

Level of Stress and Life Satisfaction among Working and Non-Working Women

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Abstract:

Stress and life satisfaction are important indicators of psychological well-being, especially among women who perform multiple roles in family and society. Modern women often balance personal, family, and social responsibilities, which may affect their mental health differently depending on their employment status. Working women face occupational stress along with household duties, while non-working women may experience stress related to financial dependence, social expectations, and lack of personal recognition. The present study aims to examine the level of stress and life satisfaction among working and non-working women and to analyze differences between these two groups.

A sample of 200 women (100 working and 100 non-working) aged 25–50 years was selected from urban and semi-urban areas. The Perceived Stress Scale and Life Satisfaction Scale were used for data collection. Mean, standard deviation, independent t-test, and Pearson's correlation coefficient were applied for statistical analysis. The results revealed that working women experienced higher stress levels, while non-working women reported lower life satisfaction. A significant negative relationship between stress and life satisfaction was found. The study highlights the need for psychological support and stress-management programs for women irrespective of their employment status.

Keywords: Stress, Life Satisfaction, Working Women, Non-Working Women, Mental Health
Introduction:

Stress has become an inevitable part of modern life and affects individuals across all age groups and social categories. Women, in particular, experience stress due to multiple responsibilities related to family, work, and social roles. The increasing participation of women in the workforce has brought greater independence and self-identity but has also introduced new sources of stress such as work pressure, role conflict, and time management issues. Stress is defined as a psychological and physiological response to demands that exceed an individual's coping capacity. Chronic stress can negatively affect physical health, emotional stability, job performance, and overall quality of life. On the other hand, life satisfaction refers to a person's cognitive evaluation of their overall life quality and sense of fulfillment.

Working women often juggle professional responsibilities along with household duties and childcare, leading to higher stress levels. Non-working women, although free from occupational stress, may experience emotional strain due to financial dependence, lack of social recognition,

monotony, and restricted personal growth. These factors may influence their life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is an essential component of mental health and well-being. Higher life satisfaction is associated with positive emotions, better coping skills, and psychological resilience. Stress and life satisfaction are closely related, as increased stress often leads to decreased satisfaction with life.

Understanding the differences in stress and life satisfaction between working and non-working women is important for designing effective mental health interventions. Therefore, the present study attempts to examine stress levels and life satisfaction among working and non-working women and to explore the relationship between these variables.

Objectives of the Study:

- To study the level of stress among working and non-working women.
- To study the level of life satisfaction among working and non-working women.
- To examine the difference in stress between working and non-working women.
- To examine the difference in life satisfaction between working and non-working women.
- To study the relationship between stress and life satisfaction among women.

Hypotheses:

- Working women will experience significantly higher stress than non-working women.
- Non-working women will show lower life satisfaction than working women.
- There will be a significant negative relationship between stress and life satisfaction among women.

Methodology:

• Sample-

The sample consisted of 200 women, including 100 working women and 100 non-working women. The age range of the participants was 25–50 years. Participants were selected from urban and semi-urban areas using a random sampling method.

• Tools Used-

➤ Perceived Stress Scale (PSS):

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was used to measure the level of stress perceived by the participants in their daily lives. It is a standardized psychological tool designed to assess how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overwhelming individuals find their life situations. The scale focuses on the individual's subjective perception of stress rather than objective stress-producing events. It is widely used in psychological and mental health research due to its simplicity and effectiveness. Higher scores on the PSS indicate higher levels of perceived stress, while lower scores suggest better stress management and coping ability.

➤ Life Satisfaction Scale:

The Life Satisfaction Scale was employed to assess the overall satisfaction and sense of fulfillment experienced by the participants. This scale measures the cognitive evaluation of life

by examining how individuals feel about their achievements, personal happiness, and general quality of life. It provides an understanding of an individual's subjective well-being. Higher scores on this scale reflect greater life satisfaction, whereas lower scores indicate dissatisfaction with life circumstances.

Both the Perceived Stress Scale and the Life Satisfaction Scale are standardized instruments with established reliability and validity. Their use in the present study ensures accurate measurement and enhances the credibility of the research findings.

