

Comparative Study

A Comparative Study Between Middle–Aged Employed and Unemployed Women on Stress and Life Satisfaction

Shreya Samanta¹, Tanusree Moitra^{2*}

ABSTRACT

A comparative study was conducted among middle aged women of Kolkata with employment and unemployment status to measure life satisfaction and stress level in Kolkata, India. As stress and life satisfaction are important facet of an individual's life, the objective was to compare stress level and life satisfaction between the groups. For this study 35 people with employment and 35 unemployed people were selected randomly from the population. The data was statistically analysed using mean, standard deviation, t test and Pearson correlation coefficient. The results of the findings are; a significant difference in the level of stress and life satisfaction between employed and unemployed middle-aged women was obtained. Furthermore, life satisfaction and stress were negatively correlated. Therefore, it can be concluded from the findings that quality of life of employed middle aged women was better than their counterparts.

Keywords: *Employed, Unemployed, Middle-Aged, Women, Quality of Life, Kolkata*

Education is the most important instrument for human resource development (Kartika Eva Presentina & Sugito, 2021). Likewise, education of women is an important measure taken to improve the status of women in India. It is considered to be the most effective weapon for implementing social change. In recent years, the focus has shifted from equipping women for their traditional roles as house-wives and mothers to recognizing their worth as producers, making a major contribution to family and national income (Financial Express, 2020). In India women's employment, has been an issue of considerable interest over the last few years.

Gender differences that are preferring male child and male adult has an impact on the economic capacities of women. Moreover, access to education for females has increased. Result of these movements are making a woman empowered and employment opportunities for them is increasing (Maria Ignatova & Deanne Tockey, 2019). However, inability to work, due to various reasons, has become a major source of stress among women (Mona Faisal, Ali Saad et al, 2020). Stress has different effect upon different people based on their attitude, values, socioeconomic status, mental state, family condition, employment and health status (Kuper & Marmot, 2003).

¹B.Sc. student, Department of Psychology, Barrackpore Rastraguru Surendranath College, Kolkata

²Assistant Professor & Head, Department of Psychology, Barrackpore Rastraguru Surendranath College, Kolkata

*Corresponding Author

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For instance, if the woman is one of the major earning members of the family and has been unemployed for extended period of time, the impact of unemployment on mental health can become severe and may develop various mental health disorders within the individual (Banyan Mental Health Programme,2020). A great body of high-quality longitudinal research has shown if a woman is literate, but she is not working can have a negative impact on mental health and wellbeing (Andersen 2009, Clark 2003, Murphy & Athanasou 1999, Strandh 2000a). Furthermore, socioeconomic factors such as social class, age, gender, marital status, duration of unemployment, ethnicity and work involvement have all been found to aggravate the effect of unemployment on mental health (Andersen 2009; McKee-Ryan et al. 2005, Nordenmark & Strandh, 1999). This in turn influences the overall quality of life of an individual.

Quality of life is defined by the World Health Organization (2013) as “an individual’s perception of her position in life in the context of culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns”. Unemployment can have a devastating impact on people’s quality of life. It covers a wide range of aspects of life that can be adversely affected by poor physical and emotional well-being, and inability to undertake stress.

In the present study the quality of life of an employed middle-aged women will be compared with unemployed counterpart with respect to stress and life satisfaction.

Objectives of the study:

- To compare stress level between the employed and unemployed middle-aged women.
- To compare life satisfaction between the employed and unemployed women.
- To examine quality of life of employed and unemployed women.

METHODOLOGY

Following methodology was used to conduct the study.

Research plan:

The present research aims to study the quality of life, stress and life satisfaction of educated Middle – aged woman in comparison to women who are unemployed.

Hypothesis:

- There will be significant difference between two groups of participants on level of stress.
- There will be significant difference between two groups of participants on life satisfaction.

Sample:

Sample is the small portion of population. it is not possible to conduct study for entire population. the nature of population was employed middle aged women and unemployed middle-aged women. this study was conducted in Kolkata, India. as it is difficult to study entire population, the total sample size was 72 with equal representation of concerned groups. age of sample was 21 to 45 years. due to limited time of the study, sample was selected using purposive sampling method.

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Measures:

Following questionnaires were used to collect

- Stress scale
- Satisfaction with life

Stress Scale – This test is perfect to measure the stress. It was developed by Singh (2004). The range of age was between 16 to 50 years. Test-retest reliability of the test was found to be .82 and Validity is .61. Higher scores show higher stress level.

Satisfaction with life scale – The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was developed as a measure of the judgmental component of subjective well-being. It is 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction (not a measure of either positive or negative affect). Participants indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the 5 items using a 7-point scale that ranges from 7 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree.

