

Anxiety Related Emotional Disorders among Children of Working and Non-Working Mothers

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ABSTRACT

The research study was based on understanding Anxiety Related Emotional Disorders among children of Working and non-working mothers. The independent variable chosen was the work status of the mother whereas, the dependent variable was anxiety scores of their children, to understand the impact of work status on the anxiety developed by the child in various forms as suggested by the Scale. The study findings were consistent with that of, Paulussen-Hoogeboom et al, (2010), which stated, Parenting behavior as a mediator between young children's negative emotionality and their anxiety/depression, debating that, paternal autonomy and maternal warmth were both responsible for the child's anxiety and depression. The aim of the study was, to study the difference in anxiety among children of working and non-working mothers for which scale used was (SCARED)Screen for Children's Anxiety Related Emotional Disorders. The researcher analyzed 48 children with working mothers and 38 with non-working mothers using independent sample t test using IBM SPSS Version 2.0, based on the results of a 3 point likert scale questionnaire. The researcher hypothesized that there is a significant difference in anxiety among children of working and non working mothers. Hence, there is no significant difference in anxiety among children of working and non working mothers. This further supports that the work status of the mother does not have much of an influence on childhood anxiety.

Keywords: Work Status, Anxiety, Working and Non-Working Mothers, Negative Emotionality, Parental Behaviour

Anxiety is a mood state characterized by strong negative emotion and bodily symptoms of tension in which the child apprehensively anticipates future danger or misfortune (Barlow, 2002), an emotion based on unpleasant state of emotional turmoil often accompanied by nervous behavior such as pacing back and forth, somatic complaints and rumination(Seligman, Walker & Rosenhan, 2001).

Observations of interactions between 9- to 12-year-old children with anxiety disorders and their parents found that parents of children with anxiety disorders were rated as granting less

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autonomy to their children than other parents; the children rated their mothers and fathers as being less accepting (Siqueland, Kendall, & Steinberg, 1996).

Other studies have found that mothers of children previously identified as behaviorally inhibited or anxious are more likely to be critical and to be less positive when interacting with their children (Whaley, Pinto, & Sigman, 1999).

The study focused on impact of work status of the mother (Independent Variable) on Anxiety among the children (Dependent Variable).

In the study, childhood was a major consideration as it is an age where manifestation of separation anxiety can be perceived through different behavioral patterns such as, generalized anxiety, separation anxiety, social anxiety, panic, school avoidance.

From the previous studies, it has been seen how parental behavior can play a major role in the negative emotionality as well as depersonalization within the child.

Research in this area has successfully delineated environmental and relationship aspects as factors contributing to anxiety and coping mechanism among children of this age. In 2006, Peter J. Cooper; F. Lucy Willets; et al. conducted a study to establish whether there was an elevated rate of anxiety disorders in the parents of children with anxiety disorders, and whether there was intergenerational specificity in the form of disorder. It concluded strong familiarity of anxiety disorders, especially between child and maternal anxiety disorder. Another study conducted by Geert Jan J. M. Stams Susan M. Bögels Marja C. Paulussen-Hoogeboom (2010), examines observed paternal and maternal control (psychological control and autonomy granting) and support (rejection and emotional warmth) as mediators of the relation between children's negative emotionality. Results indicated that maternal rejection mediated the relation between children's negative emotionality and their later anxiety/depression. Higher levels of child negative emotionality predicted more psychological control in mothers, but did not predict any parenting behaviors in fathers. Unexpectedly, however, more maternal emotional warmth was related to higher levels of child anxiety/depression. The findings offer new insights to guide future research on the (mediating) role of parenting behaviors in the relation between children's negative emotionality and their internalizing problems. Further a comparative study was conducted by Firozeh Derakhshanpoor, Hamideh Izadyar and Najmeh Shahini(2016) on anxiety level in primary school children with working and unemployed mothers in Gorgan. A significant difference was observed between two groups of the students with working and unemployed mothers and between two sexes ($P < 0.05$). The results also concluded that, prevalence of anxiety disorders in children with unemployed mothers with lower education levels, in female, in families with fewer children and public-school students was more. Followed by this, Uwe Wolfradt, Jeremy N.V Milesc conducted a study in 2001 to investigate the relationship between perceived parenting styles, depersonalization, anxiety and coping behavior in a normal high school student sample ($N=276$). Perceived parental warmth was positively associated with active coping and negatively correlated with trait anxiety in the adolescents. In 2015, Alyssa Lungarini conducted a study that aimed to determine the relationship between two aspects of parenting styles, demanding and responsiveness, and the presence of anxiety in children. Results indicate differences in child anxiety reported by fathers in regard to race and age. Specifically, fathers showed a significant negative relationship between responsiveness and child anxiety indicating that more responsive fathers have children with lower anxiety. Mothers did not show any significant relationships

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in regard to child anxiety. However, results indicated that mothers who had received Some High School Education or Less were less responsive. Analysts suggest the need for future research regarding the gaps in literature pertaining to mothers and parenting styles, as well as why demanding and responsiveness characteristics differ by demographics, specifically in a large minority sample.

