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**DIFFERENCES IN SELF-ESTEEM AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-
BEING BETWEEN WORKING AND NON-WORKING LEBANESE
WOMEN**

BY

Nada Safi Haddad

Nada Safi Haddad

Approved by

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters in Arts
to the Department of Education
of the division of Social and Behavioral Studies
at Haigazian University

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June, 2005

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This thesis was not supposed to be done by now. Many obstacles faced me
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Dr. Hanine Hout, for being available, understanding, and supportive,

Dr. David Tawil, for being a statistical resource,

Dr. Marwan Gharzeddine, for being helpful behind the scenes,

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Husband, for sacrificing a lot,

Children, for bearing with my absence,

Mother, for journeying selflessly with me through my studies,

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the differences in self esteem and general psychological well-being including levels of autonomy, personal growth and self-acceptance between working women and non-working women. The sample consisted of randomly selected 101 Lebanese women between 25 and 55 years old. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and the Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being were the two tools used in this study. This study was a quantitative study that utilized the t-test, as well as the method of correlation and simple percentages. The results were significant and showed that working women score higher on the Self-Esteem Scale and the Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being as well as the subscales, personal growth, self-acceptance and autonomy. This study confirmed the importance of work in increasing levels of self-esteem and psychological well-being among Lebanese women.

Nada Safi Haddad

CHAPTER ONE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Challenges Women Face in the Work Place

Sex Segregation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
ABSTRACT	ii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
1. Problem Statement	1
2. Purpose of the Study	2
3. Hypotheses	3
4. Research Questions	3
5. Background of the study	4
6. Need for the Study	5
7. Nature of the study	6
8. Definition of Terms	6
9. Limitations of the Study	7
<u>CHAPTER ONE</u>	26
REVIEW OF LITERATURE	9
1. Challenges Women Face in the Work Place	9
Sex Segregation	9

Risk of Childlessness	10
Facing the Dual Roles Problems	12
1. Child Care	13
2. Internal Restrictions	13
3. The Glass Ceiling	14
4. Sexual Harassment	14
2. Pro's and Con's for Working Mothers	15
3. The Impact of Job and Family on Psychological Well-Being of Working Mothers and Fathers	17
4. The Psychological Effect of Work on Women	18
5. Role Qualities and Women's Well-Being	20
6. Employed Women and Gender Role Attitudes	20
7. A Korean Study Concerning Working Women's Well-Being	21
8. A Historical Glimpse on Women and Work	22

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY	25
1. Participants	25
2. Tools	25
3. Procedure	26

CHAPTER THREE

THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY	28
---------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER FOUR

ILLUSTRATIONS

DISCUSSION 36

1. Women’s Self-Esteem Under the Microscope 36

2. Women’s Psychological Well-Being Under the Microscope 37

3. Autonomy, Self-Acceptance, and Personal Growth 38

4. Self-Acceptance Shared by Both Groups 40

5. Meditating on the Research Questions 41

6. Future Studies 43

REFERENCES 44

APPENDIX

ILLUSTRATIONS

Table	Page
1 Comparing Means of Self Esteem Among both Groups of Women	28
Figure 1 Percentages of the answers on Research Question 1	32
2 Comparing Means of Psychological Well Being Among two Groups	28
Figure 2 Percentages of the answers on Research Question 2	34
3 Comparing Mean Scores of Six Subscales Among Both Groups	29
4 Correlation between Well-Being and the Six Sub Scales (NWW)	30

TABLES

TO THE MEMORY OF MY LATE FATHER
Running Head: WOMEN AND CAREER

Table	Page
1 Comparing Means of Self Esteem Among both Groups of Women	28
2 Comparing Means of Psychological Well Being Among two Groups	28
3 Comparing Mean Scores of Six Subscales Among Both Groups	29
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INTRODUCTION

TO THE MEMORY OF MY DEAR FATHER

Problem Statement

Women have always been viewed as the weaker and fragile sex. This gentle and softer part of humanity is more apt to be affected either positively or negatively with respect to emotions, feelings, and self-esteem.

Contemporary college women say they want it all: career, marriage, and mother-hood. They evaluate the combination as the most attractive role option (Hoffnung, 2004).

Over the past decade, the increase in the number of women graduating from leading universities has been much greater than the increase in the total number of graduates (Wentling, 1992). As the world is progressing into new eras of technology and knowledge, women are getting more involved in the field force, either for financial or other reasons.

Lebanese women specifically are getting more involved in the world of work, mainly for financial reasons. However, some women stress the fact that, financial issues aside, they would still prefer to continue their careers rather than stay at home. Women nowadays are paying a dear price in order to join the working world, but they are reaping the benefits as well. Those who juggle several roles have more potential sources of fulfillment than women who "put all their eggs in one basket". Filling more than one role allows women to "divide their emotional eggs among several baskets" (Barnett, 1993). If something is going poorly in one area, things are likely to be going better in another. The independence provided by money, an enhanced sense of

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competence, structured daily life, getting out of the house, and the likelihood of friendships in the work place are important benefits enjoyed by working women (Hoffnung, 2002). According to research (Barnett, 1988) stress does not seem to be related to how many roles a person takes on. Up to a point, the more roles a woman can handle the greater her self-esteem will be.

In this context, the question presents itself: "How is the self-esteem of the working women? Does it differ from that of the full-time home-makers? And, does their self-esteem change as they get more involved in their careers?" Do career women identify themselves through their work achievements or through the achievements and social ranks of their parents, spouses, or children? Is the women's psychological well-being higher than those women who are not pursuing any career?

As discussed above, research (Wentling, 1992, Barnett, 1988, Hoffnung, 2004), seems to give support to the idea that the self esteem and different aspects of the psychological well-being of working women are all related to the significant fact that this group of women consists of career women.

Purpose Of The Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the differences in self-esteem and the general psychological well-being; including the levels of autonomy, personal growth, and self acceptance between working and non-working Lebanese women.

Hypotheses

Based on the rationale above, we can hypothesize the following:

1. Lebanese working women will score higher on self-esteem than non working women.
2. Lebanese working women will show higher levels of psychological well-being than non working women.

Based on our personal reading and understanding of the Lebanese women culture, which are observations that cannot be backed up by scientific research, we can further hypothesize the following:

3. Lebanese working women will score higher on autonomy, self-acceptance, and personal growth than non-working women. However, no differences are predicted among working women and non-working women on the other three subscales (Environmental Mastery, Positive Relations, and Purpose in Life).
4. The three subscales (Autonomy, Personal Growth, and Self-Acceptance) are expected to correlate higher with psychological well-being among working women than non-working women.

Research Questions

The researcher was interested in obtaining some additional feedback regarding certain issues that could help in discussing the posed hypotheses later on in the study. The issues were addressed as research questions and not as hypotheses:

1. Do Lebanese working women identify themselves through their jobs, while non- working women identify themselves through the achievements of their parents, husbands, or kids?
2. Do Lebanese working women spend their free time in catching up with their missing responsibilities, while non-working women enjoy leisure time for their personal benefits?

