 2014). The results indicated a strong negative correlation ($r=-.07$) between job stress and mental health, suggesting that mental health problems arise from job stress. Furthermore, there was an inverse relationship between job stress and work-life balance, with an ($R^2=-.02$). Additionally, there was a negative correlation between mental health and work-life balance, as indicated by ($R^2=.08$). The study also investigated gender disparities and found that female teachers exhibited a higher level of mental health ($M=164.52$) compared to male. The proposes implications for mental health and work life balance for university teachers.

Keywords: Burnout, Employee Well-being, Job Stress, Mental Health, Work-Life Balance

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Introduction**Background**

This study examined job stress and its effect on mental health and work-life balance incorporates multiple perspectives and latest research findings. Job stress is widely acknowledged as an important aspect that impacts both mental health and work life balance among different occupations. Excessive job stress has been connected to negative mental health consequences like burnout, depression, and anxiety along with physical health issues like orthopedic and

cardiovascular illnesses. Research, for example, on health care workers indicates that job demands and stress can negatively impact work-life balance and efficiency, with work-life balance serving as an intermediary between job stress and worker performance (Arif et al., 2022).

Job Stress

Job stress is characterized by elements in the workplace that an individual sees as intimidating or stressful, or by characteristics that cause uneasiness. Branham (2005) claims that a significant proportion, ranging from twenty-five percent to fifty percent, of individuals experience a reduction in work efficiency and a greater chance of leaving their job due to negative effects.

Branham (2005) affirms that stress can arise from various factors, such as the company's inability or refusal to provide the required instruments for effective job performance. Gibson et al. (2012) found that job stress affects the consumption of drugs, medical expenses, achievements, absenteeism, unemployment, accidents, and satisfaction in terms of behavior. Henderson et al. (2012)

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found that stress can lead to intellectual impacts such as indecisiveness, irritability, reduced attention, apathy, and confusion. A heavy workload is a major contributing factor to occupational stress. Excessive workload and duties might result in considerable stress for workers.

Mental Health

Mental health concerns with the persons mental condition characterized by an overall sense of happiness, personal development, a feeling of purpose in life, acceptance of oneself, and beneficial relationships with others (Price et al., 2006).

People who are in great mental health are more inclined to practice healthy habits, such eating properly and exercising frequently, which lowers their chance of developing chronic illnesses (Jones et al., 2022). Olusegun (2015) looked at the impacts of workplace stress on mental health and fulfillment within employment. The findings revealed that there is no statistically significant correlation between job stress and mental health. However, a significant correlation was seen between occupational tensions and job satisfaction among bank employees. The findings additionally demonstrated that occupational stress was a major indicator of both job satisfaction and mental health.

Additionally, prior studies have demonstrated that employment enhances performance and promotes restoration by offering security and organization, employment is crucial for those with mental health disorders. Mental health issues impose significant costs, both directly through the inability to work and reliance on government income support (Heffernan & Pinkilton, 2011), and indirectly through reduced efficiency and increased absence from work (Levinson et al., 2010). Furthermore, as evidenced by Dietrich and Wenzelried (2014) companies exhibit hesitancy in employing individuals with

mental health issues. Furthermore, when they find jobs, it is common for them to experience joblessness and receive low salaries, as highlighted by Levinson et al. (2010).

Work Life Balance

Work-life balance is commonly characterized as the state in which there is no disagreement between one's professional responsibilities and their family or individual responsibilities. The term of work-life balance suggests that one's occupational and private affairs should correspond and be within equilibrium by preventing disputes between the two (Daipuria & Kakar, 2013). The lack of a satisfactory work-life balance has detrimental impacts on both the physiological and psychological health of employees, in addition to the general success of the association (Shaffer et al., 2016). Important and major factors of work-life balance and work-life disruption have not received much research attention.

In order to comprehend and explain the reason for the inequality within job and other aspects of life, past investigations have explored a diverse arrangement of elements. Among them, significant attention has been given to aspects such as heavy traffic, unfavorable psychosocial working conditions including workplace stress, unbalance between effort exerted and rewards received, and insecure employment. The idea of an undesirable work-life balance from the accumulation about research, which links work-related stressors such as high blood pressure and heart rate, levels of cortisol, muscular disorders, mental health issues, cardiovascular illness, and overweight (Lunau et al., 2014).

Relationship between Job Stress and Mental Health

The investigation conducted by Irvin et al. (2017) examined the correlation between the implications of job stress and that mental well-being of instructors. Job stress and

work-life balance are closely connected problems within contemporary employment settings that have an important effect on mental health (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The investigation examined the frequency with which instructors encountered significant indications of psychological distress, as opposed to receiving formal diagnoses of mental disorders. The effectiveness of workplace coping has proven insufficient. Recent investigations reveal that burnout could be more precisely understood as a psychological condition rather than a distinct entity.

