

CHILD REARING AND SOCIALIZATION PRACTICES AMONG WORKING AND NON-WORKING MOTHERS IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The present study was designed to investigate the differences in child-rearing and socialization practices in controlling dimension employed by working and non-working mothers in Karachi. The sample of study consisted of 60 mothers with age ranging from 28-45 years with a minimum qualification of graduation. Maternal control was measured by Control Scale developed by Rohner,(2000). In addition to this scale a qualitative mode of inquiry was used and an indigenous interview was conducted to explore more emic aspect of analysis.. T-test was used to compute the mean difference and results showed significant differences on control scale i.e. non-working mothers attempt to exert more control as compared to working mothers ($t=2.61,df=58, p<.01$). Quantitative and qualitative mode of analysis revealed that non-working impose more parental control and use directives to discipline behavior of their children as compared to working mothers.

INTRODUCTION

“Socialization is the process by which the new born child is moulded into the culture of his/her group and thus becomes an accepted member of the society” (Sinha, 1962). It appears appropriate to quote Kagitcibasi (1996) who argues: “the psychologist interested in studying within traditional family and society usually lacks the appropriate theoretical orientation for this task”. The author further observes that psychological theories of child development based on the western

nuclear family are too individualistic in their approach to deal with the traditional context. For example, `autonomy`, is a core value within individualistic Western society, therefore, more emphasis in that society is put on the independence training, responsibilities, self-sufficiency and achievement. In the contrast to autonomy, conformity is the basic concept in socialization within traditional society. Gordon (1960) defined `conformity` as doing what is accepted and proper, and being a conformist (cited in Haque, 1983). Haque (1978) found

`obedience` respectfulness` `submissiveness` `dependency` to be essential components of conformity.

Pakistan is a developing country where religious component is dominant. The religious and social taboos are very strong which result in producing a lot of guilt feelings. Clinical psychologist Ahmad (1993) holds that due to strong super-ego development, people in Pakistan fall victim to mental illness. All over Pakistan a male child is generally preferred and the birth of girl child is even regretted by the parents themselves. A few studies report on the cross-cultural study in Pakistan involving Muslim children (Haque, 1982) for example, reports differential socialization practices for boys and girls. The Pakistani data (Haque, 1982; Williams, Best, Haque, Pandey & Verma, 1982; Haque & Malik, 1994) consistently present well differentiated psychological characteristics associated with male and female sex. For example, Haque (1982) in his study of university students (young adult and young children) found "strong, aggressive, adventurous, independent etc." to be male-associated stereotypes, which

have 70% endorsements from both the groups.

Minturn and Lambert (1964) in their six cultures studies have highlighted a large number of behaviors that seem to characterize the Indian child, for example, sparing use of positive reinforcement and frequent use of "don't" in guiding behavior. An eminent Pakistani psychologist, Zaidi (1975) raised the question: How do we inculcate discipline in children? How do we make children do things in the right way? Answering the question, Prof. Zaidi says, "One of the typical and most frequent methods is to use negative reinforcement. There is great emphasis on teaching positive virtues. When he does well or brings good results we only pat him on the back. That is all the reward he gets. There is hardly any value put on positive virtues, for their own sake. We do well because someone will be pleased with that. So our attempt is really to be on the better side of the law, and on the better side of elders so that they are pleased. For example, there are many officers in Pakistan where, when the officers are gone the clerks stop working but when the

officer is present they all continue working because all that they wish is to impress the officer that they are working. Therefore, more emphasis is put on appearances, or appearing to be good or deception”.

According to Rohner (2000) “Parental Control is a bipolar dimension with low/lax control (permissiveness) defining one end of the continuum and strictness (restrictive control) defining the other. Conceptually, control refers to the extent to which parents place limits or restrictions on children’s behavior and the extent to which parents use directives and demands requiring compliance. In effects, parental control refers to parental prescription (“you shall...”) and proscription (“you shall not...”) Parental control also includes the extent to which parents insist on compliance with their prescription and proscriptions” (Rohner, 2000).

In the present investigation we were particularly interested in finding answers to the following questions:

1. Is there any difference in the way children are raised in families of non-working mothers compared with those

raised in families of working mothers?

2. Does any difference exist between maternal permissiveness-strictness dimension of child rearing among working and non-working mothers?

