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Parenting stress among dual earner families in urban areas of Jammu District

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Abstract

The present research was conducted to study the parenting stress among the dual earner families under various domains i.e. Child Domain, Parent Domain, Life Stress and Total Stress and to compare the Parenting Stress in context of gender and nature of job. The sample for the study comprised of 150 parents i.e. 75 mothers and 75 fathers. The tool used for the present study was Parenting Stress Index Scale (PSI-4). Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The results of the study revealed that majority of mothers had obtained normal scores on various dimensions i.e. Distractibility, Adaptability, Reinforces, Demandingness, Mood and Acceptability on Child Domain than fathers. Parenting stress among parents in Parent Domain implies that majority of fathers had obtained normal scores on various dimensions i.e. Isolation, Attachment, Health, Role Restriction, Depression than Mothers. Life stress scores of fathers were in normal category than mothers. The level of Total Stress was higher in fathers than mothers. Analysis of mean and t- score of parents in context of gender revealed that fathers were having higher mean scores than mothers and highly significant difference was found on various Parenting Stress Domains. The mean scores of mothers who were Private teachers were higher on Child Domain, Parent Domain, Life Stress and Total Stress. It was also found that majority of the fathers who were in Government job had obtained higher mean scores on Child Domain, in context of nature of jobs and there is an insignificant difference found on life stress scores.

Keywords: Parenting, Stress, Dual earner families.

1. Introduction

Parenting stress is a normal part of the parenting experiences. It arises when parenting demands exceed the expected and actual resources available to the parents that permit them to succeed in the parent's role. Parenting stress related to caring for and rearing a child that causes frustration and interferes with how a parent relates to a child. Parents who respond higher level of parenting stress are more likely to be authoritarian, harsh and negative in their interactions with their children. Parenting stress decreases the quality of parent child-relationship (Turner *et al* 2010) [8]. Researchers have identified early childhood as a time of elevated parenting stress (Kaczynski and Kochanska, 1990) [5], making this a particularly crucial developmental period in which to study the determinants of parenting stress. Parenting stress may undermine the quality of parent-child interactions as well as the quality of relationships between parents; it also has been linked to behavior problems in young children (Anthony *et al* 2005; Crnic, Gaze, and Hoffman, 2005; Thompson *et al.* 1993) [3, 4, 7].

Dual earner families faces some challenges like division of household duties finding satisfactory children, challenge of sufficient parenting time, the costs of both parents working, time management, role negotiation. Parental time pressure is significantly associated with depression among mothers and fathers and that well-off parents are significantly less depressed by parental strains than less affluent parents. Parenting stress decreases the quality of the parent child- relationship (Turner *et al* 2010) [8] and may influence the development of the child externalizing behaviours (Williford *et al* 2007) [9]. Parenting stress is associated with both parenting behaviour and child adjustment. Parents who respond higher level of parenting stress are more likely to be authoritarian, harsh and negative in their interactions with their children.

2. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To study parenting stress among dual earner families under the following domains in urban areas of Jammu district:

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- a) Child Domain
- b) Parenting Domain
- c) Life stress
- d) Total stress
- 2) To compare parenting stress in context of:
 - a) Gender
 - b) Nature of job

3. Methodology

Random sampling technique was used to select the various urban areas of Jammu. The sample for the study comprises of 150 parents i.e. 75 mothers and 75 fathers. Only those mothers who are school teachers and fathers from any profession were selected. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. Parenting Stress Index Scale (PSI-4) devised by in response to the need for a measure to assess all these facts of the parent child system. The PSI is a screening and diagnostic assessment designed to measure the relative magnitude of stress in the parent-child system. The PSI-4 is intended to be used with parents of children ranging in age from 1 month to 12 years. The PSI items have three different response choice styles. Of the first 101 items, 91 instruct respondents to choose whether they strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are not sure (NS), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) with a statement by circling one of those five response. Items 102 through 102 are life stress items and require the respondent to circle Y (yes) or N (no) on the answer sheet. Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Background Information of Respondents

The results revealed that majority of the fathers (47%) and mothers (36%) were in the age group of 31-40 years. Rest of the fathers (37%) and mothers (28%) were in the age group of 41-50 years. Only 8% fathers and 12% mothers were above 51 years. Majority of the children (69%) were in the age group of 7-10 years and only 31% children were in the age group of 10-12 years. Most of the mothers (80%) and fathers (35%) were post graduates. Rest of the mothers (20%) and fathers (45%) were graduates. Only 20% fathers had passed higher secondary. Most of the mothers (73%) were private teachers

and 27% mothers were government teachers. Majority of fathers (40%) were in bank and fathers (33%) were in private sector. Rest of the fathers (27%) were teachers.

