

Moderating role of gender upon the relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization on work life balance among IT sector employees

¹ Muffliha S, ² Nisamudheen T

¹ Junior Research Fellow, School of Commerce, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

² Senior Research Fellow, School of Commerce, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

IT sector employees are facing high emotional exhaustion and depersonalization because of their job, long working hours, excessive work pressure, lack of job autonomy in work place and inequity in organizational justice will lead to work life imbalance. Thus this study investigated the perceptions of Infopark IT sector employees towards emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and its effects on work life balance. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data from 250 employees in Infopark IT Company in Kochi. Data was analyzed through confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation model. The study revealed that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization have negative effect on work life balance and it is found that the female respondents have high effect on work life balance due to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than the male respondents.

Keywords: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Work Life Balance, Moderating Role of Gender

1. Introduction

Job Burnout was first defined by Freudenberger in 1974 as "The inability of an employee to function effectively in one's job due to the consequence of prolonged and extensive job related stress" (Maslach & Jackson, 1984) [1]. The burnout syndrome refers to a type of work related stress affecting professionals who have constant, intensive and direct contact with other people especially when it is in the role of service provider. It is a psychological condition in which people suffer emotional exhaustion and tend to depersonalize from their work environment (Elham Cheraghi *et al.*, 2013) [2].

Emotional exhaustion occurs due to excessive job demands exhaust an individual psychological resources (Kalbers & Forgarty, 2005) [3]. This stage has symptoms like fear, nervousness, anger, irritability, loss of energy, sense of helplessness and fatigue. Individuals suffer from exhaustion and in turn experience actions to distance themselves emotionally and cognitively from their work (Maslach *et al.*, 2001) [4]. Depersonalization refers to lack of self esteem and an employee become impersonal to co-workers and creates a tendency to exert negative and uncaring attitudes towards customers (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993) [5]. It is mainly occurred due to the excessive interpersonal interaction and workloads (Burke & Greenglass 1989) [6]. The employees feel negative attitude towards accomplishment in the professional life and thus evaluates dissatisfaction from their work. This results in depression, inability to cope with work demands and also feels low self esteem and low productivity (Maslach & Jackson 1986) [7] which ultimately creates an imbalance between work and personal life. When employee's experience high level of job burnout, they may lack the balance between the work and personal life and may fail to fulfill the responsibilities with minimum conflict and maximum satisfaction. The effect of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization on work life balance also affects the job

satisfaction and human relations within the organization (Frone *et al.*, 1994) [8].

Work-life balance is a major aspect of the quality of work and life of individuals when try to manage multiple roles. The metaphor of balance does not denote an equal division of time, energy or other resources between the work and non-work domains, but is a highly individualized and reflexive concept of being able to manage one's work, family and leisure life in a self-fulfilling way (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006) [9]. Workplace characteristics such as the length and organization of working time, family friendly policies, managerial practices and organizational cultures also act as determinants of how men and women experience work-family balance (Gallie, 2003) [10]. Work-life balance has become an important issue at workplace. Work-life balance is a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal. Over the years, there is a growing perception that the quality of an employee's personal life and family life affects work quality and that it makes business sense to promote work and family integration (Lyonette *et al.*, 2007) [11]. A conflict between work and family has real consequences and negatively affects the quality of family and career attainment of both men and women. Hence the researcher is intended to investigate the moderating role of gender upon the relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization on work life balance of IT sector employees.

2. Literature Review

William, P. McCarty *et al.*, (2007) [12] explored whether male and female police officers report different levels of occupational stress and burnout. The mean score of work related stress indicate that female officers reported high level of stress (13.58) than the male officers (13.47) but in contrast, male officers expressed high level of burnout (10.61) than female officers (10.13). The results of regression analysis reveals that the adjusted R² for female officers is 0.43 and it is

relatively high than male officers (0.34) and thus indicate that work environment and coping strategies have significant negative effect on occupational stress and burnout.

