

Research Article**PARENTING STRESS OF MOTHERS AND BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS OF CHILDREN****Biplob Kumar Dey^{1*}, Kishor Roy² and Trisha Hoque Reshmi¹**¹*Department of Psychology, University of Chittagong, Bangladesh.*²*Department of Psychology, Jagannath University, Dhaka-1100, Bangladesh.**Received: 06 September 2020, Accepted: 03 January 2021***ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the present study was to explore the parenting stress of mothers and behavior problems of children as a function of job status, family structure and number of children. This study was conducted purposively on 130 mothers and their children in Chittagong District. They were categorized into groups on the basis of job status, family structure and number of children. An adapted Bangla version of Parenting Stress Index (PSI) and Children Behavior Question (teacher version) were used to measure parenting stress and children behavior problems. Results showed that working mother showed more parenting stress than non-working mother ($F = 39.33$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .001$); nuclear family had more parenting stress than joint family ($F = 207.98$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .001$); mothers who have 2 or above 2 children showed more parenting stress than mothers who have 1 children ($F = 11.33$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .001$). A significant interaction effect was found between job status and family structure ($F = 10.85$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .001$) and family structure and number of children ($F = 5.21$, $df = 1, 228$, $p < .02$) in parenting stress. On the other hand, children of working mother showed more behavior problems than children of non-working mother ($F = 22.73$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .001$); children of nuclear family had more behavior problems than children of joint family ($F = 42.24$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .001$). Significant interaction effect was found between job status and family structure ($F = 7.97$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .01$); family structure and number of children ($F = 4.55$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .05$) in children behavior problems. Finally, result also showed a significant positive correlation between parenting stress and children behavior problems ($r = .66$, $p < .01$).

Key words: *Parenting stress, children behavior, job status, family structure***Introduction**

Parenting is the paramount part of human life. For parenting, parent child relation is apex matter that is recognized by Bowlby (1969) on his prominent attachment theory. It is the course of encouraging and maintaining physical, social, and psychological advancement of a child. This natural process is run by parent. Parents are the sole of their child. They always provide best effort for their child's development. But to rear up of their child, sometimes they face some unwanted problems that are called parenting stress. It is a distressing feeling when parental

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demand exceeds the expected and actual resources available to them. This stress comes from different socio-cultural factors such as different distressful life events, child's physical and emotional problems, job and low socio-economic status etc. This parenting stress influences on their child's behavioral, physical, social, cognitive and psychological development (Cheng and Sun 2015).

A human being whose age is under 18 years is called children (The United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989). If any child shows symptomatic expression of emotional or interpersonal maladjustment, then they are recognized as behavioral problems. It includes frequent contravention of other's rights, hyperkinetic impulsive behavior, absent class or running away from school. A study was performed in five developing countries and they concluded 10.50% adolescent had mental health problems because of parenting stress. Among these problems significant proportion of adolescent had behavior problems (Atilola, *et al.*, 2013). Some researchers suggested that parenting stress associated with child behavior problem had negative influences on social, economic and educational performance in later life. It also predicts engagement in antisocial activity or behavior in adulthood (Fergusson *et al.*, 2005). So parenting stress and its impact on children behavior is significant issues. The present study has been undertaken to explore the relation between parenting stress of working mothers and behavior problems of children.

Several researchers had found contradictory result about parenting stress between working mother and housewife. Catherine (1992) found that working mother suffer from more stress than housewife because of both hassles in job and family responsibilities. But Crnic and Greenberg (1990) worked on minor parenting stresses with young children. They found housewife has to face more hassle that deteriorates parent child relationship. And it aggravates dysfunction of child and families. A research was conducted by Yeo and Teo (2013) on child behavior and parenting stress. They found housewife had more parenting stress than working mother. But behavioral problem is more acute among working mother. They also found positive correlation between parenting stress and children behavioral problem. Neece *et al.* (2012) found positive relation between parenting stress and children behavior problems. Kauts and Kaur (2011) found that children in joint family showed less behavioral problems than nuclear family. A research was performed by Hwang and James-Roberts (2013) and they found joint family had less behavioral problems than nuclear family because of affection, attachment and knowledge by grandparents.

