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The Impact of Psychological Well-Being on Health of Women Employees in Garment Industries

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Abstract

This research investigates the critical relationship between psychological well-being and the General health of women employees working in the garment industries. In recent years, the garment industry has witnessed a substantial influx of female labour, making it an essential economic contributor in many regions. However, this sector's work environment is often characterized by factors such as long working hours, repetitive tasks, and low wages, which can take a toll on the mental and physical health of the female workforce. The study employs a quantitative method, to comprehensively assess the impact of psychological well-being on health status of women employees in garment industries. The research

aims to understand the psychological stressors these women face in their workplace. The research focuses on the Garment industries from Tirupur district in Tamil Nadu. The data collection tools used in the study are GHQ-28 proposed by Goldberg and Hillier, 1979 and PWB-18 proposed by Ryff and Keyes, 1995. The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between psychological well-being and General Health of women employees working in garment industries. However, the results show that psychological well-being is a part of General Health and certain factors assessed by the PWB-18 scale are correlated with the General Health. Recognizing the pivotal role women play in the global garment industry, this research is not only academically significant but also holds substantial implications for the well-being and empowerment of a significant portion of the global labour force.

Keywords: Health, Psychological well-being, Garment industries

I.INTRODUCTION

The health and psychological well-being of women employees in the garment industry is an important issue that deserves attention. These women are often employed in low-paying, low-skilled jobs that are characterized by long working hours, low job security, and poor working conditions. Research has shown that women working in the garment industry are at risk of a range of health problems, including respiratory illnesses, skin diseases, and musculoskeletal disorders. These health issues are often caused by exposure to hazardous substances, such as chemicals used in garment production, as well as poor ventilation and lighting in factories. In addition to physical health problems, women in the garment industry are also at risk of mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and stress, which are often caused by the demanding and stressful nature of their work. To address these issues, it is important for garment factories to implement measures to promote the health and well-being of their female employees. These measures could include providing training on safe work practices, improving working conditions, and providing access to healthcare services. It is also important to address the underlying social and economic factors that contribute to poor health outcomes for women in the garment industry, such as low pay, lack of job security, and limited opportunities for career advancement.

Health can be broadly defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It encompasses various aspects of an individual's life, including their physical condition, emotional well-being, social interactions, and lifestyle behaviours. Achieving optimal health involves maintaining a balanced and healthy lifestyle that includes regular exercise, proper nutrition, adequate sleep, stress management, and avoiding harmful habits such as smoking and excessive alcohol consumption. Maintaining good health also involves seeking medical care when necessary and taking appropriate preventive measures to reduce the risk of illness and disease.

The context of people's lives determines their health, and so blaming individuals for having poor health or crediting them for good health is inappropriate. Individuals are unlikely to be able to directly control many of the determinants of health.

- Behavioural factors: These include an individual's lifestyle habits, such as diet, physical activity, smoking, alcohol consumption, and drug use.
- Social factors: These include an individual's social support system, income, education level, employment status, and access to healthcare services.
- Environmental factors: These include an individual's physical surroundings, such as air and water quality, access to green spaces, and exposure to toxins and pollutants.
- Healthcare factors: These include an individual's access to healthcare services, including preventative care, treatment, and medications.
- Policy and political factors: These include policies and regulations related to public health, such as regulations related to food safety, workplace safety, and environmental protection.

Psychological well-being refers to a person's overall mental health and happiness. It includes positive emotions, life satisfaction, a sense of purpose and meaning, positive relationships, and a sense of personal growth and autonomy. Psychological well-being is an important aspect of human life, as it contributes to one's ability to cope with stress, adapt to changes, and achieve personal goals. People with high levels of psychological well-being tend to have better physical health, higher levels of productivity, and greater resilience in the face of challenges. There are many factors that can influence psychological well-being, including genetics, personality, social support, and environmental factors. Additionally, there are various strategies and interventions that can help improve psychological well-being, such as mindfulness, exercise, therapy, and social engagement.

