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**ATTITUDES, BELIEFS AND EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS
MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT AND NON-PARENTAL CARE
AMONG FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

NATALIE J. FIANI

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
PSYCHOLOGY AT HAIGAZIAN UNIVERSITY**

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HAIGAZIAN UNIVERSITY

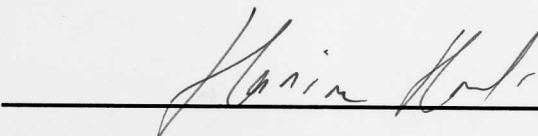
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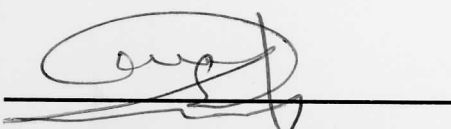
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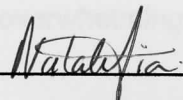


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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the attitudes and expectations of female Lebanese college students (N = 145) in regard to maternal employment, exclusivity of maternal care, and non-parental childcare. Beliefs about the costs and benefits of maternal employment were measured by the Beliefs about the Consequences of Maternal Employment scale (BACMEC). The Exclusive Maternal Care scale determined the extent to which the participants believe that only a mother is best suited to care for her child, whereas the Home/Employment Orientation scale evaluated the women's preference for staying home versus her desire to return to work. Additional variables were explored in order to identify the subjects' preferences and perceived future plans in relation to maternal work history, the type and timing of non-parental care arrangements, work resumption, and the major factors influencing such decisions. The study indicated a significant relationship between early maternal work history, beliefs in the benefits of maternal work, and work resumption. Moreover, beliefs in the costs of maternal work were significantly associated to the attitudes toward the exclusivity of maternal care, which in turn yielded a significant relation to participants' home/employment orientation. The correlation between subjects' home/career inclinations and preferred age of the child to be placed in childcare and for mother to resume work also proved significant.

INTRODUCTION

Today's women are faced with conflicting messages and difficult decisions concerning childcare and maternal employment during their transition into motherhood. Many Lebanese women are now pursuing college degrees and entering the work force prior to marrying and bringing up children. Although college women aim for diverse careers, whether in traditional or innovative fields, motherhood is still an integral and dominant part of their future plans and expectations (Baber, & Monaghan, 1988; Devos et al., 2007).

T. Devos et al.'s (2007) research on college students' components of self concept measured through explicit and implicit responses, provided evidence that these young women *implicitly* identified more strongly with motherhood than with college education. This finding indicates that "the strong connection between self and motherhood may not be accessible through introspection or be willingly acknowledged among women pursuing a college education" (Devos et al., 2007).

A study by Baber & Monaghan, (1988) showed that most college women report that they do not wish to work during their child's first year and that they would prefer part-time work until their children reach preschool age. However, statistics of working moms with young children may tell a different story. When it comes to planning for the future or making the "right" decision, integrating the role and responsibilities of motherhood with work and career aspirations, whether by putting one's job/career on hold, or by choosing to "have it all", has proven to be a situation loaded with anxiety, guilt, and feelings of inadequacy and ambivalence, to say the least (Johnston, & Swanson, 2007; Rubin, & Wooten, 2007; Leach *et al.*, 2006; DeMeis et al., 1986; Johnston, & Swanson, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

Contemporary Lebanese women who are pursuing college degrees, entering the labor force, and developing a sense of identity based on their personal goals and aspirations, are still expected and expecting to fulfill the mothering role one day. In our society, the pressure to get married and bring up children seems to be even more intense and hurried than the pressures in the USA and the UK, where most studies take place. Moreover, many Lebanese women are nowadays also encouraged, once married, to share the “breadwinners” role and to be productive outside the realms of the home, while still being responsible for the more traditional roles of “housewives”, where cooking and tending to the daily household tasks fall under that role’s description. These expectations are also in conflict with the social policies on maternal leave which grants a woman only 49 days of paid leave, and work policies which offer negligible opportunities for part-time work, flextime and/or work from home. Short maternity leaves (6 weeks or less), when interacting with other factors such as marital concerns, have shown to have a negative impact on women’s mental health, thus posing as a risk factor for depression (Hyde et al., 1995). Moreover, an association has been shown between short maternity leaves (12 weeks or less), early return to employment, and drops in breastfeeding and immunizations, which may function as health risks for children (Berger, Hill, & Waldfogel, 2005). In this young generation of ambitious and well-educated college women eagerly opting to or simply being persuaded to “have-it-all”, these questions prevail: what employment-childrearing choices will they make and how do they plan to achieve a balanced worker-mother identity, when the baby comes? What attitudes and beliefs do they hold regarding maternal employment and non-parental childcare? Which are the factors that will most likely influence their future parental

decisions? At what age do they plan to place their child in non-parental childcare? And which type of childcare arrangement do they deem as most suitable to themselves and to their future children? Female Lebanese university students' attitudes, beliefs and responses toward motherhood and childcare are also of key significance as these women "compromise the future cohort of employers, colleagues, and friends" (Bridges, & Orza, 1993) of both, working mothers and stay-at-home moms.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study is to explore Lebanese female university students' maternal work and non-parental care history, attitudes toward maternal employment, career/home orientation, and beliefs in exclusive maternal care, and also to investigate their association to future parental plans concerning employment and childcare arrangements.

Hypotheses

1. Participants who have experienced maternal employment as young children, will report greater acceptance of early maternal work than those who have not experienced maternal employment.
2. There will be a mean difference in the rated benefits of maternal employment and the child's age group at which the mother would consider resuming work.

3. There will be a positive correlation between scores on the BACMEC and scores on the Exclusive Maternal Care scale. Furthermore there will be a negative correlation between scores on the BACMEC and scores on the Home/Employment Orientation scale.
4. Attitudes toward the Exclusive Maternal Care scale will be negatively correlated with responses toward the Home/Employment Orientation scale.
5. There will be a mean difference in the Home/Employment Orientation scores and the child's age group at which the mother would consider resuming work.
6. There will be a mean difference in the Home/Employment Orientation scores and the age group at which the child would be placed in non-parental care.

The study will further attempt to explore the participants' attitudes toward different childcare arrangements, preferred timing for mother to resume work, expected age of child to be placed in non-parental care, and finally, the major factors that might influence their future parental decisions.

Significance of the Study

The current study aims to explore the beliefs and expectations in maternal care, work resumption and childcare arrangements among young Lebanese women who will one day be faced with difficult choices in the efforts to achieve success and a balance in the work-family arena. This research further suggests that we need to focus our attention and widen our understanding on the motherhood issue in Lebanon, in order to achieve a broader understanding of the attitudes, expectations

and trade-offs involved, so that we can better assist women in making manageable future plans. Young Lebanese women, through wider awareness in this complex issue, could be assisted in developing a more realistic outlook, better informed choices, and efficient coping strategies when future mothering decisions are expected. Only then social policies and actions could also and hopefully be knowledgeably influenced.

Nature of the Study

The present study is quantitative in nature. It relies on self-report measures and questionnaires exploring the attitudes and beliefs toward childcare and the benefits and consequences of maternal employment among a sample of 145 female college students. Significance in the differences of participants' responses among the various variables related to the issues of maternal work and non-parental childcare, are investigated and assessed through the use of descriptive statistics, correlational analyses, comparisons of means (t-tests), and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Definition of Terms

Maternal Employment: Maternal employment refers to the labor force affiliation of mothers with children 0-18 years. The term, "maternal employment" includes a wide variety of labor force participation patterns, from full-time work to part-time work (Lerner, 2001).

