

## *Mindful Parenting and Anxiety in Full-time Working Mothers*

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**Abstract.** Full-time working mothers face numerous challenges that can lead to anxiety. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between mindful parenting and anxiety among full-time working mothers. The participants in this study consisted of 99 mothers engaged in full-time employment. The sampling technique used was convenience sampling. Data were collected using the Mindful Parenting Scale and the Anxiety Scale from the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS). Data were analyzed using product-moment correlation analysis. The results of the data analysis showed a correlation ( $r_{xy}$ ) = -0.210 with  $p < 0.050$ . This result indicates a negative correlation between mindful parenting and anxiety among full-time working mothers, meaning that higher level of mindful parenting is associated with lower level of anxiety. Conversely, lower level of mindful parenting is associated with higher level of anxiety. Therefore, it is recommended to provide intervention to enhance mindful parenting among working mothers to help reduce their anxiety.

**Keywords:** Anxiety, Mindful Parenting, Working Mother

**Abstrak.** Ibu yang bekerja penuh waktu mengalami banyak tantangan yang dapat menyebabkan kecemasan. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji hubungan antara *mindful parenting* dengan kecemasan pada ibu yang bekerja penuh waktu. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini yaitu sejumlah 99 ibu yang menjalani pekerjaan penuh waktu. Teknik sampling yang digunakan yaitu *convenience sampling*. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan skala *mindful parenting* dan skala kecemasan dari *Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale* (DASS). Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan analisis korelasi *product moment*. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan bahwa terdapat korelasi ( $r_{xy}$ ) = -0,210 dengan  $p < 0,050$ . Hasil ini mengindikasikan adanya korelasi negatif antara *mindful parenting* dan kecemasan pada ibu yang bekerja penuh waktu, artinya semakin tinggi *mindful parenting* maka semakin rendah kecemasan. Sebaliknya, semakin rendah *mindful parenting* maka semakin tinggi kecemasan. Dengan demikian, disarankan pemberian intervensi untuk meningkatkan *mindful parenting* pada ibu bekerja untuk dapat membantu mengurangi kecemasannya.

**Kata kunci:** Ibu bekerja, Kecemasan, *Mindful Parenting*

Working is a fundamental necessity for family life. It involves the duty to fulfill the family's needs, making it the responsibility of the head of the family to provide for their sustenance. Currently, many couples engage in dual careers, where both partners work. This trend is not limited to men; women also contribute by working to earn a living and often take on double-duty roles (Chairina, 2019).

Working full-time entails maintaining a work schedule of approximately 40 hours per week. Regulations regarding work hours have been specified in Indonesian Labor Law No. 13 of 2003, which mandates a seven-hour workday or a total of 40 hours a week spread across six days, or an eight-hour workday within a 40-hour week spread across five days. According to the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS), in 2021, the percentage of working women in the population aged 15 and above was 39.52%, totaling 51.79 million individuals. This number increased by 1.09 million compared to the previous year's count of 50.7 million. The data also indicated that, as of February 2021, there were 52,498,135 employed women and 3,000,686 unemployed women, demonstrating a higher number of working women compared to non-working women (BPS, 2021).

Working mothers juggle multiple roles, including managing household responsibilities and fulfilling their duties in the workplace. This dual role can enhance their skills and expand their social network (Ramdani, 2016). Various factors drive women to work, such as the desire to contribute to the family's economy, assist low-earning spouses, address personal needs, and apply their educational knowledge in the workforce (Andriana, Agustinar, & Asnita, 2021).

Working mothers encounter challenges stemming from time constraints and pressures, leading to issues like difficulty in time management, inadequate supervision of children, limited family time, irregular eating habits, excessive workloads, and workplace-related problems (Murtiana & Hidayah, 2017). Intensive work hours demand prolonged time at the workplace, and high occupational status can lead to conflicts for working mothers (Nugrahaningtyas, 2019). These challenges can contribute to the emergence of anxiety in full-time working mothers.

Anxiety often arises from negative thoughts about uncertain events. It corresponds with the study conducted by Faradiana and Mubarok (2022), which stated that individuals with high levels of negative thinking are more prone to experiencing high levels of anxiety.

Full-time working mothers frequently experience fatigue, difficulty concentrating, headaches, emotional instability, mixed or confused thoughts, and a feeling of losing control (Nevid, Rathus, & Greene, 2018). Research by Anesthesia, Alie & Tresnasari (2016) explained that anxiety can affect an individual's ability to concentrate, as anxiety triggers the release of cortisol hormones that can damage the hippocampus, which plays a role in cognitive processes like concentration.

