

Original Article

An Exploratory Factor analysis Examining Psychological correlates among Females

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Abstract:

The working status of women provides them with a different psychological foundation than non-working women. Literature is evident that there is an immense difference between working and non-working women, especially the psychological factors affecting them. Objective: The aim of this study was to identify the difference between working and non-working women on the basis of psychological factors mainly quality of life, psychological well-being, self-esteem and perceived stress. Methods: Cross sectional research design was employed to measure the psychological factors of working and non-working women in the age group of 25 to 45 years. The sample size was recruited as 600 by power analysis, with 305 working and 295 non-working women. Data collection was conducted using WHO-QOL-BREF, Ryff's Psychological well-being scale, Rosenberg's Self-esteem scale and Cohen's perceived stress scale. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, independent T-test and factor analysis. Results: Findings of the study revealed that working women are higher on social and environmental quality of life and environmental mastery, positive relations with others and self-acceptance domains of psychological well-being than non-working women. The psychological variables are significantly correlated and significant factor loadings were for environmental mastery and social quality of life for working women and self-acceptance domain of psychological well-being, social and physical quality of life for non-working women.

Conclusion: The results of this study suggest that there is a significant difference between working women and non-working women for the psychological correlates. In addition, the psychological variables are significantly influencing one another and the most effective influence is environmental mastery and social quality of life for working women and self-acceptance and social and physical quality of life for non-working women.

Keywords: Quality of Life, Psychological Well-Being, Self-Acceptance, Women

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Introduction:

The employment of women is a universally acceptable milestone that has given a foundation to the life of modern women. This study is to explore whether working status affects perceived stress, self-esteem, quality of life, and psychological well-being in women.

There is an assemblage of studies that show controversy in understanding the effect of working/non-working status on women, as it was found that working women have dual responsibilities making them prone to stress and time constraints.¹ Also, they have to make adjustments for this dual role at home as well as at work. A study in Nepal concluded that

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women who worked at or managed microenterprises feel more confident in their abilities, take on leadership roles, handle problems easily, and are generally happier.²

Stress is not missing in non-working women and there is a range of sources including family responsibilities, financial concerns and health issues that produce stress. Thus, the absence of paid work does not eliminate stress from her life, rather it causes potential vulnerability to stress related to social isolation and lack of purpose.

In the case of non-working women, the major problems faced are the lack of economic decision-making participation at home. They lack financial independence and have lesser social interactions outside of the home. A study gave the merits and demerits of employment such that there is financial independence and major social roles played in case of working women but they donate less time to their husbands leading to marital maladjustments. As for non-working women, they are dependent on their spouses for every single requirement of their day-to-day needs.³

Furthermore, job stress has negative effects on both physical and psychological health. There are researches which confirm that work stress influences the health of employees negatively in many ways.⁴ If we look at previous findings, most of the research pointed to the fact that working women experience more stress than non-working women.⁵ Studies reported that there is higher stress levels in working women than non-working women.^{6,7} A study examined the relationship between 100 working and 100 non-working women and concluded that women's modernization status and stress are related. They found that working women scored higher on the stress scale than their non-working counterparts.⁸

Self-esteem also has a significant impact on working women. A study emphasizes that as women take part in multiple roles they have more chances to learn,

generate self-esteem, and expand their social nexus. She has a greater approach to communicatory, instrumental and emotional assistance, and she is able to neutralize her life's stresses and problems. As she has many roles it helps in improving her cognition and provides her with more sources of self respect.⁹ Furthermore, working women have high self-esteem because they socially participate with different people and while playing multiple roles their ability to do their work also skilfully increases. It was seen that high self-esteem lowers the anxiety levels, helping the individuals to manage circumstances and strengthen physical health.¹⁰

Another major factor outlining the controversial role of employment in a woman's life is the quality of life. Working and non-working women may experience both positive and negative effects on their quality of life and there are a number of supporting and contradictory studies in the past explaining this. In a study it was determined that quality of life of working women was lower than non-working women.¹¹ Another study also examined that the quality of life of working married women was lower in their social and environmental aspects.¹² Furthermore, it was also concluded that quality of life of non-working women is higher in comparison to working women especially in physical, psychological and environmental domains.¹³ But in contradiction, it was found that the quality of life of working women is higher than that of non-working women because they feel their jobs give them motivation, they feel more confident, safe and satisfied because of their jobs, and have closer relations with others.¹⁴

