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Investigating the Relationship between the Mental Health of Students with Working and Non- working Mother's

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Abstract

Aim: The center of family around the mother and her presence or absence can effect on the emotional intelligence and mental health of students. In other words, working mothers inside or outside home have different effects on both the boy and girl students. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health of students with working and non-working mothers.

Methods: This cross-sectional study was conducted on a population consisting of all high school girls and boys in the city (total n=140). Data were gathered by a questionnaire. After verifying the validity and reliability, the data were collected, and analyzed using SPSS18 and descriptive statistics.

Findings: The findings indicate that mothers' employment brings no negative and positive consequences for emotional intelligence and mental health, though it positively affects students' educational performance. Results also revealed that the adolescent children of employed mothers had high emotional intelligence. The female children of employed mothers showed more emotional intelligence, while there were no gender differences in the emotional intelligence of adolescent children of homemakers.

Conclusion: The research finding revealed that boys and girls with working mothers have low mental health, this results approves that presence of mother at home is necessary.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Mental health, Working and non-working mothers

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Introduction

The contribution of mothers in shaping the personality of their children cannot be ignored. But an unprecedented number of women, especially mothers are entering the labor force either due to economic necessity or in search of identity [1]. Hence, an attempt is made to see the effect of working and non-working mothers on students' mental health and emotional intelligence. The concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI), or sometime referred to as EQ, started from the discipline of psychology in the early 1920's and 1930's, when Thorndike was exploring the arena of "social intelligence", and viewed it as a single concept [2]. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his/her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his/her community"[3]. Family building and parenting influences children's EI, mental health, physical health, and a range of other outcomes throughout their lives; in addition, adults' mental health can be profoundly affected during the family building. Good, accessible maternal services, information and advice about parenting strategies, and helping manage transitions to parenthood are protective of adults' and children's mental health [4]. Kaplan and Sadock [5] define the mental health as "a condition of well-being and the feeling in person when can come to terms with society, and personal situation and social features are satisfying for him/her". In general, psychologists believe that mental health is created when people have proper and appropriate behavior with their society; and it can be said that not only does mental health mean being away from problems and mental diseases, but being well-adapted to one's environment and interacting with the people and community, and therefore, having interest and passion for life. Vijayalaxmi & Bowlby [6] found that the adolescent children of home makers have significantly higher self-concept. Also they have higher achievement motivation than the children of employed mothers. Female children of home makers enjoy significantly higher emotional maturity compared to their male children. The female children of employed mothers are more socially maladjusted and lacked independence to a very highly significant level compared to the children of home makers. Hock et al. [7] revealed that there existed a positive relation between maternal separation anxiety and children's anxieties and separation from their mothers. This is perceived as a threat to the child's well-being and/or to her own psychological equilibrium. Such anxiety may be reflected in feelings of worry, sadness, or guilt. On the positive side, adolescents with working mothers may develop a greater degree of autonomy and adult maturity than those with

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non-working mothers. Employed mothers may have a less stressful relationship with their adolescent children because they would not be as fully invested in childrearing, and so could more easily relinquish maternal control than the fulltime home makers [8]. Some other investigations have signified that mother's absence at home would end to negative consequences for children though intensity of these negative effects is not the same as the non-employed mothers' impact (e.g. poverty, parents' education, and quality of caring for the child) on their children. In fact, family with only working father may experience poverty [9]. Powdthavee and Vernoit [10] found that maternal employment during adolescence has a temporary positive effect on the self-rated happiness of children aged 11-15 years, but a working mother with a more negative attitude to work, on the other hand, seems less involved with the child, in general, and is more demanding on the child. This is an important finding, but not possible to confirm with the existing data. However, it provides evidence for the fact that, in fact, what is important is not the employment status of mothers, but how they treat their children [11].

Yet, some other researchers have indicated that employed mother is a reason for her adolescent(s)' low educational scores, low levels of creativity, and increase of stress [12-14]. Furthermore, Khanna [15] has worked on the emotional intelligence of adolescent children of working and non-working mothers, and found a significant difference in the social maturity of adolescent children of working and non-working mothers. There exists no significant relationship between the social maturity and emotional intelligence of the adolescent children of working and non-working mothers. Esmaeili & Baloui Jamkhaneh [16] investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health of high school students. Their findings showed a significant relationship between the components of the emotional intelligence and mental health of the mentioned groups (men, women, totally). Ghorbanshiroudi [17] and Shabani et al. [18] investigated the link of EI, with mental health scales and sub-scales (somatic symptom, anxiety, social dysfunction and depression) in Iranian high schools students. Taking the above points together, the present study focused on the relationship between the EI and mental health of students with working and non-working mothers.

Method

The study population consists of all high school students in the first semester studying are in high school. The sampling method used in this research is cluster sampling. The population consisted of all high school girls and boys in the city and 30% of the population. The sample size was 140 people from the community, which was selected by

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multistage random cluster sampling. to sampling, simple cluster were selected from the 140 participants, 66 were boys (14 boys working mothers, 4 boys in the field of experimental, 25 boys non-native speakers working in the field of science, 20 boys in field the humanities, 3 boys junior high school) and 74 girls (40 girls students working mothers, 16 girls students in the field of Humanities, 18 girl students and non-working mothers in the field of humanities). After completing the questionnaires, as well as data collection, data were analyzed and scored.

Two instruments were used to collect data from the respondents. They include: 1). General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) [19-21].

