

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MENTAL WELL-BEING IN TEENAGERS WITH WORKING MOTHERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND HOMEMAKERS ATTENDING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN LAHORE, PAKISTAN

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Abstract: *Mental health plays a vital role in our ability to think, feel, interact, work, and enjoy life individually and collectively. A person's mental health is affected by several things at any moment, some of which are social, psychological, and biological. Children of working mothers may have different degrees of anxiety, depression, and social problems. Adolescents' mental health has been the subject of countless global studies. Still, less is known about the differences in adolescent mental health between children whose mothers work and those whose mothers do not work outside the home. This research aimed to compare students' mental health in public and private schools in Lahore based on their mothers' employment and its correlation with other socio-demographic characteristics. The research was cross-sectional and included 150 randomly chosen people from many different strata. The collected data were entered and analyzed using SPSS version 26.0. The majority of students we checked attended private schools. The study findings revealed no significant association between the mental health status of adolescents and their mothers' working status, especially in the private sector. However, a noteworthy correlation was observed between mental health status and gender. The average score for mental health assessment was not satisfactory. In conclusion, this research found no statistically significant difference in adolescents' mental health across groups depending on their mothers' employment level. The results indicated that a mother's employment or lack thereof had little impact on her children's psychological health. However, when comparing the mental health of male and female students, there was a clear gender gap. Adolescents' mental health was not significantly affected by factors like their mothers' education, the sort of household they were born into, their birth order, or their parents' monthly income. To learn more about this issue, researchers should investigate how teenagers see their parents' parenting styles in the future.*

Keywords: Adolescents, mental health, working mothers, non-working mothers, schools, Lahore

Introduction

According to the World Health Organisation, mental health is a condition of comprehensive physical, mental, and social well-being rather than just the absence of sickness or disability. The determination of mental health is influenced by many biological, psychological, social, cultural, and environmental elements that interact in intricate manners. The aforementioned characteristics are often recognized as risk and protective factors that impact the mental well-being of people and groups (Mrazek and Haggerty, 1994). Adolescence is often considered a critical period in an individual's life since it significantly influences their future development and outcomes. This is a critical phase characterized by establishing and sustaining social and emotional behaviours that are vital to one's psychological well-being. The strategies above include the adoption of good sleep patterns, engagement in regular physical

activity, cultivation of coping mechanisms, problem-solving abilities, and interpersonal skills, as well as the acquisition of emotional management techniques. Supportive settings within the family, educational institutions, and the broader community are equally crucial. According to Kessler (2007) (Kessler et al., 2007), there is a worldwide prevalence of mental health issues among teenagers, with an estimated range of 10-20%. However, it is worth noting that these illnesses often go undiagnosed and get inadequate treatment. In the month of July in the year 2020, it was determined that around 17.6% of individuals between the ages of 11 and 16 had symptoms indicative of a potential mental condition. The prevalence of this statistic increased to 20.0% for those classified as young adults within the age range of 17 to 22. When examining the variations in mental health based on gender, it was found that females were more likely to present with a suspected

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mental condition than males (England and Improvement, 2020). Approximately 50% of mental health illnesses in the adult population seem to manifest during adolescence, namely by age 14. However, many of these cases go unnoticed and get no treatment. Around one-sixth of the global population consists of adolescents, which amounts to around 1.2 billion individuals between the ages of 10 and 19. Depression ranks as the primary contributor to morbidity and impairment in the teenage population, while suicide stands as the third leading cause of mortality. The World Health Organisation (Sunitha and Gururaj, 2014) has identified that exposure to violence, poverty, humiliation, and feelings of devaluation might heighten the susceptibility to experiencing mental health issues. According to the findings of the 2017 Mental Health of Children and Young People (MHCYP) survey conducted in England, it was observed that 15.3% of individuals aged 11-19 exhibited symptoms indicative of at least one mental health condition. Additionally, 6.3% of this demographic matched the diagnostic criteria for two or more mental illnesses. In 2017, the prevalence rates across the age groups of 10-12 and 12-14 exhibited little change. However, notable disparities in prevalence rates emerged when the factors of both sex and age were considered. The prevalence of mental problems was higher among girls aged 17-19 (23.9%) than males (10.3%). The data from 2020 substantiates the observed disparity, indicating that likely mental problems are more prevalent among older teenage girls (27.2% among females aged 17-22) compared to boys (13.3%) (Mandal and Mehera, 2017). The presence of depression in children is a significant health concern that has a profound impact on their overall development. Major depressive disorder is characterized by a chronic feeling of a dysphoric mood and a diminished interest or pleasure in almost all activities. These emotions are accompanied by various supplementary symptoms that impact food and sleep, activity and focus level, and self-value perceptions. Parents have a significant role in the formation and development of subsequent generations. During adolescence, peers have a crucial role in facilitating the assimilation of values and the acceptance of cultural norms. Additionally, they contribute significantly to promoting healthy emotional and psychological growth in children, ultimately fostering their development into successful individuals. The significance of a mother's role stems not from her unique talents but rather from the substantial amount of time she spends with her children, which allows her guidance to profoundly impact their attitudes, abilities, and behavior. The extent of a mother's dedication to childcare is often assumed to be significantly impacted by her level of economic activity. Temporal limitations result in a reduced availability of childcare for employed women compared to their non-employed counterparts. The mother assumes the responsibility of making daily choices, guiding her children as they grow, and equipping them with the necessary attributes of bravery and comprehension to confront life's challenges. Ensuring her children's nourishment and proper care is within her jurisdiction. She must provide training that enables individuals to progress according to societal norms and expectations. The individual in question has been