As we study the quality of life, we cannot leave psychological well-being behind as it is directly related to the quality of life and thus is another determining variable. Past research found that non-working women play the role of homemaker and only have the responsibility of family and children whereas a working woman has the responsibility of her job and family both. She is not able to take care of her own health, hobbies, and interests.¹⁵ Due to their dual roles at home and at work the working women feel that their psychological well-being is affected negatively. But, another study showed that working women had higher

psychological well-being as compared to non-working women.¹⁶ These findings were consistent with a study that found working women are highly satisfied because they play dual roles giving a boost to their psychological well-being.¹⁷ It was also reported that non-working women have low satisfaction levels, and poor mental and physical health.¹⁸ This may be because of the fact that home care and domestic work can be stressful. A reason for this is that working women are able to outsource more burdensome household tasks by using domestic help and other helpful facilities. By contrast, non-working women do not have financial independence and are often overloaded by monotonous, time-consuming, and exerting domestic works.¹⁹

Overall, the relationship between stress, self-esteem, quality of life and psychological well-being is multifaceted. Both working and non-working women may experience positive and negative effects of these factors as they are interrelated and it is important to recognize and address these psychological factors. So, this study is an attempt to investigate the impact of working/non-working status on psychological correlates.

Objectives of the Study:

Hence the objectives of the study are

1. to understand the comparison of quality of life, psychological well-being, self-esteem and perceived stress of working and non-working women.
2. to determine the effect of the studied variables on one another.
3. to find the psychological factor that plays a pivotal role in the lives of working and non-working women.

Materials and Methodology:

Sample:

This cross-sectional study was conducted among working and non-working women. The sample size was calculated through G-power software by applying the F test, α power=0.90. A total sample of 600 women was recognized as a sample size with 305 working and 295 non-working women. Respondents' consent was obtained using an informed consent form. Inclusion

criteria recruited the women in the age group of 25 to 45 years with senior secondary education.

Study Instruments:

An information form was prepared for the demographic and personal information required for the study.

In order to collect data from the participants the researcher used standardized questionnaires to measure self-esteem, quality of life, perceived stress and psychological well-being. Rosenberg Self Esteem scale was used for self-esteem, the SES is commonly scored as a Likert Scale. The scale has high reliability, test-retest correlations in the range of 0.82 to 0.88. For the quality of life WHO QOL-BREF was used. The four main domains of physical quality of life, psychological quality of life, social quality of life and environmental quality of life are covered in the instrument.

Ryff's Psychological well-being Scale (42 items version) was used for the psychological well-being variable, the scale is divided into six dimensions; self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purposes in life and personal growth. The scale showed factorial validity for the six-factor model NFI=.777, CFI=.836, KMCe=.063, Pclose = .000, CMIN/DF=3.089. Finally, the perceived stress was measured with the help of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) by Sheldon Cohen. Internal consistency for this scale ranges from 0.829 to 0.903.

Ethical Approval:

This study is a part of Ph.D. research and was accepted by the institutional ethics committee of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (53/HG).

Statistical Analysis:

The data was analysed using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics version 23. Descriptive statistics (Mean, Standard deviation) were used for both working and non-working women on Rosenberg's self-esteem scale, WHO-QOL, BREF, Ryff's psychological well-being scale and Cohen's perceived stress scale. Independent T-test, was used for the comparison of the means between the variables of both groups. Pearson's correlations were used to find the effect of variables on one another and finally, principal component analysis was done to predict the

significant psychological factor components most affecting the working and non-working women. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was used for assessing the sample size so that Principal Component Analysis can be performed.

Results:

The age of working women (N-305) and non-working women (N-295) sample ranged from 25 to 45 years with a mean age of 34.86 and 31.4 for working and non-working women respectively.

