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**Relationship of Stress and Job Satisfaction:
A Comparative Study of Male & Female of
Dual Career Teacher Couples of India**

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Abstract

The manuscript compares the relationship of stressors at 'work', 'family domains', and 'the work family interface' on the job satisfaction of male and female members of dual career teacher couples. The sample comprises of 254 dual career teacher couples from universities of the northeastern states of India, with at least one member from the couple teaching at the tertiary level of education. The results indicate that stressors related to work-role and work-family conflict negatively relate to job satisfaction of both the genders. Family role stresses positively relate to the female member's job satisfaction but have no relationship to that of their male partner's. The results also indicate that female members face more stress than the male members. Both genders with high work-family conflict and work-role stress have lower levels of job satisfaction than those facing lower family conflict and work-role stress. Females facing high 'family roles stress' experience higher job satisfaction than those facing low 'family role stress'.

Introduction and Need for the Study

Researchers have proposed that dual career couples face unique problems in their work, family, and personal arenas of life (Hall & Hall, 1979; Moen, 1985). They argue that the potential for stress arising from the work and family domains and work-family interface is heightened in case of dual career couples (Gupta & Jenking, 1985; Sekara, 1986). The two-career partners are more challenged and are required to make

greater efforts and adjustments while attempting to strike a balance between the simultaneous demands and pressures of two important areas, viz. their careers and their family. The study by Elloy & Smith (2003) shows that dual career couples experience higher levels of stress, family conflict, overload, role ambiguity and role conflict than single career couples. The risk for conflict between the two roles becomes all the more serious because individuals in such relationships have to face simultaneous and conflicting demands and pressures of two careers with that of family (Adams, King, & King, 1996, Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992). Resolving of such conflicting demand is not only difficult, but is likely to threaten the peace of mind, quality of work and the process of family integration. For married women the reciprocal interaction between work-life and family-life takes on greater significance. Although these women are assuming the demanding new role of an employee, they are typically not free to relinquish any of their previous traditional roles. For instance, the major responsibility of household work and parenting chores still appear to be the province of women (Thompson & Walker, 1989; Ferree, 1990). 'Motherhood' is the prescribed social cultural mandate for women by most societies. The notion and belief that women are fulfilled-adults only when they have children, still holds social significance and is an accepted norm for measuring a woman's womanhood and worth in society, at least in India. Consequently, married women who obtain paid employment typically experience significant role 'expansion', coping with which is no easy feat. Such an expansion has repercussions not only for the women themselves but also for their families and their employing institutions. These working women can anticipate varying degrees of role conflict and role stress (Frone & Rice, 1987; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, Granrose, Robinowitz & Beutell, 1989). The multiple

role stress significantly impairs the mental health and well being of the wives, though not of the husbands, in dual career families (Sekaran, 1986). Higgins, Duxbury and Irvin, (1992) conclude that conflicts between work and family roles reduce employees' perceptions of the quality of family- life, which in turn can lead to absenteeism, affecting productivity and turnover. Supportive work practices like flexible work options as well as assistance with child and dependent care, employee support programs and career path alternatives were some of the measures to minimize stress and maximize employees' sense of control over their lives, sustain a manageable career progression and balance career and family demands (Bardoel, Tharenou, & Moss, 1998). Family friendly policies that meet the changing work related needs of both the employees and employers are considered beneficial to the organization as well as to the employees, leading to a win-win situation for all concerned (Elloy & Smith, 2004).

Bures, Henderson, Mayfield, Mayfield, and Worley (1996) found that high level of spousal support leads to higher level of job satisfaction. The most interesting fact that came out from their study was that although high level-spousal support significantly reduces the work-stress-level of the male partners, no such relation exists in the case of women. The above findings raise the question as to why women's stress levels are not reduced to the same extent as that of their male partners. Researches on dual-career couples have also indicated that the country to which the couple belong and where they are employed also plays an important moderating role in relation to the impact of spousal support, and on work stress levels. The researchers attribute the reason for this to differences in marriage norms among cultures, differences in the job characteristics between countries or a combination of these and other factors.