Shahnaz Aziz & Jamie Cunningham (2008) ^[13] examined the potential difference between male and female workaholics in relation to work stress and work life imbalance and also tested gender as a moderator in the relation between workaholics with work stress and work life imbalance. The results of regression analysis reveals that work stress had a significant partial effect in the model, accounting 12 percent of the variance in workaholics. Similarly work life imbalance had significant partial effect in the model, accounting for 24 percent variance in workaholics. The results of t test showed that men and women did not significantly differ on workaholics, work stress and work life imbalance. The study found that the gender did not moderate the relation between work stress and workaholics and relation between work life imbalance and workaholics. The study suggests that the management should reprioritize work to reduce workaholics' behaviour in employees and additional stress management programs could be implemented to reduce the effect of workaholics.

Kanwar *et al.*, (2009) ^[14] examined the impact of work life balance and burnout on job satisfaction in the context of IT and ITES industries. The researcher selected 191 respondents from IT industry and 122 respondents from ITES industry from six different organizations in National Capital region, New Delhi using convenience sampling method. The study measured burnout using three dimensions such as meaninglessness, de-motivation and exhaustion. The findings reveal that work life balance and job satisfaction were positively related to each other, de-motivation, exhaustion and meaninglessness were negatively related to job satisfaction. The significant contribution to job satisfaction came from work life balance and it was higher among ITES group compared to the IT group. The findings show that job satisfaction was higher among the male respondents in comparison to the female respondents and identified that the IT group had lower work life balance and job satisfaction and they had higher meaninglessness, de-motivation and exhaustion compared to the ITES group. The study concluded that poor job satisfaction result in lower morale and productivity among employees and they expect their organizations to help in managing work life balance and in reducing stress and burnout.

Yu-Chi Wu & Keng-Yu Shih (2010) ^[15] investigated whether gender roles may affect perceived job stress. For the purpose of the study, data were obtained from 293 bank clerks working in Taiwanese banks. The samples consist of 41 percent males and 59 percent females. The result of Independent t test revealed that female bank clerk ($M = 3.0$, $SD = 0.65$) perceived more job stress than male bank clerk ($M = 2.5$, $SD = 0.5$) and differ significantly among the male and female bank clerks (t value = 0.81, p value = 0.05). Thus this study proves that there is a strong relationship exists between the job stress and gender role.

Dimitrios Belias *et al.*, (2013) ^[16] investigated the job burnout experienced by the bank employees in Greece and also analysed whether this syndrome is related with various demographic characteristics such as age, sex, possession of University degree, Possession of a Master degree, year of experience and position held by the people in the institution. The data was collected from 230 employees of a Greek bank with the help of structured questionnaire suggested by Maslach

and Jackson, 1986. The study reveals that there was strong positive correlation between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization where people felt more emotional exhaustion, the more they experienced the phenomenon of depersonalization but there was a negative correlation between emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment where people felt more emotional exhaustion; the less they experienced the feeling of personal accomplishment. The study identifies that female feel more emotionally exhausted than male and men feel more depersonalized and less fulfilled than women.

Sachin Gupta & Charu (2013) ^[17] conducted a case study among 100 employees of IBM and WIPRO and analyzed the work life balance and burnout as predictors of job satisfaction. The study measures the burnout through three dimensions such as meaninglessness, de-motivation and exhaustion. The result of multiple regression reveals that there is an 85 percent influence of all independent variables like work life balance, de-motivation, meaninglessness and exhaustion on the dependent variable called job satisfaction. Thus the author found that work life balance increases the job satisfaction where as burnout decrease the job satisfaction.

Osman Karatepe (2013) ^[18] tested a research model that investigates emotional exhaustion as a predictor of the effects of work overload, work-family conflict and family-work conflict on job embeddedness and job performance. The study evaluated the relationship through Structural Equation Modelling based on data collected from 110 full time frontline hotel employees and their managers in Romania. The results of SEM revealed that emotional exhaustion function as a full mediator of the effect of work overload, work family conflict and family work conflict on job embeddedness and job performance. The study identifies that employees who have heavy work load are unable to establish a balance between work and family roles and they are emotionally exhausted. Such employees in turn are less embedded in their jobs and display poor performance in the service delivery process. The study suggests that management of the hotels should take into consideration the establishment and maintenance of a family-supportive work environment, effective hiring practices for frontline service jobs and the mentors should provide professional assistance to employees.

