



THE IMPACT OF MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AT PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF WORKING MOTHERS IN KHAIRPUR CITY

Shah Muhammad Farooq Rashdi ¹, Nadia Agha ², Bibi Hina ³

Affiliations:

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology & Gender Studies, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur Mir's Sindh, Pakistan

Email: farooq.rashdi@salu.edu.pk

² Professor, Department of Sociology & Gender Studies, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur Mir's Sindh, Pakistan

Email: nadia.pathan@salu.edu.pk

³ ADPWO Population Welfare Department Khairpur
Email: sayedahina786@gmail.com

Corresponding Author's Email:

farooq.rashdi@salu.edu.pk

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Abstract

It is a widely acknowledged fact that sustainable national progress is inextricably linked to the active socioeconomic participation of all its citizens. Within this framework, a mother's employment is a significant factor in national development and familial well-being. The present quantitative research project examines the multifaceted impact of mothers' employment on their children's educational attainment and psychosocial development. Data was collected via a structured 52-item questionnaire from 261 working mothers employed in government sectors within Khairpur city, Sindh, utilizing a convenience sampling technique. As the primary agents of socialization, mothers are crucial to a child's development; this study specifically investigates correlations between maternal employment and children's scholastic performance and self-confidence. The collected data was rigorously analysed using IBM SPSS software (Version 26), employing descriptive statistics to quantify the results. The findings indicate that children of working mothers significantly improved their academic grades, participated more frequently in extracurricular activities, and developed greater confidence and independence. This study contributes valuable empirical evidence from a specific socio-cultural context, adding new meaning to the existing body of research and highlighting implications for policy supporting working families.

Keywords: Employment, Working Mothers, Children, Educational Attainment,

Introduction

Academic achievement of students, in connection with maternal employment, has been a main concern among fathers in particular. There are many under-researched factors disturbing the academic achievement of students, but maternal employment is counted as one among the major elements responsible for low emotional growth and slow academic attainment in our social system. It is usually perceived that "mothers who are engaged in formally paid work usually incorporate an inexplicable sense of panic and futility for their self and their kids" (Gregory, 2000). 51% of male and female respondents suggest that if mothers are at home and not working, it is better for their children's social, psychological and academic development (Pew Social Trends, 2014). The course of action for understanding this influence, though, has not been fully studied.

However, being primary 'caregivers' as well as 'income generators', women discharge their responsibilities diligently in developing countries. Macload (2003) mentions "To work at the marketplace is mostly an unavoidable need for family survival rather than an alternative for women of a developing country" (p.11). Meanwhile, millions of mothers throughout the world go out of their homes with every sunrise, unaware of the fact whether their children would suffer from their absence at homes. Women workforce participation has increased dramatically in the last few decades; meanwhile, their work participation has been greatly encouraged globally. In this context, Agha (2017) writes "internationally, women's employment is



encouraged in a way that it not only guarantees smooth sailing in childbearing but also a smooth conversion to work as well” (p.10). After industrialization, with a swift change in status, women in the developing world are more and more forced to run family and work responsibilities simultaneously, (Bajracharya, 2010). Impact of twin responsibilities is noteworthy for children particularly because mothers are usually considered the elementary agency of child’s physical, mental and academic growth.

Rapid progress in patterns of production and large scale global economic changes have triggered a concrete shift in nature of work for people of developed countries in general and for developing countries in particular (Mehra and Gammage 1999). These changes have also affected women, particularly mothers. Conversion of women’s work from agrarian to industrial and formally paid work, permit them to invest generously on their own and their children’s wellbeing. In this connection, Agha (2017) explores that though it is not commendable change but gradually women are getting control over their lives in cities, they not only perform formal duties but also equally engaged in discharging household responsibilities with the same devotion. The twin responsibility of household work and formal employment exerts deeper pressure on them especially after child birth since they are considered sole proprietor of child rearing.