Parasuraman and Greenhans (1993) also found gender differences in terms of satisfaction with one's job in their study on role stressors, social support, and well being among two-career couples. Women in the sample reported lower job satisfaction level than men. Work role stressors were negatively related to the job satisfaction of both genders; but family role-stressors and work-family-conflict had no relationship with job satisfaction for both genders. These findings were consistent with the results reported by Kopelman et al (1983), who found strong support for linkages between conflict within a given domain (e.g. work conflict) in contrast to prior findings by Bourne and Wikler (1982) according to which direct intrusiveness of work-role stressors within the family domain or family-role stressors into the work-domain were considered as the causes of lower job-satisfaction or dissatisfaction with job/family or burnout. The findings also showed work role stressors and work-family role stressors (and not work-family conflict) are associated with heightened life stress among women. These results highlight the high salience of work role for couples in a two-career relationship and also imply that for women their family role is far more important than it is for men. Gender differences in the relationships among stressors and indicators of well-being underscore the need for additional researches in the area of the demographic characteristics of the spouses and examining the structural variables likely to influence the experiences and attitudes of men and women in a two-career relationship.

However, most studies in the area have focused mainly on the inter-role conflicts of married women (Hall, 1975; Steffy & Ashbaugh, 1986) and employed mothers (Holahan & Gilbert 1979; Macewen & Barling, 1988). Some studies have focused on the effect of the wife's employment on her husband's well-being. Few have

attempted to examine work-family stress and its outcomes for both partners, but they have generally focused on finding the overall inter-role conflict or conflict between work and other specific roles such as professional versus spousal or professional versus self. None have focused on within-role conflicts and stress; or on the entire work-family nexus, which according to Lambert (1990) would help uncover the intricacies of the relationship between work and home. Thus, there is lack of complete and comprehensive information and a need for further researches.

The present researchers strongly view that Indian-dual career couples, in contrast to similar couples in other parts of the world (where the single parent family or the nuclear-family system is a more common way of life) must be facing and confronting lot more pressures and conflicts in their attempts to meet the varying and contrasting demands of work and family roles. The pressures are likely to be high, primarily because of the Indian socio-cultural context, where the joint-family-structure and the extended family system, with its emotionally loaded familial bonds and close-knit character, is the dominant way of life. Hence, the researchers of this paper found the dual-career couples in India, about whom not enough data and information is generated and available, as interesting source materials for exploring and furnishing new insights into the problems of work-family-integration. Indian dual-career couples were considered an interesting study material for one other reason also. It is a commonly known fact that the socio-cultural ethos in the sub-continent is quite different because of its strong social and family support system. In the face of industrialization, modernization, urbanization, globalization and growth in the standards of education and economy levels of the aware and interested, rapid transformation is taking place in the social fabric and social structure

of the nation. The typical joint-family structure, especially in urban areas and amongst the educated lot, is rapidly getting destroyed and substituted by nuclear and close single families. The burden of family income is fast being shared equally by both male and female members. But it is still very true that despite these quick changes and transformations, working couples in India can still bank on a plethora of familial support when in crisis. Regular, cheap, hired, and dependable help is much more easily and conveniently available in India than in most other parts of the world, whether developing or developed. Family-support, either from the wife's side or from the husband's is a very common feature in most Indian families, irrespective of whether they are nuclear in structure or placed in some metro or cosmopolitan town - and that too, help that is willingly, eagerly and readily given. How do dual career couples, within this kind of supportive environment and social-context, respond to and cope with the conflicts and pressures (and resultant stress) from work, family and work-family-interface. Do the two genders respond differently and adopt differential coping strategies; is the feeling of stress, conflict, happiness/ well-being and satisfaction in and with job and family, differential in respect to their genders? – These are some very pertinent questions that triggered the interest and attention of the investigators, especially because of the exponential and voluminous growth of women in the work force.

