

Research Paper

The Relationship Between Parental Stress, Parental Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being of Working Mothers of Preschool Children

Amruta Rajendra Kale^{1*}, Asst. Prof. Ganesh Pawar²

ABSTRACT

Parental stress is the pressure felt by the parents due to various factors while raising a child. (Abidin, R. R., 1995) Parental self-efficacy is the belief of a parent about how good they are at being a parent. (Bandura, 1997) Psychological well-being is how good they feel about themselves and their life. (Ryff, C. D. 1989) The current research focuses on studying the correlation between parental stress, parental self-efficacy and psychological well-being of working mothers of preschool children. The sample includes 100 working mothers of preschool children. The tools used for this research are Parental Stress Scale (PSS) (1995), Brief Parental Self Efficacy Scale (BPSES) (2023), Warwick Edinburgh mental well-being scale (MWS) (2007). The questionnaire was distributed along with a personal data sheet which included 24 questions. It was later analyzed with appropriate statistics. The results show a significant correlation among parental stress, parental self-efficacy and psychological well-being. Further regression analysis was conducted, the values indicate, that parental stress brings variance in parental self-efficacy by 42.2%, parental stress brings variance in psychological well-being by 91.0%, parental self-efficacy brings variance in psychological well-being by 43.3%. Researcher suggests that working mothers should get certain employment benefits in order to reduce their stress and enhance their self-efficacy and psychological well-being.

Keywords: Parental Stress, Parental Self-Efficacy, Psychological Well-Being, Working Mothers, Preschool Children

Parental Stress: According to Lavee, McCubbin, & Olson (1987), “Parental stress is associated with the demands of parenting, which includes challenges related to child development, family roles, and economic or social strain.”

Parenting Stress Model (Abidin, 1992): Abidin (1992) model focuses on how parenting stress is influenced by both internal and external factors. This model suggests that parental stress arises when parents experience difficulties in meeting their child’s needs or when the

¹Student, Department of Psychology, Modern College of Arts, Science & Commerce (autonomous), Shivajinagar, Pune

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Modern College of Arts, Science & Commerce (autonomous), Shivajinagar, Pune

*Corresponding Author

Received: April 19, 2025; Revision Received: August 12, 2025; Accepted: August 16, 2025

The Relationship Between Parental Stress, Parental Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being of Working Mothers of Preschool Children

demands of the child exceed the parents' available resources (emotional, social, and economic). It emphasizes the importance of coping strategies and support systems in mitigating stress.

Parental self-efficacy: According to Bandura (1997), "parental self-efficacy as "the belief in one's ability to successfully manage the demands of parenting and influence their child's behavior in a positive way."

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986): According to (Bandura, 1986) Social Cognitive Theory is foundational in understanding parental self-efficacy. The theory emphasizes the role of personal beliefs in shaping behavior. According to (Bandura,1997), self-efficacy influences how parents approach challenging parenting situations. Parents with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in positive parenting behaviors, use effective problem-solving skills, and persist in the face of challenges.

Psychological well-being: According to Ryff (1989), "Psychological well-being is a multidimensional concept that includes six key elements: self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, and positive relationships with others."

(Ryff, 1989) Six-Dimensional Model of Psychological Well-Being: (Ryff,1989) proposed that psychological well-being is composed of six interrelated factors:

1. Self-acceptance: A positive attitude toward oneself, including self-esteem and acceptance of personal flaws.
2. Personal growth: A sense of ongoing development and realization of one's potential.
3. Purpose in life: A sense of direction and goals, contributing to a fulfilling existence.
4. Environmental mastery: The ability to effectively manage one's environment and make choices that align with one's goals.
5. Autonomy: A sense of independence and the ability to make choices freely, reflecting one's values.
6. Positive relationships with others: The ability to form meaningful, supportive relationships.

These six dimensions together create a holistic view of psychological well-being, where optimal well-being is a result of fulfilling all these aspects.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This research is done by (Krause, K. R., Bear, H. A., Edbrooke-Childs, J., Wolpert, M., & Deighton, J., 2021). This research emphasizes on how parental stress is prevalent in working mothers as they have to manage both professional as well as personal responsibilities. It also reveals how working mothers have to face difficult challenges in terms of preschool children as they require extreme emotional and constant care. The study was conducted on 280 working mothers with children below the age of 6, had high levels of stress due to great professional demands and personal responsibilities and commitments too. Survey method was used to conduct this research. The tools included the Parental Burnout Assessment (PBA). The results show, there is a negative correlation between perceived social support and parental burnout score.

