

## Impact of Housemaids on Social and Emotional Development of Children of Working Mothers in Lahore

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore the lived experiences of working mothers whose children are raised by housemaids. For this study four semi-structured interviews were conducted. The sample was collected through purposive sampling technique. After collecting and transcribing the data, Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used for the analysis of data. The research highlighted six superordinate themes that were organized to make a model of experiences of working mothers. The highlighted superordinate themes included were Maid A Necessity, Distribution of responsibilities, Multiple Consequences (Issues of trust, Abuse, Ethical concern, Hygiene issues, Influence on Language, Behavioural Problems, & Social and emotional changes. Implications of the research for educationists and developmental psychologists are discussed.

**Keywords:** *Experiences of Working Mothers, Impact of Housemaids, Social and Emotional Development of Children.*

The trend of hiring housemaids for the children's upbringing has given rise to several concerns. Housemaids are basically the helpers that perform different duties such as cleaning the home and the most important taking care of the children. The most important question that was addressed in this research was the impact of housemaids on the emotional and social development of children of working mothers. Housemaids can look after the children's basic needs but they do not take the responsibility for child's emotional, intellectual and social development. So in this way children may develop disruptive behaviours (Hammeed, 2011).

Social development can be defined as that how the children learn the knowledge and skills which enable them to understand the relationships of family, friends and community. In emotional development children usually learns values, temperaments, beliefs and they usually observe the feelings of others (Reinsberg, 2007).

The trends of housemaids or domestic labour were started in the late nineteenth century in the European countries. The number of housemaids in the United States also increased in the nineteenth century because many upper and middle class people could afford the housemaids.

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## **Impact of Housemaids on Social and Emotional Development of Children of Working Mothers in Lahore**

This trend of maids is increasing day by day because of the job opportunities for women in different organizations after the world war two (Graham & Pang, 1951).

Pakistan is a developing country and also it has a great number of poor people that's why people usually engage in any work that guarantees money. Domestic worker is one of the professions. The number of informal domestic workers is 8.5 million which may include women, men and children. Some are working within the age of 14 or some are working in the age of above 60. The wages that they are earning is not enough for their living in today's world. Like other developing countries in Pakistan the domestic workers are usually belongs to rural areas. The nature of this kind of job is decided by the contract of the servants and the hirers where it is decided that the payment or a salary is less than the load of the work. The work duration depends on the work requirement of the hirer. Some of the domestic servants work for full day while some other servants are paid for few hours' duty. Some domestic labours are even live in hirers' house with their families. Their range of their pay starts from 800 four thousand rupees per month from that salary they have to cover their expenditures of travelling as well. Some of the hirers may provide pick and drop facility to their domestic servants but it happens very rarely. The hirers as well as the domestic workers they both argue against each other. The hirers hold a belief that their servants may also involve in some criminal activities (Ansari, 2007).

Sometimes the impact of housemaids badly affected the whole family. Many mothers get too comfortable with housemaid and by that unfortunately children soon become the victims of the housemaids. Now a day's many children are abused by the housemaids. The reason of abusing the children maybe the housemaids want to feel powerful over children or maybe the housemaids want to take the revenge of mothers that treat them bad. So in this way children feel insecure and scared all the time because of the housemaids. Some housemaids do not abuse children and they actually like them. And children would love housemaids even more than their mother. Sometimes such children want to do everything same as their housemaid do like watching television etc. By adopting that particular behaviour the children get used to watch things or do things that they should not watch or do. This will produce a bad effect on their behaviours such as they will become arrogant or rude in the future (Al-binali, 2011).

Matangi, Kashora, Mhlanga, and, Musiyiwa (2013) conducted a study on perceptions on the interactions of nurseries and housemaids on early development of child. The main theme of this research is to investigate the perceptions of early development of child teachers on the interactive roles of housemaids and nurseries on early child development. The results of the research have shown that these two are the essential for the early child development and they provide the support for the children's development. The respondents also agreed that nurseries and housemaids were not alternate of parents who have no time for their children. The respondents agreed that housemaids promoted local languages whereas nurseries promoted foreign languages. There were significant associations between the respondent's perceptions and their demographic factors. Overall the results of the study showed that the respondents noticed that nurseries are more significant than housemaids in most early childhood development.

