Evening And Night Work Schedules And Children's Social And Emotional Well-Being

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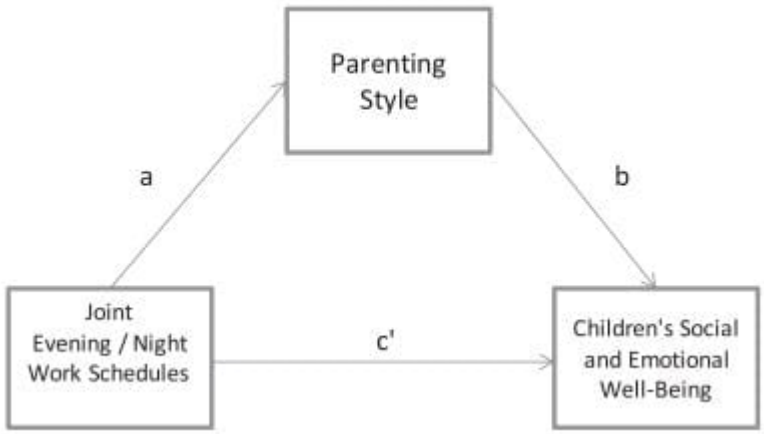
Research Summary

Article Title: Evening and night work schedules and children's social and emotional well-being

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Introduction

This article presents new empirical evidence on the relationship between non-standard work schedules and children's well-being by extending previous literature on the work-family conflict framework. A considerable body of literature claims that unbalanced work rosters have a significantly negative impact on children's emotional and social well-being. However, very few attempts have yet been made which examine the diverse mediating factors and fathers' work schedule impacts on children's well-being. This paper is filling these research gaps by using a unique dataset, the *Families in Germany Study (FiD)*. The authors got motivation for this research from two different theoretical frameworks: 1) work-family conflict and 2) the conceptual resource. The research hypothesis of the study is developed by combining these two frameworks, which are: *Why non-standard work schedules may have an impact on children's emotional and social well-being and what factors may mediate this association*. In addition, the authors assumed that child development is indirectly affected by parent workplaces via parents' labour activities effect. And non-standard labour timetables have an influence on the parent's physical and mental health, which ultimately disturbs the childcare behaviour (Li et al., 2014). As far as a research methodology is concerned, the importance of mediation effects is examined through the bootstrap resampling technique, and the mediated impact of non-standard working timetables on children's emotional and social development is studied through random intercept models (multi-level modelling technique). A formal demonstration of the three different research models is simply explained in the following figure. First of all, the (a) model deals with the influence of independent variables on the mediator. Second, the (c′) model reports the direct effect of an independent variable on the dependent, including the mediator. Third, the (b) model describes the impact of the mediator on the dependent variable.



Participants and Variables

The empirical analysis of this article is based on the data from the *Families in Germany Study (FiD)* collected in the years 2010-2013 (Wagner, Frick & Schupp, 2007). Data on child well-being for ages 7 to 8 and 9 to 10 is used from two recent waves of this survey: 2010-11 and 2012-13. The final sample of the study consists of 838 observations of child-years in dual-earner families. Working at night or in the evening is used to define the non-standard work hours. As far as dependent variables are concerned, emotional and social well-being (the problem of behaviour) are measured with SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire), which covers four areas: peer problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity, and emotional symptoms. Severe control and undesirable communication variables are used to construct a parenting style instrument (mediators). The control variables include education of parents in years, monthly net household income, occupational status, weekly working hours, migration background of father and mother, use of child daycare, mother age, number of children in a family, and child gender.

Results

The key finding of the paper is that both fathers' and mothers' non-standard working hours, i.e. nights and evenings, are associated with an increase in the children's internalizing (peer problems and emotional symptoms) and externalizing behaviour (hyperactivity and conduct problems). This relationship is to some extent mediated by fathers' and mothers' strict and harsh parenting, with significant mediation impact of fathers' parenting. On the basis of child SDQ rating by fathers, when both father and mother worked non-standard hours, child behavior is directly and indirectly affected by mothers parenting due to negative communication and strict control. On the other hand, on the basis of child SDQ rating by mothers, the relationship between child behaviour problems and night/evening working hours is significantly affected by fathers' strict and harsh parenting. Another important finding of the study is that conduct problems increase when either both parents or mothers work non-standard working hours. The authors separately re-estimated the models for highly

educated parents and low-educated parents. The results describe that mothers from low-education families reported higher SDQ scores as compared to mothers from highly educated families, assuming that both parents worked night/evening hours (Strazdins et al., 2006).

Conclusion

Is a non-standard working schedule, especially evening and night, playing any role in child behaviour complications? If so, does strict and harsh parenting have importance in mediating such influences? The article in hand is an attempt to answer these problems. On the basis of SDQ scores, empirical findings conclude that non-standard working hours parents stated more children's behaviour problems and this relationship was mediated (partly) by the harsh and strict behaviour of parents. These findings have strong practical implications and are in line with previous studies (Strazdins et al., 2006; Colman et al., 2009). An important implication of the study is that the father plays a key role in children's emotional and social well-being. Moreover, the parents' highly educational background did not show a stable pattern. The article also highlights the spillover impacts of one parent employed at night/evening jobs on the other parent, predominantly on the father.

References

Kaiser, T., Li, J., & Pollmann-Schult, M. (2019). Evening and night work schedules and children's social and emotional well-being. *Community, Work & Family*, *22*(2), 167-182.