



Life Satisfaction And Academic Achievement In Children With Single Working Parent And Both Working Parents: A Comparative Study

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Abstract- *The economic situation today is reeling under the aftermath of a global downturn. The meltdown has adversely affected the global financial system, the magnitude being larger in the developed nations. Amplifying the problem at hand is the rate of inflation in India which has been increasing dangerously. The fatal combination of these two factors has led to a sharp incline in the cost of living. The present investigation was being conducted to see whether in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh, India this new trend of both parents holding jobs to sustain their lifestyle was taking a toll on their children in academic achievement and life satisfaction. It was hypothesized that the two groups would be significantly different on life satisfaction and academic achievement. A sample of 80 students (40 girls and 40 boys) between 14-17 years were taken, wherein, 20 girls and 20 boys were from nuclear families with working father only; and 20 girls and 20 boys were from nuclear families with both working parents. The sample was administered the Satisfaction With Life Scale and the emerging construct of life satisfaction (Pavot, W, & Diener, E. 2008). The average score of the last three examinations were taken as the score for academic achievement. The socio-economic status of the group had been controlled. Only nuclear families were taken. The data was analysed using the t-ratio. It was expected that the results obtained would indicate a significant difference between the children from the one working parent working group and both parents working group when compared on the variables being considered. The study hints at the ironic circumstance of parents having to choose between quality time with children as opposed to maintaining a secure financial milieu and the need to find appropriate balanced strategies.*

Many families require both parents to work for financial sustainability. However, there are many families where one parent remains home to care for the kids. If your family has the financial flexibility for only one parent to work, and that arrangement aligns with your family values, that structure can work well. Various researches have pointed out that the family structure and parents' working status affect the welfare of the children. The well-being of children depends on many factors, most importantly, the kind of parental care they receive in their growing up years. Stress and life satisfaction of children depend on the kind of emotional support they get through these ages. With changing economic times, families have become nuclear and both parents have taken to full time jobs, leaving them with little time to tend to their children. Eventually, the children's academic achievement is also affected if parents do not give proper attention to their children.

Life Satisfaction- Life satisfaction is a measure of a person's overall well-being, assessed in terms of mood, relationship satisfaction, achieved goals, self-concepts, and self-perceived ability to cope with life. Life satisfaction involves a favourable attitude towards one's life-rather than an assessment of current feelings. Life satisfaction has been measured in relation to economic standing, degree of education, experiences, residence, and other factors. Life satisfaction is a key part of subjective well-being. Many factors influence subjective well-being and life satisfaction. Socio-demographic factors include gender, age, marital status, income, and education. Psychosocial factors include health and illness, functional ability, activity level, and

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social relationships. Life-satisfaction is the measurement of the overall conditions of existence as derived from a comparison of one's desires to one's actual attainment. (Gilman, Rich; Huebner, Scott, Summer 2003)

Academic Achievement- Academic Achievement is the progress made towards the goal of acquiring educational skills, materials, and knowledge, usually spanning a variety of disciplines. It refers to achievement in academic settings rather than general acquisition of knowledge in non-academic settings. Academic achievement is commonly measured through examinations or continuous assessments but there is no general agreement on how it is best evaluated or which aspects are most important procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts. Furthermore, there are inconclusive results over which individual factors successfully predict academic performance, elements such as test anxiety, environment, motivation, and emotions require consideration when developing models of school achievement. (Annie Ward et. al., 1996)

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY- With changing times, the social and economic lifestyles are also changing. Joint families are converting into nuclear ones and housewives are paving ways to become working women. With the changing economic and social scenario, the welfare of the children is being affected. 14- 17 years is a tender age. Adolescence is the period of transition between childhood and adulthood. It includes some big changes-to the body, and to the way a young person relates to the world. The many physical, sexual, cognitive, social, and emotional changes that happen during this time can bring anticipation and anxiety for both children and their families. Understanding what to expect at different stages can promote healthy development throughout adolescence and into early adulthood. But to keep up with the new economic demands, both parents are working today and as such children now come back to locked houses and/ or with their servants waiting to give them lunch. This study was done to compare the well being of children belonging to families where both parents were working to those where only one was working.

