

Comparison of Stress Level Between Working Women and Homemakers in a Selected Village Chinnampalayam, Erode, Tamilnadu

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Abstract: *Stress is a universal phenomenon commonly experienced by most people. Stress affects the individual across all dimensions viz. physical, emotional, intellectual social and spiritual. Often, women spend more time meeting the needs of others rather than caring for themselves. Women in modern global world have to play a dual role as homemaker and career builder. This makes women exhaust and can cause stress. This study aimed to compare the stress level among working women and homemakers in a selected village. This study adopted quantitative approach and Non-experimental comparative descriptive study design. Convenient sampling technique was used to select samples. Stress level was assessed by using Perceived Stress Scale. Comparisons of stress level by using statistical methods of descriptive and inferential statistical analyses to analyze the collected data. Mean, standard deviation, and percentage distribution used to examine relationships and patterns in the data. Working women have a mean stress score of 19.8, which is 4.5 points higher than the homemakers' mean score of 15.3. So, working women experience a noticeably higher level of stress compared to homemakers. t-value is 3.92, the result is highly statistically significant. These findings suggest that women in common should manage time effectively allows the individuals to maintain work-life balance and improve efficiency. Regardless of whether they are homemakers or working women, both groups can benefit from stress management techniques such as deep breathing exercises, meditation, maintain regular contact with friends, being assertive and engaging in activities that promote relaxation.*

Keywords: Homemakers, working women, stress level, Perceived Stress Scale, stress management techniques, work-life balance

1. Introduction

“A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform”

Women in modern global world have to play a dual role as homemaker and career builder. Today work-life balance has become an increasingly pervasive concern for employers as well as employees. Demographic changes as seen in the increasing number of women in the workplace and dual career families have generated an increasingly diverse workforce and a greater need of employees to balance their work and non-work lives (Bharat, 2003).

Be it a working woman or a homemaker, the daily duties seem to be for females - from taking care of kitchen, children, elderly to their individual goals. This put them at an increased risk of stress, depression, anxiety, and other such mental health issues (Hindustan times 2022, October 10). Today's career women are continually challenged by the demands of full-time work and when the day is done at the office, they carry more of the responsibilities and commitments at home. When survey is conducted by Osmania University in Hyderabad, discovered that most of the women are working 40-45 hours per week and 53% of the respondents report that they are struggling to achieve work-life balance (Shravanthi, Deshmukh & Deepa, 2013).

It is more difficult to balance multiple roles for women to adjustment with family requirements with her personality traits, expectation and perceptions combined with those of her spouse and family members whether they are employed or housewives. So, this tension will create stress among women. Stress is part of day-to-day life. There are varieties of sources of stress (Sultanpur, 2021).

“Stress” is derived from the Latin word, “Stringere” means to hold “tight”. Stress can harm an individual's life, attitude towards a beloved one, and health condition. There are numerous causes of stress. How the individual deals with stressful situations are known as ‘coping’. Coping strategies are behaviors adopted by an individual as a response to reducing the side effects of the stressors. Therefore, being a homemaker or working woman coping strategies may depend on their age, education and support from their family including kids.

Coping is the use of one or various types of mechanisms that are intended to reduce psychological stress (Gurvich et al., 2021). Effective coping strategies, such as problem-solving & seeking support, help manage stress & improve wellbeing.

Mental health is a state of balance between the individual and the surrounding world, a state of harmony between oneself and others, a co-existence between the realities of the self and other people and the environment. An adjustment of human beings to the world to each other with maximum effectiveness and happiness (Karl Menninger, 1947).

Thus, mental health would include not only the absence of diagnostic labels such as schizophrenia and obsessive-compulsive disorder but also the ability to cope with the stressors of daily living, freedom from anxieties and generally a positive outlook towards changes in fortunes and to cope with those. This study is focusing on comparison of stress level between working women and homemakers. The results of this research could help to know about which population need knowledge regarding coping strategies among women.

