



A Study of Stress Among Mothers of Primary School Children

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Abstract:

According to investigator 'Stress' is body's reaction to any demand whether the cause, of stress is a physical danger, a family crisis, emotional stress such as a fight with a beloved one or the boss, preparation for examination or interview or a new and demanding assignment at the office.

Some research stated that Parenting can influence children's social, emotional, and academic adjustment, efforts have been made to determine factors that affect parenting behavior. One such factor is parenting stress. Parenting stress can be defined as excess anxiety and tension specifically related to the role of a parent and to parent-child interactions (Abidin, 1995). Questionnaire was used for subject information regarding stress among parents and their family environment.

Total number of subjects was 20 such mothers who are facing stress in their daily lives. Purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample. Total number of subjects/mothers will be 20 (N=20). Questionnaire was used in testing the subjects/mothers on this research. Higher statistical analysis was done to determine the findings data's (Mean, Variation, Correlation, Standard Deviation, and other appropriate statistical technique was used). For all the computation purposes SPSS 16.00 version was used. The study is that working mothers experience significantly higher parental stress as compared to non-working mothers. There was no significant difference found between the family environment of working and non-working mothers. Further the dimensions of family environment did not correlate significantly with the parental stress levels implying that parental stress is not related to the family environment.

Keywords: *Stress, parenting stress, Environment*

1. Introduction

1.1 Stress

'Stress's body's reaction to any demand whether the cause of stress is a physical danger, a family crisis, emotional stress such as a fight with a beloved one or the boss, preparation for examination or interview or a new and demanding assignment at the office. Anything that produces stress reaction is called a 'stressor' Fear, emotions, mental and physical strains are the common stressor. In most cases the same complex physiological reactions occur. Hans Selye (1956), father of Stress physiology defined "stress' as non-specific response of the body to meet any demand made upon it". Some others, as Fessel (1962) defined stress as a 'non-specific' deviation from normal resting state'. Stress is seen to be associated with several disorders such as hypertension, peptic ulcers, cardiac infarctions, diabetes mellitus such as hypertension, peptic ulcers, cardiac infarctions, diabetes mellitus, shocks, psychic diseases, and immunological disorders such as AIDS and cancer.

Sympathetic nerves are the first to such stresses bringing about changes in widespread target organs. Noradrenalin secreted at the endings of sympathetic post-ganglionic nerves accelerates heart beat-rate,

of breathing, speeds up glycogenolysis and gluconeogenesis so that more sugar is made available to body and muscle cells, the adrenal medulla is stimulated to make available to body and muscle cells, the adrenal medulla is stimulated to release more adrenaline hormone that boosts up blood pressure-in short, 'the body is geared up to meet the challenges of stress and operates at peak capacity. Brain wave activity also increases and senses are heightened, When the demand on the body is removed, or the crisis is overcome, the enhanced activities slow down, sometimes dropping below normal resting or baseline levels.

2. Symptoms of Stress

The many treacherous things about Stress are at the present without difficulty it can creep up on you. The symptom and sign of stress excess can be about anything, Stress affect the mind, body and behavior in many ways and every one experiences stress differently, there sign and symptoms that you may notice when you are experiencing stress. There are four categories of sign and symptoms- 1-Feelings 2-thoughts, 3-Behavior, and 4-Physiology:

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Feeling Anxious | : | Behaviors |
| Feeling anxious | : | Acting impulsively |
| Feeling Scared | : | Starting easily |
| Feeling irritable | : | Grinding you teeth |
| Feeling moody | : | Increasing smoking |
| | : | Increase use of drugs and alcohol. |
| Thoughts | | Physiology |
| Low Self Esteem | : | Perspiration/ Sweaty hands |
| Fear of Failure | : | Increased heart heat |
| Forgetfulness | : | Trembling |
| Worrying about the future | : | Nervous ticks |
| | : | Sleeping problems |
| | : | Headaches |

3. Signs of stress

In India, where the world's fastest-growing middle class is undergo reflective changes in its specialized and community opportunity, child stress has turn into the latest demonstration of the distracted race to get ahead. Parents are impressive unprecedented demands on their children to jump-start their education at earlier ages, hoping to help the youngster's cash in on well-paid futures in the country's newly liberalized market place." The middle class's aspiration is growing so speedily they have realized that the only real ladder to rising reasonably and socially is through education," said Shakti Sinha, director of education for the New Delhi city schools.

Overachieving parents now begin grooming children as young as two-and-a-half for the battery of entrance interviews for admission to the city's most elite private nursery schools. Once a child is in school, the stress only increases.

