The Relationship between Job Stress and Job-related Affective Well-Being among English Language Teachers: The Moderating Role of Self-Compassion

[1]Mojtaba Rajabi*
[2]Mehdi Ghezelsefloo

Abstract

Although extensive research has been carried out on the important source of self -compassion in reducing stress and enhancing job-related affective well-being, no single study exists to investigate the correlation between job stress and job-related affective well-being as moderated by self-compassion levels among English language teachers. In doing this study as a descriptive correlational -one, 120 English language teachers working in public, non-profit, and private schools in Gonbad-e- Kavous were selected by purposive sampling method. Then, occupational Stress Inventory-Revised, Self-Compassion Scale, and Job-related Affective Well-being Scale were administered. Data were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS softwares. The results demonstrated that there was a negative relationship between job stress and job-related affective well-being, total self-compassion and such subscales as self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness. However, there was a positive relationship between job stress and self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification. Furthermore, a positive relationship between job-related affective well-being, total self-compassion and such subscales as self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness was found; there was a negative relationship with self-judgment, isolation and over-identification. Based on path analysis pattern, standard and non-standard coefficients of the direct path of the hypothesized model of job stress to self-compassion and self-compassion to job-related affective well-being were meaningful. Therefore, the application of self-compassion can be useful for reducing job stress and improving job-related affective well-being among English language teachers.

Keywords: Job Stress, Job-related Affective Well-being, Self-compassion, English Language Teachers

1. Introduction

Today, one of the most important aspects of an individual's life is his/her job. There exists job stress in each profession which differently puts individuals under mental pressure. English language teachers as effective manpower in every community who can play a major role in the process of its progress and development are not an exception (Ravichandran & Rajendran, 2007; Shernoff, Mehta, Atkins, Torf, & Spencer, 2011). Due to job-related stresses on behalf of their principals and colleagues as well as students' parents at school, teachers have been suffering from constant anxiety which may have an influence on their affective well-being (Barzegarbafrooei & Arbabi, 2015). Geving (2007) also underscores the stress epidemic among teachers at different schooling levels and argues that their profession is so stressful that it can have a major effect on their affective well-being. In fact, job-related affective well-being is one of the components that must be paid attention to in order to assess positive and negative feelings and emotions in response to different professional aspects (Van Katwyk, Fox, Spector, & Kelloway, 2000).

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[1] Assistant Professor of TEFL, rajabi.m57@gmail.com; Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Humanities and Physical Education, Gonbad Kavous University, Gonbad Kavous, Iran.

[2] Assistant Professor of Psychology, me.ghezelseflo@gmail.com; Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Physical Education, Gonbad Kavous University, Gonbad Kavous, Iran.

Previous literature has shown that job stress as an emotional and physiological state influences an individual's productivity, usefulness, health, and job quality (Shahu & Gole, 2008). Job stress can occur due to several factors such as poor working situations, executive job burnout, shift work, ambiguity, conflict in roles, poor relationships with co-workers and managers, and other feasible risks at work (Bokti & Talib, 2009). Also, one of the main issues which is created by job-stress is to reduce affective well-being among teachers. Affective well-being emphasizes positive emotions such as comfort and relief, calmness, satisfaction, and high spirits and negative feelings, including anxiety, boredom, depression, hate, burnout, and fear (Naami & Piryaei, 2014).

Numerous factors are involved in reducing job stress and improving a job-related affective well-being level. One of these factors which have been recently addressed by the researchers is self-compassion. Self- compassion is considered to be one of the constructs that helps people tolerate job stress and professional burnout, entailing affective well-being. The relationship between self-compassion and psychological well-being has so far been investigated (Dasht Bozorgi & Homai, 2018; Varaee, Momeni & Moradi, 2017). Atharyan, Manookian, Varaei, and Haghani (2018) found that self-compassion is a contributive variable in reducing job stress. Neff (2003a) describes self-compassion as a 3-component construct that contains self-kindness to self-judgment, common humanity to isolation, and mindfulness to over-identification. The research literature has so far shown that self-compassion has a significant relationship with affective well-being so that it can remove stress among people (Akin, 2010).

Despite the significant role of self-compassion in reducing stress (Atrian and Manookian , 2017) and enhancing affective well-being (MacBeth and Gumley, 2012), there exists a paucity of research to address this relationship among Iranian EFL teachers' community. In so doing, this study is to address the relationship between job stress and job-related affective well-being among English language teachers considering the moderating role of self-compassion. In keeping with this, the following research questions were formulated:

Research Question One: Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' job-stress and their affective well-being?

