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Social Connectedness and Psychological Well-Being Among Divorced Women

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Abstract: ***In today's world, Social Connectedness (SC) and Psychological Well-Being (PW) are strongly influenced by marital status. With a focus on married and divorced women, this study investigates the connection between Psychological Well-being, Social Connectedness, and marital status. Through the use of standardized evaluations, 61 married and 41 divorced women participated and shared their experiences. Married women demonstrated higher levels of Social Connectedness and Psychological Well-Being when t-tests were used to compare the groups. Positive correlations between Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness were found in both groups using Pearson's correlation analysis. There were differences in the distribution of the Social Connectedness data, which calls for consideration of data normalization. Women's Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness are significantly influenced by their marital status, underscoring the connection between relationships and mental health. The results point to custom therapies for women in various marital situations.***
Keywords: Social connectedness, psychological well-being, Marriage, Divorce.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social Connectedness is defined as both the structural and functional aspects of social relationships that make up an individual's perception of meaningful and reciprocal connection with others (van Bel et al., 2009 From: Journal of Adolescence, 2021). To put it simply, social connectedness can be thought of as the opposite of loneliness.

People are by nature social creatures. Social connections are important for our survival. Our relationships with family, friends, co-workers, and community members can have a major impact on our health and well-being. High-quality relationships can help people live longer, healthier lives. Supportive and inclusive relationships can protect against the harmful health effects of loneliness and social isolation.

Psychological Well-being can be understood as a state of optimal mental health where individuals are able to realize their abilities, cope effectively with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and make meaningful contributions to their communities (World Health Organization, 2004). This definition, provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), emphasizes the holistic nature of psychological well-being, which goes beyond the absence of mental illness to encompass positive feelings, positive functioning, and positive relationships.

Key models such as Ryff's Six-Factor Model (1989) and Diener's Tripartite Model (1984) offer insights into the various dimensions of Psychological Well-being. Ryff's model includes dimensions such as self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. These dimensions highlight the importance of self-perception, social relationships, personal autonomy, and mastery of one's environment, life purpose, and continuous personal development. Diener's Tripartite Model, on the other hand, suggests that Psychological Well-being comprises three components: positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction. Positive affect refers to experiencing positive emotions such as joy, happiness, and contentment, while negative affect involves the experience of negative emotions like sadness, anxiety, and anger. Life satisfaction reflects a cognitive judgment of one's life as a whole, considering aspects such as accomplishments, goals, and fulfillment.

Numerous factors contribute to an individual's psychological well-being, ranging from personal characteristics to social, environmental, and cultural influences. These determinants include but are not limited to:

Personality Traits: Traits such as optimism, resilience, self-esteem, and emotional intelligence have been linked to higher levels of psychological well-being (Judge et al., 2002; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004).

Social Support: Strong social connections, supportive relationships, and a sense of belonging are crucial for psychological well-being (Thoits, 2011; Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010).

Coping Mechanisms: Effective coping strategies, such as problem-solving skills, seeking social support, and cognitive reframing, can enhance psychological resilience (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

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Life Experiences: Positive life events, such as achieving goals, personal growth, and fulfilling relationships, contribute to well-being, while negative events can have adverse effects (Diener et al., 2006; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

Cultural Factors: Cultural beliefs, values, and norms shape individuals' perceptions of well-being and influence the strategies they employ to achieve it (Diener & Suh, 2000;

Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Social connectivity may affect a person's psychological or other aspects of functioning. According to certain studies (such as Griffiths et al., 2007), social connectivity is associated with better levels of well-being. Low social connectivity has been linked to depression, anxiety, and stress, according to McLoughlin and colleagues (2019). Research has also indicated that individuals with low levels of connectivity frequently report feeling less satisfied with their social connections (Satici et al., 2016). In addition, they might struggle to control internalising symptoms (Faro, McKee, Garcia, & O'Leary, 2019). Similar findings were made by Lee and colleagues (2001), who discovered that those who felt more socially connected were more outgoing, built relationships more quickly, and had a favorable outlook on their surroundings.

Divorce represents a significant psycho-social transition that impacts various facets of an individual's life. This life-altering event can result in profound changes, including adjustments to one's standard of living, place of residence, employment, household management, and parenting roles and responsibilities. Family relations and social interactions outside of the family are also influenced by divorce. The dissolution of a marriage, which is a social institution characterized by a committed, legally recognized relationship between partners, often living together, disrupts not only the intimate partnership but also broader social and familial dynamics. This transition can lead to emotional distress and challenges in rebuilding social connections, affecting overall well-being and psychological adjustment. Understanding the complexities of divorce and its repercussions is essential for supporting individuals navigating this transformative phase of life and promoting resilience in the face of significant relational and social changes.

