

A Comparative Study of Psychological Adjustment of the Children Belonging to Working and Non-working Women in Nuclear and Joint Family System

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KEYWORDS Family Structure. Life Patterns. Pakistani Women. Effects. Well- being

ABSTRACT The main objective of this research paper was to determine the psychological adjustment upon the children of working women and non-working women belonging to nuclear and joint family structure of Pakistan. The sample of present research consisted of 200 adolescent children of working women and non-working women including 50 children of working women of nuclear family structure (22 male, 28 female), 50 children of non-working women of nuclear family structure (28 male, 22 female), 50 children of working women belonging to joint family structure (35 male, 15 female) and 50 children of non-working women belonging to joint family structure (34 male, 16 female). Their age range was from 12 to 18 years. It was hypothesized that adolescent children of working and non-working women belonging to nuclear and joint family structure, differ in their psychological adjustment. Subjects were interviewed by personal information questionnaire. Then Reynolds Adolescent Adjustment Screening Inventory (RAASI) was administered in order to determine the psychological problems among adolescent children of working and non-working women belonging to nuclear and joint family structure. Then their responses were scored to determine the level of their psychological adjustment. Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test were applied to test the study hypotheses. The results showed that there was no significant difference between the psychological adjustment of adolescent children of working and non-working women in nuclear and joint family structure.

INTRODUCTION

The family is a group of people forming the smallest unit of a society. It is known as the “Basic Building Block” of human society which has its own specific structure. Traditionally, the family has been defined as a unit made up of two or more people who are related by blood, marriage or adoption and who live together, form an economic unit and bear and raise children (Becnokraitis 1996). Sharing and togetherness is the basic feature of the family. All the family members are expected to cooperate, have unity and togetherness to achieve the common family goals. There are many varieties of family in the world which are in general categorized according to linkage, composition and relationships (Ghani 2000). Family is the most important factor in shaping the child’s pre-knowledge (Ozel et al. 2014).

Composition refers to the number of people making the size and structure of the family which

is two types nuclear or small family and joint or large family. In Pakistan, basically in researcher’s country there are two family structures out of above mentioned families, nuclear family and extended or joint family. Nuclear family is a small structured family composed of married couple and their children only. Extended or joint family is made up of married couple, their children, grand and great-children and the relatives of the male-line, all living together. The “joint family” is one such thing that has the potential to ensure sustainability of life and natural resources on this planet (Jha 2001).

Ghani (2000) exposed that the forms and functions of family have varied around the world over the countries. Changes in the family structure and system inevitably brought a remarkable change in the status of women. Now the status of women has been recognized as an authority in her home. Her rights are being realized in every field of life. Industrialization and the eventual reality of working women began to impact upon family living arrangements, assigned roles and daily life patterns, the concept of family life also changed. According to Manzoor (2002), in Pakistan, majority of women are uneducated and the proportion of uneducated women is consider-

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ably high in rural areas than urban areas. An educated mother is generally more aware of her responsibilities. The main reasons for the involvement of women in outdoor work are the disintegration of the family system and economic crises. Unemployment and economic disparity have forced the families to let their women go out to get job. The objectives of the study were as follows:

- ♦ To measure the psychological effects of the children belonging to working women and non-working women.
- ♦ To measure the psychological effects of the children belonging to nuclear family structure and joint family structure.
- ♦ To compare the psychological effects of the children belonging to working women and non-working women.
- ♦ To compare the psychological effects of the children belonging to nuclear family structure and joint family structure.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

1. There is no significant difference between mean adjustment scores of children belonging to working women in nuclear families and children of working women in joint families.
2. There is no significant difference between mean adjustment scores of children belonging to non-working women in nuclear families and children of non-working women in joint families.
3. There is no significant difference between mean adjustment scores of children belonging to working women in joint families and children of non-working women in joint families.
4. There is no significant difference between mean adjustment scores of children belonging to working women in nuclear families and children of non-working women in nuclear families.
5. The result of this research will help in the education of females who believe that there are only negative consequences of work if family is nuclear one. Research may also increase the realization of the actual utilization of women's potentials and abilities not only before marriage but also after marriage. It will also encourage the mothers to enter employment outside their home even they belong to nuclear family structure without

any guilt feelings. This research may also lead to future research.

