

Psychological predictors of life satisfaction among married women

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study was to examine the psychological predictors (anger and hostility) of life satisfaction among married women. It was hypothesized that anger and hostility would significantly predict life satisfaction among married women. To proceed it further, total one hundred and fifty ($n = 150$) married non-working women were recruited using snowball sampling. The variables of anger and hostility were measured using subscales (Anger and Hostility) of Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992). Life satisfaction was examined through Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). Linear Regression analysis of the research data reveals that anger and hostility significantly predicted life satisfaction among married women. The present findings have implications for mental health professionals, governmental and non-governmental organization devoted to address women issues.

Keywords: Anger, Hostility, Life satisfaction, Married Women, Lalamusa

Functions of human life depend on needs, goals and resources people have or aspire to have in their hand. Generally, people do not feel satisfied until or unless they achieve their goals. Achievement of goals, self-concept, competency to deal daily life matters, satisfaction in relationships and mood constitute sense of well-being (Harkins, 2003, as cited in Rogers, 2013). Life goals, needs and resources vary among individuals, societies and cultures that, in a long run, serve as foundation for setting individual criteria and standards. Desires, expectations and assets also wrought the standards and criteria for evaluating one's life. Nevertheless, life standards and criteria have different meanings for different people and are integral in judging their level of satisfaction. As Diener et al. (1985) have conceptualized the construct of life satisfaction as one's cognitive evaluation of his or her own life. Life satisfaction is a cognitive judgmental process that involves comparison of circumstances with expectations in order to determine to what extent a person is satisfied with own life. Cognitive evaluation is done in the light of what people aspire to have and the life they are presently leading (Paschali & Tsitsas, 2009). Life as a whole or its specific domain is evaluated (Huebner, Valois, Paxton, & Drane, 2005).

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A scientific glance at specific domains of life establishes the fact that the level of one's satisfaction with life gets rise or decline for the number of reasons. For instance; education (Saundra & Hughey, 2003), pay (Jan & Masood, 2008), employment (Beutell, 2006), job satisfaction (Judge & Watanabe, 1993), social support (Young, 2006), loss of spouse (Chipperfield & Havens, 2001) and fertility or motherhood (McQuillan, Stone & Greil, 2007) ascertain life satisfaction. People with satisfied needs of self and freedom reported more global life satisfaction (Oishi, Diener, Lucas & Suh, 1999). In addition to this, psychological resilience, assertiveness, internal locus of control, extraversion, empathy and openness to experience were reported to be defining life satisfaction (Sousa & Lyubomirsky, 2001, as stated in Sadiq, 2014). Spiritual intelligence (Kalantarkousheh, Nickamal, Amanollahi & Dehghani, 2014), the way of appraising a situation (Bortner & Hultsch, 1970), interpersonal relationships (Huebner, 2004) and externalizing and internalizing problems (McKnight, Huebner, & Suldo, 2002) have noteworthy alliance with life satisfaction. Personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism) have appeared as significant predictors of life satisfaction (Onyishi, Okongwu & Ugwu, 2012).

Physical health (Sousa & Lyubomirsky, 2001, as cited in Sadiq, 2014) and as well as psychological health (Jan & Masood, 2008) have deep link with life satisfaction. Hostile feelings (Jan & Masood, 2008), substance abuse (Zullig, Valois, Huebner, Oeltmann, & Drane, 2001), self-esteem (Rani, 2014), adaptive functioning and self-esteem (Dew & Huebner, 1994), depression and anxiety (Gullone & Cummins, 1999) are related with life satisfaction. Mental health disorders including depressive disorders, anxiety, hypochondriacal disorders are concomitant with life satisfaction (Ghubach et al., 2010). Perceived stress and psychological resilience significantly predicts life satisfaction (Abolghasemi & Varaniyab, 2010).