Research Question Two: Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' job-stress and their self-compassion?

Research Question Three: Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' self-compassion and their affective well-being?

Research Question Four: Does self-compassion play a moderating role between Iranian EFL teachers' job-stress and their affective well-being?

2. Literature Review

Job stress is a kind of stress experience at work place. It can lead to abnormal and inappropriate behavior at work atmosphere and job dissatisfaction (Ahsan, Abdullah, Fie, & Alam, 2009). When the persons with job stress and high anxiety overwork will soon become upset, their social, psychological, physical, family performance and production may decrease, and their job dissatisfaction can increase (Lazuras, Rodafinos, Matsiggos, & Stamatoulakis, 2009; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). In addition, job stress can give rise to psychological and mental imbalance and such consequences as job dissatisfaction and job leave (Ouellette, et al, 2018). All-inclusive cognitive studies indicated significantly positive relationship between job stress, anxiety, depression and decrease in emotional well- being (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Hence, affective well- being among teachers is one of the key components which is needed to be addressed (Van Katwyk, Fox, Spector, & Kelloway, 2000).

Charted Institute of Personal and Development (CIPD, 2014) also defines the concept of the job-related affective well-being as creating and preparing an atmosphere to increase staff's happiness. This can make them come up with ways to be aware of their own potential capacities to achieve the goals beneficial to both themselves and the relevant organization. Some theorists

Chabahar Maritime University
Iranian Journal of English for Academic Purposes   ISSN: 2476-3187
IJEAP, 2020, 9(1)   (Previously Published under the Title: Maritime English Journal)

believe that our emotions in the workplace can overshadow the way we think. People's affection in the interaction with the cognitive processes can exert an influence over their various behaviors. As a result, moods will direct the way people do their duties, evaluate information, and judge each other's behaviors (cited in Rahmani & Esmaili-shad, 2017). Thus, the research evidence also indicates that positive or negative feelings would have a great impact on one's behavior and performance as well as inclination towards instructive or destructive behaviors (Golparvar, Javadian, Adibi, Mosahebi, & Ahmadi, 2013). Furthermore, research findings shows that there is a positive relationship between positive affection and job satisfaction and there is a significant relationship between negative affection and professional stress (McCalister Dolbier, Webster, Mallon, & Steinhardt, 2006).

Self- compassion can also be considered as an effective factor in psychological adjustment. Self-compassion has a positive relationship with life satisfaction, positive emotions and less psychological symptoms and affective well- being (MacBeth, & Gumley, 2012). Apparently, the self-compassionate are of more adaptable profiles contributing to explain such findings. For instance, self–compassion is correlated with low mind-rumination level (Johnson & O'Brien 2013, Odou & Brinker, 2014), the fear of negative evaluation (Vernon, Chiarella & Papps, 2013), the reduction of avoidance (Krieger, Altenstein, Baettig, Doerig, & Holtforth, 2013), the crackdown of disturbing thoughts and emotions, and confident emotional skills (Neff, Hsieh, & Dejitterat, 2005). Atrian and Manookian (2017) demonstrate that self-compassion plays a major role in reducing job stress. Besides, other studies indicate that people with high self-compassion have less mind-rumination and are more highly motivated to tackle the personal conflicts, depression, anxiety, and idealism, instead (Van Dam, Sheppard, Forsyth, & Earleywine, 2011). They also show that the self-compassionate will be better prepared to encounter stressful situations (Allen, Goldwasser, & Leary, 2012). Self-compassionate has also a strong relationship with affective well-being (Bluth & Blanton, 2015).

To sum up, in recent years, there is an ever-increasing attention to the role of self-compassion and positive psychological components such as life happiness (Neff, 2003a), joy (Hollis-Walker & Colosimo, 2011), optimism (Neff, Kirkpatrick & Rude, 2007), emotional intelligence (Hofmann, Grossman & Hinton, 2011), confrontation skills (Leary, Tate, Adams, Batts Allen, & Hancock, 2007), motivation improvement (Breines & Chen, 2012), psychological well-being (Mills, Wand& Fraser, 2015), distress tolerance, emotion regulation and anxiety sensitivity (Keshavarz Mohammadi & Khalatbari, 2018), Deterministic Thinking (Ghezelseflo, Mirahmadi, Jazayeri, 2015). Yet, not considered in this body of literature was to predict the role of self-compassion as a moderating variable in relationship between job stresses and affective well-being among Iranian EFL English language teachers. Hence, the present study addresses this gap by assessing these possible relationships**.**

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The present study is a descriptive-correlational research. The population consisted of all English language teachers from public and private schools, and English language centers in Gonbad-e-Kavous, a northern city in Iran, in 2018. Among them, 120 English language instructors were selected by purposive sampling method, 40 people (33%) from public schools, 30 people (25%) from private schools, and 50 people (42%) from English language centers. The required criteria for the sampling were having more than 5 years teaching experience and holding at least B.A degree in the field of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL).

