

Abstract

The present study aimed to explore the existential crisis of working women after the birth of first child. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample consisting of (N=6) working women, age range of 22 to 35 years, with less than a year old baby. 4 working women were allowed, while 2 were not allowed to bring their babies to the workplace. Semistructured interviews were conducted & audio-recorded with the participant's permission to explore working women's existential crisis & coping strategies using transcription of verbatim recordings. Emergent, sub-ordinate and super-ordinate themes emerged by Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Super-ordinate themes emerged about the experience of pregnancy and delivery were Reaction, Decision to continue career, Physical & Psychological Discomfort & Illness, Challenges, Work environment, Coping with symptoms & workplace challenges, Hesitation, Weight gain & body image, Work-life balance planning, Sick leaves, Impact on work efficiency, Complexity, In-laws, Family & husband support, Duration, Pay, Experience and thoughts during maternity leave. The super-ordinate themes that emerged after childbirth are Long-term effects on Health, Effect on work efficiency, Workplace environment, Breastfeeding pattern, Feelings when unable to breastfeed the baby, Thoughts on leaving child at home, Impact of taking child at workplace, Expected & actual life changes, Work-life balance progress, Marital relationship, Thoughts of leaving career & Dealing with them, Financial Burden, Job type difficulty/ease, Social Comparisons, Perception as a mother, Family, In-laws & husband support in child rearing, Body image & Weight, Impact on life & goals, New life role as a mother, Changes in sleep pattern, Coping strategies. Themes of working women with permission and no permission to bring child to workplace were also compared. This study suggests the considerations for providing career support and lactation rooms at the workplace after childbirth.

Key words: existential crisis, working women who can and cannot bring the child to the workplace, during pregnancy, after childbirth, coping strategies