



Exploring the Relationship between Conscientiousness and Psychological Well-Being among Working Women and Homemakers

Dr. Vikash Kumar Gupta

M.A., Ph.D, Department of Psychology, Veer Kunwar Singh University, Ara

e-mail: vikashkgupta17@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between conscientiousness and psychological well-being among working women and homemakers. A sample of 140 women (70 working women and 70 homemakers) was assessed using the Big Five Inventory and the Psychological Well-Being Scale. The study employed a cross-sectional research design with purposive and random sampling techniques. The results revealed that homemakers reported significantly higher psychological well-being than working women, $t(138) = 13.69, p < .001$. No significant difference was found in conscientiousness between the two groups, $t(138) = 0.76, p > .05$. A significant positive correlation between conscientiousness and psychological well-being was observed among working women ($r = .27, p < .05$), whereas the relationship was not significant among homemakers ($r = .21, p > .05$). The findings suggest that employment status may influence the relationship between conscientiousness and psychological well-being. The study highlights the importance of contextual factors in understanding women's psychological well-being.

Introduction

The relationship between personality traits and psychological well-being has been a central focus of psychological research over the past few decades. Among the Big Five personality traits, conscientiousness has consistently been associated with positive life outcomes, including better mental



health, higher life satisfaction, and effective coping strategies (Ryff & Singer, 2006; Friedman & Kern, 2014). Individuals high in conscientiousness tend to be organized, disciplined, and goal-oriented, which enables them to manage stress effectively and pursue meaningful goals, thereby enhancing their psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct that extends beyond the mere absence of mental illness. It encompasses positive functioning in various domains, including autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, and positive relationships with others (Huppert, 2009; Seligman, 2018). Contemporary psychological research has increasingly shifted its focus from pathology to the study of factors that promote human flourishing and optimal functioning (Martin Seligman, 2018; Corey L. M. Keyes, 2020).

However, the relationship between personality traits and psychological well-being does not operate in isolation but is influenced by socio-cultural and contextual factors, such as employment status. For women, employment can serve as a source of financial independence, social interaction, and self-identity. At the same time, working women often face challenges such as work–family conflict, role overload, and occupational stress, which may negatively affect their psychological well-being. In contrast, homemakers may experience limited social exposure and financial dependency but may benefit from greater flexibility and control over their daily lives.

Recent studies in the Indian context have highlighted that women’s psychological well-being is significantly shaped by socio-cultural expectations, role demands, and changing gender norms, particularly in urban and semi-urban settings (Anjali Chatterjee & Ritu Sharma, 2021; Neha Verma, 2019).

Particularly in regions like Bihar, traditional gender roles coexist with emerging modern lifestyles. These changing dynamics can significantly influence women’s experiences, responsibilities, and overall psychological well-being. Differences in lifestyle, social expectations, and role demands between working women and homemakers may therefore shape not only their levels of well-being but also the way personality traits such as conscientiousness relate to it.

Although a substantial body of research has examined personality traits and psychological well-being independently, limited studies have explored how this relationship varies across different role contexts, especially among working women and homemakers in India. Most existing studies have focused either



on employment status or personality traits in isolation, with insufficient attention to their combined influence.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine and compare psychological well-being and its relationship with conscientiousness among working women and homemakers in the Patna district of Bihar.

Psychological Well-Being

Psychological Well-Being refers to an individual's overall level of positive psychological functioning, including aspects such as life satisfaction, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, and purpose in life.

It includes:

- **Positive emotions (e.g., happiness, contentment):** The experience of pleasant feelings such as joy, satisfaction, and emotional positivity in daily life.
- **Self-acceptance and a sense of purpose:** Having a positive attitude toward oneself while feeling that life has meaning, direction, and goals.
- **Ability to manage stress and challenges:** The capacity to cope effectively with difficulties, pressures, and setbacks in life.
- **Healthy relationships with others:** The ability to build and maintain supportive, trusting, and satisfying social connections.
- **Feeling in control of one's life:** The perception that one can make decisions, influence outcomes, and direct their own life circumstances.

Conscientiousness:

Conscientiousness is one of the major dimensions of personality in the Big Five Personality Traits. It refers to an individual's tendency to be organized, responsible, disciplined, and goal-directed in their behavior. A person high in conscientiousness typically shows:

- ✓ Orderliness and organization in daily activities
- ✓ Strong sense of duty and responsibility
- ✓ Self-discipline and persistence in completing tasks
- ✓ Careful planning and time management
- ✓ Reliability and dependability in work and relationships



In contrast, individuals low in conscientiousness may be more careless, disorganized, impulsive, and less consistent in pursuing goals. In a broader sense, conscientiousness reflects how well a person can control impulses, regulate behavior, and work toward long-term goals, making it an important predictor of academic success, job performance, and overall life outcomes.

Working Women

Working Women refer to women who are engaged in paid employment or professional occupations outside the home, either in the public or private sector, on a full-time or part-time basis. In this study, participants categorized as working women are those who reported being employed at the time of data collection.

