

Achievement Motivation as a Predictor of Psychological Well-being amongst Working Women

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The present research examines the role of achievement motivation in determining Psychological wellbeing of working women across different professional sectors viz. Public, Private and Teaching. For the purpose of the present research study a sample of 360 working women across two age groups viz. 25-40 years and >40 years and equally distributed across the three professional sectors. The instruments used for data collection were: Demographic Information Questionnaire, Psychological wellbeing scale, and Achievement Motivation Scale. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and Multiple Regression. The findings of the research study revealed that achievement motivation significantly and negatively predicted psychological well-being of public and teaching women professionals.

Keywords: Achievement Motivation, Psychological well-being, Gender

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, 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 wellbeing 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.

Achievement Motivation

The Achievement Motivation Theory evolved from the works of McClelland in the 1940s. McClelland identified human motives related to the achievement motive, the affiliation motive, and the power motive. Quintessentially, McClelland's theory suggests that people are

motivated in varying degrees by their need for Achievement, need for Power, and need for Affiliation and that these needs are acquired, or learned, during an individual's lifetime. McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, and Lowell (1958; p.181) defined the need for Achievement (n Achievement) as "success in competition with some standard of excellence. That is, the goal of some individual in the story is to be successful in terms of competition with some standard of excellence.

John Atkinson (1966) developed his theory of achievement motivation using an expectancy-value framework. Achievement-oriented behavior is viewed by Atkinson as a resultant of a conflict between approach and avoidance tendencies. When a person anticipates success of an achievement-related action, he or she experiences a feeling of pride, in opposite to the possibility of a failure which is connected with the consequent emotions of shame. The choice or rejection of the achievement-related activities by an individual depends on the strength and prevalence of these anticipated emotions. Thus, Atkinson views achievement behavior as a result of an emotional conflict between hope for success and fear of failure (Atkinson, 1966c).

Further on, the desire to choose an achievement-related activity is also determined by three factors, according to Atkinson (1966b):

The need for achievement or motive for success, a relatively stable disposition within the person to strive to approach a certain class of positive incentives (goals) or to avoid a certain class of negative incentives (threats).

The probability that one will be successful at task, or expectancy, particular kind of cognitive association aroused in the person by situational cues.

The incentive value of success, some potential reward or goal that can be manipulated by the experimenter.

Last implication of his theory was that Atkinson tried to predict which task goal a person will choose, if he or she has to choose between tasks of different degrees of difficulty (Atkinson, 1966c). He came to an important conclusion

that success-motivated people choose normally tasks of medium difficulty, while the failure-motivated individuals choose non-challenging or too difficult tasks. The person in whom the achievement motive is stronger should set his or her level of aspiration in the intermediate zone where there is moderate risk. On the other hand, the person in whom the motive to avoid failure is stronger should either select the easiest of the alternatives or set his or her goal where there is virtually no chance for success.

In the present study ten different sub-dimensions of Achievement Motivation have been considered viz. Task orientation, Perseverance, Anticipatory behaviour, Competitiveness, Test taking behaviour, reaction to success/failure, Future orientation, Independence, Rigidity and Involvement.

As a general principle, individuals experience enhanced well-being when they progress toward specific goals that are congruent with their motivational drives. A study conducted by Kaplan and Maehr (1999) concluded that emotions and cognitions are connected with achievement goals that not only assist learning process but also enhance well-being in general. For example, positive expectations of anticipated outcomes can facilitate goal engagement and maintenance of positive affect during goal pursuit, high levels of threat appraisal and goal conflict can hinder goal achievement and elicit negative affect. Research has shown that these variations have important implications for psychological well-being (Emmons & King, 1988). Findings of another research by Sheldon & Elliot (1999) suggested that goal attainment predicted greater need satisfaction, experiences of autonomy, competence and relatedness, which predicted increase in overall well-being of individuals. Research studies have suggested that individuals with high and positive workplace well-being are those who are success and achievement oriented (Parker & Martin, 2011). It has also been proposed that domains of achievement such as work provide a basis upon which an individual's self-worth is evaluated, maintained and enhanced through its relationship with achievement relevant attributes.

Srivastava and Krishna (1994) made a comparative analysis of male and female teachers in aspects related to their work motivation and job involvement. The results indicated that the male teachers maintained a noticeably higher level of work motivation and job involvement. Teachers' work motivation generated by most of their needs was positively correlated with their job involvement. Analysis of the results indicated that the 'need for achievement' and 'self-control' were the most dominant motivating forces for male as well as female teachers whereas the 'monetary gain' was the least effective motivator for them.

