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### Original Article

# Impact of Self-Esteem on Stress in Working and Non-Working Married Women (30-37 Years)

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### ABSTRACT

Every person goes through periods of low self-esteem at some stage in life, it's unavoidable. Replacing this negative conditioning with more positive programming is critical to building a successful and harmonious life. Stress is perhaps the most common issue of man's everyday life. Stress is so universal and widespread that it is considered as a hallmark of human life. Married women especially with responsibilities of job, children and ageing parents can particularly feel overwhelmed by stress of daily life and that might accentuate if women have lower esteem. Low self-esteem can lead to psychological effects that cause a person to be more susceptible to stressful situations. Conversely, high self-esteem can act as a sort of protection against high levels of stress. Individuals with low esteem tend to feel helpless, powerless, and incapable of overcoming the obstacles placed in front of them. People today suffer from stress in a range of situations. Stress is present in people's lives and is believed to be the cause of psychopathologies, diseases, and inability to adapt to any given environment or work. Stress is considered a complex defensive-balancing mechanism of the body that develops in two stages: during the first stage, individuals assess the stressor and the demands stemming from it, and during the second stage, they evaluate whether or not they have enough resources to meet the stressor demands. The latter stage draws attention to the individual's subjective assessment of the stressor, which conditions their reaction to it. Different people may react differently to the same stressor. The stress response refers to body reactions, which can either be physiological, emotional, or behavioral reactions to stimuli that cause stress.

**Keywords:** Stress; Selfesteem; Working Women; Nonworking women

### INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem has two tenets – Self-efficacy and Self-respect. Self-efficacy is the confidence in our ability to think and to cope with basic challenges of life; and Self-respect is the confidence in our right to be successful and happy and enjoy the results of our efforts. Absence of even one of these components leads to an impaired self-esteem. Overall, the healthier self-esteem is, the more likely it is that we treat self and others with respect, and fairness.

Stress is often called the ultimate universal experience. Everyone on earth has felt stress irrespective of their life

situations. The relationship between stress and self-esteem is closely linked. Low self-esteem can lead to psychological effects that cause a person to be more susceptible to stressful situations. Self-esteem affects people's reaction to stressful events and in addition the way individuals cope with stress.

Married women juggle between roles across home and/or office, managing family and household responsibilities. The working woman tries to excel in her job too. This study aims to understand the impact of Self-esteem on the stress levels of married women in Bengaluru and the differences of impact on Working vs. Non-Working married women.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Self-esteem and Stress which have been researched extensively as stand-alone topics. However, there are hardly any studies done that correlate the impact of self-esteem on stress. Lydia Kogler<sup>1</sup>, Eva-Maria Seidel Hannah Metzler et.al. conducted a study titled ‘Impact of self-esteem and sex on stress reactions’ (2017) and concluded that differences in stress response emerged on the behavioral, hormonal, and neural level<sup>1</sup>. The findings suggested a stronger engagement in achievement stress task in men than in women.

Keke Wu, Chenwei Li et.al. conducted a study ‘Role of Self-Esteem in the relationship between stress and ingratiation’ (2011)<sup>2</sup>. The mediation model suggests that job-related stress lowered self-esteem, which in turn led to more frequent use of ingratiation behaviors, lending full support for the hypothesis that self-esteem mediates the relationship between stress and ingratiation.

Dr Neeraj Panwar conducted a research titled ‘Effect of anxiety level on life satisfaction’ (2011)<sup>3</sup>. Results shows that married and working women have low anxiety with higher life satisfaction in comparison to non-working married females.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

The study was conducted on working and non-working married women (30-37 years) in Bengaluru with following objectives:

- To identify the stress levels in married working and married non-working women
- To identify the self-esteem of married working and married non-working women
- To identify the relationship between self-esteem and stress in married working and married non-working women.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This project is a Quantitative Study that used Descriptive Correlational Design. Data was collected using self-administered standard questionnaires. The data collected used standard questionnaires using a virtual on-line survey. The respondents were approached virtually on phone and were briefed about the project, its purpose and all the questionnaires were explained in detail. They were told that true and prompt answers were expected.

