Percieved Self among the Managers of Telecom Sector: A Gender Study

*Shukla Archana **Fatima Amreen

Abstract

The objective of the present study is to find out the perceived self among the managers of telecom sector and to study the gender difference among them. 50 managers were selected (25 males and 25 females) through purposive sampling. The age range of the sample is 30 to 40 years. WHO AMI? Technique by Bugental and Zelen(1950) is used in the present study for the better understanding of perceived self among the managers of telecom sector. Gender differences were found in the perception of self. Male managers' personality bears more positive shades as compared to female managers. Males' perception is more self-focused as compared to females whose perception of self is other- focused.

Keywords: *Percieved Self, Ideal Self, Real Self, Personality*

Introduction :

Self is the center of our being; it is a core of our personality. Self is above all, totally unaffected by the flow of bodily conditions. In words of Sullivan (1950) "the self is said to be made up of reflected appraisals." Self includes the totality of man; the four functions of thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition, man's relationships with life and with the inanimate universe. Self on the one hand, provides awareness of one's unique nature and on the other hand, a feeling of oneness with the cosmos. According to Jung (1940) "Self is not only the center but also the circumference that encloses consciousness and unconsciousness; it is the center of this totality as the ego is the center of consciousness."

Most theorists have assigned a major role to the environment and experience in the development of self. The social experiences play a very significant role in the formation of self-perception. An Individual perception of his physical and psychological attributes is known as the perceive self. Perceived self can be positive or negative depending upon the favorable and unfavorable appraisals assigned to self. According to Rogers (1961) perceived self is composed of three sides of the triangle; the perceived self (how person see self & and others see him/her), the Real Self (how person really is), and the Ideal Self (how person would like to be). In views of Rogers the ideal self is the base for the other two elements of self - the perceived and the real self.

Interestingly the importance of self has been recognized by the modern organizations. Many researches Shamir (1991), Vathanophas and Thaingam (2007) and Wright (2007) has accepted the role of manager's self-concept as a source behind the organizational success.But surprisingly there is a dearth of literature on perceived self especially with reference to the managers of telecom sector in Indian perspective. Very limited and scanty work has been done studying perceived self and gender differences in the managers of telecom sector, as the managers have to be vigilant in their work, meet the targets, work at the odd hours of the day etc. This encouraged the researcher to take up the present study. While reviewing the literature some questions came in the mind of the researcher; how does the managers of

telecom sector perceived themselves? Is there any gender difference in the perceived self among the managers of telecom sector? Do males managers have better perceived self as compared to female managers? Since it's impossible to answer all the questions in a single study, hence an attempt has been made to answer some of them in the present study.

Objective of The Study:

To study the perceived self among the managers of telecom sector and to find out the gender difference among them.

Sample:

The study was conducted on 50 managers of telecom sector. Age range of the subjects was 30 -40 years and the mean age was 112.3. Subjects were selected through purposive sampling.

Nature of the Study:

An ex post facto research with exploratory orientation in nature.

Varaible:

·   Perceived self

·   Gender

Tool Used:

Who am I? Technique was given by Bugental and Zelen (1950). There are many variant of Who am I? Technique In the present study one of the variant of Who am I? – (What is good and not so good about me – the positives and negatives of the self) introduced by Arkoff (1985) was used. Who am I? Is a tool, which explores one's perceived self on the one hand, and on the other hand serves as the base for identifying how the individual view does him /her?

<u>Administration of "Who Am I? Technique:</u>

Who am I? Technique was administered with the generation of self-descriptive statements. Following instructions were given to the subjects:

"You must have seen yourself in a mirror, in a pot of water, or in a pool. What did you see? Right you saw your face, how you look physically, or how others see you. Today we are going to show you a different kind of a mirror, which will tell you how you are from within. Look in it and see "who are you?"

