

STRESS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT AS PREDICTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL-WELL BEING OF WORKING MOTHERS IN NSUKKA, ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

The Psychological well-being of humans is an important area of interest. The present study, therefore examined the role of stress and social support on the psychological well-being of working mothers in Nsukka urban, in Enugu State of Nigeria. Respondents were 200 females drawn from Nsukka, in Enugu State. The average respondent's age was 25-50 years. The Perceived Stress Scale, Social Support Scale and Psychological well-being scale were the instruments administered for the study. Hierarchical multiple regression was used in analyzing the data. It was found that stress predicted psychological wellbeing among working mothers ($\beta = -.12, P < .01$). Social support also significantly predicted psychological wellbeing among working mothers ($\beta = .28, P < .05$). Management, administrators, clinicians and psychologists at workplace level should foster a social support networks which may help working mothers improve their ability to face the challenges they encounter in their jobs and also maintain their overall well-being. In conclusion, when women are stressed up and without enough support in their work place or at home, they tend to have poor Psychological wellbeing.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, social support, stress, working mothers

INTRODUCTION

Motherhood is an important aspect of life for every woman, though one may have the choice of either accepting to be a mother or rejecting it. A female could become a mother either by procreation or by adoption. Motherhood is saddled with lots of responsibilities, duties and roles which could be classified as traditional and non-traditional duties. In Nigeria, after the birth of a child which qualifies a woman to be a mother, her next traditional role is to work long hours in the family farm in order to have increased economic resources, improve the financial status of the family and achieve self-actualization (Iyi, 2003). On the contrary to the views of other countries like India, whose Government reported that women should be empowered socially, economically, educationally and politically

to enable them make decisions on the area of economic independency, and also have political freedom to participate in government (Choudhary & Ahmad, 2017). However, the term "working mothers" came about with the advent of western civilization. Working mothers, refer to those mothers who have been employed in either the public or private sectors of the society (Temitope, 2015). Blake (2000), posits that most women are now educated and gainfully employed in various sectors of the economy. According to Alarape and Afolabi (2001), the multiple roles resulting from work demands, child rearing and other demands expected of a wife, mother and worker, have led to emotional and financial hardship as well as strained relationship among women. If not properly taken care of, working mothers in this situation would experience an increased

level of stress as well as a diminished sense of well-being (Omoniyi, 2003). Therefore, this study deems it expedient that the correlates of psychological well-being of working mothers be investigated.

Choudhary and Ahmad (2017), define well-being as, “a dynamic state characterized by a reasonable amount of harmony between an individual’s abilities; needs and expectations; environmental demands and opportunities.” Terms such as happiness, satisfaction, positive affect, positive mental health and quality of life are synonymous and have been used interchangeably with wellbeing. Also, subjective satisfaction and individual pleasure has a role to play in wellbeing. However, this depends upon the individual’s psychological status and his environmental conditions (Choudhary & Ahmad 2017).

Over the past decades, the concept of “psychological wellbeing” is complex and has various dimensions; it has gained more importance in the field of psychology and has in recent years drawn intense research attention (Diener & Diener, 1995; Choudhary & Ahmad, 2017). Snyder, Lopez, and Pedrotti (2011), defines psychological well-being as a, “state of wellbeing which is characterized by self- acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, and positive relations. Furthermore, it has also been viewed as the dynamic and active process that gives people a sense of knowledge about how their lives are enduring the interaction between their circumstances, activities and psychological resources or “mental capital”(Anand & Nagle, 2016). According to Ryff and Keyes (1995), the six dimensions of psychological well-being are; (a) self- acceptance which entails having a positive attitude towards oneself and one’s past life;(b) personal growth which is having a sense of continued development and self- realization (c) positive

relation with others that is possessing caring and trusting ties with others (d) autonomy entails being able to follow one’s own ideas to manage complex demands of daily life and (f) purpose in life which means having goals and objectives that give meaning to life (Choudhary & Ahmad, 2017).