Relationship between Job stress and Work Life Balance

Bell and Morse (2012) investigated a connection within job stress, wellbeing, along with work-life balance among academics. Study explored the link in the interval of work-life balance and work-life conflict has found that stress is a substantial factor. Reported workplace stress, specifically stressors related to threats and hardship, was found to be linked into a decline in work-life balance and a rise on disagreements over researchers' professional and personal lives. The impact of stress related to the perception of job threat had a greater influence and was an important factor in predicting scores for work-life balance and work-life conflict, compared stress related to this perception of workplace pressure.

The study conducted by Kaushal and Vashisht (2021) investigated the connection within work stress and work-life balance among IT workers. This investigation aims to uncover the specific workplace elements that contribute to stress and examine their results in the work-life balance of IT workers. Based on the data, it could be inferred there might be an adverse connection among work stress as well as work-life balance.

Job Stress and Mental Health Predict Work Life Balance

In a recent investigation conducted by Kelly et al. (2020), the researchers examined the correlation between workplace stress, exhaustion, work-life balance, wellness, and job fulfillment among pathology interns and research colleagues. The objective of this project is to examine the frequency and origins of stress and mental fatigue, while also identifying ways to improve work-life balance and overall well-being, and to prevent exhaustion. The results indicate the high frequency of occupational stress and burnout, since more than one-third of the respondents reported currently feeling burnout. An investigation conducted by Roopavathi and Kishore (2021) examined the link between work-life balance and worker achievement. The research proposed that factors such as labor strength, employer-employee connection, work environment, and job security have a beneficial influence on enhanced manufacturing quality, heightened productivity, reduced staff turnover rates, and increased worker retention.

Rationale of the Study

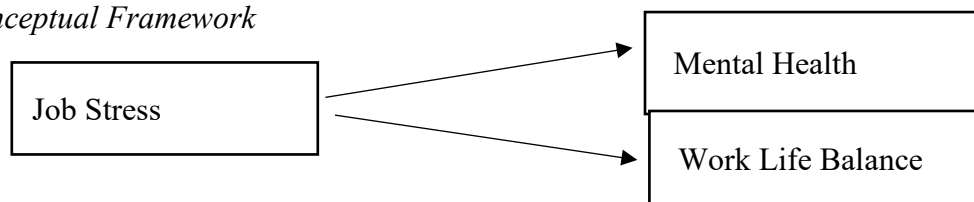
Job stress is a growing problem in contemporary work environments, influenced by variables such as a demanding schedule, deadlines that are strict, and the expectation of excellent performance. The purpose of studying "Job Stress and Its Impact on Mental Health and Work-Life Balance" is to comprehend the influence about job stress on both the mental well-being of staff members and their capacity to preserve a harmonious work-life equilibrium. Recognizing the correlation between prolonged professional stress along with the development of severe mental health problems, for example nervousness, depression, and burnout. Those mental health difficulties not only reduce an individual's total wellness but additionally hinder one's capacity to operate efficiently in the workplace. This article is to illustrate the

significance of managing work stress in order to enhance general staff wellness and

company achievement by examining these factors.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Objectives

- To examine the demographic variables of job stress, mental health and work life balance.
- To examine the relationship between job stress, mental health and work life balance.

Hypotheses

- There would be negative relationship between job stress and mental health among university teachers.
- There would be a negative relationship between job stress and work life balance among university teachers.
- Job stress and mental health will predict work life balance among university teachers.

Method

Research Design

This research focused on understanding connection between job stress and its impact on mental health and work-life balance, using a relational research method. The study used a correlational method to investigate the relationship between variables. In addition, that investigation utilized a cross-sectional methodology. The interview is conducted on an individual basis.

Participants of the Study

Lecturer, Professor, Assistant professor and Associate professor, from different institutes of Multan. The study population comprises ($N=140$). The study employs a convenience sampling approach (non-probability sampling technique). That from ($N=140$) 73 were male respondents and 67 female respondents were 22-64 age range ($M=35.85$, $SD=9.04$). Many of were 58.6% from middle socio-economic status.

Measures

Demographic Data Form

The demographic data sheet collects information from participants on their age, gender, occupation, level of experience, socio-economic status, location, and marital status. The characteristics were gathered to create a thorough profile of the participants and examine any possible connections or disparities between job stress and its impact on mental health and work-life balance among university lecturers, professors, assistant professors, and associate professors.

