



## Stress, Sleep Quality, Well-Being and Relationship Satisfaction in Married Working Women

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### ABSTRACT

*This research was an initiation to explore the relationship of stress, sleep quality, psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction among married working women (MWW). Stress, sleep quality and relationship satisfaction were explored as predictors of psychological well-being in married working women. Correlational research design was used to measure the relationship between these variables. Convenient sampling technique was used to recruit sample. The sample of study was MWW (N= 200) age ranged between 25 to 59 years. Working Women's Stressors Scale (WWSS) ( $\alpha=.87$ ), Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index ( $\alpha=.74$ ), Ryff Psychological well-being Scale ( $\alpha=.74$ ), and Relationship Assessment Scale ( $\alpha=.72$ ) were used as data collection tools. Results showed significant positive relationships among stress, sleep quality, psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction. Stress, sleep quality, and well-being emerged as predictors of relationship satisfaction in MWW.*



### Introduction

The current study is designed to investigate the association among stress, sleep quality, psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction in MWW. It focused on the impact of stress on sleep quality, psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction of working women. In this modern global world, women are playing dual roles as career builders parallel to housewives. Society expects them to fulfill their traditional roles perfectly as spouse, mother, daughter in-law and so on. It is also expected that they should give priority to the relations over their own needs and job demands. After a daily long hectic routine MWW get stressed because of managing both the family and work responsibilities. There are many work burdens and home responsibilities that cause stress and increase complexity in their life. These stressors have massive concern for the well-being and psychological distress of MWW (Balaji, 2014; Asad & Najam, 2015). Which may create relationship dissatisfaction among them

Personal issues combined with other regular routine factors, tightens and strengthens the stress and builds up pressure which leads to behavioral change and psychological problems. Researchers explored significant higher levels of stress in working women as compared to non-working women (Shukla, Jaiswal, Agrahari & Shingh, 2017). Stress in women also affects their well-being negatively. Researchers identified high levels of stress in health care professionals and severe levels of stress among technicians and nurses (Haider, Mahato, 2013). Another investigation explored a significant positive link between relationship satisfaction and sleep quality in married couples with age ranging 24 to 70 years (Schlarb, Claben, Schuster, Neuner, & Hautzinger, 2015).

Sleep is another factor that is indirectly influenced by stress and negatively affects well-being.

Olson, Stevens, and Kitzman (2006) found a significant negative association between disturbed sleep and psychological well-being among a sample of 502 community residents. Another research conducted by Knudsen, Ducharme, and Roman (2007) on job stress and poor sleep quality showed a significant positive relationship between job stress and poor sleep. Sleep hours are also very important in relation to sleep quality. Dong g-woochoi, Chun, and Park (2015) find out the relationship between sleep duration and perceived stress. They reported that those workers who slept for a short duration of five or less hours had high levels of stress.

One major component of sleep is quality of sleep which is defined as subjective perception of the quality and restfulness of one's sleep (Rechtschaffen & Kales, 1968). According to Karacan (1983) stress is an important factor associated with poor sleep quality. Thus performing duties both at home and workplace MWW experience stress that lead to poor sleep quality. Many researchers come to the conclusion that sleep quality is generally subjective and interpret the factors like deep sleep and restless sleep. Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) developed by Buysse et al. (1988) contributed to supplementary research and investigated the connection between sleep quality and causes related to well-being. It is important to have an in-depth understanding of the relationship between sleep quality and stress in order to identify the factors that may be associated with them. Karacan (1983) reported that stress has the greatest importance in connection with poor sleep quality. Sleep is an important need for human survival, bodily functioning and well-being.

