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STRESS-WORK LIFE BALANCE - PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF WOMEN MECHANICS IN BMTC

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ABSTRACT

The world of work and business has undergone a paradigm shift in the recent past that could be analyzed at global, national and the individual level. While IT revolution, globalization, free trade etc have taken place at the global level, urbanization, demand and enrolment in technical education, women participation in education and employment etc are seen at the national level. At the individual level, it has affected the work and personal life of individuals. This has resulted in many changes at the workplace and also in the employee demographics resulting in an increased concern for the boundary between employee work and non work lives. In addition, due to the increase in the availability of women technical resources and the administrative support women are hired into certain technical jobs that were hitherto considered to be domain of men. In this light, in the present study an effort is made to identify the causes and impact of stress on the work-life balance and psychological well-being and family life satisfaction of women mechanics at BMTC. The sample for the study consisted of Women mechanics working in BMTC at various depots at Bangalore city. The results of the correlation analysis show a significant positive correlation between work life balance and psychological well being. The correlations among other variables of the study were not significant. However a negative correlation was observed between work life balance and stress. The result show that married women mechanics have relatively a higher degree of psychological well being, work life balance but also tend to have a higher degree of stress compared to those unmarried. Unmarried mechanics on the other hand tend to have external locus of control and a greater degree of family life satisfaction. The implications of the findings of the study are also discussed.

KEYWORDS

Family life satisfaction, Psychological well being, Work-life balance.

INTRODUCTION

The world of work and business has undergone a paradigm shift in the recent past. While IT revolution, globalization, liberalization, free trade etc are seen at the macro level, moving towards urbanization, demand for technical education, increased number of women in higher education and employment etc are the typical features at the national level. One of the major consequences of these changes is an increased concern for the boundary between employee work and non work lives (Hochschild, 1997). Due to the fact that more women are joining the workforce dual career couples are becoming increasingly common (Moorhead, Steele, Alexander, Stephen and Duffin 1997). In addition, today's workforce is a mosaic of different genders, ages, races, ethnic groups, religions marked by varied lifestyles (Esty, Griffin & Schoor Hirsch, 1995). Remarkable demographic and social changes mean a host of new challenges for today's workers as they struggle to cope with the often competing pressures of work demands and personal responsibilities. As a result of these the traditional model explaining the coordination between work and family is no longer valid for the modern work force.

Balancing work and family roles has become an issue of concern not only for women, but also their spouses and families, Organizations as well as the State (Rajadhyaksha, 2004). The issue of work life balance is of a major concern for Indian organizations as the percentage of women of employees is steadily on the increase. Women today do not have any reservations in joining organizations that were hitherto male dominated. Dynamics of work life balance for women in non traditional sectors are different hence it is the need of the hour to analyze it.

A survey of literature have repeatedly shown that the stress and work life balance among women and employees serving in service organizations are relatively high and is contingent upon the social support system available to them both at the home and at the work place. Prevailing organizational culture, reward systems were found to moderate the work life balance and stress profile of the employees especially in the government and service sector Lori and Bradley(2000) Mohan and Chauhan (1999) Kim and Kim et.al (2007) .

A survey conducted by Padma (2008), on working women in different professions at Hyderabad city revealed that majority of women are working 40-45 hours per week and 53% of the respondents report that they are struggling to achieve work-life balance.

Despite accumulating evidence that work and family life are interrelated, the available research literature, in the Indian context, is limited. Even, in the area of work-life balance and locus of control, only a few studies have explored the interaction between these variables. The present study aims at investigating mechanics serving in a service sector on a technical job role perceive their occupation and how their perceptions affect work-life balance and psychological well-being.

PRESENT STUDY**PROBLEM**

To study the effect of work-life balance and work-locus of control on perceived stress, psychological well-being and family life satisfaction of women mechanics.

OBJECTIVES

The concept of work life balance has evolved as a result of changing work environment and work culture. Women in the modern days are entering into newer professions that call for the ability to balance between work and life. Hence in the present study an attempt is made to examine the relationship between work life balance and work-locus of control with psychological well-being, stress and family life satisfaction of women mechanics. Keeping this in view the following objectives have been identified.

