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Comparative Analysis of Gender Socialization Parenting Practices among Working and Non-working Mothers in Lahore, Pakistan

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Abstract

The present study focused on analyzing the differences in gender socialization parenting practices among working and non-working mothers from Lahore, Pakistan. The sample of this study was based on 250 mothers with an age range from 31-60 years and educational level from Primary to Masters degree. Alabama Parenting Questionnaire and a self-constructed Gender Socialization Parenting Scale (GSPS) were used to analyze gender socialization parenting practices among mothers. Following the positivist approach, a cross-sectional survey was conducted, and a multistage stratified random sampling technique was used to collect data. Data analysis was conducted using the MANOVA statistical technique and descriptive statistics (frequency/percentage) that revealed notable differences in gender socialization parenting practices between working and non-working mothers. The analysis showed that working mothers enforce gender socialization parenting practices like social concerns, gender equality, involvement, and positive parenting, whereas non-working mothers tend to use 'corporal punishment' as a gender socialization parenting practice to socialize their children. The results highlighted the significant role of mothers in the social development of children, especially regarding gender norms and social behaviours.

Keywords: Gender, Socialization, Parenting Practices, Working Mothers, Non-Working Mothers.

Introduction

Parenting is a process carried out by parents to treat, communicate with, monitor, and support their children (Young, Smith & Johnson, 2022). Parenting also has a significant role in the life of every child because, from birth, children receive information from their parents. Therefore, parents are expected to teach their children how to deal with people and situations and adapt to a good standard of living by showing examples of responsibility, love, sharing, and caring (Agrawal, Sharma & Kumar, 2017). The notion of parenting has transformed, where mothers are no longer solely tasked with caring for children and maintaining the household; they are also

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expected to work to support their family income level (Hess, Yand & Neimand, 2020). In this evolving landscape, a mother plays a crucial and pivotal role in nurturing her children's growth and development. A mother's responsibility is to care for and educate her children, ensuring that their personalities develop in line with their capabilities and that they grow into responsible adults (Mislaini, Hoktaviandri & Muliati, 2020). Therefore, maternal contribution plays an important role during a child's independence development. The way a mother interacts with her child can have both positive and negative effects that can last a lifetime (Manimekalai, Post, Fellow & Geetha, 2019). Working mothers are those who balance raising their children at home while also holding jobs outside to provide for their families through goods or services (Jannah & Chandra, 2020). Generally, it has been observed that non-working mothers focus on their family (children and spouse), they prefer to stay at home to have quality time with their family members. Their preferences allow them to get engaged in activities to manage their children's behaviour and to manage their dietary habits and above all support them in their physical growth and mental development (Bardosono et al., 2018).

Mother's involvement is considered very vital in creating their child's gender identity and helps them to follow the path of independence. According to several studies, non-working mothers have different parenting methods and techniques, which affect a child's development significantly (Hoffman & Youngblade, 1999). For instance, working mothers may seek assistance and depend on childcare services to give their children full attention and to help them with their education and other requirements. Whereas, non-working mothers have ample time to look after their children and can have deeper engagement in bringing up their children (Rajgariah, Singh & Patel, 2021; Matias, Lopez & Gupta, 2022). Similarly, it has been highlighted that mothers have a pivotal role in shaping a child's personality and managing their traits such as attitude, moral character, excelling abilities and skills, conduct, and regulation (Dixit, 2007). Additionally, the bond between a mother and her child is highly important and sensitive as the mother nurtures her child's psyche and overall development (Anil, Bindu & Bhat, 2021). On the other hand, studies have shown that children of working mothers are more self-reliant and independent as compared to those of non-working mothers. Thus, it indicates that the maternal role affects the nature of a child (Saini, 2005). Moreover, Azizah et al. (2022) argued that the employment of mothers has a positive impact on a child's personality, behaviour, and psychological development and affects a child's independence.

