

## The Influencing Factors of parenting stress in Iranian mothers

K. Tahmassian, Ph.D.

Family Research Institute, Shahid Beheshti University,  
G.,C.  
Tehran, Iran  
ktahmassian@yahoo.com

Anari, M. A.

Jahad Daneshgahi, Tarbiat Moallem University.  
Tehran, Iran.  
asiehanari@yahoo.com

M. Fathabadi, M. A. student.

Family Research Institute, Shahid Beheshti University, G.,C.  
Tehran, Iran  
modernpsy@hotmail.com

**Abstract—This electronic document is a “live” template. The Current study was conducted to examine the influencing factors in parental stress of 2-6 year old children’s mothers. The present study is a descriptive-post hoc study. 350 mothers were selected from 15 kindergartens of 3 area of Tehran through multistage sampling method. They completed Rosenberg’s self-esteem scale, Parental Bonding Questionnaire, Parenting stress Index, Sources of Social support scale, maternal efficacy Questionnaire and Preschool Behavior Checklist. Stepwise regression analysis showed that maternal self-efficacy, children’s behavioral problems, mother’s self-esteem, social support and parental bonding, in five steps, could explain 42% of variance in parental stress. Specific psycho-educational interventions on stress management based on these factors would be effective.**

**Key Words: Parental stress, Parental bonding, Social support, parenting self-efficacy, Self-esteem, Behavioral problems.**

### I. INTRODUCTION

An accumulation of stress can result in a negative influence on the parent and child relationship as well as the quality of parenting. A description of parenting stress is the convenience of perceived resources available during the demands associated with parenting combined with the parent’s perception of the child’s behavior and the parent’s competence [1].

Parenting stress is an important concept because it is considered to be a determinant of dysfunctional parenting [2,3,4]. It is a type of stress that is uniquely perceived by parents and it follows from the demands inherent in being a parent [4]. The effects of parenting stress are wide-ranging and varied, and such stress has been shown to be associated with illness, poor marital relationships [5], and child abuse [6]. Studies show many factors contribute to parental stress, such as the developmental disability of children [7], child behavioral problems [8], infant temperament [9], maternal and child characteristics [10,11], parenting style [11].

Many different factors contribute to parents’ functioning and parental stress including characteristics of the child, the parent, the family, and the social support network [12]. Child characteristics are important for parents’ experience in their parenting role, and are

amongst the most influential contributors to parenting stress. A variety of child characteristics have been investigated in regards to their relationship with parenting stress but child problem behavior has been found to be a primary contributor to parenting stress [13]. In addition to child characteristics, several characteristics of the parent are related with parenting stress. For example self esteem [refers to how people feel about themselves and how they evaluate their abilities and attributes, as well as their momentary feelings of self-worth, such as pride or shame [14, 15] is related to role stress [16] and parenting stress is a kind of role stress.

Also recalling a parental style of over protectiveness has been linked to higher levels of anxiety [17] and some investigations have found relationships between anxiety and low levels of Parental care [18].

Parenting self-efficacy (a parent’s level of confidence in performing in her or his role as a caregiver) is associated with parenting stress in mothers. Child characteristics are important for parents’ experience in their parenting role, and are amongst the most influential contributors to parenting stress. A variety of child characteristics have been investigated in regards to their relationship with parenting stress particularly behavioral problem [13].

In addition to child characteristics, several dimensions of the parent, family and environment have frequently been investigated for their relationship with parenting stress. Some of these include family income, parent education, social support factors, and parent gender [19].

Family disability research has documented the significance of social support for parenting stress [20,21]. These studies highlight the strong correlation between social support and successful coping as well as the potential of social support to act as a stress buffer [22]. The purpose of present study was to examine the influencing factors of parenting stress including child behavioral problem, parental bonding, maternal self-efficacy, self-esteem and social support in Iranian mothers.

## II. METHOD

1.2. Participants and procedure: This study is a statistical and ex post facto research (causal-comparative). 350 mothers (mean age=33 years, SD=4.7) of 2-6 year old children in kindergartens were selected randomly. 178 of children were boys and 183 of them were girls (mean age=4.5, SD=1.5).

Stepwise regression analysis were used to examine the relationship between factors.

### 2.2. Measures

**1.2.2. Parenting Stress Index (PSI):** short form: The mother-child relationship was assessed using Parenting Stress Index [2]. The PSI was designed to assess the degree of stress related to parenting. Studies demonstrate a good content validity, and show sufficient factorial, concurrent, discriminant and construct validity and internal reliability, Cronbach's alpha for the PSI dimensions ranged between  $\alpha$  is .75 and .91 [2].

**2.2.2. Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI):** PBI was designed by Parker et al. [23]. This 25 item scale assesses recollections of both the care and control received as a child from both mother and father. Four variables were derived from this measure: maternal care, parental care, maternal control and parental control.

