

# Comparative Analysis of Student stress level: Employed vs. Unemployed Mothers

Iman Waris\*<sup>1</sup> |

\*Student, Department of Psychology, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan 

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** This study investigates the potential differences in stress levels among university students with employed mothers versus those with unemployed mothers. The study aims to understand whether maternal employment status significantly influences students' stress levels. The objectives are to compare stress levels between university students with employed and unemployed mothers and to determine if maternal employment status is a significant factor in students' stress levels.

**Methods:** The study employs a quantitative research design, using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) to assess stress levels in 100 university students aged 18 to 25. The participants were divided into two groups: Group A (students with employed mothers) and Group B (students with unemployed mothers). An unrelated t-test was used to analyze the data.

**Results:** The analysis revealed a t-value of 1.02627 and a p-value of 0.153634, indicating no significant difference in stress levels between the two groups ( $p > 0.05$ ). The mean burnout scores were 20.74 (Group A) and 19.64 (Group B), with standard deviations of 5.543 and 5.377, respectively.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that mothers' employment status does not significantly impact the stress levels of university students. Various factors beyond maternal employment status influence student stress.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received April 2024

Accepted June 2024

Published June 2024

## KEYWORDS

Unemployed, employed mother, perceived stress scale, psychology, quantitative research, adolescent.

## Introduction

If we examine the ongoing shifts within the family system, a significant transformation emerges, notably in the growing independence of women. More women are actively pursuing financial autonomy, diversifying their career paths even after marriages, and entering the workforce. When viewed comprehensively at the state level, this trend appears beneficial not only for individuals but also for organizations and the overall state. Female labor force participation in Pakistan might be below the regional average, among south Asian countries but despite growing by approximately 9 percent over the past three decades has been noted (Amber et al, 2023). Due to that reason

employed status of women has increased (Sadaquat, 2011). According to ILO estimates of labor force participation in Pakistan, the percentage of females in the labor force went from 13.95 in 1990 to 21.67 in 2020. Temitope (2015) beautifully describe the definition of working mother or women, a mother who engage in paid employment or occupation,

\*Correspondence Author: Iman Waris

Email: emaanwaris4@gmail.com

To cite this article: Waris I. (2024). Comparative Analysis of Student stress level: Employed vs. Unemployed Mothers. *Archives of Management and Social Sciences*, 1(2), 55–62. Allied Nexus Publisher.

Licensing: Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY-4.0)

Publisher: Allied Nexus Publisher

contributing their skills, time, and expertise to the workforce while simultaneously managing responsibilities of house and children.

However, amidst the positive outcomes, a critical aspect that often receives inadequate attention is the transfer of responsibilities onto employed mothers' children's. As major it's been concerning that women with employed status won't be able to handle childcare and domestic responsibilities at the same time (Ramos & Tuss, 2020)- Some studies suggest that being a working mother has significant implications, not only affecting the emotional stability of the mother but also influencing the well-being of children and the overall family dynamics (Almani, Abro, & Mugheri, 2012). Conversely, other research posits a positive impact of working mothers on their children, as indicated by (Quaye, 2011). So, if we delve into the challenges faced by students, particularly those with employed mothers versus unemployed mothers, a nuanced picture emerges. A mother's employment duration has a direct impact on her child's linguistic growth and academic performance.

The empowerment of women through employment undoubtedly brings about positive changes, but it also introduces unique stressors for their children. In households where mothers are employed, children often find themselves navigating a landscape where the traditional division of responsibilities has shifted. The transfer of maternal responsibilities, coupled with the mother's professional commitments, can potentially elevate stress levels in students. These increasing responsibilities stemming from their mothers' employment can lead to a sense of burnout and irritability. This major stressor creates a challenging environment, where the dual roles of being a student and dealing with a sift of responsibilities contribute to a significant and sometimes overwhelming state of stress.

