

Research Article

Stress Among Working Mothers Related to Academic Performance of Their Children Under 18 Years of Age, in Selected Colleges, Delhi Ncr- A Survey

Sharma A¹, Dewan A²

^{1,2}Nursing Tutor, Rufaida College of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi, India

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Corresponding Author:

Dewan A, Rufaida College of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi, India

E-mail Id:

dewananamika25@gmail.com

Orcid Id:

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-0172-9199>

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A B S T R A C T

Introduction: Working mothers play a dual role in managing professional responsibilities and supporting their children's education. Stress among working mothers can arise from various factors such as workload, time constraints, lack of social support, and high academic expectations for their children. If not managed properly, this can lead to decreased involvement in children's education and affect the parent-child relationship. Therefore, it is important to assess the level of stress among working mothers and understand its relationship with the academic performance of their children. This study aims to assess the level of stress among working mothers related to academic performance of their children under 18 years of age.

Methods: A quantitative research approach and descriptive research design were used for the proposed study. A total number of 100 samples were taken through the purposive sampling technique from working mothers in selected colleges in Delhi NCR in the month of December 2025. Demographic data and a self-structured perceived stress scale were used to assess the level of stress among working mothers related to the academic performance of their children under 18 years of age. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data.

Result: The result revealed that 8% of working mothers were having a high level of stress, 71% of working mothers were having a moderate level of stress, and 21% of working mothers were having a low level of stress regarding the academic performance of their children.

Conclusion: The present study revealed that the majority of working mothers were having a moderate level of stress regarding the academic performance of their children. This emphasizes the need to assess the level of stress among working mothers.

Keywords: Stress, Working Mothers, Academic Performance, Children

Introduction

Stress is a Latin word, *stringere*, which means “to draw tight,” to denote hardship and affliction. This word was used in the seventeenth century. In today’s era, it is one of the universal human responses to challenging or demanding circumstances. Both physiological and psychological mechanisms of the body respond to the stressors. However, the perception and intensity of stress are inherently subjective, varying significantly from individual to individual.¹

Physical threats, familial issues, or emotional circumstances like disagreements with loved ones or experiencing loss can all lead to stress, which is the body’s natural reaction to any form of demand or challenge. Stress may also occur while preparing for exams or interviews or when facing new and difficult responsibilities at work. Anything that triggers this response is known as a stressor. Common stressors include fear, strong emotions, and mental or physical pressure. The father of stress physiology, Hans Selye (1956), defined “stress” as the body’s general reaction to any demand made of it. According to Fessel (1962), stress is a general departure from the body’s typical resting state.²

With the steady increase in the number of working women across various sectors in India, dual-income households have become more prevalent. While this enhances economic stability, it may also limit the time parents can spend with their children and reduce the amount of quality time they are able to devote to them due to demanding work schedules. Parents’ involvement and social support are crucial in promoting balanced and positive personality development in children. With the emergence of new economic structures, greater access to education, higher living standards, and ongoing modernization, women—especially those from middle- and upper-class backgrounds—have increasingly moved beyond traditional homemaking roles to enter the workforce. As a result, the proportion of working women has continued to grow.

According to Vandana Desai (1978), the country’s socio-political and economic structure often necessitates that women, regardless of their educational background,

participate in income-generating activities. This changing role of women highlights the need to examine the balance between professional commitments and family responsibilities in contemporary society.³

Material and Methods

A quantitative research approach to assess the level of stress among working mothers related to the academic performance of their children under 18 years of age in selected colleges in Delhi NCR.

Sampling and sampling technique

Data was collected from 100 working mothers whose children were under 18 years of age in selected colleges, using a self-structured stress scale for working mothers. Ethical clearance was obtained from the principal of Rufaida College of Nursing, Delhi NCR, to conduct the research.

