

Stress and Coping Strategies among Employed and Unemployed Mothers

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Abstract

Introduction: In this modern society both men and women experience various patterns of stress. The stress faced by married employed women commonly referred to as a dual stress has drawn the attention of the researchers. As compared with the employed mothers unemployed mothers get more time to look after their children and family so that the child is expected to get timely attention and care required for their physical and mental development. Recent studies shows that working women still do the majority of the house work with child care taking priority over other chores. Many sacrifice leisure time and sleep to manage. *Method:* A quantitative approach, non-experimental comparative survey design was adopted. A total 100 samples (50 employed mothers and 50 unemployed mothers) were selected by using non-probable purposive sampling techniques, the target population were mothers of school going children and the accessible population were those who are in Nagaur city. The questionnaires were prepared under two sections. Section 'A' was on demographic variables; section 'B' was on stress and coping strategies. The data was collected after getting consent from the mothers. Survey techniques were adopted and self-administered questionnaire was provided to each mother for the duration of 20-30 minutes. And data was compiled and tabulated for descriptive and inferential statistics. *Result:* Major findings of the study revealed that employed mothers had more stress than unemployed mothers in relation to physical, psychosocial and academic needs of children. Percentage distribution of stressors among employed

mothers of school going children showed that 9.1% had always stress in relation to physical needs, 3.6% in relation to psychosocial needs and 11.6% in relation to academic needs of children. Among unemployed mothers majority (82.6%) had no stress in relation to academic needs of the child, whereas, only 4.0% always had stress in meeting the physical needs of their children but not in psychosocial and academic needs. Most of the employed and unemployed mothers used adaptive coping strategies in meeting the physical, psychosocial and academic needs of their children. Among the unemployed mothers 22% were used adaptive coping strategies in relation to physical needs whereas only 4.8% were used maladaptive coping strategies in relation to psychosocial needs. *Discussion:* This present study is supported by various other similar studies. It was found that employed mothers had more stress than unemployed mothers in meeting physical, psychosocial and academic needs of their children. Majority of employed and unemployed mothers used adaptive coping strategies in relation to fulfilling various needs of their children. *Conclusion:* Employed and unemployed mothers need to get more awareness regarding stress which they undergo while dealing with various aspects of day-to-day life especially in meeting the needs of their school going children. And there was a need to enhance more adaptive coping strategies and must reduce maladaptive coping strategies.

Key words: Stress; Coping; School Going Children; Employed Mothers; Unemployed Mothers and School.

Introduction

Everyone experience various kinds of stress one time or the other throughout the life. Selye (1967), often called the "Father of stress" defines stress as a

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state manifested by a specific syndrome which consists of all the non-specifically induced changes within a biological system.

Coping could be defined as “things people do to master or tolerate and reduce stress [1]. These are the person’s cognitive and behavioral effort to manage i.e., minimize, master or tolerate specific internal or external demands. Each person perceives and reacts to a stressful situation differently depending on his/her personal characteristics, abilities and experiences, and his/her external support system. The stress response, which was described as flight or fight response may be elicited by real potential or imagined threats leading to variety and multiple pattern of hormonal changes.

In this modern society both men and women experience various patterns of stress. The stress faced by married employed women, commonly referred to as a dual stress has drawn the attention of the researchers [2].

As compared to the employed mothers unemployed mothers get more time to look after their children and family so that the child is expected to get timely attention and care required for their physical and mental development. Recent studies shows that working women still do the majority of the house work with child care taking priority over other chores. Many sacrifice leisure time and sleep to manage needs of their children [3].

The problem faced by the mothers who are working badly affect their health causing malnutrition, depression, fatigue, abortion etc. which leads to poor care of the children and are subjected to stress towards child care [4].

Methodology

A quantitative approach, non-experimental comparative survey design was adopted. A total 100 samples (50 employed mothers and 50 unemployed mothers) were selected by using non-probable purposive sampling techniques, the target population were mothers of school going children and the accessible population were those who are in Nagaur city. The questionnaires were prepared under two sections. Section ‘A’ and section B. Section A consists of socio-demographic variables such as age, Religion, educational status, occupation, income of the family and number of school going children[5]. Section B was again divided in to ‘a’ and ‘b’ parts. Part ‘a’ includes mothers stress related to the physical, psychological and academic needs of the child. Part ‘b’ coping strategies used by the mother related to the physical, psychosocial and academic needs of the children [6]. All the mothers of the school going children between the age group of 5-7 years were included in the study. The data was collected after getting the ethical clearance and permission from the concerned authority of the school and informed consent from the mothers. Survey techniques were adopted and self-administered questionnaire was provided to each mother for the duration of 20-30 minutes. And data was compiled and tabulated for descriptive and inferential statistics.