Early Maternal Employment: *Early* maternal employment is defined differently depending on the age of the child under investigation in each specific study, with the age of the child varying between 1 and 5 years old.

Non-maternal / Non-parental Childcare: The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) researchers defined child care as any care provided on a regular basis by someone other than the child's mother (non-maternal), or in this case, other than a parent (non-parental), in the child's home, small group care, in a caregiver's home, or in center-based care. The terms are applicable to children up to the age of 4, that is, before they reach school age. Children in any type of care for fewer than 10 hours a week were considered to be in exclusive maternal care (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1997).

Exclusive Maternal Care: the extent to which participants believe that only a mother is best suited to care for her child (Hock, Gnezda, & McBride, 1984).

Home/Employment Orientation: reflects a women's preference for staying home with her young child versus her desire to return to work (Hock, Gnezda, & McBride, 1984).

Limitations

The fact that the sample of female college students was taken only from two universities across Lebanon, Haigazian University and the Lebanese American University (Byblos campus), does not allow us to generalize our results to all college women, and those of different ethnic, social and economic backgrounds . Moreover, the specified population sample was composed of a small number of subjects (145).

The students who participated in this research, were from Psychology and Education courses only, and this could further limit the validity and reliability of our results.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Nowadays, the "ideal" woman and mother seems to be the one who can juggle multiple roles simultaneously and still aim for reaching the high standards expected by society and the media, which are mostly perfectionist and focused on perfection. Moreover, the lack of community and of times emotional support have made it difficult for those women, be it in western or eastern societies, to find the most suitable work-family arrangements without feeling overwhelmed and/or unfairly scrutinized about her future or current decisions regarding motherhood and childcare. Studies have shown that multiple factors play an integral role in shaping women's choices and ultimately the decisions they make when it comes to early maternal employment, exclusive maternal care, and non-parental care arrangements during different stages of a child's development. These variables include maternal work history, attitudes toward the costs and benefits of maternal employment, career/home orientation, and beliefs about the exclusivity of maternal care, among others.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Nowadays, the “ideal” woman and mother seems to be the one who can juggle multiple roles simultaneously and still aim for reaching the high standards exerted by society and the media, which are mostly paradoxical and opposed in nature. Moreover, the lack of community and at times spousal support have made it difficult for these women, be it in western or eastern societies, to find the most suitable work-family arrangements without feeling overburdened and/or critically scrutinized about her future or current decisions regarding motherhood and childcare. Studies have shown that multiple factors play an integral role in shaping women’s choices and ultimately the decisions they make when it comes to early maternal employment, exclusive maternal care, and non-parental care arrangements during different stages of a child’s development. These variables include maternal work *history*, attitudes toward the costs and benefits of maternal employment, career/home orientation, and beliefs about the exclusivity of maternal care, among others.

Working Mothers versus Stay-at-Home moms

Contradicting attitudes and beliefs about working mothers on the one hand, and stay-at-home moms on the other hand, (Shpancer et al., 2006; Johnston, & Swanson, 2003; Bridges et al., 2002, Zimmerman, 2000; Brescoll, & Uhlman, 2005), have made it hard for women to feel more confident and less conflicted about their current or future decisions regarding non-parental care, exclusive maternal care, and family-work balance (Johnston, & Swanson, 2003; Zimmerman, 2000, McDonald et al., 2006). Research shows that mothers, including highly educated women, who have chosen to be full-time moms, usually feel “invisible” and “discounted” by others, thus experiencing a loss of validation by society and a harsh sense of isolation (Rubin, & Wooten, 2007; Zimmerman, 2000). These women are constantly bombarded with societal messages that they are wasting their education and skills by choosing to stay home and care for their children, therefore confronting the need to work harder in order to achieve feelings of self-worth (Zimmerman, 2000). This situation, in turn, reinforces their commitment to “intensive mothering” expectations so as to self-justify their reasons for leaving employment (Johnston & Swanson, 2007).

Moreover, these mothers also report feelings of guilt when it comes to taking time “off” to care for their own needs, struggling with the idea that they should sacrifice all their time for the family (Rubin, & Wooten, 2007). According to Johnston & Swanson (2003), the maternal myths and ideologies constructed by culture, and in turn perpetuated by the media and women’s magazines, offer mothers a “double-bind communication”, encouraging a certain behavior yet condemning a mother for acting it out, thus causing frustration among all. In their analysis, they found out that

a *traditional* motherhood ideology is more frequently promoted, **yet** with negative and simplified connotations, such as those that stay-at-home mothers are superficial, unhappy and confused. While employed mothers are less frequently portrayed, they are usually described in a more positive light, such as being “proud” and happy.

However, a study by Bridges & Orza (1993), showed that college students indicated less approval for mothers who were continuously employed and viewed them as less communal than those who interrupted their work to care for their child. Mothers who returned to work once their child reached school age, were seen in a more favorable light than both, those who returned to work after 6 weeks of maternity leave and those who stayed unemployed. Therefore, this study revealed that the factor which mostly accounted for the differences in the college students’ perceptions of a mother and her child was the *timing* of maternal employment (Bridges, & Orza, 1993).

Moreover, although viewed as more “agentic” than full-time mothers, working moms were usually viewed as less competent and more “selfish” when it came to parenting (Bridges, Etaugh, & Barnes-Farrell, 2002; Shpancer et al., 2006), although regarded less negatively when described as working out of financial need rather than personal satisfaction (Brescoll, & Uhlmann, 2005). Therefore, employed mothers may be more disliked and yet socially respected at the same time. These mixed judgments and intensive mothering ideologies have in turn prevented women, on both ends of the worker-mother “battle”, from attaining the community support needed (Medina, & Magnuson, 2009; Johnston, & Swanson, 2007, Scarr et al., 1989).

Spousal Support

Another factor that have made it difficult for today's women to deal with their transition into motherhood and the realities involved, is that although men express more egalitarian attitudes toward maternal employment and the role of women in society, these values are not mirrored in their daily involvement in family work (Baber & Dreyer, 1986). A study by Zimmerman (2000) described how, in two different groups of single-breadwinner family arrangements, one where the mother worked and the father stayed home, and the other where the father worked while the mother stayed at home, the women in both groups experienced higher degrees of exhaustion and tension. This seems to be the case due to the fact that the burden of housework and the division of tasks are not being equally shared by both partners (Almeida et al., 1993; Blair & Johnson, 1992; Gunter & Gunter, 1990; Starrels, 1994; Zimmerman & Addison, 1997).

Moreover, the responsibility for managing children's emotions and organizing their activities, appointments and schedules still falls heavily on mothers, while fathers are often there to "help out" (Crouter et al., 1987; Leslie et al., 1991). As Zimmerman (2000) points out, whenever both parents were at home in either of the family arrangements stated above, mothers always tended to take on the role of primary caregiver, thus meeting both, high internal and external motherhood expectations.

In the face of all these pressures and less than ideal conditions, still comes the responsibility of making the decision that a mother believes to be the most

suitable when it comes to their child's upbringing, thus posing the question: why and how do women make the plans and decisions they do?

