

Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction among Employed Women and Housewives: A Comparative Investigation

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Abstract

Background: Women, especially the housewives in India are often seen as the backbone of the family, responsible for managing household duties, raising children, and supporting their husbands financially. Regardless of their significant contributions, they often lack the formal recognition and support they deserve resulting in low confidence and poorly satisfaction with life.

Method: The present investigation is planned to explore the difference in self-efficacy and life satisfaction among employed women and housewives. In the said study, 240 women participants in which 120 employed women and 120 housewives were selected from the Srinagar city (Kashmir) using the Non-probability (Purposive) sampling method. A between-group research design was prepared to achieve the objective of the study. Two psychological tools used to gather data from the women participants include the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES, Bandura, 1977) and The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS, Diener et al., 1985).

Results: The comparison among employed women and housewives in the said variables has been carried out using an independent sample t-test. It has been reported that employed women are highly self-efficacious and satisfied with their lives.

Conclusion: Thus, it can be said that the employment status of women do have a significant impact on the way she perceive herself and about her life.

Keywords: *Employed women, Housewives, Self-efficacy, Life Satisfaction*

Introduction

Traditionally, Indian society has been patriarchal, where women is often confined to roles as wives and mothers, responsible for managing household duties, raising children, and supporting their husbands economically. The housewives work long hours without pay. The employed women who not only perform household chores but also work at office and provide financial support to their parents. In both the cases they may not receive the appreciation they deserve.

Though the status of women in Indian society has evolved over time, modern women has been

increasingly participating in social, economic, and political activities, challenging traditional gender roles. The roles of women (employed) have undergone profound transformations, marked by increased participation in the workforce and shifting societal expectations making them confident and financially self-independent. The same is not true with the housewives, there are still many challenges an Indian housewives faces compared to an employed women. Their contribution in the family as well as society is still underestimated.

Self-Efficacy

According to Brockner (1998), self-efficacy is a goal-associated form of self-esteem and is a synonym of self-confidence (Kanter, 2006). The concept of self-efficacy was first introduced by Bandura, and is defined as “a person’s belief that he/she is capable of performing a particular task successfully” (Bandura, 1997, 1977). There are three dimensions of self-efficacy: (1) magnitude (degree of task complexity that one believes one can achieve), (2) strength (belief that one's degree of achieving a task is weak or strong) and (3) generality (extent to which the expectation is applicable in many contexts) (Bandura, 1997). It has been also reported that perception, motivation, and performance has a positive correlation with an employee’s ability to accomplish a task because they attempt to learn and complete things that they think they can complete successfully. There are three ways that self-efficacy influences the learning process and performance (Bandura, 1982).

1. Self-efficacy helps in the selection of task/s (employees that have poor self-efficacy typically have modest personal ambitions. On the other hand, a person who believes in their own abilities is more likely to have high aspirations).
2. Self-efficacy not only influences the learning process but also the energy and effort an employee puts into achieving the task (employees with high self-efficacy strive to achieve the goals successfully, whereas employees with low self-efficacy put less effort into achieving set goals).
3. Self-efficacy affects the perseverance with which people put effort to learn novel and challenging tasks (employees with high self-efficacy are optimistic and confident in selecting new skills and put extra effort and energy into accomplishing the task. Conversely, employees with low self-efficacy perceive themselves as inept of learning and give up easily when confronted with difficult situations.

A significant role of Self-efficacy has also been seen in job performance (Bandura & Locke, 2003) and type of employment (Bala & Lakshmi, 1992) which in turn influences how effectively people handle the demands and difficulties of their career goals (Bandura, 2005), searching for new job (Wenzel, 1993; Eden & Aviram, 1993) while considering a wide range of career opportunities (Flammer, 2001). Self-efficacy among working women is a critical factor influencing their ability to manage work-family conflicts and pursue career aspirations. Research indicates that self-efficacy is significantly affected by various contextual factors, including workplace support and personal circumstances, which can either enhance or hinder women's professional development. Sharma and Chawla (2023) found a significant influence of employment status among employed women. It has been noted from the outcomes of the study that employed women are highly self-efficacious compared to housewives. Self-efficacy tends to be bolstered by workforce participation, contributing to a sense

of agency and mastery in various life domains such as social participation, and confidence in making decisions of life (Mankani & Yenagi, 2012) leading to a better quality of life (Shekhawat et al., 2022). Moreover, a self-efficacious person (Azar & Vasudeva, 2006) also report high self-esteem (Mary & Good, 2005; Bandura, 1997; Flammer, 1990) showed better health (physical and mental) (Arias-Galicia, 2018), sound psychologically well-being (Ross & Mirowsky, 1988) among employed women resulting in higher sense of confidence, self-fulfilment (Paula et al., 1987) balance between work-life domain.

Life-Satisfaction

In simpler terms, life satisfaction can be stated as an overall appraisal of one's attitudes and feelings toward one's life at a specific moment, ranging from destructive to constructive. The degree of happiness and well-being that a person perceives is measured by their subjective life satisfaction.

