



Life Satisfaction and Adjustment Among Married and Unmarried Women

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the life satisfaction and adjustment among married and unmarried women. The sample for the study consisted of 30 married women and 30 unmarried women. Simple random sampling procedure was used for the study. The sample was administered the Life satisfaction scale and Bell's Adult Adjustment Inventory. The obtained data were organized for statistical analysis. The descriptive 't' test of statistical significance and Pearson's Product Moment correlation were used for analysis of data. The difference between married and unmarried women was found to be negligible in life satisfaction and adjustment. Both married and unmarried women were found to have high level of life satisfaction and average adjustment. There was also no significant relationship between life satisfaction and adjustment among married and unmarried women.

KEYWORDS : Life Satisfaction, Adjustment, Married, Unmarried Women

Introduction:

Satisfaction is a Latin word that means to make or do enough. Satisfaction with one's life implies contentment with or acceptance of one's life circumstances, or the fulfilment of one's wants and needs for one's life as a whole.

Life satisfaction is a measure of well-being which represents how satisfied people feel with their life generally, as contrasted with positive affect (sometimes called just 'happiness'), which represents how they feel at a single point in time. That is, life satisfaction involves people thinking about their life as a whole, including factors such as whether they are achieving their goals, are doing as well as other people around them, and are happy generally rather than just right now. Life satisfaction is thus a longer-term measure than affect. Life satisfaction refers to the feelings of contentment and happiness which a person has towards his/her life. It has been reported to be one of the three primary components, viz satisfaction, pleasant affect and low level of unpleasant affect of subjective well-being. Satisfaction can be divided into various domains of life such as recreation, love, marriage, friendship and so forth and these domains can further be sub-divided into various facets.

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. It is one of three major indicators of well-being: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect (Diener, 1984).

Adjustment refers to the behavioral process of balancing conflicting needs or needs against obstacles in the environment. Adjustment can be defined as a process of altering one's behavior to reach a harmonious relationship with the environment. Adjustment disorder occurs when there is an inability to make a normal adjustment to some need or stress in the environment.

Need for the present study:

The present study is based on the Life satisfaction and Adjustment among married and unmarried women. Life satisfaction and adjustment are important to find out if there is any relationship between these variables and marital status. Earlier, it was believed that a woman has better life satisfaction and adjustment when she is married and takes up responsibilities as a wife, and later as a mother. Attitude towards marriage has now changed, and women have started believing that they are better off, satisfied, happier and are capable of making decisions better when they are independent. They also believe that they are better adjusted when they are alone and responsible for their own actions rather than when they have to deal with a family. So in the present context where women are educated and oriented towards careers, it is essential to study the life satisfaction and adjustment of married and unmarried women because of change in family structure and ideas towards marriage and life.

Objective of the study:

The objective of the study was to find the difference in life satisfaction and adjustment among married and unmarried women. The study also aimed at finding out if there was any relationship between life satisfaction and adjustment. Based on the objectives, certain null hypotheses were framed.

Hypotheses:

- There is no significant difference in Life Satisfaction among married and unmarried women.
- There is no significant difference in Adjustment among married and unmarried women.
- There is no significant relationship between Life satisfaction and Adjustment among married women.
- There is no significant relationship between Life satisfaction and Adjustment among unmarried women.

Review of Literature:

[Natalie Ebin Bloch](#), [Jennifer Campion](#) et al (1999) studied the life satisfaction and stresses of single women in midlife on sixty single women 35 to 65 years old, previously married or never married. They were interviewed about the satisfactions and stresses of the single status. Respondents were categorized as having high, medium, or low life satisfaction. Life satisfaction was found to be significantly correlated to such factors as good health, not being lonely, living with a female housemate, having many casual friends, and being invested in work. Half the women mentioned having sexual needs, which were or were not fulfilled. The other half stated that they did not have sexual needs. These two groups did not differ in life satisfaction. Regrets about not having had children occurred in one-quarter of the childless women, without necessarily implying low life satisfaction. Only 15% of the entire sample had low life satisfaction, a percentage similar to that found in the general population.

Patricia Frazier et al (2008) studied the desire for marriage and life satisfaction among unmarried women. The purpose of this study was to examine factors that may underlie current marriage trends. A community sample of 217 unmarried women aged over 30 years were surveyed regarding their reasons for being single, desire for marriage and life satisfaction. Results suggest that unmarried women attribute being single to both barriers and choices. Mediation analyses suggest that unmarried women have more desire for marriage because they have less social support and they have and lower life satisfaction because of lowered self-esteem.

Womer (2009) et al studied the personal and social adjustment of the Never-married women by employing chiefly the California Test of Personality. This study compared the personal and social adjustment of 38 never-married women and 38 married mothers. Certain contemporary stereotypes picturing the never-married woman as deficient in

personal and social adjustment and insisting that marriage and motherhood are essential to feminine fulfillment were not supported. The two groups in this study exhibited a comparable adjustment pattern, both scoring above the average on norms provided for the California Test of Personality. It was deduced that, through creative contribution to society, a never-married woman may achieve a satisfactory adjustment to life and that, though denied a husband and children, she may nonetheless experience adequate personality fulfillment.

Research Design:

Correlational analysis design.

Variables:

Independent variable: Marital status.

Dependent variable: Scores obtained on Life Satisfaction and Adjustment.

Sample:

A total of 60 women (30 married, 30 unmarried) of the age 23-35 years from an urban population were selected using random sampling procedure.