In conclusion, the mother's role has a direct influence on a child's life. Parenting practices of working and non-working mothers affect children's gender and social development, which shapes their children's overall personality. Studies identify that different parenting methods are adopted by working and non-working mothers, where non-working mothers have an edge over working mothers, as they do not face the challenge of giving proper time and attention to their children. Despite these

differences, mothers do have a very significant role in nurturing their children and shaping their overall personality socially, morally, physically, and psychologically along with their long-term social well-being. Mothers' involvement in bringing up their children is a very sensitive process because mothers tend to bring the best out of their children by guiding them and adjusting their behaviours and intelligence. Therefore, it is required to delve further into dynamics in terms of a child's social behaviour and response, which will contribute to the understanding of how a mother can contribute to nurturing their children in the best manner to have better outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical background of the present study is based on the following theories:

Social Learning Theory: According to this theory children are very keen and reflexive learners and they develop their gender in response to external stimuli based on incentives, rewards, or punishments from parents and people around them. Children have the opportunity to learn and practice gender-based activities at home through their elders such as hobbies, and models of gender behaviour. Children are very quick learners and they learn masculine and feminine traits by observing the gender difference between parents. Since gender roles are very significant now, therefore, the role of bread earner and housewife is obvious and almost everyone is aware of it. Learning direct instructions, effective experience, and modeling is based on how people learn about actions based on gender response and gender roles. Based on this theory, children can learn both positive and negative gender aspects and inappropriate behaviours (Burn 1996; Wharton 2005). This theory helps people to understand social expectations of their gender and normally people prefer to choose to follow society's gender norms.

Social Role Theory: Developed by Eagly (1987), Social Role Theory states that patterns of behaviour of people as well as their expectations depending on the roles they perform in society, gender and context being the most defining ones. In the case of working and non-working mothers, this theory enables us to understand the interactions between expectations and practices, more specifically, how societal views shape the parenting approaches of these mothers. It is more likely that working mothers, who need to combine their jobs with family life (Eagly & Wood, 2012), will be more oriented towards independence, achievement, and structure in child owing, whereas non-working mothers are often more seen as the primary caregivers and as such, their expectations are more nurturing, inclusive, and seeking emotional support as traditional mothers. In families with working mothers, children may socialize to be self-sufficient, self-assured, and flexible, while in families with non-working mothers, children may be encouraged to be attached, dependent, and more "traditional". Differences in these practices of socialization are very important because children tend to absorb the place of the mother in the family and society in general (Katz &

Ksansnak, 1994). In the context of comparative gender socialization parenting practices, social learning theory suggests that both working and non-working mothers develop their parenting styles based on the behaviours they observe around them. Working mothers frequently face a range of societal norms in their workplaces, which may lead them to embrace progressive parenting styles. Conversely, social role theory suggests that societal expectations about gender roles shape behaviour. Non-working mothers, who are typically seen as prioritizing home life, might adopt traditional maternal roles, resulting in the use of more conventional parenting practices, like stricter discipline, following cultural expectations of motherhood.

Research Objectives (RO)

The research objectives of the study were:

- **RO_1**. To compare the difference in socialization parenting practices among working and non-working mothers based on involvement, positive parenting, supervision, discipline, corporal punishment, gender equality, role model, and social concerns;

- **RO_2**. To examine the impact of maternal employment on socialization parenting practices.

Research Hypotheses (H)

The following are the hypotheses of the present study:

H_1: There is a significant difference in parenting practices of involvement, positive parenting, supervision, inconsistent discipline, and corporal punishment among working and non-working mothers;

H_2: There is a significant difference in gender socialization parenting practices of role models, social concerns, and gender equality among working and non-working mothers;

