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## EFFECTS OF IRREGULAR SHIFT WORK ON THE MARITAL LIFE AND PARENTING DIFFICULTIES (A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING)

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The researcher uses SEM modeling to find the relationship between Irregular shift work and the marital satisfaction as well as Parenting Difficulties. Simple Linear Regression and Pearson's correlation is used to justify that there is a significant relationship between Irregular shift work and the marital satisfaction as well as Parenting Difficulties. The workers from logistic Industry with children were the respondents. **Methodology:** Sample size of 297 was taken and the SEM modeling was run to find whether the model is fit. The model was found to be fit between the exogenous variable and the endogenous variable. Simple Linear Regression showcased that there is a strong relationship between Irregular shift work and the marital satisfaction as well as parenting difficulties. Pearson's correlation test was also done between the Irregular shift work and marital satisfaction as well as between Irregular shift work and Parenting Difficulties. **Findings:** The SEM was found to be fit. The simple linear regression and Pearson's correlation test found a strong relationship between Irregular shift work and marital satisfaction of the employees as well as the relationship between Irregular shift work and the Parenting Difficulties. These tests have also confirmed that the couples working in Irregular shift work suffer when it comes to fulfilling their marital obligations as well as the growth of their children. **Management Implications:** These days it is very important to understand the problems of employees working in Irregular shift work. Here the data was collected from logistics industry as it works round the clock. This paper would be an eye opener for the employers of logistics industry to know the problems of the employees who work in night or rotational shifts.

### KEYWORDS

SEM modeling, logistics, marital satisfaction; parenting difficulties; night shift; irregular shift work.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Shift work called non-standard schedules or Irregular shift work is the work done away from the normal working hours of 8 AM to 6 PM. These days' employees in firm or organization need to work 24/7 and are required to work in Irregular shift works. These changes have happened in many countries around the globe especially in India, Philippines, China etc., here the employees are expected to work round the clock to take care of the needs of the customers. Irregular shift work is required since globalization took over (Shu-Yu Tai et al, 2014). In an economy that is globalized, in India it has become mandatory to work 24/7 that caters to the need of the customer around the globe. This kind of work has improved the standards of the economy as well as provided employment for the citizens of India. The Indians who work in Irregular shift works are paid well when they start working in Irregular shift work this has not only increased the economic standards of the country but also the economy standards of the citizens.

Irregular schedules would affect the employees and their families in many ways. A set of past studies have studied the effects of irregular schedules and have put forward the problems that are faced by the family members and the stress that is created within the family system. In the study it is found that communication within the family is very minimal which makes it difficult to carry out the family activities. Interaction and communication within the family is associated with happiness in the marital relations, conflict within the couples and poor adjustment among the family (Bohle & Tilley, 1998; Grosswald, 2004; Presser, 2000; Staines & Pleck, 1983, White & Keith, 1990).

Varied roles may lead to chaos and confusion if it is done at the same time. The communication and interaction can go either in a complementing way or create conflicts because of the source of stress. This turns into conflict when the actions performed by the individuals are out of their reach and when they are not comfortable. A male member when he is in a position to take care of the chores related to the female it is not compatible and exceeds the capabilities of the concerned person. The two important part of life is family and work, most research has been dealing with the relationship between these two parts (Frone MR, Russell M, Cooper ML, 1992) conflict arise due to the interference of work life with the family life and conflicts arise due to the interference of family life on work life.

### 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A new study that was conducted by Shu-Yu Tai et al (2014) studied the effects of Irregular shift work on the nurses. This empirical study clearly exhibited that the nurses who worked continuously in night or rotational shifts faced problems in the functioning of their families and this was pertaining to the married nurses. There is always an effect of Irregular shift work on the work and family life causing work-family conflict. The study compared the day shift nurses and the night as well as rotational shift nurses and found that the night and rotational shift nurses were more affected since their family functioning and marital commitments were affected.

