Parenting Stress and Coping Strategies Adopted by Working Mothers; A Thematic Research

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Abstract

In today's society, an increasing number of mothers are balancing the demands of work and family responsibilities. As more women enter the workforce, understanding the unique stressors faced by working mothers in their parenting role becomes paramount. The challenges of juggling work and family life can contribute to heightened levels of parenting stress, impacting maternal well-being and family dynamics. Furthermore, the strategies employed by working mothers to cope with these stressors are crucial for maintaining a healthy work-family balance and promoting positive parent-child relationships.

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However, there is a gap in our understanding of the specific stressors experienced by working mothers and the effectiveness of various coping strategies they adopt. The study likely involves an investigation into the unique stressors experienced by older first-time mothers and how they adapt to the demands of motherhood. Reece may have conducted interviews, surveys, or observational studies to assess stress levels, coping mechanisms, and maternal adaptation among this population.

Keywords: Workload, time constraints, and family dynamics, seeking social support, job flexibility and support from supervisors,

Introduction

In old Indian culture, women were frequently perceived as being akin to servants or slaves, lacking the autonomy to express their own volition or aspirations. They were obliged to willingly jump into the funeral pyres of their husbands after their husbands had died as a sign of their enduring affection for their partners. The practice of "Sati," which involved a widow self-immolating on her husband's funeral pyre, continued until the late 17th century. Despite the opposition from influential Hindu religious leaders, it was eventually prohibited. Despite being officially banned, the tradition of "Sati" persisted extensively until the late 19th century and continues to be observed in certain rural areas of India today. Throughout decades, women have faced persistent challenges in establishing their role in a predominantly male-oriented environment, and the societal position of women is constantly subject to scrutiny. The economic structure of the period exhibited a stark contrast to its present form. The prevailing consensus was that the male patriarch held the legitimate ownership of the family's assets. No other members of the family, regardless of their gender, were permitted to assert ownership over their own individual property. Thus, the patriarchal family's recognition of just the male as the family's leader resulted in limitations on the rights of women. Prior to that time, economic rights were not regarded as highly significant. Women in Hindu law had numerous disadvantages and restrictions, such as those addressed by the India Women's Conference. This conference, created in 1927, has long been campaigning for the removal of these obstacles. Equality of status encompasses both equal opportunities and equal treatment under the law. Gender-based bias against women has no place in contemporary society..

Research background

Women possess the legal entitlement to exercise their voting rights and actively engage in the electoral process. There is no gender-based prejudice or bias against women in any sector of employment, including both the service industry and the professional realm. Several professional domains that were formerly inaccessible to women have now become inclusive, granting them the opportunity to engage. It is conceivable that the military is the last remaining institution for women to enlist in, however, they have not done so thus far. In recent times, there has been a noticeable increase in the participation of women in that field, and they have demonstrated their ability to perform at the same level as their male colleagues. Recent research has focused on coping as a determinant of an individual's stress level. Coping is the phrase used to describe the cognitive and behavioral actions taken to effectively manage, endure, or reduce both external and internal pressures and conflicts.

Parenting styles and satisfaction

This is significant as it sheds light on how the dual roles of being a working woman and a parent intersect, particularly within the cultural and social context of Malaysia. While the summary provided is brief, it suggests that the study delves into various parenting styles and their impact on the satisfaction levels of working mothers in Kedah. Understanding the dynamics of parenting styles and their effects on satisfaction is crucial for policymakers, employers, and families to develop supportive environments for working mothers. This study may provide insights into the unique challenges faced by working women in Kedah, contributing to the existing literature on parenting, work-family balance, and cultural influences on parenting practices. The study likely involves a comprehensive review of existing literature on parenting behavior, drawing from psychological theories, developmental psychology, and family studies. Abidin may have examined various factors such as parental personality traits, socioeconomic status, cultural influences, family dynamics, and child characteristics to understand their roles in shaping parenting behavior. Through this investigation, Abidin aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of

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the complex interplay of factors that influence parenting behavior. Understanding these determinants can have implications for clinical practice, interventions, and policies aimed at supporting families and promoting positive parent-child relationships. Abidin's article likely provides valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of parenting behavior, shedding light on the diverse factors that contribute to how parents raise and nurture their children. The article likely discusses the initial psychometric evidence supporting the reliability and validity of the scale. This evidence might include data from surveys or interviews conducted with parents to assess their stress levels and correlate them with other measures of parenting satisfaction, mental health, or child behavior. The validation process likely involved statistical analyses such as factor analysis to confirm the underlying structure of the scale and its subscales, as well as tests of internal consistency to ensure that items within each subscale reliably measure the same construct.

