

Relationship Between Family Conflict and Perceived Stress Among Working Women

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Abstract

Working women are facing various problems after joining the workforce outside home sphere. The lack of family support generates problems in the way of working women. Married working women are facing the challenges in their marital relationships, child care and household responsibilities. They are facing the changing behavior of family members and family conflict, and don't have proper time for self-care. Despite providing financial support to their families yet they have not any equal participation in decision-making. Role family conflict also affects the mental health and physical health of working women, This study mainly focuses on mental health and stress of working women and non-working women. For this, purpose 50 working women and 50 non-working women of Delhi were purposively selected and they were administered Working Family Conflict Scale (WAFCS) and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) t- Test and Pearson's product moment were applied to analyze the data. The results as follows: A significant difference between mean family conflict scores of working and non-working women was obtained. A significant difference between mean stress scores of working and non-working women was obtained. A significant positive relationship between family conflict and stress of working women was obtained. A significant positive relationship between family conflict and stress of non-working women was work out. The study aims in making the women and their family members to aware of the various stressors and the different coping strategies that can help them deal with the stressors in a better way, and thus maintaining their psychological health. The review concludes with a summary of major research findings, as well as a consideration of future directions and implications for practice and policy.

Keyword: Family Conflict, Stress, working and non-working women etc.

Introduction:

Women are essential to the social and economic progress of all countries in the globe. Working women face a unique set of issues that affect both their personal and professional life. Women must fulfil their responsibilities as wives, mothers, and wage earners. While still playing their customary duties, they must manage their careers. This implies that there are two sets of overlapping obligations for working women. Consequently, professional tasks appear to be one of the main causes of stress that working women must deal with in addition to their conventional roles. Modern living is stressful, and as life becomes more complex, stress levels are expected to rise. Stress is built in the concept of role, which is conceived as the position a person occupies in a system. Women's in modern global world have to play a dual role as housewife and career builder. To balance the dual pressure of work at home and work sphere, women faced various psychological, social and physical problems. The present investigation was conducted to examine relationship between family conflict and perceived stress among the working women

Family conflict:

Family conflict refers to active opposition between family members. Because of the nature of family relationships, it can take a wide variety of forms, including verbal, physical, sexual, financial, or psychological. Conflicts may involve different combinations of family members: it can be conflict within the couple or between parents and children or, again, between siblings.

Theory of conflict within families starts with the premise that family members undergo conflicts and disharmony (Ray, 2015). Conflict theories encompass the work of Marx and Engels as well as Weber, Habermas, Foucault, and Domhoff. Conflict theories focus on social conflict and inequality, and as such, can be thought to include feminism. Feminism focuses on gender inequality as one form of social inequality. According to these theories as cited in Schaeffer (2004), conflict theorists view the family not as a contributor to social stability but as a reflection of the inequality in wealth and power that is found within the larger society. The assumption is that people act in their own sequence in a material world in which exploitation and power struggle are prevalent. The author further explains that the feminist and conflict theorists note that the family has traditionally legitimized and perpetuated male dominance.

Work-family conflict is “a form of inter role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Conflict between work and family becomes important for organizations and individuals because it is linked to negative consequences. For example, conflict between work and family is associated with increased absenteeism, increased turnover, decreased performance, and poorer physical and mental health. Conceptually conflict between work and family is bi-directional. Most researchers make the distinction between what is termed work-family conflict, and what is termed family-work conflict. Work-to-family conflict occurs when experiences at work interfere with family life like extensive, irregular, or inflexible work hours, work overload and other forms of job stress, interpersonal conflict at work, extensive travel, career transitions, unsupportive supervisor or organization. For example, an unexpected meeting late in the day may prevent a parent from picking up his or her child from school. Family-to-work conflict occurs when experiences in the family interfere with work life like presence of young children, primary responsibility for children, elder care responsibilities, interpersonal conflict within the family unit, unsupportive family members. Work can conflict with one’s home and family life. However, work holism can lead to adverse affects on one’s relationship with his or her partner.

Stress:

It is a word derived from the Latin word ‘stringere’ meaning to draw tight, One concept on stress says that, external forces (load) exerting upon an individual, producing strain and we can measure the stress to individual in the same way, that we can measure physical stress on a machine.(hinkle.1973)

Stress is purely a scientific word. As per engineering, it means “external force directed on physical object or substance” which gives rise to stress and the substance changes. In psychology, external stimulus tries to brings change. In an individual’s, physical-mental, mental state that arise out of situation is called as stress.