Anxiety is a natural response to threats but can become abnormal when it exceeds the actual level of threat or occurs without responding to life events (Nevid, Rathus, & Greene, 2018). Symptoms of anxiety encompass physical, behavioral, and cognitive disturbances. Physically, individuals feel restless, experience chest tightness, tremors, and irregular breathing. Behaviorally, they tend to avoid situations, display dependent behavior, and appear agitated. Cognitively, they exhibit worrying, fear, or anxiety about the future, excessive alertness, and excessive focus on bodily sensations (Nevid, Rathus, & Greene, 2018).

According to Lovibond and Lovibond (1995), anxiety involves fear and worry about unpleasant events in the future. Anxiety can also arise when in unpleasant situations without clear reasons or be influenced by negative past experiences related to similar events. Aspects of anxiety, according to Lovibond and Lovibond (1995), include autonomic nervous system responses, skeletal muscle responses, situational anxiety, and subjective feelings of anxiety.

Based on online interviews conducted in October 2021 with ten full-time working mothers regarding their experiences with the dual role, seven out of ten respondents expressed concerns about the challenges they encountered. The dual responsibilities of being a working mother have significant psychological implications, leading to stress and anxiety stemming from the heavy workload and household demands. Some of the challenges faced by these working mothers include a lack of quality family time, inadequate attention to their children, difficulties in effective time management, and unmet household responsibilities. Consequently, full-time working mothers often experience fatigue, emotional instability, diminished concentration, and a pervasive feeling of being unable to control their current circumstances.

Working mothers often experience high levels of anxiety when faced with the demands of office tasks and responsibilities at home, leading to fear and worry about their circumstances. High anxiety is characterized by feelings of restlessness, worry, fear, difficulty concentrating, and excessive focus on bodily sensations (Nevid, Rathus, & Greene, 2018). Research conducted by

Puspitosari and Prasetya (2007) revealed that the anxiety levels of working mothers are higher than those of non-working mothers. Additionally, a study by Erawan, Opod, and Pali (2013) stated that women experience more anxiety than men, with higher anxiety levels among women.

The high anxiety experienced by mothers can impact the household environment. Anxious mothers may feel worried, tense, and fearful, affecting positive thinking and potentially disrupting their ability to manage stressors, including parenting responsibilities. Ineffective or suboptimal parenting behavior can hinder a child's development in various areas such as physical, emotional, psychomotor, and social aspects. Hence, investigating anxiety among working mothers is crucial.

Parental roles play a vital role in a child's life and development (Novita, Amirullah & Ruslan, 2016). Parents, particularly mothers, guide and support their children, fostering feelings of love and care through gentle guidance, teaching good behavior and language skills. Research by Ruli (2020) indicated that parent-child bonds influence child development. Children who experience strong connections with their parents feel protected and cherished, leading to positive behaviors and attitudes. Therefore, working mothers need to provide effective parenting to minimize anxiety.

Anxiety can be influenced by internal and external factors. One internal factor impacting anxiety is an individual's ability to focus consciously and fully on the present moment, accepting things as they are without judgment – a concept known as mindfulness (Kaplan & Sadock, 2010). Mindfulness is related to effective anxiety reduction, as indicated by research showing that individuals who possess high negative thought patterns are more prone to experiencing anxiety (Santoso, 2021).

Mindful parenting is an approach that emphasizes paying full attention, actively listening to children without judgment, and creating an atmosphere of respect. This parenting style involves investing more time than conventional methods, but the attention given is also greater (Duncan et al., 2009). Therefore, mindful parenting is selected in this study as a variable that influences anxiety.

One method to establish a secure parent-child relationship is through mindful parenting (Kiong, 2015). According to Kabat-Zinn and Kabat-Zin (2014), mindful parenting is an ongoing parenting activity aimed at helping parents support their children by providing full attention, enhancing awareness, and acting wisely without judgment.

Mindful parenting consists of three aspects, as explained by Kabat-Zinn and Kabat-Zin (2014). The first aspect is self-regulation, where parents control their reactions to their children's behavior. The second is empathy, parents' ability to understand and resonate with their child's experiences. The third is acceptance, where parents accept their own feelings and those of their children. A study by Febriani, Kumalasari, Triman, and Fourianalistyawati (2019) revealed that mindful parenting allows parents to adopt a positive perspective. This approach improves a mother's emotional regulation, compassion, and the parent-child relationship (Ma & Siu, 2016).