The mean scores of quality of life domains, psychological well-being sub-divisions, perceived stress, and self-esteem are depicted in table 1. Analysis using an independent T-test demonstrated that working women had significantly higher mean scores on social and environmental domains of quality of life, and environmental mastery, positive relation with others and self-acceptance subdivisions of psychological well-being than the non-working women.

Table 1: Comparison of quality of life domains, psychological well-being subdivisions, self-esteem and perceived stress among working and non-working women

Variables	Working Nonworking	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value	Sig.
QOL Domain1Physical health	W	70.2552	12.70807	.856	.392
	NW	69.2886	14.87368		
QOL Domain2Psychological	W	67.2308	15.24594	.208	.835
	NW	66.9545	17.26517		
QOL Domain3Social Relations	W	71.0530	20.42831	4.228**	.000
	NW	64.1295	19.62384		
QOL Domain4 Environmental	W	69.2448	14.33840	1.615	.107
	NW	67.2236	16.25644		
PWB Autonomy	W	29.12	4.873	-.281	.779
	NW	29.25	6.315		
PWB Environmental mastery	W	29.08	4.732	3.76**	.000
	NW	27.62	4.782		
PWB Personal growth	W	31.61	5.260	1.583	.114
	NW	30.90	5.715		
PWB Positive relations with others	W	31.88	5.585	3.165**	.002
	NW	30.44	5.582		
PWB Purpose in life	W	30.83	5.315	1.415	.158
	NW	30.20	5.566		
PWB Self-acceptance	W	32.28	5.413	3.620**	.000
	NW	30.59	6.024		
Self-Esteem	W	30.57	4.874	1.657	.098
	NW	29.95	4.360		
Perceived stress	W	18.63	6.201	-1.836	.067
	NW	19.55	6.026		

Significance value of t- * for p<1.96 at 0.05 at 95 % confidence and ** for p<2.58 at 0.01 at 99% confidence. QOL- Quality of life, PWB-Psychological

well-being, W- working women, NW-non-working women

Table 2 shows the intercorrelations between the variables under study directing the significant relationships among all the variables and also comparing the differences in working and non-working women. As it is clear from the table, there are significant intercorrelations among all the variables except the social quality of life with autonomy in working women. For non-working women as well all the variables have significant correlations between them except the social quality of life with self-esteem variable, and psychological well-being domains of

autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life and self-acceptance. Also, for non-working women significant relations were not found between environmental quality of life with personal growth and purpose in life domains of psychological well-being as well.

The results were assessed by screening the significant intercorrelations among the studied variables. A significant negative relationship can also be seen in both working and non-working women for perceived stress with all the other studied variables.

Table 2: Correlations among all the variables for working and non-working women

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.QOL Domain1P hysical health	W	1	.583*	.389**	.531**	.300**	.460**	.313**	.377**	.296**	.369**	.378**	-.403**
	NW	1	.547*	.221**	.493**	.369**	.321**	.203**	.308**	.243**	.385**	.314**	-.349**
2.QOL Domain2 Psychological	W		1	.457**	.568**	.302**	.493**	.380**	.423**	.346**	.450**	.397**	-.392**
	NW		1	.272**	.500**	.375**	.344**	.170**	.342**	.229**	.394**	.374**	-.398**
3. QOL Domain3 Social Relations	W			1	.477**	.050	.357**	.121*	.362**	.148**	.208**	.247**	-.302**
	NW			1	.492**	-.021	.243**	-.038	.251**	-.051	.030	.098	-.133*
4.QOL Domain4 Environmental	W				1	.226**	.488**	.184**	.345**	.182**	.281**	.316**	-.376**
	NW				1	.180**	.288**	.051	.203**	.023	.208**	.203**	-.263**
5.PWB Autonomy	W					1	.410**	.412**	.358**	.385**	.462**	.358**	-.214**
	NW					1	.441**	.445**	.352**	.445**	.617**	.437**	-.308**
6.PWB Environmental mastery	W						1	.471**	.641**	.456**	.519**	.476**	-.467**
	NW						1	.373**	.416**	.402**	.456**	.427**	-.379**

