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College of Education and Behavioral Studies

School of Psychology

**Psychological Well-being of Married and Unmarried Postgraduate Students in the College
of Education and Behavioral Studies, Addis Ababa University**

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**Psychological Well-being of Married and Unmarried Postgraduate Students in the College
of Education and Behavioral Studies, Addis Ababa University**

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Acronyms

AU:	Autonomy
EM:	Environmental mastery
NGO:	Non-governmental Organization
PG:	Personal growth
PL:	Purpose in life
PR:	Positive relations with others
SA:	Self acceptance
PWB:	Psychological well-being

Abstract

The objective of this study was to compare the psychological well-being of married and unmarried postgraduate students in Addis Ababa University. Quantitative method was employed to achieve the research objectives. For this purpose, 300 (200 male and 100 female) postgraduate students of the College of Education and Behavioral Studies of Addis Ababa University were selected through simple random, stratified, and systematic sampling techniques. A psychological wellbeing scale (Ryff, 1989) with demographic questions were used to collect data. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and t-test were conducted for data analysis. Findings revealed that unmarried students were found to have a significantly lower psychological wellbeing as compared to the married postgraduate students. Results from Pearson correlation analysis also revealed that Education level was significantly and positively correlated with psychological wellbeing whereas marital status was significantly and negatively correlated with psychological wellbeing. Age was not significantly related with psychological wellbeing. Therefore, the media, professional and religious institutions, family and the society at large has to teach those young men and women about the benefits of being married boldly.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

The World Health Organization defines health as not only the absence of illness and malformation but also individual's complete well-being from the aspects of physical, mental, spiritual and social (WHO 2010). Psychologists and health professionals (Campbell, 1981; Deci and Ryan, 2008) have studied well-being extensively. While the distinct dimensions of well-being have been debated, the general quality of well-being refers to optimal psychological functioning and experience.

More over psychological well-being is a multi-component concept and including: Self-acceptance: the positive attitude of self- acceptance and positive aspects like good and bad characteristics, and positive feeling about past life; Positive relation with others: a sense of satisfaction and intimacy relationships with others and understanding the dependencies; Autonomy: independence and effectiveness of the active role of life events and behaviors; Environmental mastery: a sense of mastery over the environment, outdoor activities and effective utilization of the opportunities around; Purpose in life: having a purpose in life and a belief that life past and present life is significant; Personal growth: a sense of sustain/need growth and to gain new experiences as one of the potential talents (Ryff and Singer, 1998).

Similarly psychological well-being is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. Sustainable well-being does not require individuals to feel good all the time; the experience of painful emotions (e.g. disappointment, failure, grief) is a normal part of life, and being able to manage these negative or painful emotions is essential for long-term well-being. Psychological well-being is, however, compromised when negative emotions are extreme or very long lasting and interfere with a person's ability to function in his or her daily life (Huppert, 2009).

Traditionally, the association between marriage and individual well-being has led to the following two distinct lines of research: (a) influence of marriage, including marital status and marital quality, on one's well-being (protection perspective); and (b) the effect of one's health status and physical and psychological well-being on marriage (selection perspective). Many

previous studies have tried to identify mechanisms of each perspective and to explain questions such as what aspects of marital life are crucial for one's well-being and unique in comparison with other intimate relationships (Ren, 1997).

From birth until death, individuals pass through specific and defined stages of development. Within each stage of the life cycle, there are developmental tasks that must be accomplished before going on to the next step. This is a universal theme. Likewise, the transition from adolescence to adulthood is a major trajectory in every person's life. Yet, the adulthood period is a period characterized by opportunities to become more independent in making decisions about the future, has unique developmental tasks as adjusting to the body's physical and physiological changes; leaving the parental home to establish one's own residence, establishing financial independence, moving into full time employment, getting married and becoming a parent, adjusting to the reality of the work situation; assuring economic security for the young and old age, helping children to become responsible citizens; participating in the community; and reaffirming the values of life that have real meaning (Benson, 2004).

Researchers have yet to fully understand how or why marriage protects people from poor health and the relationships between marital status, social support and psychological wellbeing are not well understood. Previous research has acknowledged the associations between marital status and psychological wellbeing; social support and psychological wellbeing, marital status and social support (e.g. Waite, 1995)

Yet, to date, limited research attention has been paid to the inter-relationships between marital status, social support and psychological wellbeing. (Bierman, Fazio, & Milkie, 2006; Hewitt, Turrell, & Giskes, 2010). Sherbourne and Hays (1990), for example, found an indirect effect of marital status on psychological health through social support, but the findings were drawn from a chronically ill sample and may not be a reflection of the wider population. In a longitudinal study investigating marital loss, Hewitt (2010) found that social support mediated the relationship between marital loss and psychological health, and that for widowed men, social support moderated psychological health. This research aims to build on the limited existing evidence. It makes use of marital status groups and five domains of psychological wellbeing to assess the relationship between married and unmarried peoples' psychological well being.

Generally, previous analyses of marital status effects on psychological well-being have been plagued with questions of whether a selection effect is causing the relationship (Gove, Style, and Hughes, 1990) i.e., are persons with poorer psychological profiles finding themselves left never married or divorced, making the apparent association between marriage and positive well being a spurious relationship? Also, differentiations are often not made between separated, divorced, widowed, and unmarried people when making contrasts to those who are married. Furthermore the researcher of the present study did not found any single study in Ethiopian context that addressed such conditions and there also be a widely held negative attitude towards marriage among unmarried people. Therefore through this researcher it is possible to challenge the unmarried people who have negative outlook about marriage.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Marriage and psychological well-being has been known to vary by gender (Glenn & Weaver, 1988). The prevalent perspective is that marriage is more beneficial for men than for women (Gove, Hughes, & Style, 1983), and conversely, being single is more disadvantageous for men (Gove, 1983). However, more recent studies have questioned whether marriage benefits men more than women (e.g., Joung, 1997) because married women are often found to report lower levels of depression as well as overall happiness compared to their male counterparts. Relatively little attention has been paid to gender differences in psychological well-being among the unmarried, because it has been assumed that the roles of single men and women are relatively similar. Findings from empirical studies have shown that unmarried women far better in terms of psychological well-being than their male counterparts (Gove, 1990).

In addition, transitions from non married to married status are associated with lower levels of depression among men, but this does not hold true for women (Horwitz et al., 1996; Umberson, 1992). Similarly, other researchers also reported that differences in health status between unmarried and married women were not statistically significant, but the opposite was true for men; unmarried men were found to far worse than married men (Ross & Mirowsky, 1989; Wyke & Ford, 1992). In the last four decades, studies on women's well-being have gained considerable attention across different disciplines. In the 1980s, investigations in to various indicators of psychological well-being started to proliferate and the impetus for almost all of these studies is the hypothesized link between psychological health and physical health (Ryff and Singer 1998).

A number of these researches look in to the relationship between psychological well-being and major life transitions, including marriage. However, most of the studies on marital transition and psychological well-being were conducted in the developed country (e.g., Pearlin and Johnson 1977; Gerstel, Riessman and Rosenfield 1985; Doherty, Su and Needle 1989; Horwitz, White and Howell white 1996). In the developing countries, few of any such studies exist in particular, nothing is known about the association between married and unmarried with people's psychological well-being in the context of Ethiopia.

This paper extends the research on attitudes toward marriage by focusing on how young adults view their pathway to marriage, applying a quantitative and qualitative analysis combined to a representative sample of young adults as the transition into adulthood.

Marriage patterns in the United States have changed substantially in recent decades. People are marrying later in life than they did 40 years ago and young adults today are spending more time unmarried than earlier generations did (Schoen and Standish 2001; Fields 2004). Over this same period, cohabitation and non marital childbearing have become increasingly common (Bumpass 1991, Chandra et al. 2005; Martin et al. 2007). These shifts in marriage patterns have sparked considerable interest among researchers and policymakers, as well as some concern about their potential social impact—in particular, their possible adverse effects on the well-being of children (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Amato 2001). However, people neither are passive recipients of structure nor are multiple schemas aligned with one another. Influences from more than one schema might cause values to overlap or clash, producing conflict or change. Thus, the researcher argue that the timing and conditions where marriage will be located in someone's own life course will vary according to a person's combined schemas, materials and agency, which will be reflected in different memberships to Latent Classes (LC's) of attitudes toward marriage and different things that one needs to accomplish before getting married.

Thus, this study was tried to explore the psychological well-being of the married and unmarried, postgraduate students and examines if socio demographic backgrounds associate with the psychological well-being of the married people. To address this gap in literature, this research tries to achieve the following major objectives of the study.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

To explore the status of psychological wellbeing of married and unmarried post graduate students of Addis Ababa University College of Education and Behavioral Studies.

