

Quality of life among working and nonworking mothers in Kolkata

Shinjan Ghosh^{1*}

ABSTRACT

Aim: The occupational status of mothers is a topic of discussion for decades. Various individuals have different opinions about how employment status affects the physical and psychological health of a mother. Employment may also affect the quality of interpersonal relationships formed by the mother with her children, husband, and other family members. The present study aims at studying the quality of life among Working and Non-working mothers in Kolkata. **Methods:** The study was conducted on 100 working and 100 non-working mothers within the age range of 36-45 years residing in Kolkata. The sample was drawn from various hospitals, working sectors, schools and households by a simple random sampling method. An information schedule and WHO-Quality of Life scale (WHOQOL-BREF) prepared by the WHOQOL group (1995) were administered to the mothers and data were collected from them individually. Data analysis was done by using Descriptive statistics and t-test and SPSS was used to get the results. **Result:** Results indicated that there lies a significant difference between Working and Non-working mothers on the basis of the quality of life. The working mothers were found to have a better quality of life than non-working mothers.

Keywords: *Quality of life, Working mothers, Non-working mothers*

“Life doesn’t come with a manual, it comes with a Mother”.

‘Mother’ a single term that accompanies a thousand emotions. This is the most overrated term which denotes a person whose daily actions have been underrated on a consistent basis. Sometimes, she is the medicine to depression, sometimes the root of frustration, sometimes the reason to return home, sometimes the reason for getting fat, sometimes the symbol of unconditional positive regard while sometimes the reservoir of empathy. She is one and the only one.

With passing time, increment of the pace of life, increment of needs, the desire for luxuries over necessities, increment of women empowerment and decrement of patriarchy, women have started working before as well after the marriage, leading to a great number of working mothers being present today in this world working alongside their husbands for the sake of their family and their own self-esteem.

¹M.Sc, Dept. of Applied Psychology, Rajabazar Science College, University of Calcutta, Kolkata, India

*Responding Author

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It has been a matter of concern to various people that whether working mothers are able to take care of their family and child as well as their nonworking counterparts. In short, their efficacy as a mother has been judged through the eyes of their husband and their children.

Quality of life is the subjective judgment of a person about he or she is leading his or her life. This subjective judgment depends on their physical health, the mental state, the kinds of interpersonal relationships they share with others and the quality of the various environments which surround them on a day to day basis. It is the general well being of a person depending on the feeling of happiness, inner peace and the subjective meaning of their existence in this world. Quality of life is a very important domain to access because it takes into account quite about every sphere of life and it may show how the mothers are perceiving their life to be. The employment status of a mother may affect her quality of life in both positive and negative ways. On one hand, employment leads to an increase in workload, dual responsibilities of running a home as well as working outside, which may increase the physical and mental strains faced by the mothers. On the other hand, employment also leads to financial independence, a sense of autonomy and may lead to an increase in the confidence of these mothers. According to Powell (2006), positive experiences in one role may increase positivity towards the other roles. Thus, a positive experience in working sectors may actually make the mother feel more positive while playing the role of the homemaker after returning home. On the other hand, a poor and strenuous workload and working environment may also hamper other areas of the mother's life.

Rich source of literature is there which puts light on the effects of employment status on quality of life. Studies of Arshad (2015) on 50 working and 50 nonworking women found significant differences between them in regard to their positive well being. On the other hand, studies by Ahmed & Khan (2018) show that there lies no significant difference between working and nonworking mothers in terms of their quality of life. Studies of Anand & Sharma (2017) conducted on 100 women, found out that non-working women have a better quality of life than working women. On the other hand, studies by Sinha (2017) conducted on 82 working and 82 nonworking mothers, show that working mothers have a better quality of life than their nonworking counterparts. The study also concludes that employment has a positive effect on the psychological well being of the mothers. Thus, it can be seen that there are studies with all diverse conclusions. While some opines that employment affects the quality of life positively, some say it's affecting the quality of life negatively. There are also some studies which conclude that there is no significant effect of employment on quality of life. Thus, a study is needed to fulfilling these gaps and to get an answer to this never-ending question. The present research aimed at studying the quality of life among working and nonworking mothers of the age range 30 to 45 years, residing in Kolkata. The research also intended to find out whether there is any significant difference between the quality of life of working and nonworking mothers.

