



Life Satisfaction and Stress Levels Among Employed and Non-employed Wives

¹Muskan Verma, Student,

Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Noida,

muskanverma98@gmail.com

²Dr. Shivani Bhambri, Assistant Professor,

Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Noida, India

sbhambri@amity.edu

Abstract

This research examined the relationship between employment status and well-being among married women in India, revealing no significant differences in perceived stress and life satisfaction between employed and unemployed groups. This counterintuitive finding is explored through factors that potentially equalize well-being across these groups. The homogeneity of the sample, consisting of married women with similar demographics and experiences, suggests robust social support and coping mechanisms that mitigate well-being disparities. The research employed validated scales by Cohen et al. (1983) and Diener et al. (1985) to ensure accurate measurement

of stress and life satisfaction. It also considers how temporal and contextual factors, such as the duration of unemployment and cultural norms, influence well-being. Through a mixed-methods approach, this study offers insights into the complex interplay of individual, societal, and cultural dynamics affecting married women's well-being in India, challenging assumptions about the impact of employment status on mental health.

Keywords: *Perceived Stress, Life Satisfaction, Employment Status, Well-being, Married Women*

Introduction

Historical Context of Women's Roles in India

The journey of women in India is marked by resilience, adaptation, and transformation. From ancient scriptures revering women to colonial challenges and post-independence struggles, the role of women has been dynamic and evolving. Ancient India revered women, yet societal norms began to constrain them. The medieval period brought varied practices, some upholding honor, others imposing restrictions. Colonial rule introduced new challenges, reinforcing patriarchal structures. Understanding this history is crucial, as it shapes the modern Indian woman's experience, highlighting both resilience and struggle. It underscores the legacy upon which contemporary movements for women's rights build and informs present challenges and opportunities.

Comparative Analysis: Rural vs. Urban Women

The dichotomy between urban and rural life shapes women's experiences differently. Urban women benefit from better access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, fostering empowerment. Rural women face limited access to education and healthcare, bound by traditional roles. Despite this, they exhibit resilience and community centrality. Urbanization has brought opportunities for urban women, yet challenges remain, including balancing work and domestic responsibilities and safety concerns. The comparative analysis reveals a spectrum of challenges and opportunities shaped by geography and social norms, highlighting the need for context-specific empowerment strategies.

The Role of Media and Technology

Media and technology play pivotal roles in shaping Indian women's empowerment. While media portrayal is evolving, stereotypes persist. Technology, especially social media, has empowered women, yet the digital divide remains, particularly between urban and rural areas. Technology offers tools for empowerment but also poses risks like online harassment. Addressing these challenges while leveraging technology's potential is crucial for women's future roles in India.

Mental Health and Well-Being

Indian women's mental health is deeply impacted by societal expectations and discrimination. Stress, anxiety, and depression are prevalent, exacerbated by work-life balance challenges and stigma. Promoting mental health awareness and access to support systems is

crucial. Community and family support, along with workplace initiatives, are essential for women's well-being.

Economic Participation and Empowerment

Economic independence is vital for women's empowerment, yet challenges like unequal pay persist. Economic empowerment extends beyond employment to access to resources and decision-making. Initiatives focusing on financial literacy and skill development show promise but need scaling up. Addressing the informal sector is essential for overall economic empowerment.

Education and Skill Development

Education is fundamental for empowerment, yet disparities persist, especially in higher education and STEM fields. Skill development offers additional pathways for empowerment. Barriers to education, such as early marriage and societal attitudes, need addressing for true empowerment. Context-specific programs are essential for diverse groups of women.

Societal Norms and Cultural Practices

Societal norms and cultural practices profoundly influence the lives of Indian women, shaping their roles, responsibilities, and opportunities. While some traditions celebrate women's roles, others perpetuate gender inequality. Changing these practices requires education, community engagement, and legal reforms, along with challenging gender stereotypes. Engaging men and boys in this process is crucial, as gender norms affect all members of society.

Policy Analysis and Recommendations

Effective policies are critical for advancing women's rights and empowerment in India. Key areas for policy focus include enhancing economic security, ensuring equal access to education and healthcare, and promoting women's participation in political and public life. Recommendations include strengthening legal frameworks, increasing investment in women-focused programs, and promoting gender-responsive budgeting.

