

Research Paper

## A Comparative Study between the Parenting Style of Working and Non -Working Mothers and Their Childs' Temperament on Behavioural Problems: Among School Going Children

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### ABSTRACT

The study compared working and non working mother's parenting style and their child's Temperament and its effect on Behavioural problems: among school going children. The sample was gathered from mothers (working and non- working) of 400-school going Children of both genders, between ages 12years to 15years. Parenting style questionnaire, The Early Adolescent Temperament Questionnaire were given to mothers to assess their parenting styles and child's temperament respectively. The Strength and difficulty questionnaire was given to the teachers to screen for behavioural problem among these children. Our research concluded that children's of working and non- working mothers have behavioural problems but the children of non – working mothers have severe behavioural scores which were clinically significant than compared to children of working mothers.

The research concluded that working status of mother do not have effect on children behavioural problems, rather other external and social factors like peer interaction, child caregiver attitude, neighbours interaction pattern and social relations and interactions have more influence on the child's behaviour, specially, when they are in their early adolescent age. The research also concluded that temperament do not have direct effect on behavioural problems, until, the child has behavioural issues that are clinically significant and needs attention.

**Keywords:** Working And Non –Working Mother, Parenting Style, Temperament, Behaviour Problem

Parenting plays the most important part in any child's life, it can help a child by teaching them to deal with people, situations and adapt to a better living standard; by modelling to them the correct means to be responsible, loving, sharing and caring. However, if it fails the outcomes can be devastating. Thus, considering the same parenting styles has been identified

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as three type based upon two aspects of parental behaviour: warmth and control, based from these concept (Baumrind, D., 1966); coined three principal parenting styles: 1) Authoritative; 2) Authoritarian; and 3) Permissive. Parental control is when parents consistently shape their child's behaviour to suit their own expectations and preferences, rather than the child's needs (Chess & Thomas, 1986). Parental warmth can be described as expression of verbal and physical affection where in low parental warmth includes criticism, disapproval and rejection of the child (Hemphill & Sanson, 2001). Authoritative parenting consists of parenting characteristics of warm but firm parenting with high level of communication with child (Baumrind, D., 1966). Such children might be more self-reliant, self confident, and socially responsible (Daniels, 2009). Authoritarian parents attempt to shape, control, judge, influence and evaluate behaviours and attitudes of a child through their own ideas and ways to behave and act (Baumrind, D., 1966). Such children are more likely to be unhappy, withdrawn, inhibited, display poor communication skills, less self-assured, and less socially adept (Daniels, 2009). Research reported that a mother's authoritarian parenting style is more likely to have externalizing problem – as conduct disorders, hyperkinetic disorder and defiant disorders. Permissive parenting may be described as no punitive, accepting, and affirmative towards their child's impulses, wants and actions (Baumrind, D., 1966). Such children could be less mature, more irresponsible, and lack self-control. (Daniels, 2009) concluded that mother's permissive parenting style is associated with anti-social behaviour and other externalizing problem among their children.

Through researches it has been suggested that parents have an impact on the behaviour of their children, and it could be predictive of their internalizing and externalizing behavioural problems. However over the years research findings were not consistent in reporting the exact interaction between parenting and behavioural problems among children and thus other factors which could be affecting child behavioural outcome were studied; which led the researcher to the finding that temperament which is an biologically innate characteristic in every individual plays role in modulating child's behaviour together with the kind of parenting received.

Hence, emphasis was on the interaction being considered in terms of “goodness-of-fit”, (Chess & Thomas 1991; Lemer, J. V., Lemer, R. M., & Zabski, S. 1985); which suggests parents, family members, school and community dealing with the child according to their compatibility and temperament.

