HOUSEWIVES' SELF-ESTEEM AND THEIR HUSBANDS' SUCCESS
A COMPARATIVE STUDY AMONG THE VARIOUS CASTE GROUPS IN POKHARELI WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between self esteem of housewives with respect to some selected socioeconomic variables, namely; marital status, husband's income, husband's occupation, husband's physical attraction, women's own intelligence and women's physical attraction with a sample of 240 Pokherli married women. The study compares whether the self-esteem of women and other different factors is different among the various caste groups. A comparison is also made between professional women and housewives. Self-esteem of women is significantly different among the various caste groups with the highest in Magar and Gurung women. Professional women are more conscious than housewives in all aspects of husband's success. This study tests the common assertion that women, having reasonably higher income housewives experience their husbands' success. Husbands' success does positively affect a housewife's self esteem, but only indirectly, through its effect on perceived marital success. Only husband's income has a direct positive effect on self esteem, while other successes of the husband actually lower her self esteem. Since marriage is traditionally a basis for a woman's identity, successful marriage increases her feelings of worth. However, the specific role arrangements may reduce her feelings of personal competence.

KEY WORDS: *Housewives, Self-esteem*

BACKGROUND

Self-esteem is an all comprehensive process and difficult to define in concrete terms. One definition of self-esteem says it is "the trait that differs from people to people in their degree to which they like or dislike themselves" (Brockner, 1988) .In other words self-esteem is the individuals' degree of liking or disliking of themselves. Self- esteem refers to a person's feeling of adequacy and self worth. In general,

research has suggested that people who have low self- esteem tend to be more perusable than those with high self- esteem (Jenis, 1964).The self-esteem is the evaluative component of the self-concept. It is function of the distance between the ideal self and the perceived self. When the perceived self matches the ideal self, self-esteem is relatively high. Low self-esteem occurs when the perceived self is significantly lower than the self. Since the distance between the ideal and perceived self constantly varies depending on task and social feedback, self- esteem is dynamic component of the self-concept and it is always in a state of change and development (Gecas, 1982).

This article starts by highlighting the fact that the roles of men and women in our traditional societies have always been complementary. Among the role performed by women those which were considered to be most important are the procreative roles, the domestic and the indirect political influence (Allele, 1985). The procreative and domiciliary have tended to be acknowledged with pride while that of indirect political influence may be observed in situations where women were brought into resolve civil conflicts. Moreover there has been low participation of our women in occupations which necessitate education and training as a result of socio-cultural tradition and imported ideas which portray women as inferior beings and train them exclusively as home makers and in role compatible jobs that require feminine temperaments of nature and succor.

In traditional societies, women were made to assist their husbands in all farming activities. The woman was recognized as a daughter of lineage, wife of a man or mother of a child and so and so, but hardly was she seen as an individual in her own individual respect. She worked long hours weeding the farms, helping to process the harvests for sale in nearby markets in addition to performing her domestic duties. Yet, she was always seen as a helper to the husband, but not as an economic independent producer or unit. Today, work is vastly different. It is usually away from home, away from husbands (and usually with another person's husband) and away from the children particularly for women working in the formal sector of the economy. These groups of women are those whom we can regard as being in industry (Fashoyin, Oyekanmi & Fapopunda , 1985).

Some detractors of women's pursuit of gainful economic careers have often argued that when women enter into public life they tend to neglect their matrimonial duties. Yet, others argue that women are either not disposed or strong enough to meet the rigorous of public life and she should be disallowed from participating or reaching top posts. Some people use the Bible or the Quran to support these ascertains (Olurode, 2004). The male domination of females has been extended from the home into the business arena and it has been practiced for so long that the myth of female weakness is now taken to be a general belief. Abundant research has, however, amply demonstrated that bring to their positions essentially the same talents, capabilities and flaws as men do. Unfortunately, the power structure remains in the hands of men who either consciously or subconsciously subscribes to these outrageous presuppositions and distortions (Oguje, 2004).

