

## The Relationship between Perceived Stress and Psychological Well-being among Working Women and Housewives

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between psychological health and perceived stress among Jammu housewives and working women. A correlational research methodology investigated the association between psychological discomfort and the well-being of working women and housewives. N = 150 women (75 working women and 75 housewives) of various ages (M = 33.93, SD = 11.07) participated, all from Jammu. Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) were used to measure psychological well-being and perceived stress, respectively. A correlation design was employed, and a t-test and Pearson product-moment correlation were used. The present study's findings showed a significant difference in perceived stress between housewives and working women. Moreover, similar scores exist between housewives and working women on psychological well-being. Further, results showed a negative relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being among housewives and working women.

**Keywords:** *Perceived Stress, Psychological Well-being, Working Women, Housewives, Health*

Indian government research states that women need to be given more social, economic, educational, and political power so they may make decisions about their mobility, financial independence, political engagement, public speaking, and awareness of their rights. Today, women's responsibilities change as they become more committed to their families and careers. Working women experience various forms of stress and strain as a result. Numerous mental diseases affect women more frequently than men. According to national data from the United States (N = 9,282), 8.6% of women and 11.6% of women meet the criteria for depression, and 11.6% of women match the mood disorder (Moe, 2012; Kessler et al., 2005).

Women are two times more likely than men to have depression and two to three times more likely to experience anxiety disorders such as panic disorders, phobias, obsessive-

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Received: February 18, 2023; Revision Received: April 25, 2023; Accepted: April 29, 2023

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compulsive disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Lewinsohn et al., 2001; Moe, 2012). Kessler et al., 2005; Moe, (2012) Women's psychological well-being (PWB) is a significant concern because they experience severe mental problems. Working women frequently struggle with role conflict or conflicting roles. Role conflict has been linked to reports of psychological discomfort, strain in mind, anxiety, etc., all of which impact the psychological health of working women. They have psychological issues due to their outside work, including worry, stress, burnout, exhaustion, etc. (Abirami et al., 2019).

When an individual's resources are insufficient to handle the demands and pressures of the circumstance, stress, a psychological and physical state, ensues. Stress is, therefore, more likely to occur in some circumstances than others and in some people than others. Goal-achieving can be hampered by stress for both individuals and organizations. Stress is brought on by the environment's extreme ambiguity and unpredictability. While some professional stress is natural, excessive stress can adversely affect relationships, home life, physical and emotional health, productivity, and performance. Even the outcome of the job can depend on it. Workload (both excessive and insufficient work), lack of participation and control in the workplace, monotonous or unpleasant tasks, lack of recognition at work, inequity, poor interpersonal relationships, poor working conditions, poor leadership and communication, and conflicting demands from home and the workplace are some factors that contribute to increased workplace stress (Maulik, 2017). In addition to the fact that work, money, and family are the three main stressors, other things, including parenting, pregnancy, change, caring for others, and social isolation, can also be stressful.

An individual's perception of their stress level at a particular moment or over an extended period is expressed in feelings or thoughts. Perceived stress includes thoughts about how unpredictable and uncontrollable one's life is, how frequently one needs to deal with annoying hassles, how much change is taking place, and confidence in one's capacity to handle issues or problems. It measures how a person feels about how difficult their life is overall and their capacity to handle stress rather than the sorts or frequency of stressful events that have happened to them. Similar traumatic life events may affect people differently, depending on various characteristics, including personality, coping mechanisms, and social support.

The lack of negative thoughts and the predominance or growths of positive ideas are indicators of psychological well-being. It covers many topics, such as leading an active lifestyle, achieving emotional equilibrium, having a good outlook on life, and finding personal fulfillment. It encompasses fulfilling a person's ideals, aspirations and needs as a result of actualizing those talents in their circumstances. Most psychological well-being theories concentrate on comprehending the makeup or dynamics of psychological well-being (i.e., the causes and consequences of PWB). Carol Ryff's model and the division of psychological well-being into hedonic and eudemonic components are recognized explanations for its composition. An individual's psychological well-being, satisfaction, and happiness are all influenced by six elements, according to Carol Ryff's hypothesis known as the Six Factor Model of Psychological Well-Being.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Moe (2012) conducted a study identifying factors critical to women's psychological well-being. Findings showed that Psychological distress and PWB were firmly and inversely

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correlated, suggesting that the constructs are more directly related than previously identified.