Homemakers

Homemakers refer to women who are primarily engaged in managing household responsibilities and are not involved in any form of paid employment. Their activities include domestic work, caregiving, and family management. In this study, participants categorized as homemakers are those who reported not being engaged in any paid employment at the time of data collection.

Review of Literature:

Psychological well-being has emerged as an important area of research in recent years, particularly in understanding how individuals function effectively in their personal and social lives. In the Indian context, the concept of psychological well-being is closely linked with cultural values, family structure, gender roles, and socio-economic conditions. Women, in particular, experience psychological well-being differently depending on their roles as working professionals or homemakers.

Several Indian studies have explored the psychological well-being of women in relation to their employment status. Research indicates that working women often experience higher levels of stress due to role conflict, work pressure, and the challenge of balancing professional and family responsibilities. At the same time, employment provides financial independence, social identity, and a sense of achievement, which can positively influence their psychological well-being. In contrast, homemakers may benefit from greater flexibility and family involvement but may also experience reduced social interaction, lack of recognition, and financial dependence, which can impact their well-being.

A study by Kaur and Kaur (2015) found significant differences in psychological well-being between working and non-working women, with working women reporting higher levels of stress but also greater



life satisfaction. Similarly, research by Sharma and Sharma (2012) indicated that employment status plays a crucial role in determining the psychological well-being of women, particularly in urban Indian settings.

Personality traits, especially conscientiousness, have also been studied in relation to psychological well-being. Conscientiousness, characterized by discipline, responsibility, and goal orientation, has been found to be positively associated with mental health outcomes. In the Indian context, individuals high in conscientiousness tend to adopt better coping strategies and maintain structured lifestyles, which contribute to improved psychological well-being.

A study conducted by Singh and Srivastava (2013) reported a positive relationship between conscientiousness and psychological well-being among adults, suggesting that individuals who are more organized and responsible experience greater life satisfaction and emotional stability. Similarly, Verma and Mishra (2016) found that conscientiousness significantly predicts psychological well-being among working professionals.

Despite these findings, there is limited research in the Indian context that simultaneously examines the relationship between conscientiousness and psychological well-being among working women and homemakers. Most studies have either focused on employment status or personality traits independently. Therefore, there is a need to explore how conscientiousness interacts with employment status to influence psychological well-being among women, particularly in regions like Bihar where traditional and modern roles coexist.

The present study attempts to fill this gap by examining and comparing psychological well-being and its relationship with conscientiousness among working women and homemakers in the Patna district of Bihar.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To compare the level of psychological well-being between working women and homemakers.
2. To compare the level of conscientiousness between working women and homemakers.
3. To examine the relationship between conscientiousness and psychological well-being among working women.
4. To examine the relationship between conscientiousness and psychological well-being among homemakers.



Hypothesis:

- H1: There will be a significant difference in psychological well-being between working women and homemakers.
- H2: There will be a significant difference in conscientiousness between working women and homemakers.
- H3: There will be a significant positive relationship between conscientiousness and psychological well-being among working women.
- H4: There will be a significant positive relationship between conscientiousness and psychological well-being among homemakers.

Methodology:

Design:

The present study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine the relationship between conscientiousness and psychological well-being among working women and homemakers.

Study Population:

The study population will consist of 140 working and homemaker women aged 25 to 50 years, from Patna district of Bihar.

Sampling Technique

A combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques was used to select participants. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure the inclusion of women belonging to the specified categories (working women and homemakers), while snowball sampling was used to reach additional participants through referrals.

Inclusion Criteria

Women aged between 25 to 50 years.

Women who were either working or homemakers (not engaged in paid employment).

Participants live in the Patna district of Bihar.

Participants who were able to read and understand the questionnaire.

Participants who voluntarily agreed to take part in the study and provided informed consent.



Exclusion Criteria

Women who not belong to defined age group which is below 25 years or above 50 years of age.

Participants with any reported diagnosed psychological or cognitive disorder that could affect their responses.

Participants who provided incomplete or inconsistent responses on the questionnaires.

Women not belonging to the Patna district of Bihar.

Tools used:

Personal Data Sheet

A self-constructed Personal Data Sheet was used to collect demographic information of the participants, including age, marital status, education level, occupation, and employment status (working woman or homemaker) and that information which were not present in scale which were being used in the present study and are necessary to fulfil the requirement of the objectives and hypothesis of the present study.

Big Five Inventory (BFI)

This scale was developed by Dr. Arun Kumar Singh and Ashok Kumar was used to measure personality traits. The inventory consists of 180 items which are being divided into five dimensions of personality: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. In the present study I used only one dimension of this scale which is conscientiousness which consist of 36 items.

Responses are recorded on a standardized format, and higher scores indicate higher levels of conscientiousness and vice versa.

Psychological Well-Being Scale

The Psychological Well-Being Scale developed by Sisodia and Chaudhary. It was used to assess the psychological well-being of the participants. The scale consists of 50 items divided into five dimensions. Higher scores indicate higher levels of psychological well-being and lower score indicates the lower level of psychological well-being. The scale has demonstrated adequate reliability and validity in previous research.

