

## A Study of Life Satisfaction and Optimism in Relation to Psychological Well-Being Among Working and Non Working Women

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### **Abstract:**

*Purpose of the present investigation was to study the life satisfaction and optimism in relation to psychological well being among working and non working women. The sample comprised of 150 (75 working and 75 non working) women of Aligarh. Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS, Diener, Emmons, Larson and Griffin, 1985) was used for measuring Life Satisfaction of women, Life Orientation Scale Revised (sheir and carver; 1994) was used for measuring optimism and Well Being Manifestation Measure Scale (WBMMS, Masse et. al., 1998) was used for measuring Psychological well being of women. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and t-test were used for analyzing the data by SPSS 16 software. Result showed that there was significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and psychological well being. Result also revealed that there was significant positive correlation between optimism and psychological well being. In group differences, it was found that Working Women scored significantly higher on life satisfaction in comparison to Non Working Women. The result also showed that Working Women scored significantly higher on optimism in comparison to Non Working Women. Similarly, the results also revealed that Working Women scored significantly higher on five dimensions of psychological well being out of six dimensions as compared to Non Working Women. Further, it was found that Working Women also scored significantly higher on composite well being as compared to Non Working Women.*

**Key words:** Life Satisfaction, Optimism, Psychological Well-Being and Women.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### **Psychological Well-Being**

Women play a very important role in our society and perform a lot of responsibility in different areas of life than men. It is found that condition of women are vastly improved and have developed more than before, it is also true that they achieved good success in many areas of science and technology. In present time India has the largest number of professionally qualified women such as more female doctors, surgeons, scientists and professors are in India than the other country. However, it is also a bitter truth that an average of women in India are socially, politically and economically weaker than men. The reality of women's lives remains invisible, and this invisibility persists at all levels beginning with the family to the nation [1]. Thus, it is necessary to find out those psychological factors which enhance positive growth and development and increase psychological well being of women. Therefore, the aim of the present paper is to examine the life satisfaction and optimism in relation to psychological well being among working and non working women.

Psychological well-being is important with respect to how we function and adapt and with respect to whether our lives are satisfying and productive. Psychological well being is a state of mind desirable for one and all. Some of the characteristics associated with psychological well being are: optimism, positive work attitudes, understanding, reaching out to people, maintaining good health, ability to sustain relationships, able to handle crisis effectively etc. In present modern era every individual facing high level of competition and also experiencing a lot of pressure. Well-being is a concept that encompasses a well-rounded, balanced and

comprehensive experience of life. It includes health in social, physical, mental, emotional, career and spiritual domains.

Psychological well-being refers to how people evaluate their lives. According to Diener and Suh (1997), these evaluations may be in the form of cognitions or in the form of affect [2]. The cognitive part is an information based appraisal of one's life that is when a person gives conscious evaluative judgments about one's satisfaction with life as a whole. The affective part is a hedonic evaluation guided by emotions and feelings such as frequency with which people experience pleasant/unpleasant moods in reaction to their lives. According to Kitchener and Jorm (2002) Psychological well-being can be described as a state of mind with an absence of a mental disorder, from the perspective of positive psychology, it may include an individual's ability to enjoy life, and create a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience [3]. Ryff and Singer, (2008); Ryan and Deci, (2001); Waterman (1993) conceptualized positive well-being as *subjective* (hedonic) well-being, which emphasizes happiness and pleasure; and *psychological* (eudaimonic) well-being, which focuses on the fulfillment of human potential [4];[5]; [6]. Snyder and Lopez (2007) correctly proposed the formula: Happiness + Meaning = Well-being [7]. Diener (1984) used the terms happiness and subjective well-being interchangeably, reflecting a hedonic perspective of subjective well-being [8]. A eudemonic perspective of psychological well-being focuses on meaning and virtue [6];[9].

