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A STUDY OF LIFE SATISFACTION OF WORKING WOMEN AND HOUSEWIVES

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Abstract:

The present investigation is an attempt to study the life satisfaction of working women and housewives. The study sample comprised of 50 working women and 50 housewives, selected from Dharwad city. A life satisfaction scale developed by Sinha and Sharma (1979) was administered on the sample. The obtained responses were scored and subjected to "t" and "x²" tests. The results showed that the working women and housewives are not differing significantly from each other in their life satisfaction. Incidentally it is found that age, educational level and number of children of women are not significantly associated with their life satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION:

Satisfaction is considered to be a very important aspect in one's life. Many researchers, thinkers and writers have been reflecting their thoughts and knowledge on the concept of life satisfaction since many years, while scientific approach towards the study of life satisfaction is a recent attempt made by many psychologists and other social scientists. It is observed that life satisfaction is a broader term which includes the satisfaction of an individual with his/her family life, marriage life, social life, health etc. Life satisfaction of an individual also depends upon the quality of work that one does. Thus, in the present study an effort is made to know whether the working women are significantly differing from the housewives in their life satisfaction or not.

A review of related studies in this regard revealed the following facts. Studies on life satisfaction have revealed that there is high raise in satisfaction level with age. Mukherjee (1986) in his monumental study pointed out that overall in 1970s in US, life satisfaction showed a tendency to advance with age, and young well educated persons were remarkably dissatisfied. Happiness of college educated people increased with age, as it did with overall life satisfaction. He also found that older blacks expressed more satisfaction than younger blacks. Aminabhavi and Dharnanendriah (1992) found positive relationship between age and life satisfaction. Where as Fugl-Meyer et.al., (1991) stated that the happiness of Swedan adults was not dependent on their age.

Kavanagh and Halpern (1970) found that job satisfaction is a contributing factor for life satisfaction but they may always not correlate. Lee Graham's (1986) findings revealed that employees with high self actualization needs tend to experience greater life satisfaction and higher job satisfaction. Nathwat and Mathur (1993) investigated that working women have significantly better life satisfaction and self-esteem than the housewives.

In the above reviewed literature, it is observed that there are not much studies available with regard to the life satisfaction of working women and housewives. In the present days, some transition has taken place in women's life and new vistas are opened to her by providing the opportunity to work outside the home also.

Thus, this change in our society necessitates the study of life satisfaction of working women as well as housewives.

METHOD:**Sample:**

The selected sample of the study constituted of 100 women, i.e., 50 working women and 50 housewives. The working women sample includes college lecturers, doctors, lawyers and employees of Life Insurance Corporation and banks. The other sample consists of pure housewives. The age range of women in both the sample varies from 30 to 50 years and education from pre-university course to post graduation.

Measures:

A life satisfaction scale developed by Sinha and Sharma (1979) was used to measure the life satisfaction of both the samples i.e., working women and housewives. Further some more information relating to their age, educational level and number of children etc, were also collected in the personal schedule.

Procedure:

The subjects selected for the study were contacted personally and individually by the investigator in their work places and houses. In addition to obtaining the responses to the life satisfaction scale, some other personal information was also collected from the samples. The obtained responses were scored and subjected to suitable statistical analysis. Mean and Standard deviation were calculated for both the groups. To know the significance of difference between working women and housewives in their life satisfaction, 't' test was applied. Further, to know the significance of association of some factors like age, education and number of children of women with their life satisfaction, χ^2 analysis is done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Table 1: Mean, S.D and 't' value for Life Satisfaction of working women and housewives.

Groups	N	Mean	S.D	t' Value	Sig. level
Working women	50	50.32	12.37	-0.3854	NS
Housewives	50	50.68	7.89		

NS- Not Significant

An inspection of Table 1 shows that the mean scores of life satisfaction of working women (50.32) and housewives (50.68) are not differing much. It can also be observed from this data that, both the groups are having just moderate level of life satisfaction. While, the obtained standard deviation scores of working women (12.37) and housewives (7.89) are differing from each other to some extent. This reveals the fact that there is a more variation in life satisfaction of working women when compared to the life satisfaction of housewives.

The 't' value (-0.3854) reveals that working women and housewives do not differ significantly in their life satisfaction.

Further to get an explanation for the observed insignificant difference, a qualitative analysis has been done and results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Means and Rank Orders for various needs of working women and housewives

Sl. No.	Categories of Needs	Working Women		Housewives	
		Means	Ranks	Means	Ranks
1	Basic Needs	5.81	1	6.01	1
2	Safety and Security	5.00	3	5.09	3
3	Social	4.89	4	5.03	4
4	Self Esteem	5.77	2	5.43	2
5	Self-actualization	4.73	5	4.71	5
	Total	26.20		26.27	
	Overall Mean	5.24		5.25	

An observation of Table 2 reveals that the pattern of need satisfaction is very much same in both the groups. Working women and housewives are most satisfied with their basic needs, while they are least satisfied with self-actualization needs. It is surprising to notice that both the groups are well satisfied with self esteem needs and moderately satisfied with safety and security needs, while less satisfied with social needs.

The observed insignificant difference between the two groups may be attributed to the fact that both the groups are coming from upper middle class. Due to this reason both of them are having some what similar life experiences and exposures. In addition to this, the observed same pattern of need satisfaction in qualitative analysis supports the obtained insignificant difference between the working women and housewives in their overall life satisfaction.

One can see from the qualitative analysis that, both the working women and housewives are highly satisfied with their basic needs. It is followed by satisfaction of self-esteem needs. Here the working women were expected to have higher satisfaction with their self esteem need, as they get due respect and recognition in the society. But surprisingly it is not found here. It might be due to the fact that now a days even housewives have become more social and actively participating in cultural and social affairs. Thus, it is through this type of their exposure to the society that they are also gaining recognition in the society. Similarly, working women were expected to have higher level of satisfaction with their self-actualization needs also. Once again that is not to be found here. This may be because of the fact that the working women might not have chosen their occupations in accordance with their abilities. On the other hand they might have entered into these occupations due to certain compulsions, chance factors and out of economic necessity.

On the whole, in this modern supersonic age even the Indian housewives by being at home can get all sorts of information through varied mass media. So this way of obtained higher level of knowledge, understanding and awareness about the present world might have made them to feel more confident and thereby, even the housewives also find themselves in the more enhanced state of well-being.

Table 3: χ^2 value revealing the association of age, education and number of children of women with their Life Satisfaction

Variables	χ^2 value	Significance level
Age and Life Satisfaction	0.2409	NS
Education and Life Satisfaction	0.1210	NS
Number of children and Life Satisfaction	1.6283	NS

NS-Not Significant

A perusal of Table 3 reveals that age (0.24), education (0.12) and number of children (1.63) of women are not significantly associated with their life satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS:

- 1) Working women and housewives do not differ significantly in their life satisfaction.
- 2) Age, education and number of children of women are not significantly associated with their life satisfaction.

However, it is felt that further studies on macro samples are required to arrive at more definite conclusions.

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