

Exploring Mindful Parenting Among Career Oriented Mothers and Non-Career Oriented Mothers

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ABSTRACT

Background: Mindfulness is defined as the awareness that comes from ‘paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally. Unsurprisingly, mindful parenting takes those principles and applies them to how you parent. Parenting, especially with respect to mothers has evolved over time due to changes in the lifestyle, socio economic scenario, education, etc. This study aimed to study mindful parenting between career-oriented and non-career-oriented mothers.

Methodology: In the present study, 30 career-oriented and 30 non-career-oriented mothers between the ages 30- 35 years were administered with a questionnaire on Mindful Parenting.

Results: After referring to the table of critical value at t, the data was found to be not significant at any of the accepted levels. Hence, the obtained data is more due to chance and less due to true difference.

Conclusions: The findings of the study can be used in everyday life settings like organizing parents’ workshops, mindfulness workshops, marital counseling, individual and group therapy which will help the society to evolve consciously.

Keywords: Parenting, Mindfulness, career-oriented mothers, mothers.

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INTRODUCTION

“Always hear the yes in the no”

Marshall. B. Rosenberg

The term "mindful parenting" was introduced by Kabat-Zinn and Kabat-Zinn in 1997. It refers to the practice of intentionally bringing awareness and attention to a child in a non-reactive and non-judgmental manner at any given moment, fostering positive affection in the parent-child relationship.

Duncan and others [1] elaborated on this idea by creating a mindful parenting model, which includes five essential elements of mindful parenting: listening attentively (providing meaningful attention and accurately understanding the child's communication), and non-judgmental acceptance of both oneself and the child (valuing the child's characteristics; acknowledging that challenges, mistakes, and unmet expectations will occur while also setting clear expectations for the child's behavior), developing emotional awareness for both oneself and the child involves being less dismissive and more responsive to the child's emotional needs. This includes accurately recognizing emotions in oneself and in the child to minimize discipline that is driven by emotional responses with self-regulation within the parenting relationship entails practicing emotional regulation, exercising self-control, and cultivating a lower reactivity to the child's emotional expressions. It also involves decreasing impulsiveness and parenting in alignment with one's goals and values and fostering compassion for both one and the child means being more forgiving and less critical of one's own parenting efforts while promoting positive affection in the parent-child relationship.

Parenting has evolved over time due to changes in the lifestyle, socio economic scenario, education, nature of employment, etc. Unlike olden times, women have resorted to pursuing their careers and establishing a

balance in their parenting as well as careers. However, there are still women who are homemakers as well as parents [2].

Research was conducted on middle aged working parents and dimensions such as work family balance, Traits such as Mindfulness and Psychological Well-Being were explored. Results specifically showed that along with work-family balance, describing and acting with awareness were the facets that significantly contributed to all dimensions of psychological well-being. Work-family balance and non-judging of inner experience significantly predicted the environmental mastery dimension of psychological well-being [3-4].

Indian Parenting

In India, parenting holds a strong cultural significance. Unlike in most western cultures, the parent's parent their children regardless of the child's age. In a paper reviewing studies on cultural differences in parenting styles and their outcomes in the West and India, it was found that, despite anticipated cultural distinctions, the impact of parenting styles on children appears to be similar across cultures. Culture did not act as a moderator between parenting style and child outcomes. Authoritative parenting was linked to better outcomes compared to authoritarian and neglectful/uninvolved styles in both Western countries and India. Findings regarding indulgent/permissive parenting styles were mixed in both regions. The article also discusses the cultural shift in parenting styles and its implications for the future [5].

In a study that examined Indian mothers' narratives thematically, two overarching themes and nine sub-themes were identified. The first theme, pandemic-related stress, included the sub-themes of increased workload, poor support system, lack of time for self, and emotional and physical distress. The second theme of mindful parenting included the sub-themes of mindfulness as a mother and in relation to the child, acceptance of self and child, empathic understanding of self and child, active engagement with child, and emotional regulation. An increased workload on all fronts, coupled with a lack of support and a lack of time for themselves, contributed to an exacerbation of the mothers' emotional and physical stress [6].

They addressed these concerns, which arose from their experiences, by using mindfulness-based educational processes in their educational practice. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, mindfulness-based stress reduction, and mindfulness-based parenting techniques could be explored as possible interventions for mothers to alleviate their distress while drawing attention to larger structural changes and policy interventions that address social issues such as gender inequality and childcare [7].

