



ASSOCIATION BETWEEN MARITAL STATUS AND STRESS AMONG WORKING WOMEN

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ABSTRACT This study tries to explore the influence of marital status on the stress and its consequences. During the 21st Century, women are stepping out of their homes into the world of employment. But, social condition is slow to change. As a consequence, working women's role expectations are often conflicting and difficult to fulfill. The cumulative effect of various factors contributes to the stress, anxiety and emotional trauma among working women. Stress experienced by working women during the performance of the familial role can take a severe psychological and physical toll in terms of organizational role performance. Across the globe, working women, especially those in the peak stages of their family life cycle, are grappling with the herculean task of balancing their organizational and familial roles. The study found that there exist a significant difference between the marital status and the stress scores. There exists significant difference among marital status and all the stress consequences in the present study.

KEYWORDS : stress, marital status, relationship, consequences

This study tries to explore the influence of marital status on the stress and its consequences. During the 21st Century, women are stepping out of their homes into the world of employment. But, social condition is slow to change. As a consequence, working women's role expectations are often conflicting and difficult to fulfill. The cumulative effect of various factors contributes to the stress, anxiety and emotional trauma among working women. Stress experienced by working women during the performance of the familial role can take a severe psychological and physical toll in terms of organizational role performance. Across the globe, working women, especially those in the peak stages of their family life cycle, are grappling with the herculean task of balancing their organizational and familial roles.

Performing in an organization position always wants connections with a set of related roles inside or outside the organization. Role occupant in these connected roles does have their prospect from the role in difficulty; they function as Role correspondent for the crucial role, influencing how the crucial role should function. Stress can be created in organizations in situations where there are no clear job descriptions or career prospect is absent. Also a lack of understanding of the supervisors by the employees and vice versa can exacerbate stress levels. Long tasks may further incubate heavy responsibilities with no authority or decision making, discretion and inadequate time to complete tasks to personal or company standards may also create a stressful situation for an individual. Other possible causes of work related stress may be due to lack of recognition or reward for good job performance, the absence of opportunity to voice complaints and the chances for small error or monetary lapse of attention to have serious or even disastrous consequences.

Literature Review

The study made by Hina Ahmed Hashmi et al., (2007) is aimed at exploring the relationship between marital adjustment, stress and depression. It is noted from the study that non-working married women are better adjusted in their married life than working married women. Along with this they also do not feel depression and stress in their married life as compared to working married women. Depressed married woman have to face marital adjustment problems in her married life. She also cannot perform better her married life responsibilities because she is under stress and if a married woman feels stress in her life, it affects her household work, her relationship with spouse and other members of her family. Their attention diverted because of working in two situations. They cannot give proper attention to their marital lives and this causes depression and stress.

Sen (1982) observed that unmarried persons experience more stress than married persons. Long et al. (1992) found that being married, earning a higher income, and having children was associated with more positive stress appraisals.

Gold and Roth (1993) stated that unmarried teachers had a higher stress level than married teachers. Cairney et al. (2003) found married individuals have less stress when compared to non-married individuals.

Chona C. Roxas (2009) indicated no significant differences between the marriage status groups in stress levels. Dixie Meyer and Robert Paul (2011) found that being married was associated with higher stress scores.

The study made by Mariya Aftab and Tahira Khatoon (2012) finds no significant associations between the occupational stress of teachers and marital status.

Materials and Methods

The present study is based on primary data collected using pre-tested questionnaire from a sample of 500 from the working women in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States. Descriptive research is used in the present study. The study is cross sectional. Survey strategy is used. The data is collected using positivism research philosophy. Deductive research approach is followed. SPSS Software is used to draw output from the primary data. T-test is used to analyze the data.

Results and discussion

Distribution of the sample respondents by their marital status is given in Table – 1. It is found from the table that about two thirds of the sample respondents are married and the rest one third of the respondents are unmarried.

Table – 1
DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS BY MARITAL STATUS

	Marital Status		Total
	Unmarried	Currently Married	
No. of respondents	163 (32.60)	337 (67.40)	500 (100.00)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis represent percentages to the total
Source: Computed from the Primary Data

Effect of marital status on stress

This study tries to explore the influence of marital status on the stress. With this perspective a t-Test was carried out to identify if marital status had an impact on the level of stress. The statistics for the t-Test are in presented in Table – 2. The t score obtained for stress ($t=319.79$, $p<0.001$) is found to be less than 0.01. Therefore, there exists a significant difference between the marital status and the stress scores. The mean stress score of married respondents is 94.55, while it is 91.54 in the case of unmarried respondents. Graph - 1 presents the means of stress score across marital status.