**3.2.2. Rosenberg's self-esteem scale:** This 10 item scale in 1965 by Rosenberg was introduced and in general has considerably validity and reliability between .82-.88 [24]. Scoring is in 0-30 range. Normal self-esteem is attaining between 15-25 scores and low self-esteem is scoring low of 15.

**4.2.2. Sources of Social support scale:** This 10 item scale was published by Koeske and Koeske [22] and assesses practical and emotional social support from various sources such as spouse, parents, friends, manager, colleagues, children, relatives. This scale showed high correlation with social support behavior scale and considerable construct validity. Internal consistency was reported .88 [22].

**5.2.2. Maternal self-efficacy scale (MSQ):** Teti and Gelfand [25] designed this 10 item scale assesses maternal self-efficacy and mother's level of confidence in her role as a caregiver, in relation to 9 mothering activities and including 1 global item.

**6.2.2. Preschool Behavior checklist:** This scale was designed by McGuire and Richman [26] to assess behavioral and emotional problems in -5 years old children. It has 22 items and every item allocates to certain behavior. Scores are between 0-44 and score 12 is cut off of behavioral problem.

## III. FINDINGS

In table 1 are showed correlation coefficients between parental stress, maternal self-efficacy, self-esteem, parental bonding, behavioral problems and social support.

TABLE I. CORRELATION COEFFICIENT BETWEEN PARENTAL STRESS, MATERNAL SELF-EFFICACY, SELF-ESTEEM, PARENTAL BONDING, BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. parental stress	81.53	19.24					
2. maternal self-efficacy	49.57	8.86	**-.50				
3. self-esteem	17.98	2.15	**-.36	**-.31			
4. parental bonding	145.56	22.14	**-.33	**-.23	**-.26		
5. behavioral problems	30.96	4.87	**-.43	**-.32	**-.08	**-.15	
6. social support	34.72	22.14	**-.27	**-.21	**-.18	**-.26	.001

\*\* P< 0/01

step	Variable	F	R	R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	B
1		112.015	.52	.26		
	maternal self-efficacy				-1.16**	-.52
2		79.93	.59	0.34		
	maternal self-efficacy				-.93**	-.41
	behavioral problems				1.15**	.29
3		65.11	.62	.39		
	maternal self-efficacy				-.77**	-.34
	behavioral problems				1.19**	.30
	self-esteem				-2.02**	-.23
4		54.23	.64	.41		
	maternal self-efficacy				-.70**	-.31
	behavioral problems				1.23**	.31
	self-esteem				-1.82**	-.21
	social support				-.23**	-.17
5		45.46	.65	.42		
	maternal self-efficacy				-.66**	-.30
	behavioral problems				1.18**	.30
	self-esteem				-1.65**	-.19
	social support				-.20**	-.14
	parental bonding				-.11**	-.20

\*\* P<0/01

Parental stress has more correlation with maternal self-efficacy (negatively) and less correlation with social support (negatively). In order to predict and make clear variance of maternal stress with maternal self-efficacy, self-esteem, parental bonding, behavioral problems and social support used stepwise regression (table 2).

TABLE II. PARENTAL STRESS STEPWISE REGRESSION ANALYZE VIA MATERNAL SELF-EFFICACY, SELF-ESTEEM, PARENTAL BONDING, BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

We can see in table 2 that all variables include maternal self-efficacy, self-esteem, parental bonding, behavioral problems and social support can predict maternal self-efficacy significantly in 5 steps. In step 1 maternal self-efficacy could explain %26 of parental stress variance. In

step 2 with adding behavioral problems was predicted %34 of parental stress variance. In next step maternal self-efficacy, behavioral problems and mothers self-esteem could explain %39 of parental stress variance. In step 4 and with adding social support was explain %41 and finally maternal self-efficacy, behavioral problems, self-esteem, social support and parental bonding could explain %42 of parental stress variance.

#### IV. CONCLUSION:

The present study showed that, maternal self-efficacy, self-esteem, parental bonding, social support and child behavioral problems are related to parental stress and these factors can explain parental stress in Iranian mothers. These findings are in agreement with prior researches [13,14,15].

Prior researches showed that many different factors contribute to maternal stress. Some factors are related to mothers; for example maternal self-efficacy, mother self-esteem and parental bonding. Some factors are about family and social networks such as social support. In addition, child characteristics, importantly child behavioral problems are determining parental stress in mothers.

A finding of this research showed maternal self-efficacy is the most significant factor in predicting of maternal stress. It means mothers with high level of confidence in performing their role as a mother, have low parental stress. After maternal self-efficacy, child behavioral problems were the most significant factors in maternal stress. Specific psycho-educational interventions on stress management based on these factors would be effective.

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