Mindful parenting encourages parents to focus entirely on the current situation, aiding working mothers in fully accepting and consciously responding to events without judgment or evaluation of their own or their child's feelings and situations. Whether facing sad, fearful, or anxious situations, mindful parenting teaches mothers to embrace imperfections and reduce the pressure to achieve perfection (Bögels & Restifo, 2014). This can mitigate anxiety stemming from unrealistically high expectations.

Working mothers frequently experience stress and exhaustion due to the demands of caring for children, performing work duties, and other responsibilities. These challenges can trigger anxiety if not managed properly. Through mindfulness practices, mothers can develop strategies to manage stress effectively and respond calmly (Bögels, Lehtonen, & Restifo, 2010). This can reduce the risk of anxiety arising from pressures and exhaustion. A study by Dekeyser et al. (2008) stated that parents practicing mindful parenting are less likely to experience anxiety and stress, enhancing their well-being and resulting in a sense of calmness.

The research issue posed in this study is whether there is a relationship between mindful parenting and anxiety among full-time working mothers. The objective of this research is to explore the connection between mindful parenting and anxiety in full-time working mothers.

## **Methods**

### ***Variable Identification***

This research aims to determine the relationship between mindful parenting and anxiety among full-time working mothers. Therefore, the independent variable in this study is mindful parenting, and the dependent variable is anxiety. Mindful parenting is an ongoing parenting activity that aims to help parents support their children by providing full attention, enhancing awareness, and acting wisely without judgment (Kabat-Zinn & Kabat-Zin, 2014). Anxiety is the feeling of fear and worry about unpleasant events in the future (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995).

### ***Research Instrument***

The instrument in this study utilized the Anxiety Scale from the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS), which was validated by Damanik (2011) and follows the anxiety aspects outlined by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995): autonomic nervous system responses, skeletal muscle responses, situational anxiety, and subjective feelings of anxiety. The DASS demonstrated high reliability scores with  $\alpha=0.948$ , while the anxiety subscale exhibited  $\alpha=0.852$ . The anxiety subscale consisted of 14 favorable statements/items. The response options in this scale ranged from 0, 1, 2, to 3. A score of 3 represented a response that was very appropriate or very frequent, a score of 2 indicated an appropriate response or moderately frequent, a score of 1 meant an occasional response, and a score of 0 indicated an inappropriate or never occurring response.

The mindful parenting scale, developed by Prihandini et al. (2019), was based on the mindful parenting aspects as defined by Kabat-Zinn and Kabat-Zinn (2014): self-regulation, empathy, and acceptance. The reliability of the mindful parenting scale was  $\alpha=0.9333$ . This scale consisted of 30 favorable statements/items. Each statement/item in this instrument had four answer alternatives and was measured using a scoring range of 1 to 4. The response choices in this scale included Very Appropriate, Appropriate, Not Appropriate, and Not Appropriate at All.

### ***Research subject***

The criteria for the participants in the study are mothers who work full-time, have at least one child, and have been employed full-time for a minimum of six months. The sampling technique used is convenience sampling. In this sampling technique, researchers select participants or subjects for a study based on their ease of accessibility and availability. In this study, the sample size was determined using the Lemeshow Equation Formula since the population size is unknown. The following is the Lemeshow Equation Formula:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \alpha^2 x P x Q}{L^2}$$

Explanation:

n = Minimum required sample size

Z $\alpha$  = Standard value from the distribution corresponding to the value  $\alpha = 5\% = 1.96$

P = Prevalence of the outcome, since data is not available, a value of 50% is used

Q = 1 - P

L = Precision level of 10%

Based on the formula, then  $n = \frac{(1,96)^2 \times 0,5 \times 0,5}{(0,1)^2} = 96,04$

Therefore, the result indicates that the minimum required sample size for this study is 96 respondents. The research scale was distributed using Google forms and obtained a sample of 99 respondents.

### ***Research Methods***

This research utilizes a quantitative cross-sectional method. A cross-sectional study is a type of observational study that involves analyzing information about a population at a specific point in time (Turner, 2013).

### ***Analysis***

The data analysis employed is the analysis of Pearson's product-moment correlation. Pearson's product-moment correlation is a statistical measure that quantifies the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two continuous variables (Metsämuuronen, 2022).

