

Child Socio- Emotional Behavior between Employed and Unemployed Mother at primary School age

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Abstract: The ability of children to manage their emotions and behaviors and to make meaningful friendships is an important prerequisite for school readiness and academically successful. Researchers have documented that children are more likely to spend time without parental supervision at younger ages if their mothers are working, which may in turn harm the children's performance in school and increase their participation in risky behaviors .

This study aimed to: Assess child socio- emotional behaviors at primary school age, and determine the difference between child socio- emotional behaviors of employment and unemployment mother.

Research design: Across – sectional descriptive study design was utilized.

Setting: This study was carried out at "8" of governmental primary schools.

Sample: A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 200 studied children aged up to seven years.

Tools of data collection: Tool (1): Socio- demographic questionnaire was developed by researchers, **Tool (2) :** The strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) developed by Goodman .R , 1997.

Results: More than half of the studied children have mild socio- emotional and behaviors problems, and there was no difference between employed and unemployed mothers regarding to their children socio - emotional behaviors problems.

Recommendation: The present study recommended that; Nurses in anywhere, teach mothers about the important of child mother relationships, and how they interact with their children, and enhance quality of their interactions, and strong the bond with their children to improve their emotional wellbeing, which in turn contributes to child healthy social behaviors.

I. Introduction:

The ability of children to manage their emotions and behaviors and to make meaningful friendships is an important prerequisite for school readiness and academically successful. Children, who have difficulty paying attention, following teacher direction, getting along with other, and controlling negative emotions, do less well in school. They are more likely to be rejected by classmates, and to get less positive feedback from teachers which in turn, contributes to off task behaviors and less instruction time⁽¹⁾ .

Researchers on the healthy development of children consistently show that children need stable family relationships, with adults who are responsive, nurturing, and productive; physically safe environments that allow them to explore without risk or fear of harm; and adequate nutrition and health care⁽²⁾ . Focusing on mothers, one way that a mother's work might directly influence her child's development is through its effect on her ability to form a bond with her infant that promotes the child's security and attachments, as well as her ability to care for the child responsively and appropriately⁽³⁾.

Most concern and empirical attention has been devoted to the question of whether children of employed mother suffer ill effect, because an employed mother is at home less than a non-employed mothers, it has been assumed that she deprives her children of the time and energy needed to establish and maintain a healthy parent relationship⁽⁴⁾ .

Researchers have documented that children are more likely to spend time without parental supervision at younger ages if their parents are working, which may in turn harm the children's performance in school and increase their participation in risky behaviors⁽⁵⁾ .

Theories of how parents function and nurture their children suggest that ongoing stress at work may cause parents to withdraw from interacting with their children at home, or to be more vulnerable to stimuli that trigger conflict with their children. Researchers describe this as " role over-load " : Working parents may be over whelmed by the feeling that they can't accomplish everything they needs to do, and in this way , work stress becomes linked to stressful situations at the home⁽⁶⁾ .

When employed mother is trying to cope with an excessive number of overlapping work and family demands , her concentration and attention will be affected and she will experience negative moods , such as mother may be less attention to her children and adopt less time – consuming and less effective parenting behaviors⁽⁷⁾ .

On another hand working mother earn money that they can use to improve how they care for her children and the quality of her children's environments. For example; they might spend money on nutrition, child care, health care, the safety of their physical surrounding, or opportunities for learning⁽⁸⁾ . Unfortunately, it is low - income parents who are most likely to work in stressful, low quality jobs that feature low pay, little autonomy, and inflexible hours. An low- income children whose parents are working are more likely to be placed in inadequate child care or to go unsupervised, especially when the mother work long hours or evening and night shifts⁽⁵⁾ .

Not all work is a like, and the effect of mother's work on herself and her children will be part depend on what the work is like. Working mothers may be positive role model for their children. They have higher self- esteem and sense of control and use strategies more effectively to dealing with most life situations, and more productive family routines and higher earing⁽⁹⁾ .

In another way, many people might think at home mothers are free from stress as they just look after their children and take good care of the family. But according to **Crnic and Greenberg (1990)**, Hassles that experienced by at home mothers proved to be more powerful stress construct and might influence micro social processes within parent - child relationships and contribute to dysfunction in children and family⁽¹⁰⁾.