Similarly, Diener et al. (1985) defined "life satisfaction as an individual's global assessment of his or her life in positive terms" (Diener et.al., 1985). According to Valentina (2011) Life satisfaction is "an overall, "global assessment" of feelings and attitudes about one's life at a particular point in time according to that individual's chosen criteria". Similarly, Tatarkiewicz (1976) describes "satisfaction with life as a whole must be satisfaction not only with that which is, but also with that which was and that which will be, not only with the present but also with the past and the future". Furthermore, Diener et al., (1999) states that "people will feel more satisfied when they perceive that their standards of fulfilment have been meeting and less satisfied when they have not been met".

In this regard, differences in satisfaction with life among employed women and housewives have been reported in multiple studies. Working women scored high on satisfaction with life scale when associated with non-working women (Arshad et al., 2015; Singh et al., 2014; Akbari, 2012) and may become happier than housewives in the future (Subich, 1998). Similarly, working women were seen as highly satisfied with life (Chaudhary, 2018; Adams et al., 1996; Shek, 1998). Furthermore, higher life satisfaction was found among employed women when compared with housewives (Nathawat & Mathur, 1993) which develops confidence among employed women to handle multiple tasks at a time (Hasnain et al., 2011; Bryant & Constantine, 2006) and makes them financially independent (Jan & Masood, 2008).

Objectives

- 1) To investigate the comparison in Self-Efficacy among Employed Women and Housewives.
- 2) To explore the comparison in Life Satisfaction among Employed Women and Housewives.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: Employed women and housewives differ in Self-Efficacy.

H₀₂: Employed women and housewives differ in Life Satisfaction.

Method

Participants

In this study, 240 women participants from Kashmir (Srinagar city) were chosen. The age range of the participants ranged between 25-36 years ($M = 31.77$; $SD = 3.83$) Two equal categories with an equal

number of respondents i.e., 120 employed women (50 %) and 120 housewives (50%) were selected based on their employment status. Furthermore, a nonprobability (purposive) sampling method was used to collect the sample.

Research Design

A between-group design was prepared to achieve the research objectives of the study.

Instruments

General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES, Bandura, 1977)

It is a self-administration scale and comprises 10 items. Each item has provided four options "exactly true" (4) and "not at all true" (1). The said scale reported significant reliability (predictive reliability) with optimism (.56) and self-esteem (.40). Likewise, Cronbach's alpha has been noted in the range between .82 to .93. Adding all the responses on respective items provides the total scores of the whole scale.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS, Diener et al., 1985)

The said scale includes five items and each item has seven options "strongly disagree" (7) to "strongly agree" (1). Also, the satisfaction with life reported high reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .85) and the test-retest reliability came out to be .82. As far as criterion validity is concerned, it has been reported .83 and content validity (inter-rater) has been noted .83. The total scores on the scale is done by summing all the response on each item.

Procedure

A warm and friendly atmosphere was set up before the tools were administered. Confidentiality about the shared data was guaranteed to the participants. The instructions required to complete the questionnaire were provided to avoid any sort of misunderstanding. After that small groups were formed and the questionnaires were distributed individually. It took an average of 15 to 20 minutes for each participant to finish the questionnaire. Finally, the questionnaires were collected, scored manually by the given manual of each questionnaire.

Statistical Analysis

An independent samples t-test (or independent t-test) was used to examine the obtained data.

Results

Table 1

Comparison of Mean Scores in Self-efficacy and Life satisfaction among women (employed women and housewives)

Variables	Employment Status		<i>t</i> (<i>df</i> =238)	<i>p</i>
	Employed Women (120) <i>Mean (Standard Deviation)</i>	Housewives (120) <i>Mean (Standard Deviation)</i>		
Self-Efficacy	27.66 (2.21)	26.64 (2.63)	3.26	.00** *

Life Satisfaction	19.41(2.51)	18.60 (2.61)	2.41	.01*
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(Note: * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$)

Table 1 shows a statistically significant gender difference in the scores of self-efficacy among employed women (*Mean* = 27.66, *Standard Deviation* = 2.21) and housewives (*Mean* = 33.54, *Standard Deviation* = 7.43), $t(238) = 3.26$, $p < .001$ showing higher self-efficacy among employed women. Similarly, on the grounds of the higher scores obtained by employed women on life satisfaction (*Mean* = 19.41, *Standard Deviation* = 2.51) when compared with housewives (*Mean* = 18.60, *Standard Deviation* = 2.61, $t(398) = 2.41$, $p < .01$ employed women reported highly satisfied with life.

Discussion

The said research is intended to explore the comparison among employed women and housewives in self-efficacy and life satisfaction. To carry out the study 240 women participants in which 120 employed women and 120 housewives were chosen from the Srinagar city (Kashmir) using the Non-probability (Purposive) sampling method. Between-group design was carried out to achieve the research objectives of the study. Two psychological tools used to gather data from the women participants include the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES, Bandura, 1977) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS, Diener et al., 1985). Similarly, an Independent sample t-test was used to find out the comparison among employed women and housewives.

There are two central hypotheses of the present study

H₀₁: Employed women and housewives differ in Self-Efficacy.

