

Impact of Family Structure on Working Women's Self-Confidence and Self Esteem

Bandana Kumari^{1*}, Dr.Santosh Vishvakarma²

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to shed light on how much family structure impacts the self-confidence and self-esteem of working women. The main objective of this study is to compare the family structure on working women's self-confidence and self-esteem. The study was conducted in the urban area of Patna taking 100 working women. Among these 50 working women from nuclear families and 50 working women from joint families. Pretested ex-post facto research design was used for collecting the data. The data was tabulated and statistically analysed by using t-test techniques. The results indicate that working women living in nuclear families have higher self-confidence compared to those living in joint families and working women living in nuclear families have not higher self-esteem compared to those living in joint families. Research work also draws attention to important limited decision-making freedom, constant criticism and comparison, and time management challenges adversely affect women's mental health and create obstacles in becoming self-reliant and confident.

Keywords: Working Women, Self-Confidence, Self Esteem, joint family working women, nuclear family working women

Family is an essential part of an individual's life, significantly impacting their mental health. For working women, in particular, family structure (joint family or nuclear family) plays a crucial role in shaping their mental well-being, self-confidence, and overall self-esteem (Simanjuntak et al., 2024). The family structure has a profound effect on the self-confidence and self-esteem of working women. Various family systems, including family roles and motherhood, influence women's mental health, self-reliance, and life perspective. The family system plays a key role in shaping women's mental health, especially in collectivist cultures where family support serves as a major foundation for emotional and social stability. Research suggests that women living in joint families experience reduced stress due to shared responsibilities, emotional support, and assistance in child-rearing, leading to overall better mental well-being (Long, 1986). However, cohabiting with multiple family members may also increase stress due to interpersonal conflicts, traditional gender expectations, and limitations on personal freedom (Sharma et al., 2023). Women in joint families receive support and guidance from their family members, which

¹Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, India

²Associate Prof. and HOD, Department of Psychology, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, India

*Corresponding Author

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can strengthen their self-confidence and self-esteem (Aziz et al., 2024). However, traditional social expectations can sometimes restrict their independence, negatively affecting their self-esteem. On the other hand, women living in nuclear families develop independent decision-making abilities, which enhance their sense of self-reliance and self-esteem (Kumari, 2012). However, single mothers often face social and economic challenges (McDonnell & Gracia, 2024), which can impact their self-confidence. Despite these challenges, their struggles to provide for their children and witnessing their children's success can boost their self-esteem (Mehta, 2018; Blau, 2017). Family structure and happiness ratings are closely related, with those living separately often reported as being less happy. Self-esteem is significantly linked to parental happiness (Long, 1986; McManus et al., 2002).

According to Rosenberg, self-confidence is a mental state that enables an individual to feel capable of effectively meeting life's challenges and social expectations. This confidence depends on social comparison, achievements, and familial or social encouragement. Rosenberg (1965), in his book *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*, considered self-confidence as an essential aspect of self-esteem. According to him, self-confidence signifies a person's positive perception of themselves and trust in their abilities. He associated it with a sense of self-acceptance and self-worth. In everyday life, self-confidence is regarded as one of the most influential motivators and guiding principles (Bandura, 1986). It is a crucial personality trait that combines an individual's thoughts and emotions. Self-confidence reflects a positive attitude toward one's self-concept.

Self-esteem reflects an individual's perception of themselves and their self-evaluation. It is associated with a positive assessment of oneself. When self-esteem is high, a person considers themselves worthy and maintains a respectful attitude toward themselves. Self-esteem, which is deeply connected to self-perception, reflects the positive outlook an individual develops toward their personality. It can influence a person's perspective and significantly impact various aspects of their life. Self-esteem not only plays a crucial role in personality development but also represents the overall framework of an individual's perceptions, emotions, and thoughts. Additionally, it plays an essential role in social interactions and decision-making situations (Rosenberg, 1965).

METHODOLOGY

Objective

The primary objective of this study was to examine the impact of Family Structure on Working Women's Self-Confidence and Self Esteem

Hypotheses

- **Ho1** There will be no significant difference in Self-esteem among joint family working women and nuclear family working women.
- **Ho2** There will be no significant difference in and self-confidence among joint family working women and nuclear family working women.

Study design

To investigate the differences in self-esteem and self-confidence between joint family working women and nuclear family working women, an independent samples t-test was performed. This statistical test allowed for the comparison of mean scores between the two groups. The present study includes a sample of 100 Indian working women, aged 25 to 40 years, from Patna, India. The research was conducted using an Ex-Post Facto research

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design. The data analysis was conducted using SPSS software, ensuring robust statistical evaluation of the results.

Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling to recruit participants, with a total of 100 working women selected. The sample included 50 women from joint families and 50 from nuclear families, all aged between 21 and 40 years. Participants had an educational background ranging from higher secondary to graduation and belonged to an urban background. The non-probability (purposive) sampling technique was used for data collection.

Ethical Consideration

Before conducting the research, signed consent was obtained from all participants. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Ethical approval for the study was granted by the Ethics Committee of Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar (Ethics Ref. No.: DSVV/PSY/13192/2024).

Data collection

The data was collected in Patna using a consent form, and assessment scales. The study measured self-confidence using the Agnihotri Self-Confidence Inventory (ASCI) developed by Dr. Rekha Agnihotri (1987) and self-esteem using the scale originally created by R.N. Singh and Ankita Srivastava (2008). The research was conducted in accordance with established ethical guidelines.

Measures Used

Two measures were used in this study, this study utilized two assessment tools.

- 1. Self Confidence of Agnihotri Scale (ASCI):** was developed by Dr. Rekha Agnihotri (1987). It measures **Self Confidence** on the basis of yes = 1 and no = 0. It has 86 questions in this questionnaire. The reliability test of the scale in the present study was conducted in the Split-Half, K-R formula 20, Test –Retest was found to be 0.95, 0.94, and 0.88. ASCI was adapted for the National Psychological Corporation (1987).
- 2. Self-esteem scale:** scale originally developed by Eagly and Robinson. R.N. Singh & Ankita Srivastava (2008). The **Self-esteem scale** is a 20-item self-report questionnaire designed to measure the degree of **Self-esteem**. The **Self-esteem scale** consists of 20 items and each item is accompanied by five alternative response categories, namely very much = 5, much = 4, average = 3, low = 2 and very low = 1. The **Self-esteem scale** has values for reliability Test –Retest, Split-Half is 0.86, 0.82. The Self – esteem was adapted for the Indian population by (Singh & Srivastava, 2008). Self-esteem scale was adapted for the Prasad Psycho digital Assessment Platform (2008).

RESULTS

H01 There will be no significant difference in Self-Confidence among joint family working women and nuclear family working women

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Table No. 1 significant difference in Self- Confidence among nuclear family working women and joint family working women

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-score	df	P-value
Nuclear Family working women	50	23.18	8.592	.921	98	.359*
Joint Family working women	50	24.74	8.337			

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

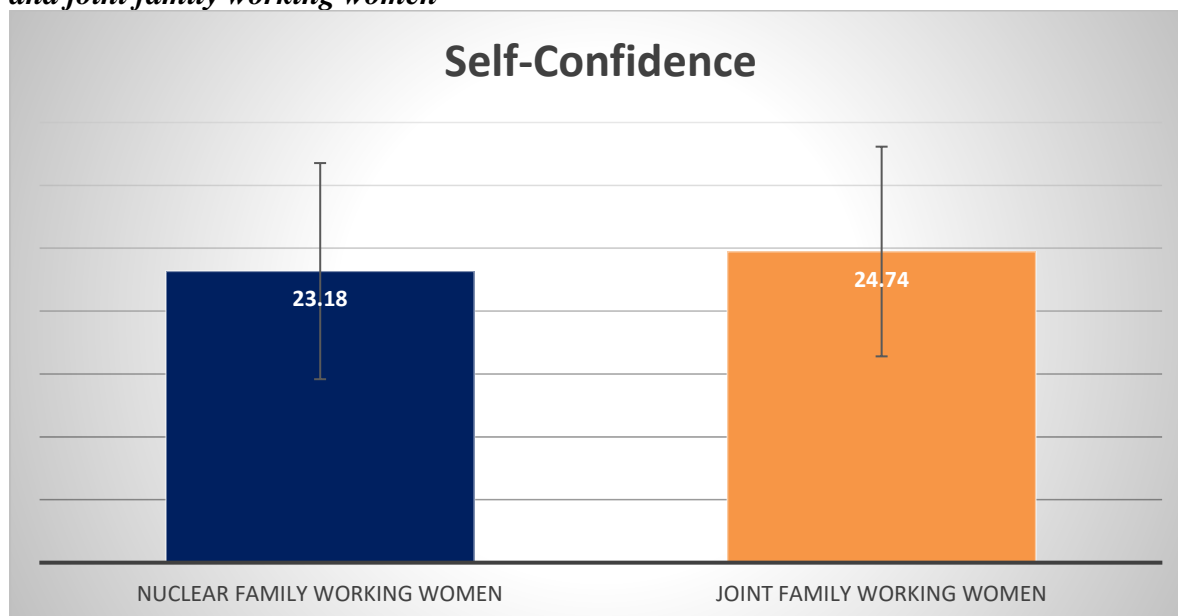
*p<.05(Significant on .05 Level)

The result table - 01 presents a comparison of the mean scores of Nuclear Family working women and Joint Family working women on the dimension of Self-Confidence. This table clearly indicates that there is a significant difference in the level of self-esteem between Nuclear Family working women (M = 23.18, SD = 8.592) and Joint Family working women (M = 24.74, SD = 8.337). Using an independent t-test, the t-score was found to be .921, and the p-value was .359*. This suggests that the difference is statistically significant. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected.