Initially the managers were motivated by the researcher and were informed that there is no right and wrong answer. Further they were also ensured that their responses will be kept confidential and their identity will not be disclosed to anyone.
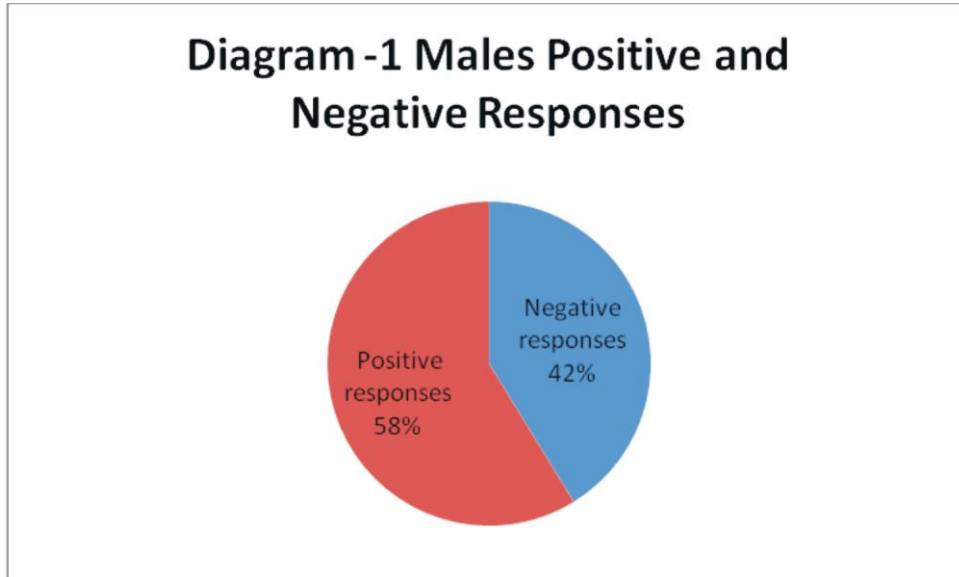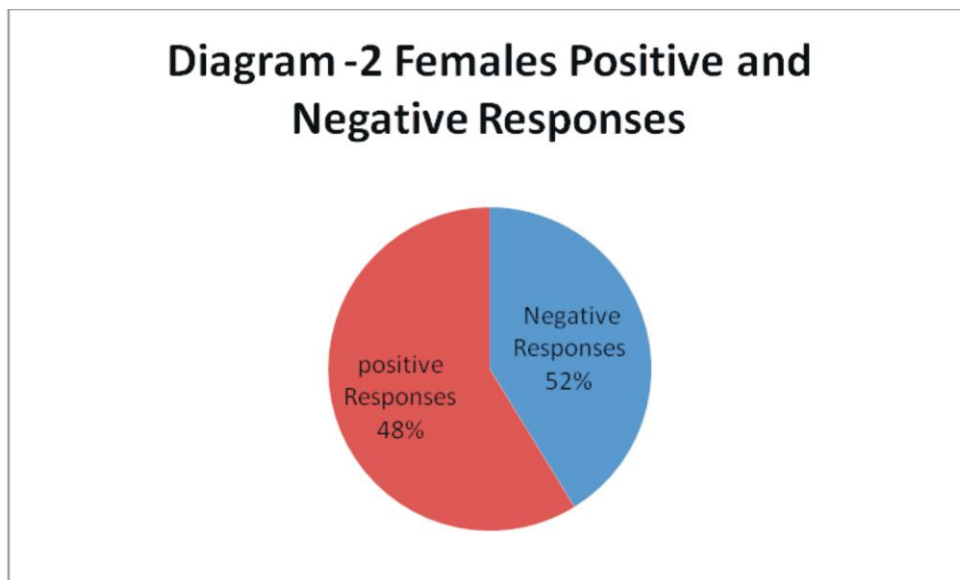
Figure .1

Diagram -1 Males Positive and Negative Responses

Negative responses 42%

Positive responses 58%

Figure .2

Diagram -2 Females Positive and Negative Responses

Negative Responses 52%

positive Responses 48%

When the responses of male and females were looked into (fig.1 and fig.2.) it depicts a clear picture that there is a gender difference in terms of positive and negative statements. Majority 58% of male's responses (fig.1) were positive while only 42% responses fall in to negative category. On the other hand, maximum responses (52%) of females (fig 2) were negative and only 48% of responses were positive.