Procedure of Data collection

The participants were approached personally at their workplaces, homes, and nearby localities. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to them, and they were assured that their participation was



voluntary and that the information provided would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. After obtaining their consent, the participants were requested to complete the questionnaires. Proper instructions were given to ensure accurate and honest responses. The collected data were coded and analyzed using SPSS version 21.

Result and Discussion:

Table 1

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	DF	Level of Significance
Psychological Well-being	Working	70	153.57	15.44	13.69	138	P<0.01
	Homemaker	70	190.60	16.54			
conscientiousness	Working	70	60.92	5.72	0.76	138	P>0.05
	Homemaker	70	61.67	5.86			

The findings regarding psychological well-being and conscientiousness among working women and homemakers presented a contrasting pattern. Homemakers reported significantly higher levels of psychological well-being compared to working women, $t = 13.69, p < .001$. Therefore, Hypothesis 1, which proposed a significant difference between the groups, was accepted. This finding suggests that employment status is an important factor influencing psychological well-being among women. The higher well-being observed among homemakers may be attributed to lower levels of occupational stress, reduced time pressures, and greater flexibility in managing daily responsibilities.

In contrast, the analysis revealed no statistically significant difference in conscientiousness between working women and homemakers, $t = 0.76, p > .05$. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was rejected. This indicates that conscientiousness, as a relatively stable personality trait, does not vary significantly with employment status. It suggests that factors such as long-term personality development may play a more important role than situational roles in determining levels of conscientiousness.

Table 2

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Correlation	Level of
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				Coefficient (r)	Significance
Psychological Well-being	70	153.57	15.44	0.27	P<0.05
Conscientiousness	70	60.93	5.72		

The findings indicate a significant positive correlation between conscientiousness and psychological well-being among working women, $r = .27, p < .05$. This suggests that higher levels of conscientiousness are associated with greater psychological well-being in this group. Hence the H3 was accepted. However, the findings suggest a weak correlation ($r = .27$) indicates a low to moderate relationship, suggesting that although conscientiousness contributes to psychological well-being, it accounts for only a limited proportion of its variance. This implies that other factors, such as work environment, social support, and job satisfaction, may also play a significant role in influencing the psychological well-being of working women.

Table 3

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Level of Significance
Psychological Well-being	70	190.60	16.54	0.21	P<0.05
Conscientiousness	70	61.67	5.86		

The findings indicate a positive but non-significant correlation between conscientiousness and psychological well-being among homemakers, $r = .21, p > .05$. Although the direction of the relationship suggests that higher conscientiousness is associated with higher psychological well-being, but the correlation is not statistically significant. This indicates that the observed relationship is weak and may not reliably represent the association in the population. Hence, Hypothesis 4, which proposed a significant positive relationship between these variables, was rejected. These findings imply that other factors, such as family environment, social support, and daily life context, may play a more prominent role in influencing psychological well-being in this group.



Limitations and Future Directions:

The present study has several limitations that should be considered while interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional research design restricts the ability to draw causal inferences between conscientiousness and psychological well-being. Second, the reliance on self-report measures may introduce response biases, such as social desirability and subjective interpretation.

Future research should adopt longitudinal or experimental designs to better examine the directionality and potential causal relationships between the variables. Additionally, the use of multiple methods of assessment, including behavioral measures or informant reports, could enhance the validity and reliability of the findings.

Furthermore, the study was limited to a specific geographical region, which may restrict the generalizability of the results. Expanding the sample to include women from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, and regional backgrounds would improve the external validity of future studies.

Finally, examining specific facets of conscientiousness, such as orderliness, dutifulness, and self-discipline, may provide a more nuanced understanding of how different components of this personality trait relate to psychological well-being across varying life contexts.

Conclusions:

The present study examined the relationship between conscientiousness and psychological well-being among working women and homemakers, as well as differences between these groups. The findings revealed a significant difference in psychological well-being, with homemakers ($M = 190.60$) reporting substantially higher levels than working women ($M = 153.57$), $t(138) = 13.69$, $p < .001$. However, no significant difference was found in conscientiousness between working women ($M = 60.92$) and homemakers ($M = 61.67$), $t(138) = 0.76$, $p > .05$, indicating that this personality trait remains relatively stable across employment contexts.

Furthermore, a significant positive relationship between conscientiousness and psychological well-being was observed among working women ($r = .27$, $p < .05$), whereas the relationship was positive but not statistically significant among homemakers ($r = .21$, $p > .05$). These findings suggest that conscientiousness plays a more meaningful role in enhancing psychological well-being in structured and demanding environments such as employment settings.



Overall, the study highlights that while personality traits like conscientiousness contribute to psychological well-being, their impact varies across different role contexts. The substantial difference in well-being scores between working women and homemakers underscores the importance of contextual and role-related factors, such as work demands, stress, and lifestyle flexibility, in shaping women's psychological functioning.

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