The Impact of Babysitters on the Family Dynamics

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INTRODUCTION

Babies are born into and grown up in a social environment. This environment includes mainly the mother and the father, as well as other caregivers like babysitters. Live-in or live-out, babysitters enter the routines of the employer families and they gradually become a family member. Nevertheless, the relationship dynamics between the babysitters and the family members are mostly unknown, as well as the effects of these dynamics on the cared child's well-being.

OBJECTIVES

Exploring the intrafamilial dynamics in babysitter-employing families.

In other words,

- The impact of babysitters on the cared child's psychosocial development,
- The babysitters' relationship dynamics with the employer family members,
- The affect of these relationships on the babysitter-child relationship

HYPOTHESES

- Employing babysitters is going to affect the child's well-being
- This effect is going to be mediated by the babysitter-child relationship
- This effect is also going to be mediated by the mother-babysitter, father-babysitter, mother-father, mother-child, and father-child relationships.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS:

- 100 mothers-100 fathers with:
- A child at the ages between 1,5 - 5,
- A babysitter currently employed for that child's care
- Mother preliminary data: 30-35 data per cell
- Father preliminary data: not enough participants

PROCEDURE:

Online survey & online call for participation

MATERIALS:

Online Survey; babysitter employment processes, their and other family members' relationships with the babysitters, the household allocation of responsibilities
Perceived Partner Responsiveness Scale
CBCL - 1.5-5

RESULTS

Table 1: The average percentage of time spent with the child

	During babysitter shift	When babysitter is absent
Mother	28,73	56,24
Father	12,17	27,68
Others	11,28	1,29
Babysitter	35,26	-

RESULTS (cont'd)

According to correlations significant at the $p<.001$ level,

RESULTS (cont'd)

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In terms of item-by-item correlations on the CBCL ($p<.001$), The more time the mother spends with the child during the babysitter's shift,

- The less is the child tolerant for waiting ($r = .45$)

The more time the father spends with the child during the babysitter's shift,

- The less has the child problems in long-span attention ($r = -.47$)
- The less easily does the child go from activity to activity ($r = -.47$)
- The less selfish is the child ($r = -.46$)
- The less noisy is the child ($r = -.44$)

The better the babysitter-child relationship,

- The less readily does the child give up when faced with difficulties ($r = -.45$)
- The less does the child appear unhappy ($r = -.50$)
- The less does the child appear too tired ($r = -.53$)
- The less is the child stubborn, moody and irritating ($r = -.46$)
- The less is the child unhappy and anhedonic ($r = -.53$)
- The less does the child get offended and sulk ($r = -.53$)
- The less is the child introverted ($r = -.53$)

The better the mother-babysitter relationship,

- The less readily does the child give up when faced with difficulties ($r = -.53$)

The better the mother-child relationship,

- The less does child seem reactive to love and care ($r = -.46$)

Table 2: The babysitters' at-home-duties

Job	Frequency	Percent
Shopping	1	02
Taking care of children	30	61
Tidying up	19	39
Cooking for the family	20	41
Cleaning for the family	11	22
Laundry for the family	14	29
Doing dishes for the family	13	27
Other	1	02
Cooking for the child	17	35
Cleaning for the child	16	33
Laundry for the child	22	45
Doing dishes for the child	16	33

CONCLUSIONS

- There might be a link between babysitter employment and intrafamilial dynamics.
- Babysitter employment might have a positive effect on the child's well-being.
- More data is needed to conduct mediation analyses.
- This data are limited to the mothers' perspectives on babysitter employment and intrafamilial dynamics. The paternal perspective is needed. Data collection is ongoing.

REFERENCES & CONTACT

For references and more, please contact

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