

Stress, Resilience and Life Satisfaction among widows in Kashmir

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Abstract: *Being satisfied with one's life depends upon so many factors. Some factors are internal e.g. positive psychological strengths and others are external e.g. support groups, life events etc. In present paper, two of such factors were taken into consideration in predicting a person's Life Satisfaction. The aim of present paper was to examine the relationship of stress & resilience with Life Satisfaction among women. The participants comprised of 100 women aged 30 to 40 years. In order to collect data, Perceived Stress Scale, Brief Resilience Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale were used. It was found that Stress was positively related to Resilience. Besides, Resilience showed positive relationship with Life Satisfaction. It was also found that both Stress and Resilience predicted Life Satisfaction significantly. Thus, reducing stress and building resilience can go a long way to enhance the life satisfaction.*

Keywords: *Stress, Resilience, Life Satisfaction. Equilibrium, Life Scale.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The turmoil in Kashmir influences all the people living there, especially women folk. Being the vulnerable part of population, women stand witness to numerous misfortunes and challenges. In Kashmir there are around 32,000 widows (Dabla, 2010)¹. Among widows 80 percent belong to the age group of 25 to 32 (Mustafa, 2014)². Despite being stricken with the most painful event, major portion of this population are living satisfying lives. The reason for being satisfied with their lives could be numerous. In present study, one such reason i.e. resilience is taken into account. Besides, stress is also considered for its influence on Life satisfaction of widows. In the following sections the study variables viz. Life Satisfaction, Stress and Resilience are discussed.

2. LIFE SATISFACTION:

There exists a considerable ambiguity in defining Life Satisfaction as it is dependent upon individual perceptions. For some people, it is confined to the fulfillment of basic needs e.g. food, shelter, etc and for others it may go beyond materialistic aspects. To be satisfied with one's life means to live in accordance with the ideals, to live life at its best. Life Satisfaction is the positive evaluation of life as a whole. Life Satisfaction is one of the three components of Subjective Well-being (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985)³. Life Satisfaction is regarded as an essential construct in positive psychology (Gilman and Huebner 2003)⁴. Measures of Life Satisfaction entail the entire spectrum of functioning, thereby providing indicators for both well-being and psychopathology. Life Satisfaction involves life as a whole and not a specific aspect. Thereby, many factors play their role in determining Life Satisfaction. Some scholars regard Life Satisfaction as a top down process where it is determined by personality factors and some regard Life Satisfaction as a bottom up process where it depends upon basic human needs.

3. STRESS:

The extent to which a person feels satisfied or dissatisfied with his/her life depends upon numerous factors. One such factor is the events that a person encounters in his/her life. The events may be benign or stressful depending upon the influence they exert on persons functioning. Stressful situations are those life occurrences that hamper individuals daily functioning. They may included both positive events e.g., Marriage, birth of a child, new job or promotion etc or negative life events such as death of some relative, friend, parent or child, loss of job, etc. Whether positive or negative, some sudden changes in life are stressful. Stress may be defined as a response to challenging situations Stress is not only negative but positive as well. Positive stress is necessary for survival. But negative stress or distress hampers the daily functioning of a person experiencing it. In a way stress disturbs the equilibrium of a person. In some people, equilibrium is resorted after some time but in some people it may take years to come on track. This bouncing back after encountering disturbing event is known as resilience.

4. RESILIENCE:

Resilience has been thought as a sign of exceptional emotional strength (McFarlane and Yehuda, 1996)⁵. But now resilience is viewed as ordinary magic as stated by Marten. Resilience is not a rare thing and it doesn't need some extraordinary experience to be resilient. Resilience arises from experiences of day to day lives of common people. Resilience has been defined as maintenance, recovery or improvement in mental or physical health following a challenge (Ryff & Singer, 2003)⁶. Being resilient means to be fittest enough to survive the challenges and move on in life in a positive way. While encountering a stressful life, many people emerge as resilient but many others who

survive a misfortune are not capable to live in a positive way and thus they do not become resilient on account of challenge.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many research studies have shown strong relationships between stress, resilience and life satisfaction. Some of the studies are given below

While exploring the moderating role of resilience in relationship between past child sexual abuse and current Life Satisfaction, Iannacone & Yancy (2016)⁷ found that there was a strong positive correlation between resilience and satisfaction with life and a strong negative correlation between history of child sexual abuse and life satisfaction.

In a study by Akbar, Akram, Ahmed, Hussain, La, and Ijaz (2014)⁸, resilience and life satisfaction were examined in nomadic. The Resilience scale and the Life Satisfaction scale were used to assess resilience and life satisfaction respectively. After analyzing data, it was found that resilience correlated positively and significantly with Life Satisfaction.

Mak, Ng & Wong (2011)⁹ conducted a study to examine the relationships among resilience, Life Satisfaction and Depression. It was found that individuals who had higher level of resilience reported significantly higher levels of Life Satisfaction and lower levels of Depression.

Abolghashemi and Varaniyab(2010)¹⁰ conducted a study in order to determine the relationship of perceived stress and resilience with Life Satisfaction. They found that resilience and perceived positive stress are positively related to life satisfaction. Also, perceived negative stress is negatively related to life satisfaction. The result of multiple regression showed that psychological resilience and perceived stress explained 31 and 49 percent of variance of life satisfaction in the students of success and failure, respectively.

