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Psychological and Social Effects of the Spread of Domestic Workers in the UAE Society

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Abstract

Objectives: The current study aimed to identify the most common tasks performed by maids in Emirati society& understanding the psychological & social effects associated with the spread of housemaids' phenomenon in Emirati society.

Methods: the sample included 550 respondents, consisting of 335 males (60.9%) and 215 females (39.1%). The ages of the sample ranged from 18 to 48 years, with an average age of 40 years and a standard deviation of 7.26 years. The tools included initial Data Collection Form & The house maids Scale.

Results: 1- 76% of maids perform their primary duties, such as cleaning, cooking, laundry, and shopping, which ranked first. The second most common task, according to 18.91% of maids, are caring and responsible for upbringing of children, a significant proportion, especially considering the negative effects of maids on child-rearing. The third task, elderly care, ranked third with 5.09%, which emphasizes the diversity and variety of tasks performed by maids within the household.

2- The findings revealed numerous negative psychological impacts resulting from the widespread presence of domestic workers in Emirati society.

3- The findings revealed a variety of negative social impacts resulting from the widespread presence of domestic workers in Emirati society.

Conclusion: This study confirms that the widespread presence of domestic workers in Emirati society has profound psychological and social effects that extend to families, children, and community relationships.

Keywords: Psychological Effects, Social Effects, Domestic Workers, Emirati Society.

الآثار النفسيَّة والاجتماعيَّة المرتبطة بانتشار ظاهرة خادمات المنازل في المجتمع الإماراتي

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ملخّص

الأهداف: هدفت الدراسة إلى تحديد أكثر المهام والأدوار التي تؤديها الخادمات في المجتمع الإماراتي من وجهة نظر عينة الدراسة، وفهم الآثار النفسية والاجتماعية المرتبطة بظاهرة انتشارهن.

المنهجيَّة: شملت العينة 550 مشاركًا، منهم 335 ذكورًا (60.9%) و215 إناثًا (39.1%)، تراوحت أعمارهم بين 18 و48 عامًا، بمتوسط عمري قدره 40 عامًا وانحراف معياري قدره 7.26 سنوات، وقد تنوعت الخصائص الديموجرافية للعينة، وتضمنت الأدوات المُستخدمة في الدراسة استمارة جمع البيانات الأولية ومقياس الخادمات.

النتائج: أشارت الدراسة إلى النتائج الآتية:

1- 76% من الخادمات يؤدين المهام المنزلية الأساسية، مثل: التنظيف، والطهي، والغسيل، والتسوق، وقد جاءت في المرتبة الأولى، وجاءت في المرتبة الثانية مَهَمَّة رعاية الأطفال وتربيتهم بنسبة 18.91%، أما رعاية كبار السن فجاءت في المرتبة الثالثة بنسبة 5.09%.

2- أظهرت النتائج وجود العديد من الآثار النفسية السلبية الناتجة عن انتشار ظاهرة الخادمات في المجتمع الإماراتي، وقد ركَّزت معظمها على مستوى توافق الأطفال نفسيًّا ومشكلاتهم السلوكية والنفسية والمعرفية والانفعالية والاضطرابات المُتعلقة بسمات الشخصية.

3- تتعدد الآثار الاجتماعية السلبية الناتجة عن انتشار الخادمات، وقد تركَّزت على تأثيرهن السلبي في طرائق تربية الأطفال وتنشئتهم، وفي الاستقرار الأسري والتوافق الزواجي وارتفاع مُعدلات الطلاق والعنف الأسري، علاوة على قيم المجتمع وعاداته وتقاليده بالشكل الذي قد يُهدِّد البناء الاجتماعي السليم.

الخلاصة: كشفت نتائج الدراسة عن تنوع الآثار النفسية والاجتماعية السلبية المُرتبطة بانتشار الخادمات في المجتمع الإماراتي، وفقًا لوجهة نظر عينة الدراسة، وتركَّزت معظم هذه الآثار السلبية على حياة الأطفال، وأوصت باتخاذ عدة تدابير مهمَّة للتخفيف من آثار هؤلاء الخادمات النفسية والاجتماعية السلبية.

الكلمات الدالة: الآثار النفسية، الآثار الاجتماعية، الخادمات، المجتمع الإماراتي.

Introduction

Child-rearing is a long, complex, and challenging process, requiring sustained effort and dedication. Raising a child's character is far more demanding than constructing buildings, as interacting with a human being-endowed with free will and autonomy-is infinitely more intricate than dealing with inanimate objects.

The family is the first institution of socialization where a child grows and develops, making the family's internal cohesion and active role critical to societal strength and prosperity. Conversely, societal decline ensues when the family's influence weakens, and its supervisory role diminishes (Elwakeel, 2010).

It is worth mentioning that individuals in societies vary in social, economic, professional, and physical levels, so the mutual benefit between the rich and the poor emerged. The wealthy need to employ the workers and rely on them to fulfill their needs and manage many aspects of their lives. Similarly, the workers also depend on the rich for employment, managing their affairs, and fulfilling their own needs. Thus, the mutual benefit is shared between all social classes and all members of society. Therefore, the phenomenon of housemaids is a human one and as old as humanity itself.

