

A Comparative Review: Self Esteem, Self-Efficacy, Mental Health, And Marital Adjustment Among Working And Non-Working Females

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ABSTRACT

This review paper investigates the nuanced interplay between employment status and various dimensions of psychological well-being among females. Focusing on self-esteem, self-efficacy, mental health, and marital adjustment, the study delves into the comparative analysis between working and non-working women. Employing a systematic approach, existing literature is scrutinized to elucidate the differential impacts of employment on these key domains. The findings suggest that employment status significantly influences self-esteem, with working women generally exhibiting higher levels. Moreover, self-efficacy tends to be bolstered by workforce participation, contributing to a sense of agency and mastery in various life domains. Mental health outcomes reveal a complex relationship, with employment offering both protective and risk factors depending on individual circumstances and societal contexts. Furthermore, marital adjustment emerges as a critical dimension affected by employment status, with implications for relational dynamics and family functioning. By synthesizing empirical evidence, this review underscores the multifaceted implications of employment for the psychological well-being of women, providing insights for future research and interventions aimed at enhancing women's holistic empowerment and fulfilment.

Key words: Psychological wellbeing, working females, non-working, Mental health, Marital adjustment

Introduction

In contemporary society, the roles and experiences of women have undergone profound transformations, marked by increased participation in the workforce and shifting societal expectations. Within this evolving landscape, the intersection of psychological well-being, mental health, and marital adjustment among women stands as a compelling area of inquiry. This paper endeavours to provide a comprehensive exploration of these dimensions, focusing specifically on the comparative analysis between working and non-working females.

The decision to embark on a comparative review stems from the recognition of the diverse contexts in which women navigate their lives. Employment status, in particular, serves as a significant determinant that can shape not only individual well-being but also the dynamics of intimate relationships. By elucidating the intricate interplay between employment status and psychological outcomes, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted experiences of women in contemporary society.

Drawing upon a systematic analysis of existing literature, this paper seeks to uncover the nuanced relationships between employment status and psychological well-being, mental health, and marital adjustment. Through this exploration, we endeavour to unravel the complexities inherent in gender-specific experiences and offer insights that can inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at promoting the holistic well-being of women.

In undertaking this endeavour, we acknowledge the complexity and diversity of women's experiences, recognizing that individual narratives are shaped by a myriad of intersecting factors including socio-economic status, cultural norms, and personal values. By embracing this complexity, we aim to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities that characterize the lives of women in contemporary society.

Thus, this comparative review stands as a testament to the ongoing quest for knowledge and understanding in the field of women's studies, highlighting the importance of considering diverse perspectives and contexts in the pursuit of gender equity and social justice.

Self Esteem, Self-Efficacy, Mental Health, and Marital Adjustment among Working and Non-working Females

Employment has become increasingly significant in everyone's life especially women as the time has progressed and attitudes about women's employment have changed. More and more women have started going out to work. Khot and Dwivedi, 2012, conducted a study that aimed to understand how the employed and unemployed women perceive themselves on the basis of self-esteem and self-efficacy and is there a difference in self-esteem and self-efficacy between the employed women and unemployed women. The sample consisted of 220 women- 110 employed women and 110 unemployed women in the age range of 25-50 years. Snowball sampling technique was used for the selection of sample. The Rosenberg Self-esteem scale and the General Self-efficacy scale was used for the collection of data. The results showed that employed women had significantly higher self-esteem than unemployed women. But there was no significant difference in the self-efficacy of employed women and unemployed women.

In a context of widespread unemployment resulting from the northern cod moratorium, this study investigated the mental health implications for women in two regions of Newfoundland, Canada. Questionnaires administered to both employed and unemployed women revealed significantly poorer mental well-being among unemployed women. Key stressors included the moratorium, financial difficulties, and feelings of uncertainty, highlighting the detrimental effects of unemployment on mental health (Cynthia Murray, Lan Gien, & Shirley Solberg, 2003). Another study was conducted by Maneesha et al to ascertain the marital adjustment, stress and depression among working and nonworking women and also to examine the relationship between these variables. These psychological states are assumed to be associated with mental health and happiness among people. The study was conducted on 120 women aged 20 to 60 years, out of which 60 were working and 60 were nonworking, through purposive sampling techniques. Marital adjustment scale (Locke-Wallace, 1959), Perceived stress scale (Cohen et al., 1983) and Beck depression inventory (1988) were used to collect data. One-way ANOVA and Pearson Product Moment correlation were applied to analyse the data. Results show that working women have relatively poor marital adjustment and high depression and stress as compared to non-working women. There is a significant difference in marital adjustment, stress and

depression between working and nonworking women. It was also found that there is a significant relationship between marital adjustment, stress and depression among working and nonworking women.