Statistical analysis:

Descriptive statistics, t – test and correlation were used to analyse the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study is to examine life satisfaction, stress and quality of life among employed and unemployed middle-aged women in parts of Kolkata, India. The mean, standard deviation and t test were used to analyse the data. Results and Discussion of the study are as follows.

Table 1: Means, SDs and t – test value of employed and unemployed middle-aged women on Life Satisfaction.

Groups	n	Mean	SD	t – test	p value
Unemployed	35	18.46	5.73	8.68**	0.01
Employed	35	25.38	6.18		

The results from Table 1 show a significant difference between employed or unemployed middle-aged women in Kolkata on life satisfaction. The unemployed group received lower mean score 18.46 as compared to employed group (25.38). The standard deviation score of unemployed groups is 5.73 and for the employed group it is 6.18. Mean difference shows employed women have higher level of life satisfaction in comparison to unemployed women. The t – test further confirms the same. It has come out to be 8.68. This shows a significant difference between employed and unemployed women. This means employed women were more satisfied with their life. They were healthy, emotionally balanced and have high self-esteem and high confidence level. (Frasquilho, D. et al., 2017).

The bar diagram in Figure 1, represents mean difference between employed and unemployed middle age women on the level of life satisfaction.

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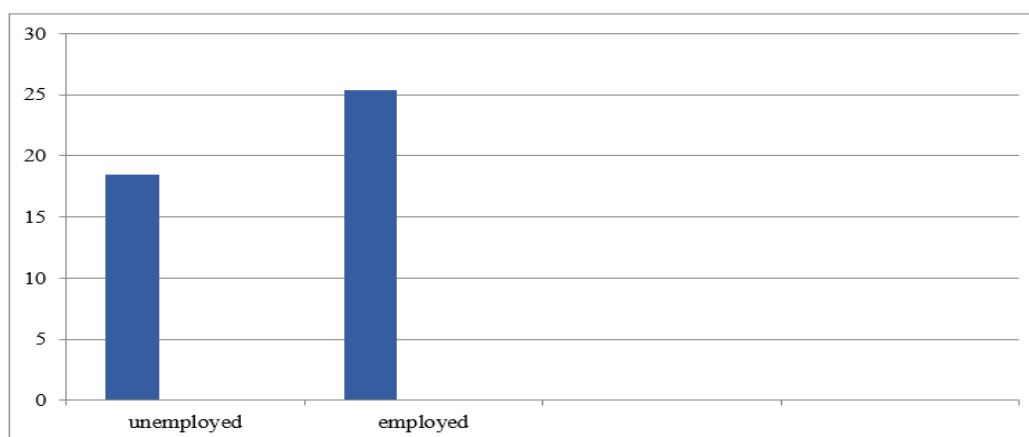


Figure 1: Mean value of employed and unemployed middle-aged women on life satisfaction

Table 2: Means, SDs and t – test value of employed and unemployed middle - aged women on Stress level:

Groups	n	Mean	SD	t – test	p value
Unemployed	35	22.18	6.84	6.32**	0.01
Employed	35	18.20	4.80		

Furthermore, it was seen that there is a significant difference between the groups on the life stress as well. The unemployed group had high mean score (22.18) compared to the employed group (18.20). Similarly, there is a difference in standard deviation score. Mean difference shows unemployed women have high level of stress compared to employed middle aged women. The t value is 6.32. This is significant at 0.01 level of significance.

Employed women had less stress in their life compared to unemployed women. This may be due to financial securities among them. Whereas, unemployed women have to depend on their spouse for economic support. This might be one of the reasons of high stress among them. Our findings have been supported by a cross sectional study conducted by Alexander, Maiken, & Maehlisen et al., (2018). Graphical representation of the difference between means has been presented below.