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### **Life Satisfaction**

Life satisfaction is an important variable in relation to psychological well being. Life satisfaction is an interesting topic of research in the area of psychology. Life satisfaction is a state of mind. It is an evaluative appraisal of something. The term refers to both 'contentment' and 'enjoyment'. As such it covers cognitive- as well as affective-appraisals. Life Satisfaction can be both temporary and stable through time. Life satisfaction defines as "the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as-a-whole. In other words, how much the person likes the life he/she leads".

Satisfaction with life refers to "as a whole must be satisfaction, not only with that which is but also with that which was and that which will be, not only with the present, but also with the past and the future [10]. Psychologist defined life satisfaction as a "global evaluation by the person of his or her life" [11]. Life satisfaction is an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one's life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive. Diener (1984) focused that life satisfaction is one of three major indicators of well-being i.e. life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. It also reflects individual mood and the cognitive appraisal of events and conditions [12];[13]. Life satisfaction can be assessed specific to a particular domain of life (i.e. life domain satisfaction) or globally (i.e. global or life as a whole) life satisfaction. Life-domain satisfaction refers to satisfaction with specific areas of an individual's life, such as work, marriage, and income, whereas judgments of global life satisfaction are much more broad, consisting of an individual's comprehensive judgment of her/his life. Satisfaction is determined by one's perceptions of "how things are" vs. "how they should be."

Life satisfaction is an important component of well-being and may be assessed in terms of mood, satisfying relation with others and with achieved goals, self concepts and self-perceived ability to cope with daily life. It involves experiences which have the ability to motivate people to pursue and reach their goals. It is the cognitive assessment of one's life as a whole. We can say that satisfaction in life is very important for positive mental health and well being. A study conducted by Agarwala (2001) in which she examined the significant difference in the life satisfaction of working and non-working women. Her results showed that higher level of Life-satisfaction was among non-working women in comparison to working women [14]. While in another study conducted by Akbari (2012) found that life satisfaction of working women were better in comparison to non working women [15].

### **Optimism**

Optimism is another important factor which play significant role in enhancing psychological well being. Scheier and Carver (1985) defined optimism as "the global generalized tendency to believe that one will generally experience good versus bad outcomes in life" [16]. Optimism is often defined as a disposition to expect the best and view events and situations in a positive light. In the context of resiliency, optimism refers to a sense of a positive future, to a tendency to find positive meaning in experiences, and a belief in one's

ability to impact positively on one's environment and situation. Optimism may be beneficial in several ways. Firstly, optimism naturally promotes a more positive mood, which helps to ward off depression and anxiety. Secondly, optimism also encourages greater persistence in the face of obstacles, which in turn is likely to result in greater success. Finally, there is evidence that optimists actually look after their health better than pessimists. They are more likely to seek out information about potential health risks and change their behavior to avoid those risks.

According to this view, optimists are people who expect future outcomes to be positive. Conversely, pessimists are those who display more negative expectations for the future [17]. Optimism has been shown to play a role in positive mood, perseverance, good problem solving, and academic and occupational success [18]. *Optimism* was developed from the model of self-regulation [17]. The model assumes that people are continually engaged in efforts to overcome obstacles to their goals as long as their expectancies for success are favorable. When doubts become too severe, people are more likely to abandon their threatened goals. People who are considered optimists are more likely than pessimists to persist in their pursuit of goals when faced with a difficult situation [19]. Optimistic people tend to spontaneously use stable coping mechanisms, such as problem-focused coping, which help them to face their challenges [17]. Robbins, Spence, & Clark, (1991) found that optimists displayed better task performance in various domains than pessimists [20]. Shepperd, Maroto, and Pbert (1996) pointed out that optimism shows a positive relationship with individuals' success in many tasks they carry out, including academic achievement [21]. There has been some evidence to suggest that there are many other variables besides ability and intelligence that explain a large amount of the variability in individuals performance. Optimism increases people's ability to tolerate situations and to solve problems which may have an effect on goal achievement. In fact, optimistic people have been found to display lower mood disturbance when responding to a wide range of situations, such as the adjustment to the start of university study [22]. Therefore, the purpose of present study was to examine the life satisfaction and optimism in relation to psychological well being among working and non working women.

