

The Employed Mother and the Effect on her Child's Sociability

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Abstract

The social stability of a person connects all the way back to when he or she was an infant. When a mother is away at work, missing time to create a strong attachment with her child, she can risk negatively affecting the child's social stability. Previous studies have determined that children of working mothers have no less cognitive abilities than those whose mothers do not work.

However, the social development of children of working mothers has been in question. This study will have 500 female participants; a majority of them will be Caucasian. Self-report and paystubs will determine work hours. The child of each participant will be assessed on the Preschool Behavioral Questionnaire at 3 years of age to determine his or her social stability.

Pearson Correlation test will determine any relationship between variables. The results of this study will have implications for mothers and their work habits.

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When mothers go back to work after having a baby, society puts positive and negative stigmas on them (Tudge, Hogan, Snezhkova, Kulakova & Etz, 2000). Can women have a successful career and a happy family? Is the baby's development suffering from a somewhat absent mother? This research will attempt to find a relationship between how often a mother works and the effect it has on her child's social development. Infants must make an attachment to a caregiver in order for them to fully develop. In a video blog, Popper (2001) explained behavioral disorders and what kind of symptoms doctors look for when diagnosing them to children. "There's so many different ways that early attachment disruption can disrupt development" (Popper, 2001). If a mother is working and not able to care for the needs of her baby, then a connection between her baby and herself could be altered. Popper (2001) explained that attachment disorders could cause the child to have difficulty trusting, difficulty managing behavior and difficulty in peer relationships. This research will be focusing on children's social adjustment when they have a working mother. A working mother is one that leaves her child in the hands of another caregiver or daycare worker and works without seeing her child for a set period of time.

Though this research will be looking at middle-class mothers between 25 and 35 years of age, many studies from the past have had samples of women from a lower socioeconomic status and have a young age. Marshall (2004) found that low-income families were at a dilemma because they were forced to work often, but were still unable to get quality child care. There are many different types of care providers and different levels of care. When a mother is required to work more than one job to make ends meet, the child's needs can be difficult to meet when other requirements need to be met. Trying to find a quality care provider who can assure the proper

development of the child is difficult for low-income mothers. When there is little time spent with the mother, the infant is unable to have a stable connection to his or her mother. Day care can be filled with many children and therefore, a stable connection can not be provided to the infant there either. Marshall (2004) stated that social adjustment is lower for children that do not get the right amount and quality of attention and care. The less time spent with the mother, or a care provider, will negatively affect the infant's social adjustment in the future. Whoever fulfills the needs of the child in a consistent and time efficient manner is more likely to be the main attachment figure.

Child care can be a very beneficial program for many families, but when the child begins and the frequency to when the child goes are crucial to the child's development. Howes (as cited in Belsky, 1991) stated that when children are put in limited quality child care during the first year of life, they often showed more pronounced effects of poor social adjustment than children in quality care or maternal care. Whether that is the mother or worker at the child's day care, the needs of the child should be met and an attachment figure needs to be established. However, limited time in quality care shows that the child does not have a stable and consistent care provider. Vandell and Corasaniti (as cited in Belsky, 1991) went on to extend Belsky's study and found that children with 30 or more hours of day care per week during the first year of life had poorer social and academic functioning compared to children who started such care later in their lives. The earlier the child was in child care, the less time they had to create a connection to their mother during that critical period of the first year of life. If a mother were to wait to go back to work after the first year of the child's life, then the bond the child created with the mother will be more stable to maintain. The bond with the care provider will be easier to obtain due to the child's stable working model of attachment.

Most of the time the attachment figure is the mother, and when it is, her working schedule has been studied on its effect on the child's development. Rich (2010) found that even if the mother was working, some areas of development of the child is not affected. In terms of cognitive development, a child is neither more nor less likely to have cognitive problems when a mother works part time (Rich, 2010). In the study Brooks-Gunn, Han, and Waldfogel (2010) released, being away part of the time during the first year of life, in other words, working part time, did not hinder the cognitive development of the child. In contradiction to the previous studies, Rich (2010) stated that children of part time working mothers were less likely to have problems managing behavior. Having a mother meet the needs of the infant at least half of the time was sufficient for the infant's development. However, Brooks-Gunn et. al (2010) found that children whose mothers worked full-time in the first year after giving birth had significantly lower outcomes in social and emotional tests than children who had part-time working mothers.