Given below are some of the factors affecting psychological well-being:

- ✓ Mental and Emotional Health – All individuals will experience mental and emotional distress within their lives at some point. Managing psychological distress such as stress, anxiety, panic attacks and depression are often some of the reasons individuals will seek out support from a psychological wellbeing practitioner.
- ✓ Relationship with Self/Self-Acceptance – Many people struggle to accept themselves as they are and often are searching for something to complete them or to “fix them”- Learning to accept and care for ourselves as we are paradoxically frees us up to consider change (Carl Rogers).
- ✓ Positive relationships with others- Wellbeing is significantly influenced by the quality of the relationships we have in our lives. Working within a coaching environment on improving relationships by enhanced communication strategies or the establishing of boundaries significantly impact wellbeing and relationship satisfaction.
- ✓ Positive Emotions – As human beings we are ‘hard wired’ to focus more on our negative emotions than on our positive emotions. Working from a Positive Psychology Perspective, the Wellbeing Coaching Therapist facilitates the client in the cultivation of positive emotions, which with practice, become more habitual and contribute positively to our sense of wellbeing.

- ✓ Personal Growth and Sense of Accomplishment – Personal growth and a sense of accomplishment have been found to be significantly associated with Wellbeing. Educational goals, career choice, and career development, are often areas that contribute to our sense of growth and accomplishment.

Review of Literature

Deepthi Shanbhag, Bobby Joseph, in their descriptive study that was conducted in three units of a private garment factory with a sample size of 350. The study aimed to assess the mental health status of the female garment workers and the associated factors. The findings of the study show that the overall GHQ positive workers were found to be as high as 39%. GHQ was not associated significantly with demographic factors like age, education, marital status, and occupational factors like years of experience, overtime done.

Md. Shobel Mahmud, Vinay Rajath D, Rayhan Mahmud and Mst. Nusrat Jahan, in their study has aimed to explore their physical health issues, psychological health issues and causes of health issues, physical and psychological. The findings of the study are germane to other occupational health and safety researchers. Findings reveal that due to the nature of their job and lack of basic facilities in the factories, female workers are vulnerable to diverse health hazards.

Dr. D. Kanchana, Mrs, B Suganya, states about external influencing factors, influential internal factors, the intervention of local people, and responsible garment. Targeted population of this study is employees of the Tirupur working in garment units. It is also to be studied that the level of employees' perceptions on other relevant factors is evaluated from the literature review. The findings of the study proved that there is no association between psychological problems faced by women employees in garment companies and the mean rank of the gender of the respondents.

Geetha N, has discussed in her research that clarity to the policy makers to conceive the policies to protect the rights of the women workers. The main objective of the study was to understand the problems and prospects of Garment industry in the context of occupational health hazards. The findings of the study were that a strong relationship exists between amenities in the working place and health situation of the selected workers.

Deepthi Kamath, in her study, has aimed to assess the mental health of female workers and its associated factors. The findings of the study were that the mental health status was found to have no significant association with age, education, marital status, support of the family, years of experience in the garment industry and number of hours of overtime performed.

Neal Krause, Kyriakos S Markides, in their study has aimed to determine how the combination of paid employment and household responsibilities influences the psychological well-being of Mexican American women. Findings, however, are done only with the uniqueness and limitations of the sample in mind. In addition, the cross-sectional design of the study also requires that restrictions be placed on the findings.

Md. Shobel Mahmud, Vinay Rajath D, Rayhan Mahmud, Mst. Nusrat Jaban, Md. Rownok Hasan, Kazi Md. Arifur Rahman in their study has aimed to examine prevalence of health hazards among the female workers of the garment industry in Gazipur district, Bangladesh. This study found that women workers in the industry are suffering from diverse health issues because of the ailing working environment at the workplace. Headache, hand pain and respiratory problem were recognised as three main health complications while uncomfortable sitting arrangements, noise and exposure to diverse dust and chemical particles found to be the main reasons.

Zibran M F, Kabir A J, Hasan A in their study has discussed about the challenges faced by the RMG sector in ensuring well-being of the workers in Bangladesh. The overall research focuses in detailed behaviour and lifestyle of workers that includes basic services such as health, education, access to information etc. The results show a huge variance over the workers from different criterion. But the lacking of good understanding between the authority and workers, ignorant nature of the authority is more or less same.

Felicia A Hupper has examined the causes of positive well-being and also its consequences, including beneficial effects for many aspects of cognitive functioning, health, and social relationships. The findings of the study have been found out that psychological well-being is associated with flexible and creative thinking, pro-social behaviour, and good physical health.

Sherly Thom has discussed health problems of women workers in the textile unit. The results of the research study have found out that many of them suffered from backache, joint pains, headache and general tiredness. The health hazards of the women working in the textile industry are much higher. Among the total sample, most of them experienced the job hazards.

