

Effect of Mothers' Work on Psychological Well-Being of Their Children at Benha City

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Abstract

Back ground: Children face several cognitive, behavioral and psychological effects that are the result of maternal employment during their early developmental years. **Aim:** Study aimed to assess the effect of mothers' work on psychological well-being of their children at Benha city. **Research Design:** A descriptive design was utilized to fulfill the aim of the study. **Setting:** This study was conducted at selected governmental primary schools at Banha city, Qaliubiya government. **Sample:** A multistage sample included 400 children selected from the above mentioned settings. **Tools of data collection:** Tool (1): A structured interviewing questionnaire sheet, tool (2): The Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale. **Results:** Less than half of the studied sample had low level of total psychological wellbeing and less than one third had moderate level while one fifth of them have high level of total psychological wellbeing. **Conclusion:** Mothers' work had a negative effect on the psychological wellbeing of their children. **Recommendations:** Developing awareness programs for enhancing woman's knowledge for improving psychological well-being of their children.

Key words: Working mothers, Psychological wellbeing, Children.

Introduction

Working mothers experience a lot of stress which arise from the inability to balance between work and family needs. These two responsibilities appear to be like two jobs which are being handled by one person at the same time. As a result, these mothers are ever in a hurry to catch up with time and attend to unfinished duties at home and at work place. These mothers end up meeting the needs of the family with very few men willing to share the responsibility. In the event that a child falls sick, mothers find it difficult to fully attend to the child at the expense of her sleeping job. They also feel stressed over their own lives. Many working women are not willing to give birth. In other

words, working continues to rob women off their mothering ability (Pollmann& Hess, 2020).

Moreover, working mother enters the workforce and stay there; more and more children are cared for by adults other than their parents. Relatives sometimes take on child care duties, or children are cared for in a variety of child care settings. Not surprisingly, working mothers are more likely to have their infants and toddlers in an out-of-the-home child care center than nonemployee mothers. The problems start when the child may feel alone and fall in bad company in search for friendship and affection, being alone in their house for most of the time. The parents do not have time to attend the

important school meetings, functions, outings or talk to the child about his problems, which may develop guilt, inferiority or he may end up having depression in worst cases (Ellemers,2018).

Children's well-being not only depends on their own emotional, social, and cognitive functioning, but also on environmental factors. Amongst these, familial factors, such as maternal working are particularly important and influential. Maternal well-being may possibly affect children's outcomes via its impact on parenting (Dillow, 2020).

Significance of the study

Children born of working mothers experience difficulties during their early stages of development. As young beings, children need enough time from their caregivers who are non-other their mothers. In the absence of this care emotional impact is felt which may affect up to the academic capabilities of such children (Martin , 2019)

Many studies have demonstrated the significant effects of maternal work on children's psychological well-being that reflected on their emotional status as they observed that the emotional disorders were reported 12-25% of school-age children and 13% of preschooler children's. The psychosocial problem increased from 6.8% to 18.7% and emotional problems showed the increase from to 0.2-3.6%.These increase in psychosocial problems were associated with increase in the proportion of single-parent families, parents get divorced, mothers employment .The prevalence rate of anxiety among Egyptian primary school children were 7.9% and 15% had mixed anxiety and depressive disorders (Eassys,2018).

Aim of this study

The aim of this study was to assess the effect of mothers' work on psychological well-being of their children at Benha city.

Subject and methods

Research Design:

A descriptive design would be utilized in this study.

Research Setting:

This study was conducted at selected governmental primary schools at Benha city , Qaliubiya Government . As there are (20) governmental primary schools which are affiliated to Benha educational administration. A multistage random sample was used to select 50%of these primary schools (10) schools.

Subject:

Sample Size:-

A multistage random sample of (400) students was taken from the previously mentioned setting by taken randomly one grade from selected governmental primary governmental schools then taken all students from these grades.

