

**Comparative Study**

## **Mental Health and Life Satisfaction: A Comparative Study Among Working and Non-Working Women**

Mariya Agnes<sup>1</sup>, Akhila P.J.<sup>2\*</sup>

### **ABSTRACT**

This study was conducted to compare the relationship of mental health and life satisfaction among working and non-working women. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), mental health is a state of mind characterized by emotional well-being, good behavioral adjustment, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and a capacity to establish constructive relationships and cope with the ordinary demands and stresses of life. The APA defines life satisfaction as the extent to which a person finds life rich, meaningful, full, or of high quality. The sample of the study consisted of 60 women, which included 30 working women and 30 non-working women. Working women are those who do remunerative work, mainly outside of their homes, and non-working women are basically housewives who do not involve in remunerative work and takes care of their family and children. The sample chosen for the study was of the age group 24-55 years. The tools used for measuring mental health was MHI-18. Life satisfaction was measured by using the Satisfaction with Life scale. Statistical methods used for the analysis of data were t-test and Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The major findings of the study were that there is a positive correlation between mental health and life satisfaction among working and non-working women, and there is no significant difference in both, mental health and life satisfaction, among working and non-working women.

**Keywords:** *Mental Health, Life Satisfaction, Working Women, Non-Working Women*

**A** working woman is a woman who works for a living. The number of working women has increased significantly in recent times. This adds an additional role to their already existing duties- that of a working person. A working woman has to earn wages as a member of the working class. More women are earning members of the society as a result of industrial revolution and have much more evolved perspectives of thoughts. Yet, they might still suffer from greater work stress owing to the lack of autonomy in their respective fields of work. They may not be given work roles that identify with their capacity and capabilities. They may also face unfair biases in their salaries. According to a study conducted by Kawakami in 1999, work pressures were found to be the major cause of psychological harm, notably depression. Sometimes families may also not be supportive enough as in sharing their work load and understanding their burdens. Working women also

<sup>1</sup>Student, Christ college autonomous Irinjalakuda

<sup>2</sup>Student, Christ college autonomous Irinjalakuda

\*Corresponding Author

**Received: May 05, 2023; Revision Received: June 16, 2023; Accepted: June 20, 2023**

## **Mental Health and Life Satisfaction: A Comparative Study Among Working and Non-Working Women**

play an important role in solving the inter-familial issues, therefore, occupational stresses may add to negative effects on them and their families, thereby reducing their quality and satisfaction of life. Restlessness, tension, and stress may be experienced as a result of the impacts of urgency and worry. Women tend to lose physical strength as they age, and, as a result, it could also impact their mental health. However, people nowadays are becoming more aware of their mental health than they were previously.

Satisfactory work-life balance and a good level of mental health are to be aimed by the working group of women, so that they could be contributing members to their own well-being and development and also to the development of the society. Non-working women refer to the category of women who looks after their families and children and does not participate in any paid jobs. Many researches have shown that mental health was linked to employment status of individual. Vaghela, K (2011) found that working women have better mental health compared to non-working women. Kholasezadeh et al. (2014) has also observed similar results in their study. Many women who serve their role of house-wives, in fact, have great potential and interest to work and put their capabilities and talents to good use. The age old social and moral belief of women having to consider their family and role of wife as first priority restricts them to go out and pursue their interests and passion and earn to be independent. Even though many women have broken free from the old beliefs and have become a part of the working group of society, the number of housewives who should think independently for themselves and follow their interests and have a remunerative employment status need to be further increased. Women's various habits, activities, happiness, and performance are linked to their well-being and life satisfaction. Being able to do what they want and being able to perform well can boost their self-esteem and confidence. Remunerative employment makes women financially independent and may increase their autonomy in decision making in their families. When housewives are encouraged to explore the various opportunities that are available in their lives, it may have an influence on the mental health and satisfaction with their lives.