Furthermore, stress has severe impact on the well-being of MWW. Studies conducted by different researchers suggest it is associated in relation to environment, insufficient supply to bodily needs, and emotional disturbances as causes of stress and relationship dissatisfaction. (Randall & Bodenmann, 2017). Earlier studies also found a relationship between stress and poor quality of sleep. As per the direct relationship, deprived sleep is one of the reasons for poor well-being and vice versa. And reported a correlation among symptoms of insomnia, poor well-being and higher score in stress (Ishak et al. 2012; Alotaibi, 2020). Well-being of MWW can be determined through their workplace and home situation they faced. Balancing both the workplace and at home can be stressful in many ways. Family difficulties and work stressors may negatively contribute to their well-being (Malarvizhi, 2014). By joining a job women essentially have to make numerous social rearrangements that can also enhance their stress, create sleep deprivation and damage the psychological well-being. Sleep duration is positively correlated with the dimensions of psychological well-being (Ryff, 2004). It is estimated that stress has a direct relationship with satisfaction in personal and professional life which leads to psychological well-being. It is also evident that stress is one of the negative predictors of well-being (Hamarat, 2001; Suleman, Hussain, Shehzad, Syed, & Ayub, 2018). According to Sadiq and Ali (2014) poor psychological well-being in married working women is a consequence of dual responsibility they pay at home and workplace. In Pakistani society women have obligations to fulfill their job and home responsibilities in her full capacity. Performing double duties at home and at work and facing very hectic daily routines generate issues in them and damage their well-being which may create relationship dissatisfaction.

### **1.1. Rational of Study**

Researchers all over the globe have been studying and partially succeeded in finding a relationship between stress and sleep quality. There have been researches regarding the relationship between sleep quality and psychological well-being. This research focused on filling the gap between stress, sleep quality, psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction. This added to the work in this field in context to the Pakistani population of MWW. Furthermore this research is designed to assess how stress affects the sleep quality, psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction of women, and how this mechanism can be proved better understood using different perspectives. Demographics played a vigorous role in regards to cultural settings. Pakistani society is still backward in accepting the contributing role of women in enhancing family status and a productive role in the development of the country. This study opened new horizons and baseline results for researchers new in this field. The finding of research will portray the social facts and figures in this regard.

### **1.2. Objectives of the Study**

- To assess the relationship of stress, psychological well-being, sleep quality and relationship satisfaction among MWW.
- To assess demographics, stress, sleep quality, psychological well-being as predictors of relationship satisfaction of MWW.

- To explore differences regarding job status, family system regarding stress, sleep quality, psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction of MWW.

### 1.3. Hypotheses

- There is likely to be a relationship among demographics, stress, sleep quality, psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction in MWW.
- Age, income, working hours, stress, sleep quality and psychological well-being are likely to be the predictors of relationship satisfaction in MWW.
- There are likely to be differences in job status and family system regarding stress, sleep quality, psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction of MWW.

### 1.3. Clinical significance

Psychological well-being of an individual is an important factor in maintaining the economy and peace in a society. With the increasing social demands and commitments, social pressure develops and results in a number of issues. Considering women, in most of the cases, they tend to have more pressure than men which originates from constant struggle of maintaining a balance among personal, social and professional life. Around the globe, there have been studies on this particular issue and it has helped the professionals and people to understand the significance of a few factors that shall be a part of our regular routine in order to maintain good relationships. With the help of such studies, it becomes easier to link and understand psychological issues at the earliest. This study is designed to form a baseline data which can be used by different organizations, medical staff and social workers to improve the psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction of the MWW and people around them.

## Methodology

### 2.1. Research Design

Survey research design was used for data collection.

### 2.2. Participants

The sample of this study was composed of school and college women teachers (N=200) with an age range between 25 to 59 years ( $M=36.25$ ,  $SD=6.28$ ). Participants were full time employees of educational institutions with an experience of more than two years were included.

### 2.3. Sampling Strategy

Convenient Sampling technique was used to recruit samples.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive characteristics of the study participants (N=200)*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Age of participant	36.25	6.28	-	-
Working hours	6.86	.98	-	-
Income of participant	47230.00	3144.65	-	-
Work experience	6.46	2.15	-	-
Education				
Higher education			46	23%
Postgraduate			134	67%
University Edu			20	10%
Job Status				
Government				
Private			137	68%
			63	31%

			200	100%
Family system				
Nuclear	-	-	89	44%
Joint			111	55%
Residence				
Rural	-	-	64	32%
Urban			136	68%

Note: *M*= mean, *SD*= standard deviation, *f*= frequency, %=percentage

## 2.4. Assessment Measures

### 2.4.1. Demographic Questionnaire

The questionnaire was generated to gather demographic information and personal information, connected to the participants (age, education, income, family system and socioeconomic status, job experience, working hours).