Result

Major findings of the study revealed that employed mothers had more stress than unemployed mothers in relation to physical, psychosocial and academic needs of children.

Table 1: Distribution of mothers of school going children in relation to the stressors

S. No	Stressors	Employed Mothers (%)					Unemployed Mothers (%)				
		(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1	Physical	36.6	27.6	20.8	5.9	9.1	75	11.7	6.8	2.5	4.0
2	Psychosocial	27	30.6	28.4	10.4	3.6	74.6	13.2	6.4	0.8	-
3	Academic	19.6	36.8	24.4	7.6	11.6	82.6	10.2	4.4	2.8	-

0-Never, 1-Occasionally, 2-Sometimes, 3-Most of the times and 4-Always

Table 2: Comparison of mothers of school going children in relation to the stressors

S. No	Stressors	Employed Mothers Mean	SD	Unemployed Mothers Mean	SD	t	Significance
1	Physical	15.9	6.19	5.96	5.56	08.42	p<0.001
2	psychosocial	06.6	2.72	1.56	2.09	10.33	p<0.001
3	Academic	07.6	3.20	1.50	2.00	11.40	p<0.001
	Total	30.08	8.62	9.04	8.28	12.43	p<0.001

Percentage distribution of stressors among employed mothers of school going children showed that 9.1% had always stress in relation to physical needs, 3.6% in relation to psychosocial needs and 11.6% in relation to academic needs of children.

Among unemployed mothers majority (82.6%) had no stress in relation to academic needs of the child, whereas, only 4.0 % always had stress in meeting the physical needs of their children but not in psychosocial and academic needs.

Comparison of employed and unemployed mothers in relation to three stressors revealed that there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$) among three stressors among employed and unemployed mothers. So in the present study, the above findings (Table 2) depicted that, employed mothers had more stress than the unemployed mothers.

Most of the employed and unemployed mothers used adaptive coping strategies in meeting the physical, psychosocial and academic needs of their children.