3.2. Instruments

The Job-related Affective Well-being Scale (JAWS**)** is devised by Van Katwyk, Fox, Spector, and Kelloway (2000) to assess one's emotional reactions to his/her job. It has a long 30-item form and a short 20-item form to describe various emotions of an occupation (Nemat Tavousi, 2013). The long 30-item form was used in this research. The validity reports of JAWS reported for different

occupations seem to be proper (Bruk-Lee & Spector, 2006; Spector & Fox, 2010). The internal consistency of the 30-item form, negative emotions, and positive emotions is 0.95, 0.92, and 0.94 respectively (Van Katwyk et al., 2000). The internal consistency of JAWS via Guttman split-half method in an Iranian research study is obtained 0.90. The correlation coefficients of the scale for the interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction are equal to -0.33 and 0.82 respectively. The significance of the amounts of the correlation coefficient for the positive affective well-being (0.81r) and the negative affective well-being (0.92r) proves the acceptable convergent -reliability of the scale.

The Self- compassion Scale (SCS) is a scale containing 26 questions which is constructed by Neff (2003a) to evaluate the degree of the self-compassion. It includes 6 subscales: self-kindness (5 questions), self-judgment (5 questions), common humanity (4 questions), isolation (4 questions), and mindfulness (4 questions, and over-identification (4 questions). It aims to assess an individual's relationship quality with his /her experiences. The questions of this scale are developed and ordered on a five-item Likert continuum from almost never (0) to almost always (4). The questions of the self-judgement, isolation, and over-identification subscales are graded reversely. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients are reported as 0.92 for the total scale, and 0.75-0.81 for the subscales. The test-retest reliability coefficient for a two-week interval is obtained 0.93 (Neff, 2003b). In addition, in another study, Neff, Hsieh, and Yung (2008) tested this scale in Thailand, Taiwan, and the U.S. and then obtained the Cronbach alpha reliability for each country 0.87, 0.95, and 0.86 respectively. Momeni, Shahidi, Mootabi, and Heidari (2014) reported the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients for the common humanity and mindfulness subscales 0.71, for the self-kindness 0.75, for the isolation 0.72, and for the over-identification 0.65. The correlation coefficient of the scale as well as the self-esteem scale was reported 0.22. In this research study, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the total scale is obtained 0.83, for the self-kindness 0.79, for the self-judgment 0.78, for the common humanity 0.76, for the isolation 0.77, for the mindfulness 0.78, and for the over-identification 0.65.

The Job Stress Inventory- Revised (OSI-R) is a questionnaire which is developed by Osipow and Spokane (1998). The OSI-R is of 140 questions which participants can provide their responses to each question on a five-degree continuum from never true (1) to often true (5). The present research study has enjoyed a job stress questionnaire with 60 questions. The 6 subscales of stress related to occupational roles consist of role overload (questions 1-10), role insufficiency (questions 11-20), role ambiguity (questions 21-30), role boundary (questions 31-40), responsibility (questions 40-41), and physical environment (questions 51-60).The results of the research conducted by Hicks, Fujiwara, Bahr (2006), Ross (2005), and Osipow and Spokane (1998) to test the factorial validity of the OSI-R support the theoretically fundamental logic practically. The internal consistency coefficient in Ross's research is obtained 0.88. In the present study, this value for the total questionnaire score is equal to 0.88, for role overload 0.68, role insufficiency 0.70, role ambiguity 0.76, role boundary 0.69, responsibility 0.67, and physical environment 0.80. Notably, the above-mentioned questionnaires namely JAWS, OSI-R and SCS enjoyed validity since they were examined and confirmed by two Iranian experts in educational psychology.

3.3. Data Analysis

After selecting the participants and collecting information of the variables, the data were analyzed in two forms, i.e., descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, by the SPSS software to determine the mean and the standard deviation. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test (K–S test) to assure the normal data distribution (P=0.872, Z=0.736) and Pearson correlation test at a significant level (P≤ 0.05) were also utilized in this research. In a construct path analysis carried out with AMOS software, direct and indirect coefficients of the observed variables on the independent variable were determined based on the research pattern.

4. Results

The first goal of this research was to find any possible relationship between job stress and job-related affective well-being among English language teachers. Table 1 illustrates the mean and the

standard deviation of the scores for the job stress, self-compassion, and job-related affective well-being.

