



Career Adaptability, Self-Esteem, Mental Well-Being Among Working Professionals with Caregiving Responsibilities: Ex-Post Facto Research

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate whether there is a significant difference in Career Adaptability, Self-Esteem, and Mental Well-Being between Working Professionals with caregiving responsibilities and Working Professionals with no caregiving responsibilities. The study utilized a sample of 72 participants, with Working Professionals with caregiving responsibilities and Working Professionals with no caregiving responsibilities. The results indicated a significant difference between the two groups in Self-Esteem and Mental Well-Being with Working Professionals with caregiving responsibilities and Working Professionals with no caregiving responsibilities. However, there was no significant difference found in Career Adaptability. The study suggests that having the responsibility of caring for others while maintaining a career may have a positive impact on an individual's self-esteem and mental well-being. The study also highlighted the importance of addressing the needs of working professionals with caregiving responsibilities to promote their mental health and well-being. Given the unique challenges faced by working professionals with caregiving responsibilities, such as juggling work and caregiving responsibilities, employers and policymakers should consider implementing policies and support systems to help working professionals who are also caregivers manage their workload and maintain their mental health. These findings may be useful in guiding interventions aimed at promoting the well-being of working individuals, particularly those who are also caregivers.

Keywords: Career Adaptability, Self-esteem, Mental Well-Being, Working Professionals, Caregiving Responsibilities, Support System

1. Introduction

Working professionals in the 21st century face the challenge of adapting to a dynamic, unpredictable, and everchanging nature of work culture. Today, the workforce is being modernized with the new advancements in technologies, innovations, globalization, and changes in structures of corporate world. As a result of all these uncertainties employees find it difficult to thrive in their jobs and these transitions affect the well-being of the employee. According to *The United States Bureau of Labour statistics* survey individuals tend to change their jobs once every five years (Mullins, 2009), and have an average of 10.8 jobs between the ages of 18 to 42 (US Dept of Labour, 2008). There are four main challenges that need to be addressed to adapt to these transitions. Firstly, because of major digitalization many occupations are at risk. *The World Economic Forum* in the year 2021 reported that approximately 85 million jobs will be transferred to machines from humans and about 97 million jobs will be collaborated among humans-machines-algorithm until 2025. Secondly, the challenges related to environment such as climate change, increasing world population and consumption. Thirdly, the ongoing economic recession is creating a major impact on attributes such as job security, unemployment, and sense of social exclusion. Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a lot of instability among employees. Hence to cope with these transitions, adapting to change is essential for career success.

In India, over 26000 employees were laid off in January 2023. Big MNC's such as Amazon, Flipkart, Meta, Snapchat, Wipro etc have started a wave of layoff. Because of this there are loss of status, minimal ability to plan and changes in social network as the consequences. Microsoft work trend index study shows that 29% of Indian employees faces burnout that is the second highest in the world. A Deloitte survey showed that 49% of the Indian working women suffers burnout which is higher than the global average which is 47%. These data reflect the need of addressing the concerns of mental health and to find ways to cope with that.

1.1 Career Adaptability

Career adaptability refers to an individual's ability to adapt to changing work environments, roles, and demands over the course of their career. It is becoming an important need as the changing demands in workforce culture are increasing specially in this period of recession. Career adaptability as an adaptive resource, is a self-regulatory ability that employees can use to resolve unpredictable, complex, unfamiliar, and ill-defined issues which arises from career transitions, career tasks and job trauma. On Big Five Personality test, individuals who scored high on openness to experience trait showed higher career adaptability (Zacher & Hannes, 2014). Considering cultural factors, a Chinese study revealed that collectivism (i.e., valuing group harmony

and cooperation) was negatively associated with career adaptability, whereas individualism (i.e., valuing independence and self-expression) was positively associated with career adaptability (Wang et al., 2020).