In a research carried out by Srimathi and Kumar (2010), to assess the psychological well-being of 325 working mothers across different organizations- industries, hospitals, banks, education institutions and in call centers. They were randomly selected at Mysore, using convenience sampling method with the age range of 25-50 years. They were administered Carol Ryff’s Medium Form of Psychological Well-being. Results indicated that women employed in industries had least psychological well-being due to the fact that they work for considerably longer hours when compared to other sectors. More so, these women are involved in risky and stress prone jobs, have a limited number of holidays, unhygienic environment, and they were not satisfied with their salaries. The result also revealed that women working in health organization also had low psychological well-being. Matud, Curbelo, and Fortes, (2019), examined the relevance of gender to the psychological well-being of adult individuals in a cross-sectional study using a sample of 1700 men and 1700 women from the general Spanish population. Their ages ranged from 21 to 64 years, and they were assessed with Rye’s Psychological Well-Being Scales and the Bem Sex Role Inventory. Results show that men scored higher than women in self-acceptance and autonomy, and women scored higher than men in personal growth and positive relations with others. The most relevant variable in the psychological well-being of both women and men was high masculinity. Other relevant variables in women’s well-being were high femininity, not having a manual occupation,

not being homemakers, and professional occupation. Wellbeing was higher in professional men and in men with skilled non-manual occupation, men with high femininity and men who were not single, divorced or widowed. Adherence to traditional gender roles is relevant to the psychological well-being of women and men; hence women and men whose self-concept includes both masculine-instrumental and feminine-expressive characteristics have greater well-being.

Boss (1988) describes family stress as interruption that enters into the family through the outside context, (e.g, war, unemployment), it may also come from the family (e.g death; divorce), and threatens the family system equilibrium. It affects the well-being of workers, their work performance and could also incur heavy cost on the organization. Work stress has been defined as the negative effects on the workers' health as a result of the mismatch between the workers capabilities, resources or needs and the requirements of the job (NIOHS, 1999). Due to modernization of the current working environment, employees are now compelled to work longer hours, adapt effectively to change, perform complex task and acquire greater skills. Collins (2019) conducted interviews on 135 working mothers from four different countries, such as the United States, Italy, Germany, and Sweden, in order to know the stress they experience. The result indicates that American mothers were the most stressed. Women in Europe reported that they had more help, though sometimes, cultural norms jeopardize the help. Collins concluded that the real solution will be a carefully designed government intervention to help families at all income levels. Paxton, (2019) analyzed data on 6,025 participants using Understanding Society's UK Household Longitudinal Survey, which collects information on working life and readings of measures of stress response,

including hormones levels and blood pressure. The result indicates that the overall level of 11 biomarkers related to chronic stress, including stress related hormones and blood pressure, was 40% higher for women who were working full-time while bringing up two children than it was among women working full-time with no children. Women working full time and bringing up one child had 18% higher level, which leads to high psychological well-being. They also observed that women with two children who worked reduced hours through part-time work, job share and term-time flexible working arrangements had chronic stress levels 37% lower than those working in jobs where flexible work was not available. Those working from home, with no overall reduction in working hours, had no reduction in chronic stress.

As earlier mentioned, working mothers are prone to stress and they might also be prone to low social support due to the multiple role they play as homemakers, spouse and employee. Sanderson (2004), defines social support as the presence or amount of social relationships, the perception of available assistance, and the receipt of assistance. Laaksoa and Paunonen-Illmonen (2002) believe that social support is a care resource that can be received from family, friends, colleagues, and healthcare personnel. Two categories of social support have been identified (emotional support and instrumental support). While emotional support includes appreciation for others, trust and listening; instrumental support on the other hand include behavior that provides tangible assistance (Laakso et al, 2002). In addition, two other categories of social support are appraisal support (which means affirmation, feedback, and social equity); and informational support (which refers to advice, suggestions, guidance, and information giving) Laakso and Paunonen-Illmonen, (2002). Elom, Ogbodo, Ofoke,

Okechukwu and Nkwuda (2017) examined the relationship between marriage, social support and psychological health among impoverished rural mothers and also found a positive relationship between social support and psychological well-being of mothers. Social support improves life because it creates a sense of well-being, belongingness and hopefulness. Social support is stress reducer because it provides effective coping resources and helps people view events as less stressful than when handling the events in isolation.

