

The influence of the mother's job on the psychological state of preschool children in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Background: Children during their early developmental years face several cognitive and behavioral effects that are the result of their mother work.

Objectives: To assess the relationship between mothers' job and psychological state of their preschool-age children at Sakaka City in Saudi Arabia, and to compare mothers job type with the degree of loneliness feeling of their children.

Design: A descriptive survey design was used. Sample: A convenient purposeful sample of 120 working mothers of different careers and their preschool-age children aged from (2-6 years). **Tools** included 1. A structured questionnaire developed by the researcher 2. Likert scale for preschool-age children's loneliness feeling.

Results: indicated that the mothers age ranged between 31-40 years are more than a quarter (35.8%), and rest are between (20-30 years), 89.5% of them have a university education. The degree of mothers' work effect on their young children feeling of loneliness was 43.40 ± 1.095 very affects. On the other hand, 43.25 ± 3.56 was does not affect at all.

Conclusions: It was concluded that there was a relationship between mothers' job and loneliness feelings of their preschool age children. The loneliness feeling for children increases related to the type of mother work where school teachers were the most mothers' career associated with a high sense of loneliness among their children.

Keywords: Mother job, Loneliness feelings, and preschool age children.

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INTRODUCTION

In many families today, mothers continue to work because they have careers that they have spent years developing. Some women return to work soon after giving birth because they know that most employers in this country are not sympathetic to working mothers who wish to take time off to be with their young children. If these women stop working, even for several months, they may give up some of the advantages they have earned or risk losing specific career opportunities [1,2]. Children who spend long days away from their mothers, particularly in the first year of life, are more likely to develop problem behavior, such as hitting and disobeying, and psychological problems such as loneliness feeling and anxiety [3]. Loneliness has been described as negative feelings that exist when there is a discrepancy between what one wants in terms of interpersonal affection and intimacy and what one, in fact, has[4]. Blazer reported that the discrepancy can be long-standing or can result from changes in the individual's social relations or changes in the person's social needs or desires[5,6,7].

Loneliness is a subjective anxiety that causes feelings of being without the type of relationships one wants; that is, loneliness is a discrepancy between one's real and desired relationships [8,9]. A study of American children, aged 2-6 years, evaluated their ability to cope with their emotions in preschool and at home. Children with secure attachment relationships and greater levels of parental support showed "higher levels of positive mood, more constructive coping, and better regulation of emotion in the classroom." [10,11]. Researchers report that children who engaged in mutually responsive, positive interactions with their mothers during the toddler and preschool years had more developed consciences when they reach school age these children were also more likely to comply with adult instructions [11,12]. Children with working mothers are usually placed in group childcare, which results in them receiving less one-on-one attention and guidance. This may have significant psychological effects later in childhood. Behavioral effects may also arise as loneliness feeling [2,6]

The researchers found that working mother in the first year of a child's life harmed cognitive and psychological

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outcomes for the child by age three or four. These adverse effects could still be seen by age seven or eight. Interestingly, the amount of time that mothers worked did not appear to affect cognitive outcomes, as no differences were found in children of mothers working part-time compared with mothers working full-time [6,13,14].

The researchers also found a correlation between mothers working during the first year of a child's life and behavioral problems by the child later in childhood. Mothers entering the workforce might also have a positive effect on children. Dual-earning families can provide much more for their children. With increased financial opportunities come increases in healthcare, nutrition, and educational opportunities. Researchers have found that mothers report many positive effects of working [14,15].

Working mothers in the study felt that they were helping to meet the needs of their families by providing financially, but that on occasion, their family relationships did suffer as a result of their employment. Many working mothers also felt that they were good role models for their children [16,17]. Mothers informed the researchers that, at times, working harmed their children because, after work, mothers were sometimes too tired to interact as much with children as the children would have liked. Also, working sometimes got in the way of completing activities with children that mothers and children would have wanted to do. The decision to become a working mother or a stay-at-home mother is an important one [18].

Definition of terms

Psychological state in this study focuses on the feeling of loneliness which is defined as the negative feelings that arise when the actual quality of a person's social relationships is lower than their expected quality [11].

AIMS OF THE STUDY

1-To assess the relationship between mothers' job and loneliness feelings of their young children at Sakaka City in Saudi Arabia.

2-To compare between mothers' job type and degree of loneliness feeling of their young children

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1-Is there a relationship between mothers' job and loneliness feelings of their young children?

2-If type of mothers' job effect on the degree of loneliness feeling to their young children?