Personal Narratives and Case Studies

Personal narratives and case studies provide insights into the lived experiences of Indian women, highlighting their challenges and triumphs. They can inform successful interventions and shed light on gaps in current efforts. Incorporating diverse voices is essential to ensure that narratives reflect the heterogeneity of women's experiences.

Global Context and Comparative Perspectives

Positioning Indian women's experiences within a global context allows for a broader understanding of their struggles and achievements. Comparative analysis can reveal common challenges and innovative solutions from other countries. It's crucial to adapt global insights to India's specific cultural, social, and economic realities.

Importance of Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is essential for Indian women's well-being, reflecting various aspects of their existence. Enhancing life satisfaction requires creating environments that support women's choices, aspirations, and participation in all life domains.

Significance of Stress Management

Stress has profound implications for Indian women, affecting their physical health, mental well-being, and productivity. Effective stress management strategies should encompass mental health support, societal changes, and empowerment through education and economic opportunities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shivane et al. (2024) conducted a study to examine the life satisfaction and stress among women. The research involved a random sample of 200 women. Tools such as the Life Satisfaction Scale and a stress scale were employed for data gathering. Statistical analyses included mean, standard deviations, t-tests, and correlations. The results showed a significant difference in life satisfaction and stress levels between employed and unemployed women. Specifically, working women reported higher life satisfaction ($t=5.52$) compared to their non-working counterparts. Additionally, non-working women exhibited higher levels of stress than those who were employed. The study also uncovered a significant negative correlation between life satisfaction and stress.

Narayana et al. (2023) conducted research to explore the impact of life stress and life satisfaction among employed and unemployed women. The study included 100 participants, evenly split between non-working, and working women residing in Hyderabad. A random sampling method was used to select the participants proportionately. The Presumptive Stressful Life Events Scale (PSLES) and Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS) were utilized to measure the life

satisfaction and stress levels of the subjects. The findings indicated that non-working women reported higher life satisfaction compared to their working counterparts. Additionally, the stress levels were found to be lower among non-working women than those who were employed. The research also found a negative correlation between life satisfaction and life stress.

Bindhu et al. (2022) explored the relationship between perceived stress and life satisfaction among both working and non-working women. The study encompassed 200 women, split evenly between those employed and those not, all within the age range of 18 to 35 years. Participants responded to the Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1988) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). The analysis, which included a Mann-Whitney t-test, showed no significant differences in perceived stress levels between the two groups. However, it was noted that working women reported higher life satisfaction than their non-working counterparts. Additionally, the study identified a negative correlation between perceived stress and life satisfaction across both groups of women.

Kumar et al. (2022) conducted research focused on comparing the mental health conditions and life satisfaction of mothers, specifically examining how occupational stress influences these factors. The study included 60 women, split into two groups of 30 each: working mothers and non-working homemakers, all within the age range of 25 to 50 years. To measure life satisfaction and mental health, the Life Satisfaction Scale by Singh and Joseph, along with the Employee Mental Health Inventory by Dr. Jagdish (1985), were utilized. The study underscored that good mental health fosters harmony and happiness, impacting personal life positively. The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods, and the findings were discussed extensively in the

study. Moreover, working mothers facing work-related mental health issues were provided with counseling and therapeutic support.

Rehman (2022) conducted a study to assess life satisfaction levels among working and unemployed women in both urban and rural settings. This mixed-method study utilized quantitative and qualitative research designs, employing a survey and interviews. The Satisfaction with Life Scale, adjusted to include five items rated on a 7-point Likert scale, was used for data collection. The study's sample comprised 100 respondents, split evenly between urban and rural areas, with each subgroup containing 25 working women and 25 non-working women. Results indicated that working women in urban areas reported the highest levels of life satisfaction, while in rural areas, non-working women reported the highest levels. Comparatively, working women in urban areas demonstrated greater overall life satisfaction than those in rural settings. The findings aim to provide clarity for women in both urban and rural areas regarding the benefits of employment versus staying at home.