Oginyi, Mbam, Edeh, and Chibugo (2017), investigated depression, poverty, social support and psychological distress as factors in psychological well-being of working mothers. Participants in the study were 646 working mothers with age range between 25-45 years and mean age of 34.56, randomly selected from Ebonyi State, Nigeria. They completed Beck's Depression Scale (KPDS) and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWS) while poverty was elicited through demographic information of the participants. The multiple regression statistical analysis show positive correlation of depression, poverty, social support, psychological distress as factors in psychological well-being of working class mothers. The findings indicate that working class mothers should be assisted to reduce depression, poverty, psychological distress and strengthen social support in order to increase their psychological well-being.

Akram, (2014) examined the level of depression among working and non- working women, using 100 working and 98 non working married women who were recruited through purposive sampling technique. Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) was used to assess the level of depression. The result indicated that non-working women have more depression tendencies compared with their working women counterparts. Sharifian

and Gruhn (2018) investigated on the differential impact of social participation and social support on psychological well-being: evidence from the Wisconsin longitudinal study. The impact of social support (SS) and social participation (SP) on change in Psychological Well-Being (PWB) was investigated from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study spanning 19 years (1992–2011) in two samples: graduate respondents and their siblings. Using latent growth curve models, small declines in PWB were found. Individuals high in SP demonstrated a less steep decline in PWB across the three time points than individuals low in Social Participation; thus Social Support, did not buffer declines in Psychological Well-Being.

Chawla and Sharma, (2019) investigated the role of psychological capital and perceived gender equity on employee well-being, (particularly women) and assess if commitment mediates and social support moderates the relationships between psychological capital, perceived gender equity, and well-being. A personal survey method was employed for data collection using standardized measures from a representative sample of 433 managers (201 women and 233 men) from private sector companies in Gurgaon, India. The findings revealed that perceived gender equity in the workplace positively impacts employee well-being for both men and women, with the greater impact being on women's well-being. To facilitate employee well-being, organizations can leverage on the strengths of psychological capital through training interventions and can promote perceived gender equity through appropriate policies and practices. This bridges the knowledge gap in developing and utilizing psychological capital to enhance employee well-being, especially for women, who are under pressure due to their demanding multiple roles at work and home.

Statement of the Problem

Years back women in Nigeria are married basically to give birth to children, take care of them and their husband; hence they are known as house wives. They also go to farm to get food for the family, and in most cases are allowed to have up to ten (10) children, in order to assist them in farm work. But today, with the emergence of civilization, mothers now prefer white collar jobs instead of staying at home, as home makers. The situation of role overload in families and organizations, have led to increased stress for working mothers, because they are not getting enough support from their homes and work places.

Some researchers have worked on Stress and Psychological well-being, but much have not been done on social support, especially with Nigerian population. Hence, the researcher seeks to examine the psychological well-being of a sample of Nigerian working mothers with a focus on the roles of stress and social support they experience; and also to know the best way to assist the working women to reduce stress from their work places.

Purpose of the Study.

The purpose of the study is to investigate whether the role of stress and social support will predict psychological wellbeing of working mothers in Nsukka, Enugu state. Specifically, the study will examine;

1. Whether stress will significantly predict psychological well-being of Nigerian working mothers?
2. Whether social support will significantly predict Psychological wellbeing of Nigerian working mothers?

Literature Review

Two theories were applied to this study, namely Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and Stress Vulnerability Model (Zubin & Spring, 1977). **Self-determination theory (SDT)** was developed by Ryan & Deci (2000) and it posits that psychological needs had significant influence on well-being through the satisfaction of three basic human needs for competence (i.e., a sense of confidence), relatedness (i.e., a sense of connectedness), and autonomy (i.e. a sense of behavior as an expression of self) Ryan and Deci, (2000). Social environments in form of social support that allow satisfaction of these needs are thought to promote optimal outcomes in terms of both personal development and the quality of the experiences within a specific social situation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, these outcomes are only possible if the social context offers certain conditions such as choice, support for individual volition, empathy and a meaningful rationale for engaging in activities (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The implication of this theory to the psychological wellbeing of women is that the need for autonomy is satisfied when women perceive that what they are doing is devoid of stress, freely chosen and consistent with their core values as it improves their psychological wellbeing.

