
Impact of Marital Status on the Mental Wellbeing of Working Women of Kolkata

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Abstract: *The present study aims to explore the impact of marital status on the mental wellbeing of working women of Kolkata. 130 working women having full time jobs (65 married and 65 unmarried) across the city of Kolkata participated in the study. The method of purposive sampling was employed. Quantitative method of data collection was used, 2 questionnaires namely, GHQ-28 and The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale were administered along with a consent form and a general information schedule (including the Kuppuswamy Socioeconomic Scale 2021). The mean score for mental wellbeing were obtained for both the groups which indicated unmarried working women have a slightly higher score than the married ones. Results of One-way ANOVA indicated that there was no significant impact of marital status on the mental wellbeing of working women.*

Keywords: *Marital status, mental wellbeing, working women.*

1. Introduction

Marriage is a social institution that has varying effects on mental health across cultures. Marital status refers to distinct options that describe a person's relationship with a significant other. Married, single (unmarried), divorced, widowed and in a domestic partnership are examples of marital status. In communities that value marriage, being married is related with decreased levels of depression, anxiety, suicide risk, and substance addiction. Mental wellbeing, an integral part of our overall health, is the state of thriving in various areas of life, such as in relationships, at work, play, and more, despite ups and downs. It's the knowledge that we are separate from our problems and the belief that we can handle those problems. The association between mental health and marital status is explained by two models: selection and causation. People who are healthy and socially appealing are more likely

to marry and stay married, according to selection models. Marriage offers rewards directly to participants in causality models. Divorce and remarriage have a short-term detrimental influence on mental health. Remarrying is beneficial to one's mental health, although not as much as the first marriage. Never-married and cohabiting people are becoming more prevalent, according to research, with different effects based on cultural standards and selection criteria (Spiker, 2014). According to a research by Mori et al. (2002) on sex-role orientation, marital status, and mental health in working women, consciousness of being a woman in unmarried working women and stress outside the workplace in married working women was the strongest predictor of poor mental health. Akhouri et al. (2019) conducted a comparative study on anxiety, depression and quality of life among married and unmarried working women. The results indicated significant differences in the levels of anxiety, depression and quality of life among married and unmarried working women. It was concluded that married working women experience higher levels of anxiety and depression as well as a lower quality of life compared to unmarried working women. On the other hand, a study conducted by Parveen (2018) portrayed working married women's mental health and well-being was better than working unmarried women.

2. Methodology

130 working women (working for at least 40 hours per week with a experience of minimum one year) across the city of Kolkata participated in the study. The technique of purposive sampling was used. The following inclusion and exclusion criteria were used:

General inclusion criteria

Woman with a full time job, working for at least a year with minimum 40 working hours per week.

Either married or unmarried

Must be aged between 25-45 years

Must be a resident of Kolkata

Must have at least a graduation degree

General exclusion criteria

Males, transgenders or gender-neutral individuals

Woman with a part time job/business; no employment or working for

less than 40 hours per week for at least one year or employed for less than a year
Divorced or separated
Aged below 25 years or above 45 years
Not a resident of Kolkata
Does not possess a minimum graduation degree

Objective

To find out the impact of marital status if any on the mental wellbeing of working women.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is no significant impact of marital status on the mental wellbeing of working women.

Data was collected from the participants using electronic means. The questionnaire (Google form) was circulated online across various social media platforms. Quantitative method of data collection was used, 2 questionnaires namely, GHQ-28 and The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale were administered along with a consent form and a general information schedule (including the Kuppuswamy Socioeconomic Scale 2021). As all the scales were self administering, participants were asked to read the instructions carefully. There was no time limit. It was ensured that no item was omitted as that would result in incomplete scoring. All the questionnaires were provided in English. The data collected was then screened based on the GHQ-28 scores and scores on the Kuppuswamy Socioeconomic Scale 2021. Individuals scoring 4 and above in GHQ-28 and below 11 on the Kuppuswamy Socioeconomic Scale 2021 were not considered for further scoring. The scores of the remaining participants were then tabulated for further statistical treatment and verification of hypothesis. The raw scores were calculated manually for each of the scales. Then the statistical treatment of the scores was attempted. The statistical tools were selected in accordance with the objective of the study and included descriptive statistics and One-way ANOVA.