- **Statistical Analysis**

Mean, standard deviation, independent sample *t*-test, and Pearson's correlation coefficient were used for statistical analysis.

Results and Discussion:

- Comparison of Stress and Life Satisfaction-

Variable	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value
Stress	Working Women	100	48.60	9.40	3.12*
	Non-Working Women	100	42.10	8.85	
Life Satisfaction	Working Women	100	71.20	8.90	2.45*
	Non-Working Women	100	66.40	9.30	

***Significant at 0.05 level**

The present study examined differences in stress and life satisfaction between working and non-working women using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and independent sample *t*-test to determine whether the observed differences between the two groups were statistically significant.

The mean scores indicated that working women experienced higher levels of stress ($M = 48.60$) compared to non-working women ($M = 42.10$). Similarly, the mean life satisfaction score of working women ($M = 71.20$) was higher than that of non-working women ($M = 66.40$). These findings suggest that employment status influences both stress and life satisfaction among women. While working women face greater stress, possibly due to occupational demands and dual responsibilities, they also report higher life satisfaction, likely due to financial independence, professional identity, and social recognition.

The standard deviation values for both stress and life satisfaction were relatively similar across the two groups. For stress, the standard deviation was 9.40 for working women and 8.85 for non-working women, while for life satisfaction, it was 8.90 and 9.30 respectively. These values indicate that the scores were fairly consistent within each group, and the variability among participants was moderate.

To test whether the differences in mean scores were statistically significant, an independent sample *t*-test was applied. The obtained *t*-value for stress was 3.12, which was significant at the 0.05 level. This result indicates a significant difference in stress levels between working and non-working

women, with working women experiencing higher stress. Similarly, the *t*-value for life satisfaction was 2.45, which was also significant at the 0.05 level, indicating a significant difference in life satisfaction between the two groups.

Overall, the results demonstrate that working women differ significantly from non-working women in terms of both stress and life satisfaction. These findings support the view that employment plays a crucial role in shaping women's psychological well-being, highlighting the need for stress management and mental health support for women across different life roles.

Summary and Interpretation-

Variable	Which group higher	Significant?	Interpretation
Stress	Working Women	Yes (3.12*)	Working women feel more stress than non-working women.
Life Satisfaction	Working Women	Yes (2.45*)	Working women have higher life satisfaction than non-working women.

- Stress among Working and Non-Working Women:**

Stress is a common psychological experience among women due to the multiple social, personal, and emotional responsibilities they carry in daily life. Women are often expected to perform several roles simultaneously, including managing family responsibilities, maintaining social relationships, and fulfilling personal expectations. These multiple demands create continuous pressure, making women more vulnerable to stress. However, the sources and nature of stress differ between working and non-working women depending on their social roles and lifestyle.

- Stress among Working Women:**

Working women experience stress mainly due to occupational demands such as heavy workload, strict deadlines, job insecurity, performance pressure, and workplace competition. Along with professional responsibilities, they are also expected to manage household duties, childcare, and family obligations. This dual burden often leads to role conflict, physical fatigue, and difficulties in time management. The constant effort to balance work and family life can result in emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and reduced mental well-being. Lack of sufficient rest, limited personal time, and inadequate social or family support further increase stress levels among working women.

- Stress among Non-Working Women:**

Non-working women, although not exposed to occupational stress, also experience significant psychological stress. Financial dependence on family members, lack of economic independence, and limited involvement in decision-making processes can contribute to feelings of helplessness and low self-worth. Additionally, social factors such as lack of recognition for household work, reduced social interaction, and societal undervaluation of domestic roles may negatively affect

their self-esteem. Many non-working women may also face monotony in daily routines, feelings of isolation, and restricted opportunities for personal growth and self-development, leading to emotional stress and dissatisfaction with life.

Thus, both working and non-working women experience stress, though the causes and intensity of stress vary. Separating these categories helps in better understanding their unique challenges and is essential for developing effective mental health support and stress-management strategies.