Description of tools

The tool was developed through an extensive review of the literature to develop the items and scoring technique. The tool was organized into 2 sections. Section A included the demographic characteristics; Section B included a self-structured stress scale for working mothers, which had 30 questions. It includes a 5-point rating scale to assess the level of stress among working mothers. The validity of the tool was ensured by 7 experts. The content validity of the tool was established by obtaining expert opinions from four subject matter experts, including nursing faculty.

Ethical consideration

Ethical clearance was obtained from the principal, Rufaida College of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard. Participant information sheets and participant’s informed consent forms were developed. Informed consent was obtained from the participants prior to the data collection. Anonymity and confidentiality of participants were maintained.

Results

Data show that 8% of working mothers experienced high stress, 71% moderate stress, and 21% low stress (mean = 55.2; median = 56.8).

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of participants by demographic characteristics

n= 100

S.No	Demographic Profile	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	Age (in years)	25–30 years	18	18%
		31–35 years	30	30%
		36–40 years	33	33%
		40 years & above	19	19%
		Total	100	100%

2	Education	Up to 10th Class	18	18%
		Graduate	21	21%
		Post Graduate	46	46%
		Other	15	15%
		Total	100	100%
3	Monthly Family Income	Below Rs. 10,000/-	8	8%
		Rs. 10,000–20,000/-	25	25%
		Rs. 20,001–30,000/-	10	10%
		Rs. 30,001 & above	57	57%
		Total	100	100%
4	Marital Status	Married	91	91%
		Widow	4	4%
		Divorced	0	0%
		Separated	5	5%
		Total	100	100%
5	Type of Family	Nuclear Family	59	59%
		Joint Family	38	38%
		Extended Family	3	3%
		Total	100	100%
6	Residential Area	Urban	83	83%
		Rural	17	17%
		Total	100	100%
7	Number of Children	One	38	38%
		Two	44	44%
8	Age of Child	4–8 years	51	51%
		9–12 years	17	17%
		13–16 years	16	16%
		16 years and above	16	16%
		Total	100	100%
9	Academic Level Attended by the Child	Primary School	56	56%
		Senior Secondary	7	7%
		Secondary School	25	25%
		College	12	12%
		Total	100	100%
10	Academic Performance of the Child	Poor	1	1%
		Average	26	26%
		Good	61	61%
		Excellent	12	12%
		Total	100	100%
11	Any Health Problem in the Child Affecting Academic Performance	No	94	94%
		Yes	6	6%
		Total	100	100%

12	Number of Working Hours	5–7 hours	12	12%
		8–10 hours	80	80%
		More than 10 hours	8	8%
		Total	100	100%

Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of working mothers by stress levels (self-structured Perceived Stress Scale) related to their children's academic performance (under 18 years)

n= 100

Categories	The possible range of score	Obtained score	Mean	Median
High level of stress	80 – 120	8	55.2	56.8
Moderate level of stress	41 – 80	71		
Low level of stress	0 – 40	21		

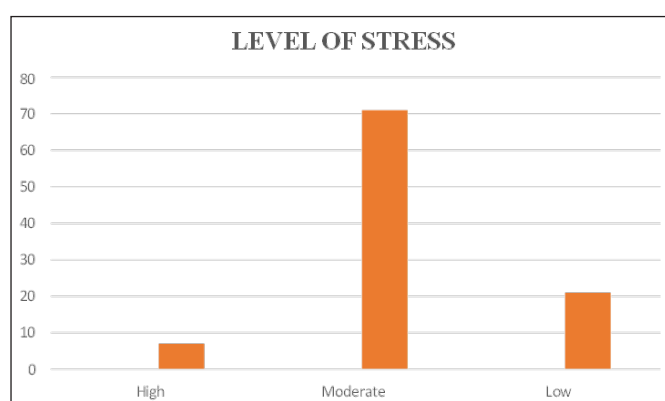


Figure 1.A Bar graph showing the percentage distribution as per level of stress among working mothers related to academic performance of their children under 18 years of age