More specifically, this study tried to

- ✓ Determine the status of psychological well being of married and unmarried postgraduate students.
- ✓ Compare the status of psychological wellbeing of married and unmarried postgraduate students.
- ✓ Examine the association between some selected socio demographic variables (i.e., age, sex, educational level, marital status, number of children and duration of marriage) and psychological well being of married and unmarried post graduate students.

1.4. Operational Definition of Terms

Psychological well-being:- it refers to the individual's meaningful engagement in life, self-satisfaction, optimal psychological functioning and development at one's true highest potential. It has six dimensions that are autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationship with other, purpose in life and self-acceptance of individuals (Ryff, 1989).

- ✓ **Autonomy:** the extent to which student's view themselves as being independent and able to resist social pressures
- ✓ **Environmental mastery:** the extent to which graduate students feel in control of and able to act in the environment
- ✓ **Personal growth:** the extent to which graduate students have a sense of continued development and self-improvement.
- ✓ **Positive relations with others:** the extent to which graduate students have satisfying, trusting relationships with other people.
- ✓ **Purpose in life:** the extent to which graduate students hold beliefs that give life meaning
- ✓ **Self-acceptance:** the extent to which graduate students have a positive attitude about themselves

Married people: are participants of this study who are in the state of being united as spouses in a consensual or being engaged in marriage life.

Unmarried people: are participants of this study who are not now or previously married or still in the state of being single.

Postgraduate students: students who are currently following their MA and PhD degree program in Addis Ababa University College of Education and Behavioral Studies both in regular and extension (night and weekend program of the university).

1.5. Significance of the Study

The results of the study are believed to be helpful in the following ways:

The study assesses the status and comparing the psychological well-being of married and unmarried postgraduate students. As a result, the concerned bodies, policy makers, , family, governmental and non-governmental organization will work together on marriage issues or strengthen the existing programs in order to increase positive attitude towards marriage to solve the problem delaying marriage at expected age of marriage. This research is important for those involved in therapy and in counseling to identify adults who are at low level of psychological wellbeing and to develop and improve prevention and intervention methods for unmarried or being singlehood. The finding of this study will also provide important direction for conducting further research in the areas of psychological wellbeing and mental health of unmarried people.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

The data collected for this study was based on self-reported scale that was provided by students targeted by the study. Therefore, there is some potential reporting bias which may have occurred because of respondents' interpretation of the questions or desire to report their emotions in a certain way or simply because of inaccuracies of responses and some of respondents are too much busy with their academic program. And the researcher faced to challenges which are financial and time because to collect data from participants it would requires the available time and also financial availability to come upping of unbiased data and research process.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Overview of the Literature

This section describes the review related literature that of related to the researcher study and it comprises: marriage and its contribution, psychological wellbeing; meaning, components and measures, marriage and psychological well-being and summary and implication of the literature.

2.2. Marriage and its General Contributions

Marriage affects the way people view themselves and their abilities. Often marriage promotes feelings of mastery at being a spouse, taking care of others, along with higher self-esteem because the person feels desired and needed by his or her spouse. Self-esteem is an important psychological characteristic that improves psychological health by diminishing psychological despair and/or increasing motivation to cope better. Being married enhances mastery and self-esteem by providing a foundation for a sense of meaningfulness (Gove, 1983; Marks, 1996).

While some studies show that married men and women experience improved holistic health, other studies find marriage to be emotionally disadvantageous for women and particularly beneficial to men. Being married not only directly protects and improves men's physical and psychological health, but such a committed state also reduces risky behaviors. Men's lives are enhanced because they have someone who, by nature, is often nurturing and observant, thus directly paying service to his needs. For women, marriage is indirectly beneficial through the social assumptions of financial and emotional security and immediate social support. What happens when marriage does not provide these benefits?(Waite, 2000)

Marriage is assumed to be economically beneficial because it most often results in higher household incomes, which helps to potentially circumvent possible economic stresses and helps to provide for higher quality living, such as better housing, food, and services. The improved standard of living and lower risk of impoverishment contributes to a better overall psychological health (Stack & Eshleman, 1998).

Research further suggests that marriage, alone, is predictive of healthy psychological well-being (Acock & Demo, 1994, Kim & McKenry, 2002). However, most research shows marriage to be beneficial in comparison to people who are not currently married (Gove, Hughes, Style, 1983;

Horwitz & White, 1991; Kim & McKenry, 2002; Mastekaasa, 1994; Pearlin & Johnson, 1977; Stack & Eshleman, 1998; Williams 1988; Williams, Takeuchi, Adair, 1992), in terms of marital satisfaction (Waite, 2000), and with regards to what marriage provides.

A large body of research has examined how living arrangements and marital status relate to wellbeing in adulthood, and most studies have found that those who are married and coreside with family have a better quality of life than those who are not married and live alone. Married individuals are likely to have better subjective health status (Liu and Umberson 2008), lower mortality rates (Manzoli, 2007), more feelings of happiness (Sassler and Schoen 1999; Soons, Liefbroer, and Kalmijn 2009), a fewer number of depressive symptoms (Jang et al. 2009; Yan et al. 2011), and a lower likelihood of suicidal ideation and attempts (Crump et al. 2014). Research on the benefits of family coresidency in adulthood has heavily focused on the older population, as family is the main source of support in old age (Li 2013). Older adults living alone are more likely to experience loneliness (Greenfield and Russell 2011) and suicidal ideation or attempts (Crawford, Kuforiji, and Ghosh, 2009; Lee and Oh 2008).

2.3. Psychological wellbeing; Meaning, Components and Measures

Psychological well-being is perhaps the most widely used construct among psychologists and mental health professionals. However, there is still no consensus regarding the operational definition of this construct (Khan and Juster, 2002). Yet, many theories of well-being have been proposed and an extensive body of empirical research using different indices of this construct has been conducted. However, theorists have found that the concept of psychological wellbeing (PWB) is much more complex and controversial. Practically speaking, psychological wellbeing serves as an umbrella term for many constructs that assess psychological functioning (Girum, 2012).

Psychological well-being is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. Sustainable well-being does not require individuals to feel good all the time; the experience of painful emotions (e.g. disappointment, failure, grief) is a normal part of life, and being able to manage these negative or painful emotions is essential for long-term well-being. Psychological well-being is, however, compromised when negative emotions are extreme or very long lasting and interfere with a person's ability to function in his or her daily life

(Huppert, 2009). Ryff's (1989) defined well-being is the optimal psychological functioning and experience. Shek (1992) defines psychological well-being as that 'state of a mentally healthy person who possesses a number of positive mental health qualities such as active adjustment to the environment and unity of personality'

Dzuka and Dalbert (2000) defined psychological well-being is the overall satisfaction and happiness or the subjective report of one's mental state of being healthy, satisfied or prosperous and broadly to reflect quality of life and mood states.

Deci and Ryan (2008) defined Psychological well-being as living life in a full and deeply satisfying manner. This conceptualization maintains that well-being is not so much an outcome or end state as a process, and is concerned with living well or actualizing one's human potentials.

Throughout human history, normative understandings of well-being have defined particular human characteristics and qualities as desirable and worthy of pursuit or emulation (Taylor, 1989). Such normative understandings are represented by traditional philosophies and religions that often stress the cultivation of certain virtues (Diener, 1984).

In contemporary Western society, these norms are largely provided by philosophies of psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is among the most central ideas in counseling. It plays a crucial role in theories of personality and development in both pure and applied forms; it provides a baseline from which we assess psychopathology; it serves as a guide for clinical work by helping the counselor determine the direction clients might move to alleviate distress and find fulfillment, purpose, and meaning; and it informs goals and objectives for counseling-related interventions (Christopher, 1999).

The Eudaimonic is deriving from ancient Greek philosophy notably the work of Aristotle and were later championed by Mills among other. Eudaimonic measures emphasis 'human flourishing' literally eu (wellbeing or good) and Daimonia (demon or spirit) and virtuous action, which is argued to be not always congruent with happiness or satisfaction, but to reflect a broader and multi-factored set of need. Hedonic measures follow the criteria of maximizing pleasure and avoiding pain an approach dating back to ancient Greek philosophy that found later expression in the work of Bentham and his followers (OPHI, 2007). Ryff and

Singer (1998) define eudaimonia as “the idea of striving towards excellence based on one’s own unique potential.”