endowed by a higher power with the inherent skill and aptitude to provide vitality and inspiration to subsequent cohorts. The advancement seen in industrialized nations may be largely attributable to the significant contributions made by women in such societies (Shah, 2015). Most children who succeed and exhibit a sense of security tend to originate from households characterized by positive parental attitudes and a nurturing parent-child interaction. Mothers provide their children with love, affection, and care from the moment of their birth. The provision of childcare services has emerged as a significant concern in several nations around the globe. It is well acknowledged that a mother figure's affection and care are essential for children's well-being and development. According to popular belief, the family serves as the first educational institution, with the mother assuming the role of the primary educator for each child. During ancient times, particularly under conventional family structures, women were primarily responsible for childcare and domestic duties. The individuals were prohibited from leaving their residences for employment purposes. The responsibility for generating income via breadwinning was exclusively shouldered by male members within the family unit. Mothers dedicate significant effort to fostering good personality traits, uncovering latent abilities, and facilitating effective coping mechanisms in challenging circumstances (Shrestha and Shrestha, 2020). Children can form a solid relationship with their biological mother and other members of their immediate family. A growing phenomenon of women joining the labor market is driven by economic constraints or a desire to establish their sense of self. This phenomenon has resulted in a significant transformation of the conventional role of mothers from being primarily responsible for caregiving to assuming the position of primary income earners. Consequently, this shift has also changed the objectives and methods of child upbringing (Rohman, 2013). Based on the Lahore Education Statistics of 2007-08, the total count of female instructors in Lahore was 679,503. In 2015, 773,332 were recorded, signifying a notable rise in the population of female teachers. This increase may be attributed to several causes, the predominant being the societal perception that teaching is a suitable vocation for women. Female educators can allocate much time to their families while fulfilling their professional responsibilities. Another significant element is that the educational policies implemented in Lahore over the years have prioritized the enrolment of women in the teaching profession. This has been achieved by providing supplementary incentives targeting women (Shrestha and Shrestha, 2020). Balancing the obligations of work with the duties of familial life is a well-known struggle encountered by parents raising children in the contemporary day. The market has shown a response to the increasing presence of working women with small children, prompting the ongoing development of work-life programs aimed at catering to the diverse demands of all workers. However, there is still little understanding of the unique work-life experiences of working parents who have children with special needs (Syed and Khan, 2017). Approximately 20% of families consist of children who have particular health or mental health requirements.

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Methodology

A cross-sectional study methodology was used to quantitatively examine the mental health of adolescents with working and non-working moms who are enrolled in public and private schools. The study was conducted at private schools in Lahore. The schools were selected through stratified random sampling.

The research sample consisted of teenagers enrolled in private schools in Lahore, with moms who were either employed or not employed. The sample was chosen based on certain criteria for inclusion and exclusion.

The data were obtained via a self-administered questionnaire provided to the participants. A Performa was devised to gather data about the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, as well as conduct a mental health evaluation. The questionnaire was developed using an adapted tool from two validated tools.

The primary objective of the questionnaire was to evaluate the mental well-being of teenagers with moms who are employed and those who are not employed. The dependent variable in this study was the mental health of teenagers, which was assessed using a modified measurement instrument. Data on independent variables was collected through a self-administered questionnaire constructed after an international and national literature review. The Performa included socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, institute, mother working status, etc. In addition, it also included some variables related to the mental health assessment, such as the mother's education and participation in extra-curricular activities. Type of family, number of siblings, school environment, etc.

Before starting the formal data collection procedure, pilot testing was performed by including 10% of the sample size. Performa was tested for future changes; no major changes were made after pilot testing. One question was added in the demographic section: the number of siblings. Data from pilot testing was not included in the final analysis.

