International Journal of Enhanced Research in Medicines & Dental Care (IJERMDC),
ISSN: 2349-1590, Vol. 13 Issue 10, October 2026

Behavioural Problems and Social Skills among Preschool Children of Employed and Unemployed Mothers

Ms. Mariammal P[1], Ms. Nithya S[2], Ms. Rajapriya K[3], Ms. Christina Ruby K[4], Ms. Sudhi R[5], Ms. Sivaranjani M[6], Ms. Gurujanani B[7], Ms. Maladevi L[8], Dr. K. Thamaraiselvi[9]

[1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8]B.Sc. Nursing, (IV Year Students) Rathinaam College of Nursing, Aruppukottai, Tamil Nadu, India
[9]M.Sc (N), Ph.D (N), Principal, Rathinaam College of Nursing, TN Dr. MGR Medical, University, Chennai.]

ABSTRACT

This study compared behavioural problems and social skills among preschool children of employed and unemployed mothers at Government District Headquarters Hospital, Aruppukottai. A quantitative approach, descriptive research design, and non-probability purposive sampling technique were used to select 60 children, with 30 in each group. Data were collected using the Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scale (PKBS). Social withdrawal was significantly higher among children of unemployed mothers (t = 2.665), whereas social cooperation was significantly higher among children of employed mothers (t = −2.284). The findings highlight the importance of early identification and support for behavioural well-being and social development.

Keywords: Preschool children, behavioural problems, social skills, employed mothers, unemployed mothers, PKBS, social withdrawal, social cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

“A mother is a child’s first teacher, playing the most vital role in their social and behavioural development”

- **Egger and Angold.**

Preschool age is a critical period for emotional, social, and behavioural development. Identifying mental health and behavioural problems during early childhood is important for understanding children's developmental difficulties. Behavioural problems such as aggression, hyperactivity, anxiety, and social withdrawal may affect children's social adjustment and overall well-being. Early identification and appropriate intervention are essential to promote healthy behavioural development among preschool children.

Need of the study

According to the World Health Organization, approximately 10–20% of children and adolescents worldwide experience mental and behavioural problems, with many conditions beginning during early childhood. Studies conducted in various countries have reported that behavioural problems affect a substantial proportion of preschool children, ranging from 10% to 30%.

Statement of the problem

“A comparative study to assess the behavioural problems of preschool children among employed and unemployed mothers in government district headquarters hospital, Aruppukottai”.

Objectives

- To assess the behavioural problems of preschool children among employed and unemployed mothers as measured by PKBS.
- To find out the comparison among behavioural problems, social skill of preschool children between the employed and unemployed mother.
- To find out the association between behavioural problems and social skill of preschool children with their demographic variables.

Hypothesis:

H_1- There will be a significant difference between behavioural problems and social skill of preschool children among employed and unemployed mothers.

H_2- There will be significant association between behavioural problems and social skill of preschool children with their selected demographic variables.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research approach with a descriptive research design was adopted at Government District Headquarters Hospital, Aruppukottai. The study included 60 preschool children aged 3–6 years, comprising 30 children of employed mothers and 30 children of unemployed mothers, selected using a non-probability purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using a demographic questionnaire and the Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scale (PKBS), developed by Kenneth W. Merrell, to assess social skills and behavioural problems. To compare both groups and examine correlations and associations with selected demographic variables.