Literature Review

Social scientists generally agree that the family provides the most important social contact in the child's early life. In particular, the family is important in much theoretical position on delinquency. Various family characteristics have been linked to the misconduct of adolescents. Adolescence is a period of many transitions. Transitions not only to adult roles and responsibilities but also too many of the problems and potential risks associated with adulthood (Sprinthall and Collins 1995b). According to Eitzen (2003), "Family is a lift up of meaningful relationships". Middle adolescent occurs during the high school years, and late adolescence is a result of an educational structure that for many postpones the assumption of adult responsibilities (Elliot and Feldman 1990). Many delinquency causation theories are, however, premised on conception of what a typical or ideal family should be like, usually a conjugal-nuclear family with traditional mother and father role models (Thornton and Voigt 1985). Whatever the family structure, a child's healthy development is most associated with the quality of parenting, which is itself enhanced by the availability to the family of strong community and social supports (Voices for Children 1999). Virginia Cooperative Extension (2009) in an article recommended that family acts effectively in shaping out the personalities of the children and developing life skills among the children.

As maternal employment becomes increasingly common, it is less likely that differences between children of mothers who work at home and those who work elsewhere will be detected in research (Orthner 1990). Conversely, mothers who stay at home even though they would prefer to work report that they find it more difficult to control their children and feel less confident in themselves as mothers (Hoffman 1989b). Many studies, however, show no differences in closeness or other qualities of relationships for working and non-working mothers (for example, Armistead et al. 1990; Galambos and Maggs 1990; Keith et al. 1990; Paulson et al. 1990). Jacobson (1999), mentioned that Harvey found among mothers who worked, only the timing of the return to work and interruption in employment affected how obedient children were at ages

3 and 4. Those whose mothers returned to work after 3 years were slightly more compliant than those whose mothers went back to work earlier. The differences faded by the time the children were 5 and 6. The number of hours a mother worked also had a small effect on children's test scores; the more hours the mother worked, the lower the child scored. But again, those differences were not significant and eventually disappeared.

Socialists welcome the employment of women as a progressive factor. Women are no longer slaves of slaves without status or economic independence. Whether a mother's job has benign or harmful influences on her child's socialization depends on the interaction of other factors: the nature of child care for infants and preschoolers, social class, whether the mother works steadily or sporadically, how she feels about her job and the father's involvement with his children. One of the strongest influences is the mother's satisfaction; a factor that seems so important that some researchers have speculated that a child is probably better off with a non-employed mother who is at home all day out years to be working (Scarr and Hall 1984). Research in child development and early childhood education has demonstrated that the quality of child care can have a profound, long-term impact on a child's development (Hayes et al. 1990). Walker's research (1996, 1997, 1999) indicates that almost all of the at-risk children discussed earlier do not possess even the minimal interpersonal and behavioral competencies essential to school success. Once rejected by their teachers and peers, these students often band together to form deviant or disruptive gangs which later run into trouble with the law (Dishion et al. 1994).

It has been shown that children exposed to these risk factors follow a well described and documented path beginning with behavioral manifestations and reactions such as defiance of adults, lack of school readiness and aggression toward peers (Walker and Sprague 1999). Certain specific antisocial behavior patterns and high levels of aggression exhibited in preschool and kindergarten are not just correlated, but are highly predictive, of violent, delinquent and criminal behaviors in middle school, later adolescence and adulthood (Fagan 1996; Walker et al. 1996). Problems stemming from children's under controlled expressions of anger and aggression are among the most common and serious concerns of parents and teachers (McGee et al. 1983).

When young children exhibit negative emotions (anger or sad distress), mothers attempt to teach their children how to interpret and act on these emotions. Mother's label their children's emotions, provide explanations, and attempt to guide children's behavior towards acceptable resolutions (Saarni et al. 1997). Personal distress may disinherit aggressive reactions. Sympathy, on the other hand, is associated with positive peer status and social competence (Cummings and Davies 1994; Eisenberg and McNally 1993).

Negative emotions expressed by the parent-child dyad during problem-solving leads to lower quality solution, and poor solutions are characteristics of children who show verbal and/or physical aggression at home and school (Forgatch 1989). The self concept is a special framework that influences how we process information about the social world around us along with information about ourselves, such as our motives, emotional states, self evaluations, abilities and much else besides (Klein et al. 1989; Van Hook and Higgins 1988). Aneesa et al. (2013) investigated the impacts and implications of family dynamics on the adolescents' development. They found that family communication supports good family functioning. They also correlated family communication and family system as the predictors that can determine family satisfaction among the adolescents.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was descriptive in nature. The main purpose of the study was to determine the psychological effects upon the children of working and non-working women. Following procedure was adopted for this study.