Table 1: The Mean and the Standard Deviation of the Research Variables

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self-kindness	12.26	3.42
Self-judgment	11.38	2.47
Common humanity	13.28	2.47
isolation	10.68	2.04
Mindfulness	12.92	3.11
Over-identification	9.28	2.18
Total self-compassion	74.24	7.22
Role overload	29.99	5.07
Role insufficiency	32.24	4.40
Role ambiguity	35.52	4.45
Role boundary	30.66	3.89
Responsibility	28.56	5.45
Physical environment	29.27	4.33
Total Job stress	156.87	24.04
Job-related affective well-being	93.89	17.03

Table 2: The Correlation Matrix among the Research Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Self-kindness	1														
Self-judgment	**-0.41	1													
Common humanity	**0.47	**-0.49	1												
Isolation	**-0.37	**0.48	**-0.41	1											
Mindfulness	**0.61	**-0.65	**0.48	**-0.45	1										
Over-identification	**-0.44	**0.60	**-0.31	**0.35	**-0.78	1									
Total self-compassion	**0.54	**-0.42	**0.32	**-0.29	**0.53	**-0.45	1								
Role overload	**-0.24	**0.22	*0.24	**-0.24	**-0.32	**0.29	*-0.25	1							
Role insufficiency	**-0.32	**0.28	*0.33	**-0.32	**-0.45	**0.44	**-0.37	**0.29	1						
Role ambiguity	**-0.2	**0.3	*0.2	**-0.3	**-0.3	**0.33	**-0.5	**0.27	**0.43	1					

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Iranian Journal of English for Academic Purposes   ISSN: 2476-3187
IJEAP, 2020, 9(1)   (Previously Published under the Title: Maritime English Journal)

	6	2	1	8	3		0								
Role boundary	**-0.40	**-0.33	**-0.25	**-0.41	**-0.36	**0.47	**-0.45	**0.30	**0.38	**0.41	1				
Responsibility	*-0.36	**-0.41	**-0.38	**-0.44	**-0.32	*0.46	**-0.23	**0.53	**0.33	**0.47	**0.44	1			
Physical environment	*-0.23	**-0.28	**0.41	**0.31	**-0.41	**0.33	**-0.26	*0.49	**0.33	**0.37	**0.33	**0.27	1		
Total job stress	**-0.33	**0.34	**-0.40	**0.27	**-0.45	**0.34	**-0.54	**0.29	**0.43	**0.61	**0.47	**0.30	*0.43	1	
Job-related affective well-being	**0.46	**-0.30	**0.30	**-0.4	**0.29	**-0.43	**0.47	**-0.53	**-0.38	**-0.44	**-0.46	**-0.53	**-0.38	**0.48	1

As for the first research question i.e. whether there is any statistically significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' job-stress and their affective well-being, Table 2 shows that there is a significantly negative relationship between job stress and job-related affective well-being (p < .05).

Furthermore, concerning the second research question i.e. whether there is any statistically significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' job-stress and their self- compassion, Table 2 shows that there is a significantly negative relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' job-stress and their self-compassion with its subscales such as self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. However, they have a significantly positive relationship with the subscales of self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification (p < .05).

On the third research question i.e. whether there is a statistically significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' affective well-being and their self- compassion, Table 2 shows that there is a significantly positive relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' affective well-being and their self-compassion with its subscales such as self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. However, they have a significantly negative relationship with the subscales of self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification (p < .05).

To perform the path analysis, those variables which are correlated with self-compassion are inserted into the model path. After the paths are determined based on the theoretical principles, the final model is devised by the fit indexes. In addition, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and path analysis method are utilized to investigate the direct and indirect effects as well as the impact of the total job stress and self-compassion on job-related affective well-being. The SEMs are a set of linear equations to describe a phenomenon on the basis latent pre-hypothesized cause and effect variables using a set of measurable variables for each one. Factor analysis (exploratory and confirmatory) and path analysis are special cases of this technique. Factor analysis has only a set of latent variables which are analyzed by some measured variables. Both cause and effect variables are measurable in path analysis. In fact, the correlation coefficient of each cause/effect variable is divided into two parts: direct effects and indirect effects. That is why the correlation coefficient must not be considered as the only basis for judgement. The existence of correlation between the two variables may be as a result of another variable existence that affect both variables, leading to correlation between them. Actually, there is no cause/effect relationship between the two variables.

