

‘MENSTRUAL LEAVE’ A LUXURY OR NECESSITY- AN INTROSPECTION’

***Shorya Gupta, **Shilpa Bhakar**

*Assistant professor, School of Management, ITM University Gwalior

**Associate professor, School of Management, ITM University Gwalior

ABSTRACT

The rising numbers of women involved in workforce makes it vital to adopt menstrual leave policy as the fundamental policy for every business organization. Despite its importance, organizations are still unsure and reluctant to embed menstrual leave policy in their human resource policy. The study aims to evaluate the effect of employees’ perception toward menstrual leave policy on job performance and mental health. Standardized questionnaire was used to collect the data from (N=200) employees of IT and academic sector. Data has been analyzed using Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Test, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) on Smart Partial Least Squares (PLS). The results indicate that mental health contributes 68.6 percent to job performance and perception of employees toward menstrual leave policy contributes 18.6 percent. There is significant intervention of mental health between the relationship between perception of employees toward menstrual leave policy and job performance.

Keywords: perception of employees, menstrual leave policy, mental health, job performance.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations have realized the importance of employee satisfaction, in this line organizations have started believing in implementing employee-friendly policies, the menstrual leave policy remains a question and a source of contention. There could be a variety of reasons for this, including women's reluctance to speak out, public support for such an initiative, and so on. The menstrual leave policy helps the accomplishment of an equivalent and comprehensive working environment; it will also help women to maintain proper work-life balance, improves psychological well-being, and contributes to overall job performance. There are several physiological differences and other clinical signs that make it tough for women to work to their maximum potential. Considering it all, it is important to take into account menstrual leave policies in ordinary living and implement them in every organization as established policies and procedures. Paid menstrual leave is a significant strategy to energize a discussion around women's well-being and motivate women to join the labor force, educating people regarding these policies and eliminating negative attitude of public toward menstruation as somewhere deep down it is still a stigma in a society. Nevertheless, some go against such policies in the view of contentions that it will diminish financial effectiveness or manage the cost of women exceptional treatment. (Swani, 2020)

Marathe and Paul (2020) investigated the link between employee perceptions on menstruation leave policy. Mental health and job efficiency are elements investigated (Barnes, 1984). Dutt and Robinson, (2008) An investigation was conducted to evaluate the impact of the menstrual

leave policy on the working efficiency of female employees working in the coal face and it was discovered that women, particularly blue-collar female employees, find it difficult to work during two days of menstruation and believe that a policy of two days of menstrual leave should be implemented. However, no research has been conducted to investigate the association between employee perception towards menstruation leave policies and mental health. As a result, this study will fill that need and assesses the influence of employees' perceptions of menstrual leave policies on mental and job performance, as well as the contribution of mental health in mediating the relationship between employee perceptions of menstrual leave policies and job performance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employee Perception about Menstrual Leave Policy and Mental Health

Menstrual difficulties negatively impact the psychological health and well-being of females, and poor psychological health and well-being were identified amongst the female employees with menstrual issues as compared to those who do not have menstrual problems (Sarwar and Rau, 2021). Menstruation stage of a woman's cycle is connected with the highest risk of significant psychological consequences and it has been identified that Suicides, suicidal tendencies, medical hospitalizations, and drug misuse are reported at a higher rate during the menstrual period and it is connected with highest risk of the psychological consequences (Jang and Elfenbein's, 2019).

Impact of menstrual leave policy on mental health has been identified, but impact of perception towards menstrual leave policy on mental health is still not explored much. This study will throw light on this relationship with special reference to IT and Academic institutions.

H1: Employee perception towards menstrual leave policy has a substantial impact on mental health.

Mental Health and Job Performance

Dar, Akmal, Naseem, and Khan (2011) analyzed the negative correlation between mental stress and total employee job performance in major multinational enterprises in financial sectors is studied with reference to universities of Pakistani, where it revealed that male representatives are more stressed as compared to female representatives, and thus suggested implementation of policies which are pro males in order to assist employees to cope with mental pressure. The analyses were also complemented by studies undertaken by (Bashir, Ramay, 2010) among the employees of banking sector in Pakistan. Alvi, (2017) in their research highlighted that psychological wellbeing has a crucial role in enhancing the work performance of employee working in IT companies and this relationship is equivalent in projectized as well as for, non-projectized authoritative designs. Lu, Yu, Shan (2022) all confirmed that employees psychological health positively impacts work performance.