1. To assess the degree of work-life balance (WLB) and work-locus of control(WLC) among women employed in technical field.
2. To study the effect of work-life balance on psychological well-being (PWB), stress and family life satisfaction (FLS).
3. To study the effect of work-locus of control on psychological well being, stress(S) and family life satisfaction.
4. To examine the relationship between the work- locus of control with work life balance, stress, psychological well- being and family life satisfaction.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

1. WORK-LIFE BALANCE: Work-life balance refers to the simultaneous pursuing of the roles in work and life without any conflict or imbalance (Fisher –McAuley et.al.2003)
2. STRESS: The term stress is typically been used to refer both to the adjustive demands placed on an organism and to the organisms internal biological and psychological responses to such demands (Hanzs Selye, 1956, 1976a).
3. WORK-LOCUS OF CONTROL: A generalized expectancies about control of reinforcements or rewards at work (Spector P.E. 1988)
4. PSYCHOLOGICALWELL-BEING: psychological well-being represents people's evaluation of their lives and includes happiness, pleasant emotions, life satisfaction and a relative absence of unpleasant moods and emotions (Diener & Diener, 2000).
5. FAMILY LIFE SATISFACTION: life satisfaction is an overall assessment feelings and attitudes about one's life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive. It is one of three major indicators of well-being. Life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect. (Diener, 1984)

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no relationship between the work-life balance, perceived stress, psychological well-being, and family life satisfaction.
2. There is no relationship between Work-locus of control and perceived stress, psychological well-being and family life satisfaction.
3. There is no relationship between Work- Locus of control and work-life –balance.

PROCEDURE

A single group design is used consisting of a sample of 30 women mechanics drawn from the various depots of BMTC.

SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 30 women mechanics of which -15 married and 15 unmarried. The age of the sample ranged from 21 years to35 years, with the job experience ranging from 2 to 12 years. Women mechanics who volunteered to participate were only selected for the study. Women mechanics were interviewed at their place of work and data was collected from those who volunteered to participate. On an average each individual required 30-45 minutes to complete the process.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

In the initial stage the mechanics were interviewed using the schedule developed by the department of psychology, Bangalore university, Bangalore. To fulfill the objectives of the study the following tools are utilized in the present study.

TABLE SHOWING PROPERTIES OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Sl. No.	Variable	Tool	Author	Psychometric Properties
1.	Locus of Control	Work locus of control scale	Paul E. Spector, (1988),	Coefficient of alpha ranging from .80 to .85 Test retest reliability .60
2.	Work-life balance	Work-life balance scale	Fisher – McAuley et.al (2003)	Cronbach alpha Value ranging from 0.69 to 0.93
3.	Occupational stress	Stress questionnaire	Latha (1984),	Test-retest reliability Coefficient for the source of stress, coping mechanisms and somatization scale are .81,.86 and .79 respectively
4.	Psychological well-being.	Psychological well-being questionnaire	Bhogle & Prakash (1995).	Internal consistency co-efficient 0.84 Split-half consistency 0.91 Test- retest reliability 0.72
5.	Family-life satisfaction	Family life questionnaire	Bernard Gurney Jr. (1976)	Test retest r=0.61
6.	Information schedule		Devised by the researcher	

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Keeping the objectives of the study, the data were analyzed using the SPSS (12.0 version) and discussed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study was to compare the psychological profile of women mechanics at Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation. The psychological profile constituted measuring the work-life balance, work-locus of control, psychological well-being, stress and family life satisfaction. Among these variables work-life balance and work-locus of control were treated as the independent variables where as psychological well-being, stress and family life satisfaction constituted the dependent variables of the study. The data was collected from a total of 30 (15 married and 15 unmarried) women mechanics working at BMTC. The responses were scored using the standard procedure and discussed.

Table 1 depicts the descriptive statistics in terms of mean standard deviation and the range of scores on all the variables of the study. Based on the possible maximum and minimum score one could get on all the variables of the study and the obtained mean score of the sample on all the variables it is observed that work life balance is above average, greater orientation towards external locus of control, higher degree of psychological well being. Women mechanics also were found to be experiencing a high degree of family life satisfaction and a moderate degree of occupational stress.

One of the objectives of the study is to analyze the relationship among the variables of the study. Table 2 depicts the correlation among the different variables of the study.

The results of the correlation analysis show a significant positive correlation between work life balance and psychological well being. The correlations among other variables of the study were not significant. However a negative correlation was observed between work life balance and stress. Earlier research by Bruke and Greenglass,(1987); Eckenrode and Gore,(1990); Greenhaus and Beutell,(1985)have also observed the negative correlation between work life balance and stress implying that individuals with low degree of work life balance tend to experience higher degree of stress. Similarly the observed negative correlation between work locus of control and stress also finds support from the earlier study by Meng, (2008). Significant correlation among the subscales of occupational stress scale only provide proof for the psychometric property of the tool.