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Sample

A convenient purposeful sample of 120 working mothers and their young children aged from (2-> 6 years). Data were collected within three months, from October 2019-December 2019.

1. Child, age 2- 6years.
2. Child in good health condition (free from chronic illness).
3. Children not suffering from psychiatric disorders.
4. Working married mother who lives with her husband and her children at one home.

Setting

The study was conducted at the different parameters of the Female Department in the university, Hospital of

Gynecology, obstetric and pediatric at Sakaka City, as well as Selected schools at Sakaka City.

Design

A descriptive survey was used to fulfill the research purpose. Criteria for sample selection working mothers, mothers have young children and lives with her husband.

Tools of the Study

1-Instruments used consists of one structured sheet for mothers and loneliness feeling rating Scale for young children of working mothers.

Russell &Cutrona developed Loneliness feeling rating Scale to measures the loneliness and the feeling of this is happening because of the absence of social relations and the test consists of 20 words and in front of every four choices phrase, and fits my preschool-age child, and applied to an individual or a collective. The scale was modified by the researcher and validate by a panel of specialists from the psychology department in education faculty to suit the young age group. Its responses distribute as the following: Never happen one degree, rarely happens two degrees. Sometimes it happens three degrees, always happens four degrees. According to the standard semantics class: 20 degrees or less is low in loneliness, 21-40 degrees in the medium loneliness, 41-60 degrees above average in loneliness, 61-80 degrees high in loneliness [10].

Pilot study

A pilot study was carried out on five mothers for each career category, as well as their young age children assessed for loneliness feeling to try out the tools and validate it. The sample of the pilot study was excluded from the total sample.

Preparation for data collection

Official permissions were obtained from the dean of the faculty of Applied Medical Science to get the agreement of the administrators of both the Hospital director and schools.

Data Collection procedure

Tools of the study were based on the researchers begin to ask about the biosocial data, then ask the mothers to fill the structured sheet by their self. Then, it begins to fill the loneliness feeling scale for the child.

Statistical analysis: The statistical analysis of data was done using the Excel program and the statistical package for social science (SPSS) program version 17.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The researcher emphasized to the mothers that the study was voluntary and anonymous. Mothers had the full right to refuse to participate in the study at any time. Verbal consent was obtained from each mother in the study.

Table 1. revealed that the mother's age ranged between 31-40 years, more than a quarter (35.8%) of them ranged between (20 -30 years) and (89.5%) of them have a university education. Regarding husbands' occupation, less than half of them (41.6%) assumed free business. Age of children ranged between (2- < 6 years), and more than half of their age (60%) were varied between 5 - < 6 years

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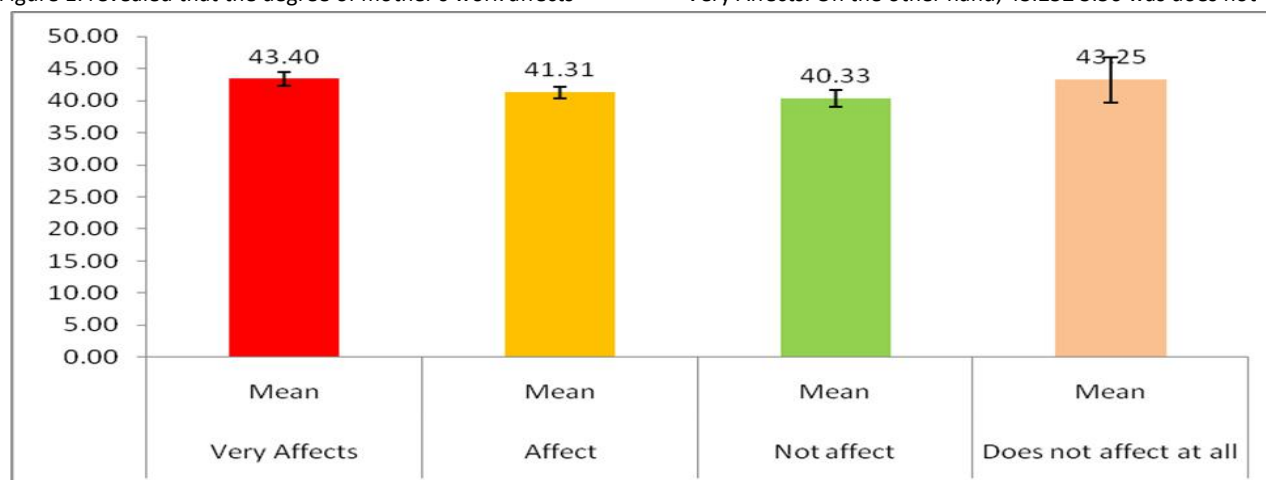
Table 1. Biosocial characteristics of the subjects, mothers, and their young children