A recent government sponsored study found that 86% of private schools surveyed assigned an average of four to 11 books to toddlers between India's pre-school is not child's the ages of two and three. As the youngsters reach first and second grade, they will tote a 9-pound load of books between school and home each day. The trend has so alarmed the country's educators that the government next year will increase age limits on children entering nurseries and pre-schools. Social relations and communication problems are associated with cognitive impairments affecting children with autism (e.g., Joseph et al., 2002). It appears, however, that intellectual development of the child is not a determinant of the level of parental stress. Parents of high functioning children with autism or Asperger syndrome also experience

elevated stress levels (Mori et al., 2009; Rao & Beidel, 2009).

Among the most important predictors of parents' stress are the child's behavior problems (Bishop et al., 2007; Estes et al., 2009; Herring et al., 2006; Tomanik et al., 2004). Children with autism present with a few such problems, including aggression and self-injury (Matson & Rivet, 2008). Self-injury, aggressive and otherwise destructive behaviour are the strongest predictors of parental stress (Dunlap & Robbins, 1994; Richman et al., 2009). The child's stereotyped and self-stimulating behaviors are also a source of distress for parents.

The actual degree to which specific behaviour problems contribute to parental stress depends on the child's age. Parents of adolescents cite destructive behaviour and withdrawal from contact as the most significant causes of concern, while self-stimulation and tantrums are mentioned primarily by parents of preschool children (Dunlap & Robbins, 1994).

Table 1

| | |
|---|---|
| Physical Signs of Unhealthy Stress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ulcers or chronic stomach problem. ❖ High Blood Pressure ❖ Stress-related conditions such as eczema or psoriasis ❖ Anxiety ❖ Weight gain or loss ❖ Sleeplessness or disturbed sleep patterns. |
| Cognitive Signs of Unhealthy Stress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Inability to concentrate and stay on task. ❖ Forget Fitness |
| Emotional Signs of Unhealthy Stress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Depression ❖ Irritability ❖ Anxiety ❖ Feelings of isolation ❖ Reduced empathy towards clients and other people |
| Behavioral Signs of Unhealthy Sign | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Increased Smoking |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Compulsive eating or weight loss. ❖ Increase a nervous behavior such as nail-biting, teeth grinding, playing with hair etc. ❖ Increased alcohol consumption. |
| Signs of Unhealthy Stress in the Workplace | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Burnout ❖ Discouragement pessimism decline in motivation and efforts. ❖ Negativism, irritability, rigidity ❖ Blaming others ❖ Resistance to change ❖ Become more emotionally affected by clients and colleagues. ❖ Longer lunches or no lunch at all. |

4. Significance of the study

The rationale of current study is based on stress among mothers of pre-school children. However, in our societies there has been reported research on stress, mothers and children of different age group separately, but the studies on stress among mothers of any specific age group children (i.e., pre-school children) are scare. The current study would also include analysis based on managing mother's stress related to their pre-school children, adjustment in their daily work pattern and to learn how they can make their preschoolers involve in the activities at school and at home considering their overall well-

being. The current study would also make possible answer to the stress and anxiety trouble. The research evidence has suggested that women who work have new issues of association their work-life balance. Since both work and family are time demanding areas it is likely that working mothers would be affected by it and would experience more parental stress as compared to non-working mothers.

5. Methods

Questionnaire was used for subject information regarding stress among parents and their family environment.

6. Objectives

The objectives of the present paper are-

- 1.To measure the stress among mothers of pre-school children of the age group of 2 to 4 years both boys and girls studying in play-school of New Delhi.
- 2.To assess factors contributing to stress and stress related problems among mothers of pre-school children studying in the play school of New Delhi.
- 3.To assess the stress between working and non-working mother of preschool Children of the age group of 2 to 4 years both boys and girls studying in playschool of New Delhi.
- 4.The purpose of the present research was to study the level of parental stress in the mothers of children aged between 2-4 years. The study examined the differences in the level of parental stress and family environment for working and non-working mothers. The relationship between environment of the family and parental stress level was also assessed.

7. Hypotheses

The hypothesis of the present paper was work is that a mild stress is found among the mothers of pre-school children. or the hypothesis of the present project work is that working mothers experience significantly higher parental stress as compared to non-working mothers.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviation and t-Values for Comparison Between Working and Non-Working Mothers on the Dimensions of Parental Stress And Family Environment

| S. NO | VARIABLES | Working Mothers (N = 10) | | Non-working Mothers (N = 10) | | t – values |
|-------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|------|------------------------------|-------|------------|
| | | MEAN | S.D. | MEAN | S.D. | |
| 1) | Parental Stress | 45.60 | 6.05 | 31.80 | 3.61 | 6.18** |
| 2) | Competitive Framework | 9.60 | 2.50 | 9.20 | 1.47 | 0.43 |
| 3) | Cohesion | 11.20 | 1.31 | 12.20 | 1.81 | -1.41 |
| 4) | Expression | 10.20 | 1.47 | 9.60 | 3.97 | 0.44 |
| 5) | Interdependence | 9.80 | 2.34 | 8.40 | 3.20 | 1.11 |
| 6) | Moral Orientation | 11.30 | 1.76 | 11.20 | 2.61 | 0.10 |
| 7) | Organization | 10.20 | 1.87 | 9.10 | 2.18 | 1.20 |
| 8) | Recreational Orientation | 8.00 | 2.62 | 9.40 | 2.22 | -1.28 |
| 9) | Total Score on Family Environment | 70.30 | 9.51 | 69.10 | 10.89 | 0.26 |