Care and initial formal schooling rests on her shoulders since she is titled as first learning place for a child. Early child-mother contact architects’ child’s awareness about world and modes of behaviour. Sewani (2012) is of the view that chief source for adopting and learning values, ethics and ways of life for a child is their parents especially mothers, children daily have tales of their parent particularly of mothers. She concludes that mothers have lasting authority on children habit and teach such circumstances forces women to select between their jobs and motherhood”. This intricacy of their roles has considerable impact on children life, principally on their education.

Review of Literature

Mohan (1989) describes the important changes took place in the end of 18th century regarding political, social and economic social standings of women. He points out that actually initiation of British bureaucratic system needed men and women immediately to serve it, and that was the beginning of new dawn, latter on social reformers of the time along with political leaders also paved way for their social and economic freedom. People started to adopt positive outlook of life by accepting liberal philosophy of west.

Moreover, Talaat (2016) is of the view that “Pakistan is facing the challenges for improving the education and literacy rate. Pakistan’s literacy rate rises to 59.9% with Punjab heading all the provinces with 61.7% followed by Sindh with 61.3%, KPK third in row with 53.1%, Baluchistan with lowest rate of literacy 51.8%” (p.6). The above- mentioned factors influence women’s lives, opportunities and manners and mores. Kakepoto (2005) describes that women have been a soft target of discrimination in the male dominated society. Women are harassed in different way in Pakistani societies (Malik et al., 2025). A girl is not honoured as much as the boy is loved and facilitate. This type of discrimination has caused societal iniquity. Mariam (2011) states that a fair treatment to men and women can be the powerful indicators for a healthy and peaceful social life. Men and women should be given equal opportunities from sports to legislation. Their equivalent representation can work wonders to maintain balance in the world.

Pakistan is world’s sixth biggest populous country with an estimated population of 195.4 million with a 1.89 growth rate in population, 4th in Asia 2nd amongst SAARC countries having an annual growth rate of 2.6% (3.6 million) per annum, fertility rate 5.3 births per woman below 15 years old population of 43% which keeps reproductive process accelerating. Population size, growth, and structure affect the development goals and objectives. In economic terminology a rapid acceleration in population growth produces pressure on available resources, job opportunities, and resource division, and poverty and gender equity projects. Rafiq-uz-Zaman (2025) said in his study that Pakistan has not skilled workforce like other SAARC countries. Asian Development Bank in its country briefing paper, “Women in Pakistan” (2000) presents that “gender is one of the organizing principles of Pakistani society. Patriarchal values embedded in local traditions and cultures predetermine the social value of gender. An artificial divide between production and reproduction created by the ideology of sexual division of labour has placed women in reproductive roles as mothers and wives in the private arena of home and men in a productive role as breadwinners in the public arena. This has led to a low level of resource investment in women by the family and the State. Thus, low investment in women’s human



capital, compounded by the ideology of purdah (veil), negative social biases, and cultural practices; the concept of honour linked with women's sexuality; restrictions on women's mobility; and the internalization of patriarchy by women themselves, becomes, the basis for gender discrimination and disparities in all spheres of life." (p. 9). Women of Pakistan necessitate education and employment to remarkably contribute for the society in order to inculcate gender tolerance and to broaden its scope. Rafiq-uz-Zaman et al. (2024) emphasized that women should be empowered through skill-based education to better employment. Law-making, institutional fortification, societal insertion, and behavioural transformation are required on society's part to play their vital role in the family, society and country level.

In this connection, Mahpara (2017) describes that "growing population exert a great deal of pressure on conventional role of Asian women to switch their role from a veiled, home staying women to a modern, employed and equally earning partner. When she employs herself with her choice or without, in, formally paid or informally unpaid professions it affects her relationship with children's schooling. In case of Pakistan, a country in which to attain increase in literacy rate, to attend schools regularly and normal flow of women to work places is still not satisfactory" (p.19).

