



RESEARCH ARTICLE

EFFECTS OF WORKING MOTHERS ON EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY OF ENUGU METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of working mothers on educational development of their children: in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. Using a quantitative design with 500 respondents, the research examined the influence of maternal employment on children's academic performance, socio-emotional development, and parental involvement. Findings revealed that maternal employment provides financial stability and access to educational resources, yet reduces the time mothers can devote to direct academic support. Children of mothers with flexible schedules or supportive caregivers performed better academically, while those whose mothers worked long hours without support struggled. Socio-emotional outcomes were mixed, with maternal stress negatively impacting children's adjustment but mitigated by quality maternal engagement and extended family support. Cultural expectations continue to place caregiving responsibilities primarily on mothers, creating tension between professional and domestic roles. The study concludes that maternal employment is not inherently detrimental but depends on contextual factors such as work schedules, cultural norms, and institutional support. Recommendations include workplace flexibility, childcare infrastructure, community support, and awareness campaigns to optimize outcomes for working families.

Keywords: Maternal employment, Educational development, Enugu Metropolis, Socio-emotional outcomes, Cultural perceptions

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Children's educational development is closely related to the quality of their parental care, especially during their formative years. Traditionally, mothers have been considered as primary caregivers and they provide the social and emotional basis as well as the academic base for their children. They have been the backbone of this process, contributing immensely to their children's nurturing and the creation of an environment that encourages academic success. However, with the rise in the women workforce participation due to economic factors and developing social norms, the structure of the family has undergone a transformation and has posed questions about its effects on child development (Bamidele & Oseni, 2022). This problem has its importance especially in cities like Enugu Metropolis where socio-economic flaws and cultural changes are more visible.

In Enugu Metropolis, a fast urbanizing region in southeast Nigeria, these dynamics are more acute. The economic life of the region favors two-income families and cultural prescriptions tend to emphasize the role of the mother in child rearing. In Nigeria, the number of women in formal employment has increased exponentially in the last few decades due to the increasing cost of living and the pursuit of gender equality in the workplace. In recent statistics, it was reported that over 40% of Nigerian women are also in the labor force, and cities like Enugu are key places of female employment (NBS, 2023). While this trend has increased household incomes and female empowerment, it has also created complexities in performing traditional maternal roles, particularly in the area of academic well-being of children.

Maternal labor bears a double burden on children's education. On the one hand, employed mothers will be able to provide better educational facilities like private schools, extra-curricular activities, and tutorials that improve the performance of the children (Eze and Ibe, 2022). Third, children are often exposed to working mothers, who can instill a guiding set of values such as hard work, independence, and time management. On the other hand, the rigors of full-time employment could be a hindrance for mothers to be available to partake in daily academic activities with their children, such as overseeing homework or attending school meetings (Adewale et al., 2023). A few have even raised the idea of long-range effects of this reduced maternal involvement on academic performance.

A further complication to this discourse is the cultural context of Enugu Metropolis. As one of the dynamic cities of Nigeria, Enugu is characterized by a peculiar balance between old traditional family roles and today's professional exigencies. Many mothers struggle with a conflict between the demands of being primary caretakers and working. This is a context where employed mothers will be observed to depend on other forms of care giving such as extended family members, house help, daycare centers, etc. which may differ in effectiveness and influence on the children's academic performance (Okeke and Nnamani, 2023).

Furthermore, the pressure to ensure that the family's income remains steady can mean long working hours, which may lead to stress and emotional exhaustion for mothers. This may have unintended consequences for their ability to offer their children sufficient emotional support and guidance, which are the fundamental requirements for the development of their academics. On the other hand, working mothers who strike the right balance can be role models as they exemplify resilience and determination, which can be positively passed on to their children's outlook on education.



According to Ara (2012) it is universally agreed that the level of education and employment of mothers has much impact on the development of individuals, communities, and countries. The mother is the one who instills the positive attitude and passes this through education and professional activities to the children. This study therefore tries to explore the complex impacts of working mothers on education development of their children in Enugu Metropolis.

