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Impact of mother's nature of work on personality development of pre-school children

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Abstract

The present study was carried out to examine the impact of mothers nature of work on personality development of their young kids. The sample for the study was 400 working women and their 400 children who were between 3-6 years of age. Sample was randomly selected from various departments from four districts of Kashmir division viz. Srinagar, Anantnag, Ganderbal and Baramulla. Information from working mothers regarding the nature of their official work was collected by a self-devised questionnaire while as from pre-school children (3-6 yrs) the information was gathered from a personality questionnaire M5-Ps. The data obtained through questionnaires was consolidated, analyzed and interpreted through SPSS-20 as per the requirement using specific statistical tools. It has been found that most of the respondents finished their official work on time and did not carry any pending work to their home. It was observed that there occurs a significant co-relation between mothers occupational stress and neuroticism in children. In district Srinagar, a significant co-relation was found between mothers work being finished on time and extraversion in children and also between mother's getting extra money from overtime and openness to experience in children. Further, in district Srinagar and Anantnag a significant co-relation was found between mothers work being carried to home and consciousness in children. Moreover, the agreeableness in children had a significant co-relation with mothers work being carried to home for completion in district Srinagar and Baramulla. To sum up, it could be said that working mothers nature and style of work significantly effects the personality of pre-school children.

Keywords: Women, Children, Work, Nature of Work and Personality.

1. Introduction

Work of women has always been a topic of debate as it is thought to influence her family life and especially her children. As women have become more assimilated into the work-force over recent decades, they have realized considerable changes in their work roles which may contribute to health problems and other negative outcomes such as marital strain and problems in upbringing children. The unfavorable schedules of job disturbs the body's circadian rhythms, alter physiological functions, and potentially lead to chronic health conditions, anxiety, neurotic disorder, depression, chronic sleep deprivation and fatigue in working mothers. Working till late evenings or night shifts has been associated with greater depressive symptoms among mothers. As mental and physical health is an important resource for parents it influences health and development of children. Fatigue due to sleep deprivation and mental stress associated with work can reduce the quality of time spent with children in developmentally important activities, and it can also lower the quality of care on the part of mother. The stress associated with nature of work may adversely affect the family dynamics and increase the risk of mal-adapted personality in children. Nature and style of work of a working mother leaves an impact (be it positive or negative) on all the dimensions of personality like neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness.

Emotional stability (inversely called neuroticism) is a personality trait that has been conceptualized as negative feelings and stress in children. Bowlby studied neurotic children who had never suffered any obvious psychological trauma and had remained in a relatively stable home, looked after by their mothers and well cared for according to ordinary standards. Yet they had developed into neurotic children with great anxiety and guilt and abnormally strong sexual and aggressive impulses. After investigating the causes of trouble, Bowlby noted that one factor stood out the personality of the mother and her emotional attitude towards the

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child. Children who are not fortunate enough to have the loving, caring and constancy of their mother during their earlier years because of her work react with negativism, hypertension, stupors sleep, diarrhea and emotional imbalance. Mody and Murthy (1988)^[4] have revealed that the children of employed mothers are usually found to be careless and slightly emotionally unstable in the early years and the latch key experience causes behaviour problems in them due to which they are emotionally weak.

Besides neuroticism, mothers nature of work also defines the level of extraversion in children. Extraversion is the act, state, or habit of being predominantly concerned with obtaining gratification from what is outside the self. Extraverts tend to enjoy human interactions and to be enthusiastic, talkative, assertive, and gregarious. Extraversion can be expected to be associated with more positive relationships between parents and children. It has been argued that an extravert child has an emotional hunger for maternal love and those other feelings of protection and care implicit in the mother-child relationship. Trust in mother, or a sense of security in the relationship with the mother is necessary for the healthy development of the ego, which could deal effectively with other relationships as well. Openness to experience is one of the domains which are used to describe human personality in the Five Factor Model. It involves facets like imagination, aesthetic sensitivity, creativity, attentiveness to inner feelings, preference for variety, and intellectual curiosity. Imagination, curiosity and creativity is a more natural way for children to learn about the world. Children of working mothers express and appreciate art, imagination and beauty more than children of non-working mothers.

