

Role of Parental Stress on Parenting Practice in Parents of Middle Childhood Children

Ellen Theresia^a, Marissa Chitra Sulastra^b and Serena Wijaya^c

Faculty of Psychology, Maranatha Christian University, Surya Sumantri No. 65, Bandung, Indonesia

Keywords: Parental Stress, Parenting Practice, Middle Childhood.

Abstract: Parenting at every stage of a child's development can create happiness as well as challenges for parents. When parents feel stressful and lack of satisfaction in parenting, parents can experience parental stress. Parental stress plays a role in parenting practice. This study aims to determine the role of parental stress in parenting practices. Data were collected from 134 parents who have middle-childhood children in Bandung. This study used Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ) Short-Form questionnaire to measure parenting practices and Parental Stress Scale (PSS) to measure parental stress. The researcher validated the questionnaire using CFA and tested the hypothesis using multiple regression analysis. The results showed significant relationship between two variables and inter-variable. The lack of satisfaction aspect in parental stress predicts a positive parenting and parental stress aspect predicts poor supervision. This shows that the parental stress aspect: parental stress and lack of parental satisfaction, gives contribution to parenting practices in middle-childhood children. This study provides a new perspective, in which the parental stress can predict poor supervision and lack of satisfaction in parenting. Further research can be carried out by examining individual child differences and parent's belief as a moderator.

1 INTRODUCTION

The understanding of parenting is quite important because the role of parents exceeds the role of other figures around a child and has a strong and direct influence on the welfare of the child. Warm relationship between children and parents, good and positive communication, consistent discipline has a contribution for family well-being development. Indonesia has strength, as one of the attributes in relationships and can also be shown in the relationship between children and parents (Tomlinson & Andina, 2015).

The process of parenting is related to the skills of parents as adults in their capacity to take care of their children. In Indonesia, there are several records that are needed in carrying out parenting practices, such as the need to reduce the use of corporal punishment, the attention to children's health and safety, financial well-being, how to deal with child disobedience and help children achieve their goals (Tomlinson &

Andina, 2015). Referring to various studies on parenting in Indonesia, the issue of parenting is more related to the poor parenting, including giving too harsh discipline, corporal punishment, and aggression. However, the things that need to be considered are not only poor parenting given to children but also the pressure faced by parents while positive parenting practice, has not been optimally accommodated to all parents (Kiling-Bunga, Margiani, & Kiling, 2020).

The relationship between a child and parents can be reflected in the parenting given by parents. Various understandings of parenting ultimately refer to child rearing and the behaviour of parents in terms of providing socialization of beliefs, hopes, goals, values, and various aspects of development in parenting (Smith, 2011). Parent's behaviour is very important in the process of parenting, which is the most influential factor in the well-being of children and family (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002).

^a <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3110-8316>

^b <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3904-8434>

^c <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9948-2887>

The parenting practices process includes the mechanism in the interaction between parents and children, which is shown through direct behaviour from parent to child, so that parenting goals can be achieved (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Parenting practices are focusing on how parents behave and their efforts on the development and growth of the child, which in turn will determine the characteristics of the child in the future. In addition, parenting practices provided by parents can also be a mediator between the development of children's achievement, adaptation, and children's well-being (Gaspar & Gaspar de Matos, 2017).

Parenting is a dyadic process, which involves parents and children but on the other hand, it contains non-relational factors that can influence parenting, such as maternal depression (Lovejoy, Graczyk, O'Hare, & Neuman, 2000). Parents are not the only parties who play a role in the parenting process. Characteristics of the child (both physical and psychological) and their needs, the work and marriage life of the parents and the role of the community also play a role in the success of the parenting process (Brooks, 2013). Characteristics of children in relation to children's respective stages of development (Gorostiaga, Aliri, Balluerka, & Lameirinhas, 2019), are related to parenting by parents which means, parenting is related to the different needs at each stage of child development. So, parents need to adjust parenting practices given to children to accommodate children's needs (Respler-Herman, Mowder, Yasik, & Shamah, 2012). In other words, the parenting process does not only depend on parents or children but also depends on the interaction between children and parents, the role of the environment and the situation faced by the parents.