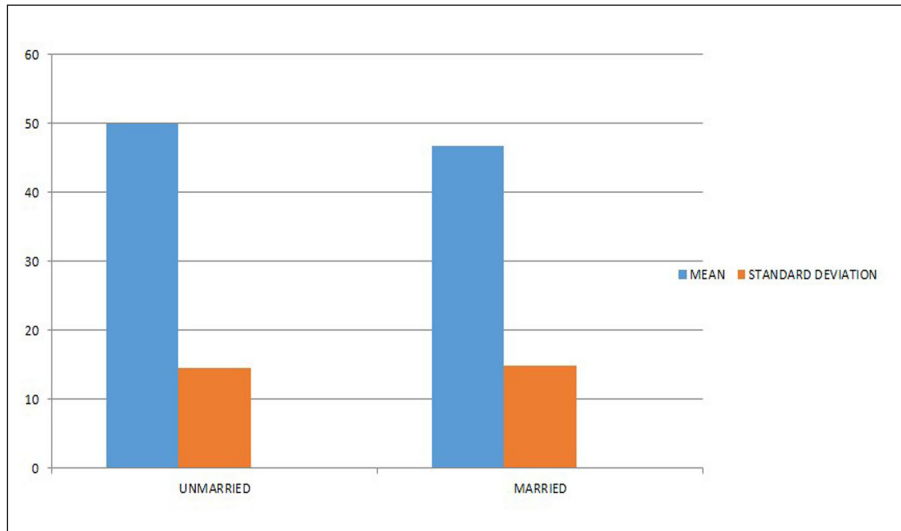
3. Result and Discussion

The results indicated that the mean mental wellbeing score for unmarried working women is slightly higher than that of married working women.

TABLE 1: Depicts the Mean and Standard Deviation for the mental wellbeing scores obtained by the working women belonging to the two marital status groups.

MARITAL STATUS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Unmarried	49.86	14.48
Married	46.72	14.93

Figure 1: Graphical representation of the Mean and Standard Deviation for the mental wellbeing scores obtained by the working women belonging to the two marital status groups.



Results of One-way ANOVA indicate that there is no significant difference between the mean mental wellbeing scores of married and unmarried working women. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected at the level of significance. Hypothesis 1 (H1) is accepted. There is no significant impact of marital status on the mental wellbeing working women.

TABLE 2: Results of ANOVA with Marital Status as IV and Mental Wellbeing of working women as DV

		SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	df	F	SIG.
Mental Health	Between Groups	320.12	320.12	1	1.48	.226
	Within Groups	27684.77	216.29	128		
	Total	28004.89		129		

p > 0.05

From the quantitative analysis, it was observed H1 (There is no significant impact of marital status on the mental wellbeing of working women) has been accepted. It means there is no significant impact of marital status on the mental wellbeing of working women. The finding is consistent with results of a study conducted on similar lines by Pearson (2008) which showed marital status not being related to the psychological health of employed women. This result though, is quite different from most studies showing the impact of marital status on the mental wellbeing of working women. Prior literature indicates that marital status do have an impact on the mental health status of working women as has been reflected from studies conducted by Amaro et al. (1987), Akhouri et al. (2019), Di Tella et al. (2020) and several others.

However, from table 1 it can be observed that though not high enough to be significant, slight difference does exist between the mean mental wellbeing status of married and unmarried working women with unmarried working women scoring higher indicating better mental wellbeing than married working women.

This corroborates with the results of the study conducted by Garima and Kiran (2014) and Vata et al. (2015). There can be several factors which can explain why marital status is gradually losing its effect on mental wellbeing of working women. Primarily, this can be attributed to the growing educational levels and employment status among women and awareness of rights stemming from it. Today, women no longer feel that it's just their responsibility to look after the house and take care of the family, while men make merry to their heart's content. Women today feel the need to contribute to their family financially while also looking after their wellbeing. Particularly in the metropolitan cities, where the present study too has been conducted, the lines between being and not being married is getting blurred, with women refusing to give in to the patriarchal demands and expectations from them that have been prevalent since time immemorial. However, with still a long way to go, certain societal expectation still remain from women, as a result of which married women have flaired slight poorly on the mental wellbeing.

4. Conclusion

The aim of the study was to explore the impact of marital status on the mental wellbeing of working women of Kolkata. It can be concluded that there is no significant impact of marital status on the mental wellbeing of working women. The study has implications in the job sector, both with regard to recruitment and work life. The bias associated with hiring female employees that too married ones, can be tackled through the findings of the study.

5. Reference

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