



Psychological Distress, Work Life Balance and Coping Orientation among Civil and Criminal Lawyers

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to assess the level of Psychological Distress, Work-Life Balance and Coping Orientation among Civil and Criminal Lawyers. The study adapted Comparative and Correlational Research Design. A Snowball Sample of 40 Civil and 40 Criminal Lawyers were taken for the study. Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, Work Life Balance Scale and Brief-Coping Orientation to Problem Inventory were used for the data collection. The findings of the study indicated that, there is a significant difference in the level of Psychological Distress, Coping Orientation and there is no significant difference in the level of Work-Life Balance among Civil and Criminal Lawyers. There is a negative correlation between Psychological Distress and Coping Orientation, positive correlation between Coping Orientation and Work-life Balance and positive correlation between Psychological Distress and Work-life Balance among Civil Lawyers. There is a positive correlation between Psychological Distress and Coping Orientation, highly significant positive correlation between Coping Orientation and Work-life Balance and positive correlation between Psychological Distress and Work-life Balance among Criminal Lawyers.

Keywords: Psychological Distress; Work-Life Balance; Coping Orientation; Civil and Criminal Lawyers

Introduction

The legal profession is arguably the most researched aspect of law in legal scholarship and socio-legal studies. It is also one of the most challenging professions in the world, as it involves tough process of thinking, contemplating and reasoning whether he/she is in a policymaking role, advisory service, justice dispensing role or simply representing clients at court.

Advocacy can be defined as, getting a support from another person for helping in our views and wishes and also help us to stand up for our rights. The person who helps you in this way

is called advocate. An advocate can listen the person's views and concerns, help them to explore their options and rights (without pressuring the person), provide more information to make decisions and help them to contact relevant peoples.

In the profession of providing legal advice to others, lawyers may experience high level of distress at work that damages physical and mental wellbeing, as well as their ability to represent clients. So, with regard to this, the present study encompasses the psychological distress, work life balance and coping orientation among civil and criminal lawyers and focuses on exploring the level and relationship of psychological distress, work life balance and coping

orientation among civil and criminal lawyers, by adapting the quantitative research approach. The study attempts to understand the extent to which the civil and criminal lawyers vary in level of psychological distress, work life balance and coping orientation and also the connectedness between psychological distress, work life balance and coping orientation among civil and criminal lawyers. Further, the study also throws light on suggesting the psychological assistance to reduce psychological distress and improves coping orientation to achieve a better work life balance, if necessary.

Literature Review

Choo LG, et al. [1] the study was conducted on work stress and coping amongst lawyers in Singapore. The data was collected by using both quantitative and qualitative methods, 450 lawyers were surveyed and 27 lawyers were interviewed. The result was found that lawyers tended to report more problems -focused than emotion-focused coping ways. Emotion-focused and help-seeking coping ways were significantly correlated with interpersonal stress.

Guha D, et al. [2] the present study focused on the influence of demographic variables in their work life balance, to understand their professional work load challenges and analyse their work life balance in all dimensions. A sample of 144 advocates was taken into consideration. From the study it was found that both men and women are equally balancing their work and life and those women are balancing more when compared to men in some aspects.

Gunasekaran V [3] the present study focused on the work life balance of women advocates and its impact on their professional satisfaction. For the study women advocates practicing in Madras high court were selected as participants. A total of 387 women advocates participated in the study. The results revealed that, women advocates get moderate enrichment from work towards personal life and that their personal life helps in the enrichment of their profession. It was found that women advocates are smart enough to make balance between family life and work life and never let the constraints to permeate into the job profile. Further, women advocates have moderate satisfaction towards their profession.

Arzeen N, et al. [4] a study aimed to focus on the gender differences in psychological distress and psychological well-being among lawyers. Psychological Distress Scale and Psychological Well-being scale were the instruments used in the study. There were 110 lawyers as participants out of which, 55 were males and 55 were females. The study concluded that lawyers with high psychological distress reported lower level of psychological well-being and female

lawyers experienced more psychological distress than their male counterparts.

Method

Aim

To study the psychological distress work life balance and coping orientation among civil and criminal lawyers.

Research Rationale

The present study is focusing on psychological distress, work life balance and coping orientation among civil and criminal lawyers. If the person has maladaptive coping orientation it may contribute to increased risk of psychological distress and decreased work life balance. Whereas if the person has adaptive coping orientation it may contribute to decreased risk of psychological distress and increased work life balance. So, the present study is conducting to find out the relationship and to assess the level of psychological distress, work life balance and coping orientation among civil and criminal lawyers.

