How role overload affects female teachers' work-life balance crafting behaviours: a coexistence collective moderation model

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Abstract: Drawing from the conservation of resources theory, this study explored the interplay between role overload and work-life crafting behaviours, emphasising the moderating effects of job demands-abilities fit and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX). Utilising structural equation modelling, data from 342 full-time female primary school teachers in Iran was analysed. Results showed that teachers with a lack of work-life balance crafting behaviours reported heightened job demands. Furthermore, the presence of role overload diminished teachers' tendencies for work-life balance crafting behaviours. Both individual (perceived job abilities-demands) and situational (quality of leader-member exchanges) factors exhibited combined moderation effects on the relationship between role overload and work-life crafting behaviours among

these teachers. This research enriches the literature on work-life crafting behaviours, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of work-life balance crafting behaviours influenced by a blend of individual and situational factors.

Keywords: female teachers; job demands-abilities fit; leader-member exchange; work-life balance crafting behaviour.

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1 Introduction

Adults have personal and professional responsibilities that play a crucial role in their lives (Butler et al., 2005). Individuals' personal lives are intertwined with their occupations in complex ways, and Harris et al. (2011) noted a rapid decline in the boundaries between work and family obligations. Consequently, many researchers, academicians and decision-makers have shown interest in examining work-life balance (Casper et al., 2018; Sirgy and Lee, 2018; Uddin et al., 2021; Williams et al., 2016). According to a report by the International Labour Organisation, women spend an average of 4 hours and 25 minutes each day doing household chores and taking care of other family members (Pozzan and Cattaneo, 2020). Broadbridge (2008); Livingston and Judge (2008) and Verma et al. (2018) believed that women have at least two work shifts: taking care of the household chores and meeting their professional responsibilities. Work-life balance thus has become a critical issue in the lives of working women (Hebert, 2021), particularly amongst teachers and instructors.

Because teachers are viewed as high-status professionals and because of the client-demanding culture of their occupation, they are exposed to intense work pressure, stress

and exhaustion which affect their life satisfaction (Helou et al., 2016; Thornton, 2016; Ahmed et al., 2020). Such demands and pressure (not limited to time and place) aligned with masculine stereotypes can lead women to dedicate most of their time to professional work-related matters (Moen et al., 2013). Toropova et al. (2020) shown that younger female teachers tend to leave their schools. Over the last decades, education has become challenging and considering issues such as introducing new educational courses and curriculum development is much more time-consuming. The governments' policies aim to expand and universalise education in emerging and developing economies. Accordingly, there is an increase in relevant job opportunities in this sector, and the percentage of female employees is increasing because of their greater flexibility (Rawal, 2023). This may herald a potential imbalance between occupational and non-occupational roles, particularly among Iranian teachers.

Teachers in Iran have faced increasing work-related pressure because of changes in the work context of the Iranian educational system, such as the implementation of economic policies related to education expansion and privatisation, which has increased competition among schools to attract and retain students and improve both the quantity and quality of their services. This is more likely to influence female married teachers in Iran because of their commitment to occupational duties as well as household and family affairs (Hardy and Adnett, 2002; Pareek and Bagrecha, 2017), that together result in a work-life imbalance.

Meanwhile, human beings typically intend to shape and optimise their living conditions (Vansteenkiste and Ryan, 2013) and play active roles in reacting to environmental or situational forces to achieve their personal goals (De Bloom et al., 2020). Hence, they attempt to achieve work-life balance by managing the relationship between occupational and non-occupational aspects of their lives (Kossek et al., 1999), which may require numerous recreations (De Bloom et al., 2020). Crafting behaviours concerning the work-life balance refers to employees' informal measures and strategies that help shape work-life balance and separate different aspects of life (Kreiner et al., 2009; Sturges, 2012). Such behaviours are considered as changeable and spontaneous behaviours that are necessary to adapt to changing conditions and challenges (Ghitulescu, 2013). Therefore, teachers need to take into account such behaviours because they are influenced by personal (values and beliefs), interpersonal (dynamic professional relationships) and institutional (school roles, regulations and policies) factors while conceptualising their job (Haneda and Sherman, 2016).

Personal judgment and creativity are inevitable in teaching (Leana et al., 2009). Despite performing different strategies and implementing crafting behaviours, some factors may always affect employees' efforts to achieve work-life balance. The most obvious situation as of late would be the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely affected the relationship between work and life (Kniffin et al., 2021). The pandemic not only changed (or removed) boundaries between roles but also critically changed individuals' treatment and healthcare methods for their family members and thus increased family role demands numerous employees (Rothbard et al., 2021). Although the pandemic was regarded primarily as a healthcare crisis, it also deeply affected the economic life, social life and education around the globe (Hjálmsdóttir and Bjarnadóttir, 2021) and led to a significant shift in schooling systems and educational practices (Kraft et al., 2021), resulting in the closure of schools and universities and to the expansion of online education, causing students and teachers to stay home and change their learning/teaching approaches (Hjálmsdóttir and Bjarnadóttir, 2021). When formal education happens at

home, and job duties and family affairs occur in the same space, the boundary between work and family is diminished.