First and foremost positive responses of males were analysed and divided into 6 sub- categories. Male positive responses were depicted in the diagram below:

Figure .3
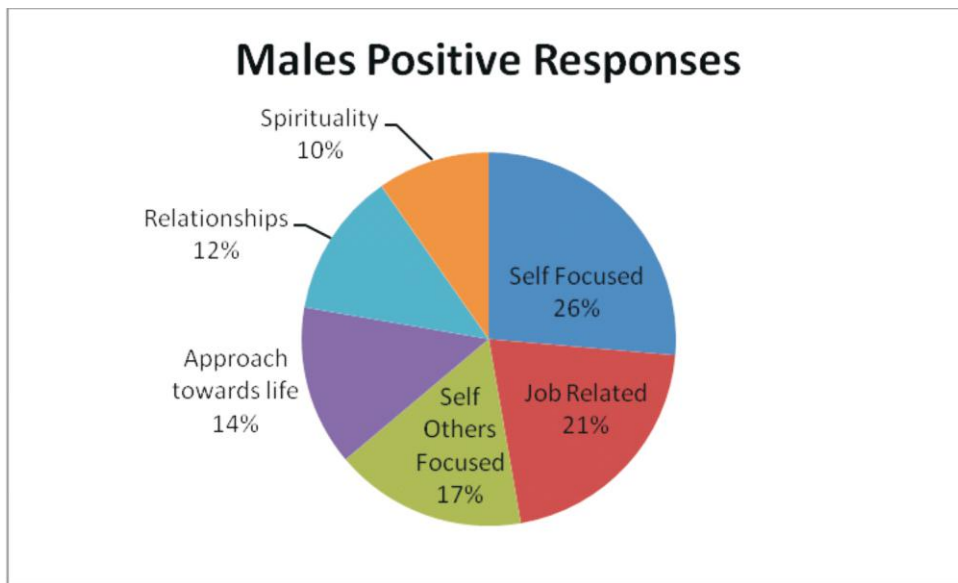
First category with maximum number of responses indicates that 26% of males were self-focused. Some of the responses in this category were: "I am a Fighter" and "I have a happy nature". A positive perceived self, adheres confidence and trust in ones capabilities. Therefore the above percentage suggests males possess the feelings of self-worth and they are aware of their strengths and are willing to use it in a positive manner (Shamir 1991)

Next category that emerged is job with 21% of males' statements. The positive attitude towards job was marked by the verbatim like "I feel content with my job" and my job provides me the opportunity to explore more." This category go hand in hand among the managers of Indian telecom sector, as they are more job oriented, they are spending most of their hours in their job, making an effort to perform better at the expense of their respective personal lives. This finding was also supported by Abbas, Hameed and Waheed (2011)

Further (17%) of male responses suggests "the dominance of others". In words of Hurlock (1965) "Others focused self refers to how a person views herself/ himself through the eyes of

others"This category goes hand in hand with the present scenario, where positive appraisal by others becomes necessary in order to keep up with the daily problems of life. Statements like "my colleagues think I am hard working, and "People trust me for my honesty"were given by the subjects.

Fourth category was approach towards life. 14 % of male managers stated that they have adopted a positive approach towards life. Statements in this category were for example "I have a positive approach towards life." They further reported that the positive approach helps them to strike a balance with their hectic schedule and stress.

Surprisingly 12% of the managers perceived themselves in terms of relationships. Some of the statements were; "I value relationships". Relationships are said to be the core of our lives, which is the reason that the focus of responses in this category was on relationship development, maintenance of relationship with family members and friends.