Rationale of the Study

Now, as more women are entering into different professions they often have to leave their children to others. On the other hand, non-working mothers also find it difficult to get involved to household chores and to raise children at a time. In both cases, they take the help of smart gadgets. Too much dependence on smart gadgets is also leaving negative impact on socialization of a child. Joint family can play a significant role for both working and non-working mothers as children have more people for socialization. Previous research had found contradictory result regarding parenting stress and children's behavior between working and non-working mother in nuclear and joint family (Yeo and Teo 2013). So, the present study has been formulated to clarify these contradictions. Therefore, in the present time, mother has to face more difficulties with meeting demand of their child. In case of more children, problem arises more. Most of the studies

in this area have been done in western culture, but in Bangladesh there are very few studies. Findings of the study will help for the parents, school authorities, policy makers and plan executors to adapt realistic plans to improve and enlighten mothers and children to succeed everywhere in life.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the present study was to see whether there is any relationship between parenting stress of working mother and behavior problems of children. Specific objectives of the study were-

- i) To investigate the relation between parenting stress and behavior problem of the children
- ii) To know whether parenting stress differs according to job status, family structure and number of children
- iii) To see whether children behavior problem varies according to job status, family structure and number of children.

Materials and Method

Participants

The number of participants of the study consists of 130 mothers and their children. The respondents were categorized into groups on the basis of job status (working mother is 50% and housewife is 50%), family structure (nuclear family is 50% and joint family is 50%) and number of children (1 child is 50% and 2 or above 2 child is 50%) at Chittagong district. They were selected purposively from different areas in Chittagong. The age ranges of the children were from 8 years to 11 years and mothers were from 30 years to 50 years.

Measuring Instruments

Following Instruments were used to conduct the present study:

a) Personal Information Form

A personal information form (PIF) was used to collect information like age, gender, working status, family structure, number of children, socioeconomic status etc.

b) Parenting Stress Index (PSI)

An adapted Bangla version (Akhter and Afrose 2009) of Parenting Stress Index (Abidin 1990) was used to measure parenting stress. The scale contains 120 items including parent's characteristics, child's characteristics and life stress items. Parenting Stress Index (PSI) has two domains- (a) *Child Domain*: High scores in the Child Domain may be associated with children who display qualities that make it difficult for parenting roles. (b). *Parent Domain*: High scores in Parent Domain suggest that the sources of stress and potential dysfunction of the parent-child system may be related to dimensions of the parents' functioning.

The cronbach's alpha ranged from .70 to .80 for the subscale 'Child Domain' and from .70 to .84 for the subscale 'Parent Domain' of PSI. The test-retest reliability between the first and second score was .63 for the child domain, .91 for the parent domain and .96 for the total stress score. Correlation coefficients of .82 and .71 were obtained for the child Domain and Parent Domain

respectively which indicated a significant ($p < .01$) and strong relationship for score across a 3 week interval. Significant correlation ($r = .72, p < .01$) between the scores of English and Bangla version indicated test- retest reliability of the translated form of the scale. The PSI is reported to have content and predictive validity.

Each item of the Parenting Stress Index (PSI) has five alternative responses: SA (strongly agree), A (agree), NS (not sure), D (disagree) and SD (strongly disagree). The scores range from 5 to 1. In case of several items, the scoring procedure is reverse. The sum of the child domain score and parent domain score means total stress score. Total raw score within 250 range means that the score is normal. Parents who earn raw score at or above 260 with the life stress raw score at or above 17 should definitely be offered 1 for professional consultation. Extremely low total stress scores also indicate defensive responding on the PSI. Defensive responding score of 24 or less indicates that the individual may be responding in a defensive manner.

c) Children Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ)