Background Of The Study

As a Lebanese mother of two kids, I have had the privilege of experiencing a full-time job, and full-time motherhood. I have established my opinions concerning both situations, and have been voicing them out ever since. I, strongly, invite any new mother to enjoy her child(ren) because she will never be able to set the time back. I have passed also, through a period of being single and working, and through another period when I was not working. These times left behind certain cognitions and thoughts which have lasted with me up to this moment. I am a combination of the different roles that a woman can play at one time or another. My interest lies in finding out whether a woman's self-esteem and psychological well-being are affected by being a working woman or a non-working woman. I hope that this study will be of interest to many women as well as men. It should be of interest to the Lebanese women because they are getting more involved in the world of business and career. I, also, hope men would be interested to become more aware of the emotional and psychological needs of the women around them

whether their wives, daughters, sisters, or colleagues,... and to eventually acquire a new perspective towards a woman's career.

Need For The Study

Despite perceptions that working women have progressed, and that working men have become more egalitarian, the war between the sexes is nowhere near resolution. We have no reason to expect that the battles staged on the home front, the social front, the governmental front, the economic front, or the work front are becoming fewer or more quickly resolved.

One reason for the conflict stems from the differences in perceptions that working men and women are likely to develop when they examine reports on women's progress (Snavey, 1993). One reason that called for this study is the little awareness that people show on how it is psychologically important for women to have a career for themselves.

Lebanese women have started to be aware of building an independent identity not associated with "others". However, some Lebanese men are still finding it difficult to see women identifying themselves other than through the circles of the male figures in their families. Men should become more aware of the fact that a career boosts the self-esteem of women, and therefore they should give them a helping hand to achieve their goals.

This study is extremely significant to our Lebanese society where both men and women are still struggling to reach a compromise with respect to a woman's career. Most importantly, however, is the need is to enlighten

women about the fact that a positive experience in a paid work role could have positive results on her physical as well as psychological health.

Nature Of The Study

This study is a quantitative study that will utilize the independent t-test to compare both groups on a number of variables, mainly, self-esteem and psychological well-being.

In addition, this study uses the method of correlation research to detect differences in correlations-mainly between the psychological well-being scale and its six subscales (Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with others, Purpose in Life, and Self Acceptance) between the two groups of women.

This study will also include simple percentages that reflect both groups' answers on both posed research questions.

Definition of Terms

Self-esteem: It can be defined as the individual's personal judgment of his or her own worth. Although self-esteem is sometimes discussed as if it were a single entity, persons evaluate their functioning in different areas of life discriminatively (Collins, 1984).

“Work” or “career” may mean one of the following:

- a full-time job
- a part-time job which involves a minimum of four hours daily.

Woman: it includes the single, married, divorced, or widowed woman. So, our study applies on women in general and not on married women only.

Psychological well-being: refers to an individual's subjective and global psychological well-being, and is the extent of "happiness or satisfaction with life-as-a-whole or in life in general" (Kim, 1998).

Autonomy: the ability to exist, respond, react, and develop independently (Mirriem, 1992).

Environmental Mastery: Skill, command, and knowledge of the environment (Webster, 1975).

Personal Growth: Progressive self-development (Mirriem, 1992).

Positive Relations with others: the ability to establish and maintain networking among people and acquaintances (Mirriem, 1992).

Purpose in Life: Resolution and determination in life (Webster, 1975).

Self-Acceptance: Accepting one's self; accepting an individual's typical or temporary character or behavior (Mirriem, 1992).

Limitations Of The Study

The limitations of this study could be summarized in the following points which we were aware of, and were not able to overcome:

- We did not cover the population of low socioeconomic status women, for the assumption that these women would be working blue collar jobs for financial reasons, and the type of work that they have cannot be addressed as a career.

- A number of women mentioned the financial difficulties as their main reason of working, so we cannot assume that they are acquiring their self-esteem from their jobs only.

ation rates, numerous studies (Gerson, 1986; Snavey, 1993) reveal that professional women face stereotyping, struggle with bias in performance appraisal, promotion, and salary, and are confronted with serious work-life tradeoffs as they climb the corporate ladder. Before analyzing the positive psychological effect of work on women, a section on the various challenges that women face in their careers is also important. Therefore, what follows is a discussion of few areas that women struggle with while pursuing a career.

Challenges Women Face in the Work Place

Sex Segregation

This issue still continues to characterize the workplace, despite the changes that have occurred in some occupations, and despite perceptions that working women have progressed and that working men have become more egalitarian, the war between the sexes is nowhere near resolution. According to Snavey (1993), we have no reason to expect that the battles staged on the home front, the social front, the governmental front, the economic front, or the work front are becoming fewer or more quickly resolved. Time and energy spent addressing male-female conflict seem destined to remain a significant managerial role. One reason for the conflict stems from the variance in

Chapter One

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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perceptions that working men and women are likely to develop when they examine reports on women's progress (Snavely, 1993).

Attitudes about the role of women in society may have changed dramatically, but women are still perceived as being less suitable than men for managerial positions. On the financial side, women today earn 76 cents for every 1 \$ earned by men (American Demographic, April 1, 2002). Even with their earnings stagnating at 76% of men's, it is not just money women are losing out on, but better job assignments, recognition and career opportunities. Companies lose too, with high attrition rates of dissatisfied (but silent) female workers, performing below their potential. They are satisfied with less, assume good behavior is automatically rewarded, and equate "assertive" with "difficult" (Auster, 2001).

Risk of Childlessness

As women's workplace participation reached a historic high, the birthrate dropped below the replacement rate to a historic low (Gerson, 1986). Despite fears of a population explosion, the long-term trend has been toward a "baby bust". It is no coincidence that as more women are employed, they are having fewer babies. Women's work and family decisions have always been closely connected.

Medicine tells us that at the age of forty-two, 90% of a woman's eggs are abnormal; her chance of pregnancy is 7.8%. Fertility declines with age. We just do not realize how much and how fast. Ambitious young women

spend their most fertile years establishing their careers, embracing a “male model” of single-minded career focus, waiting until much later to get pregnant. The result has been “an epidemic of childlessness”. One in five women between 40 and 44 is childless, and that number has doubled in the past twenty years (Work & Family News brief, May, 2002). Women face a “cruel choice” that men do not have. Slow down to start a family, and you will be running the risk that you will never catch up. Do not slow down, and biology may make your childbearing choices for you.

The patterns of marriage have been changing, also. People are waiting longer to get married, and more women are forgoing marriage altogether. Many women are marrying later now than at any time in the century. Median age at marriage for women was 24.5 in 1994, compared with 20.8 in 1970. While most people married while in their 20s during the 1970s, more people are now entering their 30s still single. In 1996, 20 percent of women had yet not married, compared with 6 percent in 1970 (Bianchi, 1998). Whether the current never-married population remains single throughout life or simply waits until older ages to marry will have important social implications on women.

Delayed marriage has important effects on childbearing patterns, and it serves to reduce the completed family size, and for some women, leads to childlessness.

Facing The Dual Roles Problem

Economic conditions have greatly contributed to an increase in the number of married women who are employed full time. Managing both roles has caused conflicts for many women, particularly in meeting with their own individual needs (Zunker, 2002). Although the dual role of working women has found greater acceptance, personal contradictions that need clarification persist in the working woman's life (Zunker, 2002). When a working woman gets stressed out, many blame her job. But women who stay at home are more likely to suffer anxiety and to feel unhappy (Blake, 1989). Planning child care and day-to-day support are an important part of being a successful wife, mother, and career woman. It takes more than hard work and high hopes.