“Stress is the pattern of responses an organism makes to stimulus event or situation that disturb the equilibrium and exceeds person’s ability to cope”

“Stress means extreme experiences which are there for long time and are also challenging associated with impulsive behavioral and bodily changes”

Stress of working women:

Occupational stress in case of women results from adverse working conditions, dysfunctional internal and external attitudes that engulf their coping resources and manifests in acute cognitive, emotional, behavioral

or physical problems. In recent times, women are fast pervading almost all traditionally male-dominated professions and performing effectively. Despite this, the traditional mindset where males view professional role as their primary objective and neglect household responsibilities while females view marriage and motherhood as their primary objective persists. There obviously exist several impediments in the journey of career oriented women. Despite being equally qualified and experienced as men, women have to struggle hard to reach the top positions in any profession, they are underpaid as compared to men, face discrimination and discouragement both internally and externally, many a times they are forced to restrict themselves to mundane jobs though they can take up better ones and apart from working have to do the large part of household chores as well.

Women who face chronic stress develop psychological problems (depressive symptoms, insomnia, dissatisfaction, irritability, rage, anxiety, fearfulness, feelings of guilt and shame and withdrawal), physical problems (coronary heart disease, changes in blood pressure, body ache, tension headaches, short menstrual cycles, digestive problems and back pain) and dysfunctional behavioral manifestations (sickness absenteeism, changing jobs frequently, career interruption and job withdrawal owing to negative job attitudes). Though working women are likely to get stressed while striking a balance between multiple roles (worker, spouse, mother, daughter-in-law, daughter) that they are required to do nevertheless they still tend to have better physical and mental health as compared to those women who are housewives. This is because these different roles add to and enrich women's sense of self and enhance psychological well-being. The strain and stress they experience due to one role is balanced by the satisfaction they obtain from other roles. Many people tend to devalue the work of a homemaker woman taking it for granted and thinking that it can be easily substituted by a housekeeper. Thus, women who are homemakers despite working around the year without a break for even a single day may feel extremely insignificant as the family does not value their contributions.

Rational of the study:

From the review of literature it was noticed that many studies have been made to determine the family conflict and stress of employees in hospitals, hotels, IT, educational intuitions and Universities. Very few studies are conducted on family conflict and stress of working women employees in government, non-government organization. But these studies have not touched out the relation of family conflict and stress of working women and non-working women in a comparative angle. The answer to the research question whether working women and non-working women face same level of stress, hold same level of family conflict or not has not been conducted by previous researcher. Furthermore, previous researchers have not properly clarified the role of family conflict and stress of working women and non-working women. The present study is intended to fill up this gap of knowledge and on these grounds the present work is justified. Hence, these variables were selected for the study. The researcher also felt the need to study the family conflict and stress of working women employees in Bihar.

Objective of the study:

The following objectives were formulated for the proposed study:

1. To find out the difference on family conflict between working women and non-working women
2. To find out the difference on perceived stress between working women and non-working women
3. To explore the relationship between family conflict and perceived stress of working women.
4. To examine the relationship between family conflict and perceived stress of non-working women

Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses were formulated to empirically validate the above objectives:

1. There would be significant difference on family conflict between working women and non-working women
2. There would be significant difference on perceived stress between working women and non-working women
3. There would be significant relationship between family conflict and perceived stress of working women.
4. There would be significant relationship between family conflict and perceived stress of non-working women.

Sample:

Data were collected on a total of 100 women from different organizations located in Bihar. Out of these 50 were working women taken from different private and public sectors of Delhi and NCR and 50 non-working were taken from different locations of Bihar Further, the age group of the women were 25 to 40 years of age. An availability sampling technique was used to select the respondents of the study.

Research design:

In the present study, a two groups design (working women and non-working women) was used. The present study aimed at examining the difference in family conflict and stress between working women and non-women and also to find out the relationship between mental health and stress of working women and non-working women separately.

Tools:

The following tools were used for data collection.