Significance of the Study

Examining the impact of different maternal parenting methods (working and non-working mothers) is very crucial because gender socialization is based on these practices as they help in shaping a child's attitude, behaviour, and personality dynamics (Kalil, Haskins & Chesters, 2012). Since mothers manage productive and reproductive roles, therefore their approaches and priorities can be different as per their nurturing role, being a working and non-working mother. Conducting further research on these practices can provide insights into mothers' productive and reproductive role, which impacts children's emotional, social, gender, and

psychological development. Such studies can also help in establishing understanding regarding policies and programs to design better parental involvement in taking care of their children and providing them with a better and healthier family environment to deal with the challenges encountered by the mothers. This study aims to cover both parents (working and non-working) and caregivers in creating more effective socialized practices to achieve better results for children.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study is cultural preference, which may prevent it from exactly representing various socio-economic groups, thus affecting its generalizability. The study also focused on considering other important factors such as the roles of fathers, family dynamics, and wider societal norms in this perspective longitudinal study may give comprehensive results to analyze gender socialization parenting practices among working and non-working mothers in Pakistani society.

Review of the Literature

The local and transnational literature on socialization parenting practices among working and non-working mothers was critically analyzed to study the differential impact of mothers' employment on a child's gender development. This analysis highlighted how varying maternal roles, whether employed or homemakers affect children's socialization. The study by Imam (2012) observed the differences in socialization parenting practices, particularly looking at the controlling behaviours of working versus non-working mothers in Karachi. The research was based on a sample of 60 mothers aged between 28 and 45 years, all of whom had at least a graduate education. It was assessed that maternal control using the Control Scale and an interview designed to capture local perspectives. The results revealed notable differences: mothers who didn't work outside the home tended to exert more control over their children ($t = 2.61$, $df = 58$, $p < 0.01$). A deeper analysis showed that these mothers were more likely to use direct commands and authoritative discipline methods. This study offers valuable insight into how a mother's employment status shapes parenting styles and approaches to raising children.

Bhalerao and Ujagare (2021) conducted a study to explore how working and non-working mothers differ in their approaches to discipline and child-rearing for school-aged children between 2 and 10 years old. They interviewed 150 mothers, ensuring an equal balance between both groups and used a combination of structured and open-ended questions. The study found notable differences in parenting styles. Working mothers tended to have higher expectations for their children, with 87% admitting to raising their voices when their children misbehaved and enforcing punishments for mistakes. In contrast, non-working mothers were more focused on encouraging positive behaviour, with 97% actively motivating their children and 95% rewarding

them for good conduct. Another key finding was that working mothers often received less support from their families, including their husbands and in-laws, in managing household responsibilities. These results highlight how a mother's employment status influences her parenting style and emphasize the importance of family support in raising children.

Kumari et al. (2021) conducted a study to explore how working and non-working mothers in Jamuhar village, Rohtas, understand socialization practices. The research focused on how different demographic factors shape their knowledge of child-rearing and influence their parenting approaches. Using a descriptive research method and purposive sampling, the study gathered data from 100 mothers—50 working and 50 non-working—through a self-designed questionnaire. The findings revealed that working mothers, most of whom were employed in the private sector, had different levels of child-rearing knowledge compared to non-working mothers, who were primarily homemakers. Differences in age, education, and family income played a significant role in shaping their understanding and parenting practices. The study underscored the importance of maternal knowledge in fostering children's physical, intellectual, and psychosocial development, emphasizing the need for well-informed parenting to help children reach their full potential (Ward, Hisley & Kennedy, 2016, p.843).