METHODOLOGY

Problem Statement

To study the quality of life among Working and Nonworking mothers

Objectives

1. To find out if there is any difference between working and nonworking mothers in terms of their quality of life.
2. To find out if there is any difference between working and nonworking mothers in terms of their physical health

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3. To find out if there is any difference between working and nonworking mothers in terms of their psychological health
4. To find out if there is any difference between working and nonworking mothers in terms of their social relations
5. To find out if there is any difference between working and nonworking mothers in terms of the quality of their environment

Hypothesis

H01: There is no significant difference between Working mothers and Nonworking mothers in terms of Quality of life

HA1: There is a significant difference between Working mothers and Nonworking mothers in terms of Quality of life

H02: There is no significant difference between Working mothers and Nonworking mothers in terms of Physical Health

HA2: There is a significant difference between Working mothers and Nonworking mothers in terms of Physical Health

H03: There is no significant difference between Working mothers and Nonworking mothers in terms of Psychological Health

HA3: There is a significant difference between Working mothers and Nonworking mothers in terms of Psychological Health

H04: There is no significant difference between Working mothers and Nonworking mothers in terms of Social relations

HA4: There is a significant difference between Working mothers and Nonworking mothers in terms of Social relations

H05: There is no significant difference between Working mothers and Nonworking mothers in terms of the quality of their Environment

HA5: There is a significant difference between Working mothers and Nonworking mothers in terms of the quality of their Environment

Variables

In the present study, the researcher has taken Employment status as the Independent Variable and Quality of life as the Dependent variable.

Samples

The sample of the present study consisted of 100 working mothers and 100 nonworking mothers selected from working sectors, schools, hospitals and households in Kolkata. Simple random sampling was used to select them.

Materials

WHOQOL-BREF (WHOQOL Group, 1995): It is the short version of the WHOQOL-100 questionnaire. This questionnaire consists of 26 items and to be responded on a 5 point scale. It measures Quality of life, Physical health, Psychological health, Quality of Social relation with others and Quality of the Environment in which one stays.

Scoring

The WHOQOL-BREF produces a profile of quality of life by taking into account scores of four domains. There are also two items at first which deals with the individuals perception about their quality of life and health. Domain scores are scaled in a positive direction (i.e. higher scores denote a higher quality of life). Three items are reverse scored. The mean score of items within each domain is used to calculate the domain score.

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WHOQOL-BREF Subscale Composition (underlined means reverse-scored):

Quality of Life: 1, 2

Physical Health: 3, 4, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18

Psychological Health: 5, 6, 7, 11, 19, 26

Social Relations: 20, 21, 22

Environment: 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25

Reliability and Validity

For measuring the internal consistency of the tool, Cronbach's alpha calculation was done. The alpha values have been found to be satisfactory good, which is 0.80 for physical health, 0.74 for psychological health, 0.66 for social relation and 0.73 for the environment.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected from the Information schedule and the WHOQOL-BREF given to the sample.

Statistical Treatments

The data collected was analyzed with the help of SPSS and descriptive statistics and t-test measures were calculated.

RESULT

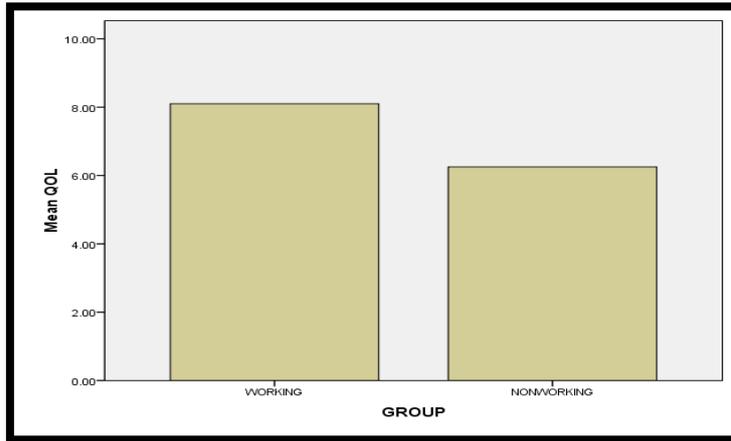
Descriptive statistics were calculated to measure the mean and sd of the scores of working and nonworking mothers on various subscales of WHOQOL-BREF. The results are shown in the table below:

Table 1: Table showing the mean and SD of WHOQOL-BREF subscale scores of 100 Working and 100 Nonworking mothers

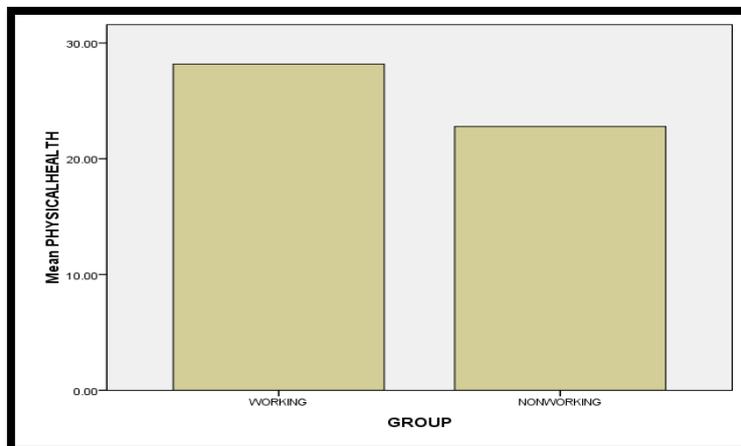
Groups (Mothers)	WHOQOL-BREF Sub-Scales	Mean	S.D
Working	Quality of Life	8.1	1.03
Nonworking		6.3	1.48
Working	Physical Health	28.2	3.24
Nonworking		22.8	4.49
Working	Psychological Health	24.1	2.72
Nonworking		19.1	4.19
Working	Social Relations	11.9	1.49
Nonworking		9	2.2
Working	Environment	30.4	3.3
Nonworking		29.1	4.2

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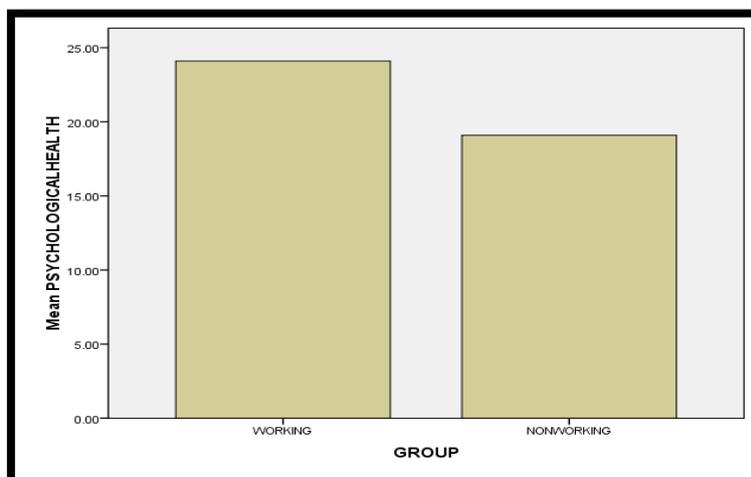
From the above table, it was seen that working mothers have higher mean scores than nonworking mothers in every subscale of quality of life. The low Sd also indicates that the collected data is stable.



Graph 1: Graph showing the mean scores of quality of life among working and nonworking mothers

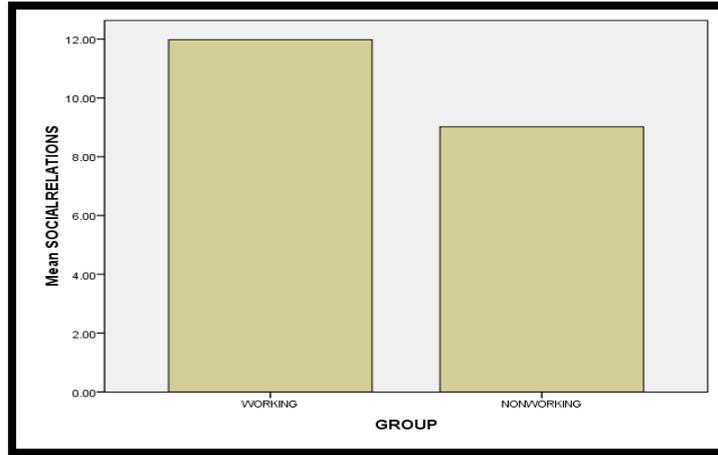


Graph 2: Graph Showing the Mean Scores of Physical Health among Working and Nonworking Mothers