Work–Family Conflict Scale (WAFCS) developed by Haslam et al (2015). This tool contains 10 statements on a 7 point rating scale. A total score ranging from 10 to 70. Scale has two dimension; 1. Work to family conflict 2. Family to work conflict Higher score indicate greater levels of conflict. Reliability of the scale .70 are considered good indicators of internal consistency. It provides a less adequate approximation of perceived stress levels than the larger scales. As a result of statistical analyses several items were dropped resulting in a brief 10-item scale comprising two subscales assessing theoretically distinct but related constructs: FWC (five items) and WFC(five items). Analyses revealed both subscales have good internal consistency, construct validity as well as concurrent and predictive validity.

On the other hand Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Sheldon Cohen ,1988) administered to assess the level of stress of working women. It has been developed by Sheldon Cohen (1988). This tool contains 10 statements on a 4 point rating scale. A total score ranging from 0 to 40 is computed by reverse scoring the four positively worded items and then summing all the scale items. Higher score indicate greater levels of perceived stress, Subscale scores were computed by summing the six negatively worded items (items 1, 2, 3, 6, 9 and 10) for factor 1 (Negative) and the four positively worded items (items 4, 5,7 and 8) for factor 2 (Positive) with higher score indicating greater negative distress/stress feelings and greater positive stress feelings and coping abilities, respectively. PSS-4 is based on psychometric principles and is considered to be sound. However, the limited four-item abridged scale suffers in internal reliability ($r=.60$). It provides a less adequate approximation of perceived stress levels than the larger scales. Test-Retest reliability and predictive validity is strongest for shorter time periods. The 10 and 14 item self-report instruments have established reliability and validity ($r=0.85$).

Procedure of data collection:

To begin with the research, the researcher contacted the different organizations of the public and private sectors of Bihar. Permission was sought from the organization authorities by approaching and explaining details of the study, i.e., purpose and benefits for the working employees, and the organization. Also, verbal consent of the working women employees regarding data collection was taken and they were assured of confidentiality. Working employees who were not willing to give information were not forced to do so and were not included in the sample for the study. First, they were explained briefly about the purpose and the importance of research, which helped in establishing rapport with them. The test was administered on an individual and group basis available and allocated to the researcher. The scales were administered to them one after the other in the same Order. After collecting the relevant data researcher extended thanks to the participants for contributing their valuable time and helping the researcher in her research pursuit. The non-working women were from different households from the location from where working women were taken and individual test administration was used in this case.

Hypothesis-1: There would be significant difference on family conflict between working women and non-working women.

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	SED	t	p
Family Conflict	Working women	50	42.78	3.914	.885	14.442	<.001
	Non-working women	50	30.00	4.882			

Table no. 1: Means, SDs, and SED and results of t-ratio between mean family conflict of working women and non-working women.

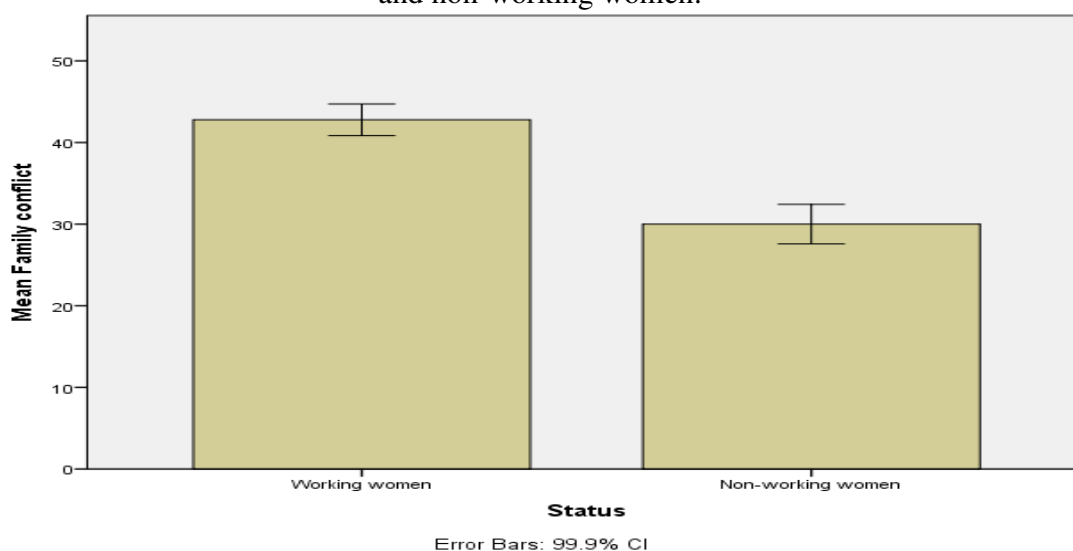


Figure 1: Graphic representation of mean score of family conflict of working women and non-working women.