Homogeneous Purposive Sampling technique was used. Married women in the age group of 30-37 years living in Bengaluru were approached through common acquaintances, or references.

The Sample size was 60 with equal number of Working/Non-working married women. 50% of the respondents (N=30) are Home makers and are non-working. 36.7% of the respondents (N=22) were working in the Corporate sector and the remaining 13.3% (N= 8) were self-employed

**ANALYSIS**

*The three hypothesis that were considered are:*

- Hypothesis1: The stress levels in married working women is lesser than the stress levels in married non-working women
  - Hypothesis 2: Self-esteem levels in Married Non-working women is lesser than the self-esteem in Married Working women
  - Hypothesis 3: There is significant relationship between self-esteem and stress for both groups-married working women and married non-working women (Age: 30-37 Years)

Descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. Independent sample t-test used to identify the level of stress and self-esteem in married working and married non-working women. Pearson’s coefficient method used to find the relationship between stress and esteem in the two groups.

**Table 1: Mean and SD of all the variables of the study**

| Variables   | N  | Mean  | Standard Deviation |
|-------------|----|-------|--------------------|
| Self-Esteem | 60 | 20.41 | 3.44               |
| Stress      | 60 | 17.90 | 5.84               |

The mean of Self Esteem (calculated using Rosenberg Self Esteem Score questionnaire) for the overall sample was 20.41, while the Standard Deviation was 3.44.

The mean of Stress for the overall sample (calculated using Perceived Stress Scale by Sheldon Cohen) was 17.90 while the Standard Deviation was 5.84.

**Table 2: Mean and SD of the variables by two segments**

| Vari-ables  | Category    | Sample Size (N) | Mean  | Standard Deviation |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------|
| Self-Esteem | Married     | 30              | 19.97 | 3.86               |
|             | Non-Working |                 |       |                    |
| Stress      | Married     | 30              | 20.87 | 2.97               |
|             | Working     |                 |       |                    |
|             | Married     | 30              | 18.20 | 6.68               |
|             | Non-Working |                 |       |                    |
|             | Married     | 30              | 17.60 | 4.96               |
|             | Working     |                 |       |                    |

Self Esteem was higher among married working women (Mean value: 20.87) vs. non-working married women (Mean value: 19.97). Stress levels were lower in the Married working women (Mean value of 17.6) as compared to the married non-working women (Mean value of 18.2)

**Distribution of Self Esteem**

Among the overall sample, 33% of respondents have Low self-esteem, 58% have Normal self- esteem, 8% have High self-esteem. Among the Working sample, 63% have Normal



self-esteem, and in the Non-working sample, 53% have Normal self-esteem.

**Table 3: Distribution of self-esteem among sample**

|                    | <b>Non-Working (N=30)</b> | <b>Working Married (N=30)</b> | <b>Overall Sample (N=60)</b> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Low self-esteem    | 33%                       | 33%                           | 33%                          |
| Normal self-esteem | 53%                       | 63%                           | 58%                          |
| High self-esteem   | 13%                       | 3%                            | 8%                           |

**Distribution of Stress**

Among the overall sample, 22% of respondents have Low stress, 70% have Moderate stress, 8% have High stress. Among the Working sample, only 3% have High stress, while in the Non-working sample, 13% have High stress

**Table 4: Distribution of Stress among sample**

|                 | <b>Nor-working (N=30)</b> | <b>Working married (N=30)</b> | <b>Overall Sample (N=60)</b> |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Low stress      | 23%                       | 20%                           | 22%                          |
| Moderate stress | 63%                       | 77%                           | 70%                          |
| High stress     | 13%                       | 3%                            | 8%                           |

**Hypothesis 1 Testing**

Though there is a difference between the mean scores of both the groups, this test was conducted to understand the statistical significance if any.