Once the infant has grown up into his or her adolescent years, the social stability can continue to be effected due how he or she developed as an infant and if the parent is still working part- or full-time. To look at the later effects of social development with a working mother during infancy, Davis, Crouter and McHale (2006) studied the shift work for parents and the relationship with the adolescent. They concluded that a shift working mothers would be more likely to work harder to make up for the lost time when they were at work (Davis, Crouter & McHale, 2006). The mothers knew they had missed quality time with their child and made more effort to compensate for them being away. "Mothers' relationships with their adolescents do not seem to be negatively affected by their working non-standard schedules, at least in terms of intimacy and their knowledge of their adolescents' day-to-day activities" (David et. al 2006, p. 458). During infancy, a baby does not know that the mother was working and trying to make a

living. The only thing an infant can understand is that his or her needs are not being met, and therefore, a poor model of attachment is formed. On the other hand, the adolescent can now understand why the mother needs to work, but the relationship does not grow or become stronger because the attachment was already hindered during infancy. The research study did not focus on the adjustment of the child and how they interpreted their relationship with their parent. Instead, the parents were questioned on how they felt they connected with their adolescent and if they knew how he or she was feeling. A continuously working mother did not cause a negative consequence throughout the child's life, but the study did not state that is a continuously working mother was a benefit to the child's development either.

This study will be looking at the correlation between the number of hours the mother worked during the first year of the child's birth and the score of the child's social stability from the PBQ. A child's social adjustment is measured by the responses their preschool teacher gives them on a social behavior questionnaire. It is predicted that the number of hours the mother worked has a negative relationship with the social adjustment of the child. A working mother is not always there for the needs of an infant and when those needs are not met, the child is at risk for stunted development. A poor connection with a caregiver can leave the child with a negative view of himself or herself and/or a negative and distrusting opinion of others. Poor views of oneself and society can negatively affect how a child or a person handles social situations and his or her behavior when dealing with society.

Methods

Overview

The goal of this research is to see if there is a relationship between a mother working and the child's social development. This study will be a correlational design to look at naturally

occurring variables. The predictor is the number of hours a mother works, while the outcome will be the social adjustment of the child. The number of hours a mother works will be measured on the ratio scale. The social development of the child will be determined by the PBQ, which is on the interval level.

Participants

This research will use non-probability sampling to collect a group of pregnant women in the year 2013. Due to ethical reasons, a non-probability sampling technique is the most appropriate. This study will take 500 women between 25 and 35 years of age. These women will volunteer to be a part of the study but will be drawn from a doctor's office in a suburban area of Silicon Valley in California. They can be a single mother, cohabitating, married or widowed. They must be pregnant when they volunteer. The ethnicity of the study can be diverse, but predicted to be mainly Caucasian and Asian. The income of the study can also be random, but predicted to be middle to higher economic levels.

Measures

The women will write down the total numbers of hours they worked each week beginning the day the child is born and finish on his or her first birthday. After every month, they will send in four totals of worked hours, each week counts as a total, along with a paystub for proof of the total hours worked. Four years later, when the child is in preschool, the Preschool Behavioral Questionnaire will be given to the teacher to evaluate the child. The fixed format, quantitative questionnaire has several statements the teacher rates: 0- "Does not apply", 1- "Sometimes applies" and 2- "Frequently applies". There are statements like "Fights with other children", "Not much liked by other children" and "Bullies other children" (Behar & Stringfield, 1974). To find the total score, the teacher must add all the individual scores together. The scores will range

from 0 to 60 on an ordinal level. A high score reflects a low socially competent child; as opposed to a low score that reflects a socially stable child. Correlating the number of hours worked by the mother to the score on the PBQ will determine if there is a relationship between these two naturally occurring variables.