First, the statistical fit of the measurement model of the research data was examined by the AMOS software. Specifically, the following indexes were used to fit the model. Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit index (AGFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean

Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Relative Fit index (RFI). Exploring the fit indexes of the model indicates that the model has a really desirable fit with the data. If the chi square fails to be statistically meaningful, it will indicate a very appropriate fit. When CFI, AGFI, GFI are greater than 0.95 and RMSEA is less than 0.05, it will also show a highly good and desirable fit. If CFI, AGFI, GFI are greater than 0.90 and RMSEA is less than 0.08, it will represent a good and desirable fit (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Consequently, CFI, AGFI, GFI, RMSEA, and RFI illustrate a highly good and desirable fit (see Table 3).

Table 3: The Goodness of fit Indexes of the Research Pattern

RFI	CFI	AGFI	GFI	RMSEA	p-value	df	Chi square	Index
0.91	0.95	0.96	0.97	0.041	0.47	1	0.39	Value

In order to answer the fourth research question i.e. whether self-compassion plays a moderating role between Iranian EFL teachers' job-stress and their affective well-being, figure 1 provides the results associated with predicting the scores of job-related affective well-being moderated by self-compassion and its subscales. As shown in figure 1, the precise review of the goodness of fit indexes of the structural pattern shows that this pattern is of adequate fit with the data. In this pattern, 29 % of the dispersion of the scores for job-related affective well-being among English language teachers is described by the job stress and self-compassion variables and 13% of the scatteredness of the score for self-compassion through job stress. According to the structural model 1, all the path coefficients of the unobservable variables are statistically significant. Additionally, the relationship between job stress factor and self-compassion as well as job-related affective well-being among instructors is negative, but the relationship between self-compassion and job-related affective well-being is positive and meaningful. The values of the generic and indirect effects of the variables that were calculated in terms of direct effects can be seen in Table 4 below.
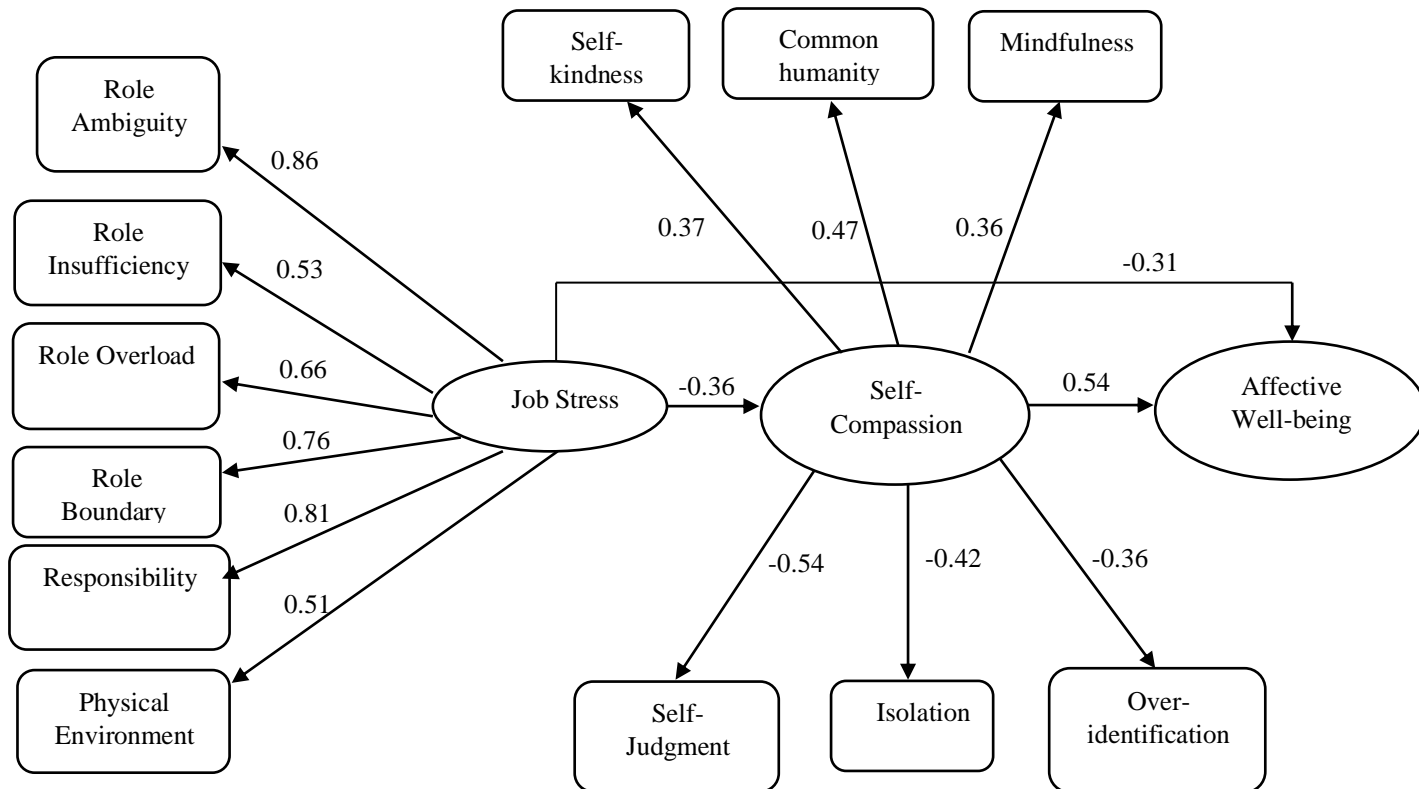