The data were obtained via self-administered questionnaires without the involvement of paid data collectors. The study included recruiting adolescents from households with working and non-working moms. Oral consent was obtained from all participants, and only those who provided their agreement to participate in the study procedure were chosen. After obtaining the consent, the participants were given a self-administered questionnaire, and the researcher recorded their responses. Data collection was completed in approximately two months. All filled questionnaires were kept protected in plastic files, and no one had access to them other than the researcher.

The codebook was established, and the data were inputted into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Following meticulous data input, the data underwent a thorough error-checking process before continuing with further analysis. Following the process of data cleansing, certain variables underwent data transformation. The data analysis process was conducted in

two distinct stages, namely descriptive analysis and inferential analysis.

Socio-demographic factors were used to obtain descriptive statistics. The categorical variables were summarised by calculating the frequencies and percentages and then presented in a tabular format. The mean and standard deviation summarised continuous variables, assuming a normal data distribution.

Results

A total of 150 responses were included. A self-administered questionnaire was used. Out of 150 respondents (67) were boys and (33) were girls. Most of the 150 respondents were 15 years of age group (13.5%). All of the students were from private schools. Of the total number of respondents, 36.0% were those students whose mothers were working, and 64% were those whose mothers were non-working.

An adapted questionnaire was used to assess adolescents' mental health (MHA). The outcome variable was the mental health assessment of adolescents. Although females were targeted slightly more than males, there was no significant difference, as shown in Figure 1. Therefore, according to the results, there is no major difference in the categories of males and females targeted, and further results show that the working and non-working categories of participants also do not have much of a difference. An adapted questionnaire was used to assess adolescents' mental health (MHA). The outcome variable was the mental health assessment of adolescents. Although females were targeted slightly more than males, there was no significant difference, as shown in Figure 1. Therefore, according to the results, there is no major difference in the categories of males and females targeted, and further results show that the working and non-working categories of participants also do not have much of a difference

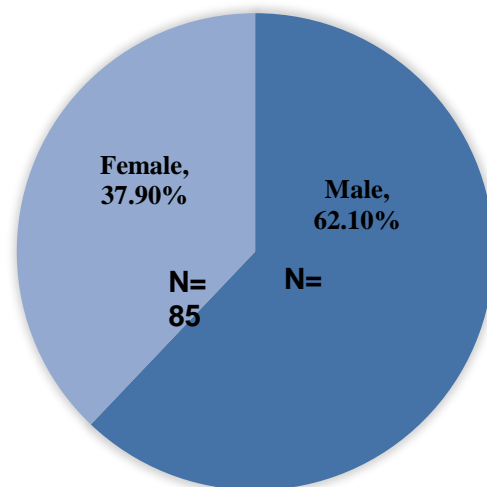


Figure 1 Percentage of gender in the study population

Table 1 Demographic characteristics

Characteristic	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
Total Participants	150	100%
Gender:		
Boys	67	44.7%
Girls	33	22.0%
Age Group:		
15 years	20	13.3%
School Type:		
Private School	150	100%
Maternal Employment Status		
Working	54	36.0%
Non-Working	96	64.0%

Discussion

The current research aimed to evaluate the mental health of teenagers with both working and non-working moms. Adolescents' mental health was assessed using tools adapted from previous studies. The study was conducted at private schools in Lahore city. A stratified random sampling was used, and schools were selected through a lottery method. Pilot testing was performed before the formal data collection procedure, including 10% of the sample size (150). Reliability was checked after entering data into SPSS. The current investigation demonstrated a statistically significant correlation between teenagers' mental well-being and gender. No statistically significant correlation was observed between the mental health of teenagers and demographic variables such as age, educational institution, monthly household income, and others (Singh et al., 2020). The present investigation revealed a marginal disparity in the mental health condition of adolescents with working and non-working moms. However, this discrepancy did not reach statistical significance. The preceding research in India revealed a notable disparity in the mental well-being of adolescents with working moms compared to those with non-working mothers. The obtained p-value indicated no statistically significant difference in the mean score of psychosocial disorders, as reported by Koirala in 2016. One potential reason for the observed findings might be that employed moms dedicate less time to their children, which may hinder the development of emotional bonds between them (Berghuis et al., 2014). Working women face the challenge of balancing their responsibilities in both the household and professional spheres, resulting in heightened stress and anxiety levels within their home life. In such circumstances, individuals will remain unaware of the changes in children's moods and behaviors. Therefore, as a result of these factors, the mental health condition of adolescents with working moms was shown to be worse in comparison to those with non-working mothers. The current investigation demonstrated a statistically significant correlation between teenagers' mental well-being and gender. There was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores for evaluating teenage mental health between male and female pupils (Mahmood and Iqbal, 2015). The preceding research done in Islamabad (Lahore) revealed a notable disparity in the psychological adaptation of pupils.