It has been observed that a large segment of educated-women's population in India (most probably in other countries also) show preference to teaching as a profession over jobs in industries, private sectors and the government (except for the central and provincial civil services) etc. This in all probability is because of the inherent nature of the profession, which on the face of it is less demanding and allows more leverage and

comfort to its occupants. It is an attractive proposition in respect of its working hours (time duration), flexi-schedules, convenient timings, no time bound fixed targets, none or very little need for tour and travel, regular and frequent holidays with the added bonus of status and respectability in society. Such characteristics of a profession, in all probability must be providing enough edge over others to its women professionals, helping them to cope with the multifarious roles and responsibilities towards their family and work in a more non-stressed manner. Aryee (1983) reported that the husbands feel less burnout than their wives and attributed the reason to the differential roles played by men and women in a gender stratified social system. Sekaran (1986) also found multiple role stress to significantly impair the mental health of wives but not husbands in a dual-earner relationship. Aryee (1993) attributed this to the gender stratification of the social structure, which prescribes differential sex roles and the differential socialization process that it entails. Thus, a profession that is likely to provide more time, less pressure and more 'space' to carry out the social and cultural mandate of having primary allegiance to the family, without any doubt, is going to draw the maximum number of women towards it (the growing demand of teachers training institutions and the increasing number of female enrolment in them, is sufficient evidence to support the claim). Hence, it is no wonder, that most Indian families as also its prospective women employees, regard teaching to be the most suited and respectful, less-stress inducing profession for women. This is all the more so with respect to the middle-class segment of the population (that probably constitutes the largest chunk of the literate and educated population of the country) which, in its attempt to meet economic challenges and acquire the mantle of a modern, liberal and forward class, is increasingly allowing its women to join the work

force, but without enough will or courage (or probably preferring the status quo) to break the traditionally assigned differential roles of a gender stratified social system. Differential social roles assigned to men and women are still the order of the day and probably the root cause of greater levels of stress and burn out in women.

It was within this experimental, theoretical and research based background-framework that the present investigators thought of examining the nature of conflicts and stress emanating from work and family domains of dual-career teacher couples with their job-satisfaction – a strong and predictive factor of burn out.

For clarity and better understanding of the hypotheses put forth and the conclusions drawn, a brief description of the major issues and theoretical foundations in respect to the various concepts included in the study are discussed in the following section of the paper.

Work Role Stress

Job stress is generally defined as the person-environment misfit. When there is misfit of an individual's skills and abilities or needs in the environment, it threatens the individual's well being. Strain and tension occur and stress is the natural result (French, Rogers, & Cobb, 1974). Work related stress (produced by such factors as role ambiguity, role overload and career frustration) can produce such strain symptoms as irritability, fatigue, preoccupation, depression, and anxiety (Brief, Schuler & Van Sell, 1981).

Caplan, Cobb, and French (1975, 211) described work-stress as "any characteristics of the job environment which poses a threat to the individual." According to Cooper and Marshal (1976, 12), occupational stress is negative environmental factors associated with the job. Beehr and Newman (1978) defined job stress as a condition

* Names of the authors are arranged in alphabetical order.

wherein job related factors impact the worker and change (disrupt or enhance) his psychological condition such that the person (mind and or body) is forced to deviate from normal functioning. McGrath (1976) has suggested six sources of stress: a) Task-based stress; b) Role-based stress; c) Stress intrinsic to the behavior setting; d) Stress arising from the physical environment itself; e) Stress arising from the social environment in the sense of interpersonal disagreement; and f) Stress within the person-system which the focal person "brings with him" to the situation.

Cooper and Marshall (1976) proposed seven sources of managerial stress: a) Intrinsic job; b) Career development; c) Role in the organization; d) Organizational structure & climate; e) Relationships within the organization; f) Extra organizational sources: Company vs. family demand, company vs. own interest etc.; and g) The individual himself.

Family Role Stress

Stress, most representatives of pressures in the family domain, includes family conflict and parenthood. Family conflict refers to incompatible role pressures within the family. Married women who assume home roles & non-home roles frequently experience conflict between the competing demands of these two roles. Women's family role often combines a high level of psychological demand with a low level of control. In their study of women's social roles, Barnett and Baruch (1985) found that role conflict and levels of role overload were significantly associated with the role of a paid worker or that of a wife.