Furthermore, initial reports indicate that the pandemic has had different effects on genders, especially concerning working mothers (Calarco et al., 2020; Zamarro et al., 2020). It, therefore, is important to take this issue into account and provide appropriate insight into individual management of the work-life balance (Sturges, 2012); however, most of the related research has focused on organisational policies and different measures such as flexible working hours and telecommuting to facilitate this balance. Only a few studies have inspected the influential role of employees' characteristics in achieving work-life balance (Clark, 2000; Eby et al., 2005). In addition, Gravador and Teng-Calleja (2018) failed to comprehensively investigate such individual characteristics. Eby et al. (2005) have highlighted the importance of developing and validating different models of the work-life domain and proposed that such a model is needed to study causal mechanisms explaining work-life balance crafting behaviours. Some studies have developed and then tested simple models to investigate the impact of work-life balance crafting behaviours. For example, Gravador and Teng-Calleja (2018) studied these behaviours from the subjective well-being perspective of individuals but did not intend to extend the model to effective antecedents and causal mechanisms of factors affecting the formation of this process. Therefore, examining and recognising causal mechanisms that explain the relationship between job stressors and their behavioural consequences is crucial. According to Solberg and Wong (2016), there is a complex relationship between job stressors (such as demanding roles) and spontaneous change-oriented behaviours (e.g., the work-life balance crafting behaviours). In other words, it is important to highlight the role of moderating factors that determine the extent of individuals' control as well as external/supportive factors. Besides, Ghitulescu (2013) asserted that change-oriented behaviours might be facilitated as a result of a better understanding of situational factors.

The present study delves into the coexistence and collective moderating influence of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) quality and demands-abilities on the relationship between role overload and work-life crafting behaviours among female teachers.

This study employs the Coexistence Collective Moderation Model to explore the combined influence of two distinct moderating factors (as outlined by Kath et al., 2009) on the relationship between perceived role overload and work-life balance crafting behaviours. Initially, the model examines a two-way relationship, focusing on the role of one moderator variable, namely the perceived job demands-abilities fit. Subsequently, it delves into a three-way relationship, incorporating both moderator variables: perceived job demands-abilities fit and leader-member relationships. This approach seeks to comprehensively understand the collective moderation effects of these variables on the relationship between perceived role burden and work-life crafting behaviours. Also, this study intends to explain these relationships using the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory perspective (Hobfoll, 1989). According to this theory, individuals are inherently motivated to maintain their existing resources and obtain new ones. These resources include objectives, personal characteristics, environmental conditions and different types of energies considered valuable for individuals. They will struggle to maintain, protect and accumulate their valuable resources to overcome potential threats to their well-being, and will also use them to obtain other resources or protect their existing resources.

In this regard, the present study expands the work-balance crafting behaviours literature in two ways; while reviewing previous research on work-life balance crafting

behaviours and explaining the mechanism of these behaviours, this study has also investigated the influence of such a relationship. Although previous studies have implemented job characteristics (e.g., autonomy and task interdependence) or individual differences (e.g., work experience) to explain similar individual behaviours with self-oriented and self-initiated change nature (Niessen et al., 2016), the present research has employed the individual-situational approach for this purpose. It attempts to explain the potential of work-life balance crafting behaviours based on a more complex range of factors resulting from a mutual combination of individual and situational factors. It is also noteworthy that previous studies have investigated neither the mediating role of individuals' abilities demands nor its simultaneous moderating impact on LMX. Thus, this study intends to overcome this limitation through the development and validation of a model, highlighting the immediate moderating role of two individual-situational variables such as 'perceived of job abilities-demands' and 'quality of leader-member exchanges'.

The rationale for selecting these two variables as individual and situational factors lies in their significance in understanding the dynamics of the study. Job demands-abilities fit serves as an indicator of the individual's control over the environment (Rothbaum et al., 1982), while the quality of Leader-member exchange represents a crucial support factor within the social work environment (Daniels and Harris, 2005).

2   Theoretical perspectives and hypothesis development

2.1   *Role overload and work-life balance crafting behaviour*

Work-life balance crafting behaviours can be categorised into physical, cognitive and interactive regeneration. Physical crafting behaviours are strategies to manage work time, workplace options and employer selection. Cognitive regeneration refers to techniques people use to describe balance crafting behaviours and justify their demands, and sacrifice balance for future benefits. Interactive regeneration involves people's interpersonal relationships at work and home to manage the demands of the two domains (Gravador and Teng-Calleja, 2018).

According to these definitions, work-life balance is regarded as a resource that encourages people to acquire and maintain that balance (Brough et al., 2014). Hence, COR theory should be used to explain the first hypothesis. Regarding COR theory, human beings possess various psychological, personal and social resources to protect themselves and deal with any potential threats to their well-being. The underlying principle of COR theory is that people strive to acquire, maintain, and develop whatever seems valuable to them (Hobfoll, 2001). Consequently, resources play a crucial role because they help people achieve valuable results and have symbolic values that help individuals identify who they are (Hobfoll, 1989). Accordingly, individuals may invest their available resources to create new resources, which subsequently will help protect their resources and promote their well-being (Hill, 2005). Therefore, people must endeavour to achieve work-life balance crafting behaviours as significantly practical resources. Given that people's working and non-working lives are regarded as a part of their resources and consumption (Hobfoll, 2011b).