### **Objectives of the study**

Following objectives were formulated for the present study:

1. To find out the nature of relationship between Life Satisfaction and Psychological Well-Being.
2. To find out the nature of relationship between Optimism and Psychological Well-Being.
3. To find out the significance of difference between Working and Non Working Women on Life Satisfaction.
4. To find out the significance of difference between Working and Non Working Women on Optimism.
5. To find out the significance of difference between Working and Non Working Women on Psychological Well-Being.

## II. METHOD

### Participants

The sample of present research paper comprised of 150 (75 Working and 75 Non Working) Women of Aligarh. The random sampling technique was used for collecting data. Age of the subjects ranged between 28 to 40 years, the mean age being 34 years. All the Working and Non Working Women belonged from upper middle class socio-economic background.

### Instruments

The following questionnaires were used for measuring Life Satisfaction, Optimism and Psychological Well Being of the Participants.

**1. Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS):** Satisfaction with Life Scale developed by Diener, Emmons, Larson and Griffin (1985) was used to assess the life satisfaction of the subjects [23]. The scale is originally in English language. The scale contains five items requiring a general evaluation of the respondents life as a whole on a 7-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. So the total score may range 5 to 35. Score on SWLS can be interpreted in terms of absolute as well as relative life satisfaction. A score of 20 represents the neutral point on the scale, the point at which the respondent is about equally satisfied and dissatisfied. Below 20 score represent dissatisfied and above 20 score represent satisfied and respectively. Test- retest correlation coefficient of this scale was 0.82 (over a two month period) and a coefficient Alpha was 0.87 respectively.

**2. Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R):** Optimism was measured by the Life Orientation Test-Revised [24]. It consists of 10 statements (3 positively worded, 3 negatively worded and 4 filler items). The LOT-R is a brief modified version of the original Life Orientation Test [16] and has been found to correlate .95 with the later [24]. The LOT-R consists of 10 statements that participants are asked to answer using a letter A (*I agree a lot*) through E (*I disagree a lot*). The test takes no more than 10 min to complete and has no subscales. To score the LOT-R, high values from the responses are to be considered high optimism. Items two, five, six, and eight are filler items and were not included in the scoring procedure.

**3. Well-Being Manifestation Measure Scale:** Well-Being Manifestation Measure Scale was used for measuring psychological well-being of students. It was developed by Masse et. al. (1998), [25]. It consists 25 items and rated on five point scale with six factors or sub scale i.e. Self Esteem, Metal Balance, Social Involvement, Sociability, Control of Self and Events, and Happiness. Masse et. al. (1998) found an over all Cronbach's Alpha of .93 for the questionnaire, and range of .71 to 85 on the subscales [25].

**Analysis:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test were used to analyze the data.

## III. RESULTS

**Table No.1:** Correlation between Life Satisfaction, Optimism and all Dimensions of Psychological Well-Being.

Variables	Well-Being						
	Self Esteem	Mental Balance	Social Involvement	Sociability	Control of Self and Events	Happiness	Composite Well-Being
Life Satisfaction	.531**	.321**	.613**	.585**	.186*	.519**	.675**
Optimism	.359**	.220**	.364**	.408**	.228**	.307**	.460**

\*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.  
\*\*correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

It is found from above table that life satisfaction is significantly positively correlated with all six dimensions of psychological well being (i.e. self esteem, mental balance, social involvement, sociability, control of self and events and happiness). Significant positive correlation is also found between life satisfaction and composite psychological well being. The result also shows that there is a significant positive correlation between optimism and all six dimensions of psychological well being. The significant positive correlation is also found between optimism and composite well being.