Early Maternal Employment and Childcare History

Maternal employment and childcare history has shown to have a strong effect on college students' future work and family plans. Sphpancer & Murphy's (2006) research on the link between early childcare history and future parental decisions, suggested a "dose-response effect": the more the subjects experienced non-parental care at a young age, the more approving the attitudes toward it when considering their children's future care and maternal employment. Mothers' work history also seemed to predict college students' attitudes and expectations regarding its positive and negative effects, with students who experienced maternal work holding more favorable beliefs in the benefits of maternal employment, such as in the possible educational and socialization aspects involved in daycare (Gambone et al., 2002; Gorton et al., 2001; Heaven & McCluskey-Fawcett, 2001). However, differences in attitudes toward the *costs* of maternal employment were not replicated, perhaps "pointing to a universal belief that there are negatives associated with maternal employment independent of its benefits"(Heaven & McCluskey-Fawcett, 2001), and to persisting concerns about the emotional, cognitive and psycho-social development of young children away from their mother's care. An interesting finding is that, regardless if the mothers of these young men and women worked when they were children, they tended to believe in the importance of mothers staying home with their *infants* (Gambone et al., 2002). Surprisingly, in a comparison of two generational cohorts of students, 1990 versus 2000, respondents in the latter group expressed a

significantly stronger desire not to work or work only part-time during their children's first two years, whereas a greater support for maternal employment during the school years was evident (Gorton et al., 2001; Gambone et al., 2002).

Beliefs about the Consequences of Maternal Employment

As mentioned above, a major factor influencing a woman's work-family planning when faced with this engulfing dilemma, is her attitudes and beliefs about the consequences of maternal employment for children, whether at a very young age or at a later stage in the child's development. High scores on the *Benefits* subscale of the Beliefs about the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children scale (BACMEC) developed by Greenberger et al. (1988), predicted the following: women's work status (employed); tendency to work for longer stretches during the day; and the *younger* age of the child at which the participants deemed suitable to be placed in non-parental care. On the other hand, the longer a woman chose to stay home with her child, the less favorable were her attitudes toward the benefits of maternal employment and the stronger were her beliefs in the costs. However, in many instances, working mothers might also view high costs to maternal employment while strongly believing in its advantages, thus pointing to the significance of the two distinct dimensions of the scale (Greenberger et al., 1998).

Another study on the psychometric analyses of the BACMEC also corroborated all the findings stated above (Hyde & McKinley, 1993). The costs that mostly concerned mothers-to-be were about the dangers children might face while away from them, and the emotional troubles they might experience due to their mothers absence (Greenberger et al., 1988). An interesting line of reasoning also

pinpointed in these studies, is the strong correlation between employment status and beliefs about the consequences of maternal employment. Whether attitudes and beliefs are developed first and then work decisions are made in accordance to these values, or whether employment plans are made first which in turn influence our opinions on the effects of maternal employment (Greenberger et al., 1988; Hyde & McKinley, 1993) still remains an important question to be investigated in future research studies.

Career versus Home Orientation

When women have young children, sometimes mothering roles may override career goals. Hock, Gnezda and McBride (1984), examined the attitudes of new mothers through the participants' reported attitudes about the significance of exclusive maternal care and their career versus home orientation preferences during their babies' first year. Although most mothers planned to return to the labor force during their child's first year, such plans were not in congruence with their traditional and well-rooted beliefs about infants' needs and the value of maternal care. This conflicting situation might pose high degrees of stress among many first-time mothers. Most subjects reported that they would prefer to stay home if given the choice, while women who planned to stay home believed more strongly in exclusive maternal care, and those who planned to return to work were more career oriented (Hock, Gnezda & McBride, 1984).

The significance of individual differences in reactions to maternity leave and return to the work force one year after delivery were also examined in a study by Klein et al. (1998). For those women, who were more work-oriented, higher levels of

depression were experienced if longer leaves were taken. However, most importantly, for those participants whose employment status was dissimilar to their actual preferences, anger and anxiety were found to play a detrimental role in their mental health (Klein et al., 1998).

A further study investigating a group of well-educated mothers, indicated the importance of understanding and differentiating between women's employment preference and their actual work status in their struggles to balance employment and motherhood (DeMeis, Hock, & McBride, 1986). Feelings of anxiety, guilt and sadness did not seem to be reduced after those mothers who desired to be home with their infants returned to their job. On the other hand, the decrease in separation anxiety among mothers who were more work-oriented, might reveal "their realistically coming to terms with balancing their infants' needs with their own needs or their denial of anxiety in order to return to their careers" (DeMeis, Hock, & McBride, 1986). Moreover, these mothers were less worried about leaving their infants in order to continue their careers than were participants who preferred to be home.

According to Hakim (1998), women vary in their preferences, wishes and commitments toward family and work life, and as she describes in her preference theory, women fall under three categories: Home-centered women whose main focus is family and children; adaptive women who desire to work and also be involved with family planning, thus not decisively committing to careers; and work-centered women who are mostly devoted to work and career achievements. Therefore, Hakim (1998) asserts that mothers *choose* to either concentrate on pursuing a career, raising children, or juggling both depending on their personal inclinations rather than due to the influence of external factors.

On the other hand, research suggests that financial, educational and work opportunities and constraints are also major forces acting upon women's decisions to work full-time (McDonald, Bradley, & Guthrie, 2006; Leach et al., 2006). In a study conducted by McDonald et al. (2006), the authors indicated that two-thirds of the participants, a group of working moms with young children, preferred to work part-time. These mothers stated that the reasons they had to compromise their preferences were the due to nature of the job, which required full-time hours, the perceived disadvantages of part-time work, such as feeling devalued and "downgraded by the team", and the lack of promotion opportunities. Therefore, this study suggests that although full time mothers may affirm that they prefer to work fewer hours out of concern for being "negatively stereotyped" (social desirability bias) for actually favoring working to childcare, nevertheless the influences of external forces such as job demands and policies, cannot be discarded (McDonald, Bradley, & Guthrie, 2006).

Other factors, as described by working mothers with infants, might also influence their decision to return to work and place their child under non-maternal care: contextual influences, such as end of maternity leave and job security; financial reasons, such as the need for the income and wish for financial independence; maternal factors, including career orientation, enjoyment of work and need for adult contact; and infant personality ("easygoing") and what mothers believed to be their infants need to socialize (Leach et al., 2006).

Many studies focus on the "traditional" influences, stereotypical gender-role attitudes and lack of spousal and societal support that seem to "provoke" women to decide to stay home and be the main caretaker of their young child by putting their career or work goals on hold (Hare-Mustin & Broderick, 1979; Cooper et al., 1994;

Dillaway & Pare, 2008; Scarr, Phillips & McCartney, 1989). Although in many cases this might be true, research seems to ignore women's genuine desire to nurture and care for her child and the possible enjoyment derived from it. Women might experience a sometimes unexpected and at others previously anticipated shifting in priorities when their child is born. This might be true due to an increase in satisfaction and the "recognition of motherhood as a valuable, desirable, and positive means of expressing basic human needs to nurture and love" (Hock, Gnezda & McBride, 1984).