The findings indicated a statistically significant correlation between males and females. According to Dr. Khalid Mahmood (2015), there is evidence suggesting that females exhibit greater psychological adjustment than males. Further research done in Lahore similarly indicated that there was no discernible correlation between teenagers' psychological well-being and their moms' employment status (Mahmood and Iqbal, 2015). The study revealed a lack of statistically significant disparity between male and female offspring of employed moms. Furthermore, a lack of correlation was seen among the offspring of moms who were not employed. The findings of the current research indicate that there is no statistically significant association between the mental health of teenagers and the educational level of their mothers. The present research observed a positive correlation between the educational attainment of mothers and the mental health evaluation scores of their children. The underlying cause of this problem stems from the limited opportunities for children of employed moms to interact with their peers and community members. Employed mothers have allocated less time to engage with their children. The limited availability of time has been shown to have a detrimental impact on the mental well-being of children, manifesting in challenges related to communication, attention, emotional comprehension, and the fulfillment of their needs. The limited scope of their social environment may be attributed to the insufficient amount of time that mothers can dedicate to their children's leisure and socialization (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2018). The present research also revealed a marginal disparity between mental health evaluation and monthly income level; however, this discrepancy did not reach statistical significance. The preceding research done in Germany revealed a notable disparity between the mental well-being of teenagers and the monthly family income. The study conducted by ReissID (2019) found a substantial negative correlation between higher levels of family income and the prevalence of mental health disorders. One potential rationale for conducting the present investigation may be attributed to the smaller sample size compared to the prior study. The present research observed a marginal distinction in the mental well-being of teenagers based on family type; however, this difference did not reach statistical significance. The current research revealed that the average score for the nuclear family type was discovered to be, while

for the joint family type, it was observed to be. The mean score of mental health evaluation was somewhat higher among teenagers from nuclear family types compared to those from joint family types. This observation suggests that adolescents from nuclear families may have better mental health outcomes than their counterparts from joint families. One potential explanation for these findings is that adolescents living in nuclear family structures may have limited opportunities for interpersonal engagement with extended family members, leading to decreased socialization (Smithson and Lewis, 2000). The present research also observed a marginal difference between "mental health assessment and engagement in extra-curricular activities"; however, this distinction did not reach statistical significance. The mean and standard deviation for involvement in extra-curricular activities were determined. The previous research done in Brazil showed a noteworthy correlation between the evaluation of mental health and engagement in extra-curricular activities (Reverdito, 2017). One potential explanation for the observed outcome may be attributed to the smaller sample size used in the present research compared to the earlier investigation. The marginal distinction between mental health assessment and engagement in extra-curricular activities suggests that children participating in such activities can cultivate their social skills, critical thinking abilities, leadership qualities, time management proficiencies, and collaborative aptitude to pursue a collective objective (Reiss et al., 2019). The current investigation revealed a lack of statistically significant correlation between the evaluation of mental health and the quantity of siblings. The present investigation yields comparable findings about evaluating mental health and the influence of sibling count, as seen in prior research. The preceding research in Japan showed a lack of statistically significant correlation between mental health evaluation and the number of siblings (Liu, 2015). The rationale for doing this research may be attributed to the finding that the number of siblings did not provide statistically significant impacts on mental health. This suggests a multifaceted association between the kind of siblings, gender, age, and variations among siblings (Liu, 2015). The present research findings indicate a positive link between the number of siblings and the mental health scores of teenagers. Specifically, it was observed that as the number of siblings grew, the mental health scores of adolescents also increased. This suggests adolescents with fewer siblings tend to exhibit better mental health (Reverdito et al., 2017). The current investigation observed no statistically significant correlation between the evaluation of mental health and birth order. The present study's findings align with those of other research in terms of the relationship between mental health evaluation and birth order. The research done in Japan demonstrated no statistically significant correlation between birth order and mental health evaluation (Liu, 2015). The majority of children included in the present research were found to be middle children. The rationale for doing this research may lie in the observation that middle children often experience a desire to vie for parental attention as they find themselves between younger and older siblings (Kessler et al., 2007).

Conclusion

The present research has shown that there exists no statistically significant disparity between the mental health state of adolescents and the employment position of their mothers. Overall, the research findings suggest that both working and non-working moms have no significant impact on the mental well-being of their offspring.

Declarations

Data Availability statement

All data generated or analyzed during the study are included in the manuscript.

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Approved by the department Concerned.

Consent for publication

Approved

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Not applicable

Conflict of interest

The authors declared absence of conflict of interest.

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