COR theory contends that people may not choose to spend and invest in personal resources such as time and energy to manage situations that do not meet their

environmental demands. Thus, they will employ avoidance strategies instead of acquiring strategies to protect their invaluable resources (Halbesleben and Bowler, 2007). For instance, when people deal with role overload, they may experience losing valuable resources such as energy, time and emotions. Heavy duties are referred to as stressful factors, which are imposed on individuals due to excessive time pressure as well as commitments and responsibilities to available resources and capabilities (Reilly, 1982). In other words, such role overloads occur when it is impossible to manage the high role demands over a specific period, and the individuals lack the appropriate skills and abilities to meet these demands (Vullinghs et al., 2020). According to some researchers, taking over several responsibilities and meeting students' different needs reinforce role overload among teachers and are usually associated with individuals' incentives; hence, they negatively affect teachers' commitment to their jobs and organisations and decrease their intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction (Bogler and Nir, 2015).

Therefore, it is expected that the heavy burden imposed by the roles is regarded as a hindrance job demand and will cause employees to lose the desire and ability to get involved in change-oriented behaviours, including work-life balance crafting behaviours. Hobfoll (1989) believes such measures may lead to the loss or reduction of resources. It is also argued that engaging in change-oriented work-life balance crafting behaviours is costly and demands significant resources. Despite the obstructive job demands, the person is dealing with a relatively impossible situation; hence, individuals will not make any effort to achieve an impossible objective. Accordingly, role overload and work-life balance crafting behaviours will have an adverse association. Therefore, the first research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H1: Perceived role overload will relate negatively to work-life balance crafting behaviour.

2.2 *Moderating effect of perceived job demands-abilities fit: a two-way interaction*

Job demands reflect a job's requirements, which include a wide variety of tasks. Job demands reflect a job's requirements, which include a wide variety of tasks. Personal capabilities can determine individuals' competence, knowledge and skills; in other words, personal abilities encompass all of the tasks that an individual is capable of completing (Kristof-Brown and Guay, 2011). Besides, job demands-abilities fit is defined as the consistency between job demands and individuals' knowledge, skills and abilities (Astakhova et al., 2017). Dineen et al. (2018) argued that the higher the consistency between job demands and employees' capabilities, the greater the latter's satisfaction. Given that job demands-abilities fit can play a complementary role in achieving individuals' goals by supplying necessary resources (particularly their energy), it is highly critical for everyone (Muchinsky and Monahan, 1987; Park, 2018). COR theorists assert that employees' characteristics, working conditions or a combination of the two resources are implemented when facing job demands (Bakker and Demerouti, 2014). Job demands-abilities fit refers to individuals' ability to shape their environment, which motivates them to indicate change-oriented behaviours (Rothbaum et al., 1982). On the other hand, the lack of job demands-abilities fit will lead people to believe they have insufficient resources and skills to meet their job demands (Li et al., 2022); COR theory suggests that individuals with limited resources may experience a loss spiral because they are subjected to high levels of stress. Ultimately, they are faced with reduced energy for

reinvestment, leading to a range of non-standard resources. In contrast, people with ample resources may experience a profit spiral and they are more likely to obtain resources that ultimately lead to increased motivation and risk-taking to enhance their existing resources (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 2011a).

Thus, job demands-abilities fit is regarded as a resource to help moderate role overload and its behavioural consequences because the individuals strive to acquire necessary skills comprehensively. Nevertheless, the lack of job demands-abilities fit might be referred to as a stressor, leading to the loss of other resources because of the potential loss spiral. Notably, access to a set of resources can help people demonstrate innovative measures while facing demanding working conditions (Strauss et al., 2015). Therefore, the present study argues that the perceived job demands-abilities fit will lead individuals to indicate work-life balance crafting behaviours in role overload situations. Based on these theoretical and empirical arguments, the second hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H2: Perceived job demands-abilities fit moderates the negative relationship between perceived role overload and work-life balance crafting behaviour, such that the relationship is more positive when perceived job demands-abilities fit is high and more negative when perceived job demands-abilities fit is low.

2.3   Moderating effect of LMX: a three-way interaction

According to LMX theory (Dansereau et al., 1973; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995), one-on-one leader-member relationships should be formed through various daily interactions. These relationships are placed within a continuum of quality, from low to high (Probst et al., 2016). The differences in LMX are caused by different social exchange relationships between supervisors and their followers (Le et al., 2020). In other words, it depends on the extent of providing various resources (e.g., emotional and occupational support, job opportunities, guidance and self-esteem) for the followers (Huang et al., 2020). Resources provided by the leader play a crucial role in facilitating or preventing employees' innovation (Parker et al., 2006; Wei et al., 2021). Furthermore, Meijerink et al. (2020) argued that when employees perceive the organisation as providing sufficient resources, they are more likely to be motivated to take risks in enhancing those resources through crafting.

It is noteworthy that COR theory highlights the moderating role of high-quality LMX as a resource in meeting job demands. Accordingly, resources can be divided into individual and organisational levels (Hobfoll, 2001; Schaufeli and Taris, 2014). Organisational resources reflect aspects of the job that support achieving occupational goals, reducing job demands and stimulating personal growth and development (Demerouti et al., 2001). Such resources in the organisational context include LMX, social support and working conditions (Le et al., 2020). In contrast to high-quality LMX, through which followers receive more growth opportunities and support from their leaders, low-quality LMX provides followers with much fewer opportunities (Horne et al., 2016). Given that high-quality LMX involves mutual respect, high trust and expectations of professional commitment (Dansereau et al., 1973), people will undoubtedly consider such a relationship an invaluable resource. This kind of relationship can be considered as social support and an instrument to obtain other resources, leading to a profit spiral. Conversely, individuals will perceive a loss spiral in role overload conditions when the LMX is low. Therefore, they try to minimise the loss of their resources and are likely to lose their motivation for crafting behaviours. In fact,

reinforcing resources such as the quality of LMX is likely to help individuals justify their investment in work-life balance crafting behaviours, which will probably lead to achievement. Consequently, individuals are more likely to demonstrate work-life balance crafting behaviours to accomplish work-life balance.