Spirituality can be defined as the ultimate reality. It is a path which enables a person to discover the essence of his/ her being. It provides deepest values and meanings to a person's life. Spirituality is (10%) the last category among positive responses. Responses in this category were "I pray every day, because it helps me to stay claim even in the worst of situations" Managers also mentioned that they do meditation everyday which in return helps them to feel content with what they have in live.

Further when the data was reviewed in terms of females' positive responses, six categories emerged. These categories are mentioned below:
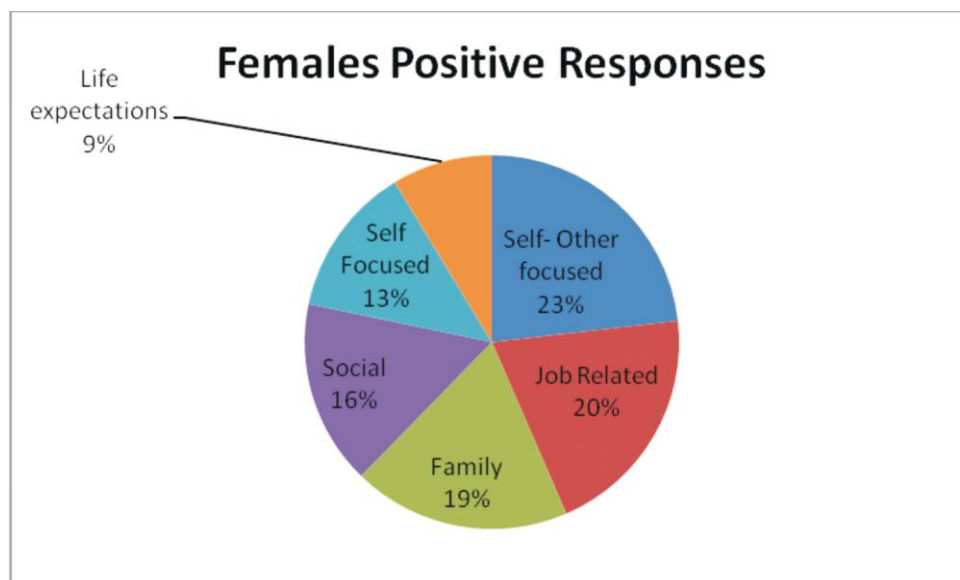
Figure .4

Fig.4 shows that majority (23 %) of females self is other focused. This in comparison to males' positive responses (fig.3) is in complete contrast; as the males were more self-focused where as females perception of self is entirely based on the judgements of others. Statements in this include;" People say I have an attractive face", and "others think I am charming personality". This finding was supported by findings of Crocker, Sabiston, Kowalski, McDonough and Kowalski (2006) indicated that specific physical self-perceptions by others were the important predictors of physical activity, dietary restraint and social physique anxiety in females.

Further 24% of females reported positive attitude towards their job. Statements in this were "I am good at managing work". Positive attitude towards job suggests all the positive experiences which a person holds towards their job. With reference to this finding Grobeleny and Wasiak (2010) stated "The most satisfied with income were masculine women managers, the least feminine women non-managers.

Moving on to the next category of positive responses, (19%) of females perceived themselves with regards to their family. Some of the responses in this category were like; "I love my family" and "I like to spend time at home". It is ironical yet true, that in our Indian culture no matter at what position a female is, how much she is earning, family remains the prime importance. The present finding similarly supports the Indian values of working women.

Another category was social with 16% of the females' responses. Verbatim under this were, "I like to be with others", "I am good at maintaining relationship" and "I like to socialize at times."Major focus of responses in this category was on socializing, interacting with others, and developing interpersonal skills.

It is an interesting finding to know that only 13% of females' perception is self-focused. Statements in this category were as "I respect myself" and I am good at managing things". This finding indicates the feminine stereotype. Feminine stereotype in our Indian culture suggests that females have a tendency of self-negligence. They think about themselves in the last; for them their family, children and others come first, despite the fact how educated they are and at what position they were working. This stereotype also goes hand in hand among the female managers of telecom sector.

