



# A Study on Work-Life Balance, Self-Compassion, Resilience, and Psychological Well-Being among Working Women

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## ABSTRACT

Times have metamorphosed from when women were considered as merely being passive contributors to the development and maintenance of societies and economies, to them actively supporting themselves and their families financially. Nonetheless, they have been the cornerstone of all civilizations, both ancient and contemporary. Consequently, with the expansion in their role continuum, their struggles have been augmented too. Apart from the pressures of work, the daily demands of household chores, child rearing, and managing the demands of life outside work give rise to conflicting priorities. Work-life balance, self-compassion and resilience are typically aligned with the level of psychological well-being across genders and occupations. Self-compassion deals with the facilitation of being accepting of one's personal failures, incompetence and adversities. Resilience refers to the ability to recuperate from unfortunate experiences by adjusting to formidable situations. The potency of work-life balance as a concern demands a lot of effort to be vested, directly in correspondence with one's quality of life. The current research aims to study work-life balance, self-compassion, and resilience on psychological well-being among working women. The study was conducted on 50 working women within the age range of 25-60. Standardized scales of work-life balance, self-compassion, resilience and psychological well-being were administered to the participants. The results found that resilience, self-compassion and psychological well-being were positively correlated. However, no significant correlation emerged of work-life balance with resilience, self-compassion and psychological well-being. Delving into the experiences of working women and their relationships with these aspects provide crucial insight into their relationships with themselves. An equitable society for the new-age working woman can only be established through our collective acknowledgement and comprehension of the copious demands erupting from the varied domains of their lives.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Self-Compassion, Resilience, and Psychological Well-Being, Working Women

## INTRODUCTION

“Anything may happen when womanhood has ceased to be a protected occupation.”- Virginia Woolf

Ever since the advent of capitalism and feminist movements, women have come to play a major role in the economies around the world. However, the issues of unequal pay, long working hours, unpaid labor, gender stereotyping and discrimination, stagnation of careers, exploitation and harassment at work and home are often sidetracked to accommodate the notion of “increased acceptance” of their varied roles in a multipolar world. It remains largely unacknowledged, owing to collective complacency, that working women in India are more prone to psychological distress due to the combined burden of work and home fronts, than working men. Women are expected to fulfill their work related duties but not at the expense of their home-life. They are anticipated to return home at a certain time and

their decisions to travel for work are often shadowed by their families' opinions. The question of safe working and traveling environments is rarely overlooked. Married women are even more prone to facing these predicaments, with a large control of their lives residing with their spouses and in-laws. Factors contributing towards stress in women include multiple roles, lack of career progress, discrimination and stereotyping (Palmer & Gyllensten, 2005). Thus, it would be prudent to state that the issues faced by working women are qualitatively different than those of working men and women who are homemakers.

Analogously, with better access to education and career-oriented roles being embraced by women in India since the beginning of this century, this steady shift in mindsets has served as a conspicuous catalyst towards their emancipation from a unidimensional set of duties and towards financial independence. However, it cannot be ignored that the percentage of working women in India is one of the lowest amongst developing countries. Over the past two decades, it has witnessed a steady decline of 24% since 1993-1994. According to the Annual Bulletin of Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS) 2019-20 data, the female participation ratio was merely 22.2 percent as opposed to that of 56.8 percent for males. According to the Occupational Trend Statistics, the employment of women in professional and technical roles is higher than men in urban areas but their participation in official, legislative and managerial roles stood much lower at 11.7 percent, as opposed to men with 17.8 percent. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2020 (2019), women earn an average of 65.5% of what men do for doing the same work based on hourly wages.