Shift work such as Structural work requirements as well as (Staines & Pleck, 1983) extended working hours (Fenwick & Tausig, 2001) causes social and psychological pressure, in terms of the lot of family responsibility, more tasks to be fulfilled, more work load etc. Psychologically the individual faces a lot of stress at home and this leads to poor family functioning and also work dissatisfaction. This causes higher degree of marital dissatisfaction (Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998). The structural and social demands of the family were related with higher levels of marital dissatisfaction (Hill, Yang, Hawkins & Ferris, 2004) as these lead to negative consequences such as the feeling of increased stress, dissatisfaction with the family members, worn out feeling and less efficient in Marital and child care functions (Frone & Yardley).

A study conducted by Robert Perrucci et.al (2007) found that workers in irregular shifts compared to workers with general shift reported greater negative effects in their marital and family life and working in irregular shifts affects the interaction of parent and child. The workers of irregular shift also reported lesser community and social involvement.

A study conducted by Jansen et al (2004) found that Irregular shift work workers had a greater amount of marital dissatisfaction and work – family problems when compared with the day shift workers and that this shift work interfered with the family life to a greater extent as the days working in shift work went by. Irregular shift work workers need to sacrifice their sleep hours if they want to have time with their spouses and children, the lack of sleep would further make them inefficient at work. According to the study conducted by Ariel Kalil et.al (2010) suggest that work in an important means for marital stability and the findings extends beyond what presser found that irregular shift work leads to divorce.



In the study conducted by Olav Muurlink et.al (2014) found that the irregular shift workers job affected the relationship with the partner thus bringing a greater negative effect on the work-life balance and consequently leading to greater marital dissatisfaction.

Hakola and Harma (2003) found that as the shift work causes an effect on the employee’s wellbeing, it is very important to study the work-family conflict. Grosswald (2003) in a very interesting study found out that the employees who worked in rotational shift were the most affected when compared to the workers in permanent day or permanent night shift. Here in this study it is noted that work to family spillover is more in the employees who work in rotational shifts. Since in rotational shifts employees are expected to keep changing their shifts on and off according to Amelsvoort et al (2004) this has a negative impact on the house chores and duties. The team found that rotational shift workers had more problems on health, even more lack of sleep and greater work-family conflict as well as greater marital dissatisfaction.

Barnett and Gareis (2008) ventured into an interesting findings to study the effect of Irregular shift work on the married women of dual earner couples who work in day shift or Irregular shift work and especially those who have children aged between 8 to 14 years indicates that mothers who spend greater time interacting with their children regardless of their work schedule would not affect the children’s perception about their mother and would not feel alienated but if not monitored or if not taken seriously may lead to in-confidence in the children. In the event of spending time with the children or not it is clearly evident that the mother faces more psychological distress and quality of her marital life

A very interesting national survey taken by Staines and Pleck (1983), based on the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey highlighted that Irregular shift works are related with the difficulties to schedule the family chores, working in weekends and working on variable days lead to more insufficient time with spouses as well as children and increase in conflicts among the family members especially the spouses since both spouses weren’t able to adjust themselves to the demanding work as well as family commitments. Kingston and Nock (1985) used the same data to find the effect of the no of hours the employee worked and the impact on marital dissatisfaction. They found that there is a greater relationship between the no of hours worked and the amount of time spent by the couples leading to greater marital conflict and greater work-family conflict.

Staines and Pleck’s subsequently conducted an analysis of the time diary data which was available from the study of time use in 1981. (Kingston & Nock, 1987) proved that in both couples who worked in Irregular shift work spent very less time with one another leading to marital instability hence it was found that Irregular shift work was linked to the marital quality of the couples. He quoted that it was not clear whether this Irregular shift work has any link with the work hours and whether longer hours in Irregular shift work increased marital instability. He made it clear that interviews and time study can only indirectly explain the relationship between the work hours and marital quality.