Hashmi, Khurshid, and Hassan (2007) conducted a study on marital adjustment, stress and depression. The study covered 150 married women, who were both working and non-working. Urdu Translation of Dyadic Adjustment Scale (2000), Beck Depression Inventory (1996) and Stress Scale (1991) were used. Results indicated highly significant relationship between marital adjustment, depression and stress. In comparison to educated working and non-working married women, the findings demonstrate that highly educated working and non-working married women can do well in their married lives and are free from depression (Dandona, 2013). Vyas (2019). Investigated the Level of Anxiety, Depression and Stress among Working and Non-Working Women. It was expected that there would be a considerable difference in anxiety, depression, and stress levels between working and non-working women. Using random sampling techniques, the researcher selected 60 working and 60 non-working women in the age range of 30 to 40 years for the current study. Anxiety, Depression and Stress Scale was used; it was developed by Bhatnagar et al. (2011). It was discovered that working women in lower socioeconomic status had more anxiety, stress, and depression symptoms than nonworking women; however there was no significant difference between working and nonworking conditions among women in higher socioeconomic status. Gupta and Damodar (2020) investigated the Levels of psychological distress among working and non-working women. This study tried to identify the level of psychological distress and the vulnerability of women towards mental disorder, according to their work status (working and non-working). The purpose of this study is to determine the difference in the Levels of Psychological Distress among unmarried working and nonworking women. 144 unmarried women with age range of 23-30 years from Kolkata and Bangalore participated in the study. The data was collected by administering Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10, 2002). Independent sample t-test is used to determine the difference in psychological distress between the two groups. According to the findings, there is no statistical significant difference in the level of psychological distress experienced by working and non-working women.

Mental health encompasses various components that collectively contribute to an individual's well-being and functioning. These components include positive self-evaluation (PSE), perception of reality (PR), integration of personality (IP), autonomy (AUTNY), group-oriented attitudes (GOAs), and environmental mastery (EM). Positive self-evaluation, or PSE, involves recognizing one's potential and feeling self-assured, accepted, and identified. It encompasses a sense of confidence and belief in one's abilities. Perception of reality, or PR, refers to the ability to perceive the world without distortion, excessive imagination, or bias. It involves having a broad perspective on life and the ability to see things as they are, rather than how one wishes them to be. Integration of personality, or IP, is characterized by a balance of psychic variables and includes the capacity to understand and empathize with others, the ability to focus on tasks, and an interest in diverse activities. Autonomy, or AUTNY, is the ability to adhere to internal norms and rely on one's own potential for growth rather than seeking validation or direction from others. It involves a sense of independence and self-reliance. Group-oriented attitudes, or GOAs, encompass the capacity for collaboration, interpersonal harmony, and engagement in leisure activities with others. It reflects an individual's ability to navigate social relationships and contribute positively to group dynamics. Environmental mastery, or EM, involves adaptability, responsibility, and efficiency in meeting situational demands. It includes the ability to effectively manage challenges and maintain a sense of control over one's environment. Together, these components form the foundation of mental health, influencing an individual's ability to cope with stress, maintain relationships, and achieve a sense of fulfilment in life. Understanding and nurturing these aspects of mental health are essential for promoting overall well-being and resilience.

The mental health of employed and unemployed females can vary significantly due to various factors related to their employment status. While employment can provide structure, social interaction, and financial stability, unemployment can lead to stress, financial strain, and feelings of inadequacy. Both groups may face unique challenges that impact their mental well-being. For employed females, mental health may be influenced by factors such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, and workplace support. Positive work environments, supportive colleagues, and opportunities for career advancement can contribute to a sense of fulfilment and

overall well-being. However, challenges such as job insecurity, workplace stress, and discrimination may negatively impact mental health. On the other hand, unemployed females may experience heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and depression due to financial strain, loss of social connections, and feelings of isolation. The lack of employment opportunities and the stigma associated with unemployment can exacerbate these challenges, leading to a decline in mental health.

Additionally, societal expectations and gender roles may play a role in shaping the mental health of both groups. Employed females may face pressure to balance work and family responsibilities, while unemployed females may experience feelings of worthlessness or failure due to societal norms regarding productivity and success. It is important to recognize that mental health is complex and influenced by multiple factors beyond employment status. Access to mental health resources, social support networks, and coping mechanisms can significantly impact the mental well-being of both employed and unemployed females. By addressing systemic barriers, promoting workplace wellness initiatives, and providing support services for unemployed individuals, society can work towards improving the mental health outcomes of females across different employment statuses.

Marital Adjustment refers to the ability of married individuals to adapt and cope with the challenges, changes, and demands within their marital relationship. It encompasses various aspects of the marital dynamic, including communication, conflict resolution, emotional intimacy, shared decision-making, and division of responsibilities. A well-adjusted marriage is characterized by mutual respect, trust, support, and satisfaction between partners. It involves the ability to effectively navigate disagreements and conflicts, maintain emotional connection and intimacy, and work together to achieve common goals. Marital adjustment also includes the ability to balance individual needs and desires with those of the relationship as a whole.