Sample Technique:-

A multistage sample of 400 students from the above mentioned setting who will fulfill the following inclusion criteria:-

Inclusion criteria:-

- Age: (6-12) years.
- Children whose mother working.
- Both sexes.
- willingness to participate in the study

Tools of data collection:

The data were collected through using the following tools:

Tool (1):-A Structured Interviewing Questionnaire Sheet: It was developed by the researcher and used to assess characteristics of studied children, their family and their parents.

Tool (2):-The Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale:-

This scale developed by **Liddle and Carter (2015)**, as a screening tool to assess psychological well-being of children. The scale consists of 15 items that are divided into 3 subscales:-Positive emotional state (6 items), Positive Outlook (6items) and Social Desirability (3items).

Validity of tools:

To achieve the criteria of trust and worthiness of the tools of data collection in this study, the tools were tested and evaluated for their face and content validity, were tested by five experts in psychiatric and mental health nursing field.

Reliability of tools:

Reliability was applied by the researcher for testing the internal consistency of the tools, by administration of the same subjects under similar conditions on one or more occasions. Answers from related testing were compared (test-re-test reliability) by using Alpha cronbach reliability. The tool was strongly reliable at 0, 93 for the striling children well-being scale

Ethical consideration

An oral consent was obtained from the studied sample after explaining the purpose of the study. All subjects were informed that the participation in the study is voluntary and no name was to be included in the questionnaire sheet.

Field work

The actual filed work was carried out in about 3 months from the middle of October 2020 to the end of December 2020. The researcher visited the selected governmental primary schools at Benha city from 9 am to 1 pm, 3days per week to collect data from children An individual interview was conducted for every children to collect the necessary data using the tools for data collection attitude related to psychological wellbeing scale. The average time needed for this sheet was around (25-30) minutes. The researcher visited this selected governmental primary schools 3/ days per weeks and be stressed in data collection due to (COVID- 19 disease)

Statistical analysis:

The statistical analysis of data was done by using the computer software of Microsoft Excel Program and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. Data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentage for categorical data, the arithmetic mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) for quantitative data. Qualitative variables were compared using chi square test (X) 2, P-value to test association between two variables and R- test to the correlation between the study variables.

Degrees of significance of results were considered as follows:

- P-value > 0.05 Not significant (NS)
- P-value ≤ 0.05 Significant (S)
- P-value ≤ 0.01 highly statistically Significant (HS)

Results

Table (1) shows that, less than half (42%) of the studied children their age ranged between 10-12 years, the Mean SD of age was 9.35 ± 3.64 year. As regard to gender, more than half (53.5%) of the studied children were females. Also, less than one-quarter (22.5%) of the studied children were at Fifth grade. Concerning residence, the majority (82%) of them are living in urban areas. Regarding family type, less than two-thirds (63.5%) of the studied children had independent family. Also, more than two-thirds of the studied children had 4-6 people in their family while more than half of them had 1-2 siblings, (70.5% and 61.5%) respectively. Concerning ranking among family members, less than one-third (31.3%) of the studied children were the second child

Table (2) illustrate that less than half (43.8%) of the studied children their mothers' age ranged from 35-<40 years, the Mean SD

of mothers' age was 37.61 ± 3.60 year. Also, more than one-third and more than half of the studied children their mothers were employee at government and had secondary education (diplome) (38.3% and 57%) respectively. Also, less than half (44%) of the studied children their mother working from 8-<10 hours with Mean SD 9.19 ± 2.59 hours.

Table (3) shows that there is a high statistically significant relation between all children's psychological well-being subscales and their mothers' work at (P value= < 0.01**).

Table (4) shows that there is a highly significant positive correlation between children's positive emotional state and their positive outlook and social desirability at (P value= < 0.01**).