By measuring the mom's degree of child care responsibility, how confident she feels in combining the demands of work and home, psychological distress and well-being, it is obvious that a woman's belief in her ability to manage multiple roles contributes significantly to her overall satisfaction. And, no one other than her spouse has the greatest influence on that belief (Gale, 2004). Whether or not mothers believed that their jobs or even their friends were flexible enough to help in crisis, the fathers' willingness to help out (if she gets stuck in a meeting, for instance) greatly influences the women's well-being-regardless of whether they actually need the help. Conversely, if the father's attitude toward sharing the responsibilities stinks, the time he puts in does not matter; the mother feels extra stressed. The bottom line? Happy working mothers need supportive spouses.

Child Care

Research has shown that mothers shoulder the greater burden with regard to child care issues (Zunker, 2002). Many work, family and personal difficulties for women evolve from child care problems. Personal problems usually involve stress and the conflict that results between the need to achieve in a work situation, and the need to be a responsible parent (Zunker, 2002).

It is not the actual burden of child care that determines working moms' distress, contends a University of California at San Francisco researcher (Gale, 2004). While bearing the brunt of responsibility does have a negative effect, two other closely related factors also come into play:

- Regardless of the actual division of child care, it is extremely important for a mother to be able to count on enlisting her husband's help should she need him.
- The knowledge of such support increases mom's perceived capabilities to juggle work and baby care, improving her outlook, and reducing overall stress (Gale, 2004).

Internal Restrictions

Of major importance is the internal restrictions women experience when considering full-time careers or non traditional roles. To project oneself into an occupational environment dominated by men can indeed be a difficult task for many women who grew up under the influence of traditional gender stereotyping of occupations. On the one hand, early socialization has instilled

identification with certain society-sanctioned gender roles; on the other hand, women are being told to break away from the traditional gender role. Indeed, many find this dichotomy too great to bear (Zunker, 2002).

The Glass Ceiling

The so-called glass ceiling is an invisible barrier that consists of subtle attitudes and prejudices that have blocked women from ascending the corporate ladder. One method used to block women from top-level corporate jobs is to insist that senior executives have 25 years' experience.

Another method used to exclude women is to groom them for either lower-level positions or for those positions not on track for senior-level positions (Zunker, 2002).

Sexual Harassment

The issue of sexual harassment has been well documented in the workplace for several years. Some descriptions of harassment are sexual remarks, suggestive looks, deliberate touching, pressure for dates, letters and calls, pressure for sexual favors, and actual or attempted rape.

More than 50% of working women will experience sexual harassment in their jobs at one time or another in their career life (Lott, 1994).

Pro's and Con's for Working Mothers

A study by the Canadian National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth released in October, 1999, concluded that “children who are enrolled in early childhood programs and day-care centers appear to get a head start in school over youngsters who stay at home with a parent” (Stay at – Home Parents, 2002).

A recent study by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development has concluded that “the more hours a child spends during the first three years of life in non-maternal care, the less positive the child’s interactions with her/his mother.” (Stay at –Home Parents, 2004). Some of the findings of this new study, as published in the November issue of “Developmental Psychology” published in the American Psychological Association were:

- Children who regularly spend time in non-maternal care have “somehow less positive” interactions with their mothers than children who spend less or no time in non-maternal care.
- Longer hours of child care are associated with some diminished familiarity and less ability of mother and child to be “in tune” with each other.
- Maternal education was a much stronger predictor of maternal sensitivity than either child care hours or the quality of that care (Developmental Psychology, 2003).

choice More typical is the surrender of the late Dr. Benjamin Spock. For years he maintained that nurseries are “no good for infants”. But, by the 1990s, he had dropped the advice, because it made working mothers feel guilty. “It’s a cowardly thing that I did,” he explained. “I just tossed it in subsequent editions” (Spock, 1992).

Apart from the different aspects that the work of a mother has on her children, research seems to focus on the psychological importance of work on the working mother herself Genevie (1987) concluded the following:

- Working is better for a woman’s personal growth.
- There is a feeling of satisfaction; it makes them happier people.
- Women feel that they have to work for their own psychological well-being (Genevie, 1987).

In today’s society if you walk up to a woman and ask what is her career, if the answer is that she is a stay-at-home mom, people might tend to look down at her. But if she is a working mom, they might ask, “How do you do it all?”. This happens to many women and it makes it harder for them to choose between their children and work (Genevie, 1987). But for the first time in 25 years, the percentage of new moms returning to work has fallen from 59% in 1998 to 55% in 2000 (Fox, 2002). On the contrary, from 1975 to 1990, the work labor force for women has grown steadily and women with children account for most of the increase (Hayghe, 1998).

It is interesting to note that all of the statistical information on this subject is controversial, but it also shows that more women have a lifestyle

choice instead of an economic choice. It all comes down to if women are happier working or staying at home. It is a choice that all women must make, and the results are still debatable (Genevie, 1987).

The Psychological Effect Of Work On Women

The Impact of Job and Family Responsibilities on Psychological Well-being of Working Mothers and Fathers

As men and women take on increasingly similar levels of responsibilities at work and within home, their perception of work stress and *their level of psychological well-being also become similar.* Drs. Schwartzberg and Dytell (Schwartzberg, 1999), looked specifically at how well self-esteem in earner mothers and fathers were affected by both work stress and family stress, as well as by job-family interference.

The authors found that both parents derived self-esteem from their accomplishments at work rather than accomplishments at home. Work stress was suggested by this study to be more important in determining the self-esteem of mothers than fathers, while family stress appeared to be more important in determining depression for fathers than mothers (Schwartzberg).

Overall, the family stressors resulting in depression were different for mothers and fathers; dual earner fathers reported depression due to lack of spousal support or family role insignificance, whereas dual-earner mothers were sensitive to a lack of task sharing. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Blake, 1989, Gale, 2004) indicating that working fathers seem more attuned to their emotional relationship with their spouses, whereas

working mothers seem more attuned to the amount of actual assistance they receive around the house.

The Psychological Effect Of Work On Women

The picture of women in the workplace is one of clear, albeit slow, progress toward equality with men. This bodes well for gender equality in the labor force. The more highly educated a woman, the more likely she is to work for pay, and to be in a managerial or professional role. Hence, the rise in women's educational attainment has been a key factor in women's movement toward paid work and continuous participation throughout their adult lives (Bianchi, 1998).

Elizabeth Ozer studied 42 married women from the last months of their pregnancy to one month after they returned to work (usually within three months after giving birth). By measuring how confident the moms felt in combining the demands of work and home, psychological distress and well-being, Ozer found that a woman's belief to manage multiple roles contributes significantly to her overall satisfaction (Gale, 2004).

By the end of the 1980s, after two decades of increased participation by younger women, women had increased their representation in higher-paid occupations. In particular, the proportion of managers who were women jumped from 19 - 31 percent in the 1970s and then to 43 percent by the middle of the 1990s, an increase that paralleled the feminization of business majors in colleges (Bianchi, 1998).

