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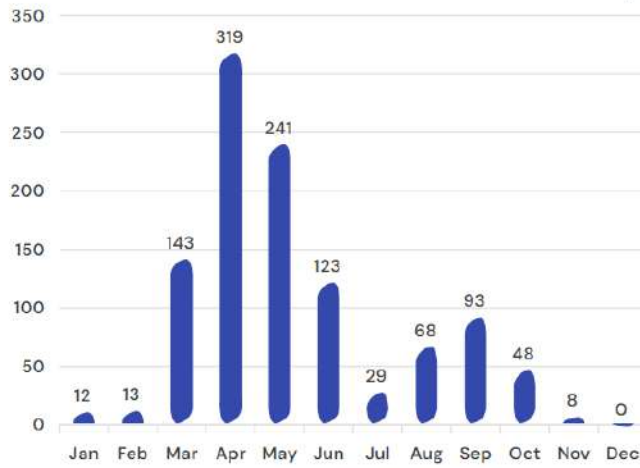
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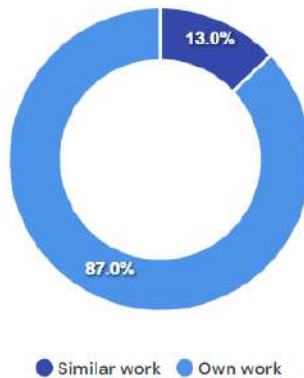
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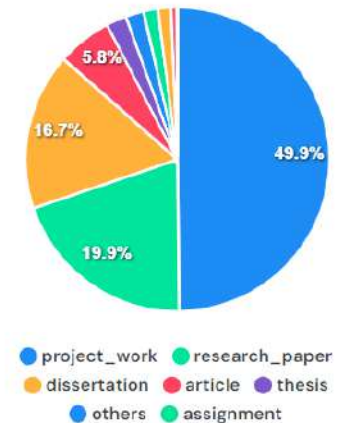
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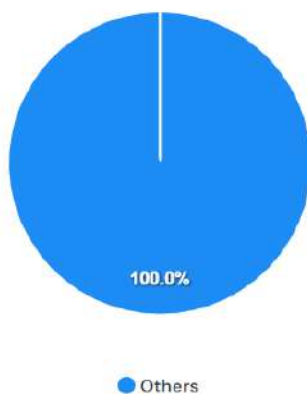
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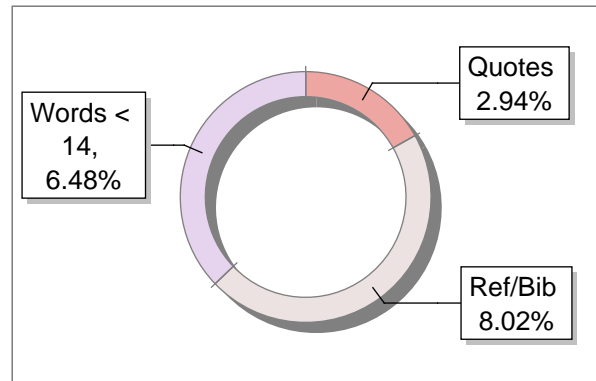
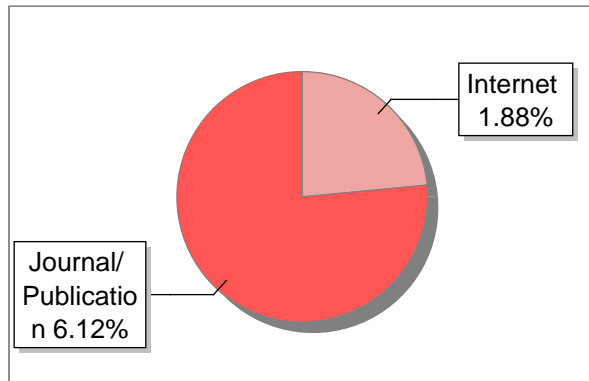
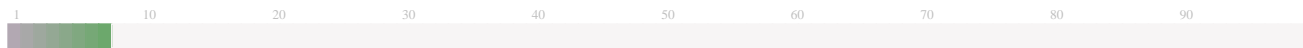


