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Household Chaos and Insomnia Severity Among Married Women Managing Households in India: A Correlational Study

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Abstract

The present study examined the relationship between household chaos and insomnia severity among Indian housewives using a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research design. The Confusion, Hubbub, and Order Scale (CHAOS) developed by A. P. Matheny et al. (1995) and the Insomnia Severity Index developed by Charles M. Morin (1993) were administered to 300 Indian housewives. Descriptive statistics indicated that respondents reported a mean score of 10.45 (SD = 5.186) for household chaos and 11.26 (SD = 6.056) for insomnia severity. Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between household chaos and insomnia severity ($r = .691$, $p < .01$). The null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that higher levels of household chaos are associated with greater insomnia severity among Indian housewives. Limitations include the use of self-report measures and a specific population focus. Future research may explore additional psychosocial factors influencing sleep patterns among women.

Keywords: Household chaos, Insomnia severity, Indian housewives, Sleep quality

1. Introduction

Life at home can be a source of comfort and stress. For a housewife, home is not always a comfortable place, but rather a place of chaos. Chaos at home is defined by a home environment characterized by high levels of noise, crowding, disorganization, and irregular home schedules, which can affect the emotional, intellectual, and physical well-being of those in charge of managing the home (Matheny et al., 1995; Wachs, 2000; Evans & Wachs, 2010). This chaos is a function of structural, gender, and socio-cultural factors. In India, a typical scenario is observed where a housewife is mostly in charge of managing home chores, emotional demands, and caregiving responsibilities, leaving her with little time to relax and recharge. It is arguably one of the most detrimental outcomes of household chaos in terms of its effect on the quality of sleep and its severity in terms of insomnia. The severity of insomnia is measured in terms of difficulty in initiating or sustaining sleep, waking up too early in the morning, or dissatisfaction with sleep despite having adequate opportunity for sleep, which consequently affects emotional stability and cognitive functioning (Morin, 1993; Perlis et al., 2005; Buysse, 2014). Studies have shown that household chaos leads to fragmented and poor-quality sleep due to excessive vigilance and cognitive fatigue in managing household affairs, resulting in excessive daytime fatigue and reduced capacity to manage

household affairs. There is a vicious cycle between household chaos and insomnia in terms of its effect on household affairs and its impact on sleep.

Moreover, it is essential to understand the correlation between household chaos and insomnia severity in order to realize the broader psychological and social implications of this issue on housewives. Living in a chaotic home environment is not only linked to insomnia severity, but it is also related to increased levels of stress and risk of developing mental health problems. By exploring these variables, this study aims to investigate the extent to which household chaos influences sleep quality among Indian housewives.

Definitions and Conceptual Framework

Household Chaos

Household chaos is not only a reflection of physical clutter but also of the psychological and social climate of the home. In homes with high chaos, individuals particularly women responsible for domestic management experience constant demands, emotional labour, and cognitive overload, which can impair their mental health and daily functioning (Wachs & Evans, 2010; Deater-Deckard et al., 2009).

Factors contributing to household chaos include:

- **Structural and Socioeconomic Instability** – Limited financial resources, small living spaces, and unpredictable schedules create environmental stressors that increase household chaos (Evans et al., 2005).
- **Gendered Domestic Burdens and Time Poverty** – Women often bear primary responsibility for childcare, cleaning, and managing household routines, leaving little time for rest or self-care (Daminger, 2019; Hochschild & Machung, 2012).
- **Psychological, Cognitive, and Mental Health Factors** – Mental health challenges such as stress, anxiety, or depression exacerbate the effects of chaos and reduce coping capacity (Deater-Deckard, 2004).

Insomnia Severity

Insomnia severity reflects difficulty in initiating or maintaining sleep, early morning awakenings, and dissatisfaction with sleep quality, even when adequate time for sleep is available (Morin, 1993; Perlis et al., 2005; Buysse, 2014). It encompasses several dimensions:

Poor sleep quality has significant consequences for emotional regulation, cognitive functioning, physical health, and daily productivity, creating a feedback loop where stressful home environments worsen sleep, and poor sleep further disrupts household routines (Buman & King, 2010; Baglioni et al., 2016).