Lastly 9% of females 'mentioned that they have positive life expectations. Some of the verbatim were:" "things will improve in the future" and "I will be able to accomplish my goals very soon". Positive expectations about life indicates the optimism among females about future, this also suggests that despite the present situations females try to maintain a positive outlook towards their lives.

Figure .5
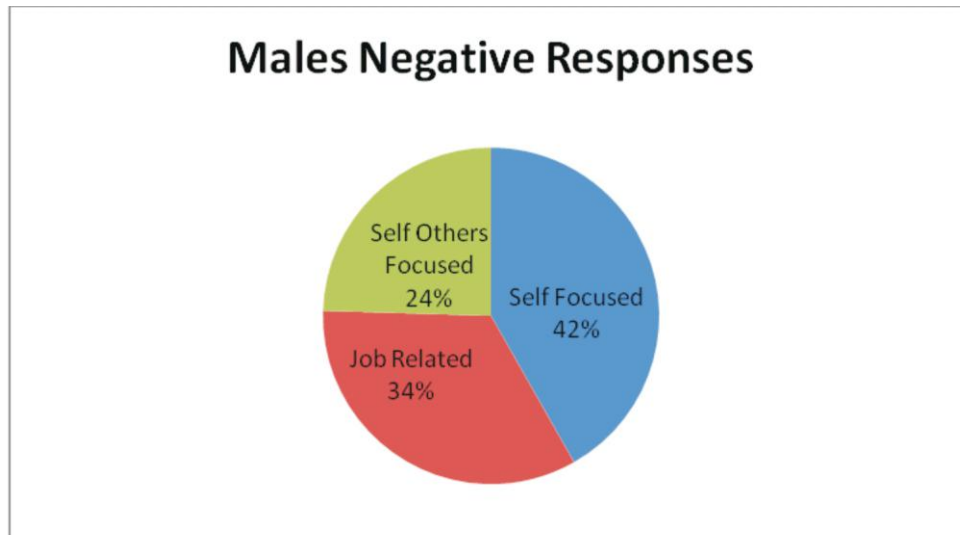
Majority of males 42 % have a negative perceived self. Statements in this category were like "I have a bad temper" and "I slightly egoistic". A negative perceived self in words of Besser and Priel (2011) is marked by the "personality predisposition of dependency, higher levels of negative affect and interpersonal rejection." With reference to the previous finding (fig.3) this was opposite of what managers reported about positive perception of self.

Fig.4 clearly depicts that (34%) of males hold the negative attitude towards their job. Verbatim in this category were like: Due to my job I have become aggressive in nature" and "I have a very demanding job." Negative responses clearly suggest their dissatisfaction in job. Thus the feeling of negative affect can said to result due to the aggressive and hectic nature of their jobs in the telecom sector.

Moving to the last category, of males' negative responses it was found that 24% of male managers self is other focused. Following were some of the example; "others think I am a bad person." It was very shocking to find out that the manager holds such a negative view about themselves despite the fact that their job requires them to maintain a positive outlook as they have to largely deal with others. Present finding supports the concept of "dissonance". It becomes ironical yet true that for the managers working in telecom sector have to represent themselves as a positive person in front of the others, despite the fact how negative and gloomy they feel within themselves.