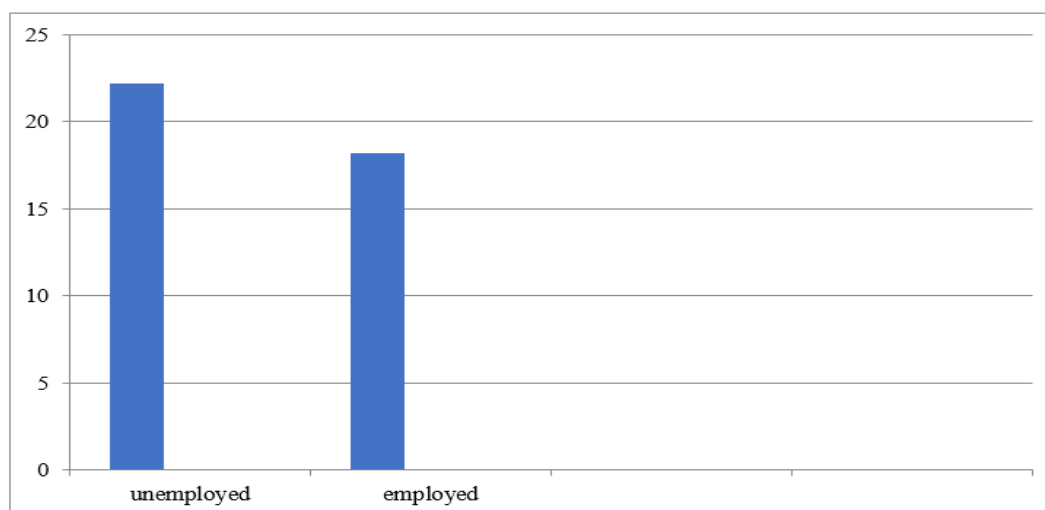


Figure 2: Mean value of employed and unemployed middle-aged women on stress

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Table 3: Means, SDs and t – test value of employed and unemployed middle aged women on Family environment:

Groups	n	Mean	SD	t – test	p value
Unemployed	35	18.45	5.72	8.68**	0.01
Employed	35	25.39	6.19		

Table 3 shows a significant difference between employed and unemployed middle-aged women in Kolkata on their family environment. The unemployed group received lower mean score (18.45) compared to employed group (25.39). Difference between standard deviation also exists. Employed women have better family environment compared to unemployed women. The t value is significant at 0.01 level of significance confidence. This means the family environment of employed women is harmonious compared to their counterpart.

Financial support from an employed women is a big help to improve overall condition of the family. Basic needs and other requirements of the family can be easily met due to double income in the family. Number of research has proved that dual earning in the family improve overall condition of the family (Francine & Winkler, 2017).

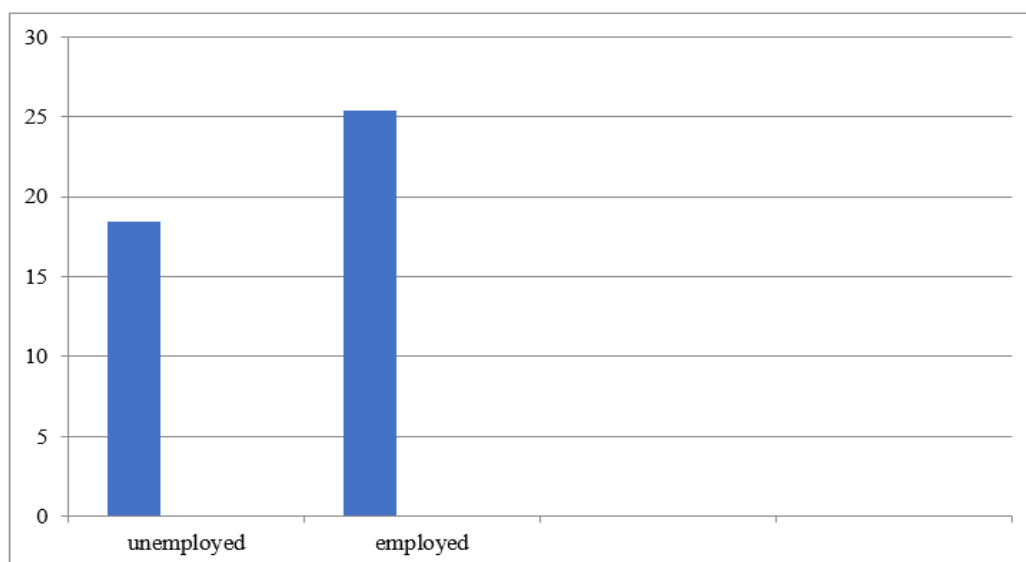


Figure 3: Mean value of employed and unemployed middle-aged women on family environment

CONCLUSION

Overall, it may be concluded that a significant difference was found between life satisfaction, stress and family environment of middle aged employed and unemployed women. Life satisfaction and family environment of middle-aged employed women are better compared to their counterpart. Consequently, the stress level is low among them. It may be suggested that financial contribution from women play a big role in improving the overall condition and wellbeing of the family.

However, the study had certain limitations like size of the sample was small; the study was conducted in Kolkata, India as a result generalization to other parts of the country is limited.

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Apart from these limitations, the study does give a direction towards the mental health wellbeing of middle aged employed and unemployed women.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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