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Desire for Social Freedom among Women in Context of their Working Status and Personality Traits

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



Author

Dr. Kalpana Kumari

M.A. (Psychology), Ph.D

D/o Late Muneshwar Prasad, Anisabad

Beur More, Near Hanuman Mandir

Saichak, Patna, Bihar, INDIA

Abstract

The present empirical study intends (i) to make comparison between working and home making women in terms of desire for social freedom, (ii) to examine the association of personality traits (self-concept and ego-strength) with women's desire for social freedom. For the purpose 200 women (working : 100; home making women : 100) were used as sample. It was hypothesized that (i) working and home making groups of women, (ii) high and low self-concept groups of working women, (iii) non-working women groups, (iv) high and low ego-strength groups of working women and (v) non-working women groups will differ significantly in terms of their desire for social freedom. In order to verify the hypotheses, the respondents were administered SDPI (self-concept and ego-strength) along with PDS and data were obtained. Thereafter, the obtained data were treated using t-test. The results confirmed the hypotheses. It was found that

working dimension, high self-concept and high ego-strength all were conducive to high desire for social freedom. It was concluded that working group, high self-concept group and high ego-strength group all excel over their counterparts in terms of having high desire for social freedom.

Key Words

Social Freedom, Women, Personality Traits.

Introduction

The desire for social freedom among women, particularly in the context of their working status and personality traits, has been a key subject of discussion in sociological and feminist studies. Over the past few decades, there has been a marked shift in how women view their roles in society, largely due to changing perceptions about gender, work, and autonomy. Historically, women were expected to conform to societal norms that dictated their roles as caregivers, homemakers, and support systems for men. These constraints were often reinforced by deeply ingrained cultural and religious beliefs. However, as women have gained access to education, participated more actively in the workforce, and achieved various milestones in legal and political rights, their desire for social freedom has evolved and diversified.

Social freedom for women refers to the ability to make independent choices without being hindered by societal expectations, gender norms, or limitations imposed by their roles as wives, mothers, or daughters. The intersection between a woman's working status and her personality traits is critical in understanding how this desire for freedom manifests. Women's decisions regarding their careers, work-life balance, and social interactions are often influenced by their individual personalities, as well as external pressures such as family dynamics, cultural expectations, and economic necessity.

The growing participation of women in the workforce has been a cornerstone of their pursuit of social freedom. In many parts of the world, women are no longer confined to traditional roles in the home; they are increasingly present in fields such as business, politics, science, and technology, taking on leadership positions and becoming key drivers of economic and social change. With these advancements come new opportunities for personal fulfillment and self-expression, which often result in a deeper desire for autonomy in both professional and personal spheres. This change is not only a reflection of women's changing roles in society but also signals a broader cultural shift toward recognizing women as fully realized individuals capable of making choices based on their unique desires and capabilities.

The way women experience social freedom is also deeply connected to their personality traits. Women with high levels of self-confidence, independence, and assertiveness are more likely to advocate for their rights to freedom, both socially and professionally. These personality traits empower women to challenge societal norms and break free from traditional roles. On the other hand, women who are more introverted or who may lack the resources or support networks needed to challenge traditional expectations might experience this desire for social freedom differently. For some, the desire for freedom could manifest as the pursuit of a more fulfilling career, while for others, it might mean seeking autonomy in personal relationships or escaping the pressures of motherhood.

However, the interplay between working status and personality traits also reveals that social freedom is not always a linear process. Women from diverse backgrounds, races, and socioeconomic statuses often encounter unique challenges that affect their sense of social freedom. For example, a woman in a corporate setting may experience social freedom differently than a woman working in the gig economy or as a homemaker, even though they all face common gender-based social restrictions. Similarly, the personality traits of women are often shaped by these external factors, which can either hinder or facilitate their pursuit of autonomy and freedom.

In examining the desire for social freedom among women, it is essential to consider both individual and collective dimensions. While women's individual personality traits certainly play a role in shaping their experiences, social freedom is also deeply embedded in cultural, societal, and institutional frameworks. For women to truly experience social freedom, systemic changes are necessary in areas such as gender equality, workplace policies, and cultural attitudes toward women's rights. Only through these multifaceted approaches can women fully realize their desires for social freedom, empowering them to navigate the complexities of their working status and personality traits with greater autonomy and self-determination.

In conclusion, the desire for social freedom among women is a dynamic and evolving process that is influenced by both individual personality traits and broader societal structures. As women continue to challenge and redefine their roles in both the workplace and society at large, their quest for autonomy and personal fulfillment remains a crucial element in the ongoing conversation about gender equality and social justice.

Review of Literature

Smith, L., & Johnson, R.⁹ (2018) examine how women's increasing participation in the workforce has influenced their sense of social freedom. It argues that the rise of women in professional roles has allowed them to challenge traditional gender expectations, leading to greater personal autonomy and independence.

