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DIFFERENCES IN LEVEL OF SELF-ESTEEM OF HOUSEWIVES AND WORKING WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To investigate the differences in level of self-esteem between working women and house wives.
Study design: Survey Method.
Method: 50 educated females were randomly selected, out of them 25 were working as health professional at Institute of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation-Dow University of Health sciences, while 25 were house wives who were educated enough but not allowed to work. Rosenberg Self-esteem scale (RSE) by Rosenberg (1965) was used to measure the level of self-esteem. It was hypothesized that educated house wives suffer from low self esteem.
Results: Descriptive statistics (Percentage and frequencies) were used to find out the differences in the level of self-esteem of working women and house wives.Results shows that 36% of house wives were suffering from low self esteem while only 4% of working women fall in this category.
Conclusion: Result showed that educated house wives are suffering from low self esteem as compared to working women.

Key Words: Self-esteem, working women, house wives, Rosenberg self Esteem scale.

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is an all-inclusive process and hard to define in tangible terms. One definition of self-esteem says it is "the trait that differs from people to people in their degree to which they like or dislike themselves" (Brockner, 1988) [1, 2]. Self- esteem is a person's feeling of competence and self-worth. In general, research has proposed that people who have low self-esteem are likely tobe more critical toward themselves than those with high self- esteem (Jenis, 1964)[6].Theself-esteem is the evaluative aspect of the self-concept.[5]It is measureof the distance between the ideal self and the perceived self. Whenthe perceived self matches the ideal self, self-esteem is comparatively high.Low self-esteem arisesonce the perceived self is significantly lowerthan the ideal self.[3]Since the distance between the ideal and perceived selfconstantly varies depending on task and social feedback, self- esteemis the dynamic component of the self-concept and it is always in a state ofvariation and development (Gecas, 1982).[4]

Healthy self-esteem is grounded on our capability to evaluate ourselves exactly (know ourselves) and still be able to confess and value ourselves unconditionally, this means being able to realisticallyidentify our strengths and weaknesses , at the same time accepting ourselves as worthy and worthwhile without conditions or doubts. (Jhonson 1991).[15]Studies suggest Gender differences in self-esteem, females having low self-esteem as compared to male adolescent in western culture. (Chub et al. 1997; Harper and Marshall 1991). [7]Even though in two other researches piloted in a non-western context have not found gender differences in self-esteem. (Mwanamwender 1991; Watkins and Yu 1993).These results are predominantly different from the researches conducted in South African culture (Mwamwenda

1991) and in Chinese society (Watkins and Yu 1993) as in both studies results are in favour of male population because they are preferred more in educational institutions. [7, 12, 16, 17]

Different group of womenargued that when women go into public life they are liable to ignoretheir marital duties and are also not strong enough tohandle public lifeso she should not be permitted to adopt professional life or reach top posts.Some people use the Bible or the Quran to support above ascertains(Olurode, 2004) [3]. The male dominance at home and business is so common that female suppression has now taken to be a universalbelief, although the number of researches verified that women have equal talent and capacities as men but unfortunately the dominant role of men in society either consciously or subconsciously suppresses the women equal status.(Oguje, 2004). [8, 12]

A transformation in the status of women requires a change in both men and women approach towards interpersonal relation and behavior [3] The pleasant partnerships between men and women encourages women self confidence thus leading to a healthier communication on all issues of joint responsibilities. Efforts to work on equal partnership of men and women in public and private life would ultimately improve the status of women (UN, 1994). [11,14]Women bear a triple burden in the society: as a professional sheadds directly to home income, as a mother and wifeshe cares for the family and as a communityworker she gives all her leisure hours to the society. [12, 13]This meansthat women have many tasks on their plate so without healthy self esteem and self onfidenceshe cannot perform her duties in a systematic manner. Hence thisresearch is important to measure the level of self-esteem to know the satisfaction with her life.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was designed as a descriptive measure of differences in level of self esteem between working women and house wives. It was hypothesized that working women self esteem would be better than of house wives. For the purpose 50 (n=50) participants including 25 working women (n=25) and 25 house wives (n=50), age range between 25-35years were randomly selected. Demographic sheet was used to get the information regarding age, educational level, socioeconomic level and residential area etc. After taking verbal informed consent Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSE) was individually administered to all participants.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE, Rosenberg, 1965) is a 10-item self-report inventory of self-esteem. It comprises of 10 items to know overall feelings of self-respect or self-acceptance. The items are answered on a four-point scale ranging from strongly agrees to strongly disagree. The scale ranges from 0-30. Scores between 15 and 25 are within normal range; scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.

