

A Comparative Study to Examine the Quality of Life Among Married Working and Non-Working Women

Priyanka Panghal¹, Poonam Malik², Amita Verma³,
Jyoti Dudi⁴, Reenu Pindar⁵

¹Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Human Development, CCS, HAU, HISAR

²Assistant Scientist, Department of Human Development, CCS, HAU, HISAR

^{3,4,5}Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Human Development, CCS, HAU, HISAR

Abstract

Quality of life (QOL) refers to the subjective well-being of the individual or society that consists of various positive and negative aspects of life. As believed that job is the most influential factor in enhancing the quality of life, however working women face various problems because of dual responsibilities. Similarly, homemakers have to take care of their homes and children as well so it is very difficult to state which group has a better quality of life. The present study was planned to solve this controversy and to compare the quality of life of working and non-working women. The sample for the current investigation consists of 40 women (20 working and 20 non-working) in the age range of 20-40 years. Data collection was done in Hisar district of Haryana state using quality of life questionnaire developed by Gehlert *et al.* (2006). Data was analysed using SPSS 28 version by applying appropriate statistical tests. Findings of the study revealed that significant differences existed in quality of life of working and non-working women. Working women were found on the better side in all the aspects of quality of life except in the case of social health aspect the mean score of non-working women was found higher than working. Age, number of years in marriage, number of children, working hours, domestic help, mass media exposure, family size and income were found contributing factors toward quality of life among women.

Keywords: Quality of Life, Subjective Well-being, Social Health

Introduction

Women play a crucial role in our families and society, and their well-being is an indicator of the general well-being of the community as a whole. Women's attitudes towards conventional roles have changed over the past several years, and many of them now hold dual responsibility for their employment and their household work. "The number of working women has increased compared to a decade before due to the increase in educational and job opportunities as well as due to financial demands of managing households" (Balaji, 2014). It is true that in today's society, women have made significant progress in the workforce, but the question of whether working women have a better quality of life than non-working women still remains a topic of debate. The general well-being of people and societies is known as quality of life (QOL), which describes both the negative as well as positive aspects of life. It examines factors that affect life

satisfaction, such as physical well-being, family, education, employment status, wealth, religious convictions, finances, and the surrounding environment (Barcaccia, 2013). According to the World Health Organisation, quality of life (QoL) is a subjective assessment of how well one's reality aligns with their aspirations as seen through the prism of their culture and value system. The University of Toronto's Quality of Life Research Unit defines QoL as how much a person may appreciate the worthwhile opportunities in their lives. It is crucial to distinguish between QoL and other concepts that are somewhat similar and may be mistaken with one another in the literature, such as standard of living and health-related quality of life. Quality of life differs from standard of living in the sense that standard of living is solely based upon economic status and income.

Both working and non-working women face their unique set of challenges, and the decision to work or not work is a personal one that must take into account individual circumstances. One significant advantage of working women is financial independence. Working women have the opportunity to earn their own money, which can provide them with a sense of autonomy and self-worth. They can contribute to their family's finances, which can relieve financial stress and improve the overall quality of life for the household. Additionally, working women have access to benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and paid time off, which can improve their overall quality of life. On the other hand, non-working women can also have a high quality of life, particularly if they have a supportive partner and strong social connections. Non-working women have the time and flexibility to pursue hobbies and interests, volunteer, and engage in community activities, which can provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment. They also have the time and energy to invest in their relationships with family and friends, which can improve overall well-being. So, keeping these views in mind the current study was planned to compare the quality of life among working and non-working women to answer the question that among both which group possess high quality of life.

Methodology

Participants: The present investigation is a type of comparative study of the descriptive domain and it intends to discover the difference between quality of life among working and non-working women. The sample for the present study was comprised of 40 women in the age group of 20-40 years equally divided into both groups (20 working and 20 non-working). The sample was randomly selected from the urban area of Hisar district of Haryana state.

Tools Used

Self-Structured Socio-Personal Information Sheet was used to collect information regarding personal and social life of working and non-working women. Various aspects related to personal and social life like age, education, occupation, spouse education and occupation, income, mass-media exposure, type and duration of work done, family type and size etc. were included in this sheet.

Women's Quality of life Questionnaire Developed by Gehlert *et al.* (2006) was used to assess the level of QOL among working and non-working women. This scale is a self-report questionnaire intended to measure the four aspects of quality of life and these are, physical health, mental health, social health and spiritual health. It consists of 40 items to be rated on a three-point Likert scale. Scores of the four dimensions were evaluated by adding the rating of the related items and the sum of these scores represented the level of QOL among working and non-working women. Scores were divided into three categories i.e., low, medium and high.

