



## Behavioural Problems Among School-Aged Children of Working Mothers in Chembilode Panchayat, Kannur District: A Cross-Sectional Study

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### Abstract

**Background:** Behavioural problems among school-aged children are increasingly recognized as a significant public health concern because of their impact on emotional well-being, social relationships, and academic performance. Maternal employment may influence children's behavioural outcomes through changes in parental supervision and care giving patterns.

**Objectives:** 1. To assess behavioural problems among school-aged children of working mothers in Chembilode Panchayat. 2. To determine the association between behavioural problems and selected demographic variables.

**Methods:** A quantitative descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 60 working mothers having children aged 6–12 years in Chembilode Panchayat, Kannur District, Kerala. Participants were selected using convenience sampling. Data were collected using a structured demographic questionnaire and a structured behavioural checklist. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis.

**Results:** Among the children studied, 24 (40%) exhibited mild behavioural problems, 33 (55%) demonstrated moderate behavioural problems, and 3 (5%) had severe behavioural problems. A statistically significant association was found between behavioural problems and the type of school attended by the child.

**Conclusion:** The study revealed that behavioural problems are prevalent among school-aged children of working mothers, with the majority exhibiting moderate behavioural issues. Early identification and timely

interventions involving parents, teachers, and healthcare professionals are essential to promote positive behavioural development.

**Keywords:** School-aged children, Behavioural problems, Working mothers, Child mental health, Behavioural development, Nursing research.

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## INTRODUCTION

Children are valuable assets of society, and their healthy growth and development are fundamental to the nation's progress. School age, ranging from 6 to 12 years, represents a critical developmental stage characterized by rapid cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioural changes. The family environment plays a significant role in shaping children's behavioural patterns and psychosocial well-being.

Behavioural problems such as aggression, hyperactivity, anxiety, social withdrawal, attention deficits, and conduct disorders may negatively affect children's academic performance, interpersonal relationships, and future development. Various factors contribute to behavioural disturbances, including family dynamics, parenting styles, socioeconomic conditions, educational environments, and parental employment status.

With the increasing participation of women in the workforce, concerns have emerged regarding the potential influence of maternal employment on children's behavioural outcomes. Understanding behavioural problems among children of working mothers is therefore essential for developing effective preventive and supportive interventions.

## NEED FOR THE STUDY

Behavioural problems among school-aged children are a growing public health concern worldwide. Studies indicate that approximately 10–20% of children experience emotional and behavioural difficulties. If left unidentified and unmanaged, these problems may persist into adolescence and adulthood, leading to adverse educational, social, and psychological consequences.

Working mothers often face challenges in balancing professional responsibilities and child-rearing practices. Therefore, assessing behavioural problems among children of working mothers is important for planning interventions aimed at promoting healthy child development and family well-being.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To assess behavioural problems among school-aged children of working mothers in Chembilode Panchayat.
2. To determine the association between behavioural problems and selected demographic variables.

## HYPOTHESIS

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant association between behavioural problems among school-aged children of working mothers and selected demographic variables.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study was based on Nola J. Pender's Health Promotion Model (1982), which emphasizes the influence of individual characteristics, experiences, and environmental factors on health-related behaviours. The model served as the conceptual basis for exploring behavioural problems among school-aged children.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Research Approach**

Quantitative research approach.

### **Research Design**

Descriptive cross-sectional research design.

### **Setting**

The study was conducted in Chembilode Panchayat, Kannur District, Kerala.

### **Population**

working mothers having school-aged children between 6 and 12 years.

### **Sample Size**

60 working mothers.

### **Sampling Technique**

Convenience sampling technique.

### **Inclusion Criteria**

- Working mothers with children aged 6–12 years.
- Mothers willing to participate.
- Mothers able to understand English.

### **Exclusion Criteria**

- Mothers of children with special needs.
- Mothers unwilling to participate.
- Mothers unavailable during the data collection period.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

#### **Section A: Demographic Questionnaire**

Included age, gender, birth order, occupation, working hours, type of family, type of school attended, and academic performance.

#### **Section B: Behavioural Checklist**

The checklist assessed:

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Conduct Disorder
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder

- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Separation Anxiety Disorder
- Childhood Insomnia
- Age Regression

### Scoring Pattern

SCORE	INTERPRETATION
10-16	Mild Behavioural Problems
17-32	Moderate Behavioural Problems
33-48	Severe Behavioural Problems

### Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established by 14 experts in nursing and related disciplines. Reliability was assessed using the Split-Half Method and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83, indicating good reliability.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee of the College of Nursing, Kannur Medical College, Anjarakandy. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study.

## RESULTS

### Demographic Characteristics

Among the 60 participants:

- 40% of children were aged 6–8 years.
- 25% were aged 8–10 years.
- 35% were aged 10–12 years.
- 58.33% were female children.
- 41.67% were male children.
- 60% were first-born children.
- 53.33% of mothers had full-time occupations.
- 60% worked approximately 8 hours per day.
- 75% belonged to nuclear families.
- 68.33% attended government schools.
- 56.67% demonstrated excellent academic performance.

## Behavioural Problems among Children

Behavioural Problems	Frequency	Percentage
MILD	24	40%
MODERATE	33	55%
SEVERE	03	05%

The majority of children (55%) exhibited moderate behavioural problems.

### Association between Behavioural Problems and Demographic Variables

A statistically significant association was found between behavioural problems and the type of school attended by the child. No significant association was observed with the remaining demographic variables.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study revealed that more than half of the children (55%) exhibited moderate behavioural problems. The results indicate the need for increased parental involvement and behavioural monitoring among school-aged children. The significant association between behavioural problems and type of school suggests that educational environments may influence behavioural outcomes. Family support, school environment, and parental engagement play a crucial role in promoting positive behavioural development.

## NURSING IMPLICATIONS

### Nursing Education

Nurse Educators should provide education regarding behavioural assessment and management strategies for children and parents.

### Nursing Practice

Community health nurses should conduct behavioural screening programmes and provide counselling services to parents and children.

### Nursing Administration

Nursing administrators should organize awareness programmes and continuing education sessions related to child mental health and behavioural management.

### Nursing Research

Further studies involving larger sample sizes and comparative designs are recommended to strengthen the evidence base.

## LIMITATIONS

- The study was limited to 60 participants.
- The study was conducted in a single Panchayat.
- The duration of data collection was limited.

- Findings cannot be generalized to all populations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Similar studies may be conducted with larger sample sizes.
2. Comparative studies may be undertaken among children of working and non-working mothers.
3. Interventional studies can be conducted to evaluate behavioural management programmes.
4. Studies may be replicated in different geographical settings.

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that behavioural problems are prevalent among school-aged children of working mothers, with the majority demonstrating moderate levels of behavioural difficulties. Early identification, parental guidance, school support, and community-based interventions are essential to promote healthy behavioural development and improve child well-being.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed substantially to the conception, design, data collection, analysis, manuscript preparation, review, and approval of the final manuscript.

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