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STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES OF WORKING MOTHERS

ABSTRACT

Working mothers juggle many responsibilities and play many roles to maintain stability between work and family. Studies reveal that average working mothers' puts in nearly 100 hours of work a week between the home and the office. Perceiving their responsibilities both at home and work place, most of them undergo a lot of stress. According to 2020 data from Maven and Great place to work, nearly 9.8 million working mothers reported experiencing burnout i.e., almost 30% more than working fathers. With this regard in today's competitive world, work life balance and stress management for working women is absolutely necessary to strike a balance between professional work and personal life. This helps in reducing disharmony between official and domestic life. In this paper we analyze ² stress in the workplace and at home, factors creating stress and the consequences of stress for the working mothers. The present study makes a sincere effort to understand and explore strategies adopted by the working mothers to manage their stress level. A sample of 100 working mothers from Mangalore are chosen as respondents for the

study. The convenient sampling technique is used for data collection, and for the analysis of the data SPSS has been used. The reliability test, percentage analysis and Friedman test were used to analyze, compare and interpret the data.

Key words: working mothers, work life balance, workplace, stress management, strategies

1. Introduction

Lifestyles of women are always challenging. Women are more focused on creating the lifestyles for themselves that they have always aspired to. They always take active and consistent steps in the right direction to significantly improve the way they live lives. Independently driven women are no longer the niche but the vast majority. The mother is the highest ideal of womanhood in India (Swami Vivekananda). Working mothers, as a label, refers to women who are mothers and who work outside the home for income in addition to the work they perform at home in raising their children, as per encyclopedia of children's health. Women are focusing on not just being great mothers, but also being accomplished professionally. They remain the anchors of home and family while also becoming drivers of domestic wealth creation and national economy. Yet, what has remained the same is their attitude towards self-care and well-being. The busy schedule of their life, leaves them with no time and mental space to look after themselves. As a result, women especially in urban India, are susceptible to an alarmingly big array of lifestyle-related health risks. At present women of very young age suffer from burnout, diabetes, hypertension and cardiac problems which have become common among women in their thirties.

Stress is an inescapable element of the modern age. Instances of untreated stress may lead to a reduction in the individual's health, well-being and socio-economic situation. Stress can emerge from the regular day to day challenges of family to the work environment or from the workplace to family. According to the **World Health Organisation**, "Stress can be defined as any type of change that causes physical, emotional or psychological strain. Stress is your body's response to anything that requires attention or action. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. The way you respond to stress, however, makes a big difference to your overall well-being"

Today's career-oriented ¹women are frequently challenged by the demands of constant work. The day in the office will end with more responsibilities and commitments carried to their home. (Andukuri Raj Shravanthi, 2013). In the present day, both men and women would like to work and take care of families. Working woman who is also a working mother, faces a lot of challenges to achieve balance between work and life. A working mother has to face challenges at two fronts. One at work and second at home. Along with positive effectives, there are negative effects of working mothers on self and child and family. This study focuses on the different factors affecting stress of a working mother and consequences of the same. The present study makes an attempt to find out various strategies followed by the working mothers to overcome stress.

2. Review of Literature

Gopal C Mahakud (2013), identified that there are three stages of stress namely the alarm stage, resistance stage and exhaustion stage. **Andukuri Raj Shravanthi (2013)**, observed that ¹today's career women are continually challenged by the demands of full-time work and when the day is done at the office, they carry more of the responsibilities and commitments at home. **Hanna Zagefka (2021)**, states ⁴that policies that enable mothers to work will be conducive to maternal well-being, but that the policies must minimize conflict between demands associated with employment and parental responsibilities. **Rajesh K Yadav and Shriti Singh Yadav (2014)**, suggested that the factors which ¹lead to job satisfaction also contribute towards the reduction of stress and to achieve work life balance among the workers. such as: encouraging social groups, accommodating working conditions, mentally challenging work, impartial rewards and employee-oriented policies. **Kamaldeep Bhui et al. (2016)**, identified that ²unrealistic demands, lack of support, unfair treatment, low decision latitude, lack of appreciation, effort-reward imbalance, conflicting roles, lack of transparency and poor communication ²adverse working conditions and management practices that causes work related stress which includes. Improved management styles, and physical exercise, taking breaks and ensuring adequate time for planning work tasks will result in effective organizational interventions. **Deepthi Amith et al. (2019)**, identified that, effective utilization of professional time, at most commitment towards work are the effective stress management strategies of working women. Personal balance maintenance such as health balance of herself, her family health, child care, elder health, economic balance,

