

Which workers are more vulnerable to work intensification?

Peter Boxall

University of Auckland

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Goal and structure

- To discuss the findings on vulnerability to work intensification from two NZ surveys
 - which groups (occupational and other) are more vulnerable?
 - Le Fevre M, Boxall P and Macky K (2015) Which workers are more vulnerable to work intensification? An analysis of two national surveys. *International Journal of Manpower* 36: 966-83.
- Presentation structure:
 - (1) Concepts, theory and research
 - (2) The surveys, measures and methods
 - (3) Results
 - (4) Conclusions

Concepts, theory and research

- Types of vulnerability in employment
 - life and limb: high risk to personal safety
 - precarious employment
 - low-paid and dead-end jobs
 - work intensification: in-work and extra-work pressures
- Causes of work intensification
 - Taylorist/lean-production environments
 - mis-judged downsizing
 - rising levels of ‘people work’ affecting managers and professionals

Relevant theory: the demand-control relationship

Decision- making latitude	High	Low-strain jobs	Active jobs
	Low	Passive jobs	High-strain jobs
		Low	High

**Psychological
Demands**

Source: Karasek, R. and Theorell, T. (1990) *Healthy Work*.
NY: Basic Books, p. 32.

Surveys, measures and methods

Random telephone survey conducted in 2005 (n = 1004, RR = 34.2%) and 2009 (n = 1016, RR = 31.5%)

Frame: employees over 18 years with at least 6 months' tenure in an organisation with at least 10 employees

A reasonable mirror of the working population for testing group comparisons except that public sector and unionised workers are over-represented

Key methods: Anova and Manova

- Work intensity
 - Hours worked (imperfect on its own)
 - Role overload (6 items, 1-7 scale, $\alpha = 0.87$; 0.84)
 - Time demands (4 items, 1-7 scale, $\alpha = 0.82$; 0.85)
 - Composite variable of RO and TD ($\alpha = 0.71$) with median split into low and high work intensity
- Well-being outcomes
 - Job satisfaction (single item, 1-7 scale)
 - Job-related stress (single item, 1-10 scale)
 - Fatigue (3 items, 1-7 scale, $\alpha = 0.72$, 0.71)
 - Work-life imbalance (6 items, 1-7 scale, $\alpha = 0.90$, 0.90)
- Occupational, employment and demographic variables

Results: descriptive statistics

Variable	2005		2009		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Usual weekly hours	39.12	12.94	40.47	12.53	2.38	0.017
Role overload	3.54	1.42	3.54	1.60	-0.04	0.972
Time demands	3.26	1.68	3.14	1.75	-1.55	0.121
Job satisfaction	5.45	1.39	5.95	1.44	7.93	0.000
Job-related stress	4.97	2.16	5.48	2.20	5.24	0.000
Fatigue	3.30	1.50	3.00	1.53	-4.47	0.000
Work-life imbalance	2.49	0.98	2.41	0.89	-1.97	0.049

Work intensity: Anova comparisons

		2005		2009	
		Mean diff.	p	Mean diff.	p
professionals	cf. managers	0.384	0.074	0.382	0.041
	cf. technical and trades	0.399	0.009	0.629	0.001
	cf. clerical	0.759	0.000	0.561	0.001
	cf. sales and service	0.489	0.010	0.575	0.049
	cf. machine ops. etc.	0.515	0.005	0.704	0.000
No union at work	cf. union at work not member	-0.041	1.000	-0.125	0.869
union at work not member	cf. union member	-0.329	0.004	-0.324	0.010
male	cf. female	0.200	0.030	-0.023	0.825
private	cf. public	-0.169	0.097	-0.006	0.958
permanent	cf. temporary/fixed term	-0.071	0.685	-0.061	0.710
part-time	cf. full-time	-0.407	0.000	-0.320	0.007

MANOVA						
	2005			2009		
	Scale difference	η_p^2		Scale difference	η_p^2	p
Union members c.f. non-union members						
Work-life Imbalance	0.114	0.006	0.049	0.156	0.010	0.009
Job Stress	0.303	0.027	0.000	0.318	0.006	0.039
Fatigue	0.004	0.000	0.972	0.092	0.001	0.389
Job Satisfaction	0.027	0.006	0.049	0.026	0.000	0.803

MANOVA**Full-time c.f. part-time**

	2005 scale diff	η_p^2	p	2009 scale diff	η_p^2	p
Work-life imbalance	0.257	0.023	0.000	0.157	0.008	0.006
Job Stress	0.353	0.026	0.000	0.658	0.019	0.000
Fatigue	0.115	0.001	0.255	0.005	0.000	0.961
Job Satisfaction	0.021	0.000	0.834	0.113	0.001	0.276

MANOVA: private versus public-sector employees

	2005			2009		
	Scale difference	η_p^2	p	Scale difference	η_p^2	p
Work-life Imbalance	-0.093	0.004	0.048	-0.086	0.003	0.088
Job Stress	-0.168	0.008	0.005	-0.285	0.005	0.034
Fatigue	0.312	0.000	0.000	0.203	0.005	0.028
Job Satisfaction	-0.031	0.009	0.249	-0.168	0.004	0.066

MANOVA: Professional c.f. all others

	2005 Scale difference	η_p^2	p	2009 Scale difference	η_p^2	p
Work-life Imbalance	0.171	0.011	0.001	0.186	0.013	0.000
Job Stress	0.412	0.004	0.035	0.555	0.017	0.000
Fatigue	-0.157	0.003	0.109	-0.044	0.000	0.637
Job Satisfaction	0.125	0.002	0.202	0.133	0.002	0.155

Conclusions

- those more vulnerable to work intensity are more likely to be union members
 - what impacts are unions having on work intensification?
- full-timers are more affected by work intensity than part-timers
- public sector workers are more stressed while private sector workers are more fatigued

- professionals are noticeably more stressed and their lives more imbalanced than other groups (including, it would seem, managers)
 - a growing degradation of professional work (increasing demands, declining discretion, as in the UK)?
 - increasing proportion of ‘high-strain’ jobs in professional work?
 - what are the societal implications?