Table 1: Score range for QOL scale

Sr. No.	Dimensions	Low	Medium	High
1.	Physical Health	0-10	10-20	20-30
2.	Mental Health	0-10	10-20	20-30
3.	Social Health	0-10	10-20	20-30
4.	Spiritual Health	0-10	10-20	20-30
5.	Overall Quality of Life	0-40	40-80	80-120

Procedure: For the purpose of data collection women were approached in their houses, after giving an overview of the study consent from each respondent was taken. Important instructions were given to the respondents to fill out the questionnaire and they were assured that their information would be kept confidential. After that, questionnaires were given to the respondents and collected on the spot after completion.

Data validation and statistical analysis

It was done using Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 28. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

Result and Discussion

Table 2. Socio-Personal Profile of Working and Non-Working Women:

Variables		Working		Non-Working	
		F	%	F	%
Age	20-30	4	20	8	40
	30-40	16	80	12	60
Education Qualification	Illiterate	-	-	6	30
	Matric	-	-	6	30
	Post Matric	-	-	2	10
	Graduation	8	40	6	30
	Post Graduation	12	60	-	-
Occupation	Private Job	4	20	-	-
	Government Job	12	60	-	-
	Semi-Government	-	-	-	-
	Self -Employed	4	20	-	-
	Homemaker	-	-	20	100
Working Hours	4 Hours	-	-	-	-
	5 Hours	-	-	-	-
	6 Hours	-	-	2	10
	7 Hours	-	-	8	40
	8 Hours	20	100	10	50
Rest Period	2 Hours	20	100	12	60
	3 Hours	-	-	8	40
	4 Hours	-	-	-	-
No. of Years in Marriage	0-5 Years	4	20	2	10
	5-10 Years	12	60	6	30

	10-15 Years	4	20	6	30
	15-20 Years	-	-	6	30
Spouse Education	Illiterate			4	20
	Matric			2	10
	Post Matric			6	30
	Graduation	16	80	6	30
	Post-Graduation	4	20	2	10
Spouse Occupation	Private Job	8	40	4	20
	Government Job	4	20	8	40
	Semi-Government			-	-
	Self-Employed	8	40	8	40
No. of Children	1	12	60	6	30
	2	8	40	6	30
	3			8	40
Domestic Help	From Family Members	4	20	6	30
	Paid Labour	16	80	-	-
	No Help			14	70
Mass Media Exposure: No. of Hours Spent on Phone	2 Hours			14	70
	3 Hours			6	30
	4 Hours	16	80	-	-
	5 Hours	4	20	-	-
Phone Type	Keypad			12	60
	Smartphone	20	100	8	40
Family Size	Small (0-4)	12	60	-	-
	Medium (4-7)	8	40	16	80
	Large (7 and Above)			4	20
Family Type	Joint	8	40	12	60
	Nuclear	12	60	8	40
Personal Income	10000-50000	12	60	-	-
	50000-100000	8	40	-	-
	100000-Above			-	-
	None			20	100
Spouse Income	10000-50000	4	20	18	90
	50000-100000	16	80	2	10
	100000-Above			-	-
	None			-	-
Family Income	10000-50000			12	60
	50000-100000	4	20	8	40
	100000-Above	16	80	-	-

Table 2 represents the distribution of working and non-working women according to their socio-personal profile. Data regarding age showed that 80 per cent of working women and 60 per cent of non-working women were between age of 30-40 years. A large difference was observed between educational qualification of working and non-working women. More than half (60%) of the working women were educated up to post-graduation level followed by graduation (40%), on the other hand a small proportion (30%) of non-working women were educated up to the level of graduation. The data regarding occupation of working women revealed that more than half (60%) of the respondents were doing government job followed by private job (20%) and self-employment (20%). As we all know women are the backbone of society, they remain occupied with work for the betterment of their families no matter they are working or non-working, data also revealed the same pattern women work at least for 6-8 hours a day. Majority of non-working women take rest for 2 hours or even less and in case of non-working women rest period may extend up to 3 hours. More than half (60%) of the working women were married from 5-10 years and 30 per cent of non-working women were from 5-10 years, 30 per cent were from 10-15 and 10 per cent were married from 0-5 years. Trends in spouse education and occupation were found similar to the education qualification and occupation of working and non-working women. 60 per cent of working women had only one child followed by two children (40%). In case of non-working women 40 per cent had three children, 30 per cent had two and 30 per cent had one child. Data regarding availability of domestic help revealed that in case of working women majority (80%) of women get help from paid labourers in contrast 70 per cent non-working women manage household task alone. Most of the working women possess smartphones and spent at least 4 hours on screen or phone, time spent by non-working women was found less than the working women because around 60 per cent women had keypad mobiles. 60 per cent of working women belonged to small and nuclear families and 80 per cent of non-working women belonged to medium sized families. Majority of working women were from families with monthly income of one lakh and above and in case of non-working women 60 per cent of women were from families with monthly income between 10000-50000.

