

## Mindful Parenting and Depression in Working Mothers

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### Keywords

Depression, Mindful Parenting, Working Mothers.

### Abstract

Depression is a significant mental health issue among working mothers, which can negatively impact their quality of life and family well-being. One potential approach to mitigating the risk of depression is mindful parenting, which involves paying full attention and awareness to the present moment in interactions with children. This research investigates the association between the practice of mindful parenting and the prevalence of depressive symptoms among employed mothers. This research employs a quantitative correlational approach, involving 100 working mothers selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using the Mindful Parenting Scale and the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II), and analyzed using Spearman's correlation test. The results indicate a significant negative relationship between mindful parenting and depression ( $r = -0,317$ ,  $p = 0,001$ ). This finding suggests that higher levels of mindful parenting are associated with lower levels of depression in working mothers. Conversely, lower levels of mindful parenting are associated with higher levels of depression. The study's conclusion posits that mindful parenting may act as a buffer, mitigating the risk of depression for working mothers. Based on these findings, it is recommended to develop and implement mindfulness and mindful parenting training programs as part of mental health support for working mothers.

## INTRODUCTION

Working for mothers provides several significant benefits, both economically and psychologically. Economically, working mothers contribute to family income, which can enhance the overall quality of family life (Teng et al., 2018). Additional income from their job can be used to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, and provide better education for children (Dillon-Wallace et al., 2014). Furthermore, their financial contribution can help alleviate the financial burden felt by their partners, thus creating economic stability within the household (Azizah & Salam, 2021). With improved financial support, families can have greater access to healthcare services, recreational activities, and other social engagements that contribute to overall family well-being (Beaufils et al., 2023; Gennetian et al., 2011).

From a psychological standpoint, work provides mothers with a sense of identity, achievement, and self-worth (Krauss et al., 2021; Robinson et al., 2020). Working mothers often experience satisfaction from their professional achievements and contributions in the workplace (Zhang et al., 2022). Jobs also provide opportunities to develop new skills, learn, and grow in their careers (Shiri et al., 2023). Moreover, social interactions at work can help mothers build strong social support networks, which are crucial for emotional and mental well-being (Sigursteinsdottir & Karlsdottir, 2022). Through their work, mothers can experience autonomy and recognition, which can enhance their self-esteem and sense of competence. Research indicates that working mothers tend to report higher levels of life satisfaction because they have more opportunities to express themselves and achieve their personal goals (Barbano et al., 2024).

Working mothers are frequently confronted with the challenge of balancing their professional demands and family responsibilities (Uddin et al., 2021). This dual burden involves efforts to meet job demands such as deadlines, attending meetings, and completing professional tasks, while also fulfilling domestic responsibilities such as managing household chores, caring for children, and organizing family activities. This situation can lead to chronic stress as working mothers must divide their time and energy between two demanding roles. This stress is often exacerbated by a lack of personal time for rest and recovery, which are crucial for physical and mental well-being (Chen et al., 2022). As a result, working mothers often feel physically and mentally exhausted (Lebert-Charron et al., 2018).

Research shows that working mothers tend to experience a greater dual burden compared to non-working mothers or working fathers (Kuo et al., 2018). This phenomenon is attributed to prevailing social norms and gender expectations, which often designate mothers as the primary caregivers for children (Bukini et al., 2020). This burden not only includes daily tasks such as preparing meals, assisting children with homework, and managing their schedules, but also emotional responsibility to ensure the overall well-being of their children. The need to meet

professional demands while also ensuring the well-being of their children can create significant psychological pressure. This tension can lead to feelings of guilt, anxiety, and a lack of life satisfaction, which can ultimately negatively impact the mental health of working mothers (Choo, 2023).

These existing challenges can increase the risk of depression among working mothers. Depression, a mental health condition, is defined by enduring feelings of sadness, a diminished interest in previously enjoyed activities, and a variety of accompanying physical and emotional problems. The World Health Organization (2023) reports that in 2019, depression affected around 280 million people worldwide, making it one of the most widespread mental health conditions. Data shows that women are twice as likely to experience depression compared to men (Epifanio et al., 2015).