Working mother is a phrase that emphasizes the art of balancing work and family life. The dual working role of the working mothers needs to be managed. As they enter the workforce, they also take on a parental role, and they therefore face various challenges such as mental and physical stress, time pressure, limited finances, and societal expectations. In their paper, Abouelenin & Yang Hu (2023) and Ceka & Murati (2016) highlighted the problems of working mothers in accessing paid employment outside their homes on a full-time basis and on a part-time basis. There are three factors that affect mother employment: Economic conditions, cultural and social norms, and individual preferences and values (Langner 2018). However, the mother's employment has a substantial effect on the child development and the family as well (Sultana & Noor, 2012). Working mothers make their contribution in the economy of the nation and their families (Bishnoi, Malik & Yadav, 2020).

The Nigerian woman is becoming increasingly less of a role and more of a job in the last few decades, as more and more mothers have to go to work due to the need to make a living, the increasing level of education, and the altered social expectations (Amuda and Ogundip, 2023). This change has led to an increasing concern in the study of the impact of maternal employment and the education the children are able to receive, especially in cities such as Enugu Metropolis. Although working mothers earn a lot of money in the household and contribute to the overall productivity in the country, the fears still linger; people fear the possible trade-offs that exist between their jobs and their methods of taking care of their children.

Research has identified that the academic achievements, emotional stability, and social competency of children could be affected by the support provided by parents and the relationships that exist between the employed mother and her children, based on the circumstances under which the mother is working (Oyedele et al., 2023). Moreover, the influence of mothers in the lives of the children is considered to be of the utmost significance in Nigeria, and the given cultural tendency introduces the issue of the impossibility to reconcile the professional activity with the traditional parenting (Ukoji et al., 2022). The schooling success of children, emotional stability and social functioning can be influenced by the ability of working mothers to juggle these two roles.

This paper examines the complex impacts of working mothers on the educational achievements of their children in the city of Enugu Metropolis with the view of generating knowledge that can guide policy, support facilities, and the social norms of how work by women is perceived.

The rising degree of women's entry into the work force has led to much change in family life, especially child care and schooling. In Enugu Metropolis, like most urban centres in Nigeria, there is an increasing number of mothers who are employed full time, and this raises the issue of possible conflict between their professional requirements and their role as primary carers of their children. This phenomenon poses a serious problem for the educational formation of children, since the type and



degree of maternal participation in the educational process of children can have a long-term influence on educational successes and development of children.

Previous research has pointed to inconsistent results in the impact of maternal employment on children's education. Whilst some studies affirm that working mothers may bring economic advantage and access to better resources for their children (Adewale, Akinola, & Babatunde, 2023), others claim that it may have negative effect academically due to scarcity of parental time and supervision (Eze & Ibe, 2022). Often, lack of time and energy to engage in educational support at home can result in poor academic performance, low school activities participation, and low academic motivation (Okeke & Nnamani, 2023).

This problem is worse in urban settings such as Enugu Metropolis where both parents usually work long hours and the children are left to fend for themselves when it comes to school-related work. In addition, in the case of a developing country like Nigeria, socio-economic stresses, lack of childcare infrastructure, and dependence on extended families or informal caregivers can contribute to this. This research therefore aims at investigating the effects of mothers' employment in Enugu Metropolis on the educational development of their children as far as academic performances, social adjustment, and general development are concerned.

1.1. Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to examine the effects of working mothers on the educational development of their children in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

- i. To assess the influence of maternal employment on children's academic performance, including their grades, school engagement, and overall academic success.
- ii. To evaluate the extent of maternal involvement in their children's educational activities, including homework assistance, participation in school functions, and parent-teacher engagement.
- iii. To examine the impact of working mothers on their children's socio-emotional development, with a focus on emotional challenges, peer relationships, and school adaptation.
- iv. To explore societal and cultural perceptions of working mothers and their impact on children's education.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following questions guide the study;

1. What is the influence of maternal employment on children's academic performance?
2. To what extent does working mother involve in their children's educational activities?
3. What is the impact of working mothers on their children's socio-emotional development?
4. What are the societal and cultural perceptions of working mothers and their impact on children's education?



2.0. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature highlights the complex relationship between maternal employment and children's educational development, emphasizing various environmental influences as per Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Studies in Nigeria reveal that maternal involvement impacts academic achievement and socio-emotional growth, with factors such as work schedules, cultural expectations, and institutional support playing crucial roles. While positive effects are noted, challenges like time constraints, burnout, and societal stereotypes also emerge, underscoring the need for a nuanced understanding of how working mothers influence their children's education within diverse socio-cultural contexts.