Figure 1: The Path Analysis of the Research Pattern for the Relationship between the Job Stress and Self-compassion as well as Affective Well-being

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Iranian Journal of English for Academic Purposes   ISSN: 2476-3187
IJEAP, 2020, 9(1)   (Previously Published under the Title: Maritime English Journal)

Table 4: The Direct Standard and Non-standard Coefficients of the Research Pattern in Terms of Occupational Stress Moderated by Self- compassion

P	C.R	S.E	β	B	← Paths
0.001<	4.50	0.04	-0.36	0.09	Job stress to self-compassion
0.001<	10.64	0.05	0.54	0.23	self- compassion to Job-related affective well-being

As can be seen in Table 4, the standard and non-standard coefficients of the direct path in the hypothesized research model from job stress to self-compassion (P<0.01, β =-.036), and from self-compassion to job-related affective well-being are significant.

5. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between job stress and job-related affective well-being as moderated by self-compassion among English language teachers in Iranian context. The results of the statistical method of the research path revealed that there was a significantly negative relationship between job stress and self-compassion as well as job-related affective well-being among English language teachers. On the other hand, the relationship between self-compassion and job-related affective well-being is significantly positive. This statistical significance of the indirect effect of the self-compassion on the relationship between job stress and job-related affective well-being experimentally supports the moderating role of self-compassion. The present study showed that self-compassion itself was a good moderator between job stress and job-related affective well-being among Iranian English language teachers so that it could help psychological and adjustable functions.

The results of the present study are in line with Allen and Leary (2010)'s findings in which they showed that highly self-compassionate individuals in stressful situations used effective counterproductive strategies; Finlay-Jones, Rees, and Kane (2015) argued that there was a reverse relationship between self-compassion and stress so that people with high self-compassion in stressor situations could experience less shocking behaviors. In the same way, the results of the investigations conducted by Rajabi and Maghami (2015) as well as Poulin, et al. (2013) showed that those ones who were under the self-compassionate conditions had better affective well-being indexes to those who were not in such situations. Likewise, Lamela, Figueiredo, and Bastos (2014) similarly found that self-compassion had a relationship with affective well-being indicators such as joy, happiness, less depression, more self-esteem, and optimism; and finally the results of Homan (2016)'s study shows that there is a positive relationship between self-compassion and psychological and affective well-being.

To explain the above-mentioned findings, Neff (2003b) posits that self-compassion can be considered as a strategy for regulating emotions since it can transform negative feelings into kindness and human commonality. Finlay-Jones, Rees, and Kane (2015) believe that the high self-compassionate individuals experience greater psychological adjustment and emotional transparency, accept their negative emotions more easily, and show less shocking behaviors while confronting stressors. Self–compassion enables people to find better coping resource strategies facing stress and produce more adaptive responses to stressors. Moreover, Leary et.al. (2007) argue that the self-compassionate ones are more likely to think about negative events in more adaptive ways. They appear to be more purposeful and rational. It is less likely to judge themselves in a cruel manner. It enables them to accept the negative events and experiences as part of everyday life.

One of the theories discussed in this field represents the fact that the individuals with high self-compassion levels have more preparedness to face stressor situations in stressful conditions (Allen & Leary, 2010). In addition to evaluating negative emotions and discarding them, such people can be educated about how to effectively and efficiently interact with stress and reduce it and deal with their positive feelings like self-compassion as a treatment strategy (Breines, Thoma, Gianferante, Hanlin, Chen, & Rohleder, 2014). The high self-compassionate individuals also have

Chabahar Maritime University
Iranian Journal of English for Academic Purposes ISSN: 2476-3187
IJEAP, 2020, 9(1)   (Previously Published under the Title: Maritime English Journal)

great motivation for looking after their own health by following healthy lifestyle and programs (Terry & Leary, 2011). Considering the important role of self-compassion in achieving a balance in life, it seems that the self-compassionate individuals are able to control their stressor and negative emotions better while facing daily events such as a stressful workplace (Leary et al., 2007).