1.1.1. Theoretical Framework

Nevertheless Savickas (2005), the pioneer of the concept Career adaptability and gave the most influential model of career adaptability- Career construction theory in which he identified four key dimensions: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. Concern refers to the awareness one has about the need of being more adaptable to the changing situations, while control refers to the belief one has about his or her ability to adapt. Curiosity infers to the willingness an individual shows to explore new opportunities, and confidence refers to the level of self-efficacy in the period of challenges. This model by Savickas is one of the most useful frameworks to understand the components of career adaptability though other researchers have also expanded and explored this model. Later the Career Adaptability Inventory (CAI) was developed by Savickas and Porfeli (2012). To measure career adaptability, Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) was developed by Rudolph et al. (2017), which measures all the four key dimensions mentioned earlier.

In context of Indian vocation, the empirical support is very less that can verify the functionality of career adaptability. Only a few newspapers like India Today, 2018 and The Hindu, 2017 and few consultancy agencies have reported its importance within Indian IT workforce in terms of developing knowledge, competencies, and learning to confront uncertainty. For Indian workers, implicit hints could be extracted from the literature that explains individual's flexibility and adaptability and his or her abilities to learn new skills, grasp knowledge while adjusting persisting cross-cultural traumas, changes and innovation. A study conducted on Indian I.T. Professionals highlighted that individuals strives very hard to build their reputation and career identity in their career pathways amid different work challenges, work traumas and work changes. They need to reflect their potential to reflect that they can withstand any vocational shock or unseen and unpredictable challenges. In career construction theory, it is explained that having high career adaptability plays a major role to have such potential and capabilities, and these capabilities to withstand work culture challenges comes from factors of career adaptability which are concern, control, curiosity and confidence (Santara & Giri, 2019). Also, having high career adaptability leads to better self-regulation in achieving a good work-environment fit and overall results in better job outcomes as suggested in a study conducted on 239 Indian bank employees (Kaur & Kaur, 2020).

1.1.2. Effect of Pandemic induced employment changes and current global recession on career adaptability and mental well-being

As compared to pre-pandemic times, the work culture is constantly changing its dynamics and has impacted the overall well-being of several employees. Not only the pandemic but the current recession phase since 2022 is creating a negative psychological impact on the well-being. These factors have compelled the workers to use psychological resources in order to maintain the mental well-being failing which results in burnout, depression, stress and anxiety.

Fear of being laid-off and remain unemployed creates job insecurity and psychological distress which adversely affects the mental health (Srivastava & Gupta, 2021). This fear resulted in changes in behavioural, emotional, and cognitive responses of employees (Sigala, 2020)

WHO has reported that 15% of the world's working population suffers from mental health issues majority of which includes depression, anxiety and stress. According to Employee Well-Being survey report of 2021 conducted by a well-known HR firm "The7thFold" revealed that 36% of Indian employees were suffering from mental health issues and 50% were worried about uncertainty of future due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, according to Assocham, the non-governmental trade approximately 43% of employees in the private firms in India suffer from mental health problems due to work pressure.

1.1.3. Career Adaptability and Social support

Social support is a very crucial factor that has a very significant role in one's life. In this changing, dynamic, and demanding work culture having social support is very essential for the mental well-being of an employee. For a caregiver, the most prominent support they could get is from their family especially children and their parents. Though there has been no research conducted to know whether having supported or non-supporting family for caregiver helps in increasing career adaptability or not but there are several studies which shows that social support is positively correlated with career adaptability in general. Moreover, it has been observed that social support results in lower turnover intentions with higher career adaptability (Lee; Yang, 2021).

1.1.4. Career Adaptability among working professionals with caregiving responsibilities

The working professionals with caregiving responsibilities here refer to the individuals who are responsible for simultaneously taking care of both their children and their aging parents at the same time and are working as well. Many times, balancing these multiple roles together takes a toll on their mental health and impacts their career development and job satisfaction. In recent years, there have been several studies to know about the experiences of the working parents but there is a gap in the literature of Career Adaptability among working professionals with caregiving responsibilities of children and ageing parents and hence this paper tries to explore this gap. A study conducted on working parents on 598 Taiwanese Working Parents showed that parents who have higher scores on career adaptability especially in the domains of curiosity and concern have less work-family conflict and high personal

growth intentions whereas parents with lower scores of career adaptability had high scores on work-family conflict and low scores on personal growth intentions. Higher flexibility in career and lower work-family conflict were shown in males more as compared to females (Wang, Tien & Lin-Wu, 2018).