In 1972, Goldberg developed a simple questionnaire, the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), which is the most widely used instrument for detecting non-psychotic psychiatric "Cases". The GHQ is a self-administered screening questionnaire used to diagnose psychiatric disorders both in primary care and in the community. The measure was found to have an acceptable level of internal consistency reliability (alpha = 0.92). High score on this scale indicate poor general health.

2). Emotional Intelligence Scale Emotional Intelligence Inventory, Youth Version (EQ-i YV) [22].

The EQ-i YV was developed to measure EI in adolescent populations based on the theoretical basis of the Bar-On model of social and emotional intelligence. This 60-item inventory is a self-report instrument designed to measure EI in young people aged 7 to 18 years. The instrument measures a cross-section of abilities and competencies that constitute the core features of EI. Responses are invited on a four-point Likert scale ranging from "very seldom true of me" to "very often true of me". For this study, the simple Likert method (1–2–3–4) was chosen. The measure yields an overall EI score (range 0–240). The scale has a Cronbach alpha of .74. The participants were asked to respond to the questions according to the guidelines, and as far as possible leave no questions unanswered. After completing the questionnaire and data collection, the data were scored and analyzed.

Hypothesis Results

1) There is significant difference between the male and female students' EI (Table 1).

Table 1: Results of Mann-Whitney test for significant differences between the male and female students' emotional intelligence

Sex / EI	Average	Mann-Whitney U	Significance level
Girl	69.03	2.05	0.5
Boy	61.64		

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To be Mann-Whitney test meaningful, a significance level of 5% should be lower; here the significance level is 0/5. So there is no significant difference between the EI of girls and boys participated in the study. This result implies that gender does not affect EI.

2) There is a significant difference between the male and female students' mental health (Table 2).

Table 2: Results of Mann-Whitney test for significant differences between the male and female students' mental health

Sex / Mental health	Average	Mann-Whitney U	Significance level
Girl	69.08	2.337	0.661
Boy	72.09		

To be Mann-Whitney test meaningful, significance level should be less than %5, here the significance level is 5% larger than 0/661. So there is a significant difference between the mental health of the boy and girl students participated in the study; this result indicates that sex does effect on students' mental health.

3) There is a significant difference between the EI of students with working and non-working mothers. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of Mann - Whitney for significant differences between the emotional intelligence of students working mothers and not working mother

Career mothers / Emotional intelligence	Mean	Mann-Whitney U	Significance level
Working mothers	67.83	2.156	0.8
Non-working mothers	1666		

To be Mann-Whitney test meaningful, significance level should be less than %5; here the significance level is %5 larger than 0/8. So there are not significant differences between the emotional intelligence of students working mothers and housewife. This result can be interpreted that the EI working mothers had no effect on children.

4) There is a significant relationship between the mental health of students with working and nonworking mothers (Table 4).

To be meaningful Mann-Whitney test, significant level must be less than 5%, here the significance level is 0/387. So there is no significant difference between the mental health of students having working and non-working mothers. This result implies that working mothers have not effect on the mental health of children.

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Table 4: Results of Mann-Whitney test for significant differences in the mental health of students with housewife and working mothers

Career mothers / Mental health	Average	Mann-Whitney U	Significance level
Working	73.46	2.242	0.387
Non-working	67.54		

Discussion

As we know, todays because of many problems such as paying rent, and registering children in high quality schools and their relief services, parents try to prepare for their children. Thus, working out of home is necessary, especially mothers that have major impact on training children as next generation. However, we tried to examine how much a mother's work can effect on the mental health and EI of their children. According to the results, there is not significant difference between the EI of girls and boys participated in the study. This result can be interpreted in this way that gender does not affect on EI. The obtained results of the study are inconsistent with the findings of the study reported by [21, 23, 24, 25-28]; in our study, children were not affected by mothers' work but another research has shown that children of non-working mothers are more emotionally intelligent than children of working mothers. According to the results of Singh and Kiran [26], children of working mothers remain deprived of healthy family care, become emotionally weak, and their personality is less developed than the children of non-working mothers. Based on our results, there are not significant differences between the EI of students of working mothers and non-working mothers. This result implies that staying at home, the non-working mothers get enough time to support their child academically and emotionally. Accordingly, some previously performed investigations are consistent with this study, and have demonstrated that mother's employment brings no positive or negative impact on the children development [21, 24, 29]. However, the results of Deb et al. [14] showed that adolescents having employed mothers were more anxious and less mentally healthy compared to their peers with non-employed mothers. The results obtained by Sukhsarwala & Mansuri [30] revealed that the adolescent children of employed mothers had high EI. The female children of employed mothers showed more EI, while there were no gender differences in the EI of adolescent children of homemakers. McIntosh [28] found little evidence of a strong statistical relationship between early maternal employment and any of the emotional outcomes. Khan and Asma [31] found that children of non-working mothers are more emotionally intelligent than children of working mothers. The study further indicated

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that the mother's separation from and presence to her children influences the EI of children to a large extent. Based on the results obtained in four hypotheses, our study revealed not significant relationship between the mental health of the students of working and non-working mothers.

Conclusion

Employment was associated with negative child outcomes when children were from intact, middle class families that were not at risk financially. In those families, early full-time employment (relative to mothers who were not working outside the home) was associated with later risk for child behavioral difficulties.

It is to be noted, however, that this increased risk was not the case when mothers worked full-time when their children were toddlers or preschoolers. It appears that working full-time when the child is an infant – a critical period in terms of attachment and emotional and cognitive growth – is more likely to be associated with subsequent difficulties [32].

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