According to *Viviane Gontijo Augusto, Rosana Ferreira Sampaio, Lorena Magda Ferreira and Renata Noce Kirkwood* in their study have investigated how women operating the garment industry in Divinópolis, understand and relate to the perception of work ability and health. The results highlighted the need for reflection on the role of working conditions and employment, organizational rigidity and loss of control over work, in health and work ability of operators in the garment industry.

D.Kanchana and B.Suganya, has highlighted the issues such as working conditions, work life balance between family and their work, stress causing factors, psychological and physiological issues in their work environment, relationship between the superiors and the co-workers. This study aims to identify the benefits gained and problems faced by women employees in garment industry. The study concludes that women employees face many problems at the work place in the garment industry.

P Murugan and Dr. R Rajan Babu has aimed to study the Work life balance of the working women in Garment Industries, Work life conflict that is hindering the job performance & personal life and to study the Work life provisions provided for the employees by the management. The results revealed that most of the employees are able to balance their work and life and most of the employees are able to spend few quality times with family and friends without any work pressure.

Prof. Mibir Kumar Roy, Ph.D, Md. Shakil, Fatema Tuz Zohora, was undertaken with the objective of analyzing the health and safety issues of the employees of Chittagong Asian Apparels Ltd (CAAL). The study reveals that the industry is the largest employer in the formal manufacturing sector where more than one thousand women employees worked.

Mohammad Mamun Ur Rashid, Mohammad Ashrafur Rashid, was aimed to identify and compare the present condition of the health and safety environment in a garment company with the relevant laws. The study found out that the organization does not ensure the prescribed space for every worker in a work-room; there is no emergency exit and fire exit; all the dangerous machineries are not securely fenced; the company does not thoroughly examine every part of cranes and other lifting machinery regularly, which may result in accident.

Research Methods

This research study is focused to study on health and psychological well-being of women employees in garment industries with the aid of **descriptive research design** through **quantitative research method**. The research aims to study the socio-demographic details of the respondents, to assess the psychological well-being of women employees in the garment industries, to study the relationship between psychological well-being and general health of women employees in garment industries and to find out

the level of General Health conditions of women employees in garment industries. **General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28)** was used for the dependent variable. It was developed by Goldberg and Hillier in 1979 and is based on an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the original GHQ-60. The other data collection tool is **Psychological well-being (PWB-18)** scale which is an 18-item version of Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (Ryff and Keyes, 1995) is a self-report instrument that comprises 18 items measuring six dimensions of psychological wellbeing.

Hypothesis

Alternate hypothesis H_1 : There is significant relationship between psychological well-being and Health.

Null hypothesis H_0 : There is no significant relationship between psychological well-being and Health.

Interpretation:

Table 1: Demographic details of the participants

Age	Total no of responses	%	Years	Total no of responses	%	Marital status	Total no of responses	%
20-30	49	49.49	0-5	49	49.49	Married	64	64.64
30-40	22	22.22	5 - 10	50	50.50	Unmarried	11	11.11
40-50	28	28.28				Divorced	6	6.06
						Separated	13	13.13
						Widow	5	5.05

Table 1 shows the demographic details of the respondents in the study. Majority of the respondents were from the age group of 20-30 which counts to 49.49%. Majority of the respondents had 0-5 years of experience in their industry which shows 49.49 %. And 64.64 % of the respondents were married.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of General Health and Psychological well-being

		General Health		Psychological well-being	
N		99		99	
Missing		98		98	
Mean		47.2		62.6	
Median		47		62	
Standard deviation		14.0		7.95	
Minimum		13		45	
Maximum		84		89	
Shapiro-Wilk W		0.979		0.910	
Shapiro-Wilk p		0.113		< .001	

Table 2 represents the descriptive analysis of the collected data. In the case of General Health, the p-value is 0.113, which is greater than the typical significance level of 0.05. This suggests that the General Health data is not a normal distribution. On the other hand, for psychological well-being, the p-value is less than 0.001. By this we can conclude that there is strong evidence to reject the assumption of normality. Therefore, the provided data is not normal. The mean scores denote the levels of the dependent and independent variables with psychological well-being having a mean score of 62.6 and General health having a mean score of 47.2.