Respondents suffering from temperament, anxiousness, trauma, and pressure mental illnesses confirmed failure to remember essential information, which hampered their capacity to effectively perform and adversely affected their output. (Hennekam, Richard and Grima, 2021). Similar results are reported by Ahmadia, Bakhshizadeh, Balouchi (2012) stating that mental health issues leads to decrease in employee productivity.

H2: There is significant impact of mental health on job performance.

Employee Perception about Menstrual leave policy and Job Performance

Appropriate incentives (parental leave, medical leave, food stipends, menstrual leave policy, training and development program local area security to employees etc. has a positive and a significant on employee productiveness (Sinaga, 2018). physical working capacity of medical college students in Bangalore decreased during the luteal and menstrual stages (Girija and Veeraiyah, 2011). Also, female staffs working in field, operating machines and heavy vehicles believes that they are not competent enough to perform their task during menstrual days and prefer taking two days of menstrual leave whereas female staffs working in office are less likely to remain at home and take rest during two days of menstruation, (Lahiri-Dutt and Robinson, 2008)

Jang & Elfenbein, (2019) identified correlation between menstruation phase of women and genuine psychological wellness. It was reported that 50.5% of women during their menstrual cycle experienced psychological health issues, and 49.5% women experienced less or no psychological related health issue (Sarwar and Rauf; 2021). Thus, women employee performance was questioned and solution could be found in leave policy of the organization. Leave strategy and delivery of services have a significant correlation among the employees of commercial of banks in the state of Lagos (Obiageli, Uzochukwu and Ngozi, 2015) Work leaves such as (ill leave, maternity leave, and menstruation leave) can make the life of female employees in terms of relieving stress, increasing motivation levels, and restoring performance (Isma, Soetjipto and Sopiah, 2019).

H3: There is significant impact of employees' perception towards menstrual leave policy on job performance.

H4: Mental health mediates the MLP-job performance relationship

OBJECTIVES

1. To evaluate the impact of employees' perception toward menstrual leave policy on mental health.
2. To evaluate the impact of employees' perception toward menstrual leave policy on job performance.
3. To evaluate the mediation effect of mental health on the relationship of employees' perception towards menstrual leave policy and job performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This was causal a study using standardized questionnaires for evaluating perception of employees toward menstrual leave policy, mental health and job performance on a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree) to collect data from 200 individual respondents from the IT and academic sectors, selected using purposive sampling technique. Respondents were further divided on the basis of demographic variables (genders, marital status and educational qualification). Cronbach's Alpha Reliability test was applied to test the reliability of all the variables in the context of the current research. Exploratory Factor Analysis was applied to identify the underlying factors of all the variables. The conceptual model developed on the basis of literature review was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM) through Smart PLS software.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Showing Cronbach’s α Reliability values

S.NO	Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha	No. of item
V1	Perception of employees towards menstrual leave policy	.913	18
V2	Mental health	.968	22
V3	Job performance	.883	12

The reliability of all measures (Employees’ perception towards menstrual leave policy, job performance and mental health) was measured using Cronbach’s alpha reliability test. It resulted in Cronbach’s α value ranging from 0.883 to 0.968 for the measures of all the variables. Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.70 indicates that the questionnaire is reliable (Nunnally, 1975) and can be used for further testing. The reliability values for all the variables are in very high reliability range. Thus, the variables are highly reliable.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett’s test of adequacy and sphericity

S. No.	Variable Name	KMO Value	Bartlett’s test (chi square value)	Sig. value
1	Affirmative, Invigorating, Relevant	.866	1323.850	.000
2	Fervent, genial, cooperative	.944	2870.418	.000
3	Competent, self-confidence, stress	.876	1083.013	.000

Bartlett's sphericity test is a statistical procedure used to determine the significance of all associations in a correlation matrix (Kline, 1994). The test compares the computed item-to-item correlation matrix with identity matrix. The significant values of Bartlett’s Test chi-square values indicate that the computed item-to-item correlation matrix is significantly different from the identity matrix. The significance of the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, demonstrates the suitability of the data for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The value of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity must be below than 0.05 for EFA to be appropriate (Hung Van Truong, Cuong Hung Pham & Nhan Hoang Vo, 2016). The chi square value for all the measures was above the significance level, therefore it is considered that association in correlation method is found. Thus, the data is suitable for carrying out exploratory factor analysis. Norusis, (1992) KMO test result of 0.50 or above shows that the quantity of samples used for factor analysis is acceptable. The computed values of KMOs included in the table 2 above indicate that they are .886, 944, and .876, all greater than 0.5, indicating that the collected data through the questionnaire is appropriate for exploratory factor analysis.

