

Single Mothers by Choice at Corona Time - The Perception of Social Support, Happiness and Work-Family Conflict and their Effect on State Anxiety

Authors : Orit Shamir Balderman, Shamir Michal

Abstract : Israel often deals with crisis situations, but most have been characterized as security crises (e.g., war). This is the first time that the Israel has dealt with a health and social emergency as part of a global crisis. The crisis began in January 2020 with the emergence of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19), which was defined as a pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020) and arrived in Israel in early March 2020. This study examined how single mothers by choice (SMBC) experience state anxiety (SA), social support, work-family conflict (WFC), and happiness. This group has not been studied in the context of crises in general or a global crisis. Using a snowball sample, 386 SMBC answered an online questionnaire. The findings show a negative relationship between income and level of state anxiety. State anxiety was also negatively associated with social support, level of happiness, and WFC. Finally, a stepwise regression analysis indicated that happiness explained 34% of the variance in SA. We also found that most of the women did not turn to formal support agencies such as social workers, other Government Ministries, or municipal welfare. A positive and strong correlations was also found between SA and WFC. The findings of the study reinforce the understanding that although these women made a conscious and informed decision regarding the choice of their family cell, their situation is more complex in the absence of a spouse support. Therefore, this study, as other future studies in the field of SMBC, may contribute to the improvement of their social status and the understanding that they are a unique group. Although SMBC are a growing sector of society in the past few years, there are still special needs and special attention that is needed from the formal and informal supports systems. A comparative study of these two groups and in different countries would shed light on SA among mothers in general, regardless of their relationship status and location. Researchers should expand this study by comparing mothers in relationships and exploring how SMBC coped in other countries. In summary, the findings of the study contribute knowledge on three levels: (a) knowledge about SMBC in general and during crisis situations; (b) examination of social support using tools assessing receipt of assistance and support, some of which were developed for the present study; and (c) insights regarding counseling, accompaniment, and guidance of welfare mechanisms.

Keywords : single mothers by choice, state anxiety, social support, happiness, work-family conflict

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