Role Overload Studies on the effects of employment on women's well-being have demonstrated highly inconsistent results. In support of the scarcity approach, which hypothesizes that human energy is fixed and limited, additional roles often result in stress, overload, and conflict (Kim, 1998). In contrast, the enhancement approach or role accumulative hypothesis (Gutek, 1993) suggests that a woman's multiple roles supply the woman with multiple identities and that satisfying roles can complement or offset less satisfying roles. Despite the hardships working women encounter, the benefits they stand to gain working may balance out the picture.

In a study conducted by Keith (Keith and Schafer, 1982) results showed that employed women reported lower levels of depression! Women who are satisfied with their jobs show fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression and greater levels of well-being, regardless of their roles at home (Hoffnung, 2002). A positive experience in a paid work role can even offset the negative feelings a woman may have concerning her inability and inadequacy in her role as a mother, and enhance the relationship between her and her partner.

Findings Women nowadays are dearly paying to join the work world, but they are reaping the benefits as well. By becoming more aware of potential pitfalls, many of them may find that "having it all" makes them happier than hapless and more stimulated than strained. However, the secret of the emotional and physical well-being lies in whether the woman feels the job as a choice or an obligation (Robinson, 2002).

Role Qualities and Women's Well-Being

Based on previous research (Pines & Kafry, 1981; Baruch et al., 1987; Barnette & Marshall, 1992), it was expected that the presence of multiple roles would not be crucial in predicting employed and non-employed well-being. Supports for this prediction were manifested in several sets of results. While having a job, working full-time, having young children implies more multiple roles for women (Waldren & Jacobs, 1989), the negative effects of those factors on mothers' well-being were absent in this study. This study's findings thus lend strength to the idea that it is not simply a matter of the number of roles women have, but a matter of the quality the women experience in each of their social roles. Specifically, this study demonstrated that when women experienced more positive aspects or more rewards in their roles, they experienced better psychological well-being (Hyewon, 1998).

Employed Women and Gender Role Attitudes

Studies that have examined the impact of gender role attitudes on the relationship between employment and women's well-being reported consistent findings (Hyewon, 1998). Employed women, in general, had more liberal attitudes than non-employed women (Feree, 1980, Parry, 1987), and the high level of liberality in gender role attitudes were to be linked to greater well-being among employed women. The different association between gender role attitudes and well-being, employed and non employed working women were clearly demonstrated in Parry's (1987) study. With 160 employed and non

employed working class women, the results showed that more liberal gender role attitudes were related to lower psychiatric symptoms and anxiety among employed women, but not in non employed women.

A Korean Study Concerning Working Women's Well-Being

In traditional Korean society, due to the strong legacy of Confucian philosophy, hierarchical orders of human relations according to age and gender were highly stressed (Hyewon, 1998). Recently, contrary to its tradition that admires married women for staying home, Korea is observing a big increase in the numbers of mothers working outside the house. While the rate of male participation in the labor force has decreased between 1980 and 1996 from 70.4% to 68.9%, the rate of female participation has increased from 45.4% to 49.0% during the same period (Cho, 1994). Especially, the married women's participation in the labor force was notable in that the rate of maternal employment has continually increased from 40.0% in 1980, to 48.5% in 1996 (KWDI, 1997).

A group of Korean studies (Nato, 1989; Cho, 1994) revealed that working outside the home led women to experience better physical or psychological well-being, compared to non employed women.

Kim Hyewon (1998) explored through a study the psychological well-being of employed and non-employed Korean mothers in relation to their social structure variables, gender roles, and role qualities. The results of this

study were as such: employed mothers were at no greater risk of psychological distress than were non-employed mothers.

These findings support the growing consensus that employment and the accompanying increased number of social roles per se do not have harmful effects on women's psychological well-being. Instead, results showed that employed and non-employed mothers' well-being was determined by the interplay of employment and additional variables, and that the variables were affecting the mothers' well-being with different weight of influence (Hyewon, 1998).

A Historical Glimpse on Women and Work

We must never be fooled into thinking that the 19th century "cult of domesticity", which glorified active motherhood and diligent domesticity, meant that the 19th and early 20th century women worked only in the home (Clark, 2002). Far from it. Housework and childcare by no means exhausted women's energies. On the contrary, both housewives and single women threw themselves into a variety of activities that took them out of the home. They organized benevolent societies, female reform societies, and foreign missions. They took up charities and philanthropies of all kinds. Many of them enlisted in the antislavery crusade, the peace movement, prison reform, and of course the movement for women's rights (Lasch, 2002).

Between 1890 and 1920, it was *women* who did much of the work in the "public" sector, according to the traditional understanding of the terms

“public” and “private”. The chief reason that our contemporaries do not acknowledge these women’s work outside the home is that their labor was *unpaid*. There is always been plenty of hard labor done by women that went unacknowledged for one reason or another (Lasch, 2002).

Nowadays, woman’s role is increasingly recognized, not only in the family circle, but also in the wider context of all social activities. Without the contribution of women, society is less alive, cultural impoverished, and peace less stable. Situations where women are prevented from developing their full potential and from offering the wealth of their gifts should therefore be considered profoundly unjust, not only to women themselves but to society as a whole (Angelues, 2001).

I believe that women are in this together; if we stay at home, or work outside it, or do little of both, work helps us grow, become independent and provides us with an identity of our own.

Therefore, the present study was conducted to assess the differences in self-esteem and psychological well-being between the working and non-working women. More, specifically, and as stated in the introduction, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Working women will score higher on self-esteem than non working women.
2. Working women will show higher levels of psychological well-being than non working women.
3. Working women will score higher on autonomy, self-acceptance, and personal growth than non-working women.

4. The three subscales (Autonomy, Personal Growth, Self-Acceptance) are expected to correlate higher with psychological well-being among working women than non-working women.

Moreover, the following research questions were posed.

1. Do working women find their identities through their jobs, while non-working women find their identities through the achievements of their parents, husbands, or kids?
2. Do working women spend their free time in catching up with their missing responsibilities, while non-working women enjoy leisure time for their personal benefits?

Fifty-one of the selected women are career women, and the other fifty are non-working. The ages ranged from 25-55 years old. Conditions for the working women are the following: a minimum of 3-5 years of experience, with the High School as the minimum level of education.

Tools

A questionnaire was filled by both groups of women. It included both research questions as well as some demographic data.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965), was used to score the self-esteem of women. The scale consists of 5 positively worded items, and 5 negatively worded items. Each item is rated on a 5-point scale, and responses are summed to produce a total self-esteem score (negatively worded items are reversed scored before summing). Scores range from 10-50, with higher scores

Chapter Two

METHODOLOGY

Participants

One hundred and one Lebanese women (single or married) from different social and religious backgrounds were chosen randomly from middle-high socioeconomic status. Women from low socioeconomic status were exempted from this study for the mere fact that if these women are working, they are not pursuing a career and most are working out of need. And, If they are not working, they have their own reasons for low self-esteem and poor psychological well-being due to the low socioeconomic level.

Fifty-one of the selected women are career women, and the other fifty are non-working. The ages ranged from 25-55 years old. Conditions for the working women are the following: a minimum of 3-5 years of experience, with the High School as the minimum level of education.

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indicating more positive self-esteem. Rosenberg (1965) reported a reliability coefficient of .92.

The Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-Being (1982) was used as a tool to measure the difference in psychological well-being of both groups.