Depression in working mothers can have extensive negative impacts. In addition to reducing their own quality of life, depression can also affect the quality of parenting and interactions with their children. Children of mothers experiencing depression are more likely to experience emotional and developmental issues (Bernard-Bonnin, 2004). Moreover, depression can reduce work productivity and increase absenteeism, which can affect the professional careers of mothers (De Oliveira et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2022).

Given the significant impact of depression, it is important to understand the factors influencing this condition in working mothers. This knowledge can aid in the development of effective interventions to reduce the risk of depression and enhance the well-being of working mothers and their families (Goodman & Santangelo, 2017).

Some factors that may contribute to work-related depression include excessive workload, lack of social support, financial problems, and role conflict between work and family (Saedpanah et al., 2023; Yu et al., 2023). Chronic stress resulting from this imbalance can trigger depressive symptoms (Hussenoeder et al., 2022).

The practice of mindful parenting requires being fully attentive and consciously aware of the present moment during interactions with one's children (Duncan et al., 2009). This approach can help reduce stress and improve the quality of the relationship between mothers and their children. Studies indicate that mindful parenting can enhance emotional regulation and provide better coping strategies (Coatsworth et al., 2018), ultimately reducing depression.

Although mindful parenting has been identified as a potential protective factor, research specifically examining the relationship between mindful parenting and depression in working mothers is still limited. Most studies focus more broadly on the general benefits of mindful parenting without delving deeply into its impact on working mothers. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring in greater detail how mindful parenting can influence levels of depression among

working mothers. Thus, this research is expected to provide better insights into strategies that can be implemented to support the mental health of working mothers through mindful parenting approaches.

## METHOD

### Design

This study applies a quantitative correlational approach to explore the relationship between variables, specifically examining the link between mindful parenting and depression among working mothers. This approach involves analyzing numerical data to determine the extent and direction of association between mindful parenting practices and levels of depression experienced by participants.

### Participants

Participants in this study were working mothers who were invited to participate through an online form distributed via social media. Convenience sampling was employed, where participants were selected based on availability and ease of access. This technique was chosen to facilitate efficient data collection from a population that might be difficult to reach directly or underrepresented in other research studies.

During the data collection process, a total of 113 respondents filled out the online form, but only 100 respondents met the inclusion criteria for further analysis. Demographic analysis of these 100 participants showed that the majority were aged between 31 and 35 years, comprising 46% of the total respondents. Other age ranges included under 30 years (23%), 35-40 years (26%), and over 40 years (5%), as depicted in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Demographic data (N = 100)*

Age	n	%
< 30	23	23
31-35	46	46
35 - 40	26	26
> 40	5	5

### Instruments

The research instruments utilized in this study include the Mindful Parenting Scale and the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II). This study utilized the Mindful Parenting Scale developed by Prihandini et al. (2020). This instrument focuses on measuring key aspects such as self-regulation, empathy, and acceptance, which are considered foundational to the mindful parenting concept as outlined by Kabat-Zinn

and Kabat-Zinn (2014). This scale consists of 30 items and demonstrates high reliability with  $\alpha=0.9333$ .

Depression is measured using the Beck Depression Inventory-II, developed by Beck et al. (1996). The BDI-II is a widely used tool for measuring depression and has been translated into various languages, including Bahasa Indonesia. Psychometric properties of the BDI-II in Bahasa Indonesia have been well-established (Ariani et al., 2023; Ginting et al., 2013; Sorayah, 2015). It comprises 21 groups of statements designed to assess the severity of depressive symptoms.

These instruments were selected for their robustness in assessing mindful parenting practices and depression levels among working mothers, providing reliable data to explore the relationship between mindful parenting and depression in this context.

### **Procedure**

The data collection process began by distributing an online form to working mothers through social media groups oriented towards them. This form was designed to gather information related to mindful parenting practices and the levels of depression they experience. Participants were invited to fill out the form voluntarily and anonymously through links shared in relevant social media groups.

Strict data security measures were implemented to ensure the confidentiality of participants' personal information. This information would not be personally identifiable and would only be used for research purposes. Participants' consent to participate in the study was obtained explicitly before they accessed the form, and they were assured that there would be no risk or detriment to them due to their involvement in the research.

These procedures were conducted in accordance with research ethics guidelines, ensuring that all necessary steps to protect participants' security and privacy were met. Therefore, this approach ensures that the collected data is reliable and relevant for further analysis concerning the relationship between mindful parenting and levels of depression among working mothers.