According to these arguments regarding the second hypothesis and the present hypothesis, it can be expected that the combination of high-quality LMX and job demands-abilities fit should prepare the ground for individual and organisational factors to facilitate crafting behaviours. As a result, the third hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H3: Perceived role overload, employees' perceived job demands-abilities fit and leader-member exchange quality interact to relate to work-life balance crafting behaviour. The negative relationship between perceived role overload and work-life balance crafting behaviour is strongest when employees' perceived job demands-abilities fit is high and leader-member exchange quality is high.

Drawing from the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, this study posits that female teachers, when confronted with demanding and stressful work conditions, are likely to deplete vital resources like energy, time and emotions. This depletion can make them feel ill-equipped to garner the necessary resources to meet their job demands, leading to adverse outcomes such as a hesitancy to engage in crafting behaviours. Within the framework of this theory, resources encompass both individual and organisational factors. As illustrated in Figure 1, it's imperative to consider additional resources, including the balance of individuals' demands-abilities and the quality of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX).

Figure 1   The conceptual model
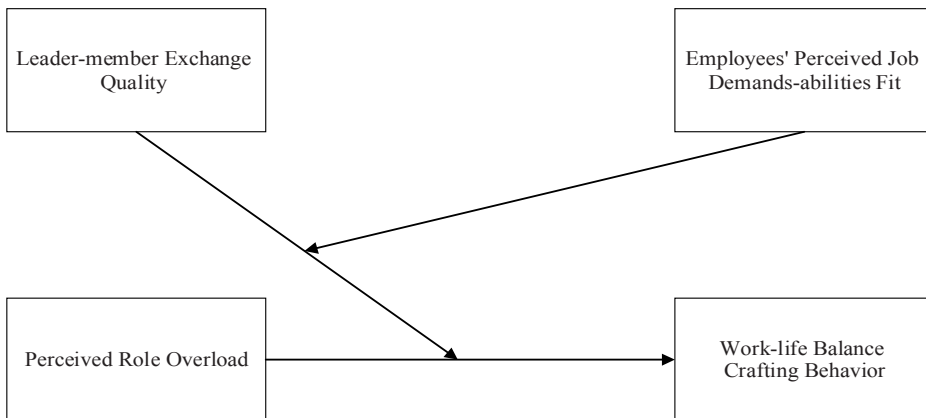
3   Methods

3.1   Sample and procedure

This survey research is conducted using structural equation modelling. The statistical population includes all full-time female teachers working in primary schools in Iran in

2021. The following inclusion criteria were taken into account in this study: they should be married, have a child and have a minimum of 1 year of work experience. The teaching experience is necessary to ensure sufficient lived experience in managing work duties and family affairs and facing the work-life balance challenge. A questionnaire with closed answers was used to collect data.

3.2   Measures

As the independent variable in this study, 'role overload' was measured using the criteria proposed by Price (2001) based on a four-item scale. For example, 'I have to work hard in my job' was one of the items of this scale. These measures were scored using a five-point Likert scale (from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Therefore, the higher the value, the more significant the perceived role overload. The combined reliability of this variable has been reported 0.86 in previous studies, including one by Karatepe (2013). Thus, it indicates an acceptable level of reliability for this instrument.

In addition, the dependent variable, 'work-life balance crafting behaviours' was measured using the criteria proposed by Gravador and Teng-Calleja (2018) based on a 25-item scale. For example, 'To what extent do you forget your activities and work tasks during the holidays and weekends?' was one of the items of this scale. These measures were scored using a five-point Likert scale (from 1=never to 5=always), where higher values indicate more frequent demonstration of work-life balance regeneration behaviours. The reliability of this scale's clusters varied from 0.61 to 0.84 in the study by Gravador and Teng-Calleja (2018), which indicates appropriate reliability for this instrument.

The first moderating variable, 'job demands-abilities fit', was measured using the criteria proposed by Cable and DeRue (2002) based on a three-item scale. For example, 'there is an outstanding balance between the job demands and my skills' was one of the items of this scale. These measures were scored using a five-point Likert scale (from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Consequently, the higher the values, the higher the perceived job demands-abilities fit by the employee. It is also noteworthy that the reliability of this scale was reported as 0.91, 0.85 and 0.94 in the contexts of the USA, China and Japan, respectively (Astakhova et al., 2017). Thus, it indicates an acceptable level of reliability for this instrument.

Eventually, the second moderating variable, 'quality of leader-member exchanges', was measured using the criteria proposed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) based on a seven-item scale. For example, 'To what extent does your manager understand your job issues and demands?' was one of the items of this scale. These measures were scored by a five-point Likert scale (from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Hence, higher values highlight the higher quality of leader-member exchanges. The reliability of this scale has been reported as 0.88 in previous studies, including one by Katrinli et al. (2010). Therefore, it indicates an acceptable level of reliability for this instrument.