1.2 Self-Esteem

Self-esteem refers to the subjective sense of how a person perceives and values oneself (Atac, Dirik, Tetik, 2018). It is the overall opinion about one's own self, beliefs, attitudes, strengths, and limitations. Dr Laura Morgan Roberts studied the need of self-esteem in working professionals. Employees with a higher self-esteem tends to trust their thinking and judgement and are more likely to make better decisions. High self-esteem creates more effective interpersonal as well as work relationships which helps in contributing effectively to the work environment. Leaders with high self-esteem are able to focus on the development of others more efficiently rather than only working on themselves. Self-esteem studies suggests individuals with high self-esteem may and get higher job positions, e.g., by occupational prestige, salary, responsibilities, and influence than with low self-esteem individuals which in results helps in gaining higher job positions which provides more opportunities for gains in self-esteem compared with lower job positions. A study conducted by Hussye-Gaytandjieva showed that self-esteem plays an important role in predicting unemployment in future and is a very integral part of an individual's self-concept. Also, high self-esteem is associated with high job outcomes (Gaytandjieva, Groot, and Joling, 2015)

The two different versions of esteem are explained by Maslow in his theory of hierarchical needs which are lower and higher versions. The lower version depicts the actions individuals take to gain respect from others whereas the higher version depicts the internal need of self-respect. Status, recognition, fame, and prestige or any other attention are the attributes of lower version of self-esteem, and it is the subordinate of higher version.

In one of the interesting longitudinal studies conducted in 2010 titled as "Change in adult self-esteem: A longitudinal assessment", 97 married couples were randomly selected, and their components of self were compared over 13 years of time gap. Surprisingly, all the components of self declined after 13 years in which the major decline was seen in self-esteem specially in those husbands and wives who scored high in self-esteem earlier as compared to couples who scored comparatively low in self-esteem. After interviewing it was found that this decline in high self-esteem participants was not due to the factors like age, gender or socio-economic status but because of the demands and pressure to maintain or enhance self-esteem (Schafer & Keith, 2010).

1.2.1. Career Adaptability and Self-Esteem

Individuals who need to navigate constant change need to be career adaptable (Maree, 2012). Individuals can thrive more easily in an organization if they meet the pressures of their working world and are highly adaptable with the ability to adjust themselves (Autin, Douglass, Duffy, England & Allan, 2017). One of these pressures is the need to adapt and adjust to changes in careers, technology, and within and between occupations and various life roles as compared with previous generations. Theoretically, this is possible among young adults who utilise their strengths (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Studies quoted by Minhas, Proctor, Maltby and Linley in a research conducted by Douglass and Duffy suggested that employees who can utilise their strengths are found to report higher levels of self-esteem (Douglass & Duffy, 2015). Research has further revealed that self-esteem serves as an important predictor of an employee's career adaptability (Cai et al., 2015). Those employees with well-developed self-esteem reflect their graduate employability strengths confidently (Potgieter, 2012).

Based on Career Construction theory, Career adaptability can be positively predicted by self-esteem and proactive personality and this relationship is mediated by career exploration. Another related study suggests that there is a relationship between career adaptability, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction. Career adaptability is directly impacted by self-efficacy whereas there is unidirectional effect of self-esteem on life satisfaction (Rossier, 2021; Cai, 2015).

1.2.2. Self-Esteem of working professionals with caregiving responsibilities

Self-esteem acts as mediator for maintaining healthy work-family balance. Organizations whose values and principles focuses on fulfilling the best interests of employees results in overall increased organization-based self-esteem (McAllister & Bigley, 2002). A related experiment was done by Rashid and Nordin in 2012 in which full structural equation modelling was used. It suggested that among 689 married nurses, nurses who were given training and strategies to enhance self-esteem showed higher satisfaction levels and work-family balance.

2. Research Methodology

Aim

To assess Career Adaptability, Self-Esteem, and Mental Well-Being among Working Professionals with caregiving responsibilities and Working Professionals with no caregiving responsibilities.