According to Tilastokeskus (2014) the percentage of employees working in Irregular shift work has increased and it increases every year to a larger extent. These days Irregular shift work also called as non-standard working hours have started in every field mostly in the service industry where people need to be there round the clock. These days non-standard working hours have become more common among women and in order for women to become independent she has started working in whatever shifts are given. Women have started also working in different areas. The logistic industry sees a lot of people working in Irregular shift work as it is a service industry catering to the customers worldwide. In logistic industry shipments are being sent through ship or air on a continuous basis and this involves huge number of people working 24/7. Transportation sector has increased rapidly with logistics and most of the employees in the transportation sector are committed to working non-standard working hours. (Hakola et al, 2003) It is typical for non-standard working hours, that the shifts usually do not follow any particular pattern. It is also very common that the employees are working longer shifts, their off-time is shorter and the amount of work days in a row can be longer than five days. (Hakola et. al. 2003) found that irregular work takes place in varied timings. Though the members are committed to working nine hours they are forced to extend their working hours to fulfill the demand of the clients. Non-standard schedule includes the evening and night shift. There are night shifts which start at 7 in the evening, 9 in the evening or even at 12 midnight. The shift schedule depends on the work location as well as the customer interest.

These days work becomes a part of family life as it is not confined to one place or one particular time frame. The employee should be ready and prepared to change according to the organizations demands. Atleast the flexible option of working from home has come into place hence many employees prefer to take up this option in order to fulfill their family commitments, but the management expects them to be attentive round the clock. (Kinnunen & Mauno, 2012) found that most of the employees expressed concern the work disrupted their well being and marital life.

On the basis of the above literature, the aim of the study was to find the relationship between the below mentioned

1. To find the relationship between Irregular shift work (Exogenous Variable) and the marital satisfaction of workers from logistics industry (Endogenous Variable).
2. To find the relationship between Irregular shift work and Parenting Difficulties.

**3. HYPOTHESIS**

SEM was used on the hypothesized relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables as shown in fig 1. The model is fit with all the values within the recommended limit. The hypothesis was framed firstly to justify there is a relationship between Irregular shift work and employee’s marital satisfaction; secondly to justify there is a relationship between Irregular shift work and Parenting Difficulties. Irregular shift work Difficulties, Age of the employees, Years in Irregular shift works, Years married and age is taken as the exogenous variable whereas Marital satisfaction and Parental Difficulties are taken as the endogenous variable.

**4. METHODOLOGY**

The samples in the study are the employees of Logistics companies who are married with children and have been working in Irregular shift work. The data was collected from logistics companies by issuing questionnaires. The questionnaires with 25 questions including the demographic variables were circulated (5 questions Demographic and 20 pertaining to irregular shift work). A total of 350 employees were targeted but 297 questionnaires were found to be appropriate for the study. Lickert Scaling measurement was used to find the level of effect on the employees hence parameters such as 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) were used. The questions were all pertaining to the difficulties the employees faced in performing the family responsibilities, meeting their marital commitments and child rearing. Convenient sampling method was used to collect data from the employees. The data was collected from both male and female.

**5. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

Reliability of the variables is measured using the Cronbach alpha test in SPSS. All the 20 items leaving the demographic variables (5 questions) were tested to see the reliability. The demographic variables of 5 questions were not considered for this test. The items were tested using reliability analysis. The Cronbach alpha test is used to measure for internal consistency to see how the different items are closely related. As the value is higher there would be high internal consistency. The reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is found to be acceptable. In this study the reliability coefficient is .959 which has good internal consistency.

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	297	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	297	100.0

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.959	20

**6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

The researcher has used Pearson’s correlation to find the significance level of correlation between Irregular shift work and marital satisfaction as well as the significance of correlation between the Irregular shift work and Parenting Difficulties. The Bivariate analysis also tests the level of significance between marital satisfaction and Parental Difficulties.

