

THE ROLE OF PREGNANCY EXPERIENCE IN WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG WORKING WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of present study were; To find out the Role of Pregnancy Experience in Work life Balance among Working Women. Research has demonstrated the benefits of considering the associations between the happy and negative emotions around pregnancy in particular. In the present study Two instruments; Pregnancy Experiences Scale- Brief Version (PES-Brief) (DiPietro, Christensen & Costigan, 2008), and Work life balance (WLB) (Yusuf, 2018) were administered on a sample of (N=200) along with demographic sheet. Results of the study revealed that Positive Pregnancy experience (Uplifts) have negative effect on Work life balance. It was also found that there exists a significant relationship between Negative pregnancy experience and work life balance that Negative Pregnancy experience have negative relation with Work life balance. The findings from this study have great implications for developing programs, and increase the awareness regarding working women pregnancy experience. Since the sample was limited to a single city, it cannot be applied to all Pakistani women. A sample from several cities could be gathered for further research in order to fairly represent the population of pregnant working women.

Keywords: Pregnancy experience, Work life balance, Working women.

INTRODUCTION

Pregnant women are among the most delicate populations in society. Women's bodies experience significant physiological changes during pregnancy due to biological and chemical changes. These are the first uncontrollable changes that put individuals in danger, both mentally and physically. Pregnancy is linked to several significant changes in a woman's body and mental health, and she performs less well in social situations than the general population (Akiki et al, 2016).

There are four types of maternal styles that emerge during pregnancy: the "regulating" mother, the "facilitating" mother, the reciprocity style, and the "conflictual" mother. These styles have an impact on pregnant women's expectations, fantasies, and

representations, as well as the relationship between mother and child. Thus, based on personal experience, one may experience enduring and strong negative emotions such as melancholy or anxiety, or one may experience primarily positive emotions such as joy and hope. Happiness and anxiety, hopes and disappointments, positive and negative emotions can all coexist in situations when a pregnancy is wanted and viewed positively in one's thoughts. The first and most obvious change that occurs during this delicate stage of a woman's life is to her own body image, which some women find difficult to accept (Bedaso et al., 2021).

The positives and negatives of pregnancy are inherent, and women's subjective perceptions of

these features are linked to their health throughout pregnancy, the health of their fetus and newborn, and their postpartum parenting styles (Amiel Castro et al., 2020; McManus et al., 2017). Pregnant women who concentrated more on the difficulties and drawbacks of their pregnancy tended to feel more stressed and anxious (Akiki et al., 2016) and produce offspring with poorer prospects for their postnatal health (Souza-Vogler & Lima, 2021; Zijlmans et al., 2017). Stress, depression, and worry are examples of negative emotions that seem to be harmful to expectant mothers and their unborn children (Bedaso et al., 2021). On the other hand, women and children generally benefit from positive emotions such as optimism, pleasure, and purpose (Golmakani et al., 2012). Pregnancy-specific emotions, such as whether the experience is positive or negative, do carry particular dangers and advantages (McManus et al., 2017). Research focused on positive and uplifting aspects of pregnancy finds benefits to maternal wellbeing (Amiel Castro et al., 2020; Faramarzi et al., 2016) as well as advantageous parenting techniques and favorable results for the health of children (McManus et al., 2017). For example, coping with labor pains is positively correlated with women's self-reported pleasure and positivity during pregnancy (Golmakani et al., 2012), increased birth weight of the child (Keeley et al., 2004), and postnatal synchronization between the mother and child (Moore et al., 2016). Positive emotions seem to be advantageous for fetal and infant development and may be protective against prenatal and postnatal depression, stress, and anxiety, while being far less researched than negative emotions (McManus et al., 2017).