The married respondents has higher level of Stress compared to unmarried may be due to work-family conflict as evidenced in various earlier studies. It may be said that married respondents would have to take up family responsibilities and commitment towards taking care of the family. It is a fact that the personal adjustment patterns and attitudes of individuals change substantially after marriage. The capacities of the individuals to

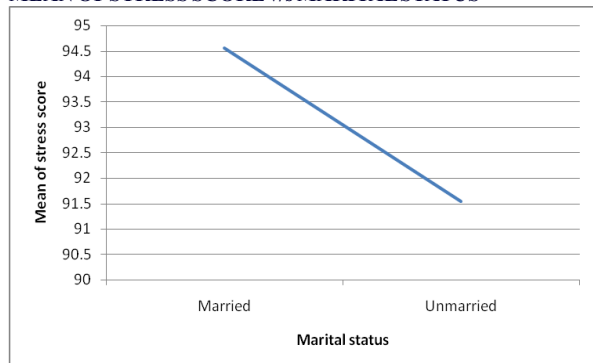
Table – 2
EFFECT OF MARITAL STATUS ON STRESS (T-TEST)

Variable	Marital status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T value	df	Sig.
Stress Score	Married	337	94.5579	6.51398	319.7935	499	<.001**
	Unmarried	163	91.5460	5.40713			

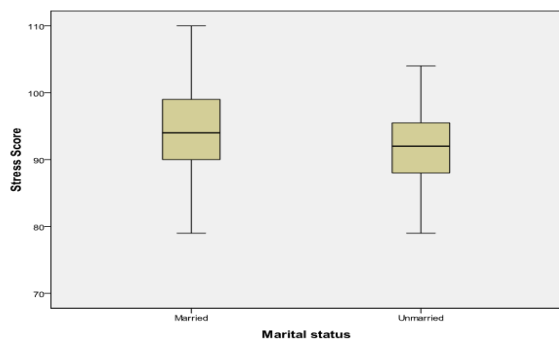
** Significant at the 0.01 level.

Source: Computed from the Primary Data.

Graph – 1
MEAN OF STRESS SCORE v/s MARITAL STATUS



Graph - 2
BOX PLOT SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARITAL STATUS AND STRESS



tolerate frustrations are also considerably vary after their marriage. The results of the present study are inconsistent with the results of Chona C. Roxas (2009), who indicated no significant differences between the marriage status groups in stress levels. On the other hand, the findings of the study are consistent with the results of Dixie Meyer and Robert Paul (2011), who found that being married was associated with higher stress scores. Box plot showing the relationship between marital status and stress is given in Graph – 2.

Marital status and stress consequences

Study consists of both married and unmarried respondents. T-test was conducted to examine the effect of marital status on stress consequences. The result of t-test is shown in Table – 3. It clearly indicates that there exist significant difference among marital status and all the stress consequences in the present study (p value = <0.01) implying that the stress consequences are dependent on marital status of the working women.

This may be due to the fact that working married women have to face more difficulties in their lives like they experienced more stress and depression as compared to non-working married women. On some aspects working married women cannot contribute significantly for the well being of their family. Their attention diverted because of working in two situations. They cannot give proper attention to their marital lives and this causes depression and stress. Obviously, these married working women are liable to fulfill all commitments equally at home and at work place, as compared to unmarried working women. The potential for work/family conflict and stress increases as most of the professional women struggle with the demands of balancing their work and family. It is really the most difficult task for married working women to integrate their multiform obligations of career, household, spouse and children. Evidently, the consequence of women's feelings

of incompatibility to deal with these demands is the occurrence of high level of stress. Dixie Meyer and Robert Paul (2011) found that being married was associated with higher stress scores.

Table – 3
EFFECT OF MARITAL STATUS ON STRESS CONSEQUENCE CES (t-test)

Stress Consequence	T value	df	Sig.
Physical fitness problem due to stress	69.01	998	<.001**
Insomnia problem due to stress	38.1	998	<.001**
Ulcers problem due to stress	50.71	998	<.001**
Hair loss problem due to stress	25.45	998	<.001**
Over consumption of drugs due to stress	46.16	998	<.001**
Job dissatisfaction due to stress	32.60	998	<.001**
Feeling difficult to learn new policies due to stress	36.05	998	<.001**
Decreased motivation due to stress	62.42	998	<.001**
Higher absenteeism due to stress	17.60	998	<.001**
Lower performance due to stress	29.32	998	<.001**
Aggressive behaviour with family members	44.58	998	<.001**

** Significant at the 0.01 level.

Source: Computed from the Primary Data.

Conclusion

The study found that there exist a significant difference between the marital status and the stress scores. There exists significant difference among marital status and all the stress consequences in the present study. The study confirms the findings made by a recent study by Ragles Devi and Sakthivel Rank (2016) on women working in IT sector in India, which reveals that stress is positively correlated with age, marital status and qualification. The results of the present study are inconsistent with the results of Chona C. Roxas (2009), who indicated no significant differences between the marital status in stress levels. On the other hand, the findings of the study are consistent with the results of Dixie Meyer and Robert Paul (2011), who found that being married was associated with higher stress scores.

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