Impact Factor:					
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	ISI (Dubai, UAE) = 1.582	РИНЦ (Russia) = 0.191	PIF (India) = 1.940
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	JIF = 1.500	SJIF (Morocco) = 6.004	OAJI (USA) = 0.350

SOI: 1.1/TAS DOI: 10.15863/TAS

International Scientific Journal

Theoretical & Applied Science

p-ISSN: 2308-4944 (print) **e-ISSN:** 2409-0085 (online)

Year: 2026 **Issue:** 08 **Volume:** 160

Received: 25.07.2026
Accepted/Published: 30.08.2026

https://T-Science.org

Issue Article

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACCEPTANCE OF THE MOTHER ROLE AND FAMILY FUNCTIONING WITH JOB SATISFACTION IN FEMALE EMPLOYEES CONSIDERING THE MODERATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

Abstract: *The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between acceptance of the maternal role and job satisfaction among employed women, with particular emphasis on the moderating role of psychological well-being, among female elementary school teachers. The research design was descriptive-correlational. The statistical population consisted of all female elementary school teachers employed by the Department of Education in Tehran in the academic year 2022 (1401 in the Iranian calendar). A sample of 376 participants was selected through random sampling from girls' elementary schools in Tehran. After determining the sample, the questionnaires were distributed among participants for completion.*

The research instruments included the Maternal Role Acceptance Questionnaire, the Job Satisfaction Questionnaire by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin, the Hermans Achievement Motivation Scale, the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale. After collecting the questionnaires and extracting the raw data, statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS software. The validity of the instruments was confirmed through content validity procedures, and the overall reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.82, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

The results of Pearson correlation and regression analyses revealed a significant positive relationship between acceptance of the maternal role and psychological well-being ($p < 0.05$). However, no significant relationship was found between maternal role acceptance and job satisfaction among female elementary school teachers ($p > 0.05$). Furthermore, the findings indicated that psychological well-being may function as a moderating variable in the relationship between the studied variables and can be influenced by environmental and organizational factors, ultimately affecting individuals' personal and professional quality of life.

Overall, the findings highlight the importance of considering positive psychological characteristics—particularly psychological well-being and happiness—when examining job-related factors and maternal role acceptance, as these variables play a crucial role in enhancing personal adjustment, life satisfaction, and occupational performance.

Key words: *Psychological well-being, maternal role, job satisfaction, correlation, regression.*

Language: *English*

Citation: Kashi, L.V., & Zamani, M. (2026). The relationship between acceptance of the mother role and family functioning with job satisfaction in female employees considering the moderating role of psychological well-being. *ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science, 08 (160),* 1-6.

Soi: https://s-o-i.org/1.1/TAS-08-160-1 ***Doi***: crossref https://dx.doi.org/10.15863/TAS

Introduction

Motherhood and the process of becoming a mother are among the most significant and sensitive stages in a woman's life (Gilman, 2023, 12:2). Contrary to common assumptions, motherhood is not merely a biological phenomenon. Giving birth to and raising a child is a complex process shaped by a combination of social factors, including beliefs, values, and norms, which take different forms across cultures and are manifested through economic, political, religious, and legal structures. Since the attainment of the maternal role requires knowledge, skills, and motivation (Shipton et al., 2017, 1:4), a lack of knowledge, competence, or motivation may result in deficiencies in maternal functioning and create stress and anxiety for mothers. The transition to motherhood involves substantial changes in cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioral functioning. These changes may be influenced by a mother's personal circumstances, beliefs and attitudes, socioeconomic status, preparedness, knowledge, and psychological and social conditions. The more adequately prepared a mother is in these areas, the more effectively she is likely to perform her maternal role. Motherhood can therefore be understood as the conceptualization and development of a role characterized by maternal responsibility, the formation of a new identity, and the emergence of maternal behaviors (Omidvar & Liravani-Nejad, 2018, 23:1).

