

# **The Effect of Childcare Staffs'(Early Childhood Teachers') Eating Attitude and a Impulsive Aggression Proclivity on their General Mental Health - Around the City, UL SAN , 0GU –**

Mi-Jung Kim

Yuin University 2007 E. Compton Bl. Compton, CA 90221  
[mj5044@hotmail.com](mailto:mj5044@hotmail.com)

## **Abstract**

*This study seeks to analyze the correlation and influence on general mental health of childcare teachers according to their eating habits and impulsive aggressive tendency. For the study, self-filling questionnaire survey was conducted on childcare teachers working in kindergartens in U city from February 15th 2015 to June 20th 2015. For the data analysis, the SPSS WIN 18.0 program was used to conduct frequency analysis, correlation analysis, and linear regression analysis to verify at the significance level of 5%. The results first showed that the sub-factor of eating habit, fasting, has a positive correlation to mental health; on the contrary, the absorption in food, excessive eating, and aggressive characteristics showed not to be statistically significant. Second, the result of verifying the effect of eating habits and compulsive aggressive characteristics on general mental health showed that the socio-demographic characteristic, religion, and the sub-factor of eating habit, and fasting, showed to affect general mental health with statistical significance. The implications of this study are expected to become basic data to improve the eating habits and general mental health of childcare teachers.*

**Keywords:** *Childcare teachers, eating habits, personality, aggressiveness, general mental health*

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Necessity of Study**

Due to the development in industry, double-income families have increased and the change in family composition brought spotlight to issues regarding childcare. Due to the increase in the demand for childcare, the interest and the concept of childcare have expanded and being recognized and it is being stressed that childcare staff's qualitative level must be raised in order to create good educational experiences to fit the youth's development. The most important factor in the qualitative program of kindergartens is the childcare staff. However, the job of childcare teachers require excessive labor, raising one's self to be on the eye level with the youth, move a lot, and be active for a long period of time. Such work environment harms the health of the childcare staff to ultimately affect the youth's development [1] and the work environment of childcare staff has been shown to cause various types of stress. Accordingly, understanding the mental health of childcare staff is a very meaningful study in itself.

Generally, it is a state of not possessing any mental illnesses, not having psychological conflicts in one's actions, labor capability to be satisfied in one's job, and having the thought for love and hatred, ethics, and moral thought. The concept of mental health is the state of independently creating one's daily lives, dealing and controlling stress, and conducting harmonious social lives [2].

The health of the childcare staff is an important issue in the aspect that it maintains individual happiness and stability as well as in the aspect that it affects youths. Such

problems greatly affect youths' development. The health of childcare staff is the model for youth health and they are deeply involved in the personal lives of the youth and as the subject of direct contact, their influence is great[3]. Considering this finding, the desperate need to correctly understand the health of childcare staff arises. Accordingly, the health and eating habits of childcare staff are very important factors in the health and education of children. Therefore, the inappropriate living habits of childcare staff not only affect the health of the teachers but they are also directly affecting the health of the children. Despite this fact, there is insufficient previous study on the importance of the mental health of childcare teaching staff.

Generally, the previous studies on childcare staff have mostly been on stress, self-esteem, and job satisfaction [4-6]. However, there is a lack of study on the general mental health of childcare teaching staff. Especially, there are not studies on the effect of the eating habits and aggressive characteristics of childcare staff on general mental health. Accordingly, this study seeks to provide basic data necessary for the improvement of mental health of childcare staff by understanding eating habits, personality, and general mental health.

### 1.2. Study Issues

Issue 1. How is the level of eating habits, personality, and general mental health of childcare staff?

Issue 2. How is the relationships among eating habits, personality, and general mental health of childcare staff?

Issue 3. What is the influence of eating habits and personality of childcare staff on the general mental health?

## 2. Study Subject and Tool

### 2.1. Study Subjects

A self-filling questionnaire survey was conducted on childcare staff working in U city from Jun 15th 2015 to June 20 2015. 250 a total copies were distributed and 210 copies were collected at the collection rate of 84.0%. Excluding 9 copies with insufficient data or no response, 201 copies were used for this study. The socio-demographic characteristics of the study subjects are as follow <Table 1>.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Study Subjects**

(N=201)			
	Contents	Frequency	Percent
Age	Less than 40	113	56.2
	More than 40	88	43.8
Marital status	Single	63	31.3
	Married	138	68.7
Education	below graduation from 4-year university	127	63.2
	above graduation from 4-year university	74	36.8
Religious affiliation	Yes	137	68.2
	No	61	31.8
Monthly income	2.5 million won or less	139	69.2
	More than 2.5 million won	62	30.8
Job position	Headmasters, assistant directors, and managers.	83	41.3
	Teaching staff	118	58.7

The age of the subjects were under 40 at 56.2% (113) and over 40 at 43.8% (88). 68.7%(138) are married and 31.3%(63) are not married. 63.2%(127) has below the education level of below graduation from 4-year university and 36.8%(74) has education of above graduation from 4-year university. 68.2%(137) has a religion and 31.8%(61) had no religion. For the monthly income, 69.2%(139) earns under 2.5 million one and over 30.8%(62) earns over 2.5 million won. For job position, 41.3%(83) are headmasters, assistant directors, and managers and 58.7%(118) are teaching staff.