Assessing parental stress and its impact

The article is valuable for researchers and practitioners interested in assessing parental stress and its impact on family functioning and child development. By providing initial psychometric evidence for the PSS, Berry's work lays the groundwork for future research on parental stress and interventions aimed at supporting parents in managing stress and promoting positive parent-child relationships. The findings of the study may provide insights into the challenges faced by older first-time mothers and the factors that contribute to their successful adaptation to motherhood. Understanding these dynamics is important for healthcare professionals, policymakers, and support services in providing appropriate resources and interventions to assist older mothers in navigating the transition to parenthood. The article likely contributes to the literature on maternal health and adaptation, particularly focusing on the experiences of older first-time mothers, and may have implications for nursing practice and maternal healthcare policy.

Parenting Stress and the Role of Maternal

The study examined how maternal gate keeping beliefs, which involve mothers' perceptions of their role in regulating fathers' involvement in childcare and household tasks, interact with parenting stress. Specifically, the researchers explore whether workplace flexibility moderates the relationship between parenting stress and maternal gate keeping beliefs. Through empirical analysis, the authors provide insights into the dynamics of parenting stress and maternal gate keeping beliefs within the context of workplace flexibility. The findings suggest that workplace flexibility can play a moderating role in the relationship between parenting stress and maternal gate keeping beliefs, potentially alleviating stress for mothers who perceive greater flexibility in balancing work and family responsibilities. The study contributes to the understanding of factors influencing parenting stress and maternal gate keeping beliefs, highlighting the importance of workplace policies and practices in supporting working mothers and promoting positive family dynamics.

Determinants of parenting behavior

Sonnenschein (2019)[11]synthesize existing research literature to provide insights into the unique challenges faced to manage parenting stress. Through a comprehensive review of relevant studies, the authors analyze the prevalence and factors contributing to parenting stress among mothers of children with ASD. Additionally, they examine various coping strategies utilized by these mothers to cope with the demands of raising a child with ASD. The study may have implications for interventions and support programs aimed at assisting families affected by ASD and promoting their overall well-being [11]. Through survey data collected from a sample of working and non-working mothers, the authors analyze various coping strategies utilized by the participants. The findings of the study provide insights into the challenges faced by mothers in balancing their care giving responsibilities with other aspects of life.

Parenting styles between working and non-working mothers

Yusuf and Sim (2017)[7] involve surveying or interviewing working mothers to assess their parenting styles and employment status. Parenting styles may include authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful styles, while employment status distinguishes between working and non-working mothers. Through their investigation, Yusuf and Sim aim to identify any associations or differences in parenting styles between working and non-working mothers within the university setting in Malaysia [7]. Their findings may contribute to understanding the interplay between maternal employment and parenting practices in this cultural context. They suggest that promoting organizational justice may help mitigate stress and reduce work-family conflict among employees, ultimately leading to improved job satisfaction and performance. Sharpley and Gardener (2001) involved surveys, interviews, or focus groups with managers to investigate their awareness and understanding of stress-related issues among employees. Sharpley and Gardener may have examined managers' knowledge of common stressors, their recognition of stress symptoms, and their strategies for addressing stress within their teams or organizations. Through their research, the authors aim to identify potential gaps in managers' understanding of workplace stress and its effects on employee well-being and performance. Understanding managers' perspectives on stress is essential for developing effective interventions and policies aimed at reducing stress levels and promoting a healthier work environment. The findings of the study may contribute to enhancing managerial training programs and organizational practices. Additionally, the research may shed light on culture that prioritizes employee well-being and addresses stress-related issues proactively.

Research objectives

1. To assess the levels of parenting stress experienced by working mothers, considering factors such as workload, time constraints, and family dynamics.
2. To examine the effectiveness of different coping strategies in alleviating parenting stress among working mothers, considering factors such as perceived stress reduction and overall well-being.
3. To explore potential interventions and support programs aimed at reducing parenting stress.
4. To provide recommendations for employers, policymakers, and healthcare professionals to create supportive environments for working mothers, fostering better work-family balance and overall well-being.

Analysis and Findings

Parenting stress

Parenting stress faced by working mothers encompasses a multitude of challenges that arise from the dual responsibilities of care giving and professional obligations. One significant issue is the constant struggle to balance work demands with the needs of their children and family. The pressure to excel in their careers while also being present and attentive parents can lead to feelings of overwhelm and guilt. The parenting stress experienced by working women is assessed across multiple dimensions. The mothers' capacity to sense the degree of stress can be ascertained by their innate temperament. Thus, we will now investigate the correlation between stress and its properties. The sample respondents for this study are married women who are employed and have children between the ages of 1 and 5 years. The stress levels of the moms and their methods of coping are assessed through the utilization of Google forms.