Numerous factors influence job satisfaction, one of which is psychological well-being. With the emergence of the positive psychology movement and the growing emphasis on positive attributes and the development of individual capacities, many psychologists have increasingly adopted the concept of psychological well-being rather than focusing solely on mental health. They argue that psychological well-being better reflects the positive dimensions of human functioning. Within this perspective, the absence of psychological disorders is not considered the sole indicator of health; rather, adaptation, happiness, self-confidence, and other positive characteristics are viewed as signs of psychological health. The primary goal of individuals in life is considered to be the realization and flourishing of their capabilities (Wren-Lewis & Alexandrova, 2021, 23:8). Mental health refers to the harmony between an individual's values, preferences, and attitudes, as well as the existence of a realistic and effective plan for achieving life goals and meaning. It is also regarded as a capacity for personal growth (Jafarnejat, 2017, 9:4). Consequently, psychological well-being can serve as an important moderating factor in various life outcomes (Ibrahim et al., 2021, 7:2).

Considering the relationship between maternal role acceptance and job satisfaction, the present study seeks to examine the moderating role of psychological well-being in the relationship between maternal role acceptance and job satisfaction among employed women. According to Ryff (1989), psychological well-being contributes to a sense of purpose in life. It requires an understanding of the existential challenges of human life, and the psychological well-being approach evaluates growth and development in response to such challenges while emphasizing human development (Mikaeili Mani, 2020). Examples include pursuing meaningful goals, striving for personal growth and self-improvement, and establishing high-quality relationships with others. The experience of well-being encompasses both affective and cognitive dimensions. Individuals with high levels of well-being tend to experience more positive emotions and evaluate life events more positively, whereas those with lower levels of well-being are more likely to perceive their lives negatively and experience predominantly negative emotions (Altinay et al., 2023, 6:8).

Psychological well-being can therefore be regarded as a reflection of mental health and includes positive feelings and general satisfaction with oneself, one's life, and one's relationships in domains such as family and work. It reflects an individual's positive thoughts and emotions, which emerge from satisfaction with life, work, and family experiences (Northcott et al., 2018, 13:2). Consequently, the study of psychological well-being among employed women is particularly important because of its significant role in their mental and emotional health (Kaufman, 2023, 7:2). Psychological well-being has been defined as active engagement with existential challenges and the pursuit of personal growth (Ryff, 2023, 4:6). This perspective emphasizes individuals' capabilities and maintains that the goal of psychology should be to enhance quality of life and facilitate the realization of human potential. Therefore, psychological well-being constitutes an essential dimension of overall health.

Given the importance of mothers' job satisfaction for both the quality of their work performance and their psychological health, job satisfaction remains a critical challenge for health-related organizations and workplaces. In light of the significance of job satisfaction among mothers and the influential role of psychological well-being, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between maternal role acceptance and job satisfaction among employed women while examining the moderating effect of psychological well-being.

Materials and Methods

The present study employed a descriptive correlational research design. Correlational research refers to the examination of relationships between two or more variables that can be quantified and measured. In this type of research, the relationships among variables are investigated based on the objectives of the study. A correlational approach implies that the researcher deals with two distributions and aims to examine the relationship between them. This method demonstrates the extent to which changes in one variable are associated with changes in another variable. Correlational studies focus on identifying existing relationships among variables. In this approach, the researcher collects information on at least two variables from the same sample of participants and then determines the strength and direction of the relationship using correlation coefficients.

In the study conducted by Khanjani et al. (2014), the results of a single-group confirmatory factor analysis indicated that, for the overall sample as well as for both genders, the six-factor structure of the scale (self-acceptance, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, purpose in life, personal growth, and autonomy) demonstrated a good model fit. The internal consistency of the scale, assessed using Cronbach's alpha, was reported as 0.51 for self-acceptance, 0.74 for environmental mastery, 0.75 for positive relations with others, 0.52 for purpose in life, 0.73 for personal growth, and 0.72 for autonomy. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the overall scale was reported as 0.71. In the present study, the overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be 0.78.