Gulf societies, in general, have achieved numerous manifestations of development, progress, sophistication, and socio-economic luxury; the standard of living in these societies has come to rival and even surpasses that of many advanced nations. The presence of a housemaid becomes an essential feature of modern life in Gulf societies, to the extent that having a housemaid is now regarded as a necessity in Gulf societies at large (Khalifa, 1985).

Fernandez & de Regt (2014) highlighted that, over the past half-century, the Middle East-particularly the Arabian Peninsula-has become a major hub for domestic labor migration from Asia and Africa. The large-scale employment of migrant house maids began following the oil boom of 1973, driven by the rapid increase in oil revenues. Gulf Societies used these revenues to fund development projects in infrastructure, industry, agriculture, attracting migrants from neighboring Arab countries and other parts of the world.

The growing demand for paid domestic labor led to an increase in the number of housemaids, with house maids primarily coming from Southeast Asia (e.g., the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Indonesia). However, in the past decade, an increasing number of African women have also started migrating to the Middle East. Most of these women come from Ethiopia and Eritrea, Nigeria, Cameroon, Madagascar, Benin, and other African countries employed as housemaids in Gulf societies (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014).

According to the 2020 report on domestic workers in Khaleeji societies, the total number reached 3.77 million, with an annual average increase of approximately 36,000 new workers entering the region. However, it is believed that the actual figure could be significantly higher and continues to rise at an accelerated pace, largely due to the consistently low labor market participation of Khaleeji women (Lang, 2021).

It is noteworthy that the prevalence of maids did not initially arise from a genuine need or social necessity, but it was driven by personal, social, and economic factors, such as the economic spurt and its consequent changes to the social structure, luxury among Gulf families came to be measured by the number and nationalities of maids in their homes. Thus, the phenomenon of domestic maids spread widely across Gulf societies.

In Saudi Arabia, the number of female domestic workers and household helpers stands at 1.56 million. In Kuwait and Qatar, official national statistics report that the number of domestic workers reached 696,335 in 2019 and 173,000 in 2018, respectively. Notably, women constitute more than half of these workers, accounting for 67% in Kuwait and 62% in Qatar (Lang, 2021).

Its escalation has been associated with numerous changes and negative impacts on the lives of families and society, potentially influencing the social structure, values, customs, traditions, ethics, and norms prevailing in the community. The phenomenon of domestic maids has become a real threat to the social fabric and structure of families, especially when households rely entirely on them. In some cases, the maid becomes a "surrogate mother" (Al-Sultan, 1984), posing significant risks to children's lives, personalities, language, emotions, habits, traditions, norms, and attitudes.

This raises concerns about the influence of foreign cultures brought by maids, many of whom introduce habits, traditions, and languages that differ significantly from those prevalent in Gulf societies. This cultural disparity is particularly worrisome as it could have far-reaching implications for the upbringing and development of future generations.

According to Fernandez and de Regt (2014), upper-class families tend to employ Asian women, particularly Filipinas or Indonesians, while middle-class families are more likely to hire house maids from South Asia or Africa, who generally receive lower wages. Furthermore, when families employ more than one domestic worker, there is often a clear division of labor among them. Asian women are typically tasked with childcare and elderly care, whereas African women are more likely assigned cleaning and cooking duties, thus, maids are not a homogeneous category; they vary based on nationality, religion, social and cultural background.

Lang (2021) revealed in his study that approximately 90% of Kuwaiti households hire domestic workers to assist with household chores (Lang, 2021).

Fawaz study's (2022) found that maids from the Philippines and Sri Lanka constitute most of the workforce in the social care and domestic labor sectors in Kuwait.

Halabi study's (2008) found that Saudi Arabia was considered the largest destination for maids, followed by United Arab Emirates; maids primarily come from Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines, driven by various economic and social factors.

There is global concern about the impact of maids on child development, although research showed that high-quality alternative care during early childhood can have a positive effect on children's growth (Roumani, 2005). However, maids are often perceived as a threat because they live and work within the private sphere of homes, leading to concerns about the exposure of household privacy and secrets to outsiders (Sabban, 2004).

Scientifically, the close connection between a child and their caregiver is well recognized. In a survey conducted to assess the values, customs, and traditions of a group of foreign caregivers and maids in Gulf societies, it was found that 14% of them invite their friends to the homes where they work, 8.7% visit their friends at their homes, 4.3% consume alcohol, and 7.2% smoke cigarettes. These findings are sufficient to emphasize the risks associated with relying entirely on a house maid for a Muslim household (Khalifa, 1985).

The reliance on maids in Emirati society is increasing, raising concerns about the development of generations with dependent personalities who rely on house maids to fulfill their desires. Full dependence on house maids within the home encourages the growth of unproductive families, at the same time, maids face their own set of issues, which they bring with them when migrating to the United Arab Emirates. These problems are often exacerbated and handled inadequately at various levels within the UAE (Sabban, 2004).