Objective

I. To find the correlation between Career Adaptability, Self-Esteem, and Mental Well-Being

II. To compare Career Adaptability, Self-Esteem, and Mental Well-Being between Working Professionals with caregiving responsibilities and Working Professionals with no caregiving responsibilities.

Hypotheses

H1: There will be positive correlation between Career Adaptability, Self-Esteem, and Mental Well-Being

H2: There will be no significant difference among working professionals with caregiving responsibilities and with working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities in Career Adaptability, Self-Esteem, and Mental Well-Being.

Research Design

Ex-Post Facto Research

Sample

72 participants were taken who were working professionals in variety of fields from different cities. They were divided into two groups:

- i. Working professionals with caregiving responsibilities (Individuals who are working and are caregivers of their children as well as their ageing parents)
- ii. Working Professional with no caregiving responsibilities and living away from family

Sample Selection

The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, which is also known as judgmental sampling because here two groups which are working professionals are selected with the criteria of with or without caregiving responsibilities.

Variables

Independent Variable: Working Professionals (with caregiving responsibilities and with no caregiving responsibilities)

Dependent Variables: Career Adaptability, Self-Esteem, Mental Well-Being

Tools Used

1. Career Adapt-Ability Scale (CAAS)

The CAAS scale aims to assess the ability to adapt to the changing situations of career and job and it was developed by Savickas and Porfeli in 2011. The scale contains 24 items and takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. It is suitable for adolescents (9th grade/15 years and above) and adults. It contains 4 subscales namely Concern, Control, Curiosity, and Confidence. Each subscale has 6 questions each. Item 1-6 represents concern, Item 7-12 represents control, Item 13-18 represents curiosity and item 19-24 represents confidence. CAAS is a likert type scale in which 1=Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree 3= Neutral 4= Agree and 5=Strongly Agree. The scores are calculated by summing up the 6 items in each subscale.

The researchers from 13 of the 18 countries administered the CAAS in their respective countries in order to test the reliability and validity of the instrument within a cross-cultural sample (Savickas and Porfeli, 2012; Soresi, Nota, and Ferrari, 2012; Tak, 2012; Teixeira, Bardagi, Lassance, Magalhães, and Duarte, 2012; Tien, Wang, Chu, and Huang, 2012; van Vianen, Klehe, Koen, and Dries, 2012; Vilhjálmssdóttir, Kjartansdóttir, Smáradóttir, and Einarsdóttir, 2012). While the CAAS reliability estimates vary between countries, the internal consistency estimates for the adaptability construct ranged from good to excellent ($\alpha = .85$ to $.96$) (Savickas and Porfeli, 2012). The internal consistency estimates for the four subscales, Concern, Control, Curiosity, and Confidence, were questionable to excellent across the 13 countries (.64 to .91).

2. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Questionnaire

It is a 10-item scale that measures global self-worth. It includes both positive and negative feelings about the self. It is a uni-dimensional scale with positive and negative items. The negative items are reverse scored. The scale uses 4-point Likert scaling ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored. The highest score can be 30. Score 25 and above is considered as high self-esteem, scores between 15-25 are considered as moderate self-esteem and scores below 15 are considered as low self-esteem.

Reliability: The Guttman scale coefficient of reproducibility of Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale is .92, which means it has high internal consistency. The Test-retest reliability is .85 and .88 which was measured over a period of 2 weeks, which demonstrates excellent stability.

Validity: It has an excellent construct, concurrent, and predictive validity. With other measures of self-esteem, there is significant correlation, including the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. Moreover, this scale correlates with measures of depression and anxiety in the predicted direction.

3. Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale

The WEMWBS scale was developed by Professor Sarah Stewart-Brown, and it was supported by Professor Stephen Platt and Dr Ruth Tennant from the University of Edinburgh in 2007. The WEMWBS scale consists of 14 items which covers both hedonic and eudaimonia aspects of mental well-being which also includes feelings of positive affect like relaxation, optimism, cheerfulness, interpersonal relationships as well as positive functioning like competence and autonomy, energy, self-acceptance, clear thinking, and personal development.