Abu Taleb (2025) explored how Jordanian mothers' employment status influences their parenting approaches and their children's social behaviours. The study involved 132 mothers of kindergarten-aged children in Amman and found notable differences in parenting styles between working and non-working mothers, with employed mothers demonstrating more positive practices. However, the research did not find a significant link between a mother's job status and her child's social behaviour. This suggests that while employment may shape parenting methods, it does not necessarily impact how children interact socially. The study highlights the need for further research into factors like marital status, child gender, and whether the mother works full-time or part-time to gain a deeper understanding of how employment influences child development. Similarly, Rani & Rafi (2021) conducted a comparative study on socialization practices among working and non-working mothers in rural Varanasi. Their research aimed to identify differences in parenting styles between these two groups and examine how demographic factors may play a role. Employing a non-experimental research design, data were gathered from 60 mothers (30 working and 30 non-working) with children aged 5-12 years. The findings revealed that non-working mothers displayed greater child-rearing practices, with 90% showing good practices compared to 66.6% of working mothers. Nevertheless, the study found no significant correlation between child-rearing practices and demographic variables. The paired t-test indicated a statistically significant difference in child-rearing practices, with non-working mothers generally providing more nurturing and comprehensive care. The study emphasized the importance of health education and

awareness programs aimed at improving child-rearing practices, especially for working mothers, to support children's health and overall development.

The studies reviewed reveal important insights into how maternal employment affects parenting practices and children's development; however, there are still several gaps to address regarding gender formation among children through the parenting practices of mothers. Firstly, while the research examines the differences between working and non-working mothers, it often overlooks other influencing factors such as the quality of parental involvement, socio-economic status, and cultural influences on parenting styles. Furthermore, there is a lack of investigation into the long-term effects of a mother's working status on her child's cognitive and emotional development.

Research Methodology

The present study is based on a positivist approach and is quantitative. Through cross-sectional survey designs, the differences in gender socialization parenting practices were analyzed among working and non-working mothers.

Population and Sample: The population of the present research consisted of households from Lahore, Pakistan, the second major and most populated city and the provincial capital of Punjab. The sample for the current study was calculated using the formula of Yamane (1973), which is based on N=250 families and selected including n=250 mothers (115 working mothers and 135 non-working mothers) selected by a multi-stage stratified random sampling procedure.

Sampling Procedure: In the first phase, six strata of the city of Lahore were selected; in the second phase, twelve schools were chosen from six strata (two schools from each stratum), one girl's higher secondary school, and one boy's higher secondary school, selected randomly from the list of Govt. higher secondary schools from Department of Secondary Education of Lahore. In the final step, based on the study's inclusion criteria and a sample of mothers with children, both sons and daughters between the ages of 12 and 18 were chosen.

Data Collection Instruments: Two scales were used to collect data. First, the Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (Frick, 1991) was used with the author's prior permission. The questionnaire was based on five sub-scales from the extended version of the scale. The questionnaire had the following subscales: 'involvement', 'positive parenting', 'supervision', 'inconsistent discipline', and 'corporal punishment'. Mothers rated selected items on a 5-point Likert scale from 1-Never to 5-Always, taking into account their children, sons, and daughters aged 12 to 18 years. The APQ scale has sufficient internal consistency (average reliability) with Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.68$. Data was also gathered using a self-constructed Gender Socialization Parenting Scale (GSPS). Its 21 items are divided into three subscales: social concerns, role models, and gender equality, with seven items in each. Mothers

rated each item on a 5-point Likert scale of 1 completely agree to 5 disagree based on their children, including sons and daughters between the age groups 12 to 18. The Cronbach's α 0.76 indicates the GSPS scale has average internal consistency.

Procedure: The school's higher authorities provide permission to collect information from female teachers (mothers) and mothers of students. The respondents were also assured that their personal information would be kept anonymous and that the data's aim was solely educational. Ethical concerns were also taken into account during the daily collection of surveys, and participants were thanked for their speedy contribution and patience in sharing their information. Female teachers (working mothers) with children aged 12 to 18 were chosen. Similarly, students (12-18 years) were selected and requested to complete a questionnaire/scale from their mothers (non-working). Questionnaires were collected daily by visiting the participants in their homes and houses.

Data Analysis: Mean differences of four dependent variables were tested using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), followed by univariate ANOVA.

Descriptive of Demographics: The participants included 115, (46%) working mothers and 135, (54%) non-working mothers who participated in the present study. The age range of participant mothers included 31-40 years (38.8%), 41-50 years (37.2%), and 51-60 years (24%). Similarly, 47.6 % of mothers belong to nuclear family structure while 52.4% mothers belong to joint family structure.