2. Literature Review

Latha P.K (2023) conducted a study on Comparative Analysis of Stress Management among Homemakers and Working Women in Kerala. The findings of this study highlight the significant stress levels experienced by both working women and homemakers. The slightly higher stress score among working women (47.45) compared to homemakers (42.25) may be attributed to the additional responsibilities and pressures associated with managing both work and family obligations. In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that working women experience higher levels of stress compared to homemakers.

Dabbara Ramana conducted a study on Stress and Coping Strategies- A comparative Study of Women in Petty business and Homemakers. The study was carried out in Tirupati, Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. Purposive sampling procedure was followed in selection of respondents. The study was undertaken with the following objectives to examine the socio – economic and demographic Petty business women to study the coping strategies of Petty business women and Homemaker's viz; Support network, People involvement in support network for domestic work, Wake up time, Time retired to bed, Strategies adopt relive from the stress, Regular activities. More than one quarter (28%) of the respondents in Petty business women and (26%) in homemakers were in the age group of 31-35 years. More than one third (38%) of the respondents in professional women and one tenth (10%) of the homemakers had done post graduation. Nearly two fifth (39.12%) of the respondents in homemakers had expressed that too much responsibility has caused them stress. So, the study concluded (1.34) mean of petty business have stress at considerable level of degree than homemakers (1.14) mean. Majority (2.12) of petty business respondents were face highly stressful situations than homemaker (1.76) respondents.

Sayyed Meysam Dibaji, et al. conducted a study on Occupation or Home: Comparison Housewives and Working Women in the Variables of Stress, Depression and Perception of Quantitative, Mental and Emotional Home Demands. The research method is comparative. The research sample is all the working and nonworking women in 2016 in the province of Isfahan. 90 participants were chosen out of this sample for each group. Perceived Stress Scale (Warttig, Forshaw, South, & White, 2013, pp. 1617-1628). This questionnaire measures perceived stress of respondents. The aim of this study was to examine differences between home quantitative, mental and emotional demands, stress and depression among working and nonworking women. Given higher home quantitative and mental demands and depression in working women and no difference in home emotional demands and stress between working and nonworking, it seems nonworking women have better status. The remarkable point is that in spite of no difference between working and nonworking women's stress, depression in working women is more than nonworking women. A probable inference for this finding is that working women due to over perception of quantitative demands feel that they do not have enough time for life and enjoyment and just have to think about spending family and work life and consequently it leads to depression.

Garima R. Shishodia (2023) is conducted a study on A Study on Stress Management among Women at Workplace. The study aims to determine the impact of stress management practices on women's health. Data were collected from 200 working women in various occupations. Studies show Deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation techniques can decrease perceived stress and anxiety. Various statistical method like regression, spear's Man correlation, and ANOVA was used to test the null hypothesis. The key is finding stress relief strategies that work for each individual. Some may benefit from yoga or exercise, while others prefer journaling or pursuing a hobby. Participants were asked to provide information on techniques used over the past month, frequency of use, and perceived effectiveness. The most commonly used techniques were deep breathing (used by 45% of respondents), meditation (22%), and journaling (17%). The exercise was utilized by 11% of the sample. Less popular options included yoga (5%). Participants rated each technique used on a scale of 1 (not at all effective) to 5 (extremely effective). Deep breathing received the highest average rating (4.2), followed by meditation (4.0), exercise (3.8) and journaling (3.5). Yoga practices were rated slightly lower at 3.3. On average, respondents engaged in stress management techniques 2-3 times per week. The most frequent users (4-5 times per week) reported the highest perceived effectiveness ratings for all techniques. Irregular or infrequent use (once per week or less) was associated with lower perceived effectiveness.