RESULTS

Objectives 1

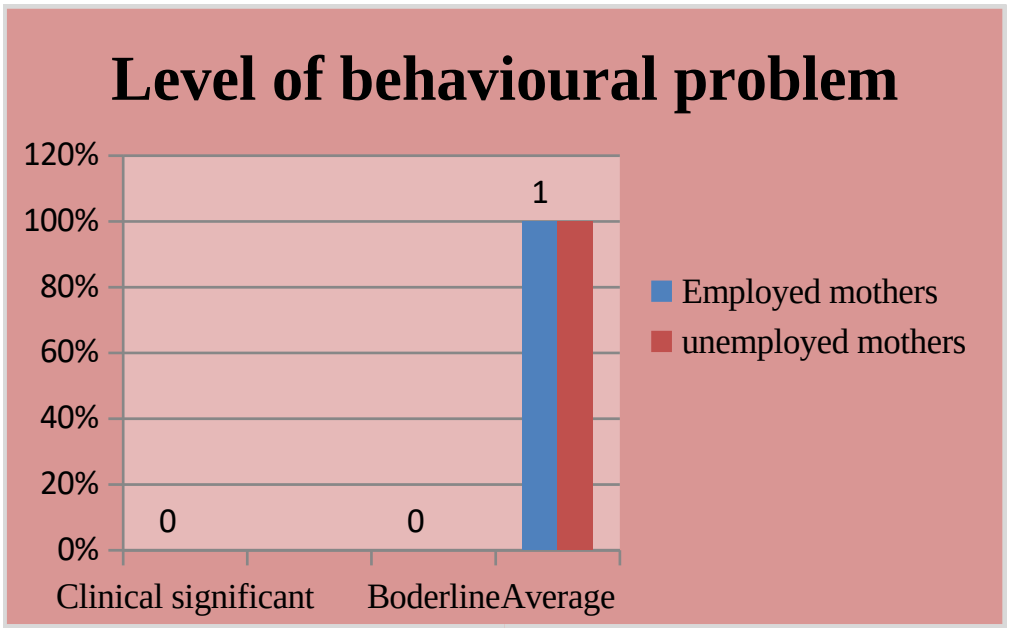


Figure 1: level of behavioural problems of preschool children among employed and unemployed mother

Figure 1 illustrates the behavioural problem risk among preschool children of employed and unemployed mothers. The findings reveal that 100% of the children in both groups were classified as having a low risk of behavioural problems, with none exhibiting clinically significant or borderline behavioural problems.

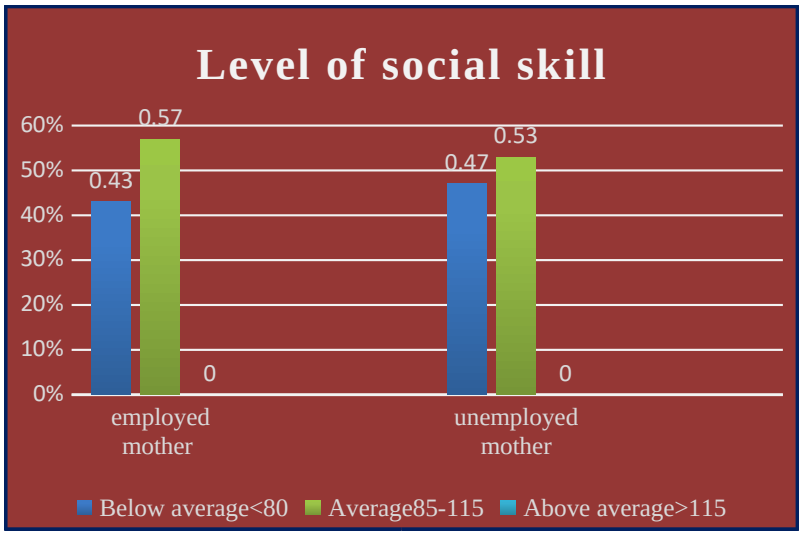


Figure 2: Level of social skill of preschool children among employed and unemployed mother

Figure 2 depicts the level of social skills among preschool children of employed and unemployed mothers. Among the children of employed mothers, 43% had below-average social skills, while 57% demonstrated average social skills. Similarly, among the children of unemployed mothers, 47% had below-average social skills, whereas 53% demonstrated average social skills. These findings indicate that a slightly higher proportion of children of employed mothers demonstrated average social skills compared with children of unemployed mothers.

Objecives 2

Table 1: Comparison of the Sub domains of Behavioural Problems among Preschool Children of Employed and Unemployed Mothers

Sub domain	Employed mothers: mean (SD)	Unemployed mothers: mean (SD)	t - Value	Result
Social withdrawal	2.1 (3.18)	4.4 (5.89)	2.665	Significant
Self-centredbehavior	10.8 (7.65)	1//1.8 (7.87)	0.706	Not significant
Attention problems	8.6 (7.33)	8.9 (6.78)	0.232	Not significant
Antisocial behavior	5.8 (7.15)	5.8 (5.87)	0.000	Not significant
Anxiety	3.2 (3.85)	4.2 (5.39)	1.170	Not significant

Table 2: Comparison of the Sub domains of Social Skills among Preschool Children of Employed and Unemployed Mothers