Stress Vulnerability Model (Zubin & Spring, 1977) is an integrated model developed by Zubin & Spring (1977) to specifically explain the etiology of mental health. Incorporating all other models, it has as its common denominator the relationship between stress and vulnerability.

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psychological wellbeing of women is that the need for autonomy is satisfied when women perceive that what they are doing is devoid of stress, freely chosen and consistent with their core values as it improves their psychological wellbeing. Women's roles are emerging differently with new commitment and career oriented as well as commitment to families. So, this in turn leads to a number of stress and strain among working women (Sinha, 2017).

Wanninayake and Salam, (2016) argued that multiple roles played by women such as the role of an employee, wife and a mother has serious consequence on women's Psychological well-being. Working mothers have heavier responsibility than single women because they have to find better ways to balance family, work and life. Giorgi, Arcamgeli, Perminiene, and Lorini, (2017) in their studies, reviewed that workplace stress is more critical in banking sector with potentially negative effects on working mother's psychological wellbeing and their physical health. Holidays give working mothers an opportunity to balance family and work conflict. Duff, (2017) examined the psychological distress of 195 women who returned to work after maternity leave. They completed an online questionnaire, the family-conflict scale, work-family balance and social support scale including demographic questions. The result shows that the Psychological distress of mothers who came back from maternity leave was normal, not elevated, which indicates that break will support working mothers and improve on their psychological well-being.

Wersebe, Lieb, Meyer, Hofer and Gloster, (2018) examined the link between stress, well-being, and psychological flexibility during an acceptance and commitment therapy self-help intervention. The intervention was a randomized controlled trial of an ACT-based self-help intervention. Participants were 91 individuals reporting elevated levels of work-related

stress. Measurements were completed at pre-intervention, post-intervention, and 3-month follow-up. Results of structural equation models revealed that the total increase in PF during the intervention was negatively associated with a decrease in stress ($b = -0.63$, $SE = 0.14$, $p < .001$) and positively associated with an increase in well-being during the intervention ($b = 0.48$, $SE = 0.11$, $p < .001$), but not with a decrease in stress ($b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.27$, $p > .05$) and well-being ($b = -0.04$, $SE = 0.39$, $p > .05$) following the intervention.

Social Support and Psychological Wellbeing

Social relationships are central to the well-being of humans and are critical in maintaining good health (Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton, 2010; House, Landis, & Umberson, (1988). Social support is the supportive behavior performed for an individual by others which is often assessed by an individual's perception of received support (Burlison & MacGeorge, 2002; Goldsmith, 2004). Lack of social support is an indication of mental health issues. Social support from family and friends constitutes better Psychological well-being in the life of individuals.

Nielsen, Newman, Smyth, Hirst and Heilemann (2017) investigated the influence of instructor support, family support and psychological capital on the well-being of postgraduate students: a moderated mediation model. The result reveal that family support moderates the mediated relationship in such a way that the relationship is stronger among students with lower levels of family support. Choudhary and Ahmad (2017) investigated the psychological well-being of 60 elderly house wives and 60 elderly working women of Mithla Region in India. Data was gathered using Psychological well-being scale. The result of the study shows that elderly house wives had low psychological well-being

unlike elderly working women hence, elderly women needs both social and emotional support from their respective social and family institutions as reported. Lopez-Zafra et al (2019) investigated on social support and emotional intelligence as protective resources for well-being in 1277 Moroccan Adolescents (men 571, women 694). The data was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM), and the result confirms the protective role of social support in the well-being of Moroccan adolescents.