The Workplace Stress Scale

The workplace stress scale quantifies the level of personal stress encountered in the workplace. It was established by Rosenfeld (1988). The purpose of the scale is to establish a uniform approach for assessing stress levels in the workplace. It comprises 7 items measured on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from Never to Very Often). It usually produces Cronbach alpha coefficients of .90 and demonstrates a highly replicable bifactor structure with a dependable general factor.

Psychological Wellbeing Scale

The Psychological Wellbeing Scales, developed by psychologists Ryff et al. (2007) is a widely used assessment tool that consists of 42 items. These measures contain both positively and negatively phrased statements. The Psychological Wellbeing (PWB) scale assesses six dimensions of welfare and satisfaction: acceptance of oneself, positive interpersonal relationships, freedom,

management of one's surroundings, sense of direction in life, and personal development. Cronbach's alpha values were found to be between 0.70 and 0.78.

Work Life Balance (WLB) Questioner

The work life balance scale developed by Brough et al. (2014) includes 21-item evaluated on a 6- point Likert Scale (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree). Work-Life Balance Questionnaire is a comprehensive tool created to evaluate how individuals handle and interpret the relationship among their work and personal lives. The Cronbach's alpha for the Work-Life Balance ranges between 0.87 and 0.90.

Procedure

The investigation specifically examines job stress, and strict protocols were followed to assure ethical standards and the accuracy of the data. For this investigation, we obtained approval from the writers and owners of copyright. Official appeals were submitted to verify adherence to copyright and intellectual property rights. Permission was authorized for the utilization of these scales, enabling their implementation in the study for a total of 25 instances, while strictly following any given restrictions and rules. Before doing the questionnaire, those engaged in the job were given a detailed explanation of the study's goals and were provided with instructions on how to complete the survey. This involved marking checklists and utilizing a Likert scale with a span of options. Prior to continuing, individuals were required to give informed consent, confirming their choice to participate and comprehension of the study's objectives and methods. Participants were debriefed about aim and nature of research,

before agreeing to be the part of it. Furthermore, participants were urged to seek more information regarding any questions associated with the questionnaire ahead of filling out the survey. Participants' responses were kept confidential, and their personal information will be protected. The respondent informed on the projected duration about survey, which was around 15 to 20 minutes, to help them plan their schedules. After finishing, respondents handed over the questionnaires to the investigator, allowing for the organized gathering of information for evaluation. The research procedure involved undertaking painstaking steps to ensure ethical norms were upheld, involvement was promoted, and data quality was maintained. To preserve the welfare and rights of research participants, researcher followed the identified standards of APA Ethics Codes.

Results

Understanding the influence of job stress and its impact on mental health and work life balance is significant in psychological research. This utilizes the Workplace Stress Scale to assess the job stress alongside the Psychological Wellbeing Scale and Work life Balance Scale. By integrating demographic data, this research aims to elucidate how job stress relates to mental health and how its effect the work life balance. This investigation is not only explored the job stress as well as their impact on mental health and work life balance but also examine how the variables effect our mental health and work life, providing insights into their broader psychological implications.

Table 1*Demographic Characteristics for Job Stress, Mental Health and Work Life Balance (N=140)*

Characteristics	N	%
Gender		
Men	73	52.1
Women	67	47.9
Socioeconomic status		
Lower	6	4.3
Middle	82	58.6
Higher	52	37.1
Designation		
Lecturer	65	46.4
Professor	36	25.7
Assistant Professor	32	22.9
Associate Professor	7	5.0

The Table 1 shows that from (N=140) 73 were male respondents and 67 female respondents were 22-64 age range ($M=35.85$,

$SD=9.04$). Many of were 58.6% from middle socio-economic status.

Table 2*Reliability for Job Stress Scale, Mental Health Scale and Work Life Balance Scale (N=140)*

Scale	M	SD	Range	Cronbach's α
Job stress	20.30	5.23	23	.75
Mental health	164.78	20.75	106	.85
Work-life balance	57.06	11.66	74	.75

Note. $**p<0.1$. M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

Table 2 indicates that reliability of Job Stress Scale, Mental Health Scale and Work Life Balance Scale. Cronbach's alpha was utilized to measure the internal consistency. The

coefficient values were for Job Stress .75, Mental Health .85 and Work Life Balance .75.