Women still experience prejudice at work because of their unique biological capacity to produce children, even though females make up a sizeable fraction of the labour force and have held a significant number of paid jobs in the last few years, including during pregnancy. Since women make up more than half of the population of Pakistan, they play important role to the country's economy. The female labor force participation (FLFP) has attracted interest from around the world recently because of Pakistan because of its structure and progress. While the percentage of women participating in the workforce increased slightly

from 15.9% in 2003–04 to 18.9% in 2005–06, it is still significantly lower than in other south Asian nations. Pakistan now has the lowest percentage of women in the labor force, at just 22% (Akiki, 2016). Maintaining the mother's and the child's health during pregnancy (including preventing or treating risks, illness, and death) a smooth transition leading to a labor and delivery outcome, and achieving positive motherhood (including maternal self-esteem, competence, and autonomy) are all illustrations of positive pregnancy experiences that maintain social and physical normalcy (Downe, 2015). Given the effects that pregnancy experiences have on both the mother and the unborn child, accurate assessment of these experiences is crucial (Satyanarayana, 2011). Maternal well-being and enhanced fetal health are linked to constructive thinking and optimistic expectations (Park et al., 1997). Adverse incidents, however, can heighten mothers' emotional distress and increase their chance of developing anxiety or depression as well as infant premature delivery. A later-life risk of emotional and behavioral problems in children is also linked to adverse maternal experiences (Stein, 2014). Experiences during pregnancy are unique, but they are also influenced by cultural norms and the network of friends and family. Pregnancy may be viewed as a joyful time in South Asia, where a woman prepares to become a mother. However, cultural expectations or burdens associated with pregnancy, high rates of stillbirth, and complications during childbirth, and maternal mortality in the area may also make it anxiety-inducing (Aziz, 2020).

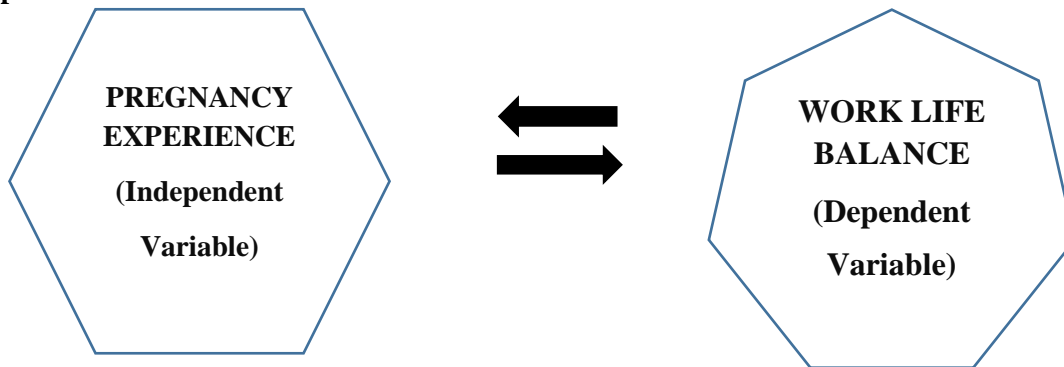
For ergonomic, psychological, and organizational reasons, working women may find pregnancy to be a stressful time. First of all, pregnant women have extremely demanding physical needs, and workplaces rarely accommodate these needs. Pregnancy is also a period of psychological transition and adjustment. It's frequently been described as a stressful period that is also in a state of crisis and transition. Pregnancy has a negative impact on women's cognitive functioning because it can impair performance at work and cause anxiety in expectant mothers about their capacity to do their jobs. Third, women might be impacted by how their company handles pregnant employees, which is related to how coworkers and employers feel about

pregnancy in the workplace. According to a number of studies, working while pregnant can improve a woman's psychological health and financial situation under the right circumstances. This should be advantageous for the company that hires the pregnant workers as well. Work-life balance is facilitated by a positive pregnancy experience and support during the pregnancy. While working while pregnant can be beneficial for some women, it should also be possible for other women to do so with the right assistance (McManus et al., 2017).

The number of women entering the workforce is rising, which presents numerous difficulties. Among other difficulties, juggling job and household obligations is one of the biggest problems women, particularly expectant mothers face (Shelton, 2006). Generally speaking, women struggle more to

balance work and family because they bear a disproportionate amount of the family's responsibilities. The unequal distribution of childcare and other household responsibilities among women poses significant obstacles to their professional advancement (Cross & Linehan, 2006). Women entrepreneurs find it even harder to balance work and family in patriarchal societies like Pakistan, where it is expected from women to shoulder a large portion of the caregiving duties in the home. There's also the idea that stereotypical gender roles play a major role in shaping work-family roles because it has long been believed that women should be "house makers" and men should be "bread-winners." Consequently, compared to fatherhood, motherhood is less negotiable due to the social construction of gender (Gronlund, 2007).