Rossi, Bisconti and Bergeman (2007)¹¹ carried out a study with the aim of examining dispositional resilience in the perceived stress–life satisfaction relation following loss of spouse. The participants were 55 widows. It was found that dispositional resilience acts as a mediator and a moderator between perceived stress and life satisfaction. After reviewing literature, following objectives were set for the present study.

6. OBJECTIVES

- To examine the relationship of stress and resilience with Life Satisfaction.
- To examine Stress and Resilience as predictors of Life Satisfaction.

7. HYPOTHESES

- There will be negative correlation between Stress and Life Satisfaction.
- There will be positive correlation between Resilience and Life Satisfaction.
- Resilience will emerge as a positive predictor of Life Satisfaction.
- Stress will emerge as a negative predictor of Life Satisfaction.

8. METHOD:

8.1 Sample

Participants of the present study comprised of 100 widows with age range of 30 to 40 years from Kashmir. Purposive sampling was used to approach the participants. Besides, only those who were widowed for more than six months and less than twelve months were included in the study.

8.2 Tools

Brief Resilience Scale

This scale was developed by Smith et al (2008). It comprises of 6 items. Items 1, 3 & 5 are positively worded and items 2, 4 & 6 are negatively worded. This scale is scored on a five point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Items 2, 4 & 6 are reverse scored. Total score is the average of 6 items.

Satisfaction with Life Scale

Satisfaction with Life Scale was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin in 1985. It comprises of five items and participant is required to indicate his/her level of agreement with each statement on a seven point scale ranging from strongly disagrees to strongly agree. Responses are summed to yield an overall score of life satisfaction.

Perceived Stress Scale

This scale was developed by Sheldon Cohen. It comprises of 10 items. PSS scores are obtained by reversing responses (e.g., 0 = 4, 1 = 3, 2 = 2, 3 = 1 & 4 = 0) to the four positively stated items (items 4, 5, 7, & 8) and then summing across all scale items.

9. RESULTS

After collecting data, SPSS version 20 was used to analyze it. The results obtained are given in the following sections

9.1 Correlations

Table 1.1

	Life Satisfaction
Stress	-.776***
Resilience	.840***

*** Correlation is significant at 0.001 level.

In table 1.1, the Bivariate correlations of the study variables are depicted. As can be seen, stress is correlated negatively and significantly with life satisfaction. Hence hypothesis 1, which stated that there will be negative correlation between Stress and Life Satisfaction, is accepted. Resilience correlated positively and significantly with Life Satisfaction. Hence, Hence hypothesis 2, which stated that there will be positive correlation between Resilience and Life Satisfaction, is also accepted.

9.2 Regression Analysis

Stepwise multiple linear regression analysis was used to study relationship between a single criterion variable and two predictor variables. Before performing the analysis, the variables were scatter plotted to look into the nature of data for variables under study. Besides, fulfillment of the assumptions (normality, linearity, equality of variance and independence) was ensured. Both predictor variables were retained in regression analysis.

Table 1.2 exhibit the regression models considering the Life Satisfaction as the criterion variable and Stress and Resilience as predictor variables.

9.3 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Criterion Variable: Life Satisfaction

Table 1.2

Predictor variables in the model	β	Multiple R	R square	F-value	p
Resilience	.840	.840	.706	235.264	0.000
Constant		-29.111			
Resilience	.587	.910	.123	69.447	0.000
Stress	-.432				
Constant		-10.935			

After entering the predictors in regression, Resilience emerged as a significant positive predictor of Life Satisfaction ($\beta=.706$, $P=0.000$). Hence Hypothesis 3, which stated that Stress will emerge as a negative predictor of Life Satisfaction, is accepted. Besides, Stress emerged as significant negative predictor of Life Satisfaction ($\beta=-.432$, $P=0.000$). Hence, Hypothesis 4, which stated that Stress will emerge as a negative predictor of Life Satisfaction, is accepted. Resilience was found to be stronger predictor than Stress.

10. DISCUSSION:

The results of present study are in accordance with earlier research. It was found in the present study that stress correlated negatively and significantly with Life Satisfaction. The results found support from the studies of Abolghashemi and Varaniyab (2010), Marum, Clench-Aas, Nes & Ranaas (2014) etc. It was also found that resilience correlated positively with life satisfaction. Similar results could be found in the studies conducted by Mak, Ng & Wong (2011), etc. Besides, results indicated that both stress and resilience predict Life Satisfaction in a significant way. In a study, Abolghashemi and Varaniyab (2010) also found perceived stress and resilience as significant predictors of Life Satisfaction. As resilience predicted Life Satisfaction more strongly than stress, it can be said that despite encountering stressful events in one's life, building resilience is more important to live a satisfied life. Thus, widows of Kashmir have found opportunity in adversity.

11. IMPLICATIONS:

Besides finding support from earlier research, present study will add to the reservoir of knowledge on stress, resilience and Life Satisfaction. It can be concluded from the present study that where there is adversity, there is opportunity as well i.e. to prosper and be satisfied in one's life. The present study has implications for counselors and therapists who deal with widowed women. They can help them to adjust well in life by building resilience.

12. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

The present study included only widows; it will be interesting to include widowers as well and examine the differences. The participants of current study comprised of 100 widows, future researchers may include larger samples.

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