The instructions says that participants have to select the statement that best describes their experience of each statement over the past 2 weeks. The scale uses a 5-point Likert scale, and it represents a score for each item from 1 to 5 respectively. The minimum score possible is 14 and maximum score of 70. There is no reverse scoring. The total score for the WEMWBS is calculated by summing up the scores for each item. The higher the score, the higher the level of mental well-being.

Procedure

Firstly, the questionnaires were selected that suited the subject of the topic. Three questionnaires were selected respectively for the three variables of the current study that is Career Adaptability, Self-esteem, and Mental well-being. Different instructions were given for different scales.

Later, scoring was done, and correlation, independent t-test and stepwise regression were calculated.

Data Collection

Data was collected for two groups that are working professionals with caregiving responsibilities and with working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities.

Analytic Strategy

For finding correlation, Pearson r correlation was used and to check the significance independent t-test was used. Also, Stepwise Regression was used check the predictors of Career Adaptability. The predictors considered were Self-Esteem, Mental Well-Being, and Years of Experience.

3. Results and Discussion

In this section the result of the study is presented, analysed and discussed. The analysis has been undertaken to verify the hypothesis which are presented in the previous section.

Table 1 - Mean and Standard Deviation of Career Adaptability, Self-esteem and Mental Well-being of Working Professionals

	N	Mean	Group	SD
CAREER ADAPATABILITY	36	98.1	WPCR	11.87
	36	97.15	WPNCR	13.63
CONCERN	36	24.8	WPCR	3.11
	36	23.5	WPNCR	3.75
CONTROL	36	25.1	WPCR	3.34
	36	25.2	WPNCR	3.68
CURIOSITY	36	24.4	WPCR	3.36
	36	24.1	WPNCR	3.95
CONFIDENCE	36	23.8	WPCR	4.09
	36	24.9	WPNCR	3.98
SELF-ESTEEM	36	18.6	WPCR	5.62
	36	22.1	WPNCR	4.51
MENTAL WELL-BEING	36	45.8	WPCR	10.53
	36	52.2	WPNCR	7.38

WPCR- Working Professionals with caregiving responsibilities.

WPNCR- Working Professionals with no caregiving responsibilities.

This table shows the mean and standard deviation and standard error of the variables. The sample taken was 36. The mean of Career Adaptability for both working professionals with caregiving responsibilities and working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities is 98.1 and the standard deviation for is 11.87 working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities and for working professionals with caregiving responsibilities is calculated

to be 13.63. The mean of Self-esteem for both groups is calculated to be 18.6 and 22.1 respectively and Standard deviation is 5.62 for working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities and 4.51 for working professionals with caregiving responsibilities. This table also shows that the mean of Mental well-being is calculated to be 42.8 for working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities and 52.2 for working professionals with caregiving responsibilities and the Standard Deviation is calculated to be 10.5 and 7.38 respectively.

Table 2- Correlation between Career Adaptability (Concern, Control, Curiosity, Confidence), Self-esteem and Mental Well-being of Working Professionals with caregiving responsibilities and Working Professionals with no caregiving responsibilities.

	Career Adaptability	Concern	Control	Curiosity	Confidence	Self-Esteem	Mental Well-being
Career Adaptability	1	0.624	0.898	0.841	0.770	0.540	0.773**
Concern	0.711	1	0.457**	0.426*	0.228	0.245	0.185
Control	0.837	0.429**	1	0.744	0.709	0.584	0.496**
Curiosity	0.896	0.547	0.764	1	0.627	0.443**	0.478**
Confidence	0.815	0.472**	0.638	0.626	1	0.562	0.527**
Self-Esteem	0.208**	0.166	0.153	0.088	0.239	1	0.629
Mental Well-being	0.376*	0.277	0.281	0.311	0.350*	0.399	1

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Based on the correlation coefficients of working professionals with caregiving responsibilities and working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities, Career Adaptability of working professionals with caregiving responsibilities is positively correlated with all the other variables in the table, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.185 to 0.841. From this it can be inferred that working professionals with higher levels of Career Adaptability tend to have higher levels of Concern, Control, Curiosity, Confidence, Self-Esteem, and Mental Well-being, whereas for working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities also there is a positive correlation of Career Adaptability with all the other variables in the table, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.166 to 0.896. This shows that working professionals with higher levels of Career Adaptability tend to also have higher levels of Concern, Control, Curiosity, Confidence, Self-Esteem, and Mental Well-being.