The employed women showed a higher level of self-efficacy when compared with housewives. This indicates that the employed woman believes in their ability to carry out the actions required to realize desired outcomes. Moreover, employed women hold confidence in their ability to manage and regulate their emotions well, strive to achieve their goals, deal with stressful situations objectively, enjoy the activities they like, recover objectively from disappointments quickly, view problems as challenges and never give up easily.

In support of the findings of the study, Sharma and Chawla (2023) found a significant influence on employment status among employed women. It has been noted from the outcomes of the study that employed women are highly self-efficacious compared to housewives. Self-efficacy tends to be bolstered by workforce participation, contributing to a sense of agency and mastery in various life domains such as social participation, and confidence in making decisions in life (Mankani & Yenagi, 2012) leading to better quality of life (Shekhawat et al., 2022). Furthermore, higher self-efficacy (Azar & Vasudeva, 2006) showed better health (physical and mental) (Arias-Galicia, 2018), sound psychological well-being (Ross and Mirowsky, 1988) among employed women resulting in higher sense of confidence, self-fulfilment (Paula et al., 1987) to between work-life domain.

Thus, it can deducted that the first hypothesis is not accepted.

H₀₂: Employed women and housewives differ in Life Satisfaction.

The employed women report being highly satisfied with life. This shows that the employed women

feel grateful for the things and the people around them. They deal with hardships objectively, hold a positive attitude towards life, enjoy social gatherings, and have a sense of purpose in life which provides direction to their life, they are also efficient in managing and understanding their as well as others' emotions well, they are kin to others. Moreover, employed women always keep the doors of improvement open and try to pursue personal by learning new skills. Last but not least, employed women experience a sense of independence in making their decisions. To support the outcomes of the study, differences in satisfaction with life among employed women and housewives have been reported in multiple studies. Working women scored high on satisfaction with life scale when associated with non-working women (Arshad et al., 2015; Singh et al., 2014; Akbari, 2012) and may become happier than housewives in the future (Subich, 1998). Similarly, working women were seen as highly satisfied with life (Chaudhary, 2018; Adams et al., 1996; Shek, 1998). Furthermore, higher life satisfaction was found among employed women when compared with housewives (Nathawat & Mathur, 1993) which develops confidence among employed women to handle multiple tasks at a time (Hasnain et al., 2011; Bryant & Constantine, 2006) and makes them financially independent (Jan & Masood, 2008).

Thus, it can be deduced that the first hypothesis is not accepted.

Implications

Grounded on the findings of the study, it can be interpreted that employment status has a significant role in self-efficacy and life satisfaction among women. Precisely speaking housewives reported lower self-efficacy and less satisfaction with lives.

Therefore, in the premise of the results of the study, some effective strategies for improving self-efficacy and enhancing life satisfaction among housewives have been discussed below:

1. **Skills Training:** Offer classes or workshops on various skills such as cooking, sewing, gardening, or even computer literacy.
2. **Continuing Education:** Encourage and provide opportunities for further education, whether online courses, certifications, or degrees.
3. **Building a Support Network:** Create or join local groups where housewives can share experiences, challenges, and successes. Connect with more experienced individuals who can offer guidance and encouragement.
4. **Goal Setting:** Help housewives set and achieve personal and professional goals. This can build confidence and a sense of accomplishment. Encourage the pursuit of hobbies or interests that bring joy and fulfilment.
5. **Physical well-being:** Promote regular exercise, healthy eating, and self-care practices.
6. **Mental and Emotional Well-being:** Keep mental health resources (counselling sessions) accessible. Additionally, engage in stress-reduction practices (yoga, meditation, or deep breathing techniques).
7. **Financial Independence:** Teach financial literacy, including budgeting, saving, and investing. Support entrepreneurial endeavours, like starting a small business or home-based enterprise.

8. **Community Involvement:** Encourage participation in community service or local events, which can build a sense of purpose and connection. Get involved in local projects that improve the community and offer leadership opportunities.
9. **Encouraging Autonomy:** Encourage taking initiative and making decisions, both at home and in the community.
10. **Problem Solving:** Foster problem-solving skills through real-life scenarios and support.
11. **Pursue Passions:** Encourage the exploration of hobbies and interests that bring joy and a sense of accomplishment.
12. **Self-Reflection:** Spend time in self-reflection to understand personal needs and desires.

These strategies can significantly enhance and improve self-efficacy and satisfaction with life among housewives. However, it is also important to consider that societal norms adhered to by women result in poor self-efficacy and less satisfaction with life. Addressing these challenges can be one of the effective ways to improve scores on self-efficacy and satisfaction with life compared to employed women.

Conclusion

Thus, on the grounds of the outcomes of the study, it can be interpreted that less confident and poorly satisfied with their lives among housewives is attributed to the lack of financial support to their husbands when compared to employed women. However, there have been significant strides in improving the position of women especially housewives in Indian society. Due to this more and more women have started going out to work, however, there is still much work to be done to ensure they receive the recognition and support they deserve. Furthermore, the current study included a very small proportion of working women and housewives. More extensive and detailed random research on working women and housewives in Srinagar (Kashmir) is required.

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