Haroff-Tavel (2013) stated that employing maids may negatively impact the development of children's independence, highlighting the risks related to safety, property, and the well-being of children. He pointed out that house maids might mistreat children as an outlet for their frustrations.

Tan & Gibson (2013) noted that maids is highly beneficial in emergency situations. With the help of house maids, working mothers can spend more time at their workplaces while maids assist in childcare. Fathers can delegate household tasks to the maids, allowing them to spend more time with their siblings. Since maids can assist employers with various household chores, parents can use their free time to strengthen their relationship with their children. By spending more time with their children, parents can also alleviate the stress resulting from work.

Since families in the Middle East are often extended families, the workload for house maids becomes overwhelming, as it includes tasks such as cleaning, washing, cooking, sewing, and caring for children and the elderly. Working hours are long, ranging from eleven to twenty hours a day. Given that foreign house maids can have a significant influence on child-rearing, many cultural conflicts arise, further complicated by the potential for illicit relationships (Halabi, 2008).

Varia study's (2010) showed that, despite the numerous benefits of maids, the lack of accurate appreciation for their impact on children's personalities and culture in the United Arab Emirates has sparked significant debate within both the research and community fields.

The Sharjah Social Services Department conducted a study during the last quarter of 2017; After interviewing 600 families who relied on house maids, the study found that the main negative effects of house maids on children included: the inability to learn Arabic fluently, exposure to physical abuse, and the loss of moral values. The results showed that 49.8% of participants stated that their children lost their understanding of Arabic, while 25% expressed concerns about their

children being exposed to sexual harassment. Additionally, 29.5% of participants reported that employing foreign house maids negatively affected their children's values, morals, behavior, and religious beliefs. Furthermore, up to 31% of participants indicated that their children had experienced domestic violence from the maids (Al Serkal, 2018).

A study conducted by Moazzam & Haroon (2019) emphasized the significant social and emotional impacts of housemaids on children of working mothers, highlighting trust issues, behavioral problems, and language influence. The findings underscore the need for careful management of domestic workers' roles in child-rearing to mitigate negative consequences. Another study conducted by Al-Othaimeen (2020) highlighted the negative effects of domestic labor, which included weakening family relationships, reducing daily interactions among family members, diminishing the role of parents in social upbringing, and deviating children from authentic cultural values and norms. Additionally, it emphasized the negative impacts on cultural identity, ethical and behavioral standards, and language used in social upbringing.

A study conducted by Al-Shibli & Al-Sarhani (2020) revealed that the Studies in maids confirm that 68.3% are not familiar with child-rearing and home affairs, that one third are illiterate, two thirds provide children with false information, and 97.5% are dangerous examples of Buddhist and pagan beliefs.

Borman's study (2021) indicated that foreign labor in Qatari society negatively impacts the use of the Arabic language and Islamic identity, leading to a decline in linguistic culture and replacing Arabic with a hybrid language. The study also highlighted the weakening of parental roles within families, widening gaps between parents and children, and the adverse effects on marital relationships.

Alruwailiy et al. (2024) highlighted the negative impacts of employing non-Arabic-speaking domestic workers on children in Saudi families. The findings revealed that some parents expressed concerns regarding the influence of domestic workers on children's values and personality traits, while the effects on cognitive development and academic achievements were minimal. The study emphasizes the importance of raising family awareness about the risks of relying entirely on domestic workers for child-rearing.

Asiimwe & Musinguzi, study (2024) revealed multiple motives associated with Ugandan women working as domestic servants in Saudi households. These motives include family obligations, escaping domestic and marital violence, poverty, unemployment, school dropout, marital neglect, domestic violence, and personal commitments.

According to that we can deduct that there are a lot of social and psychological negative impact related to the house maids in the gulf societies in general, so the problem of the current study is highlighted by the significant research gap in examining the psychological and social impacts of the presence of house maids in Emirati society; coupled with conflicting findings from studies accessible to researchers regarding the psychological and social impacts of house maids. Many of these studies have highlighted the negative effects of house maids, while a smaller number have emphasized their positive effects, and yet another group has concluded that house maids have no impact, whether positive or negative. Such contradictions in the findings of previous studies logically justify the attempt to examine this phenomenon further.

Given the seriousness of this phenomenon on the lives of Emirati families and their children, it was necessary to shed light on this issue to understand the psychological and social effects resulting from its spread in Emirati society. The aim is to derive the best recommendations that could help mitigate the negative impacts of this phenomenon in a society that has become increasingly threatened by many issues that may undermine its customs, traditions, values, norms, standards, principles, and social customs. Hence, this study was conducted.

Objectives & Research Questions

The current study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

1. To identify the most common tasks performed by maids in Emirati society from the perspective of the study sample.
2. To understand and interpret the psychological effects associated with the spread of maids' phenomenon in Emirati society.
3. To understand and interpret the social effects associated with the spread of maids' phenomenon in Emirati society.
4. To derive a set of recommendations that could help improve the negative psychological and social effects associated with the spread of maids in Emirati society.