Table 3*Correlation between Job Stress, Mental Health and Work Life Balance (N=140)*

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3
Job Stress	20.30	5.23	-	.07**	-.02**
Mental Health	164.78	20.75	-	-	-.29**
Work Life Balance	57.06	11.66	-	-	-

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$

Table 3 investigates that job stress was negatively linked with mental health ($r = -.07$, $p < .001$) which reveals that higher the job stress in the university lecturers, the lower will be their mental health, similarly, job stress was also negatively correlated with mental health ($r = -.02$, $p < 0.01$). Mental

health was significantly negatively linked with work life ($r = -.29$, $p < .001$) which reveals that higher the job stress, higher will be mental health in university teachers. Hence first hypothesis of the study has been proven.

Table 4

Regression for Predicting Work Life Balance from Job Stress, and Mental Health Stress (N=140)

Variables	Work life balance		
	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Constant	84.13		8.24
Job Stress	.003	.001	.18
Mental health	-.16	-.29	.04
R^2	.08		

*** $p < 0.01$

The Table 4 shows that job stress and mental health predicted work life balance. To test this hypothesis linear regression was used. The R^2 value of .08 indicate that the independent variable explained 86% variation in the dependent variable with F (6.42). $p < 0.01$. Job stress negatively predicts

work life balance ($\beta = .001$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the results revealed that job stress negatively predicted job satisfaction ($\beta = -.29$, $p < .001$) in university teachers. Hence results revealed that job stress and mental health predict work life balance in university teachers.

Table 5

Independent Sample t – test for Gender Differences among Job stress, Mental Health and Work Life Balance (N = 140)

Variables	Men (n=73)		Women (n=67)		<i>t</i> (222)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Job stress	19.89	5.74	20.76	4.60	-.98	.056	0.02
Mental Health	164.52	19.81	165.07	21.87	-.15	.72	0.02
Work Life Balance	55.80	11.31	58.43	11.97	-1.33	.71	0.22

Note. * $p < .05$; *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation; Cohen's *d* = Effect size

Table 5 revealed significant gender differences on job stress with ($t = -.984$, $p < .05$).

Findings showed that female teachers were higher level of mental health ($M = 164.52$,

$SD=19.81$) and work life balance ($M=55.80$, $SD=11.31$) as compared to male teachers.

Discussion

Impact of Job Stress on Mental Health

First hypothesis posited that job stress have a significant impact on mental health. The correlation analysis revealed a negative relationship between job stress and mental health ($r=-.07$) Result revealed that job stress has negative impact on mental health. Similarly, different researchers revealed that there is a negative relationship between job stress and mental health. Smith et al. (2023) examine the study underscores the significant correlation between workplace stress and poor mental health, highlighting that mental health conditions can deteriorate due to unmanaged job stress, affecting productivity and overall wellbeing.

Brown et al. (2023) investigated the connection between job stress and mental health among mental health professionals, revealing a strong connection between higher job stress levels and 33 negative mental health outcomes, including psychological discomfort and burnout. This highlights the necessity for improved treatments to promote a healthier work-life balance. Hasin et al. (2023) conducted a study that involved a comprehensive literature review to examine the latest studies about job stress and its impacts on mental health. Research continuously demonstrates a negative relationship between job stress and mental health, resulting in disorders such as depression, anxiety, and burnout. This highlights the importance of implementing occupational treatments to alleviate these consequences. The cross-cultural study also investigated the correlation between work stress and mental health among employees in Cabo Verde and China. The findings demonstrated an inverse correlation between occupational stress and positive mental health, with job burnout acting as a mediator

in this association. Alphin (2022) emphasizes the significant negative outcomes of job stress, such as reduced organizational effectiveness, increased employee turnover, higher rates of tardiness, and decreasing levels of job satisfaction. The study highlighted that job-related stress contributes in mental health issues and emphasizes the importance of employing effective coping mechanisms to mitigate these consequences.

Impact of Job stress on Work Life Balance

Second prediction stated that job stress could significantly impact on work-life balance. The correlation study indicated a robust negative association among job stress and work-life balance, with an R-value ($r=-.02$). The findings validate the notion that elevated levels of workplace stress are linked to more intense and unfavorable associations with work-life balance. The data indicate a negative association between job stress and work-life balance, highlighting a similar negative correlation among university teachers. The Urba and Soetjningsih (2022) investigates the correlation between work-life balance and job stress amongst workers. A remarkable inverse relationship was discovered between work-life balance and job stress, suggesting that improved work-life balance is linked to reduced job stress. A separate study investigates the correlation between job stress and the balance between work and personal lifestyle, as well as the likelihood of employees leaving their jobs. Maharani and Tamara (2024) discovered a negative correlation between work-life balance and both job stress and mental health. Moreover, this research demonstrates that job stress has a detrimental effect influence on both job satisfaction and work life balance. Enhancing work-life balance can support to reduce the detrimental impact of job stress on

job satisfaction (Izdihar et al., 2023). Another study investigated by Patel and Sharma 2021 the correlation between job stress and work-life balance among construction workers across India. It is evident that elevated phases of professional stress disrupt the harmony between work and personal life.

