

Self-Criticism, Learned helplessness and Psychological Well-being among Women Entrepreneurs: A Correlation Study

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Abstract

The present study examined the relationship between self-criticism, learned helplessness, and cerebral well-being among women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu. Across-sectional correlational design was used with a sample of 150 women entrepreneurs progressed 18 – 55 times. Data were collected using the Forms of Self-Criticising/ Attacking and Self-Reassuring Scale (FSCRS), Learned Helplessness Scale (LHS), and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale. The results showed mean scores of self-criticism (M = 45.20, SD = 4.73), learned helplessness (M = 63.24, SD = 7.95), and psychological well-being (M = 55.70, SD = 10.38). A weak negative correlation was set up between self-criticism and learned helplessness ($r = -.166, p < .05$). However, both the independent variables did not have significant relationship with psychological well-being, and regression analysis indicated they weren't significant predictors ($R^2 = .020$). The findings suggest that the psychological well-being may be affected by other psychosocial factors among women entrepreneurs.

Keywords: self-criticism, learned helplessness, psychological well-being, Women entrepreneurs, mental health

1. Introduction

Discovery, societal change, and financial development are all significantly told by entrepreneurship. In recent decades, women have decreasingly shared in entrepreneurial conditioning, and this is a lesser move toward gender equivalency and profitable development. There are a number of psychological factors, like gender discrimination, role conflicts, financial insecurity, and other social factors, which are specific to women entrepreneurs. They may have a great deal of psychological stress from these factors, which may have a negative impact on their general psychological well-being. According to Blatt and Zuroff (2002), self-criticism is self-defining dimension of personality which is an interjective orientation and is associated with achievement of personal goals, standards and being highly competitive. In the entrepreneurial context, where numerous failures take place, excessive self-criticism weakens confidence and even psychic development in the individual. Learned helplessness was first observed in rats, monkeys and dogs (Seligman, 1975: 56). Besides, it was noticed in humans also. In fact, it is related to pessimism and depression (Miller & Seligman, 1975:229). Learned helplessness may also befall female entrepreneurs as they undergo untoward experiences in business and Gender

Discrimination and lack of social support groups, which may further worsen their mental well-being. Psychological Well-being, well-being is multidimensional, and not merely about happiness, or positive emotions. A good life is balanced and whole, engaging each of the different aspects of well-being, instead of being narrowly focused (Carol D. Ryff & Burton H. Singer, 2008). The purpose of this study is to examine how learned helplessness and self-criticism affect the mental health of female entrepreneurs. It is hoped that it's all provide great insight into how an intervention and social support groups may be formulated to promote mental wellness in women entrepreneurs.

2. Review of literature

- **Antonio Cebolla et al.(2024)** researched the psychometric properties of the Forms of Self-Criticizing/ Attacking and Self- Reassuring Scale – Short Form(FSCRS- SF) among 576 grown-ups. The results supported the three- factor structure of the scale and demonstrated good reliability and validity. Actors involved in mindfulness and compassion- grounded interventions showed reduced self- criticism and increased self- compassion, suggesting advancements in psychological well-being.
- **Paul Gilbert et al.(2004)** explored the different forms of self- criticism and self- reassurance using the Forms of Self- Criticizing/ Attacking and Self- Reassuring Scale(FSCRS) among university scholars. The study set up that high levels of self- criticism were significantly associated with depression, anxiety, and lower psychological well- being. The results pointed that individualities who constantly engage in self-critical thinking are more vulnerable to emotional pain and reduced psychological health.
- **Carol D. Ryff(1989)** proposed a multidimensional model of psychological well- being, which includes six factors autonomy, environmental mastery, particular growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self- acceptance. The Psychological Well- Being Scale(PWB) developed by Ryff has been extensively used to assess individualities' overall psychological health and functioning. Studies using this model have shown that psychological well- being is told by several cognitive and emotional factors, including self- perception, managing strategies, and particular beliefs.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Research question:

The study was aimed to examine the relationship between self-criticism, learned helplessness and psychological well-being among women entrepreneurs.