Research study by Gopalkrishnan (2009) aimed at identifying the factors that determine job satisfaction of teachers. It was found that factors such as salary, fringe benefits, opportunity for achievement were implicated in determining satisfaction levels of teachers.

Chen (2007) explored the relationship between school teachers' work and job satisfaction. The findings of the study indicated that achievement at work had a role to play in determining job satisfaction and overall well-being of teachers.

Darolia and Kumari (2010) in their research found out that component of work motivation as goal achievement is a significant predictor of job performance and satisfaction.

Another study by Bentea and Anghelache (2012) also found that job satisfaction amongst employees was strongly influenced by achievement and affiliation at workplace. Also, the research indicated that there was no significant gender difference in the factors influencing job satisfaction amongst employees.

Research by Greene and DeBacker (2004) showed men focused on long-term goals and planning, whereas women focused on altruistic behavior. Another research study on 267 employed adults (124 males and 143 females) by Ružić, Matešić, & Štefanec (2016) revealed that males scored significantly high on Self-Assurance Cluster (Competitiveness, Dominance, Goal-Setting, Confidence in success, Preference for difficult tasks etc.) in

the Achievement Motivation Inventory (Schuler et al., 2004) as compared to their female counterparts.

Rationale of the Study

In today's changing context the percentage of women in the Indian workforce has been on a steady increase. Research highlights the transformation in which women have risen above their traditional roles and emerged as professional partners at workplace. Research has indicated that women who perform multiple roles both at personal and professional levels experience lower levels of physical and mental problems and greater level of well-being (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). Traditionally, women in India faced major challenges in entering the workforce and getting ahead in the workplace. According to Lockwood et al. (2009), the situation is improving as more girls are being educated, more women are working outside the home, and women are attending business schools in greater numbers. Therefore, in this context, wherein women are playing an active role at workplace, it is important to study the factors operating at the workplace that contribute to their overall well-being.

Objectives

To study the significant difference in the two variables viz. Psychological well-being, and achievement motivation amongst working women across the three professional sectors viz. public, private and teaching.

To examine the role of achievement motivation in predicting psychological well-being amongst working women across the three professional sectors viz. public, private and teaching.

Method

Sample

The sample comprised 360 working women across the country from different geographical locations, 120 each in Public Sector, Private Sector and Teaching. The age varied between 25-60 years with mean age being 35.05 years.

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.

Achievement Motivation Scale: The Achievement Motivation Scale developed by Iyer & Kamalanabhan (2006) was used to measure Achievement Motivation amongst working women. Principal component analysis of 306 samples indicated that 10 factors appeared relevant, which explained for 69% of the original variance. The ten salient dimensions identified were: Task orientation, Perseverance, Anticipatory behaviour, Competitiveness, Test taking behaviour, reaction to success/failure, Future orientation, Independence, Rigidity and Involvement. The questionnaire was administered to 222 scientists working in R&D organizations. Cronbach alpha values for the factors ranged from 0.55 to 0.87. The sub scores from each scale are added to get an overall score, with higher score reflecting high achievement motivation.

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.

Results

Results of the study in respect to psychological well-being and achievement motivation across the three professional women

groups viz. Public, Private and Teaching is depicted in the following section.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Variables across the Three Professional Sectors viz. Public, Private and Teaching

Variable	Public (N=120)	
	Mean	SD
Psychological Well-being	230.61	23.13
Achievement Motivation	115.92	10.37
	Private (N=120)	
	Mean	SD
Psychological Well-being	231.87	26.14
Achievement Motivation	115.03	10.2
	Teaching (N=120)	
	Mean	SD
Psychological Well-being	233.44	23.46
Achievement Motivation	116.71	10.5

As depicted in Table 1, mean of psychological well-being is highest for teaching sector women professionals (M=233.44), followed by private sector (M=231.87) and lastly public sector women professionals (M=230.61). On Achievement Motivation, it is depicted that the public sector employees reported (M= 115.92; SD= 10.37); private sector employees (M= 115.03; SD= 10.2) and Teaching employees (M=116.71; SD= 10.5).

According to Table 2, as indicated by the F values, there is no significant difference in the sub-dimensions of psychological well-being of working women across the three professional sectors viz. Public, private and teaching.

As depicted in Table 3, along the sub-dimensions of achievement motivation, independence is significantly higher in teaching sector professionals (F=7.21), followed by private and lastly public sector professionals.

As depicted in Table 3, there is no significant difference in the psychological well-being of women professionals across the three professional sectors viz. public, private and teaching. For achievement motivation, there is no significant difference in working women across the three professional sectors.

