



Perceived Social Support among working women with respect to various socio-demographic variables.

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ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed to explore the perceived social support with respect to various socio demographic variables. The sample of the present study comprised of 500 working women from different sectors of Srinagar district. The tool used was Multidimensional scale of Perceived social support developed by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley (1988). Apart from these tools personal data sheet was used to collect personal information from the respondents like organization, marital status, etc. The collected data was analyzed by statistical techniques like descriptive statistics and comparative analysis. The results of comparative analysis revealed that unmarried women, women who hadn't to perform household chores, women who had assistance available scored significantly higher than their counterparts. The ANOVA revealed that there is no significant difference among working women in levels of qualification with respect to Perceived Social Support.

Keywords: Perceived Social Support, Working Women

I. INTRODUCTION

Albrecht and Adelman (1987) defined social support as “verbal and nonverbal communication between recipients and providers that reduces uncertainty about the situation, the self, the other, or the relationship, and function is to enhance a perception of personal



control in one's life experience". In this definition, the key features of social support are:

- Communication
- Uncertainty reduction
- Enhanced control

According to this definition, social support is any type of communication that helps individuals feel more certain about a situation and therefore feel as if they have control over the situation.

Social support is a concept recognizing that people exist to varying degrees in networks through which they can receive and give aid, and in which they engage in interactions (Patel, Peterson & Kimmel, 2005). In defining social support, we must differentiate in actual versus perceived social support. Actual support is the support that an individual receives in terms of what is said, what is given, and what is done for that individual. However, much more significant than actual support is an individual's perception of the availability of support. Perceived support refers to an individual's belief that social support is available, is generally considered positive or negative, and provides what is considered needed by that individual (Norris & Kaniasty, 1996; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). Perceived support refers to a recipient's subjective judgment that providers will offer (or have offered) effective help during times of need. (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007; Hobfoll & Vaux, 1993). Received support (also called enacted support) refers to specific supportive actions (e.g., advice or reassurance) offered by providers during times of need. Women with higher perceived role demands have more stress and role strain. Women with low social support are indicated to have more stress, while those with stronger support from family and friends have less. Social support at work place and home significantly influences a person's wellbeing. Spousal support is most effective in helping women deal with the demands of multiple roles (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Eckenrode & Gore, 1990). Family members have the ability to provide support to each other this is related reduced levels of stress and depression (Johnson, Gans, Keer, & LaValle, 2010). Positive benefits of social support are highly interrelated with fundamental interpersonal relationship qualities and processes, such as companionship, intimacy, social skills and low conflict (Thompson, Flood & Goodvin, 2006). Social support can play an important role in dealing with stressors. Specifically, social support is found to be associated with more positive adjustment (Tao, Dong, Pratt, Hunsberger & Pancer, 2000).



Social support has been a powerful resource capable of inoculating people against the deleterious effects of life stress (Geller & Hobfoll, 1993). Social support from co-worker networks are such resources. Furthermore, research has found that perceived positive social support from workplace network members is significantly related to employees' physical and mental health (Greenhaus, Bedian, & Mossholder, 1987). Social support significantly impacts the stress experienced by the individual at the work place (Viswesvaran, Sanchez & Fisher, 1999). Studies have indicated that receiving supportive behaviors from one's spouse was related to lower levels of distress (Schuster, Kessler, & Aseltine, 1990; Frazier, Davis-Ali, & Dahl, 1995; Druley & Townsend, 1998). Interpersonal networks that provide emotional, informational and practical support can be very important in managing stress and wellbeing (Sonnentag & Frese, 2003).

II.OBJECTIVES

- 1.To assess perceived social support among Working Women.
- 2.To study the difference in perceived social support among working women with respect to different socio- demographic characteristics.

III.METHODOLOGY

Research Instruments

For the assessment of Perceived Social Support, Multidimensional scale of Perceived social support developed by Zimet, G. D., Dahlem, N. W., Zimet, S. G., & Farley, G. K. (1988) was used. It is a 12 item instrument having 4 items in each of the three dimensions namely Significant Others, Family & Friends. The items are measured on a 7 point Likert scale.

Sample

As the nature of the population was heterogeneous, proportionate stratified random sampling technique was devised in order to carry out the study scientifically. From every organization graduate females with at least two years of experience were considered. All the employees included in the strata were working full-time basis at their respective organizations and from each division sampling elements were selected randomly. The total population consisted of 500 working women. The approximate age range of the sample was 25-40 years.



IV.RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1.1 Presenting Scale Characteristics and Reliability Testing of Perceived social support (MPSS)

Measure	Dimensions	Items	Response Range	N	M	SD	Cronbach's alpha (α)
Perceived Social Support	Significant Others	4	1-7	500	21.54	4.87	.86
	Family	4	1-7	500	20.86	4.49	.83
	Friends	3	1-7	500	21.06	4.92	.84
	Overall	12	1-7	500	76.20	11.49	.91

The reliability of the scale used in the present study was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha method. The tools showed good internal consistency. The alpha coefficients, for the dimensions of Perceived Social Support were as follows: Significant Others, .86; Family, .83; Friends, .84; overall, .91.

Table 2.1 Showing range of scores on different levels of dimensions of perceived social support.