Quality in relationship also predicted life satisfaction (Gustavson, Røysamb, Borren, Torvik & Karevold, 2015). Married women were found to be reporting more life satisfaction than unmarried women (Kalantarkousheh, Nickamal, Amanollahi & Dehghani, 2014). Among married women, life satisfaction is significantly determined by affection expression and dyadic consensus in marital relation (Sadiq, 2014) and marital adjustment as well (Daniel, Wishman & Uebelacker, 2013). Coping strategies and marital adjustment are related with life satisfaction (Kaya-Balkan, Karadeni & Aktas, 2013).

Previous literature proved the significance of various psychological constructs in ascertaining life satisfaction. Likewise, the present study aimed at investigating the predictive relationship of two important psychological constructs (anger and hostility) with life satisfaction among married women. Globally, exclusive efforts were made to create the stable environment so that women could feel free to make autonomous decisions to benefit themselves and their families as well. As a result, women seem to set their own standards and criteria to judge their life conditions. But decision making, productive contribution and cognitive judgment of life depends on how people think and feel while encountering daily life situations. Negative feelings, thinking and emotions impede the ability to evaluate life conditions in positive mode. Consequently, overall life satisfaction gets affected. From this point of view, the present study will be a valuable addition in the literature exclusively focused on women's psychological issues that are vulnerable for their sense of life satisfaction. For this reason, following assumptions have been framed based on the current objectives;

1. Anger will significantly predict life satisfaction among married women.

2. Hostility will significantly predict life satisfaction among married women.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Using snowball sampling technique, total one hundred and fifty ($n = 150$) non-working married women living in Lalamusa, were recruited in the study. Following inclusive/exclusive criteria, women with minimum age of 21 years, minimum education level of grade ten, minimum marital duration of 2 years with at least 1 child, and residing in joint family were recruited. Furthermore, women whose husbands were diagnosed with chronic disease or living separately/ out of station were excluded.

Measures

Albeit, the minimum educational level of the participants was grade ten, therefore, in order to remove language barriers, Urdu Versions of all measures were used in the study.

Personal Information Form (PIF) measured demographic characteristics of the women, for instance: age, educational level, duration of marriage, number of children, family system, and residence.

Anger is a subscale of Aggression Questionnaire developed by Buss and Perry (1992) who described anger in terms of emotional/ affective state characterized by physiological arousal. It comprises of 7 items that are scored on 5-point likert scale [Extremely uncharacteristic of me- 1, Somewhat Uncharacteristic of me- 2, Neither Uncharacteristic of me Nor Characteristic of me -3, Somewhat Characteristics of me - 4, Extremely Characteristic of me - 5]. Authors reported Anger subscale as a reliable measure for scientific investigation ($\alpha = .83$). Translated Version of Anger subscale (Sadiq & Ali, 2013) was found to be significantly correlated with its English Version ($r = 0.82$). Whereas, computed Cronbach's alpha for the present study is ($\alpha = 0.75$) indicating internal consistency among all items of Anger subscale.

Hostility is another variable that was measured through the subscale of Hostility developed by Buss and Perry (1992) as a construct of Aggression Questionnaire. Hostility measures the negative thoughts, resentment, cynical distrust and suspiciousness in individuals. It consists of 8 items which are also scored on 5-point likert scale [Extremely uncharacteristic of me- 1, Somewhat Uncharacteristic of me- 2, Neither Uncharacteristic of me Nor Characteristic of me -3, Somewhat Characteristics of me - 4, Extremely Characteristic of me - 5]. Reliability of this subscale is ($\alpha = .77$) as reported by Buss and Perry (1992). Urdu version of Hostility subscale was reported to have a significant correlation ($r = 0.74$) with English Version (Sadiq & Ali, 2013). For the present study, Cronbach' alpha was calculated ($\alpha = 0.72$) that also depicted good internal consistency of the subscale.