Various studies on parenting practices were sourced from monitoring, supervision, and parental involvement (Shelton, Frick, & Wootton, 1996) or in terms of acceptance (involvement) and strictness (Gorostiaga et al., 2019). The Alabama Parenting Questionnaire which is used to measure parenting practice refers to the dimensions: involvement with children, positive parenting, supervision and monitoring, corporal punishment, and consistency in the use of discipline. This study uses the Alabama Short Form Questionnaire with dimensions: positive parenting, inconsistency discipline and poor supervision (Elgar, Waschbusch, Dadds, & Sigvaldason, 2007).

When a child enters the middle childhood stage or better known as school age, the child experiences various changes (Papalia, 2021). Children are more physically active, more critical in thinking and

learning new things. Children's understanding about their own emotions and the environment is also growing. The environment known to the children become even wider so that this stage provides various opportunities and challenges. The middle childhood development stage is also a critical point for children to learn about competence (Angela, 2011). For parents, the middle childhood stage becomes a stage for children to develop their abilities. On the other hand, in line with the development experienced by children, parents need to change the control that is usually carried out, by providing opportunities for children to improve ability to make decisions so that the role of parents is no longer controlling but instead turning into monitoring. Sharing controls with children or what is commonly referred to as coregulation, become a change of role that parent can do when the child is in the middle childhood stage (Brooks, 2013).

The role of parenting in the 'school age' period is also important as a basis for influencing the success of the academic aspects in the future and shaping expected behaviour (Kahraman, Yilmaz Irmak, & Basokcu, 2017). In addition, at school age, parents are still the main figures that children look for when they experience difficulties. The role of parents in this stage is not only in terms of monitoring but also in warm interaction to provide opportunities for children to ask for help when needed (Brooks, 2013). For this reason, it is necessary to understand parents in dealing with and providing care for children who are in the middle childhood development stage, especially to fulfil children's needs. Parents who understand the stages of child development can provide more optimal parenting (Belcher, Watkins, Johnson, & Jalongo, 2007).

In fact, parenting is a process and while living it, parents can feel various feelings in carrying out their role as parents, both positive and negative feelings in providing care for children (Brooks, 2013). As a result, parents experience stress or what is better known as parental stress. Previous studies have focused more on the influence of parents on children, not the opposite. Even though the role of a parent includes various things such as giving love and developing more intimate relationships, this role can be tiring as well as rewarding for parents. This is the content of the parental stress measurement. Parental stress can affect children's behaviour at various stages of development, from infancy to adolescence (Louie, Cromer, & Berry, 2017)

The degree of parental stress can fluctuate depending on the stage of child development and the demands faced by parents (Pontoppidan, Nielsen, &

Kristensen, 2018). The stress experienced by parents can come from various factors such as factors that come from parents (depression and anxiety), children (such as difficult behaviour) and the environment (poverty, social support, etc) (Smith, 2011). Parents who have a high degree of stress can find it difficult to recognize the basic needs of their children, which can affect their parenting behaviour and the subsequent development of their children. Sources of stress can vary, in parental stress, things related to stress conditions can come from parenting conditions and interactions between parents and children. Economic problems, single parenting conditions, and parental separation also cause parental stress. Parental stress is a condition of stress in parenting that can be viewed from the demands and joys that are lived out in the parenting process (Louie et al., 2017).

When parents experience parental stress, it will affect their physical and psychological condition. When the stress is high, it will affect how they interact and care for their children. The more parents experience parental stress, the more it can lead parents to do violence and the lowering of the quality of parent-child interactions (Neece & Green, 2014). Parenting is a buffer system where the interaction occurs between sources of stress and parenting support such as psychological and social support (Smith, 2011).

2 METHODS (AND MATERIALS)

2.1 Participants

This research was conducted using a survey given to the parents whose children are in middle childhood. Participant's criteria are: (1) parents (father/mother), (2) live in Bandung, (3) have children aged 6-11 years old. Participants in this study were not limited to only mothers or fathers, but both parents could participate. Data were obtained from 134 parents with middle childhood children, consisting of 14,5% men (father) and 85,5% women (mother). All participants have filled in informed consent as evidence that participants are willing to volunteer in this research, then fill out the questionnaires that were distributed.

2.2 Instrument

The data was collected by filling out a questionnaire for each variable studied. This study used the Short Form Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ) measurement tool from Elgar et al., (2007) which researcher has translated into Bahasa Indonesia to

measure parenting practice. Another instrument used in this study is the Parental Stress Scale (PSS) from Berry & Jones (1995) which researcher has translated into Bahasa Indonesia to measure parental stress. At the beginning of the questionnaire, participants were asked to fill some data such as name (initials), age, gender, marital status, latest education, socioeconomic status, current occupation, number of children and their ages, and whether there are other parties (besides parents) involved in parenting.

