

Psychological Well-Being Amongst Women Professionals in Different Spheres of Work-Life

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Abstract:

The present research study examines the role of profession in determining psychological well being amongst working women. For the purpose of the present study, a sample of 180 working women aged 25-55 years and employed in three different working sectors viz. Public (60), Private (60) and Teaching (60) was selected. Psychological well-being scale developed by Ryff (1989) was administered in order to attain their overall well-being score. Data was analyzed using ANOVA. Results indicated significant difference across the three professional groups and also between teaching and private sector professionals and public and private sector professionals in their levels of psychological well being with teaching professional reporting the highest level of well-being followed by public and lastly by private sector professionals. Significant difference was also found in sub-dimensions of psychological well-being viz. Autonomy, personal growth and purpose in life.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, Women Professionals

I. INTRODUCTION

Psychological wellbeing is a diverse construct encompassing myriad of psychological and social dimensions. Research has shown that psychological wellbeing is a multidimensional concept (Wissing & Van Eeden, 2002), which develops through a combination of cognition, emotional regulation, personality characteristics; identity and life experience (Bradburn, 1969; Helson & Srivastava, 2001). The cognitive aspect is an information based appraisal of an individual's life, when one is involved in consciously evaluating one's life satisfaction as a whole. The affective aspect is a hedonic evaluation based on emotions such as pleasant/unpleasant states of mind.

Research on Psychological wellbeing has traditionally focused on two approaches viz. Hedonic and Eudaimonic tradition. According to the Hedonic view of well-being, the focus is to maximize pleasure and minimize pain and to find the good or bad elements of life in order to maximize happiness (Kahneman, Diener & Schwarz 1999). Diener (1984) further developed the notion of happiness and proposed the concept of subjective well-being (SWB). Diener and his colleagues concluded that subjective wellbeing (SWB) refers to people's evaluation of their lives, and the evaluations include both affective and cognitive aspects (Diener, & Lucas, 1999; Diener 2000).

The philosophical roots of eudaimonia are in Aristotle's (1925) formulation of the highest human good which he termed as Eudaimonia. Eudaimonia thus captured the essence of the two great Greek imperatives: first, to know yourself, and second, to become what you are. Bradburn (1969) highlighted that Psychological wellbeing "stands out as being of primary importance" (p. 6). He linked this to Aristotle's view of eudaimonia, which is now commonly translated as wellbeing. According to Bradburn: "an

individual will be high in psychological well-being in the degree to which he has an excess of positive over negative affect and will be low in well-being in the degree to which negative affect predominates over positive (Bradburn, 1969, p. 9)" Ryff (1989b), on the other hand identified dimensions of psychological wellbeing viz. Autonomy, Environmental Mastery; Positive relationships with others; Purpose in life; Personal growth and Self-acceptance.

In today's context, wherein the Indian society is developing rapidly, women have become professionally more inclined and are pursuing varied career choices. This substantial increase in women workforce over the past few years has led researchers to explore the effects of employment on women's well-being. Research suggests that employment of women may result in higher psychological well-being as it leads to absorption of one's time and resources within a particular identity role (Elgar & Chester, 2007). In the Indian context, it has been highlighted that personal control and psycho social competence are significantly positively related to well-being amongst urban educated women (Varma & Dhawan, 2006). Research studies (Patrick, 2001; Mojoyilana, 2007; Stuart et al. 2013; Klumb & Lamper, 2004; Watson, 2010; Bryson et al. 2012) have found a positive correlation between level of education, occupation, level of income and well-being amongst women. Also, according to Erlandson (2006), women working under less complex pattern of occupation had better health and well being as compared to those with medium complex pattern of occupation.

The present research aims at exploring the significant difference in psychological wellbeing amongst women employed in different professional groups viz. Public, Private and Teaching. For the purpose of the present study the Public sector employees comprised women employed in

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Government service and organizations. Private sector employees comprised women employees working in privately owned firms, BPOs or in other case self-employed. And lastly, the Teaching sector employees comprised women teaching at school as well as university level.

Objectives

- To find out significant difference between different Professions viz. Public, Private and Teaching on psychological well-being of working women.
- To study the significant difference on various sub-dimensions of psychological well-being of working women across different professions viz. Public, Private and Teaching.

II. METHOD

Sample:

The sample comprised 180 working women aged 25-55 years and employed in three different working sectors viz. Public (60), Private (60) and Teaching (60). The mean and standard deviation of the sample is 34.75 and 8.4 respectively.

Measures:

Psychological well-being scale (Ryff, 1989): The psychological wellbeing scale developed by Ryff (1989) comprises six distinct components: self acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, environmental mastery and autonomy. The 54 item version has been used for this study. It is a 6 point likert scale with options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The sub scores from each scale are added to get an overall score, with higher score reflecting high psychological well-being. Internal consistency values (coefficient alpha) for each dimension ranged between 0.86 and 0.91 indicating high reliability of the scale. Correlation coefficients varied between 0.83 and 0.99 indicating higher level of validity for the scale.