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Table (1): Socio-demographic characteristics of the studied children and their families

Socio-demographic Characteristics of the studied children and their families.	N	%
Age (year)		
6-<8 years	98	24.5
8-<10 years	134	33.5
10-12 years	168	42
Mean SD	9.35±3.64	
Gender		
Male	186	46.5
Female	214	53.5
Academic grade : (primary)		
First grade	50	12.5
Second grade	52	13
Third grade	70	17.5
Fourth grade	66	16.5
Fifth grade	90	22.5
Six grade	72	18
Residence		
Rural	72	18
Urban	328	82
Family type		
Independent	254	63.5
Extended	146	36.5
Number of people in the family		
< 4	78	19.5
4-6	282	70.5
> 6	40	10
Number of brothers /sisters		
1-2	246	61.5
3-4	130	32.5
> 4	24	6
Ranking among family members		
The First	98	24.5
The second	125	31.3
The third	110	27.5
The last	67	16.8

Table (2): Percentage distribution of the studied sample according to their mother’s characteristics (n=400).

Mother’s characteristics	N	%
Mothers’ age		
25-<30 years	84	21
30-<35 years	92	23
35-<40 years	175	43.8
≥ 40 years	49	12.2
Mean SD	37.61 ±3.60	
Mothers’ education level		
Illiterate	16	4
Read & Write	20	5
Primary /preparatory	60	15
Secondary education (dipome)	228	57
High education	60	15
Postgraduate	16	4
Mothers’ work		
Employee at government	153	38.3
Employee at private sector	110	27.5
Free business	42	10.5
Other	95	23.7
Number of working hours for your mother		
6-<8	1119	29.8
8-<10	176	44
≥ 10	105	26.2
Mean SD	9. 19±2.59	



Figure (1): Percentage distribution of the studied children according to their total psychological wellbeing scale

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Table (3) Relationship between mother’s work and total psychological well-being subscales among studied sample (n=400).

Levels of total psychological well-being		N	Mothers' job								X2	P-Value
			Employee at government		Employee at private sector		Free business		Other			
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Positive emotional state	High	80	0	0.0	9	11.2	38	47.5	33	41.3	14.15	.001**
	Moderate	120	24	20	72	60	4	3.3	20	16.7		
	Low	200	129	64.5	29	14.5	0	0.0	42	21		
Positive Outlook	High	84	2	2.4	8	9.5	42	50	32	38.1	14.05	.001**
	Moderate	110	8	7.3	80	72.7	0	0.0	22	20		
	Low	206	143	69.4	22	10.7	0	0.0	41	19.9		
Social desirability	High	88	6	6.8	12	13.6	40	45.5	30	34.1	13.97	.005**
	Moderate	145	43	29.7	78	53.8	2	1.4	22	15.2		
	Low	167	104	62.3	20	12	0	0.0	43	25.7		
Total psychological well-being	High	82	0	0.0	7	8.5	40	48.8	35	42.7	14.17	.001**
	Moderate	126	24	19	80	63.5	2	1.6	20	15.9		
	Low	192	129	67.2	23	12	0	0.0	40	20.8		

*significant at $p < 0.05$. **highly significant at $p < 0.01$

Table (4): Correlation between children’s psychological well-being subscales.

Correlation between children psychological wellbeing subscales	Positive emotional state	Positive Outlook
Positive emotional state		$r = .544$ $P = .000^{**}$
Social desirability	$r = .496$ $P = .000^{**}$	$r = .471$ $P = .000^{**}$

study done **Juboori (2019)** who found that the majority of his samples were females.

Discussion

In addition, **Wazqar et al., (2017)** who showed that the age group of the majority of the children in their studies was between 6 to 12 years old.

As regard to gender, more than half of the studied children were females .This might be due to increase birth rate of females rather than males. This finding was similar to the

Concerning residence, the majority of the studied children are living in urban areas this might be due to jobs chances, better living condition and a lot of schools and hospitals. This finding was similar to the study done by **Arabaci (2019)** who found that the majority of his samples preferred living at urban areas. On the same line, **Akinjola (2018)** who reported that, more than half of

his samples were living at urban areas with better live condition.