The hedonic view equates well-being with happiness and is often operationalized as the balance between positive and negative affect (Ryan and Deci, 2001). The eudaimonic perspective, on the other hand, assesses how well people are living in relation to their true selves (Waterman, Schwartz, and Conti, 2008; Ryff, 1989). There is not a standard or widely accepted measure of either hedonic or eudaimonic well-being, although commonly used instruments include Bradburn’s Affect Balance, Neugarten’s Life Satisfaction Index, Ryff psychological wellbeing scale, Rosenberg’s self-esteem scale, and a variety of depression instruments (Ryan and Deci, 2001).

Recent years have witnessed an exhilarating shift in the research literature from an emphasis on disorder and dysfunction to a focus on well-being and positive mental health. This paradigm shift has been especially prominent in current psychological research but it has also captured the attention of epidemiologists, social scientists, economists, and policy makers (Huppert, 2005). This positive perspective is also enshrined in the constitution of the World Health Organization, where health is defined as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 1948). More recently, the WHO has defined positive mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (Huppert, 2009).

Component of psychological well being

Ryff (1989) critiqued research on subjective well-being for what she saw as its impoverished theoretical basis. She acknowledged that current approaches to subjective well-being have been extensively evaluated and that psychometrically solid measures have been constructed (Christopher, 1999).

Ryff (1989) developed an alternative approach to well-being that she refers to as psychological well-being. Synthesizing ideas from the personality theories of Malsow, Jung, Rogers, Allport, Erikson, Buhler, Neurgartens, and Jahoda, she constructed a measure of well-being around six

subscales: Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Positive Relations with Others, and Purpose in life, Personal Growth, and Self-Acceptance.

Autonomy

Ryff (1989) equates autonomy with attributes such as self-determination, independence, internal locus of control, individuation, and internal regulation of behavior. Underlying these attributes is the belief that one's thoughts and actions are one's own and should not be determined by agencies or causes outside one's control. The fully functioning person is described as having an internal locus of evaluation, whereby one does not look to others for approval, but evaluates oneself by personal standards (Ryff and Singer, 1996).

Most orphans are at risk of being confronted by powerful cumulative and often negative social changes in their lives over which they have no personal control. Experiences in continuously adverse circumstances do not make life appear to be subject to control through a person's own efforts (Cilliers, 1998). Perceived lack of control produces a feeling of helplessness and loss of hope, and diminishes an individual's will power (Tsihoaane, 2006).

Environmental Mastery

Ryff's (1989) defined environmental mastery as the ability to choose or create environments that is suitable to whom they are as a person, as well as the ability to be flexible in various environmental settings.

Maturity is seen to require participation in a significant scope of activity outside of oneself. Life-span development is described as requiring the ability to manipulate and control complex environments and also one's ability to advance in the world and change it creatively through physical or mental activities. These active participation in and mastery of the environment are key ingredients in an integrated framework of positive psychological functioning (Ryff and Singer, 1998).

Positive Relations with Others

Ryff (1989) defined positive relations with others as warm, trusting interpersonal relations and strong feelings of empathy and affection. At first glance this subscale/criterion seems most sympathetic to or compatible with collectivism. However, there is a significant difference

between having relations with others and being psychologically constituted by one's location in a social network (Christopher, 1999)

Many of the preceding theories emphasize the importance of warm, trusting interpersonal relations. The ability to love is viewed as a central component of mental health. Self-actualizers are described as having strong feelings of empathy and affection for all human beings and as being capable of greater love, deeper friendship, and more complete identification with others. Warm relating to others is posed as a criterion of maturity (Ryff and Singer, 1996). Orphans who do not establish a supportive relationship with their care given are unable to create new components and risk for poor psychological adjustment (Kodero, 2000).

Purpose in Life

Ryff (1989) suggested that having a clear comprehension of life's purpose, a sense of directedness, and intentionality are important parts of the feeling that there is purpose and meaning to life. One who functions positively has goals, intentions, and a sense of direction, all of which contribute to the feeling that life is meaningful (Ryff and Singer, 1996).

Personal Growth

Ryff (1989) defined personal growth as the continuing ability to develop one's potential, to grow and expand as a person. Openness to experience, for example, is a key characteristic of the fully functioning person. Such an individual is continually developing, rather than achieving a fixed state wherein all problems are solved. Life-span theories also give explicit emphasis to continued growth and to facing new challenges to tasks at different periods of life (Ryff and Singer, 1996).

The dimension of personal growth parallels Aristotelian conceptions of human excellence, human flourishing, and the realization of one's true potential (Waterman, 1993).

Eudaimonistic accounts of ethics and the good life in fact, to the imperative to know oneself (one's daimon) and to choose to turn it, as completely as possible, from an ideal to an actuality (Ryff and Singer, 1996).

Self-Acceptance

Ryff (1989) maintained that holding positive attitudes toward oneself emerges as a central characteristic of positive psychological functioning. This is defined as a central feature of mental health as well as characteristic of self-actualization, optimal functioning, and maturity. Life span theories also emphasize acceptance of one's self and one's past life. Thus, holding positive attitudes toward oneself emerges as a central characteristic of positive psychological functioning. Ideas of self-love, self-esteem, and self-respect are also evident in lists of criteria goods showing parallels to self-acceptance (Ryff and Singer, 1996).

Measuring of psychological well being

The main strands of the literature on psychological and subjective wellbeing focus on Eudaimonic, hedonic and mental health measures, respectively. Equating well-being with hedonic pleasure or happiness has a long history. Aristotle, a Greek philosopher from the fourth century B.C., taught that the goal of life is to experience the maximum amount of pleasure, and that happiness is the totality of one's hedonic moments. His early philosophical hedonism has been followed by many others. Hobbes argued that happiness lies in the successful pursuit of our human appetites, and De Sade believed that pursuit of sensation and pleasure is the ultimate goal of life. Utilitarian philosophers such as Bentham argued that it is through individuals' attempting to maximize pleasure and self-interest that the good society is built. Hedonism, as a view of well-being, has thus been expressed in many forms and has varied from a relatively narrow focus on bodily pleasures to a broad focus on appetites and self-interests (Ryan and Deci, 2001). Psychologists who have adopted the hedonic view have tended to focus on a broad conception of hedonism that includes the preferences and pleasures of the mind as well as the body (Kubovy, 1999).

There are many ways to evaluate the pleasure/pain continuum in human experience; most research within the new hedonic psychology has used assessment of subjective well-being (SWB) (Diener and Lucas, 1999). SWB consists of three components: life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood, and the absence of negative mood, together often summarized as happiness (Ryan and Deci, 2001).

There are some philosophical arguments about equating hedonic pleasure with well-being; there has been considerable debate about the degree to which measures of SWB adequately define psychological wellness (e.g. Ryff and Singer, 1998). Accordingly, there are two important issues concerning the hedonic position in research on well-being. One concerns the validity of SWB and related measures as operational definitions of (a) hedonism and/or (b) well-being. The other concerns the types of social activities, goals, and attainments theorized to promote well-being; however it is assessed (Ryan and Deci, 2001).

The term Eudaimonia is valuable because it refers to well-being as distinct from happiness perspective. Eudaimonic theories maintain that not all desires, not all outcomes that a person might value would yield well-being when achieved. Even though they are pleasure producing, some outcomes are not good for people and would not promote wellness. Thus, from the Eudaimonic perspective, subjective happiness cannot be equated with well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2001).

Waterman (1993) stated that, whereas happiness is hedonically defined, the Eudaimonic conception of well-being calls upon people to live in accordance with their daimon, or true self. He suggested that Eudaimonia occurs when people's life activities are most congruent with deeply held values and are holistically or fully engaged. Under such circumstances people would feel intensely alive and authentic, existing as whom they really are. Waterman labeled personal expressiveness (PE). Empirically, Waterman showed that measures of hedonic enjoyment and PE were strongly correlated, but were nonetheless indicative of distinct types of experience. For example, whereas both PE and hedonic measures were associated with drive fulfillments, PE was more strongly related to activities that afforded personal growth and development, furthermore, PE was more associated with being challenged and exerting effort, whereas hedonic enjoyment was more related to being relaxed, away from problems, and happy (Ryan and Deci, 2001).

Ryff and Singer (1998) have explored the question of well-being in the context of developing a lifespan theory of human flourishing. Also drawing from Aristotle, they describe well-being not simply as the attaining of pleasure, but as "the striving for perfection that represents the realization of one's true potential" (Ryff, 1995). (Ryff and Keyes, 1995) thus spoke of psychological well-being (PWB) as distinct from SWB and presented a multidimensional

approach to the measurement of PWB that taps six distinct aspects of human actualization: autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery, and positive relatedness. These six constructs define PWB both theoretically and operationally and they specify what promotes emotional and physical health (Ryff and Singer, 1998). They have presented evidence, for example, that Eudaimonic living, as represented by PWB, can influence specific physiological systems relating to immunological functioning and health promotion. PWB is measured through different assessment devices such as self-reported questionnaire, informant reports, memory measures, interview, behavioral observation and biological measures. Taken together these measures provide a more accurate assessment of PWB (Girum, 2012).