The questionnaire used to measure self-confidence employed a reverse scoring system, where a higher score indicates lower self-confidence and a lower score indicates higher self-confidence. The lower average score of nuclear family working women implies that their self-confidence level is higher.

Thus, it is evident that the Self-Confidence level of working women in Nuclear Families is higher than that of working women in Joint Families.

Graph – 01. The Mean Level of Self-confidence among nuclear family working women and joint family working women



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Ho2 There will be no significant difference in Self-esteem among joint family working women and nuclear family working women

Table No. 2 significant difference in Self-esteem among nuclear family working women and joint family working women

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-score	df	P-value
Nuclear Family working women	50	72.66	5.992	-.370	98	.712 (N.S.)
Joint Family working women	50	72.20	6.417			

***p<.001,**p<.01,*p<.05

The result table - 02 presents a comparison of the mean scores of Nuclear Family working women and Joint Family working women on the dimension of Self-Esteem. This table clearly indicates that there is a significant difference in the level of self-esteem between Nuclear Family working women (M = 72.66, SD = 5.992) and Joint Family working women (M = 72.20, SD = 6.417). Using an independent t-test, the t-score was found to be -0.370, and the p-value was .712. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. This suggests that the difference is not statistically significant.

Thus, it is evident that the Self-Esteem level of working women in Nuclear Families is not higher than that of working women in Joint Families.

Graph – 02. The Mean Level of Self-esteem among nuclear family working women and joint family working women



DISCUSSION

The present research study examines the impact of family structure on the self- confidence and self- esteem of working women. The data has been systematically analysed to describe how these groups differ from each other.

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Self-confidence and self-esteem play a vital role in enhancing an individual's mental health, social relationships, and overall quality of life. Confidence gives a person the courage to trust their abilities and decisions, which is essential for achieving success in any field. Self-esteem, which symbolizes positive thinking and self-acceptance, helps a person recognize and maintain their self-worth. (Geethika et al., 2021); (Akram, 2017).

The findings of the present study indicate that working women living in nuclear families have higher self-confidence compared to those living in joint families. Compared to joint families, women in nuclear families can maintain a better balance between their professional and personal lives, leading to greater mental stability (Debnath, 2015). Additionally, due to relatively lower pressure from traditional family rules and social expectations, they can focus more on their careers and personal growth, which enhances their self-esteem and self-confidence. Women in nuclear families get more opportunities to recognize and refine their abilities, enabling them to make independent decisions in both their professional and personal lives (Khare, 2022). Furthermore, women in nuclear families experience greater mental and emotional independence, as they are relatively free from constant criticism, comparison, and familial pressures. Due to all these factors, they tend to be more self-confident and achieve success in both their personal and professional lives (Debnath, 2015). Working women in joint families are influenced by various social and familial factors (Lakshmi & Prasanth, 2018). In many families, women are still expected to prioritize household chores and family responsibilities, requiring them to manage both job and family duties, which leads to mental stress. Additionally, in many joint families, men are given more authority and respect compared to women, limiting women's opportunities to express their opinions and advance in their careers. Patriarchal thinking influences relationships and family values, negatively impacting women's self-esteem and self-confidence (Biswas & Banu, 2023; Sharma, 2022). Limited decision-making freedom, constant criticism and comparison, and time management challenges adversely affect women's mental health and create obstacles in becoming self-reliant and confident (Panigrahi et al., 2014; Abbas et al., 2019).

However, if the family provides a supportive environment and women receive full cooperation and support from family members, it has a positive impact on their mental well-being (Dhanaraj, S., & Mahambare, 2019). A supportive family environment not only enhances women's self-confidence and self-esteem but also strengthens their mental health (Dubey, 2017).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that the self-confidence and self-esteem of working women in joint families are influenced by various social and familial factors, particularly family roles and limited decision-making freedom. In contrast, women living in nuclear families experience greater independence and balance, which enhances their self-confidence. However, a supportive environment in joint families can have a positive impact on women's mental health and self-reliance. Therefore, family support plays a crucial role in boosting women's self-confidence and self-esteem.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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