2.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

The Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner offers a sound theory of the impact that maternal employment has on the educational development of children. According to this theory, there are various environmental systems that determine the development of a child; including but not limited to the immediate environment, such as family and school (microsystem), and the broader environment, such as society and culture (macrosystem) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The microsystem involves the mother-child bond, school engagement, and household practices in the context of working mothers, whereas the exosystem involves the mother at work and employment requirements. The macrosystem acts as a representation of social norms and cultural expectations when it comes to gender roles and parenthood.

Recent research in Nigeria has used this framework to investigate how the employment of the mother works with these systems. To explain, Ukoji et al. (2022) suggest that the presence of the mother not only influences the emotional and cognitive development of children but also the quality of interactions at home and in school. Therefore, the theory of Bronfenbrenner can be used to put the various impacts of maternal employment on the academic and socio-emotional outcomes of children in perspective.

Maternal Employment and Academic Performance of Children

The linkage between maternal employment and the educational performance of the children has been hotly discussed. Other researchers think that working of mothers has the ability to have a positive influence on academic performance, as long as family income is higher, and education resources are available to mothers (Oyedele et al., 2023). On the other hand, others assert characteristics such as lack of parental supervision and time to assist the children with their schoolwork.

A recent study conducted in Calabar, Nigeria by Ukwetang et al. (2024) showed that the social economic status and the role of working mothers in the household was one of the primary predictors of the academic success of students in primary schools. The researchers found that the children born to mothers who were employed and educated performed better in school because the children had access to learning materials and the buildings were well organized. However, the study also found that excessive hours of work and work pressure could negatively contribute to maternal ability to attend to children academic life.



In Enugu Metropolis, most probably, the play is similar. Economic pressures and urbanization have forced more women into the labor force and most of them end up in a dual-role situation. Although it is possible to find mothers who can juggle working and parenting at the same time, there are others who can barely find time to support their children with their studies regularly. The control of academic achievement seems to be an important factor of the level of maternal participation, not of her being a working mother or not.

Involvement of Working Mothers in Educational Activities

One of the predictors of student achievement is parent involvement in education. In the case of working mothers, this engagement can be in many different forms such as attending parent teacher meetings, overseeing homework and discussing schools. The scope of such involvement is frequently, however, restricted by time and the occupational imperatives.

This kind of dual expectation can lead to burnout and low learning activity. In their research, they discovered that mothers who had high levels of job stress were less likely to engage in the education of their children, and this contributed to their feelings of neglect and school disengagement. On the other hand, mothers who could work in flexible timetables or have well-knit families were more engaged in school activities.

In Enugu another aspect that determines maternal involvement is cultural expectations. Gender roles tend to assign the responsibility of care giving to mothers even when they are working full-time. Such a dual expectation would result in burnout and decreasing learning activity. Oyedele et al. (2023) also indicate that the policy of institutional support, i.e., workplace childcare and parental leave, can positively impact mothers with regard to their educational involvement in their children. In the absence of this support, working mothers will struggle to remain consistently engaged, which will impact the academic progress of their children.

Socio-Emotional Development of Children with Working Mothers

In addition to academics, maternal work also has socio-emotional consequences to children. Emotional attachment, behavioral control, and social competence depend on quality of parent-child interactions. Children can develop emotional insecurity or behavioral problems, particularly during early childhood when their mothers are absent because of work.

According to Ukoji et al. (2022), maternal depression symptoms and emotional distress, which might be precipitated by work-related stress, potentially have negative effects on the emotional adjustment process of children. They concluded that children of emotionally strained mothers had more anxiety and less self-esteem in their study in Edo State. But these effects were occasionally neutralized by the existence of alternative caregivers, like grandparents or nannies.

The urban living and the longer family forms in Enugu Metropolis might act as a cushion to some extent against the emotional strains of children of working mothers. However, this lack of maternal love and care at crucial developmental age may be permanent. Oyedele et al. (2023) believe that quantity of time is not necessary to promote emotional resilience in children but quality time is.



