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<b>Article:</b>	<b>Loneliness and Well-being among Working, Married and Unmarried Women in Pakistan</b>
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### **Abstract**

This study was set forth to find out the relation of loneliness and wellbeing among working, married and unmarried women in Pakistan. Overall, 210 working, married and unmarried women were recruited for this study through purposive sampling. A self-constructed questionnaire comprising demographic characteristics and loneliness scale Schmidt and Sermat (1983), and wellbeing scale developed by Warwick – Edenbrug (2006) were used to collect the data. Results showed that there is an inverse relationship between loneliness and well-being among working married and unmarried women. Further, the analysis revealed that working unmarried women feel more loneliness and working married women enjoy more wellbeing. All subscales of loneliness confirmed that wellbeing was negatively associated for both working married and unmarried women. It is concluded that loneliness has significant contributor of low wellbeing among unmarried working women.

**Keywords;** Loneliness, Wellbeing, working women, Pakistan

## Introduction

Loneliness is a complex and usually an unpleasant emotional response to isolation or lack of companionship. Loneliness typically includes anxious feelings about a lack of connectedness or communality with other beings, both in the present and extending into the future. As such, loneliness can also be felt even when surrounded by other people. The causes of loneliness are varied and include social, mental and/ or emotional factors. Loneliness results from not having enough social contacts from which one wants (Jones, 1981). Loneliness occurs when a person has fewer interpersonal relationships than desired or when these relationships are not as satisfying as desired. People vary in their needs for social connections. Thus, if one is not distressed by the quality of social and emotional ties, one cannot be considered a lonely (Lloyd, 2003).

Well-being or welfare is a general term used for the condition of an individual or a group wellness, for example their social, economic, psychological, spiritual or medical state. High well-being means that the individual or group's experience is positive, while low well-being is associated with negative happenings. It is measured through Well-Being Scale (Warwick, 2012). Well-being has been area of attention of many such as Policy makers, researchers, educators, and politicians. It has become a dominant field of positive psychology in developing and developed countries. Many researchers are exploring its relationships with other factors including environment (Kahneman, Diener & Schwartz, 1999).

Studies of loneliness have shown that mental representations of our connection with other are characterized by individual, relational, and collective dimensions. These dimensions correspond to individual, relational, and collective selves posited by theories of the self. At the individual level, feelings of isolations and low self-worth are precluded when people feel comfortable with themselves and they are fit in social world. At the relational level, feelings of interpersonal connections are fostered in close dyadic relationships. At the collective level, feelings of group identification and cohesion satisfy needs across gender and racial/ethnic lines in middle aged adults, suggesting a universality to this representational structure of the social self.

A report which has been produced by the United Kingdom cabinet office on life satisfaction of people showed that there is significant relationship between life satisfaction and work satisfaction (Donovan, Halpern and Sargeant, 2002). Jahoda (1982) conducted a study which showed that work and leisure has significant relationship with Well-being.

Since classical ancient times, loneliness has been a long explored theme and numbers of researches has been done on this issue. Number of researches proven that loneliness is a social pain and individuals may be motivated to seek social interaction and connection. Human being need social connection to avoid loneliness (Cacioppo, Hawkley 2003). Social isolation and low social support are associated with loneliness and depressive symptoms. Cacioppo & Hawkley (2006) argued that social isolation and low social support are closely linked with loneliness.

## Methodology

In this study we adopted cross sectional survey design. A survey has been conducted on cross sectional sample for this study. This design is highly recommended when it aimed to collect the data from a large population. A sample of 210 respondents (105 working married and 105 working unmarried) women were taken from different sectors of Lahore city. For the present research purposive sampling technique was used. This sampling techniques is useful when the population is having specific characteristics. Inclusion criteria for the recruitment of sample were; only women were included in this sample. These women were either married or unmarried. Both married and unmarried women were working in some organization. They were 20 to 55 years of age. Non-working women were excluded from the sample. Loneliness

scale developed by Schmidt and Sermat (1983) was utilized. This scale consisted of 20 items with two categories of responses, i.e. true and false which indicate high or low score.