Conceptual Frame work



The primary elements that influence pregnancy are the unique challenges and benefits associated with it, along with the complex interplay between familial, societal, economic, and environmental influences. woman's well-being can be significantly influenced by how she views the highs and lows associated with pregnancy (Mortazavi, 2021). Juggling work and family obligations is one of the biggest problems women, particularly expectant mothers face (Shelton, 2006). Women typically have a tougher time juggling the demands of work and family since they shoulder a greater share of the household tasks. Pregnancy-related discrimination seems to be widespread, and maternity protection laws didn't seem to be of much use (Bertolini & poggio, 2022). Although working during pregnancy can be advantageous for certain women, it should also be feasible for other women to do so with the

appropriate help and encouragement (Pattison & Gross, 2007).

Method

Design

In this study, a cross-sectional research design is employed. In a cross-sectional study, information is gathered to draw conclusions about the universe, or population of interest, at a particular moment in time. It has been said that cross-sectional data represent snapshots of the populations they collect information on (Lavrakas, 2012). The selection of the sample is predicated on the presence of employed expectant women within the age range of 20 to 40 years. These respondents could be approached in outpatient visits in hospitals, offices, educational institutes.

Participants

The study's sample consists of 200 pregnant women who are employed. The majority of research studies in this field used sample sizes ranging from 150 to 300. The study used emotion regulation and cognitive bias to predict pregnancy anxiety in expectant mothers. This study used a descriptive approach based on correlation. The statistical population for this study consisted of all pregnant women who were referred to Ardabil Health Care Centres in 2017 for prenatal care throughout the first through the ninth month of their pregnancy. 180 people in total were chosen using a stratified random selection technique (Basharpoor & Taherifard, 2019).

Sampling technique

The technique of purposive sampling was employed in order to recruit individuals. One kind of non-probability sampling method is purposeful sampling. Using this type of sampling, the researcher deliberately chooses the participants according to the characteristics of informants needed for the study. After determining the necessity for the study, the researcher obtained information from people who were willing to provide the necessary background knowledge and expertise (Bernard, 2002).

Ethical Consideration

- Informed consent from respondents.
- Ensure confidentiality of information.
- Individual questionnaire administration.
- Verbal and written instructions to respondents.
- Reply to queries of respondents.

Measures

The following tools were employed to gather information from respondents

Demographic Information Form

A socio-demographic form was developed. It includes variables of Age and Level of education.

Pregnancy Experience

Pregnancy Experiences Scale- Brief Version (PES-Brief) is a shortened version of the Pregnancy Experiences Scale (PES), a measurement of the daily, continuous uplifts and hassles that mothers experience during pregnancy, based on the general

Hassles and Uplifts Scale. According to that report, it contains the ten most frequently recommended uplifts and ten most frequently recommended hassles, each rated from 0 (not at all) to 3 (a great deal). Every item in the PES-Brief is rated along only one dimension, as opposed to the original Pregnancy Experience Scale PES (i.e., as either a hassle or an uplift). Six scores result from scoring these consist of: the frequency of uplifts and hassles, which is determined by counting the number of items that are endorsed with values greater than 0; the intensity of uplifts and hassles, which is determined by dividing the total of scale scores (1 to 3) by the frequency of uplifts or hassles; and two hassles: the uplifts ratio scores, which are calculated by dividing the uplifts by the hassles' frequency and the hassles' intensity by the uplifts' intensity. These ratio scores were intended to measure the affective valence towards the pregnancy. Internal reliability was high for both the uplifts ($\alpha= 0.82$) and the hassles ($\alpha= 0.83$) subscales (DiPietro, Christensen & Costigan, 2008).

Work life balance Scale

The three dimensions of work-life balance, work interference with personal life (WIPL), personal life interference with work (PLIW), and work/personal life enhancement (WPLE) were measured using a 15-item scale (Hayman, 2005). There are five points on the scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. The Cronbach alpha coefficient yielded an estimated reliability of .91 for WIPL, .82 for PLIW, and .67 for WPLE for the scale (Yusuf, 2018).