Exploratory Factor Analysis was applied on the data collected using all the three measures. Principle Component Analysis (PCA) was used for the conversion of elements into factors and varimax orthogonal rotation method was used for rotating the factors.

Table 3: Summarized Exploratory Factor Results of Employee Perception towards menstrual leave policy

Factors name	Eigen value	Variance	Item converged	Factor loading
Acceptance	4.663	19.660	Menstrual leave policy would not lead to any controversy.	.818
			Male employees will not oppose implementation of menstrual leave	.663
			Menstrual leave policy would not be abused by women.	.631
			Menstrual leave policy would not be difficult to enforce.	.560
			Menstrual leave policy would not lead to discrimination against men.	.540
			Menstrual leave policy would be used by women only when required.	.522
			Menstrual leave policy safeguard would be established to Prevent the policy from interfering with the workplace.	.507
			Menstrual leave policy would not be unfair to men.	.422
Rationale	3.997	18.092	Menstrual leave policy would have positive effect on Workplace environment.	.716
			Menstrual leave policy would ensure female employee wellbeing.	.696
			Menstrual leave Policy could potentially protect jobs for women who miss the work during menstruation.	.678
			Pain and other symptoms of menstruation make the Menstrual leave necessary.	.599
			Menstrual leave policy is right of every working women.	.487
			Menstrual leave policy would lead to women empowerment.	.440
			Menstrual leave policy does not mean three days leisure holiday.	.381
Relevance	1.786	11.936	Menstrual leave policy does not violate women's privacy.	.772
			Labeling the policy as "menstrual leave" is appropriate.	.539
			Women will not hesitate to avail menstrual leave policy.	.475

The measure Employee Perception towards menstrual leave policy converged on three factors. The factors were named as 'Acceptance', 'Rationale' and 'Relevance' based on the common thread among the statements converged on each factor.

Table 4: Summarized Exploratory Factor Results of Job Performance

Factors name	Eigen Value	Variance	Items converged	Factor Loading
Assiduous	6.115	24.815	I maintain high standard of work.	.725
			I complete my assignment on time.	.711
			I can handle effectively my work in the face of change.	.664
			My colleagues believe I am high performer in my organization.	.662
			I could manage change in my job very well whenever the situation demands	.632
			I am very passionate about my work.	.598

			I perform well to mobilize collective intelligence for effective team work	.595
			I know I can handle multiple assignments for achieving organizational goal.	.583
			I cope well with organizational changes from time to time.	.500
			I do not easily lose my temper when faced by criticism from my team members at work	.445
Team Leader	5.072	23.787	I maintain good coordination among fellow workers.	.771
			I praise my co-workers for their good work.	.755
			I share knowledge and ideas among my team members.	.728
			I extend my sympathy and empathy to my co-workers when they are in trouble.	.641
			I always believe that mutual understanding can lead to viable solution in organization.	.608
			I actively participate in group discussions and work meeting.	.567
			I derive lot of satisfaction nurturing others in organization.	.529
			I guide my colleagues beyond my job purview	.473
Adaptive	2.398	17.507	I am very comfortable with job flexibility.	.718
			I love to handle extra responsibility.	.666
			I usually extend help to my co-workers when asked or needed.	.558
			I am capable of handling my assignments without much supervision.	.456

The measure ‘Job Performance’ converged on three factors. The factors were named as ‘Assiduous’, ‘Team Leader, and ‘Adaptive’, based on the common thread among the statements converged on each factor.