In another study, Chi-Ming and Bi-Cun (2019) researched on the effect of social support on stress –health relationship: Gender comparison among Military personnel in Taiwan. The result indicates that male personnel who perceived higher stress and gained more social support from supervisors and colleagues were less likely to have physical and mental issues than female personnel who did not experience social support. Alsubaie, Stain, Webster and Wadman (2019) investigated the sources of social support on depression and quality of life for University students. 461 students (82% female, mean age 20.62% years) completed an online survey measuring depressive symptoms (Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9), Social support, Multi-dimensional Perceived Social Support (MPSS), and Quality of Life (WHOQOL-BREF). The prevalence depressive symptoms were 33%, Social support from family and friends. The result shows that social support was a significant predictor of depressive symptoms ($p=0.000^*$).

Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were proposed for the study and they include:

1. Stress will not statistically significantly predict psychological wellbeing of working mothers.

2. Social support will not statistically significantly predict psychological wellbeing of working mothers.

Method

Participants

Participants for the present study were 200 females (academic and non-academic staff among others) drawn from University of Nigeria, Nsukka using convenient sampling technique. The age of the participants ranged between 21 and 62 (mean = 32.85, SD = 8.89). With respect to marital status, 95.7% were married, 3.2% reported to be single and 1.1% divorced. With regards to occupation, 94.6% were employed while 2.2% were unemployed. The composition of the sample with regard to educational attainment was as follows: FSLC (6%) WASSCE (7.2%), OND (10.2%), NCE (7.2%), HND (16.0%), Bachelor's degree (46.4%), Masters' degree (10.5%), PhD (1.6%). With regard to demographic characteristics for tribe (ethnic group); Hausa (1.1%), Igbo (73.1%), Yoruba (10.2%) and others (5.9%).

Instruments

Three instruments were used in this present study: the Perceived Stress Scale, Social Support Scale and Psychological Well-being scale

Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983)

Perceived Stress Scale assesses how often an individual felt a certain way in order to measure his/her perception of stress (Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983). The scale was designed as direct queries for scoring current levels of experienced stress such as, 0 = "Never," 1= "Almost Never," 2 = Sometimes, 3 = "Fairly Often," and 4 = "Very Often" with maximum score of 14 and minimum score of 4. The Cronbach's alphas

for the total score were .83 and test re-test reliability was 0.82.

Social support scale

Social support was assessed using the Multi-dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support developed by (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley 1988). The scale is a 12-item instrument with three subscales of support from family with items like My family is willing to help me make decisions; friend with items like I can count on my friends when things go wrong; and significant others with items like There is a special person with whom I can share my joys and sorrows. There were 4 items per subscale. The scale was scored on a 7-point Likert scaling model ranging from 1 = very strongly disagree through 4 = neutral to 7 = very strongly agree. The Cronbach's alphas for the total scale range from .88 to .90 in the general population, with good test-retest reliability (.70).

The Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being

The Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being was developed by (Ryff, 1989). It has 42 items which consists of six subscales: (a) Positive Relations with Others (PR), Self-Acceptance (SA), Autonomy (AU), Environmental Mastery (EM), Personal Growth (PG) and Purpose in Life (PL) which is rated on a 6- point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The internal consistencies varied between 0.87 and 0.96 and test-retest

reliability coefficients ranged between 0.78 and 0.97 for the six sub-scales. The scale demonstrates valid and reliable characteristics and potentially provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for investigating positive functioning of adolescents.

Procedure

With the aid of research assistance, the researcher approached some working mothers in their place of work. Rapport was created and through a letter of identification, their consent to participate on the study was obtained. Convenient sampling technique was used to select participants and they were encouraged to answer the questions as honestly as possible and that their personal information would remain confidential. They were also encouraged to respond to all the items in order to obtain complete data.

Design/ Statistics

This study adopted the survey method of data collection, and a cross-sectional design because it is seen as the most appropriate, and cuts across all segments of the unit of analysis. Pearson's correlation (r) analysis was conducted among the study variables while hierarchical multiple regressions was employed to statistically test the hypotheses for the study. The data obtained from respondents were analysed with the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.