Roberts, et al. (2021) is conducted a study on Coping Mechanisms to Mitigate Occupational Stress by Women in Accra Metropolis. His paper addresses how women in managerial positions in the Accra Metropolis manage the occupational stresses they experience in the discharge of their duties. The convenient purposive sampling technique was used to select 10 females from 150 women in managerial positions in government institutions in the Accra Metropolis. A structured interview guide based on Occupational Stress Inventory-Revised OSI-R was used to collect data from the 10 women and analysed using factor analysis. The study revealed that respondents managed their stresses by employing recreation, social support, and self-care. Even though, some of the women unknowingly adopted rationalization or rational-cognitive defense mechanisms to cope with the stresses they experience, none of them used popular stress reducing techniques such as yoga and physical exercise to cope with their stresses. The resilience of these women coupled with the formulation and implementation of formidable policies, provision of conducive working environment and the requisite resources by employers will go a long way to alleviate the women's stresses while promoting their good health and productivity. This research paper addresses the strategies adopted by Ghanaian women in managerial position to manage their stresses and proposes that individual differences and religiosity of persons should be taken into consideration when counselling people on stress management.

Gupta Sneha, et al. is conducted a study on comparative study of stress levels and coping mechanisms among women bank employees in Kanpur city: public vs. private sector banks. The study compared stress levels and coping mechanisms among women bank employees in Kanpur City,

focusing on key stressors, coping mechanisms, and differences in effectiveness. It aims to contribute to understanding stressors faced by women in the banking sector, inform strategies for improving well-being, and contribute to gender equity and workplace health efforts. Research revealed a significant difference in mean stress levels between women bank employees in public and private sector banks. Women working in private sector banks reported higher levels of stress on average compared to their counterparts in public sector banks. This finding highlights the importance of addressing stress-related issues in private sector banking workplaces. The study demonstrated that the effectiveness of coping mechanisms varies with the number of years of service among women bank employees. This research suggested that the strategies for managing stress should be tailored to the specific needs and experiences of employees at different career stages.

2.1 Research gap

The above studies are not in village settings. This research will identify the gap to find out any variations in stress level among working women and homemakers in village background.

3. Theoretical Background

This study is based on three theoretical backgrounds. First, Role Strain Theory - main concept is human time and energy are finite. Women playing dual roles (working women and homemaker) experience role overload and role conflict. The competing demands of professional deadlines and household responsibilities deplete their mental and physical resources.

Second, Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) proposes that Stress is not just an external event, but a relationship between the person and their environment. It depends on **Primary Appraisal** (is this situation a threat?) and **Secondary Appraisal** (do I have the resources to cope?). Working women appraise their dual-role environment as highly demanding and perceive their coping resources (like time) as insufficient.

Third, Role Accumulation / Enhancement Theory (Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974) proposes that holding multiple roles can sometimes provide privileges, self-esteem, and social resources that buffer stress. It also mentions that holding multiple social roles- such as being a worker, and homemaker provides net psychological and social benefits that increase the stress of role overload.

Objectives

- To assess stress level of working women by using Perceived Stress scale.
- To assess stress level of homemakers by using Perceived Stress Scale.
- To compare stress levels between working women and homemakers.

Hypothesis

H1: There will be a significant difference between working women stress level and homemakers stress level.

H2: There will be a significant association between demographic variables and stress level.

4. Methodology

The present study employed a **quantitative, non-experimental comparative descriptive research design** to compare the stress level between working women and homemakers in a selected village, Chinnampalayam, Tamilnadu. A convenience sampling technique was employed because of population constraints especially working women. A total of 60 samples selected and received responses by using Perceived Stress Scale [PSS] and included in the final analysis. The collected data were organized and analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques like mean, standard deviation, including frequencies and percentages distribution used to examine relationships and patterns in the data. This study is mainly focused on the stress level difference between working women and homemakers. Included the demographic variables of age, marital status, support from the family, number of children, monthly family income to see the association with stress level. Individuals who were aged, 18 years and above and provided informed consent were included in the study.

4.1 Procedure

The researcher explained the purpose of this study and obtained consent. 30 samples of homemakers and 30 samples of working women were selected by using convenient sampling technique. A written permission has obtained to conduct the study from participants. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) questionnaires have given to participants and collected the data. Collected data analyzed as per statistical methods.