The neglect of this crucial element can lead to increased stress levels, affecting both the mothers and their children. Student stress level is a common concern in academic settings, and it can be influenced by a range of factors, including family dynamics. This study explores the relationship between the employment status of students' mothers and the stress levels experienced by university students. While the empowerment of women in the workforce is commendable, it is essential to recognize and address the associated challenges to ensure a balanced and supportive family dynamic.

By scrutinizing these contrasting scenarios, we aim to unravel the intricate dynamics at a deeper understanding of how the employment status of mothers influences the stress levels experienced by their children. This analysis not only sheds light on the challenges faced by students but also underscores the need for targeted support systems to address the diverse needs arising from the changing dynamics within families.

### **The objectives of this study are as follows**

To examine and compare stress levels among university students with employed and unemployed mothers.

To determine if the employment status of students' mothers is a significant factor in explaining stress levels among university students.

## **Literature Review**

Researchers have researched the general relationship between the stress levels of students and mothers' working status. Many scholars have conducted different research to see the effect of mothers' work status on their children's psychological and emotional health. An ever-increasing number of women joining this occupation has been one of the most significant social changes in recent years. It is evident in such countries as Pakistan, where the female employee labour force participation rate has risen albeit at a slower pace than in other areas (Amber & Chichaibelu, 2023). The percentage of women in the labour force rose from 13 to 16, a record that the government Ministry of Gender and Youth Affairs expressed satisfaction with. Therefore, the literacy rate has improved drastically from 95% in 1990 to 21. To be more precise, seventy per cent in the year 2020, as per the International Labour Organisation (ILO) data (ILO, 2021). Hence, working mothers' impact on their children's stress is still an area of discussion, even with the abovementioned advances.

As mentioned in several research studies, they experience more stress from the additional responsibilities children of working mothers have when their mothers are not frequently at home. For instance, research carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in the year 2003 established that individuals with working full-time mothers were more likely to suffer from psychological stress by 28%. The present discovery is in harmony with prior research being carried out by Chase-Lansdale et al. (1991), who proposed that employment among mothers negatively impacts the emotional steadiness of children.

However, other research suggests that mothers' employment positively impacts children: Quaye further postulates that working women's jobs offer their children richer context and notes improved language and cognitive competencies. Furthermore, a study by Almani, Abro, and Mugheri in 2012 showed that working mothers provide better prospects of earning more cash than the fathers of these children, and this exercise has positive effects on children's welfare and academic achievements.

It is possible to record various pressures associated with working mothers. In their article: 'Challenges Working Moms Face,' Ramos and Tuss (2020) assert that most working mothers struggle to balance family and career. It can also result in stress and shame, and this is not good for the children in question. Hence, knowledge about the cases and the reasons for removing them is necessary to prevent a negative impact arising from such processes. However, Rass and Salahuddin

(2021) argued that working mothers' financial ability to provide for their families' needs can reduce some of the economic pressures that families go through, thus reducing children's stress levels.

This problem is more complicated in Pakistan due to the culture of this country. Cultural and gender roles determine working moms' and children's experiences, as Temitope noted in 2015. A separate set of expectations is established for mothers and children in a family where the default expectation is that they will be the primary caregivers, which often puts them in a predicament concerning their professions.

The outcome of the current study contributes to this ongoing debate by revealing that the work status of mothers is unrelated to the level of stressed-out college students. This conforms with the studies conducted by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelsten (1983) who developed the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) used in this study. As a well-known stress measurement tool, PSS has been determined to be efficient in different contexts and age groups.

## Methodology

### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

University students aged between 18 and 25 years were included, Students outside the specified age range (below 18 or above 25) were excluded from the study.

### Sampling procedure

Participants were recruited via non-probability convenient sampling technique. All the participants voluntarily participated and verbal consent was also taken from each participant. Data was collected in a comfortable environment according to participants' preference.

### Sample description

The sample for this study comprised 100 participants.