2.4. Marriage and Psychological Well-being

Research suggests that marital status and psychological well-being are closely associated (McGrath, 1990). Marital status refers to the various relationship configurations (married, separated, and cohabiting) or the lack thereof (never married, divorced, and widowed). Over the last four decades, much research focused on marriage (Gove, 1983; Horwitz & White, 1991; Lee, 1991; Lorenz, Simons, Conger, Elder, Jr., Johnson, & Chao, 1997; Pearlin & Johnson, 1977; Simon, 2002; Stack & Eshleman, 1998; Williams, 1988). The focus of previous research ranges from general findings on the effects of marriage to more specific findings of comparing different relationship statuses.

Married Persons and Psychological Well-Being

Research suggests that marriage contributes to an overall healthy well-being (Gove & Shin 1989; Lamb et al., 2003; Ross, Mirowsky, & Goldstein, 1990). Married people enjoy the benefits of social support, immediate intimate emotional support, and economic support (Waite, 2000), as well as having lower morbidity and mortality rates (Coombs, 1991; Ross et al., 1990). Marriage is a legal, formalized relationship that facilitates association in a network that could potentially provide social support and influences one's well-being (Cotton, 1999). Intimate emotional support, provided by a partner, is characterized as a sense of being cared about, loved, esteemed, valued as a person, along with having a confidante (Pierce, Sarason, Joseph, & Henderson, 1996; Ross et al., 1990). Married people report higher degrees of intimate emotional support and also tend to report lower levels of depression (Stack & Eshleman, 1998).

Marriage is assumed to be economically beneficial because it most often results in higher household incomes, which helps to potentially circumvent possible economic stresses and helps to provide for higher quality living, such as better housing, food, and services. The improved standard of living and lower risk of impoverishment contributes to a better overall psychological health (Gove & Shin, 1989; Stack & Eshleman, 1998).

While some studies show that married men and women experience improved holistic health (Waite, 2000), other studies find marriage to be emotionally disadvantageous for women and particularly beneficial to men (McGrath et al., 1990; Simon, 2002). Being married not only directly protects and improves men's physical and psychological health, but such a committed state also reduces risky behaviors (Ross et al., 1990; Waite, 2000; Wu & Hart, 2002). Men's lives are enhanced because they have someone who, by nature, is often nurturing and observant, thus directly paying service to his needs. For women, marriage is indirectly beneficial through the social assumptions of financial and emotional security and immediate social support.

Research further suggests that marriage, alone, is predictive of healthy psychological well-being (Acock & Demo, 1994; Kessler & Essex, 1982; Kim & McKenry, 2002). However, most research shows marriage to be beneficial in comparison to people who are not currently married (Gove, Hughes, Style, 1983; Horwitz & White, 1991; Kim & McKenry, 2002; Mastekaasa, 1994; Pearlin & Johnson, 1977; Stack & Eshleman, 1998; Williams 1988; Williams, Takeuchi, Adair, 1992), in terms of marital satisfaction (Waite, 2000), and with regards to what marriage provides.

Non-Married Persons and Psychological Well-Being

Non-married persons are defined as persons who never married as well as persons who were formerly married (separated, divorced, widowed), and persons who are cohabitating. Studies find that when compared to married people, non-married persons report possessing higher levels of psychological distress (Ross, 1990). Although non-married individuals may report happiness, hopefulness, and a sense of social support, when compared married people, non-married people do not possess as high a level of psychological health (Williams, 1988)

Examined closely, studies reveal inconsistent findings when comparing married persons to each subgroup of non-married persons. Some research shows that married people are much happier and have lower depression levels, followed by those who never married, and finally by those

who were formerly married (Gove et al., 1983; Marks, 1996). Other research found that widowed and never married individuals, especially women, experience more psychological distress than separated and divorced persons (Williams, 1988). Research also found that the divorced and never married were substantially more depressed than married women (Acock & Demo, 1994).

Additional support for the proposition that separated and divorced persons experience the highest depression levels also suggests that married persons experience the least distress, and the single and widowed experience an intermediate level of distress (Gove & Shin, 1989; Pearlin & Johnson, 1977; Williams et al., 1992). Other studies found that people who cohabit experience less psychological distress than other non-married individuals (Stack & Eshleman, 1998; Waite, 2000). In addition to the possible increase in happiness for the never married, studies suggest that a possible decrease in happiness exists among the married (Lee, 1991).

Previous studies reveal that compared with single people who are not in current relationships, married people are happier because of the idea that the married encounter higher levels of interaction with others (Stack & Eshleman, 1998). Many studies do not include persons living together in the non-married pool, but of those that do, people who cohabit were the happiest subset of non-married people. Cohabitation has many of the beneficial emotional characteristics of marriage such as an intimate relationship, a source of social support, regular sexual activity, and shared income, but also possesses the flexibility to end their relationship, an advantage of singlehood (Horwitz & White, 1998). People who cohabit are not considered to be equal to married people because cohabitation does not have the same legal status as marriage and has a negative association with financial satisfaction and health.

Past studies reveal that the idea that married persons are psychologically better off than never married persons who exhibit higher depression scores. Yet, more recent studies find this differential is no longer true or is losing validity. Some studies suggest that the state of marriage alone does not determine emotional health; rather the quality of the marriage determines emotional health (Haring-Hidore, Stock, Okun, & Witter, 1985; Waite, 2000; Kim & McKenry, 2002). Such inconsistent findings about the experience of depression and union statuses lend support for additional exploration of the relationship between marital status and psychological health especially among low-income and rural, low-income people and gives rise to questions.

Associations between living arrangements and wellbeing also vary across life stages. A body of research conducted in Western societies has shown that living alone is positively related to wellbeing among young adults. For young adults, especially for those in their late teens and early 20s, gaining a sense of self and the social identity of being an independent adult is a major developmental task that needs to be accomplished (Jordyn and Byrd 2003; Kins and Beyers 2010). In Western societies, leaving the parental home often initiates a transitional process towards adulthood, followed by other role transitions, such as completing education, starting a career, and getting married and having children (Aassve, Arpino, and Billari 2013; Spéder, Murinkó, and Settersten Jr. 2014). The accomplishment of the main markers for adulthood, such as residential independence, securing a job, and starting a romantic relationship, are related to better psychological wellbeing in young adulthood (Galambos and Krahn 2008; Kins and Beyers 2010; Schulenberg, Bryant, and O'Malley, 2004). By making everyday decisions away from the control of their parents, young adults living alone may gain a sense of independence that, in turn, is related to better psychological wellbeing (Galambos and Krahn 2008). Additionally, living alone does not predict poor economic status and/or social isolation for young adults as they are economically independent and have wider and more active non-family social networks, such as friends and professional networks within the workplace (Wrzus, 2013).

2.5. Summary and Implication

Research suggests that marital status and psychological well-being are closely associated (McGrath, 1990). Marital status refers to the various relationship configurations (married, separated, and cohabiting) or the lack thereof (never married, divorced, and widowed). Over the last four decades, much research focused on marriage (Gove, 1983; Horwitz & White, 1991; 1982; Lee, 1991; Lorenz, Simons, Conger, Elder, Jr., Johnson, & Chao, 1997; Pearlin & Johnson, 1977; Simon, 2002; Stack & Eshleman, 1998; Williams, 1988). The focus of previous research changes from general findings on the effects of marriage to more specific findings of comparing different relationship statuses.

Social support is one construct believed to play a protective role in buffering stress for the married and the non-married. However, Cotton (1999) found social support to be especially beneficial to non-married persons and people who are dissatisfied with their marriage because it helps to offset negative outcomes associated with singlehood and distressing unions. For

widowed and never married persons, friend and relative social support is strongly associated with psychological health (Cotton, 1999).

Regardless of marital status, if partner emotional support and/or social support from others are lacking, the married will experience higher depression levels. Most research provides evidence that the lower the level of social support, the higher the level of depression (Cotton, 1999).

Marriage can be a source of social support. Support by an intimate partner is distinctively helpful. Commonly, partners are most likely to be turned to for support in time of need (Beach, Fincham, Katz, & Bradbury, 1996). Research also found that available intimate emotional support is very beneficial in preventing distress from turning into depression (Cutrona, 1996). The presence of a supportive marital relationship is linked to reduced depression vulnerability in that marriage lessens one's susceptibility to experiencing distress (Davila, 1997).