Children behavior problems were assessed using the teacher version of the children behavior questionnaire (Rutter 1970) translated in Bangla by Hossian (2001). The CBQ is a validated and widely used screening instruction for children problem. The CBQ has two version are A2 (parents) and B2 (teacher version). The B2 version was used in the present study and it contains 26 statements about child behaviors which may be a problem. Each of the 26 items consists of a question asking whether the respondent has recently experienced a particular symptom of behavior problem which is rated on a 3-point scale. The teacher has to record whether the statement “does not apply” “apply somewhat” or “certainly applies” (scored 0, 1 or 2 respectively) to child question. The sum was the children behavior problem score. The higher score indicates higher behavior problem and vice versa. The test-retest reliability was found to be .85 for the total questionnaire, which was significant at .001 levels.

Design

A cross-sectional survey research design had followed for conducting present study.

Procedure

Standard procedure was followed for collecting the data and the administration of the questionnaires. The parenting stress index (PSI) and children behavior questionnaire (CBQ) were administered to the sample of working mother and non-working mother. After administration parenting stress index (PSI) to the mother, each mother was given a children behavior questionnaire (CBQ) in a sealed envelope to full up data from teacher about her child (instruction was given in each questionnaire). The mothers were requested to return the filled up questionnaire in a sealed envelope to the private tutor, coaching centre or school teacher. The author collected the envelope from the mother. All data were collected within 10 days. At completion of the questionnaires thanks was given to the mothers.

Results and Discussion

Obtained data were analyzed by using F-test and Pearson product moment correlation. All statistical analyses were carried out using the statistical program SPSS version 16.0 for window. The findings are presented in the following tables.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of parenting stress scores according to job status, number of children and family structure.

Job Status	Family structure		Number of Children		Total
	Nuclear	Joint	1 Child	2 or above 2 children	
Non-working mother	$M = 279.15$ $SD = 67.11$	$M = 174.48$ $SD = 24.33$	$M = 213.74$ $SD = 57.94$	$M = 246.23$ $SD = 84.87$	$M = 229.23$ $SD = 73.31$
Working Mother	$M = 367.97$ $SD = 63.53$	$M = 202.82$ $SD = 55.26$	$M = 261.13$ $SD = 94.51$	$M = 300.24$ $SD = 106.07$	$M = 281.58$ $SD = 101.86$
Total	$M = 321.51$ $SD = 78.82$	$M = 189.31$ $SD = 45.34$	$M = 236.34$ $SD = 80.54$	$M = 274.48$ $SD = 99.58$	$M = 255.41$ $SD = 92.22$

Table 1 indicates that mean parenting stress of non-working mother was 229.23 ($SD = 73.31$), and working mother was 281.58 ($SD = 101.86$). That means, working mother had more parenting stress than non-working mother. Mean score of nuclear family was 321.51 ($SD = 78.82$) and joint family was 189.31 ($SD = 45.34$) according to parenting stress. That means, parenting stress is higher among nuclear family than joint family. Finally, mean parenting stress score of number of children in one child was 236.34 ($SD = 80.54$) and two or above two children were 274.48 ($SD = 99.58$). That means, those mothers who had one child showed less parenting stress than two or above two children. To determine whether the differences observed between the means in Table 2 were statistically significant, three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed.

Table 2. Summary of the analysis of variance of parenting stress scores according to job status, family structure and number of children.

Sources of Variations	SS	df	MS	F	Sig. Level
Job Status (A)	109159.34	1	109159.34	39.33	.001
Family Structure (B)	577213.90	1	577213.90	207.98	.001
Number of Children (C)	31439.22	1	31439.22	11.33	.001
A*B	30124.07	1	30124.07	10.85	.001
A*C	3967.11	1	3967.11	1.43	.23
B*C	14465.22	1	14465.22	5.21	.02
A*B*C	239.99	1	239.99	.09	.77
Error	338595.09	122	2775.37		
Total	9577455.00	130			

Table 2 shows that job status had significant effect on parenting stress ($F = 39.33$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .001$); family structure had significant effect on parenting stress ($F = 207.98$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .001$); number of children had significant effect on parenting stress ($F = 11.33$, $df = 1, 122$, p

<.001). The result also showed a significant interaction effect between job status and family structure ($F = 10.85$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .001$). That means, the working mother of nuclear family had more parenting stress and non-working mother of joint family showed less parenting stress. Finally, the result indicated that a significant interaction effect was found between family structure and number of children ($F = 5.21$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .02$). That means, the mother of 2 or above 2 children in nuclear family showed more parenting stress and the mother of 1 child in joint family had less parenting stress.