### **Data Analysis**

and hypothesis testing, which was conducted using the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. Descriptive analysis played a crucial role in summarizing and organizing the collected data from the Mindful Parenting Scale and Beck Depression Inventory-II among the participants. This involved calculating measures such as means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages to provide a comprehensive understanding of the central tendencies and variability of scores.

Hypothesis testing was conducted to examine the relationship between mindful parenting and depression among working mothers. Spearman's rho was chosen as the statistical tool due to its suitability for assessing monotonic

relationships between variables that may not meet the assumptions of normality required for parametric tests like Pearson correlation.

## **RESULT**

This study aimed to examine the relationship between mindful parenting and depression levels among working mothers. A total of 100 working mothers participated in this research. Their demographic characteristics provide important context for understanding how social and economic factors may influence parenting practices and mental health outcomes.

### **Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

The majority of participants were employed as private-sector employees (73%), followed by civil servants (ASN) at 18%, entrepreneurs at 5%, and freelance workers at 4%. These employment types reflect a diverse range of work environments for working mothers, from formal jobs in public and private sectors to more flexible but potentially less stable forms of independent work.

In terms of employment status, most respondents held permanent positions (72%), while 19% worked under contract status and 9% were freelancers. This distribution suggests that most participants had long-term employment ties, which may offer economic security but also bring added responsibilities and workload.

Regarding housing status, 50% of participants lived in privately owned homes, 29% rented (contract housing), and 21% lived with their parents. Housing situations can influence autonomy, stress levels, and comfort in fulfilling parenting responsibilities.

Concerning marital status, 75% of participants were married, while 25% were divorced. Marital status is a significant factor, as single mothers often face the dual burden of work and parenting without spousal support, increasing the risk of psychological distress.

In terms of children's age, most participants had children aged 6–7 years (62%), followed by 8–10 years (29%), and 11–12 years (9%). Children in this age range generally require intensive parenting, emotional attention, and academic support, which can be a significant source of stress for working mothers.

As for the number of children, 59% of respondents had two children, 26% had one child, and 15% had three children. The more children a mother has, the more complex the challenges she may face in managing time, energy, and emotional balance.

**Table 2***Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 100)*

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Type of Employment	Private employee	73	73%
	Civil servant (ASN)	18	18%
	Entrepreneur	5	5%
	Freelance	4	4%
Employment Status	Permanent	72	72%
	Contract	19	19%
	Freelance	9	9%
Housing	Private residence	50	50%
	Rented (contract)	29	29%
	With parents	21	21%
Marital Status	Married	75	75%
	Divorced	25	25%
Children's Age	6–7 years	62	62%
	8–10 years	29	29%
	11–12 years	9	9%
Number of Children	One child	26	26%
	Two children	59	59%
	Three children	15	15%

**Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables**

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the two primary research variables: mindful parenting and depression. Based on the analysis, the mean score for mindful parenting was 67.1, with a minimum of 46, maximum of 81, and a standard deviation of 4.73. Meanwhile, depression scores measured using the BDI-II showed a mean of 12.6, minimum of 6, maximum of 30, and standard deviation of 4.54.

**Table 3***Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables*

Variable	N	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max
Mindful Parenting	100	67.1	68.0	4.73	46	81
Depression (BDI-II)	100	12.6	11.0	4.54	6	30

**Correlation between Mindful Parenting and Depression**

To answer the research question, a correlation analysis was conducted between mindful parenting and depression levels using Spearman's rank correlation (Spearman rho). The analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between the two variables, with  $r = -0.317$  and  $p = 0.001$ . This indicates that higher levels of mindful parenting are associated with lower levels of

depression among working mothers. Conversely, those with lower levels of mindful parenting tend to have higher depression scores.

**Table 4**

*Spearman Correlation between Mindful Parenting and Depression*

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Sig. (p)
Mindful Parenting	Depression	-0.317	0.001

The correlation coefficient of -0.317 is considered a weak to moderate relationship, yet statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). This finding supports the hypothesis that mindful parenting may serve as a protective factor against depression, particularly in the context of working mothers who often face dual-role burdens.

These results reinforce the understanding that mindful parenting practices—which include full presence during interactions with children, emotional regulation, and non-judgmental awareness—are associated with better psychological conditions in mothers. Working mothers who consistently apply mindful parenting tend to be calmer in managing conflicts, less likely to experience guilt, and more capable of balancing work and family responsibilities.