RESULT

Table 1: Showing the Mean and Standard Deviation of Stress and Social Support as Predictors of Psychological Well-being of Working Class Mothers.

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among the Study Variables

| Variable | MEAN | SD | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <i>Psychological wellbeing</i> | <i>30.10</i> | <i>20.15</i> | |
| <i>Stress</i> | <i>22.15</i> | <i>8.50</i> | |
| <i>Social support</i> | <i>18.8</i> | <i>4.15</i> | <i>N=200</i> |

Table 1 shows that participants who experienced stress, had the greatest mean and standard deviation of (M=22.15, SD =8.50) on psychological well-being of working class mothers while Social support reported mean score and standard deviation of (M= 18.8, SD=4.15) on psychological well-being of working class mothers. The output of

the analyses revealed that the participants with stress had a higher mean score and standard deviation showing that working mothers are stressed up on their job, which affects their Psychological well-being. While increase in social support increases psychological well-being of mothers.

Table 2. BIVARIATE CORRELATION ANALYSIS

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Age | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.Marital Status | .189* | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 3.Tribe | -.081 | -.192* | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 4.Employment Status | -.024 | .058 | -.116 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 5.Occupation | .069 | .003 | .187* | .179* | 1 | | | | | |
| 6.No. of Dependents | .312** | .157* | .072 | .014 | .229** | 1 | | | | |
| 7.Educational Qualification | .338** | .210** | -.007 | -.116 | .330** | .365** | 1 | | | |
| 8. Psy –wellbeing | .048 | -.024 | -.067 | -.042 | .007 | -.108 | .165* | 1 | | |
| 9.Stress | .121 | .114 | .055 | -.014 | .071 | -.081 | .028 | -.33** | 1 | |
| 10.Social Support | .274** | .125 | .127 | -.046 | .324** | .288** | .284** | .22** | .019 | 1 |

*Note. N = 200 = p < .05, ** = p < .01), *** = p < .001.*

Bivariate correlation analysis was employed to check the relationships among the variables of study. The findings revealed that there was no positive correlation between age, marital status, tribe, employment status, occupation, number of dependents and psychological well-being. Educational qualification was positively correlated with psychological wellbeing ($r=.17, p<.05$). This means that higher levels educational qualification were associated with higher levels psychological well-being among participants of the present study. The findings also indicates a negative correlation

($r= -.33, p< .01$) between stress and psychological wellbeing among working mothers. This means that as stress decreases, the psychological wellbeing among working mothers reduces. However, there was a positive correlation ($r = .22, p <.01$) between social support and psychological wellbeing among working mothers. This implies that as social support increases among working mothers, their level of psychological well-being increases.

TABLE 2: Hierarchical Multiple Regression results predicting psychological well-being of social support and stress.

| Variable | Step 1 <i>B</i> | Step 2 <i>B</i> | Step 3 <i>B</i> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Controls</i> | | | |
| Age | -.01 | -.01 | .03 |
| Marital Status | .07 | .07 | .10 |
| Tribe | -.02 | -.02 | .00 |
| Employment Status | .02 | .02 | .02 |
| Occupation | -.02 | -.02 | .07 |
| No. of Dependents | -.30** | -.30** | -.23* |
| Educational Qualification | .17 | .17 | .21 |
| <i>Predictors</i> | | | |
| Stress | | -.12** | -.15** |
| Social Support | | | .28** |
| Adjusted R^2 | .05 | .15* | .29* |
| ΔR^2 | .10 | .10* | .14* |
| ΔF | 2.04 | 2.14* | 7.19* |

Note * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$

The results of the hierarchical multiple regression in Table 2 in which Psychological well-being was the criterion variable indicated that the demographic variables (i.e. age, marital status, tribe, employment status, occupation, number of dependents, educational qualification), entered in Step 1 of the equation as controls, collectively accounted for 0.5% variance in wellbeing. This variance was collectively not statistically significant. However, number of dependents singly predicted wellbeing ($\beta = -$

.30, $p < .01$). When stress was entered in Step 2 of the equation, it accounted for 15% additional variance observed in PWB ($\beta = -.12, p < .01$). Thus, hypothesis 1 was not confirmed. Furthermore, when social support was entered in Step 3 of the equation, it accounted for 14% additional variance in wellbeing ($\beta = .28, p < .01$). Social support was a significant predictor of wellbeing. Thus, hypothesis 2 was not confirmed.