## 2.2. Study Tool

In order to accomplish the purpose of this study, the questionnaires from previous studies on mental health criterion, eating habits, and aggressive tendencies were reorganized to fit the purpose of this study to focus on the content composition and ease of understanding and verified to complete the final questionnaire. The credibility of this study tool is as follows in Table 2.

**Table 2. The Contents of Research Tools**

Contents		Number of questions	(Cronbach's $\alpha$ )	
Independent variable	Impulsive aggression proclivity	10	.762	
	Eating habits (.910)	Fasting(13 questions)		
		Absorption into food (2 questions )		.874
		Excessive eating (3 questions )	26	.821
		Restrained eating (6 questions )		.758
Dependent variable	Mental health depression, anxiety, and social maladjustment	20	.873	

### 2.2.1. Dependent Variable: Mental Health Criterion

For this study, the Korean version of the General Health Questionnaire (K-GHQ) [7] was used. This criterion was composed of a 4-point system (1-point: not at all, 4-point: very much so) and composed of 3 factors of depression, anxiety, and social maladjustment for a total of 20 questions. 1-point and 2-point were converted into 0 point and 3-point and 4-point were converted into 1 point. The range of points is from 0 to 20. High score indicates higher level of psychological impairment. The credibility Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of this study was .873. The credibility Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value was .873

### 2.2.2. Independent Variables

#### 2.2.2.1. Eating Habits

The purpose of the eating habits is the measure the wide-ranged activities and attitude of anorexia. The criterion developed by [8], revised by [9], and used by [10] was used for eating habits. This criterion was of a 6-point system and in EAT-26, the lowest score is 0 point and the highest point is 70 to indicate more perturbed eating habits. The credibility Cronbach  $\alpha$  value was .87 in [9]'s study and in this study, the Cronbach  $\alpha$  value was .758~.874 for the sub-factors and the overall credibility Cronbach  $\alpha$  value was .91.

#### 2.2.2.2. Aggressive Tendencies

The aggressiveness criterion is the tool that measures the 4 aspects of aggressiveness: aggressiveness, verbal, anger, and hostility. The criterion developed by Aggression

Questionnaire [11] and used in [12]'s study was used. Out of the 29 questions, 5 questions related to compulsive aggressiveness were used. Higher score indicates higher aggressiveness. The credibility of the tool was Cronbach  $\alpha$  value of .65 in [12]'s study and .762 in this study.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were calculated into scores, underwent encoding, and was processed and analyzed using the SPSS for Windows 18.0 statistics program. Credibility analysis was conducted to confirm if the concept that is meant to be measured was recorded precisely and evenly from the subjects. In order to understand the effect of the key variables of this study, eating habits and aggressiveness, correlation analysis and simple regression analysis were conducted. The influence of eating habits and aggressive tendencies on mental health was inspected finally.

## 3. Study Results

### 3.1. Technical Statistics of Eating Habits, Compulsive Aggressive Tendencies, and Mental Health

The result of analyzing eating habits, compulsive aggressive tendencies, and mental health by technical statistics are as follows <Table 3>.

**Table 3. Technical Statistics of Eating Habits, Compulsive Aggressive Tendency, and Mental Health**

(N=201)

Contents		minimum value	maximum value	Average	Standard deviation
Eating habits	Fasting	18.00	65.00	38.045	9.600
	Absorption into food	6.00	31.00	15.010	5.348
	Excessive eating	3.00	16.00	7.672	3.121
	Restrained eating	7.00	66.00	15.090	8.038
Compulsive aggressive tendency		5.00	26.00	6.647	1.921
Mental Health		.00	71.00	7.463	8.996

The result of analyzing eating habits, compulsive aggressive tendencies, and mental health with technical statistics(N=201) shows that fasting, a sub-factor of eating habits, has an average of 38.045 and standard deviation of 9.600. The absorption into food showed average of 15.010 and standard deviation of 5.348. Excessive eating showed average of 7.761 and standard deviation of 3.121. Restrained eating showed average of 15.090 and standard deviation of 1.921. Mental health showed the average of 7.463 and standard deviation of 8.996.

### 3.2. Correlation among Mental Health, Eating Habits, and Compulsive Aggressive Tendency

The result of correlation among mental health, eating habits and compulsive aggressive tendency are as follows <Table 4>.

**Table 4. Analysis of Correlation among Mental Health, Eating Habits, and  
 Compulsive Aggressive Tendency**

(N=201)

Contents		Eating habits				Personality	Mental Health
		Fasting	Absorption into food	Excessive eating	Restrained eating		
Eating habits	Fasting	1	.661**	.562**	.664**	-.205**	.153*
	Absorption into food		1	.961**	.509**	.054	-.051
	Excessive eating			1	.413**	.106	-.095
	Restrained eating				1	-.224**	.125
Compulsive aggressive tendency						1	-.053
Mental Health							1

\* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\* p<.001,

The result of analyzing the correlation between mental health, eating habits, and compulsive aggressive tendency shows that fasting had a positive correlation( $r=.153$ ) and statistically significant(  $p<.05$ ). Absorption into food( $r=-.051$ ), excessive eating ( $r=-.095$ ), compulsive aggressive tendency ( $r=-.053$ ) showed not to be statistically significant. Although restrained eating ( $r=.125$ ) had a positive correlation, it was shown not to be statistically significant.

