



PERCEIVED SPOUSAL RELATIONSHIP AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS IN WOMEN SCHOOL TEACHERS

NUZHAT-UL-AIN, FAIZA SAFDAR

Center for Clinical Psychology, University of Punjab.

CORRESPONDENCE: FAIZA SAFDAR, E-mail: nuzhatulain4@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE

To find the relationship between spousal relationships and psychological distress in married women school teachers.

DURATION AND PLACE OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in a public and private schools of Lahore from September, 2014 to August, 2015

STUDY DESIGN

Correlational research design

METHODS

Two hundred and ten married women school teachers (105 government teachers & 105 private teachers) were included in the study from eight government and ten private schools of Lahore city in Pakistan. Perception of Spousal Reciprocity Scale and Kessler Psychological Distress Scale translated by Hussain and Kausar (2010) were used as test tools. Data were analyzed in SPSS v. 20.

RESULTS

Pearson Product Moment analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between perceived spousal reciprocity and psychological distress. Regression analysis showed that perceived spousal reciprocity is significant predictor of psychological distress.

CONCLUSION

Perception of spousal relationships was significantly associated with psycho-logical distress. It is important to realize that spousal support is an important factor in working women's life to enhance their psychological health.

KEYWORDS

Spousal relations, Psychological Distress, Working women.

INTRODUCTION

Spousal Reciprocity is defined as describing relationships wherein spouses perceive each other as equal to each other; believe in mutual respect, and direct communication¹. Psychological distress is a measure of degree of manifestation of symptoms of anxiety and depression such as nervousness, sadness, restlessness, hopelessness, and worthlessness over a particular period of time². Psychological Distress is a cluster of many depression and anxiety symptoms. It is continuum of psychological issues mainly described in terms of depression and anxiety. Psychological distress may be comorbid with acute and chronic stress specifically when the stage comes where there is a failure of physical and psychological coping strategies^{3,4}.

Barnet, Brennan, Raudenbush and Pleck signified that the negative marital experiences were associated with increasing severity of psychological distress in working women⁵. The findings of the indigenous research showed that working married women have to face more problems in their married life as compared with non-working married women and due to marital conflicts they are more prone towards depression⁶. The way spousal reciprocity can affect psychological distress of the female school teachers is still unexplored in the literature available. Present study is conceived to find out the answer to this question. The present study hypothesized that

- There is likely to be a relationship between perceived spousal reciprocity and psychological distress in married women school teachers.
- Perceived spousal reciprocity is likely to predict psychological distress in married women school teachers

METHODS

Participants

A total 210 (105 government and 105 private) married women school teachers were included in the study through purposive convenient sampling technique.

Inclusion in the study based on the criterion that participant must have been working in the school for at least one year and have been married for at least one year. Teachers doing part-time jobs, working on contract, working in special schools, over the age of 55 years, working in schools where day-care or school psychologists were available, widow/divorced, or the teachers with any severe psychological and physiological problems or physical disability such as amputation etc were excluded in the present research.

Instruments

Perception of Spousal Reciprocity Scale (POSRS)¹

Perception of Spousal Reciprocity Scale (POSRS) is a 17-item inventory. It is rated on a 6 point Likert-type scale that include 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). The higher score on this scale indicate greater spousal reciprocity. This tool was translated into Urdu language by using back translation procedure proposed by MAPI institute. The internal consistency of the translated version of The Perception of Spousal Reciprocity Scale (POSRS) was .87 for the present research.

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)²

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) is a 10 items scale. It consisted of 5-point likert scale ranging from 1 (all of the time) to 5 (none of the time). The translated version of this tool by Hussain and Kausar (2010)⁷ was used in the present study. The internal consistency of the translated version of The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) was .89 for the present research.

Procedure

After the approval of the study, school administration was contacted to get access to the teachers. The participants were assured about confidentiality. Written informed consent was sorted. N=10 participant (n=5 from government school and n=5 from private school) were included in the pilot study. On the average, the participants took 12-14 minutes to fill the whole research form. After piloting, the main study was conducted and data was entered to SPSS 20. Overall response rate was 27%.

RESULTS

The data was screened for outliers and no outliers were found. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was conducted to find out the relationship between perceived spousal reciprocity, and psychological distress in married women school teachers. Regression analysis was done to find out the predictive role of perceived spousal reciprocity on psychological distress.

The descriptive statistics showed that the average age of the participants was 37 years. Majority of the participants had the family monthly income more than 50,000. Majority of the participants lived in nuclear family system with maximum number of family members ranging from 1-5. Seventy-two percent of the participants' spouses earned more than 50,000 Rupees per month. Majority of the participants reported that they spent 2-4 hours with their husband and 4-6 hours with their children. Most of the participants were either satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the quality time that they spend with their husband and children.

Majority of the participants arrange gatherings at home, go on gatherings and outings outside home with family at least once a month. Most of the participants lived with their husbands and most of them were either satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their spousal relationships. Majority of the participants and their spouses worked for about 6-8 hours daily. However, the performance satisfaction was high for nearly whole of the sample. Most of the participants spent their income on their family.

Table 1

Summary of Inter-correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Scores on Perceived Spousal Reciprocity and Psychological Distress of government and private school teachers

Variables	1	2	M	SD
1. Perceived Spousal Reciprocity	-	-.50**	79.49	15.09
2. Psychological Distress	-.50**	-	27.12	7.70
<i>M</i>	79.19	26.50		
<i>SD</i>	15.46	6.51		

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

Inter-correlations for government school teachers (n= 105) are presented in upper diagonal, and inter-correlations for private school teachers (n= 105) are presented in lower diagonal. Means and standard deviations for government school teachers are presented in the vertical columns, and means and standard deviations for private school teachers are presented in the horizontal rows. For all scales, higher scores are indicative of more extreme responding in the direction of the construct assessed.