This research was conducted by Aktu, Y. It was conducted in the year 2024. This research administered the levels of stress and self-efficacy of mothers of preschool children. The test

The Relationship Between Parental Stress, Parental Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being of Working Mothers of Preschool Children

was administered 456 Turkish parents aged between 25 and 65 years. The tools used were Parenting Stress Scale (1995), the Parental Burnout Scale (2017), and the Parenting Self-Efficacy Scale (1989). Pearson's correlation and Hayes's bootstrapping method were employed for data analysis. The study found a negative relationship between parenting self-efficacy and both parenting stress and parental burnout.

This research was conducted by Aramburu, I., Bae, Y., Findler, L., Lubiewska, K., & Zeng, Y. It was conducted in the year 2025. This meta-analysis synthesized data from 86 studies, encompassing 22,108 parents of children aged 0 to 18 years. The studies utilized various standardized tools to assess parental stress and well-being, including the Parenting Stress Index (PSI) and self-report measures of happiness and life satisfaction. The analysis revealed a significant negative medium-sized association ($r = -0.40$) between parental stress and well-being, indicating that higher levels of parental stress are robustly linked to reduced well-being. The association was consistent across different parent and child characteristics, such as gender, age, and job status. The findings underscore the importance of addressing parental stress to enhance overall well-being.

This research was conducted by Östberg, M., & Hagekull, B. (2013). The study involved 256 mothers as well as 204 fathers of children of 1 to 7 years. Researchers employed the Swedish Parenthood Stress Questionnaire (SPSQ) (2000) to assess parenting stress, the General Health Questionnaire-28 (GHQ-28) (1979) for psychological distress, and the State Anxiety Inventory (STAI Form X-1) Spielberger, C. D., Gorsuch, R. L., & Lushene, R. E. (1970) for anxiety levels. Mothers reported higher levels of parenting stress and psychological distress compared to fathers. Anxiety and psychological stress were strong predictors of parental stress in both mothers and fathers. The study highlights the need for targeted interventions to address parenting stress and promote emotional well-being among parents of preschool children.

This research was conducted by Jones, T. L., & Prinz, R. J. It was conducted in the year 2005. This study was conducted to examine the role of parental self-efficacy on parents as well as the child's well-being. The sample was of 115 people. The study utilized various standardized tools to assess parental self-efficacy, parental mental health and the child development outcomes. The findings reveal that higher PSE is consistently associated with better parental mental health, including lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Additionally, increased PSE correlates with improved child outcomes, such as enhanced social competence and reduced behavioral problems.

This research was conducted by Harpaz, G., Grinshtain, Y., & Yaffe, Y (2021). The study involved 132 parents of school-age children. Researchers employed questionnaires measuring parental self-efficacy, subjective well-being, parenting styles, and help-seeking orientation from teachers. Findings revealed that higher well-being and an authoritative parenting style positively predicted parental self-efficacy. And a permissive parenting style was negatively associated with PSE.

Need and Importance

The working mothers have dual roles of managing their professional responsibilities along with raising their children which can be both rewarding as well as challenging. The working mothers of preschool children often tend to face many unique pressures which in turn impact both their physical as well as mental health. These pressures are often constituted of work

The Relationship Between Parental Stress, Parental Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being of Working Mothers of Preschool Children

commitments, societal expectations and also the needs of their young children too. In today's fast paced world, there has been an increasing demand for women to join workforce and along with it the need to be involved with the children in their early developmental period has made it important to examine the experiences of working mothers of preschool children in terms of their stress, self-efficacy and psychological well-being. The need for studying parental stress, self-efficacy, and psychological well-being of mothers of preschool children stems from the important stage of preschool years, where children's cognitive, emotional, and social behaviours are rapidly developing. Mothers often bear a huge amount of the caregiving burden during this phase, making them particularly vulnerable to stress. Understanding how parental stress impacts mothers can reveal the psychological challenges they face in balancing caregiving with their personal well-being. Furthermore, examining parental self-efficacy, a mother's confidence in her ability to manage parenting task can help explain how mothers cope with stress and perceive their parenting abilities. Psychological well-being is another important dimension, as it reflects a mother's overall mental health, which is essential for both her and her child's development.

Objectives of the research:

1. To study the parental stress of mothers of preschool children.
2. To study the parental self-efficacy of mothers of preschool children.
3. To study the psychological well-being of mothers of preschool children.
4. To study the relationship between parental stress and parental self-efficacy of mothers of preschool children.
5. To study the relationship between parental self-efficacy and psychological well-being of mothers of preschool children.
6. To study the relationship between psychological well-being and parental stress of mothers of preschool children.