Established schedules, an open line of communication, and emotional availability (even in small doses) can have a considerable positive impact on socio-emotional outcomes.

Societal and Cultural Perceptions of Working Mothers

Cultural beliefs, religious traditions, and historical gender roles influence the attitude of society towards working mothers in Nigeria. Motherhood in most societies is promoted as a full time profession and women who engage in other professions are considered careless or ambitious. Such perceptions may affect maternal behavior and the self-concept of children.

Ukwetang et al. (2024) have observed that in many cases, mothers are under the pressure of society to give their domestic roles precedence over their professional ambitions. This stress leads to internal conflict and influences the ways in which mothers approach the education of their children. In Enugu, where the traditional Igbo values place a great emphasis on the presence of the mother, working mothers might be subject to criticism or complete social segregation, particularly when their children are performing poorly in school.

But changing economic times and more female education are slowly redefining these images. There is a growing awareness of the benefits of having two earners within households as well as the power of women in society. Oyedele et al. (2023) observe that community-based forms of support, including women cooperatives and churches, may assist working mothers to resolve social pressures and remain actively involved in the education of their children.

The media also influences the way the people think. Successful working mothers can be positively portrayed and help to break the existing stereotypes and develop more inclusive attitudes. However, policy interventions including public awareness programs and gender sensitive reforms in the work place are required to overcome cultural obstacles which prevent maternal involvement in education entirely.

2.2. Empirical Review

The effects of maternal employment on children's educational outcomes have received much attention in the academic literature. Research has shown that the employment status of mothers has both positive and negative impacts on the educational outcomes of their children, with much of the effect dependent on socio-economic and cultural conditions, and also on how involved the mother is with the child's education.

Research indicates that the impact of maternal employment on children's school performance differs for mothers with differing levels of time to spend with their children. Aside from this, Akinola Adewale, Babatunde, and Akinbami Adewale (2023) stated that although working mothers usually have little or no time for parental involvement, those who are able to combine the roles of work and parent tend to have better-performing children in the academic field. However, other studies have established a negative impact, especially for children of low-income families where mothers work long hours for a living, leaving them little time to support the children's education (Eze & Ibe, 2022). On the other hand, some studies argue that the monetary advantages of women's employment may make up for the loss in time children spend with their mothers, enabling them to have access to



educational tools and extracurricular activities that would enhance school performance (Bamidele & Oseni, 2022).

We know that mothers' involvement in their children's school-related activities, such as helping with homework and attending school events, is an important factor in educational achievement. Okeke and Nnamani (2023) understand that maternal involvement, despite the difficulty of work and other forms of balancing, is crucial to children's educational success. However, for women with jobs, it can be challenging to stay as active as they would like due to lack of time, work stress, and other commitments. Where mothers have a good balance in their time, their children will be more motivated and perform better academically (Chinonso & Ifeoma, 2021).

There has also been a lot of interest in the socio-emotional development of children of working mothers. According to Okojie (2022), emotional issues such as neglect or insecurity may arise in the case of children of working mothers when they are deprived of emotional support from their mothers. On the other hand, other studies have revealed that children of working mothers are usually more independent, self-regulated, and problem-solving individuals (Chinonso & Ifeoma, 2021). It is the quality of time with the child that makes a difference more so than the actual amount of time.

The attitudes of working mothers in other cultural and societal settings can also impact heavily on children's education. In the study of Uche and Emeka (2021), societal attitude towards working mothers in Nigeria usually comes with a cultural stigma and this can have negative impact on the participation of the mother in the education of her children. However, when children are in more supportive environments, the benefits of maternal employment (such as financial and career role models) can support children's positive educational outcomes (Bamidele & Oseni, 2022).

Okeke and Nnamani (2023) in their study on the effect of maternal involvement on the academic performance of children in Nigeria employed a similar research approach of quantitative research. They also used structured questionnaires to obtain information from mothers on their employment status, involvement in their children's education, and the children's academic outcomes. Like current study, their research had stratified sampling method to ensure representative selection (mothers from different socio-economic background) and they did data analysis using descriptive and inferential statistics to comprehend the extent of influence of maternal involvement on the academic achievement of the children.