From the results given in the above table 1 it appears that the mean family conflict scores of working women and non-working women were found to be 42.78 and 30.00 respectively. It means that working women have obtained more mean family conflict than non-working women. The standard deviations for working women and non-working women were 3.914 and 4.882 respectively. The t-ratio between the two

means came to be 14.442 which was significant beyond .01 level. These finding suggest that working women had significantly greater amount of family conflict than non-working women. Hence, the hypothesis-1 which states that “there would be significant difference on family conflict between working women and non-working women” was proved true by the finding of the study.

Since the t-ratio came to be significant it can be said that working women have significantly more family conflict than non-working women. It is true that the two types (working and non-working) of women belong to the same society and family. The finding revealed that conflict can happen when family members have different views or beliefs that clash, when people misunderstand each other and jump to the wrong conclusion and as a result of two people having different values or needs in which the satisfaction of one may thwart the needs of the other. Having a heavy workload, experiencing difficulty in reconciling work and family life, having long and irregular working hours, can cause conflicts in work life and family life (Mansour & Tremblay, 2016). These employees are known to be exposed to stress at work, which causes employees to have major challenges in coping with it. Previous research has shown that conflict between work and family demands is higher in women than men because women spend more time on work and family activities simultaneously (Jang et al., 2016). This happens because in principle a woman is still responsible for the house and family even though they also have to work out of the family. Women usually turn to women's types of work to minimize conflicts with family roles, because these jobs tend to be more flexible. However, increasing status in this job is sometimes more difficult to achieve.

Hypothesis-2: There would be significant difference on perceived stress between working women and non-working women

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	SED	T	P
Stress	Working women	50	27.52	2.794	.542	10.882	<.001
	Non-working women	50	21.62	2.626			

Table no. 2: Means, SDs, and SED and results of t-ratio between stress of working women and non-working women

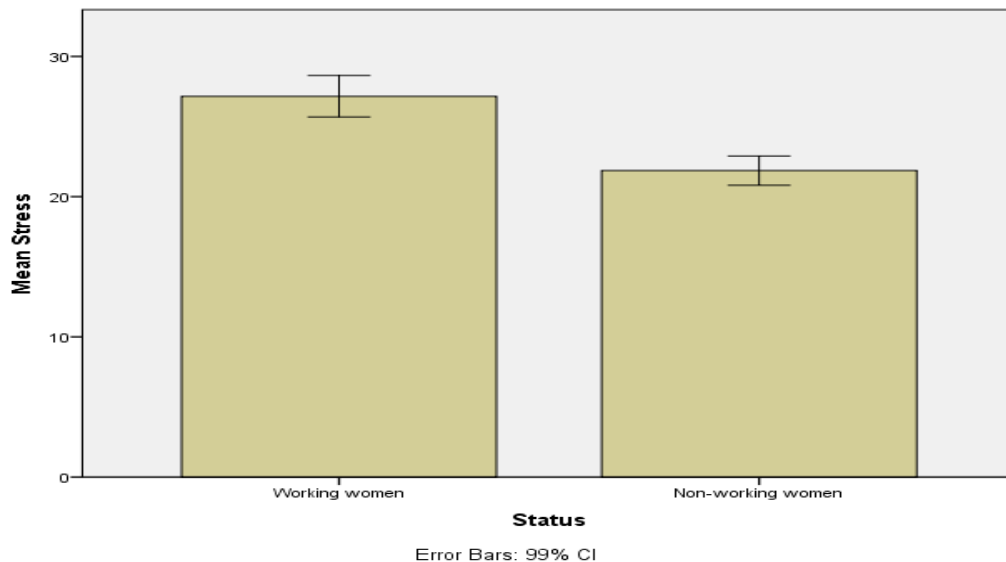


Figure 2: Graphic representation of mean stress scores of working women and non-working women Table-2 shows that mean stress score of working women and non-working women were 27.52 and 21.62 respectively. The SDs of stress score of working women and non-working women were found 2.794 and

2.626 respectively. The t- ratios between means stress scores of the two groups was found to be 10.882, which was statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance. These finding suggest that working women had significantly greater amount of stress than non-working women. Hence, the hypothesis-2 which states that “there would be significant difference on perceived stress between working women and non-working women” was proved true by the finding of the study.