### **Result**

Based on data obtained from 99 research participants, the study included a diverse group of participants in terms of occupation. The majority of respondents were private employees (39%), followed by those categorized as "Others" (47%). Civil servants and state-owned enterprise employees each represented smaller segments of the sample at 7%. This diverse representation enables a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of working mothers across various employment sectors.

The length of employment among the participants varied, with two categories having nearly equal proportions. A significant portion (39%) had been employed for 1 to 5 years, while 33% had been working for 6 months to 1 year. Meanwhile, 28% of the respondents had more than 5 years of employment experience. Regarding the number of children, the majority of participants had one child (57%), followed by those with two children (31%), three children (9%), and a small percentage with more than three children (3%). In terms of work conditions, a significant portion of participants worked from the office (61%), followed by those who worked from home (23%), and a subset who combined both work from home and work from the office (16%). The demographic data is presented in Table 1

Table 1.  
*Participant Demographic Data*

Demographic variable	N	%
Occupation		
Civil servant	7	7%
Private Employee	39	39%
State-owned Enterprise Employee	7	7%
Others	46	47%
Length of Employment		
6 Months to 1 Year	33	33%
1 to 5 Years	38	39%
More than 5 Years	28	28%
Number of Child		
1 child	56	57%
2 children	31	31%
3 children	9	9%
More than 3 children	3	3%
Work Condition		
<i>Work From Home</i> (WFH)	23	23%
<i>Work From Office</i> (WFO)	60	61%
WFH dan WFO	16	16%
Kecemasan		
Normal	37	38%
Mild	12	12%
Moderate	28	28%
Severe	16	16%
Very Severe	6	6%
Mindful parenting		
High	86	87
Moderate	13	13
Low	0	0

Based on the assessment indicators of the anxiety variable, it is known that research participants who fall into the normal category are 37 people (38%), those in the mild category are 12 people (12%), those in the moderate category are 28 people (28%), those in the severe category are 16 people (16%), and those in the very severe category are 6 people (6%). It indicates that the majority of subjects in this study have anxiety ranging from the normal to mild categories.

Based on the categorization results of the mindful parenting variable, it is known that research participants who fall into the high category are 86 people (87%), and those in the moderate category are 13 people (13%). This indicates that the majority of participants in this study have a high level of mindful parenting.



### *Normality Test*

Based on the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the anxiety variable, a K-S Z value of 0.078 with a p-value of 0.143 was obtained. This indicates that the distribution of data for the anxiety variable follows a normal distribution. From the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the mindful parenting variable, a K-S Z value of 0.113 with a p-value of 0.003 was obtained. This indicates that the distribution of data for mindful parenting does not follow a normal distribution. Many experts suggest that if the number of subjects in a study is 30 or more, the research results can be considered normally distributed (Widana, 2020). This study used a sample size of 99 subjects, so the data can be considered normally distributed.

### *Linearity Test*

Based on the results of the linearity test, an F value of 4.429 with  $p < 0.05$  was obtained. This indicates that the relationship between mindful parenting and anxiety is a linear relationship.

### *Hypothesis Test*

Based on the results of the analysis of Pearson's product-moment correlation, a correlation coefficient ( $r_{xy}$ ) of -0.210 ( $p < 0.050$ ) was obtained. This indicates a negative relationship between mindful parenting and anxiety in full-time working mothers. In other words, as mindful parenting increases, anxiety in full-time working mothers decreases.

Conversely, as mindful parenting decreases, anxiety in full-time working mothers increases. This leads to the conclusion that the hypothesis proposed in this study is accepted. The result is presented in Table 2. Additionally, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is 0.044, indicating that the contribution of mindful parenting to anxiety is 4.4% in full-time working mothers, while the remaining 95.6% is influenced by other factors.

Table 2.  
*Hypothesis result*

		Kecemasan	Mindful Parenting
Kecemasan	Pearson Correlation	1	-.210*
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.018
	N	99	99
Mindful Parenting	Pearson Correlation	-.210*	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.018	
	N	99	99

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

## Discussion

This study aims to determine the relationship between mindful parenting and anxiety in full-time working mothers. The result of Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis shows a correlation coefficient of  $(r_{xy}) = -0.210$  with  $p = 0.018$  ( $p < 0.050$ ). This indicates a significant negative relationship between mindful parenting and anxiety in full-time working mothers. In other words, the higher the level of mindful parenting, the lower the anxiety in full-time working mothers. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is accepted.