In recent years, due to urbanization, more mothers have come to participate in the workplace to contribute towards improving their family status, thus their indulgence in household activities and quality time for child care has been affected, and few researches have stated that this has further decrease in quality time for child care by working mothers (Bianchi & Raley, 2005). However, there are other set of research stating that the working status of a mother do not always have a negative effect on the child (Carvel, 2001) rather it makes the child more independent and emotionally stronger, they also have good social interaction and

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strong peer group. Thus, to explore whether working status of a mother effects a child growth and progress the present study: Influence of parenting style of working mother in comparison to non- working mothers and child temperament on behavioural problems among school children was planned.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants:***

Sample in study was recruited from English and Kannada medium school of Udupi District, Karnataka; using cluster sampling method. All mothers of children studying in eight and nine standards were included as sample for the present study. In the present study a total of 800 cases were screened for selecting the samples; out of which mother of 400 children were included as the sample of study (200 of working mother's and 200 of non- working mother's) according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria:

The inclusion criteria for both control and study group were; Children (both genders) aged 12 to 15; form State Board, CBSC and ICSE syllabus; Mothers educated up to 5th standard; can read and write Kannada or English; Working mothers: any mother who has a child and works outside her home for a wage or salary. (Class 1 - class 5 worker) (9 hour of working or even part time workers i.e.. at least 4-5 hours of daily working) and Non – working mothers: any women who has child, but is not working outside home.

Exclusion criteria for both control and experimental group in study: Students who are below 12 and above 15; Parents educated below 5th standard; who cannot read or write Kannada or English.

#### ***Instrument:***

The permission to use concerned tools for the research purpose was acquired from the concerned authors and all the questionnaires were translated into required language using front back translation method. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ); (Goodman, 1997) was used in the present study to screen the behavioural problem among children by using teachers rating scale its applicable for age 11-17 years and is a 3 point likert rating scale. The Early Adolescent Temperament Questionnaire (EATQ);( Capaldi & Rothbart, 1992) was used to assess the temperament among the children, the maternal report of the temperamental ability for every child was taken for the study; it is applicable for age 10-16 years and is a 5 point rating scale; and the Parenting Style Questionnaire (PSQ); (Based on: Robinson, C., Mandlco, B., Olsen, S. F., & Hart, C. H. (1995). is a self-report questionnaire on which every mother was asked to rate their parenting method, it is 5 point likert scale which measures the three parenting style. In addition, information about the age, education and working category of mothers along with the age, gender and education status of the child was collected.

#### ***Procedure:***

Aim of the research is to explore the relationship between the working status of mother, the temperament of child and its influence of any on the behavioural problems among children in

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a school going group. The first objective was to Study the type of behavioural problem among children of working mothers in comparison to non - working mothers. The second objective was to study the relationship between parenting styles and temperament among children. The third objective was to study the relationship between temperament and behavioural problem among working and non- working mothers.

The study was initiated after obtaining clearance and permission from the ethic committee of Manipal University. After which the schools authorities were approached for permission, 5 schools from Udupi district both kannada and English medium schools with (state, CBSC and ICSC syllabus) were approached; after taking permissions from school authorities the questionnaires PSQ and EATQ-R with consent form and information sheet were send in a sealed envelope to the parents through their children and the SDQ were given to the class teacher. All the questionnaires were then collected from the schools after 2 weeks time. Finally as per the inclusion exclusion criteria the scores were computed and proceed with data entry and analysis.

### ***Statistical analysis:***

Descriptive study design was used in the present study. Non qualitative analysis was done. The data were subjected to analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 16.0). Cases and control groups on various domains of parenting style, temperament and behavioural problems were analyzed using Chi - Square test and Kruskal–Wallis test.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The primary data analysis showed no significant difference in the age and education level of the mothers selected as sample. Also it indicated no significant difference in the age and education level among the children. It also indicated that irrespective of the working status higher number of mothers adapted to authoritative style of parenting.