4.2 Analysis of Parenting Stress among Dual Earner Families

Table 1 depicts data on level of parenting stress in child domain and its subscale among dual earner families. Child domain assesses child characteristic that may be major factor in contributing to the overall stress in the parent-child system. Results revealed that majority of the mothers (52%) and 45% fathers had obtained normal scores on Distractibility. This indicates that child have an average attention span and doesn't show signs of excessive activity. Rest of the mothers and fathers have high and clinically significant scores on this dimension. On adaptability dimension, 70% mothers and 68% fathers were found to be having normal scores. This show that mothers task was less difficult by virtue of the child's inability to adjust to changes in his or her physical or social environment than fathers. Majority of the mothers (51%) and 57% fathers had normal scores indicating that parents does experience his or her child as a sense of positive reinforcement. On reinforce dimension, 53% mothers and 28% fathers were having clinically significant scores. Most of the mothers (88%) and 59% fathers were having normal scores on demandingness dimensions. This implies that parents believe that his or her child is independent and doesn't attempt to unreasonably gain adult attention or assistance. Majority of the mothers (59%) were having normal score and 53% fathers were having clinically significant score on mood dimension. This indicates that mothers sometimes cope with negative emotionality in her child than fathers. With regard to acceptability dimension, majority of mothers (71%) and 45% fathers were having normal score. This implies that mothers believe that the child is attractive, intelligent, or pleasant as she had expected or hoped. Overall, both mothers and fathers were having normal scores on child Domain. The table further reveals that there was a significant association on Demandingness, Mood and Acceptability in context of gender i.e. there is association between mother and father on these subscales.

Table 1: Level of Parenting Stress among Parents in Child Domain

Level of Parenting Stress	Normal Score (16-84 %) ile		High Score (85-89) % ile		Clinically significant (90 th and above)% ile		X ²
	Mother N (%)	Father N (%)	Mother N (%)	Father N (%)	Mother N (%)	Father N (%)	
Distractibility	39 (52)	34 (45)	6 (8)	13 (17)	30 (40)	29 (39)	2.09
Adaptability	53 (70)	51 (68)	10 (13)	10 (13)	12 (16)	14 (19)	0.098
Reinforces	38 (51)	43 (57)	12 (16)	11 (15)	25 (53)	21 (28)	0.393
Demandingness	66 (88)	44 (59)	5 (7)	6 (8)	4 (5)	25 (33)	17.80**
Mood	44 (59)	24 (32)	11 (15)	11 (15)	20 (27)	40 (53)	11.37**
Acceptability	53 (71)	34 (45)	13 (17)	20 (21)	9 (12)	21 (28)	8.84**

**Significant at 0.01 level

*Significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 depicts data on the level of Parenting Stress in parent domain and its subscale among dual earner families. Parent Domain assesses parent characteristics that may be contributing to overall stress. Results revealed that majority of the mothers (95%) and (76%) fathers had obtained normal scores on competence. This indicates that parent appears reasonably confident in their child management skills and, although they experiences periodic swings in their confidence level. Only 15% fathers were having high scores and 13% fathers have clinically significant scores on this dimension. In

such situation, individual consultation with specific courses of action and perception guidance is necessary. Majority of the mothers (59%) were having clinically significant scores. This implies that mothers have considerable stress in terms of both the parenting role and their own psychic pain concerning issues of abandonment and rejection. Most of the fathers (52%) and 41% mothers were having normal scores on this dimension rather than fathers reasonably large social-emotional support of friends and relative. Majority of the mothers (53%) and 71% fathers were having normal scores on

attachment dimension. This implies that parents feel a sense of closeness with their child. Most of the mothers (45%) and 44% fathers were having clinical significant scores on health dimension. This implies that parents appears not to be reasonably good health and possess the physical energy necessary to effectively handle her responsibilities as a parents, whereas, 39% mothers and 44% fathers had obtained normal scores. Role restriction means the parent sense of limited freedom and constrained personal identity as a result of the parenting role. Majority of the mothers (55%) and 76% fathers had attained normal scores on the dimensions. This indicates that parent does not experiences the restriction on her personal freedom, and they does not see themselves as being controlled and dominated by her child's needs and demands. Depression assesses the parent's affective status. Majority of