According to world health organization "health is a condition of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not only the absence of disease or disability". This definition implies that mental health encompasses more than the absence of mental diseases or disabilities. It has an impact on how we think, feel, and act in our daily lives. It also influences how we deal with stress, interact with others, and make decisions. Mental health is crucial at all stages of life, from birth to adolescent to adulthood and old age. It is a condition of well-being and is vital because it can help you cope with life's stressors, and maintain positive relationships, contribute to your community in a meaningful way, work efficiently, and also make the most out of your abilities.

Mental health is also crucial because it has an impact on your physical well-being. Mental diseases, for example, might increase your risk of physical health problems including stroke, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease. Mental health has been a major concern of people nowadays. Depression and other mental health issues are a major issue in every community and country. Mental health is essential to our ability to think, emote, interact with others, earn a living, and enjoy life on a collective and individual level. On this basis, mental health promotion, protection, and restoration might be considered a critical concern for individuals, communities, and societies all over the world. In a study by Kaur, I.M. et al (2012), working and married women showed less anxiety and higher life satisfaction in comparison to their non-working counterparts.

## **Mental Health and Life Satisfaction: A Comparative Study Among Working and Non-Working Women**

Life satisfaction is the extent to which a person finds life rich, meaningful, full, or of high quality (APA). Better physical health, improved performance, and stronger social relationships are all linked to life satisfaction. How pleased you are with your life is vital for your well-being, and it is a more relevant way of judging the quality of your life than how joyful you are. In a study by Muzafar Hussain Kawa et al. (2017), a positive correlation was found between mental health and life satisfaction. According to bottom-up theories, people are satisfied in a variety of areas of life, including job, relationships, family and friends, personal growth, and health and fitness. Our overall life satisfaction is a result of our pleasure with our lives in these areas. Top-down theories, on the other hand, claim that our total life happiness influences (or even decides) our life pleasure in other domains. This discussion rages on, but for the most part, overall life satisfaction and contentment in other spheres of life are inextricably linked.

Life satisfaction can be influenced by socio-demographic and psychological factors. Women's life satisfaction is seen to be influenced by factors such as raising children, marriage, poverty, occupation, and inequality. When adverse living conditions emerge or worsen, such as chronic diseases, functional disability, constraints on social contacts, reduced income, declining levels of exercise and social involvement, and self-rated negative health, life satisfaction tends to decline. Various studies have found a strong relationship between life satisfaction and mental health. Life satisfaction was found to be highly related with self-reported mental health in a Canadian national survey done by Patrick Lombardo et al. (2018) even after criteria such as income, general health, and gender were taken into account, and life satisfaction was notably low in the group with poor self-reported mental health.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Aim***

The present study is done to get an understanding of mental health and life satisfaction, their influence on each other, and their differences among working and non-working women.

#### ***Objectives***

- To understand if there is difference in mental health among working and non-working women.
- To understand if there is difference in life satisfaction among working and non-working women.
- To find out the relationship between mental health and life satisfaction.

#### ***Hypothesis***

- Ho1- There is no significant difference in mental health among working and non-working women.
- Ho2- There is no significant difference in life satisfaction among working and non-working women.
- Ho3- There is no significant relationship between mental health and life satisfaction.

#### ***Sample***

Participants for the study were 30 working women and 30 non-working women between the age range of 24-55years, from the urban and rural areas of different states in India.

## Mental Health and Life Satisfaction: A Comparative Study Among Working and Non-Working Women

### *Tools used for the study*

In this study, mental health was measured using Mental Health Inventory (MHI-18), a structured self-report questionnaire that was created as a part of National Health Insurance Study (Veit and Ware, 1983), and has been researched in a wide range of demographics. It includes subscales such as anxiety, depression, behavioural control, positive effect and general distress. The full version of the MHI contains 18 items which takes around 5-10 minutes to respond, while the reduced form contains 5 items. The MHI is one of the components of the MSQLI (Multiple Sclerosis Quality of Life Inventory). The Cronbach's alpha for the full-length version of the MHI is observed to be 0.9, and it has demonstrated good convergent and discriminant validity in field testing for the MSQLI.