Education provides parents with important cognitive resources that enables them to support and facilitate their children's learning in a better way, it also improves family's living condition and thus facilitates parent - child interaction and a better educated parent is able to give their child a better ability of problem solving and decision making capacity; which may result in a better and more positive way or solving problem among children (Sabates& Feinstein, 2005)

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**Table 1: showing the distribution of behavioural problems with four sub domains scores across the two groups (working and non-working mothers.)**

<b>BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEM</b>	<b>WORKING MOTHERS</b>		<b>NON- WORKING MOTHERS</b>		<b>P</b>
	<b>N</b>	<b>(N%)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>(N%)</b>	
<b>SDQ (TOTAL)</b>	60	(30.0)			.024*
Normal	76	(38.0)	37	(18.5)	
Borderline					
Abnormal	64	(32.0)	93	(46.5)	
			70	(35.0)	.036 *
<b>SDQ (DOMAINS)</b>					
<b>Emotional Symptoms</b>					
Normal	183	(92.0)	168	(84.0)	.310
Borderline	9	(4.5)	14	(7.0)	
Abnormal	7	(3.5)	18	(9.0)	
<b>Conduct problems</b>					.629
Normal	140	(70.0)	126	(63.0)	
borderline	31	(15.5)	35	(17.5)	
Abnormal	29	(14.5)	39	(19.5)	.005**
<b>Hyperactivity</b>	148	(74.0)	151	(75.5)	
Normal	26	(13.0)	20	(10.0)	
Borderline	26	(13.0)	29	(14.5)	
Abnormal					
<b>Peer problem</b>	10.8	(17.5)	82	(41.0)	
Normal	28.5	(54.0)	57	(28.5)	
Borderline	35	(57.0)	60	(30.5)	
Abnormal					

*P significant if <.01\*\**

Table 1: Shows behavioural problems among children across the two groups, where 93 children of non-working mothers were found of have average level of behavioural problem and 70 children of non-working mothers were found to have severe or abnormal level of behavioural problems. This is suggestive that the behavioural problem in children is found irrespective of the working status of mother but it differs in its severity.

Results were significant for emotional and peer related problems among these children, which suggests that children included in the sample suffered problems mostly emotional in nature which could be either related to family or friends or any other social situation or they suffer from peer related problems. Both findings could be also be supported by the fact that the group taken under study is per adolescent group and the age could be one factor among children to feel the emotional and peer related stress.

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This finding could be because of the interactive process of various external factors the most important being increased in peer interaction, usually around the age of 14 the desire to belong to a group and particular group activity is highest (Nancy, 2010). The early adolescence marks a transaction period for both boys and girls. At this age they go through physical development, during this age friends replace parents as a source of advice; at home a child may prefer spending time alone than being with their family. Thus seeking freedom, independence and moving away from family, but their cognitive development where they are capable of solving all their problems is still not well developed. This could lead to emotional disturbances; study on adolescents have shown that individuals who have difficulty relating their experiences and had difficulty opening up were found to have more depressive feature than those who had smooth transition with their peer (Nicole Philips, 2001).

Research has also shown that for this age group- friends tend to have a greater influence over an individual's thinking and actions, than parents leading to modelling of inappropriate behaviour (Buhrmester, 1996).

**Table 2: comparing the mean and standard deviation for temperament with parenting styles among working and non-working mothers.**

<b>Temperament</b>	<b>Authoritative M (±SD)</b>	<b>Authoritarian M (±SD)</b>	<b>Permissive M (±SD)</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>WORKING MOTHERS</b>					
Effortful control	53.5 (±1.17)	37.4 (±2.4)	42.5 (±6.3)	.620	.733
Surgency	59.7 (±1.07)	56.1 (±7.8)	55.0 (±8.4)	1.78	.411
Negative affect	50.5 (±1.2)	54.8 (±1.2)	53.0 (±4.2)	.258	.879
Affiliativeness	21.0 (±5.9)	30.6 (±2.1)	13.0 (±1.4)	6.08	.048*
<b>NONMOTHERS WORKING</b>					
Effortful control	55.1 (±1.04)	50.2 (±1.01)	58.3 (±6.5)	4.10	.128
Surgency	60.4 (±9.6)	56.6 (±1.7)	52.3 (±7.0)	1.07	.583
Negative affect	51.0 (±1.1)	52.0 (±1.5)	44.0 (±1.9)	3.88	.144
Affiliativeness	21.0 (±4.4)	17.2(±5.9)	12.0 (±2.6)	.046	.977

*P* significant if <.05\*

Table 2, indicated comparison of mean and standard deviation for temperament (effortful control, surgency, negative affect, and affiliativeness) with parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) among working and non-working mothers. It shows a significant relation between affiliativeness and parenting style in working mothers.