Procedure:

The participants (working women) for the study were personally contacted and requested for cooperation after briefly introducing the aim of the study. Some participants obliged to complete the measures immediately thereby allowing the investigator to ensure that the participant gave responses to all the items. Instructions were given to the participants only after forming adequate rapport. Others requested time, in which case, the responses were collected through e-mails.

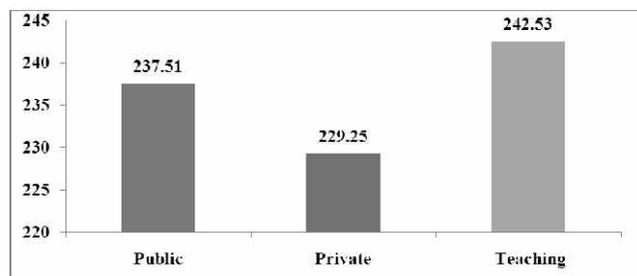
III. RESULTS

Results of the study in respect to psychological well-being across the three professional women groups viz. Public, Private and Teaching is depicted in the following section.

Table No. 1: Means and SD across three Professional women groups (Public, Private, Teaching) on psychological well-being

Public			Private			Teaching		
M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
237.51	20.55	60	229.25	23.04	60	242.53	20.81	60

Figure 1.1: Graph depicting Means across three Professional women groups (Public, Private, Teaching) on psychological well-being



As depicted in Table 1 and Graph 1.1, Psychological well-being is highest amongst women in teaching profession (M=242.53, SD=20.81), followed by Public (M=237.51, SD=20.55) and lastly the Private sector (M=229.25, SD=23.04).

Table No. 2: One-way ANOVA across three Professional women groups (Public, Private, Teaching)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	MS	f
Between Groups	3597.91	2	1798.956	3.068*
Within Groups	103775.75	177	586.30	
Total	107373.66	179		

*p < 0.05

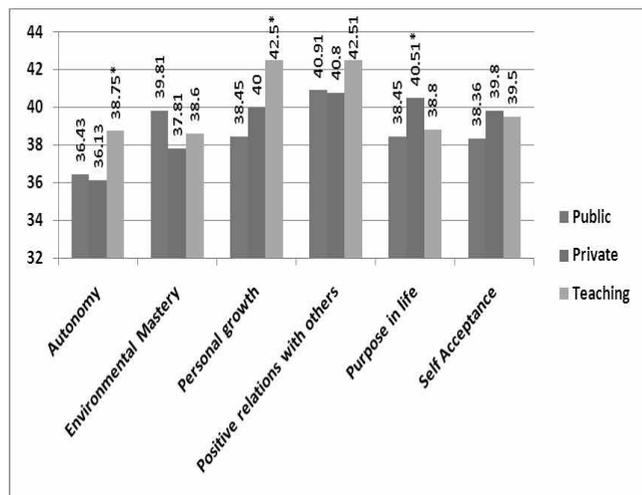
Table 2 depicts that significant difference has emerged (.05 level) between the professional groups viz. Public, Private and Teaching in their levels of psychological well-being, thereby providing further support to the findings that organizational setting affects psychological well being levels amongst working women.

Table 3: One-way ANOVA of sub-dimensions of Psychological well-being

Dimensions	Public		Private		Teaching		F value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Autonomy	36.43	4.88	36.13	5.20	38.75	4.40	5.25**
Environmental Mastery	39.81	5.18	37.81	5.80	38.60	4.40	1.76
Personal growth	38.45	5.53	40.00	6.45	42.50	5.76	7.23**
Positive relations with others	40.91	5.42	40.80	7.35	42.51	5.90	1.39
Purpose in life	38.45	4.57	40.51	4.49	38.80	4.66	3.50*
Self Acceptance	38.36	4.39	39.80	5.89	39.50	4.16	1.44

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Figure 3.1: Graph depicting Means of sub-dimensions of psychological well-being across three Professional women groups (Public, Private, Teaching)



As depicted in Table 3 and Graph 3.1, Teaching women professionals have significantly (.01 level) higher level of Autonomy followed by Public and lastly by Private women professionals. Teaching women professionals have significantly (.01 level) higher level of personal growth followed by Private and lastly by Public women professionals. It is also depicted that private women professionals have significantly (.05 level) higher levels of purpose in life followed by Teaching and lastly by Public women professionals.