The population consisted of the adolescent children of the working and non-working women belonging to nuclear and joint family structure studying in the secondary classes. Study was delimited to public and private schools located in city Rawalpindi. The sample consisted of 200 children of the working and non-working women belonging to nuclear and joint family structure. The cluster sampling method was used for the present research. The data was collected in the group form.

Tools of Research

The following two instruments were used for this research:

1. Questionnaire of Personal Information:

Personal information was obtained through a questionnaire which focused on the subject's, age, gender, education, nuclear/joint family structure, socio-economic status, number of siblings, birth order, fathers alive/dead, mother's employed status etc.

2. Reynolds Adolescent Adjustment Screening Inventory (RAASI): This questionnaire screen adolescents and identify those who may be at risk for psychological adjustment problems. The author of this questionnaire was William M Reynolds (2001). It is a 31 items brief, screening measure of adjustment for use with adolescent's ages 12 to 19 years. It provides an adjustment total score on psychological problems including Antisocial Behavior, Anger Control Problems, Emotional Distress and Positive Self. Subjects are required to endorse response that best describes how they have been feeling in the past 6 months, on a 3 point scale, ranging from never or almost never (1), to nearly or all the time (3). It included 25 negative items, and 6 positive items. Thus, half of items constitute RAASI adjustment total score are included on scales of internalizing problems and half represents problems that are externalizing in their symptom expression.

RAASI is reported to have adequate psychometric properties. It has high internal consistency (.92); two weeks test retests reliability (.88) for total developmental sample. High internal consistency reliability co-efficient were found for RAASI scales ranging from (.71, .88) and test retest ranging from (.83, .86). Strong evidences are reported to support the content validity of RAASI adjustment total scores as a measure of psychological adjustment in adolescent; scales also appear to adequately sample their respective domains of psychological adjustment. RAASI is reported to have strong evidences of having criterion related validity, construct validity, convergent validity and discriminant validity in clinical sample. Only minimum relationship found between RAASI scales and social desirability supporting discriminant validity of scales.

DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

It was a descriptive study because it measures the psychological effects of male and female students of secondary classes. The following procedures were adopted to collect the data:

- Initially 10 schools were selected in order to conduct the study.
- Then the questionnaire of personal information was filled by the children.
- After administering the personal information questionnaire, required children from 6 schools out of 10, were selected.
- Then the children belonging to joint and nuclear family structure were approached.
- Both the groups were further divided into children of working and non-working women.
- Thereafter RAASI was administered from required Adolescents in group form.

Method of Data Analysis

After collection of data, the scale items were scored. The responses to 6 positively stated items were scored as below:

Never = 1 , Sometimes = 2 , All the time =3

The responses to 25 negatively stated items were reversed and scored as below:

Never =3 , Sometimes = 2 , All the time =1

The score thus obtained were adjustment scores of the selected children/students. The adjustment scores of the children were belonging to working women and those belonging to non-working women in nuclear and joint family structures, were summarized separately by calculating their average score and standard deviation score. Then t test was applied in order to find out whether the students in each category differed in their average adjustment scores.

RESULTS

This part deals with analysis and interpretation of data as related to the topic, collected and scored. The results of the study are tabulated in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison between children of working women at nuclear and joint families

Family structure	Mean	SD	SE _D	t	p
Nuclear	71.14	7.58	1.47	0.81	>.05
Joint	69.94	7.13			
df=98	t at .05=1.99				

As entries in the Table 1 indicate, the obtained difference in the mean adjustment scores

of children belonging to working women in nuclear families and children belonging to working women in joint families is 1.20, which is not statistically significant because $t=0.81$ which is less than the critical value ($t=1.99$). The null hypothesis no.1 is, therefore, retained.

As entries in Table 2 indicate, the obtained difference in the mean adjustment scores of children belonging to non-working women in nuclear families and children belonging to non-working women in joint families is 0.24, which is not statistically significant because $t=0.17$ which is less than the critical value ($t=1.99$). The null hypothesis no. 2 is, therefore, retained.