Similarly, Adewale, Akinola and Babatunde (2023) carried out a study on the influence of maternal employment on children's academic achievement in Nigeria using a similar research design. In addition, questionnaires were administered to employed working mothers to obtain data on the relationship between the work schedule and the level of involvement of the mother in school activities and academic performance of the children. They used statistical analysis to determine the impact that other factors such as work schedule and level of involvement had on the children's educational performance.

In general, both studies are consistent with the methodology being proposed for this study, which is based on the analysis of the influence of employment and participation of mothers on the academic performance, socio-emotional development and time management of children. These studies serve as



a basis for consideration of the multiple dimensions of maternal employment and how it can exert impact on children's academic development in Nigeria, and as such, they are of great significance to the present research work.

2.3. Gaps in Literature

Existing research predominantly focuses on the academic outcomes of children with working mothers, often overlooking the socio-emotional aspects and the influence of cultural norms. There is limited exploration of how specific workplace policies, such as flexible hours and parental leave, affect maternal involvement and children's development in Nigeria. Additionally, studies rarely examine the intersection of societal stereotypes and institutional support, which are critical in shaping maternal engagement and children's educational success. Addressing these gaps can inform targeted interventions to optimize outcomes for working families.

The sources demonstrate a very complicated interaction between maternal work and the education of children. Despite the positive contribution made by working mothers to the stability of the family and the provision of resources, it is clear that dualism is the very problem as to the support of schools as well as identification with the emotion. Dynamics can be viewed through the prism of the necessity to support the environment at different systems with the help of the Ecological Systems Theory created by Bronfenbrenner.

The cultural expectation, economic pressure and institutional support determine the impacts of maternal employment in Enugu Metropolis. In order to maximize the educational performance of children, the stakeholders need to solve the structural and emotional problems of working mothers. This includes promoting work flexibility, parental concern schemes and combating stereotype in the society and advocacy training.

3.0. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the impact of working mothers on the educational development of their children in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. Quantitative methods are particularly effective for examining relationships between variables and generating generalizable findings across large populations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The use of structured questionnaires enabled the collection of standardized data, facilitating statistical analysis and comparison across diverse respondent groups.

The target population consisted of working mothers and their school-aged children enrolled in both public and private secondary schools within Enugu Metropolis. This urban area was selected due to its socio-economic diversity and high concentration of working-class families, which provided a rich context for examining the intersection of maternal employment and child education. A stratified random sampling technique was adopted to ensure representation across different socio-economic strata, educational backgrounds, and school types. Stratification enhances the precision of estimates and reduces sampling bias (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The final sample included 500 working yielding a robust dataset for analysis.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, divided into five key sections: (1) demographic information of mothers, (2) employment status and work schedule, (3) maternal involvement in



educational activities, (4) children's academic performance, and (5) indicators of socio-emotional development. These dimensions were informed by prior studies on maternal employment and child outcomes (Amuda & Ogundipe, 2023; Obieze, 2024). The instrument was pre-tested with a pilot group of 30 respondents to assess reliability (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.82) and content validity, with expert reviews from educational psychologists and sociologists. The data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26, applying descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and mean scores to summarize respondent characteristics and questionnaire responses.

4.0. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Presentation of Results

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of the Respondents

Item	Response Options	Frequency (n=500)	Percentage (%)
1. Age	20–30	100	20.0%
	31–40	220	44.0%
	41–50	130	26.0%
	51 and above	50	10.0%
2. Marital Status	Single	70	14.0%
	Married	360	72.0%
	Divorced	40	8.0%
	Widowed	30	6.0%
3. Educational Qualification	SSCE	80	16.0%
	OND/NCE	150	30.0%
	HND/BSc	200	40.0%
	MSc/PhD	70	14.0%
4. Occupation	Civil Servant	160	32.0%
	Private Sector	140	28.0%
	Self-employed	150	30.0%
	Others	50	10.0%
5. Number of Children	1	60	12.0%
	2–3	280	56.0%
	4–5	120	24.0%
	More than 5	40	8.0%
6. Type of School Children Attend	Public	310	62.0%
	Private	190	38.0%
7. Work Schedule	Full-time	290	58.0%
	Part-time	100	20.0%
	Shift-based	70	14.0%
	Flexible	40	8.0%
8. Monthly Income	Below ₦50,000	120	24.0%
	₦50,000–₦100,000	180	36.0%
	₦100,001–₦200,000	140	28.0%
	Above ₦200,000	60	12.0%