Winefield et al. (2012) state that psychological distress and well-being are mutually exclusive. In order to evaluate the mental health of married working women living in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, Panigrahi et al. (2014) conducted a study. 32.9% of research participants had poor mental health, according to the findings, and just 10% of these women had sought any form of mental health care. According to a logit regression study, three predictors—a positive attitude from coworkers, discussing personal issues with the husband, and scheduling time for yoga, meditation, and exercise—had a substantial positive impact on the mental health of married working women.

In a study by Choudhary and Ahmad (2017), the psychological well-being of housewives and working women in the Mithila region of North Bihar was compared. The findings showed that elderly housewives had lower levels of psychological well-being than elderly working women. Additionally, both groups of older women, need social and emotional support from their respective families and social institutions. According to Sinha's (2017) research, working women had higher psychological well-being than homemakers or non-working women since they scored lower on the PGI Health Questionnaire than homemakers, which was statistically significant.

Smadi (2019) studied a sample of working women and housewives in the menopausal stage to determine their degrees of psychological burnout. The statistical analysis results, or t-test, revealed statistically significant differences in the psychological burnout of housewives compared to working women, suggesting that work positively impacts women's lives. The risk factors for psychological burnout are associated with the physical dimension, which is consistent with the nature of the menopause stage and the age of the sample study.

The research was done by Abirami et al. (2019) to evaluate the psychological health of women working in an industrial setting. According to the findings, most workers (67%) and women exhibited low psychological well-being levels. According to Chawla and Sharma (2019), psychological capital and perceived gender equity impact employee well-being, particularly for women. They also examined whether social support and commitment mediate these associations. The results of this study showed that perceived gender equity in the workplace has a favorable influence on male and female employee well-being, with the female benefit being more robust.

In contrast to working men, working women reported higher levels of psychological distress, according to Bilodeau et al. (2020). Additionally, they discovered that indicators directly linked to a higher level of psychological distress include women who were more exposed to work-to-family conflict, had less control over decision-making, were more likely to be single parents, and had lower self-esteem (Zaheer & Khan, 2022). In contrast to men, Viertio et al. (2021) reported increased psychological suffering. The most significant risk factors for psychological discomfort were loneliness, unhappiness at work, and family-work conflict. In Rajasthan, India, Lokeshwari and Monika (2021) found that women had higher subjective well-being than men.

According to Franzen et al. data from 2021, lower academic satisfaction levels were strongly connected to depression, whereas higher grades were linked to psychological well-being.

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Women are more prone than males to worry and feel stressed, although neither gender is associated with depression or mental health. Women's obligations are evolving in today's competitive environment as they devote more time to their families and careers. Role conflict or conflicting roles are common problems for working women. Role conflict has been connected to stress, anxiety, and other mental health problems that affect working women.

Even though there has been much research on perceived stress and psychological well-being, the factors in the current study are very different from those in the reviewed studies. Two factors are used in the current study: psychological well-being and perceived stress. The correlation between these two factors is essential, particularly for the population of working and stay-at-home mothers. Because of this, the current study's factors and its differences from the evaluated studies' areas, populations, and samples make it unique.

Therefore, it is essential to investigate the connection between psychological well-being and perceived stress among Jammu housewives and working women.

### ***Objectives***

- To assess working women's and housewives' perceived stress and psychological well-being.
- To investigate the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being among working women and housewives.

### ***Hypotheses***

- Working women and housewives experience significantly different levels of perceived stress and psychological well-being.
- Working women and housewives will negatively affect perceived stress and psychological well-being.

## **METHOD**

### ***Sample***

The sample for the present study comprised 150 women, including 75 working women and 75 housewives from Jammu.

### ***Inclusion Criteria:***

Women living in Jammu and working in an Organization  
Housewives who live in Jammu

### ***Exclusion Criteria:***

Women who are above 60 years old  
Women diagnosed with any mental health issues

### ***Research Design***

To determine the association between psychological discomfort and the wellbeing of working women and housewives, a correlational research design was used in the current study.

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### Tools for data collection

- **Demographic data sheet:** Preliminary information like age, marital status, educational qualification, type of company, working hours, family type, number of children, and other details were collected using this sheet. The participants filled out this personal data sheet before filling out the perceived stress and psychological well-being scales.
- **Psychological Well-Being (PWB):** There are 42 items total in the Ryff inventory. Ryff created the psychological well-being scale (1995). It consists of statements representing the six components of psychological well-being: self-acceptance, environmental mastery, personal growth, and positive relationships with others.
- **Perceived Stress Inventory:** One of the most often used instruments for determining psychological stress is the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (PSS; Cohen, Kamarch & Mermesstein, 1983). It is the most commonly used psychological tool for gauging stress perception. It gauges how stressful someone perceives their life's circumstances to be. Items were created to understand how unpredictably chaotic and overburdened respondents find their lives to be.