CFA and SEM is used to test the hypothesis. CFA was used as a measurement modeling to test the variables and their relationship with one another. The items of Irregular shift work were tested to bring a relationship between them so that the study is free of errors.

The structural equation modeling was later used to test the hypothesis and bring out the relationship between the Independent variables and the dependent variables. SEM gives a clear explanation on the relationship and presents the measurement in the simplest way. The Structural equation modeling presents the relationship between the demographic influence on the marital satisfaction and Parenting Difficulties.

Here the exogenous latent variables are the demographic variables comprising of questions regarding Irregular shift work, age, Years married, Years spent in Irregular shift work and Level in the organization. The researcher has taken marital Satisfaction and Parenting Difficulties as the endogenous variables. The study shows that the endogenous variable is influenced by the exogenous variable.

SEM consists of two models, one is the Measurement model and the other is the structural model. The measurement as well as the structural equation modeling is used to the extent to which a hypothesized data fits or summarizes the data sample.

The model fit steps were undertaken to find whether there is goodness of fit between the hypothesis model and the data sample. Goodness of fit verifies the extent to which the specified model reproduces the observed co-variance matrix among the indicator items.

For all goodness of fit measures, statistics are given in a continuum, with the independence model as the most restricted model and the saturated model as the least restricted one. Once the model is estimated, model fit ensures to compare the theory. If the theory is perfect, the observed and estimated covariance matrices will be the same.

**6.1 PEARSON’S CORRELATION**

**TABLE 1: CORRELATION BETWEEN IRREGULAR SHIFT WORK AND MARITAL SATISFACTION**

		Irregular shift work	Marital Satisfaction
Irregular shift work	Pearson Correlation	1	.871
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	297	297
Marital Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.871	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	297	297

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results shown on the above Table indicate that there is a strong relationship between Irregular shift work difficulties and Marital Satisfaction. The Pearson’s r is .871 which is close to 1 indicating that the correlation between both variables is strong. Hence here in this table as one variable increases the other variable also increases. As the P value is 0.000 which is <0.01, the correlation is highly significant at 1% level so as the Irregular shift work difficulties increase the marital dissatisfaction also increases.

**TABLE 2: CORRELATION BETWEEN IRREGULAR SHIFT WORK AND PARENTING DIFFICULTIES**

		Irregular shift work	Parenting Difficulties
Irregular shift work	Pearson Correlation	1	.837
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	297	297
Parenting Difficulties	Pearson Correlation	.837	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	297	297

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results shown on the above table indicate that there is a strong relationship between Irregular shift work and Parenting Difficulties. The Pearson’s r is .837 which is close to 1 indicating that the correlation between both variables is strong. Hence here in this table as one variable increases the other variable also increases. The P value (Sig (2-Tailed)) here is 0.000 which is <0.01, the correlation is highly significant at 1% level so as the Irregular shift work difficulties increase the Parenting Difficulties.

**TABLE 3: CORRELATION BETWEEN MARITAL SATISFACTION AND PARENTING DIFFICULTIES**

		Marital Satisfaction	Parenting Difficulties
Marital Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.731**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	297	297
Parenting Difficulties	Pearson Correlation	.731**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	297	297

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results shown on Table 7.1.3 indicate that there is a strong relationship between Marital Satisfaction and Parenting Difficulties. The Pearson’s r is .731 which is quite close to 1 indicating that the correlations between both variables are quite strong. Hence here in this table as one variable increases the other variable also increases. As the P value is 0.000 which is <0.01, the correlation is highly significant at 1% level so as the Marital dissatisfaction increase the Parental Difficulties also increases.