7.PWB Personal growth	W							1	.608**	.590**	.584**	.450**	- .178**
	N W							1	.485**	.615**	.492**	.389**	- .163**
8.PWB Positive relations with others	W							1	.495**	.565**	.435**	-	.345**
	N W							1	.471**	.527**	.416**	-	.319**
9.PWB Purpose in life	W							1	.523**	.345**	-	.150**	
	N W							1	.560**	.442**	-	.227**	
10.PWB Self- acceptance	W							1	.486**	-	.290**		
	N W							1	.530**	-	.408**		
11.Self- Esteem	W							1	-	.331**			
	N W							1	-	.404**			
12.Perceive d stress													1
													1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). W-working women, NW-non-working women													
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).													
QOL- Quality of life, PWB-Psychological well-being, W- working women, NW-non-working women													

On the basis of correlation results it was concluded that a number of variables are interrelated and have an effect on each other significantly regardless of the working

status of women. Further analysis by principal component analysis provided in-depth information on the psychological correlates that are significantly affecting working and non-working women differently.

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test for Sample Adequacy for Principal component Analysis(PCA) of working and non- working women

KMO and Bartlett's Test		Working	Non-working
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.897	.870
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1576.979	1378.076
	Df	78	78
	Sig.	.000	.000

From the above table 3 we found that the value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy is 0.897 for working and 0.870 for non-working women. It indicated that the sample size of this study is suitable for Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The value of chi-square statistic in Bartlett's

Test of Sphericity is statistically significant. It confirmed that the selected variables were inter-correlated. Therefore, PCA is suitable for measuring the significant psychological factors affecting working and non-working women.

Table 4: showing the component principal analysis for working and non-working women

Component Matrix							
	Working Women Component			Non-Working Women Component			
	1	2	Communalities	1	2	3	Communalities
QOL Domain1 Physical health	.678	-.259	.528	.620	.324	-.398	.648
QOLDomain2 Psychological	.733	-.242	.596	.644	.375	-.337	.669
QOL Domain4 Social Relations	.507	-.562	.574	.251	.699	.312	.649
QOL Domain3 Environmental	.623	-.481	.620	.453	.673	-.166	.685
PWB Autonomy	.556	.337	.423	.701	-.223	-.120	.555
PWB Environmental mastery	.799	-.009	.638	.682	.082	.291	.557
PWB Personal growth	.677	.463	.673	.617	-.457	.218	.638
PWB Positive relations with others	.763	.175	.613	.689	-.051	.326	.584
PWB purpose in life	.621	.456	.593	.659	-.446	.197	.671
PWB Self- acceptance	.734	.312	.636	.794	-.238	-.039	.688
Self-esteem	.660	.099	.445	.697	-.113	.012	.499
Perceived stress	-.551	.329	.412	-.576	-.174	.111	.375
Variance	40.897	13.632		36.691	15.339	8.537	

From table 4 the detailed results of the Principal Component Analysis can be interpreted and it was

revealed two Principal Components have Eigen values greater than one for working women and three

Principal Components having Eigen values greater than one for non-working women. For the working women Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings indicated that the first rotated principal component explains 40.89 percent of the total variation. The highest factor loading can be seen for environmental mastery of the psychological well-being domain at 0.799 loadings making it an important psychological factor affecting working women. The second component's highest factor loading is on the social relations domain of quality of life with a factor loading of 0.562.

Similarly for non-working women, the rotated principal component explains 36.691 percent of the total variation and the highest factor loading can be seen for the self-acceptance of psychological well-being domain at 0.794 loadings. The second component's highest factor loading was on the social relations domain of quality of life with a factor loading of 0.699 and the third component's highest factor loading was on the physical quality of life with a factor loading of 0.398.