Rationale of the paper

- The study focused on understanding whether there is a relationship between child's anxiety and the work status of mothers. The role of women is changing dynamically with the number of working mothers witnessing a rise, as a result to which there is a void in mother child relationship.
- There is a considerable amount of research done, on the effect of work status of mothers but there is dearth of evidence comparing the difference among children of working and non-working mother.
- This study assisted in understanding whether the quantity of time spent by mother with their children, has an effect on their anxiety level.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

- To study the difference in anxiety amongst children of working and non-working mothers.

Hypothesis

- There is a significant difference in anxiety among children of working and non working mothers.

Variables

- *Independent Variables* – Working status of mother – Working and non working mothers
- *Dependent Variables*- Anxiety

Operational Definitions

- Anxiety is a mood state characterized by strong negative emotion and bodily symptoms of tension in which the child apprehensively anticipates future danger or misfortune (Barlow, 2002)
- Working mothers refer to women who are mothers and work outside home for income, in addition to household and raising of children.
- Non-Working mothers refer to women who are full time homemakers.

Sample

- The sample chosen comprised both female and male children between 8-11 years of age, provided no more than one sibling, of working and non working mothers, of the age span of 30-45.
- The size of this sample was 86, covering 21 males and 18 females with non working mothers, as well as 24 males and 23 females with working mothers, occupied in full time jobs since the normative years of the child's development.
- Data collection was carried out by the method of Purposive sampling.
- Children who are physically or mentally challenged/ Single child/ Housewife and Part time working mothers were not considered for this study.

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Instruments

The scale used for this study was, Screen for Child Anxiety Related Disorders (SCARED): Child report. The scale consists of 41 items which are rated on a 3-point likert scale reflective of the 5 factors parallel to DSM-IV criteria for anxiety disorders in childhood. Socio Demographic Sheet gathered all details in the inclusion criteria mentioned.

Procedure

The institution and independent bodies from where sample was collected, was contacted, based on the inclusion criteria. Then after taking informed consent and socio-demographic details from both the child and the parent, the children were made to fill the SCARED Tool manually with the help of their parents in presence of the test conductor.

Further, for the data analysis, two-way Anova was used to correlate each aspect of the scale mentioned, based on the different forms of anxiety and working status of the mother. The data was analyzed with the help of IBM SPSS Statistics 20.

RESULT

Table 1 :

Anxiety score	Work status	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig.
Children	Working mothers	48	28.73	14.221	-.607	84	.546
Children	Non-working mothers	38	30.55	12.33			

For this research sample(n=86), the group of children with working mothers (M=28.73, SD=14.221, n=48), df=84, t=0.67, p=0.546, is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, there is no significant difference in anxiety among children of working and non-working mothers.

DISCUSSION

An Independent sample t test was used to analyze the anxiety scores of both the children of working as well as non working mothers.

The hypothesis states that there is a significant difference in anxiety among children of working and non working mothers. Mean scores of both the groups (Working= 28.73 and Non working =30.55) which shows that there is not vast difference in the mean of both.

The results concluded that, there is a slight inclination of developing anxiety among children of non working mothers than in those with working mothers, while not much difference can be inferred in the scores of both. Thus, the hypothesis stating, there is no significant difference in anxiety among children of working and non working mothers, is supported.

These findings were consistent with the following research, which states, parents of children with anxiety disorders have increased rates of current and past anxiety disorders (Cooper et al., 2006). Also, children of parents with anxiety disorders have an increased risk for anxiety disorders (Marianas, Avenevoli, Dierker, & Grillon, 1999).

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In general, family studies consistently show a relationship between an anxiety disorder in the child and anxiety disorders in first-degree relatives. Children of parents with anxiety disorders are about 5 times more likely to have anxiety disorders than are children of parents without anxiety disorders (Beidel & Turner, 1997)

Limitations of this study conceptualised that, even though the study bridged a gap in psychology research, there were some drawbacks, such as, sample size due to limited acceptance of anxiety scale by parents of children who were approached for the study. The sample was also limited to only Bangalore and Hyderabad, as no online forms were distributed due to the need for the physical presence of the researcher while form was being filled manually.

Scope of this study holds; it can be used to help identify whether the anxiety score of the mother has any implications on that of the child while the existing variable of work status is kept as one of the considerations.

Furthermore, cross sectional analysis across different geographical location maybe undertaken to understand the impact of work status on childhood anxiety.

Another area that can be explored, is the gender difference amongst children of the age considered, in level of anxiety based on all the dimensions that the scale proposes to study, in order to create a judgment if any.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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