Concern, Control, Curiosity, Confidence, Self-Esteem, and Mental Well-being are all positively correlated with each other to varying degrees, indicating that these variables are interrelated and tend to co-occur for both working professionals with caregiving responsibilities and working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities.

Self-Esteem and Mental Well-being also have significant positive correlations with all the other variables in the table, although the correlations are weak compared to the other variables.

Interestingly, the weakest correlation was seen in Self-Esteem with the other variables in the table, with significant correlations ranging from 0.166 to 0.239 among working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities. This may suggest that Self-esteem is influenced by environmental factors.

Overall, this suggests that H1 which is There is a positive correlation between Career Adaptability, Self-Esteem, and Mental Well-Being is accepted

Table 3- t-test between Career Adaptability (Concern, Control, Curiosity, Confidence), Self-esteem and Mental Well-being of Working Professionals.

Variable	t	df	p
Career Adaptability	0.00506	67.0	0.995
Self-Esteem	-2.92	65.9	0.005
Mental Well-Being	-2.95	62.8	0.004

According to table 3, it can be inferred that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of working professionals with caregiving responsibilities and working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities. Whereas there is no significant difference in the mean scores of career adaptability. The t score for career adaptability is close to 0 which shows no significant difference and t scores for self-esteem and mental well-being are -2.92 and -2.95 respectively which shows significant differences in the mean scores of working professionals with caregiving responsibilities and working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities. This suggests that H2 which is There is no significant difference among both types of working professionals in Career Adaptability, Self-Esteem, and Mental Well-Being. So, it can be inferred that the hypothesis is partially rejected for Self-Esteem, and Mental Well-Being but accepted for Career Adaptability.

Table 3.1- Normality test (Shapiro-Wilk) between Career Adaptability (Concern, Control, Curiosity, Confidence), Self-esteem and Mental Well-being of Working Professionals.

Variable	W	p
Career Adaptability	0.981	0.368
Self-Esteem	0.962	0.33
Mental Well-Being	0.932	0.03

Since the p value for self-esteem and mental well-being are more than 0.05, it can be inferred from table 4 that the data is distributed normally on normal probability curve and for mental well-being, there is not a major statistical difference of normality

Table 3.2- Homogeneity of Variance (Levene's Test)

Variable	F	df	Df2	p
Career Adaptability	1.35	1	67	0.249
Self-Esteem	0.312	1	67	0.579
Mental Well-Being	4.248	1	67	0.043

The indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in variances as the value of p is more than 0.05 or close to 0.05.

Regression between Career Adaptability (Concern, Control, Curiosity, Confidence), Self-esteem and Mental Well-being of Working Professionals.:

Table 4- Model fit Measure

Model	R	R ²
1	0.370	0.137
2	0.460	0.212
3	0.527	0.278

1: Self-Esteem 2: Mental Well-Being 3: Years of Experience

Table 4.1- Model Comparisons

Comparison							
Model	Model	ΔR^2	F	df1	df2	p	
1	- 2	0.0752	6.29	1	66	0.015	
2	- 3	0.0659	2.92	2	64	0.061	

Table 4.2- Model Coefficients- Career Adaptability

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept ^a	63.3151	7.3485	8.62	< .001
Self-esteem	0.4419	0.3178	1.39	0.169
Mental well-being	0.5318	0.1778	2.99	0.004
Years of experience	0.0659	0.0389	1.69	0.095

Working Professionals:

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Working Professionals with caregiving responsibilities–Working Professional no caregiving responsibilities	-10.5196	4.3640	-2.41	0.019

^a Represents reference level

Through these tables it can be interpreted that mental well-being is the strongest predictor of career adaptability as it has value less than 0.05.