supportive spouse reduces many stresses related problems. **Sunil Kumar (2012)**, analyzed occupational stress and its influence on working women and found out main causes of stress such as: sex specific occupational stressors, sex discrimination, insufficient funding and resources, work overload, poor management practice, job insecurity, insufficient recognition, reward and combining work and family. **Mazen Fawaz Masoooud et al. (2020)**, in their study focused on the stress associated issues such as role conflict, excessive workload, working environment and role ambiguity. **Emily L Mailey and Edward McAuley (2014)**, suggest the working mothers perceived capabilities to manage stress can be enhanced through, empowering her self-belief.

3. Research Methodology

The present study has been conducted by applying both primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected through the structured questionnaire from the working mothers in the general workforce. A sample of 100 working mothers of Mangalore city has been chosen as respondents for the study. Convenient sampling technique is followed to select the respondents for the study. Reliability Test, Percentage Analysis and Friedman's test are used to examine the relationships and to test the hypothesis. Secondary data are collected by referring various journals, web sources, previous research reports, and are incorporated whenever necessary to supplement the primary data.

4. Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the various factors creating stress on working mothers?
2. What are the consequences of the stress on working mothers?
3. What are the strategies followed by the working mothers to overcome the stress?

5. Objectives of the study

The present study is based on the following objectives:

1. To identify the factors creating stress on working mothers.
2. To analyze the consequences of the stress on working mothers.
3. To find out the strategies followed by the working mothers to overcome the stress.

6. Hypotheses of the study

7 The following hypotheses have been developed based on the review of earlier studies for further investigation:

H1: There is no significant difference in the mean ranking for the personal causes for stress by the working mothers

H2: There is no significant difference in the mean ranking for the work environment causes for stress by the respondents

H3: There is no significant difference in the mean ranking for the consequences of stress for the respondents.

7. Results and Discussion

7.1 Demographic profile the respondents

Variables	Categories of variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age of the respondents	26-35 years	36	36%
	Above 35 years	64	64%
	Total	100	100%
Age of the child	Less than 5 years	25	25%
	6 - 12 years	51	51%
	13-19 years	17	17%
	20 years and above	7	7%
	Total	100	100%
Education	Up to PUC	2	2%

	Graduation	18	18%
	Post-Graduation	72	72%
	Technical	4	4%
	Any Other	4	4%
	Total	100	100%
Annual income (Less than 1 lakh	2	2%
	1 - 2.5 lakhs	21	21%
	2.5 - 5 lakhs	30	30%
	5 to 10 lakhs	29	29%
	Above 1000000	18	18%
	Total	100	100%
Parental status	Single parenting family	17	17%
	Joint parenting family	83	83%
	Total	100	100%
Occupation	Teaching	60	60%
	Clerical	13	13%
	Bank Employee	3	3%
	Others	24	24%
	Total	100	100%
Spouse occupation	Teaching	13	13%
	Business Man	31	31%
	Office staff	8	8%
	Others	48	48%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: survey data)

7.2 Reliability test:

Table 7.2: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient Value

Question assessed:	Working mothers (n=100)
Personal Causes for stress	0.851
Work environment causes for stress	0.867
Consequences of stress	0.889
Overall	0.934

From the above table it is seen that the alpha reliability coefficient is greater than 0.8 and hence the data collected by the researcher is used for different statistical analysis as per the objectives framed for the analysis.