Results

Correlation Between Job Satisfaction and Maternal Role

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis between the variables of maternal role and job satisfaction are presented in Table 1. According to the findings, the obtained significance level (Sig.) was greater than 0.05, indicating the absence of a statistically significant correlation between maternal role and job satisfaction among female elementary school teachers in the Department of Education during the year 2022 ($p > 0.05$). This finding suggests that job satisfaction and maternal role do not share a significant common variance and can therefore be considered independent variables.

Table 1- Pearson correlation coefficient between motherhood role and job satisfaction.

		Job satisfaction	Mother's role
Job satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	-.024
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	**.642**
Mother's role	Pearson Correlation	-	1

Correlation Between Family Functioning and Job Satisfaction

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis between family functioning and job satisfaction are presented in Table 2. According to the findings, the obtained significance level (Sig.) was less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant correlation between family functioning and job satisfaction among female elementary school teachers in the Department of Education in 2022 ($p < 0.05$). This finding suggests that as job satisfaction increases, family functioning also improves, and vice versa. Therefore, these variables are positively associated and interdependent.

Table 2- Pearson correlation coefficient between maternal role and family functioning.

		Job Satisfaction	**Family Functioning**
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	-.273**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	**.000**
Family Functioning	Pearson Correlation	-	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	-

Correlation Between Psychological Well-Being and Job Satisfaction

The obtained significance level (Sig.) for the variables of psychological well-being and job satisfaction (Table 3) was less than 0.05, indicating a

statistically significant correlation between psychological well-being and job satisfaction among female elementary school teachers in the Department of Education in 2022 ($p < 0.05$). This finding suggests that psychological well-being is significantly associated with job satisfaction in the study population.

Table 3- Pearson correlation coefficient between maternal role, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being.

		Job Satisfaction	Psychological Well-Being
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	-
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	-
Psychological Well-Being	Pearson Correlation	-.273**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	**.000**	-

Regression Analysis Results for Psychological Well-Being and Job Satisfaction

Following the examination of the study variables from a correlational perspective, the next step involved assessing the predictive power of the dimensions of psychological well-being, including environmental mastery, self-acceptance, positive relations with others, purpose in life, personal growth, and autonomy. As shown in Table 4-11, the obtained F value and significance level (Sig.) were statistically significant. Therefore, the dimensions of psychological well-being (environmental mastery, self-acceptance, positive relations with others, purpose in life, personal growth, and autonomy) were able to significantly predict job satisfaction among female elementary school teachers in the Department of Education in 2022.

Table (4-11) Analysis of variance of the regression model between psychological well-being variables and job satisfaction.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	3334.837	1	3334.837	30.049	.000[b]
	Residual	41506.865	374	110.981		
	Total	44841.702	375			

Results of the regression between the variables of family function and maternal role

The results of the regression between the variables of family function and maternal role are shown in Table 7. According to Table 4, the F and Sig values are significant. Therefore, the predictor variable of job satisfaction has been able to make a significant prediction of the variable of maternal role of female teachers in primary education in 2022.

Table 4- Analysis of variance of the regression model between the variables of family function and maternal role.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	4215.584	1	4215.584	429.275	.000[b]
	Residual	3672.775	374	9.820		
	Total	7888.359	375			

4-11- Results of regression between job satisfaction and maternal role variables

The results of regression between job satisfaction and maternal role variables are shown in Table 5. According to Table 5, the F and Sig values are not significant. Therefore, the job satisfaction predictor variable could not make a significant prediction of the maternal role variable of female primary education teachers in 2022.