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that most of the working mothers (33%) were aged 36–40 years, followed by 30% aged 31–35 years, 19% aged 40+ years, and 18% aged 25–30 years. Out of 100, 46% held postgraduate qualifications, followed by 21% graduates, 18% up to 10th class, and 15% in other categories. 57% had monthly family income above Rs. 30,001, followed by 25% with Rs. 10,000–20,000, 10% with Rs. 20,001–30,000, and 8% below Rs. 10,000. The majority of working mothers (91%) were married, followed by 5% separated and 4% divorced. The majority of working mothers (59%) belonged to nuclear families, 38% to joint families, and 3% to extended families. 83% resided in urban areas, while 17% were from rural areas. Out of 100 working mothers, 44% had two children, 38% had one child, 11% had three, and 7% had more than three. The majority of working mothers (51%) had children aged 4–8 years, followed by 17% with children aged 9–12 years and 16% each with children aged 13–16 years or 16 years and above. 56% had children in primary school, 25% in secondary school, 12% in college, and 7% in senior secondary school. 61% reported good academic performance for their children, followed by 26% average, 12% excellent, and 1% poor. 94%

reported no health problems in their children affecting academic performance, while 6% reported such issues. 80% worked 8–10 hours, 12% worked 5–7 hours, and 8% worked more than 10 hours. 88% held full-time jobs, while 12% held part-time jobs.

This study evaluated stress levels among working mothers concerning their children's academic performance (under 18 years) in selected colleges, Delhi NCR. Results showed a majority, 71%, experienced a moderate level of stress, whereas 21% experienced a low level of stress and 8% experienced a high level of stress.

The present study supports the study conducted by Raksha et al. (2021) among children of working and non-working mothers in selected schools in Mandi Gobindgarh district, Fatehgarh Sahib, Punjab. 60 samples were selected by the non-probability purposive sampling technique. Data was collected using the checklist method. Results showed that 13.33% of children of working mothers had mild stress, 43.33% of children of non-working mothers had moderate stress, and 43.33% of children of working mothers had severe stress. Based on this finding, it was concluded that children of working mothers experience higher levels of stress compared to children of non-working mothers.⁴

Conclusion

The study was aimed at assessing the level of stress among working mothers related to the academic performance of their children under 18 years of age in selected colleges in Delhi NCR.

Study findings revealed that 71% of working mothers experienced moderate stress. Most working mothers (59%) from nuclear families faced more challenges than those from joint families.

Nursing implications

The study's findings carry several implications in nursing, categorized under nursing education, nursing administration, nursing practice, and nursing research.

Nursing education

- Nursing educators can incorporate content on stress management, coping strategies, and family dynamics into nursing curricula to prepare nurses to support working mothers.
- Nursing educators can use the findings of this study to develop curricula that address the problem faced by working mothers in different family structures.

Nursing administration

- Nursing administrators can advocate for day care centers and crèche facilities in institutions.
- Nursing administrators can arrange stress-reduction sessions for working mothers.

Nursing practices

- Community health nurses can conduct regular field visits to offer support and guidance to working mothers, particularly in nuclear families with limited help.
- Community health nurses can deliver education sessions on stress management, time management, balancing strategies, and community-level stress reduction.
- Establishing self-help groups for working mothers can create platforms for sharing experiences, challenges, and solutions, reducing isolation and providing emotional support.
- Community health nurses can refer working mothers to NGOs for stress-related resources and services or to psychologists for professional counselling on coping mechanisms.

Nursing research

- Researchers can undertake larger, more diverse studies to validate these findings.
- Future studies can explore community health nurses' role in supporting working mothers in community settings.

Limitations

- The specific population and small sample size limit the findings' generalizability.
- Reliance on self-reported data introduces potential biases and social desirability effects.

Recommendations

- Future studies can examine challenges faced by working mothers across different child age groups.
- Research can evaluate interventions to reduce stress and enhance well-being among working mothers in varying family structures

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