IV. DISCUSSION

The aim of the present research was to study the relationship between professional groups (Public, Private and Teaching) and psychological well-being, and if any significant difference emerges in the levels of psychological well-being across the three groups. According to the findings of the study, teaching professionals exhibited highest psychological well-being level followed by Public sector and lastly Private sector professionals (Refer Table 1). It was also found that Teaching women professionals have significantly higher level of Autonomy and Personal growth as compared to the other two professional groups and private women professionals have significantly higher levels of purpose in life as compared to the other two professional groups (Refer Table 3)

When compared with previous research (Srimathi & Kumar, 2012), the results were found to be consistent wherein teaching women professionals reported the highest level of psychological well-being and private sector professionals the least. These findings can be attributed to the fact that women employed in the teaching profession are able to devote more time and attention to their personal lives as well as are able to cater better to their household needs due to better working hours, and flexibility in the organizational setting as compared to women working in the private sector, wherein they are required to meet daily deadlines and are working under constant work pressure. Pandey & Srivastav (2003) in their study on working women also reported similar findings, wherein teaching professionals experienced minimum level of stress and illness owing to their work life. Another study by Sahoo & Mohapatra (2009) also reported similar findings wherein teaching professionals displayed maximum amount of positive affect and happiness in comparison with other

groups. Wangsoyoung (2014) also reported psychological well-being levels higher than the mean amongst teachers. Hassen & Kibret (2016) also reported positive health-related behaviours and high psychological well being levels of 110 teaching faculty at a university in Ethiopia. Another factor could be that teachers are regarded as agents of change (Lochman, 2003) which may further add to their overall satisfaction with their professional life thereby resulting in high psychological well-being levels. Similar findings were also reported by Alam & Rizvi (2012) and Bashir & Sufiyanzilli (2015) in their research study on difference in level of psychological well-being of employees in private and public sector undertakings in Aligarh. These findings can be attributed to the fact that Public sector professionals have fixed working hours, flexibility and a sense of job security as compared to private sector professionals who are working under constant pressure in order to meet deadlines and are not provided enough flexibility and job security which could lead to an overall low psychological well-being. Burch (1992) reported that job insecurity reduces psychological well-being amongst employees. Erlandson (2006) reported that women working under less complex pattern of occupation had better health and well being as compared to those with medium complex pattern of occupation.

Psychological well-being of Public women Professionals

Findings of the present research suggest that although not significant Public women professionals have been found to be high on the sub-dimension of environmental mastery as depicted in Table 3 and Graph 3.1. These findings are consistent with the previous research (Alam & Rizvi, 2012; Bashir & Sufiyanzilli, 2015) which suggests that Public sector Professionals are high on Psychological well-being as well as its sub-dimensions as compared to Private sector Professionals. In the context of environmental mastery being higher in Public women professionals, it has been suggested by Rizvi (2009) that Private professionals experience more role ambiguity as compared to Public professionals. In the present research scenario, it is possible that the role and job profile of public women professionals is clearly defined and hence they are able to handle complex situations and work tasks more efficiently as compared to Private women professionals. Also, due to stressful working hours and pressure to meet deadlines, private women professionals are unable to exert much control over their surroundings both personal as well as professional which could lead to lower levels of environmental mastery.

Psychological well-being of Private women Professionals

Findings of the present research study contrary to previous research revealed that private women professionals are significantly high on purpose in life dimension. These findings can be attributed to factors such as women working in the private sector are required to meet deadlines on a daily basis and have to keep pace with their work in order to cope with the stiff competition at work as laxity at work could result in layoff since there is less job security in private sector compared to public and teaching sector. Research (Satava, 2009) on management executives has indicated that if an

employee is not able to measure up to counterpart executives in other firms, he/she may be asked to resign. Apart from this, women have the traditional household responsibilities of tending to daily household requirements, child bearing, raising school-aged children etc. which result in additional burden upon them. So, these findings suggest that due to these factors private women professionals have greater purpose in life as compared to public and teaching women professionals.

Psychological well-being of Teaching women Professionals

Findings of the present study suggest that women teaching professionals have significantly higher levels of autonomy and Personal growth as compared to the other two groups. These findings are consistent with the previous research (Srimathi & Kumar, 2012; Mohapatra, 2009) and can be attributed to factors such as teaching professionals are able to exercise their freedom of choice in deciding their pedagogy and other issues relating to educating the students. Also, teachers derive a sense of satisfaction by educating others and impacting their lives in a positive manner, which contributes to their personal growth and overall well-being. Also, women employed in the teaching profession are able to devote more time and attention to their personal lives as well as are able to cater better to their household needs due to better working hours, and flexibility in the organizational setting as compared to women working in the private sector

V. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the findings of the present study that teaching women professionals have the highest level of psychological well being amongst working women. These findings are in accordance with previous researches (Srimathi & Kumar, 2012; Pandey & Srivastav, 2003; Sahoo & Mohapatra, 2009; Wangsoyoung, 2014; Hassen & Kibret, 2016). It was also found that teaching women professionals are high on the sub-dimension of autonomy and personal growth, whereas private women professionals are high on purpose in life.

However, this study brings to light the role of only Profession in determining psychological well-being of women, whereas there could be myriad of factors (psycho-social, socio-emotional, socio-cultural etc.) playing a major role in predicting the level of psychological well-being amongst working women. Future research could explore more of subjective factors such as personality traits, marital adjustment etc. critical in determining psychological well-being amongst women.

VI. REFERENCES

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