Rationale

It addresses the need for a deeper understanding of how employment status influences the well-being of married women in India, filling a gap in current research. While there is a common assumption that employment positively impacts well-being, especially for women, empirical evidence within the specific context of married women in India is limited and inconclusive. Research on the relationship between employment and well-being among married women in India is lacking, necessitating a focused investigation. By narrowing the scope to this demographic, the

study aims to provide valuable insights tailored to the unique socio-cultural context of India. The research seeks to challenge common assumptions about the direct correlation between employment and well-being. It acknowledges the influence of cultural norms and family dynamics, which may moderate the impact of employment on women's well-being, particularly in India. Key factors such as social support systems, resilience within families, cultural attitudes towards work, and temporal aspects like the duration of unemployment are examined. Understanding how these factors interact can shed light on variations in the relationship between employment status and well-being among married women.

A mixed-methods approach is employed, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, to ensure comprehensive exploration. Rigorously tested measurement tools for stress and life satisfaction enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. The research contributes to the literature on gender, work, and mental health, offering insights that can inform future research and policy interventions. By providing a nuanced understanding of the relationship between employment status and well-being, the study aims to support efforts to improve the lives of married women in India. Overall, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the complex dynamics shaping the well-being of married women in India, laying the groundwork for future research and policy interventions in this area.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To investigate and compare the levels of life satisfaction and stress among married women aged 25 to 50, differentiating between working and non-working wives.

Research Objective

The primary objective is to assess and compare the life satisfaction and stress levels in working and non-working wives, contributing to a nuanced understanding of their well-being.

Hypothesis

- **Null Hypothesis (H0):** There is no significant difference in life satisfaction and stress levels between working and non-working wives.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H1):** Working wives will exhibit significant variations in life satisfaction and stress levels compared to non-working wives.

Variables

- **Independent variable:** Employment Status (Working vs. Non-Working)
- **Dependent Variables:** Life Satisfaction, Stress Levels

Research Design

The research employed a cross-sectional design, allowing for a snapshot of life satisfaction and stress levels among employed and non-employed wives at a specific point in time.

Sampling

The target population is divided (married women) into distinct strata based on their occupational roles (working women vs. housewives). Then, randomly select participants from each stratum to ensure representation from both groups in your sample. A Convenient sample of 100

married women aged 25 to 50 will be selected from various sources, with a balanced representation of working and non-working wives.

Description of the Tools Employed

No.	Name of the Test	Developed by	Year	Items	Reliability
1.	Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)	Cohen et al	1983	10 items	0.70 to 0.90
2.	Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin	1985	5 items	0.90

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS): The PSS (Cohen et al., 1983) is composed of 14 items measured from 0 (never) to 4 (very often). PSS scores are obtained by reversing the scores on the seven positive items, e.g., 0=4, 1=3, 2=2, etc., and then summing across all 14 items. Items 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 13 are the positively stated items.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS): Scale as developed by Diener et al. (1985) is a 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction (not a measure of either positive or negative affect). Participants indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the 5 items using a 7-point scale that ranges from 7 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree.

Statistical Analysis

The data was analyzed by using SPSS version 20 to summarize the characteristics of the sample and the variables of interest. Mean and standard deviation were calculated to represent quantitative data, while percentages and numbers were used for categorical data.

Inferential analyses, including T-tests, were utilized to compare the means of life satisfaction and stress levels between employed and non-employed wives.

Procedure

The data collection process for the study utilized a combination of offline and online methods. To facilitate online data collection, the questionnaire was converted into Google Forms and distributed to potential participants. Prior to participation, individuals were asked to provide informed consent, and they were briefed on the study's purpose with assurances of confidentiality for their responses. Clear instructions were given for completing the questionnaire, and participants were thanked for their contribution upon completion.

Results

Table 1

T test between unemployed and employed participants across study variables

	Mean	SD	T	Sig. (2 tailed)	Result
Perceived Stress					
Employed	21.49	2.74	.55	.57	NS
Unemployed	21.77	2.34			
Life Satisfaction					
Employed	24.58	5.60	.67	.49	NS
Unemployed	23.85	5.16			

NS:Not significant, S: Significant

Table 1 represents the t statistics between unemployed and employed participants on perceived stress and life satisfaction. There is no significant difference in the perceived stress and life satisfaction of unemployed and employed participants.

Discussion

The current research compared the levels of life satisfaction and stress among married women aged 25 to 50, focusing on employed and unemployed individuals. Using the Perceived Stress Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale, data was collected from 100 married women,

revealing no significant differences between the two groups in terms of perceived stress and life satisfaction. The findings suggest that factors such as familial support, cultural expectations, and social roles may be equally or more influential than employment status in shaping well-being. Despite the potential for employment to introduce additional stressors, the study found similar stress levels between employed and unemployed women, indicating resilience derived from cultural and familial structures. Additionally, the strong emphasis on family and community relationships in Indian culture may contribute to overall life satisfaction, regardless of employment status.