Cultural Perspective

Parenting as a concept keeps changing pertaining to various factors, culture being one. Which supposedly reflects the way the children are raised. According to a book by Martin. H. Maurer, parental control in Asian countries is an expression of parental involvement and care. They feel being in alignment with their traditional and cultural values. However, it is important to consider the evolving influence of westernization which could alter this involvement of parents [8].

Parenting Across Generations

Parenting evolves across generations. The way the parents are conditioned by their parents, their behavioral patterns, etc. if carried forward from one generation to the next impacts parenting. Creative Stress Relief Programme for Parents was developed and conducted in Pune, involving four sessions. The core principles of the programme were chosen to reduce parenting stress (and in turn the stress and anxiety of their children). Two important findings surfaced in relation to these questions. First, the explorations and exercises in the 'creativity and play' and 'self-awareness and attachment' sessions (weeks 1 and 2) helped parents to understand and do things differently to strengthen their connection with their children, especially by becoming more aware of the need for quality time in the family. Secondly, the 'communication sessions' (weeks 3 and 4) and the emphasis on internal working models positively influenced the patterns of interaction between parents and children, who became more dialogical [9].

Gender and parenting

Gender also plays a key role in parenting. According to a study conducted on parenting and gender it was found that parenting is both gendered and gendering. (Emily W. Kane, 1998, #) In a study conducted on

families with LGBTQIA+ parents and families in which a child comes out as LGBTQIA. It was observed that many LGBTQIA parents made a deliberate choice to become parents, with a strong desire to raise children [10]. There is an assumption that career-oriented mothers are more educated and smarter than non-career-oriented mothers. After reviewing the research conducted in mindful parenting, it was observed that there are very few studies conducted on mindful parenting among career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers. The current study was an attempt to do the same. The purpose of the present study was to explore mindful parenting among career-oriented mothers and non-oriented mothers.

METHODOLOGY

Objective: To see whether there is a difference in mindful parenting scores between career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers.

Variables

Independent Variable: Type of mothers with 2 levels

Level 1

Career-oriented mothers: Ambitious women who are dedicated to their roles as mothers and seek meaningful and successful careers. ("Every Career Mom Has a Different Paradigm of What Success Looks Like but the Common Thread Is the Desire to Balance, Grow and Succeed in Every Role!" June, #)

Level 2

Non-career-oriented mothers: No formal definition obtained as google scholar did not show a distinction between non-career-oriented mother and a non-working woman. Non-working women are referred to those women who lived at home all the time and look after their families.

Dependent Variable

Mindful parenting score: It is a Likert scale. It is an interval scale of measurements. A meta construct that serves to integrate aspects of parental cognitions, attitudes, and affective reactivity in parenting interactions into a single higher-order construct [11].

Control Variables

1. Residing in the city of Mumbai were randomly selected.
2. Must be a graduate
3. Career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers of 30 - 35 years of age.
4. Having children of 5 - 9 years of age.
5. Career-oriented women who work out of the home from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm excluding travel time.
6. Non-career-oriented women who have no source of income generated by their own.
7. Mothers were asked to keep in mind their last 2 to 3 years of parenting while answering the questionnaire.

Design

Quasi Experimental and randomized

Null Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (1): There is no significance of the difference in the scores of awareness and present centered action between career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers.

Null Hypothesis (2): There is no significance of the difference in the scores of non-judgments between career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers.

Null Hypothesis (3): There is no significance of the difference in the scores of non-reaction between career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers.

Alternative Hypothesis

Alternative Hypothesis (1): There is a significance of the difference in the scores of awareness and present centered action between career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers.

Alternative Hypothesis (2): There is a significance of the difference in the scores of non-judgments between career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers.

Alternative Hypothesis (3): There is a significance of the difference in the scores of non-reactions between career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers.

Sample

1. N= 30 Career-oriented mothers within the age group of 30-35 years residing in Mumbai.
2. N= 30 non-career-oriented mothers within the age group of 30- 35 years residing in Mumbai.

Tools Used

Interpersonal Mindfulness in Parenting (IEM-P) scale:

Interpersonal Mindfulness in Parenting scale by Duncan is a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being "Never True," 2 being "Rarely True," 3 being "Sometimes True," 4 being "Often True," and 5 being "Always True." [11] Minimum score is 1 and maximum score is 5. The scale measures 3 sub scales which are Awareness & Present-Centered Attention, Non-judgment and non-reactivity. There were 10 items out of which 4 were dedicated to measure Awareness & Present-Centered Attention, 3 items for non-judgment and 3 items for non-reactivity. Item no. 1, 3, 6 and 9 measured Awareness & Present-Centered Action, items no. 4, 7 and 10 measured non-judgment and item no. 2, 5 and 8 measured non-reactivity. Items with asterisk marks were reverse scored. The scores were obtained for 3 subscales separately.