On the other hand, mothers with low levels of mindful parenting are more likely to exhibit emotional reactivity, become easily stressed, and feel overwhelmed by parenting demands. These conditions may directly or indirectly trigger symptoms of depression such as emotional exhaustion, helplessness, and loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities.

#### **Categorization of Depression and Mindful Parenting Levels**

To supplement the descriptive and correlational analyses, the data were also grouped into categories based on score distributions, using thresholds derived from a hypothetical mean and standard deviation (SD). This categorization provides a clearer picture of how the participants are distributed across different levels of depression and mindful parenting.

#### **Depression Categorization**

Depression levels were categorized into four groups based on the hypothetical mean and standard deviation of the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II). As shown in Table 10, the majority of participants (70%) were classified in the normal category, meaning they experienced minimal depressive symptoms. Meanwhile, 23% of participants were in the mild category, 6% were in the moderate category, and only 1% were in the severe category.



**Table 5**  
*Categorization of Depression Levels*

Category	Criteria	Score Range	N	Percentage (%)
Severe	$X > \text{Mean} + 1 \text{ SD}$	$X > 42$	1	1.0%
Moderate	$\text{Mean} - 1 \text{ SD} < X < \text{Mean} + 1 \text{ SD}$	$21 < X < 42$	6	6.0%
Mild	$\text{Mean} - 1 \text{ SD} < X < \text{Mean} + 1 \text{ SD}$	$14 < X < 20$	23	23.0%
Normal	$X < \text{Mean} - 1 \text{ SD}$	$X < 13$	70	70.0%
Total			100	100.0%

Note: X = Individual score; Mean and SD refer to hypothetical norm values of BDI-II.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that most respondents fell into the normal depression category, suggesting that the majority of working mothers in this sample have relatively healthy psychological functioning and adequate emotional regulation. The low incidence of moderate to severe depression also reflects a generally well-managed psychological state, despite the participants' multiple roles.

#### **Mindful Parenting Categorization**

Similarly, scores on the Mindful Parenting Scale were categorized into three levels using the hypothetical mean and SD. As seen in Table 11, 39% of respondents were categorized as having high mindful parenting, 59% were in the moderate category, and only 2% were in the low category.

**Table 6**  
*Categorization of Mindful Parenting Levels*

Category	Criteria	Score Range	N	Percentage (%)
High	$X > \text{Mean} + 1 \text{ SD}$	$X > 60$	39	39.0%
Moderate	$\text{Mean} - 1 \text{ SD} < X < \text{Mean} + 1 \text{ SD}$	$30 < X < 60$	59	59.0%
Low	$X < \text{Mean} - 1 \text{ SD}$	$X < 30$	2	2.0%
Total			100	100.0%

Note: X = Individual score; Mean and SD refer to hypothetical norm values of the Mindful Parenting Scale.

These results indicate that the majority of participants exhibited a moderate level of mindful parenting, suggesting that they have sufficient knowledge and awareness about parenting with mindfulness. A significant proportion of mothers (39%) also demonstrated a high level of mindful parenting, reflecting strong self-regulation, empathy, and attentiveness in their parenting approach.

The very small number (2%) of participants in the low category implies that very few mothers showed difficulty in mindful parenting. Overall, these findings reflect a relatively strong tendency toward positive and conscious parenting practices among working mothers in this study.

## DISCUSSION

This study's findings underscore a significant negative correlation between the practice of mindful parenting and the levels of depression reported by working mothers. This correlation aligns with previous research indicating that self-awareness and being present in the moment can protect individuals from depressive symptoms (Parent et al., 2010).

Mindful parenting involves a nurturing approach that emphasizes full attention and awareness in interactions with children (Lippold et al., 2019). This approach not only focuses on children's behavior but also on parents' emotional and psychological responses (Turpyn & Chaplin, 2015). Mindful parenting aids in developing better emotional regulation (Aydin, 2023). Through mindfulness, individuals become more aware of their thoughts, feelings, and responses to stressful situations (Fuller & Fitter, 2020). This awareness empowers them to respond with calm and effectiveness, rather than reacting impulsively. Improved emotional regulation can reduce stress, a common trigger for depression. When mothers can manage their emotions more effectively, they are better equipped to handle parenting and work challenges without feeling emotionally overwhelmed.