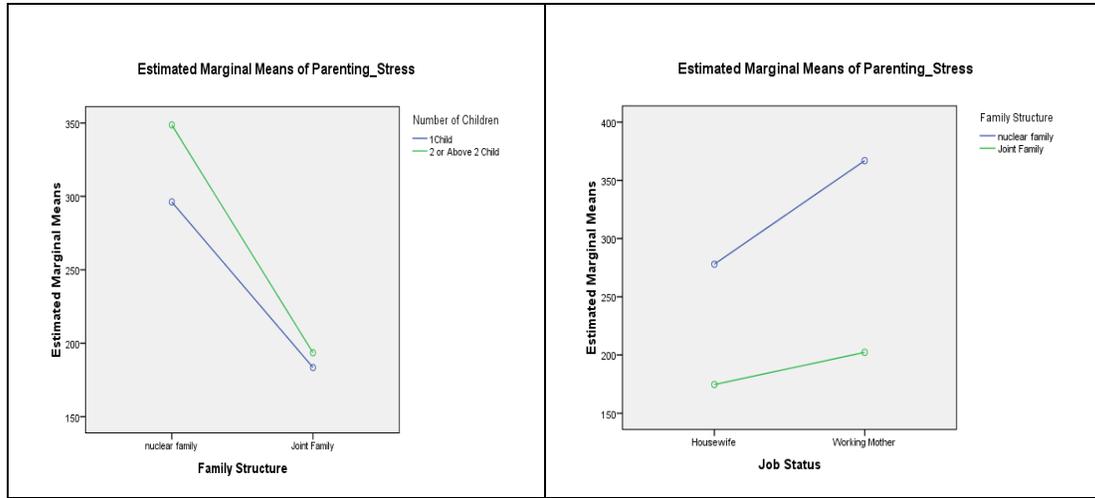


Fig. 1. Showing Two-way Interaction effect between Family Structure and Number of Children; Family Structure and Job Status.

Fig. 1 showed that the working mother of nuclear family had more parenting stress and non-working mother of joint family showed less parenting stress. Again, the mother of 2 or above 2 children in nuclear family showed more parenting stress and the mother of 1 child in joint family had less parenting stress.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of children behavior problems scores according to job status, family structure and number of children.

Job Status	Family Structure		Number of Children		Total
	Nuclear	Joint	1 Child	2 or above 2 child	
Non-working mother	$M = 27.29$ $SD = 8.02$	$M = 22.90$ $SD = 6.67$	$M = 30.68$ $SD = 8.93$	$M = 32.88$ $SD = 8.79$	$M = 25.20$ $SD = 7.68$
Working Mother	$M = 36.81$ $SD = 6.90$	$M = 24.97$ $SD = 6.91$	$M = 25.29$ $SD = 7.09$	$M = 22.55$ $SD = 6.32$	$M = 30.61$ $SD = 9.08$
Total	$M = 31.83$ $SD = 8.86$	$M = 23.98$ $SD = 6.83$	$M = 27.86$ $SD = 8.41$	$M = 27.95$ $SD = 9.25$	$M = 27.91$ $SD = 8.81$

Table 3 indicates that mean children behavior problems of non-working mother were 25.20 ($SD = 7.68$), and working mother were 30.61 ($SD = 9.08$). That means, children of working mother had more behavior problems than non-working mother. Mean score of nuclear family was 31.83 ($SD = 8.86$) and joint family was 23.98 ($SD = 6.83$) according to behavior problems of children. That means, children behavior problems are higher among nuclear family than joint family. Finally, mean children behavior problems score of number of children in one child was 27.86 ($SD = 8.41$) and two or above two children were 27.95 ($SD = 9.25$). That means, those mothers who had one child showed less behavior problems than mothers of two or above two children. To determine whether the differences observed between the means in Table 4 were statistically significant, three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed.