These findings underscore the complex interplay of cultural expectations, social roles, and personal aspirations in shaping the psychological well-being of Indian women. The investigation found minor differences in perceived stress levels between employed and unemployed women, with no statistically significant distinction. Similarly, the analysis of life satisfaction showed no significant difference between the two groups.

The uniformity within the sample likely contributes to consistent levels of social support and coping strategies across the group, smoothing out potential differences in stress and life satisfaction between employed and unemployed women. The resilience and coping mechanisms inherent in married women may buffer against the negative effects of unemployment, supported by strong familial support networks. Additionally, the reliability of measurement tools ensures accurate assessment. The broader context, including the level of social support and prevailing cultural norms, profoundly influences how individuals experience unemployment.

As a result, the hypothesis claiming significant variations in life satisfaction and stress levels between working and non-working wives is rejected.

Conclusion

The research aimed to investigate the impact of employment status on perceived stress and life satisfaction among married Indian women aged 25 to 50. The findings revealed no significant difference in the levels of perceived stress and life satisfaction between employed and unemployed participants within this demographic. This outcome suggests that employment status may not be a predominant factor influencing these aspects of well-being in the context of Indian women. Instead, other factors, possibly related to cultural, social, and familial dynamics, might play more crucial roles in shaping their psychological well-being and life satisfaction. These results contribute to a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing the well-being of married Indian women and challenge simplistic assumptions about the impact of employment status on their quality of life.

References

- Akbari, A. J. (2012). Life Satisfaction and Stress Among Working and Non-Working Women. *Journal of Social Sciences Research*, 1(9), ISSN 2250-1991.
- Arshad, M., Gull, S., & Mahmood, K. (2015). Life satisfaction and stress level among working and non-working women. *European Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 3(1), ISSN 2056-5429.
- Bano, S. (2019). Level of well-being among working and non-working married women concerning adjustment: A comparative study. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 6(2). Retrieved from www.jetir.org (ISSN-2349-5162).
- Bhardwaj, V. K. (2017). Level of stress among working and non-working women in relation to healthiness, wellbeing and depression: a comparative study. *IJCRT*, 5(3), 2320-2882.
- Chaudhary, S. (2017). Life Satisfaction and Stress Among Working Women and Housewives. *Econspeak: A Journal of Advances in Management IT & Social Sciences*, 7(7), ISSN: 2231-4571.
- Dr. Anshu Chauhan. (2015). A Comparative Study on Life Satisfaction among Working and Non-Working Women. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (IJRSSH)*, 5(IV), e-ISSN: 2249-4642, p-ISSN: 2454-4671.
- Dr. Malik Roshan Ara. (2015). Life Satisfaction and Level of Stress among Working and Non-Working Indian Women: A Comparative Study. *European Academic Research*, III(6), 6181.
- Harilal, A., & Santhosh, V. A. (2017). A comparative study on stress levels among working women and housewives with reference to the state of Kerala. *NMIMS Journal of Economics and Public Policy*, 2(1).

- Irfan, M., Kaur, N., Panwar, N., & Thind, H. S. (2012). A comparative study of working and non-working married women: Effect of Anxiety level on life satisfaction. *Indian Journal of Psychology & Mental Health*, 6(2), 169-178.
- Mishra, R., & Mehra, A. (2019). Stress Level and Life Satisfaction among Working and Non-Working Married Women: A Comparative Study. *JETIR*, 6(2). Retrieved from www.jetir.org (ISSN-2349-5162).
- Patil, M. (2016). Stress level of working and non-working women. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 3(2).
- Shukla, S., Jaiswal, M., Agrahari, K., & Shingh, A. (2017). A study on stress level among working and non-working women. *International Journal of Home Science*, 3(1), 349-357.
- Singh, S. K. (2014). Life satisfaction and stress level among working and non-working women. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 01(4), 123-135.
- Srinivasa, S. (2021). A comparative study on stress management among employed and unemployed women. *Malaya Journal of Matematik*, S(1), 13-17. DOI: 10.26637/MJMS2101/0003.