Job Stress and Mental Health Predict Work Life Balance

The third hypothesis suggested that mental health would significantly predict work-life balance. The study investigated that linear regression was used, with an R^2 value of .086, showing that the determinant variation explained 86% variance in the finding of the variable, with F (6.42). Hence, results revealed that job stress and mental health predict work-life balance. The present research examines the correlations among work-life balance, job stress, and mental health across bank workers. The analysis reveals a substantial negative correlation between work-life balance and mental health, along with workplace stress. Additionally, Kaur (2017) indicates that females tend to have higher levels of stress, is reported.

This study examines the correlation between mental well-being and the equilibrium between work and personal life in employed women. The study conducted by Kapur et al. (2022) reveals that a balanced work-life dynamic greatly influences mental health and general well-being. A separate study examines the direct and indirect impacts of work-life balance and workplace stress on the decision of university employees to leave their jobs. Rilantiana et al. (2022) reveal a direct correlation among work-life balance, work stress, and intent to leave.

Comparison of Job Stress among Women and Men

Lastly, it was hypothesized that job stress would be higher among women ($M = 164.52$, $SD = 19.81$) compared to men. Some research explains that this analysis utilizes information from the National Longitudinal

Study of Adolescent to Adult Health to investigate the differential implications of job stress for men and women. Venechuk (2023) finds that job stress outcomes for women are more intricate, with factors like job flexibility having a more significant impact. Jehangir et al. (2011) examines that female nurses in public sector hospitals encounter higher levels of stress compared to their male colleagues, revealing that job stress negatively impacts job performance and job satisfaction among female nurses.

Additionally, Nair (2013) examines job stress and strains in a sample of police personnel, revealing that the magnitude of stress and its sources are greater in women police officers compared to their male counterparts. Another study finds that job stress affects mental well-being more significantly among women than men, with social support mediating this relationship (Mensah et al., 2022). Gnanaselvi and Shanmugapriya (2018) examined the higher levels of stress among women employees in the IT industry, with significant impacts on their psychological and physical well-being.

Conclusion

This investigation aimed to analyze the influence on job-related stress affecting mental health and work-life balance of university professors. The study's findings determined a negative connection between job-related stress and mental well-being. The study found a negative association among job stress and work-life balance among university lecturers. There is an inverse correlation between mental health and work-life balance, showing increased levels of mental health linked with lower levels of work-life balance. The investigation focused on assess an impact of occupational stress on mental health and work-life balance, according to the analysis of these variables, it was shown that job stress is more prevalent among women than men. The findings revealed a negative correlation between

workplace stress and both mental health and work-life balance. The present investigation emphasizes the significance of occupational stress in relation to other variables among university professors.

Limitations and Suggestions

The variety of the sample population is another limitation, as restricted diversity in terms of industry, job roles, or geographic regions can limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Cultural differences also play a role, as job stress and its impacts can vary significantly across different cultural settings, complicating the universal applicability of findings. Additionally, many studies use a cross-sectional design, collecting data at a single point in time, which makes it difficult to establish causal relationships between job stress, mental health, and work-life balance. Encourage a supportive work environment by promoting open communication and providing resources for stress management and mental health support. Flexible work arrangements by offering options such as remote work, flexible hours, and compressed workweeks to help employees manage their professional and personal lives. Workload management by ensuring workloads are reasonable and offering assistance when employees are overwhelmed.

Implications

When examining the consequences of occupational stress on mental health and work-life balance, it is crucial to recognize the significant impact it may have on persons. Anxiety, despair, burnout, and even physical health conditions like high blood pressure and heart problems can all be brought on by job stress. The negative consequences of workplace stress on work-life balance can be important, adversely affecting not just the individual but also their relationships, family life, and general contentment. Elevated levels of job-related stress can result in heightened conflicts between professional and personal

life, reduced participation in recreational pursuits, and challenges in establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries between work and home.

Contribution of Authors

Ayesha Malik: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft
Fatima Javaid: Methodology, Writing - Reviewing & Editing, Supervision
Syeda Bisma Batool Gardezi: Methodology, Formal Analysis, Writing - Reviewing & Editing

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest declared by the authors.

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Data Availability Statement

The datasets of the current study are not available publicly due to ethical reasons but are available from the corresponding author [A.M.] upon the reasonable request.

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