** The value is significant at $p < .01$

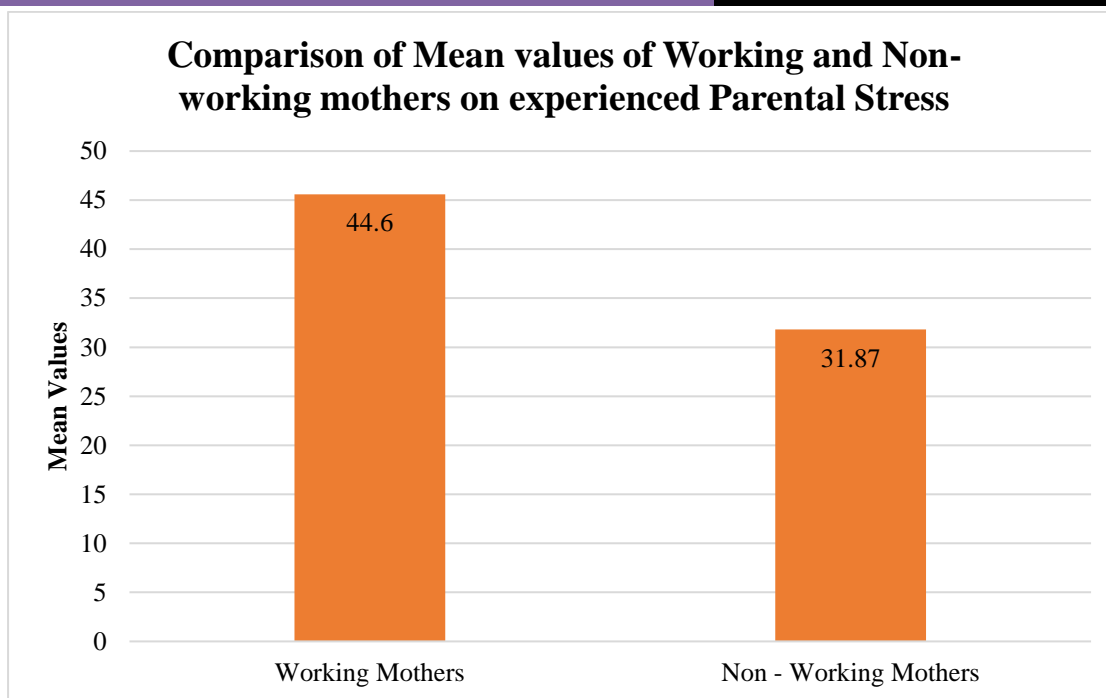


Figure 1: Comparison of Mean Values of Working and Non-Working Mothers on Experienced Parental Stress

From the Table it can be say that there is a significant difference between working and non-working mothers in their experience of parental stress (t -value = 6.18, $p < .01$). Looking at the mean values (Figure 1) it can be seen that working women experience significantly higher stress (Mean = 45.6) as compared to the non-working women (Mean = 31.8). The demands of managing work with family requirements may have caused the working mothers to feel more stressed out in the upbringing of their children.

There was no significant difference between working and non-working mothers in their perception of the family environment and its sub-dimensions (Table). None of the t -values were found to be significant. A possible explanation for such findings can be that the participants of the study were mothers who were from a similar socio-economic background. Further they were also situated in the similar geographical area. This could have led to similar environment in their families.

In order to understand the family environment factors associated with parental stress Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was calculated. The results are presented below.

Table 3: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficients Between the Parental Stress Scores and Scores on the Sub-Dimensions of Family Stress as Well As the Total Score

| S.NO. | Measures of Family Environment | Correlation with Parental Stress (N = 20) |
|-------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Competitive Framework | .015 |
| 2. | Cohesion | -.258 |
| 3. | Expression | .051 |
| 4. | Interdependence | .128 |
| 5. | Moral Orientation | -.250 |
| 6. | Organization | .084 |
| 7. | Recreational Orientation | -.252 |
| 8. | Total Score on Family Environment | -.075 |

From the above table calculated that it can be concluded that none of the correlations were significant.

This implies that the amount of parental stress is not affected by the type of family environment in those families.

8. Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from the study is that working mothers experience significantly higher parental stress as compared to non-working mothers. There was no significant difference found between the family environment of working and non-working mothers. Further the dimensions of family environment did not correlate significantly with the parental stress levels implying that parental stress is not related to the family environment.

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