Tests:

Life Satisfaction Scale:

The Life Satisfaction Scale was developed by Promila Singh and Joseph to assess an individual's level of satisfaction in life. The scale consists of 35 statements and was constructed considering five dimensions of life – i.e. pleasure in everyday activity, life meaningfulness, positive image, optimistic outlook and achieving goals. The subject may mark the responses to each item on a five point rating as “Always”, “Often”, “Sometimes”, “Seldom (Rarely)” and “Never” scored as 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. Scores earned by the subject on every marked item are added together to yield a total score. Higher the score, higher is the level of life satisfaction. Likewise, lower the score, lower is the life satisfaction. The maximum score on Life Satisfaction is 175.

Reliability:

The test-retest reliability computed after a lapse of 8 weeks turned out to be 0.91.

Validity:

Co-efficients of correlation between the scores of the present scale and Life satisfaction scale by Alam and Singh(1971) was computed. The co-efficient of correlation was found to be 0.83. The scale also possesses face and content validity since each item was judged by experts.

Bell's Adjustment Inventory:

The Bell's Adjustment Inventory developed by Hugh.M.Bell, Consulting Psychologists Press Inc, Palo Alto, California. The Adult form of the adjustment inventory provides five separate measures of adjustment on home, health, social, emotional and occupational areas.

Reliability :

The co-efficients of reliability for each of the five sections and for its total score are reported by correlating the odd-even items and applying the Spearman- Brown prophecy formula. The co-efficients of reliability was 0.91 for Home adjustment, 0.81 for Health Adjustment, 0.88 for Social adjustment, 0.91 for Emotional adjustment, 0.85 for Occupational adjustment and 0.94 for the total adjustment.

Validity:

The inventory has been validated in two ways. First, the items for each of the section in the inventory were selected in terms of the degree to which they differentiated between the upper and lower fifteen percent of the individuals in a distribution of adult scores. Only those items which clearly differentiated between these extreme groups are included in the present form of the Inventory.

Second, the inventory has been validated through the selection of “Very well” and “Very poorly” adjusted groups of individuals by specialists in adult counseling and a determination of the degree to which the inventory differentiates among them.

Procedure:

In order to collect data for the research, the married and unmarried women were contacted personally to get their consent to participate in the study. With their consent, the purpose of the study was briefed and rapport was established. Their biographical information was obtained in the data sheet prepared for the purpose which contained their age, education, marital status etc. Ethical issues like confidentiality of information and convenience of subjects for data collection were strictly followed for the collection of data. Finally, the participants were informed of the choice to withdraw themselves from the research at any point during the responding period. Subsequently, the Life Satisfaction Scale and Bell's Adult Adjustment Inventory were administered as per standard directions to measure level of satisfaction and adjustment. After the participants finished responding, the questionnaires were collected back and the subjects were thanked for their participation and co-operation.

Results and Discussion:

Table 1

Mean SD and 't' value of married and unmarried women on Life Satisfaction Scale

	MARRIED		UNMARRIED		't' value
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	
Life Satisfaction	143.73	12.94	141.27	16.31	0.65 NS

NS: Not significant

An examination of table 1 shows that married and unmarried women do not differ significantly on Life Satisfaction. The obtained 't' value of 0.65 is statistically not significant, thus accepting the null hypothesis which states that “ There is no significant difference in life satisfaction among married and unmarried women.”

Table 2

Mean SD and 't' value of married and unmarried women on Bell's Adjustment Inventory

AREAS OF ADJUSTMENT	MARRIED		UNMARRIED		't' value
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	
Home	7.8	5.78	6.07	5.69	1.17 NS
Health	8.03	5.28	7.33	4.79	0.54 NS
Social	13.2	5.08	13.33	5.34	0.0962 NS
Emotional	11.77	6.04	10.4	7.27	0.79 NS
Occupational	7.96	4.89	6.7	4.47	1.05 NS
Total Adjustment	48.77	18.98	43.8	22.59	0.92 NS

NS: Not significant

An observation of table 2 reveals that married and unmarried women do not differ significantly on adjustment. The 't' values on all areas of adjustment were found to be insignificant, thus proving the hypothesis which states “There is no significant difference in adjustment among married and unmarried women.

Table 3

Pearson's product moment correlation between life satisfaction and adjustment among married women

Adjustment	Life Satisfaction
Home	0.32 NS

Health	0.45 NS
Social	-0.43 NS
Emotional	-0.19 NS
Occupational	0.48 NS
Total Adjustment	0.59 NS

NS: Not significant

An examination of table 3 reveals insignificant correlation co-efficients between all areas of Adjustment and Life Satisfaction among married women, thus proving the hypothesis which states "There is no significant relationship between Life Satisfaction and Adjustment among married women"

Table 4

Pearson's product moment correlation between life satisfaction and adjustment among unmarried women

Adjustment	Life Satisfaction
Home	0.0086 NS
Health	0.026 NS
Social	0.043 NS
Emotional	0.038 NS
Occupational	0.019 NS
Total Adjustment	0.03 NS

NS: Not significant

An observation of table 4 reveals insignificant correlation co-efficients between Life satisfaction and Adjustment among unmarried women, thus proving the hypothesis which states "There is no significant relationship between life satisfaction and adjustment among unmarried women."

Findings:

1. There is no significant difference in life satisfaction and adjustment among married and unmarried women.
2. There is no significant relationship between life satisfaction and adjustment among both married and unmarried women.

Scope for further study:

1. The study can be conducted on married and unmarried males.
2. Different socio economic status and socio cultural background can be included to study how they affect life satisfaction and adjustment.
3. The study can be conducted on married and unmarried women of a different age group.

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