As de Marneffe (2004) points out in her book entitled "Maternal Desire", a women's actual "wanting" to raise her children, despite what society and studies claim, has become a "taboo" discussion, thus causing even greater confusion and struggles among working moms who yearn to be home and at home mothers who feel the stings of others' judgments upon them. This taboo might have stemmed from many historical reasons, among them the fear of once again restricting women's rights and freedom of choice (de Marneffe, 2004) that have been so ardently and painstakingly fought for and still are, up until this day. However, de Marneffe (2004) further highlights that "whereas the ideal of maternal self-sacrifice used to obscure mothers desire for things other than motherhood, today's ideal of 'staying on track' obscures mothers' desires to be transformed by motherhood". This desire should thus be valued for its affective, relational and community attributes (de Marneffe, 2009). Other reasons, as described by highly educated stay-at-home mothers, for wanting to be the exclusive caretaker of their child, were the following: stress they felt when trying to balance work and family; experience with their own mother' presence during their childhood; sense of relief for being home; being able to influence their child's development and not missing out on the milestones; providing

their children with a more peaceful and secure home with “less hectic schedules for everyone”; raising healthy children and influencing them; and having more time with the family (Rubin, & Wooten, 2007).

Non-parental Childcare

Whether mothers who return to work actually prefer to do so or would rather stay home with their infants or young children, this question still remains: when selecting or planning for future non-maternal care, what are the forces that shape women’s choices and what type of care is mostly favored among women? Different factors are believed to play a role in the non-parental childcare choices that women make, among them: cost, convenience, and availability of childcare; carer’s personality, attitudes, warmth and experience; attributes of the care setting, as for instance, the “relative peace” provided by a childminder or more trust in a nursery setting; information and advice from others; mother-carer relationship; child’s characteristics; and finally, partner’s involvement in the decision making process (Leach, 2006). When asked to state which factors would most influence their childcare choices in a study conducted by Shpancer and Bennett-Murphy (2006), college student respondents stressed their own beliefs toward child development as the major factor, followed by both, child and spouse variables. Moreover, when subjects in two different groups, those who were placed in non-parental care and those who experienced maternal care as young children, were asked which care arrangement they would prefer for their child during the first three years of life, both reported favoring care by grandparents or extended family (Shpancer, & Bennett-Murphy, 2006). Another study on non-parental childcare placement before 6 months

of age, also pointed out that grandparents care, when in combination with other types of care, was the largest category used, followed by childminders (registered and inspected home-based care), nursery, and nanny (Leach et al., 2006). Although it is a common practice to opt for grandparents care in Lebanon, especially during infancy, and daycare centers, during infancy and preschool years, childminders and babysitters are not available options in our country.

One unfortunate and widely used alternative to non-parental care in Lebanon, is the employment of expatriate housemaids who are expected to do the job of raising the children along with the burden of housework, among other duties. Two studies focus on the common trend and the detrimental impact of such childcare arrangement in Oman (Al-Lamsky, 2004) and in the gulf countries (Roumani, 2010), highlighting such alarming practices. The increased dependence on “untrained, culturally and linguistically different... and generally overburdened housemaids” (Al-Lamsky, 2004) to care for infants and young children, can have irreversible, negative effects on their emotional, cognitive and psycho-social upbringing. Many young parents have come to view this as a “standard practice” (Roumani, 2010).

Most studies on the impact of maternal employment and non-maternal care on children’s emotional, cognitive, behavioral and psycho-social development have focused mainly on the use of daycare centers, the availability of low versus quality care and the timing and amount of non-parental care provided (Belsky, 2001; Belsky et al., 2007; Bernal, 2008; Brooks-Gunn, Han, & Waldfogel, 2002; Baydar, & Brooks-Gunn, 1991; McCartney et al., 2010; Youngblade, 2003; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1997). Most of these studies relied on data gathered from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) longitudinal study of child and youth. Early, extensive, and continuous non-maternal care and

low quality daycare seem to act as risk-factors and create the most harmful conditions for children (Belsky, 2001; Belsky et al., 2007; Bernal, 2008; Brooks-Gunn, Han, & Waldfogel, 2002; Baydar, & Brooks-Gunn, 1991; McCartney et al., 2010; Youngblade, 2003; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1997).

However, although *structural* characteristics of childcare can be measured as in the child:staff ratio, children's group size, and specialized training of care providers, *process* characteristics, such as "the warmth, sensitivity, and responsiveness of caregivers; the emotional tone of the setting; the activities available to children; the developmental appropriateness of activities; and the learning opportunities available" are difficult to investigate (Marshall, 2004). These findings paint an even more worrying picture on the potential risks that may come from the employment of foreign domestic workers as young childrens' 'nannies'. According to Roumani (2010), this childcare arrangement may lead to attachment disorders, separation anxiety and social phobia, personality disorders, and social attitude disorders (e.g., reduced interpersonal intelligence) due to the following risk factors:

Maid's Lack of authority: expected compliance and no permission to set limits may affect children's interpersonal interactions.

Insensitivity to child's needs: young age, inexperience in childcare and lack of education, along with the language barrier may lead to negative consequences.

Lack of stimulation/freedom to explore: fear of reprimand for messy house or injured child; need to keep baby in crib or playpen while cleaning the house; lack of knowledge of appropriate ways to stimulate child; child's lack of interaction with outside world and peers may lead to withdrawal, social phobia, etc.

The child's attachment to the maid: may lead to apparent "role-reversal"; mother may experience feelings of resentment and guilt; frequent change of maids, witnessing abusive behavior towards maid, and maid's threats to leave may cause attachment disorders, separation anxiety, and affect personality and development.

The maid's own emotions: attachment to the child may lead to feelings of possessiveness which in turn causes more "maternal antagonism". Maid's painful reaction to negative treatment might lead to less sensitivity and responsiveness to child and thus irreversible consequences.

CONCLUSION

Exploring the many factors that shape women's mothering expectations and ultimately the choices they make regarding maternal employment and childcare, may help us better understand the individualistic realities, cultural barriers, common societal practices, and future dilemmas involved in the decision process and the rationale behind these choices. In turn, increased awareness of the negative consequences of these inherent pressures and the detrimental effects of some of these practices, on both, child and mother, may eventually lead to wider community, labor force, spousal, and fellow women's support.

Hypotheses

1. Participants who have experienced maternal employment as young children, will report greater acceptance of early maternal work than those who have not experienced maternal employment.
2. There will be a mean difference in the rated benefits of maternal employment and the child's age group at which the mother would consider resuming work.
3. There will be a positive correlation between scores on the BACMEC and scores on the Exclusive Maternal Care scale. Furthermore there will be a negative correlation between scores on the BACMEC and scores on the Home/Employment Orientation scale.
4. Attitudes toward the Exclusive Maternal Care scale will be negatively correlated with responses toward the Home/Employment Orientation scale.
5. There will be a mean difference in the Home/Employment Orientation scores and the child's age group at which the mother would consider resuming work.
6. There will be a mean difference in the Home/Employment Orientation scores and the age group at which the child would be placed in non-parental care.

The study will further attempt to explore the participants' attitudes toward different childcare arrangements, preferred timing for mother to resume work, expected age of child to be placed in non-parental care, and finally, the major factors that might influence their future parental decisions.

Chapter III

METHOD

Participants

Female college students from two different universities in Lebanon, Haigazian University and the Lebanese American University (Byblos Campus), with ages ranging approximately between 18 and 32 years old, took part in this study. The number of subjects consisted of 145 students enrolled in various undergraduate and graduate programs. The sample was composed mostly of middle class participants from different ethnic backgrounds.