Results

Table I

H_1: There is a significant difference in parenting practices of involvement, positive parenting, supervision, inconsistent discipline, and corporal punishment among working and non-working mothers

Variables	***Mean***	***SD***	***df***	***P***
Involvement				
Working	39.50	.629	1	.00
Non-working	36. 39	.576		
Positive Parenting				
Working	17.06	.267	1	.01
Non-working	16.06	.245		
Corporal Punishment				
Working	11.43	.388	1	.00
Non-working	13.17	.355		
MANOVA	Wilks' Lambda= .889, F (5, 246) =6.06, p<.00			

**p<.05*

A one-way between-groups multivariate analysis (MANOVA) was used to investigate differences in socialization parenting techniques. The dependent factors were involvement, positive parenting, inconsistent discipline, supervision, and corporal punishment, while the independent variable was mothers' social status—working or non-working. Working and non-working mothers had significantly different scores on the combined dependent variables (F (5, 246) = 6.06, p =.00; Wilks' Lambda =.889; partial eta squared =.047). When the results for each dependent variable were examined individually, significant differences were found for 'involvement' (p =.00), 'positive parenting' (p =.01), and 'corporal punishment' (p =.00). An analysis of the mean score differences for 'involvement' revealed that working mothers reported (M = 39.50, SD = .629) whereas non-working mothers reported (M = 36.39, SD = .576), indicating that working mothers demonstrated a greater concern for 'involvement' in their children's socialization compared to non-working mothers. An analysis of the mean score differences for 'positive parenting' revealed that working mothers reported (M = 17.06, SD = .267) whereas non-working mothers reported (M = 16.06, SD = .245), indicating that working mothers demonstrated a greater concern for 'positive parenting' in their children's socialization compared to non-working mothers. Moreover, the mean score differences indicated significant findings for working mothers (M = 11.43, SD = .388) and non-working mothers (M = 13.17, SD = .355), suggesting that non-working mothers were more focused on 'corporal punishment' as a parenting practice in socializing their children.

Table II

H_2: There is a significant difference in gender socialization parenting practices of role models, social concerns, and gender equality among working and non-working mothers.

Variables	***Mean***	***SD***	***Df***	***P***
Social Concerns				
Working	23.18	5.75	1	.02
Non-working	21.63	6.02		
Gender equality				
Working	26.43	4.29	1	.04
Non- working	25.35	4.12		
MANOVA	Wilks' Lambda= .93, F (3, 245) =3.14, p<.03			

**p<.05*

Similarly, a one-way multivariate analysis (MANOVA) was used to investigate differences in socialization parenting techniques depending on mothers' socioeconomic position. This study's dependent variables were 'social concerns,' 'role models,' and 'gender equality.' The independent variable was the mothers' social status, which was divided into two categories: working and nonworking mothers. Working and non-working mothers differed significantly in terms of the combined dependent variables ($F(3,245) = 3.14$, $p = .014$; Wilks' Lambda =.93; partial eta squared =.05.). Individually assessing the dependent variables revealed statistically significant differences for 'social concerns' ($p = .02$) and 'gender equality' ($p = .04$). An analysis of the mean differences for 'social concerns' revealed that working mothers reported ($M = 23.18$, $SD = 5.75$) while non-working mothers reported ($M = 21.63$, $SD = 6.02$), indicating that working mothers prioritized' social concerns' in their children's socialization over non-working. Similarly, the statistical mean difference for 'gender equality' revealed that working women ($M = 26.43$, $SD = 4.29$) were more concerned with 'gender equality' as a socialization parenting technique than non-working mothers ($M = 25.39$, $SD = 4.12$) in terms of their children's upbringing.