Regarding the research Questions

The current study is trying to answer the following questions.

1-What are the most common household tasks performed by maids' according to the study sample's perspective?

2-What are the psychological effects associated with the spread of maids' phenomenon in Emirati society from the study sample's perspective?

3-What are the social effects associated with the spread of house maids' phenomenon in Emirati society from the study sample's perspective?

Importance of the study

The Importance of the study is highlighted through both theoretical and practical contributions. As far as theoretical importance is concerned, the study draws its importance through the following:

1. Identifying the most common tasks performed by maids in Emirati society from the perspective of the study sample.
2. Understanding and interpreting the psychological effects associated with the spread of maids' phenomenon in Emirati society.
3. Understanding and interpreting the social effects associated with the spread of maids' phenomenon in Emirati society.
4. Deriving a set of recommendations that could help improve the negative psychological and social effects associated with the spread of maids in Emirati society.

As for the practical importance, this study attempts to derive a set of recommendations aimed at evaluating the dimensions of the phenomenon in Emirati society and mitigating the negative consequences and effects resulting from its spread. Additionally, the study's practical benefits, which will be revealed, will benefit professionals in clinical fields, mental health, counseling, and psychotherapy, social counseling, social worker, as well as civil society institutions, parents in Emirati families, the scientific research community, and the field of socialization psychology. The study's findings will have significant practical relevance in these fields.

Methodology:

Population:

The study population consists of individuals who have housemaids in their homes within Emirati society. This population exhibits diverse demographic, social, and economic characteristics, reflecting the widespread reliance on housemaids and their impact on Emirati families. The population includes both males and females aged 18 to 48 years, indicating that the phenomenon extends across different age groups.

The study population encompasses individuals from various age groups, social backgrounds, and professional levels, highlighting the widespread presence of housemaids in Emirati households. This population is characterized by hiring housemaids from diverse cultural backgrounds, with varying employment durations. These features make Emirati society a significant model for studying the psychological and social effects of reliance on housemaids in households.

The sample:

The Sample consisted of male and female respondents who had house maids in their homes in the United Arab Emirates. The current study relied on using the descriptive survey method, the current study used two samples:

1-The sample for verifying the psychometric properties of the tools:

This sample consisted of 100 male and female respondents who had house maids in their homes. Their ages ranged between 22 and 40 years, with an average age of 38 years and a standard deviation of 9.15 years. This sample shared the same social and professional characteristics as the primary study sample.

2-The basic Sample:

This sample included 550 respondents, consisting of 335 males (60.9%) and 215 females (39.1%). The ages of the

sample ranged from 18 to 48 years, with an average age of 40 years and a standard deviation of 7.26 years. Regarding employment status, 81.8% of the sample worked in government jobs, while 18.2% were employed in the private sector or engaged in their own businesses. In terms of marital status, 63.6% of the sample were married, 26.4% were unmarried, 7.3% were divorced, and 2.7% of the sample were widowed.

Regarding the characteristics of house maids and the tasks they perform inside the home, the results showed diversity in the characteristics of maids, as follows:

1-Regarding the number of house maids employed by the sample members, the results showed that 43.6% of the respondents had two maids, 40.9% had one maid, 9.1% had three maids, and 6.4% had more than three house maids.

2-Regarding the number of years, the house maids have been employed in the homes of the sample, the results showed that 20% of the respondents had the same house maids for less than a year, 10.9% had the same maids for one year, 19.1% had the same maids for two years, 10.9% had the same maids for three years, and 39.1% had the same maids for more than three years. This reflects the diversity in the duration of house maids' employment in the homes of the sample.

3-Regarding the nationalities of the housemaids employed in the homes of the sample, the following table illustrates their nationalities:

Table (1) The nationality of the housemaids according to the sample N= 550

Nationality	Frequency	Percent
Indonesia	125	22.7
India	5	.9
Philippines	109	19.8
Ethiopia	230	41.8
Sri Lanka	13	2.4
Eritrea	42	7.6
Nepal	16	2.9
Arab	10	1.8
Total	550	100.0

It can be seen from the table **(1)** that the most common nationalities of house maids are Ethiopian (41.8%), followed by Indonesian (22.7%), Filipino (19.8%), and Eritrean (7.6%), in addition to other nationalities as outlined in the table **(1)**. This reflects the diversity of the maids' nationalities.

Tools:

The study relied on a set of research tools specifically designed to achieve its objectives. These tools included the Initial Data Collection Form and the Housemaids Scale, both developed by the researchers to ensure measurement accuracy and relevance to the psychological and social context of Emirati society.

So, to achieve the objectives of the study, a questionnaire was designed by the researchers. The current study used the following tools:

1. **Initial Data Collection Questionnaire** (prepared by the researchers)
2. **House maids Scale** (prepared by the researchers)

First: Initial Data Collection Form: (prepared by the researchers)

This form was developed by the researchers, and it focuses on collecting a set of basic and initial data about the sample members, including their educational level, age, marital status, and occupation. The form also collects information about the house maids in the homes, such as the number of house maids employed, their nationality, the length of time they have been working in the home, and the tasks they perform. It is important to note that this form does not have a total score, and there are no right or wrong answers. It is used to gather quantitative data about the house maids and the sample members.