the mothers (63%) and 79% fathers were having normal scores on this dimension. This implies that parents operates within normal limits with regards to mood and possess sufficient resiliency to balance both from situational upsets. Spouse parenting relationship means the parent's perception of emotional and physical support from the parenting partner with regard to Spouse Parenting Relationship dimension. Majority of the mothers (89%) and all fathers were having normal scores. This indicates that parent has a reasonably positive relationship with her child's others parents. Parents feels basically supported and appreciated by the child's other parent in her relationship with the child. The table further reveals that there was a significant association on competence, and attachment in context of gender i.e. there was a significant association between mothers and fathers on these subscales.

Table 2: Level of Parenting Stress among Parents in Parent Domain

Level of Parenting Stress	Normal Score (16-84 %) ile		High Score (85-89) % ile		Clinically significant (90 th and above)% ile		X ²
	Mother N (%)	Father N (%)	Mother N (%)	Father N (%)	Mother N (%)	Father N (%)	
Competence	71 (95)	54 (76)	1 (1)	11 (15)	3 (4)	10 (13)	11.56**
Isolation	31 (41)	39 (52)	-	6 (8)	44 (59)	30 (40)	7.15*
Attachment	40 (53)	53 (71)	4 (5)	10 (13)	31 (41)	12 (16)	10.86**
Health	29 (39)	33 (44)	12 (16)	9 (12)	34 (45)	33 (44)	0.33
Role restriction	41 (55)	57 (76)	6 (8)	2 (3)	28 (37)	16 (21)	6.17*
Depression	47 (63)	59 (79)	9 (12)	9 (12)	19 (25)	9 (12)	4.03
Spouse Parenting relationship	67 (89)	75 (100)	4 (5)	-	4 (5)	-	4.84

** Significant at 0.01 level

*Significant at 0.05 level

Table 3: Level of Life Stress among Parents

Level	Mother		Father		Total	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Normal	43	(57)	48	(64)	91	(61)
High	15	(20)	17	(23)	32	(21)
Clinically significant	17	(23)	10	(13)	27	(18)

Chi square=2.215 df =4 p-value= 0.69

Life stress is the amount of stress outside the parent-child relationship that the parent is currently experiencing. This table 3 depicts that majority of the fathers (64%) and mothers 57% have normal score on life stress. Only, 20% of the mothers and 23% of fathers have high scores on life stress scores indicating an intensification of the total stress that the parents is experiencing and are a risk factor for dysfunctional parenting. Rest of the mothers (23%) and fathers 13% have clinically significant. This indicates that they need referral assistance. There is insignificant association between mothers and fathers on level of Life Stress in context of gender.

Table 4: Level of Total Stress among Parents

Level	Mother		Father		Total	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Normal	56	(75)	49	(65)	105	(70)
High	14	(19)	14	(19)	28	(19)
Clinically significant	5	(7)	12	(16)	17	(11)

Chi-square=3.34 df=4 p-value=-0.50

Table 4 depicts that majority of the fathers (65%) and mothers 75% have normal scores on total stress. An equal number of fathers and mothers have high score on total stress. Rest of the fathers (16%) and mothers 7% fall in clinically significant and should be offered referral for professional consultation. There is insignificant association between mothers and fathers on

level of Total Stress in context of gender.

Table 5: Mean and t-score of Parents on different areas of Child Domain

Dimension of Child Domain	Mother		Father		t-score
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Distractibility	27.84	6.04	28.38	4.95	0.606
Adaptability	26.82	6.39	25.74	7.28	0.964
Reinforces	15.74	4.26	15.04	3.38	1.137
Demandingness	20.36	4.79	24.72	6.41	4.717**
Mood	14.45	3.14	16.82	3.58	4.307**
Acceptability	15.98	3.19	18.45	3.23	4.693**

** Highly significant at 0.01 level

Table 5 shows mean and t- score of parents on different areas of Child Domain. It indicates that the mean score of fathers is higher on different area of child domain i.e. Distractibility (28.38), Demandingness (24.72), Mood (16.82) and Acceptability (18.45) than mothers. Mothers were having high scores on Adaptability (26.82) and Reinforces (15.74) than fathers. A highly significant difference was found on Demandingness, Mood and Acceptability in different dimension of Child Domain i.e. mothers and fathers differ on these dimensions.