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RATIONALE

In recent years, gender issue is the most common theme of discussion in seminars and workshops in Nepal. Much of the literature dealing with the women of Nepal clearly indicates that development programmes failed to account the role of gender. The general argument is that women are exploited by males; status of women is low; women are excluded from the development processes due to the male oriented structures and basis (CEDA, 1981). This paper questions that these arguments are true only in certain specific situations; an approach that addresses the problems of women in isolation of Nepali culture is problematic. Women's problems in Nepal are closely and systematically embedded with the basis of socio- cultural norms and values.

A change in the status of women requires a change in both men's and women's attitude towards interpersonal relation and behavior. The harmonious partnerships between men and women improve the decision making power of women. A better communication between men and women on all issues ensures in the understanding of their joint responsibilities. Efforts to improve the state of equal partnership of men and women in public and private life would eventually improve the status of women resulting in desired demographic consequences (UN, 1994).

Marriage is traditionally a basis for women's identity in Nepal. Thus, this study possesses the following research questions: To what extent of happiness does a woman experience by her husbands' success?, Is there any relationship between the self esteem of women and marital success? Does the income of husband contribute as a major factor to increase the self-esteem of women? The result of this research will be important information for bachelors and matchmakers. Since there are no research conducted in the area of housewives' self-esteem and their husbands' success in Pokhara, hence the study is needed.

Women carry a triple burden in the society: as a production worker she contributes directly to subsistence and income; as a mother and wife she cares for the family members and the children; as a community worker she gives all her leisure hours and labor to society. This means that women have many tasks to be accomplished. Without satisfaction she cannot perform her duties in a systematic manner. Hence this research is important to study to measure the level of satisfaction of women, her self-esteem and her feelings of worth on the success of their husbands.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

The main objective of this study is to identify whether or not husband's success increases the self-esteem of his wife. Besides, this the study also has the objective of identifying the major factors that will increase housewives' self-esteem. The following hypotheses have been formulated for empirical verification of this study

H1: Housewives' self-esteem is positively related with husband's income.

H2: Housewives' self-esteem is positively related with husband's occupational prestige.

H3: Housewives' self-esteem is negatively related with husband's physical attraction.

H4: There is no significance difference between the self-esteem of professional and non-professional women.

H5: Women's self-esteem significantly differs among the various caste groups.

STUDY ASSUMPTIONS

The non-probability sampling technique reliance on available subjects is assumed to be a representative sample   for this study. The respondent was chosen between the age group 15 to 49 because it is assumed that women will experience all the husbands' success within this age group than in the other age group. Although equal-interval theoretical concepts like income abound in physical sciences, they are harder to find in the social sciences. Though abstract concepts are rarely inherently interval based, operational measures defined in this study are employed to quantify them using quantification at an interval level (Walliman, 2001). In other words, some ordinal scaled data are treated as an interval level with some cautions and then mean and other statistical measures are calculated (Kurtz, 1999)

STUDY MODEL

On the basis of literature review, the theory suggests that housewives' self esteem is related to socio-economic variables like husband income, marital success, women's own intelligence, husband's physical attraction, husband's occupational prestige and wife's physical attraction. This clearly indicates that self esteem is a dependent variable and rests of the others are independent variables. The model has already been tested in American contest and same model is studied in Nepali contest especially in Pokhara city.

METHODOLOGY

1. STUDY SITE

Nepal is a mountainous country rich in natural beauty and cultural heritages. Pokhara lies in Kaski district. Kaski is one of the 16 districts of the country's Western Development Region. Pokhara is a sub-metropolitan city of Kaski district. Pokhara city has a population of 180692 of which 94863 are female. (Projected Population with reference to the population of 2001 assuming a constant growth rate of 4.95% over the years).The share of female in the reproductive age group (15-49) is 49.2% for Nepal (MOPE, 2004). Assuming the same share of female

population in Pokhara city, the number of females in the reproductive age group will be 46672. This number is considered (approximately) as population for this study because there is less chance of getting married with the age less than 15 years and from the pilot survey , the researcher found that there was higher non- response rate above than 50 years. Of the total population 85 percent are Hindus, 14 percent are Buddhists and less than 1 percent are Muslims in Kaski district. Brahmins (31%) followed by Gurung (19%) and Chhetri (15%) are among the most prevalent caste group in this district (Kaski DDC, 1999). In terms of human development, Kaski ranks third out of 75 districts on Human Development Index ladder. All other indicators of Kaski district are better than their corresponding national averages (Kaski District, 1999).