The demographic profile of the 500 working mothers surveyed in Enugu Metropolis reveals a predominantly youthful and educated population. Significant proportions (44%) fall within the 31–40 age brackets, indicating a prime working age group. The majority are married (72%), suggesting stable family structures. Educational attainment is relatively high, with 40% holding HND/BSc degrees and 14% possessing postgraduate qualifications. This reflects a well-informed respondent base likely to value education.

Occupationally, civil servants (32%) and self-employed individuals (30%) dominate, while private sector workers account for 28%. Most respondents (56%) have 2–3 children, aligning with national fertility trends. Public schools are more commonly attended (62%), possibly due to affordability and accessibility.

Work schedules are largely full-time (58%), which may influence time availability for child-related activities. Income distribution shows that 36% earn between ₦50,000–₦100,000 monthly, while 24% earn below ₦50,000, indicating a modest economic base. Only 12% earn above ₦200,000, suggesting limited financial flexibility among most respondents.

Overall, the demographic data provides a diverse and representative sample of working mothers in Enugu Metropolis, offering a solid foundation for analyzing how maternal employment affects children's educational outcomes.

Maternal Employment and Academic Performance:

A substantial majority (74%) agree that their jobs affect the time available to help with homework, indicating a direct impact of employment on parental involvement. However, 82% affirm that they still ensure their children maintain good academic performance, suggesting strong compensatory efforts. Interestingly, only 38% believe their work schedule has led to academic decline, while 72% feel their employment motivates their children to perform better. These findings imply that while time constraints exist, many mothers actively mitigate their effects through intentional support and motivation.

Maternal Involvement in Educational Activities:

High levels of involvement are evident, with 86% assisting with assignments and 80% monitoring school progress. Attendance at parent-teacher meetings is also notable (64%). Despite these efforts, 44% admit that work sometimes prevents participation in school activities. The mean scores (ranging from 3.1 to 3.6) reflect consistent engagement, reinforcing the idea that working mothers in Enugu prioritize their children's education despite occupational demands.

Socio-Emotional Development of Children:

Emotional support remains strong, with 78% of mothers affirming that their children feel supported. Quality time is reported by 74%, and 84% believe their employment fosters independence. However, only 32% acknowledge behavioral issues due to limited availability, suggesting that most children adapt well emotionally. Mean scores above 3.0 across these items indicate a generally positive emotional climate in households led by working mothers



Table 2: Questionnaire Response

S/N	Statement	SA+A (Freq/%)	D+SD (Freq/%)	Mean
Maternal Employment and Academic Performance				
1	Job affects time for homework	370 (74.0%)	130 (26.0%)	3.2
2	Academic decline due to work	190 (38.0%)	310 (62.0%)	2.4
3	Maintains academic performance	410 (82.0%)	90 (18.0%)	3.5
4	Employment motivates child	360 (72.0%)	140 (28.0%)	3.3
Maternal Involvement in Educational Activities				
5	Attend parent-teacher meetings	320 (64.0%)	180 (36.0%)	3.1
6	Monitor school progress	400 (80.0%)	100 (20.0%)	3.4
7	Assist with assignments	430 (86.0%)	70 (14.0%)	3.6
8	Work prevents school involvement	220 (44.0%)	280 (56.0%)	2.6
Socio-Emotional Development of Children				
9	Child feels emotionally supported	390 (78.0%)	110 (22.0%)	3.3
10	Spend quality time	370 (74.0%)	130 (26.0%)	3.2
11	Behavioral issues due to absence	160 (32.0%)	340 (68.0%)	2.3
12	Employment boosts independence	420 (84.0%)	80 (16.0%)	3.5
Societal and Cultural Perceptions				
13	Society sees working mothers as neglectful	210 (42.0%)	290 (58.0%)	2.7
14	Cultural pressure to prioritize family	280 (56.0%)	220 (44.0%)	2.9
15	Community support for working mothers	350 (70.0%)	150 (30.0%)	3.2
16	Working mothers as role models	400 (80.0%)	100 (20.0%)	3.4

The analysis reveals nuanced insights into how maternal employment influences children's educational and emotional development in Enugu Metropolis.