Inter role conflict in the family can be seen to increase as one's obligations to the family expand through marriage and arrival of children. This is particularly true for

women, who more than men, tend to assume the responsibilities of household and child-care (Gutek, Nakamura & Nieva, 1981). Gove and Geerken (1977) found a positive relation between the number of children and psychiatric symptoms of employed mothers. Women with young children are more likely than others to experience incessant demands and limited freedom. They report loneliness, depression, and concern about having a nervous breakdown (Campbell, Converse & Rogers, 1976; Gove & Geerkan, 1977; Brown & Harris, 1978). Children can produce inter-role conflicts, not only to parent versus spouse roles but also to family versus work roles. Brown and Harris (1978) found that employment outside the home offsets the vulnerability to health problems of women with children.

With respect to men, Bachman, O'Malley, and Johnston (1978) concluded that marriage and parenthood could have positive effects on the self-esteem and job motivation of young males. The presence of children was related to higher level of job involvement and organizational identification (Gould & Werbel, 1983). Furthermore, in a recent survey, childless couples were perceived as having neither the most satisfying lives nor the most satisfying marriages (Blake, 1979). In the present investigation, parenthood and family conflict both have been considered as sources of family role stressors.

Work Family Conflict

Work family conflict is experienced when simultaneous pressures from work and family roles are mutually incompatible. Elloy (2001) found that stress in dual career couples was primarily due to family conflict and overload. Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1997) proposed that there are two dominant forms of work family conflict, namely time

based conflict, and strain-based conflict. Time based conflict is experienced when the time devoted to one role (e.g. the work role) makes it difficult to fulfill the requirements of the other role (e.g. family role). Boles, Howard, & Donofrio (2001) found that increased level of work family conflict is negatively related to several different facets of employee job-related satisfaction.

An employee, who “brings home” these strain symptoms from work, is unlikely to participate fully and happily in the family domain. Interactions with family members can be difficult and trying under conditions of “negative emotional spillover” from work (Evans & Bartolome, 1980), just as concentration and well being at work can be threatened if one carries family induced stress into the workplace.

Currently, three theories characterize the process by which work and family are linked. These are: segmentation, compensation, and spillover. Segmentation theorists view that work and home do not affect each other. Workers actively seek greater satisfaction either from their work/ family life because of their dissatisfaction with one of these factors. ‘Spill over’ is the most popular and recent view about the relationship between work and family. Several researchers suggest that workers carry the emotions, attitudes, skills and behaviors that they establish at work into their family life and vice versa (Crouter, 1984). The spillover can either be positive or negative. Both time-based conflicts and strain-based conflicts have been included to measure work-family conflict in this investigation.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an attitudinal concept central to work psychology (Bass & Barnett, 1972). Bullock (1952) defined job satisfaction as an attitude, which results from

a balancing and summation of many likes and dislikes experienced in connection with one's job. Locke (1969) defined job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of ones' job values or job experience." According to Wexley and Yukl (1977) job satisfaction is the way an employee feels about his job. Ilies and Judge (2004) have defined job satisfaction as a latent evaluative tendency of ones job that accounts for the covariation between work stimuli and responses is manifested through discrete evaluative states during the working day.

Seybolt (1976) supported the idea that job satisfaction is a function of the person- environment interaction. Although a number of factors (such as wages, opportunity for achievement and advancement, security, company, management, social aspects of job, communication, benefits etc.) are related to the job satisfaction, it is the interaction among these factors rather than any one of them in isolation, that accounts for job satisfaction.

Pestonjee (1973) identified 'the job itself', 'the management', 'personal adjustment', and 'social relations' as the constituents of job satisfaction. He referred to the first two constituents as "on the job" factors, and to the latter two as "off-the-job" factors. Satisfaction in the job area and management area has been included for measuring the level of job satisfaction of teachers in the present study.

The Present Study

The study intends to explore the relationship of work role stressors, family role stressors, and work family conflict with the job satisfaction of male and female members of dual career teacher couples in India. Pearson bi-variate correlation was calculated to study the relationship between the stressors and job satisfaction of the two groups

separately. The study further attempts to find out if the low and high stressed groups of male and female teachers differed from each other in the context to job satisfaction. For this purpose, the high and low stressed males and females were segregated based on the median values obtained for the entire sample. Then the means, critical ratio values, and 't' values are calculated.