In summary, the above results it is clear that higher the degree of psychological well-being higher will be the work-life balance. Higher degree of family life satisfaction leads to higher degree of work-life balance. This finding is in accordance with the findings of the study which states that working women whether employed out of necessity or out of their own choice- have been able to combine their role as worker with that of wife and household successfully (Kapur, 1970). As there is a lower degree of stress higher will be the work-life balance (-0.099). The obtained correlation in the negative direction between work-life balance and stress (though not significant)is in accordance with the theoretical views.

Further a comparison is made among married and unmarried mechanics. The result show that married women mechanics have relatively a higher degree of psychological well being, work life balance but also tend to have a higher degree of stress compared to those unmarried. Unmarried mechanics on the other hand tend to have external locus of control and a greater degree of family life satisfaction. The results as depicted in table no.3.shows mean scores obtained by the married and unmarried mechanics do not differ significantly which is in accordance with the study conducted by Srinivasan, (2006) on work-life balance

among women IT professionals. The study showed that marital status does not lead to women dropping out but they moved within the industry. So marital status does not impact work-life balance but parental status does.

The above findings were also supported by their responses to the personal interview aimed at collecting information about their perception about the job, peer group, organization etc. In general it was reported by the women mechanics that they are getting co-operation from their family members, peers and their immediate supervisors.

The somatic symptoms related to stress were reported by only 5 out of 30 mechanics. The predominant somatic symptom were found to be Inability to relax (9.99%), problem with voice during stress (6.6%) and problems with speech, sleep disturbances and a feeling of blood rushing towards the head during anger (3.33% each).

The common coping strategies used by the employees to overcome the stress were to attend some entertainment programme (50%), withdrawal from social relationships (41%), escaping from the difficult situations (41%), reading books as a means of relaxation (41%) etc were reported by the mechanics.

Since mechanical roles at BMTC were hitherto were performed by male and women are taking up these jobs currently, perception of the role senders i.e. their immediate supervisors was also obtained.

The overall opinions of the 10 immediate supervisors about their women mechanics are as follows:

1. Women mechanics cannot be assigned all the jobs due to their inherent difficulties such as the job requiring too much of physical power.
2. They lack appropriate job orientation and job training.
3. Their interpersonal relationship with the peer is found to be good with mutual co-operation ensuring mutual personal benefits is detrimental to the organization.
4. Interpersonal relationship between mechanics with their supervisors is found to be very poor.
5. Nine out of ten supervisors believe that women mechanics have a bleak professional future as they cannot find similar employment in any other organization.
6. Most of the supervisors have suggested that by assigning job which is demanding less physical energy. Eg. Seat cover stitching, assembling certain parts in the central work-shop etc productivity of women mechanics could be enhanced.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Recruitment and placement of women especially on mechanical job require providing sufficient job knowledge and training.

Induction training could provide more confidence and skills to perform functions to the degree to which their male counterparts are performing.

Training in gender sensitization to both male and female mechanics is the need of the hour as the job requirement and training being the same for both the gender the discrepancy observed while assigning the job could be more objective without gender discrimination.

Interpersonal relationship needs to be enhanced.

To enhance the degree of work-life balance among women mechanics a healthy environment should be created in the workplace.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The women mechanics working at BMTC were studied to analyze their degree of work-life-balance, nature of work-locus of control and its relationship with psychological well-being, family life satisfaction and stress. From the findings of the study it is evident that a lower degree of stress has lead to a higher degree of work-life balance. Higher degree of psychological well-being and family life satisfaction accounts for the higher degree of work-life balance. An orientation towards extrinsic work-locus of control has lead to a higher degree of work-life balance, psychological well-being, family life satisfaction and a lower degree of stress in the mechanics.