The quandaries befalling working women are multifaceted and multilayered. However, when it comes to their quality of life, achieving a work-life balance remains a paramount concern. Resilience is one of the chief components that operate towards the achievement of that state. It refers to the mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility required to successfully adapt to challenges. Resilience is a protective factor, shielding the individual's psychological being and supplementing positive changes while coping with stressful conditions (Dolbier, Jaggars, & Steinhardt, 2010). Another factor is self-compassion, which entails being warm and understanding towards oneself instead of tormenting oneself with self-criticism. Studies concerning work have revealed that self-compassion predicts and correlates to positive mental health outcomes (Montero-Marin et al., 2018; Kotera et al., 2019b, 2020). Apart from this, well-being is another strong facet. It is one's quality of psychological health, encompassing a sense of accomplishment and life satisfaction.

### **Work-Life Balance**

Kirchmeyer (2000) defined work-life balance as "achieving satisfying experiences in all life domains and to do so requires personal resources such as energy, time, and commitment to be well distributed across domains." According to Greenhaus et al. (2003), "work-life balance is the extent to which an individual is engaged in and equally satisfied with his or her work role and family role." According to Marks & MacDermid (1996), "Work-family balance reflects an individual's orientation across different life roles, an inter-role phenomenon."

In a study conducted by Delina & Raya (2013) on working women of Pondicherry, it was found that most of the respondents were not successful in striking a balance between their personal and professional life. In a study conducted by Gautam & Jain (2018) on male and female participants who were single or in a relationship, and with or without children, it was found that poor work-life balance due to high levels of work-family conflict negatively affected work satisfaction and psychological well-being.

### **Resilience**

According to Neenan (2009), "Resilience comprises a set of flexible cognitive, behavioral and emotional responses to acute or chronic adversities which can be unusual or commonplace." According to Bonanno (2004), Resilience is defined as the ability of adults in otherwise normal circumstances, who were exposed to an isolated and potentially highly disruptive event, to maintain relatively stable and healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning and the capacity for generative experiences and positive emotions.

In a study by Vemuri & Sahai (2020) on women living in Delhi NCR, it was found that working married women were higher on resilience than non-working married women. In a study by Boardman, Blalock & Button (2012), it was found that self-acceptance was very significant in determining heritability of resilience in men and women. However, it pointed out that men attain further benefits from environmental mastery.

## Self-Compassion

According to Neff & Beretvas (2012), “Self-compassion involves being kind to oneself when confronting personal inadequacies or situational difficulties, framing the imperfection of life in terms of common humanity, and being mindful of negative emotions so that one neither suppresses nor ruminates on them.” According to Shapira & Mongrain (2010), “Self-compassionate persons, accepting both suffering and loss, allow themselves to non-judgmentally engage in self-appraisals rooted in warmth and kindness.”

In a study by Rafiq et al. (2018), it was found that self-compassion safeguards the negative impact of work-family conflict on psychological well-being. In a study by Hormansyah & Hidayah (2018), the results found that higher levels of self-compassion indicated lower levels of stress in working married women.

## Psychological Well-Being

According to Ryff & Singer (1998), “Psychological wellbeing involves not only the absence of illness, but the presence of something positive; growth, positive relationships, autonomy, purpose and environmental mastery.” According to Burris, Brechting, Salsman, & Carlson (2009), “Psychological well-being refers to the simple notion of a person's welfare, happiness, advantages, interests, utility, and quality of life.”

In a study by Grzywacz (2000), it was found that positive spillover, i.e. the change in one behavior influence bringing a change in ensuing behaviors, from work to family and from family to work was associated with better well-being outcomes. In defining well-being, it was found that men and women were becoming more and more similar in doing so according to comparative analyses by Bryant & Veroff (1982) on adults in the US.

## PURPOSE

The purpose is to study Work-Life Balance, Self-Compassion, Resilience, and Well-Being in Working Women in the age range of 25 to 60 years.

## HYPOTHESIS

Correlation will be found between Work-Life Balance, Self-Compassion, Resilience, and Well-Being in Working Women.

## METHOD

### Sample

A sample of 50 working women (N= 50) within the age range of 25-60 years was taken from the tricity, i.e. Chandigarh, Mohali and Haryana. Out of the sample, 68% of the working women fell within the age range of 41-60 years while 32% fell within the age range of 25-40 years. While 80% of the working women were married, 20% were unmarried.