Regarding to number of brothers and sisters more than half of the studied children had 1-2 siblings (brothers and sisters). This finding might be due to increase birth rate generally at Egypt. Also, more than two-thirds of the studied children had 4-6 people in their family. This finding was similar to the study done by **Dagget (2018)** who revealed that the majority of their samples had 1-2 siblings (brothers and sisters).

On the other hand, these results contradicted those of **Juboori (2019)** who showed that, more than half of his studied children were the only child and did not had any siblings (brothers and sisters) at home.

The current study results demonstrated that more than half of the studied children had independent family. These results could be due to work of both father and mother of children and other relatives take care of their children which effects on their psychological well-being. These findings were similar to the study done by **Mula (2018)** who found that the majority of children of the working mother in his studies have independent family.

On the other hand, these results contradicted those of **Kelleher (2019)** who indicated that, the majority of participants were living at extended families.

The present study results demonstrated that less than half of the studied children their mothers' age ranged from 35<40 years. This might be due to the fact that this age is the age of working mother who start to work after the birth of child to support the economic condition of her family these findings were consistent with the study done by **Fegghi (2018)** who indicated that most of his samples were in the age group: 35-40 years. These

findings also were similar to the study done by **Juboori (2017)** who showed that, more than half of

In contrast, these findings were in disagreement with **Vahedi (2018)** who found that: the age of in his study samples working mother were ranged from (15:65) years old.

The present study reflected that more than half of mother of the studied children had secondary education (diplome). This could be explained by the fact that mothers preferred secondary education (diplome) because they finish education after years and start to work compared with high education which need more years to finish and finally both get the same job. These findings was similar to **Abbas (2017)** who found that more than half of mother of the studied children had secondary education (diplome). These data are in contrast to the study conducted by **Juboori (2019)** who found that the majority of his samples preferred to continue their education and get high education level.

The present study results reflected that, more than one-third and more than half of the studied children their mother are employee at government., this result could be related to the fact that a lot of working mother prefer to work at governmental sector which allow to making part-time tenures available. In addition governmental sector had flexible working hours which not allowed at the private sector which help mothers to make a balance between their work and their families

These findings were similar to study done by **Stoops (2018)**, who found his result were majority of samples working within governmental sector with consistent time to attendees and leaving the work. These results were in disagreement with **Cotter (2019)** who indicated that more than half of mothers of his studied samples working at private sector

with better income rather than the governmental sector. Also **Chang (2019)** who reflected that, the majority of his samples were working on private sector with better contracts rather than the governmental sector.

The current study findings showed that, near the half of the studied children their mother working from 8-<10 hours with Mean SD 9.19 ± 2.59 hours. This result could be related to the average of the number hours of work according to the Egyptian work law which ranged from (6-10) hours per day. These findings were consistent with Research findings revealed by **Amanda (2018)** who demonstrated that less than half of his studied sample working 8-10 hours. On the same line **Yang (2017)** who reported that more than half of studied children their mothers working 8-10 hours per day. These findings were in disagreement with **Xuel (2019)** who reported that more than half of his samples working more than 12 hours per day for better income and live condition.

The present study findings demonstrated that less than half of the studied primary school children had low level of total psychological well-being and also less than the one third had moderate level of total psychological well-being. This could be due to the negative effects of mothers' work on emotional, social, cognitive and psychological development of their children as mothers were fundamental persons in developing their children healthy and enjoying good mental and psychological state.

This findings were similar to **Akinjola(2018)** who reported that the majority of his studied samples had low psychological wellbeing as a result of mothers' work. Moreover, **Parel (2019)** who reported that Mothers' employment affects the emotional development of children. As he

stated that a mother who leaves her child in the care of others whole the day causes psychological and mental disturbance because none can equalize the love and care, their children always not feel cheerful about things and do not enjoy what each new day brings.

In addition, this findings in consistent with the study conducted by **Cardas (2018)** who revealed that maternal work was positively associated with the children's emotional problems and psychological problem with in the children. Also **Ceulemans (2019)** who reported that more than half of of his studied samples had low level of total psychological well-being.