At home mothers were particularly vulnerable to stress, physical burden of housework and potential loss of self-esteem when a women's self- identity id subsumed by her role as mother and wife are the reasons to cause stress to at home mother⁽¹¹⁾.

II. Aims of the present study

- 1-Assess child socio- emotional behaviors at primary school age.
- 2- Determine the difference between child socio- emotional behaviors of employment and unemployment mother and at primary school age.

Research hypothesis:

- What are socio- emotional behaviors of child at age of primary school?
- If there are differences between child socio- emotional behaviors of employment and unemployment mother at primary school age?

III. Materials:

Research design: Across – sectional descriptive study design was utilized.

Setting: This study was carried out at "8" of governmental primary schools "three from rural & five from urban area "were chosen randomly from available of primary schools in El Gharbya.

Sample: A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 200 studied children aged up to seven years. Their selected according to power analysis equation from previously mentioned setting

Tools of data collection:

Tool (1) : Socio- demographic questionnaire was developed by researchers to collect data about mothers of studied children . It was included: Mother's age, address, levels of her education, mother's work, and marital status.

Tool (2) : The strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) developed by **Goodman .R , 1997**⁽¹²⁾. This questionnaire used to assess child socio- emotional behaviors. The (SDQ) was composed of 25 items, which cover five domains: Hyperactivity, emotional symptoms, conduct problems, peer problems, and prosocial behaviors.

Each domain consisted of five items. Each item has three responses categories: "not true ", "somewhat true", or "certainly true" --- - which are coded as 0, 1, and 2, except three items have reversed score.

The score of total items in each domain were summed to determine the level of problems, the score ranged between 0- 3 mean no problems, 4-5 interpreted as mild problems, 6-7 referred to moderate level, and 8-10 indicated to high level of problems.

The total score of four domains (20 items) were summed; except the prosocial behaviors domain which was considered healthy behaviors. The producing total interpreted as follows:

- (0-10) -----no problems
- (11-20)-----mild problems
- (21-30)-----moderate level of problems
- (31-40)-----higher level of problems

IV. Method:

Official permission for data collection was obtained from concerned authorities in the selected setting after explanation the purpose of the study.

Tool one was developed by researchers and tool two was translated on to Arabic language .The tools were tested to content validity by fine experts in the field of psychiatric mental health nursing. The tools reliability was tested through test-retest method.

The written consent was obtained from mothers of studied children, and teachers who collected data of tool (2) thoroughly observed the studied children in educational classes.

The mothers and teachers were reassured that all information that obtained from the present study will be confidential and used only for the purpose of the study, and they have right to withdrawal from the study at any time.

Pilot study:

Before entering the actual study, a pilot study was carried out on four teachers who observed 20 children in the studied setting, the pilot study was to ascertain clarity and applicability of the study tool (2) and to identify obstacles that be faced during data collection. These teachers and children were later excluded from actual study.

Actual study:

During the actual study the researchers explain the aim of the study and the tools to the teachers and the mothers who selected to participate in collected data about their studied children.

The information of the tool (1) was obtained by mothers of studied children, and the teachers implemented tool (2) through their observation the studied children in the class rooms.

Data were collected during the second semester academic year 2014-2015.

Statistical analysis:

Data collected were categorized, coded, computerized, tabulated, and analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 18 and presented in descriptive forms. A nova test was used for data presented as mean and standard deviation, and was comparing the differences between more than two groups. The level of statistically significant difference was adopted at ≤ 0.05

V. Results:

Table (1) shows the socio- demographic characteristics of mothers of studied children. As for age, almost of mothers between 28 to ≥ 40 old years, with a mean 35.7 years, regarding to the address, 62.5 %of mothers from urban area, and 37.5 % were from rural. Highest percentage of mothers were married (94%).As for level of education, the studied mothers have different level of education with different percentage. 40% of them had secondary education, 19.5%at graduate level, 17.5% were read and write, 13.5% were illiterate, 5% had postgraduate, and 4.5% had primary education. The more than half of studied mothers (58%) were employed, and 42% were unemployed.