Materials

Participants were handed a booklet including:

- **Cover page and Demographics sheet**
- **Beliefs about the Consequences of Maternal Employment Scale (BACMEC)** – this is 24-item, 6-point Likert (1 “disagree very strongly” to 6 “agree very strongly”) scale developed by Greenberger et al. (1988) to assess attitudes toward maternal work. The scale is composed of two subscales measuring beliefs about the benefits (13 items), and the costs (11 items) of maternal employment. When taken together, the 24 items yield a Total Score reflecting the view that maternal employment has negative outcomes for children. That is, the higher the score, the more negative the attitude. The cost and benefits items cover a range of potential byproducts of maternal

employment including: physical health and safety; psychosocial impacts; impacts on sex-role conceptions; and effects on learning and school performance. Studies of 5 samples ($n = 375$) have indicated that the BACMEC scales and subscales are highly reliable and have good convergent, divergent and concurrent validity (Greenberger et al., 1988). Another study on the psychometric analyses of the BACMEC revealed that the subscales have “excellent” internal consistency reliability, and moderate construct and discriminant validity (Hyde, & McKinley, 1993). Both studies also demonstrated the empirical integrity of each of the subscales as well as the Total Scale, and how the scale was not susceptible to a social desirability bias (Greenberger et al., 1988; Hyde, & McKinley, 1993).

- **Exclusive Maternal Care Scale and Home/Employment Orientation Scale** – Both scales were developed in a study by Hock, Gnezda, & McBride (1984), and comprised 5 Likert-type items. The Exclusive Maternal Care Scale, measures the extent to which a mother believes that only she is best suited to care for her child, whereas the Home/Employment Orientation Scale reflects a women’s preference for staying home with her young child versus her desire to return to work (Hock, Gnezda, & McBride, 1984). Item ratings on both scales ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The 10 items, as developed by the authors, were of interest in two ways, separately and when summed into the two 5-item scales described above. The internal consistency reliability coefficient for the Exclusive Maternal Care scale was .71 (Cronbach’s alpha) and for the Home/Employment Orientation scale was .82 (Hock, Gnezda, & McBride, 1984).

- **Future Parenting Plans Questionnaire** – this questionnaire is adapted from N. Shpancer and L. Bennet Murphy (2006), and it was developed by the authors to explore, explicitly, participants' future expectations and preferences regarding early non-parental care during the child's first three years of life. However, for the purpose of the current study, items were modified according to the nature and relevance of the research questions and in order to better reflect the Lebanese culture and practices. For example, when asking subjects what form of non-parental care arrangement they would prefer, the option "foreign housekeeper" was included, replacing "childminder", an option not available in our country.
- **Childcare & Maternal Employment History Questionnaire** – this questionnaire investigates whether participants experienced maternal employment and non-parental care as young children.

Participants were asked to answer 3 questions, such as the following:

- To your present knowledge, were you placed under any type of non-maternal care (e.g., nursery, daycare center, foreign housekeeper, grandparents, etc) for at least half the day, during the first 3 years of life? YES - NO- DON'T KNOW

Procedure

The researcher distributed the booklet and assured the participants of the confidentiality of their responses and their appreciated and yet completely voluntary contribution to the completion of an MA thesis. A brief explanation of the purpose of the study was given before the completion of the questionnaires and scales.

Analysis of data was computed through the use of different statistical procedures as follows: For hypothesis one, means were compared by employing a t-test for independent samples. One-way ANOVA was used when testing for hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 5. Correlational analyses were applied when investigating the effect among the variables in hypothesis 3 and hypothesis 4. Finally, further factors relating to the attitudes and expectations of the participants regarding maternal employment and childcare arrangements, were explored utilizing appropriate statistical means.

Scales & subscales	Previous	Current
	Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha
BACMFC total	.88 to .94	.76
Enrollee	.83 to .91	.87
Owner	.88 to .94	.86
Attitudes Maternal Care	.71	.77
Home/Employment Orientation	.87	.83

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for most of the current study's scales and subscales indicated a good internal validity in line with the results of the previous studies. However, the Home/Employment Orientation scale's coefficient for

Chapter IV

RESULTS

This study used three scales:

1. Beliefs about the Consequences of Maternal Employment scale (BACMEC), which is composed of 2 subscales, the Benefits subscale and the Costs subscale.
2. The Exclusive Maternal Care scale
3. Home/Employment Orientation scale.

The internal validity of the scales as well as the subscales used in this study, were determined by calculating Cronbach's alpha. Current and previous coefficients for Cronbach's alpha are shown on Table 1.

Table 1

Cronbach's alpha for the BACMEC total scale and subscales, and the Exclusive Maternal Care and Home/Employment Orientation Scales

Scales & subscales	Previous Cronbach's alpha	Current Cronbach's alpha
<i>BACMEC total</i>	.89 to .94	.75
<i>Benefits</i>	.83 to .91	.87
<i>Costs</i>	.88 to .94	.90
<i>Exclusive Maternal Care</i>	.71	.77
<i>Home/Employment Orientation</i>	.82	.53

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for most of the current study's scales and subscales indicated a good internal validity in line with the results of the previous studies. However, the Home/Employment Orientation scale's coefficient for

Cronbach's alpha indicated a poorer internal reliability. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the results of the hypotheses exploring participants' responses on this respective scale reveal a tentative outcome.

Hypothesis 1:

To test the first hypothesis that participants who had experienced maternal employment as young children will have a lower total score on the BACMEC (believe in lower costs to maternal employment), compared to those who had not, an independent-samples t-test was conducted using SPSS 16.

Results showed a significant difference in the mean scores between the two groups: Group 1 (participants' mothers worked), [$N = 26$, $M = 79.88$, $SD = 1.85$]; Group 2 (participants' mothers did not work, [$N = 116$, $M = 85.16$, $SD = .90$], $t(140) = -2.51$, $p = .013$, thus confirming hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2:

To test for mean difference in the rated benefits of maternal employment and the child's age group at which the mother would consider resuming work, one-way ANOVA was used.

As seen on Table 2, the results yielded a significant F ratio, thus confirming hypothesis 2.

Table 2

One-way Analysis of Variance for scores on the BACMEC Benefits subscale and age of child at which subject would consider resuming work

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1001.638	6	166.940	2.705	.016
Within Groups	8455.355	137	61.718		
Total	9456.993	143			

The results were then followed by multiple comparisons for specific difference in means among the age categories. It was revealed that subjects who wish to return to work when their future child is 2 years old, scored significantly higher on the BACMEC Benefits subscale (stronger beliefs in the benefits of maternal employment), than those who wish to resume work when child is 4 (see table 3).

Table 3

Multiple Comparison table for scores on BACMEC Benefits subscale and age of child at which subject would consider resuming work

	(I) Age of Child	(J) Age of Child	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Bonferroni	2	4	13.26000*	4.23063	.044	.1629	26.3571

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Further analysis of means for work resumption timing (age of child), and subjects' rated benefits of maternal employment, indicated a curvilinear trend between the variables, as seen on Table 4.

Table 4

Means for rated Benefits and age of child at which subject would consider resuming work.

Age of child	N	Rated Benefits
Under 1 yr.	12	50.2
B/w 1 & 2 yrs.	30	52.2
2 yrs.	25	52.8
3 yrs.	22	49.8
4 yrs.	4	39.5
School age	32	48.0

Hypothesis 3:

To test for the expected positive correlation between the beliefs in the costs of maternal employment and beliefs in exclusive maternal care, a correlation coefficient was computed between scores of the respective scales.

Resulting $r = .290$, $p = .000$, hence confirming this prediction.

To further test for the predicted negative correlation between the beliefs in the costs of maternal employment and attitudes toward a home/employment orientation, a correlation coefficient was calculated between scores of the relevant scales.