Allen and Leary (2010) believe that self-compassion as a person's special feature enjoys a variety of functions so that it can help encounter with stressors, evaluate situations rationally, and have the best choice from different alternatives. As a coping resource strategy, it can finally provide effective behavioral, affective, and cognitive consequences. As to self-compassion components, it should be noted that a self-compassionate language teacher makes an attempt to face painful emotions generously and rationally. Caring, considerate, and compassionate persons can find themselves highly valuable and experience less negative feeling since they believe in themselves, take low self-criticism, and think that all human beings may make mistakes over the unpleasant and stressful events in life (Poulin, Brown, Dillard, & Smith, 2013). It can help an individual accept his/her negative emotions and overcome them, build up his/her self-esteem, and achieve welfare emotionally. Hence, compassionate teachers try not to judge themselves harshly, accept distressing events more easily, and evaluate themselves based on their true performance. Therefore, self-compassion can cause an individual to behave in line with affective well-being (Odou, & Brinker, 2014).

Taking positive dimensions of self-compassion into consideration, English language teachers enjoying such aspects behave kindly towards themselves, fully understand themselves instead of making a judgement about their own manners, and support themselves against self- incompetence in bitter occasions and negative life experiences. The component of mindfulness helps an individual to avoid pessimistic thoughts and obsessive ruminations in mind. It can reduce negative emotions as a result of affective well-being by decreasing rumination because the vast majority of negative feelings are due to mental ruminations occurring after negative experiences in mind (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000). English language teachers should be aware that individuals who gain high self-compassion scores in self-judgement and over-identification mostly under questions themselves in stressful situations and unsuccessful experiences and have self-criticism and negative self-evaluation; in consequence, they would express anxiety, depression, self-criticism, mental rumination, (interpersonal) cognitive distortions, and excessive perfectionism.

6. Conclusion

The results of this study indicated that the self-compassion of the EFL teachers working in different language school settings can be contributive in moderating the EFL teachers' stress level and affective well- being among the Iranian EFL teachers. The present study theoretically expanded the knowledge of the subject matter of self–compassion and clarified its need in association with English language teachers' affective well-being and job stress. Empirically, the findings of this study provide psychologists and English language teachers with the latest facts on how the impact of self-compassion and personality traits is highly significant in terms of psychological well-being. In this respect, we can conduct experimental studies to promote the self-compassion levels among EFL teachers and contribute to the development of psychological well-being of new generations through such activities as contact meetings and parental schools to help families acquire positive personality traits.

Notably, there are some limitations and suggestions in this research. One of the limitations of this study was related to the small sample size i.e., the English language teachers in Gonbad-e-Kavous; accordingly, caution must be applied, as the findings might not be generalizable to other populations. The results of the study cannot provide evidence regarding causal relationships among the variables. Therefore, further research should be done to investigate such links to establish the support of the suggested relationship between self-compassion, job-related affective well-being and job stress, and other variables. For example, further work on the use of cognitive teaching or self-compassion–oriented mindfulness in the direction of improving affective well-being and reducing job stress is recommended.

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Appendix A: Job-related Affective Well-being Scale, JAWA (Copyright Paul T. Van Katwyk, Suzy Fox, Paul E. Spector, E. Kevin Kelloway)

Below are a number of statements that describe different emotions that a job (here English language teaching) can make you as a teacher feel. Please indicate the amount to which any part of your job (e.g., the work, coworkers, administrators, students, pay) has made you feel that emotion in the past days.

Please check **one** response for each item that best indicates how often you've experienced each emotion at work over the past 30 days.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite often	Extremely often
1. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel at ease					
2. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel angry					
3. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel annoyed					
4. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel anxious					
5. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel bored					
6. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel cheerful					
7. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel calm					
8. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel confused					
9. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel content					
10. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel depressed					
11. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel disgusted					
12. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel discouraged					
13. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel elated					
14. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel energetic					
15. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel excited					
16. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel ecstatic					
17. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel enthusiastic					
18. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel frightened					
19. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel frustrated					
20. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel furious					
21. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel gloomy					
22. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel fatigued					
23. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel happy					
24. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel intimidated					
25. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel inspired					
26. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel miserable					
27. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel pleased					
28. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel proud					
29. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel satisfied					
30. My job as an English Language teacher made me feel relaxed					

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Appendix B. **The Job-stress Inventory Revised Scale, OSI-R**

Below are a number of statements that describe job stress as an English language teacher. Please read the following statements and answer them carefully. Note that there is no right or wrong answer to the statements below.