Table (1): Distribution of studied mothers according to their socio-demographic characteristics (No=200)

Socio-demographic characteristics	No=200	
	NO	%
Age of mother		
28-	78	39
35-	80	40
40-	30	15
45-	10	5
50-	2	1
Mean \pm SD	35.7 \pm 4.5	
Address		
Rural	75	37.5
urban	125	62.5
Level of education		
Illiterate	27	13.5
Read & write	35	17.5
Primary education	9	4.5
Secondary education	80	40
Graduate	39	19.5
Postgraduate	10	5
Marital status		
Married	188	94
Divorced	9	4.5
Separated	3	1.5
Mothers' work		
unemployed	84	42
Employed	116	58

Table (2) appears distribution of studied children according to their levels of socio- emotional and behaviors problems. It was found that more than half of studied subjects (53.5%) had mild socio- emotional and behaviors problems, 34% not experienced any problems and only 12.5% of them had moderate problems. regarding to the type of these problems, 37.5% of studied subjects had mild peer relations problems, 33% had mild emotional symptoms, 29% had mild hyperactivity in the classroom, and 16% of studied subjects had conduct problems.

Table (2) Distribution of studied children according to their level of socio- emotional and behaviors (No =200)

Child Socio- emotional and behaviors	Non		Mild		Moderate		Sever	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Hyperactivity	91	45.5	58	29.0	27	13.5	24	12.0
Conduct problem	153	76.5	32	16.0	13	6.5	2	1.0
Emotional symptoms	83	41.5	66	33.0	33	16.5	18	9.0
Peer relation	92	46.0	75	37.5	30	15.0	3	1.5
Total problems	68	34.0	107	53.5	25	12.5	0	0.0
Pro-social behaviors " healthy behaviors"	11	5.5	33	16.5	45	22.5	111	55.5

Responsive not mutually explosive

Figure one shows levels of total socio- emotional and behaviors problems among studied children. From this figure appeared that more than half of studied children (53.5%) have mild problems, 12.5% have moderate level, and 34% of them have no problems, while not present sever problems among studied children.

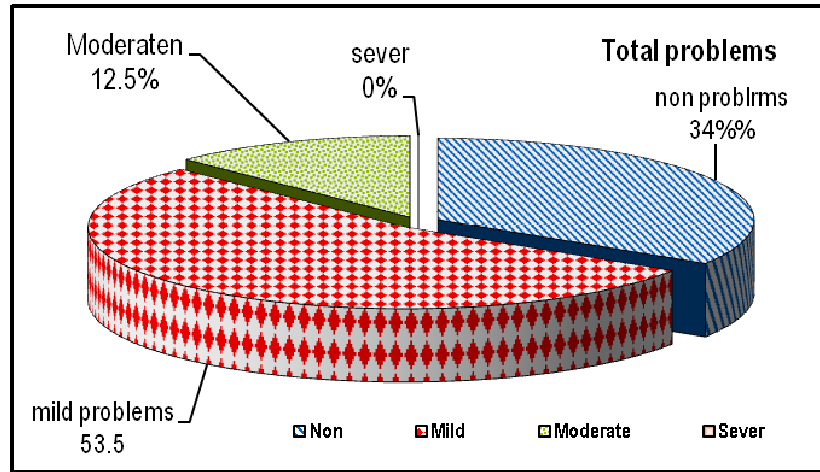


Figure (1): Distribution of studied children according to levels of their total social, emotional, and behaviors problems

Table (3) represents distribution of studied children according to their socio- emotional behaviors problems. Table shows that more than half of studied subjects (58.5%) had emotional problems, followed by 54% were hyperactivity, and 53% had problems with peer relations. , and only 23% had conduct problems .

Table (3): Distribution of studied children according to their types of socio-emotional behaviors problems (No =200)

Socio- emotional and behaviors problems	No	%
Emotional problems	117	58.5
Hyperactivity	109	54
Peer relation problems	108	53
Conduct problems	47	23

Responsive not mutually explosive

Table (4) shows the relation between levels of mothers' education and socio- emotional behaviors of their children. Statistically significant relation was found between levels of mother' educations and child hyperactivity, his /her conduct problems, emotional symptoms, and prosocial behaviors, while peer relation problems not have this statistically significant relation.