Additionally, through the increased social network provided through marriage, partners may find psychological benefits (Cotton, 1999). Nonmarried individuals are isolated from important social ties, derived through marriage and usually centered on home and family, which often generates feelings of security and belonging (Gove et al., 1983; Cotton, 1999). Without those ties, non-married people are more likely to possess lower psychological health. Based on these research findings, psychological health is greatly influenced by various factors that, in some way, are experienced by everyone. More specifically, everyone falls into some category of marital status, socioeconomic status, geographic location, and group of perceived social support. Over time, many researchers examined the association between different relationship configurations (Cockrum & White, 1985; Gove & Shin, 1989; Lorenz, 1997; Marks, 1996); different geographic locations (Human & Wasem, 1991); and various perceptions of social support and psychological health (Green & Rodgers, 2001). Some studies even examined the combination effect of these variables, such as the affect of economic level and geographic location on psychological well-being (Amato & Zuo, 1992).

However, the many studies on the influences on psychological well-being, research focused on the affects of marital status on psychological well-being, if marriage is associated with better mental health, do these demographic trends portend a proliferation of mental health problems in

our future aging society? Or is there any additional evidence that might indicate that as adult single life becomes more common.

3. Methods of the Study

This chapter deals with the description of the research design, population, sample and sampling techniques of the study, instruments of data collection, procedure of data collection, and methods of data analysis.

3.1. Design of the Study

The study is descriptive in its nature which involves comparative survey and correlational research design. It is descriptive since it attempts to assess the level of psychological wellbeing between married and unmarried postgraduate. It is also correlational, since it correlates the dependent variable of psychological well-being of orphan children with some selected independent variables such as sex, age, educational level, marital status, number of children, duration stay in marriage and comparative since it compares the status of psychological well-being of orphan and non-orphan children. In order to achieve the stated objectives, quantitative approach of data collection was used.

The aim of the quantitative approach is to assess the psychological wellbeing of married and unmarried postgraduate students, compare psychological wellbeing between married and unmarried, and to examine the relationship between demographic variables and psychological wellbeing of unmarried postgraduate students.

3.2. Participants

The study was conducted in Addis Ababa University; more specifically the target population of this study consists of married and unmarried people studying their postgraduate program in the college of Education and Behavioral Studies.

3.3. Sample and Sampling Techniques

The researcher selected post graduate students of College of Education and Behavioral Studies were selected randomly. The students were stratified in gender, program of study (i.e., MA or Ph.D. candidate), year of study and mode of the program (i.e., regular or extension).

Accordingly there are 1503 post graduate (master's and doctoral degree) students in Addis Ababa University College of Education and Behavioral Studies who are enrolled both in regular and extension programs in 2010 academic calendar which would enable the selection of both married and unmarried post graduate students. From these 985 are male and the rest 518 are female students. It is recommended by Huck (2004) that 20% of the total population is worthy enough to be taken as a representative sample size. By this recommendation the researcher has decided to take 20% of each sex and the calculated sample size is 200(20% of 985) for male and 100 (20% of 518) for female participants.

A list of post graduate students (sampling frame) was obtained from lists. Their record represents those married and unmarried post graduate students who reported to the college. The record consists of 300 participants from whom 200 were married and the remaining 100 were unmarried post graduate students of AAU College of Education and Behavioral Studies to see whether there are statistically significant difference or not.

Postgraduate students were selected using systematic random sampling technique. In this process MA and PhD Education levels in the sample of one school and five departments, who are attending their Masters and PhD program, in regular and extension mode of study. First, from two educational level (MA and PhD), the year of study was taken as sample using lottery method. Totally from one sample schools, 5 departments were selected.

The sampling frame consists of 1503 postgraduate students in college of Education and Behavioral Studies. From this sampling frame, 20 % of the students were selected. Thus, a total of 300 samples of married students were selected using systematic sampling technique. Using this technique, every fifth postgraduate students was selected from the sampling frame and included in the sample of the main study. Therefore, a total of 300 students were taken as a sample. Out of the 300, 135(45%) were Married and 153(51%) were Unmarried and 12(4%) were divorced. Out of the total married, unmarried and divorced students 200(67%) were males and 100(33%) were females. The total number of married respondents 93(68.8%) were males and 42(31.1%) were females, the total number of unmarried 101(66%) were males and 52(39.98%) were females and 6(50%) were males and 6(50%) were females. Concerning their education level, 189(63%) Masters students 125(41.6%) were males and 64(21.3%) were females and 111(37%) PhD students 76(25.3%) were males and 64(21.3%) were females.

3.4. Research Variable

3.4.1. Independent variable

The independent variables of the research are sex, age, marital status, educational level, number of children for married and Duration of stay in marriage.

3.4.2. Dependent variable

Psychological well-being is the dependent variable in this research and has six dimensions: Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life, and Self-acceptance.

3.5. Instruments

Demographic Questionnaire

The respondents were asked to provide information regarding their gender, age, educational level, marital status, number of children and duration stay in marriage of married and unmarried postgraduate students.

Psychological wellbeing scale

In order to assess the psychological wellbeing of the respondents the researcher employed the Ryff Psychological Wellbeing scale medium form which consists of 46 questions. The scale consists of a series of statements reflecting the six areas of psychological well-being: Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, purpose in Life and Self-acceptance. The test retest reliability of the sub scales ranges from 0.81 to 0.85 and the internal consistency ranged from .87 to .90 (www.Liberal arts.wabash.edu).

There are four versions of the Ryff's psychological well-being scale. Cronbach's alpha was 0.63 for autonomy, 0.53 for environmental mastery, 0.78 for positive relations with others, 0.73 for self-acceptance, 0.66 for personal growth and 0.74 for purpose in life. Individual indicated their response on 5 point liker-type scale, which higher scores on each scale indicating greater wellbeing on each dimension. The number of responses made by the subject on each question depends whether the question is positive or negative. If it is a positive question responses are rated from 1 to 5, where a score of 5 indicates strong agreement. If it is a negative question scoring done is in reverse order which is from 5 to 1, where 5 indicated strong disagreement. For each category, a high score indicates that a respondent has a mastery of that area in his/her life. Conversely a low score shows that the respondent struggles to feel comfortable with that particular concept (Srimathi and Kumar,

2010).

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Participation of respondents is strictly on voluntary basis. Participants are fully informed as to the purpose of the study and consented verbally. Measures are taken to ensure the respect, dignity and freedom of each individual participating and to assure confidentiality in the study. Participants were informed that the information they provide would be kept confidential and would not be disclosed to anyone else including anyone in the University.

3.7. Procedures

After obtaining informed consent from the participants, the structured questionnaire which includes demographic and psychological wellbeing variables was administered to the sample population of married and unmarried PG student.

The data Collection instruments in this study was the most widely applied scales to assess psychological wellbeing i.e. PWB scale which is developed by carol D. Ryff (1989). This scale measures the six aspects of psychological well-beings like autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, and purpose in life and self- acceptance. The items are presented are presented on five point likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The six dimensions of psychological wellbeing are:

- A. Autonomy** – assesses self-determination, independence, and an internal locus of control.
- B. Environmental mastery** – measures one’s ability to manipulate and control complex environments.
- C. Personal growth** – measures one’s needs to actualize and realize one’s potentials
- D. Positive relationships** – assesses the ability to love, trust, and establish deep relationships with others.
- E. Purpose in life** – measures one’s sense of directedness and goals.
- F. Self-acceptance** – assesses positive attitudes held toward the self.

3.8. Pilot Testing

In order to check if there are problems of clarity, language and structure in the instruments and to have valid and reliable instruments for the main study executing pilot study is the only option. In the present study, the English version of the instrument was administered to 30 participants of which 15 were married and the rest 15 were unmarried post graduate students of AAU. Accordingly, the researcher has seriously observed the comments on the instruments that the respondents have given and carried out a statistical analysis on the validity and reliability of the instruments.

In view of this the pilot study participants suggested that some of the statements are ambiguously stated and some are miss spelt or editorial problems (these are like Q8, Q20, Q41, Q45, Q49, Q51, and Q52). The researcher was checked these comments and corrected them contextually for the main study.

Item-total correlation was computed for each sub-scale of the Psychological Wellbeing Scale. Based on the criterion of 0.30 as an acceptable corrected item-total correlation (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994), eight questions out of 54 items from each sub scale were identified as contextually unacceptable therefore the researcher has removed from the main study. Internal consistency reliability of the English version of the instrument was determined for the total scales using Cronbach's alpha and the computed Cronbach's alpha coefficients of PWB scales were 0.84.