Table 3. Comparison between working and non-working women on various aspects of quality of life:

Dimensions	Working Mean ± S.D	Non-Working Mean ± S.D	t-value
Physical health	22.4±2.43	18.4±3.59	4.123**
Mental health	21.3±2.11	17.2±3.39	4.588**
Social health	13.4±1.96	19.9±4.24	6.223**
Spiritual health	21.8±2.24	19.5±3.76	2.349*
Overall QOL	78.9±4.09	70.8±11.03	3.080**

Table 3 depicts the difference in the mean scores (\pm S.D) distribution of respondents at the level of QOL. The mean scores of working and non-working women at the first aspect of QOL i.e., physical health were 22.4±2.43 and 18.4±3.59 respectively. This indicates that significant ($t=4.123, p\leq 0.01$) differences existed in the physical health aspect of QOL and working women were ahead of non-working women. Similar findings were also reported by Chandan and George (2016) who concluded that working women in the age group of 20-40 years had lower body mass index due to active involvement in physical activities, had better hand grip power compared to homemakers and also had better overall physical health than homemakers. Comparison on the mental health aspect of QOL revealed that significant ($t=4.588, p\leq 0.01$)

differences existed among working (21.3±2.11) and non-working (17.2±3.39) women, working women had better mental health as compared to non-working. Similarly, Sinha (2017) inferred that score of working women on the PGI health questionnaire was significantly lower than homemakers which indicates that working women possess a higher level of psychological well-being. In contrast, Kaur et al (2020) reported that non-working women had better mental health as compared to working women because working women have higher stress related to work. Mean score of non-working women on social health aspect was found to be 19.9±4.24 which was significantly (t=6.223, p≤0.01) higher than mean score of working women (13.4±1.96). Similar results were reported by Anand and Sharma (2017) who found that mean score of non-working women on social domain of quality of life was higher as compared to working women because homeworkers have more leisure time to spend with close ones and relatives. Significant differences on spiritual aspect were also found, working women (21.8±2.24) possess greater level (t=2.349, p≤0.05) of spirituality as compared to non-working women. Khandelwal and Sahu (2018) also concluded that working women were on the better side of spiritual well-being as compared to non-working women. Comparison on the overall quality of life revealed that the mean score of working (78.9±4.09) women was significantly (t=3.080, p≤0.01) higher than the mean score of non-working (70.8±11.03) women which indicates that working women enjoy a better-quality life than non-working women. These findings were consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Vernekar et al (2019) who reported better quality of life among working women this may be due to sense of self-dependence, high self-esteem and financial security and independence. Findings of the study were contrasting with the results observed by Anand and Sharma (2017) who concluded that non-working women had a better quality of life.

Table 4: Relationship between selected socio-economic variables and quality of life of non-working women

Socio-Economic Variables	Quality of life				
	Physical Health (r)	Mental Health (r)	Social Health (r)	Spiritual Health (r)	Overall QOL (r)
Age	-0.802**	-0.612**	0.304	0.089	-0.612**
Education	0.041	0.032	-0.425	0.041	0.032
Working Hours	0.263	0.075	-0.449*	-0.066	0.075
Rest Period	0.356	0.612**	0.304	-0.089	0.102
No of year in marriage	-0.535*	-0.663**	-0.304	0.134	-0.408
Number of Children	-0.867**	-0.662**	-0.090	0.184	-0.662**
Domestic Help	0.048	-0.327	0.163	0.048	0.218
MM: No of Hours	-0.524*	-0.218	0.163	-0.429	-0.764**
Personal Income	-	-	-	-	-
Spouse Income	-0.218	-0.167	0.248	0.105	0.167
Family Income	0.356	0.102	0.004	-0.089	0.612**