**Table No. 2:** Comparison of Working and Non Working Women on Life Satisfaction, and Optimism Scores.

Variables	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	df	Sig.
Life Satisfaction	Working Women	75	22.30	5.32	2.92	148	.01
	Non Working Women	75	19.89	3.77			
Optimism	Working Women	75	15.05	3.03	2.22	148	.05
	Non Working Women	75	13.92	3.20			

Table-2 shows that there is a significant difference between Working and Non Working Women on life satisfaction scores. In other words Working Women scored significantly higher on life satisfaction scores as compared to Non Working Women.

Above table-2 also shows that significant difference is also found between Working and Non Working Women on Optimism scores. We can say that Working Women scored significantly higher on optimism as compared to Non Working Women.

**Table No. 3:** Comparison of Working and Non Working Women on All Dimensions of Psychological Well-Being and its Composite Scores.

Variables	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	df	Sig.
Self Esteem	Working Women	75	13.81	2.23	4.00	148	.01
	Non Working Women	75	12.36	2.22			
Mental Balance	Working Women	75	15.46	2.72	2.58	148	.01
	Non Working Women	75	14.50	1.70			
Social Involvement	Working Women	75	14.73	2.51	2.86	148	.01
	Non Working Women	75	13.58	2.37			
Sociability	Working Women	75	15.42	2.65	2.47	148	.05
	Non Working Women	75	14.38	2.49			
Control of Self and Events	Working Women	75	14.36	2.45	1.77	148	NS
	Non Working Women	75	13.69	2.88			
Happiness	Working Women	75	19.25	3.22	3.68	148	.01
	Non Working Women	75	17.37	3.02			
Composite Well-Being	Working Women	75	93.16	10.21	4.38	148	.01
	Non Working Women	75	85.90	10.03			

From the table-03 it is clear that there is significant difference between Working and Non Working Women on five dimensions of psychological well being (i.e. self esteem, social involvement, sociability and happiness) out of six dimensions. In other words Working Women scored significantly higher on five dimensions of psychological well being out of six dimensions as compared to Non Working Women.

Similarly the table also showed that there is significant difference between Working and Non Working Women on composite psychological well being scores. In other words Working Women scored significantly higher on composite well being scores as compared to Non Working Women.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The purpose of present study was to examine the relationship between life satisfaction, optimism and psychological well being among Working and Non Working Women, as well as the group differences in life satisfaction, optimism and psychological well being among same sample. The result in pertaining to correlation revealed that the significant positive correlation was found between the life satisfaction and all dimensions of psychological well being. It was also found that there was a significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and composite well being. This is apparent from the result that life satisfaction is very important factor for promoting psychological well being of women and enhancing positive mental health.

Similarly, it was also apparent from the results that there was significant positive correlation between optimism and all dimensions of well being. It is also clear from the result that significant positive correlation was found between optimism and composite or total well being. On the basis of above results it may be said that optimism is other important factor which also play important role in promoting psychological well being of women.

When group differences was investigated on above sample, it was found that Working Women scored significantly higher on life satisfaction as compared to Non Working Women. It means that Working Women have more better life satisfaction in comparison to Non Working Women. This study is supported by Akbari (2012) she also found in her study that life satisfaction of Working Women were better in comparison to Non Working Women [15].

Similarly, it was also apparent from the results that Working Women scored significantly higher on optimism as compared to Non Working Women. It means that Working Women are more optimistic than Non Working Women.

It was also found that Working Women scored significantly higher on five dimensions of psychological well being (i.e. self esteem, social involvement, sociability and happiness) out of six dimensions in comparison to Non Working Women. In the same way, Working Women also scored significantly higher on composite well being as compared to Non Working Women. The reason may be that Working Women live in more open environment, get more social and financial support, interact with different kind of people, and generally more busy that is why, they have better life satisfaction, high level of optimism and more positive well being in comparison to Non Working Women.

#### V. CONCLUSION

It is concluded that life satisfaction and optimism play important role in enhancing psychological well being of women, as these two variables are positively correlated with psychological well being. Similarly, it is concluded that Working Women scored significantly higher on life satisfaction and optimism as compared to Non Working Women. It is also concluded that Working Women scored significantly higher on psychological well being as compared to Non Working Women.

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