Sub domain	Employed mothers: mean (SD)	Unemployed mothers: mean (SD)	t - Value	Result
Social cooperation	29.8 (4.48)	27.5 (6.39)	−2.284	Significant
Social connection	27.7 (4.90)	25.3 (8.42)	−1.909	Not significant
Social freedom	26.6 (6.98)	25.2 (9.18)	−0.940	Not significant

The findings presented in Tables 1 and 2 revealed a significant difference in social withdrawal, with children of unemployed mothers scoring higher (Mean = 4.4, SD = 5.89) than children of employed mothers (Mean = 2.1, SD = 3.18; t = 2.665). Social cooperation was significantly higher among children of employed mothers (Mean = 29.8, SD = 4.48) than those of unemployed mothers (Mean = 27.5, SD = 6.39; t = −2.284). No significant differences were observed in the other behavioural problem dimensions or social skills. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was partially supported, as significant differences were found only in social withdrawal and social cooperation.

Objectives 3

Table 3: Association of social skill of preschool children among employed mothers with demographic variables

S.NO	Demographic variables	UNEMPLOYED MOTHERS (Social skill)						T-Value	χ^2 Chi Square Value	Remark
		Below average <85		Average 85-115		Above average >115				
		F	%	F	%	F	%			
1.	**Age**							7.81	4.63	NS
	3 Years	2	7%	1	3%	0	0			
	4 Years	7	23%	5	17%	0	0			
	5 Years	5	17%	6	20%	0	0			
	6 Years	0	0	4	13%	0	0			
2.	**Gender**							3.84	1.15	NS
	Male	6	20%	10	33%	0	0			
	Female	8	27%	6	20%	0	0			
3.	**Mother'sage**							3.84	0.24	NS
	21-30	13	43%	14	47%	0	0			
	31-40	1	3%	2	7%	0	0			
4.	**Mother's Education**							7.81	7.23	NS
	Secondary Level	4	13%	1	%	0	0			
	Higher Secondary Level	5	17%	8	27%	0	0			
	Graduate Level	0	0	5	17%	0	0			
	Above Graduate	4	13%	3	10%	0	0			
5.	**Mother's Occupation**							0	0	NS
	Employed Mother	0	0	0	0	0	0			
	Unemployed Mother	14	47%	16	53%	0	0			
6.	**Residence**							3.84	0	NS
	Urban	4	13%	4	13%	0	0			
	Rural	11	37%	11	37%	0	0			
7.	**Type of family**							3.84	0.53	NS
	Nuclear	7	23%	8	27%	0	0			
	Joint Family	7	23%	8	27%	0	0			
8.	**Family Income**							7.22	5.48	NS
	Below 10,000	6	20%	2	7%	0	0			
	10,000-25,000	6	20%	12	40%	0	0			
	25,001-50,000	1	3%	2	7%	0	0			
	Above 50,000	1	3%	0	0	0	0			
9.	**No of Siblings**							5.99	7.0	**S***
	No	5	17%	0	0	0	0			
	1	7	23%	13	43%	0	0			
	2	3	10%	2	7%	0	0			
10.	**Primary Care Giver**							0	0	NS
	Mother	14	47%	16	53%	0	0			

Table 3 shows that, among children of employed mothers, no significant association was found between demographic variables and social skills. Among children of unemployed mothers, only the number of siblings showed a statistically significant association with social skills at the 0.05 level. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported.

REFERENCES

1. Egger, H. L., &Angold, A. (2006). Common emotional and behavioral disorders in preschool children: Presentation, nosology, and epidemiology. In C. A. Essau (Ed.), Childhood and adolescence: A comprehensive guide *(pp. 35–59)*
2. Belsky, J. (2007). Early child care and early child development: Major findings of the NICHD study of early child care. European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 3*(1), 95–110.*
3. Smita K, Jakibanja R. Prevalence of behavioural problems among preschool children aged 4 to 5 years in Bhaktapur District, Nepal. 2026;
4. Choudhari P. Behavioural Problems among Preschool Children: A Comparative Study between Working and Non-Working Mothers. International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR). 2026 Apr; ***15(4)***
5. Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (Eds.). (2000). From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development. National Academy Press.
6. Desai, S., & Jain, D. (1994). Maternal employment and changes in family dynamics: The social context of women's work in rural South India. Population and Development Review, *20*(1), 115–136