### Measures

The standardized tools used for the study were:

1. **Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)** was developed by Smith et al. (2008). It is a 6-item questionnaire assessing the ability to bounce back. The scale is a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Higher scores indicate more resilience.
2. **Self-Compassion Scale- Short Form (SCS-SF)** is a 12-item self-report measure developed by Raes, Pommier, Neff & Van Gucht in 2011, used to measure the capacity of adults for self-compassion. The scale is a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from Almost Never to Almost Always. It measures six aspects of self-compassion: self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness and over-identification.

3. **Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB- 18 Item Version)** is an 18-item self-report scale developed by Ryff & Keyes in 1995. The scale is a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The scale measures six aspects of wellbeing and happiness: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.
4. **The Work-Life Balance Scale (WLB)** used in this study is a 15-item scale developed by Fisher-McAuley et al. (2003) and adapted from the 19-item scale originally developed by Hayman (2005) as a psychometric instrument to measure WLB in organizations. The 15-item scale measures three aspects of work-life balance: Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW), and Work Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE).

**Procedure**

The standardized psychological scales were administered to the participants of the research study through Google Forms. The participants were made aware of the eligibility criteria for participation and were assured of confidentiality of the data collected to mitigate the interference of social desirability.

**Analysis of Data**

**Results**

**Table 1: shows N, Mean, and Standard Deviation**

	WORK-LIFE BALANCE	RESILIENCE	SELF-COMPASSION	WELL-BEING
N	50	50	50	50
Mean	2.62	3.26	3.40	4.99
Standard deviation	0.545	0.451	0.450	0.671

Table 2: shows correlation between all variables

Correlation Matrix

	WORK-LIFE BALANCE	RESILIENCE	SELF-COMPASSION	WELL-BEING	
WORK-LIFE BALANCE	—				
RESILIENCE	-0.275	—			
SELF-COMPASSION	-0.202	0.370	**	—	
WELL-BEING	-0.244	0.333	*	0.615	***

Note. \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between resilience and self-compassion ( $r = 0.370$ ,  $** p < .01$ ), positive significant correlation between resilience and well-being ( $r = 0.333$ ,  $* p < .05$ ) and a significant positive correlation between self-compassion and well-being ( $r = 0.615$ ,  $*** p < .001$ ). However, the results exhibit that there is no significant correlation between work-life balance and resilience, between work-life balance and self-compassion, and between work-life balance and well-being.

In a study by Noor (2004) on employed English women with children, it was found that the negative effects of work-interfering-with-family (WIF) conflict were aggravated by work salience but not by family-interfering-with-work (FIW) conflict, on well-being. In a study conducted by Connor and Zhang (2006), it was found that resilience can be modified and it varies with gender, age, time, cultural origin and the context; individuals may exhibit resilience in some functional aspects such as work but not in others like relationships. Balaji (2014), in a study, found that the determinants of work-family conflict in married working women were the amount of working hours outside home, the size of the family and the number of dependents in it.

## CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to examine the effects of work-life balance, self-compassion and resilience on psychological well-being. The study was conducted on 50 Indian working women within the age range of 25-60. Standardized scales of work-life balance, self-compassion, resilience and psychological well-being were administered to the participants. The results found that resilience, self-compassion and psychological well-being were positively correlated. However, no significant correlation emerged of work-life balance with resilience, self-compassion and psychological well-being. With rapid societal advancement, it becomes even more vital that the dynamics between work and life are analyzed for women, with regard to their well-being. There is a greater need to inspect and understand the conditions prevailing management of career, family and leisure time concerning employed women. Future research must integrate a variety of perspectives such as family support, emotional insight, work demands, living conditions, spirituality and religiosity, physiological health and economic status. Strategies focused upon inculcating self-compassion and resilience should be taught and promoted in educational institutes and organizations for the enrichment of one's psychological well-being to better manage the demands of work and life. Harmony between an organization, its employees and society as a whole is a result of work-life balance (Singh & Singhal, 2016).

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