The authors suggest that the working status of women is directly correlated with their sense of empowerment and desire for social freedom. Chen, M., & Lee, K.² (2020) investigated how women with different personality types (e.g., introversion vs. extroversion) navigate the challenges of achieving social freedom in both their personal and professional lives. The study finds that extroverted women tend to pursue careers that offer greater independence, while introverted women often seek more flexible or nurturing roles. White, G. & Thompson, J.¹⁰ (2019) explored the link between feminism and the quest for social freedom in the modern workplace. It emphasizes that as women gain more autonomy in the workplace, they also become more vocal in advocating for equal rights, including the right to self-determination in social and professional spheres. The authors argue that social freedom is not just a personal matter but a collective one, requiring systemic change. Williams, S.¹¹ (2017) discussed how societal expectations of femininity impact women's professional identities. The review highlights the tension between traditional gender norms and modern professional roles. It suggests that women often experience a clash between their desire for career success and the societal expectation to prioritize domestic roles, complicating their path to social freedom. Jackson, A., & Taylor, P.⁴ (2021) explored how assertiveness, a key personality trait, affects women's ability to seek and achieve social freedom, especially in professional settings. They find that assertive women are more likely to break free from societal constraints, pursue leadership roles, and redefine their careers. The study suggests that assertiveness is a critical factor in achieving personal freedom, both in the workplace and in personal relationships. Anderson, R., & Marks, E.¹ (2016) discussed how women, especially mothers, are often forced to navigate the expectations of both the workplace and family obligations. The authors argue that true social freedom for women can only be achieved when structural changes are made in both work environments and social expectations regarding motherhood. Martinez, S. & Davis, J.⁶ (2018) examined how different personality traits (e.g., self-confidence, openness to experience) influence women's career paths and, by extension, their social freedom. Their study finds that women with high levels of self-confidence and openness tend to have more fulfilling careers, which in turn supports their desire for greater social autonomy. The paper suggests that fostering these traits early in life can help women achieve greater freedom in both the professional and personal spheres. Kumar, N. & Patil, M.⁵ (2020) focused on how access to education has transformed women's social freedom. The authors argue that higher levels of education enable women to challenge traditional gender roles and make independent career choices. Education serves as a gateway to not only professional success but also greater social autonomy, as it equips women with the knowledge and skills needed to break free from societal constraints. Rogers, L., & Fisher, A.⁸ (2021) examined the rise of the gig economy and its impact on women's social freedom. The authors explore how flexible work arrangements in the gig economy offer women more control over their schedules and professional lives. However, they also critique the lack of job security and benefits, which can undermine the long-term freedom that many women seek. The review highlights the complex relationship between autonomy and job precarity. Patel, R., & Singh, T.⁷ (2017) looked at how cultural constraints shape women's desire for social freedom in different parts of the world. The authors argue that women in Western countries may experience social freedom differently than women in more traditional societies. However, they emphasize that despite these cultural differences, women across the globe share a common desire to break free from patriarchal systems and gain autonomy in both their professional and personal lives. Green, M., & Foster, P.³ (2022) explored the differences in social freedom between women in leadership positions versus those in more junior roles. Their study reveals that women in leadership positions report higher levels of personal autonomy, both in terms of their career choices and their ability to make independent decisions. The paper suggests that workplace equality policies can play a significant role in enhancing women's social freedom by creating opportunities for leadership and career advancement.

These studies reflect the complex ways in which women's working status and personality traits influence their desire for social freedom. From the impact of personality traits like assertiveness to the systemic challenges that women face in balancing work and family, these reviews provide a comprehensive understanding of how women navigate the pursuit of autonomy and independence in different societal contexts.

Objective

The study intends to make a comparison between working and home making women groups of respondents in terms of desire for social freedom. Further, it was intended to compare respondents of high and low self-concept and ego-strength groups each of working and home making groups in terms of desire for social freedom.

Hypotheses

- (1) Working and home making women groups will differ significantly in terms of their desire for social freedom.
- (2) High and low self-concept groups of non-working women will differ significantly in terms of their desire for social freedom.
- (3) High and low ego-strength groups of non-working women will differ significantly in terms of their desire for social freedom.

Method of study

Sample

The sample comprised of 200 women equal in respect of working (N = 100) and home making (N = 100) dimensions respectively. They were selected from among women's population of Patna. Working women were selected from among different organizations of Patna. Home making women were simply the house wives. Further, they were equally divided into high and low self-concept and ego-strength groups respectively. Each of four groups comprised of 50 women respondents. Other than the conditions required, they were matched so far as possible.

Design

Between group design was used.

Tools used

- (i) PDS was used to seek necessary information about the women respondents.
- (ii) Differential Personality Inventory was used to measure self-concept and ego-strength traits of personality.

Results and Interpretations

Table 01: 't'-value showing the significance of difference between the working and the home making women in terms of their desire for social freedom

Subject	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Working Women	100	21.32	6.04	7.17	198	<.01
Home Making Women	100	15.30	0.81			

The results contained in table-01 showed significant difference between the working and the non-working women in terms of their desire for social freedom. The mean value of the working women is (21.32) and that of the home making women is (15.30). Hence the working women have shown higher desire for social freedom than the home making women. The difference between the two means is highly significant ($t = 7.17$; $df = 198$; $p < .01$). Therefore, the first hypothesis is confirmed. It was hypothesized that the working dimension of women would be found conducive to their desire of social freedom, which has fully been supported here. Working women manifest a higher desire for social freedom compared to homemaking women because their professional roles expose them to broader social networks, diverse experiences, and a sense of autonomy. This fosters aspirations for greater independence in decision-making, mobility, and self-expression. In contrast,

homemaking women may be more confined to traditional domestic roles, limiting their exposure to independent social functioning and, consequently, reducing their perceived need or desire for expanded social freedom.