After the reviewing the males' negative responses, females' negative responses were taken into the consideration. The five categories for negative responses were mentioned below:
Moving on to the next, the percentage of negative responses among males was divided into the three sub categories were as under:

Figure .6

Females Negative Responses

Gossip 14%
Self Focused 38%
Job Related 22%
Self Others Focused 26%
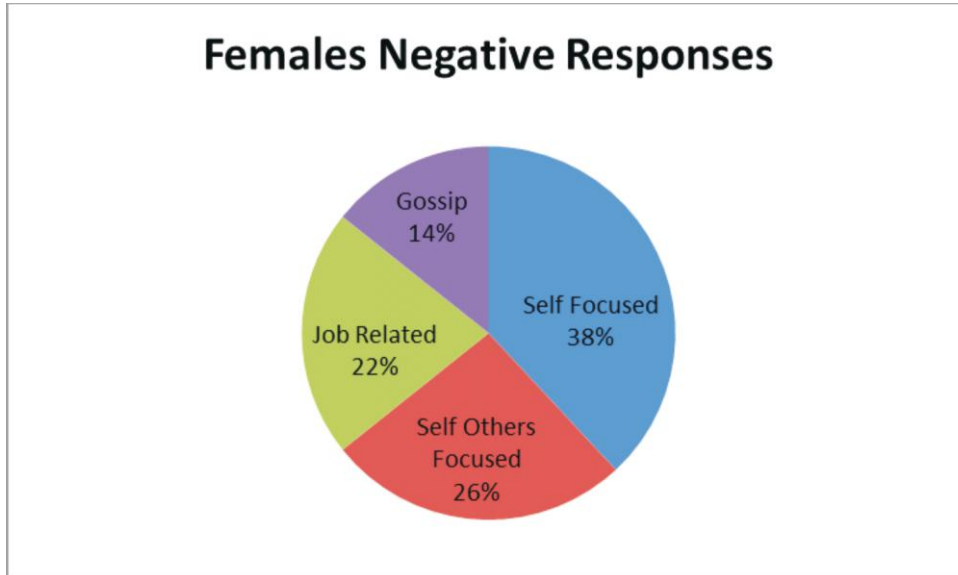
Majority of females perceived themselves negatively (38%). Negative perceived self is witnessed in the verbatim like"I have a very short temper" and "I am easily frustrated." A negative perception towards self suggests that one is not content with herself/ himself and holds negative views about self.

(26%) of females negative responses states that their self is other focused. Statements in this category were like: "Others think I am in decisive". For a person having a negative perceived self, what others think is more important than how he or she is in reality. In other words negative perceived self is characterized by the negative evaluations by others.

Next category of was job with 22% of females instances. Responses in this category were "My job is very demanding in nature and "Due to hectic schedule at work I am not able to spend time at home." Females also mentioned that they had problems in their job and because of the nature of job they were unable to

maintain a proper balance between job and personal life.

Gossip was the last category with 14% of female's responses. Verbatim in this category were: "I like to include in office politics" and "Often I like to talk about others"Gossip refers to the talking bad about others, back biting and interest in others doing. It also refers to idle talk or rumour about the personal or private affairs of other. De Gouda, Vuuren and Crafford (2005) "mentioned workplace gossip could have direct implications on trust in workplace relationships, might undermine principles espoused by corporate governance and could therefore lead to higher staff absenteeism and turnover.

The data analysis clearly points that majority of males perception is self-focused. Further suggesting that they are aware of their strengths and positives points. Job has predominance in their lives. They also acknowledge themselves through the eyes of others. Males try to maintain a positive approach towards life to strike a work life

balance. They also seem to value relationships. Lastly spirituality helps them in maintaining this positive outlook of life. Whereas the data analysis of females positive responses suggests that largely females perception is other focused. Family is of great importance in the lives of females. They were more concerned about maintaining relationships. While trying to maintain this positive outlook in life females have positive expectations from their respective lives.

Interestingly the content analysis of negative responses portrays that the males in the sample had a negative perception of self. They hold a negative perception of their job, suggesting that they were not happy with their present job conditions, pressure at job and exhaustive working hours. On the other hand females perceived more themselves negatively as compared to males. They are more influenced by the how negatively others perceived them than what they actually are. Females have a negative job perception; they feel their job is very demanding and time consuming and to add more negativity at times they like to gossip about others.