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The survey methodology has been designed to address to the study's objectives. The major focus of this research has been to know the self-esteem of women among the various caste groups and to see whether the self-esteem differs between housewives and professional women. The research also focuses to identify the relationship between self-esteem of women and various successes of their husband like marital success, monthly income, physical attraction, husband's occupational prestige along with the respondent's self-physical attraction and her own intelligence. Primary source is the means of data collection.

3. TYPE OF DATA AND DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE

This study is totally based on primary data. The structured questionnaire was prepared and this was administered   to the respondents by making an arrangement of interview schedule. The selection of respondents based on non-probability sampling: Reliance on Available Subjects. Tsample is restricted to a part of the population, that is, readily accessible (Cochran, 1977). However, care was taken while selecting the respondents such that sample should contain different castes groups who were living in the Pokhara Valley. Hence the generalization of the sample result will somewhat correct to the estimate of the

population, though perfect estimate is not possible through non probability sampling technique. The data was collected by the author himself during September to November in 2005.

5. POPULATION, SAMPLE COVERAGE AND DATA ANALYSIS

All Pokhareli married women ranging from ages 15 to 49 year is the population for this study. Approximately there are 46672 females living in this age group in Pokhara city (Projected population for 2004). The sample size for this study was 240 women. For comparison purpose, about 120 housewives who were not employed outside the home and 120 professionals working married women were selected for this study. Descriptive statistics tools with Chi-square, t- tests, and F-tests as well as correlation-regression analysis are used in order to analyze the data.

6. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF STUDY VARIABLES

Self-Esteem (SE): Self-esteem was measured by a subset of seven items. It contains general measures of self-esteem and specific measures of social adequacy. It refers to the liking or disliking of women, feeling of apprehensiveness while talking in front of the same class or group of people, self-consciousness, and handling of social gatherings and feelings of uncomfortableness when talking with unknown persons. In another words self- esteem was measured by seven items with five point scale for each. Value of 7 indicates the lowest self esteem women while value of 35 means the highest self esteem women.

Marital Success (MS): Marital success was measured by asking, "How certain are you that you will be with your partner ten years from now?" The five possible responses ranged from "almost uncertain" (1) to almost certain (5) with higher score indicating greater certainty.

Husband's Occupational Prestige (HOP): It refers to career success or career development of husband's occupation. It ranged from 1 to 9, depending upon which of nine occupational categories was appropriate (such as doctor, businessman, engineer, teachers, army, police, etc.). These categories were ranked according to the average prestige rating

of specific occupations within the broad categories.

Husband's Income (HI): It refers to the income of the husband currently in the job. In this case, the respondents were asked to indicate which of seven categories represented their husband's monthly income. The lowest category was less than Rs. 4000; the highest was more than Rs14, 000 with a range of Rs 2000 in each category.

Husband's Physical Attractiveness (HPA): It refers to the appearance of husbands as compared to the wife's herself .Husband's physical attractiveness was measured by asking the respondents to rate her spouse as compared to herself. The five answer choices ranged from "much more attractive than I" with a value indicating 1 to "much less attractive than I" with a value indicating 5.

Respondent's Self Physical Attraction (RSPA): It refers to the overall attractiveness of a woman in comparison with others of same age. This item asked the respondent to rate her overall attractiveness in comparison with others of same age. The five possible responses ranged from" much more attractive than others" to "much less attractive others"

Respondent's Self Intelligence (RSI): It is the comparison of the respondents' intelligence with average persons. The question to measure the respondent's self-intelligence was, "Do you consider yourself generally more intelligent than average person?" The five possible responses ranged from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF MARRIED WOMEN BY ETHNICITY