**6.2 SIMPLE LINEAR REGRESSION (IRREGULAR SHIFT WORK DIFFICULTIES AND MARITAL SATISFACTION)**

**TABLE 4: MODEL SUMMARY**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.871 <sup>a</sup>	.759	.758	3.31487

a. Predictors: (Constant), Irregular Shift work

**TABLE 5: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10212.981	10212.981	929.437	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	3241.564	10.988		
	Total	13454.545			

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Irregular Shift work

TABLE 6: COEFFICIENTS

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.403	.668		8.087	.000
	Irregular Shift work	.888	.029	.871	30.487	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction

The model summary in Table 4 gives us the correlation coefficient and coefficient of determination for the regression model. A coefficient of.871 indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between Irregular shift work and marital Satisfaction of the employees. Here we can suggest that as long as the Shift difficulties increase there will be an effect on the marital life of the employees.

The model is statistically significant as the P value is <0.05, here the Anova in Table 5 shows us that the regression model is a statistically significant proportion of the variance.

Hence there is a relationship between Irregular shift work and the marital Satisfaction of the employees.

6.3 SIMPLE LINEAR REGRESSION (IRREGULAR SHIFT WORK AND PARENTING DIFFICULTIES)

TABLE 7: MODEL SUMMARY

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.837 <sup>a</sup>	.701	.700	2.83206

a. Predictors: (Constant), Irregular Shift work

TABLE 8: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5537.206	5537.206	690.374	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	2366.073	8.021		
	Total	7903.279			

a. Dependent Variable: Parenting Difficulties

b. Predictors: (Constant), Irregular Shift work

TABLE 9 COEFFICIENTS

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.290	.571		2.261	.025
	Irregular Shift work	.654	.025	.837	26.275	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Parenting Difficulties

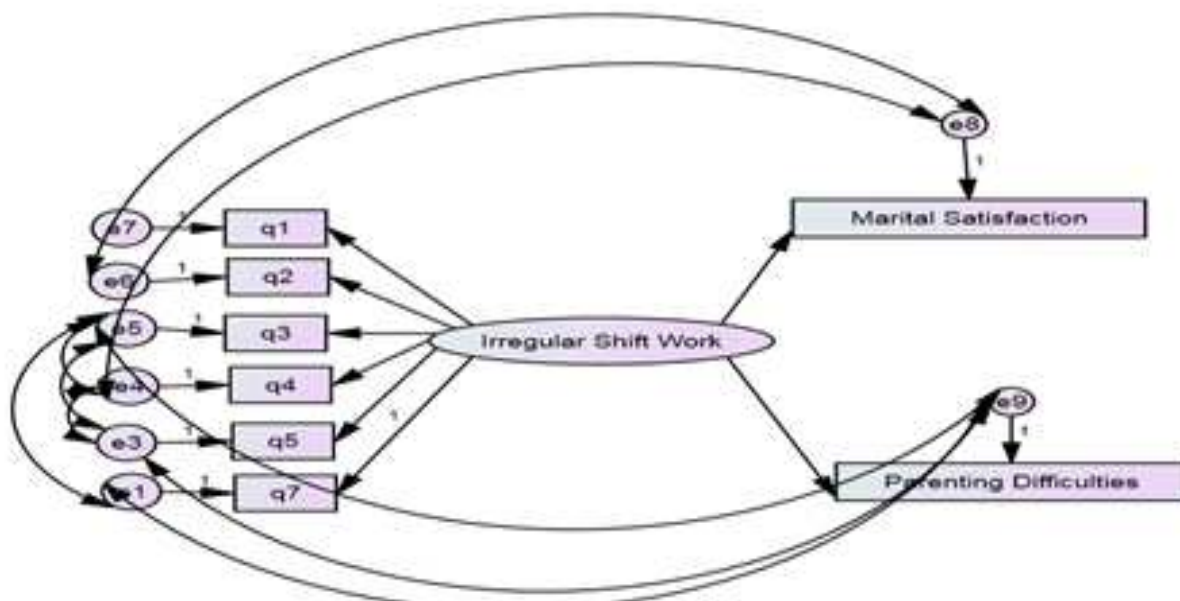
The model summary in Table 7 gives us the correlation coefficient and coefficient of determination for the regression model. A coefficient of.837 indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between Irregular shift work difficulties and parenting difficulties of the employees. Here we can suggest that as long as the Irregular shift work exists there will be Parenting Difficulties. The model is statistically significant as the P value is <0.05, here the Anova in Table 8 shows us that the regression model is a statistically significant proportion of the variance.