Second: House Maids Scale

The researchers based the development of this scale on the results of the few previous studies available in this field. They

also included an open-ended question about the effects of house maids in homes on families. The responses to this question were analyzed and converted into several declarative statements reflecting the psychological and social effects associated with maids in the household. After formulating the statements for the scale, the researchers reviewed them linguistically.

The researcher used the quintet gradient Likert scale to measure the respondents' answers to the study items as follows: Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, and by setting signal (√) in front of the answer, which reflect the degree of consent. The final version of the scale consists of 30 items measuring the **psychological & social effects** of having maids in the home. The scale is divided into two main dimensions:

A. Psychological Effects (15 items):

This dimension assesses the impact of housemaids on children's and family members' mental health, including:

-Effects on children's self-confidence.

-Influence on anxiety and stress levels among children.

-Impact on behavioral problems such as social withdrawal, stubbornness, fear, and irritability.

B. Social Effects (15 items)

This dimension measures the influence of housemaids on family structure and social cohesion, including:

-Effects on parenting methods.

-Influence on family stability and marital relationships.

-Impact on social values, customs, and traditions

To ensure the accuracy and validity of the scale, the following steps were undertaken:

Validity & Reliability

The scale is divided into two main dimensions:

(Psychological Effects: 15 items, **Social Effects**: 15 items) The total score for the scale ranges between 30 and 150 points. The validity and reliability of the scale were established.

Validity

The validity of the scale was obtained through **exploratory factor analysis** (EFA) due to the novelty of the scale used. The EFA was conducted on a sample of 100 respondents, like the total sample in demographic variables. The adequacy of the sample size was confirmed using the **Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test**, which resulted in a value of 0.887, which is very good and exceeds the minimum required threshold of 0.5. Additionally, the **Bartlett's test** yielded a value of 3281.13, a high value reflected in the significant Chi-square (χ^2) value at the 0.000 level, indicating good model fit for the exploratory factor validity.

The EFA was conducted using the **principal component analysis (PCA)** method, with orthogonal rotation (Varimax rotation) to examine the factor structure of the scale. It was ensured that each factor contained at least three items and that each factor had a valid eigenvalue of 1 or more.

The EFA results revealed two factors after rotating the items orthogonally:

1. **Factor 1: Psychological Effects** - This factor contained 15 items with factor loadings ranging from 0.933 to 0.654, an eigenvalue of 17.5, and a variance of 37.82%. It was named "Psychological Effects."
2. **Factor 2: Social Effects** - This factor contained 15 items with factor loadings ranging from 0.733 to 0.600, an eigenvalue of 2.969, and a variance of 27.42%. It was named "Social Effects."

The total variance explained by the scale was **65.25%**, which is high and indicates that the items are strongly aligned with the factors extracted, demonstrating the scale's validity.

Reliability

The reliability of the scale was obtained using two methods:

1. **Cronbach's Alpha Reliability**:
   - For the **psychological factor**, the Cronbach's alpha value was **0.963**.
   - For the **social factor**, the Cronbach's alpha value was **0.951**.
   - For the **total scale**, the Cronbach's alpha value was **0.974**. These values are considered high, indicating strong internal consistency and reliability of the scale.
2. **Split-Half Reliability**:
   - For the **psychological factor**, after applying **Guttman correction**, the value was **0.940**.
   - For the **social factor**, the value was **0.925**.
   - For the **total scale**, the value was **0.903**. These values are also high, suggesting good reliability of the scale when split into two halves.

Additionally, the **Cronbach's Alpha** values for the sub-factors and total scale, calculated on the **psychometric validation sample**, were:

- **Psychological factor**: 0.943, 0.947, 0.874.
- **Social factor**: 0.969 for the total scale. All these values are high, confirming that the scale and its subscales have excellent reliability.

Statistical analysis:

The descriptive statistics: frequencies, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) were conducted using SPSS.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process was carried out systematically to ensure accuracy and reliability in the study results. This process included multiple stages, such as designing research tools, selecting the sample, distributing the tools, and conducting statistical analysis on the collected data.

Results:

The study aimed to analyze the psychological and social effects associated with the prevalence of housemaids in Emirati society by surveying a sample of **550 participants**, including **335 males (60.9%)** and **215 females (39.1%)**. The analysis focused on identifying the most common tasks performed by housemaids, as well as the psychological and social effects of this phenomenon.

Results of the First Question:

The first question entitled "***What are the most common household tasks performed by maids according to the study sample's perspective?"*** To answer this question, the frequencies and percentages of tasks performed by housemaids in Emirati households were analyzed. The results revealed a variety of tasks, ranked as follows:

Table (2) The duties carried out by the house maids in Emirates families.

