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A Comparative Study of Self-Esteem of Working and Non-Working Women in Relation to their Psychological Well-Being

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Abstract

Employment has become increasingly significant in the lives of women. The modern woman is trying to be happier and better adjusted by relinquishing the traditional and modern role or by combining the two roles. The present study aims to compare the Self-esteem of working and non- working women in relation to their psychological well-being. The samples consisted of 20 married working and 20 married non- working women of the age range of 20-45 years, with educational qualification of 10+2 and above. Cluster sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample. The State Self-Esteem scale was chosen for collection of data. SPSS was used for analyzing data. Working women were found to be significantly higher on self-esteem than non-working women. The reason for this difference may be because of the fact that employment is associated with enhanced self-esteem and life

Keywords: Working Women, Non-Working Women, Self-esteem, Psychological well-being.

Introduction

What is self-esteem?

In sociology and psychology self-esteem reflects a person's overall subjective emotional evaluation of his or her own worth. It is a judgment of oneself as well as an attitude toward the self which encompasses beliefs "I am competent", "I am worthy"

The most basic need all of us have is to have a sense of personal worth. This sense of personal worth has two elements: security and significance. Security means being loved and accepted just for who I am, regardless of what I do. This is what Gloria Steinem calls "core" self-esteem, and psychologists refer to as "global" self-esteem, being loved and accepted. Significance means having meaning or purpose in life, being adequate for what I do. This is also called situational self-esteem. It knows that we are good at what we do. The problem is that we develop a series of false assumptions of what we think will meet our needs for security and significance. We usually learn these assumptions in childhood. If we don't experience unconditional love and acceptance as a child, we will experience pressure to have those needs met elsewhere. And if we aren't given a sense of competency and significance in childhood, we will also experience pressure to meet that need elsewhere. It is generally believed that there are many benefits of having a positive view of the self. Those who have high self-esteem are presumed to be psychologically happy and healthy whereas those with low self-esteem are believed to be psychologically distressed and perhaps even depressed. Persons who possess high self-esteem apparently feel good about them, cope effectively with challenges and criticism, and feel wanted and respected socially too, thus lead happy and productive lives. By contrast, people with low self-esteem see the world through a more negative filter. Accumulated research suggests that unemployment is associated with increased depression and poorer self- esteem

Psychological well- being (PWB)

Psychological well- being (PWB) is defined as "the overall effectiveness of an individual's psychological functioning" as related to primary facets of one's life: work, family,

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Community, etc. or in other words, how people evaluate their lives as a whole. A person is said to be with high positive psychological wellbeing when he or she is satisfied with his or her life and experiences positive emotions and avoids negative emotions such as anger, negativity and depression

Justification of the Study

The focus of this study is on self-esteem of working and non-working women. Studies examining self-efficacy is the level and strength of a woman's belief that she can successfully perform a given activity, have been examined given the similarity of this construct to self-esteem. This paper is an attempt of understanding and underlying structure of the self-concept, which can contribute to the process of mediating change in self-esteem and improving psychological health among women.

Objectives of the Study

- To study self-esteem of working women in relation to their psychological well-being.
- To study self-esteem of non- working women in relation to their psychological well-being.
- To compare the self- esteem of working women and non-working women in relation to their psychological well-being.

Hypothesis

There exists significant difference between the self-esteem of working and non-working women in relation to psychological well-being.

Research Methodology

The sample consisted of 20 married working and 20 married non- working women of the age range of 20-45 years, with educational qualification of 10+2 and above selected from Panchkula. Cluster sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample. Working women were teachers, bankers and etc. The State Self-Esteem Scale (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991) [3]. is used to measure self-esteem. The SSES consists of 20 items that tap momentary fluctuations in self-esteem. The scale has acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$) and it is responsive to temporary changes in self-Confirmatory factor analysis reveals that the SSES is made up of three factors: performance, social, and appearance self-esteem. Of course, measures of trait and state self-esteem are highly correlated, and therefore in neutral settings scores on the SSES will be highly related to trait measures. The decision to use a trait or state measure of self-esteem, therefore, depends on whether one is interested in predicting long-term outcomes or in the immediate effects associated with feelings about the self. The result distributions are presented and basic descriptive parameters (arithmetic mean \pm standard deviation) were calculated. The differences between the groups were tested by applying t test. The level of statistical significance was set at .05 levels.

Results and Analysis

The work status on self-esteem revealed that the working women and non –working women differ significantly on self-esteem. The working women were significantly higher on self-esteem than non-working women. Thus the findings of the present study support our hypothesis. According to them, occupying multiple roles is thought to increase the women's chances to learn, to develop self-efficacy and self-esteem, to build social network and open access to informational,

instrumental and emotional support, and to buffer life's stresses and strains. Playing multiple roles also provides cognitive cushioning and alternative sources of self-esteem and gratification when things go poorly in one's personal life. One of the main reasons for higher self-esteem among professionally employed women is that women who hold multiple roles may be better at coping or less susceptible to psychological distress, and women who have fewer roles may be more psychologically vulnerable and drop or lose roles. Holding more roles is associated with higher self-esteem and job satisfaction. Higher self-esteem among working women as compared to unemployed could be due to the fact that these women would achieve something positive (such as higher status and economic independence) in an opportunity to work outside the home. A feeling of contributing to the welfare of their families as well as society might enhance their self-esteem. They acknowledge the joys of combined employment and family responsibilities. When a woman goes out to work, she shakes off the feeling of subordination which she might feel while staying at home. Work provides a woman with more self-esteem and to some extent satisfies her need for recognition freedom, power, independence, and the need for social contacts. The reason for higher self-esteem among employed women than non-employed women may be because of the fact that employment is associated with enhanced self-esteem and life satisfaction only when it is regarded as a career or significant life work. For those women who did not think of the paid work role as a long term life goal, employment was not linked to higher self-esteem or life satisfaction. Satisfaction with job and salience of the occupational role has been found to be higher in working women and this explains their being higher on self-esteem than non-working women. Another reason is that housewives face more stress, because of lack of financial independence and support.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Self-esteem is an important psychological variables that be discussed in topic of self and along with extensive research. Research has shown that low self-esteem cause depression, anxiety, guilt and many of mental distress thus resulting a negative psychological being and the high self-esteem has an important role in personal life, social relations, creativity, and ultimately, academic success and career growth and human development; thus a healthy and positive psychological well being

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