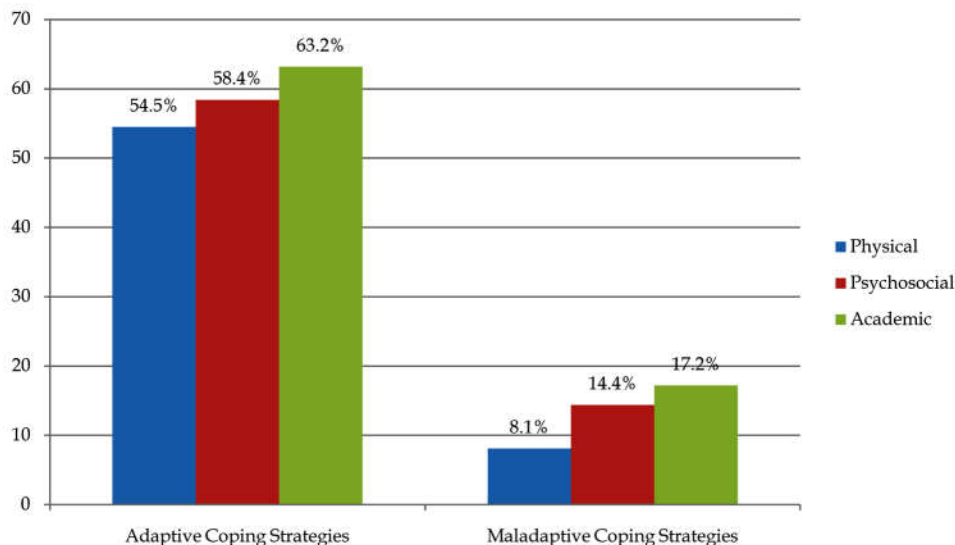


Fig. 1: Coping strategies adapted by employed mothers of school going children

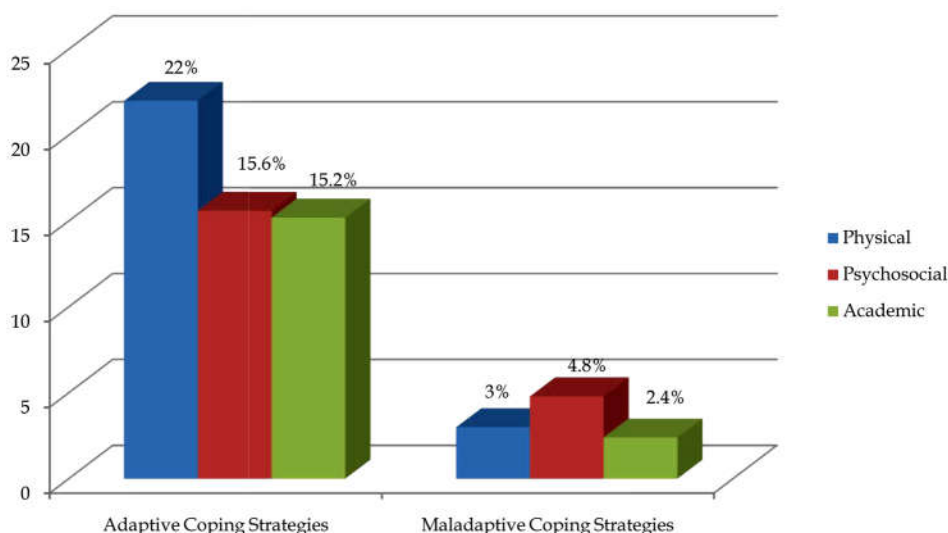


Fig. 2: Coping strategies adapted by unemployed mothers of school going children

Coping strategies scores (Figure-1) of employed mothers of school going children reveals that, 63.2% of employed mothers used adaptive coping strategies in meeting academic needs and 14.4% were used maladaptive coping strategies in fulfilling

psychosocial needs of the child.

Among the unemployed mothers 22% were used adaptive coping strategies in relation to physical needs whereas only 4.8% were used maladaptive coping strategies in relation to psychosocial needs (Figure-2).

Discussion

Percentage distribution of stressors among employed mothers of school going children showed that 9.1% had always stress in relation to physical needs, 3.6% in relation to psychosocial needs and 11.6% in relation to academic needs of children. Among unemployed mothers majority (82.6%) had no stress in relation to academic needs of the child, whereas, only 4.0% always had stress in meeting the physical needs of their children but not in psychosocial and academic needs.

Most of the employed and unemployed mothers used adaptive coping strategies in meeting the physical, psychosocial and academic needs of their children. 63.2% of employed mothers used adaptive coping strategies in meeting academic needs and 14.4% were used maladaptive coping strategies in fulfilling psychosocial needs of the child. Among the unemployed mothers 22% were used adaptive coping strategies in relation to physical needs whereas only 4.8% were used maladaptive coping strategies in relation to psychosocial needs.

Employed mothers had more stress than unemployed mothers in meeting physical, psychosocial and academic needs of their children. Majority of employed and unemployed mothers used adaptive coping strategies in relation to fulfilling various needs of their children.

This study was consistent with similar descriptive studies,

- (1) The investigation was conducted to examine the stress among the working and non-working women. It was hypothesized that the working women has more stress than the non-working women. In order to verify the above hypothesis a sample of 90 women were taken. From which working women (N= 45) and non-working women (N= 45). The major findings of the study revealed that, mean and standard deviation scores of the married working women were 40.47 and 10.21 respectively. The mean and standard deviation scores of the married non-working women were 29.34 and 7.87 respectively. The 't' scores obtained for the mean difference is 4.46 which was very highly significant at 0.001 levels. This clearly implicated that the married working women had significantly very higher level of stress than married non-working women [7].
- (2) A study was conducted to identify the relationship between parenting stress and employment status among 72 employed and 48 unemployed mothers on environmental, child, and personal variables.

Results suggest that the level of parenting stress is not related to the employment status alone. However the factors contributing to reported stress do vary with employment status [8].

- (3) A comparative study has been conducted on working and nonworking women, in order to examine the relationship between stress and working status. Data were gathered from 540 randomly selected women living in Turkey. Face-to-face interview method was used to collect data. It has been determined that total stress score of working women is higher compared to nonworking women and there is a significant difference between women's working status and total scores. Working women have high levels of stress than nonworking women [9].

Conclusion

In this study, it was concluded that, employed mothers had more stress than unemployed mothers in meeting physical, psychosocial and academic needs of their children. Majority of employed and unemployed mothers used adaptive coping strategies in relation to fulfilling various needs of their children.

Employed and unemployed mothers need to get more awareness regarding stress which they undergo while dealing with various aspects of day-to-day life especially in meeting the needs of their school going children. And there was a need to enhance more adaptive coping strategies to cope up with stress experienced while meeting the needs of their school going children and must reduce maladaptive coping strategies.

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