Table 5: Summarized Exploratory Factor Results of Mental Health

Factors name	Eigen Value	Variance extracted	Item converged	Factor Loading
Competent	4.14	28.808	I am capable of making decisions about things?	.899
			I am able to face up to problems?	.731
			I feel I can overcome my difficulties?	.722
			I feel that I play a useful part in things around me?	.702
			I am able to enjoy my normal day-to-day activities?	.594
			I am able to concentrate on whatever I do?	.492
Confident	2.931	24.870	I don’t lose confidence in myself?	.793
			I mostly feel reasonably happy, all things considered?	.762
			I never consider myself a worthless person?	.733
			I usually don’t feel unhappy or depressed?	.643
Stress free	1.634	12.093	I feel constantly under strain?	.924
			I lose much sleep over worry?	.710

The measure ‘Mental Health’ converged on three factors. The factors were named as ‘Competent’, ‘Confident’, and ‘stress free’, based on the common thread among the statements converged on each factor.

Table 6: Indicator loading and reliability

Latent variable	Indicator	Loading	Indicator reliability (loading roha)	Composite reliability	AVE
Perception towards MLP	PALMPF_1	0.860	0.929	0.952	0.870
	PALMPF_2	0.876			
	PALMPF_3	0.870			
Mental health	MHF_1	0.940	0.856	0.920	0.852
	MHF_2	0.905			
Job performance	JPF_1	0.945	0.838	0.902	0.755
	JPF_2	0.943			
	JPF_3	0.909			

Indicator loading

Evaluating the indicator loadings is the initial stage in the reflective measuring model evaluation. Loadings greater than 0.708 are suggested, implying the construct justifies more than 50% of the variation in the indicator, resulting in satisfactory item reliability. Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, (2019).

Internal consistent reliability/ Composite reliability

In addition to Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, the "rho A" coefficient (Henseler et al., 2014) were applied to assess the reliability of PLS construct scores. To indicate composite reliability, a "rho A" value of 0.7 or above is desired (Henseler et al., 2014). However, a "rho A" value greater than 1 is abnormal and should not exist in the model. As a consequence, the rho A values for job performance, mental health, and perception towards menstruation leave policy are (0.929, 0.856, and 0.838) respectively, which are higher than 0.7 and less than 1 and the composite reliability is high for all the constructs.

Convergent validity

The validity of reflective models of measurement is evaluated using convergent validity. by examining the average variance extracted (AVE). A convergent validity score of 0.50 or above suggests that the latent variable describes over than half of the variance in its indicators. Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt, (2011). As a result, convergent validity for all constructs is high because the AVE values are greater than 0.50, i.e. 0.807, 0.723, and 0.623.

Discriminate validity

The Fomell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT are two methods for determining discriminant validity. Fornell and Larcker (1981) proposed a conventional approach where the square root

of AVE for every latent variable can be utilized to create discriminant validity if such value is greater than other correlation coefficients among the latent variables.

Table 7: Farnell-Lacker Criterion for Discriminant Validity

Fornell-Larcker Criterion			
	Job Performance	Mental Health	Perception Towards MLP
Job Performance	0.933		
Mental Health	0.777	0.923	
Perception Towards MLP	0.521	0.487	0.869

The Fornell and Larcker criterion, which specifies that the square root of the AVE should be larger than the correlations among the constructs. The table 7 above displays the computed square root of AVEs and the correlation between the constructs. The results indicate that the Fornell & Larcker, 1981 criterion is completely satisfied.

Table 8: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) for indicating Discriminant validity

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)			
	Job Performance	Mental Health	Perception Towards MLP
Job Performance			
Mental Health	0.834		
Perception Towards MLP	0.589	0.584	

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

The HTMT ratio, which assesses the similarity of latent variables, was also investigated. Values of this ratio less than 0.85 indicate that the two variables are not similar (Hair et al., 2017); consequently, all the HTMT ratio values (0.834, 0.589, 0.584) fulfilled the condition, however HTMT ratio between Mental Health and Job performance is 0.834 which is very close to 0.85.

Multicollinearity Assessment

Multicollinearity among the independent variables inflate the regression coefficient. Therefore, multicollinearity among the independent variables must be within limit to ensure the correctness of multiple regression coefficient. The variance inflation factor (VIF) is a popular technique for the detection of collinearity. The value 5 or less indicate that the collinearity is within limits and does not affect the regression coefficient. The Smart PLS findings posited in table-9 suggest that all Values of VIF are less than 5, i.e. values are (1.496, 1.000). Thus, the predictors are not collinear, Haider, Jabeen, and Ahmad, (2018).