METHOD

Sample

The present study was based on a sample of 60 mothers (i.e Working Mothers, n=32; Non-working mothers, n=28). The age of participants ranged from 28 years to 45 years. All the mothers were selected on the basis of their working status. Mothers of both the groups were educated and belonged to middle class families. A total of 78% of the working Mothers stated that they preferred to work because of their poor economic status, 20% said that they preferred to work rather than to be housewives. 2% admitted being drawn to work for both reasons.

Measures

The first instrument used to elicit responses about controlling techniques was Parental Control Scale (Rohner, 2000) designed to measure individual’s perceptions of parental control (permissiveness-strictness). The control

scale contains 13 items. For the parental control scale alphas ranged from 0.66 to 0.81 with a mean alpha of 0.73. Additionally interview for exploring child-rearing practices in the control dimension was also conducted for this study. The questions asked were about autonomy / control dimension and dependence / independence dimension and family demands for obedience and sanctions used by mothers on the child.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was conducted using the SPSS programme (version 12.00). T-test was computed to examine the differences in level of maternal control imposed by working and non-working mothers.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results on maternal control scale are provided in Table 1.

Table-1
Descriptive data and t-test results on maternal control scale

Total control score	Working mothers (n=32)	Non-working Mothers (n=28)	T	P
	Mean/S.D	Mean/S.D		
Mother referent	38.95/3.72	42.50/2.67	2.61	.01

df = 58; p<.01

The Table-1 shows the Means, standard deviations and t-values for maternal control scores of working and non-working mothers. The mean values, indicated that Non-working mother usually try to control their children’s behavior. They are demanding and directive whereas working mother’s control scores fall under the category of moderate control. According to Rohner (2000) “the scores in the moderate control range signify that mother’s sometimes or often try to control the children’s behaviors. That is parents are flexible in their control, insisting on compliance with parental wishes in some contexts but allowing their children considerable latitude in regulating their own activities in other contexts”.

Table-2
Summary of mothers’ interview responses

Responses	Working Mothers n=32	Non-working mothers n=28
Autonomy	86%	18%
Control	24%	82%
Dependence	22%	43%
Independence	78%	57%
Demands for obedience	96%	98%
Sanctions used by mother	82%	92%

The interview responses of mothers were analyzed in terms of percentages (see table 2). The question asked about autonomy /control dimension showed: 86% of working mothers allow their children some autonomy and only 24% working mothers impose parental control. The questions regarding dependence / independence dimension were as: 78% working mothers inculcate independence training in order to meet the situational demands that children of working mothers may have to face in their absence, whereas 22% of working mothers preferred traditional dependence training in child-rearing. The third dimension explored during the interview was demands for obedience. For this dimension of discipline almost all the working-mothers (i.e. 96%) put their efforts to obtain obedience from their children. To achieve this they use sanctions on children in order to become well adjusted in Pakistani cultural context, specifically, 82% working mothers use sanctions on their children. The interview data as analyzed for non-working mothers revealed that in autonomy-control dimension 18% allowed autonomy

whereas 82% preferred control dimension; for dependence-independence dimension 43% preferred dependence whereas 57% mothers endorsed independence training. Regarding demands for obedience 98% of mothers put their efforts to obtain obedience from their children; for sanctions used by mothers 92% mothers apply this technique to discipline their children.

It is important to mention that kind of discipline techniques adopted by parents are consistent with the prevailing socio-cultural norms in that society as well as situational demands of parenthood. Therefore, the socialization process could be understood with reference to a particular socio-cultural context. Zaidi (1975) reported that: "There may be some variation but the general pattern emphasis is only negative reinforcement. A child is punished if he is naughty, the parents threaten him or put him in the bathroom or in a closed room. If the mother is lenient, she may threaten the child with punishment by his father. Thus, Pakistani parents discipline the child by punishing or threate-

ning him". Haque (1987) reported that: "in Pakistan, strict disciplinary measures are being used by parents in regulating their son's behavior when they are disobedient". According to Peisner,(1989) "Parental control in socialization is closely related to values and goals of socialization, which show variation across cultures and through time. A key factor here is the desired level of dependence-independence in child socialization in that culture (Kagitcibasi, 1996).

Keeping in view the limitation of this research it is suggested that there is an immense need for developing an indigenous parental control questionnaire which can fully explore the optimal level of autonomy-control as well as dependence-independence construct in Pakistani cultural context. A fully developed indigenous parental control scale may enable researchers, educationists, parents and other family members in understanding the cultural context of the problem under investigation.

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