Duties	Frequency	Percent	Rank
Cleaning, Preparing Food, Washing Clothes, &Shopping	418	76	1st
Raising & Caring for Children	104	18,91	2nd
Elderly Caring at Home	28	5,09	3rd
Total	550	100.0	-

From table (2), it is clear that:

-76% of the participants indicated that housemaids primarily perform **basic household tasks (cleaning, cooking, laundry, and shopping)**, making this the most common role.

-18.91% of the participants stated that housemaids are involved in **childcare and upbringing**, highlighting their significant role in children's development, which may have important psychological and social implications.

-5.09% reported that housemaids are responsible for **elderly care**, indicating that some families rely on housemaids to assist older family members.

***Results of the Second Question**:*

"What are the psychological effects resulting from the spread of house maids in Emirati society from the perspective of the study sample?" To answer this question, data on the psychological effects of housemaids on children and families were analyzed, with frequencies and percentages presented in the table below:

Table (3) Frequencies and Percentages of the Psychological Effects Associated with the Spread of House maids from the Perspective of the Sample (N = 550)

N	Items	Agree		Neutral		Not Agree		Rank
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	The housemaid leads to the children feeling embarrassed	275	50	195	35,5	80	14,5	15th
2	The housemaid deprives the children of the ability to persevere	330	60	115	20,9	115	20,9	7th
3	The housemaid deprives the children of the ability to be courageous	360	65,5	85	15,5	105	19,1	1st
4	The housemaid contributes to the children feeling stressed	350	63,6	130	23,6	70	12,7	2nd
5	The housemaid contributes to the children feeling overly anxious	320	58,2	150	27,3	80	14,5	8th
6	The housemaid contributes to the increase in anxiety levels within the family	290	52,7	145	26,4	115	20,9	14th
7	The housemaid negatively affects the children's self-esteem	320	58,2	130	23,6	100	18,2	10th
8	The housemaid leads to the children losing confidence in themselves	320	58,2	145	26,4	85	15,5	9th
9	The housemaid causes the children to become fearful	295	53,6	140		115	20,9	13th
10	The housemaid negatively affects the children's personality	310	56,4	85	15,5	155	28,2	12th
11	The housemaid leads to the children becoming quick-tempered	315	57,3	160	29,1	75	13,6	11th
12	The housemaid causes the child to lose trust in others	330	60	160	29,1	60	10,9	6th
13	The housemaid contributes to an increase in the children's behavioral disorders	345	62,7	110	20	95	17,3	5th
14	The housemaid teaches the children to be evasive	350	63,6	120	21,8	80	14,5	3rd
15	The housemaid teaches the children isolation & introversion	345	62,7	125	22,6	80	14,5	4th

It is evident from table (3) that the psychological effects resulting from the spread of house maids in Emirati society are diverse and varied, according to the study sample's perspective. The frequencies and percentages of these negative effects are ranked as follows:

The psychological effects associated with the presence of house maids mainly impact the lives of children, as they are the most vulnerable group in the household, especially during their early years. The first ranked effect is that the presence of house maids causes children to lose the ability to be brave, daring, and bold. The second effect is that house maids may be a source of tension for children in the home due to their inability to meet needs at times or their failure to communicate

or adapt to the previously stable family environment. The third effect is that the presence of a house maid may lead to children experiencing behavioral disorders, such as evasiveness and lying.

Continuing in relation to the previous effects, the fourth-ranked psychological effect is that children may suffer from feelings of isolation, withdrawal, and introversion due to the behavior of the domestic worker with the children and the lack of opportunities for family communication or interaction, as the maid is responsible for caring for the children and meeting their basic needs. The fifth effect is that children may experience an increase in behavioral disorders.

In the sixth rank, the presence of a house maid may result in children suffering from personality issues, such as a lack of self-confidence and, consequently, a loss of trust in others. The seventh effect is that the domestic worker may deprive children of the ability to persevere in fulfilling their needs, desires, and motivations. The eighth-ranked psychological effect of the presence of a house maid is that children may experience excessive irritability.

The ninth effect is that children may suffer from a weakened sense of self-confidence. Lastly, the tenth effect is the decrease in children's self-esteem, which is a natural and logical consequence of such disturbances, problems, and the negative implications associated with the presence of house maids in the children's lives.

Results of the Third Question:

"What are the social effects resulting from the spread of house maids in Emirati society from the perspective of the study sample?" To answer this question, the social effects of housemaids within families and the broader community were analyzed. The results are detailed in the table below:

Table (4) Frequencies and Percentages of the Social Effects Associated with the Spread of House maids from the Perspective of the Sample (N = 550)