Table 9: Indicating the Variance Inflation Factor values

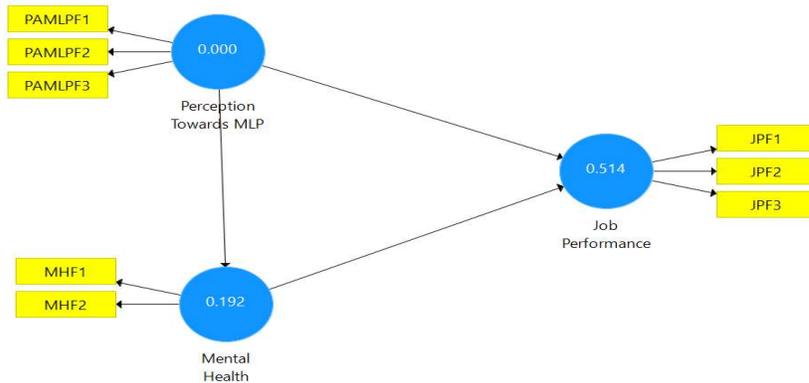
VIF Values			
	Job Performance	Mental Health	Perception Towards MLP
Job Performance			

Mental Health	1.496		
Perception Towards MLP	1.496	1.000	

Predictive Relevance: The Stone- Geisser’s Q² (values)

PLS blindfolding procedure has been utilized to obtain Q². The predictive relevance (Q²) of the model for reflective endogenous variables. Blindfolding was utilized to establish the PLS predictive analysis for all described factors in the proposed framework.

Figure 1: Blind folding Model



This was accomplished through the computation of Q² prediction, with a value higher than zero representing that the exogenous variables have predictive relevance (significance) for the endogenous variable under consideration (Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2011).

Table 10: Construct Cross Validated Communality

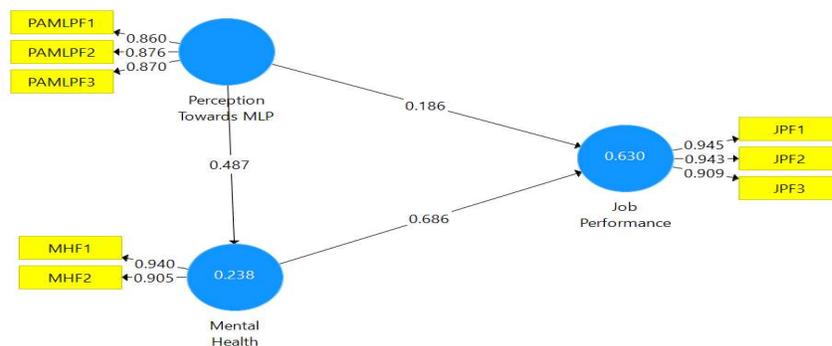
	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
Job Performance	435.000	211.384	0.514
Mental Health	290.000	234.275	0.192
Perception Towards MLP	435.000	435.000	

Table – 10 indicates that both the endogenous variables Job Performance and Mental Health have Q² values (0.514 and 0.192) that are higher than zero indicating predictive relevance for both the endogenous variables.

Inner Model Path Coefficient Sizes and Significance

Figure 2: PLS-SEM Model

Structural equation model (PLS-SEM) applied using Smart PLS software, which assessed two aspects: the measurement model and the structural model.