Table 2: Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) and F value of the Sub-dimensions of Psychological Well-being of the Total Sample across the Three Professional Groups viz. Public, Private and Teaching

Psychological Well-being	Public (N=120)		Private (N=120)		Teaching (N=120)		F
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Autonomy	36.12	4.49	37.12	5.31	37.03	4.81	1.53
Environmental Mastery	38.73	5.08	37.43	5.54	38.12	4.55	1.97
Personal Growth	38.70	5.88	40.31	6.47	39.47	6.81	1.89
Positive Relations with others	40.00	6.03	40.34	6.55	40.96	6.01	.73
Purpose in Life	38.24	5.04	38.59	5.32	38.66	4.71	.23
Self-Acceptance	38.37	4.43	38.33	5.97	39.22	3.92	1.27

Note: **p<.01

Table 3: Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD) and F value of the Sub-dimensions of Achievement Motivation of the Total Sample across the Three Professional Groups viz. Public, Private and Teaching

Achievement Motivation	Public (N=120)		Private (N=120)		Teaching (N=120)		F
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Task Orientation	15.18	2.03	14.82	2.29	15.22	2.13	1.28
Perseverance	16.95	2.4	17.08	2.54	17.21	2.79	.73
Anticipatory Behaviour	15.13	2.6	14.74	2.37	14.97	2.59	1.26
Competitiveness	9.03	1.53	8.99	1.56	9.40	2.09	1.58
Test-Taking Behaviour	11.59	2.22	11.26	2.08	11.81	2.31	1.79
Reaction to Success/Failure	13.48	1.89	13.14	1.91	12.99	2.06	1.91
Future Orientation	8.83	1.39	8.78	1.58	9.13	1.63	1.60
Independence	7.13	1.46	7.34	1.39	7.45	1.38	7.21**
Rigidity	6.58	1.93	7.41	1.72	6.70	1.85	1.71
Involvement	12.03	2.13	11.60	1.73	11.92	1.74	.44

Note: **p<.01

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA for Psychological Well-being in Women across Three Professional Sectors viz. Public, Private and Teaching

Study Variables		SS	df	MS	F
Psychological Well-being	Between Groups	1137.91	2	568.95	1.07
	Within Groups	189578.48	357	531.03	
	Total	190716.40	359		
Achievement Motivation	Between Groups	168.50	2	84.25	.78
	Within Groups	38289.82	357	107.25	
	Total	38458.33	359		

Note: **p<.01

Table 5: Step-wise Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Psychological Well-being of Women Professionals from Achievement Motivation across the three professional sectors viz. public, private and teaching

Sector		B	SeB	β	P	Adjusted R ²
Public	(Constant)	256.42	27.85		.000	.203
	Achievement Motivation	-.916	.179	-.429**	.000	
Private	(Constant)	154.83	25.18		.000	.135
	Achievement Motivation	-.042	.206	-.018	.837	
Teaching	(Constant)	206.22	32.97		.000	.261
	Achievement Motivation	-.746	.177	-.334**	.000	

Note: **p<.01

As depicted in Table 5, in step-wise multiple regression, significant model emerged for psychological well-being of public sector women professionals, with achievement motivation emerging as a significant negative predictor ($\beta=.429^{**}$) of psychological well-being of public sector women professionals, which explained 20.3% of the variance (Adjusted R² =.203). Significant model emerged for psychological well-being of teaching sector women professionals with achievement motivation emerging as a significant negative predictor ($\beta= .334^{**}$), which explained 26.1% of the variance (Adjusted R² =.261).

Discussion

The aim of the present research study was to study the significant difference in the two variables viz. Psychological well-being, and achievement motivation amongst working women across the three professional sectors viz. public, private and teaching. Also, to examine the role of achievement motivation in predicting psychological well-being amongst working women across the three professional sectors viz. public, private and teaching.

The findings of the study indicated that there was no significant difference in overall psychological well-being of working women across the three professional sectors. However, the mean values indicated that teaching women professionals had the highest psychological well-being across the three professional sectors. Micro analysis of the sub-dimensions of psychological well-being (as depicted in Table 2) also revealed no significant difference

in women across the three professional sectors. These findings are inconsistent with the previous researches wherein significant differences were found in the psychological well-being of women working in different professional sectors. Research study by Srimathi & Kumar (2010) revealed that women teachers had the highest overall psychological well-being scores and also along the entire sub-dimensions of psychological well-being, followed by Bank employees and lastly private sector employees. Similar findings were reported in a research study conducted by Syafhendry, Fadhila & Arief (2017) on psychological well-being of Riau Malay women working in various organizations. Research study by Sahoo & Mohapatra (2009) & Ilgan, Cengiz, Ata & Akram (2015) also revealed that teachers had the highest well-being compared to other professionals.