Procedure

Data was collected through a pre-tested questionnaire, through quantitative research method. The sample of pregnant working women were approached for the current study's purposes. The questionnaires of Pregnancy Experiences Scale-Brief Version (PES-Brief) and Work life balance (WLB) along with the demographic sheet which include (Age, Level of Education) were distributed among the sample of students (N=200). The respondents were told to fill out the questionnaires as completely and honestly as they could, making sure to answer each and every question. They were

confident in the privacy of their information. Since they could finish the questionnaires whenever it was

convenient for them, there was no deadline for completing them.

Results

Table 1: Regression Analysis

Table showing regression analysis predicting Positive pregnancy experience total (PPET), Negative pregnancy experience total (NPET) and Work life balance total (WLBT). (N= 200).

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	31.119	9.383		3.317	.001
	PPET(IV)	-.158	.101	.109	1.556	.121
	NPET(IV)	1.321	.653	-.142	-2.021	.045

The table display the estimate coefficient for each independent variable, along with their corresponding p-values and standard errors. The P-values associated with each independent variable in regression analysis provides a measure of their statistical significance. Variables with p-values below a predetermined significance level (e.g., 0.05; 0.01) are considered statistically significant, implying that their effects on dependent variables are unlikely to have occurred by chance. According to analysis, Positive pregnancy experience has negative effect on Work life balance and Relationship is non- significant while Negative pregnancy experience is also negatively related to work life balance and the relationship is significant

Discussion

The study aimed to investigate the role of pregnancy experience (Positive and Negative) in Work life balance among working women. Study has indicated the advantages of taking into account the positive and negative feelings around pregnancy in particular, as well as their relationships. In this study two questionnaires were used Pregnancy experience scale (PES), work life balance scale (WLB) along with demographic information form (Age, Education) on the sample of 200 Working pregnant women. The data was gathered in the Islamabad area using these standardized questionnaires. The participants were twenty to forty-year-old pregnant working women. In this study, a cross-sectional research design is employed.

According to the hypothesis Positive Pregnancy experience (Uplifts) would have positive impact on Work life balance. Regression analysis was applied to analyze the data to study hypothesis. The analysis in table 1 shows a non-significant effect of positive pregnancy experience on work life balance. The results indicate that Positive Pregnancy experience (Uplifts) have negative effect on Work life balance which doesn't supports the hypothesis. the likelihood of Significant Results rises with increasing Sample Size and varying Locations. working while pregnant can be beneficial for some women, it should also be possible for other women to do so with the right assistance and support (Pattison & Gross, 2007).

Results of table 1 indicate that there exists a significant relationship between Negative pregnancy experience and work life balance which supports the hypothesis which states that Negative Pregnancy experience (Hassles) would have negative impact on Work life balance. Negative experiences, however, can heighten mothers' emotional distress and increase their chance of developing anxiety or depression as well as infants' premature labor (Rosa, 2019).

More and more women are joining the workforce, which presents numerous difficulties. Among other difficulties, Balancing career and home responsibilities is one of the largest issues women, especially expectant mothers, face (Shelton, 2006). Women are usually harder to balance work and family obligations because they bear a disproportionate amount of the family's

responsibilities. Pregnancy discrimination appeared to be a common occurrence, and maternity protection policies provided little help. Unfair treatment did not seem to be significantly influenced by an individual's occupation, and pregnant women's work-life balance was generally found to be inadequate (Bertolini & Poggio, 2022).

Conclusion

The current study contributes significantly to the existing literature regarding working women with pregnancy. The purpose of the study was to look into how working women's work-life balance were affected by their pregnancy experiences, both positive and negative. Research has demonstrated the benefits of considering the associations between the happy and negative emotions around pregnancy in particular and how they relate to work life balance.

The future research in this domain should focus on to determine which kinds of support systems such as employer policies, childcare assistance, and partner support are most useful in helping pregnant women achieve work-life balance. Considering Pakistani culture, a lack of moral education and basic rights awareness, and the variety of social ethics, beliefs, and practices, surveys and research are necessary to gain a deeper, more critical understanding of human potential and the ways in which it can be used to improve lives

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