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*Table 3: comparing the mean and standard deviation for temperament with behavioural problem among working and non-working mother*

<b>WORKING MOTHER'S</b>								
	<b>Normal</b>		<b>Borderline</b>		<b>Abnormal</b>		<b>H</b>	<b>P</b>
	<b>M</b>	<b>(±SD)</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>(±SD)</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>(±SD)</b>		
<b>Children Temperament</b>								
Effortful control	101	(±1.2)	107	(±2.4)	89	(±6.3)	.620	.437
Surgency	103	(±1.04)	80	(±7.8)	109	(±8.4)	1.78	.087
Negative affect	98	(±1.2)	108	(±1.2)	102	(±4.2)	.258	.671
Affiliativeness	105	(±6.9)	90	(±2.1)	89	(±1.4)	6.08	.234

<b>NONWORKING MOTHER'S</b>								
	<b>Normal</b>		<b>Borderline</b>		<b>Abnormal</b>		<b>H</b>	<b>P</b>
	<b>M</b>	<b>(±SD)</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>(±SD)</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>(±SD)</b>		
<b>Children Temperament</b>								
Effortful control	108	(±1.04)	85	(±1.01)	89	(±6.5)	4.10	.065
Surgency	103	(±9.6)	96	(±1.7)	95	(±7.0)	1.07	.689
Negative affect	99	(±1.1)	110	(±1.5)	94	(±1.9)	3.88	.485
Affiliativeness	104	(±4.4)	81	(±5.9)	104	(±2.6)	.046	.112

*P* significant if  $<.05^*$

Table 3, indicates comparison of mean and standard deviation for temperament with behavioral problem among working and non-working mothers. This indicates that there is no significant comparison between temperament and behavioural problem.

Table 2 and Table 3 show that temperament affiliativeness and parenting has a relation among working mothers but temperament of child has no relation with behavioural problem. This could be because in the sample only 33% of the population was found to have behavioural problem to an abnormal level, others were found to have either no behavioural problem or problem at a borderline level which is not clinically abnormal and could even be due to their age.

Thus, in addition a sub group analysis of individuals with behavioural problems at abnormal range was done to see whether children with behavioural problems at abnormal level had any correlation with temperament or not.

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**Table 4: showing correlation for SDQ (abnormal behaviour score with temperament)**

Abnormal Behavior Score for N = 134	TEMPERAMENT			
	Effortful Control	Surgency	Negative Affect	Affiliativeness
	<i>r</i> (p)	<i>r</i> (p)	<i>r</i> (p)	<i>r</i> (p)
Emotional symptom				.205 .018*
Conduct problem	.221 .010*			
Hyperactive problem			.220 .011*	
Peer problem				

*p* significant if <.05\*

Table 4; Shows that, children with emotional problems there was a positive correlation with temperament. For conduct problems there was a positive correlation with temperament effortful control (attention, inhibitory control, activity control) and for peer related problems there was a positive correlation with negative affect (frustration, depressed mood and aggression); Showing that temperament has effect on children with behaviour problem.

Temperament and the development of psychopathology have been linked. Temperament is strongly implicated in the socialization process of both typically developing children (Rothbart, Ahahi, & Hershey, 1994) and atypically developing children (Rutter, 1987; Varni, Rubinfeld, Talbot, & Setoguchi, 1989). Thus from the above three tables it could be concluded that temperament has a bidirectional relation with both parenting and behaviour problems. However it is not predictive factor for any behaviour problems in children. Only children with behaviour problems at a clinically abnormal level seem to have temperament as a modulation factor.

