

Influence of Self-efficacy and Select Demographic Variables on Psychological Distress of Married Women

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Abstract

Well being of women is an integral aspect of family. Mental health of women will reflect in her relationships, performance, and child rearing practices. Achievement of positive mental health is the prime moto of every human being. Aim of this paper was to identify the influence of self efficacy and certain demographic variables on psychological distress of married women. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments. Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment. Psychological distress is a general term that is used to describe unpleasant feelings or emotions that impact an individual's level of functioning. The depression, anxiety and stress model is a widely investigated research area of contemporary psychology. The participants of this study consists of 60 married women of varying age, education, religiosity and employment status. Data were collected using self efficacy scale, psychological distress scale, and personal data sheet. Data were analyzed through two-way Analysis of Variance. Results idicated a significant influence of age on stress of married women. The findings suggested that the extent of psychological distress among the participants is below the scale value and that of self efficacy is higher than the scale value. The results of two anova revealed a statistically significant main effect of age on dimension stress of psychological distress of married women. No other statistically significant results were obtained.

Key words: Anxiety, Demographics, Depression, Married women, Stress, Self-Efficacy.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The psychology of women is an area of scientific investigation that aimed to study the behavior (not excluding male gender-role behavior) mediated by the variable of female sex. It includes all psychological issues pertaining to women and their experiences (Denmark, 1977). Psychological issues such as sexuality, reproduction, the link between motherhood and raising children, roles of women, sexual values, sexual myths, ethnicity, race, class, and religion and experiences that are unique to women such as pregnancy, breast feeding, menstruation, menopause etc are widely addressed under this scientific discipline. This paper is an attempt to investigate the influence of self- efficacy and certain demographic variables such as age, education, employment status, number of dependents, husband's occupation and family type on the psychological distress of married women.

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment. Self-efficacy has become an important variable within social psychological research because of its association with various favorable consequences, especially in the areas of physical and mental health. It is a significant factor in various health related behaviours (Gecas, 1989). The findings of Self-

efficacy research in the area of marriage and women's mental health indicated that, perceived self-efficacy was the most consistent predictor of wellbeing and psychological distress (Ozer, 1995).

Psychological distress is a general term that is used to describe unpleasant feelings or emotions that impact an individual's level of functioning. The depression, anxiety and stress model is a widely investigated research area of contemporary psychology. The present study is framed on the triad model, (stress, anxiety and depression) of the psychological distress.

The gender differences and contributing effects of certain demographic variables on psychological distress was examined by the works of Cleary and Mechanic (1983); Employment Transitions and Psychological Distress was investigated by Ali and Avison (1997); relationship between self-efficacy and psychological distress were examined by Wu et al in 2004.

The growing body of research suggests that, along with many other factors, psychological distress is a significant predictor of marital satisfaction. Findings of a study among Turkish sample by Cirhinlioglu, Tepe and Cirhinlioglu in 2017 revealed that marital dissatisfaction and psychological distress was higher for women than males. They also reported that women with higher educational qualification had lower levels of psychological distress.

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An extensive body of research documents higher levels of depression and psychological distress among women than men (Cleary & Mechanic, 1983). Among the wide variety of factors such as response biases, biological differences, personality characteristics, social-role norms and behavior, and patterns of learned helplessness, the child care responsibilities, multiple roles in the family, poor work-life balance etc are the crucial contributors of psychological distress (Ozer, 1995). The findings of a cross sectional study with 240 married women from India revealed that 32.9% of the participants had poor mental health and also found that three significant predictors such as support from colleagues, support from spouse and relaxation methods have significant positive impact on mental health of married working women (Panigrahi & Padhy, 2014). Oydanof and Donnelly (1989) reported that women receive fewer social and economic resources and rewards and experience greater emotional demands, role overload, and conflicting expectations than men. These lower gratifications and higher strains are associated with psychological distress.

The purpose of the present study is to identify the effect of demographic variables and self-efficacy on psychological distress of the married women of Kerala. Identifying the role of these variables in relation with the psychological distress would be helpful in addressing and managing one of the major mental health issues of married women.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To study the extent of self-efficacy and psychological distress among married women.
2. To study the influence of self-efficacy and certain demographic variables on psychological distress of married women.

III. HYPOTHESIS

1. There will be significant main and interaction effect of self-efficacy and select demographic variables on psychological distress of married women.