Life satisfaction of the participants was measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). It is a 7-point Likert style, self-report questionnaire, consisting of 5 items, designed to assess global cognitive evaluations of life satisfaction. It is filled by the respondents' perception of satisfaction with their lives. The total score of the SWLS ranges from 5-35, with lower scores indicating dissatisfaction with life and higher scores showing increased satisfaction with life. The SWLS has an excellent concurrent validity, and internal consistency and moderate temporal stability reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 and a 2-month test-retest reliability of 0.82.

### *Procedure*

Purposive sampling was used for data collection. The data was collected through Google forms, by setting the participation criteria, to obtain data from samples of the desired population. A personal data sheet was also included in the Google form in order to obtain the socio-demographic details of the respondents. Informed consent to take part in the study was also obtained. Assurance of the confidentiality of the responses and clear instructions regarding the scales were provided. The participants took around 15-20 minutes for the completion of the form.

### *Statistical analysis*

Statistical techniques such as t-test and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used in this study. The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

After conducting a thorough statistical analysis of the data acquired for the current study, the outcomes were interpreted. The study was conducted to do a comparison of mental health and life satisfaction among working and non-working women.

*Table 1: Mean, SD and t value of mental health scale among working women and non-working women.*

Variable	Sample	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Sig. (2 tailed)
Mental Health	Working women	30	324.66	64.89	1.292	0.201
	Non-working women	30	346.83	67.92	1.292	0.201

Table 1 shows the Mean, S. D, and t-value of mental health among working women and non-working women. On this variable, 324.66 and 346.83 are the mean scores that are obtained for the samples working and non-working women, respectively. The t-value is 1.292 and standard deviation is 64.89 and 67.92 for working and non-working women,

## Mental Health and Life Satisfaction: A Comparative Study Among Working and Non-Working Women

respectively. From the results, the null hypothesis is accepted, which implies that there is no significant difference in mental health among working and non-working women.

The mean scores obtained show that there is no significant difference among working and non-working women in their mental health. Non-working women are observed to have similar degree of mental health as working women. In earlier times, most of the women were home-makers, and they committed to house work and looking after their children and family. But nowadays, the number of working women has increased significantly, which means that they earn wages as well as take care of their families. Working women may experience more autonomy in their lives and in aspects such as decision making in the family. They may be well equipped at managing life stressors, making them efficient at coping with the demands of life, which can add to positive well-being in their lives. Although non-working women spent their time taking care of their family and children, they may get more time for themselves and for socialization, which could have a positive impact on their mental health. Their lives may be less stressful and they might experience lesser negative mental health.

A study conducted by Abha Khunttey and Archana Sahu (2021) showed that the mental health scores of working and non-working women did not differ, and both categories of women had almost the same levels of mental health. Another study conducted by R V Mankani and GangaV, Yenagi (2012) had identical results indicating similar degree of mental health among the working and non-working women. The result obtained on the present study suggests that working women and non-working women tend to experience a similar degree of mental health.

**Table 2: Mean, Standard deviation (SD) and t-value of life satisfaction scale among working women and non-working women.**

Variable	Sample	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Sig. (2 tailed)
Life satisfaction	Working women	30	23.83	5.97	0.816	0.418
	Non-working women	30	22.63	5.41	0.816	0.418

Table 2 shows the Mean, S. D, and t-value of life satisfaction among working women and non-working women. On this variable, 23.83 and 22.63 are the mean scores that are obtained for the samples working and non-working women respectively. The t-value is 0.816 and standard deviation is 5.97 and 5.41. Here the null hypothesis is accepted, and hence, there is no significant difference in life satisfaction between working and the non-working women.

Working women show similar degree of life satisfaction as the non-working women. Though working women may tend to have more stress in their lives, they hold a positive view towards their life and adapt effectively with the demands of situations. Owing to their capacity to earn, working women may also experience more autonomy in their families and has certain financial independence. They may hold more power and they may be more satisfied with their lives, as they may be closer to the need of self-actualization as seen in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Non-working women may be more involved with their family and children. They may find happiness in taking up their duties in sight of their maternal role. They spent more time with family and can pay a major supportive role to the members and can also efficiently solve inter-familial conflicts. They find more time for personal development and are more involved in socialization and other activities. Therefore, the result

## Mental Health and Life Satisfaction: A Comparative Study Among Working and Non-Working Women

obtained suggests that the non-working women and working women have similar degree of satisfaction with their lives.