3.3   Data analysis

Face and structural validity were measured to ensure the instrument's validity in this study. Statistical analysis was performed using the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) and SPSS software.

3.4   Harman's single-factor test

To manage common method bias, we followed prescriptions by Podsakoff et al. (2003) that the survey be anonymous and the measurement of the endogenous and exogenous variables be separated psychologically. Harman's single-factor test and a common latent factor were used to test for common method variance.

The bias of the common method should be a challenge if only a single factor emerges or the first factor with the largest eigenvalue represents a significant amount (more than 50%) of the obtained variance. Results of un-rotated exploratory factor analysis using principal component analysis revealed that four distinct factors are extracted with eigenvalues greater than 1. Therefore, the single-factor nature of the research data is rejected. The first factor with the largest eigenvalue (12.54) explains approximately 43% of the total variance, which is significantly less than 50% of the obtained variance. In addition, all these four extracted factors could explain nearly 63% of the total variance.

The results provide additional confidence that common method bias is not a major concern in this study. Accordingly, the results of the evaluation of reliability and validity, and the examination of the hypotheses, are presented in the following section.

4   Results

The results section commences with an examination of demographic characteristics, such as age and work experience. Subsequently, it evaluates construct and face validity, incorporating confirmatory factor analysis results and measured correlations between variables. The section culminates with the presentation of the outcomes derived from model fitting and hypothesis testing.

4.1   Demographic characteristics

Among all of the questionnaires distributed, 342 usable surveys were returned. According to results, 76 questionnaires (17.54%) were completed by individuals below the age of 30, 230 questionnaires (67.25%) were filled out by those aged between 31 and 45 and 37 questionnaires (10.81%) were completed by people aged 46 and above. Additionally, the results regarding work experience indicated that 100 teachers (29.39%) had less than 10 years of experience, 170 teachers (72.64%) had between 11 years and 20 years of experience and 72 teachers (21%) had more than 21 years of experience.

4.2   Validity and reliability

Construct validity was assessed based on the convergence and discriminant validity indexes. According to Wixom and Watson (2001), factor loading values greater than 0.5 can indicate an acceptable level of convergent validity. Moreover, Fornell and Larcker (1981) asserted that an AVE index value greater than 0.5 is acceptable because it can ensure that at least 50% of the construct's variance has been explained by the items related to that construct. Table 1 indicates that all questions have a factor loading value greater than 0.5, and the respective AVE values are greater than 0.50. On the other hand, discriminant validity was measured using the square root of AVE.

Moreover, the acceptable AVE value must be greater than the correlation value between the two variables. According to Table 2, the values in the main diameter indicate the square root of AVE, and the other values demonstrate the correlation between the constructs. The findings reveal that all the constructs are consistent with the anticipated conditions; therefore, we can assert that the constructs provide acceptable differential validity. Finally, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to examine the reliability of the constructs, and it was calculated to be higher than 0.7 for all variables (see Table 1).

4.3   Confirmatory factor analysis

It is necessary to determine measurement models as a prerequisite for structural equation modelling so that we can define the relationships between latent and observed variables (Schumacher and Lomax, 2004). For this purpose, the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) technique and AMOS software were used. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis, AVE, and CR indexes, as well as Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the variables, are presented in Table 1. In addition, Table 3 demonstrates the fit indices of the measurement model for different variables. The results indicate an acceptable fit of the measurement models.

Table 1   Results of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the questionnaire items

Construct	item	Factor loading	T-value	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α
perceived role overload	Q1	.799		.615	.799	.864
	Q2	.809	13.31			
	Q3	.771	12.68			
	Q4	.757	12.43			
job demands- abilities fit	Q5	.661		.557	.710	.785
	Q6	.800	9.18			
	Q7	.771	9.24			
work-life balance crafting behaviours	Q8	.800		.504	.927	.949
	Q9	.712	12.73			
	Q10	.732	13.19			
	Q11	.731	13.18			
	Q12	.598	10.28			
	Q13	.558	9.49			
	Q14	.549	9.31			
	Q15	.583	9.98			
	Q16	.567	9.66			
	Q17	.774	14.02			
	Q18	.678	11.97			
	Q19	.766	14.00			
	Q20	.733	13.22			
	Q21	.633	11.00			
	Q22	.687	12.17			

Table 1 Results of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the questionnaire items (continued)

Construct	item	Factor loading	T-value	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α
	Q23	.668	11.74			
	Q24	.639	11.13			
	Q25	.548	9.29			
	Q26	.622	10.78			
	Q27	.664	11.67			
	Q28	.876	15.04			
	Q29	.781	14.35			
	Q30	.836	14.66			
	Q31	.812	14.58			
	Q32	.735	13.05			
	Q33	.549				
	Q34	.593	7.50			
	Q35	.633	7.83			
leader-member exchange quality	Q36	.790	8.92	.522	.799	.884
	Q37	.806	9.01			
	Q38	.823	9.10			
	Q39	.806	9.01			

4.4 Correlation between research variables

Table 2 demonstrates the correlation matrix, mean, standard deviation and the square root of AVE for the research, including Perceived Role Overload (PRO), Job Demands-Abilities Fit (JDAF), Work-Life Balance Crafting behaviour (WLBC) and leader-member exchange quality (LMXQ). According to the results of Table 2, there is a significant correlation between independent, dependent and moderating variables at the confidence level of 0.99.