Variables	No.	%	SE±Mean
Age (years)			
20- 30	43	35.8 %	34.86 ± 0.596
31 – 40	50	41.7 %	
More than 40	27	22.5 %	
Task			
Nurse	30	25 %	2.50±0.102
Employee Management	30	25 %	
Schools Teacher	30	25 %	
College Professor	30	25 %	
Mothers' Education			
Primary	0	0%	4.92±0.028
Medium	1	0.8 %	
Secondary	8	6.7 %	
University	111	89.5 %	
Husband's Occupation			
Policeman	27	22.5%	4.63 ±0.233
Teacher	11	9.2 %	
Government employed	8	6.7 %	
Free business	50	41.6 %	
Lab technician	9	7.5 %	
Doctor	2	1.7 %	
Pharmacist	6	5.0 %	
Accountant	7	5.8 %	
Husband's Level of Education			
Primary	1	0.8 %	4.64±0.054
Medium	4	3.3 %	
Secondary	32	26.7 %	
University	83	69.2 %	
Duration of Marriage			
1 - 10 Year	56	46.7 %	10.91±0.62
11 - 20 Year	48	40.0 %	
21 and more Year	16	13.3 %	
Age of Children			
2-<4 years	17	14.2 %	2.46±0.067
4- <5 years	31	25.8 %	
5 - < 6 years	72	60.0 %	

Figure 1. The relationship between the degrees of maternity work effect on Child's loneliness feeling

Figure 1. revealed that the degree of mother's work affects

Very Affects. On the other hand, 43.25± 3.56 was does not



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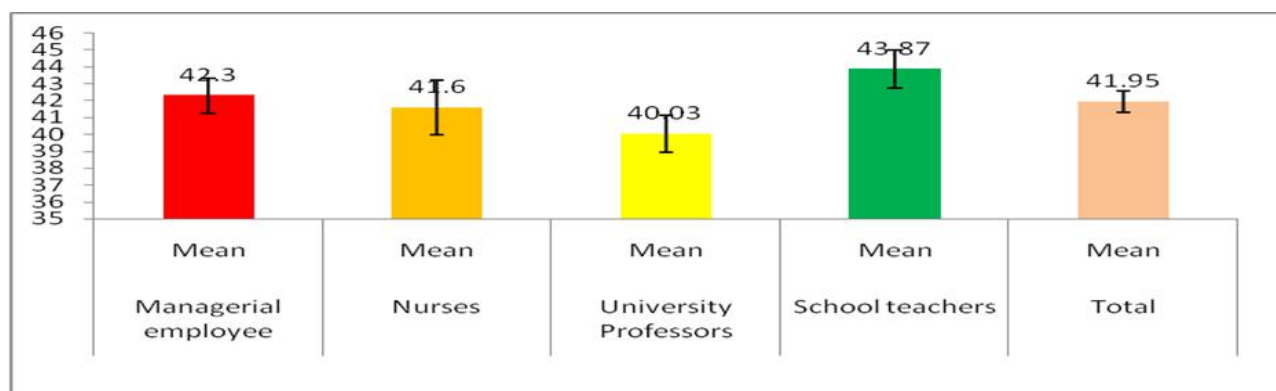


Figure 2. The relation between the level of loneliness and the maternity work type.

Figure (2) Illustrated The relation between the level of loneliness and the maternity work type. The level of loneliness feeling for children whose mothers were schoolteachers was

(43.87%), followed by 43.3% for children whose mothers were a managerial employee and the children of mothers were university professors have less level of loneliness feeling (40.0%).

Table 2. The relationship between the level of loneliness and the number of maternity working hours daily.

Maternity career	Number of daily work hours Mean \pm SE	The loneliness feeling level of young children Mean \pm SE
Managerial employee	7.73 \pm 0.287	42.30 \pm 1.04
Nurses	9.13 \pm 0.33	41.60 \pm 1.62
University Professors	7.17 \pm 0.173	40.03 \pm 1.11
School teachers	6.96 \pm 0.131	43.87 \pm 1.13
Total	7.75 \pm 0.145	41.95 \pm 0.63

Table 2. Showed that the mean and stander error of loneliness feeling level of increase among young children for mothers work as school teachers mothers was 43.87 \pm 1.13 followed by children of mothers working as the managerial employee was the mean and stander error of the mean and

stander error was 42.30 \pm 1.04 followed by mothers work as nurses at 41.60 \pm 1.62

The lowest loneliness feeling level of young children Mean \pm SE 40.03 \pm 1.11 was for mother work as University Professors.