Discussion:

The working status of women has a significant impact on the overall well-being of women and there is a remarkable difference between working and non-working women. The results of this study provide us with information about the psychological factors that play important role in the lives of women. The result showed the statistics of the differences between working and non-working women on the basis of the quality of life, psychological well-being, self-esteem and perceived stress. The working women showed significantly higher scores on the social and environmental quality of life than the non-working women. Furthermore, working women also scored higher on the psychological well-being domains of environmental mastery, positive relations with others, and self-acceptance. The results are supported by a study that indicated that the quality of life of working women was higher because of their motivating jobs and there is a feeling of safety, confidence, and satisfaction in them.¹⁴ Studies from Turkey and Iran showed that working women have a better quality of life than non-working women in all the domains of quality of life.^{20,21} Working women have greater self-acceptance as well.²² Also the data from a previous study showed that working women

generally have a positive perception of their psychological well-being in terms of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.²³ The results of the present study were contradicted by a few pieces of research which determined that the quality of life of non-working women is higher than that of working women.^{12, 13}

The result also revealed that the domain of quality of life, psychological well-being and self-esteem were significantly, and positively correlated with one another. The said variables were significantly negatively correlated to perceived stress. The result was congruent with previous research, which found that the level of psychological well-being is highly affected by the self-esteem.²⁴ The unemployed women tend to have low levels of psychological well-being.²⁵

The relationship between the quality of life, well-being and self-esteem was studied and it was found that working women had a better standard of living and self-esteem than non-working women.²⁶ Furthermore, the psychological well-being of working women is influenced by the kind of environments they get at home and at work indicating the importance of social support.¹⁶ Thus, the variables are somewhere interrelated to one another such that enhanced values of one variable will have a positive effect on the other, especially in the case of quality of life, psychological well-being and self-esteem. This effect is the opposite for stress variable such that higher scores on stress will negatively affect the other said variables. This effect had been studied in previous researches which relate to the decreased effect on emotional stability because of perceived stress which in turn reduces psychological well-being.^{27,28}

Similarly, the stress in life reduces self-esteem as well.²⁹ Another research on stress found that in working women if the working social life is good and supportive, it negates the daily stress and tensions in general.³⁰

The consequences of the present research also provided the result that for working women environmental mastery and social quality of life play the most important role. The working women thus are most affected by the way they are able to handle their

environments while they are juggling dual roles and also how supportive their social quality of life is. These findings were similarly discussed in previous studies which indicated that working women feel more satisfied because they are helping at home as well as working outside and earning, thus increasing their psychological well-being.¹⁷ It was also found that working women tend to feel satisfied, and are eager and self-disciplined, they feel they are realistic, firm, safe, trusting, lenient, happy, and positive in their thoughts because they interact with more people outside their homes. They also feel safe and close to other people thus having a better social quality of life.³¹

As for non-working women self-acceptance domain of psychological well-being comes out to be the most important factor which indicates that non-working women need to accept themselves as they are. This can be explained by the fact that unconditional self-acceptance allows people to rate their actions and traits, and facilitates personal change and improvement as a part of self-acceptance.^{32,33,22}

Furthermore, the result found that the social and physical quality of life also plays important roles for non-working women. Similar research concluded that the social domain of non-working women is higher.¹³ Finally it was concluded that there is a transparent relationship between job stress and physical diseases. This work stress is not present in non-working women thus positively affecting their physical health.⁴ Thus, non-working women are highly affected by their social and physical quality of life.

Study Strength, Limitations, and Recommendations:

The result of the study has been able to fill the gap in terms of the psychological factors affecting working and non-working women. Firstly, the study covered women from 25-45 years of age, wider age range will further improve the understanding of psychological factors affecting women. Secondly, only four psychological factors were covered, more factors can be studied to understand the difference between working and non-working women intensively.

As the present study helped in understanding working and non-working women, future research on women

from different strata and backgrounds can provide us with an in-depth understanding of the psychological factors affecting women in a larger domain.

Conclusion:

Our study is useful to understand the differences between working and non-working women on the basis of psychological correlates. It can be summarised that working women have a better quality of life and psychological well-being than non-working women. Working women are satisfied with their personal relationships and have the support of their friends. They feel safe in their daily life and has a healthy physical environment. They have a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment and are able to control a complex array of external activities. They are highly affected by their social quality of life and their environment. As for non-working women, self-acceptance plays an important role in their lives. They are affected by their own attitude towards self and their social and physical quality of life. Psychological upliftment at homes and workplaces is a need of the hour to make women empowered and self-sufficient in society.

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