Table 2 Mean, SD, correlations and the square root of AVE

	MEAN	S.D	PRO	JDAF	WLBC	LMXQ
PRO	2.38	.87	.784			
JDAF	3.84	.79	−.490**	.746		
WLBC	3.55	.68	−.613**	.618**	.709	
LMXQ	3.85	.71	−.428**	.583**	.651**	.722

Notes: ** Correlation at the significance level of $p < 0.01$.

* Correlation at the significance level of $p < 0.05$.

The square root of the AVE is presented through the values on the main diameter of the matrix.

PRO= perceived role overload; JDAF = job demands- abilities fit; LMXQ = leader-member exchange quality; WLBC = work-life balance crafting behaviour.

Table 3   Results of the model fit

Models	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	TLI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA
perceived role overload	4.41	2	2.22	.985	.995	.017	.068
job demands- abilities fit	3.17	2	1.58	.988	.998	.013	.065
work-life balance crafting behaviours	730.78	275	2.65	.904	.914	.067	.075
leader-member exchange quality	35.15	14	2.51	.907	.967	.063	.077

4.5   Hypotheses testing

We conducted a three-step hierarchical regression analysis to test the research hypotheses and thus interpreted three regression models. Before this, we mean-centred and standardised the variables to prevent the potentiality of multi collinearity between predictor variables. We entered the predictor variables into the regression model in step 1 and the interactional variables in step 2 (too-way interactions) and step 3 (three-way interaction). The results of the regression analyses are reported in Table 4. As Table 4 indicates, PRO negatively affected WLBC ($\beta = -0.257$; $p < 0.001$) and confirmed the first hypothesis.

Table 4   Analysis of the moderating effect

| Predictor	Dependent variable: work-life balance crafting behaviours			
	MODEL1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	β	β	β	B
Variable control				
age	.124**	.113**	.078*	.079*
work experience	.088*	.077*	.063*	.068*
Main effects				
perceived role overload		−.257***	−.244***	−.219***
job demands- abilities fit		.197***	.144***	.127***
leader-member exchange quality		.165***	.212***	.193***
two-way interactions				
perceived role overload × job demands- abilities fit			.149***	.120***
perceived role overload×leader-member exchange quality			.073**	.055*
job demands- abilities fit × leader-member exchange quality			.061**	.187**
Three-way interactions				
perceived role overload × job demands-abilities fit ×leader-member exchange quality				.196**
R^2	.010	.280	.329	.340
ΔR^2	.014**	.266***	.050***	.010***

Note: ($N = 342$); * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Hypothesis 2 stated that JDAF positively moderated the effect of PRO on WLBC. According to Jaccard et al. (1990), a moderating effect exists if the R^2-value of model 2 significantly differs from that of model 1 ($p < 0.05$). The reported value for ΔR^2 is 0.050, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). The two-way interaction term for JDAF was also significant ($\beta = 0.149$; $p < 0.001$) and confirmed the second hypothesis. Hypothesis 3 stated that the effect of PRO on WLBC lessened by JDAF is yet weaker for high levels of LMXQ. Results indicated that the third regression model is significant ($\Delta R^2 = 0.010$; $p < 0.05$), and JDAF interacted with LMXQ in moderating the effect of PRO on WLBC. The third hypothesis was accordingly confirmed.

As seen in Table 4, the variables of gender and work experience indicate that with increasing age and work experience, the behaviours of re-creating work-life balance become more common. Because of increasing age and work experience, teachers face many challenges in various situations. These factors help them better understand their environment and work and know how to organise their work environment and life.

To better illustrate the two-way interaction, we plotted the simple slope difference regarding the effect of PRO when the level of JDA is high or low. Figure 2 portrayed a dampened negative effect for PRO when JDA is high. Furthermore, Figure 3 plotted the three-way interaction of PRO, JDA, and LMXQ in predicting the variance of WLBC; the figure clearly illustrated that the simple slope for the association of PRO and WLBC was the lowest when the level of JDA and LMXQ were both high. Therefore, in line with the third hypothesis, moderated hierarchical multiple regression analysis showed that JDAF and LMXQ interacted to lessen the negative effect of PRO on WLBC.

Figure 2 The two-way interaction effects of role overload and job demands-abilities fit on work-life balance crafting behaviours
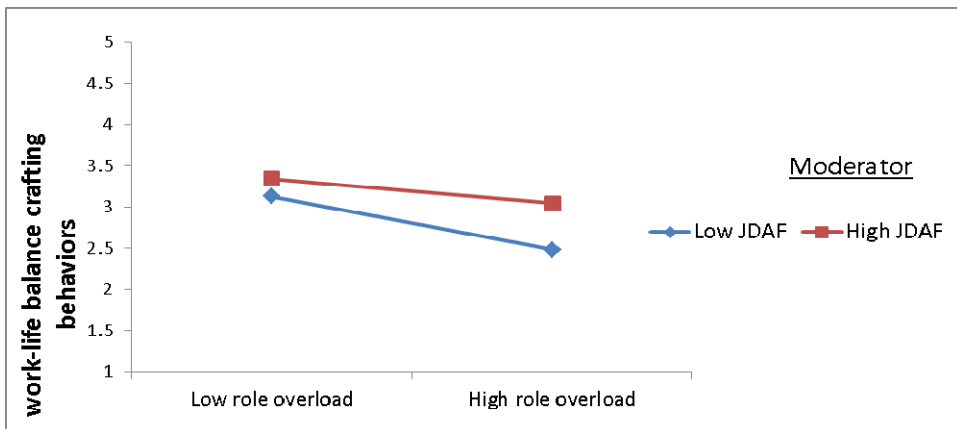
Note: JDAF = job demands-abilities fit.