The result of this study suggests that there is a positive correlation between career adaptability, self-esteem and mental well-being ranging from 0.166 to 0.896 for working professionals with caregiving responsibilities and 0.185 to 0.841 for working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities. Hence the H1 was accepted that there is a positive correlation between career adaptability, self-esteem, and mental well-being. Another result compared the differences between both groups, and it was observed that working professionals with caregiving responsibilities have more self-esteem and mental well-being, and there is a significant difference in self-esteem ($t = -2.92$) and mental well-being ($t = -2.95$) among both the groups though no significant difference was found between two groups in career adaptability. Hence, the H2 was partially accepted that there is a significant difference in career adaptability, self-esteem, and mental well-being. These results can be explained by various daily life examples, studies and theories.

Firstly, the reason for such results could be that according to some research having a sense of purpose and accomplishment contributes to higher self-esteem and overall well-being. Working professionals who are caregivers may feel a sense of contentment, satisfaction as well as achievement from successfully being multitasker, such as being a parent, a spouse, and a working professional. This sense of achievement can contribute to higher self-esteem and a positive self-image.

Secondly, it was also found that working professionals with caregiving responsibilities have a social-support that plays a crucial role in maintaining work-family balance and mental well-being. Working professionals who are caregivers may benefit from having a family who can share the responsibilities of childcare and household chores and provide emotional and practical support. This social support can help reduce stress and increase feelings of overall well-being (Kengatharan, 2015).

Thirdly, working professionals with caregiving responsibilities may have developed certain strengths that can be beneficial in both their personal and professional lives such as time-management, organization, and communication. These skills help in generating a sense of self-efficacy, which refers to the belief in own's capability to successfully solve challenges and to achieve goals. This sense of self-efficacy also tends to increase self-esteem and mental well-being (Kinnunen, Geurts, & Mauno, 2011).

Also, India being the collectivist country is more adapted to live in harmony and interdependence with each other which may also be the reason for such results.

Overall, this complex interaction of factors such as a sense of purpose, social support, and personal skills and strengths may contribute to the higher self-esteem and mental well-being observed in working professionals with caregiving responsibilities as compared to working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities.

Other than these psychological explanations it is also important to know that individual factors are also responsible for higher self-esteem and mental well-being of working professionals with caregiving responsibilities such as personality traits and coping styles.

There can be various reasons for the lower scores on career adaptability, self-esteem, and mental well-being for working professionals with no caregiving responsibilities and who live away from their families. Firstly, a sense of loneliness and lack of social support may develop being when a person is away from the family, which impacts self-esteem and mental well-being negatively. It may become difficult to cope with work related stress by being isolated leading to lower scores on career adaptability.

Moreover, the regression results suggested that mental health is the strongest predictor of career adaptability. Overall, if a mental health of an individual is high, all other attributes can be increased, and an individual can improve overall well-being. Hence, the importance of mental health is also highlighted in this paper.

4. Conclusion

The paper highlighted the importance of career adaptability, self-esteem, and mental well-being in the context of caregiving responsibilities. The results suggested that working professionals with caregiving responsibilities have higher career adaptability, self-esteem, and mental well-being and it was concluded that mental well-being is the strongest predictor of career adaptability.

Through this paper the role of caregiving was also highlighted. Though caregiving responsibilities are hectic at times and becomes overwhelming, it also provides sense of contentment and fulfilment and teaches skills and strengths like problem-solving, decision making and handling challenges which also helps in work culture and helps in increasing career adaptability.

The future implications of this paper could be that it can help the employers and recruiters in understanding the type of employees working in their organizations whether they have dual responsibilities of caregiving, household chores etc and work responsibilities both or whether if the employers are

ones who stay alone. This can help in knowing the reasons behind their job performances based on their career adaptability, self-esteem, and mental well-being.

It was concluded that how important Career Adaptability is in this changing work culture. Career Adaptability refers to the ability of changing and adapting oneself according to the changing environment of career and job. It was also seen that above all having a good mental health is very important to maintain other psychological attributes. Hence mental well-being was the strongest predictor of career adaptability.

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