Table 3: Correlation matrix of General Health and Psychological well-being

Correlation Matrix							
				General Health		Psychological well-being	
General Health				—			
		df		—			
		p-value		—			
Psychological well-being		Spearman's rho		0.035	***	—	
		df		97		—	
		p-value		< .001		—	
Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$							

Table 3 shows the correlation between General Health and Psychological well-being. The Spearman's rho correlation coefficient between General Health and Psychological well-being is 0.035*** (which is less than 0.05). The p-value for the correlation between General Health and Psychological well-being is less than 0.001, which is highly significant. This means that there is a significant positive correlation between General Health and Psychological well-being.

Table 4: Regression Analysis

Model Fit Measures							
Model		R		R ²		Adjusted R ²	
1		0.434		0.188		0.135	
Model Coefficients – GHQ-28							
Predictor		Estimate		SE		t	p
Intercept		89.240		11.678		7.641	< .001
Autonomy		0.449		0.659		0.680	0.028
Environmental mastery		-0.794		0.768		-1.035	0.303
Personal growth		-1.354		0.699		-1.936	0.046
Positive relations		-0.141		0.588		-0.240	0.029
Purpose in life		-0.463		0.716		-0.646	0.520
Self-acceptance		-0.945		0.631		-1.498	0.018

Table 4 shows the regression analysis between General Health and Psychological well-being. Adjusted R^2 is 0.135 it states that about **13.5% of the variance** is explained when accounting for the number of predictor variables in the model. Few of the subscales of the independent variable are statistically significant in explaining the variance, as indicated by the p-values. The subscales; Autonomy (0.028), Personal growth (0.046), Positive relations (0.029) and Self-acceptance (0.018) appear to be statistically significant with p-values <0.05 . The subscales Environmental Mastery (0.303) and Purpose in life (0.520) have p-values greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$) which shows that there is no influence of these two subscales on General health.

Findings

There is a positive correlation between psychological well-being and General Health i.e General health increases when the levels of psychological well-being are high. The mean scores denote the levels of the dependent and independent variables with Psychological well-being having a mean score of 62.6 and General health having a mean score of 47.2. Psychological well-being has an impact of 13.5% on the General Health of women employees working in the garment industries. Subscales like Autonomy (0.028), Personal growth (0.046), Positive relations (0.029) and Self-acceptance (0.018) appear to be statistically significant with p-values <0.05 . Subscales like Environmental Mastery (0.303) and Purpose in life (0.520) have p-values which are greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). The Spearman's rho correlation coefficient between General Health and Psychological well-being is 0.035*** (which is less than 0.05). This means that there is a significant positive correlation between General Health and Psychological well-being rejecting the null hypothesis.

Limitations

Translation:

The google forms were in English language. This served as a barrier for the respondents as majority of them were not comfortable and sure about the questions and its exact meaning. Therefore, a mediator was necessary to translate the questions to the respondents.

Networking and Connecting:

The chosen geographical region of the garment industries was Tirupur. Even though the researcher had prior networking connections; getting permission for collecting data was a hectic task as it also involved a third person.

Lack of in-person communication:

Rapport building process was difficult because of the distance between the researcher and the respondents. It took time to gain trust from the management of the industries and the respondents. In-person communication would have eased the process of rapport building and to gain trust.

Implications

The study can provide valuable insights into the impact of working in the garment industry on the health and psychological well-being of women employees. This information can be used to design interventions that address the specific needs of this vulnerable population. The findings of the study can also have implications for the garment industry as a whole. It can help identify areas where improvements are needed, such as working conditions, access to healthcare, and mental health support. The study can shed light on the gender-based discrimination faced by women employees in the garment industry, which can be used to design policies and programs that promote gender equality. The study can also have economic implications, as the garment industry is a major employer in many developing countries. The findings can help policymakers understand the economic costs of poor working conditions on the health and well-being of workers and can be used to design policies that promote sustainable economic growth. The findings of the study can also be generalized to other industries that employ a large number of women workers, such as healthcare, education, and hospitalit

II. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is evident that psychological well-being influences the overall health of women employees in this sector. This study has demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between psychological well-being and general health among women employees in garment industries. Ultimately, the findings of the research emphasize the need to recognize and address the impact of psychological well-being on the general health of women working in garment industries. By doing so, a healthier and more supportive working environment, ultimately benefiting both the employees and the industry as a whole can be created.

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