RESULTS

Results were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. Results are shown in the Table I & II below, indicating the number of women in each category and percentage according to the level of self-esteem. Table I shows the level of education of women that was deliberately taken equally for both groups.

Table II shows that the level of self-esteem of both working women and housewives, percentage in each category representing the differences between both groups. 4% of working women and 36% of house wives experience low self esteem issues while 82% of working women and 62% of house wives experienced normal self esteem that is considered as healthy level of self esteem. 14% of working women and only2% experience inflated level of self esteem.

Table: 01 LEVEL OF EDUCATION

S.No	Levels of Education	Housewives	Working Women
01	Bachelor	25	25
02	Master	25	25

TABLE: 02 LEVEL OF SELF-ESTEEM

S.No	Levels of Self esteem	Housewives	Working Women
01	0-14 (Low self-esteem)	18 (36.0%)	02(4.0%)
02	15-24 (Normal Level Of self-esteem)	31(62.0%)	41(82.0%)
03	25-30 (Inflated Self esteem)	01(2.0%)	07(14.0%)

DISCUSSION

It was found in the study that among the total population of house wives 36% women scored low on self-esteem scale whereas only 4% of working women had low self-esteem. Furthermore 82% of working women and 62% of housewives scored in moderate range of self-esteem that was considered as healthy self-esteem. Inflated or high self-esteem is not a healthy approach, results indicates that 14% of working women have exaggerated self-concept leading to inflated self-esteem. Park (2000) stated that professional women who enjoyed their job had feeling of worthiness. Status and level of work is important factor for positive consequences of work in women, this could be the reason why working women tend to have moderate and high self-esteem as compared to house wives.[3] Working women have more autonomy,higher worth, lesser role conflicts, more support from their family (Chaudhry, 1995), so they live motivated and enthusiastic life, these positive characteristics lead to higher self-esteem.[8,18] Educated house wives although don't like dependency on their husband but as husbands are the sole breadwinners, so these women have to be fully dependent on them and this dependency leads to low self-esteem. JokiPerdaniSawai in their research reported that women who are fully dependent on their husbands for their needs and as well as for children, face high economic hardships that could provoke stress in their life causing low self-esteem.[10] Furthermore growing older also decreases their chance to compete in limited job opportunities and thus these women develop a sense of helplessness and they presume that they are non-productive member of their family and community. [13]

While in this research a small fraction of working women scored low on self-esteem because they were unable to balance their family and work. This finding is similar with the study conducted in Kashmir that working women are facing greater conflicts in the management of household activities as compared to housewives.[7] Therefore, Inadequate and inappropriate role sharing in family, greater expectations from women, stress, strain, work overload could be the cause of low self-esteem among these working women, although study by **Deepak Raj Paudel**proposed that positively perceived self-

esteem, successful marital life, spouse support, occupation prestige and attractive income could contribute to healthy self-esteem of women.[3]

Overall it could be concluded that women are equally capable of doing any task and have capacity to work in professional environment but she needs family support for better work and healthy self-esteem. We might need to change the perception of society to overcome hurdles in her life as both men and women should work and earn a handsome amount for better living style

as work provides a woman with healthy self-esteem , confidence and satisfies her needs for social recognition, freedom, power and individuality.

CONCLUSION

The results of the present study suggests significant differences in level of self esteem of working women and house wives who are educated enough but are not allowed to work and earn for themselves and their family. The level of self esteem was higher among working women as compared to educated house wives.

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