Figure 3   The three-way interaction effects of role overload, job demands-abilities fit and leader-member exchange quality on work-life balance crafting behaviours
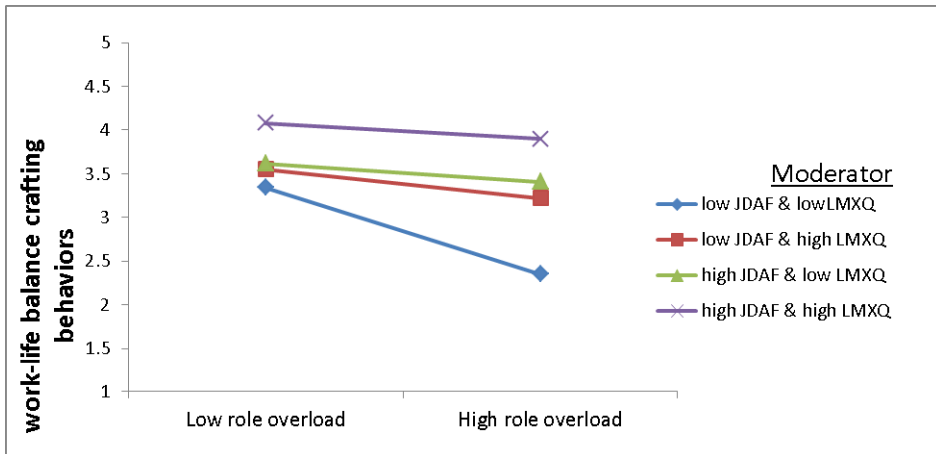
Note: JDAF = job demands-abilities fit; LMXQ = leader-member exchange quality.

5   Discussion

Demerouti et al. (2014) and Althammer et al. (2021) emphasised the crucial significance of work-life balance. Schieman and Glavin (2016) further highlighted its importance, given socio-economic changes such as increased organisational competition, job standards and the transition toward a culture of accountability. Moreover, shifts in the nature and composition of the workforce (Perrigino et al., 2018; Shabir and Gani, 2020), along with a growing number of female employees across various sectors (Kamaruddin et al., 2021), have intensified the need for improved work-life balance among women. In particular, female teachers often face conflicts between their social and family roles, requiring them to exert extra effort to balance work and personal life, making it a common challenge among them (Hossain et al., 2019). In light of these factors, this study employs COR theory to investigate the interactive nature of the relationship between role overload and work-life crafting behaviours. Specifically, it considers the coexistence and collective moderation role of job demands-abilities fit and LMX among 342 mother teachers.

According to the results of this study, teachers who did not demonstrate work-life balance crafting behaviours reported high levels of job demand and role overload. As previous studies have documented, one of the main features of women engaged in crafting behaviour in their work environment is their perceived ability to control tasks and assigned roles tailored to their personal conditions (Almeida et al., 2022). It is also noteworthy that job stressors have a twofold nature: Despite creating stress in the individuals, these stressors can either prepare the ground for more opportunities and motivation to strive for growth and change or impose adverse impacts on individuals' aspiration and impede striving for change (Lepine et al., 2005). Given that role overload reflects excessive role tasks beyond individuals' energy and time (Parasuraman et al., 1996), we can conclude that role overload is a hindrance stressor against job demands. Congruently, Lepine et al. (2005) asserted that these stressors could reduce energy,

motivation, and desire for change, associated with decreased crafting behaviours. This is in line with COR theory, highlighting that the experience of losing resources will direct individuals (particularly mother teachers) toward a loss spiral.

The significant overload of teachers can be attributed to the nature of their profession. As teachers regularly interact with various individuals, such as students and parents, they bear considerable responsibilities. Moreover, female teachers face the additional burden of managing household tasks and caring for children alongside their job (Gahlan and Singh, 2014; Collins et al., 2021).

Since mother teachers will have less time to spend with and dedicate to their family or other household responsibilities, they are more likely to lose resources and make less effort to demonstrate crafting behaviours. Given that the data for the present study were collected during the pandemic, it might have had critical impacts on excessive role demands. In addition to holding online classes and maintaining a balanced relationship with their students, mother teachers should also manage and monitor their children.

The findings of the present study also indicated the interactive effects of individual (perceived job abilities-demands) and situational (quality of leader-member exchanges) factors on the relationship between role overload and work-life crafting behaviours among mother teachers. Job demands-abilities fit was regarded as the individual factor, and LMX was considered the situational factor in this study. Besides, the second hypothesis examined the mutual interactive impact between job demands-abilities fit and role overload. Accordingly, perceived demands-abilities fit could positively moderate the negative relationship between role overload and work-life crafting behaviours.

Figure 2 depicts that when mother teachers experience a heavy workload, those who perceive their abilities to be in line with the job demands demonstrate a higher perception of their job ability compared to those who do not share this perception. Consequently, these teachers are more inclined to exhibit behaviours that foster work-life balance crafting. The reason behind this association lies in the fact that teachers who perceive a high level of job ability feel equipped with the necessary competency, skills, time and resources to effectively meet the demands and tasks required of them. This enhanced sense of job ability empowers them to proactively engage in work-life crafting behaviours.