Table 4. Summary of the analysis of variance of children behavior problems scores according to job status, family structure and number of children.

Sources of Variations	SS	df	MS	F	Sig. Level
Job Status (A)	1158.92	1	1158.92	22.73	.001
Family Structure (B)	2153.50	1	2153.50	42.24	.001
Number of Children (C)	4.46	1	4.46	.09	.77
A*B	406.29	1	406.29	7.97	.01
A*C	2.13	1	2.13	.04	.84
B*C	232.22	1	232.22	4.55	.05
A*B*C	12.46	1	12.456	.24	.622
Error	6219.81	122	50.98		
Total	111254.00	130			

Table 4 shows that job status had significant effect on children behavior problems ($F = 22.73$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .001$). That means, children of working mother had more behavior problems than non-working mother. Family structure had significant effect on children behavior problems ($F = 42.24$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .001$). That means, children behavior problems are higher among nuclear family than joint family. The result also shows significant interaction effect between job status and family structure ($F = 7.97$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .01$). That means children of working mother in nuclear family had more behavior problems and children of non-working mother in joint family showed less behavior problem. Finally, family structure and number of children ($F = 4.55$, $df = 1, 122$, $p < .05$). That means, the children of nuclear family who were 2 or above 2 children showed more behavioral problems and the children of joint family who were 2 or above 2 children showed less behavior problems.

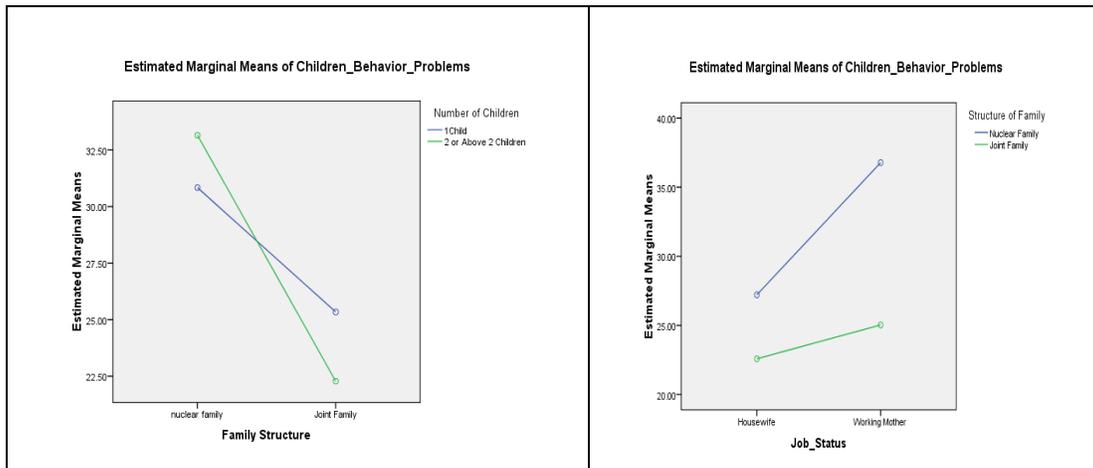


Fig. 2. Showing Two-way Interaction effect between Family Structure and Number of Children; Family Structure and Job Status.

Fig. 2 showed the children of working mother in nuclear family had more behavior problems and children of non-working mother in joint family showed less behavior problem. Again, the children of nuclear family who were 2 or above 2 children showed more behavioral problem and the children of joint family who were 2 or above 2 children showed less behavior problem.