Jabbar (2014) conducted a study on the impact of "foreigner maids on the development of the children of working mothers". Basically in Jordon the role of grandparents and other caregivers are almost finished in society. The increase dependence on housemaids regarding the rearing of the children is increasing now days. The main aim of the study was to explore

## **Impact of Housemaids on Social and Emotional Development of Children of Working Mothers in Lahore**

the impact of maids on children of Jordan city. The age range of the children was four to five year old. The results of the study indicated that there were speech and psychological well beings problems were identified. The basic purpose of this research was also to give a alert to working mothers that they should make a right decision when they hire a maid and also they should monitor the activities of the housemaids with the child.

### ***Objectives***

The objectives of this study are:

- To investigate the experiences of working mothers regarding the rearing of the children by housemaids.
- To explore the impact of housemaids on emotional and social development of children of working Mothers in Pakistan.

### ***Research Question:***

- What are the experiences of working mothers about rearing of their children by maids?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research Design***

Qualitative phenomenological research design was used to gain an in depth knowledge about the impact of maids on children of working mothers.

### ***Sample***

The sample consisted of four working mothers whose children were raised by housemaids. Purposive sampling was used for this study because the purpose was to attain a rich data from working mothers. Purposive sampling can also be defined as the judgmental and selective sampling. In purposive sampling the researcher chooses a specific people from the population. The sample for the study was collected from different organizations and the age range of the children of working mothers was 2-6 years old (Erickson, 1964).

### ***Data Collection***

The tool that was used for data collection was qualitative in nature. No standardized tool was used for this study rather the data was collected through semi structured interviews. Thick and complex information was collected through the in depth Interviews. Four in depth semi structured interviews were conducted. Semi structured interviews were used to encourage the participants to tell their stories and talk freely using their own words because it is true that no one in the world has better knowledge than participants themselves regarding their life experiences. Therefore the data was generated through recorded interviews.

### ***Procedure***

The procedure began with the identification of working mothers. The aim of the study was briefed to the participants. Before taking the interviews rapport building questions were asked from the participants which include client's daily routine, relationship with family members and general hobbies. After the rapport building the researcher received the consent form from the participants. All the interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants and the maintenance of their confidentiality was assured. Before recording the final interviews, pilot study was conducted in order to avoid any barriers and problems that are related to interviews. It helps the researcher to analyse that how the interview will go. Before every interview the pilot study was conducted for 10-15 minutes. The duration of the final

## Impact of Housemaids on Social and Emotional Development of Children of Working Mothers in Lahore

interviews ranged from 40-50 minutes each. Once the interview was transcribed, the Interpretative phenomenological approach was used to analyse the data.

### **Data Analysis**

Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used in order to gain the in-depth experiences of working mothers. It is considered as one of the important approaches as it explores that how a given person in a given context makes sense of a given phenomenon.

The steps of the interpretative phenomenological perspective are:

1. In IPA the data are collected through the semi structured interviews. After the interviews all the recordings are then transcribed.
2. In the second step the researcher re read the text and collects the main themes of the interview. The researcher analysed the basic qualities of the interview. This is the first interpretation of the researcher.
3. In the third step the researcher developed the clusters of the themes.
4. In this step the researcher depict a summary table comprise the cluster labels together with their subordinate theme labels.
5. Summing up cases and present them in summary table (Smith, 2007).

## RESULTS

Analysis of the verbatim was done by using principles of interpretative phenomenological analysis. Analysis yielded many emergent themes in each case. The similar and different emerged themes were clustered under major themes. Tables representing major themes of each case were developed for better understanding of the experiences of working mothers regarding the rearing of their children by housemaids. The superordinate themes table was developed after developing major themes for each case. The superordinate table consisted of all the themes present in all cases. It provides all the information about all the themes emerged from participants during the analysis. The table below represents the superordinate themes:

Themes	Sub Themes	Quotations
Maid A Necessity	Familial Role	Lack of family support regarding rearing of a child.
Distribution of Responsibilities	Dependency Support & Consideration Supervision	Unable to manage household responsibilities alone. Unable to give proper time to child because of long hours of job.
Multiple Consequences	Issues of Trust  Ethical Concerns Abuse Hygiene Issues	Total dependency on maid except cooking. When maid and child are unmonitored, they are more likely to develop negative behaviours.
Behavioural Problems	Sharing of Meal  Impulsiveness  Observational	Dishonest, lack of motherly affection & lack of responsibilities at certain points.  Interference in family issues  Harsh treatment with child

## Impact of Housemaids on Social and Emotional Development of Children of Working Mothers in Lahore

Themes	Sub Themes	Quotations
Influence on Language	Learning	Careless attitude towards hygiene badly affects the immune system.
	Good Impact	
Social & Emotional Changes	Bad Impact	Copies style of eating
	Social Development	Lack of empathy, irritable attitude after spending the whole day with the housemaid.
	Emotional Attachment	Copies certain actions of maid like yelling nail biting and eating cement.
		Teaching mannerism, learn poems due to maid.
		Diverse language issues, copy unethical words.
		Dependency on technology, social interaction with family, outdoor activities.
		Missing mother's presence, express happiness due to proper attention of mother.