Table (4): relation between levels of mothers education and socio- emotional and behaviors of their children (no=200)

socio- emotional and behaviors of children	Level of mother educations													
	Iterated		Read & write		Primary education		Secondary education		Graduated		Postgraduate		ANOVA	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	f	P-value
Hyperactivity	5.96	3.16	4.23	2.37	3.90	2.51	3.75	2.17	3.11	2.42	2.92	2.45	5.480	<0.001*
Conduct problem	3.22	2.42	2.29	2.16	1.78	1.64	2.00	1.88	1.85	2.03	0.60	0.84	3.094	0.010*
Emotional symptoms	5.20	2.53	4.19	2.50	4.06	2.61	4.0	1.73	2.10	1.73	2.79	2.08	4.908	<0.001*
Peer relation	3.93	2.04	4.11	1.60	3.33	2.06	3.36	1.45	3.87	1.81	4.20	1.93	1.495	0.193
Total problems	17.30	8.27	15.83	6.36	12.22	6.26	13.18	5.30	11.44	6.34	10.80	6.20	4.280	0.003*
Pro-social behavior " healthy "	5.56	2.56	7.43	1.84	8.56	2.13	7.90	2.04	7.59	2.42	8.00	1.41	5.570	<0.001*

Statistically significant at ≥ 0.05

Table (5) clarifies the relation between mother's employment and unemployment and socio- emotional behaviors of their children. From this table shows that, there no statistically significant difference was found between children of employed and unemployed mothers toward their socio- emotional behaviors.

Table (5): Difference between mother's employment and unemployment and socio- emotional behaviors of their children (no=200)

socio- emotional and behaviors of their children	No. of mother =200					
	Unemployment mother		employment mother		ANOVA	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	f	P-value
Hyperactivity	3.87	2.61	4.26	2.43	0.884	0.378
Conduct problem	2.10	2.10	2.12	1.88	0.050	0.960
Emotional symptoms	4.07	2.59	3.40	2.24	1.517	0.131
Peer relation	3.73	1.70	3.62	1.72	0.389	0.698
Total difficulties	13.77	6.65	13.40	5.91	0.325	0.745
Pro-social behaviors "Healthy"	7.60	2.24	7.00	2.31	1.537	0.126

Statistically significant at ≥ 0.05

VI. Discussion:

For many children, academic achievement in their first years of schooling appears to be built on a firm foundation of children's emotional and social skills. The relationships that children build with peers and teachers are based on children's ability to regulate emotions in prosocial versus antisocial ways and that those relationships then serve as a " source of provision" that either help or hurt children's chance of doing well academically⁽¹³⁾.

The present study revealed that more than half of studied children had mild socio-emotional and behaviors problems. The emotional symptoms come in the first, followed by hyperactivity and peer relation problems. In regarding emotional symptoms, the around half of studied children were seen worried sometimes in the classroom, nervous in a new situation or fear and easily scared. The evidence supported that children's emotional adjustment plays an important part in predicting their like hood of school success⁽¹⁴⁾.

The second problem was hyperactivity, where some of studied children were observed by teachers as restlessness, overactive, and cannot stay still long, or constantly fidgeting in another time. In this respect "**Coie JD (1998)**" stated that aggression and inadequate impulse control are perhaps the most potent obstacles to effective problems solving and forming successful friendships for children⁽¹⁵⁾.

The peer relation problem was come a third in the present study. The around half of studied children were observed sometime picked on bullied by other children, and get on better with adult than other children in another time. In the same line "**Asher et al , 1990**" stated that peer problems such as peer isolation or rejection are predictive of a variety problems including depression , school out , and other psychiatric problems in adolescence and adulthood . And children who have more impulsive and hyperactive temperament have particular difficulty forming and maintain friendships⁽¹⁶⁾.

Friendships are important for children, it foster a child's sense of belonging and begin to facilitate children's empathy skills. That is, their ability to understand another's perspective. The formation (or absence) of friendships has an enduring impact on the child's social adjustment in later life⁽¹⁾.

More important, the present study revealed that the level of mother's education has significant relation with decrease socio- emotional problems of their children. The role of mother's education was lessening work family conflict, mother who are higher education may mobilizer formal support or make needed adjustments in their time management to ensure that their parental role in fulfilled⁽¹⁷⁾.

Our unexpected finding in the present study, regarding the effect of mother employment on child socio- emotional behaviors, there was no difference between child of employment mothers and unemployment mother toward their socio-emotional and behavioral problems. The finding in the present study are further supported by previous research studies that compared the children of employed and non-employed mothers on child outcome measures such as indices of cognitive and socio-emotional development , these studies failed to find significant differences⁽¹⁸⁾.

In this respect **Cooksey, et al (2009)** found that no relationship between maternal employment and socio-emotional behaviors of their children⁽¹⁹⁾. These consisted with "**Hoffman (1989)** who stated maternal employment itself appears to have no systematic negative effect on children's achievement⁽²⁰⁾.