N	Items	Agree		Neutral		Not Agree		Rank
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	The housemaid negatively affects parenting methods	320	58,2	100	18,2	150	27,3	8th
2	The housemaid negatively affects the stability of society	345	62,7	105	19,1	110	20	3rd
3	The housemaid negatively affects customs and traditions	310	56,4	110	20	130	23,6	11th
4	The housemaid contributes to an increase in visits from strangers to the home	370	67,3	105	19,1	75	13,6	1st
5	The housemaid negatively affects the children's social belonging	320	58,2	125	22,6	105	19,1	7th
6	The housemaid is a direct cause of divorce between the couple	325	59,1	130	23,6	95	17,3	6th
7	The housemaid contributes to causing problems within the household	255	46,4	160	29,1	135	24,5	14th
8	The housemaid leads to crimes occurring within the home	330	60	150	27,3	70	12,7	5th
9	The housemaid causes chaos in the home	340	61,8	135	24,5	75	13,6	4th
10	The housemaid leads to an increase in family breakdown rates	350	63,6	120	21,8	80	14,5	2nd
11	The housemaid negatively affects the family's educational practices	250	45,5	140	25,5	160	29,1	15th
12	The housemaid causes division among the children	315	57,3	115	20,9	120	21,8	10th
13	I believe the housemaid leads to children not respecting their parents	300	54,5	130	23,6	120	21,8	11th
14	The housemaid teaches the children habits that are strange to society	315	57,3	125	22,7	110	20	9th
15	The housemaid contributes to revealing the household's secrets	290	52,7	115	20,9	145	26,4	13th

As shown in table (4) the social effects associated with the presence of house maids are varied and primarily affect the entire family. The frequencies and percentages of these negative effects are ranked as follows:

The first ranked effect is that the domestic worker contributes to the presence of strangers in the home through her various friendships with outsiders, which can make the household a place for visits by strangers. The second ranked effect

is that house maids lead to an increase in family disintegration due to the conflicts and crises they may create between the husband and wife or between parents and children, which could undermine the stability of the family.

The third effect, which is linked to the previous one in terms of impact on family stability, is the influence on societal stability. House maids can negatively affect the stability of society due to family instability. The fourth-ranked effect is that the domestic worker may create chaos within the household. The fifth effect is that the domestic worker may be responsible for committing certain crimes within the home.

The sixth ranked effect is that the domestic worker may directly cause divorce between the spouses due to the conflicts and crises she may instigate within the home. The seventh effect is that the lack of parental supervision, with the domestic worker fulfilling this role on behalf of the family, may negatively impact the children's social belonging. The eighth-ranked effect is the negative influence on child-rearing.

The ninth effect is that the domestic worker may teach the children strange habits foreign to the community, which is natural since the worker comes from a different environment with customs, culture, and traditions vastly different from those in the society. As a result, her behaviors may impart some of these negative habits to the children. The tenth-ranked effect is that the domestic worker may cause division among the children due to her improper behavior with them, which may create a tense atmosphere within the home. These results reflect the diversity and variety of social effects resulting from the spread of house maids in the community, according to the study sample's perspective.

Discussion:

This study sheds light on the phenomenon of the widespread presence of domestic workers in Emirati society and its profound impact on family structure, cultural identity, and the psychological and social development of children. The findings reveal multiple dimensions of this phenomenon, which is no longer confined to its functional aspect but has extended to include fundamental transformations in family and societal relationships.

The study findings reveal multiple negative effects of housemaids in Emirati households, impacting both children's psychological well-being and the social stability of families and society at large. The study highlights that excessive dependence on housemaids may lead to a decline in parental involvement in child-rearing, an increase in behavioral problems among children, and threats to family and societal stability.

First: The Impact of Dependence on Domestic Workers in Family Role Distribution

The study found that 76% of domestic workers perform essential household tasks, reflecting a shift in family lifestyles, where families have become heavily reliant on foreign labor to manage daily affairs. This pattern raises fundamental questions about the impact of such dependence on the traditional roles of parents within the household.

Weakening the Role of Mothers in Child Rearing: Previous studies, such as Roumani (2005) indicated that mothers who rely on domestic workers for child-rearing experience a decline in their relationship with their children, which may affect the child's emotional and psychological development.

Impact on Children's Sense of Responsibility: Halabi (2008) pointed out that excessive dependence on domestic labor reduces children's ability to take responsibility and be independent, as they become incapable of performing even the simplest household tasks.

Second: Psychological Effects on Children and Their Emotional Development

The study revealed that children raised in environments dependent on domestic workers suffer from various psychological and behavioral issues, including loss of self-confidence, feelings of isolation, and increased levels of anxiety.

Loss of Independence and Self-Confidence: 65.5% of participants indicated that the presence of domestic workers makes children less assertive in expressing themselves, aligning with the findings of Yassin (1991), which confirmed that children raised by foreign domestic workers tend to develop excessive emotional dependence, potentially limiting their ability to adapt to different social situations.

Increased Anxiety and Stress: The study found that 63.6% of the sample believed that the presence of domestic workers

contributes to higher levels of anxiety and stress among children, as they experience emotional instability due to the lack of full parental care. This finding is consistent with Moazzam & Haroon (2019), who indicated that children who spend more time with domestic workers suffer from self-confidence issues and anxiety disorders.

Third: Social Impacts and Cultural Identity

One of the significant findings of the study is that the presence of domestic workers may have long-term effects on cultural identity and social values.