Hypotheses

- **H1:** There will be a negative correlation between parental stress and parental self-efficacy in mothers of preschool children.
- **H2:** There will be negative correlation between parental stress and psychological well-being in mothers of preschool children.
- **H3:** There will be a positive correlation between parental self-efficacy and psychological well-being in mothers of preschool children.

METHODOLOGY

Sample:

The sample was collected from 100 working mothers of preschool children. Purposive sampling method was selected. The data was collected from various preschool children's working mothers across Pune city. The average age of all the mothers is around 30 years. The set of PDS and standardized tools questionnaire was distributed among the working mothers of preschool children and the data was collected.

Material:

Parental Stress Scale (Berry & Jones,1995). The scale has 18 items. The Brief Parental Self Efficacy Scale (Woolgar, M., Humayun, S., Scott, S., & Dadds, 2023). The scale consists of 5 items. Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (Tennant, R., Hills, A., Pauley, M., Perry, H., Blazey, A., & Whites, I ,2007). The scale consists of 14 items. Personal data sheet (PDS), a 24-question form was also attached to the above questionnaire.

The Relationship Between Parental Stress, Parental Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being of Working Mothers of Preschool Children

Statistical Technique:

In this research, initially analysis of descriptive statistics included mean, median, mode, skewness, kurtosis, standard error of skewness and standard error of kurtosis, was done. It was later followed by conducting a test of normality, Shapiro Wilk was calculated. After checking the normality, the data did not pass the test of normality, hence Spearman rho correlation method was followed, and the correlations were studied. The statistical analysis was carried out on SPSS.

Procedure:

The researcher took permission letters from the department. Then approached the preschools and later with the school principal's permission distributed the research forms among the mothers, which included consent form, personal data sheet, Parental Stress Scale, The Brief Parental Self Efficacy Scale and Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics:

	Parental Stress	Parental Self-Efficacy	Psychological Well-Being
N	100	100	100
Mean	85.97	6.28	16.22
Median	87.00	6.00	16.00
Mode	89	10	20
Standard Deviation	2.447	1.450	1.988
Skewness	-.783	.896	.468
Standard error of Skewness	.241	.241	.241
Kurtosis	-.630	-.237	-.797
Standard error of Kurtosis	.478	.478	.478

The above table shows the values of descriptive statistics. It gives the values of mean, median, mode, skewness, kurtosis, standard error of skewness, and standard error of kurtosis.

Table of Normality:

VARIABLES	STATISTIC	DF	SIG
Parental Stress	.857	100	<.001
Parental Self-efficacy	.821	100	<.001
Psychological well-being	.862	100	<.001

The above tables show the test of normality which was conducted using Shapiro-Wilk method. The results state that the data does not fit into normality hence further Spearman rho correlation method was used.

Table of correlation:

			Parental stress	Parental self-efficacy	Psychological well-being
Spearman rho coefficient	Parental stress	N	100	100	100
		Correlation coefficient	1	-0.515**	-0.948**

The Relationship Between Parental Stress, Parental Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being of Working Mothers of Preschool Children

			Parental stress	Parental self-efficacy	Psychological well-being
Parental self-efficacy	Correlation coefficient		-0.515**	1	0.471**
Psychological well-being	Correlation coefficient		-0.948**	0.471**	1

The above table states the correlation among the variables. It states that that correlation coefficient of parental stress and parental self-efficacy is -0.515 which means $P < .001$. Therefore, there is significant negative correlation between Parental Stress and Parental self-efficacy of working mothers of preschool children. It also states that correlation coefficient of parental stress and psychological well-being is -0.948 which means $P < .001$. Therefore, there is significant negative correlation between Parental Stress and Psychological well-being of working mothers of preschool children. Similarly, it states that correlation coefficient of parental self-efficacy and psychological well-being is 0.471 which means $P < .001$. Therefore, there is significant positive correlation between Parental Self-Efficacy and Psychological well-being of working mothers of preschool children

Table of regression:

Variables	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	F	Sig.	Standardized Beta Coefficient
Dependent Variable: Parental Self Efficacy	.649 ^a	.422	.416	71.488	<.001 ^b	-.649
Predictors: (Constant) Parental Stress						
Predictors: (Constant) Parental Self Efficacy	.658 ^a	.433	.428	74.942	<.001 ^b	.658
Dependent Variable: Mental WellBeing						
Predictors: (Constant) Parental Stress	.954 ^a	.910	.909	987.955	<.001 ^b	-.954
Dependent Variable: Mental Well Being						