Discussion

This study examined stress and social support as predictors of psychological wellbeing among working mothers. The result of the first hypothesis shows that stress significantly and negatively predicted psychological wellbeing of working mother. This result implies that stress has very high tendencies of reducing psychological wellbeing of working mothers. The result supports the works of Mittal & Sushil (2018), Wanninayake and Salam, (2016) who found that role overload has a significant impact on job stress among women, who have various roles to play in the family as well as the role assigned to them in the organization. Sometimes, it becomes difficult for women to perform all roles with similar commitment which could lead to fatigue, stress and dissatisfaction. Vulnerability model (Zubin & Spring, 1977), also shows that there are different ranges of vulnerabilities for people with regards to stress. Their central hypothesis is that the interface between an individual's vulnerability and the stress they experience in the course of their lives is the basis for the development low psychological wellbeing.

The result of the second hypothesis also explained that social support significantly predicted psychological wellbeing among working mothers. The result indicates that as women receive emotional and social support from care-givers, family members, they tend to have a mental stability, leading to psychological well-being. The result is consistent with works of Chi-Ming & Bi-Cun (2019), and Lopez-Zafra et al (2019) who found that male personnel who perceived higher stress and gained more social support from supervisors and colleagues were less likely to have physical and mental issues than female personnel who did not experience social support.

Implications of the Study

The implications of the present research study include the following:

1. The findings of this research could be helpful to develop insight in our society about the critical issue of working class mother's stress condition and check mate their psychological well-being.
2. The findings could also contribute in creating awareness to working mothers on how to manage stress and be able to manage family- conflict and work-conflict, through seminars, retreats, conferences etc.
3. It will also help to improve the quality of life, and take positive steps to handle the issues of poverty in our society at large by both government and non-governmental organizations.
4. Family members should be educated on how to give emotional support and instrumental support, eg the husband should embrace the wife with a good hug after a stressful day, while caregivers should help in household work.

Limitations of the Study

Although the current study provided an important contribution to literature in the area of stress, social support, and psychological well-being, there are a number of limitations that need to be considered. First, it is important to note that this study involved only the questionnaire. The participants were limited to only 200 women and were drawn only from Enugu State, which will hinder the generalization of the study. The questionnaire was not explicitly designed to investigate the experiences of mothers with various classifications of stress and social support; therefore only available variables could be used to examine stress, social support and psychological well-being of working class mothers. Since there are limited sources of stress, and social support on psychological well-being, this made it difficult to draw conclusions about the level

of stress, and social support on psychological well-being of mothers.

Another limitation is the number and ratio of working mothers levels of education. With a disproportionate population of mothers to minority mothers, this study did not provide an accurate report of how stress, and social support affect psychological well-being of working class mothers. Finally, some mothers in this study were single mothers and widows, so it is not easy to generalize the kind of social support they should get, compared to those living with their husbands.

Suggestions for Further Study

In the light of constraints encountered by this study, it is hoped that the under listed suggestions would improve and strengthen further studies:

1. The participants should be enlarged and made robust enough so that the findings can be generalized strongly.
2. The data should be collected from other areas and sources in order to authenticate the findings of the research.
3. There should be more time frame for data collection.

Conclusion

The study investigated stress and social support as predictors of psychological wellbeing among working mothers. The result of the study shows that stress and social support are significant predictors of psychological wellbeing among working mothers. However, the study concludes that since increased number of dependents contributes majorly to poorer psychological wellbeing of working mothers; their families, friends and significant others should help them reduce the level of stress they experience by providing adequate social support. This will enable them balance the demands of the family and workplace; and function more efficiently in the society.

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