Hypotheses

Based on theoretical models and prior findings, the following hypotheses were proposed concerning the nature of the relationship between stressors and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1: The level of work-role stress, family role stress and work-family conflict will be higher for females as compared to the male members of dual career teacher couples.

Hypothesis 2: Both male and female members of dual career teacher couples facing high level of work-role stress, family role stress, and work family conflict will have significantly lower job satisfaction than those facing low levels of stress.

Hypothesis 3: Work-role stressors will be negatively related to job satisfaction of teachers of both genders.

Hypothesis 4: Family role stressors will be negatively related to job satisfaction in the case of teachers of both genders.

Hypothesis 5: Work family conflict will be negatively related to job satisfaction of teachers of both genders.

Sample of the study

The measures were administered to a sample of dual career teacher couples of state and central universities and their affiliated colleges, situated in two

cities of eastern India. 254 teacher couples i.e. 508 respondents participated in the study. Care was taken that both the partners were teachers even if not working at the same level of education. Care was also taken to ensure that at least one partner was a teacher teaching at the tertiary level of education. Average age of the respondents was around 40 years. All the respondents of the tertiary level possessed doctorate degree. Others possessed a minimum of postgraduate qualification.

Measurement Tools

Already prepared and standardized psychometric measures a) Organizational Role Stress Scale (ORS; Pareek, 1983); b) Satisfaction-Dissatisfaction (S-D) Employee's Inventory (Pestonjee, 1973); c) Family Role Stressors Questionnaire (Singh & Singh, 1996), and d) Work-Family Conflict Scale (Singh & Singh, 1996) were simultaneously given to all the identified dual career couples. The reliabilities of all the scale were above .62 alpha value for the current data set.

Results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviation, and the 't' values of the three dimensions of stress and the job satisfaction for both males and females separately. The results indicate that there exists significant difference in the level of stress faced and the job satisfaction of male and female teachers. Since there is a significant difference in the means, the comparison of means indicates that females face more stress as compared to males and they have more job satisfaction. The mean scores of female teachers as compared to males are higher for work role stress, family role stress, and work-family conflict.

Table 1 about here

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviation obtained by the low and high groups of work role stress, family role stress and work family conflict of both genders in respect to job satisfaction. The computed 't' values have also been presented in the Table. The result indicates that in the context to work role stress and work-family conflict, there exists significant difference in the job satisfaction of teachers facing low stress than those facing high stress. The mean scores indicate that those facing low levels of these stresses experience greater job satisfaction.

With respect to family role stress, in the case of female teachers the low and the high 'family role stress' groups significantly differ in their level of job satisfaction. However, the level of job satisfaction is more for females with high level of family role stress. Among the male teachers, the job satisfaction level in the high and low groups is not significantly different.

Table 2 about here

The correlation analysis shows that job satisfaction negatively relates to work role stress and work family conflict for both the genders of dual career couples. However, family role stress has no significant relationship with the job satisfaction of men but has a significant positive relationship with the job satisfaction of woman members of dual career teacher couples.

Table 3 and 4 about here

Discussion

The results indicate that females face significantly more stress than the male members of dual career teacher couples. Interestingly, the job satisfaction of female

teachers is also more than that of the male teachers. Both male and female members of dual career couples who face low job role stress and work –family conflict have more job satisfaction than those who face high level of these stresses. However, female teachers who face high family role stress have more job satisfaction than those who face low family role stress.

Even though female teachers face more stress, they have higher job satisfaction than the male teachers, probably because the job provides them with a sense of their worth. The economic independence gives them satisfaction that may also be a compensatory source for any discord with their job. In India, the opportunity for women to work outside the home is in itself satisfying. Though the social setup is now changing, increasingly women are taking up the dual responsibility. Hall and Hall (1979) noted that the likelihood of providing support and understanding is greater if both partners are in the same or similar fields. In the family domain, receiving spouse support has been found to be negatively correlated with role overload and work family conflict and positively related to career commitment (Holahan & Gilbert, 1979). The reasons for the female members having more satisfaction with their jobs, even when they face more stress, could be the sense of support that they get from their spouses. They may be getting more support than they would expect from their spouses considering the social norms.