Summary and Conclusion:

Findings of the study suggest that there is a gender difference in the perceived self among the managers of telecom sector. Reasons could be the nature of jobs in telecom sector is very demanding and requires dealing with lot of pressure, working at odd hours of the day. Which males can do easily than females due to the social norms? As a result of this it is a male dominated industry. With reference to males dominance in the managerial positions, the Office for National Statistics (2008) showed that 19% of men in the United Kingdom

occupied managerial and positions of seniority compared to 12% of women, Further, as of 2009, the overall pay gap between men and women in the industry was 22% in favour of men (Government Equalities Office, 2009) Females on the other hand have more responsibilities; they have to manage their homes, children, and their respective lives. This imposes certain limitations and creates imbalance in personal and professional life. This further develops feelings of job demotivation, and results in negative perception of self. This finding was also supported by Iacobucci and Ostrom, (1993) In the emerging telecom sector of India the present study provides insights on the perceived self among the managers working in telecom sector. This study provides useful inputs to the future researches by exploring the ways in which perceived self, effects the work life of the managers. On the basis of the findings it can be suggested that personal counselling and useful training programs should be organized by the company for the managers to overcome feelings of negative self-perception and stress and to make the working environment more conducive. In the end to sum up in words of Assagioli (1966) can be said "the SELF is the universal and I am aware that I am SELF."

References:

Abbas, Q., Hameed, A. & Waheed, A. (2011). "Gender Discrimination and Its Effect on Employee Performance/ Productivity", International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Vol. 1, No.15.

Besser, A.& Priel, B. (2011). "Dependency, Self-Criticism and Negative Affective Responses Following Imaginary Rejection and Failure Threats:

Meaning-Making Processes as Moderators or Mediators", Psychiatry 74, Guilford Publications, Inc.

Crocker, P. R. E., Sabiston, C. M., Kowalski, K. C., McDough, M. H. & Kowalski, N. (2006). "Longitudinal Assessment of the Relationship between Physical Self-Concept and Health-Related Behaviour and Emotion in Adolescent Girls", Journal of Applied Sports Psychology. Drive, Belmont, C.A., 94002-3098, U.S.A.

Grobelny, A.L. & Wasiak, K. (2010) "Job Satisfaction and Gender Identity of Women Managers and Non Managers", International Journal of Occupational Medicine and Environmental Health, pp 161-166.

Gouda, C. M., Vuuren, van, L. J. & Crafford A. (2005). "Towards A Typology of Gossip in the Workplace", SA Journal of Human Resource Management; Vol 3, pp. 2.

Gardner, D. G., Dyne, L. V. & Pierce J. L. (2004). "The effects of pay level on organization-based self-esteem and performance: A field study", Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, The British Psychological Society, pp. 77, 307–322.

Hurlock, E. B. (1976). "Personality Development", Tata McGraw Hill Publishing Company limited New Delhi, India

Jacobucci, D., Ostrom, A. & Grayson. K. (1993). "Distinguishing Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction: The Voice of the Consumer", Journal of Consumer Psychology, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Jones, J. G. & Stowing, R. W. (1968). "Adolescent Identity and Self-Perception as Predictors of Scholastic Achievement", The Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 62, pp. 78-82, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27532145

Sara, L. R., Gerhart, B. & Minette, K. A. (2004). "The Importance of Pay In Employee Motivation: Discrepancies Between What People Say and What They Do", Human Resource Management, Vol. 43, No. 4, Pp. 38-394, Wiley Periodicals, Inc. Published online in Wiley Inter Science (www.interscience.wiley.com)

Shamir, B. (1991). "Meaning, Self and Motivation in Organizations, Organization Studies , vol. 12 , no .3, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel.

Taylor, G. C. "Who Am I?" Techniques in Psychotherapy,

McGill University, Montreal, Canada, (http://synthesiscenter.org/articles/0123.pdf)

"Women and the labour market", http://www.businessteacher.org.uk/free-business-essays/women-and-the-labour-market/

*Assist. Professor Dept. of Psychology Lucknow University
** Research Scholar Dept. of Psychology Lucknow University