Table 2: Comparison between children of non-working women at nuclear and joint families

Family structure	Mean	SD	SE _D	t	p
Nuclear	72.62	5.43	1.34	0.17	>.05
Joint	72.38	7.83			
df=98	t at .05=1.99				

As entries in Table 3 indicate, the obtained difference in the mean adjustment scores of children belonging to working women in joint families and children belonging to non-working women in joint families is 2.44, which is not statistically significant because $t=1.63$ which is less than the critical value ($t=1.99$). The null hypothesis no.3 is, therefore, retained.

Table 3: Comparison between children of working and non-working women of joint families

Motherhood	Mean	SD	SE _D	t	P
Working	69.94	7.129	1.49	1.63	>.05
Non-working	72.38	7.835			
df=98	t at .05=1.99				

As entries in Table 4 indicate, the obtained difference in the mean adjustment scores of children belonging to working women in nuclear fam-

Table 4: Comparison between children of working and non-working women of nuclear families

Motherhood	Mean	SD	SE _D	T	p
Working	71.14	7.57	1.32	1.12	>.05
Non-working	72.62	5.44			
df=98	t at .05=1.99				

ilies and children belonging to non-working women in nuclear families is 1.48, which is not statistically significant because $t=1.12$ which is less than the critical value ($t=1.99$). The null hypothesis no.4 is, therefore, retained.

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to determine the psychological effects upon the children of working and non-working women belonging to nuclear and joint family structure. The main objective was to measure and compare the psychological effect among the children of working women and non-working women belonging to nuclear and joint family structure. Study result indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the children belonging to working women and non-working women in nuclear families and joint families. The children belonging to working and non-working women in nuclear families and joint families did not differ in adjustment. These results were found inconsistent with the study conducted by Mukherjee in 2010, in which the researcher found a strong effect of a mother's employment on cognitive development. Study results also found inconsistency with a study conducted by Aneesa et al. (2013) in which they found the impacts and implications of family dynamics on the adolescents' development. On the whole, the study result shows that family background characteristics such as nuclear or joint family system and working or non-working motherhood did not influence the psychological adjustment of adolescent boys and girls.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of result the following conclusion is drawn;

1. The children belonging to working women in nuclear families and the children belonging to working women in joint families did not differ in adjustment.
2. The children belonging to non-working women in nuclear families and the children belonging to non-working women in joint families did not differ in adjustment.
3. The children belonging to working women in joint families and the children belonging to non working women in joint families did not differ in adjustment.

4. The children belonging to working women in nuclear families and the children belonging to non-working women in nuclear families did not differ in adjustment.
5. On the whole the study result shows that family background characteristics such as nuclear or joint family system and working or non-working motherhood did not influence the psychological adjustment of adolescent boys and girls.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The result of the present study focused on the psychological problems in adolescent children of working and non-working women in joint and nuclear family structure. The recommendations for future action are:

1. The results are reflective of the fact that mother's employment had a positive influence on the psychological well-being of their children, whether they were living in either joint or nuclear family structure. There might be some factors beyond family structure that affect children psychological well-being. We should try to determine these factors and then take remedial steps to remove them.
2. The home and school environment actually affect the children psychological well-being. The teachers and the parents should notice their own behavior, and should give such treatment to the children that could meet the psychological needs of the children.
3. The working mothers should try harder to compensate for their absence, because the quality, not the quantity of mothering, is important.
4. Assistance programs may provide support to Pakistani working mothers and families in the form of child care, counseling, home maker service, legal right's of children and protective service programs for children.
5. Seminars and programs related to working women may play an important role in enhancing awareness about the services of Clinical Psychologists, Mental Health Personal and Social Workers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study was limited in its sample that just consisted of middle socioeconomic

class and did not emphasis upon parenting style and family functioning. The recommendations for future research are:

1. There is need to investigate the differences between different socio-economic status and it's effect upon the life pattern of the family related to the child rearing regardless of their family structure.
2. Furthermore, there is a need to investigate about parenting style, mother child attachment and socialization process of their children regardless of their family structure.
3. After the present research was conducted, further need was felt for a comparative study between the working and non-working women regardless of their family structure.
4. Additional research is needed to determine the effects of early maternal employment and role of family functioning in child's overall development.
5. Further research needs to take into consideration the effects outside work on mothers and its relationship with child's well-being. It would be of interest to see the relationship between marital satisfaction, family size and psychological health of children.
6. Finally the result of the present research may be publicized that there are no positive effects of working mothers and joint family structure on children. This effort will help to encourage women of nuclear families to enter in labor force without having any guilt feeling.

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