The test was conducted in SPSS and the results of the same are as below:

Test shows the p value of 0.69, which means the difference between the means of Stress of the two samples is not statistically significant

This disproves the hypothesis that stress levels in married working women is lesser than married non-working women. The findings indicate that the age group selected which consists of young married women are able to feel a sense of worth in their relationships with their spouse/kids/family etc. and that having a dedicated profession or job is not necessary for enjoying a healthy self-esteem

**Table 5: T-Test results for Stress for Married Non-working and Married working women**

|                              | <b>Non-working</b> | <b>Working</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Mean                         | 18.20              | 17.60          |
| Variance                     | 44.64              | 24.59          |
| Observations                 | 30                 | 30             |
| Hypothesized mean difference | 0                  |                |
| Df                           | 54                 |                |
| T stat                       | 0.39               |                |
| P (T<=t) one-tail            | 0.35               |                |
| t critical one-tails         | 1.67               |                |
| P (T<=t) two-tails           | 0.69               |                |
| t critical one-tails         | 2                  |                |

**Hypothesis 2 Testing**

Though there is a difference between the mean scores of both the groups, this test was conducted to understand the statistical significance if any.

The test was conducted in SPSS and the results are as below:

**Table 6: T-Test for Self-Esteem for Married Non-working and Married working women**

|                              | <b>Non-working</b> | <b>Working</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Mean                         | 19.97              | 20.87          |
| Variance                     | 14.93              | 8.81           |
| Observations                 | 30                 | 30             |
| Hypothesized mean difference | 0                  |                |
| Df                           | 54                 |                |
| T stat                       | -1.01              |                |
| P (T<=t) one-tail            | 0.16               |                |
| t critical one-tails         | 1.67               |                |
| P (T<=t) two-tails           | 0.32               |                |
| t critical one-tails         | 2                  |                |

Test shows the p value of 0.32, which means the difference between the means of the two samples is not statistically significant.

This disproves the hypothesis that the self-esteem level in married working women is more than non-married working women. The findings indicate that homemakers do not have extra stress due to responsibilities of home and family. Even though working women might be able to outsource a lot of household chores and child rearing responsibilities, their jobs might add enough to their perceived stress in addition to also trying to delegate and coach the support structure back home.

An important area could be the personal choice and liking of being a working or non-working woman which will also add up to feeling a sense of worth and keeping stress levels in check.

### Hypothesis 3 Testing

To understand the correlation between the two variables, Pearson's coefficient test was conducted in SPSS. The results of the test are as below

**Table 7: Pearson's coefficient method between Self-Esteem and Stress**

|             | Self-esteem | Stress |
|-------------|-------------|--------|
| Self-esteem | 1           |        |
| Stress      | -0.59       | 1      |

A moderate degree of negative correlation exists between the two variables (Pearson's coefficient of -0.59) indicating that with high self-esteem leads to low stress and vice versa.

This proves the hypothesis that there is significant relationship between self-esteem and stress for both groups-married working women and married non-working women (Age: 30-37 Years).

Also, there is a negative relationship between self-esteem and stress among the married women. The higher the self-esteem, the lower will be the stress level and vice versa

### CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

Overall, the findings of the study indicate that the self-esteem and stress for the two groups Married Working and Married Non-Working women for age group 30-37 were not statistically different.

However, the moderate negative correlation between self-esteem and stress clearly indicates that the married women (whether working or non-working) who have higher self-esteem are able to manage stress better than the ones who have lower self-esteem.

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The results of the study have shown that find that overall, Married Non-working women do have a higher stress levels than Married working women, although on closer inferential analysis we find that it is not statistically significant. Young married women feel a sense of worth in their relationships with their spouse/kids/family etc. and that having a dedicated profession or job is not necessary for enjoying a healthy self-esteem

The study also finds that overall Married working women do have a higher Self-esteem score than Married Non-working women, although on closer inferential analysis we find that it is not statistically significant.

The correlation between the self-esteem and Stress levels of the sample was studied and indicate that there is a moderate degree negative correlation between the self-esteem and stress. There is a negative relationship between self-esteem and stress among the married women. The higher the self-esteem, the lower will be the stress level and vice versa.

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