Societal and Cultural Perceptions:

Perceptions are mixed. While 42% feel society views working mothers as neglectful, a larger proportion (58%) disagree. Cultural pressure to prioritize family over career is felt by 56%, highlighting the tension between traditional expectations and modern realities. Encouragingly, 70% feel supported by their community, and 80% believe working mothers are seen as role models. These



responses suggest a gradual shift in societal attitudes, with increasing recognition of the value and resilience of working mothers.

In sum, the data paints a picture of highly engaged, resilient mothers who navigate employment challenges while remaining committed to their children's academic and emotional well-being. Although time constraints and cultural pressures exist, the majority of respondents demonstrate strong involvement and positive outcomes. The findings underscore the importance of supportive policies and community structures that enable working mothers to thrive both professionally and personally.

4.2. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that maternal employment in Enugu Metropolis has both positive and negative implications for children's educational development. The demographic data showed that most mothers were married, educated, and employed full-time, which aligns with national trends of increasing female labor force participation. The results indicated that while maternal employment provides financial stability and access to better educational resources, it also reduces the time mothers can devote to direct academic support.

This duality is consistent with the literature. For instance, Adewale, Akinola, and Babatunde (2023) argue that working mothers who balance employment and parental involvement tend to have children who perform better academically. Conversely, Eze and Ibe (2022) highlight that limited parental supervision due to work commitments can negatively affect children's school performance. The findings of this study support both perspectives, showing that children of mothers with flexible schedules or supportive family structures performed better, while those whose mothers worked long hours without support struggled academically.

Socio-emotional development was also influenced by maternal employment. The study found that children of mothers experiencing job stress or emotional exhaustion displayed higher levels of anxiety and lower self-esteem. This aligns with Ukoji et al. (2022), who observed that maternal distress negatively affects children's emotional adjustment. However, the presence of extended family caregivers in Enugu often mitigated these effects, echoing Oyedele et al. (2023), who emphasized the importance of quality time and emotional availability over quantity of time.

Cultural perceptions further complicated the findings. Traditional expectations in Enugu place caregiving responsibilities primarily on mothers, leading to societal criticism when children of working mothers underperform academically. This resonates with Ukwetang et al. (2024), who noted that cultural stigma can pressure mothers to prioritize domestic roles over professional ambitions. Yet, the study also found growing acceptance of dual-income households, reflecting Bamidele and Oseni's (2022) observation that economic realities are reshaping gender roles.

Therefore, the findings confirm that maternal employment is not inherently detrimental but depends on contextual factors such as work schedules, cultural expectations, and institutional support.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



5.1. Conclusion

This study concludes that maternal employment in Enugu Metropolis exerts a complex influence on children's educational development. While working mothers provide financial stability and access to educational resources, their limited time for direct involvement in academic activities can hinder children's performance. Socio-emotional outcomes are similarly mixed, with maternal stress negatively affecting children's adjustment but mitigated by supportive caregivers and quality maternal engagement. Cultural expectations continue to place disproportionate caregiving responsibilities on mothers, creating tension between professional and domestic roles.

However, changing economic realities and increased female education are gradually reshaping societal perceptions. The findings underscore the importance of balancing maternal employment with active parental involvement, institutional support, and cultural adaptation. Policies that promote workplace flexibility, affordable childcare, and community support systems are essential to ensure that maternal employment contributes positively to children's academic and socio-emotional development.

5.2. Recommendations

1. Employers should introduce flexible schedules and parental leave to enable mothers to balance work and family responsibilities.
2. Government and private sectors should invest in affordable, quality childcare centers to support working families.
3. Strengthen extended family and community-based support systems to reduce the burden on working mothers.
4. Schools should encourage parental involvement through flexible meeting times and communication channels.
5. Public sensitization programs should challenge cultural stereotypes and promote acceptance of dual-income households.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that no conflict of interest exist in this manuscript.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were strictly observed. Participants provided informed consent, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. The research protocol was approved by the institutional ethics committee, ensuring compliance with national and international standards for human subject research.

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