Results were in the expected negative direction but failed to show a significant difference between the two variables ($r = -.128$, $p = .125$).

Hypothesis 4:

Pearson correlation coefficient was computed between scores on the Exclusive Maternal Care scale and scores on the Home/Employment Orientation scale to test for an expected negative relationship between both.

Obtained results were $r = -.404$, $p = .000$. Hence the hypothesized relationship was confirmed.

Hypothesis 5:

To test for mean difference between Home/Employment Orientation scores and the child's age group at which the mother would consider returning to work, one-way ANOVA was computed.

As shown on table 5, the results yielded a significant F ratio, thus confirming the above hypothesis.

Table 5

One-way Analysis of Variance for scores on the Home/Employment Orientation Scale and age of child at which subject would consider resuming work

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	114.787	6	19.131	4.906	.000
Within Groups	534.213	137	3.899		
Total	649.000	143			

The results were then followed by multiple comparisons for specific difference in means among the age categories. It was revealed that those participants who do

not consider returning to work and those who would resume work only when the child is of school age (5+), scored significantly lower on the Home/Employment Orientation scale, than those who consider resuming work when child is between 1 & 2 or 2 years old (see Table 6).

Table 6

Multiple Comparison table for scores on the Home/Employment Orientation scale and age of child at which subject would consider resuming work

	(I) Age of child	(J) Age of child	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Bonferroni	1 -2	none	1.88246 [*]	.57897	.030
		5+	1.66042 [*]	.50183	.025
	2	none	1.91579 [*]	.60100	.037
		5+	1.69375 [*]	.52710	.034

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Further analysis of means for work resumption timing (age of child), and subjects' home/employment orientation scores, indicated that there's a trend in line with hypothesis 5, as seen on table 7.

Table 7

Means for age of child at which subject would consider resuming work and scores on the Home/Employment Orientation scale.

Age of child	N	Home/Employment Orientation
Under 1 yr.	12	12.7
B/w 1 -2 yrs.	30	12.6
2 yrs.	25	12.6
3 yrs.	22	11.7
4 yrs.	4	9.5
School age	32	10.9
None	19	10.7

Hypothesis 6:

To test for mean difference in the Home/Employment Orientation scores and the age group at which mother would place child in non-parental care, one-way ANOVA was computed.

As shown on table 8, the results yielded a significant F ratio, thus confirming Hypothesis 6.

Table 8

One-way Analysis of Variance for scores on the Home/Employment Orientation Scale and age at which subject would consider placing child in non-parental care

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	49.683	3	16.561	3.864	.011
Within Groups	604.345	141	4.286		
Total	654.028	144			

Multiple comparisons were then computed in order to verify for significant difference in means among the age categories. As shown on Table 9, respondents who indicated a preference for placing their future child in non-parental care *between* the ages of 1 and 2, scored significantly higher on the Home/Employment Orientation scale (employment orientation), than those who indicated a preference to place child at the age of 3.

Table 9

Multiple Comparison table for scores on the Home/Employment Orientation scale and age at which subject would consider placing child in non-parental care

	(I) Age of Child	(J) Age of Child	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Bonferroni	1-2	3	1.49452*	.45731	.008

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Means for childcare age categories and subjects' home/employment orientation scores were further investigated, indicating a curvilinear relation between the variables, as seen on Table 10.

Table 10

Means of age categories at which child would attend childcare and scores on the Home/Employment Orientation scale.

Age of child	N	Home/Employment Orientation
Under 1 yr.	2	10.5
Bet. 1 & 2 yrs.	32	12.7
2 yrs.	54	11.9
3 yrs.	57	11.2

This study further attempted, through the use of Descriptive Statistics and comparisons of means, to explore the participants' attitudes toward the following:

- 1. Non-parental childcare arrangements:** The majority of subjects were equally divided in their preference to place their future child in either "daycare center /

nursery" ($N = 69, 47.6\%$) or with "grandparents / extended family" (47.6%) as alternative options for non-parental childcare arrangements.

2. **Time for work resumption:** When considering the best time to resume work, most participants would rather do so when child is either at the school age 5+ ($N = 32, 22\%$) or when child is between 1 and 2 years old ($N = 30, 21\%$), with the minority opting to return when child is either 4 years old ($N = 4, 3\%$) or before the age of 1 ($N = 12, 8\%$).
3. **Age of child when attending childcare:** Only a small minority of participants would consider placing their future child in a non-parental childcare arrangement before the age 1 ($N = 2, 1.4\%$). Most subjects would opt to have their child attend childcare at the age of 2 ($N = 54, 37\%$) or the age of 3 ($N = 57, 39\%$).
4. **Factors influencing decisions:** In rating the factors that might influence college students' future maternal decisions, participants mostly emphasized the role of their own beliefs about childcare and development ($mean = 4.2$ on a 5-point Likert scale), the child's temperament and personality ($mean = 3.9$), and availability of affordable childcare ($mean = 3.9$).

Societal attitudes about childcare and outside influences (parents, friends, neighbors) were rated lowest in importance ($mean = 2.3$ and 2.5 respectively).

Interestingly, the spouse's needs and desires and work/career demands and aspirations were rated equally ($mean = 3.3$), falling in 4th place as major influences in a mother's future care decisions.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

This present study aimed to explore Lebanese female college students' attitudes and beliefs pertaining to future motherhood expectations in relation to employment and childrearing decisions. In order to investigate the major forces influencing and shaping these future expectations and choices, three scales were introduced to the participants: Beliefs about the Consequences of Maternal Employment (BACMEC), Exclusive Maternal Care, and Home/Employment Orientation Scale. In addition, factors such as history of maternal employment, preferences for different childcare arrangements, preferred timing for mother to resume work, age of child regarded as appropriate to be placed in non-maternal care, and the main perceived forces behind future parental choices, were further examined through the use of two questionnaires. Variables were compared and studied through the application of statistical measures including descriptive statistics, t-tests, correlational analyses, and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Early Maternal Employment History and Beliefs about the Costs of Maternal Employment

The current study aimed to investigate the relation between the participants' history of maternal work and their beliefs concerning the costs and benefits of maternal employment. It was assumed that female college students, whose mothers worked during their first three years of life, would regard maternal employment in a more favorable light in comparison to those whose mother did not. A significant

difference emerged confirming hypothesis 1 and also the results of previous studies (Sphpancer, & Murphy, 2006; Gambone et al., 2002; Gorton et al., 2001). Subjects whose mothers did not work when they were young (80%), perceived maternal employment as carrying more negative consequences to children. Sphpancer & Murphy's (2006), research has further demonstrated the strong effect that this factor has on college students' future work-family plans. Therefore, early maternal work history could pose as an important variable when mothers are faced with career decisions, and also when considering non-parental care as viable alternatives for their future children.

Attitudes toward the Benefits of Maternal Employment, Work Resumption, and Timing of Non-parental Childcare

This study indicated a significant difference in the rated benefits of maternal employment and the child's age group at which the mother would consider returning to work (Hypothesis 2). The results further implied that female college students who wished to return to work when their future child is two years old viewed maternal work as offering more advantages to children than those who wished to resume work when child is four.

Looking further into the relation between child's age and work resumption, most participants would rather go back to work when their child reaches school age 5+ (22%) or between the ages of 1 and 2 (21%). This is an interesting finding as most preferences seem to be polarized between the very young age group and the older school age group perhaps indicating that these female college students have

already developed strong attitudes towards a career orientation or a desire to stay home and care for their child.