The Short Form Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ) to measure parenting practice consists of 9 items. Participants were asked to rate each statement based on how often it happened. Each item in APQ consists of five answer choices: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always. In this measuring tool, there are three supporting aspects, namely, positive parenting, inconsistent discipline, and poor supervision. The Parental Stress Scale (PSS) which measures parental stress consists of 19 items. Participants were asked to rate each statement based on how often the conditions in the statement matched with the conditions when the participants faced their children. PSS consists of five answer choices: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always. The higher the score obtained, the higher the parental stress experienced by participants. There are two aspects of parental stress, namely, demands and joy of parenting.

2.3 Methods

For the data analysis, the statistical software SPSS 22 was used to perform descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression models. The CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) test used R program. Multiple regression models were tested in 2 models for each test (Table 4, 5, and 6). Model 1 is to calculate the contribution of total parental stress to parenting practices, positive parenting aspect (from parenting practices) and poor supervision aspect (from parenting practices). While model 2 is to calculate the contribution of parental stress aspect and lack of parental satisfaction aspect (from parental stress) to parenting practices, positive parenting aspect (from parenting practices) and poor supervision aspect (from parenting practices).

2.4 Validity and Reliability

For the validity and reliability test of Short Form Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ) Short-Form and Parental Stress Scale (PSS) CFA was used. Items

with factor loading above 0.3 are used in this study. After processing the data, 5 of 9 items APQ short form have a loading factor above 0.3. The item is number 1,5,6,7,8. Then, 13 of 18 items PSS have a loading factor above 0.3. The item is number 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18. Based on the CFA, it was found that the items in inconsistency discipline aspect from the Short Form Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ) could not be used because the loading factor was below 0.3.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Table 1: Sociodemographic data.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	115	85.5%
Male	19	14.2%
Total	134	100%
Marital Status		
Married	128	95.5%
Single	2	1.5%
	4	3%
Total	134	100%
Education		
Less than undergraduate	22	16.4%
Undergraduate and above	122	83.6%
Total	132	100%
Social Economy Status		
Above Average	21	15.7%
Average	100	74.6%
Below Average	13	9.7%
Total	134	100%
Job Status		
Employment	133	99.3%
Unemployment	1	0.7%
Number of Children		
1-2	106	79.1%
≥3	28	20.9%
Total	134	100%
Social Support in Children		
Have social support	47	35.1%
Lacks social support	87	64.9%
Total	134	100%

Table 1 shows 85,5% women (mothers) participated in this study with 95,5% marital status is married. Most (83,6%) respondents are undergraduate and above, indicating respondents with higher level of education. Respondents with average social economy status was 74.6%. There were 99.3% respondents in this study who are employee. Respondents who have 1-2 children was 79.1%. Meanwhile, 64.9% of parents lacks social support in childcare.

Table 2: Descriptive statistic of parental stress and parenting practices.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Parental Stress	134	27.10	7.136	13	46
Parental Stress	134	22.66	6.264	10	38
Lack of Parental Satisfaction	134	4.45	1.505	3	9
Parenting Practice	134	15.69	1.967	11	22
Positive Parenting	134	13.45	1.788	9	15
Poor Supervision	134	2.25	0.817	2	8
Parental Stress	134	27.10	7.136	13	46

Table 2 represents means and SD of independent and dependent variable including parental stress (mean = 27,10; SD = 7,136) and parenting practices (mean = 15,69; SD = 1,967). Based on descriptive statistics, it can be found that respondents who experience the lack of parental satisfaction aspect (from parental stress) are lower compared to parental stress aspect (from parental stress) (mean = 4.45; SD = 1.505). It means that respondents feel that they are satisfied with the experience of parenting their middle-childhood children. It is also found that the poor supervision aspect (from parenting practices) has a lower score than positive parenting aspect (from parenting practices) (mean = 2,25; SD = 0,817). It means respondents feel that they do not supervise their middle-childhood children in a bad way.

