

Marital adjustment among employed and non-employed women of Tehran city

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines the marital adjustment of working and non-working women in Tehran city, Iran. The survey research design was used for the study. The sample consisted of three hundred (150 employed and 150 non-employed women) subjects selected through cluster sampling procedure. Data was collected using the Marital Adjustment Questionnaire that was constructed by the Spanier. Independent t-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance difference. Results showed that both employed and non-employed women exhibit no clear difference in their marital adjustment. Counsellors can use this information to assist couples with marital difficulties.

Keywords: Tehran city, employed women, among employed.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades there has been a rapid increase in the labor force participation of married women (Spain & Bianchi 1996; McLanahan & Casper 1995). Along with rising labor force rates, significant changes in the life course patterns of women's employment have occurred (Oppenheimer 1982; Sweet & Bumpass 1987). Traditionally women's entrance into and out of the labor force closely paralleled stages in family life. Typically, young women worked in the years immediately following the completion of their education. Once married most left the labor market to raise families; the few that remained did so until the birth of their first child. Today, two thirds of married mothers are in the labor force (Hayghe & Bianchi, 1994). Clearly, the "traditional marriage," in which the wife stays at home caring for the house and children while the husband provides economic support, is no longer the norm. Instead, the prevailing practice today is a dual earner household. The implications of these changes for family life are both widespread and dramatic. As wives enter the labor market, both men and women have had to redefine their roles within their marriages. Women, for example, are increasingly taking on a larger chunk of the responsibility for the financial well-being of their families, contributing close to 30% of family income (Hayghe 1993). As such, the role of breadwinner no longer belongs exclusively to men. For some women, the role as provider is a welcomed experience, and central to their identity (see Potuchek 1992). For others, their paycheck provides family extras, while having little or no effect on their role within the family (Hiller & Philliber 1986). The large majority, however, view their new role with some ambivalence (Potuchek 1992; Bielby & Bielby 1989). While they recognize their contribution to their family's economic well-being and enjoy their work, they see their economic contribution and work activity as being secondary to that of their husbands. Regardless of how married women identify with their role as economic provider, the majority worry about the effects that working outside the home may have on their family's well-being (Hochschild 1989; Rubin 1976). All of these changes have led couples to redefine the "marriage contract" and as a result have impacted the psychological, emotional, social and financial benefits that couples derive from marriage. It can be seen that the phenomenon of marital adjustment that it is given a priority in all cultures, as marriage is one of the most important commitment of an individual makes in his or her life. A good marriage not only produces a satisfied life but it also generates a sense of well-being. In west, marriage is often a centerpiece in ideological claims about the 'decline of family values' (Lavenson et al., 1995). Marital adjustment has been related to personality, job & home stresses, mental illness, depression, education, sex

role attitude, happiness and success in life. However in Iran the phenomenon of marital adjustment and its related variables have not been given much attention. Recently a few studies have been done on the topic of marital adjustment. In them marital adjustment has been studied with its relationship to depression among working and non-working women, male and female initiation of psychotherapy female education level. The present study is an attempt to investigate marital adjustment among employed and non-employed married women.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The sample of 300 married women (150 employed and 150 non-employed) was taken for this research from Tehran city, Iran. Employed women were teachers, bankers and etc. Cluster sampling was used for this study.

Instrument

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS):

The DAS is perhaps the most widely used measure of relationship quality in the social and behavioural sciences literature. Spanier (1985) noted that the DAS had been used in more than 1,000 studies, within 10 years of its creation. Since that time, that number has continued to grow. The DAS is a self-rating questionnaire of 32 items forming a global scale, Dyadic adjustment (DAS) divided into 4 subscales: Dyadic consensus (DC); Dyadic satisfaction (DS); Dyadic cohesion (CO); Affectional expression (AE). Responses to the 15 first questions are made on a six-point Likert type scale (0–5). The response choices for the remaining questions vary from one item to another. Note that the overall Dyadic Adjustment (DAS) score can be obtained with the following equation: $DAS = DC + DS + CO + AE$.

The result distributions are presented and basic descriptive parameters (arithmetic mean \pm standard deviation) were calculated. The differences between the groups were tested t test. The level of statistical significance was set at $P < 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Educational characteristics of employed and non-employed women

Education	employed		non-employed	
	N	%	N	%
High school or Diploma	102	68	111	75
Associate degree	34	22.6	29	19.3
Bachelor's degree	14	9.4	10	6.7
Masters and higher	0	0	0	0
Total	150	100	150	100

Age of employed women are 20.6, 50.7 and 28.7% in 20-25, 26-35 and 36-45 years categories, respectively; while are 16, 52.6 and 31.4% for non-employed women, respectively (Table 2).

Table 2. Age distribution of employed and non-employed women

Variable (age)	employed		non-employed	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
20-25	31	20.6	24	16
26-35	76	50.7	79	52.6
36-45	43	28.7	47	31.4
Total	150	100	150	100

Statistical analysis showed that differences between employed and non-employed women in marital adjustment has not significance differences, but mean score of marital adjustment in employed women is higher than non-employed women (Table 3).

Table 3. Compare of marital adjustment between employed and non-employed women

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t	df	sig
Employed women	150	62.91	12.18	1.37	98	0.103
non-employed women	150	60.73	11.52			

Discussion

The objective of the present study was to assess and compare marital adjustment among employed and non-employed women. For the study it was hypothesized that there will be no significant differences in the marital adjustment among employed and non-employed women. The existing level of each dimension of marital adjustment among families with employed and non-employed women is presented in terms of mean scores and standard deviation and these parameters are tested for their difference across groups of families by applying student's t-test. Our results show that there is no significance difference among employed and non-employed women. Wright (1978) in his research supports this finding; he concluded that both women who work outside in the home and full time housewives have benefits and costs attached to them. However, Adegoke (1987), Nathawat and Mathur (1993) and Rogers and May (2003) are of the view that employed class women are generally more satisfied with their lives and marriage than non-employed women. The difference between these findings could be attributed to cultural differences. The findings of this study are useful information that can identify important dimensions of marital adjustment as it affects employed class and non-employed class women. The findings of this study have implications for employed class and non-employed class women, their husbands, parents, counsellors and the society. One of the findings of this study is that employed class and non-employed class women enjoy equal marital adjustment. This implies that having paid employment either in the public or private sector, been a business person or a full time house wife does not disrupt a woman's family; thus a woman's degree of marital adjustment depends on how she handles her family such as attention to her husband, her children and communication/interaction in the home and the society at large. Employed or non-employed women despite the environmental pressures in the home can always create a good atmosphere for their marital adjustment. Counsellors can use this information to assist couples with marital difficulties.

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