In order to understand the multicollinearity between the variables, tolerance limit and variance inflation factor values were checked to find out the lowest monthly income was 1.10 and the highest eating habits fasting as under 3.95, and no problems in multicollinearity were found.

### 3.3. The Effect of Eating Habits and Compulsive Aggressive Tendency on Mental Health

The result of hierarchical regression analysis are as follows <Table 5> to look into the effect of eating habit and compulsive aggressive tendency, independent variables, on mental health, dependent variable, on the basis of above result of analyzing correlation.

**Table 5. The Effect of Eating Habits and Compulsive Aggressive Tendency on Mental Health**

(N=201)

Division	Dependent variable : general mental health				
	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
(constant)	2.910	8.980		.324	.746
Age	-2.956	1.840	-.163	-1.607	.110
Marital status	-1.082	1.613	-.056	-.671	.503
Education	-1.070	1.627	-.058	-.658	.511
Religion	3.939	1.422	.213	2.769	.006
Average monthly income	-.962	2.374	-.049	-.405	.686
Fasting	.179	.354	.085	1.118	.046
Absorption into food	-.140	.105	.191	1.705	.265
Excessive eating	-.024	.562	-.083	-.248	.804
Restrained eating	-.054	.946	-.008	-.025	.980
Compulsive aggressive tendency	.396	.119	-.048	-.448	.655

$R^2 = .148$   $R^2_{adj} = .103$ ,  $F(10) = 3.309^{**}$

In order to understand the effect of eating habits and compulsive aggressive tendency on mental health, hierarchical regression analysis and simple regression analysis with socio-demographic characteristic variable and eating habits and compulsive aggressive tendency showed that religion ( $\beta=.213$ ,  $t=2.769$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and fasting ( $\beta=.354$ ,  $t=1.118$ ,  $p<.05$ ) affect general mental health. On the other hand, absorption, excessive eating, and restrained eating showed not to be statistically significant ( $p<.05$ ). Comparing the standardized regression coefficients, it was shown that socio-demographic characteristic, religion, have the largest influence on mental health. Regression model ( $F(10)=3.309$ ,  $p<.01$ ) showed explanatory power of ( $\Delta R^2$ ).

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study sought to analyze the correlation and influence for the eating habits and personality on the general mental health of childcare staff. The study results are as follow.

First, The characteristics of childcare staff showed majority in age of under 40's 56.2%(113), marital status of married 68.7%(138), educational level of under 4-year university graduation 63.2%(127), religious 68.2%(137), monthly income of below 2.5 million won 69.2%(139), position of childcare teacher 58.7%(118). This is similar to the result of [1].

Second, it shows that the eating habits and personality of childcare staff were low. On the other hand, it was shown that the general mental health was high. This supports the result of [1]. For the childcare staff, it is seen that harmonious eating habits and personality is good for mental health.

Third, mental health and fasting ( $r=.153$ ) of childcare staff were shown to have positive correlation; on the other hand, absorption into food ( $r=-.051$ ), excessive eating ( $r=-.095$ ), compulsive aggressive tendency ( $r=-.053$ ) were shown not to be statistically significant. Such result is partially matched with the results of [3, 4]. This result shows that

restraining eating for diet or due to stress is harmful to the mental health of the childcare staff.

Fourth, the result of verifying the effect of eating habits and compulsive aggressive tendency on general mental health showed that religion( $\beta=.213$ ,  $t=2.769$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and fasting( $\beta=.354$ ,  $t=1.118$   $p<.05$ ) affects general mental health. Comparing standardized regression coefficients showed that fasting is most influential on mental health. This supports the result of [5, 6]. In eating habits, restraining eating could be harmful to mental health. Accordingly, it is shown that improving physical and mental health through exercise is more beneficial than restraining eating [7]. Also, the reality is that when the childcare teachers instruct the eating habits of the youth, they often do not have enough time for a timely meal [13].

## 5. Proposal

The following is to be proposed based on the above study results.

First, the significance of this study lies in the discussion on the general mental health of childcare staff. Such concept of mental health could differ from each academic.

Second, this study examined the general eating habits, personality, and mental health status of the childcare staff through questionnaires. Accordingly, there is a need to investigate the living conditions of childcare staff through qualitative study methods such as intensified interview and observing daily lives.

Third, there is a need to develop programs that could be practically applied to improve the mental health of childcare staff in the education sites.

Fourth, changes in recognition are needed for the childcare staff to live mentally healthy. Also, there is a need for continuous education of childcare staff that could become the starting point for the change in recognition by providing one's self with the right clothing, food, and housing.

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