7.3 Friedman's Test

7.3.1: Mean ranking for the personal causes of stress

H1: There is no significant difference in the mean ranking for the personal causes for stress by the working mothers

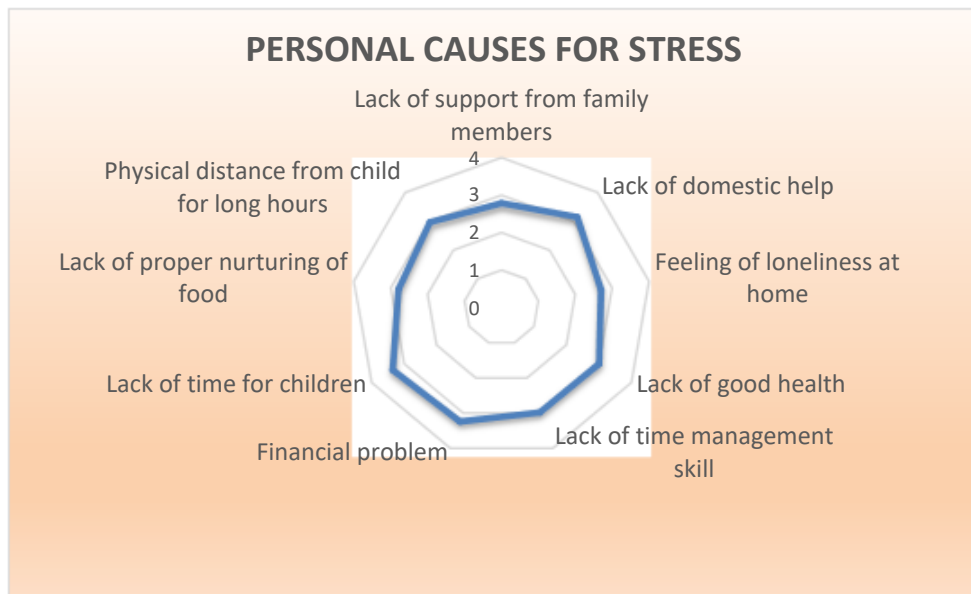
7.3.1 Table showing test results of mean ranking for the personal causes for stress among working mothers.

Personal causes –Ranks	Respondents		
	Mean Rank	Rank	
Lack of support from family members	4.52	7	Friedman's Test value = 29.335
Lack of domestic help	5.31	3	

Feeling of loneliness at home	4.45	9	d.f=08
Lack of good health	5.13	4	p value = 0.000 < 0.01
Lack of time management skill	4.91	6	
Financial problem	5.36	2	
Lack of time for children	5.76	1	
Lack of proper nurturing of food	4.5	8	
Physical distance from child for long hours	5.08	5	

The calculated Chi square value is 29.335. The significance value for 8 degrees of freedom is 0.000 which is less than 0.01. Hence, we infer that there is significant difference in the mean ranking between the variables related to personal causes for stress. From the above table it is inferred that compared with other indicators “lack of time for children” with mean rank 5.76 is a very important factor as far personal causes for stress are concerned. “Financial problem “with mean rank 5.36 is having a significant effect on personal causes for stress. “Lack of domestic help” (5.31) and “lack of good health “(5.13) are having significant impact on the personal causes for stress of the working mothers and the hypothesis is rejected and the hypothesis that there is significant difference in the mean ranking for the personal causes for stress is supported.

7.3.1: Radar chart showing personal causes for stress among working mothers



7.3.2 Mean ranking for the work environment causes for stress by the respondents:

H2: There is no significant difference in the mean ranking for the work environment causes for stress by the respondents Hypothesis:

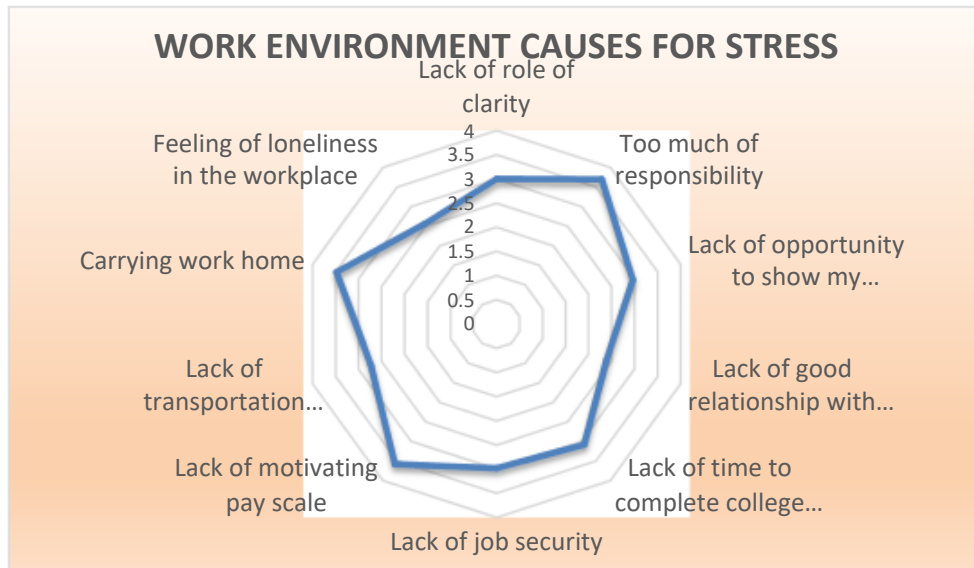
Table No 7.3.2: Table showing test results of mean ranking for the work environmental factors leading to stress among working mothers.

Work Environment causes –Ranks	Respondents		Friedman's Test value = 169.362 d.f=09 p value = 0.000 < 0.01
	Mean Rank	Rank	
Lack of role of clarity	5.31	7	
Too much of responsibility	7.30	1	
Lack of opportunity to show my talent/idea	5.54	5	
Lack of good relationship with colleagues	3.90	10	
Lack of time to complete college work	5.66	4	

Lack of job security	5.51	6	
Lack of motivating pay scale	6.76	2	
Lack of transportation facility	4.46	8	
Carrying work home	6.43	3	
Feeling of loneliness in the workplace	4.17	9	

The calculated Chi square value is 169.362. The significance value for 9 degrees of freedom is 0.000 which is less than 0.01. Hence, we infer that there is significant difference in the mean ranking between the variables related to work environment causes for stress. From the above table it is inferred that compared with other indicators “too much of responsibility” with mean rank 7.30 is a very important factor as far work environment causes for stress is concerned.” Lack of motivating pay scale “with mean rank 6.76 is having a significant effect on work environment causes for stress. “Carrying work home” (6.43) and “lack of time to complete college work” (5.66) are having significant impact on the work environment causes for stress of the working mothers and the hypothesis that there is significant difference in the mean ranking for the work environment causes for stress is supported.

7.3.2: Radar chart ranks for the work environmental factors leading to stress among working mothers.



7.3.3 Mean ranking for the for the consequences of stress for the respondents:

H2: There is no significant difference in the mean ranking for the consequences of stress for the respondents:

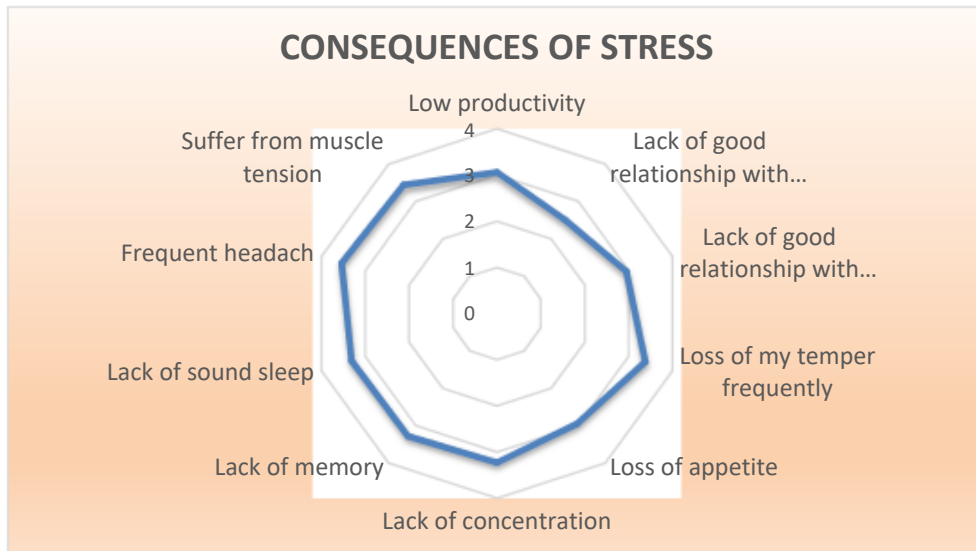
Table No 7.3.3: Table showing test results of mean ranking for the consequences of stress among working mothers