The author of the scale applied it on 801 rural parents of early adolescents. Mindful parenting was shown to have properties of reliability and convergent, discriminant and concurrent validity. Higher-order factor of mindful parenting, as expected, and four first-order factors (present-centered attention, present-centered emotional awareness, non-judgmental acceptance, and non-reactivity), one more than anticipated. This model had adequate reliability, was replicated in an independent sample of 378 mothers, and was then shown to have measurement invariance across mothers and fathers [11].

Procedure

The questionnaire was typed in google form and was circulated with the criteria mentioned in the google form including the criteria of the respondent who must be residing in the city of Mumbai. The respondents were requested to fill the questionnaire within two days of receiving. With a further request that the responses should be purely based on independent interpretation of the questions and not group discussion. The participants were provided with a brief idea about the study being conducted and were assured about the confidentiality of their data. After the responses were obtained, they were scored in Microsoft Excel according to the scoring norms provided in the manual used test on Mindful Parenting. After the scoring, the obtained data was analyzed in Microsoft Excel using t Test. The obtained scores were checked based on the value of significance and accordingly the further conclusions were drawn on the basis of theories of statistics and Psychology.

RESULTS

Table 1 states the summary of the descriptive statistics of the data. According to the table, the total of career-oriented mothers on awareness and present centered action is 355 and that of non-career-oriented mothers on awareness and present centered action is 356. Which is a negligible difference. The total of career-oriented mothers on non-judgment is 254 and that of non-career-oriented mothers on non-judgment is 253 which is a negligible difference. There is a difference in the total of career-oriented mothers on non-reaction is 267 and that of non-career-oriented mothers on non-reaction is 236.

According to the table, the mean of career-oriented mothers on awareness and present centered action is 11.834 and that of non-career-oriented mothers on awareness and present centered action is 11.867. Which is a negligible difference. The mean of career-oriented mothers on non-judgment is 8.467 and that of non-

career-oriented mothers on non-judgment is 8.434. Which is a negligible difference. There is a difference in the mean of career-oriented mothers on non-reaction is 8.9 and that of non-career-oriented mothers on non-reaction is 7.867.

According to the table, the SD of career-oriented mothers on awareness and present centered action is 12.006 and that of non-career-oriented mothers on awareness and present centered action is 7.568. There is a considerable difference. The sd of career-oriented mothers on non-judgment is 2.672 and that of non-career-oriented mothers on non-judgment is 2.944. There is a negligible difference. There is a difference in the sd of career-oriented mothers on non-reaction is 4.369 and that of non-career-oriented mothers on non-reaction is 6.465.

Table1: Summary of descriptive statistics of awareness and present centered action, non-judgment and non-reaction among career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers.

Descriptive Statistics	Career-oriented mothers			Non-career-oriented mothers		
	Awareness and Present Centred Action	Non judgment	Non-reaction	Awareness and Present Centred Action	Non judgment	Non-reaction
Mean	11.834	8.467	8.9	11.867	8.434	7.867
SD	12.006	2.672	4.369	7.568	2.944	6.465

Table 2: Summary of t score

Career-oriented mothers and Non-career-oriented mothers	N	df	t value	p value
Awareness & Present Centered Action	30 + 30	58	0.967	NS
Non judgment	30 + 30	58	0.939	NS
Non-reaction	30 + 30	58	0.092	NS
NS – not significant				

To know whether the obtained difference of means for Awareness and Present Centered Action between career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers, means of non-judgment between career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers and means of non-reaction between career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers are due to chance or due to true difference an inferential statistics namely t test for unpaired means was calculated to know whether there is significance of a difference between two means are due to chance or due to true correlation. An inferential statistic helps us to draw conclusions on whether the obtained data is due to chance or due to experimental manipulation and or variables selected by the experimenter. An appropriate inferential statistical test was t test unpaired heteroscedastic as there were two means, the interval scale of measurement was the dependent variable we want to know the significance of the difference between the two means:

- (1) Between means of Awareness & Present Centered Action among career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers.
- (2) Between means of non-judgment among career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers.
- (3) Between means of non-reaction among career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers.

The dependent variable was on an interval scale of measurement as there is an assumed zero and the possible minimum score a respondent can score is one. Whereas mindfulness parenting as a phenomenon can be assumed as less mindfulness, not completely absence of mindfulness parenting which is an interval scale measurement. As there could be several undiscovered aspects of mindful parenting and this chosen questionnaire did not include them all.