Being socially linked fosters a sense of support and belonging, which is essential to wellbeing. Research indicates a favorable relationship between psychological well-being and social ties. Divorce shatters these bonds, which has an effect on wellbeing. Marriage has a great impact on human relationships because of its varied cultural and historical circumstances. This investigation underscores the continuous need to foster strong social ties by highlighting the significance of interpersonal ties for both individual experiences and the general well-being of society.There aren't many studies on social connectedness and psychological well-being, despite their importance in an individual's life. Because it may provide light on the wellbeing of divorced women, this study is essential. The paucity of previous studies emphasizes the necessity of a thorough examination into the formation and manifestation of psychological well-being and social connectedness in women who have divorced.

II. METHOD

A. *Objective*

1) To study the relationship between social connectedness and psychological well-being among Divorce women
2) To study the relationship between social connectedness and psychological well-being among Married women.
3) To compare social connectedness and psychological wellbeing among married and divorced women.

B. *Hypothesis*

1) H01: There is no significant difference between Divorced women and Married women with regard to Psychological Well-being.
2) H02: There is no significant difference between Divorced women and Married women with regard to Social Connectedness
3) H03: There is no significant relationship between Social Connectedness and Psychological Well-being among Divorce women.
4) H04: There is no significant relationship between Social Connectedness and Psychological Well-being among Married women.

C. *Research Design*

Correlational Study

Sample

The present study selected a total of 102 women (N=102) between the age range of 25-60. In which 61 were Married women and 41 were Divorced women. The sample for the current study was selected through Non Probability Purposive Sampling Technique.

D. Inclusion criteria

1) Divorced women who have legally dissolved their marriage.
2) Married women who are currently in a marital relationship.
3) Between 25 to 60 years old.
4) Indian women residing in India.
5) Proficiency in the language of the survey or interview (e.g., English).
6) No specific psychological condition that would hinder participation.

E. Exclusion criteria

1) Male participants.
2) Widowed or separated women (unless they fall into the category of "divorced").
3) Indian women residing outside of India.
4) Inability to understand and communicate in the chosen survey or interview language.
5) Currently diagnosed with severe mental health disorders (e.g., schizophrenia, bipolar disorder) that might affect participation.
6) Individuals currently undergoing significant life changes (e.g., recent relocation, job loss, major illness) that may impact their social connections.

F. Tools for the Study

The primary assessment tools include the Social Connectedness Scale and Ryff Psychological Well-being Scale.

G. Description of the Tools

The Social Connectedness Scale (SCS): developed by Lee and Robbins (1998) is a tool designed to measure an individual's perceived connectedness to others in their social environment. It assesses the extent to which people feel connected to their friends, family, and community. The scale aims to capture the subjective experience of social support, belongingness, and relatedness. The scale consists of 8 items, which are rated on a 6-point Likert scale. The Lee and Robbins Social Connectedness Scale (1995) is a reliable and valid measure for assessing an individual's perceived social connectedness, providing researchers and practitioners with a useful tool for understanding the extent to which individuals feel connected to others in their social environment.

The Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale: is an 18-item self-report measure designed to assess various aspects of psychological well-being. Developed by Carol Ryff, this scale includes items that tap into six dimensions of well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Respondents rate each item on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree).

H. Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize demographic variables and study measures. Inferential statistics, such as t test, correlation analysis, will be employed to explore relationships between social connectedness and psychological well-being. Descriptive statistics will involve measures such as means, standard deviations, and Frequencies to summarize participant characteristics and study variables. Inferential statistics will include correlation analysis to assess relationships between variables and t test to difference among the populations.

I. Research Ethics Followed

1) No harm was done to anyone in this study
2) Informed consent was obtained from the participants.
3) The participant had complete freedom to quit from the study at any point.
4) Confidentiality was maintained.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The present study was aimed at investigating psychological hardiness and optimism among orphan and non-orphan adolescents. This chapter deals with the results and discussion of the results obtained from data collected using different tools. The data was consolidated and scored. The data was statistically analyzed using a statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS 25).

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To evaluate the hypothesis that there will be a difference in Psychological Well-being between Divorced and Married women, a t test was done and the results are indicated in Table 1.