Each six- item scale was examined separately for its expected one-factor solution.

The scale is made up of six subdivisions, all of which had adequate internal reliability. Following are the reliability coefficients of each of the following subscales: Autonomy .76, Environmental Mastery .78, Personal Growth .72, Positive Relations with Others .72, Purpose in Life .78, and Self-Acceptance .81

Procedure

The women were asked to fill in the three forms with as much precision as possible. The questionnaire is in English, and all the women were able to understand the content. One questionnaire consumed a range of 10-15 minutes to be filled. The instructions were given equally to all participants as they were printed at the top. The women were asked to fill in the papers anonymously, so that they would feel more at ease in expressing their reactions and thoughts.

An independent t-test was used to compare means of self-esteem, as well as psychological well-being among both groups of women.

An independent t-test was also used to compare mean scores of the six subdivisions of the well-being scale (Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with others, Purpose in Life, and Self-Acceptance) between working women and non-working women.

In addition, scores of psychological well-being were correlated with scores of all six subscales (Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with others, Purpose in Life, and Self-Acceptance) among both groups of women. Then, the six correlations in both groups of women were compared with each other, and the differences between each set of correlations were tested for significance.

Simple percentages were also calculated to reflect the different answers for both posed research questions on the two groups of women.

To test H2, which stated the following: *Working women will show higher levels of psychological well-being than non working women*, we performed an independent t-test (see table 2).

Table 2
Comparing Means Of Psychological Well-Being Among Both Groups

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
1.00	139.4902	29.58674	-7.019	99	.000
2.00	171.8600	13.84463			

1.00= Non-Working Women
2.00= Working Women

Chapter Three

RESULTS

H1 stated the following: *Working women will score higher on self-esteem than non working women.* This hypothesis was tested on the basis of an independent t-test (see table 1).

Table 1
Comparing Self-Esteem Means Among Both Groups Of Women

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
1.00	18.7255	6.68155	-5.555	99	.000
2.00	24.6400	3.50370			

1.00= Non-Working Women
2.00= Working Women

The table shows significant results; therefore, we can confirm H1.

To test H2, which stated the following: *Working women will show higher levels of psychological well-being than non working women,* we performed an independent t-test (see table 2).

Table 2
Comparing Means Of Psychological Well-Being Among Both Groups

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
1.00	139.4902	29.58674	-7.019	99	.000
2.00	171.8600	13.84463			

1.00= Non-Working Women
2.00= Working Women

The table shows significant results; we conclude that H2 is confirmed.

H3 stated that *working women will score higher on autonomy, self-acceptance, and personal growth than non-working women*. This hypothesis was tested based on an independent t-test (see table 3).

Table 3
Comparing Mean Scores the Six Sub-Scales Among Both Groups

		Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	df	Sig. (2-Tailed)
A	1.00	21.9608	5.63546	-3.495	99	.001
	2.00	25.6400	4.91046			
S.A	1.00	25.2549	5.67043	-3.495	99	.001
	2.00	30.2000	4.75952			
P.G.	1.00	21.3725	7.42687	-4.502	99	.000
	2.00	26.8200	4.28900			
E. M	1.00	23.8235	5.47980	-5.351	99	.000
	2.00	28.6400	3.26865			
P.R.	1.00	23.5490	6.55535	-5.439	99	.000
	2.00	29.3400	29.3400			
P.L.	1.00	25.1176	6.63821	-5.664	99	.000
	2.00	26.8200	3.22927			

1.00= Non-Working Women
2.00= Working Women

A= Autonomy S.A.= Self-Acceptance P.G.= Personal Growth
E. M.= Environmental Mastery P.R.= Positive Relations
P.L. Purpose in Life

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 shows significant results regarding the sub-scales (Autonomy, Self-Acceptance, and Personal Growth). Therefore, this hypothesis is confirmed.

H4 stated that *the three subscales (Autonomy, Personal Growth, Self-Acceptance) were expected to correlate higher with psychological well-being among working women than non-working women.*

This hypothesis was tested on the basis of the Pearson Correlation at significance level 0.01 (2-tailed) (see table 4).

Table 4
Comparisons of Correlation Between The Well-Being and the Six Subscales Among Working and Non-Working Women

	status	N	WB	Auto.	EM	PG	PR	P	SA
WB -Pearson Correlation	1.00	50	1	.459** .001	.547** .000	.426** .002	.682** .000	.690** .000	.759** .000
WB -Pearson Correlation	2.00	51	1	.773** .000	.645** .000	.701** .002	.706** .000	.865** .000	.836** .000
Difference (r)				0.0041	-	0.022	-	-	0.759

1.00= Non Working

2.00= Working

A= Autonomy S.A.= Self-Acceptance P.G.= Personal Growth

E. M.= Environmental Mastery P.R.= Positive Relations

P.L. Purpose in Life

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

To conclude if the correlations in table 4 confirm our predicted hypothesis (H4), we calculated the differences in these correlations.

For the **subscale Autonomy**, the difference between $r = 0.773$, and $r = 0.459$ is significant at $p = 0.0041$

For the **subscale Personal Growth (PG)**, the difference between $r = .0701$ and $r = 0.426$ is significant at $p = 0.022$