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APPENDICES

TABLE NO.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PSYCHOLOGICALWELL-BEING	30	14.00	28.00	24.2333	2.80004
WORK-LOCUS OF CONTROL	30	42.00	69.00	54.6333	7.87174
WORK LIFE BALANCE	30	55.00	88.00	66.2667	8.15764
FAMILY LIFE SATISFACTION	30	55.00	78.00	68.0333	5.47397
STRESS	30	113.00	210.00	146.3333	23.53769
FAMILY	30	15.00	31.00	21.3333	3.83571
PERSONAL	30	7.00	30.00	13.1000	6.26071
OCCUPATIONAL	30	10.00	26.00	18.7667	5.11039
HEALTH	30	5.00	14.00	7.8333	2.43655
FINANCIAL	30	6.00	18.00	10.7333	3.39303
MARITAL	30	.00	16.00	3.9333	4.64560
Valid N (listwise)	30				

TABLE NO.2: SHOWING THE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE VARIABLES

	PWB	WLC	WLB	FLS	TS	Family	Personal	Occupnl	Health	Financial	Marital Status
PWB	1	.151	.387*	-.124	-.111	-.187	-.228	-.059	-.151	-.011	.060
	.	.426	.035	.513	.559	.322	.226	.758	.426	.952	.755
	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
WLC	.151	1	.168	.106	-.016	.041	-.027	-.064	-.075	.067	-.176
	.426	.	.375	.577	.933	.831	.889	.737	.693	.724	.352
	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
WLB	.387*	.168	1	.348	-.099	-.156	-.242	.195	-.159	.180	-.077
	.035	.375	.	.059	.603	.410	.197	.302	.401	.342	.686
	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
FLS	-.124	.106	.348	1	.208	.119	.116	.339	-.175	.303	-.310
	.513	.577	.059	.	.269	.530	.543	.067	.354	.103	.095
	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
TS	-.111	-.016	-.099	.208	1	.668**	.672**	.587**	.371*	.497**	.334
	.559	.933	.603	.269	.	.000	.000	.001	.044	.005	.071
	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
FAMILY	-.187	.041	-.156	.119	.668**	1	.666**	.076	.427*	.121	.158
	.322	.831	.410	.530	.000	.	.000	.689	.019	.524	.404
	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
PERSONAL	-.228	-.027	-.242	.116	.672**	.666**	1	.104	.318	.095	-.102
	.226	.889	.197	.543	.000	.000	.	.584	.087	.616	.593
	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
OCCU PATIONAL	-.059	-.064	.195	.339	.587**	.076	.104	1	.052	.690**	.129
	.758	.737	.302	.067	.001	.689	.584	.	.784	.000	.498
	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
HEALTH	-.151	-.075	-.159	-.175	.371*	.427*	.318	.052	1	-.206	.100
	.426	.693	.401	.354	.044	.019	.087	.784	.	.275	.601
	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
FINANCIAL	-.011	.067	.180	.303	.497**	.121	.095	.690**	-.206	1	.132
	.952	.724	.342	.103	.005	.524	.616	.000	.275	.	.486
	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
MARI TALS	.060	-.176	-.077	-.310	.334	.158	-.102	.129	.100	.132	1
	.755	.352	.686	.095	.071	.404	.593	.498	.601	.486	.
	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

PWB=Psychological Well-being
 WLC=Work-locus of control
 WLB=Work-life balance
 FLS=Family life satisfaction
 TS=Total stress

TABLE NO. 3: SHOWING THE GROUP STATISTICS OF MARRIED AND UNMARRIED WOMEN MECHANICS

	MARITAL	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PWB	1.00	15	24.6667	2.25726	.58282
	2.00	15	23.8000	3.27763	.84628
WLC	1.00	15	52.9333	7.86917	2.03181
	2.00	15	56.3333	7.76132	2.00396
WLB	1.00	15	66.8000	9.17450	2.36885
	2.00	15	65.7333	7.28469	1.88090
FLS	1.00	15	66.6000	4.99714	1.29026
	2.00	15	69.4667	5.71797	1.47637
TS	1.00	15	148.2667	22.04044	5.69082
	2.00	15	144.4000	25.57007	6.60216
FAMILY	1.00	15	20.5333	4.56488	1.17865
	2.00	15	22.1333	2.87518	.74237
PERSONAL	1.00	15	11.0000	5.26444	1.35927
	2.00	15	15.2000	6.63540	1.71325
OCCU PATIONAL	1.00	15	19.4000	4.96847	1.28285
	2.00	15	18.1333	5.34344	1.37967
HEALTH	1.00	15	7.2000	2.95683	.76345
	2.00	15	8.4667	1.64172	.42389
FINANCIAL	1.00	15	11.5333	3.31375	.85561
	2.00	15	9.9333	3.39046	.87541
MARITAL	1.00	15	7.8667	3.39888	.87759
	2.00	15	.0000	.00000	.00000

Note:
 1.00 = Married
 2.00 = Unmarried

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