Life Satisfaction was measured through Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) by Diener et al. (1985). It consists of 5 items which are scored on 7-point likert scale [Strongly agree- 7, Agree-6, Somewhat agree-5, Neither Agree nor Disagree-4, Somewhat disagree-3, Disagree-2, Strongly disagree-1]. Authors reported test- retest reliability of SWLS ($r = 0.82$) and alpha coefficient ($\alpha = 0.87$). Urdu Version was found to be highly correlated ($r = 0.87$) with English version (Sadiq & Ali, 2013). Cronbach alpha for Urdu version of Satisfaction with life scale is ($\alpha = 0.72$) for the current endeavor.

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Procedure

The present population housewives dwelling in Lalamusa, for that reason, snowball sampling (social network) was employed to approach the present sample in the light of inclusive/exclusive criteria of the current study.

For data collection, individual meetings with participants were held in their own home. First, briefing was given them concerning current research purpose and objectives, confidentiality and method of responding on each measure used in the study. When participants showed willingness to take part in the study, data collection was started. First, Personal Information Form (PIF) was filled by the participants. Subsequently, subscales of Anger and Hostility and Satisfaction with Life Scale were administered. Analysis of data was done by computing Linear Regression Analysis.

RESULTS

Table: 1a Summary of Linear Regression Analysis of Anger with Life Satisfaction

Model	R	R ²	ΔR ²	Std. error of the estimate
1	.263 α	.069	.063	4.21673

Predictor: (constant), Anger

Table: 1b-ANOVA

Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	193.474	1	193.474	10.881	.000 α
Residual	2613.775	147	17.781		
Total	2807.248	148			

Predictor: (constant), Anger

Dependent variable: Life Satisfaction

Table: 1c – Coefficients

Model	Slope		Std. Error of Slope	Standardized slope	
	B	SE		Beta	t
Constant	32.603	1.586		20.554	.000
Anger	-.247	.075		-3.299	.001

Dependent variable: Life Satisfaction

Regression analysis shows the relationship of anger with life satisfaction ($R = .263$) that has been proved significant ($F(1, 148) = 10.881, P = .000$). Results also proved the first assumption that anger significantly predicts life satisfaction among married women ($\beta = -.263, t(148) = -3.299, p < .001$). About 6.9 % variance in life satisfaction accounted for independent variable (anger) as shown by ($R^2 = .069$).

Table: 2a Summary of Linear Regression Analysis of Hostility with Life Satisfaction

Model	R	R ²	ΔR ²	Std. error of the estimate
1	.166 α	.028	.021	4.30916

Predictor: (constant), Hostility

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Table: 2b-ANOVA

<i>Model</i>	<i>Sum of square</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Regression	77.622	1	77.622	4.180	.043 α
Residual	2729.626	147	18.569		
Total	2807.248	148			

Predictor: (constant), Hostility

Dependent variable: Life Satisfaction

Table: 2c – Coefficients

<i>Model</i>	<i>Slope</i>	<i>Std. Error of Slope</i>	<i>Standardized slope</i>		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Constant	31.202	1.846		16.901	.000
Hostility	-.165	.081	-.166	-2.045	.043

Dependent variable: Life Satisfaction

According to the results, hostility is associated with life satisfaction among married women ($R = .166$) and that relation is also evident as statistically significant ($F(1, 148) = 4.180, P = .043$). Furthermore, the variable of hostility has appeared to be a significant predictor of life satisfaction ($\beta = -.166, t(148) = -2.045, p = .043$) among married women. And approximately 2.8 % variance in life satisfaction accounted for independent variable (anger) as shown by ($R^2 = .028$).

DISCUSSIONS

Sense of life satisfaction blooms feelings of hope for future and prosperity. People showing content with their life, try to adopt positive attitude towards life. Psychologically healthy people have broader vision regarding life events, whereas psychological problems may impair the sense of well-being. Anger and hostility are two psychological problems that play influential role in determining life satisfaction.