### DISCUSSION

The results of this research revealed many different themes related to the lived experiences of working mothers whose children are raised by housemaids. The main themes include Maid a necessity, Distribution of responsibilities, Multiple consequences, Behavioural problems, Influence of language and Social and emotional changes. Pakistan is a developing country in which female and male have to work together. The one main reason of mother's employment is that they want to utilize their knowledge in any particular field. Many women have to play double roles. At office they play the role of employee and at home they play the role of mother. The job of the mothers sometimes affects the emotional and social development of the children because child care is the most important issue for the working women and many workplaces do not provide the day care facilities so in this case many mothers leave their children at home with the housemaids.

#### *First theme: "Maid A Necessity"*

Now a days housemaid play a very important role in the lives of a working mother because they think that without housemaids life is impossible. Working mothers in this study reported that there is a trend of hiring housemaids in Pakistani families. Similarly Roumani (2005) reported in a study that domestic help is an economic benefit to parents for childcare because they also provide some additional work. Some of the working ladies hire the housemaids for taking care of their children because their job hours are very long and they are unable to manage the household responsibilities alone and also they cannot provide enough time to their children. Another main reason of hiring a maid for a child is mother's exertion. A full

## **Impact of Housemaids on Social and Emotional Development of Children of Working Mothers in Lahore**

time job of mothers usually makes them lazy and exhausted so they hire housemaids as a helping hand. As one of the participants reported that:

*"I hire a maid for my child because of my work place load and hectic routine and also I have a lack of family support because nobody in my home is willing to take care of my child so maid is compulsory for me".*

One main reason of hiring a housemaid is that some mothers do not have any family support in taking care of a child. There are many organizations that do not provide the day care facilities so in these cases mothers become helpless and they have to leave their children with the housemaids but under the supervision of any family member. As one of the interviewee stated:

*"Working woman do not have time for child care. Now my daughter is almost three years old but she cannot take care of her own self".*

### ***Second Theme: "Distribution of Responsibilities"***

Mothers generally divide the household responsibilities with the housemaid, excluding cooking and washing the clothes, housemaids perform all the work which includes dusting, cleaning the home, doing laundry etc. Similar findings were reported in a study by Ahmed (2011) who said that Emirati mothers dependent on their housemaid for everything from the morning shower of the baby till putting them to bed. Hiring a housemaid is the best option because the private nurseries are expensive. Supervision of a housemaid is also one of the main concerns of working mothers. When the children and housemaids are unmonitored then children are more likely to develop negative behaviours. Participants stated that they leave their children with the housemaids but under the supervision of their in laws, husband and mother. Mothers further reported that they have a fear that their children do not do anything that are dangerous for them such as putting fingers in switches. Participant stated:

*"During illness me or my husband take a leave from office for the exclusive care of our child."*

### ***Third Theme: "Multiple Consequences of Hiring a Housemaid"***

#### ***• Issues of Trust***

There are various multiple issues revealed through this study which includes issues of trust, ethical issues, issues of hygiene, sharing of meal and abuse. One of the main themes identified in multiple consequences was "issues of trust". Participants reported in this study that they do not have an overall trust on housemaid although there are certain points in which housemaids show some loyalty and honesty. They further reported that they do not have any expectations from the housemaid regarding the rearing of a child because the housemaids cannot give motherly treatment to children. A similar finding was reported in an Erickson's psychosocial stage which is trust vs mistrust. If the child receives the reliable and supportive care from the initial caregiver then that child will develop a sense of trust otherwise the sense of mistrust will lead to the fear and the child will not be able to develop the confidence in the future.

#### ***• Ethical concerns***

Ethical concerns are always a priority for working mothers. In our society working mothers have to take special care of the young female maids when other maids are male at home. Participants described that they cannot leave their maids alone at home. As one of the participant stated that:

## Impact of Housemaids on Social and Emotional Development of Children of Working Mothers in Lahore

*“Ethical concern is one of the main reason of my frustration because my maid have to share the washroom and sitting area with my male maids”*