Consequences of stress -Ranks	Respondents		Friedman's Test value = 141.377 d.f=10 p value = 0.000 < 0.01
	Mean Rank	Rank	
Low productivity	5.41	8	
Lack of good relationship with colleagues	3.95	11	
Lack of good relationship with the family members	5.07	10	
Loss of my temper frequently	6.62	3	
Loss of appetite	5.27	9	
Lack of concentration	6.11	7	
Lack of memory	6.13	6	

Lack of sound sleep	6.41	5	
Frequent headache	6.88	2	
Suffer from muscle tension	6.44	4	
Body and mind fatigue	7.72	1	

The calculated Chi square value is 141.377. The significance value for 10 degrees of freedom is 0.000 which is less than 0.01. Hence, we infer that there is significant difference in the mean ranking between the variables related to consequences of stress from the working mothers. From the above table it is evident that compared with other indicators “body and mind fatigue “with mean rank 7.72 is a very important factor as far consequences of stress is concerned.” Frequent headache “with mean rank 6.88 is having a significant effect on consequences of stress. “Loss of my temper frequently” (6.66) and “suffer from muscle tension” (6.44) are having significant impact on the consequences of stress and the hypothesis that there is significant difference in the mean ranking for the consequences of stress is supported.

7.3.3: Radar chart showing ranks for the consequences of stress among working mothers.



7.3.4: Table showing results of Strategies used to overcome the stress

Strategies used to overcome the stress	Responses (Yes)	
	N	Percentage
strategies ^a Proper planning	93	93%
Be Systematic	86	86%
adopt positive thinking	90	90%
Listening to music/Dance/sports	79	79%
Yoga/meditation	44	44%
Short vacation	64	64%
Healthy diet	61	61%
Sound sleep	75	75%

8. Suggestions

- The most highlighted personal factor causing stress was lack of time for children therefore, it is advisable for the working mothers to have a morning routine and a bedtime routine.
- Too much of responsibility was considered as one of the important work environmental causes leading to stress as per the opinion of majority of the working mothers. Therefore, learning to say NO can help working mothers be open to maintaining their utmost priorities and finding time for self-care.
- It is suggested to the working mothers not to take things personally whether it's an abrupt response from your employer, a moody partner, or angry kids. Also, it is advisable to reflect back on the entire day just to avoid the reactions of stress.
- Nutritional food, small snack break, staying hydrated, listening to light music, enjoying nature, chit chat with like minded people, spending quality time with family specially kids also contribute to an overall serene mood.

9. Conclusion

Women employees give their best in the workplace as well as at home. They have proved their ability and talent. The work life balance is the issue of working mothers, as they play multiple roles to play. Working mothers manage many responsibilities and play several roles to maintain the stability and happiness of their families. From buying groceries, paying bills, maintaining a home, taking care of elders at home, supporting their spouse, to dedicating time to raising healthy children, to having a successful career, can be demanding and stressful. The study showed that lack of time for children, financial problem, lack of domestic help are the very important personal factors causing stress. Too much of responsibility, lack of motivating pay scale, carrying work home are the important work environment causes for stress of the working mothers. Body and mind fatigue, frequent headache, loss of temper frequently and suffer from muscle tension are the main consequences of stress. Therefore, adopting proper planning by changing their lifestyle, attitude towards life, making changes in their habits as well as food contributes to the overall mental and physical health of the working women. This will in turn brings positive impact on the society and on the economy as a whole.

10. Future research

A possible direction for future research is to conduct a similar survey among working fathers. Another possible direction is to make a comparative study of working mothers and fathers.

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