The correlation between the parenting stress and children behavior problems was .66 determined by calculating Pearson's Product-moment correlation coefficient that is found to be significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). It reveals significant positive relationship between parenting stress and children behavior problems. That means the increase of parenting stress, behavior problems of their children increases. This finding is similar to the other researchers (Neece, Green, & Baker, 2012). If mother stays in critical or stressful situation because of job stress, daily hassles, excessive engage in household activities, and then it impacts on their child's behavior.

The findings of the present study (Table 1) revealed that working mother had more parenting stress than non-working mother. Findings of this study are consistent with those of Dey *et al.* (2013). In the present time, working mother is running job for making better and peaceful life. But to continue job, working mother has to face different complicatedness such as job stress, burnout, excessive involvement in job, marital conflict (Catherine 1992) which create parenting stress, and it negatively impacts on behavior of child. On the other hand, non-working mother gets enough time to take care of her child in all aspects. She can fully concentrate to her baby. So, working mother had more parenting stress than non-working mother.

Findings also revealed that parent mothers of nuclear family suffer from more parenting stress than mothers of joint family (Table 2). This result is similar to Hwang and James-Roberts (2013). In nuclear family, mothers have to keep busy with caring of her baby and household activities. It is very tough for her to maintain both aspects. On the other hand, in joint family, other family members can take care of her baby especially grandparents in absence of mother. So, parenting stress is less among joint family than nuclear family.

Number of children had significant effect on parenting stress (Table 2). Mothers who had 2 or above 2 children showed more parenting stress than mothers who had 1 child. In the present time, parents have to engage economic activity because of high expenditure, providing better education, environment, and meeting demand of their children. In case of one child, parents can easily provide these opportunities than two or above 2 children. So parenting stress is higher among children of two or above 2 two than children of one child.

Children of working mother had more behavior problems than children of non-working mother (Table 3). This finding is consistent with the findings of other researchers (Kauts and Kaur 2011). When mother joins in work by keeping up their lovely baby under supervision of maid servants, then child may imitate unwanted behavior, aggressiveness and slang language. Sometime maid servant keeps the child busy with opening cartoons. Because excessive watching of this programme, child may facade unwanted problems such as poor vision, irritation, aggression, obesity etc. But non-working mother can get enough time to take care of her baby. So this mother can control these bizarre problems.

Children of nuclear family had more behavior problems than children in joint family (Table 3). Findings from this study are consistent with those of other researchers (Dey *et al.*, 2016). Mother of nuclear family has to perform all types of household activities with caring of her child. It may be difficult for them. Sometimes mothers don't want but compel to keep busy of her baby opening television or computer or mobile. In such way, children addict in different types of programmed such as cartons (it may be educative, aggressive or entertaining), television serial etc. and excessive use of these device children face different types of behavioral and physical problems such as impulsivity, aggression, moodiness and low self-esteem. But non-working mothers can easily monitor of their baby. They can get enough support from other family members. So their children don't face in such problems.

Children of working mothers in nuclear family had more behavior problems than children of non-working mothers in joint family (Table 3). Mother has to be full time involvement with their child at least infancy to early childhood. Because long time absence of mother, child face behavioral problems because of imitating unwanted behavior of maid servant, watching unselected television programmed, failing to make best friendship. Sometimes stress of working mother may arise from job or conflicting with partner. This phenomena also impact on their children that is major problems in nuclear family (Maccoby 2000). But in joint family most of the time, mother can take care of her baby and help to select good friend. Other family member in joint family also supports and keeps the child when mother are busy with maintaining household activities.

Number of children is not significant effect on children behavior problems. That means, children behavior problem is not vary according to number of children.

This study have some recommendations (a) every mother has to stay full time with her child at least infancy to early school age; (b) day care centers will be established in the institution and provide various toys, food and other facilities; (c) parental counseling or training program may be effective to reduce these problems; (d) husband has to share responsibilities of baby and household activities with his wife; (e) every couple need to value their parents so that they can take care of their baby in absence of them. In this aspect contribution of joint family has summit matter; (f) conscious people should come forward to educating ignorant people about the nature, causes and consequences of parenting stress and behavioral problems of children.

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