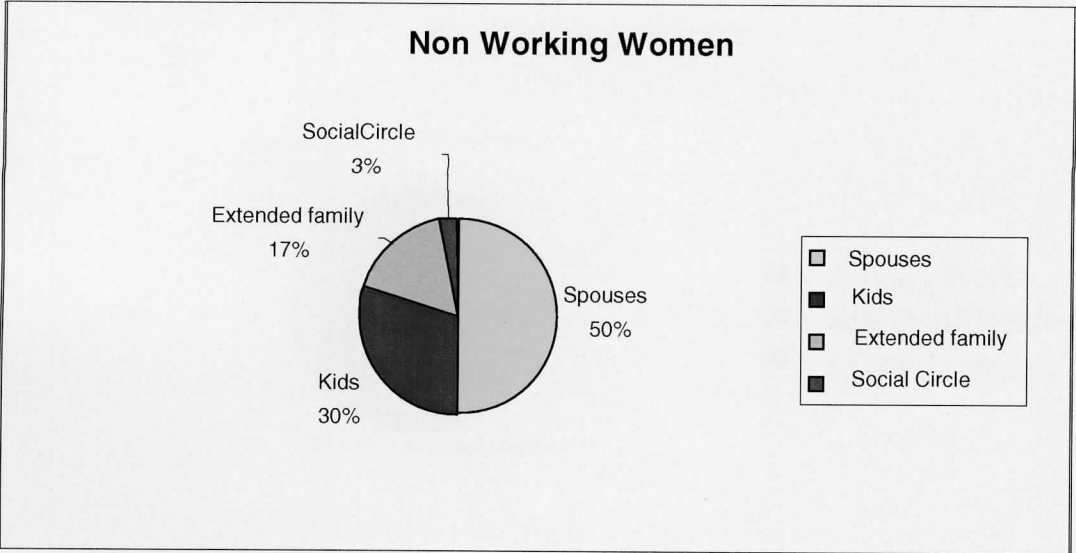
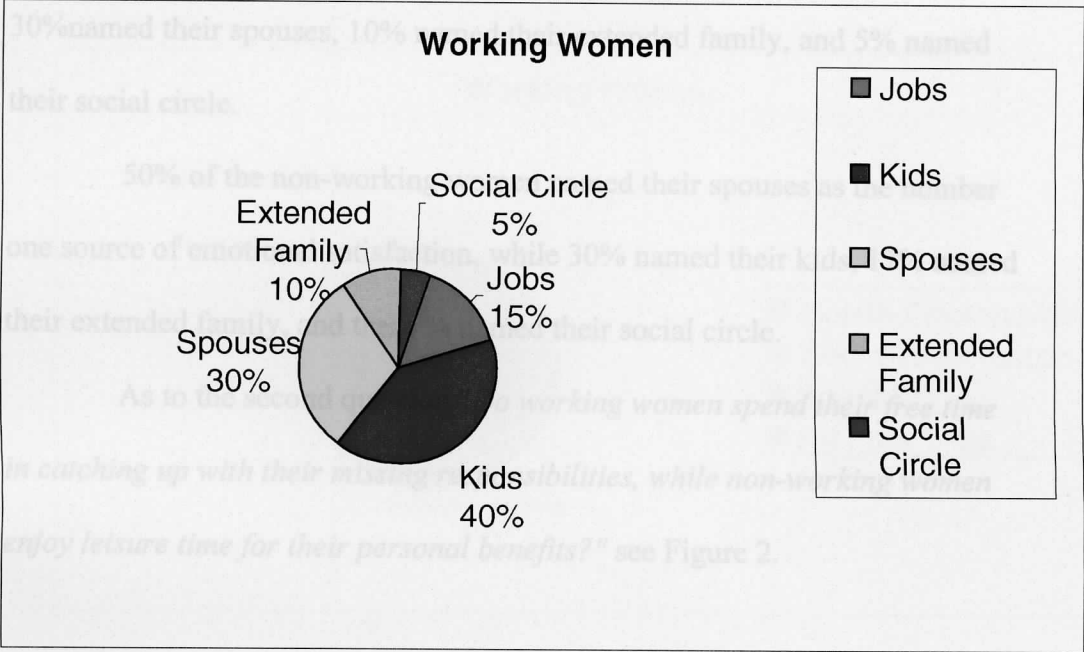
However, for the **subscale Self –Acceptance (SA)**, the difference between $r = 0.836$ and $r = 0.759$ is not significant at $p > 0.05$.

Therefore, only two parts of H4 are confirmed: Personal Growth (PG) and Autonomy (A) have a stronger association with well-being among working women than non-working women. The third part of H4 regarding the subscale Self Acceptance (SA) was not supported.

It is worth mentioning here, that even though it was not originally included in our H4, for the subscale Purpose in Life (P), the difference between $r = 0.865$ and $r = 0.690$ is significant at $p = 0.0119$. In other words, the association between well-being and Purpose in Life is stronger for the working women.

Regarding the first research question that we posed in this study, and which stated the following: “*Do working women identify themselves through their jobs, while non- working women find identify themselves through the achievements of their parents, husbands, or kids?*”, see Figure 1.

Figure 1
Percentages of the answers on Research Question 1



15% of the working women named their jobs as the number one source of emotional satisfaction, while 40% percent named their kids, 30% named their spouses, 10% named their extended family, and 5% named their social circle.

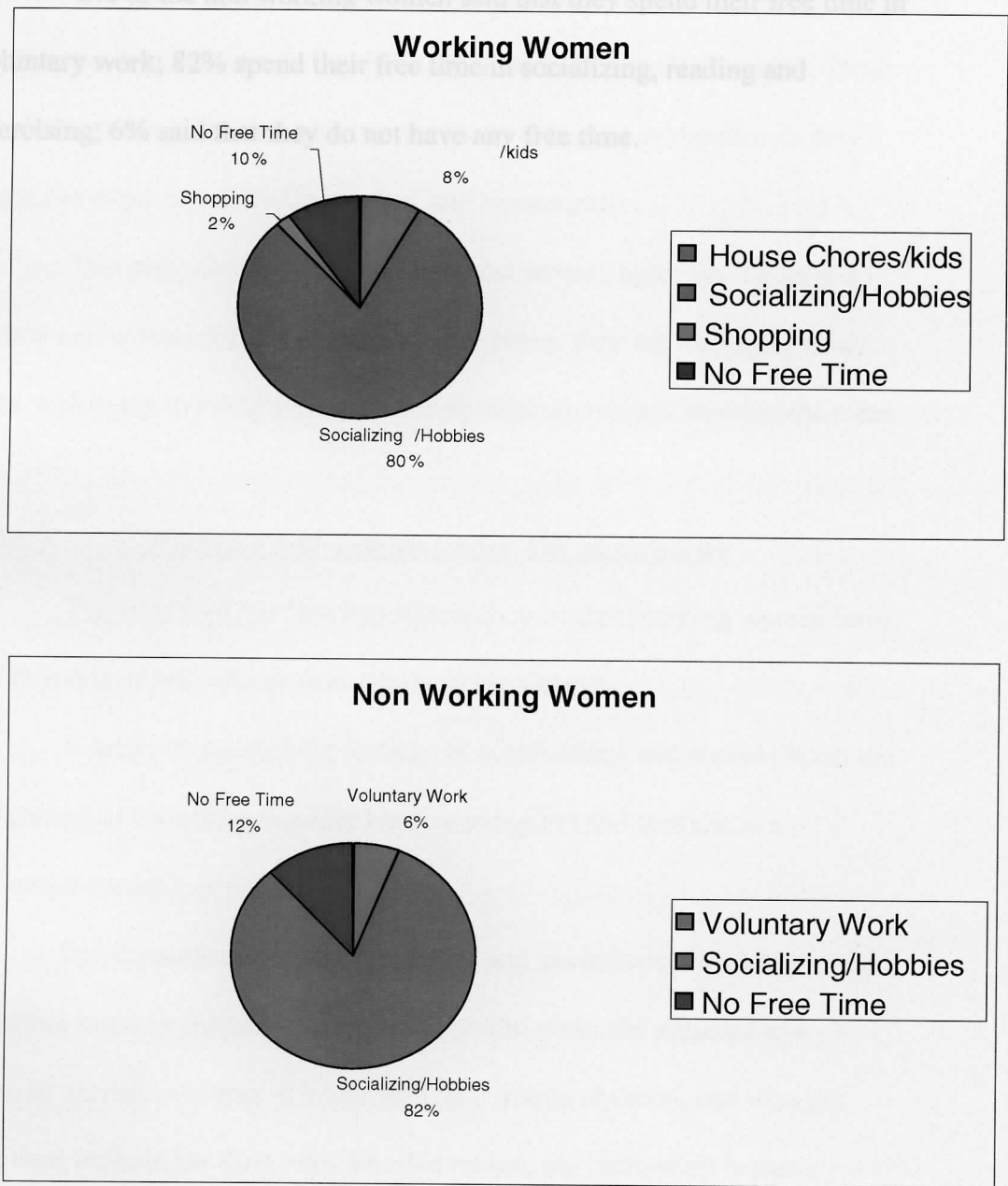
50% of the non-working women named their spouses as the number one source of emotional satisfaction, while 30% named their kids, 17% named their extended family, and three % named their social circle.

