

Effect of Marital Stress on Workplace Motivation

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Abstract—Marriage is a significant source of emotional support, but persistent marital difficulties can lead to stress that affects various areas of an individual's life, including work. The present study aimed to examine the effect of marital stress on workplace motivation among married working adults. A correlational research design was adopted, and the sample comprised 60 married working adults aged between 25 and 50 years, selected using convenience sampling. Data were collected using a standardized Marital Stress Scale and a Work Motivation Scale. The findings revealed a significant negative relationship between marital stress and workplace motivation, indicating that higher levels of marital stress were associated with lower levels of motivation at work. Further analysis showed that individuals experiencing high marital stress reported significantly lower work motivation compared to those with low marital stress. The results support the spillover theory, suggesting that stress originating in the marital domain adversely affects work-related attitudes and motivation. The study highlights the importance of addressing marital well-being through counseling and organizational support programs to enhance employee motivation, productivity, and overall well-being.

Index Terms—Marital Stress; Workplace Motivation; Work–Family Spillover; Married Employees; Occupational Well-Being; Work Engagement; Family Stress; Job Motivation; Work–Life Balance

I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a significant social institution that plays a central role in an individual's emotional, psychological, and social life. While marriage can be a source of support and stability, it can also become a source of stress when conflicts, unmet expectations, financial strain, poor communication, or role overload are present. Marital stress refers to the psychological strain experienced by individuals as a result of ongoing dissatisfaction, conflict, or pressure within the marital relationship. Persistent marital stress can negatively affect emotional well-being, leading to anxiety, irritability, fatigue, and reduced coping capacity.

In today's fast-paced and competitive work environment, individuals are required to maintain high levels of motivation, concentration, and productivity. Workplace motivation refers to the internal and external forces that stimulate enthusiasm, commitment, and persistence in performing job-related tasks. Motivation at work is a crucial determinant of job performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall career success. However, motivation is not shaped by workplace factors alone; personal and family-related experiences also play an important role.

Marital stress can spill over into the workplace, affecting an individual's emotional resources and cognitive functioning. According to spillover theory, stress experienced in one life domain can transfer to another domain, thereby influencing behavior and performance. Individuals experiencing high levels of marital stress may find it difficult to concentrate at work, experience reduced enthusiasm, and show lower engagement and motivation. Conversely, a supportive and harmonious marital relationship can act as a buffer against work stress and enhance motivation and performance.

Understanding the impact of marital stress on workplace motivation is particularly important in the context of working adults who must balance professional responsibilities with family life. Examining this relationship can help organizations and mental health professionals design interventions aimed at improving employee well-being, work motivation, and overall productivity.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Previous research has highlighted the strong connection between family stressors and work-related outcomes. Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1992) found that marital conflict was significantly associated with reduced job satisfaction and increased work-related distress. Their findings supported the spillover model,

suggesting that stress in marital life negatively influences work attitudes and motivation.

A study by Allen et al. (2000) demonstrated that family-related stress, including marital dissatisfaction, was linked to lower work engagement and motivation. Employees experiencing higher levels of marital stress reported emotional exhaustion, which in turn reduced their intrinsic motivation at work. Similarly, Matthews, Conger, and Wickrama (1996) reported that marital strain predicted declines in work performance and enthusiasm over time.

Research by Greenhaus and Powell (2006) emphasized the work–family interface, suggesting that negative family experiences such as marital conflict can drain psychological resources necessary for maintaining motivation at work. On the other hand, supportive marital relationships were found to enhance positive mood and energy, thereby increasing work motivation.

In an Indian context, studies have shown that work motivation is strongly influenced by family harmony. Kumar and Sharma (2018) found that married employees experiencing high marital stress showed significantly lower levels of job motivation and organizational commitment compared to those reporting low marital stress. These findings highlight the cultural relevance of marital well-being in shaping work attitudes.

Overall, existing literature suggests a consistent relationship between marital stress and workplace motivation, with higher marital stress being associated with reduced motivation, engagement, and productivity.

Aim:

To study the effect of marital stress on workplace motivation among married working adults.

Objectives:

1. To assess the level of marital stress among married working adults.
2. To assess the level of workplace motivation among married working adults.
3. To examine the relationship between marital stress and workplace motivation.
4. To compare workplace motivation among individuals with high and low levels of marital stress.

Hypotheses:

H1: There will be a significant negative relationship between marital stress and workplace motivation.

H2: Individuals experiencing high marital stress will have significantly lower workplace motivation compared to individuals experiencing low marital stress.

Research Design:

The present study adopted a correlational research design to examine the relationship between marital stress and workplace motivation.

Sample:

The sample consisted of 60 married working adults (both men and women) aged between 25 and 50 years. Participants were employed in various sectors including education, healthcare, corporate, and service industries. Convenience sampling technique was used due to time and accessibility constraints.

Tools Used:

1. Marital Stress Scale: A standardized marital stress questionnaire was used to assess the level of stress experienced in the marital relationship. The scale measures dimensions such as communication problems, emotional strain, role conflict, and interpersonal dissatisfaction.
2. Work Motivation Scale: A standardized workplace motivation scale was used to measure intrinsic and extrinsic motivation related to job performance, commitment, and enthusiasm toward work.

Procedure:

The data were collected using both online and offline methods. Participants who were accessible in person were given printed questionnaires, while others received a Google Form link through email or social media platforms. Prior to data collection, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. The questionnaires took approximately 20–25 minutes to complete. The collected data were scored according to the respective manuals and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques.

Results and Discussion:

The findings of the study revealed a significant negative correlation between marital stress and workplace motivation, indicating that higher levels of marital stress were associated with lower levels of motivation at work. Participants who reported frequent marital conflicts, emotional dissatisfaction, and role strain tended to show reduced enthusiasm, commitment, and interest in their professional roles. Further analysis showed that individuals categorized under high marital stress had significantly lower mean scores on workplace motivation compared to those with low marital stress. These results support the spillover theory, suggesting that stress originating in the marital domain adversely affects work-related attitudes and motivation. Emotional exhaustion and cognitive preoccupation with marital issues may reduce the psychological energy required for sustained work motivation.

The findings are consistent with earlier studies that reported negative effects of family and marital stress on work engagement and performance. The results highlight the importance of considering employees' family well-being as an integral component of organizational effectiveness.

III. CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that marital stress has a significant negative effect on workplace motivation among married working adults. High levels of marital stress reduce emotional resources, leading to decreased enthusiasm, engagement, and commitment at work. Conversely, lower marital stress is associated with higher levels of workplace motivation.

These findings emphasize the need for supportive interventions such as marital counseling, employee assistance programs, and work-life balance initiatives to help employees manage marital stress effectively. Addressing marital well-being can contribute not only to individual mental health but also to improved motivation and productivity in the workplace.

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