The findings of the study suggest that there was no significant difference in Achievement Motivation of women across the three professional sectors, with teaching women professionals having the highest level of Achievement Motivation followed by Public sector employees and lastly Private sector employees. However, significant difference was found in one of the sub-dimensions of Achievement Motivation viz. independence, wherein teaching women professionals experienced highest level of independence as compared to the other two professional sectors. These findings have been further corroborated in the analysis of checklist wherein it has again been highlighted that teaching women professionals experienced high levels of independence at their workplace

compared to the other two professional sectors. There could be several explanations for such findings as teachers have the independence of choosing and adopting new pedagogies and are encouraged towards devising more innovative methods of imparting knowledge to students, which allows them to make use of their idiosyncrasies in order to get the best outcomes.

The findings of the study suggest that achievement motivation is a significant negative predictor of psychological well-being of public and teaching sector women professionals.

This is a unique finding of our study wherein achievement motivation has emerged as a significant negative predictor of psychological well-being of women professionals. Explanation for such findings could be that facing tough competition at workplace, working under time pressure, being overly involved with work thereby compromising personal commitments may negatively influence psychological well-being of working women, since they are required to strike a balance between their work and household duties. For being highly achievement oriented, an individual is required to sacrifice their personal commitments and become overly involved with their work in order to achieve organizational goals. However, in the Indian context expectations from women, apart from their work are also very high. They are required to place their household responsibilities over and above their work duties which may lead to conflict and therefore, an overly competitive atmosphere at workplace may further influence their psychological well-being negatively.

Several research studies have also reported similar findings. For e.g. Research by Greene and DeBacker (2004) showed men focused on long-term goals and planning, whereas women focused on altruistic behavior. Another research study on 267 employed adults (124 males and 143 females) by Ružić, Matešić, & Štefanec (2016) revealed that males scored significantly high on Self- Assurance Cluster (Competitiveness, Dominance, Goal-Setting, Confidence in success, Preference for difficult tasks etc.) in the Achievement Motivation Inventory (Schuler et al., 2004) as compared to their female counterparts. The achieved gender

differences in AMI scales, primarily those scales comprising the Self-Assurance and Ambition clusters are in accordance with the stereotypical view of gender roles where boys are encouraged from an early age to engage in competition while girls are encouraged to cooperate and avoid competitive situations (Sutter and Glätzle-Rützler, 2015). Different studies have shown that men react more strongly to situations of comparison with others, while women tend to avoid competitive situations (Datta Gupta, Poulsen and Villeval, 2005; Booth and Nolen, 2009; Croson and Gneezy, 2009; Dohmen and Falk, 2011).

Another possible explanation could be in the context of 'glass ceiling effect', wherein women, even after being highly qualified and achievement oriented and also at par with their men counterparts are not able to rise and assume top positions in their area of work, especially in the corporate set-up. Working from this perspective, being highly achievement oriented and having very high career ambitions may lead to a negative impact on the overall psychological well-being of women. Glass ceiling research provides consistent evidence of gender inequality embedded in organizational logic that is reinforced by labor divisions, symbols and images, interactions, and identities (Martin 2003). Women are often viewed as less influential and less competent than men (Erickson et al. 2000; Gorman 2006; Lucas 2003). Men often doubt women's abilities to do certain jobs (Erickson et al. 2000) and assume that women's primary roles are as caretakers of the home, which will hinder their performance on the job. Indian companies seriously lack women in senior management roles. Women Managers, despite being highly educated often remain in lower management positions with little access to challenging assignments and power (Jain & Mukherji, 2010). According to a recent study, only 26.1 percent of the listed companies (392 of 1,500 firms) have a woman on their boards. Out of the 278 directors on the BSE Sensex companies, there are only 10 women directors.

Therefore, the findings of the study suggest that psychological well-being and achievement motivation don't differ significantly across the three professional sectors viz. public, private and

teaching. However, achievement motivation has emerged as a significant and negative predictor of psychological well-being amongst the working women professionals.

Conclusion

The aim of the present research study was to study the significant difference in the two variables viz. Psychological well-being, and achievement motivation amongst working women across the three professional sectors viz. public, private and teaching. Also, to examine the role of achievement motivation in predicting psychological well-being amongst working women across the three professional sectors viz. public, private and teaching. The findings of the study revealed that there was no significant difference in psychological well-being and achievement motivation of working women across the three professional sectors. However, significant difference was found in one of the sub-dimensions of achievement motivation viz. independence, with teaching women professionals having the highest level compared to the other professional sectors. Further, the findings of regression analysis also suggested that achievement motivation is a significant negative predictor of psychological well-being of women in the teaching and public sector.

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