Conscientiousness, one of five domains in the Big Five taxonomy of personality, has been defined as “the tendency to be organized, responsible, and hardworking” and as “the propensity to follow socially prescribed norms for impulse control, to be goal directed, to plan, and to be able to delay gratification and to follow norms and rules”. Conscientious children look for punctuality. If someone shows up on time, that's a great clue toward conscientiousness, since a punctual individual has to be organized enough and care enough to arrive on time. Agreeableness is a personality trait manifesting itself in individual behavioral characteristics that are perceived as kind, sympathetic, cooperative, warm and considerate. In contemporary personality psychology, agreeableness is one of the five major dimensions of personality structure, reflecting individual differences in cooperation and social harmony. People who score high on this dimension tend to believe that most people are honest, decent, and trustworthy. Agreeableness has been conceptualized as individual differences in the coordination of joint interests, leading to more harmonious relationships. In addition, agreeable individuals are more likely to “give in” during conflict situations by either abstaining from efforts to control other people's behavior or rebelling against rules and regulations. Zhong-Hui *et al.* (2006)^[6] found that agreeableness was associated with perceptions of higher parental warmth and understanding, and less paternal punishment and maternal refusal.

2. Methodology

The locale of the study was Kashmir division. The data was collected from four regions, viz; Srinagar, Anantnag, Ganderbal and Baramullah. The departments selected for sampling were health, education, banking and judiciary. A

total of 400 working women and their 400 children were selected as sample, out of which 100 women and their 100 children were selected from each district respectively in order to arrive at dependable conclusion. Purposive sampling technique was used to select various departments from where the sample was obtained. A self-structured questionnaire was developed to assess the nature of work of women at workplace and a personality questionnaire M5-Ps focusing on the personality and behaviour of pre-school children, between the age group 3-6 years was also administered on children.

3. Results & Discussion

The results of the present research, derived through the use of prescribed methodology and standard tools, have been presented in various tables. The association between mothers nature of work and neuroticism in children is presented in Table 1. It was observed that in all the selected districts, a significant positive correlation was found between mothers occupational stress and neuroticism in children. This is because that occupational stress has a psychological and physiological impact on the functioning of a working mother which ultimately influences her behaviour at home and has a direct impact on the family and all of its members, especially behaviour of children. Similarly, in district Srinagar, Anantnag and Baramulla, a significant positive correlation was seen in mothers pending work which was brought home by them and neuroticism in children. Working from home is actually more confusing to children than seeing their parents leave for work every day. Though kids feel physical presence of mothers but lack their mental presence. This style of mothers work has adverse implications on children as they get less time to spend with their mothers. Belsky and Barends (2002)^[1] reviewed extensive evidence that depressive mood associated with neuroticism in children is related to less competent care-giving and excessive workload in the workplace as well as at home on the part of mother. Further, a positive significant relation was found between the location of mothers workplace which was far away from home and neuroticism in children in district Srinagar. When mothers took longer to reach back home, children had to spend more time without them and thus felt anxious and restless. Other variables such as mothers finishing work on time, paid extra money for overtime and conveyance provided for overtime, showed insignificant correlation with neuroticism in children.

An analysis of Table 2 provides the information about the association between mother's nature of work and extraversion in children. It is clear from the results that in district Srinagar, a significant positive correlation was found between mother's nature of work in terms of work being finished on time and extraversion in children. As mothers who finish their official work on stipulated time in the workplace only have less work to carry along and thus have more time for family and children. The possible reason could be that mothers having more time at hand with children make them more sociable. According to Harvard Business School (2015)^[3], the children whose working mothers spend more time with them were likely to lead to more secure social relations and stable married lives. However, other variables such as mothers carrying work to home, paid extra money for overtime, workplace away from home, conveyance provided for overtime and stress because of work, seemed to have insignificant correlation with extraversion in children.

Table 3 illustrates that the correlation between mothers nature of work and openness to experience in children. It is clear that in district Srinagar a significant positive relation appears in

mother's being paid extra money from overtime and openness to experience in children. It is possible that creativity and aesthetic appreciation which are facets of openness to experience flourish better in economically strong atmosphere, especially when one of the earning member is mother because it is usually thought that children have more access to mother's income. Other variables of mother's nature of work showed an insignificant correlation with openness to experience in children.

In district Srinagar and Anantnag a significant positive relation was found between mothers's work being carried to home and consciousness in children (Table 4). Mothers who had official work to be completed at home and were busy in their work schedules usually had children who acted according to fixed discipline and rules, thus making them more conscientious.

Therefore it can be said that mother's nature of work in terms of working at home makes children more organized because they start managing their lives themselves from very early stage. Other variables of mother's nature of work showed an insignificant correlation with conscientiousness in children.

The correlation between mother's nature of work and agreeableness in children is presented in Table 5. It depicts that agreeableness in children has a significant positive relation with mothers work that was carried to home for completion in district Srinagar and Baramulla. Further, mother's far location of work from home also had positive significance with agreeableness in children in district Srinagar and Anantnag. Rest of the variables related to mother's nature of work had an insignificant relation with agreeableness in children.