Variable	Population	N	Mean	SD	t test	Sig
Psychological Well-being	Divorced	41	75.7805	13.11204		
	Married	61	81.8361	16.85248	-1.939	.055

Table 1 shows the difference between Divorced and Married Women with regard to Psychological Well Being. The mean value of psychological well-being is 75.7805 with a standard deviation of 13.11 in Divorced women and For the Married Women, A mean score of 81.836 with a standard deviation of 16.852 was found. The t-value was found to be 1.939 and p value is 0.055 (>0.05). The obtained score is significant at 0.05 level. Hence the null hypothesis which states that there will be no significant difference in Psychological Well-being of Divorced women and Married women is rejected.

To evaluate the hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in Social Connectedness between Divorced and Married women, t-test was done and the results are indicated in Table 2

Comparison of Divorced and married women on social connectedness

Variable	Population	N	Mean	SD	t test	Sig
Social Connectedness	Divorced	41	23.8780	11.77114	-1.939	.555
	Married	61	34.0820	10.78625		

Table 2 shows the difference between Divorced and Married women with regards to Social Connectedness. The mean value of social connectedness is 23.8780 in Divorced women with a standard deviation of 11.77114, and for Married women mean value is 34.0820 with Standard Deviation of 10.78625. The t test value is -1.939 and p value is 0.055 (>0.05). The obtained score is significant at 0.05 level. Hence the null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in Social Connectedness of Divorced women and Married women is rejected.

To evaluate the hypothesis that there will be a relationship between Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness among Divorced women, Pearson's correlation was done and the results are indicated in table 3.

Table 3

Relationship between psychological well-being and social connectedness among Divorced women

Variables	n	M	SD	1	2
Psychological well being	41	75.7805	13.11204	-	
Social connectedness	41	23.8780	11.77114	-.543**	

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

Table 3 shows the correlation between Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness among divorced women. The Mean and standard deviation for Psychological Well-being is found to be 75.7805 and 13.11204 respectively. For Social Connectedness, the Mean and Standard Deviation are found to be 23.8780 and 11.77114 respectively. The correlation coefficient for Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness is .543 and p value is found to be 0.000(<0.05).Hence the null hypothesis which states that, there will be no significant relationship between Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness among divorced women is rejected.

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From the results it is evident that there is a positive correlation between Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness among Divorced women.

To evaluate the hypothesis that there will be no significant relationship between Psychological well-being and Social Connectedness among Married women, Pearson's correlation was done and the results are indicated in table 4.

Relationship between Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness among Married women

Variables	n	M	SD	1	2
Psychological Well being	61	81.8361	16.85248	-	
Social Connectedness	61	34.0820	10.78625	.762**	

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

Table 4 gives the relationship between Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness among Married women. The Mean and Standard Deviation of Psychological Well-Being is found to be 81.8361 and 16.85248 respectively. And for Social Connectedness, Mean and Standard Deviation is found to be 34.0820 and 10.78625 respectively. The correlation coefficient for Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness is r = .762 and p value is 0.000 (<0.05), indicating a significant positive correlation. Hence the null hypothesis that there will be no significant relationship between Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness among Married women is rejected. From the results it is evident that there is a positive correlation between Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness. It means that the scores of Psychological Well-being influence scores of Social Connectedness and vice versa.

The study underscores the significant impact of marital status on Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness among women, revealing that Married women generally exhibit higher levels of both compared to Divorced women. This difference is attributed to the companionship and social support inherent in marital relationships, which contribute to better mental health outcomes. Conversely, Divorce is identified as a disruptive life event associated with increased stressors and challenges that can adversely affect Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness among women.

To address the gaps highlighted by this study, interventions aimed at supporting the social and mental well-being of divorced women are imperative. By gaining a deeper understanding of these variables and their interplay, tailored interventions can be developed to mitigate the negative impacts of divorce and enhance social networks and mental health outcomes among this population. Such efforts are crucial for promoting resilience and improving overall well-being in the face of significant life transitions.

IV. IMPLICATIONS

The study highlights the significant role of marital status in shaping women's well-being and social connections. Differences in Psychological Well-being (PW) and Social Connectedness (SC) between Divorced and Married women underscore the importance of tailored interventions and support systems to address these distinctions effectively. For divorced women, who often experience moderate levels of Psychological Well-being and Social Connectedness following divorce, targeted interventions are essential. Programs aimed at enhancing Social Connectedness through community engagement, support groups, and counseling services can play a crucial role in rebuilding social networks and promoting emotional resilience post-divorce.

Conversely, for married women, maintaining and strengthening existing social connections is key to enhancing psychological well-being. Interventions could focus on relationship enrichment, community involvement, and promoting healthy communication within marital relationships to further bolster well-being. Overall, recognizing the unique challenges and strengths associated with marital status is essential for designing effective support programs. By tailoring interventions based on marital status, women can receive relevant resources and guidance to navigate life transitions and enhance their overall quality of life.

V. SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research exploring the well-being and social connections of divorced and married women can benefit from a more comprehensive perspective. Incorporating factors such as age, duration of marriage, and the presence of children would provide deeper insights into these dynamics.

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Age influences coping mechanisms and social support systems, while the length of marriage indicates shared experiences and established networks. The presence of children introduces unique challenges impacting emotional well-being.

Examining cultural and socio-economic factors would also be valuable, as they shape attitudes toward divorce, perceptions of social support, and access to resources. A mixed-methods approach blending quantitative data with qualitative narratives could offer a more holistic understanding, revealing both trends and lived experiences. By considering these factors, future research can inform tailored interventions and policies that address the diverse needs of women in different life circumstances.

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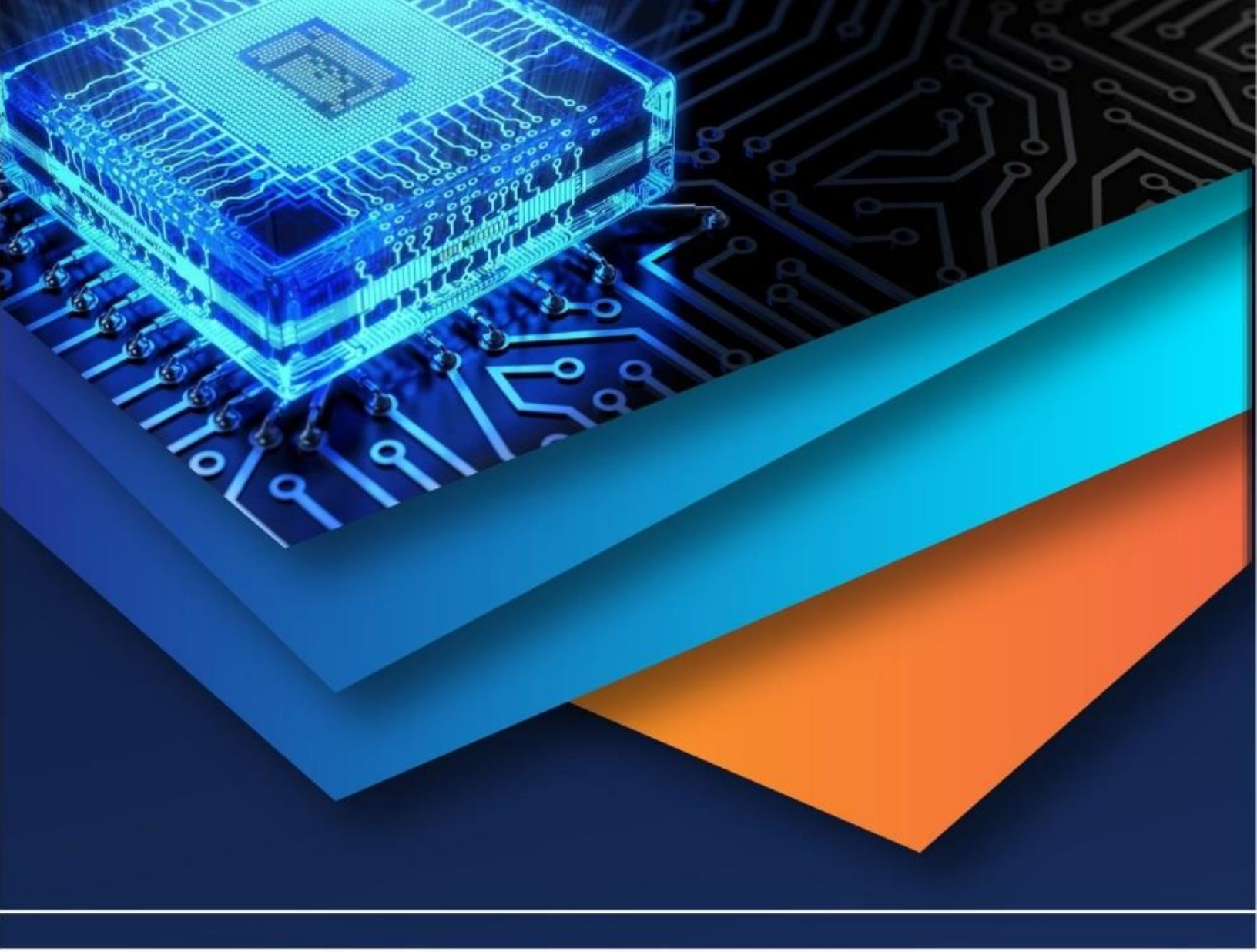

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