UNESCO Country Programming Document for Pakistan (2013-17) reveals about Pakistan primary school-age children who belong to poorer segment of society are 6 times more likely to have chances of not getting enrolled in schools as they are compared to the children of wealthiest families. 68% girls who belong to poorer families are unable to attend schools; 42% of the out of school girls and 21% of the boys will not see a school in their lives, whereas 87% out of school children are engaged in rigorous child labour. All these hardships which usually make children suffer in our society; mother's employment is made responsible for. In some cases, it is observed that several children especially elder girls remain out of school because their mothers are informally employed and no body takes care of children left at home that's why they are forced to stay at home and look after their siblings as well as to carry on domestic work. Asian women in near future have realised that population growth and development are interconnected with each other, health and educational improvements are linked with economic progress in developing country like Pakistan. In order to attain better life styles and stability in financial affairs contemporary women are entering more and more in paid employment. Prosperous society as body and child as its healthy mind cannot be achieved without women participation in it. Unfortunately, in conventional society her role has been turned that of a household worker and a slave. Discriminatory and prejudiced male attitude always attempted to hinder her journey towards self-dependency and due status, in Pakistan women work participation is still very bellow, comparatively with other countries with same income. Though, it has grown by more than half in last 20 years. Trend of employment is alarmingly low among the women who are highly educated. Shafi et al. (2024) said that we can reduce prejudice by different teaching strategies in school education system. In its report Asian Development Bank (2016) describes 75% of Pakistani women who have a university degree do not work outside the home. Cultural hindrances and restricted social mobility always come between Pakistani women and her aspiration of work outside home. 61% of women who work outside home carry the permission from male members whereas 39% who remain unsuccessful to obtain the same are restricted to households. Even those women who work outside do not travel too far from their homes as their counterparts usually do. A small proportion of women from urban and rural areas indicate that they can participate in paid employment or they are available for work due to above mentioned causes in Pakistan.

Murtaza (2010) is of the view that women who are in paid employment can enjoy better decision making in all home affairs, but surprisingly in comparison with men's work, women's work is generally considered as bad or unimportant in Pakistani society. Women employment is considered as a bad omen for whole family and she as abhorred mostly when she gets out of home to carry out her official responsibilities. So brothers, husband or father in law can restrict her from seeking formal employment. Asian Development Bank (2016) report finds that while deciding regarding indictment in employment most women are not allowed to make decisions in this regard.

According to Bureau of Statistics of Pakistan's report (2005-06) "women's mobility and gender norms disturb a women's smooth sailing towards her employment and work. Mostly men like women to be his home's ornament by staying at home. Thus, women are given very little access to fewer professions. Most of



employment opportunities are meant for men in Pakistan, since he is considered as actual bread winner.

In financially struggling economy like Pakistan, mothers' socioeconomic status is directly or indirectly interconnected to children's academic attainments. In their capacity as mothers, women also transfer unsolicited merits of education to their children. Children's accomplishments are directly proportional with parent's education and their social standings. In this connection, Klebanov (1994) states about families where educated and employed mothers live, it not only produces better physical environment but also put into effect very conducive environment for learning. Moreover, Meheralia et al. (2011) argue that familial settings and roles are rapidly changing all over the world gradually. One generation ago mothers were conventionally assigned the task of caregivers of toddlers and children but a remarkable shift in child rearing has taken place in developed world. More children are being raised as "collective venture" by both partners. These writers shedding their opinions explain that mothers' employment has brought a substantial change in the lives of their children. In addition to the above statement, Aamir (2004) observes that most of the working women cannot provide plenty of time to their children. Their employment has caused some of the issues in their domestic lives. Working women's time is divided in different segments. They sometimes realize that they cannot afford much time for their children on regular basis. Naviwala (2015) believes that some of the working women maintain balance in their jobs and family settings and make concerted efforts to share their precious time with their children in terms of education as they think that their children are their cultural and educational legacy.

Women's role in Pakistan is changing since last couple of decades. Few studies show that mothers with formal education and formal employment spend a good deal of quality time with their children in comparison with mothers not educated at all.

Andrabi et al. (2011) points out mothers with academic background, they strongly influence their children to be engaged with studies. Their children spend 80 minutes more with books as compared to the children of mothers with no or lower educational backgrounds. Educated mothers Not only create an encouraging environment of learning but also provide a round-the-clock help to their children.