Interestingly though, only 8% would consider resuming work when child is younger than one. This outcome is in congruence with previous research on college students who believe in the importance of a mother being home with her infant (Barber, & Monaghan, 1988; Gambone et al., 2002; Gorton et al., 2001).

However, preferences might not mirror their actual future decisions, due to the societal pressures, financial stresses, and difficult situations with which these young women will be faced. Unfortunately, such preferences are also not in conformity with the reality of Lebanese work laws where the mother has to return to employment when her baby is only 49 days old, thus posing a conflicting situation for these future mothers.

Similar to the finding related to work resumption, only a negligible number of participants (1.4%) would consider placing their future child in non-parental care before the age of 1. Most would opt to have their child attend childcare either at the age of 2 or 3 (76%). This perhaps reflects the new trend among young women, whether working or stay-at-home moms, to place their child in nurseries or preschools at a somewhat earlier age than did the older generation of mothers (ages 3 or 4 years old).

Early Non-parental Care Arrangements

When asked about which type of non-parental care arrangement subjects would prefer, most reflected an equal inclination towards grandparents/extended

family or daycare center/nursery. Studies show that a greater majority of college students in western countries seem to opt for grandparents and extended family care as a first choice (Sphpancer, & Bennet-Murphy, 2006) especially during infancy (Leach et al., 2006). These studies further reveal a preference for childminders (registered and inspected home-based care) or professional nannies. However, these are not common practices in Lebanon, and there aren't any specialized educational degrees in this domain. Moreover, when it comes to daycare centers and nurseries, it is important for these future moms to be aware and informed of potential risk factors that might be associated with the use of early, extensive and frequent non-maternal care and low quality daycare on the their children's emotional, intellectual and/or social development (Belsky, 2001; Belsky et al., 2007; Bernal, 2008; Brooks-Gunn, Han, & Waldfogel, 2002; Baydar, & Brooks-Gunn, 1991; McCartney et al., 2010; Yongblade, 2003; NICHD Early Care Research Network, 1997).

Unfortunately, although college students did not identify expatriate housemaids as a preferred option for childcare arrangements, the actual reality might tell a different story concerning this widespread and at times detrimental practice, as reviewed earlier in chapter 2 (Al-Lamsky, 2004; Roumani, 2010). This is especially true when these housekeepers are "replacing" maternal care instead of acting as a helping hand for the overburdened mother. Future research should focus on this issue, and the statistical actuality of this precarious form of full-time childcare in Lebanon.

Major Factors Influencing Non-parental Care Decisions

Subjects were also asked about which factors would mostly weight upon their decisions when considering different childcare arrangements. Beliefs about childcare and development, child's personality and temperament, and availability of affordable childcare were rated the highest in importance. Interestingly, spouse's needs and desires and work/career demands and aspirations were rated equally in 4th place. However, in a research study by Shpancer and Bennett-Murphy (2006), spouse's variables were rated 2nd place in importance. This is perhaps due to the fact that the husbands' involvement in daily childcare errands and responsibilities in Lebanon, even when the mother works, is still a relatively uncommon practice. Thus the decision making process seems to also fall more heavily upon the mother who might, in this case, feel more entitled to such decisions. Future studies should further focus on this topic.

BACMEC, Exclusivity of Maternal care and Home/Employment Orientation

This study revealed that higher beliefs in the costs of maternal work were predictive of a stronger belief in the value of exclusive maternal care (Hypothesis 3). However, there was no significant relationship between the beliefs in the harmful aspects of maternal work and preference for either working or staying home with the child.

Previous findings suggest that, in many instances, working mothers might also believe in the consequences of maternal employment while still believing strongly in its benefits (Greenberger et. al, 1998; Hyde, & McKinley, 1993).

As predicted in Hypothesis 4, subjects who demonstrated stronger attitudes toward the importance of a mother's exclusive care scored lower on the Home/Employment Orientation scale, thus indicating a preference to be home and care for their young child.

Therefore, the current study further reveals that although believe in the exclusivity of maternal care is a strong predictor of a young college woman's home orientation, strong views in costs of maternal work alone fail to predict a woman's stronger desire to stay home. Although the previous studies stated above do show a strong correlation between work status and beliefs in the costs of maternal employment (chapter 2), an important question that still remains and could thus be investigated in future studies is whether expectations and opinions related to maternal work are created first, thus directly influencing a woman's career plans, or vice versa.

Home/Employment Orientation and Preferred Timing for Non-parental Care and Work Resumption

A significant mean difference was found between the subjects' inclination to either work or stay home with their child, and the child's age group at which the mother would prefer to return to work (Hypothesis 5). Further analysis indicated that female college students who opted to resume work when child is either 1 or 2 years old, were more inclined towards employment (higher scores on the scale), than those who wanted to return when child is 5+.

In further investigating the means between the age categories and the home/employment orientation scores, a linear trend demonstrated that the older the age of the child at which the mother would return to work, the lower the scores on the scale (home orientation).

As predicted in Hypothesis 6, a significant difference was also revealed between subjects' Home/Career Preferences and the age at which they would place their child in non-parental care. Subjects who were more career oriented showed a tendency towards placing their future child in childcare at an earlier age (between 1 and 2 years old), whereas those who were more home oriented preferred to do so at a later stage in their child's development (3 years old).

Once again, future research could seek to investigate if thoughts and judgments related to non-parental care and maternal employment are first developed, affecting in turn the individual decisions young mothers make in relation to work and childcare, or if the choices women make to either work or stay home with the child are the major influences behind their attitudes and opinions.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to determine, once a mother's decision to either work or stay home with the child is made, what factors posed as main driving forces, and if spousal, societal, financial and community pressures played a critical role in these choices.

Conclusions and Further Implications for Future Research

Today's young women are opting for a life where they could enjoy achievements in the multiple realms of education and further employ their knowledge and aspirations in the work force and the community at large. Moreover, they wish to one day become wives and mothers, thus seeking and hoping to find fulfillment in diverse roles. Women have come a long way from the past ideal that a mother should be "all sacrificing" for the sake of her children and home, and thus disregard her pursuit for independence and self-actualization in the community at large. However, today's cultural ideal has shifted to one where a woman can and should do everything, the "supermom ideal" which "pressures mothers to perform excellently on all fronts, in a job, with their children, with their partner, at the gym, and in the kitchen..." (de Marneffe, 2004). Such internalized future expectations are thus also in line with modern societal outlooks which encourage a woman to aim for a career and also to successfully fill in the mothering role (Baber & Monaghan, 1988) and the more traditional "housewife" responsibilities.

This rosy picture of a future where a woman can "have-it-all" and still be able to achieve the high standards exerted by her own ideals and the community around her, is laden with misconceptions or a lack of knowledge about the difficult transition into motherhood. One feature of such challenging situation, is the little support that future moms are likely to receive from employment policies when faced with family-work dilemmas, such as those in Lebanon which tend to grant a mother only 49 days of maternity leave, and does not further provide options for employees such as flex hours, part-time jobs and work-from-home. Another tough situation is the possible lack of sufficient help that these young women might encounter from their future spouses when burdened with childcare and parental responsibilities (Crouter et al.,

1987; Leslie et al., 1991), and housework duties (Almeida et al., 1993; Blair & Johnson, 1992; Gunter & Gunter, 1990; Starrels, 1994; Zimmerman & Addison, 1997). As de Marneffe (2004) puts it, “as a society we are grudging and cramped about the practical adjustments required by motherhood, continually treating them as incidental and inconvenient”, and this statement might unfortunately carry an even stronger connotation in our own society.