3.9. Psychological Wellbeing by Cut -off scales

To determine the status of the psychological well-being of unmarried and married postgraduate students, percentage values and alternatively frequency counts were computed. To determine the levels of psychological wellbeing as high and low, mean split was used. Mean scores were determined for each dimension and for the total psychological wellbeing. Accordingly, the mean scores were 36.86, 36.80, 36.86, 34.42, 25.03, 25.29, and 187.87 for Autonomy, Environmental mastery, Positive relations with others, Self-acceptance, Purpose in life, personal growth, and the total Psychological well-being respectively. The reasons for selecting mean split over median split are: 1 you can always find an equivalent analysis that respects the continuous nature of the variable (e.g., regression); 2 when creating median splits, you lose a lot of information; 3 the cut-off tends to be relatively arbitrary and it varies between samples; 4 the resulting model based on a median

split does not reflect the underlying nature of the variable; 5 in most cases a binary split will have less statistical power; 6 if the purpose is to communicate to a scientific audience, respecting the continuous nature of the variable is a necessary complexity. Those who scored above the mean were considered as having high levels and those who scored below the mean were considered as having low levels of psychological wellbeing. The result is shown in Table 5 below (<http://www.uvm.edu/~dhowell/gradstat/psych341/lectures/Factorial2Folder/Median-split.html>).

3.10. Methods of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical measures mean and standard deviation was used to see general pattern of psychological wellbeing of the respondents according to marital status, sex, age, educational level, number of children and duration stayed in marriage. A t-test was computed to determine whether there is a significant mean difference between married and unmarried in their psychological wellbeing.

Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to provide information whether the independent variables and dependent variables correlate each other and to measure the degree of relationship between variables.

5. Findings

In this section the result of the study is presented in line with the objectives of the studies and presented in different parts. The first part focused on the background information of the respondents, the second part presents the psychological wellbeing of married and unmarried postgraduate students, the third part is about difference in psychological wellbeing between married and unmarried postgraduate students, the fourth part presents the relationships between demographic variables and psychological well-being, and the final part presents the contribution of marriage on psychological wellbeing.

4.1. Background Characteristics of Participants

This section describes the background characteristics of the participant's sex, age, marital status educational level, number of children and duration of stay in marriage as the following:

Table 1 Summary of Socio Demographic Characteristics of subjects

No	Variables	Categories	N	%	
1	Sex	Male	200	67	
		Female	100	33	
		Total	300	100	
2	Age	21-40 years	284	95	
		Above 41 years	16	5	
		Total	300	100	
3	Marital Status	Married	Male	93	68.8
			Female	42	31.1
			Total	135	100
		Unmarried	Male	101	66
			Female	52	39.98
			Total	153	100
		Divorced	Male	6	50
			Female	6	50
			Total	12	100
			Masters degree	189	63
4	Educational level	Doctoral Degree	111	37	
		Total	300	100	
		No child at all	161	53.8	
5	Number of children	1-2	80	26.6	
		3-5	59	19.6	
		Above 5	0	0	
		Total	300	100	
6	Duration of Stay in marriage	1-5 years	80	59.2	
		6-10 years	40	29.6	
		Above 10 years	15	11.2	
		Total	135	100	

As it is shown in Table 1 above, out of 300, 135(93%) weremarried and 153(57.5%) were unmarried in the age range of 21-40 years old and 54(45%) married and 51(42.5%) unmarried were in the age range of above 41 years old respectivelyand12(50%) were Divorced. 189(63%) were Masters degree and 111(37%) were Doctoral degree. Concerning number of children to married postgraduate students the data revealed that 80(26.6%) of them are1-2 children, 59(19.6%) were 3-5 children, and 80(59.2%) were stayed in marriage 1-3 years, 40(29.6%) were stayed 6-10 years where as 15(11.2%) were stayed above 10 years in marriage.

4.2. Status of Psychological Wellbeing

4.2.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 Summary statistics of the total and sub-scales of psychological well-being for married, unmarried and divorced postgraduate students (N=300)

PWB dimensions	Married				Unmarried				Divorced			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
AU	40.26	8.5	34.05	6.77	19.38	6.31	17.31	2.64	11.5	3.2	10.25	3.69
EM	37.15	15.08	29.35	6.31	35.69	7.32	12.83	4.75	10.51	2.5	10.37	2.57
PR	40.85	9.5	34.37	6.48	23.6	7.82	15.48	2.75	12.71	2.5	11.21	2.03
SA	33.01	5.3	26.16	4.58	14.37	5.68	13.41	3.66	10.25	1.6	12.35	1.75
PL	27.65	6.5	22.55	4.08	16.15	4.95	15.96	2.05	15	1.9	13.25	3.03
PG	28.75	5.4	22.16	4.32	12.89	4.65	12.83	5.69	13.37	3.3	14.37	2.27
PWB	207.6	50.28	168.66	32.54	102.7	27.73	87.82	21.5	73.34	15.19	71.8	15.34

AU autonomy, **EM** environmental mastery, **PR** positive relation with others, **SA**, self acceptance, **PL** purpose in life, **PG** personal growth and **PWB** psychological wellbeing.

Table 2 shows that the lowest mean scores, for both male and female, were obtained for sub

scales of purpose in life and personal growth. On the other hand the sub scales with the highest mean include autonomy and positive relation with others for males and autonomy, environmental mastery and positive relation with others for females. The mean scores of married range from 40.85 to 27.65 for males and 34.37 to 22.16 were as the female's respondents. The sub scale purpose in life and personal growth for both males and females were shows the lowest mean score compared to other sub scales. For the total psychological wellbeing scale the mean scores of married male is 207.6 were as for married females it is 168.66. Whereas the total psychological wellbeing scale the mean scores of unmarried male is 102.7 were as for unmarried females it is 87.82. This means the mean of married males and females on the total psychological wellbeing scale is higher than that of unmarried males and females. Whereas the total psychological wellbeing scale the mean scores of divorced male is 73.34 were as for females is 71.8.

Table 3: Summary result of the status of psychological well-being of married postgraduate students

PWB D	High						Low					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
AU	42	58.33	39	63.33	81	60	26	41.66	23	36.66	49	39.16
EM	38	62	41	65	79	58.5	25	40	22	35	47	37.5
PR	39	66.5	42	68.33	81	60	27	43.33	20	31.66	47	37.5
SA	40	64	45	71.66	95	70.3	23	36.66	18	28.33	41	32.5
PL	38	67.66	40	63.33	78	57.7	21	33.33	24	39.13	45	35
PG	38	63	42	66.66	80	63.3	25	40	22	33.33	47	37.5
PWB	39	63.5	41.5	66.38	82.3	61.6	24	39.13	22	35.5	46	36.36

As shown in Table 3 above 81(60%) subjects scored high on autonomy among these 42(58.33%) were males and 39(63.63%) were females and 49(39.16%) had low score out of which 26(41.66%) were males and 23(36.66%) were females. On environmental mastery, 79(58.5%) of the subjects had highly scores out of which 38(62%) were males and 41(65%) were females and 47(37.5%) had low score out of which 25(40%) were male and 22(35%) were female. On positive relation with others, 81(60%) of the subjects had highly scores out of which 39(63.33%)

were male and 42(58.33%) were females and 47(37.5%) had low score out of which 27(43.33%) were male and 20(31.66%) were females. On self-acceptance 95(70.3%) of the responds highly score out of which 40(64%) were male and 45(%) were female and 41(32.5%) had low score out of which 23(36.66%) were male and 18(28.33) were female. On purpose in life, 78(57.7%) subjects high scored out of which 38(63.33%) were males and 40(66.66%) were females and 45(35%) had score low out of which 21(33.33%) were males and 24(39.13%) were females. With regard to personal growth 80(63.33%) had high scores out of which 38(67.66%) were males and 42(66.66%) were females and 47(37.5%) scored low out of which 25(40%) were males and 22(35%) were females. Regarding the total psychological wellbeing, 82(64.16%) of the married had high psychological wellbeing whereas only 46(36.36%) of them had low psychological wellbeing.