Hence there is a relationship between Irregular shift work difficulties and the marital Satisfaction of the employees.

6.4 CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS AND SEM USING AMOS

CFA was run using Amos. The CFA which is the measurement model is used to find the established acceptable levels of goodness of fit and to validate the constructs. Validity is to check whether the variables are accurate and have accurately measured what they have intended to do. The CFA finds the relation between the observed variable and unobserved variable. The CFA defines the pattern in which each variable loads on a particular factor. The CFA is a method of testing how good the measured variables are in a particular construct. The key features of SEM are the possibility of correlation between the latent variables to find the relations. When a path is drawn from one variable to another, it can be stated that the endogenous variable is a predictor of the other endogenous variable (Stata Corp, 2013)

FIGURE 1: CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (MEASUREMENT MODEL) TO CHECK VALIDITY OF THE CONSTRUCTS



Structural equation modeling is a statistical modeling technique, is vastly used in behavioural sciences. The SEM at many times is used as a combination of factor analysis and regression. SEM is a structure of the covariances between the observed variables. SEM provides a convenient framework for analysis of the statistics and is visualized with a graphical path diagram (Hox, 2013)

FIGURE 2: STRUCTURAL MODEL HYPOTHEZED RELATIONS BETWEEN EXOGENOUS AND ENDOGENOUS VARIABLES.

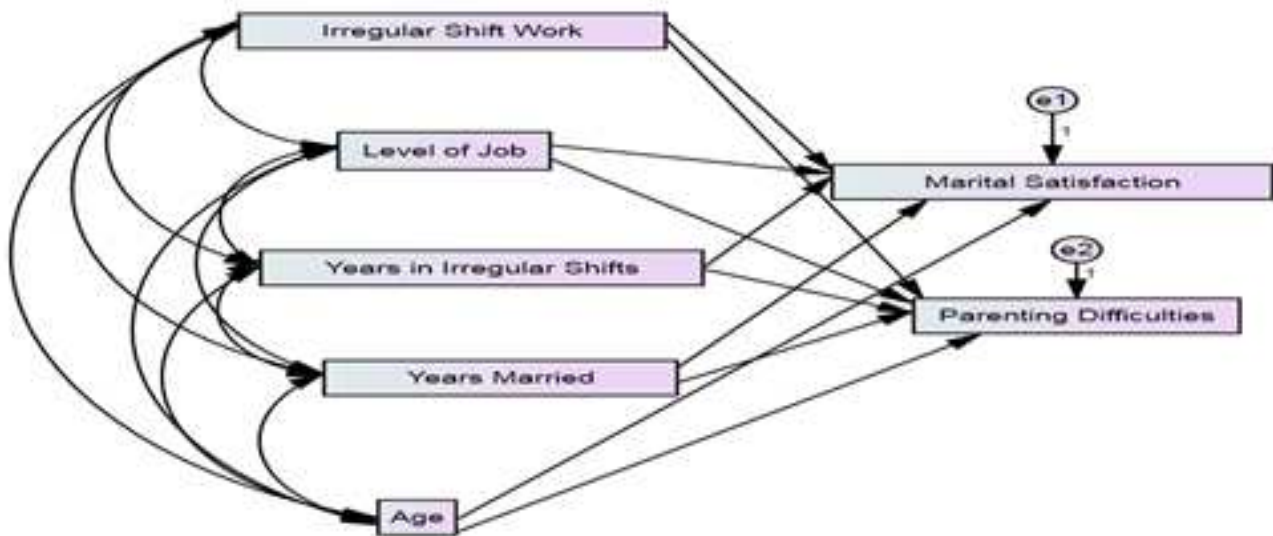


TABLE 10: AMOS OUTPUT SHOWING MODEL FIT

Model	NPAR	CMIN (x sq)	Df	P	x sq/df
Default Model	25	19.544	11	0.52	1.778
Saturated Model	36	.000	0		
Independence Model	8	2944.339	28	0.000	105.155