It is found that the self esteem of housewives is significantly different among the various castes (Table 1). The self esteem for the two castes Gurung and Magar are almost equal. Magar communities have the highest self esteem while it is least in Brahamin/ Chettri community. The husband's income could be a cause behind the higher self esteem of Magar/ Gurung women. There is no significant difference in the length of marriage duration (or marital success) among the vari-

ous caste groups. (Since p>0.05). The marriage duration in Brahamin/ Chettry caste is the highest and it is the lowest in Gurung caste. This means that Brahmins are over-conscious in the length of the marriage duration while Gurung are not so much conscious in the length of marriage duration. Social job preference is significantly different among the various caste groups (p<0.05). In other words, Husbands' occupation is the most important for Brahamin/ Chettri and Magar caste groups, while it is least for Gurung caste group. There is significantly different in the husband's income among the various caste groups (p<0.01). It seems that with major four caste groups, Magar has the highest monthly income, Gurung is second leader, Newar is third one and Brahamin/ Chettry are last one. It can also be concluded those castes which are in minority in number have the lowest monthly income as compared to the major castes. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of housewives about their husband's physical attraction as compared to themselves among the various caste groups (p> 0.01). But the result is significant at 5% level of significance. Among four major casts, Magar women think that their husbands are more attractive than other castes as compared to themselves. Some other castes which seem low in number in Pokhara (CBS, 2001) think that they are comparatively less attractive than their husband as compared to the other castes. Though, the comparison is made in different castes, neither of each social group perceived that they are more attractive than their husband (Because mean value of each castes is less than 3).This variable is measured with five point scale indicating 1 as low attractive as their husbands and 5 as high attractive than their husbands. With compared to the age of similar groups, there is no significant difference in the self attraction of women's among the various castes. But this result is significant at 5%. With comparison to the same age groups, Brahamin/ Chhetri housewives feel that they are slightly more attractive than that of the other caste groups. Magar, Gurung and Newar caste group housewives' have the more or less same views in this regard.

Table 1: Number, Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) of Socioeconomic Status of Women by Ethnicity

Perceived Self-Esteem	N	Mean	S D	p-value
Brahamin/ Chettry	114	23.42	3.71	
Magar	45	26.73	3.65	
Gurung	24	25.25	4.01	0.000
Newar	24	24.38	1.76	
Others	21	18.29	1.87	
Total	228	24.00	4.09	
Marital Success				
Brahamin/ Chettry	111	4.08	1.10	
Magar	48	4.00	1.01	
Gurung	24	3.88	.95	0.327
Newar	24	4.25	.99	
Others	27	3.67	1.36	
Total	234	4.01	1.09	
Husband's Occupational Prestige				
Brahamin/ Chettry	114	6.71	2.01	
Magar	48	6.69	2.19	
Gurung	24	3.38	2.55	0.000
Newar	24	6.38	1.13	
Others	21	5.71	2.03	
Total	231	6.44	2.34	
Husband's Monthly Income				
Brahamin/ Chettry	111	4.19	2.03	
Magar	48	5.69	1.85	
Gurung	21	5.00	1.64	0.000
Newar	21	4.86	1.93	
Others	24	3.50	1.98	
Total	225	4.57	2.05	
Husband's Physical Attractiveness				
Brahamin/ Chettry	114	2.29	.89	
Magar	48	2.44	.80	
Gurung	24	2.00	1.02	0.019
Newar	24	2.13	.80	
Others	24	1.75	.99	
Total	234	2.22	.90	
Respondent's Self Physical Attractiveness				
Brahamin/ Chettry	114	3.21	.52	
Magar	48	3.13	.33	
Gurung	24	3.13	.61	0.015
Newar	24	3.13	.80	
Others	24	2.75	.85	
Total	234	3.13	.59	
Respondent's Self Intelligence				
Brahamin/ Chettry	114	3.42	1.10	
Magar	45	3.13	.97	
Gurung	24	3.00	1.02	0.000
Newar	24	3.50	.72	
Others	24	2.13	.95	
Total	231	3.19	1.08	

Self intelligence of women is significantly different among the various castes (p<0.01) as compared to the average person. Brahamin/ Chhetry and Newars have higher self intelligence than Magar and Gurung caste groups. Table shows that Newar are the most intelligent one and Gurung are the least intelligent one. The result can also be interpreted that Newarni's are more proud one with comparison to the other caste groups. In simple words, Housewives' of Newar caste group feel that they are more intelligent than the average persons among the caste groups taken for the study. Brahamin / Chhetry is the second leader followed by Magar, while it is least in Gurung women.

2. SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF MARRIED WOMEN BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

There is no significant difference between the self esteem of professional women and housewives (p>0.05) (Table 2). But the result is significant at a 10% level of significance (p<0.10).

Table 2: Number, Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) of Socioeconomic Status of Women By Employment Status

Perceived self-esteem	N	Mean	S D	p-value
Housewives	120	24.53	4.39	
Professional women	111	23.54	3.68	0.067
Total	231	24.05	4.09	
Marital Success				
Housewives	123	4.05	1.09	
Professional women	114	3.95	1.10	0.477
Total	237	4.00	1.09	
Husband's Occupational Prestige				
Housewives	113	6.46	1.96	
Professional women	117	7.02	2.03	0.000
Total	230	6.74	2.01	
Husband's Monthly Income				
Housewives	111	4.95	2.04	
Professional women	117	4.28	2.03	0.015
Total	228	4.61	2.06	
Husband's Physical Attractiveness				
Housewives	120	2.20	.93	
Professional women	117	2.23	.86	0.069
Total	237	2.22	.90	
Respondent's Self Physical Attractiveness				
Housewives	120	3.15	.57	
Professional women	117	3.13	.61	0.777
Total	237	3.14	.59	
Respondent's Self Intelligence				
Housewives	117	3.13	1.07	
Professional women	117	3.21	1.14	0.595
Total	234	3.17	1.11	

The housewives self esteem are significantly higher than that of the professional women at a 10% level of significance. This indicates that Pokhareli women are not conscious for the job to increase their self esteem. There is no significant difference between the lengths of the marriage duration whether the women is professional or housewives (p>0.05). Housewives feel that their relationship with their husband would be longer and excellent as compared to the professional women (But the result is insignificant). Social job preference or Husband's occupation is significantly between professional women and housewives (p< 0.05). Professional women think that husband occupation is more important for them than the housewives'. It doesn't matter in the income of the husband whether their housewives are professional or non-professional (because p>0.01). But the result is significantly different at 5% level of significance. It seems that housewives' husbands' income is slightly higher than that of the professional women's husband. There is no significant difference between professional and non professional women in the perception of their husband physical attraction as compared to themselves (since p>>0.05) .It means that the perception is similar in housewives and professional women. But when comparison is made, professional women feel that their husbands are physically more attractive than that of the housewives' husbands. There is no significant difference in the self attraction of women on the perception of housewives' and professional women's as compared to age of other women with similar age group (since p>0.05). In comparison to the friends of same age group, housewives feel that they are more attractive than the professional women. There is no significant difference between the self intelligence of women whether they are professional women or housewives. But Professional women feel that they are more intelligent than the average person as compared to the housewives.

3. CORRELATION AND REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The strength of the relationship between all variables was studied. Table 3 gives the full explanation. It was found that self-esteem is significantly related to the variables of marital success, husband's monthly income and respondent-self physical attraction. It means that if the relationship between spouses is harmonious and it lasts for longer duration, it will automatically increase the self-esteem of women. Moreo-

ver, higher the income of husband, higher will be the self-esteem of women. A woman who is physically attractive as compared to the other friends of same age group will have the higher self-esteem. Women, who are more intelligent than the average persons, have harmonious relationship between the spouses for a longer duration.

Table 3 : Zero Order Correlations between all Variables

	SE	MS	HOP	HMI	HPA	RSPA	ROI
SE	1.000	.176**	-.069	.399**	.095	.222**	-.041
MS		1.000	-.087	-.009	-.024	.102	.132*
HOP			1.000	-.102	.143*	-.117	-.040
HMI				1.000	.275**	.063	.140*
HPA					1.000	.159*	.134*
RSPA						1.000	.023
ROI							1.000

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

Husbands' monthly income is significantly related to the self-esteem of women. Only the husband's income increases the woman's self- esteem. Perhaps, income is the only career reward received by a husband that a wife can always use to enhance her own status (for example, in making consumer purchases). Other rewards may be manipulated by some women to enhance their own status, but for the most part, the rewards indicated by husband's occupational prestige, at least, reduce the self-esteem of the housewives in this study. For housewives, having a desirable husband contributes positively to self-esteem indirectly through its positive effect on marital success. In contrast, Table 4 shows that married professional women don't experience this indirect effect. Housewives with attractive, occupationally successful husbands predicted that their marriage would last longer than women with less successful husbands. Interestingly, though, income has no independent role, in this process. The strong, positive effect of marital success on self-esteem supports the argument that marriage can provide some satisfaction in the lives of women.