The job may be providing them the opportunity to have their own social circle, which could help them and provide them support in managing their jobs and as well their family problems. They get the opportunity to share their family problems with someone who can give them emotional support without any bias. Lawrence (2006) argues that colleagues have the ability to provide emotional support when employees are attempting

to cope with the impact of work-family conflict on relationship in their non-work life. Colleagues can also provide informational support to cope with work-family conflict. Therefore, even if there are job related problems, the female members do not mind them much. The sense of achievement, the individuality, and identity they get from their job is satisfying to them. In addition, since they have to break the stereotyped thinking of the male dominated work domain, they would not like an image of someone who gets bothered easily. They are ready to take on challenges and as a result demonstrate more perseverance

Implications and Conclusion

The study has implications for prevention and reduction of stress for dual career teacher couples. The responsibility for stress reduction lies with organizations/institutions, with dual career couples and with their family members (in the Indian context). Today Indian organizations need to understand and focus on providing support to the couples for work-personal life balance. As Bruke (2002) has found that if employees perceive organizations values supportive of work-personal life balance, they experience greater job and career satisfaction, less stress and have less intention to quit, and more positive emotional well-being. In order to maintain high performance of the employees, organizations may organize professional counseling programs to help the couples cope with work role stress, family role stress and work family conflict. The human resource policies should be designed, keeping in mind the stress that an employee faces at work and due to work-family conflict. Organizations could conduct training programs, especially for women employees, to enable them to cope with their traditional roles. Stress prevention techniques like yoga, meditation, and physical exercise could also

form a part of such programs' curriculum. More emphasis needs to be placed on providing counseling before the problem becomes acute rather than after dysfunctional consequences are evident.

In conclusion, it is evident that an understanding, accommodating, and sympathetic approach to the management of dual career stress can improve organizational effectiveness by fostering continued employment and maximum performance among dual career couples.

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Appendix

Table 1

Significance of difference between male and female teachers

	Males (N=254)		Females (N=254)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Work Role Conflict	19.36	8.13	21.12	9.59	2.19*
Family Role Conflict	34.02	6.48	37.93	6.64	6.16**
Work Family Conflict	48.36	15.41	53.44	14.13	4.07**
Job Satisfaction	25.97	6.38	27.23	6.09	2.43*

* Names of the authors are arranged in alphabetical order.

Table 2

Significance of difference between the mean scores of criterion variables of high and low groups of both genders

JOB SATISFACTION	Work role stress		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Male	High	130	25.14	6.12	2.15*	0.03
	Low	124	26.85	6.55			
Female	High	129	26.30	6.17	2.49*	0.01	
	Low	125	28.18	5.88			
JOB SATISFACTION	Family-role stress		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Male	High	127	25.98	5.86	0.029	0.98
		Low	127	25.96	6.89		
	Female	High	139	28.30	5.61	3.14**	0.00
Low		115	25.93	6.41			
JOB SATISFACTION	Work-family conflict		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Male	High	128	25.08	6.72	2.27*	0.02
		Low	126	26.88	5.90		
	Female	High	131	25.93	6.59	3.58**	0.00
Low		123	28.61	5.19			

* Names of the authors are arranged in alphabetical order.

Table 3**Correlations with Data of Female Teachers**

Females	WRS	FRS	WFC	SATIS
Work Role stress (WRS)	1.00			
Family Role Stress (FRS)	-0.08	1.00		
Work Family Conflict (WFC)	0.31**	0.07	1.00	
Jab Satisfaction (SATIS)	-0.20**	0.28**	-0.15*	1.00

* = $p < .05$ and ** = $p < .01$

Table 4**Correlations with Data of Male Teachers**

Males	WRS	FRS	WFC	SATIS
Work Role stress (WRS)	1.00			
Family Role Stress (FRS)	-0.03	1.00		
Work Family Conflict (WFC)	0.38**	-0.42**	1.00	
Jab Satisfaction (SATIS)	-0.11*	-0.07	-0.28**	1.00

* = $p < .05$ and ** = $p < .01$