HYPOTHESES-

1. It was expected that children with both working parents (father and mother) would have a lower score on life satisfaction being in comparison to children with one working parent (father only).
2. It was expected that children with both working parents (father and mother) would have a lower score on academic achievement as compared to children with one working parent (father only)

METHODOLOGY- Sample- The present study consisted of 50 children from nuclear families with one working parent (father only) and 50 from nuclear families with both working parents- father and mother both (25 girls and 25 boys in each group respectively) in the age group of 14-17 years.

Tests and Tools- The following tests and tools were employed:

1. Satisfaction With Life Scale and the emerging construct of life satisfaction (Pavot, W, & Diener, E. 2008).
2. The average score of the last three examinations were taken as the score for academic performance

Statistical Analysis- The t-ratios were calculated between the children from nuclear families with one working parent and nuclear families with both working parents on variables of life satisfaction and academic achievement.

RESULTS- Table 1: Showing mean, standard deviation and t-ratio between children with one working parent (father only) and with both working parents (father and mother) on life satisfaction and academic achievement.

Variable	One working parent		Both working parents		t-ratio
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Life Satisfaction	23.90	6.01	24.20	6.86	0.881
Academic Achievement	42.74	4.83	37.55	4.01	6.25**

**=significant at 0.01 level



DISCUSSION- The purpose of the current study was to compare children with one working parent and children with both working parents on life satisfaction and academic achievement.

As shown by the results in table 1, the t-value for life satisfaction is not significant. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is not accepted. No significant differences have been found between children with one working parent and children with both working parents on life satisfaction in the present study. The review of literature has shown mixed studies to support the findings of the present study. Long working mothers tend to have less time to monitor their children's behaviour and their school performance. They also fail to provide the much-needed emotional support. The work- family conflict of the parents affects the children's life satisfaction in the long run (Jacobs & Gerson, 2005; Stone, 2007).

The studies in the past have also shown that working mothers generate extra monetary sources for the family so that the educational needs of the children are fulfilled (Bianchi & Heckman, 2000). Guo and Harris (2000) found that parental stress about financial tensions is reduced and this tends to have a positive effect on the parent-child relationship enhancing the child's well being and satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2 which stated that children with both working parents would have a lower score on academic achievement as compared to children with one working parent has been supported by the findings of the present study. It is very important to understand the factors determining school achievement among children because early achievement is linked with later achievement in school (Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000).

Researches in the past have shown a link between parental school involvement and academic outcomes (Jeynes, 2005; Hill & Tyson, 2009). Working mothers are unable to contribute much time to children's teaching which consequently affects children's academic achievement. Youn, Leon, and Lee (2011) investigated the relationship between maternal work hours, parental involvement in school, and students' learning growth in school. Thus, children with one working parent are high on academic outcomes and achievement as compared to children with both working parents.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS- In the present study, no significant difference has been found in life satisfaction between children with one working parent and children with both working parents. In this modern and competitive era, children need a lot of resources. Working mothers get additional income to the family, which helps the children to fulfil all their needs. On the other hand, when a mother is at home with the child, that lends a lot of emotional support to the child. So, in both cases, the child's satisfaction is there, leading to no significant differences in life satisfaction.

However, in academic performance, it was seen that children with both working parents are not able to cope with academic pressure. They are not being supervised properly, which in turn, affects their academic performance drastically. The parents need to take preventive measures that if both of them go to work, they should try to spend time with their children and take interest in their academic initiatives and pursuits. Effective supervision is needed to develop good academic skills. Even the teachers and counsellors need to develop effective intervention strategies to counsel parents to be able to manage work and children both effectively so that the academic performance of students is not compromised in the long run.

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