Aditya Simha (2014) ^[19] examined the relationship between two components of job burnout (emotional exhaustion and depersonalization) and organizational cynicism and also examined the role of moderating variables such as role conflict, work family conflict, perceived fairness and trust in co-workers on the relationship between burnout and organizational cynicism. For the purpose of the study 172 nurses in a Taiwanese hospital was surveyed. The result indicate that several variables like role conflict, work family conflict, perceived fairness and trust in co-workers acted as moderators in the relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational cynicism and in the relationship between depersonalization and organizational cynicism. Trust in co-workers, perceived fairness and role conflict all were found to negatively influence the relationship between a burnout component and cynicism, whereas work family conflict had a positive influence on the relationship between depersonalization and cynicism.

Parminder Walia (2014) ^[20] made an effort to compare the work life balance of employees working in Public and Private

sector banks in Chandigarh. The sample consisted of 77 employees from Public sector banks and 69 employees from Private sector banks. The mean score on work life balance of employees in Public sector banks was found to be 75.14, while in the private sector bank employees, it was 69.78. The result of independent t test revealed that there is a significant difference between the Public and Private sector bank employees on the dimensions of work interference with personal life ($t = 2.41, P = 0.05$), work personal life enhancement ($t = 3.39, P = 0.01$) and on total work life balance ($t = 3.00, P = 0.01$). The result indicates that the Public sector bank employees had lesser interference of work in personal life and higher life enhancement as compared to Private bank employees. The study identifies that the reason for the better work life balance of Public sector bank employees can be the shorter working hours as compared to the Private bank employees and the better leave facilities help the Public sector bank employees to have the flexibility and time to take care of their personal responsibilities. The study recommends that the Private sector banks need to provide work life balance program such as flexible work arrangements, flexible locations, flexible leave arrangements in order to meet the diverse needs of its employees and to enable them to manage the conflicting responsibilities of work and home spheres.

Jane Nyambura Mukururi & James Mark Ngari (2014) [21] analyzed the influence of work life balance policies on employee job satisfaction in Kenya's banking sector. The correlation result revealed that the flexibility polices ($r = 0.561$) have highest correlation with the employee job satisfaction and leave provisions ($r = 0.194$) have lowest correlation with the employee job satisfaction. The multiple regression result revealed that the independent variables of work life balance policies like flexibility policies, leave provisions, welfare provisions and job design have 61.8 percent influence on employee job satisfaction. Thus the study concluded that the work life balance policies should be improved to enhance the performance and satisfaction level of the bank employees.

4. Results and Discussion

Confirmatory Factor analysis and Reliability Testing

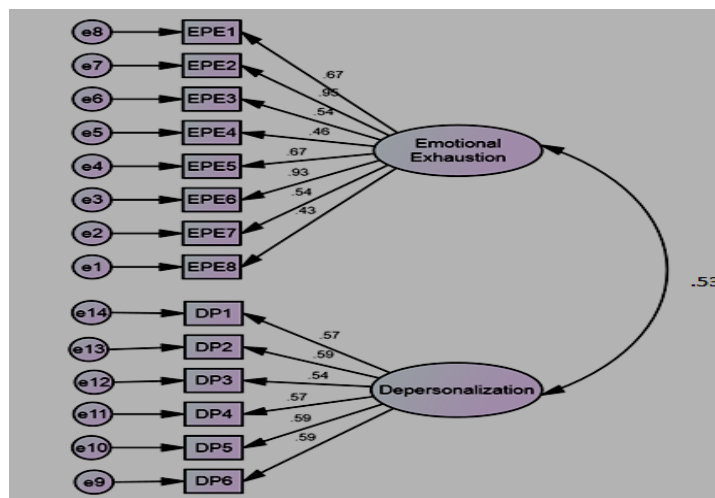
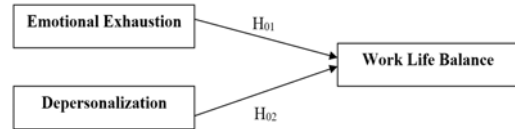


Fig 1: CFA Measurement Model

3. Objectives of the Study

- To Study the moderating role of gender upon the relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization on work life balance of IT sector employees.