Mindfulness practices in parenting also help reduce stress levels (Cheung & Wang, 2022). By focusing on the present moment and accepting circumstances without judgment, working mothers can alleviate pressure from various demands. Research indicates that mindfulness can lower stress hormone levels such as cortisol (Alhawatemeh et al., 2022), which can positively impact mental health. With reduced stress, the risk of experiencing depressive symptoms decreases. Mothers who can manage stress are likely to feel more content and happy, which positively affects their overall mental health.

Mindful parenting also enhances the quality of interactions and relationships between mothers and children (Duncan et al., 2015). When mothers are emotionally present and engaged in every moment with their children, stronger emotional bonds form. This positive relationship provides essential emotional support to mothers, helping them feel more connected and valued in their role as parents (McKee et al., 2017). A sense of connection and satisfaction in the parent-child relationship can serve as a source of happiness and reduce feelings of isolation or helplessness often associated with depression.

Through mindful parenting, working mothers can develop more effective coping strategies (Krause & Brown, 2023). Mindfulness helps individuals accept and cope with difficult situations constructively. Instead of feeling trapped by problems, mothers can gain clearer perspectives and find adaptive solutions. Effective coping strategies can reduce psychological burdens and enhance mothers' ability to handle daily challenges, both in work and parenting contexts.

The conflict between work and family roles is often a significant source of stress for working mothers. With mindful parenting, mothers can focus more

effectively on each role within its context. They can be fully present as parents at home and concentrate on professional tasks at work without being distracted by domestic concerns (Bögels et al., 2010). This balanced attention can reduce feelings of overwhelm and increase satisfaction in both roles, contributing to a decreased risk of depression.

Mindful parenting enhances self-awareness and acceptance, crucial aspects of mental health (Potharst et al., 2020). By accepting themselves and their circumstances without negative judgment, working mothers can reduce feelings of inadequacy or guilt that often arise when they perceive themselves as unable to meet all demands. This acceptance helps them feel calmer and more satisfied with what they can achieve, rather than being trapped in negative thoughts that worsen depressive symptoms.

The findings from this research have important implications for mental health interventions for working mothers. Mindfulness and mindful parenting training programs can be integrated into support strategies for working mothers to reduce the risk of depression. By enhancing working mothers' abilities in mindful parenting, it is hoped that they can better manage stress and improve their emotional well-being. Further research can explore how mindfulness interventions can be effectively implemented in the lives of working mothers and understand the mechanisms underlying the relationship between mindful parenting and depression.

Thus, these results indicate that mindful parenting is not only beneficial for children but also critical for the mental health of working mothers. Enhancing mindful parenting may be an effective approach to reducing depression levels and enhancing overall well-being in working mothers.

It is important to note that this study utilized a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time, thus unable to determine causal relationships between mindful parenting and depression. The relationship found is correlational, not causal. Furthermore, the utilization of a convenience sampling technique introduces a potential for selection bias. The selected participants may not be fully representative of the broader working mother population, thereby potentially limiting the generalizability of the study's findings.

## **CONCLUSION**

The primary objective of this research was to investigate the linkage between mindful parenting and depression within the working mother population. The findings reveal a significant negative relationship between mindful parenting and levels of depression in this demographic. Specifically, higher levels of mindful parenting corresponded to lower levels of depression experienced by working mothers. This suggests that mindful parenting, characterized by full attention and

awareness in the present moment during interactions with children, acts as a protective factor against depression in working mothers.

The development and implementation of mindfulness and mindful parenting training programs as part of mental health support for working mothers are crucial. These programs can assist working mothers in managing stress, enhancing emotional regulation, and reducing the risk of depression.

Future research should employ longitudinal designs to understand the dynamics of change in mindful parenting and depression over time. This approach would provide deeper insights into the causal relationship between these variables.

Furthermore, future studies should use more representative sampling techniques to ensure generalizability of results. Larger and more diverse samples would help paint a more accurate picture of the population of working mothers.

In conclusion, enhancing mindful parenting may serve as an effective strategy to mitigate depression and promote overall mental well-being among working mothers. Continued research and implementation efforts in this area are essential for improving mental health outcomes in this demographic.

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