2. Review of Literature

Vaschina et al. (2025) examined the relationship between household chaos, maternal fatigue, and maternal stress. Mothers reported levels of household chaos, fatigue, and perceived stress through standardized questionnaires. The results indicated that higher household chaos and greater fatigue were significantly associated with increased maternal stress. The study concluded that disorganized home environments contribute to maternal psychological strain and highlighted the need for structured household routines and support for maternal well-being.

Chung et al. (2024) investigated how household chaos influences parenting behaviors through parents' self-control and emotional states. Parents reported their household environment, emotional experiences, and parenting practices. Findings showed that higher household chaos was associated with reduced parental self-control and more negative emotional states, which in turn led to less effective parenting

behaviors. The study concluded that chaotic home environments indirectly influence parenting quality through parents' emotional regulation and psychological functioning.

Lee et al. (2023) examined the effects of household chaos on preschool children's aggression and prosocial behavior, with sleep problems and executive function as mediating factors. Parents reported household chaos and children's sleep difficulties, while executive function was assessed through standardized tasks. Results revealed that higher household chaos was associated with greater aggression and lower prosocial behavior, partially mediated by sleep disturbances and deficits in executive functioning. The study highlighted the importance of structured home environments for children's behavioral and social development.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Question

The study was attempted to find the relationship between Household Chaos and Insomnia Severity among Married Indian Women.

3.2 Objectives

1. To assess the level of household chaos among Indian housewives.
2. To assess the severity of insomnia among Indian housewives.
3. To examine the relationship between household chaos and insomnia severity.

3.3 Hypotheses

H_0: There is no significant relationship between Household Chaos and Insomnia Severity among Married Indian Women.

4. Research Design

The study follows a quantitative, correlational research design, which is suitable for examining the relationship between household chaos and sleep-related problems without manipulating the variables.

4.1 Sampling Technique

Through purposive sampling (judgmental sampling), participants will be selected for the study. The participants will include married women who are responsible for managing household activities and family routines. Women experiencing varying levels of household disorganization and sleep difficulties will be considered for participation. The sample for the study will consist of 300 married women residing in India.

4.2 Data collection

- Data will be collected through offline questionnaires distributed to the participants.
- Participants will provide demographic information, followed by responses to the two standardized scales.

4.3 Tool Description

- Household chaos was measured by using the Confusion, Hubbub, and Order Scale (CHAOS), which was developed by Robert J. Wachs and Stephen A. Matheny Jr. in 1993. This scale contains 15 items, which can be used to measure the noise, disorganisation, crowding, and lack of day-to-day activities in the home environment. Responses are recorded as true or false where higher scores indicate greater levels of household chaos. Previous studies report acceptable reliability with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.74 to 0.79.
- Insomnia Severity was measured by using the Insomnia Severity Index (ISI), which was developed by Charles M. Morin in 1993. This scale contains 7 items, which can be used to measure and evaluate the

sleep onset, sleep maintenance, early awakening, and the distress and functional impairment caused by sleep problems. The responses are rated in a 5-point Likert scale, with a total score ranging from 0-28, where higher scores indicate greater insomnia severity. The instrument shows good reliability with internal consistency ranging from $\alpha = 0.74$ to 0.90.

4.4 Statistical Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The relationship between household chaos and insomnia severity was examined using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, which determines the strength and direction (positive or negative) of the relationship between the variables. The level of significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

4.5 Inclusive Criteria

- Married women identified as housewives
- Living with family members for at least one year
- Willing to participate in the study

4.6 Exclusive Criteria

- Unmarried women, divorced women, or widows will be excluded from the study.
- Women with diagnosed psychiatric or clinical sleep disorders.
- Women not responsible for managing household activities.