5. Data Analysis

This study compared the stress level of working women and homemakers by using descriptive and inferential statistical analyses to analyze the collected data. Mean, standard deviation, and percentage distribution to examine relationships and patterns in the data.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables of working women and homemakers

S. No	Demographic Details	Working Women		Homemakers	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age:				
	18 – 25 years	6	20%	6	20%
	26 – 35 years	8	27%	19	63%
	36 – 45 years	7	23%	4	14%
	46 years and above	9	30%	1	3%

2	Marital Status:				
	Unmarried / Single	18	60%	8	27%
	Married	4	13%	19	63%
	Widowed / Divorced / Separated	8	27%	3	10%
3	Type of Family:				
	Nuclear Family	17	57%	18	60%
	Joint Family	13	43%	12	40%
4	Number of Children:				
	None	18	67%	3	10%
	1 child	6	20%	12	40%
	2 children	6	20%	14	47%
	3 or more children	0	0%	1	3%
5	Monthly Family Income (INR):				
	Below ₹15,000	0	0%	0	0%
	₹15,001 – ₹30,000	7	23%	1	3%
	₹30,001 – ₹50,000	21	70%	21	70%
	Above ₹50,000	2	7%	8	27%
6	For Working Women only — Nature of Employment:				
	Private Sector	16	53%		
	Government Sector	4	14%	NA	NA
	Self-employed / Business Owner	10	33%		

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of stress levels among working women and homemakers

S. No	Stress Level	Working Women		Homemakers	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Mild	3	10%	10	33%
2.	Moderate	26	87%	20	67%
3.	Severe	1	3%	0	0%



Figure 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of stress levels among working women

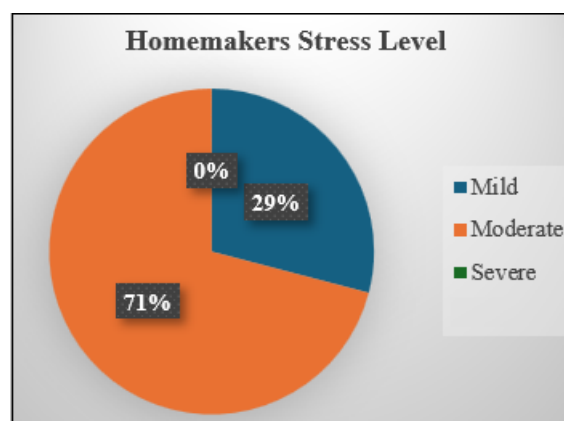


Figure 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of stress levels among homemakers

Table 3: Comparison of stress level among working women and homemakers

Level of Stress	Mean	Standard Deviation	t- Value	Statistical Result
Working Women	19.8	4.45	3.92	(df)= 58 (0.05 significance level) Significant
Homemakers	15.3	4.45		

Table 3 shows that there will be a significant difference between working women stress level and homemakers stress level. t - value is 3.92, the result is highly statistically significant.

Table 4: Association between working women stress level and their demographic variables

S. No	Demographic Variables	Mild		Moderate		Severe		Chi-Square
		F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Age:							#3.33 P<0.05 (12.59)
	18 – 25 years	0	0	6	20	0	0	
	26 – 35 years	1	3	7	23	0	0	
	36 – 45 years	1	3	6	20	0	0	
2	Marital Status:							#4.37
	Unmarried / Single	1	3	17	57	0	0	
	Married							
	Widowed / Divorced / Separated							

	Married	1	3	3	10	0	0	P<0.05 (9.49)
	Widowed / Divorced / Separated	1	3	6	20	1	3	
3	Type of Family:							
	Nuclear Family	2	7	14	47	1	3	#0.97
	Joint Family	1	3	12	40	0	0	P<0.05 (5.99)
4	Number of Children:							
	None	0	0	18	60	0	0	*21.06 P>0.05 (12.59)
	1 child	0	0	6	20	0	0	
	2 children	1	3	1	3	0	0	
	3 or more children	2	7	1	3	1	3	
5	Monthly Family Income (INR):							
	Below ₹15,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	*10.77 P>0.05 (9.49)
	₹15,001 – ₹30,000	2	7	16	53	1	3	
	₹30,001 – ₹50,000	0	0	10	33	0	0	
	Above ₹50,000	1	3	0	0	0	0	
6	For Working Women only — Nature of Employment:							
	Private Sector							#6.59 P<0.05 (9.49)
	Government Sector	0	0	10	33	0	0	
	Self-employed / Business Owner	0	0	6	20	0	0	
		3	10	10	33	1	3	