As to the second question *"Do working women spend their free time in catching up with their missing responsibilities, while non-working women enjoy leisure time for their personal benefits?"* see Figure 2.



8% of working women answered by saying they spend their free time in doing house chores and taking care of their kids; 80%- named socializing,

Figure 2
Percentages of the answers of Research Question 2



8% of working women answered by saying they spend their free time in doing house chores and taking care of their kids; 80% named socializing,

reading and exercising; 2% said that they spend it in shopping; 10 % said that they do not have any free time.

DISCUSSION

6% of the non working women said that they spend their free time in voluntary work; 82% spend their free time in socializing, reading and exercising; 6% said that they do not have any free time.

juggle the triple roles of wife, mother, and homemaker.

"No pain, no gain", this is what most women agree on. To form a healthy self-esteem and psychological well-being, they are managing many roles, and trying to build the maximum equilibrium needed between the roles.

Women's Self-Esteem Under The Microscope

The results of our first hypothesis showed that working women have higher levels of self-esteem than non-working women.

It seems to me that the feelings of achievement and success boost the self-esteem of a working woman; hence making her feel that she is a productive member of society.

Society and culture shower praises and adulation on working women, forgetting in many instances those mothers who make the personal and financial sacrifices to stay at home with their young children, and who put their lives on hold for their sake. For this reason, the inclination is that a mother's self esteem is built on whatever achievements she gains outside the family circle; it is those particular achievements that are looked up on in a society.

Chapter Four

DISCUSSION

Brandishing the organizational skills of a drill sergeant, many working women do more before 9.00 a.m. than most people do all day. Once they leave work, their evening routines prove to be just as rigorous as they juggle the triple roles of wife, mother, and homemaker.

“No pain, no gain”, this is what most women agree on. To form a healthy self-esteem and psychological well-being, they are managing many roles, and trying to build the maximum equilibrium needed between the roles.

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In another study conducted on dual –earner families, it was found that both parents derive self-esteem from their accomplishments at work rather than accomplishments at home, while their emotional state of happiness or depression is obtained from the relationships they have within the family (Schwartzberg, 2002). Other studies as well (Wentling, 1992; Barnett, 1988; Hofnung, 2004) have emphasized the importance of career in positively affecting the self-esteem of working women.

Women's Psychological Well-Being Under The Microscope

In this study, it was predicted that working women will score higher on Psychological Well-Being scale than non-working women. The results paralleled this prediction. Unlike popular notions among certain circles, employment and the accompanying increased number of social roles per se do not have harmful effect on women's psychological well-being

(Kim, 1998). On the contrary, "Not being involved in meaningful roles may be bad for your ill terns of depression, boredom, and physical symptoms," explains demographer Lois Verbugge (Gale, 1988), who analyzed health data on thousands of women balancing the roles of career, marriage, and motherhood. Verbugge found that, regardless of age, women with diverse roles were healthier than less involved women.

Similarly, women who are satisfied with their jobs show fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression and greater levels of well-being, regardless of their roles at home (Barnette, 1998).

Supporting this approach, evidence demonstrates that employed married women report suffering fewer psychological or physical problems than non-employed married women (Kessler, 1982; Friedman, 1985; Crockenberg, 1988).

The scientific study of emotional/ psychological well-being is relatively new, but theories about happiness are ages old. The philosophers of ancient Greece believed that happiness accompanies a life of intelligent reflection and production (Myers, 2000). I believe that this also applies on womanhood; being a woman gives a chance of being productive in different areas; thus having more and different opportunities of achieving happiness and a state of well-being.

Autonomy, Self-Acceptance, and Personal Growth

H3 stated that *working women will score higher on autonomy, self-acceptance, and personal growth than non-working women.*

A group of studies (Jeon, 1991; Cho, 1994) revealed that working outside the home led women to experience better sense of achievement, autonomy, and personal growth. Having the opportunity of utilizing and putting into practice whatever they have studied; in addition to the fact of being exposed to opportunities that lead to adding new sets of knowledge and information, let women feel that they are working on their personal growth (Jeon, 1991).

A recent study by Auster (2004) implies that the popular press advises women that networking improves career success. Networking has recently been defined by Firret and Gougherty (1996) as “an individual’s attempt to develop and maintain relationships with others that have the potential to assist developing themselves in their work or career”. Building on that definition, it seems that the development of oneself results by default in personal growth. Moreover, although one important benefit of networking may be to enhance one’s career, a second and equally important benefit of these “career” relationships is that they offer an opportunity to help enhance personal growth. Thus, networking may serve both practical as well as emotional purposes (Auster, 2004).

(Kim, 1998) Working women build an identity for themselves through their work –independent of their other identity roles in life- this helps them in realizing their potential as well as their personal aspiration. Hence, one might argue here that this conscious building of a work identity – assuming that the woman has chosen this identity role for herself – is without doubt helping her to accept herself more. When a person is engaged in a pattern that he /she enjoys, logically speaking, chances are that he/she will accept himself /herself more. Various studies (Schwartzberg, 2002; Dytell, 2000) have shown that in dual-earner families men as well as women derive self-acceptance and separate identities from their accomplishments at work rather than accomplishments at home.

Self-Acceptance Shared by Both Groups

H4 stated that *the three subscales (Autonomy, Personal Growth, and Self-Acceptance) were expected to correlate higher with psychological well-being among working women than non-working women.*

Our results were confirmed only for the subscales Autonomy and Personal Growth. It seems that autonomy and personal growth play an important role in explaining the well-being of a career woman. Being autonomous, independent, and having the opportunity to keep on growing and developing are all important elements that contribute positively to the general well-being of a career woman. Supporting this approach, evidence demonstrates that employed women report suffering fewer identity crisis (Kim, 1998).

However, differences in correlation for the subscale Self-Acceptance and Psychological Well-being between both groups were found to be insignificant, and, therefore, this part of H4 was not supported.

In other words, Self-Acceptance did not differ significantly in its combination to the well-being in both groups of women. This could be explained that Self-acceptance is equally important for the well-being of working as well as non working women. It seems here that the issue being a working woman or not is not very significant. Non-working women derive their Self-Acceptance from other sources; such as their families or their social circles.

An interesting result, which was not predicted as part of H4, was shown in table 4. The subscale Purpose-in-Life correlated higher with Well-Being among the working women. One can infer here that having a purpose in life explains more the better psychological well-being of the working women vs. the non-working women (Kim, 1998).

Meditating on The Research Questions

While thinking of posing the following question, “*Do working women identify themselves through their jobs, while non-working women identify themselves through the achievements of their parents, husbands, or kids*”, I expected to find out that working women place their jobs as the number one priority and source of emotional satisfaction. But, as the previous results showed, women give their kids and spouse a greater share of their source of satisfaction.

In recognition of the importance of family and the essential existence of a supportive spouse, Former Secretary of State, Madeline Albright writes in her memoir (Heilbrun, 2000) “When I became Secretary of State, I realized that though others might, I would never have climbed that high had I still been married. Yet I am deeply saddened to have been divorced. I know that, at the time, I would have given up any thought of a career if it would have made Joe (her husband) change his mind”. She describes her divorce as the most painful episode in her life.