Family size	0.218	-0.250	0.003	-0.327	0.375
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Table 4 indicates the relationship of various socio-economic variables with QOL of non-working women. Results revealed that significant negative relation existed between age and physical health ($r = -0.802, p \leq 0.01$), age and mental health ($r = -0.612, p \leq 0.01$), age and overall QOL ($r = -0.612, p \leq 0.01$), which indicated that with an increase in age quality of life deteriorates because with an increase in age, various physiological changes occur which are the leading factor of poor quality of life. No significant relationship was found between education and quality of life. Similarly, in case of working hours, no significant relationship existed in all aspects of QOL except in case of social health ($r = -0.449, p \leq 0.05$), working hours were found negatively correlated with social health of women which means that with increase in working hours social interaction decreases because they don't have enough time to contact with others. A significant negative correlation was also observed between number of years in marriage and physical health ($r = -0.535, p \leq 0.05$), number of years in marriage and mental health ($r = -0.663, p \leq 0.01$). The value of Pearson's product-moment coefficient of correlation between number of children and physical health, number of children and mental health was found to be -0.867 and -0.662 respectively which were significant at 0.01 level, it depicts that there was a significant negative correlation between number of children and physical health and number of children and mental health which indicated that with increase in number of children physical and mental health deteriorates. Similarly, number of children was found negatively correlated ($r = -0.662, p \leq 0.01$), with overall quality of life among non-working women. The relationship was also found significant in case of time spend on mass media and quality of life. Physical health ($r = -0.524, p \leq 0.05$) and overall quality of life ($r = -0.764, p \leq 0.01$), were found negatively correlated with time spent on screen or mass media which showed that higher screen time leads to poor quality of life. A non-significant positive relationship was observed in case of domestic help and quality of life, women who had support to complete household tasks were enjoying a better-quality life. Findings revealed that a significant correlation ($r = -0.612, p \leq 0.01$), was existed between family income and overall quality of life because with the help of financial resources, they can go for paid labour to complete household tasks and these resources also help in provision of better medical facilities. No sufficient studies related to factors affecting the quality of life of women were done, only few studies examined the same and the results of the present study were consistent with the findings of existing literature. Gobbens and Remmen (2019) examined the effect of sociodemographic factors on quality of life and found that age was negatively associated with domains of quality of life and higher education and higher income were positively correlated with domains of quality of life.

Table 5: Relationship between selected socio-economic variables and quality of life of working women

Socio-Economic Variables	Quality of life				
	Physical Health (r)	Mental Health (r)	Social Health (r)	Spiritual Health (r)	Overall QOL (r)
Age	-0.327	-0.408	-0.026	0.500*	-0.612**
Education	0.201	0.167	-0.272	0.408	0.167
Working Hours	-0.031	-0.057	-0.140	0.140	0.057
Rest Period	-0.145	0.272	0.454*	0.001	0.408
No of year in marriage	-0.345	-0.645**	0.527**	0.316	-0.645**
Number of Children	0.089	0.167	-0.408	0.001	0.003
Domestic Help	0.327	0.612**	0.167	0.005	-0.408
MM: No of Hours	0.327	-0.613**	0.167	0.004	-0.408
Personal Income	0.802**	-0.167	-0.408	0.408	0.167
Spouse Income	-0.327	-0.408	-0.167	0.007	0.408
Family Income	-0.327	-0.408	-0.167	0.003	0.408
Family size	-0.356	-1.00**	0.272	0.001	-0.667**

Table 5 represents the relationship of various socio-economic variables with QOL of working women. Significant ($r=0.500$, $p\leq 0.05$), positive relationship was found between age and the spirituality of working women. Age was found negatively correlated ($r= -0.612$, $p\leq 0.01$), with overall QOL. A significant ($r= 0.612$, $p\leq 0.01$), positive relationship existed between availability of domestic help and mental health. Screen time was found negatively correlated ($r= -0.613$, $p\leq 0.01$), with mental health of working women. Personal income was found positively correlated with quality of life with significant ($r= 0.802$, $p\leq 0.01$), positive correlation between personal income and physical health aspect of QOL. Family size and mental health of working women were found negatively correlated to each other and family size was also found negatively correlated ($r= -0.667$, $p\leq 0.01$), with overall QOL of working women.

Conclusion

In conclusion, both working and non-working women have different priorities and trade-offs, and policy makers and employers need to understand these differences and design policies and programs that cater to the needs of both groups. Future research can explore the relationship between quality of life and work status among women in different regions and cultures.

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