Conceptual Model of the Study



Hypotheses of the Study

H01: Emotional Exhaustion has no negative effect on Work Life Balance with the moderating role of gender.

H02: Depersonalization has no negative effect on Work Life Balance with the moderating role of gender.

Research Methodology

The present study examines the moderating role of gender upon the relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization on work life balance among the employees of Infopark IT Company in Kochi. This study is descriptive and empirical in nature. A well-structured questionnaire consisting of eight items scale of emotional exhaustion and six item scale of depersonalization developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) [22] and eleven item scale of work life balance developed by Allen & Meyer (1990) [23] was adopted to collect the data from the sample respondents. Total 280 questionnaires were distributed randomly among the employees of Infopark IT Company, out of which 250 questionnaires have been returned completed in all respect and valid for the study yielded a response rate of 89.3 percent. Reliability analysis has been applied to measure the reliability of data using SPSS 20 while factor loading has been tested through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using AMOS 20 and Structural Equation Model (SEM) using AMOS 20 has been applied to test the hypotheses among the study variables such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and work life balance.

Table 1: Results of Goodness of fit test

Indices	CMIN/df	P	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	RMR	AVE
Model Value	1.214	.292	.993	.981	.995	.996	.960	.020	.028	.62
Recommended Value	<3.0	>0.05	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.95	<0.05	<0.05	>0.50

CFA model yielded a good model fit with acceptable indices of GFI = .993, AGFI = .981, NFI = .995, CFI = .960, RMSEA = .020, RMR= .028, CMIN/df = 1.214 and Probability level (p value) = .292 (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988 [24]; Hair *et al.*, 1995 [25], Kline, 2005 [26]). Keeping in view the CFA models conducted in the studies of Paré & Tremblay (2007) [27] and Nasurdin, Ahmad, & Lin, (2009) [28], decided that the factor loading of an item statement must be $\geq .40$ to be retained in its respective scale whereas, insignificant and negatively significant/insignificant statements ($< .40$) were removed from

their respective scale. Thus, it is noted that all items of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization have been retained in the respective scale. All scales used in the study found to be reliable as the internal consistency of scales was tested using Reliability Analysis which shows the Cronbach's alphas of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and work life balance are 0.73, 0.84, 0.79 respectively. The research has proved that the value of this alpha is greater than 0.5 and is acceptable in social sciences (Nunally & Bernstein, 1978) [29].

Results of Structural Equation Modelling and Hypotheses testing

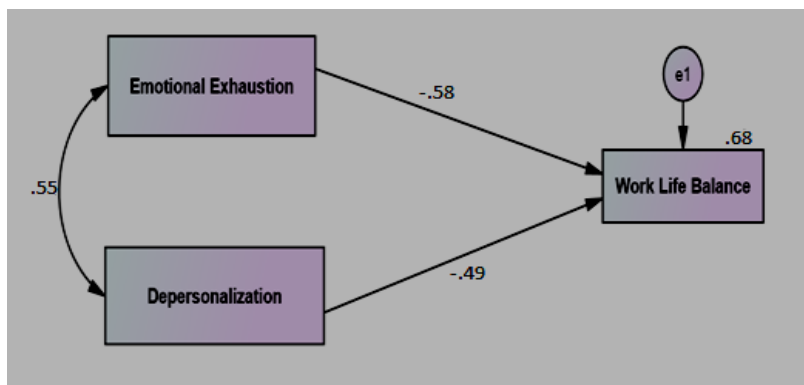


Fig 2: Structural Equation Model showing the moderating role of Male respondents in the effect of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization on Work Life Balance