3.2 objectives

- To study the link between self-criticism and psychological well-being among female entrepreneurs
- To investigate how learned helplessness is connected with psychological well-being in terms of female entrepreneurs.
- To examine if the combination of self-criticism and learned helplessness predicted psychological well-being among women entrepreneurs.

3.3 HYPOTHESES

H1: There is a significant relationship between self-criticism and psychological well-being for women entrepreneurs.

H2: There is a significant relationship between learned helplessness and the psychological well-being of

women entrepreneurs - Positive and Significant.

4. Research design:

The cross-sectional correlational research design to investigate the relationship between self-criticism, learned helplessness and psychological well-being. The independent variables are self-criticism and learned helplessness while dependent variable was the psychological well-being.

4.1 Sampling technique:

The research study targeted a sample of 150 women entrepreneurs from small and large scale businesses. In conducting this study, the data are collected from the participants through both convenient and snowball sampling.

4.2 Data collection:

- Data will be collected through offline questionnaires distributed to the participants.
- Participants will provide demographic information, followed by responses to the two standardized scales.

4.3 Tool description:

- Self-criticism was measured using, the FSCRS measures, on a 22-item scale, an individual's reaction to personal failures and setbacks on the aspect of self-criticism and reassurance. Each of the scale items measures an individual's response on a 5-point scale from 0 (not at all like me) to 4 (extremely like me). Also, the scale divides into three subscales: Inadequate Self (IS), Hated Self (HS), and Reassured Self (RS). In this current study only two subscales were used IS and HS subscale as they measure self-criticism while reassuring self is not necessary for this study. The items of the scale was not changed. It measures internal consistency with 0.90, 0.86 and 0.86.
- Learned helplessness was measured using Learned Helplessness Scale form B. It measures the perception of individuals about their lack of power and control in managing different dimensions in life. It is a 20-point scale, and scoring of it ranges on a 4-point scale from 1 to 4 instead of “Strongly Disagree” and “Strongly Agree.” It is used to assess individuals’ general feelings of helplessness and lack of control. The cronbach's alpha value of this scale is approximately 0.90.
- This scale has 18 items and targets six distinct but positive aspects of mental health, based on Ryff’s model: Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life, and lastly, Self-Acceptance. The scale ranges from a minimum of 1 “Strongly Disagree” to a maximum of 7 points marked by “Strongly Agree.” The scale indicates satisfactory reliability for the 18-item version with a range of 0.70 to 0.78 for Cronbach's alpha for different groups.

4.4 Statistical analysis:

Descriptive analysis such as mean and standard deviation is used in describing the data of the participants. To examine the correlations between self-criticism, learned helplessness, and psychological well-being, Pearson's correlation is used. Multiple regression analysis is used in ascertaining how well self-criticism and learned helplessness predict psychological well-being. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS.

4.5 Inclusive criteria

- The ages of the Women entrepreneurs should be ranging from 18-55.
- They should be based in Tamil Nadu. Women entrepreneurs with irrespective of marital status are included.

- Women Entrepreneurs from different socio – economic statuses are included.

4.6 Exclusive criteria

- Women entrepreneurs aged below 18 years and above 55 years.
- Women Entrepreneurs Currently Receiving Psychological Treatment is excluded.
- Women entrepreneurs outer of the Tamil Nadu are excluded.

5. Result

This chapter discusses the results and interpretation of the analysis done to understand the relationship between self-criticism, learned helplessness and psychological well-being.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics and spearman’s rank order correlation showing the mean and standard deviation self-criticism, learned helplessness and psychological well-being among women entrepreneurs.

variable	N	Mean	SD	1 ρ value	2 ρ value	3 P value	Decision
1. Self-criticism	150	45.20	4.736	_	-.166*	.025	Rejected H1
2. Learned helplessness	150	63.24	7.954	-.166*	_	.122	Rejected H1
3. Psychological well-being	150	55.70	10.385	.025	.122	_	

Note. Descriptive statistics and Spearman’s rho correlations are presented $p < .05^*$.

