



ASSESSMENT OF EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS AMONG CHILDREN OF EMPLOYED MOTHERS RESIDING IN A SELECTED COMMUNITY AREAS

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ABSTRACT

Background: Some mothers may choose to stay at home and adopt the traditional homemaker role. Others might prefer to work outside home, living life to its full potential. When choosing between staying at home and working outside, mothers tend to analyze what's best for their children. There can be both negative and positive effects of working mothers on their children. **Aim:** The study aims to assess the emotional and behavioural problems among children of employed mothers residing in a selected community area at Kattankulathur, Kancheepuram district, Tamilnadu. **Methods:** The study was conducted at Selected community setting at Kattankulathur, Kancheepuram District. Cross sectional design was adopted for the study. 30 children of those who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were selected by purposive sampling technique. The tool for data collection consists of 3 sections. Section A consisted of structured questionnaire to assess the demographic variables of children. Section B comprised of modified Conners abbreviated rating scale to assess the emotional problems of children. Section C comprised of Achenbach modified child behavioural checklist to assess the behavioural problems of children. **Results:** The present study results show that, regarding the emotional problems of children, majority 13 (43.3%) had moderate emotional problems, 9(30%) of children had mild emotional problems and 8 (26.7%) of them had severe emotional problems. With regard to behavioural problems of children, majority 16 (53.3%) had mild behavioural problems, 11(36.7%) of children had moderate behavioural problems and 3 (10%) of them had severe behavioural problems. There was positive correlation found between the emotional and behavioral problems among children. **Conclusion:** The present study results show that, regarding the emotional problems of children, majority 13 (43.3%) had moderate emotional problems and most of children 16 (53.3%) had mild behavioural problems. Counselling session can be organised for these children for reducing their emotional and behavioural problems. Educational programme can also be planned for the employed mothers to improve their knowledge on child care.

KEYWORDS: Emotional problems, Behavioural problems, Children, Employed mothers.

INTRODUCTION

Motherhood confers upon a woman the responsibility of raising a child. This process also changes the way in which she is perceived in society and at her workplace. It can necessitate her to take more than available leave options, and job security can be at risk. Significant social and personal adjustments are necessary to cope with such a situation. A working mother, especially one who has the good fortune to be able to balance her home and work, enjoys the stimulation that a job or career provides. She develops the ability of raising a useful member of society and at the same time gains financial independence. Along with motherhood, work adds to the completeness of being a woman.^[1]

Working mothers have to manage a plethora of activities. They encourage their kids to take responsibility. With both parents working, each family member has to play a more active role. Children learn skills that they would not learn otherwise. Raising independent children prepares them for the real world and inculcates in them sense of responsibility. Working mothers spend quality time with their children to compensate for the amount of time they do not spend together. Children also look forward to spending time with their parents. They do not take their mother's attention for granted. Children of a stay-at-home mom might get used to their mom's attention round the clock and fail to acknowledge her efforts. The financial benefits that come with having both

parents work, such as going to good schools and pursuing extra-curricular interests can inculcate a sense of security in kids.

Poor-quality day care services can hamper a child's emotional and social development. Under-qualified and over-burdened staff and poor facilities at the day care can affect the child's physical and psychological health. Mothers might feel over-burdened and weary of trying to balance work and family. If mothers bring their frustration to home, children could develop a negative attitude. They could perceive her work as a source of distress for their family.^[2]

The ideal scenario for children, both boys and girls, is shown to be where both parents lived in the home and both are in paid employment. For children living with two parents, the impact of the working life of the mother may partly depend on the father's own working arrangements. However using data from the UK Millennium Cohort Study, the researchers discovered that the relationship between behavioural difficulties and employment of the mother was stronger for girls than for boys and that this was not explained by household income, level of mother's education or depression in the mother.^[3]

Over the past several years, a number of studies have shown a rise in behavior problems among preschoolers (Keenan & Wakschlag, 2002) and children that show relatively serious disruptive and violent behavior problems in early adolescence always have a history of problems that began in the preschool years (Loeber & Dishion, 1983; Moffitt, 1990). Some of the major factors associated with child behavior problems include harsh and ineffective parenting, poor parental monitoring, lone parent status, and low socio-economic status (Webster *et al.*, 2001; Kwok *et al.*, 2000). Therefore, child behavior problems among preschool children should not be overlooked as it may bring serious effects in future.^[4]

The study aims to assess the emotional and behavioural problems among children of employed mothers residing in a selected community area at Kattankulathur, Kancheepuram district, Tamilnadu.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at Selected community setting at Kattankulathur, Kancheepuram District. Cross sectional design was adopted for the study. 30 children of those who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were selected by purposive sampling technique. The Inclusion Criteria includes. A. Children in the age group of 6-12 years, b. Both male and female children, and c. Children of employed mothers. The Exclusion Criteria includes a. House wife were excluded & b. Mothers who were not willing to participate in the study.