**Table 3: Correlation between the variables, mental health and life satisfaction.**

		Mental health	Life satisfaction
Mental health	Pearson Correlation	1	0.533
	Sig. (2- tailed)		0.000
	N	60	60
Life satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	0.533	1
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000	
	N	60	60

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2- tailed)

Table 3 shows the product moment correlation between the variables, mental health and life satisfaction from the study conducted on 60 samples, consisting of 30 working women and 30 non-working women. From the results, it is evident that the two variables mental health and life satisfaction are significantly related ( $r=0.533$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The result reflects that there is significant positive correlation between mental health and life satisfaction among the working women and the non-working women.

Life satisfaction is the degree of satisfaction that an individual perceives to have in his/her life. In a study conducted by Patrick Lombard<sup>0</sup> (2018), it was found that even after accounting for factors such as income, general health, and gender, life satisfaction was found to be strongly related to self-reported mental health. Life satisfaction was especially low in the group with poor self-reported mental health.

In the result, mental health and life satisfaction show positive correlation, which means that when mental health increases, life satisfaction also increases, and when mental health decreases, life satisfaction also decreases. Working women who find it difficult to adjust positively with the tight schedule of their lives and the work and family stress may have lower positive mental health and may perceive to have lesser satisfaction with their life. In the same way, non-working women, when they perceive their role of a home-maker negatively, may face a certain level of distress, which may lower their satisfaction with life.

### CONCLUSION

The comparative study of mental health and life satisfaction among working and non-working women was conducted to find out the relationship between mental health and life satisfaction among working women and non-working women. The samples for the study consisted of 60 females (30 working women and 30 non-working women) from the urban and rural areas of different states in India, between the age of 24-55 years. In the study, it was observed that there is no significant difference in both, mental health and life satisfaction, among working and non-working women. The study also concluded that there is a significant relationship between mental health and life satisfaction.

Working women and non-working women, both are subjected to daily life stressors, which might have an effect on their mental and physiological health as a whole, and also the perceived meaning and quality of their lives. Working women need to get good support from their families, and better working conditions and autonomy in their respective fields of work. The family members especially have to understand the struggle they face and should

## Mental Health and Life Satisfaction: A Comparative Study Among Working and Non-Working Women

support them adequately so that they can cope well with the stress and have a satisfactory work-life balance that can directly or indirectly contribute to their positive mental health and satisfaction with life. Non-working women need to be uplifted to use their potentials and capabilities for the advancement of the society and for themselves, and their growth. Being able to work and be independent increases one's self-esteem and confidence, which can positively affect their mental health and satisfaction with life.

### *Limitations of the study*

- One of the major limitations of the study was that the study was conducted during the covid pandemic, so many working women might have been restricted to their home environments and it can have a positive or negative impact on the study.
- Lack of interest to a number of items given in the scales used might also affect the study.
- The sample size taken for the study was relatively small, and the results, and therefore, studies on larger sample population is necessary for generalization.
- A cross-sectional study was conducted, therefore, it does not measure the effect of variables in the sample for an extended time. The study was conducted in a short term.
- The study conducted is limited to a particular country, and so the observations contain information that are limited to the culture and ways of the particular country.

### *Scope for further research*

The study conducted was limited to using two variables. Hence, further studies may be done using new and different variables. Future studies may include a much larger sample size and wider population range, covering different areas. Various other extraneous variables like the effect of salary range, stress management levels, family structure, and so on could be looked into for future studies.