Age: **Sex:**   **Academic degree and field of study:**

Items	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite often	Extremely often
1. At work I am expected to do too many different tasks in too little time.					
2. I feel that my job responsibilities are increasing.					
3. I am expected to perform tasks on my job for which I have never been trained.					
4. I have to take work home with me.					
5. I have the resources I need to get my job done.					
6. I'm good at my job.					
7. I work under tight time deadlines.					
8. I wish that I had more help to deal with the demands placed upon me at work.					
9. My job requires me to work in several equally important areas at once.					
10. I am expected to do more work than is reasonable.					
11. My career is progressing about as I hoped it would.					
12. My job fits my skills and interests.					
13. I am bored with my job.					
14. I feel I have enough responsibility on my job.					
15. My talents are being used on my job.					
16. My job has a good future.					
17. I am able to satisfy my needs for success and recognition in my job.					
18. I feel overqualified for my job.					
19. I learn new skills in my work.					
20. **I** have to perform tasks that are beneath my ability.					
21. My supervisor provides me with useful feedback about my performance.					

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Items	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite often	Extremely often
22. It is clear to me what I have to do to get ahead.					
23. I am uncertain about what **I** am supposed to accomplish in my work.					
24. When faced with several tasks I know which should be done first.					
25. I know where to begin a new project when it is assigned to me.					
26. My supervisor asks for one thing, but really wants another.					
27. I understand what is acceptable personal behavior on my job (e.g., dress, interpersonal relations, etc.)					
28. The priorities of my job are clear to me.					
29. I have a clear understanding of how my boss wants me to spend my time.					
30. I know the basis on which I am evaluated.					
31. I feel conflict between what my employer expects me to do and what I think is right or proper.					
32. I feel caught between factions at work.					
33. I have more than one person telling me what to do.					
34. I know where I fit in my organization.					
35. I feel good about the work I do.					
36. My supervisors have conflicting ideas about what I should be doing.					
37. My job requires working with individuals from several departments or work areas.					
38. It is clear who really runs things where I work.					
39. I have divided loyalties on my job.					
40. I frequently disagree with individuals from other work units or departments.					
41. I deal with more people during the day than I prefer.					
42. I spend time concerned with the problems others at work bring to me.					
43. I am responsible for the welfare of subordinates.					
44. People on-the-job look to me for leadership.					
45. I have on-the-job responsibility for the activities of others.					

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Items	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite often	Extremely often
46. I worry about whether the people who work for/with me will get things done properly.					
47. My job requires me to make important decisions.					
48. If I make a mistake in my work, the consequences for others can be pretty bad.					
49. I worry about meeting my job responsibilities.					
50. I like the people I work with.					
51. On my job I am exposed to high levels of noise.					
52. On my job I am exposed to high levels of wetness.					
53. On my job I am exposed to high levels of dust.					
54. On my job I am exposed to temperature extremes.					
55. On my job I am exposed to bright light.					
56. My job is physically dangerous.					
57. I have an erratic work schedule.					
58. I work all by myself.					
59. On my job I am exposed to unpleasant odors.					
60. On my job I am exposed to poisonous substances.					

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Appendix C. Self- Compassion Scale (SCS)

HOW I TYPICALLY ACT TOWARDS MYSELF IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Age: **Sex:**   **Academic degree and field of study:**

Please read each statement carefully before answering. To the left of each item, indicate how often you behave in the stated manner, using the following scale:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite often	Extremely often
1. I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.					
2. When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.					
3. When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.					
4. When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world.					
5. I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.					
6. When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.					
7. When I'm down and out, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am.					
8. When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself.					
9. When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.					
10. When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.					
11. I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.					
12. When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.					
13. When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.					
14. When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation.					
15. I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.					
16. When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself.					

Please read each statement carefully before answering. To the left of each item, indicate how often you behave in the stated manner, using the following scale:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite often	Extremely often
17. When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective.					
18. When I'm really struggling, I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it.					
19. I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering.					
20. When something upsets me I get carried away with my feelings.					
21. I can be a bit cold-hearted towards myself when I'm experiencing suffering.					
22. When I'm feeling down I try to approach my feelings with curiosity and openness.					
23. I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies.					
24. When something painful happens I tend to blow the incident out of proportion.					
25. When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.					
26. I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.					