Objectives

- To assess the level of psychological distress, work life balance and coping orientation among civil and criminal lawyers.
- To find out the difference in the level of psychological distress among civil and criminal lawyers.
- To find out the difference in the level of work life balance among civil and criminal lawyers.
- To find out the difference in the level of coping orientation among civil and criminal lawyers.
- To find out the relationship between psychological distress and coping orientation among criminal lawyers.
- To find out the relationship between coping orientation and work life balance among criminal lawyers.
- To find out the relationship between psychological distress and work life balance among criminal lawyers.
- To find out the relationship between psychological distress and coping orientation among civil lawyers.
- To find out the relationship between coping orientation and work life balance among civil lawyers.
- To find out the relationship between psychological distress and work life balance among civil lawyers.
- To suggest psychological interventions to reduce psychological distress and to improve coping orientation and work life balance, if necessary.

Hypotheses

- H0: There is no significant difference in the level of psychological distress among civil and criminal lawyers.
- H0: There is no significant difference in the level of coping orientation among civil and criminal lawyers.

- H0: There is no significant difference in the level of work life balance among civil and criminal lawyers.
- H0: There is no relationship between psychological distress and coping orientation among civil lawyers.
- H0: There is no relationship between coping orientation and work life balance among civil lawyers.
- H0: There is no relationship between psychological distress and work life balance among civil lawyers.
- H0: There is no relationship between psychological distress and coping orientation among criminal lawyers.
- H0: There is no relationship between coping orientation and work life balance among criminal lawyers.
- H0: There is no relationship between psychological distress and work life balance among criminal lawyers.

Variables

Independent Variable

- Civil Lawyers
- Criminal Lawyers

Dependent Variable

- Psychological Distress
- Work Life Balance
- Coping Orientation

Operational Definitions

- **Civil Lawyer** is a person who deals with legal issues related to the property and business.
- **Criminal Lawyer** is a person who deals with legal issues related crimes and punishments.
- **Psychological Distress** is a state, caused by severe and prolonged stress or both.
- **Work-Life Balance** can be defined as the healthy and effective functioning at professional and personal life with minimum amount of role conflict.
- **Coping Orientation** is one's efforts to reduce the impact of a difficult or stressful situation in a unique sense.

Sample

Sample Distribution A Snow ball sample of 40 civil and 40 criminal lawyers have been selected for the present study.

Research Design

The study has adapted Comparative and Correlational research design.

Inclusion Criteria

- LLB with Degree
- Professional lawyers

Exclusion Criteria

- Salary
- Marital status

- Age limit
- Work experience
- Gender
- Personal life

Research Tools

The tools used for the data collections are

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale: (K10) The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) is a widely used instrument developed by Kessler RC, et al. [5] to measure the distress. This self-reported questionnaire has 10 items about emotional state each with five response scale.

Reliability and Validity: The reliability of Kessler scale showed that it has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.84 and 0.88. It was found to have excellent construct validity.

Scoring: Each item is scored from one 'none of the time' to five 'all of the time'. Score of 10 items are then summed, yielding a minimum score 10 and a maximum score of 50. Low score indicates low level of psychological distress and high score indicate high levels of psychological distress.

Work Life Balance Scale: The Work Life Balance Scale was developed by Hayman J [6] to measure work life balance organizations. A 15- items scale has been adapted from a 19- items scales originally developed by Fisher- Mc Aulley, Stanton, Kessler RC, et al. [5] that was designed to capture employee perceptions on work life balance. The 15 -item scale measured work interference with personal life.

Reliability and Validity: The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .91, which indicates good reliability. The Bentler- Bonett coefficient for all constructs was greater than 0.90, which indicating high convergent validity.

Scoring: Here, the scale is 5 point (Strongly Disagree -1, Disagree - 2, Neither Agree nor Disagree- 3, Agree -4, Strongly Agree -5), the scoring was done as 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 for the dimensions (except item 7, which was reverse scored, i.e. and PLIW, since the items were negatively worded). High score indicated lower interference and, lower levels of interference were interpreted as higher levels of work life balance. The overall work life balance score was thus computed by adding the scores on the three dimensions.