Table 1: Age of mothers and stress

Socio-economic characteristics		No. of . Res	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Age group	<35 years	14	17.3571	5.13820	0.267	0.811
	35 -40 years	74	17.5811	5.05316		

	More than 40 years	12	16.9167	7.36649	-7.614	0.000
	Total	100	17.4700	5.32662		
No of children	One	23	16.4783	4.53948		
	Two	51	18.5098	3.72949		
	More than two	26	16.3077	4.02470		
	Total	100	17.4700	4.71415		

The age indicated their physical state, capability, and psychological development. Regarding this matter, the stress score comparison across different age groups indicates that individuals between the ages of 30 and 40 have a higher stress level (17.5811) compared to the younger and middle-aged groups. However, the mean difference is not statistically significant according to the ANOVA results. The computed F value of 0.267 is lower than the critical value from the table, while the p value of 0.811 is greater than 0.05. Therefore, it may be inferred that the level of parenting stress experienced by working mothers does not significantly differ based on their age. Table 1 indicates that the stress levels of respondents with two children are significantly higher (18.5098) compared to those with a different number of children. The disparity is markedly substantial. The t value is -7.614 and the p value is 0.000. Therefore, the data indicates that working women with more than two children experience significant levels of stress.

Coping strategies of working mothers

Working mothers often encounter time constraints, as they navigate tight schedules to accommodate both work-related commitments and family responsibilities. This juggling act can result in heightened stress levels as they strive to meet the expectations of both their employers and their families. As a result, working mothers often grapple with feelings of inadequacy and burnout as they strive to fulfill multiple roles simultaneously. Addressing the diverse and complex problems faced by working mothers experiencing parenting stress requires comprehensive support systems, including policies that promote work-life balance, access to affordable childcare, and initiatives to challenge societal norms surrounding gender roles and care giving responsibilities.

Table 2: Coping strategies of working mother

Problems	No. of . Res	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Rank
Time Management	100	3.37	0.228	4.96
Setting Boundaries	100	3.17	0.155	4.60
Social Support	100	2.83	1.207	3.78
Flexible Work Arrangements	100	2.88	0.546	4.13
Self-Care Practices	100	2.84	1.170	3.77
Effective Communication	100	3.18	1.114	4.59
Adapting Expectations	100	3.44	1.217	5.14
Mental disengagement	100	3.44	1.373	5.06
Recreational activities	100	2.99	0.961	4.87

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Working mothers to alleviate pressure and reduce self-imposed stress. Recognizing that it is not always possible to excel in every aspect of life simultaneously enables them to prioritize tasks, delegate responsibilities, and focus on what truly matters to them and their families. Time Management (4.96): Working mothers often prioritize tasks and manage their time efficiently to fulfill both work and family obligations. They may use tools such as calendars, planners, or smart phone apps to organize their schedules and ensure they allocate time for work, childcare, household chores, and personal activities. Utilizing Flexible Work Arrangements (4.17): Flexibility in work arrangements enables them to attend to childcare duties, medical appointments, or family emergencies without compromising their professional commitments. Setting Boundaries (4.60): Establishing clear boundaries between work and family time helps working mothers maintain a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives. They may set specific work hours and limit work-related activities during family time to prioritize quality time with their children and loved ones. Social Support (3.78) : Connecting with other working mothers or support networks provides emotional validation and practical assistance in coping with parenting stress. Sharing experiences, seeking advice, and receiving empathy from peers can alleviate feelings of isolation and foster a sense of community and solidarity among working mothers. Self-Care Practices: (3.77) Prioritizing self-care activities, such as exercise, relaxation techniques, hobbies, or mindfulness practices, are crucial for working mothers to recharge and manage stress effectively. Engaging in activities that promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being helps them maintain resilience and cope with the demands of parenting and work. Effective Communication (4.59): Negotiating work-related expectations, seeking accommodations when necessary and expressing concerns or challenges can foster a supportive work environment and alleviate stress.

Conclusion

Working mothers employ various coping strategies to manage the challenges they face in balancing their professional responsibilities with their roles as caregivers. These strategies are essential for maintaining their well-being and effectively navigating the demands of both work and family life. Every parent, regardless of their education, social status, or financial circumstances, experiences this to some extent. Coping tactics are intentional strategies employed to alleviate stressful conditions. Parents employ several coping strategies to manage the challenges of parenthood. These coping mechanisms may involve problem-focused strategies, where an individual analyzes the unpleasant situation and takes proactive steps to resolve it. Another approach to managing stress is by employing emotion-focused. Overall, adopting a combination of these coping strategies empowers working mothers to navigate the complexities of balancing work and family life while maintaining their well-being and fostering positive parent-child relationships.

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