IV. METHOD

Participants

Participants of this study consists of 60 married women with a mean age of 39.62 (Sd=10.82) and ranges from 20 to 61. There were participants with qualification SSLC (n=14, 23.3%), Plus-2 (n=13, 21.7%), Graduation (n=18, 30.0%), and Post-Graduation (n=15, 25.0%). Among the total participants 17 (28.3%) were employed and 43 (71.7%) were unemployed. All participants belong to middle class families of Calicut and Malappuram districts of Kerala State.

Instruments

1. Self-efficacy Scale: Self-efficacy of the participants was measured using Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Manikandan (2015). This is a Uni-dimensional scale intended to measure how an individual perceives his/her capacities. The scale consists of 14 items with five point Likert type scale. The reliability of the scale was estimated by calculating Cronbach Alpha and it was

found to be .87. Author of the scale claims face validity.

2. Psychological Distress Scale (Revised): Psychological Distress Scale (Revised) developed by Manikandan (2015) measure Depression, Anxiety and Stress of an individual. This Scale consists of 14 items: of these, 4 items measure 'stress', 5 items measure 'anxiety' and the remaining 5 items measures 'depression'. Reliability of the Psychological Distress Scale (Revised) was estimated through Cronbach Alpha and it was found to be 0.87 for the whole scale. Author also reported face validity for Psychological Distress Scale.
3. Personal Data Sheet: Personal information like age, education, employment status, number of dependents, husband's occupation and family type was collected using Personal Data Sheet.

Procedure

The investigators personally contacted the respondents on their residence at their convenient date and time. The purpose and objectives of the study was explained to them and requested their whole hearted participation in the research work. Before administering the research instruments their consent was received. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to them and the doubts on confidentiality and other aspects of the measures were also clarified. Obtained data were checked for omissions and data was entered into a spread sheet for further statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics and two-way ANOVA were used to consolidate the data.

V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As per the Census of Kerala, the number of females is higher than males. And also it can be seen that many of the educated females working somewhere unlike previous years. In this study the first objective was to understand the extent of psychological Distress and self-efficacy of the married women, the mean, median, and other statistics were calculated and they are presented in table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of the variables under study

Statistics	Stress	Anxiety	Depression	Psychological Distress	Self-Efficacy
Mean	3.97	4.75	3.77	12.48	49.67
Median	4.00	4.00	3.00	12.00	50.50
Std. Deviation	2.668	3.408	3.331	7.493	11.810
Skewness	.308	.381	.974	.353	-.127
Kurtosis	-.539	-.846	.386	-.676	-.559

The results of descriptive statistics indicate that, the mean score of psychological distress of the selected sample is below the scale value, ie; the participants of this study do not have a higher levels of psychological distress. This finding is contradictory to the findings of Cleary and Mechanic (1989). According to their findings, married women have higher levels of psychological distress than males. They also reported that, psychological distress is higher for house wives than employed women, and also higher for women having more dependents. The mean value of self-efficacy of the

participants is higher than the scale value. This indicates the higher levels of self-efficacy of the participants. According to Bandura (1977) the higher levels of self-efficacy have positive consequences on mental health. This might be one of the reasons for the low psychological distress of the participants.

To know how self-efficacy and demographic variables like Age, Employment Status, and Family type, influence psychological distress of participants a series of two-way ANOVA was computed. self-efficacy was measured in interval level, it was categorized into two groups by considering median as cutoff point and labeled as low self-efficacy ($n=30$) and high self-efficacy ($n=30$). The second objective of the study was to study the main and interaction effect of self-efficacy and select demographic variables on psychological distress. Separate two-way ANOVAs were carried out for this purpose.

Table 2

Summary of two- way ANOVA Self-Efficacy and Age on Psychological distress and its dimensions

Source of Variance	Main effect									Interaction effect		
	Self efficacy						Age			Self-efficacy*Age		
	Self efficacy			Age			Self-efficacy*Age			Self-efficacy*Age		
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F
Stress	0.48	1	0.48	0.007	44.441	2	22.221	3.23*	3.297	2	1.648	0.239
Anxiety	16.849	1	16.849	1.509	47.533	2	23.766	2.129	11.943	2	5.971	0.535
Depression	.079	1	.079	0.007	25.592	2	12.796	1.109	11.943	2	5.971	0.535
Psychological distress (total)	16.342	1	16.342	0.289	190.152	2	95.076	1.682	33.982	2	16.991	0.301

* $p < .05$

Three Two- way ANOVA were conducted to examine the effect of different levels of self- efficacy and age on psychological distress and its various dimensions such as stress, anxiety and depression of married women. The findings of the two- way ANOVA are combined and presented in table 2.