Brief- Coping Orientation to Problem Inventory: The Brief-Cope was developed as a short version of the original 60-item COPE scale Carver CS, et al. [7], which was theoretically derived based on various models of coping. The Brief- COPE is a 28 item self-report questionnaire designed to measure effective and ineffective ways to cope with stressful life events.

Reliability and Validity: The Cronbach's alpha for overall Brief COPE was 0.70 indicating good reliability. It was found to have good convergent validity [8].

Scoring: Scores are presented for three overarching coping styles average scores (sum of item score divided by number of items), indicating the degree to which the respondent has

been engaging in that coping style. Score 1 indicates for 'I haven't been doing this at all', score 2 indicates for 'A little bit', score 3 indicates for 'A medium amount' and score 4 indicates that 'I have been doing this a lot' [9].

Procedure

The participants who fulfilled the criteria were met personally by the researcher. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants. The verbal consent was taken from the participants. After the completion of the administration of psychological distress scale, a five-minute break was given for the purpose of relaxation and then work life balance scale was administered and the same followed for the coping orientation scale. Later the tools were collected back from the participants [10].

Ethical Considerations

- The verbal consent was taken from the participants before collecting the data.
- Confidentiality and privacy were maintained throughout the study.
- Data collected was only used for the academic research purpose.

Statistical Method

- Independent Sample t-test
- Pearson's Co-efficient of Correlation

Result and Discussion

Section-1: Independent Sample t-test

Area	Lawyers	N	Mean	SD	t- value	P- value
Psychological Distress	Civil Lawyers	40	28.425	6.6713	-5.498	.000
	Criminal Lawyers	40	36.175	5.9134	-5.498	.000

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation and p- value of civil and criminal lawyers on psychological distress.

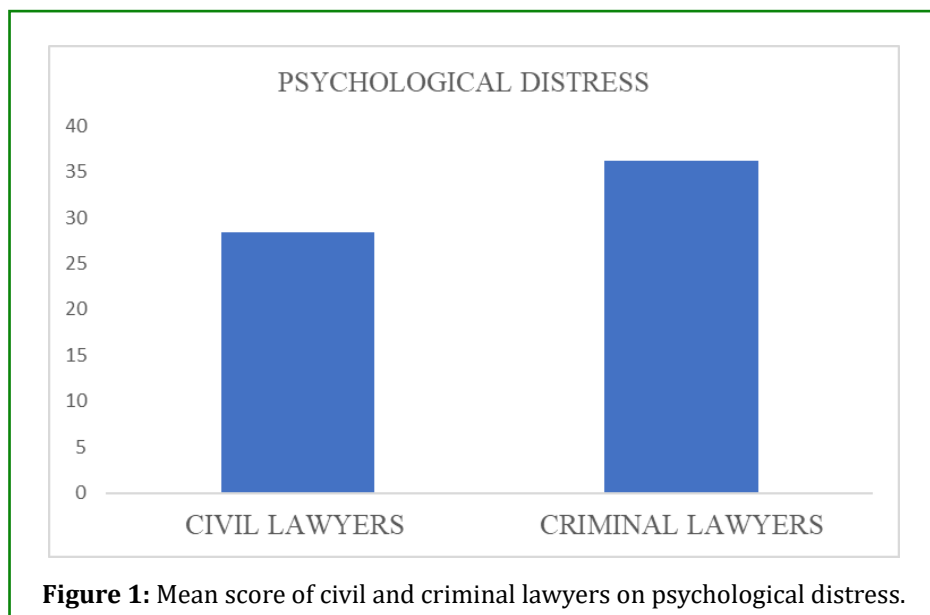


Figure 1: Mean score of civil and criminal lawyers on psychological distress.

The hypothesis stating that, there is no significant difference in the level of Psychological Distress among Civil Lawyers and Criminal Lawyers was tested employing independent sample t-test. The P-value for Psychological Distress is .000, which

is significant. Hence the null hypothesis, which states that, there is no significant difference in the level of Psychological Distress among Civil and Criminal Lawyers, is rejected (Table 1 & Figure 1).

Area	Lawyers	N	Mean	SD	t- value	P- value
Coping Orientation	Civil Lawyers	40	63.025	6.9521	-4.624	.000
	Criminal Lawyers	40	69.475	5.4301	-4.624	.000

Table 2: Mean, standard deviation and p-value of civil and criminal lawyers on coping orientation.