5. Result

This chapter discusses the results and interpretation of the analysis done to understand the relationship between Household Chaos and Insomnia Severity among Indian Housewives.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Showing Mean and Standard Deviation of Household Chaos and Insomnia Severity among Indian Housewives.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Household Chaos	10.45	5.186	300
Insomnia Severity	11.26	6.056	300

The descriptive table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation for the variables. Household Chaos has a sample N=300, mean=10.45 and standard deviation=5.186. Insomnia Severity has a sample N=300, mean=11.26 and standard deviation=6.056.

Table 2: Correlational Analysis Showing Relationship Between Household Chaos and Insomnia Severity Among Indian Housewives.

Variables	Pearson's Correlation	r value	Decision
Household Chaos	1	.691**	Rejected (H_0)
Insomnia Severity			

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 shows the values of Pearson's correlation among the two variables. There appears to be a strong positive correlation between Household Chaos and Insomnia Severity ($r = 0.691$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that as household chaos increases, insomnia severity also increases among marries Indian women.

As per the statement of the earlier mentioned hypothesis, given that there exists a substantial correlation between household chaos and insomnia severity among married Indian women, the null hypothesis (H_0) has been rejected. That is, statistically speaking, there is a significant relationship between household chaos and insomnia severity among married Indian women at the 0.01 level.

6. Discussion

The present study showed a statistically meaningful positive correlation between household chaos and insomnia severity (Pearson $r = 0.691$, $p < 0.01$). Household chaos was measured using the CHAOS scale ($M = 10.45$, $SD = 5.186$), and insomnia severity was measured using the Insomnia Severity Index (ISI) ($M = 11.26$, $SD = 6.056$). The findings indicate that higher levels of household chaos are associated with greater insomnia severity among married Indian women.

A chaotic household environment, characterized by noise, disorganization, and lack of routine, may increase psychological stress and interfere with healthy sleep patterns. Such environmental instability may make it difficult for individuals to maintain regular sleep routines, thereby increasing the severity of insomnia. These findings highlight the importance of maintaining a structured home environment and adopting stress management strategies to improve sleep quality. Future research may further explore other factors such as coping strategies and social support that may influence this relationship.

7. Summary

The present study examined the relationship between household chaos and insomnia severity among Indian housewives. The sample consisted of 300 housewives from different age groups. Data were collected using two standardized instruments: the Confusion, Hubbub, and Order Scale (CHAOS) developed by Matheny et al., and the Insomnia Severity Index (ISI) developed by Bastien et al. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was ensured throughout the study. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation through IBM SPSS Statistics. The results showed that the mean score for household chaos was 10.45 ($SD = 5.186$) and for insomnia severity was 11.26 ($SD = 6.056$). The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between household chaos and insomnia severity ($r = .691$, $p < .01$), indicating that higher household chaos is associated with greater insomnia severity among Indian housewives.

8. Conclusion

The present study examined the relationship between household chaos and insomnia severity among 300 Indian housewives. The results showed varying levels of household chaos and insomnia severity among the participants. Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between household chaos and insomnia severity, indicating that higher levels of household disorganization and lack of routine are associated with greater sleep disturbances. The findings highlight the importance of maintaining an organized household environment to promote better sleep and overall well-being among housewives.

9. Limitations of the Study

- The sample size was limited to 300 participants, which may restrict the generalization of the results to the wider population
- The data were collected using self-report questionnaires, which may be influenced by personal bias or

subjective responses.

- The cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to determine causal relationships between household chaos and insomnia severity.

10. Suggestions for Future Research

- Future studies can include larger and more diverse samples to improve the generalizability of the findings.
- Research may examine the relationship between household chaos and sleep problems in other populations, such as working women, couples, or elderly individuals.
- Additional psychological variables such as stress, anxiety, coping strategies, and emotional well-being can be explored along with household chaos and sleep quality.
- Longitudinal studies can be conducted to understand the long-term effects of household chaos on sleep patterns.

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