TABLE 11: MODEL FIT RECOMMENDED AND OBTAINED STATISTICS

Fit Statistic	Recommended	Obtained
x sq	-	0.667
df	-	1
x sq Significance	P > 0.05	0.052
x sq/df	<5.0	1.778
GFI	>0.90	0.984
AGFI	>0.90	0.948
NFI	>0.90	0.993
RFI	>0.90	0.983
CFI	>0.90	0.997
TLI	>0.90	0.993
RMSEA	<0.08	0.051
RMR	<0.10	0.064

**7. FINDINGS**

The results shown on Table 7 provides an overview of the model fit, this includes the Number of parameters, CMIN and Degrees of freedom values. In SEM a small chi-square value will always support the model that is being tested. The value for Chi square in this model is 19.54 which are relatively small suggesting that the model is fit. The p value is >0.05 and since it exceeds the alpha value it is considered a good fit. The x square divided by the degrees of freedom (11) value is 1.77 which is also within the recommended range of <5.0 showing a good fit. Hence the model here fits the data on an absolute basis. There are other model fit used to measure the goodness of fit mentioned in Table 8 shows the other model fit used to measure the goodness of fit. The Goodness of fit index (GFI) is used to measure the proportion of variance and covariance that the proposed model is able to explain (This is similar to R-square in regression). The values that are greater than 0.90 is considered as good fit. Here the GFI is 0.984 indicating that it's well above the desired value of 0.90 ensuring a good fit. Comparative Fit Index (CFI) evaluates the fit of the model relative with the independence model. The values that are greater than 0.90 is considered to represent a good fit. Here the value is 0.997 which is well above the recommended value of 0.90 ensuring a good fit. Standard root mean squared residual (SRMR) indicates the average difference between the sample variance and covariance. The values that are less than 0.08 are considered good fit. The value here is 0.06 indicating that the value is within 0.08 showing a good fit. The Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.05 which is within the recommended level of 0.08. Similarly, the values of AGFI, NFI and TLI are all greater than the recommended value of 0.90 showing a perfect model fit.

**8. CONCLUSIONS & SUGGESTIONS**

**NOTE 1:** The study aimed to find the impact of Irregular shift work on the marital life of employees working in the logistics Industry. The study showed that there was a strong relationship between Irregular shift work and work-family conflict such that the employees faced problems concerning their marital relationships and fulfilling the family commitments. The study found a great relationship between Irregular shift work and parenting difficulties as well as Irregular shift work on the marital satisfaction of the employees. The marital dissatisfaction on account of Irregular shift work led to strained parent – child relationship effecting the growth of children as well as poor academic performance. Though the study was not intended to find the effect of Irregular shift work on the children's cognitive ability, there were signs that parents found it difficult to monitor the children's academic performance. The SEM clearly depicted that all the factors such as age, years in Irregular shift work, years married, level etc. Plays are major part in the effect of Irregular shift work on the marital life of the employees.

**NOTE 2:** The study intended to concentrate more on the marital rather than the effect on the child rearing, further studies could be done to find the effect of irregular or shift work on the cognitive ability of the children. It is suggested that an empirical study to find the parents shift schedule on the children in Indian context would be admirable as there are no empirical studies on this. The academic performance of children is a major part in the family role, the future researchers

can make a study only on the effect on academic performance of children through experimental research. A comparative study between day shift workers and night shift worker is also feasible as there is not much literature in Indian context.

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