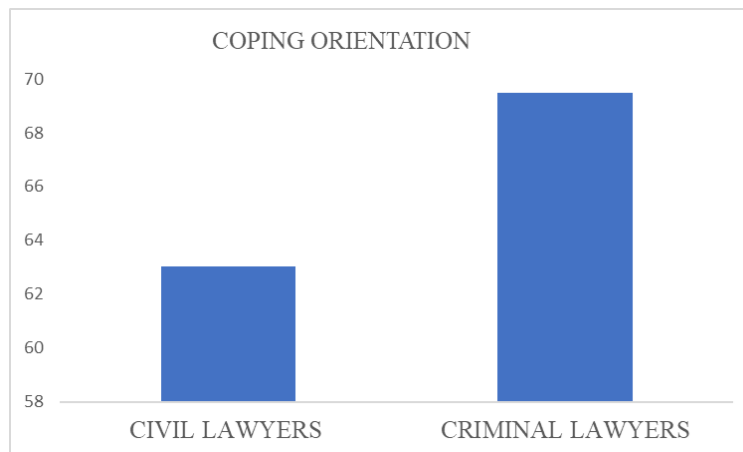


Figure 2: Mean score of civil and criminal lawyers on coping orientation.

The hypothesis stating that, there is no significant difference in the level of coping orientation among Civil Lawyers and Criminal Lawyers was tested employing independent sample t- test. The P-value for Coping Orientation is .000,

which is significant. Hence the null hypothesis, which states that, there is no significant difference in the level of Coping Orientation among Civil and Criminal Lawyers, is rejected (Table 2 & Figure 2).

Area	Lawyers	N	Mean	SD	t- value	p- value
Work Life Balance	Civil Lawyers	40	55.2	8.413	-0.955	0.343
	Criminal Lawyers	40	56.825	6.7173	-0.955	0.343

Table 3: Mean, standard deviation and p- value of civil and criminal lawyers on work life balance.

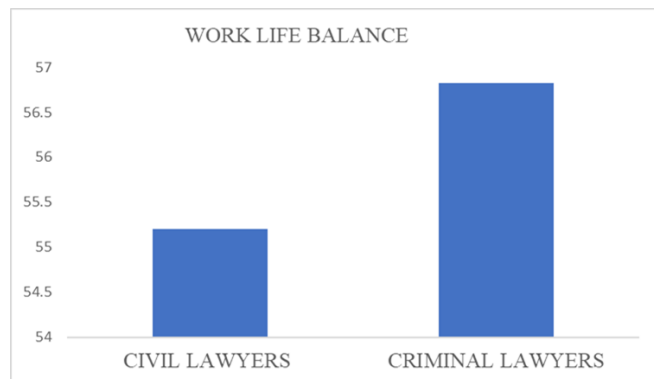


Figure 3: Mean score of civil and criminal lawyers on work life balance.

The hypothesis stating that, there is no significant difference in the level of work life balance among civil lawyers and criminal lawyers was tested employing independent sample t- test. The P-value for Work Life Balance is .343, which is not significant. Hence the null hypothesis, which states that, there is no significant difference in the level of Work Life Balance among Civil and Criminal Lawyers is, accepted (Table 3 & Figure 3).

Section-2: Pearson's Co- efficient of Correlation

	Psychological Distress	Coping Orientation
Psychological Distress	1	-0.201
Coping Orientation	-0.201	1

Table 4: Pearson's Co- Efficient of Correlation between Psychological Distress and Coping Orientation among Civil Lawyers.

The hypothesis stating that, there is no significant relationship between Psychological Distress and Coping Orientation among Civil Lawyers was tested employing Pearson's Coefficient of correlation. The result indicated that, there is a Negative Correlation between Psychological Distress and Coping Orientation among Civil Lawyers, which reveals that, as the level of Psychological Distress increases, the level of Coping Orientation decreases and vice-versa. But no significant relationship is found. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted (Table 4).

	Coping Orientation	Work Life Balance
Coping orientation	1	0.106
Work life balance	0.106	1

Table 5: Pearson's co-efficient of correlation between coping orientation and work life balance among civil lawyers.

The hypothesis stating that, there is no significant relationship between Coping Orientation and Work Life Balance among Civil Lawyers was tested employing Pearson's Coefficient of correlation. The result indicated that, there is a positive correlation between Coping Orientation and Work Life Balance among Civil Lawyers, which reveals that, as the level of Coping Orientation increases, the level of Work Life Balance also increases. But no significant relationship is found. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted (Table 5).