Table 3: Intercorrelation among parental stress, parenting practices and sociodemographic data.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Parental Stress	1	.864***	.580***	-.190**	-.271**	0.47	-.059	-.134	.234**	.156	.098	-.012	-.104
<i>Parental Stress</i>		1	.445***	-.508	-.128	.066	-.084	-.115	.219**	.150	.102	-.026	-.075
<i>Lack of Parental Satisfaction</i>			1	-.274**	-.369***	-.064	-.126	-.067	.079	.078	-.082	-.166	-.122
Parenting Practices				1	.768***	.117	.189	.048	.103	.189*	.093	.112	.180 **
<i>Positive Parenting</i>					1	-.015	-.083	.067	.121	.152	.075	.108	.158*
<i>Poor Supervision</i>						1	.154*	-.239**	.095	.148	-.034	.228**	.060
Gender							1	.007	.225**	.088	.213**	.317***	-.060
Education								1	.218**	.096	.038	-.119	-.072
SES									1	.232	.256**	.149	.073
Marital Status										1	.019	.125	.053
Employment											1	-.045	-.118
Number of children												1	.185**
Social support in childcare													1

*p<0.10; **p<0.05; ***p<0.001

Table 4: Parental stress predicting parenting practice.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std.Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Model 1					
Parental Stress	-.034	.024	-.125	-1.444	.151
Model 2					
Parental Stress	.047	.029	.148	1.578	.117
Lack of Parental Satisfaction	-.544	.123	-.416	-4.431	.000**

R2 = 0.016 for Model 1; R2 = 0.133 for Model 2. *p<0.10; *p<0.05; **p<0.001

Table 5: Parental stress predicting poor supervision.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std.Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Model 1					
Parental Stress	.011	.010	.094	1.079	.282
Model 2					
Parental Stress	.027	.013	.207	2.091	.038*
Lack of Parental Satisfaction	-.092	.054	-.169	-1.710	.090

R2 = 0.009 for Model 1; R2 = 0.036 for Model 2. *p<0.10; *p<0.05; **p<0.001

Table 6: Parental stress predicting positive parenting.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std.Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Model 1					
Parental Stress	-.045	.021	-.180	-2.101	.038*
Model 2					
Parental Stress	.020	.027	.068	.723	.471
Lack of Parental Satisfaction	-.452	.112	-.380	-4.027	.000**

R² = 0.32 for Model 1; R² = 0.123 for Model 2. *p<0.10; *p<0.05; **p<0.001

To test relationship between parental stress, parenting practices and sociodemographic, Chi-Square test is used to analyse each criterion (Table. 3). There was significant relation between parental stress and parenting practices ($r = 4.832$; $p = 0,028$). Parental stress and positive parenting aspect (from parenting practices) also have a significant relation ($r = 9.820$; $p = 0,002$). There is a significant relation between lack of parental satisfaction aspect (from parental stress) and parenting practices ($r = 10.087$; $p = 0,001$).

Table 4, 5 and 6 are the analyses that is conducted to examine whether parental stress predicted parenting practices. The first set of regressions in table 4 examined whether parental stress predicted parenting practices. It showed that neither parental stress ($\beta = -0,034$; $p = 0,151$) nor aspect parental stress (from parental stress) predicted parenting practices ($\beta = -0,034$; $p = 0,151$). But lack of parental satisfaction aspect (from parental stress) predicted parenting practices ($\beta = -0,544$; $p = 0,000$).

The second set of regression in table 5 examined whether parental stress predicted poor supervision aspect (from parenting practices). It showed that neither parental stress ($\beta = 0,011$; $p = 0,282$) nor lack of satisfaction aspect (from parental stress) ($\beta = -0,092$; $p = 0,09$) predicted poor supervision aspect (from parenting practices). However, parental stress aspect (from parental stress) predicted poor supervision ($\beta = 0,027$; $p = 0,038$).

The third set of regression in table 6 which examined whether parental stress predicted positive parenting aspect (from parenting practices). It showed that parental stress aspect (from parental stress) did not predict positive parenting aspect (from parenting practices) ($\beta = 0,020$; $p = 0,471$). However, parental stress ($\beta = -0,045$; $p = 0,038$) and lack of parental satisfaction (from parental stress) predicted positive parenting aspect (from parenting practices) ($\beta = -0,452$; $p = 0,000$).

4 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the role of parental stress on parenting practices among parents with children in the middle childhood age. Table 3 presents a significant relation between two variables and inter-variable aspect. Based on this study we found that the two variables tend to be less varied (Mean and SD, see table 1).