Table 4 : Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for Determinants of Self- Esteem and Marital Success (A Comparison between Housewives and Professional Women and all Women)

Independent Variables	Housewives (N= 102)		Professional Women (N=105)		All women
	Self-Esteem	Marital Success	Self-Esteem	Marital Success	Self-Esteem

Marital Success	.468	-	0.579	-	.594*
Husband's Physical Attraction	.183	-5.081E-02	-.949*	-.296	-.351
Husband's Occupational Prestige	1.097E-02	5.536E-04	.189	-.108	.121
Husband's Monthly Income	.705**	-6.353E-02	.745**	-3.464E-02	.827**
Wife's Physical Attraction	2.326**	.447*	.571	.276	1.593**
Wife's Intelligence	-8.240E-02	.268*	-2.158E-02	.103	-.245
R^2	0.265	0.069	0.200	0.177	0.215
F-ratio	5.706**	1.460 (n.s.)	4.077**	4.567**	9.107**

** Significant at 0.01 level * Significant at 0.05 level n.s. = Not significant

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has explored many important aspects of perception of Nepalese women regarding their husbands' success. Magar and Gurung women have the highest self- esteem. Newar is third leader followed by Brahamin/ Chhetri. Newari women perceive that their marriage lasts for longer time and they will have an excellent relationship with their partners. Brahamin/ Chhetri caste group is the second one in this regard. Gurung women perceive that their marriage duration lasts for short period of time. Husbands' occupation is the most important for Brahamin/ Chettri whereas it is least for Gurung caste group. Magar and Gurung caste groups have the highest husband's monthly income followed by Newar among the caste groups taken under study. Brahamins/Chettris have the lowest husband's monthly income. Magar women think that their husbands are physically more attractive than that of the other caste groups followed by Brahamin/ Chhetri. Gurungseni's husbands are the least physically attractive among the other caste groups. With comparison to the same age groups, Brahamin/ Chhetri housewives feel that they are slightly more attractive than that of the other caste groups. Magar, Gurung and Newar caste group's housewives' have the more or less the same views in this regard. Housewives' of Newar caste group feel that they are more intelligent than the average persons among the caste groups taken for the study. Brahamin / Chhetri is the second leader followed by Magar, while it is least in Gurung women. Housewives have slightly higher self esteem than that of the professional women. Housewives feel that their relationship with husband would be longer and excellent in comparison to the professional women. Husband's occupation is more important factor for professional women than the housewives. Husbands' monthly income

is higher in housewives than the professional women. Professional women feel that their husbands are physically attractive than that of the housewives'. In comparison to the friends of same age group, housewives feel that they are more attractive than the professional women. Professional women feel that they are more intelligent than the average person as compared to the housewives. Doctor is the most preferred job of their husband in Pokhareli women followed by engineer. Police/Army is the least preferred job of their husbands.

This study concludes that women, having reasonably housewives with higher income experience their husbands' success. Husbands' success does positively affect a housewife's self esteem, but only indirectly, through its effect on perceived marital success. Only husband's income has a direct positive effect on self esteem, while other successes of the husband actually lower her self esteem. These findings, that are made more dramatic by a comparison with professional married women for whom none of the above effects appear, demonstrate the ambiguous impact of traditional marriage on women. Since marriage is traditionally a basis for a woman's identity, successful marriage increases her feelings of worth. However, the specific role arrangements may reduce her feelings of personal competence.

Future researchers can explore whether the above findings characterize the whole population of Nepal by increasing the sample size. Another possibility to be explored in future research is whether women's self-esteem will increase as employment rates for married women continue to rise. If married women increasingly engage in continuous achievement-oriented work, then the number of women who are unemployed housewives will decrease and women who work may derive a secure sense of self- worth from their work. Variables like women's status; education can also be added for the future researchers.

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