Table 2

Predictor of Psychological Distress

Psychological Distress			
	Model		
	B	β	95% CI
Constant	45.36***		[40.89,49.83]
Perceived Spousal Reciprocity	-.23***	.50***	[-.28,-.17]
R^2		.25	
F		69.43***	

Note. N=210; CI = confidence interval. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

It was hypothesized that there is likely to be a relationship between perceived spousal reciprocity and psychological distress in married women school teachers. According to Table 1, upper diagonal represents correlations for government school teachers. The result shows that perceived spousal reciprocity has highly significant negative correlation with psychological distress which also shows that the teachers who experience higher level of spousal reciprocity will have low psychological distress (see table 1).

Results depicts that there exists a highly significant negative relationship between psychological distress and perceived spousal reciprocity in private school teachers. It shows that private school teachers, who experience more psychological distress, will experience less spousal reciprocity and vice versa (see table 1).

The regression model explained that perceived spousal reciprocity is a significant negative predictor of work-family spillover. The model turned out to be statistically significant $F(1, 208) = 69.43, p < .001$ and spousal reciprocity accounted for 25% variance in psychological distress.

DISCUSSION

Psychological distress has negative relationship with spousal reciprocity. The compromises made by the working mothers in order to create balance between work and marriage roles are also a leading factor towards psychological distress. They cannot take proper sleep

as they bring extra school work at home such as paper/ home work checking to complete it late night after getting free from the household responsibilities especially if spousal support is absent. It also causes distress in working women. These findings are also verified by previous researches; that suggests that one of the major leading factors towards psychological distress is problems in spousal relationships. Absence of spousal support makes it difficult for women to handle household also. Spousal support and communication is very important for women's mental health (Johnson & Wu, 20028; Manne & Glassman, 20009; Barnett, Raudenbush, Brennan, Pleck, & Marshall, 199510).

Secondly, it was revealed that perceived spousal support is the predictor of psychological distress. The findings of the indigenous research conducted by Hashmi, Khurshid, and Hassan showed that working married women have to face more problems in their married life as compared with non-working married women and due to marital conflicts they are more prone towards depression⁷ using Dyadic Adjustment Scale adapted version¹¹, Beck Depression Inventory¹² and Stress Scale¹³, showed that working married women have to face more problems in their married life regarding marital adjustment as compared with non-working married women and due to marital conflicts they are more prone towards depression.

CONCLUSION

The study will help in planning specific interventions regarding unhealthy spousal relationships and psychological distress in married school teachers.

Limitations and suggestions

There was no division between primary, secondary and higher secondary school teachers. The inter-comparison of the schools' education systems were not focused in the present research. It is important to study the difference between the working mothers who have children and who do not have. The comparison between the schools that provide day care for teacher's children and the schools who do not provide these facilities should be focused.

REFERENCES

1. Wintre MG, Gates SK. Relationships with parents, spousal reciprocity, and psychological distress in middle-age adults. *Journal of Adult Development*. 2006 Jun 1; 13(2):84-94.
2. Kessler RC, Andrews G, Colpe LJ, Hiripi E, Mroczek DK, Normand SL, Walters EE, Zaslavsky AM. Short screening scales to monitor population prevalences and trends in non-specific psychological distress. *Psychological medicine*. 2002 Aug 1; 32(06):959-76.
3. Hussain M, Kausar R. Psychological distress and coping

strategies used by the victims of families of suicide blasts .Unpublished thesis (Masters). University of the Punjab Lahore: Institute of Applied Psychology. 2010.

4. Wheaton B: The twain meets: distress, disorder and the continuing conundrum of categories (comment on Horwitz). *Health* 2007, 11:303–319.
5. Moberg GP. Biological response to stress: implications for animal welfare. *The biology of animal stress: basic principles and implications for animal welfare*. 2000:1-21.
6. Barnett RC, Brennan RT, Raudenbush SW, Marshall NL. Gender and the relationship between marital - role quality and psychological distress. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. 1994 Mar 1; 18(1):105-27.
7. Hashmi HA, Khurshid M, Hassan I. Marital adjustment, stress and depression among working and non-working married women. *Internet Journal of Medical Update*. 2007 Jan 1; 2(1):19-26.
8. Johnson DR, Wu J. An empirical test of crisis, social selection, and role explanations of the relationship between marital disruption and psychological distress: A pooled time - series analysis of four - wave panel data. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 2002 Feb 1; 64(1):211-24.
9. Manne S, Glassman M. Perceived control, coping efficacy, and avoidance coping as mediators between spousal unsupportive behaviors and psychological distress. *Health Psychology*. 2000 Mar; 19(2):155.
10. Barnett RC, Raudenbush SW, Brennan RT, Pleck JH, Marshall NL. Change in job and marital experiences and change in psychological distress: A longitudinal study of dual-earner couples. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1995 Nov; 69(5):839.
11. Naseer S. Marital adjustment and stress among traditional couples and dual career couples. Unpublished Dissertation (M.Phil.) Quaid-i-Azam, University: National Institute of Psychology. 2000.
12. Beck AT, Steer RA, Carbin MG. Psychometric properties of the Beck Depression Inventory: Twenty-five years of evaluation. *Clinical psychology review*. 1988 Dec 31; 8(1):77-100.
13. Rafai F. Development of examination stress scale of university students. Unpublished Dissertation (M.Phil.) Quaid-i-Azam, University: National Institute of Psychology. 1991.

Undertaking

Sr. #	Author Name	Affiliation of Author	Contribution	Signature
1	Nuzhat-ul-Ain	Student of Centre for Clinical Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore	Student	
2	Faiza Safdar	Assistant Professor at Centre for Clinical Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore	Supervisor	