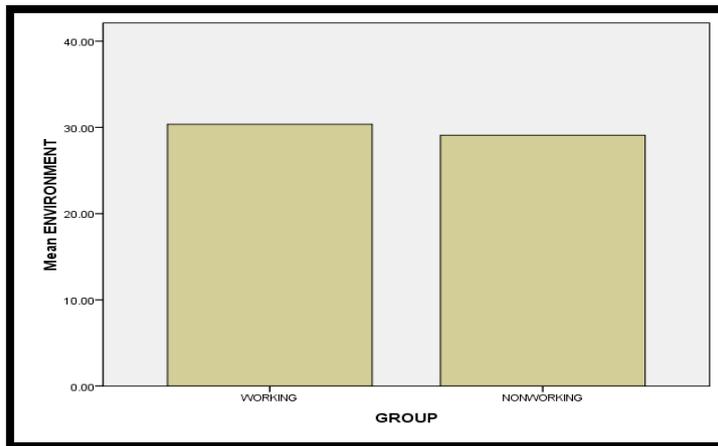


Graph 3: Graph showing the mean scores of Psychological Health among working and nonworking mothers

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Graph 4: Graph Showing The Mean Scores Of Social Relations Among Working And Nonworking Mothers



Graph 5: Graph showing the mean scores of quality of Environment among working and nonworking mothers

The main purpose of the research was to find out whether there is any significant difference in quality of life between working and nonworking mothers. It has been analyzed through t-test and the result is shown in the table given below:

Table 2: Table showing the significance of the mean difference between working and nonworking mothers

Groups (Mothers)	WHOQOL-BREF Sub-Scales	t-value	Significant at
Working	Quality of Life	10.19	0.01 level of significance
Nonworking			
Working	Physical Health	9.73	0.01 level of significance
Nonworking			

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Groups (Mothers)	WHOQOL-BREF Sub-Scales	t-value	Significant at
Working	Psychological Health	10.02	0.01 level of significance
Nonworking			
Working	Social Relations	11.12	0.01 level of significance
Nonworking			
Working	Environment	2.33	0.01 level of significance
Nonworking			

From the above table, it was seen that working mothers differ significantly from nonworking mothers in terms of quality of life. Thus, the null hypothesis H01, H02, H03, H04, and H05 were rejected and alternative hypothesis HA1, HA2, HA3, HA4, and HA5 were accepted.

DISCUSSION

From Table 2 it has been found that there lies a significant mean difference between Working and Nonworking mothers in terms of Quality of Life. It can be seen from Table 1 that in all the domains of Quality of life i.e., Physical health, Psychological health, Social relations, and Environment the Working mothers have a significantly higher mean than Nonworking mothers. Thus it can be interpreted that working mothers perceive their life to be quite good in all physical, psychological, social and environmental factors. It may also be interpreted that working mothers suffer from less psychological problems of anxiety, and depression. They have better physical health, have sound interpersonal relations and also perceives the environment in which they dwell to be of good quality. It may be because employment serves a buffer against stress for the working mothers resulting in their better overall quality of life (Holeppa, 2015). The working mothers do not feel the loneliness or experience the monotonous life of the Nonworking mothers and get the opportunity to distract themselves from stressful situations and memories by interacting with work colleagues or investing time in their work. This enhances their social relations as well as psychological health.

Staying active is always something recommended by the Doctors for better physical health and working mothers are more active than Nonworking mothers and may counter various problems like obesity or arthritis which may hamper physical health. In case of the environment domain, it can be said that for the working mothers the environment doesn't remain the same always as they have a job environment as well as a home environment to deal with. Though this may sound like a tough job, it also provides the opportunity for the mothers to change their environment and feel refreshed. They have the opportunity to tackle their tough working environment by a better home environment and vice versa. This present finding supports the views of McIntosh (1988) who stated that loneliness and the monotonous environment are causes behind a Nonworking mother's low quality of life. These findings also support the studies of Ferree(1987) and also support the expansion hypothesis which states that employment has a more positive effect on the quality of life than negative(Cooper, Rout & Kerslake, 1997).

CONCLUSION

From the conducted research, it can be concluded that there lies a difference between Working and Nonworking mothers in terms of the Quality of life and its factors such as physical health, psychological health, social relations and quality of the environment.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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