Table 3. The relation between the level of loneliness and Supervisor on childcare during a period of mother work.

Variables				The level of loneliness feeling of young children
Supervisor on childcare during the period of mother work	No.	%	Mean \pm SE	Mean \pm SE
Grandmother	32	26.7%	1.00 \pm 0.00	41.58 \pm 1.36
Husbands' family	10	8.3%	2.00 \pm 0.00	42.42 \pm 1.89
Housemaid	72	60.0%	3.00 \pm 0.00	42.56 \pm 0.801
Kindergarten	1	0.8%	4.00 \pm 0.00	37.00 \pm 0.00
Others	5	4.2%	5.00 \pm 0.00	36.40 \pm 1.60

Table 3. Illustrated that the relation between the level of loneliness feeling of young children and supervisor on childcare during a period of mother work. It was found that the Housemaid was the most caregiver for children when the mother was at her job at mean \pm SE 42.56 \pm 0.801 followed by Husbands' family at mean \pm SE 42.42 \pm 1.89.

DISCUSSION

Caregivers influence the early development through the environment, and they create materials and activities which determine whether the child is provided with participation or not to prevent young children from feeling the negative feeling as loneliness[19,20].

The present results of this study represented that (41.7 %) of mothers' age was 31-40 years, more than a quarter (35.8%) of them ranged between (20 -30 years) and (89.5%) of them have a university education. Regarding husbands' occupation, less than half of them (41.6%) assumed free business. Age of children ranged between (2- < 6 years), and more than half of their age (60%) were reached between 5 -

< 6 years.

Concerning the relationship between the impact of the type of mother job on the child's loneliness feeling level of increase among young children for mothers' work as school teachers mothers was 43.87 \pm 1.13 followed by children of mothers working as the managerial employee was the mean and stander error of the mean and stander error was 42.30 \pm 1.04. Followed by mother's work as nurses at 41.60 \pm 1.62 . The lowest loneliness feeling level of young children. Mean \pm SE 40.03 \pm 1.11 was for mother work as University Professors.

Working mothers were also more likely to use good quality childcare because they could shop around for the best providers, the study found. And, controversially, it said they showed greater 'maternal sensitivity or responsiveness towards their children - than stay-at-home mothers[21, 24]. Mothers do not harm their young children emotionally or socially by going out to work, according to research that offers reassurance to women worried about juggling jobs and family responsibilities. According to Daniel, Grzywacz,

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Leerkes, Tucker, and Han, the magnitude of this effect implies that a 10-h increase in work hours on average increases the likelihood of depression by 0.02 in the full sample, which is about a 12 % increase at the sample mean for depression of 17 % in the full sample [20,26].

The research found that among employed mothers, work hours measured when infants are about three months old are positively associated with depressive symptoms and parenting stress, as well as a small decline in self-reported overall health, measured when infants are about six months old. The effects on depression are driven by mothers who are working full time at three months post-childbirth, while for parenting stress, any level of work hours at three months is associated with adverse effects. Alternate shift work among employed mothers is associated with depressive symptoms and parenting stress at six months [17,21,27].

As a greater number of women enter the workforce and stay there, more and more children are cared for by adults other than their parents. Relatives sometimes take on childcare duties, or children are cared for in a variety of childcare 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. However, most three- to five-year-olds are in center-based or preschool programs regardless of whether their mother works outside the home [25,28,29].

CONCLUSION

The study was concluded that there was a relationship between mothers' work and the loneliness feeling of their young children. The loneliness feeling for children increases related to the type of mother's work, where school teachers were the most mothers' career associated with a profound sense of loneliness among their children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The role of the mothers should be enhanced to be more productive through educating and training mothers to be more involved and active responses during children's stimulation for cognition and social participation or during modifying their behavior.

Emphasize the need for organizing employment rule to mother take fewer hours work in the first few months after childbirth.

Also, researches need to study the scope of the environmental factors and quality of mother-child interaction, which is requiring much further research.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations to this study included small sample size, limited geographic area, lack of formal statistical about the prevalence of working women in the Saudi Arabia Kingdom, and ignorance of the father and sibling role effect.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

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