The ideal of the “supermom” is also laden with mixed and frustrating messages that are additionally reinforced by the media (Johnston, & Swanson, 2003) and do not seem to spare the mother who desires to stay home and care for her child or the one who opts to further accomplish in the outside world. Full-time moms might face the stigma of a society which judges their choices as intellectually superficial and a waste of time and education. These mothers might be confronted with the need to work harder and be “self-sacrificing” in order to achieve feelings of self-worth and not feel “discounted” by others (Zimmerman, 2000; Rubin, & Wooten, 2007), although they might genuinely find gratification in the mothering role where they are the ones responsible for the emotional, cognitive and psychosocial upbringing of their children.

On the other hand, although women who opt for full time work are more respected by society and seen as more productive and fulfilled than stay-at-home moms, they are also viewed at times as less competent and more “selfish” as mothers (Johnston, & Swanson, 2003; Bridges et al., 2002; Shpancer et al., 2006). Therefore, the community around seems to increase the pressures and deprive young women of the support needed in order to achieve an inner psychological balance and come to terms with their inclinations and choices and finally the realization that it is not possible to attain such “idealized” high standards in all

aspects of life. It is thus, of crucial importance that college women who are going to one day represent the new generation of mothers, employees and employers to be aware of the contradictory pressures with which they'll be faced. Although eager to balance the conflicting demands of work and children by planning to perhaps establish careers first, have children second and mothering their child in the first year or so, it is necessary for these young women to understand the realities and the trade-offs involved (Baber, & Monaghan, 1988).

Moreover, it is important to point out that the inclinations and expectations of the young women involved in this study, may not reflect, as reviewed in this research, the actual choices that they will make one day in their attempts to reach a balance between employment and motherhood. A study of well-educated women highlighted the feelings of anxiety, guilt and frustration that might arise when preferences are not in agreement with a mothers' actual work-family situation (DeMeis, Hock, & McBride, 1986). Therefore, future studies should further investigate the relationship between women's preferences and actual decisions and the intricate factors behind such incongruence when it exists.

In order for future studies about motherhood, maternal employment and non-parental childcare to yield significant outcomes and broaden our understanding of these issues, larger and more diverse samples of college women across the country should take part in these studies. Also the attitudes, beliefs and expectations of mothers, male subjects and the community at large should be explored.

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APPENDIX I

ABOUT MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT

The following questionnaire is designed to learn more about what people think happens to children if their mothers work full time outside the home. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Please, circle the number that indicates how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Disagree very strongly	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
1. Children are less likely to form a warm and secure relationship with a mother who is working full time.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Children whose mothers work are more independent and able to do things for themselves.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Working mothers are more likely to have children with psychological problems than mothers who do not work outside the home.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Teenagers get into less trouble with the law if their mothers do not work full time outside the home.	1	2	3	4	5
5. For young children, working mothers are good role models for leading busy and productive lives.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Boys whose mothers work are more likely to develop respect for women.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Young children learn more if their mothers stay at home with them.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Children whose mothers work learn valuable lessons about other people they can rely on.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Girls whose mothers work full time outside the home develop stronger motivation to do well in school.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Daughters of working mothers are better prepared to combine work and motherhood, if they choose to do both.	1	2	3	4	5

11. Children whose mothers work are more likely to be left alone and exposed to dangerous situations.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Children whose mothers work are more likely to pitch in and do tasks around the house.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Children do better in school if their mothers are not working full time outside the home.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Children whose mothers work full time outside the home develop more regard for women's intelligence and competence.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Children of working mothers are less well-nourished and don't eat the way they should.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Children whose mothers work are more likely to understand and appreciate the value of a dollar.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Children whose mothers work suffers because their mothers are not their when they when they need them.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Children of working mothers grow up to be less competent parents than other children, because they have not had adequate parental role models.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Sons of working mothers are better prepared to cooperate with a wife who wants both to work and have children.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Children of mothers who work develop lower self-esteem because they think they are not worth devoting attention to.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Children whose mothers work are more likely to learn the importance of teamwork and cooperation among family members.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Children of working mothers are more likely than other children to experiment with drugs, alcohol and sex at an early age.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Children whose mothers work develop less stereotyped views about men's and women's roles.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Children whose mothers work full time outside the home are more adaptable: they cope better with the unexpected and with changes in plans.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX II

EXCLUSIVE MATERNAL CARE

The following questionnaire is designed to learn more about how people feel towards childrearing. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Please, circle the number that indicates how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
1. More than any other adult, I will be able to meet my child's need.	1	2	3	4
2. My child will be happier with me than with babysitters or teachers.	1	2	3	4
3. I am naturally better at keeping my child safe than any other person.	1	2	3	4
4. It will not be good for my child to be cared for by someone else because he/she may be exposed to values and attitudes that I disagree with.	1	2	3	4
5. Only a mother just naturally knows how to comfort her distressed child.	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX III

HOME / EMPLOYMENT ORIENTATION SCALE

The following questionnaire is designed to learn more about how people feel towards work and motherhood. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Please, circle the number that indicates how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree
1. My life wouldn't be complete without a career.	1	2	3
2. A career or job brings me a lot of personal satisfaction.	1	2	3
3. I would not regret postponing my career to stay home with my child.	1	2	3
4. If I could choose between working full-time or staying home with my child, I would want to stay home.	1	2	3
5. Motherhood is a major way of fulfillment in a woman's life	1	2	3

APPENDIX IV

FUTURE PARENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Would you consider returning to work full-time after having children?

YES

DON'T KNOW

NO

2. If YES or DON'T KNOW: when would you consider returning to work?

(a) before child is 1 year

(b) between ages 1 & 2

(c) 2 years

(d) 3 years

(e) 4 years

(f) school age (5+)

3. Whether or not you would consider resuming work after having children, when would you consider acceptable placing your child in non-maternal care?

(a) before child is 1 year

(b) between ages 1 & 2

(c) 2 years

(d) 3 years

4. If you decide to place your child in some type of non-parental care arrangement, what arrangement are you likely to prefer?

(a) Daycare center / nursery

(b) Grandparents or extended family

(c) Baby sitter

(d) Foreign housekeeper

(e) Other (specify):

5. If you decide in the future to place your child in some form of non-maternal care, what factors will weight most in your decision? Please rate the following options according to their anticipated importance. Use the following scale:

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all important Very important

- ___ my spouse's needs and desires
- ___ availability of affordable quality care
- ___ the child's temperament and personality
- ___ my work/career demands and aspiratiosn
- ___ my beliefs about child care and development
- ___ outside influences or advice (parents, neighbors, friends)
- ___ societal attitudes about childcare
- ___ financial concerns
- ___ other (specify).....

Childcare & Maternal Employment History Questionnaire

1. To your present knowledge, did your mother work outside the home during your first 3 years of life?

YES DON'T KNOW NO

2. To your present knowledge, were you placed under any type of non-maternal care (e.g., nursery, daycare center, foreign housekeeper, grandparents, etc) for at least half the day, during the first 3 years of life?

YES DON'T KNOW NO

3. If yes, what was the primary type(s) of non-parental care you have received during the first 3 years?

- (a) Daycare center / nursery
- (b) Grandparents or extended family
- (c) Baby sitter
- (d) Foreign housekeeper
- Other (specify):