Table 4: Summary result of the status of psychological well-being of unmarried postgraduate student

Unmarried												
Dimensions	High						Low					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
AU	25	31.48	24	34.84	49	33.33	37	68.51	43	65.15	80	67.5
EM	24	38.88	26	36.36	50	37.5	33	61.11	42	63.63	75	63
PR	23	35.18	24	36.36	47	35.83	35	64.81	42	63.63	77	65
SA	22	42.59	26	39.39	48	49.16	31	57.40	40	60.60	71	60
PL	21	37.03	25	37.87	46	37.5	34	62.96	41	62.12	75	64
PG	19	31.48	23	34.84	42	33.33	37	68.51	43	65.15	80	67
PWB	22	36.1	25	37.87	45	36.55	35	63.86	42	63.35	77	64.42

As Table 4 shown that, 49(33.33%) unmarried postgraduate students had high scores on autonomy out of which 25(31.48%) males, 24(34.84%) females and 80(67.5%) scored low out of these 37(68.51%) were males and 43(65.15%) were females. With regard to environmental mastery, 50(37.5%) of the unmarried respondents had high scores out of which 24(38.88%) were males and 26(36.36%) were females and 75(63%) had low scores out of which 33(61.11%) were

males and 42(63.63%) were females. Concerning the positive relation sub scales of psychological well-being, 47(35.83%) scored high out of which 23(35.18%) were males and 24(36.36%) were females and 77(64.65%) had low level of scores out of which 35(64.81%) were males and 42(63.63%) were females. On self-acceptance 48(49.16%) had high scores out of which 22(42.59%) males and 26(39.39%) were females and 71(60%) scored low level out of which 31(57.40%) were males and 40(60.60%) were females. On the dimension of purpose in life 46(37.5%) had high sores out of which 21(37.03%) were males and 25(37.87%) were females and 75(64%) scored low scores 34(62.96%) were males and 41(31.48%) females. With regard to personal growth 42(33.33%) had high scores out of which 19(31.48%) were males and 23(36.1%) were females and 80(67%) scored low out of which 37(68.51%) were males and 43(65.15%) were females.

With regard to the total psychological wellbeing, 77 (64.42%) of the unmarried had low psychological wellbeing whereas only 45(36.55%) of them had high psychological wellbeing. This analysis is done by mean spilt using the mean score of the total wellbeing which is 185.47.

4.2. Difference in Psychological Well-being between Married and Unmarried Postgraduate students

One of the purposes of this study was to investigate whether or not there is significant difference in psychological well-being between married andunmarriedpostgraduate students. The results obtained were presented as follows in Table 5.

Table 5: Independent Sample t-test for Difference in psychological wellbeing between married and unmarried postgraduate students

	t-test for Equality of Means			
	df	Sig (2tailed)	t	Mean Difference
PWB Equal variance assumed	238	0.001	3.41	11.65
Equal variance not assumed	220.82	0.001	3.41*	11.65

p<0.05; PWB=Psychological wellbeing

Table 5 above shows the actual t-test for significant mean difference between married and unmarried postgraduate students. The ‘equal variance not assumed’ test, the t-test revealed that there is significant mean difference in psychological wellbeing between married and unmarried postgraduate students. Married postgraduate students (M= 188.17, SD= 41.4) had higher mean than unmarried postgraduate students (M=95.26, SD= 24.6); $t(238) = 3.41, p=0.001$. This means the psychological wellbeing of married postgraduate students significantly different from the psychological wellbeing of unmarried postgraduate students.

4.3. Psychological Well-being by Demographic Factors

To check whether there are significant relationships between demographic measures and measures of psychological well-being, Pearson correlation was computed.

Table 6: Correlation between psychological well-being Dimensions and demographic measures

Variables	AU	EM	PR	SA	PL	PG	PWB
Age	.220**	.253**	.344**	.465**	.234**	.345**	.310**
Sex (=1, if Male, =2, if Female)	.543**	.559**	.664**	.635**	.333**	.433**	.527**
Educational level	.170**	.297**	.094	.113**	.252**	.248**	.195**
Marital status(=1, if married, =2, if unmarried)	.581**	.428**	.644**	.531**	.481**	.566**	.538**
Number of children	.033	.043	.029	.042	.063	.003	.035
Duration of Stay in marriage	.075	.125**	.149**	.236**	.229**	.163**	.162**

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

As it can be seen from Table 6 above, Educational level and parental status were found to have

significant correlation with the total psychological wellbeing and with some of its dimensions. Educational level has significant positive relationship with autonomy ($r=.170$, $p<0.01$), purpose in life ($r=.252$, $p<0.01$), personal growth ($r=.248$, $p<0.01$) and with the total psychological wellbeing ($r=.199$, $p<0.01$). Gender has weak positive relation with autonomy, purpose in life, personal growth and total psychological wellbeing scale. Marital status has significant negative relation with autonomy ($r=-.381$, $p<0.01$), environmental mastery ($r=-.428$, $p<0.01$), positive relations with others ($r=-.344$, $p<0.01$), self-acceptance ($r=-.431$, $p<0.01$), purpose in life ($r=-.481$, $p<0.01$), personal growth ($r=-.566$, $p<0.01$) and with total psychological wellbeing ($r=-.551$, $p<0.01$). Autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relation with other, self-acceptance, purpose in life, personal growth and total psychological wellbeing has a moderate negative relation with marital status.

5. Discussion

This section of the study aims at discussing the major findings of the current study in line with previous research findings reviewed in the literature.

The findings of this study show that, there are significant differences in overall psychological wellbeing, personal growth, positive relationship, environmental mastery, purpose in life, autonomy and self-acceptance in a relation to marital status, gender, educational level, age. Comparing psychological well-being amongst the students of different gender already studied by different researchers. For instance Ryff and Marshal (1999), Pinqart and Sorensen (2000), Ryff (1989), Ryff and Keyes (1995).

Furthermore as evidenced in this particular study, psychological well-being was quite a function of gender. Based on this males had higher mean scores in PWB than females, among the PWB dimensions, the married both males and females have far better scores in autonomy and positive relation and relatively low scores in purpose in life and personal growth. In a relation to the unmarried male and female gender; unmarried males have high scores in environmental mastery and personal growth. However, the unmarried females have low scores in autonomy and positive relation. Both similar and dissimilar findings were also established in prior studies examining the relationship between gender and psychological well-being.

For instance as cited in KassahunTilahun (2015) a survey study carried out by Gigantesco (2011), states that many countries have found only minimal gender-related differences in PWB while others substantiated the significant gender differences on several of the dimensions and on the overall scores of PWB (Donn, 2005).

However, a study by Mills (1992) as narrated by Kassahun Tilahun (2015),generally women experience lower level of overall PWB relative to men. This is perhaps because family life and family roles have a debilitating effect on women's well-being. As women typically assume primary responsibility for child rearing, their role as mother, compared to men's role as father, is likely to be more central in determining their PWB. Precisely, the family and social roles women occupy in the home and the community makes them more susceptible to psychological illness. As a result, women have substantially higher rates of symptoms of common mental disorders

such as anxiety and depression and are more susceptible to suicidal ideation than men (Huppert, 2009). Thus, it has been concluded that women experience lower levels of PWB.

As regards to participants' age, that of described in table 6 the finding of this study revealed a significant difference among young adults aged 21 to 40 years and middle adults aged 41 to 60 years in their scores of overall PWB. In a relation to the finding of this study, there are previous studies (e.g. Ryff, 1989; Ryff and Keyes, 1995; Keyes, Shmotikin, & Ryff, 2002) which tried to examine the relationships between age and PWB and founded significant relationship between age and PWB.

In the present study the findings shows that age is significantly related to all indexes of psychological wellbeing. More specifically relatively high correlation is observed especially on measures of self-acceptance, positive growth and positive relationship with others with the overall PWB score of .310 which is statistically significant at .05 alpha level.

The finding of present study also goes in line with some early studies. For instance according to the study by Ryff and Keyes (1995), younger adult have scored higher on personal growth and purpose in life, whereas older adult scored higher on environmental mastery. In addition to this the same research finding also revealed that older adults were more likely to report less purpose in life and personal growth than middle-aged individuals.

With regard to marital status and psychological wellbeing a Pearson correlation was calculated and the study depicts that there is strong statistically significant relation between marriage and PWB. The previous studies by (Kim & Mckenry, 2002; Easterlin, 2003) also regard marital status as a strong predictor of well-being even after controlling for other demographic and psychological variables.

Similarly a study conducted by Kassahun Tilahun (2015), married adults were also found to have a significant higher level of positive affect, lower level of negative affect and better satisfaction in life than the single and cohabitated adults. Thus, the same research concluded that being married seems beneficial to lead a happy and satisfying life.

Likewise, researchers from different fields of study have documented evidence of married people's better physical and psychological health and satisfaction in life (e.g., Rao, Apte, & Subbakrishna, 2003; Diener et al., 1999).