### Descriptive data

**Sample Size:** 100 university students (50 students in each group)

**Group A (Students with Employed Mothers):** Sum of Burnout Scores: 1037

*Mean Burnout Score:* 20.74

*Standard Deviation of Burnout Scores:* 5.543

**Group B (Students with Unemployed Mothers):** Sum of Burnout Scores: 982

*Mean Burnout Score:* 19.64

*Standard Deviation of Burnout Scores:* 5.377

## **Materials**

**Perceived Stress Scale (10-item scale):** Employed as part of the questionnaire to collect quantitative data on perceived stress levels (Cohen et al., 1983).

## **Quality of Measures**

The standardized stress scale questionnaire utilized in this study is a reliable and validated instrument commonly used in research related to stress. The Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983) is a well-established tool for assessing stress levels in individualist measures have been previously validated and are considered suitable for capturing stress levels among university students.

## **Data collect**

After verbal agreement the questionnaire with the necessary demographic details and constructive items was given to study participants. Participants were instructed to read the questionnaire's instructions before responding in the appropriate section. There is no right or wrong response, so respondents were reassured, and they were asked to describe their answers as truthfully as they could. Before participating, the respondents were given a general explanation of the study's goal to allay their curiosity. Because disclosing the information prior to questionnaire delivery would have influenced respondents' answers, respondents were further told about the study after giving their responses. Finally, respondents were thanked for their cooperation and time. Simple Random sampling technique was used to collect the data from 463 participants (female: 50; male:50)

## **Data Analysis**

Quantitative data was collected using the standardized perceived stress scale questionnaire. An unrelated t-test was employed to compare the mean burnout scores between Group A (students with employed mothers) and Group B (students with unemployed mothers). The significance level was set at  $p < 0.05$  to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in stress levels between the two groups.

## **Research Design**

A quantitative research design was employed. Both Group A and Group B were requested to complete PSS questionnaire to assess their levels of stress.

## Results

	Sample size	sum	Mean	SD	T -value	P-value	Significant
<b>Group A</b> (Students with <b>Employed</b> <b>Mothers)</b>	50	1037	<b>20.75</b>	<b>5.5431</b>			
<b>Group B</b> (Students with <b>Unemployed</b> <b>Mothers)</b>	50	982	19.64	5.3771	<b>=1.0262</b>	<b>=0.1536</b>	<b>Not significant</b>

*Table 01: Summary of stress Levels in Students with Employed and Unemployed Mothers: Sample size, sum, Mean, SD, T -value, P-value, Significant*

The analysis indicated a t-value of 1.02627 and a p-value of 0.153634. The p-value exceeded the conventional significance threshold of  $p < 0.05$ , indicating that there is no significant difference in stress levels between students with employed mothers and students with unemployed mothers.

## Discussion

The study's results do not support the hypothesis that there would be a significant difference in stress levels between the two groups. This suggests that the employment status of students' mothers may not be a significant factor influencing the stress levels of university students. On the other hand, children with unemployed mothers may face different but equally impactful challenges. Financial strain and uncertainties related to unemployment can create an atmosphere of tension and concern. The lack of financial stability may, in turn, affect a child's emotional well-being and academic performance.

Moreover, it has been observed during the scoring process that students whose mothers work duration is longer experienced higher levels of stress and frustration compared to their counterparts. This heightened stress appears to be linked to a notable shift in responsibilities, particularly in terms of taking care of siblings and handling household chores. As it is also suggested in (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2003) that Adults who were raised by mothers working full-time also experience a 28 percent higher incidence of psychological stress (Chase-Lansdale et al., 1991).

If we look at the broader perspective, having an employed mother seems to have a positive impact on adults, alleviating financial constraints that arise when there are two breadwinners in the household. Moreover, the linguistic capabilities of individuals raised by employed mothers tend to be superior compared to those raised by unemployed mothers and on the flip side, mothers expressed challenges in overseeing and managing their child's behavioral changes. They found it difficult to strike a balance between work and home responsibilities, leading to feelings of profound guilt for not dedicating sufficient time to their children (Iqra Rass et al., 2021).