## REFERENCES

- Ackerman, C.E. (2018, November 6). *Life Satisfaction Theory & 4 Contributing Factors (+ Scale)*. <https://positivepsychology.com/life-satisfaction/>
- Ahmad, A., & Singh, G.S. (2014). Life Satisfaction and Mental Health of Aged with Reference to North Bihar. *Journal of Indian Health Psychology*, 8(2), 100-111.
- Anderssen, N., Sivertsen, B., Lønning, K. J., & Malterud, K. (2020). Life satisfaction and mental health among transgender students in Norway. *BMC public health*, 20(1), 1-11.
- APA Dictionary of Psychology. *Life Satisfaction*. <https://dictionary.apa.org/life-satisfaction>
- APA Dictionary of Psychology. *Mental Health*. <https://dictionary.apa.org/mental-health>
- Arshad, M., Gull, S., & Mahmood, K. (2015). Life satisfaction among working and non working women. *European Journal of Research in Social Sciences Vol*, 3(1).
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49(1), 71-75.
- Fergusson, D. M., McLeod, G. F. H., Horwood, L. J., Swain, N. R., Chapple, S., & Poulton, R. (2015). Life satisfaction and mental health problems (18 to 35 years). *Psychological medicine*, 45(11), 2427-2436.
- Jadhav, S. G. (2013). A study of life satisfaction of working women and housewives. *Indian Streams Research Journal*, 2(12).

## Mental Health and Life Satisfaction: A Comparative Study Among Working and Non-Working Women

- Kaur, N., Panwar, N., Thind, H. S., & Farooqi, M. I. (2012). A comparative study of working and non-working married women: Effect of anxiety level on life satisfaction. *Indian journal of psychology and mental health*, 6(2), 169-178.
- Kawa, M.H., et al. (2017). A Study of Mental Health & Life Satisfaction among Aged People. *International Journal of Case Studies in Clinical Research*, 1(2), 41-45. 10.25141/2472-102X-2017-2.0041.
- Kawakami, N., & Haratani, T. (1999). Epidemiology of job stress and health in Japan: review of current evidence and future direction. *Industrial health*, 37(2), 174-186. <https://doi.org/10.2486/indhealth.37.174>
- Kholasezadeh, G. H., Vaseghi, H., Ahmadi, N., & Abedinzadeh, M. (2012). Comparing the mental health of housewives and day shift working women in Yazd County, Iran, 2010. *Journal of Occupational Health and Epidemiology*, 1(1), 29-36.
- Khunttey, A., & Sahu, A. (2021). Comparative study of mental health of working and non-working women. *Mind and Society*, 10(01-02), 54-57.
- Kumar, N., Kumar, P., Grover, D., & Tarashankar, D. K. (2020). An Association between Mental Health & Life Satisfaction During COVID-19: A Study on College Students. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.
- Lombardo, P., Jones, W., Wang, L., Shen, X., & Goldner, E. M. (2018). The fundamental association between mental health and life satisfaction: results from successive waves of a Canadian national survey. *BMC public health*, 18(1), 1-9.
- Mankani, R. V., & Yenagi, G. V. (2013). Comparative study of mental health of working and non-working women. *Karnataka Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, 25(4).
- Mansuri, M. G., & Barad, A. S. (2019). A Study of Life Satisfaction among Working and Non-Working Mothers. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(2).
- Maqbool, M., Shrivastava, N., & Pandey, M. (2014). A comparative study of mental health of working women and housewives. *Indian Journal of Health and wellbeing*, 5(11), 1398-1400.
- nonworking. (n.d.) *Collins English Dictionary*. Retrieved February 26 2022 from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/nonworking>
- PAHO. (2022). *Mental Health*. <https://www.paho.org/en/topics/mental-health>
- Singh, S. K. (2014). Life satisfaction and stress level among working and non-working women. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 1(4), 121-128.
- Vaghela, K. (2014). Mental Health of Working and Non-Working Women in Ahmadabad. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 1(04), 53-58.
- Veit, C. T., & Ware, J. E. (1983). The structure of psychological distress and well-being in general populations. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 51(5), 730-742.
- workingwoman. (n.d.) *Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary*. (2010). Retrieved February 26 2022 from <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/workingwoman>

### **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:** Agnes, M. & Akhila, P.J. (2023). Mental Health and Life Satisfaction: A Comparative Study Among Working and Non-Working Women. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(2), 2306-2313. DIP:18.01.230.20231102, DOI:10.25215/1102.230