Factors that contribute to marital adjustment include effective communication skills, empathy, flexibility, commitment, and shared values and goals. Positive interactions, affection, and appreciation between partners are also indicators of marital adjustment. Marital adjustment is a dynamic process that may fluctuate over time as couples face different life stages, transitions, and challenges. Couples may need to continually

adapt and make adjustments to maintain a healthy and satisfying marital relationship. Overall, marital adjustment is essential for the long-term success and stability of marriages.

According to Ruch (1970), finding the appropriate partner and being the right partner are both important factors in a successful marriage. However, just because two people are compatible with one another does not mean their union will be happy. They must learn to coexist, share, and make concessions. Plan and modify together. To put it simply, a successful marriage requires effort (Stone & Stone, 1967).

Marital adjustment, defined as the overall feeling of happiness and satisfaction between spouses, plays a pivotal role in determining the success of a marriage. It acts as a cornerstone for marital stability, promoting well-being within the family and society (Mukherjee and Sinha, 1990). However, societal changes in work and family dynamics have intensified the challenges faced by couples in maintaining marital adjustment (Jain and Goel, 2013). Mental health emerges as a crucial factor influencing individuals' ability to cope with the demands of work and family life (Bernard, 1964). Employed women, in particular, may experience difficulties in balancing work and family responsibilities, leading to mental strain and adjustment problems (Mathur, 2000). Despite the societal significance of marriage, challenges such as work-related stress and marital dissatisfaction persist, especially among educated women with higher job status (Shukla, 1990). Research findings on the relationship between wife's employment and marital adjustment have been conflicting, with some studies suggesting a positive association and others indicating a negative one (Kitson, 1982). However, studies conducted in India have shown that working women tend to have better marital adjustment and subjective well-being compared to housewives (Mathur, 2000). Overall, marital adjustment remains an evolving process influenced by various factors such as personality, job stress, mental health, and societal norms (Aminjafari, 2012). Understanding and addressing these factors are essential for promoting marital satisfaction and overall well-being among couples.

The study aimed to explore marital adjustment among employed and unemployed women in the context of rapid urbanization and industrialization. A sample of 200 women (100 employed and 100 unemployed) was assessed using the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (R-DAS). Statistical analysis

revealed that the mean R-DAS scores did not significantly differ between the two groups, although unemployed women scored higher in the satisfaction domain while employed women fared better in the cohesion domain. Overall, the employment status of married women was not found to be significantly related to marital adjustment. These findings suggest that factors beyond employment status may play a more significant role in marital adjustment among women, warranting further exploration into the complex dynamics of marital relationships in urbanized settings (Meena et al, 2023).

Another study aimed to investigate the impact of family environment on marital adjustment among employed and unemployed women in Malappuram District. Marriage, characterized by understanding, feelings, and adjustments between spouses, often begins with high expectations. Employed women, balancing roles both inside and outside the family, face unique challenges compared to unemployed housewives. The emotional atmosphere within a family, characterized by love, peace, and support, significantly influences marital adjustment. A sample of 150 women aged 30-55, including 75 working women and 75 housewives, participated in the study using random sampling techniques. Results revealed that the majority of both working and non-working women exhibited average levels of marital adjustment. Furthermore, significant differences were observed in the mean scores of marital adjustment between employed and unemployed women, indicating the influence of family environment on marital satisfaction. (Hameed et al, 2020).

In contemporary society, the roles and experiences of women have undergone significant transformations, with increased workforce participation and shifting societal expectations. This review paper aims to comprehensively explore the intersection of psychological well-being, mental health, and marital adjustment among women, with a specific focus on comparing working and non-working females.

The comparative analysis between these two groups is motivated by the recognition of diverse contexts in which women navigate their lives, where employment status serves as a significant determinant shaping individual well-being and relational dynamics. Through a systematic analysis of existing literature, this paper seeks to uncover the nuanced

relationships between employment status and various psychological outcomes.

Key findings from the reviewed studies highlight significant differences in self-esteem between employed and unemployed women, with employed women generally reporting higher levels. Mental health outcomes reveal that unemployment is associated with poorer mental well-being, including higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Marital adjustment emerges as another critical dimension influenced by employment status, with varying levels of satisfaction observed between working and non-working women.

Moreover, societal expectations, gender roles, and family environment play crucial roles in shaping women's experiences and psychological outcomes. While employment can provide structure and financial stability, it may also introduce challenges such as work-family balance and workplace stress. On the other hand, unemployment can lead to feelings of worthlessness, financial strain, and isolation.

Overall, this review underscores the complex interplay between employment status and psychological well-being among women, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and support systems to promote holistic empowerment and fulfilment. By acknowledging the diversity of women's experiences and addressing systemic barriers, society can work towards fostering gender equity and social justice in contemporary contexts.

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