*Significant

#Not Significant

The above table shows that there is a significant association between working women stress level and their demographic variables. In that out of all demographic variables, number of

children and monthly family income shows significant association. Age, marital status, type of family and nature of employment shows not significant association.

Table 5: Association between homemaker stress level and their demographic variables

S. No	Demographic Variables	Mild		Moderate		Severe		Chi-Square
		F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Age:							
	18 – 25 years	2	7	4	13	0	0	#2.15 P<0.05 (7.81)
	26 – 35 years	6	20	13	43	0	0	
	36 – 45 years	1	3	3	10	0	0	
	46 years and above	1	3	0	0	0	0	
2	Marital Status:							
	Unmarried / Single	3	10	5	17	0	0	#0.25 P<0.05 (5.99)
	Married	6	20	13	43	0	0	
	Widowed / Divorced / Separated	1	3	2	7	0	0	
3	Type of Family:							
	Nuclear Family	8	27	10	33	0	0	#2.50 P<0.05 (3.84)
	Joint Family	2	7	10	33	0	0	
4	Number of Children:							
	None	2	7	1	3	0	0	#6.16 P<0.05 (7.81)
	1 child	5	17	7	23	0	0	
	2 children	2	7	12	40	0	0	
	3 or more children	1	3	0	0	0	0	
5	Monthly Family Income (INR):							
	Below ₹15,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	*6.43 P>0.05 (5.99)
	₹15,001 – ₹30,000	0	0	1	3	0	0	
	₹30,001 – ₹50,000	10	33	11	37	0	0	
	Above ₹50,000	0	0	8	27	0	0	

*Significant

#Not Significant

The above table shows that there is a significant association between homemaker stress level and their demographic variables in some aspects. In that out of all demographic variables, only monthly income shows significant association. Age, marital status, type of family and number of children shows not significant association.

6. Discussion

Present study findings show that the total stress level among 30 working women respectively 3 mild, 26 moderate and 1 severe and among 30 homemakers, 10 mild and 20 moderate.

The association of stress level in working women was significant with number of children and monthly family income at the level of $p < 0.05$ and only monthly income shows significant association among homemakers. Other selected socio-demographical variables such as Age, marital status and type of family show not significant association among working women and also homemakers. Working women have a mean stress score of **19.8**, which is **4.5 points higher** than the homemakers' mean score of **15.3**. So, working women experience a noticeably higher level of stress compared to homemakers. t -value is 3.92, the result is highly statistically significant.

7. Limitations of the Study

This study restricts with Convenient sampling technique and limited to 60 sample size because of population constraints. A larger sample size would have allowed for greater statistical power. The study is restricted with village, which may limit to generalizability to other region and cultural contexts.

8. Conclusion

Based on study findings, it can be concluded that working women have significantly higher level of stress level than homemakers. Stress management is essential for coping with work-related stress, improving resilience and fostering self-care practices. Regardless of whether they are homemakers or working women, both groups can benefit from stress management techniques such as deep breathing exercises, meditation and engaging in activities that promote relaxation. It is also important to remember that seeking professional help, such as therapy or counseling can be immensely beneficial in learning additional coping strategies and developing resilience. All must remember that old saying, if you don't look after yourself, no one else will look after you. Honour yourself!!!

9. Recommendations

On the basis of findings of the study, it is recommended that:

- A similar study can be conducted in different settings like urban area, schools and other institutions.
- On the basis of findings of this study, a teaching program could be planned, conducted and evaluated to find out the effectiveness of the program on stress management like coping with job-related stress, balancing household responsibilities, and promoting self-care practices.
- A similar study can be conducted with larger samples size for generalization.

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