In support of this statement, we can cite the findings of Sinclair et al. (2020) and Caringal-Go et al. (2022), who highlight that physical crafting behaviours are associated with effective boundary management. This includes aspects such as role division, personal preferences and the alignment between how individuals define their roles and their appearance. To achieve this, strategies like time management and work task management are employed. When individuals perceive a match between their tasks and competencies, they are more likely to exhibit work-life balance crafting behaviours.

The third hypothesis aimed to examine the job demands-abilities fit × LMX × role overload. The respective findings revealed that, as a risk factor, a low level of LMX can lead to the poor demonstration of work-life balance behaviours in terms of occupational demands of mother teachers. In other words, higher job demands are associated with lower work-life balance crafting behaviours, which was also significantly decreased when these teachers experienced lower levels of LMX. In general, concerning higher levels of perceived job demands-abilities fit and LMX, the results of the three-way interaction hypothesis indicated that there was a strong relationship between role overload and work-life balance crafting behaviours. Hence, the findings show that the regenerative behaviours of work-life balance in heavy-duty conditions play a role in the

interactive fit between the fit of the ability demands and the LMX. In other words, two factors of low level of demand-ability fit ratio and low level of LMX can play a role in line with overload, which can also contribute to teachers' reluctance to develop and demonstrate work-life balance behaviours. Based on COR theory, it can be concluded that job demands-abilities fit and the quality of member-leader interactions are considered as individual-situational resources that are likely to reduce the costs of role overload for the individual. Teachers experiencing excessive job demands are expected to fail to achieve the desired outcome because they consider it impossible and costly, and therefore these teachers will potentially resort to different strategies to preserve their resources and disregard change-oriented behaviours like crafting. Nonetheless, they tend to implement various resources such as job demands-abilities fit and high-quality LMX to achieve the desired outcome because these strategies help strengthen individuals' belief to pursue change-oriented behaviours. Consequently, they are likely to spend their valuable resources, such as time, attention and energy on change-oriented measures to obtain optimal work-life balance.

Based on the study's findings and in response to the main research question, it can be concluded that the quality of relationships between teachers and their managers plays a vital role in moderating the impact of perceived role burden on individuals' work-life balance behaviour. This effect is heightened when there is a simultaneous interaction between high-quality LMX and appropriate perceived job ability. Therefore, it can be inferred that the manifestation of high levels of work-life balance behaviours is determined by a complex set of factors and cannot be attributed solely to individual factors or their position within the organisation. Rather, it is a result of the coexistence and collective moderation effects of situational and individual factors.

6   Limitations and future research directions

Despite its achievements, the present study is not exempt from limitations. First, the study's design and its implementation of structural equation modelling cannot prove the causal relationship between the variables. Thus, it is suggested that future researchers implement a longitudinal study design because it can prepare the ground for the investigation of causality. Since the collected data were self-reported, the second limitation concerns the impact of common method bias on the findings (Podsakoff et al., 2003, 2012) It is also noteworthy that self-report was used in this study because these constructs under investigation are associated with individuals' personal perceptions (Solberg and Wong, 2016).

Furthermore, the data were only collected from a single source (mother teachers). Therefore, future researchers are recommended to examine whether LMX will lead to similar results if the data are gathered from different sources (e.g., supervisors' self-report and followers' reports) (Ayman and Korabik, 2010). Finally, this research has been conducted among mother teachers working in Iran; hence, caution should be taken into account while generalising the results to other populations and/or organisations due to climatic and cultural differences. Therefore, it is suggested that similar studies be designed and conducted in other organisations to yield a better understanding of the study phenomena. Still, these findings can contribute to implementing COR theory and other related theories and models to develop crafting behaviours. Eventually, researchers are

advised to examine individual and organisational consequences of such behaviours in their studies and investigate other individual, organisational and contextual resources.

7   Practical implications

Despite the potential limitations, the present study has shed some light on the processes that underpin work-life balance crafting behaviours. Since women's workplace participation has led to greater tensions between work commitments and family responsibilities since the 1980s, it necessitates governmental and organisational family-friendly interventions (Fan et al., 2021). It is therefore, essential to highlight the impact of such programs and organisational support on dealing with different situations, particularly when employees do not have sufficient resources (Somech and Drach-Zahavy, 2012). Given the effective role of LMX, it is recommended to encourage managers to improve their relationships with fellow employees by building and maintaining impartial and non-discriminatory relationships with their colleagues (Hooper and Martin, 2008). In addition, it is suggested that managers encourage teachers to express their ideas and provide an atmosphere of respect and trust to enhance the LMX's quality.

Furthermore, implementing LMX training programs (Mayfield and Mayfield, 1998) is another suggested approach. These programs can educate managers and leaders about the significance of cultivating high-quality relationships and how their strategic actions can enhance such relationships. The training should focus on enhancing skills through lectures and leaders' involvement in role-playing and simulations of potential scenarios.

Since LMX is a mutual relationship between leader and members (Van Dierendonck et al., 2004), teachers are also required to strive to establish a high-quality relationship with their managers and participate in different courses to improve their communication skills. Also, managers should spend enough time selecting employees and consider the required job demands (abilities fit). Organisations should also investigate the association of these two factors throughout the individuals' services. In other words, teachers should be interviewed and evaluated at different intervals to ensure that their abilities and demands are properly understood.

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