- **Abuse**

Abuse is also one of the reported issues revealed through this research. Abuse can be verbal and physical. In the absence of mother there is greater chance that a child will face abuse. Sometimes mothers show a fear of abuse and they do not assign the work to housemaids alone. All the participants in this study reported that their children face physical and verbal abuse due to their housemaids. Similar findings were reported in a study by Al-BuAli (2015) who said that ninety percent of the abuse cases occur when parents are not involved in caring of their children. These signs indicate that the parents should focus more on the children’s psychological, social and emotional development and they should not assign this duty to their housemaids. Another interesting theme highlighted in this research was the impact of housemaid’s hygiene on the children’s health. As one of the subject stated:

*“My daughter’s immune system was badly affected due to the housemaid’s bad hygiene.*

Three informants reported that their maids are very neat and clean and they also takes care of their children hygiene so overall they have a good experience with the housemaids regarding the hygienic problems. Sometimes children copy the styles of eating. Similar findings was reported in a study by Tembo (2015) who said that if a child is a toddler then he more likely to be mistreated by the housemaid when the parents of the child are not around. Some housemaids eat the children’s food but the older children can tell the parents about this act.

- **Influence of language**

Influence of language is also an important theme emerged in this study. Informants in this study reported that the accent of their housemaids is very bad and their children usually copy the accent of their housemaids. Housemaids usually belong to different backgrounds and their way of speaking the words are also different. Similarly when the housemaids are educated and well informed then the influence of language will also be good. Sometimes housemaids are illiterate and they usually speak diverse language such as Punjabi as one of the participant reported that due to the housemaid my daughter used to say “*Gaddi*” instead of car and “*saikal*” instead of cycle. Another participant reported that:

*“My son usually copy the paindu punjabi accent of my housemaid”. Another mother highlighted that her daughter is now used to say the word “*Btameez*”, “*Mai thapar marungi*” due to the housemaid.*

### **Fourth Theme: Behavioural Problems**

The quality of the behavioural development depends on the housemaid’s affection, warmth and response towards the child. Participants in the study reported that when the mother gives the proper attention to child then the child always show affection and express the feelings of happiness. The impact will be positive if the housemaid teaches the good behaviour to child and negative if the housemaid mistreats the child. . Similar findings was reported in a study by Al-Sughair (2015) who said that “parents who give their childcare to their untrained housemaids at a very crucial age should look at the signs of abuse in their children behaviour which includes acting out, mood swings, withdrawn and running away from people.”

Observational learning is also an interesting theme that highlighted in this study. As one of the interviewee reported:

*“When my housemaid speaks in loud voice my daughter also speaks in a same way and I always tell my maid that please speak slowly”.*

## Impact of Housemaids on Social and Emotional Development of Children of Working Mothers in Lahore

A similar finding was reported in a social learning theory by Bandura (1961) who said that children imitate the behaviours of other people.

### ***Fifth Theme: Social and Emotional Changes***

Social and emotional changes are also one of the interesting findings revealed through this research. Participants in this study reported that the prolonged separation of a child from a mother sometimes creates emotional distress and in this way the emotional attachment of a child is badly affected. After a long hectic day when mothers return home tiredly and when they are unresponsive to their children then there are more chances that child develops negative emotional behaviour. Working mothers stated in this study also reported that when they are at work their children miss their presence because the mothers believe that they have a strong emotional attachment with their children. As one of the subject stated:

*“when I am at office my child usually misses the presence of me because he is strongly attached with me”.*

Same findings were presented in an attachment theory by Bowlby (1951) who said that attachment between caregiver and children is very crucial and the children who find secure attachment during the initial years are better able to function properly in the progress of development.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research attempted to gain a deeper understanding about the lived experiences of working mothers whose children are raised by housemaids. The daily life problems and challenges that the mothers face due to the housemaids regarding the rearing of the child were discussed. The positive as well as the negative impact of housemaids on the social and emotional development on the children were analysed. In Pakistan housemaids are perceived as a necessity for employed mothers. The main reason behind necessity is that there are no day care facilities available so they have to leave their children at home with the housemaids. Housemaids performed all the duties of the children from giving them a shower till putting them to bed. It was discovered that there are a lot of behavioural problems occur in a child due to the housemaids. Children are also influenced by the language of the housemaids especially when the housemaid belongs to different background. Mother's close bond with the child positively impact on the children's emotional development. Positive mother child interaction gives an opportunity to the child to share his feelings and provides better sense regarding socialization. On the other hand, it was found that poor interaction, stress and frustration have a negative impact on children social and emotional development by shattering their self-confidence and adding reluctance and detachment in their personality.

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## Impact of Housemaids on Social and Emotional Development of Children of Working Mothers in Lahore

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declared no conflict of interests.

**Impact of Housemaids on Social and Emotional Development of Children of Working Mothers in Lahore**

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