Previous research evidences confirm that women suffer from more anger due to perceived relationship problems (Jack, 2001). Though, women appeared to be more sensitive towards relationship quality, for that reason, they seem to be reacting angrily in response to interpersonal events than men (Fehr et al., 1999). As a result, angry women deal daily life matters angrily. In Sadiq (2013), it has been described that perception of problematic situation in angry way leads to angry act (Deffenbacher, 1992). In Asian countries, for women, life after marriage usually gets changed. Numbers of household tasks keep waiting for a woman entered her husband's home. Household tasks are believed to be women's domain (Hussain, 2006). Besides, married women are also concerned with the sort of relationships they have with their husband and in-laws as well. Sometimes, they encounter problems within family environment. Women who remain angry most of the time may handle all these problems faced within family in angry way too. Anger involves cognitive factors and those cognitive factors determine how people perceive their overall life (Banjare, Dwivedi & Pradhan, 2015).

Mistreatment or hurdles in the gratification of needs might be perceived as stressors and threat to self by women. People with greater angry feelings seem to perceive others to be responsible for wrongdoing or offense (Quigley & Tedeschi, 1996). Anger does not let person to have a broader view regarding self and others. For these reasons, it is suggested

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that handling daily hassles, interpersonal situations in angry way may lead to less satisfaction with overall life, as proved in the present study (**Table: 1a, 1b & 1c**).

Same with the hostility, people respond to a situation with negative thoughts, resentment cynical distrust or suspiciousness (Buss & Perry, 1992). Women are evident to be relationship oriented and they associate their happiness with the quality of close relationships. In South Asian culture, women's life revolves around the family, home and relation. Their sense of satisfaction depends on how much they have support, cooperation and trust on the part of significant relations. When people perceive close relations having selfish motives (cynicism) and feel mistrust towards others, they get hurt. According to Buss (1991), people with hostility make negative evaluation of people and as well as things. Resultantly, they devalue the motives and worth of others. It can explain the present results well that when women perceive their significant relations having selfish motives and negatively evaluate daily household responsibilities as a huge burden, there would be more chances to be less satisfied with overall life. Or in other words, less hostility may make married women more satisfied with the life conditions as found out in the present research (**Table: 2a, 2b & 2c**).

Findings of the present study provide substantial basis to conclude that the psychological health and satisfaction with marriage are imperative in life satisfaction. With poor psychological health, it becomes difficult to make positive cognitive judgment regarding whatever women have in their hand. There are more chances to overlook the blessings and resources provided by nature, if daily life matters are handled with anger and hostility.

IMPLICATIONS

The family systems and customs in Pakistan still demand women to accommodate with their husbands' family. Once they tie a knot, they are expected to be skilled in dealing matters of all genres. For women also, to be remained in marriage till end is a great success of their life. Quality of relationship with husband, children, in-laws and husbands' kith and kin is essential ingredient of life satisfaction.

Women with good psychological health can cope with daily life problems effectively. Anger and hostility impair the daily functioning and as well as their interpersonal relations. Married women can learn to manage their angry and hostile feelings/acts to be functional in the domain of personal and social life. Mental health professionals, while treating married women, can also target the symptoms of anger and hostility during therapeutic sessions to change their vision, from negative to positive one.

Better psychological health also assists in resolving marital issues. Women with less marital problems are potentially more satisfied with overall life. The present facts draw attention of mental health professionals, married women and of those organizations whose basic agenda is women empowerment. By addressing marital and family problems, women's life conditions could be enhanced. It should be kept in mind that less satisfaction with life may, in turn, generate frustration and sadness. These negative feelings and emotions are hindrance in contributing productively, even within family environment.

Limitations/Recommendations

The present study has focused on non-working married women belonging to joint family. Working outside home, receiving lucrative remuneration and sense of being independent may contribute to the sense of satisfaction with life. Women living in nuclear system, have

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autonomy in making life decisions may view life circumstances differently. In joint systems, family decisions are not easily taken by women. These factors may influence life satisfaction among women. Thus, it is strongly recommended that life satisfaction needs to be compared between working and non-working women, between women of joint and nuclear family, between upper and lower class as well. Highly qualified women working in government sector should be focused in the context of life satisfaction.

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Conflict of Interest

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