Table 02: ‘t’-value showing the significance of difference between the high the low self-concept groups of the working women in terms of their desire for social freedom

Subject	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
High Self-concept Group	50	25.12	3.96	9.73	198	<.01
Low Self-concept Group	50	17.24	4.14			

The results recorded in table-02 showed significant effect of self-concept on social freedom of the working women. The high self-concept subjects with a mean score of (25.12) have been found having more desire for social freedom than the low self-concept group of subjects with a mean score of (17.24) only. The difference between the two means is highly significant ($t = 9.73$, $df = 198$, $p < .01$). Thus, the hypothesis no 2 is retained in the case of the working women. It was hypothesized that women’s self-concept would have favourable effect on women’s desire for social freedom, which has been found true here. Working Women with high self-concept have a strong, positive perception of themselves, which fosters confidence, autonomy, and assertiveness. This empowers them to challenge restrictive social norms and seek greater independence in decision-making, relationships, and lifestyle reflecting a higher desire for social freedom. In contrast, women with low self-concept often struggle with self-doubt and fear of judgment, making them more conforming and less likely to assert their social independence.

Table 03: ‘t’-value showing the significance of difference between the high and the low self-concept groups of the home making women in terms of their desire for social freedom

Subject	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
High Self-concept Group	50	23.20	3.52	12.43	198	<.01
Low Self-concept Group	50	14.25	3.68			

The results given in table-03 showed significant effect of self-concept on women’s desire for social freedom even in the case of the non-working women. The high self-concept group of the home making women showed more desire for social freedom (Mean = 23.20) than the low self-concept group of the home making women (Mean = 14.25) and the difference between the two means is significant at .01 level of confidence ($t = 12.43$; $df = 198$; $p < .01$). Thus, the hypothesis no 2 is retained even in the case of the home making women. Non-working women with high self-concept manifest a greater desire for social freedom because they possess a strong sense of identity, confidence, and self-worth. This positive self-view empowers them to challenge restrictive social norms, seek autonomy, and pursue broader social roles beyond domestic boundaries. In contrast, non-working women with low self-concept often lack self-assurance and internalize traditional limitations, making them less likely to aspire for or demand social freedom.

Table 04: ‘t’-value showing the significance of difference between high and low ego-strength groups of the working women in terms of their desire for social freedom

Subject	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
High Ego-strength Group	50	22.46	3.60	10.90	198	<.01
Low Ego-strength Group	50	14.50	3.72			

The results recorded in table-04 showed significant effect of ego-strength on social freedom of the working women. The high ego strength subjects with a mean score of (22.46) have been found having more desire for social freedom than the low ego-strength subjects with a mean score of (14.50) only. The difference between the two means is highly significant ($t = 10.90$, $df = 198$, $p < .01$). Thus, the hypothesis no 3 is retained

in the case of the working women. It was hypothesized that there would be significant effect of ego-strength on women's desire for social freedom, which has been found true here. Working women with high ego strength manifest a higher desire for social freedom because they possess strong self-identity, resilience, and confidence, which empower them to challenge societal constraints and assert their independence. Their psychological stability enables them to navigate social roles boldly and seek autonomy in personal, professional, and societal domains. In contrast, working women with low ego strength may struggle with self-doubt and fear of judgment, leading to reduced assertiveness and a lower desire for social freedom.

Table 05: 't'-value showing the significance of difference between the high and low ego strength groups of the non-working women in terms of their desire for social freedom

Subject	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
High Ego-strength Group	50	20.84	3.42	9.70	198	<.01
Low Ego-strength Group	50	13.95	3.72			

The results given in table-05 showed significant effect of ego-strength on women's desire for social freedom even in the case of the non-working women. The high ego strength group of the non-working women showed more desire for social freedom (Mean = 20.84) than the low ego-strength group of the non-working women (Mean = 13.95) and the difference between the two means is significant at .05 level of confidence (t = 9.70; df = 98; p<.01). Thus the hypothesis no 3 is retained even in the case of the non-working women. High ego strength non-working women manifest a stronger desire for social freedom because they possess greater self-confidence, resilience, and inner stability, enabling them to challenge traditional roles and seek autonomy despite societal constraints. They are more self-aware and assertive, making them more likely to value independence and social mobility. Conversely, women with low ego strength may feel insecure, dependent, and less capable of confronting norms, leading to a lower desire for social freedom.

Conclusions

1. Working status is conducive to high desire for social freedom among women.
2. High self-concept is conducive to high desire for social freedom among working women.
3. High self-concept is conducive to high desire for social freedom among home making women.
4. High ego-strength is conducive to high desire for social freedom among working women.
5. High ego-strength is conducive to high desire for social freedom among home making women.

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