TOOL FOR DATA COLLECTION

Section A consisted of structured questionnaire to assess the demographic variables of children such as age, sex, education of mother, family monthly income, religion, mother's occupation, father's occupation, working hours of mother, time taken to reach the home, type of family, number of sibling, family status, hobbies of the child, school type and educational system.

Section B comprised of modified Connors abbreviated rating scale to assess the emotional problems of children. The tool consists of 30 questions. The responses may be always (score of 0), sometimes(score of 1), and never (score of 2). The scores were categorized as severe emotional problems (0-50%), moderate emotional problems (51-75%) and mild emotional problems (76-100%).

Section C comprised of Achenbach modified child behavioural checklist to assess the behavioural problems of children. There are totally 30 questions to assess the behaviour problems among school children. The responses may be always (score of 0), sometimes (score of 1), and never (score of 2). The scores were categorized as severe behavioural problems (0-50%), moderate behavioural problems (51-75%) & mild behavioural problems (76-100%)

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The research proposal was approved by the dissertation committee of S.R.M College of Nursing, S.R.M University, Kattankulathur, Kancheepuram district. Formal permission was obtained from the Dean, SRM College of nursing, Counselor and Panchayat president of selected villages for conducting the study. Informed consent was obtained from the study participants, after explaining the nature and duration of the study. Assurance was given to the individuals that each individual report will be maintained confidentially.

RESULTS

The descriptive and inferential statistics were used for analyzing the data. Frequency and percentage distribution were used to assess demographic variables and level of emotional and behavioural problems of children. Chi-square was used to associate the level of emotional and behavioural problems of children with their demographic variable.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables of children n=30.

Demographic variables		Frequency (n)	Percentage distribution (%)
Age in years	6-7 yrs	11	36.7
	8-10 yrs	10	33.3
	10-12 yrs	9	30
Sex of the child	Male	17	56.7
	Female	13	43.3
Education of mother	Illiterate	1	3.3
	Primary	7	23.3
	Higher Secodary	15	50
	Graduate	7	23.3
Family monthly Income	<5000	14	46.7
	5000-10000	11	36.7
	>10000	5	16.7
Religion	Hindu	22	73.3
	Christian	6	20
	Muslim	2	6.7
Mother's occupation	Self employer	6	20
	Govt employer	5	16.7
	Private	19	63.3
Father's occupation	Self employer	8	26.7
	Govt employer	4	13.3
	Private	18	60
Working hours of mother	6hrs	3	10
	8hrs	22	73.3
	12 hrs and above	5	16.7
Time taken to reach home	Within half an hour	12	40
	Within one hour	12	40
	More than one hour	6	20
Family type	Joint	24	80
	Nuclear	6	20
Number of sibling	One	11	36.7
	Two	17	56.7
	Three	2	6.7
Hobbies of the child	TV	11	36.7
	Stamp collection	2	6.7
	Videogames	17	56.7
	Playing/	14	46.7
School type	Govt	17	56.7
	Private	13	43.3
Educational system	State board	28	93.3
	Central board	2	6.7

Regarding the demographic variables of children, most of them 11(36.7%) belonged to the age group of 6-7 years and 9(30%) were in the age group of 10-12 years. With regard to the sex of the children, majority 17(56.7%) were male and 13(43.3%) were female. Regarding educational status of mother, 15(50%) had completed higher secondary school, and only 1(3.3%) was illiterate. Considering the mother's occupation, majority 19(63.3%) were working in private sector and only 5(16.7%) were working in Government. Considering the working hours of mother, most of them, 22(73.3%) were having 8 hours of work and only 3(10%) were having 6 hours of work.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of emotional problems among children N=30.