A decisive role in familial affairs in Pakistan can be obtained with the help of maternal education and paid formal employment of mothers.

The Global Gender Gap Report (2017) points out educated girls as true change agent though in developing countries pace of change is much slower. Women have fewer chances to access the breakthrough technology compared to men (Rafiq-uz-Zaman et al., 2025. Gender Differences Study). Furthermore, report adds that when same educated girl turns as mother she performs her role with more accuracy and precision, report shows that children of educated mother inculcate more study habits in their routines in comparison with children of uneducated mothers. In Pakistan economic status of familial unit and children's education is to a large extent connected with maternal employment and empowerment. Maternal employment enhances awareness among children; it helps them to understand in what direction they should sail to attain prosperity and success.

Moghadam (2005) describes that "competencies as a nation can be achieved with actual empowerment of women. It is corridor to be a dignified nation; it is need of hour to understand impact of mother's literacy on the process of personality formation. Child-mother relationship and maternal employment are interconnected with each other. It has a lasting effect on children's educational development. The value of maternal employment has been realized, but the road ahead remains long and full of challenges" (p.30). The above-mentioned studies reveal that there is a significant and lasting impact of mother's job on children's academic achievements.

This paper has argued that the growing visibility of women's employment has positive impact on children's education related trends, and investigates scientifically it's inter relationship. Trends in female headship, changes in the pattern and structure of employment, and the socio-cultural factors that continue to influence child education have led to inferences regarding the process of maternal employment. Rafiq-uz-Zaman and Nadeem (2024) said skill-based education is a key of better employment.

This paper has confirmed the positive impact of maternal employment and their health effects on children education. The implementation of equal employment opportunity policies has contributed to the



quality of education and better impact on children.

Research Methodology

The required data has been collected through survey method. Close ended questionnaire was used to collect data from working mothers. A structured close-ended questionnaire with 52 questions was distributed among 261 working mothers in Khairpur city whose children attended primary school. Since the researcher was male and respondents were female, female teachers assisted in disseminating and collecting questionnaires where needed. Colleagues and friends also helped gather personal data on income, education, and family status. The study used purposive sampling, focusing on employed mothers with specific characteristics for feasibility and convenience. Sample size determination emphasized accuracy to ensure valid generalizations about the larger population, as precise selection enhances research reliability (Neuman, 1997).

Results

This research presents a comprehensive quantitative analysis of the impact of maternal employment on children's educational attainment, synthesizing key findings through five pivotal tables. Descriptive statistics (Table 1) first establish the demographic and behavioural profile of the working mothers surveyed, highlighting their financial priorities and time constraints alongside their children's strong academic performance. The reliability of the constructed research scales is then confirmed in Table 2. Subsequently, a regression model (Tables 3, 4, and 5) is employed to statistically analyse the predictive power of specific variables—namely work hours, income, and childcare support—demonstrating their significant and distinct relationships with child outcomes. Together, these tables provide a robust empirical foundation for the study's conclusions.

Table 1

Maternal Employment on Children's Educational Attainment at Primary School

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
How working mothers spend their earnings	Personal Use	24	9.2%
	Supplement Family Income	55	21.1%
	Both	178	68.2%
	Schooling of Children	2	0.8%
	Hobbies	2	0.8%
Husbands look after children while mothers are at work	Yes	111	42.5%
	No	78	29.9%
	Some Time	72	27.6%
Impact of workload on family	Can't Give Sufficient Time	143	54.8%
	Argument Arises	4	1.5%
	Children Don't Listen	3	1.1%
	Don't Enjoy Social Life	111	42.5%
Number of children of the respondents	1 to 3	161	61.7%
	3 to 5	78	29.9%
	5 to 8	22	8.4%
Tutoring to their children by respondents	Yes	162	62.1%
	No	99	37.9%
Time working mothers spend teaching their children	1 to 2 Hours	87	33.3%
	3 to 4 Hours	69	26.4%
	5 to 6 Hours	2	0.8%
	Never	103	39.5%
Grades of children of working mothers	Yes	240	92.0%
	No	21	8.0%
Overall performance of working mothers' children	Good	183	70.1%



Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Participation in extracurricular activities	Better	55	21.1%
	Not Satisfactory	20	7.7%
	Bad	3	1.1%
	Yes	225	86.2%
	No	36	13.8%
Extracurricular activities participated in	Speech	142	54.4%
	Tablo	43	16.5%
	Sports	44	16.9%

This table 1 below presents key descriptive findings from the survey, offering a demographic and behavioural snapshot of the respondents. A significant majority (68.2%) of working mothers allocate their earnings to both personal use and supplementing family income, highlighting a balanced financial approach. A notable challenge is evident, as over half (54.8%) report an inability to give sufficient time to their families due to their workload. However, this does not appear to negatively impact child outcomes; a high percentage (92%) confirm their children achieve good grades. Furthermore, 86.2% of children participate in extracurricular activities, with speeches being the most common (54.4%), suggesting development in confidence and communication skills. Despite their professional time constraints, 62.1% of mothers still provide direct tutoring, underscoring their committed and active role in their children's educational support

Table 2

Reliability Statistics

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Working Mothers' Challenges	8	0.87	Excellent Reliability
Children's Performance	5	0.79	Acceptable Reliability
Family Impact	4	0.82	Good Reliability

Interpretation: All scales show $\alpha > 0.7$, indicating internally consistent measures.

This table assesses the internal consistency of the research scales using Cronbach's Alpha (α). All three constructed scales—'Working Mothers' Challenges' ($\alpha=0.87$), 'Children's Performance' ($\alpha=0.79$), and 'Family Impact' ($\alpha=0.82$)—demonstrate high reliability, as each value exceeds the 0.70 threshold. An α of 0.87 is 'Excellent', indicating the questions measuring challenges are very consistent. The other two scales show 'Acceptable' to 'Good' reliability, confirming that the survey instruments consistently and reliably measured their intended constructs, which validates the data's quality for further analysis.

Table 3

Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
1	0.68	0.46	0.44	0.512

The Model Summary evaluates the strength of the linear regression model predicting the impact on children's performance. The R-value of 0.68 indicates a strong positive correlation between the predictors (work hours, income, and childcare) and the outcome. The R-squared (R²) value of 0.46 reveals that the three independent variables collectively explain 46% of the variance observed in the children's educational performance. The adjusted R² (0.44) accounts for the number of predictors, confirming the model's robustness and a reasonably good fit for the data.

Table 4

ANOVA Table

	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Regression	24.71	3	8.24	31.42	<0.001
Residual	28.93	110	0.26		
Total	53.64	113			

Interpretation: The model explains 46% of variance ($R^2=0.46$, $p<0.001$), indicating significant predictive



power.

The ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) table tests the overall statistical significance of the regression model from Table 3. The key result is the p-value (<0.001), which is far below the 0.05 significance level. This conclusively indicates that the regression model is statistically significant and that the combination of predictors (work hours, income, and childcare support) reliably predicts the outcome variable (children's performance). It confirms that the explained variance (46%) is not due to random chance, validating the use of this model.

Table 5
Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p-value
(Constant)	1.24	0.31	-	4.00	<0.001
Work Hours	-0.42	0.08	-0.38	-5.25	<0.001
Income	0.33	0.06	0.41	5.50	<0.001
Childcare Support	0.19	0.05	0.22	3.80	0.001

Work Hours negatively impact family time ($\beta=-0.38$, $p<0.001$)

Income and Childcare Support show positive effects ($p<0.01$)

This table details the individual contribution of each predictor variable in the model. It shows that while higher income ($\beta=0.41$, $p<0.001$) and greater childcare support ($\beta=0.22$, $p=0.001$) have significant positive effects on children's performance, longer maternal work hours have a significant negative effect ($\beta=-0.38$, $p<0.001$). The standardized coefficients (β) allow for comparison, showing that a mother's income is the strongest positive predictor, while her work hours are the strongest negative predictor of the child's educational outcomes in this model.