	Psychological Distress	Work Life Balance
Psychological distress	1	0.184
Work life balance	0.184	1

Table 6: Pearson's co-efficient of correlation between psychological distress and work life balance among civil lawyers.

The hypothesis stating that, there is no significant relationship between Psychological Distress and Work Life Balance among Civil Lawyers was tested employing Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation. The result indicated that, there is a Positive Correlation between Psychological Distress and Work Life Balance among Civil Lawyers, which reveals that, as the level of Psychological Distress increases, the level of Work Life Balance also increases. But no significant relationship is found. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted (Table 6).

	Psychological Distress	Coping Orientation
Psychological Distress	1	0.184
Coping Orientation	0.184	1

Table 7: Pearson's co-efficient of correlation between psychological distress and coping orientation among criminal lawyers.

The hypothesis stating that, there is no significant relationship between Psychological Distress and Coping Orientation among Criminal Lawyers was tested employing Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation. The result indicated that, there is a Positive Correlation between Psychological Distress and Coping Orientation among Criminal Lawyers, which reveals that, as the level of Psychological Distress increases, the

level of Coping Orientation also increases. But no significant relationship is found. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted (Table 7).

	Coping Orientation	Work Life Balance
Coping Orientation	1	1.000**
Work Life Balance	1.000**	1

Table 8: Pearson's co-efficient of correlation between coping orientation and work life balance among criminal lawyers.

The hypothesis stating that, there is no significant relationship between Coping Orientation and Work Life Balance among Criminal Lawyers was tested using Correlation. The result indicated that, there is a significant Positive Correlation between Coping Orientation and Work Life Balance at 0.01 level. There is a Positive Significant Correlation between Coping Orientation and Work Life Balance, which reveals that, as the level of Coping Orientation increases, the level of Work Life Balance also increases. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected (Table 8).

	Psychological Distress	Work Life Balance
Psychological Distress	1	0.176
Work Life Balance	0.176	1

Table 9: Pearson's co-efficient of correlation between psychological distress and work life balance among criminal lawyers.

The hypothesis stating that, there is no significant relationship between Psychological Distress and Work Life Balance among Criminal Lawyers was tested employing Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation. The result indicated that, there is a Positive Correlation between Psychological Distress and Work Life Balance among Criminal Lawyers, which reveals that, as the level of Psychological Distress increase, the level of Work Life Balance also increases. But no significant relationship is found. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted (Table 9).

Summary and Conclusion

The study entitled "Psychological Distress, Work Life Balance and Coping Orientation among Civil and Criminal Lawyers" was undertaken to assess the level of Psychological Distress, Work Life Balance and Coping Orientation among Civil and Criminal Lawyers. The study has adapted Comparative and Correlational research design and tools used are Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, Work Life Balance Questionnaire and Brief-Coping Orientation to Problem Experience Inventory [11].

The Following are the Important Findings of the Study

- There is no significant difference in the level of psychological distress among civil and criminal lawyers.
- There is no significant difference in the level of coping orientation among civil and criminal lawyers.
- There is no significant difference in the level of work life balance among civil and criminal lawyers.
- There is a negative correlation between psychological distress and coping orientation among civil lawyers [12].
- There is a positive correlation between coping orientation and work life balance among civil lawyers.
- There is a positive correlation between psychological distress and work life balance among civil lawyers.
- There is a positive correlation between psychological distress and coping orientation among criminal lawyers.
- There is a highly significant positive correlation between coping orientation and work life balance among criminal lawyers.
- There is a positive correlation between psychological distress and work life balance among criminal lawyers [13].

Limitations of the Study

- The sample size selected for the study was limited and only the questionnaire method was used.
- Since the sample size was small, the result cannot be generalized universally.

Implication

- As the result of the study found that, the level of psychological distress is high among criminal lawyers, certain psychological methods can be introduced to reduce the level of psychological distress and even to assist them to improve work life balance and coping orientation.

Scope for Further Study

- As the present study was only used the quantitative approach, for the further study a mixed method approach can be adapted to elicit the issues facing by the lawyers in a descriptive format by considering the large sample size.
- The other influencing factors like age, gender, salary, work experience and personal life of lawyers can be considered for the further study to gather the depth information.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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