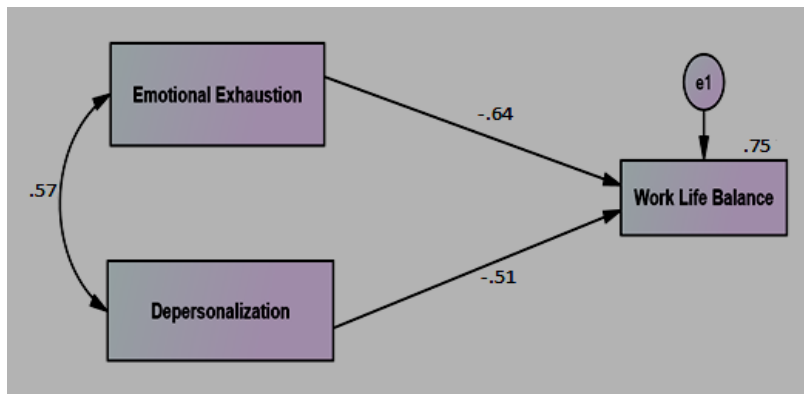


Fig 3: Structural Equation Model showing moderating role of Female respondents in the effect of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization on Work Life Balance

Table 2: Results of Goodness of Fit for Structural Equation Model

Indices	CMIN/df	P	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	RMR
Model Value	2.271	.132	.998	.982	.997	.990	.998	.019	.004
Recommended Value	<3.0	>0.05	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.95	<0.05	<0.05

SEM model yielded a good fit of CMIN/df are 2.271, P value is 0.132, GFI is 0.998, AGFI is 0.982, NFI is .997, TLI is 0.990, CFI is .998, RMESA is 0.019 and RMR is 0.004 (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Hair *et al.*, 1995; Kline, 2005). These values indicate that the results in respect of validity of the proposed model fall well within the generally accepted

limits. This confirms that the collected data set fits into the proposed structural model. Emotional exhaustion found to have significant negative effects on work life balance with the moderating role of gender ($\beta = -.58$, p-value $<.01$ for Male respondents and $\beta = -.64$, p-value $<.00$ for Female respondents). Thus hypothesis 1 is rejected and revealed that

emotional exhaustion have negative effect on work life balance that is when emotional exhaustion is high in employees, it leads to work life imbalance among the employees and it is found that the female respondents have high effect on work life balance due to emotional exhaustion than the male respondents. Depersonalization found to have significant negative effects on work life balance with the moderating role of gender ($\beta = -.49$, p -value $<.02$ for Male respondents and $\beta = -.51$, p -value $<.01$ for Female respondents). Thus hypothesis 2 is rejected and revealed that depersonalization have negative effect on work life balance that is when depersonalization is high in employees, it leads to work life imbalance among the employees and it is found that the female respondents have high effect on work life balance due to depersonalization than the male respondents. R^2 value 0.68 states that the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization has 68% influence on work life balance among the male respondents. R^2 value 0.75 states that the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization has 75% influence on work life balance among the female respondents. Hence it is identified that there is a moderating role of gender upon the relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization on work life balance among IT sector employees.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the perceptions of Infopark IT sector employees towards emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and its effects on work life balance through the moderating role of gender. The study revealed that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization have negative effect on work life balance that is when emotional exhaustion and depersonalization is high in employees, it leads to work life imbalance among the employees and it is found that the female respondents have high effect on work life balance due to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than the male respondents. The findings of the study strongly recommend that IT sector organizations should take proper care of their employees and appropriate measures so that their employees may save from emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and need to provide work life balance program such as flexible work arrangements, flexible locations, flexible leave arrangements in order to meet the diverse needs of its employees and to enable them to manage the conflicting responsibilities of work and home spheres. Hence the employees' positive attitudes towards organizations from the equitable treatment can help the employees to get rid of excessive emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, thus they can achieve the work life balance among the IT sector employees.

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