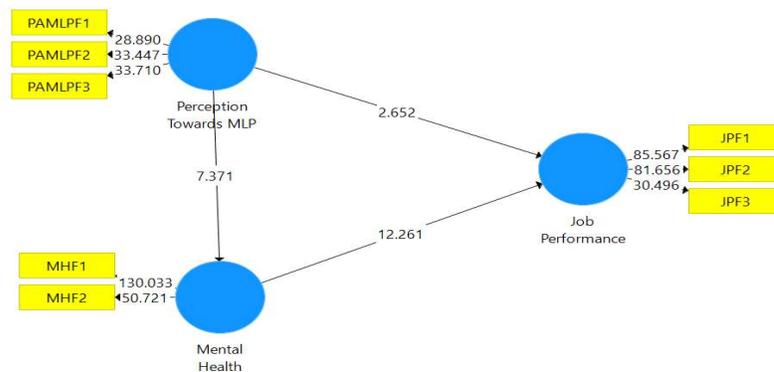


For job performance (endogenous latent variable), the coefficient of determination, R^2 , was 0.630, suggesting two latent variables (perception of menstrual leave policy and mental health) account for 63% of the variance in job performance. According to the inner model, mental health has the greatest influence on job performance (0.686), followed by the mediation effect of mental health between the perception of menstrual leave policy and job performance (0.487) and perception of employees towards menstrual leave policy (0.186). The hypothesized path association between mental health and job performance has a value of 0.630, indicating that it is statistically significant. A result of 0.186 suggests that the hypothesized route relationship between menstrual leave policy perception and job performance is statistically significant. The hypothesized path mediating the association between perception towards menstrual leave policy and job performance is statistically significant with a value of (0.003).

Checking Structural Path Significance in Bootstrapping

Bootstrapping is a non - parametric method for assessing the statistical validity of PLS-SEM (Davison and Hinkley 1997; Efron and Tibshirani 1993), which includes repeated random sampling with a substitution from the actual sample to produce a sample of bootstrap in order to generate standard errors for hypothesis testing, the desired population distribution is an accurate representation of the sample distribution presumed by the procedure. The bootstrap sample allows the estimated PLS-SEM coefficients to be tested for significance. (Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics 2009)

Figure 3: Bootstrapping Model



Relationship	Path Coefficient	t - Statistics	P - Value	Hypothesis
Perception Towards MLP -> Mental Health	0.487	7.371	0.000	H1: Supported
Mental Health -> Job Performance	0.686	12.261	0.000	H2: Supported
Perception Towards MLP -> Job Performance	0.186	2.652	0.008	H3: Supported

Table 11: Hypothesis Testing using Path Coefficients and associated T- Statistics

The hypothesis was tested through the computation of path coefficients (using PLS SEM) and their respective t-statistics computation (using Bootstrapping). The computed path coefficients and their t-values along with their level of significance are posited in table 11 above.

H1: Employee perception towards menstrual leave policy has a substantial impact on mental health. The hypothesis is supported as indicated by the path coefficient value, the associated t-statistic value and its significance. The t-statistic value is 7.371 significant at 0.0% level of significance. Thus, the Employee Perception towards Menstrual Leave Policy significantly effects the mental health of the employees.

H2: There is significant impact of mental health on job performance

The hypothesis is supported as indicated by the path coefficient value, the associated t-statistic value and its significance. The t-statistic value is 12.261 significant at 0.0% level of significance. Thus, the mental health of the employees significantly effects the Job Performance of the employees.

H3: There is significant impact of employees' perception towards menstrual leave policy on job performance

The hypothesis is supported as indicated by the path coefficient value, the associated t-statistic value and its significance. The t-statistic value is 2.652 significant at 0.8% level of significance. Thus, the Employee Perception towards Menstrual Leave Policy significantly effects the Job Performance of the employees.

H4: Mental health mediates the MLP-job performance relationship

The mediation effect of the Mental health on the relationship between Employee Perception towards Menstrual Leave Policy and the Job Performance of the employees was evaluated through the computation of indirect effect of Employee Perception towards Menstrual Leave Policy on the Job Performance. The indirect effect coefficient of Perception towards MLP and Job Performance is 0.335 and the corresponding t-statistic value is 6.374 significant at 0.000 level of significance. Thus, the mediation effect of Mental Health on the relationship between Perception towards MLP and Job Performance is significant, in other words Mental health significantly mediates the relationship between the Perception towards MLP and Job Performance.

Table 12: Showing the Indirect effect

	Job Performance	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values
Mental Health -> Job Performance					
Perception Towards MLP -> Job Performance	0.335	0.335	0.052	6.374	0.000
Perception Towards MLP -> Mental Health					

PLS-SEM analyses are commonly used to determine the importance of frameworks/components in describing other constructs in a structural model. The importance of constructs is relevant for reaching inferences. The importance-performance map analysis (IPMA) expands the PLS-SEM results by accounting for the performance of each construct

Table 13: IPMA – LV performance Values

	Job Performance	
	Importance	Performance

Mental Health	71.511	0.985
Perception towards MLP	76.228	0.626

IPMA allows interpretation of the importance of the exogenous variables and the performance in predicting the endogenous variable. The Importance-Performance Map at Chart 1 indicates that the variable mental health is very close to the other variable Perception towards MLP, however it is far more important in predicting the endogenous variable Job Performance. Thus, for the current study Mental Health is slightly lower in importance but performs far better than the other exogenous variable ‘Perception towards MLP’.