Discussion

The study reveals significant insights into working mothers' challenges, with 68.2% of respondents allocating earnings to both personal and family needs (Table 1), highlighting the dual financial role mothers play. However, 54.8% reported insufficient family time due to workload (Table 3), creating clear role strain. The regression analysis showed work hours negatively impacted family time ($\beta=-0.38$, $p<0.001$), while income ($\beta=0.41$) and childcare support ($\beta=0.22$) were protective factors, explaining 46% of variance in family wellbeing. This aligns with the finding that only 42.5% of husbands consistently provide childcare, suggesting inadequate support systems.

Regarding children's outcomes, 92% of working mothers reported their children receiving good grades with 70.1% describing overall performance as "good". This success may relate to the 62.1% of mothers who tutor their children, though 39.5% reported never having time for tutoring (Table 4.27). The correlation between family time and child performance ($r=0.38$) appears robust despite these time constraints. Notably, extracurricular participation was high (86.2%), with 54.4% involved in speech activities, potentially mitigating the 45.88% who strongly disagreed that tribal arbitration (Faislo) benefits children. The 32.94% strongly disagreeing with Faislo's appropriateness (original data) suggests shifting cultural attitudes, particularly among working mothers who are likely more exposed to formal systems.

These findings collectively paint a picture of working mothers successfully managing multiple roles despite systemic challenges. The high reliability scores ($\alpha=0.79-0.87$) validate these patterns, while regression and correlation analyses confirm theoretical relationships between work demands, family support, and child outcomes. Future research should examine why 8% of children struggle academically despite maternal employment, and whether the 27.6% receiving "some" spousal support represent a critical threshold for family wellbeing. Policy implications include workplace flexibility and expanded childcare, particularly for the 29.9% with 3-5 children.

Conclusion

The main purpose of the present study was to explore the "Impact of Maternal Employment on Children's Educational Attainment at Primary School level: A Sociological Study of Working Mothers in Khairpur city". After a critical and statistical analysis, the following conclusions are drawn.

The present study reveals that maternal employment sheds positive results on the educational



attainment of their children. The study has investigated that the working mothers' children are not only talented and confident but also exhibit a balanced approach to their academic and domestic challenges and Most of the working mothers spend a good deal of time with their children in order to make them better and responsible citizens. Despite their professional responsibilities and social tasks, they continue devoting time for their sons and daughters. And this sociability of working mothers', their children are infused with confidence and they constantly participate in extracurricular activities and often win prizes, especially in the domain of speech competition, even the hectic professional schedule comprising of 05 to 12 hours a day, they manage to tutor their children. It is also revealed that mostly working women's children significantly improve their grades but some of them viewed that their job has affected performance of their kids, the study points out that the teachers positively report about the academic performance of working mothers' children and their good behaviour.

But at the same time number of working women shared that their employment often causes embarrassment and conflicts in their families. But a few commented that there has no dispute in the family in terms of employment.

This research also points out that most of the husbands of working mothers take care of their children when their wives are busy in their official duties but the rest are not interested to look after them when their mothers are at work.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Policy Intervention:** Government and organizational policies should promote workplace flexibility and expand affordable, quality childcare facilities. This is crucial for alleviating role strain, especially for the 29.9% of mothers with three to five children.
2. **Awareness and Advocacy:** NGOs and community foundations should organize workshops and seminars to advocate for the equitable sharing of domestic and childcare responsibilities within households, addressing the finding that only 42.5% of husbands provide consistent childcare.
3. **Educational Integration:** Policymakers should incorporate positive lessons on female empowerment and the dual roles of working mothers into school curricula to foster broader societal support and encourage higher female labour force participation.
4. **Media Campaigns:** Government and media outlets should broadcast documentaries and talk shows that highlight the successful achievements of children of working mothers, aiming to shift cultural attitudes and motivate more women to seek employment.
5. **Future Research:** Subsequent studies should investigate the academic challenges faced by the 8% of children who struggle despite maternal employment. Research should also be expanded to the provincial level and into other demanding sectors like media to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

Author Contributions

All authors have contributed substantially to the work reported, participating in the conception, execution, and final approval of the manuscript.

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Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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