Parental stress is a stressful condition experienced by parents in raising children. Parental stress can be viewed from demand and joy in parenting (Louie et al., 2017). Based on the table. 6, parental stress predicts the positive parenting aspect (from parenting practices). For each 1-unit increase in the parental stress, the positive parenting will decrease by .045 units. The more parents perceive that parenting is something demanding rather than something fun, the less positive parenting will be. When parents experience parental stress, they might find difficulties to give rewards to children even though children behave positively and deserve rewards. Parents with high levels of stress are less responsive and affectionate to their children (McQuillan & Bates, 2017). Meanwhile, positive parenting is parenting accompanied by affection, which includes giving appreciation and affection to the children, praising the children, playing with the children, talking with them, and having emotional closeness with them (Elgar et al., 2007). So, it will be difficult for parents who experience parental stress to do positive parenting to their children.

Two constructs of parental stress can also be interpreted separately, namely the constructs of parental stress and lack of parental satisfaction. Table. 4 presents a significant prediction from lack of parental satisfaction aspect (from parental stress) to parenting practice. For each 1-unit increase in the lack of parental satisfaction, the parenting practices will decrease by 0,544 units. It means that the higher lack of satisfaction in parenting felt by parents, the lower

parenting practices performed by parents on their children. Lack of parental satisfaction means that parents find that parenting is something that unbearable for them. They do not feel happy with their role as a parent, they do not feel any closeness with their children, they are not satisfied with their role as a parent, and they do not find their children as the source of affection or enjoyment for them (Berry & Jones, 1995). Meanwhile, parenting practices is focusing on how parents behave and attempt to do parenting as good as possible to help their children develop and grow optimally (Gaspar & Gaspar de Matos, 2017). No wonder when parents have a high level of lack of parental satisfaction, it is difficult for them to do a good parenting practice because they do not find parenting as something enjoyable for them.

Lack of parental satisfaction consists of the rewards of parenting such as fulfilment and personal growth. For this reason, a high lack of parental satisfaction can predict positive parenting. In positive parenting, parents can reward children when children behave positively. It is shown by the results in table. 5. For each 1-unit increase in the lack of parental satisfaction, the positive parenting will decrease by 0,452 units. It is not easy to do parenting for middle-childhood children. The children are in the transition from being a child to an adolescence. So, conflicts can occur because of the adaptation of parents to the new parental role when facing their middle-childhood children and their struggles to negotiate the developmental tasks of their children. Conflicts and difficulties that occur can cause parents to perceive parenting as something unpleasant (Krapić, Hudek-Knežević, & Kardum, 2015) When parenting is experienced as something unpleasant, parents will also find it difficult to implement positive parenting which is characterized by love, affection, and warm relationships in it.

Along with this result, parental stress aspect (from parental stress) predicts poor supervision aspect (from parenting practice). Demand in parenting is a condition that is considered by parents as some kind of pressure in parenting such as the condition of children, life stressors experienced by parents, economic problems and so on (Berry & Jones, 1995). A high parental stress score indicates that parents perceive high demands in parenting. Perceptions of demands predict the monitoring done by parents to their children. For each 1-unit increase in the parental stress, the poor supervision will increase by 0,027 units (see table. 6). It means that the higher the parental stress intensity felt by parents, the higher the poor supervision practices performed by parents on their children.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This study presents that parental stress predicts parenting practice in the aspects of poor supervision and positive parenting. Based on the result, when people perceive the situation of parenting or their role as a parent as stressful, it can lead parents to specific behaviour. The results of this study also show that there is no relationship between parental practice or parental stress with the respondent's demographic data.

In parenting process, it is normal for parents to experience various experiences, either stressful experiences or joyful experiences. The parenting process is a process that is both taxing and rewarding for parents and can make parents experience parental stress. One of the things that can increase parental stress is a child individuality. Children who have difficult temperaments set parents in challenging situations and can have high parental stress. In this study, data regarding individual child differences that can show information about children's behaviour that can make parents in a state of high parental stress, has not been obtained. Therefore, further research can add data regarding individual child differences (Louie et al., 2017).

Parental practices cover parental behaviour that is generally related to parental beliefs. Parents' perceptions are shaped by experiences during the time as a child or as a parent. Parenting beliefs that direct parenting practice are determined by various factors. One of them is parental stress (Respler-Herman et al., 2012). In further research, research can be carried out in relation to the belief variable which can be a moderator between the variables of parental stress and parenting practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks go to Hianly Muljadi, S. S., M. Hum. who helped in the process of editing the research questionnaires.

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