The IPMA results also indicate that an increase of 1 in the total value of Perception towards MLP increases job performance by a factor of 0.985 and an increase of 1 in the total value of Mental Health increases the Job Performance by a factor of 0.626. The results are displayed in the chart 1 showing Importance-Performance Map.

Chart 1: IPMA Chart

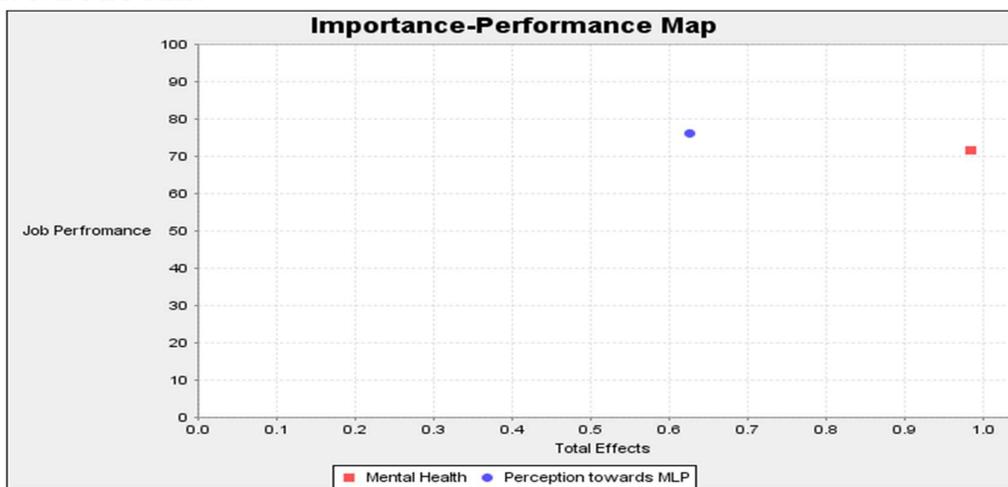
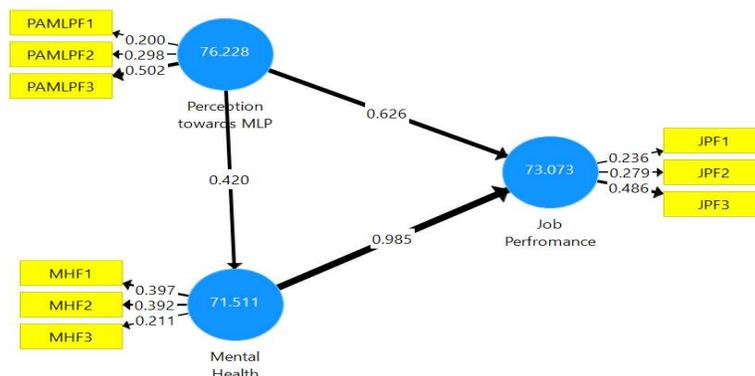


Figure 4: IPMA based PLS diagram



The IPMA based PLS diagram shows the relative performance of the exogenous variables graphically. It is clear from the diagram that Mental health-Job Performance linkage is higher than the linkage between the Perception towards MLP and the Job Performance.

CONCLUSION

As women's participation in all sectors continues to expand, it is now more important than ever to include a menstrual leave policy, as well as other basic gender-specific biological demands, in the organization's policy. As per the current study employee impressions of menstrual leave rules and mental health have a positive influence on workplace performance. Gender has a substantial impact on how employees view menstrual leave policy, according to the data, but there was no significant impact of gender on mental health or job performance, and no impact of marital status on employee perceptions of menstrual leave policy. The study revealed that marital status has a significant impact on mental health and also has a significant impact on employee work performance. Education, on the other hand, had no influence on how people feel about menstrual leave policies, their mental health, or their work performance.

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