As to the second research question that we posed, "*Do working women spend their free time in catching up with their missing responsibilities, while non-working women enjoy leisure time for their personal benefits?*", the answers were extremely interesting. My prediction was that working women lead a very stressful life, hardly being able to fulfill their duties outside as well as inside the house. However, it turned out that working women spend a good part of their free time in reading, going out with their families, exercising, and socializing.

My assumption was that non-working women have more leisure time; however, the truth is the two "sides" are not as far apart as we think. Try as we might to create neat little packages of motherhood, every mother knows that the lines are blurry. Moms with jobs outside the home still deal with sick kids, parent-teacher conferences, and shuttling kids to school and activities. Moms who stay at home still run off to appointments, manage multiple demands, and struggle to find time for themselves. We all deal with stress, loneliness, guilt, and a nagging sense that we have to defend the choice we have made.

There is not one recipe for any successful woman, whether she is single, married, working or staying at home with her kids. But, as we have seen in this study – backed up with studies in the West- a career boosts up self-esteem of a woman, and it enhances her psychological well-being (Barret, 1998). In my opinion, the secret lies in the ability and potential of the woman and how much social and emotional support she has. It depends on the personality of a woman, and how much she can cope with.

Having multiple roles, as we have seen, does not necessarily mean exhaustion, conflict, and confusion. A woman has to choose, and weigh the pro's and con's. Even if she feels that a part-time job would help her well-being, and make her feel that she is a functioning member of society, then why not? If a career would help her become a better mother, wife, citizen, or simply a more fulfilled person, hence giving her the chance to add her input in society, then it is safe to encourage her to do so.

Future Studies

The limitations of this study were related to the fact that our sample was small, due to time restrictions. Therefore, as a future study, it would be a good idea to include women from different parts of Lebanon, and not just the Beirut area. Furthermore, more research questions could have been posed to gather more details of each group's lives. For future considerations, I would suggest to include the spouses of these women in the survey for both non-working and working women to find their reaction towards their wives' jobs or joblessness.

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Demographic Questionnaire (Non-Working Women)

1. Age range: Twenties _____ Thirties _____ Forties _____ Fifties _____
2. Marital Status: Single _____ Married _____ Divorced _____ Widowed _____
3. Level of Education: _____
4. How do you evaluate yourself?
 Successful _____ Fairly Successful _____ Not Successful _____
5. Rank from 1-5 the sources of your emotional satisfaction/well-being:
 _____ Spouse _____ Kids _____ Family _____ Social Circle _____
6. If you get a job proposal that hardly covers the day care cost and the help at home, would you consider taking it? Why?

7. Describe yourself in three short terms as to social roles: _____
8. How do you spend your free time? _____
9. If you were offered a job proposal that barely covers the day care cost and the help at home, would you consider taking it? Why?

10. If you were offered a job proposal that barely covers the day care cost and the help at home, would you consider taking it? Why?

11. If you were offered a job proposal that barely covers the day care cost and the help at home, would you consider taking it? Why?

12. If you were offered a job proposal that barely covers the day care cost and the help at home, would you consider taking it? Why?

13. If you were offered a job proposal that barely covers the day care cost and the help at home, would you consider taking it? Why?

14. If you were offered a job proposal that barely covers the day care cost and the help at home, would you consider taking it? Why?

APPENDIX

Demographic Questionnaire (Non-Working Women)

1. Age range: Twenties _____ Thirties _____ Forties _____ Fifties _____
2. Marital Status: Single _____ Married _____ Divorced _____ Widowed _____
3. Level of Education: _____
4. How do you evaluate yourself?
Successful _____ Fairly Successful _____ Not Successful _____
5. Rank from 1-5 the sources of your emotional satisfaction/well-being:
_____ Spouse _____ Kids _____ Family _____ Social Circle _____
6. If you get a job proposal that hardly covers the day care cost and the help at home, would you consider taking it? Why?

7. Describe yourself in three short terms as to social roles: _____
8. How do you spend your free time? _____
11. If you are married, and your salary hardly covers the day care cost and the help at home, would you consider staying at work? Why?

12. What if your husband gets a job proposal abroad for a very high salary and benefits, what actions would you take concerning your job? How would you feel if you have to leave it?

13. Describe yourself in three short terms as to social roles: _____
14. How do you spend your free time? _____

Demographic Questionnaire (Working Women)

1. Age range: Twenties _____ Thirties _____ Forties _____ Fifties _____
2. Marital Status: Single _____ Married _____ Divorced _____ Widowed _____
3. Annual Income: 6000\$-10000\$ _____ 10000\$-20000\$ _____ 20000\$-UP _____
4. Occupation: _____
5. Years of Experience: _____
6. Level of Education: _____
7. How do you evaluate yourself?
Successful _____ Fairly Successful _____ Not Successful _____
8. Rank from 1-5 the sources of your emotional satisfaction/well-being:
_____ Spouse _____ Kids _____ Family _____ Social Circle _____ Job _____
9. Do you work for financial reasons? If not, elaborate.

10. What reasons can lead you to resign?

11. If you are married, and your salary hardly covers the day care cost and the help at home, would you consider staying at work? Why?

12. What if your husband gets a job proposal abroad for a very high salary and benefits, what actions would you take concerning your job? How would you feel if you have to leave it?

13. Describe yourself in three short terms as to social roles: _____
14. How do you spend your free time? _____

THE ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

BELOW IS A LIST OF STATEMENTS DEALING WITH YOUR GENERAL FEELINGS ABOUT YOURSELF. IF YOU STRONGLY AGREE, CIRCLE SA. IF YOU AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT, CIRCLE A. IF YOU DISAGREE, CIRCLE D. IF YOU STRONGLY DISAGREE, CIRCLE SD.

		1. STRONGLY AGREE	2 AGREE	3. DISAGREE	4. STRONGLY DISAGREE
1.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	SA	A	D	SD
2.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
3.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA	A	D	SD
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D	SD
5.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA	A	D	SD
6.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	A	D	SD
7.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D	SD
8.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA	A	D	SD
9.	I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	A	D	SD
10.	At times I think I am no good at all.	SA	A	D	SD

THE RYFF'S SCALES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Scale your opinion from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

Item	1	2	3	4
I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.				
In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.				
I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world.				
Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.				
I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.				
When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out.				
I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus.				
The demands of everyday life often get me down.				
For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.				
People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.				
Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.				
I like most aspects of my personality.				
I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.				
I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life.				
I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago.				
I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.				
I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.				
In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.				
My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing.				
If I were unhappy with my living situation, I would take effective steps to change it.				
I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons.				
Most people see me as loving and affectionate.				
I feel good when I think of what I've done in the past and what I hope to do in the future.				
I feel like many of the people I know have gotten more out of life than I have.				
I tend to worry about what other people think of me.				
I am good at juggling my time so that I can fit everything in that needs to get done.				
I don't want to try new ways of doing things, my life is fine the way it is.				
I enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members or friends.				
I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life.				
The past had it's ups and downs, but in general, I wouldn't want to change it.				
It's difficult for me to voice my own opinions on controversial matters.				
I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me.				
I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things.				
I feel like I get a lot out of my friendships.				
I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality.				
Everyone has their weaknesses, but I seem to have more than my share.				