In the same line "**Cheek H (2009)**" found from his study that mothers with difficult work hours may strategize more effectively so that adolescent children's behaviors can be better monitored⁽¹⁷⁾. According to a study conducted in Australia , employed mothers of pre- school children adjusted their activates in such a way that they could fulfill childcare earlier or later in the day while devoting less time than non – employed mothers for house work and self- care⁽²¹⁾.

While "**Hoffaman (1998)** indicated the children of employed mothers obtained higher scores on the three achievement tests for language, reading, and math⁽²⁰⁾.

The mothers' employment status can affect outcome for school aged children Through difference in childrearing, a number of researches have suggested that the child rearing dimension which includes encouragement of independence, maturing demands, and, autonomy grating is particularly important. Previous research has presented some evidence, that employed mothers encourage independence in their children more than non- employed mothers do. The

encouragement of independence is consistent the situational demands of the dual role since it enables the family its function more effectively in the mothers absence⁽¹⁸⁾.

Finding from many studies have shown that employment can actually lighten material stress as participation in the work force help in enhancing mother's prestige⁽²²⁾, getting greater sense of autonomy and independent in work force⁽²³⁾, enjoying emotional and other mental benefits⁽²⁴⁾, and therefore there are less employment depression and anxiety among employed mothers than women who are at home⁽²⁵⁾.

The home mothers in our culture are routinely challenged by child- rearing and care giving demands. They would definitely have experienced with being nagged or whined at, settling, arguments between siblings, repeated cleaning up their children's messes. Although these events sound trivial problems, their cumulative impact over a certain period might become a meaningful stressor for a mother. Regarding to employed mothers, they would send their children to their parents or in – laws for child care. With their help, it directly lightness the stress faced by the employed mothers as they are less worried about the safety of their children and thus they can fully concentrates on their jobs. Besides this, the domestic help, paid child care, with the availability of these child centers, it helps to ease the mind of lots of employed mothers.

Compared with earlier researchers, the finding in the present study was not consisted with "**Muller C (1995)**" found that mother who spend more time at home have children with fewer emotional problems: They score lower on the behavioral problems index, they are also less likely to be frequently unhappy or depressed. In addition to children with mothers spending more time at home are less likely to hurt someone, steal something, or skip school. The present study appeared the few children have conduct problems and there no difference between children of employed and unemployed mothers regarding to their conduct problems⁽²⁶⁾.

In this respect "**Gross M et al (2007)**" found that material employment has no effect on the cognitive development of children, and also found a highly significant relationship between material employment and the frequency and severity of children's behavioral and psychological problems. This effect appears to be consistent a cross gender and ethnicities. This is not supported by the present study⁽²⁷⁾.

In the same line "**Mukherjees (2010)**" suggested that mother's time at paid work is significantly associated with the amount of unsupervised time after school for children. It is not that maternal employment itself poses as a risk for children, rather parents' long, and irregular work hours may reduce opportunities for their adequate involvement in children life⁽²⁸⁾.

This consisted with "**Sphancer et al (2006)**" who stated that a mother's employment status affects the quality of emotional support she give to her children as well as the quantity of time she spends with them⁽²⁹⁾. But the recent study by **Mc Munn, et al 2012** consisted with the present study in that no evidence of detrimental effects of maternal employment in the early years on subsequent child socio- emotional behaviors⁽³⁰⁾.

Finally, **Coleman J (1988)** argument in that maternal employment itself does not pose greater risk for children. Rather, employed mother are at risk for being less nurturant and involved in their parenting behaviors⁽³¹⁾. Thus, the questions is how much time mothers spend with their children (rather than at work), what mothers do in the time they spend with their children, or how they interact, and the quality of those interactions is very important to their children's wellbeing.

VII. Conclusion:

According to the finding in the present study, It can be concluded that, there no significant difference between employed and unemployed mothers regarding to child – emotional behaviors problems.

VIII. Recommendation:

The present study recommended that; Nurses in anywhere, schools, family planning centers, child clinic, child hospital, and mental health centers, or others places; teach mothers about the important of child mother relationships, and how they interact with their children, and enhance quality of their interactions, and strong the bond with their children to improve their emotional wellbeing, which in turn contributes to child healthy social behaviors.

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