### Statistical Analysis

In this study, descriptive statistics were used. The data were analyzed using the mean, standard deviation, t-test, and Pearson correlation coefficient.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

150 women participated in this study, including housewives (N = 85) and working women (N = 65). Table 1 shows that among all the participants, 117 (78%) were married, 27 (18%) were single, and 6 (4%) were widowed. Further, 30% of the participants (N = 45) were graduates, 29.4% of the participants (n = 44) were post-graduates, 26% (n = 39) had done high school, 9.3% (n = 14) were intermediates and 5.3% (n = 8) were diploma holders. 63.3% (n = 95) of the participants lived in a joint family environment, and 36.7% (n = 55) lived in a nuclear family. 84% (n = 126) of participants had no illness, and 16% (n = 24) had minor illnesses like blood pressure, thyroid, diabetes, etc.

*Table 1A Descriptive Analysis of Participants (N=150) on the Demographic Variables (Marital Status, Profession, Educational Qualification, Family Type, and Any Illness)*

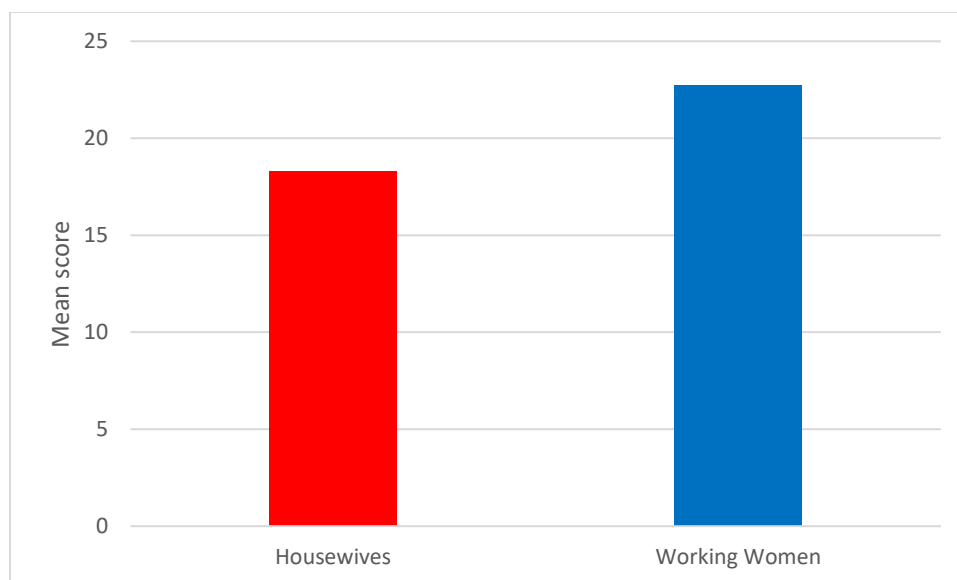
Variables		N	%
Marital Status	Married	117	78.0
	Single	27	18.0
	Widowed	06	4.0
Profession	Housewife	85	56.7
	Working Woman	65	43.3
	Diploma	08	5.3
	Graduate	45	30.0
Edu. Qualification	High School	39	26.0
	Intermediate	14	9.3
	Post Graduate	44	29.4
Family Type	Joint	95	63.3
	Nuclear	55	36.7
Any Illness	Yes	24	16.0
	No	126	84.0

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Table 2 showed that the Mean and SD scores revealed that perceived stress was higher among working women ( $M = 22.74, SD = 11.19$ ) than housewives ( $M = 18.28, SD = 10.80$ ). Further independent t-test was used for mean comparison. The t-test result for perceived stress showed a significant difference between working women and housewives:  $t(148) = 2.46, p = 0.015$ . (See Fig.1), It indicates that working women perceive more stress than housewives. Results showed that the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The present study, supported by previous studies conducted by Harshpinder and Sandhu in 2004, found that working women have a higher stress level due to different environmental factors. Usha, Rout, Cooper, and Helen (1997) found more stress among working women due to mental diversions.