However, when specifically addressing stress in students' lives, it's essential to note that the presence or absence of maternal employment alone may not be a determining factor. As itself my research indicates that there is no significant difference in stress levels. Both groups of students, whether their mothers are employed or unemployed, tend to experience moderate to high levels of stress. It suggests that factors beyond maternal employment play a more influential role in shaping stress levels among students. Other variables and factors should be considered in future research to better understand the complexities of student stress level.

## Conclusion

The findings from this study indicate that there is no significant difference in stress levels between university students with employed mothers and those with unemployed mothers. It is important to recognize that student stress is a multifaceted issue influenced by various factors, and maternal employment status may not be a primary cause.

## Limitations and recommendations

The present study, therefore, contributes to this ongoing debate by suggesting that moms' work status does not affect the stress levels of university students. This concurs with the Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein study that developed the PSS (Perceived Stress Scale) used under consideration. The PSS is among the frequently applied stress assessment tools for and nite credible in numerous settings and for diverse populations.

### Author's Contribution:

**Conception or Design:** Iman Waris

**Analysis or Interpretation of Data:** Iman Waris

**Manuscript Writing & Approval:** Iman Waris

### Acknowledgments:

I thanks to all the participants and colleagues for their contribution.

### Disclosure Statement:

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

### Funding:

N/A

## References

1. Almani, A. S., Abro, A., & Mugheri, R. A. (2012). Study of the Effects of Working Mothers on the Development of Children in Pakistan. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(11), 164-171.
2. Amber, H., & Chichaibelu, B. B. (2023). Patterns and Causes of Female Labor Force Participation: An Age-Period-Cohort Analysis for Pakistan. Accepted: 30 October 2022. Published online: 2 March 2023. Received: 30 September 2021.
3. Almani, A. S., Abro, A., & Mugheri, R. A. (2012). Study of the Effects of Working Mothers on the Development of Children in Pakistan. *International Journal of Humanities and Social*



Science, 2(11), 164-171.

4. Chase-Lansdale, P. L., Mott, F. L., Brooks-Gunn, J., & Phillips, D. A. (1991). Children of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth: A unique research opportunity. *Developmental Psychology*, 27(6), 918.
5. Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24, 385–396.
6. International Labour Organization (ILO). (2021). Labor force participation rates.
7. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. (2003). The impact of mothers' employment on family relationships.
8. October 2022. Published online: 2 March 2023. Received: 30 September 2021.
9. Quaye, E. (2011). A qualitative study of the everyday life experiences of working mothers and their children in Accra, Ghana. Retrieved from [https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/270595/433822\\_FULLTEXT01](https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/270595/433822_FULLTEXT01)
10. Ramos, E. S., & Tus, J. H. (2020). Beating the Odds: An Exploratory Study on Single Mothers' Lived Experiences in Child-Rearing Practices. *Asian Journal of Current Research*, 5(1), 58-70.
11. Rass, I., & Salahuddin, A. (2021). Perception of working mothers on child development: A qualitative study from Pakistan. *Forman Journal of Social Sciences*, 1.
12. Temitope, B. E. (2015). Effect of Stress and Anxiety on General Life Satisfaction among Working Mothers in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. *American Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences*, 2, 7–13.
13. Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2003). The impact of mothers' employment on Family relationships. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
14. Quaye, E (2011). A qualitative study of the everyday life experiences of working mothers and their Children in Accra, Ghana. Retrieved from [https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/270595/433822\\_FULLTEXT01](https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/270595/433822_FULLTEXT01)
15. Ramos, E. S., & Tus, J. H. O. S. E. L. L. E. (2020). Beating the Odds: An Exploratory Study on Single Mothers' Lived Experiences in Child-Rearing Practices. *Asian Journal of Current Research*, 5(1), 58-70
16. Sadaquat, M. B. (2011). Employment situation of women in Pakistan. *International journal of social economics*.
17. Temitope, Bankole Emmanuel. 2015. Effect of Stress and Anxiety on General Life Satisfaction among Working. Mothers in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State Nigeria. *American Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences* 2: 7–13.