According to several research findings like (Dush & Amato, 2005; Ross, Mirowsky, & Goldsteen, 1990), (Rao, Apte, & Subbakrishna, 2003), (Dush & Amato, 2005; Ross, Mirowsky, & Goldsteen, 1990) married adults are psychologically the healthiest one as compared to the counter parts and different explanations are forwarded on this regard. First marriage provides higher income benefits. Thus, adults could reap financial benefits from marriage. Second, marriage could be source of emotional and instrumental support and such enhanced feelings of attachment and emotional help could certainly reduce the incidence of depression and mental illness and may provide an important buffer against stress.

The finding revealed a statistically significant difference in well-being among adults of different educational level. In general, adults' overall PWB increases with their educational status.

It was also revealed in this study that as the education level of adults increase; their scores in PWB also increases except positive relation. However, there was statistically moderate relationship. Prior studies have also found that educational attainment to be significantly correlated with psychological wellbeing (Diener et al., 1999; Keyes, Shmotkin&Ryff, 2002; Donn, 2005).

Moreover plenty of research findings also revealed that education is positively associated with well-being (e.g., Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002; Donn, 2005; Easterlin, 2003). For instance, the study of Keyes, Shmotkin & Ryff (2002) argued that individuals who possess high profiles of PWB are individuals with educational advantage.

6. Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

6.1. Summary

The general objective of this study was to compare the psychological well-being of married and unmarried postgraduate students in Addis Ababa University.

The quantitative method was employed to achieve the stated research objectives. Composed of demographic variables questionnaire and psychological wellbeing scale was administered and completed by the married, unmarried and divorced postgraduate students.

To analyze the data from the quantitative survey, percentages, t-test, and Pearson correlation were employed. The following are the major findings from the analysis of the quantitative data:

Using mean split technique on the psychological wellbeing scores of unmarried, is 77 (64.42%) which is low psychological wellbeing as compared to the married participants. whereas only 45(36.55%) of them had high psychological wellbeing. With regard to married, 82(64.16%) scored high in psychological wellbeing whereas 46(36.6%) of married postgraduate students had low psychological wellbeing.

The t-test comparison of group means on psychological wellbeing of married and unmarried showed a significant difference. The mean of married was significantly higher than the mean of unmarried.

Among the demographic variables considered in the study, sex, age, Educational level and marital status were significantly correlated with psychological wellbeing of unmarried. Education level was positively correlated whereas marital status was negatively correlated with psychological wellbeing.

6.2. Conclusions

Based on the major findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

There was an urgent call for research to clarify this issue, this study made an initial attempt to address and test the issue of psychological well-being of married and unmarried postgraduate students in the Ethiopian context. This is due to the fact that the researcher had a firm stand that well-being needs to be recognized as a vital construct, that makes good things to shows that the contribution of marriage for the psychological wellbeing for someone who are expected to be married as developmentally and societal expectation.

Recent years have witnessed a resurgence of interest in psychological processes, such as optimal human functioning. This focus on well-being, and consequent de-emphasis of dysfunction and the illness metaphor, has been labeled as “positive psychology” and has inspired a spate of conferences, journal articles and books. Study of well-being, in fact, has enjoyed a heightened profile in recent years. This is because adult well-being is one of the most all-pervasive characteristics of humans that is central to the development of a society.

While the majority of the unmarried postgraduate students scored low on psychological wellbeing, the majority of married postgraduate students scored high on psychological wellbeing. In general, the psychological wellbeing of unmarried is low. The result of this study shows that the majority of unmarried postgraduate students have poor psychological wellbeing. Encouraging unmarried postgraduate student’s individuality and self-esteem and providing care and support were suggested by the interviewees as solutions to enhance the psychological wellbeing of these students.

6.3. Recommendations

Based on the major findings of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

As the researcher observed during the research process, despite the many advantages of marriage; still there are many people who delay marriage due to factors like unrealistic fear to take responsibilities, negative attitude towards marriage by observing marriage relationships that ended up in divorce, cultural hindrances, economic problems, increasing number of young people going to colleges to continue further education, lack of trained professionals on the area to provide appropriate guidance and counseling services for both married and unmarried, and lack of enough media promotions concerning the advantageous of being married and so forth.

Therefore the media, professional and religious institutions, family and the society at large has to teach those young men and women about the benefits marriage boldly. Furthermore we must understand the chaotic experience that some married couples are experiencing due to ill handling of marriage relationship and end up in divorce which can negatively affect those unmarried young people's attitude towards marriage. Therefore in order to tackle such problem appropriate training should be given to the family and to the young people both by trained professionals and religious institutions on how to handle marriage relationship besides the establishment of appropriate legal grounds to the assurance of justice.

Finally, as the researcher has observed while conducting this study there are no such researches that traces specifically, the psychological wellbeing of married and unmarried post graduate students in Ethiopian contexts. Therefore there is a need for future; more of qualitative in-depth studies to gain detailed and rich understanding in answering the “why” of the marriage delay and "what" of the benefits of being married in a relation to psychological wellbeing. Moreover, there is a need for further research to indicate the specific psychological and other related problems faced by the unmarried people.

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Appendix I

Addis Ababa University

College of Education and Behavioral Studies

School of psychology

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information regarding to psychological wellbeing of married and unmarried postgraduate students. This questionnaire has two parts: the first part has demographic questions about the respondents; the second part has Ryff's Scale of Psychological Wellbeing Scale. The information you provide has a very important input in the direction and completion of this study, so please try to be honest, and careful. There is no one to judge you because there is not right or wrong answer for the questions.

The information will be kept confidential and be only applied for the study. Yours right information helps to reach the goals of the study.

Thank you for investing your time and honesty completing this questionnaire.

Part One: Socio-Demographic information.

Direction: In this section, you are required to provide the information about you which is useful in the study. So, give your responses to all questions genuinely and freely.

1.	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/>
		Female <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Age in years (please provide)	
3.	Educational level	Masters student <input type="checkbox"/>
		PhD Student <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Marital status	Married <input type="checkbox"/>
		Unmarried <input type="checkbox"/>
		Divorced <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Number of children's if married (please provide)	
6.	How many years you stayed in marriage, if married?(please provide)	

Part-Two: Psychological Well Being Scale

Direction: Here are 46 items about your Psychological wellbeing. Please be informed that all the items are to be rated on five point scale (SA = Strongly Agree A= Agree U= Undecided DA= Disagree SDA= Strongly Disagree). So you are supposed to show to what extent you agree on each item on space provided on right side of each item. Put the tick mark (√)on the space provided under five alternatives of your agreement.

Put √mark that best describes the degree to which you agree or disagree with statement.	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Autonomy items					
7. Most people see me as loving and affectionate.					
8. I am not afraid to voice my opinion, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people.					
9. In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.					
10. When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out.					
11. Maintaining close relationships has been difficulty and frustrating for me.					
12. My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing					
13. The demands of everyday life often get me down					
14. In general, I feel confident and positive about myself					
Positive relation items					
15. I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns					
16. I tend to worry about what other people think of me					
17. I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me					
18. I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world					
19. My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me					
20. I feel like many of the people I know have gotten more out of life than I have.					
21. I enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members or friends					
22. Being happy with myself is more important to me than having others approve of me.					
Self-acceptance items					
23. I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life					
24. When I think about it, I haven't really improved much as a person over the years					
25. I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in my life					
26. I like most aspects of my personality					
27. I don't have many people who want to listen when I need to talk					

Put \surd mark that best describes the degree to which you agree or disagree with statement.	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Purpose in life items					
28. I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions					
29. I often feel boredom by my responsibilities					
30. I have a sense that I have developed a lot as a person over time.					
31. I used to set goals for myself, but that now seems a waste of time.					
32. I made some mistakes in the past, but I feel that all in all everything has worked out for the best					
33. It seems to me that most other people have more friends than I do.					
Personal Growth Items					
34. I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus.					
35. I generally do a good job of taking care of my personal finances and affairs.					
36. I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things.					
37. I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality.					
38. In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in my life.					
Environmental Mastery Items					
39. People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.					
40. It's difficult for me to voice my own opinions on controversial matters.					
41. I am good at juggling my time so that I can fit everything in that needs to be done.					
42. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.					
43. I am an active person in carrying out the plans I set for myself.					
44. I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.					
45. I often change my mind about decisions if my friends or family disagree.					
46. I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me.					
47. I gave up trying to make big improvements or change in my life a long time ago.					
48. Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.					
49. I know that I can trust my friends, and they know they can trust me.					
50. I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.					
51. I have been able to build a home and a lifestyle for myself that is much to my liking.					
52. When I compare myself to friends and acquaintances, it makes me feel good about who I am.					

Declaration

I the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, has never been presented in this or any other university, and that all resources and materials used here in, have been acknowledged.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Place: Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Date of Submission: _____

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval.

Name: _____

Signature: _____