Furthermore, This current findings were in similar to the study conducted by **Desai (2020)** who revealed that the majority of children who studied do not like all those they met and do not share with others the positive events in their lives related to some felling of discomfort and had low psychological well-being level.

Moreover, **Kurtz (2018)** who reported that larger negative effects on communication and social skills of children with working mother more than children with non-working mother. Also his study similarly found that when mothers went to work in the first years of their children's lives, or worked longer hours the children had high score of communication problem with other children which negatively affect their psychological well-being. Additionally, the present study results were in agreement with **Waldfoegel (2016)** whose results were the majority of studied children with mother's job-related stress they also suffered from felling of stress, discomfort, and low social and communication skills and low psychological well-being level.

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On the other hand, the study findings were in disagreement with **Amanda (2018)** who found that a majority of working mothers (seventy percent) felt that their employment had a positive impact on their child. In addition, ten percent felt that their employment had a negative effect and twenty percent felt it had no effect. On the same line **Selo-Ojeme (2017)** who reported that, children with continuous exposure to stress and responsibilities related to not presence of their mothers make them more able to face any challenge or problem during their lives. Also **Hickam (2016)** who found that, majority of his studied samples were had normal level of psychological well-being.

The present study showed that, there was a relationship between mothers' work and total psychological well-being subscales among studied sample and reflects that there is a high statistically significant relation between all children's psychological well-being subscales and their mothers' work. This might be due to that the bond between mother and children is critical and affect the early psychological and emotional well-being of her children.

On the same line **Cotter (2019)** who reported that more ever negative impact on children development Poor-quality day care services can hamper a child's emotional and social development. These findings were in disagreement with **Parel (2019)** who found that, there was not association between mothers' work and total psychological wellbeing of her children as being a working mother is a good successful model for your young children and they always try to do this.

The current study showed that, there was a correlation between children's psychological well-being subscales, explained that there is a highly significant positive correlation between children's positive

emotional state and their positive outlook and social desirability. This study was similar with **Matthias (2020)** who found that there was a correlation between children's positive emotional state and their positive outlook and social desirability.

Conclusion

Mothers' work had a negative effect on psychological wellbeing of their children as less than half of the studied primary school children had low level of total psychological wellbeing and less than one third of them had moderate level while one fifth of them had high level of total psychological well-being.

Recommendations

- Developing continuous educational programs for working mothers to enhance their knowledge and practices regarding psychological well-being of children.
- Improving parent's awareness regarding early psychological and emotional development of their children and involving them in educational programs to encourage them to better communication with their children.
- Integrate the guidelines to the curriculum of student' children to learn how to face stress and anxiety felling be further applied into their lives.

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تأثير عمل الامهات على الرفاهيه النفسيه لأطفالهن فى مدينة بنها

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عمل الأم له تأثير سلبي على الصحة النفسية لأطفالها حيث يؤثر عمل الام على الرفاهيه النفسيه للطفل حيث ان الام اهى المسؤله عن تقديم الرعاية الأساسيه للأطفال في سنواتهن الأولى من الحياه، وبسبب عمل الام لوحظ تقصير في المراقبة والإشراف في معظم العائلات التي تعمل فيها الأمهات مما يؤثر على الصحة النفسيه للأطفال ويتسبب لهم فى الشعور بفقدان الثقة بالنفس. اجريت هذه الدراسة على عدد ٤٠٠ طالب فى المدارس الإبتدائية الحكوميه المختارة فى مدينة بنها محافظة القليوبية، حيث كشفت النتائج عن وجود دلالة احصائية العلاقه بين عمل الامهات والرفاهيه النفسيه لأطفالهن. كما اوصت الدراسه عمل برامج تعليميه للامهات العاملات لامدادهن بالمعلومات اللازمه لرفع الرفاهيه النفسيه لأطفالهن.