**2.4.2. Working Women Stressor Scale (WWSS)**(Asad & Najam, 2013): It is a self-report instrument developed by Asad and Najam in 2013 to measure the stressors of working women. It consists of 66 items with seven subscales (family stressors, personal stressors, social stressors, work stressors, health stressors and catastrophic). It has a very good reliability with Alpha=.92 (Asad & Najam, 2013).

**2.4.3. Pittsburg Sleep Quality Index (PSQI)** (Buysse et al.1988): The Pittsburgh sleep quality index is an effective instrument developed in 1938 by Buysse that measures the quality and patterns of sleep, the scale consists of 9 items that measure the seven components: subjective sleep quality, sleep latency, duration of sleep, habitual sleep efficiency, sleep disturbances, use of sleeping medications and daytime dysfunction over the last month. The Cronbach's alpha is greater than or equal to .70 as reported by authors (Buysse et al.1988).

**2.4.4. Ryff Scale of Psychological well-being (RPWB)** (Ryff, 1989): The Ryff scale is a Psychological device supported by theoretical truth, exclusively concentrating on assessing the numerous pieces of evidence of Psychological health. Which include self-acceptance, establishing a strong relationship, displaying independence in decision making, to execute difficult situations and achieve personal objectives and values, follow result oriented objectives and a targeted objective in life, Consistent gain and progress as an individual. It contains 42 items. The Cronback's alpha reliability is .78 (Ryff, 1989):

**2.4.5. Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988)**: Relationship Assessment Scale by Hendrick in 1988 would be used to assess an individual's satisfaction with their relationship. It consists of 7 items and a five point likert scale is used to rate the item. Alpha reliability of this scale is .91(Hendrick, 1988).

## 2.5. Procedure

Permission was taken from the ethical committee. Author's permissions were taken for using their scales. Permission from the respective authorities of schools and colleges was also sorted.

The sample of research consisted of (N= 200) MWW age range 25 to 59 years (*M*= 36.25, *SD*=6,28). Data was collected by visiting participants' work places (school, college) and written consent was also taken. Aims and objectives of the study were discussed with the participants. Confidentiality of their information was assured by the researcher. Questionnaire comprised of Working Women Stress Scale (Asad & Najam, 2013), Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (Buysee et al. 1988), Ryff Psychological well-being Scale (Ryff, 1989) Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988) was filled by the participants at their workplace. It took 25 minutes to fill the questionnaire.

## Results

**Table 2**

*Psychometric Properties of all scales (N=200)*

Scales	K	M	SD	$\alpha$	Actual range	Maximum	Minimum
					m	m	m
						Range	range

Sleep Quality	20	39.30	7.84	.74	0-3	2.72	1.40
Psychological well-being	42	173.50	21.60	.74	0-6	5.17	3.13
Stress	66	172.11	30.93	.87	1-5	3.61	1.55
Relationship satisfaction	7	20.40	4.80	.72	1-5	3.34	2.20

Note: M=mean, SD=standard deviation, K=no of items, a=reliability

**Table 3**

Correlation matrix regarding demographic variables and Scales (N=200)

Variables	AG	N	H	V	E	H	S	RS	WSS	W	P	R	R
	ED											AS	PWB
Age	-	29**	03	.22**	43*	12	.06	.09	.19**	.26**	.23**	.02	
Education			.04	.30**	18*	.07	.01	.03	.11	.18**	.05	.03	
Income					.00	.08	.13	.06	.05	.01	.05	.12	
working hours						.04	.07	.02	.22**	.22**	.23**	.24**	.07
work experience							.03	.09	.01	.09	.12	.00	.03
Children								.09	.05	.01	.10	.07	.09
family system									.27**	.11	.21**	.09	.15*
Residence										.14*	.09	.08	.03
WWSS											.36**	.61**	.16*
PSQI												.46**	.17*
RAS													.30**
RPWB													