Discussion

There were notable differences found in gender socialization parenting practices of working and non-working mothers in the present study. Working mothers possess a better understanding of socializing techniques for nurturing children (Frontiers Media S.A., 2019). These facts highlight that working mothers have better social exposure, which influences their parenting methods (Doucet, 2006). This study highlights that parenting techniques matter and contribute significantly to gender socialization based on equality and social concerns. The findings of this study identify that working mothers can foster a more flexible and compassionate approach to child-rearing, whereas non-working mothers rely on methods influenced by socio-cultural expectations to nurture their children. McLellan & Uys's (2009) study explores how working mothers maintain balance in their dual role with long working hours and flexible schedules. Along with that researcher has also focused on how support system impacts significantly and how mothers manage time for their children.

According to Bandura (1977), social learning theory explains how children adopt different behaviours by mimicking people around them, especially their mothers. Mothers regardless of their employment show positive parenting skills to demonstrate sympathetic, empathetic, and responsible behaviour before their children for effective communication. Working mothers are engaged in career and family life at the same time, therefore they prioritize their role as mothers and a professional and play a vital role in bringing up children and helping them in their social and emotional growth. Eagly (1987) suggests that social expectations for a mother to be a primary caregiver motivate a woman to nurture their children actively along with their productive role.

Whereas, non-working mothers adopt corporal punishment method to discipline their children. It is based on a more culturally oriented and traditional conservative environment (Lansford et al., 2005). The use of corporal punishment and strict discipline is taken as socialization practices by non-working mothers to maintain discipline and control within the existing social setup (Gershoff, 2013; Lansford et al., 2005). It is also observed that mothers who face economic challenges and lack of social support adopt strict and controlling parenting methods (Smith, 2010). These results highlight that professional mothers are more progressive and possess a more balanced family life, therefore they are more capable of nurturing their children socially, morally, and emotionally and can adopt gender development by using distinct ways. The dynamic relationship between a mother's work status and cultural behavioural patterns in bringing up children (Matias, Ferreira & Matos, 2022).

The concept that non-working mothers rely more on corporal punishment and discipline to socialize their children can be understood better through social learning theory. According to Bandura (1977), this theory emphasizes that a child learns and demonstrates different behaviours by watching and copying their caregivers. Non-working mothers opt for more aggressive behaviour, which impacts children in a way that they mimic and interact in the same way. Such aggressive behaviour of a mother could be a result of past experiences and the socio-cultural norms in which they survive. Whereas the Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987), indicates that social expectations from a mother to be a primary caregiver burden her to fulfill the expectations, and she adopts more traditional and authoritative parenting methods. They might employ discipline and corporal punishment to assert control and authority, believing that their role as disciplinarians justifies the use of stricter socialization methods. It has been observed that mothers were more concerned about these parenting practices of involvement, positive parenting, social concerns, and corporal punishment for socializing their children as compared to fathers (Adil & Malik, 2024).

Conclusion and Suggestions

It is concluded that working mothers often place a high value on social issues, gender equality, and involvement in the lives of their children. They tend to emphasize 'positive parenting' practices. In contrast, non-working mothers, who generally have more time to dedicate to home life, seem to favour traditional disciplinary practices, including corporal punishment. This distinction may stem from different societal expectations, personal beliefs about discipline, and the unique challenges each group encounters. Working mothers might gravitate towards progressive parenting practices due to their exposure to a variety of societal norms.

The following suggestions were put forward in the study:

- Provide parenting programs for non-working mothers that focus on alternative, non-violent discipline methods. Educational initiatives can help change perceptions and promote less punitive approaches.
- Support working mothers by offering flexible work hours and childcare options to improve their engagement in their children's socialization.
- Establish community support networks for both working and non-working mothers to exchange experiences.
- Encourage fathers to take an active role in parenting and share household duties to reduce the burden on mothers.
- Implement programs that assist both working and non-working mothers in managing stress, as lower stress levels can foster healthier, more positive interactions with their children.

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