Table 5- Analysis of variance of the regression model between the variables of maternal role and job satisfaction.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	25.979	1	25.979	.217	.642[b]
	Residual	44815.723	374	119.828		
	Total	44841.702	375			

Psychological well-being refers to a sense of health that includes complete awareness of wholeness and integration in all aspects of mental, social, psychological and health-related behaviors of an individual and can be described through a number of basic components, which include: Self-acceptance, Positive relation with others, Autonomy, Environmental mastery, Purpose in life and Personal growth. In fact, psychological well-being or satisfaction with life is the greatest desire and the most important goal of human life that affects the mental health of individuals more than any other factor. Considering the above, it can be said that psychological well-being has a moderating role with the role of motherhood, job satisfaction and family functioning. Given the lack of relationship between the role of motherhood and job satisfaction, psychological well-being could not have a moderating role in this relationship. Regarding the lack of a moderating role of psychological well-being in the relationship between the maternal role and job satisfaction, it should be said that psychological well-being may be affected by environmental factors and lose its effect on individuals' lives. It should be added that women face many problems after childbirth that may cause their psychological well-being to be deficient, such that they may not receive support in their living environment with the arrival of a new child, family problems, work pressure, etc., which can have a destructive effect on their well-being and satisfaction. Therefore, it is likely that when women's emotional needs are disrupted in family environments, their desire to establish intimate relationships also diminishes and well-being also decreases. In view of this, the maternal role does not have a moderating role with job satisfaction.

Conclusion

Psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct that refers to the experience of health, harmony, and inner coherence. It reflects an individual's perception of integration across the cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of life. This construct is not merely the absence of psychological disorders; rather, it represents an optimal level of positive psychological functioning that can be explained through a set of fundamental components. According to Ryff's model, these dimensions include self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. Overall, psychological well-being can be considered one of the most important indicators of mental health and life satisfaction, playing a crucial role in the quality of individuals' lived experiences and their ability to adapt to personal and social challenges.

Based on the theoretical framework of the present study, it was expected that psychological well-being would serve as a moderating variable in the relationship between maternal role acceptance and job satisfaction. However, the findings revealed that, due to the absence of a significant relationship between maternal role acceptance and job satisfaction, psychological well-being was unable to exert a moderating effect on this relationship. In other words, when no direct association exists between the two primary variables, the capacity of a third variable to strengthen or weaken that relationship is substantially diminished.

This finding may be explained by the fact that psychological well-being is strongly influenced by environmental conditions and social context. Psychological well-being is not a static construct independent of life circumstances; rather, it is shaped by family, economic, organizational, and cultural factors. Following the transition to motherhood, particularly during the early years of a child's life, women are confronted with a range of physical, emotional, and role-related demands. In the absence of adequate social and familial support during this period, the likelihood of reduced psychological well-being increases. The arrival of a new child, increased household responsibilities, expectations from spouses and extended family members, and simultaneous work-related pressures may all affect an individual's psychological balance and reduce overall satisfaction with life and work.

Furthermore, unmet emotional and supportive needs within the family environment may weaken intimate relationships and diminish an individual's sense of competence and effectiveness, ultimately leading to lower levels of psychological well-being. Under such circumstances, the maternal role may function less as a source of enhanced job satisfaction and more as a source of role conflict resulting from

competing responsibilities. Therefore, in the present study, maternal role acceptance was not directly associated with job satisfaction, and consequently, psychological well-being was unable to function as a moderating variable in this relationship.

Overall, within the cultural context of Iranian society, women often develop a deep emotional attachment to the maternal role, and responsibility toward motherhood constitutes an important component of their personal identity. Continuous concern for fulfilling maternal responsibilities effectively, alongside the demands of marital and occupational roles, generates diverse expectations from spouses, children, and society. These expectations may create additional pressure to simultaneously meet both family and professional obligations. Since motherhood is frequently prioritized as a core value and identity, women may unconsciously place professional responsibilities and job-related satisfaction in a secondary position when confronted with role conflicts. Such circumstances can influence their overall experience of job satisfaction without necessarily enabling psychological well-being to moderate the relationship between maternal role acceptance and job satisfaction.

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