Note.  $p < .05^*$ ,  $p < .01^{**}$ ,  $p < .001^*$ . Note: AG=age of participants, ED= education of participants, IN= income of participants, WH=working hours, WE=work experience, CH=children of participants, FS=family system, RE=residence, PWB=psychological well-being, WWSS=working women stress

**Table 4**

Stepwise Regression Analysis predicting the impact of Age, Working hours, Income, , Stress, Sleep quality and Psychological Well-being on Relationship Satisfaction Among Married Working Women(N=200)

Predictors	B	SE	Standardized	Beta	t	Sig	F	R square
<b>Step 1</b>								
age	-.07	.05	.11	-.123	-.21	.83		
working hours	.97	.34	.20	.83	2.00	.00		
income	-2.95	.00	.09	-1.01	-.31	.75		
							.58	.60
<b>Step 2</b>								
age	-.02	.04	.03	-.47	-.63	.53		
working hours	.27	.26	.05	.00	.1	.93		

income	-1.29	00	.04	.58	56		
RPWB	.04	01	18	.48	3	00	
WWSS	.075	00	48	.55	8	00	
PSQI	.13	03	22	.79	3	00	
							0.41 3 .48

Note. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

RPWB= Ryff Scale of Psychological well-being, WWSS=working women stress scale, PSQI= Pittsburg Sleep Quality Index

Table postulates stepwise regression, results of step 1 regression indicates that age and income of working women have no association with relationship satisfaction. Working hours of women positively and significantly influenced relationship satisfaction and results are significant as  $p < .01$ . Step 2 regression analysis postulates non-significant results regarding income, while working hours emerged as non-significant factor. Moreover, stress, sleep and psychological well-being (PWB), were added as predictors of relationship satisfaction of working women and those emerged as significant positive predictors  $p < .00$ . These results indicated that wellbeing has an important role to raise relationship satisfaction of women. Overall model was significant and explained 48% variance.

Table 5

Work status and Family System difference regarding Psychological Well-being, Stress, Sleep Quality and Relationship Satisfaction among Married Working Women (N=200)

Variables	Dependent Variable	Govt	Private	SS	MS	F	I g.	Observed Power <sup>e</sup>		
		Mean	Mean							
Job Sector	Well-being	172.45	175.74	326.47	326.47	.71	.39	00	.13	
	Stress	175.35	165.03	5661.42	5661.42	6.22	.01	03	.70	
	Relationship Satisfaction	20.43		1.67	1.67	.07	.78	00	.05	94
	Sleep Quality		39.26		1.01	1.01	.01	.89	00	.05
			39.38							
Family system		Nuclear Joint								
		Mean Mean								
	Well-being	169.82	176.44	2962.81	2962.81	6.50	.01	03	.71	
	Stress	176.11	168.89	431.69	431.6	.47	.49	00	.10	
	Relationship Satisfaction	19.91		57.04	57.04	.47	.11	01	.34	90
Sleep Quality		37.40		460.19	460.19	.74	.00	03	.79	
		40.81								

M= mean, SD=standard deviation,  $\lambda$ = Wilk's Lambda difference

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Differences regarding well-being indicated no differences between private and govt. schools and college teachers. Significant differences were found in stress of women working in Government schools and colleges ( $F=6.22$ ,  $p < .01$ ) showed more work stress than teachers from the private sector. No significant differences were found in relationship satisfaction and sleep quality regarding the job sector. Whereas the differences in joint family system and nuclear family system regarding psychological well-being ( $F=6.50$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were significant. Furthermore, stress and relationship satisfaction have no significant differences



regarding family systems. Sleep quality has significant differences ( $F=7.74$ ,  $p<.00$ ) regarding family systems. The impact of family systems on relationship satisfaction  $F(1,200=2.47)$ ,  $p<.05$  is significant.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Current study has specifically been conducted to analyze relationships among stress, sleep quality, psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction in MWW. Findings indicated positive relationships among stress, sleep quality, psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction among married working women. These results are in line with the findings of Schlarb, Claben, Schuster, and Hautzinger (2015) sleep quality was positively correlated with relationship quality. Same results were found by Zhai, Gao, & Wang (2018) sleep quality had a strong relationship with psychological well-being. Furthermore, Shukla, Muchomba, & McCoyd (2018) found that MWW have significantly higher levels of stress than non-working women.