Dimensions	Mean	S.D	LL-UL	Low	Average	High
Significant Others	5.22	1.39	3.83-6.61	≤ 3.83	3.84-6.61	> 6.61
Family	5.44	1.23	4.20-6.67	≤ 4.20	4.21-6.67	> 6.67
Friends	5.19	1.17	4.02-6.37	≤ 4.02	4.03-6.37	> 6.37
Perceived Social Support	5.28	1.13	12.4 - 19.2	≤ 12.4	12.5-19.2	> 19.2



Table 2.2 Showing frequency distribution of working women on different levels of perceived social support.

Level	Low		Average		High	
	<i>f</i>	%age	<i>f</i>	%age	<i>f</i>	%age
Significant						
others	86	17.2%	339	67.8%	75	15%
Family	76	15.2%	345	69%	79	15.8%
Friends	84	16.8%	351	70.2%	65	13%
Perceived						
Social support	84	16.8%	341	68.2%	75	15%

The above table indicates that of 17.2% working women have low level, 67.8% have average level and 15% of working women have high level of support from significant others. 15.2% of working women have low level, 69% have average level and 15.8% of working women have high level of family support. 16.8% of working women have low level, 70.2% have average level and 13% of working women have high level of friend's support. 16.8% of working women have low level, 68.2% have average level and 15% of working women have high level of Perceived Social Support.



Table 3.1 Showing comparison of Mean differences for the dimensions of perceived social support in married & unmarried working women.

Dimensions	Marital Status	N	Mean	S.D	df	t-value
Significant others	Unmarried	250	5.31	1.54	498	1.49
	Married	250	5.13	1.23		
Family	Unmarried	250	5.66	1.30	498	4.11**
	Married	250	5.21	1.11		
Friends	Single	250	5.34	1.32	498	2.80*
	Married	250	5.05	.982		
Perceived Social Support	Single	250	5.44	1.19	498	3.08*
	Married	250	5.13	1.04		

** Significant at.001 level: * significantat.005level

The table indicates that among perceived social support facets, the calculated t-value in case of significant others is insignificant but the calculated t-values in case of Family, Friends & perceived social support are significant in working women (t= 4.11, p=.001; t=2.80, p=.005; t=3.08, p=.005). Perceived Social support was significantly higher in Unmarried working women (M=5.44) than Married working women (M= 5.13).



Table 5.4 Showing comparison of Mean differences for the dimensions of perceived social support in working women undertaking household tasks.

Household						
Dimensions	Chores	N	M	SD	df	t-value
Significant Others	Yes	254	4.989	1.363	498	3.89**
	No	246	5.469	1.393		
Family	Yes	254	5.232	1.201	498	3.92**
	No	246	5.659	1.231		
Friends	Yes	254	4.984	1.090	498	4.22**
	No	246	5.421	1.223		
Perceived social support	Yes	254	5.068	1.099	498	4.51**
	No	246	5.516	1.120		

** Significant at.001 level

The results displayed that among perceived social support facets, the calculated t-values in case of significant others ($t= 3.89$, $p=.001$), family ($t=3.92$, $p=.001$), friends ($t=4.22$, $p=.001$) are significant in working women with respect to undertaking household tasks. Women who don't undertake household tasks have better perceived social support ($M=5.51$) than those who have to ($M=5.06$).



Table 5.7 Showing comparison of Mean differences for the dimensions of perceived social support in working women undertaking household tasks with disposal of assistance.

Dimensions	Assistance	N	M	SD	df	t-value
Significant others	Help	398	5.32	1.39	489	3.28**
	No-Help	93	4.79	1.38		
Family	Help	398	5.58	1.21	489	5.22**
	No-Help	93	4.86	1.18		
Friends	Help	398	5.26	1.20	489	2.53*
	No-Help	93	4.91	1.04		
Perceived social support	Help	398	5.39	1.11	489	4.12**
	No-Help	93	4.85	1.13		

** significant at.001 level: *significant at.005 level

The above table indicates that on the perceived social support facets, the calculated t-values in case of significant others ($t= 3.28$, $p=.001$), family ($t=5.22$, $p=.001$), friends ($t=2.53$, $p=.005$) are significant in working women with respect to undertaking household tasks with disposal of assistance. Women who have assistance in household tasks ($M= 5.39$) differ significantly on perceived social support than those who don't ($M=4.85$).



Table 6.1 showing one-way ANOVA whether Perceived Social Support facets of the sample group differ with respect to qualification.

Dimensions		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Significant others	Between groups	5.181	2	2.590	1.327
	Within groups	970.081	497	1.952	
	Total	975.262	499		
Family	Between groups	.736	2	.368	.241
	Within groups	758.673	497	1.527	
	Total	759.409	499		
Friends	Between groups	5.160	2	2.580	1.869
	Within groups	686.252	497	1.381	
	Total	691.412	499		
Perceived social	Between Groups	.991	2	.495	.386



support	Within	637.541	497	1.283
	Groups			
Total		638.532	499	

The above table revealed that there is no significant difference among working women in levels of qualification with respect to perceived social support.

V.DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Findings revealed that 16.8% of working women have low level, 68.2% have average level and 15% of working women are at high level of Perceived Social Support. The study found that there is significant difference with respect to Marital Status. Perceived Social support was significantly higher in Unmarried working women than Married working women. All dimensions of perceived social support are significant in working women with respect to Household tasks. Women who don't rush to kitchen have better perceived social support than those who have to. The results revealed that all dimensions of perceived social support are significant in working women with respect to assistance. Women who have assistance available differ significantly from those who don't. ANOVA revealed that there is no difference among working women in levels of qualification with respect to Perceived Social Support.

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