Null Hypothesis (1) states that there is no significance of the difference in the scores of awareness and present centered action between career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers. The obtained t value

0.968 was found to be not significant, after referring to the critical values of t at any of the accepted levels. That means, the obtained data was more due to chance and less due to true difference.

Since the obtained t value were found to be not significant. Hence, the null Hypothesis (1) was retained, and the alternative hypothesis (1) was rejected.

Null Hypothesis (2) states that there is no significance of the difference in the scores of non-judgments between career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers. The obtained t value 0.939 was found to be not significant, after referring to the critical values of t at any of the accepted levels. That means, the obtained data was more due to chance and less due to true difference. Since the results obtained were found to be not significant. Hence, the null Hypothesis (2) was retained, and the alternative hypothesis (2) was rejected.

Null Hypothesis (3) states that there is no significance of the difference in the scores of non-reactions between career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers. The obtained t value 0.092 was found to be not significant, after referring to the critical values of t at any of the accepted levels. That means, the obtained data was more due to chance and less due to true difference. Since the results obtained were found to be not significant. Hence, the null Hypothesis (3) was retained, and the alternative hypothesis (3) was rejected.

Ancillary Observations

According to table no.1, it has been observed that the total of non-reaction among career-oriented mothers is higher than the total of non-reaction among non-career-oriented mothers. Similarly, the SD of awareness and present centered action of career-oriented mothers is higher than the SD of awareness and present centered action of non-career-oriented mothers. Also, the SD of non-reaction among career-oriented mothers is lower than the SD of non-reaction among non-career-oriented mothers.

When analyzing individual score of respondents when compared to the respective means of the subscales may reflect a different level of understanding. It may reflect individual differences perhaps more mindfulness amongst career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers though the inferential statistics do not reflect significance of the difference between the two means for each of the three subscales between career-oriented mothers and non-career-oriented mothers.

Other factors that played a role in the results

1. Small sample size
2. Data was collected using google forms where possibly low socially desirable responses were given due to anonymity.
3. There are differences in cultures across. For example, Collectivistic cultures consider parenting to be a lifelong process as well as a duty as long as they can if not financially. However, in individualistic cultures the aspect of children standing on their own feet independently is given more preference. The current scale does not include this collectivistic aspect.
4. There is a collective notion that a career-oriented mother is more mindful than a non-career career-oriented mother or vice versa.
5. The structure of a family could contribute to parenting. For example, in a nuclear family, the responsibility of the child could be taken care of by one parent, possibly mothers, however, in a joint family, the responsibility is likely to get distributed among all the members of the family.
6. Participants could have responded on the basis of 'what should be rather than what is.'
7. Wordings of the questionnaire: Inability of the mothers to identify her aspects of parenting to the wordings in the questionnaire.
8. Components mentioned in the questionnaire reflected western culture perhaps indicating important aspects in mindful parenting prevalent in western culture.
9. Mothers may have been raising their children based on how they were raised by their mothers.

Limitation Of the Study

1. The scores were obtained on the basis of the subscales of mindful parenting and not a composite score of mindful parenting.

2. The conducted study was quantitative, hence there is a lack in a qualitative analysis of the concept of mindful parenting. As well an individual score analysis of the group means.
3. The questionnaire used in the study lacks an Indian adaptation.

Future Scope

- 1) There could have been a larger sample size for conducting the study.
- 2) Cross Cultural Comparisons I.e. Cities, states, countries, cultures, Linguistic communities, Regional, Gender, Economic status, Sexual Identities, Religion demographics & professions.
- 3) Professions involved in help lines, Mental Health, people involved in essential services professionals, private sector and public sector can be involved in comparative study.
- 4) Creating an Indian Adaptation of the scale on Mindful parenting.
- 5) Advanced statistics like linear regression, ANOVA, correlation, etc. can be used.
- 6) Research methods like, Interview method, case study could have been used to understand the phenomenon in depth.
- 7) Internet trends can also be studied, individually or as a coping mechanism.
- 8) Concept of remote parenting and substitute parenting can be studied.
- 9) On changes in a Women's internal biological mechanisms namely stages of menstrual cycle, menopause etc.
- 10) Exploring whether mindfulness parenting and conscious parenting is the same.
- 11) Exploring the definition of parenting regardless of parents.
- 12) Comparative study between fathers and mothers mindful parenting along with life satisfaction, attachment styles can be studied.
- 13) Elaborate questionnaires can also be included.
- 14) Varied age groups can be studied in comparative studies such as younger mothers and middle adulthood mothers, mothers across generations, etc.

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