Table 1 The descriptive and correlation table shows the mean, standard deviation and spearman’s rank order correlation. Self criticism N= 150, mean= 45.20, SD= 4.736. Learned helplessness N=63.24, SD=7.954. Psychological well being N=55.70, SD=10.385. The findings revealed ($\rho = -.166$, $p = .042$) that the relationship between Self criticism and learned helplessness was weak but statistically significant negative correlation. As the increased levels of self-criticism decreases the level of learned helplessness. The score revealed ($\rho = .025$, $p = .763$) there has no significant relationship between self-criticism and psychological well-being. Same as this, the scores ($\rho = .122$, $p = .136$) revealed that there has no significant relationship learned helplessness and psychological well-being.

Table 2

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
1 Constant	38.981	11.242		3.467	.001
1 Self-criticism	.122	.180	.056	.675	.501
1 Learned helplessness	.177	.107	.136	1.652	.101

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Well being.

Table 2 shows the values of overall regression score $F(2,147) = 1.481$, $p = .231$ was not statistically significant and the combined predictors explained only 2 of the variance in psychological well- being ($R^2 = .020$; acclimated $R^2 = .006$). Hence Self-criticism ($\beta = .056$, $p = .501$) and learned helplessness ($\beta = .136$, $p = .101$) was not a significant predictor of psychological well- being. These two predictors didn't contribute uniquely to the psychological well- being.

6. Discussion

The present study explored the relationship between self-criticism, learned helplessness, and psychological well-being among 150 women entrepreneurs from Tamil Nadu. The results revealed a weak but statistically significant negative correlation between self-criticism and learned helplessness ($\rho = -.166$, $p = .042$), suggesting that high self-criticism was associated with slightly lower levels of learned helplessness. However, self-criticism ($\rho = .025$, $p = .763$) and learned helplessness ($\rho = .122$, $p = .136$) were not significantly related to psychological well-being. Regression analysis further indicated that these variables did not significantly prognosticate psychological well-being, explaining only 2% of the variance ($R^2 = .020$). These findings partially discrepancy with earlier exploration suggesting that self-criticism is linked to emotional agony and lower well-being (Blatt, 2004) and that perceived lack of control contributes to reduced provocation and well-being (Seligman, 1975). The absence of significant associations may indicate that psychological well-being among women entrepreneurs is affected more explosively by contextual factors similar as social support, adaptability, financial stability, and work – life balance, pointing the multidimensional nature of well-being.

7. Conclusion

The current study concluded that self-criticism and learned helplessness were not significantly associated with psychological well-being among women entrepreneurs. Although a weak negative association was observed between self-criticism and learned helplessness, these cognitive vulnerability factors didn't meaningfully prognosticate psychological well-being and explained only a minimum proportion of variance. The findings suggest that cerebral well-being in entrepreneurial populations may not be mainly told by self-critical or helpless cognitive tendencies alone. Rather, well-being among women entrepreneurs appears to be shaped by broader psychosocial and contextual factors. unborn exploration may profit from examining fresh variables similar as adaptability, managing strategies, collapse, work – life balance, fiscal demands, and social support to gain a further comprehensive understanding of cerebral well-being in this population.

8. Limitation

- First of all, this study is a cross-sectional study; which does not establish cause and effect relationship of the variables. Data was collected only one point snapshot will not help to track the changes overtime. It did not explain temporal sequence of the events.
- The study included 150 populations only from Tamil Nadu, which limits the geographical contexts. The findings may not explain different regions, culture or economic status. This study does not allow generalizability. As they limit the data into specific demographical contexts.
- The data was collected on self-report. This type of data collection is very easily prone to the subjective bias, socially accepted behavior than own experiences. The subjects may be responded according to these factors.
- Psychological well-being is a complex and multidimensional approach it cannot be studied only by two psychological predictors. It is influenced by many factors, social, environmental and personal factors.
- This study only studied about two predictors, but psychological; well-being might be influenced by other psychological factors like resilience, coping styles, burnout, work-life balance, financial demands and so on.

9. Recommendations

- The future study may do longitudinal research design as it provides causal and direction of the study. It also studies the changes over time and provides stronger evidence.
- Future study may adapt to increase sample size and also including sample from diverse geographical location and from different culture to increase generalizability. Also, comparison between man and women entrepreneurs may also provide valuable insights.
- Future research may also adapt to qualitative or mixed method to gain deeper understanding on the subjects rather than self report. These methods may decrease the subjective biases.

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