The simple main effect analysis showed that age has a statistically significant main effect on the dimension stress ($p < 0.05$). there were nostatistically significant mean difference obtained for self -efficacy on stress. This implies

that, different levels of age has significant mean difference on stress of married women. This finding is supported by the findings of the research done by Wu et al, (2004). According to them, psychological distress is found to be higher among married women of age 50 and above than younger females. They also pointed that, this may not be due to the independent effect of age, age related health conditions also found to have a significant influence.

The interaction effect of self- efficacy and age on stress were also not statistically significant. N No other statistically significant main and interaction effects were obtained for age and sel efficacy on depression, anxiety and total psychological distress of the sample.

Table 3:

Summary of two- way ANOVA Self-Efficacy and employment status on Psychological distress and its dimensions

Source of Variance	Main effect									Interaction effect		
	Self efficacy						Employment status			Self-efficacy*employment status		
	Self efficacy			Employment status			Self-efficacy*employment status			Self-efficacy*employment status		
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F
Stress	2.373	1	2.373	0.324	3.785	1	3.785	0.516	5.442	1	5.442	0.742
Anxiety	33.342	1	33.342	2.891	2.188	1	2.188	0.190	16.435	1	16.435	1.425
Depression	4.414	1	4.414	0.402	16.922	1	16.922	1.541	21.424	1	21.424	1.951
Psychological Distress (total)	88.656	1	88.656	1.577	13.304	1	13.304	0.237	121.337	1	121.337	2.159

The results of two -way ANOVA for identifying the main and interaction effect of self -efficacy and demographic variable employment status on psychological distress and its dimensions were combined and presented in table 3.

The results indicated that, the p value for the main effects of self –efficacy and employment status are greater than the significance level, hence the effect is not statistically significant. i.e. there is no significant mean difference for different levels of self efficacy and different levels employment status on psychological distress and its dimensions. According to the results, the interaction effect of self-efficacy and employment status on total psychological distress and the dimensions – stress, anxiety and depression were also not statistically significant.

Table 4

Summary of two- way ANOVA Self-Efficacy and family type on Psychological distress and its dimensions

Source of Variance	Main effect								Interaction effect			
	Self efficacy				Family type				Self-efficacy*family type			
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F
Stress	.188	1	.188	.025	.002	1	.002	.000	1.549	1	1.549	.207
Anxiety	23.213	1	23.213	1.990	4.587	1	4.587	0.393	7.054	1	7.054	0.605
Depression	.019	1	.019	0.002	.823	1	.823	0.071	.823	1	.823	0.071
Psychological distress (total)	29.030	1	29.030	.495	1.626	1	1.626	.028	.254	1	.254	.004

Table 4 displayed the result of two-way ANOVA carried out for finding out the main and interaction effects of self-efficacy and demographic variable family type on psychological distress and its dimensions. According to the findings, the main effect of self efficacy on stress, anxiety, depression and total psychological distress of the sample is not statistically significant. This indicate that, there were no significant mean difference for the two levels of self-efficacy on stress, anxiety, depression and total psychological distress of the sample. Similarly, the main effect for the demographic variable family type on total psychological distress and its dimensions such as stress, anxiety and depression were also not statistically significant.

The F value for interaction effect was found statistically insignificant for self-efficacy and family type on stress, anxiety, depression and total psychological distress of the sample.

The findings of the series of two-way ANOVA examined the effect of self- efficacy and select demographic variables on psychological distress and its dimensions on married women of Kerala was in contradiction with the existing findings stating the impact of demographic variables and self-efficacy on psychological distress. One potential reason for this contradictory finding may be the lower distress and higher self-efficacy of the participants of the study. The mean value for psychological distress was less than the scale value and higher for self-efficacy. Similarly, higher levels of educational qualifications, better living conditions, social support may also have contributed.

VI. CONCLUSION

- The present study aimed to investigate the influence of self- efficacy and certain demographic factors on psychological distress of married women. Data were

collected from 60 married women of varying age, education, and employment status. Data were analyzed using two-way ANOVA.

- The findings from the descriptive statistics revealed that participants have lower levels of psychological distress and higher level of self- efficacy.
- Findings of two-way ANOVA conducted to examine the effect of self- efficacy and select demographic variables on psychological distress and its dimensions revealed only age has a statistically significant main effect on dimension stress of psychological distress of married women.
- No statistically significant main and interaction effect for self- efficacy were obtained on the dependent variable.
- No other demographic factors (family type, employment status) were found to have any statistically significant main and interaction effect on stress, anxiety, depression and total psychological distress of the sample.

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