- **Concept of Life Satisfaction in Women:**

Life satisfaction refers to an individual's overall cognitive evaluation of their life and the degree to which they feel content, fulfilled, and satisfied with their life circumstances. It is an important indicator of psychological well-being and mental health. Life satisfaction is not limited to a single aspect of life but includes satisfaction with family, work, health, social relationships, financial stability, and personal achievements.

In women, life satisfaction is influenced by several interrelated factors such as economic independence, quality of family relationships, social support, personal freedom, and opportunities for self-expression. Working women may experience higher life satisfaction due to financial security, professional identity, and a sense of achievement. Employment can provide women with independence, self-confidence, social recognition, and opportunities for personal growth, which positively contribute to life satisfaction. However, high work-related stress and lack of work-life balance can reduce life satisfaction among working women. Long working hours, work pressure, and inadequate family support may negatively affect their emotional well-being and reduce overall satisfaction with life.

Non-working women may derive life satisfaction from family bonding, caregiving roles, and emotional closeness with family members. A supportive family environment and strong interpersonal relationships can enhance their sense of fulfillment. However, limited economic independence, lack of personal achievement, and reduced social participation may negatively affect their life satisfaction. Feelings of dependence and lack of autonomy may lead to dissatisfaction, especially when personal aspirations remain unfulfilled.

Therefore, life satisfaction in women is shaped by a balance between personal goals, social roles, and emotional well-being.

- **Relationship between Stress and Life Satisfaction:**

Stress and life satisfaction are closely related psychological variables that significantly influence an individual's mental health and overall quality of life. Generally, higher levels of stress are associated with lower levels of life satisfaction. When individuals experience continuous stress, it affects their emotional stability, reduces positive emotions, and creates feelings of frustration and helplessness, which in turn lower life satisfaction.

In women, excessive stress due to personal, professional, or social pressures can interfere with their ability to enjoy life and feel satisfied. Chronic stress may lead to anxiety, depression, irritability, and reduced coping capacity, all of which negatively impact life satisfaction. Working women experiencing high occupational stress may feel overwhelmed and dissatisfied despite

professional success. Similarly, non-working women facing emotional or social stress may experience reduced satisfaction with life.

On the other hand, effective coping strategies, emotional support, and stress-management skills can reduce stress and enhance life satisfaction. Women who receive support from family, friends, and society are better able to manage stress and maintain a positive outlook on life. Psychological resilience and healthy coping mechanisms play a vital role in improving both stress levels and life satisfaction. Understanding the relationship between stress and life satisfaction is essential for promoting mental health and well-being among women. It helps in designing effective interventions, counseling programs, and support systems aimed at reducing stress and enhancing overall quality of life.

Conclusion:

The study revealed that working women experience significantly higher stress compared to non-working women. This can be attributed to the dual demands of professional responsibilities and household duties, which create role conflict, time pressure, and emotional strain. Non-working women, while free from occupational stress, encounter stress related to financial dependence, limited personal growth, societal expectations, and lack of social recognition. These findings indicate that stress is a common experience for all women, but its sources and intensity differ based on employment status. Understanding these differences is essential for designing effective interventions to manage stress and improve mental health among women.

Working women reported higher life satisfaction than non-working women. Employment provides financial independence, professional identity, opportunities for personal development, and social recognition, all of which positively influence life satisfaction. Non-working women, although deriving fulfillment from family roles and caregiving responsibilities, may experience lower life satisfaction due to restricted autonomy, limited personal achievement, and reduced social participation. The study also found a significant negative relationship between stress and life satisfaction, indicating that higher stress levels are associated with lower satisfaction. This highlights the importance of addressing stress to enhance overall well-being and psychological resilience in women.

The findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions to promote mental health and life satisfaction among women. Working women can benefit from stress-management programs, counseling services, and policies that support work-life balance. Non-working women may benefit from social engagement initiatives, skill development opportunities, and emotional support to enhance personal fulfillment and life satisfaction. Overall, the study underscores that women's mental health is shaped by the interplay of stress and life satisfaction, influenced by their social and occupational roles. Providing tailored support can improve psychological well-being, resilience, and quality of life for both working and non-working women.

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