Table: 1: Mothers Nature of Work and Neuroticism in Children

Mothers Nature of Work	Srinagar	Anantnag	Ganderbal	Baramulla
Finishes work on time	0.08	0.16	-0.15	-0.09
Carry pending work home	0.27*	0.32**	0.04	0.21*
Paid extra money for overtime	0.13	0.02	0.08	0.10
Work place far from home	0.24*	0.11	0.04	0.12
Conveyance provided if working overtime	-0.04	0.14	-0.08	-0.19
Get stressed by official work	0.38**	0.42**	0.27*	0.25*

* Co-relation is significant at 0.05 level

** Co-relation is significant at 0.01 level

Table: 2: Mothers Nature of Work and Extraversion in Children

Mothers Nature of Work	Srinagar	Anantnag	Ganderbal	Baramulla
Finishes work on time	0.23*	0.14	0.15	0.09
Carry pending work home	0.08	0.06	0.04	0.06
Paid extra money for overtime	0.05	0.02	0.08	0.04
Work place far from home	0.04	0.11	0.06	0.15
Conveyance provided if working overtime	-0.12	0.03	0.04	0.02
Get stressed by official work	0.01	0.02	0.06	0.02

* Co-relation is significant at 0.05 level

** Co-relation is significant at 0.01 level

Table: 3: Mothers Nature of Work and Openness to Experience in Children

Mothers Nature of Work	Srinagar	Anantnag	Ganderbal	Baramulla
Finishes work on time	0.04	0.16	0.10	0.12
Carry pending work home	0.18	0.12	0.04	-0.11
Paid extra money for overtime	0.25*	0.01	-0.04	0.02
Work place far from home	0.07	0.19	0.03	0.07
Conveyance provided if working overtime	0.14	0.02	0.10	0.14
Get stressed by official work	0.12	0.12	0.11	0.11

* Co-relation is significant at 0.05 level

** Co-relation is significant at 0.01 level

Table: 4: Mothers Nature of Work and Conscientiousness in Children

Mothers Nature of Work	Srinagar	Anantnag	Ganderbal	Baramulla
Finishes work on time	0.07	0.09	0.02	0.13
Carry pending work home	0.42**	0.24*	0.20	0.18
Paid extra money for overtime	0.15	-0.19	0.15	0.10
Work place far from home	0.07	0.04	0.05	0.11
Conveyance provided if working overtime	0.18	0.20	0.16	0.14
Get stressed by official work	0.12	0.00	0.06	0.14

* Co-relation is significant at 0.05 level

** Co-relation is significant at 0.01 level

Table: 5: Mothers Nature of Work and Agreeableness in Children

Mothers Nature of Work	Srinagar	Anantnag	Ganderbal	Baramulla
Finishes work on time	0.04	0.13	0.03	0.12
Carry pending work home	0.31**	0.18	0.19	0.22*
Paid extra money for overtime	0.19	-0.14	0.09	-0.12
Work place far from home	0.26*	0.12	0.10	0.28*
Conveyance provided if working overtime	0.11	0.13	-0.17	0.12
Get stressed by official work	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.06

* Co-relation is significant at 0.05 level

** Co-relation is significant at 0.01 level

4. Conclusions

The present study was conducted on working women (400) and their children (400) in four districts of Kashmir division. The study was completed by administering self-structured questionnaire for women to assess the nature of work at workplace and a personality questionnaire- M5-Ps devised by Grist and McCord, focusing on the personality and behaviour of pre-school children between the age group 3-6 years has been used. The data collected was subjected to statistical treatment for enabling the investigator to arrive at certain conclusions.

It was observed that a significant positive correlation was found between mothers occupational stress and neuroticism in children. Similarly, a significant positive correlation was found between mothers work being finished on time and extraversion in children in district Srinagar. While as, other variables such as mothers carrying work to home, paid extra money for overtime, workplace away from home, conveyance provided for overtime and stress of work seemed to have insignificant correlation with extraversion in children. Similarly it was clear that in district Srinagar a significant positive relation appeared in mother's getting extra money from overtime and openness to experience in children. Further, in district Srinagar and Anantnag a significant positive relation was found between mothers work being carried to home and consciousness in children. Moreover, the agreeableness in children had a significant positive relation with mothers work that was carried to home for completion in district Srinagar and Baramulla. More distance between mothers place of work and home also had positive significance with agreeableness in children in district Srinagar and Anantnag in terms of the time taken to reach back to home from office. Rest of the variables related to mothers nature of work had an insignificant relation with agreeableness in children. The conclusion of the present study reveals that personality of pre-school children is affected by working mothers nature and style of work to a large extent.

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