Wellbeing self- assessment WEMWBS (Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale) consist 14 questions with five categories of responses. The present study was carried out after taking permission and approval from the department of psychology. Women were approached after getting formal permission from their employers. The study focused on the measurement of loneliness and well-being among working married and non-married women. A consent form was signed by the respondents in order to get their willingness. Loneliness scale, well-being scale and demographic information sheet was also provided to the respondent. It was clearly mentioned to the participants that their participation is voluntary, and if they want, they could withdraw from the survey at any time. General instructions regarding the purpose and the task required was also given to the participants. The participants who were less educated, scales were administered with the help of a researcher. It took 35 to 40 minutes to complete a questionnaire. Research team contacted all the respondents and collected the data.

### Results

Table 1: Correlational analysis of loneliness, wellbeing and subscales among Unmarried working women.

Scales & Subscales	M(SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Loneliness	28.95 (2.98)	-					
2. Wellbeing	47.13(8.02)	-.363**	-				
3. Romantic/Sexual Relationship Loneliness	7.41 (1.35)	.599**	-.243*	-			
4. Friendship Loneliness	7.36 (1.03)	.589**	-.231*	.073	-		
5. Relationship with family Loneliness	7.03 (1.28)	.642**	-.312**	.126	.295**	-	
6. Relation large groups Loneliness	7.15 (1.21)	.603**	-.091	.158	.196	.126	-

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, \**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level**

Correlation depicted inverse relationship between loneliness and wellbeing among unmarried women ( $\gamma = -0.36$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, subscales of the loneliness depicted the same inverse correlation with wellbeing except relationship with large group loneliness.

Table 2: Correlational Analysis between loneliness, wellbeing and subscales among Married working women.

Scales & Subscales	M(SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Loneliness	27.57 (3.48)	-					
2. Wellbeing	49.03 (8.58)	-.52**	-				
3. Romantic/Sexual Relationship Loneliness	6.71 (1.42)	.74**	-.46**	-			
4. Friendship Loneliness	7.16 (1.22)	.74**	-.38**	.34**	-		
5. Relationship with family Loneliness	6.5 (1.16)	.67**	-.36**	.45**	.32**	-	
6. Relation large groups Loneliness	7.21 (1.13)	.65**	-.39**	.25*	.47**	.21*	-

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, \**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level**

There is significant inverse relationship ( $\gamma = -0.52$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) was found between loneliness and wellbeing. Further, inverse relationship was also found with subscales of loneliness and wellbeing.

Table 3: Showing independent sample t-test among working unmarried and married women on loneliness and wellbeing

	Married M (SD)	Unmarried M (SD)	T	P
Loneliness	27.48 (3.6)	28.75(2.9)	2.12	.05
Well-being	48.65 (0.87)	47.51 (7.8)	-.966	.33

\* $df=198$

Independent sample t-test was also carried out to find out that working unmarried women experience more loneliness. Moreover, it also aimed to explore which group (whether working married or working unmarried) enjoying more wellbeing. The results explored that there is a significant difference between married and unmarried women on loneliness. It was further explored that unmarried women experience more loneliness as compared with married women ( $t= 2.12$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Further, it was also find out that there is no difference ( $t= -.996$ ,  $P>0.05$ ) between working unmarried women and married women on well-being. So it is concluded that both groups enjoys same levels of well-being.

### Discussion

This study was conducted to find the relation of loneliness with well-being among married and unmarried working women in Pakistan. It has been explored that overall loneliness and wellbeing were strongly and inversely related to each other. This showed that when women feel more loneliness their well-being is low or vice versa. Loneliness is a general human feeling, yet it is a complex and unique for each individual. Loneliness or social isolation takes away the individual from groups and gatherings (Antonucci, 1994). There is no one to share happiness, sorrow, sadness, and even anger (Baarsen et al., 2001). Man is a social animal. So there are some psychological disturbances observed among the people who lived in isolation or loneliness (Allan, 1979). A study conducted by Boehm, Peterson, Kivimaki & Kubzansky, (2011) suggested that loneliness eventually leads to stress, depression and other psychological problems. Lonely individual feel isolation from family, friends, groups and even from very personal or intimate relationships (Boomsma, et al., 2005). Same results were shown in the current research. Women with poor well-being were showing significantly high scores on sub scales of loneliness.

### Conclusions:

It is concluded that loneliness has significant contributor of low wellbeing among unmarried working women. The results of current study showed that there is an inverse relationship between loneliness and well-being among working married and unmarried women. Further, this analysis revealed that working unmarried women feel more loneliness and working married women enjoy more wellbeing

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