**Table 2 t-test for the difference between the Mean of housewives and working women for perceived stress**

	Profession	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
<b>Perceived Stress</b>	Housewives	85	18.28	10.80	148	2.465	.015
	Working Women	65	22.74	11.19			



**Fig. 1 Perceived stress among Housewives and working women.**

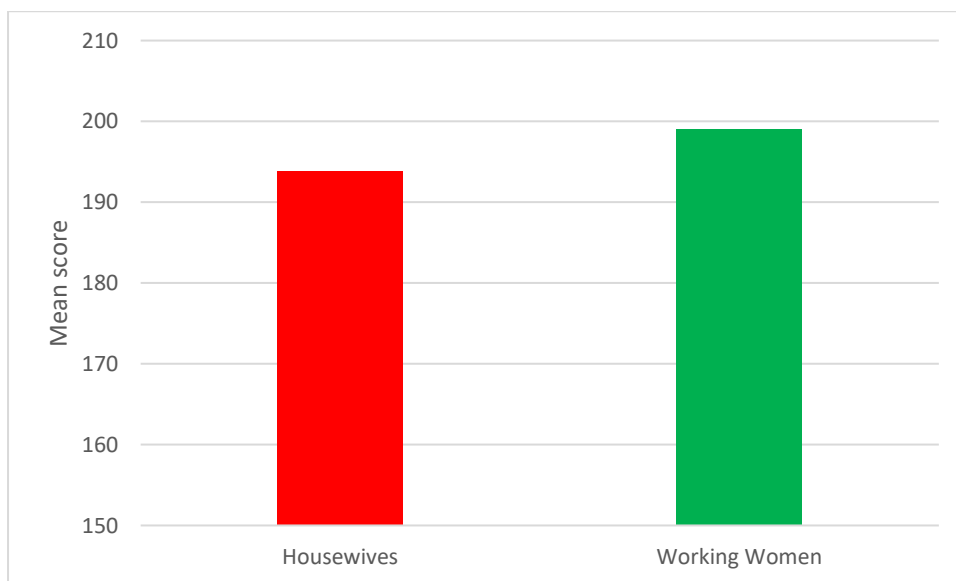
**Table 3 t-test for the difference between the Mean of housewives and working women for psychological well-being**

	Profession	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
<b>Psychological Well-being</b>	Housewives	85	193.83	30.10	148	1.08	0.28
	Working Women	65	199.10	29.20			

Table 3 showed that the mean score and SD score revealed that psychological wellbeing was higher among working women ( $M = 199.10, SD = 29.20$ ) than housewives ( $M = 193.83, SD = 30.10$ ); further independent t-test was used for mean comparison. The psychological wellbeing result showed no significant difference between working women and housewives  $t(148) = 1.08, p = .28$ . (See Fig. 2). It indicates that the feeling of

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psychological wellbeing is approximately equal among working women and housewives. Results showed that the null hypothesis was accepted, and the alternative hypothesis was rejected study supported with (Zaheer & Khan, 2022).



**Fig. 2 Psychological wellbeing among Housewives and Working Women**

**Table 4 Correlation between perceived stress and psychological well-being among housewives and working women.**

### Correlations

		PSS	PWB
PSS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.196*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.016
	N	150	150
PWB	Pearson Correlation	-.196*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	
	N	150	150

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being among working women and housewives. It can be seen that there was a significant negative correlation between perceived stress and psychological well-being ( $p = 0.016$ ), showing that as the psychological well-being score increases, the perceived score decreases.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the levels of perceived stress and psychological well-being among homemakers and working women and the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being among homemakers and working women. The results showed that working women had higher perceived stress than homemakers, whereas there was no difference in psychological well-being between homemakers and working women.

This finding correlates with Winefield et al. (2012), who mentioned that the variables positively associated with psychological well-being was negatively associated with

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psychological distress and vice versa. Further, perceived stress had a statistically significant negative relationship with psychological well-being. This study shows that perceived stress can be reduced by increasing psychological well-being.

Findings from this study will be helpful for policy-making and subsequent research studies that can be conducted on similar variables. This study will help put the focus of mental health experts on the mental health issues faced by homemakers and working women in Jammu. This study will help convince the institutions to design special training programs to help working women optimize their perceived stress and improve their psychological well-being. This study will help evolve training modules for working women, enhance their performance, and foster positive personality traits leading to better mental well-being and quality of life.

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### **Acknowledgement**

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** Yadav, V., Yadav, N. & Sharma, S. (2023). The Relationship between Perceived Stress and Psychological Well-being among Working Women and Housewives. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(2), 419-427. DIP:18.01.043.20231102, DOI:10.25215/1102.043