Procedures

California State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) will approve the study prior to the start. The women will sign up through the doctor's office, where they will receive a \$25 gift card for participating. The gift card incentive will be used to ensure participation for the study. At the doctor's office a sheet will inform them of the study. After reading the sheet, informed consent will be granted. Their mailed in paystubs will be locked away in the file cabinet that only the researcher has a key to. When it comes time for the preschool teacher to complete the PQB, he or she will receive the same study information sheet. He or she will then give informed consent to participate in the study about the child at the preschool. Once the teacher has completed the questionnaire, the results from the PBQ will also be kept in the locked file cabinet. If the participants wish to receive a debriefing on the study, they will send in the debrief form with their last paystub.

Statistical Analysis Plan

This study is being conducted to calculate the correlation between the average number of hours a mother works a week during the first year of her child's life and the score the child receives on the PBQ. Interrater reliability was reported by Behar and Stringfield as 0.81 (Blankemeyer, Culp, Hubbs-Tait & Culp, 2002). The test-retest reliability was calculated over a 3 month period to be 0.87 (Behar & Stringfield as cited in Blankemeyer, Culp, Hubbs-Tait & Culp, 2002). Behar and Stringfield (1974) stated the concurrent validity of the PBQ by

explaining that the questionnaire was completed on predetermined children from a normal preschool and on children from a preschool for emotionally disturbed children. The Pearson R is the appropriate test due to the directional hypothesis. A Pearson R statistical test will be used to calculate the correlation coefficient and if it is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. With the alpha, level of significance, being set at the 0.05 level, a critical value will be calculated. From there the critical value will be compared to the correlation coefficient, or in other words, the obtained value. If the obtained value is higher than the critical value, then the results are statistically significant and there will be a strong, negative correlation between a working mother and the social stability of her preschool child.

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Appendix

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1. Demographics Questionnaire
2. Preschool Behavior Questionnaire

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Demographics Questionnaire

Instructions: Read each question. Fill in the blank or check the box that applies.

1. What is your age? _____

2. What is your ethnicity?

White

Hispanic or Latino

African American

Native American/ American Indian

Asian

Pacific Islander

Other: _____

3. What is your annual household income?

\$0 - \$25,000

\$25,001 - \$50,000

\$50,001 - \$75,000

\$75,001 - \$100,000

\$100,001 – more

4. What is your marital status?

Single

Married

Divorced/Separated

Widowed

5. What is the sex of your child?

Male

Female

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	Doesn't Apply	Applies Sometimes	Certainly Applies	For Scorer's Use Only			
10. Has twitches, mannerisms, or tics of the face and body	___	___	___	___	___	___	
11. Bites nails or fingers	___	___	___	___	___	___	
12. Is disobedient	___	___	___	___	___	___	
13. Has poor concentration or short attention span	___	___	___	___	___	___	
14. Tends to be fearful or afraid of new things or new situations	___	___	___	___	___	___	
15. Fussy or over-particular child	___	___	___	___	___	___	
16. Tells lies	___	___	___	___	___	___	
17. Has wet or soiled self this year	___	___	___	___	___	___	
18. Has stutter or stammer	___	___	___	___	___	___	
19. Has other speech difficulty	___	___	___	___	___	___	
20. Bullies other children	___	___	___	___	___	___	
21. Inattentive	___	___	___	___	___	___	
22. Doesn't share toys	___	___	___	___	___	___	
23. Cries easily	___	___	___	___	___	___	
24. Blames others	___	___	___	___	___	___	
25. Gives up easily	___	___	___	___	___	___	
26. Inconsiderate of others	___	___	___	___	___	___	
27. Unusual sexual behaviors	___	___	___	___	___	___	
28. Kicks, bites, or hits other children	___	___	___	___	___	___	
29. Stares into space	___	___	___	___	___	___	
30. Do you consider this child to have behavior problems?	___	___	___	___	___	___	
TOTALS				Total	1	2	3