It seems that since the two types of women belong to the same socio-economic strata of the society and go through almost same kind of rearing practices so much so that they study in the same school and same curriculum, they did exhibit difference in the stress. It proves that company environment and culture; work pressure, gender discrimination, gender barrier, and dual responsibilities at home and at workplace at the same time, she is a mother, and other hands she is a working woman also which are important ingredients for the development of stress. Gyllensten & Palmer (2005) reported that working women are facing higher level of stress than compared to men.

Hypothesis-3: There would be significant relationship between family conflict and perceived stress of working women

Hypothesis-4: There would be significant relationship between family conflict and perceived stress of working women.

Variables	Correlation	Significance level
Family conflict	0.578	< .01
Stress		

Table no. 3: Results of Correlation between family conflict and stress score of non-working women.

Variables	Correlation	Significance level
Family Conflict	0.66	< .01
Stress		

Table no. 4: Results of Correlation between family conflict and stress score of working women.

If we look table- 3 we will find that coefficient of correlation between family conflict and stress of working women. was found as . 0.578 which was significant at 0.01 level of significance. The value of coefficient of correlation was positive meaning thereby that the two variables are positively related. So, the hypothesis-3 that says that “there would be significant relationship between family conflict and perceived stress of working women.” was accepted. In the same way a look at table 4 it reveals that relationship between family conflict and stress of non-working women was 0.66 which was significant beyond .01 level of confidence. The value of coefficient of correlation was positive meaning thereby that the two variables are positively related. It means if family conflict will increase then stress will also increase and vice versa. Thus, hypothesis -4 which states that “there would be significant relationship between family conflict and perceived stress of non-working women.” was also accepted by the finding of the study.

This implies that when family conflict increases, the level of stress increases too and vice versa. In working women work-family conflict is a conflict that occurs in individuals because they assume multiple roles, both in the workplace and in the family, where time and attention are to devoted to one role only so that the demands of other roles cannot be maximally fulfilled (Utami et al., 2020). This role conflict should be considered as a stress-forming factor in the workplace. This is a consequence for women who have multiple careers to always maintain or perhaps improve their performance in addition to having to take care of their household. Dewe et al., (2010) on work-family emphasized conflict as "one type of stressor." In addition, Fu & Schaffer, (2001) consistently found a positive relationship between stress factors related to work and work-family conflict. The study found that individuals who experience stress at work, have demands for higher output, and a lack of supportive work relationships may report negative moods at home and similar

discord in their marriages. So, it is known that work-family conflict will cause stress in both working women and non-working women, and this stress can be handled by them according to their abilities.

However, in the case of non-working women, it is a natural phenomenon that working family relationships will always bear a positive relationship with stress as both are negative variables.

CONCLUSION:

The present study was conducted with the objectives to investigate the difference between working and non-working women on family conflict and perceived stress and also find out the relationship of family conflict and perceived stress of working and non-working women. t-test was used to find out the difference between working and non-working women on family conflict and stress and Pearson correlation was applied to find out relationship between family conflict and perceived stress scores of working and non-working women separately. The following results were obtained:

1. The results of t- test reveal that working women achieved significant greater mean score than non-working women on family conflict.
2. Working women obtained significantly greater mean score on stress than non-working women meaning thereby that working women had significantly greater stress than non-working women.
3. Positive and significant relationship between family conflict and stress of working women was obtained.
4. Positive and significant relationship between family conflict and stress of non-working women was found.

The findings were explained in the context of the socio-cultural settings and practises that prevailed in the firms. Significantly more family conflict among working women than among non-working women was discussed in light of the high levels of social consciousness and societal expectations, as well as those of families and workplace cultural environments. Significantly more stress among working women than among non-working women was also discussed in light of the socio-cultural conditions that favour working women more than non-working women. In psychological studies, women are at a disadvantage because of bias and discrimination in the public and private sectors, as well as in society.

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