Decline in Arabic Language and Cultural Identity: Borman (2021) conducted a study in Qatar, revealing that children raised in households with non-Arabic-speaking domestic workers experience a decline in their proficiency in Arabic, as they develop a hybrid language influenced by the domestic workers' culture. This finding aligns with Alruwailiy et al. (2024) in Saudi Arabia, which confirmed that the presence of non-Arab domestic workers leads to shifts in children's values and behaviors.

Effects on Traditions and Social Values: The study indicated that 57.3% of participants believe that domestic workers introduce foreign habits and behaviors to children, which could lead to the erosion of cultural identity in the long run.

Fourth: The Impact of Domestic Workers on Family Relationships & Marital Stability

An important aspect covered in the study is the effect of domestic labor on family stability and marital relationships, with 59.1% of participants stating that the presence of domestic workers may contribute to exacerbating marital problems.

Increased Marital Distance and Declining Family Communication: Al Serkal (2018) confirmed that the presence of domestic workers could lead to weakened communication between spouses, as their interaction decreases due to their dependence on the domestic worker for household management.

Children’s Emotional Dependence on Domestic Workers Instead of Parents: Haroff-Tavel (2013) suggested that children who spend prolonged time with domestic workers tend to develop stronger emotional bonds with them rather than with their parents, which may result in a weakened parent-child relationship in the long term.

The close connection between the child and their caregiver is well known. In a survey conducted to assess the values, customs, and traditions of a sample of foreign nannies and house maids in Gulf societies, it was found that 14% of them receive their friends in the homes where they work, 8.7% visit their friends at their residences, 4.3% consume alcohol, and 7.2% smoke cigarettes. These results are sufficient to highlight the dangers of fully relying on house maids in a Muslim household (Khalifa, 1985). as it poses a significant threat to the social structure, values, customs, and traditions of Muslim households. This threat becomes more pronounced if we fail to choose the domestic worker carefully and do not provide proper supervision and care. When entrusted with the roles of the mother in child-rearing, a house maid can indeed become the "substitute mother."

These results are consistent with the findings of Roumani's study (2005), which emphasized that house maids have numerous negative effects on the emotional, social, and affective development of the children they care for, especially in the complete absence of parental involvement in the child's life.

Conclusion:

This study confirms that the widespread presence of domestic workers in Emirati society has profound psychological and social effects that extend to families, children, and community relationships. While the presence of domestic workers helps alleviate daily household burdens, excessive reliance on them may lead to the erosion of family and cultural values.

Therefore, the solution lies in finding a balance between families’ daily needs and preserving the parental role in upbringing, cultural identity, and family stability. Policymakers should adopt preventive and legislative measures to minimize negative impacts and strengthen the family's role as the primary foundation for child development and socialization.

Recommendations:

Based on the study results, which highlighted the negative psychological and social effects of housemaids in Emirati households, a set of practical and actionable recommendations has been proposed. These recommendations aim to minimize these effects and enhance the role of families in proper child upbringing.

1-Organizing Awareness Programs for Families on the Role of Housemaids by Conducting workshops and training sessions for parents on how to manage relationships with housemaids in a way that reduces their influence on children, Emphasizing the importance of parental involvement in upbringing and minimizing reliance on housemaids for child-rearing.

2-Launching Media Campaigns on the Effects of Housemaids on Children through Producing media content (TV programs, awareness videos, social media posts) that highlight the psychological and social effects of excessive dependence on housemaids, encouraging community figures and influencers to promote a culture of direct parental involvement in child-rearing.

3-Incorporating Family Independence Topics into School Curricula through Adding educational modules or school activities that reinforce values of independence and responsibility in children, reducing their dependence on housemaids.

4-Imposing Strict Standards for Housemaid Recruitment such as Implementing thorough psychological and social assessments during the recruitment process to ensure housemaids do not negatively affect children, Requiring housemaids to complete training programs in childcare and cultural adaptation before employment.

5-Clearly Defining the Role of Housemaids Within the Household such as Establishing clear and specific employment contracts that limit housemaids' responsibilities to household chores without interfering in child-rearing, requiring families to create a household task schedule to prevent housemaids from assuming parental roles.

6-Establishing a Monitoring and Evaluation System for Housemaids by Developing a periodic inspection system by relevant authorities to monitor housemaids' behavior and performance in households, Introducing a hotline or digital platform for reporting violations or negative influences of housemaids on children.

7-Launching Training Programs for Parents on Effective Parenting such as offering workshops on positive parenting techniques and enhancing communication between parents and children, providing online courses for working mothers on balancing career responsibilities with child-rearing without over-relying on housemaids.

8-Increasing Family-Child Interaction Time such as encouraging families to dedicate daily quality time with children through joint activities (e.g., storytelling, play, family discussions), Introducing governmental initiatives like "One Hour Without a Housemaid" to promote children's dependence on their parents.

9-Encouraging Children to Participate in Household Chores as instilling a culture of self-responsibility in children by encouraging them to perform simple household tasks instead of relying on housemaids, implementing school and community programs that teach children essential life skills and self-sufficiency.

Data Availability:

The data sets generated and analyzed during the current study are available in the corresponding author throw his email (s.elwakeel@uof.ac.ae).

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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