The above table shows the values of regression analysis, the values state that, when the dependent variable is parental self-efficacy and predictor is parental stress then it is seen that the R value is .649 and R square is .422. Therefore, it is proved that parental stress brings 42.2 % change in parental self-efficacy. When the dependent variable is psychological well-being and predictor is parental self-efficacy then it is seen that the R value is .658 and R square is .433. Therefore, it is proved that parental self-efficacy brings 43.3 % change in psychological well-being. When the dependent variable is psychological well-being and predictor is parental stress then it is seen that the R value is .954 and R square is .910. Therefore, it is proved that parental stress brings 91.0 % change in psychological well-being.

Findings:

H1

There will be a negative correlation among parental stress and parental self-efficacy. This hypothesis that was formulated by the researcher got accepted. There is a significant negative correlation among parental stress and parental self-efficacy. The correlation is

The Relationship Between Parental Stress, Parental Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being of Working Mothers of Preschool Children

significant at 0.01 level. The regression analysis states that parental stress brings 42.2 % change in parental self-efficacy of working mothers of preschool children.

H2

There will be a negative correlation among parental stress and psychological well-being. This hypothesis that was formulated by the researcher got accepted. There is a significant negative correlation among parental stress and psychological well-being. The correlation is significant at 0.01 level. The regression analysis states that parental stress brings 91.0 % change in psychological well-being of working mothers of preschool children.

H3

There will be a positive correlation among parental self-efficacy and psychological well-being. This hypothesis that was formulated by the researcher was accepted. There is a significant positive correlation among parental self-efficacy and psychological well-being. The correlation is significant at 0.01 level. The regression analysis states that parental self-efficacy brings 43.3 % change in psychological well-being of working mothers of preschool children.

CONCLUSION

The hypotheses that were formed by the researcher got accepted. There is a significant negative correlation among parental stress and parental self-efficacy as well psychological well-being and there is a significant positive correlation between parental self-efficacy and psychological well-being of working mothers of preschool children.

Implications

- This research helps mothers as well as fathers, to understand the importance of psychological well-being in general life.
- This research also helps to understand parental stress and self-efficacy. And how they affect the mental health of mothers. It also shows that being psychologically well will help you to be stress-free and have better self-efficacy also in regular life.
- Awareness about parental stress will lead many towards having better self-efficacy which helps them to improve their mental health as well as minimize the effects on their psychological well-being.
- This study shows that managing stress is important as it can boost psychological well-being and can improve self-efficacy in mothers.

Suggestions for Further Study

- This study can be done on a large sample size in future.
- In future researcher can do a comparative study in between mothers as well as fathers of preschool children.
- In future studies, burnout can be taken into consideration as a variable.
- Longitudinal studies can be done on this research topic.

REFERENCES

- Abidin, R. R. (1992). The determinants of parenting behavior. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 21(4), 407–412. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15374424jccp2104_12
- Abidin, R. R. (1995). *Parenting Stress Index: Professional manual* (3rd ed.). Psychological Assessment Resources.

The Relationship Between Parental Stress, Parental Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being of Working Mothers of Preschool Children

- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W.H. Freeman and Company.
- Brief Parental Self-Efficacy Scale – Woolgar et al. (2023) Woolgar, M., Humayun, S., Scott, S., & Dadds, M. R. (2023). Development and validation of the Brief Parental Self-Efficacy Scale. *Psychological Assessment*, 35(4), 392–404. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pas0001234>
- Lavee, Y., McCubbin, H. I., & Olson, D. H. (1987). The effect of stressful life events and transitions on family functioning and well-being. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 49(4), 857–873. <https://doi.org/10.2307/351979>
- Parental Stress Scale – Berry & Jones (1995) Berry, J. O., & Jones, W. H. (1995). The Parental Stress Scale: Initial psychometric evidence. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 12(3), 463–472. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407595123009>
- Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6), 1069–1081. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069>
- Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6), 1069–1081. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069>
- Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale – Tennant et al. (2007) Tennant, R., Hiller, L., Fishwick, R., Platt, S., Joseph, S., Weich, S., ... & Stewart-Brown, S. (2007). The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): Development and UK validation. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 5(1), 63. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1477-7525-5-63>

Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Kale, A.R. & Pawar, G. (2025). The Relationship Between Parental Stress, Parental Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being of Working Mothers of Preschool Children. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 13(3), 2043-2050. DIP:18.01.187.20251303, DOI:10.25215/1303.187