Low effortful control has been linked to the development of behaviour problems mostly externalized in nature; low effortful control is theorized as risk factor for externalizing problems because the experience of anger often motivates aggressive behaviours (Berkowitz, 1993); similar results are found in research where researchers have shown that children with low effortful control have difficulty regulating attention, physiological and emotional arousal, and behavioural impulses in challenging social interactions (Eisenberg & Morris, 2002). Overall studies have revealed that a child's temperament and parenting both together leads to behavioural problem, they usually have an interactive effect.



## **CONCLUSION**

Research finding have concluded that the working status of mother has its own merit and demerits; studies conducted have shown that when mothers work full time during their child's pre-school years the child's academic and extra-curricular performance is affected (Cavel, 2001), and also several research findings have stated that children of working mothers suffer from psychological distress by about one-fourth of the time when compared to children of non-working mothers (Cavel, 2001).

Other group of researchers look at positive outcomes of working mothers. Some studies show that while the lack of a mother's presence can impact a child negatively, this impact is not as severe as what occurs if the mother does not work. Such factors include poverty, parental education, and quality childcare (Booth, 2000). The working status of mother helps improvement in living standards where working mothers make family living standards more comforting (Carvel, 2001). It has been shown that children of non-working parents "fail to see the point of getting an education" (Figes, 2001).

Other factors also have important role in development of behavioural problems. Our research findings have shown that peer and friend group interaction holds a significance importance in a child's life during early adolescence. During the early adolescent years, friendships become more intimate, supportive and communicative (Buhrmester, 1996). Also family support, social support from friends, school and neighbours are significantly important in development of child; research in this area has stated that a positive support from these sources helps a child to gain a positive outlook about himself, a positive comment from his teacher in school, or a positive comment from neighbours, even a negative comment from these sources help the child to gain knowledge about their behaviour and their consequences and help them change it ( Rotman,T., 2002; Moncrieff,C. 2002; Joyce L.E., 2002).

In our research we find that children of both working and non-working mothers have behavioural problem, however children of non working mothers have more severe behaviour problems this may be because of the fact that even though these mothers stay at home they are not able to impart to their child the quality time and quality knowledge as that of working mothers. This can be explained as follows, as working mothers are managing both work and home, they are more concerned about their child's behaviour and are more determined to make up for their absence at home. Further literature also suggests that more social exposure and exposure to recent trends and new models helps working mothers get closer to their children and make them a better friend as they can adapt and understand child better than mothers staying at home; lacking the recent trends.

In conclusion, our study makes a contribution to the society where due to financial reason more and more women are going to work, the finding of research have concluded that the working status of mother; whether working or non-working effect a child in similar ways. Thus the working status of mother do not have effect on child behavioural problems, rather

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other external and social factors like peer interaction, child caretakers, neighbours and social reaction have more influence on a child's behaviour, especially when they are in adolescent age-than family and parental interaction. In our research we mostly have children with borderline level of behavioural problems which indicates that parenting is a protective factor. Thus the major finding of the research states that mothers working should not be guilty for their status rather they should be confident and impart this knowledge and positivity to their children for a much better future.

There were several limitations in our studies; teachers reported behavioural problem of children, and parent's evaluation were not included in the present study. High social desirability of the respondent towards authoritative parenting style may have influenced the significance of self- reported information. Qualitative time spending by the parents with children and its influence on the behavioural problem could not be studied. The parent study was quantitative description and could not employ higher statistical analysis to predict the specific factor influencing behavioural problem among children with abnormal behavioural problem. Other confounding variables such as family problem and socio demographic factors were not addressed in the present study.

Further researches should make an attempt to study perceived parenting style from children to get a better understanding. They should also take father's parenting style and explore if there is any other support available in the family. They should take into consideration other confounding variables and family problems and socio demographic factors into account for further researches. Even a larger sample size can be considered in further researches.

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