Full-time working mothers face several challenges related to child development and work demands (Wibowo & Saidiyah, 2013). The demands of work and household responsibilities lead to more emotional pressure on working mothers (Apreviadizy & Puspitacandri, 2014). Various issues that arise can trigger anxiety in working mothers, making mindful parenting crucial to minimizing anxiety. This is consistent with research by Sari (2021) and Santoso and Rinaldi (2022), which show that mindful parenting programs can reduce anxiety.

Research conducted by Febriani, Kumalasari, Triman, and Fourianalistyawati (2019) indicates that mindful parenting enables parents to adopt a positive perspective. Mindful parenting enhances a mother's emotional regulation, compassion, and parent-child relationship (Ma & Siu, 2016).

When a mother has high mindful parenting, it means she is capable of acceptance. Acceptance involves a state in which parents accept various feelings and conditions that occur within themselves, while also accepting their child's feelings. Self-acceptance is necessary for a mother to manage negative emotions that arise, such as worry and anxiety. When a mother can accept, understand, and acknowledge everything within herself and her child, she becomes capable of managing emotions and refraining from reactive behavior, resulting in a sense of calmness when facing emotional situations.

High mindful parenting indicates that participants have been able to practice mindfulness in their parenting. Mindfulness involves increased full awareness focused on the present experience without dwelling on past events or future occurrences (Baer, 2010). Through mindfulness, a mother can regulate her emotions more effectively, remain calm, respond less reactively, and exhibit positive behavior towards her own conditions (Bögels & Restifo, 2014). Mothers who implement mindful parenting methods can avoid anxiety and stress, leading to a greater sense of peace (Dekeyser et al., 2008).

Meanwhile, the results of the assessment indicators for the anxiety variable show that 37 subjects have normal anxiety (38%), 12 subjects have mild anxiety (12%), 28 subjects have moderate anxiety (28%), 16 subjects have severe anxiety (16%), and 6 subjects have very severe anxiety (6%). Considering the two presented research findings, it is evident that the majority of full-time working mothers have normal anxiety levels. This suggests a correlation between mindful parenting and anxiety. This is supported by the fact that 87% of full-time working mothers have high mindful parenting, while the remaining 13% have moderate mindful parenting. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) calculated from the empirical data is 0.044. This means that the mindful parenting variable contributes effectively by 4.4% to anxiety, while the remaining 95.6% is influenced by other variables.

One notable limitation of this study pertains to the sample size, which consisted of 99 participants. While this number could be considered reasonable, it's important to acknowledge that it may not comprehensively capture the intricate diversity and complexity inherent among all full-time working mothers. As a result, caution should be exercised when extrapolating the findings to broader populations of working mothers characterized by varying backgrounds, cultural contexts, and socioeconomic statuses.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that there is a negative relationship between mindful parenting and anxiety in full-time working mothers. This means that as mindful parenting increases, anxiety in full-time working mothers tends to decrease. Conversely, as mindful parenting decreases, anxiety in full-time working mothers tends to increase. The categorization results show that the majority of full-time working mothers have a high level of mindful parenting and a normal level of anxiety.

### *Suggestion*

The researcher recommends that working mothers consider adopting mindful parenting practices as a means to regulate their emotions, foster self-acceptance, and gain a deeper understanding of their own feelings and those of others. By effectively managing negative thoughts and reactions, working mothers can cultivate a sense of inner calmness, thereby facilitating the juggling of their dual roles—both at the workplace and in managing household responsibilities. This approach holds the potential to contribute to a healthier balance between these demanding spheres of life.

In terms of future research directions, it is advisable for other researchers to delve deeper into the exploration of factors that wield significant influence over anxiety levels in full-time working mothers. Uncovering these underlying factors could offer valuable insights for designing targeted interventions and support systems that address the specific needs of this demographic.

Furthermore, enhancing the granularity of subject descriptions in future studies can yield richer outcomes. Detailed information about subjects' identities or characteristics, such as cultural backgrounds, life circumstances, and personal experiences, could provide a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between mindful parenting and anxiety. This information can aid in identifying variations or nuances that might contribute to differing outcomes across diverse groups of full-time working mothers. To bolster the applicability and relevance of future research findings, researchers are encouraged to ensure that study samples encompass a wide spectrum of cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, and occupational roles. A diverse and representative sample allows for a more robust examination of the relationship between mindful parenting and anxiety across varying contexts. By embracing this approach, research outcomes can be more reliably generalized to a broader range of full-time working mothers, thereby fostering a comprehensive comprehension of this intricate connection.

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