Results from stepwise regression analysis indicated that working hours of women positively and significantly influenced relation satisfaction. Whereas, income and age of working women did not emerge as predictors of relation satisfaction. These results indicate that higher working hours reduces productivity of MWW, which in-turn reduces relationship satisfaction of women. Higher working hours also reduces sleep timing of individuals as reported by Dong g-woochoi et al. (2015) salaried workers who slept for five or less hours had a high stress level. Stress and lack of sleep both have severe impacts on physical and mental health, a variety of disorders and relationship satisfaction. Similarly, the income level of working women also influences relationship satisfaction, especially when women are not paid well, this may cause stress, lower psychological well-being and also relationship dissatisfaction in women. Statistical results of step 2 regression postulates negative influence of income and age on relationship satisfaction. These results were in line with the finding of Gove, Hughes, & Style, (1983) indicated though marital pleasure is strongly influenced by stress but other demographic variables (income, age, qualification) also play a major role in relationship satisfaction. Psychological well-being (PWB), was a positive and significant indicator of relationship satisfaction in working women. These results indicate that well-being has an important role to raise relationship satisfaction of women.

According to Gove, Hughes & Style (1983), women's well-being acts as an important factor to influence marital relationship as compared to men because women are more concerned about their family matters and affected by their marital relationship, traditional expectations, demands, and stressors from society. Moreover, women are more conscious to maintain their career and make marital life happier. Similarly, in case of sleep quality, satisfaction of relation also affects them negatively. Likewise, stress among working women positively and significantly influenced their relationship satisfaction. Bodenmann (2005) indicated that stress influences relationships through mutual understanding, fewer time available to spend together, lack of communication, psychological & physical problems, anxiety and sleep disorders. These factors in turn influence the quality of marital relationships. Sleep is defined as a number of components including: sleep duration, sleep onset latency and sleep quality that causes impairment and distress in major areas of life (Pearson, Johnson, Nahin, 2006).

Analysis of two way MANOVA indicated significant differences regarding the job sector (public, private) in work stress. Women teaching in Government schools and colleges showed more work stress than teachers from the private sector. Women also suffer from stress and their wellbeing is affected due to work family conflict, number of hours worked outside the home, flexible or inflexible working hours, size of the family and number of dependents of the family (Balaji, 2014). Results showed significant differences in sleep quality regarding the family system. These results indicate that the family system may cause sleep problems and hurt well-being due to work overload, family pressure and abusive behavior. Some results were found by Sulsky and Smith (2005) indicating higher levels of stress in women due to work and family conflict, juggling work and home responsibilities. According to Karacan, Thornby, and Williams (1983) stress is an important factor associated with poor sleep quality. Thus performing duties both at home and workplace married working women experience stress that lead to poor sleep quality which leads to poor relationship satisfaction.

#### 4.1. Conclusion

It is concluded from the findings that due to performing dual roles as housewife and career builder MWW has developed many stresses, poor sleep quality, poor psychological well-being and relationship dissatisfaction, which are associated with each other. Stress, sleep quality and psychological well-being are indicators of working women's relationship satisfaction. Furthermore women working in public schools and

colleges have more stress levels than women working in the private sector. Another conclusion was drawn from the study that women in joint families' arrangement enjoy quality sleep as compared to the women in nuclear family arrangement.

#### 4.2. Limitations and future suggestion

Current study doesn't cover moderation and mediation analysis in relation between stress, well-being, and sleep quality and relationship satisfaction. The sample consisted of only married working women. In future studies, uneducated married non-working people can be considered for such a research. The total sampling was done from one city, participants from more than one city can be considered in future for better generalization. Qualitative studies can also add the more extensive and in depth knowledge about MWW's stress, sleep quality, well-being and relationship satisfaction.

#### 4.3. Implications

This study has its utilities in Psychopathology, clinical and counseling psychology, researchers working on clinical and counseling psychology with married women having stress and its effect on them such as poor sleep and decreased well-being and relationship dissatisfaction. Therapeutic intervention can be developed for the purpose of promoting good psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction. The finding of study will be supported in filling the void in literature in Pakistan in the fields of psychology.

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