Emotional levels	Frequency (n)	Percentage distribution (%)
Mild	9	30
Moderate	13	43.3
Severe	8	26.7

The above table shows that, majority 13 (43.3%) had moderate emotional problems, 9(30%) of children had mild emotional problems and 8 (26.7%) of them had severe emotional problems.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of behavioural problems among children N=30.

Behavioral problems	Frequency (n)	Percentage distribution (%)
Mild	16	53.3
Moderate	11	36.7
Severe	3	10

The results reveals that, majority 16 (53.3%) had mild behavioural problems, 11(36.7%) of children had moderate behavioural problems and 3 (10%) of them had severe behavioural problems.

Table 4: Correlation between the emotional and behavioral problems among children.

Correlation	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation	P value
Emotional levels	66.19	12.162	0.662	0.0001 S
Behavioral levels	74.68	12.656		

The results depicts that, there was positive correlation found between the emotional and behavioral problems among children.

DISCUSSION

Some mothers may choose to stay at home and adopt the traditional homemaker role. Others might prefer to work outside home, living life to its full potential. When choosing between staying at home and working outside, mothers tend to analyze what's best for their children. There can be both negative and positive effects of working mothers on their children. While working mothers can teach their children some invaluable life skills, they can also make the child feel neglected at times. Mothers, in spite of having their child's best interests at heart, might fail to provide their children a safe emotional outlet. They might not be enthusiastic to hear their children's issues after a hectic day at work. Children in such cases could resort to finding an outlet elsewhere or simply feel that their parents are not interested in their lives. Problems can arise between parents over the mother's employment. Such parental conflict can adversely affect children. It could damage their self-esteem and make them insecure.^[5]

The present study results show that, regarding the emotional problems of children, majority 13 (43.3%) had moderate emotional problems, 9(30%) of children had mild emotional problems and 8 (26.7%) of them had severe emotional problems. With regard to behavioural problems of children, majority 16 (53.3%) had mild behavioural problems, 11(36.7%) of children had moderate behavioural problems and 3 (10%) of them had severe behavioural problems. There was positive correlation found between the emotional and behavioral problems among children.

The current study results are supported by the study done by Ragnhild Bang Nes *et al.*, as they examined association between children's behaviour problems and maternal employment. Information on children's behaviour problems at 3 years from 22,115 mothers employed before pregnancy and participating in the Norwegian Mother and Child Cohort Study were linked to national register data on employment and relevant social background factors, mothers' self-reported susceptibility to anxiety/depression and mother-reports of day-care attendance and fathers' income. Mothers reporting their child to have severe (>2 SD) internalizing or severe combined behaviour problems (5 %) had excess risk of leaving paid employment irrespective of other important characteristics generally associated with maternal employment (RR 1.24–1.31). The attributable risk percent ranged from 30.3 % (internalizing problems) to 32.4 % (combined problems). Externalizing behaviour problems were not uniquely associated with mothers leaving employment.^[6]

The study was consistent with the study done by Vanaja Kumari B *et al.* on assessment of level of knowledge on selected behavioral problems among employed and unemployed mothers of under five children. The present community based cross-sectional study was conducted in Saraswathi Nagar at Nellore, Andhrapradesh state (India). The study sample included 60 mothers in that 30 are employed mothers and 30 are unemployed mothers Selected by Purposive sampling technique. In the present study, with regard to level of knowledge among employed mothers on behavioral problems, 7[23.3%] are having inadequate, 8 [26.7%] are having moderately adequate, and 15[50%] are having adequate knowledge. Among unemployed mothers 16[53.3%] are having inadequate knowledge, 8[26.6%] are having moderate knowledge, and 6[20%] are having adequate knowledge. The findings of study revealed that 15[50%] employed mothers are having adequate knowledge and only 6[20%] unemployed mothers are having adequate knowledge regarding behavioural problems. Educational programme needs to be organized to improve the knowledge of mothers.^[7]

CONCLUSION

The present study results show that, regarding the emotional problems of children, majority 13 (43.3%) had moderate emotional problems and most of children 16 (53.3%) had mild behavioural problems. Counselling session can be organised for these children for reducing their emotional and behavioural problems. Educational programme can also be planned for the employed mothers to improve their knowledge on child care.

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