Table 6: Mean and t-score of Parents on different areas of Parent Domain

Dimension of Parent Domain	Mother		Father		t-score
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Competence	23.50	5.95	31.44	6.53	7.766**
Isolation	21.85	6.96	18.65	6.83	2.841**
Attachment	18.05	5.54	15.88	4.33	2.67**
Health	15.46	4.05	18.60	6.85	3.406**
Role restriction	20.17	4.80	17.36	5.00	3.512**
Depression	23.04	5.15	21.28	4.50	2.225*
Spouse Parenting Relationship	18.24	4.55	15.41	2.95	4.504**

** Highly significant at 0.01 level

*Significant at 0.05 level

Table 6 shows means and t-score of parents on different area of Parent Domain. Mean scores of mothers is higher on Isolation (21.85), Attachment (18.05), Role restriction (20.17), Depression (23.04), Spouse Parenting Relationship dimensions than fathers. Fathers were having high scores on Competence (31.44), Health (18.60) than mothers. T-Score shows a highly significant difference on Competence, Isolation, Attachment, Health, Role restriction and Spouse Parenting Relationship i.e. mothers and fathers differ on these dimensions. Anthony *et al* (2005) revealed that parenting stress was significantly related to teacher’s ratings of social competence, internalizing and externalizing behaviour and the effects of parenting behaviours don’t appear to mediate this relationship. Parenting Stress was not strongly related to children’s social competence. Parents report of expectations for their child’s development of child externalizing behaviour.

Table 7: Overall mean and t- score of Parents on domains of Parenting Stress in context of gender

Domain	Mother		Father		t-score
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Child Domain	121.41	21.65	128.97	10.55	2.717**
Parent Domain	140.56	15.25	139.22	17.108	0.504
Life Stress	17.22	5.049	19.90	5.89	2.990
Total Stress	261.97	26.34	262.8	21.35	1.590

**Highly significant at 0.01 level

Table 7 shows that mean and t-scores of fathers are high on Child Domain (128.97), Life Stress (19.90) and Total Stress (262.8) than mothers. Mothers were having high scores on Parent Domain (140.56) than fathers. A highly significant difference was found on child domain in context of gender i.e. mothers and fathers differ on these dimensions. Therefore, high child domain scores of fathers may be associated with children who display qualities that make it difficult for parents to fulfill their parenting roles. On the contrary Swartzberg and Dytell (1996)^[6] reveal that mothers and fathers in dual earner families reported equivalent level of family stress.

Table 8: Mean and t- score of mothers on Parenting Stress in context of nature of job

Parenting Domain	Government Teacher		Private Teacher		t-score
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Child Domain	112.00	24.54	124.84	19.619	2.337*
Parent Domain	139.00	15.727	141.13	15.159	.532
Life Stress	16.70	4.256	17.41	5.332	.542
Total stres	251.00	28.239	265.96	24.691	2.233*

*Significant at 0.05 level

Table 8 depicts mean scores of mothers who were private teachers is higher on Child Domain (124.84), Parent Domain (141.13), Life Stress (17.41) and Total Stress (265.96) than

mothers in government job. A significant difference was found on child domain and total stress in context of nature of job of mothers. On the contrary Minz (2012)^[2] reveals that it was assumed that there will be no significant difference between stress between Government and Private School teachers. There is insignificant difference stress between male and female working parents and non-working parents separately.

Table 9 shows that mean and t-score of parenting Stress in context of nature of job. It is depicted that the mean scores of fathers who were in Government Job is higher on Child Domain (129.64), Parent Domain (139.31) and Total Stress (268.96) than father in Private Jobs. Fathers who were in private job have higher mean shows on Life Stress (21.00) than who were in Government jobs.

Table 9: Mean and t-score of fathers on Parenting Stress in context of nature of job

Parenting Domain	Government Job		Private Job		t-score
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Child Domain	129.64	9.180	127.97	12.433	.672
Parent Domain	139.31	17.27	139.10	17.14	.052
Life Stress	19.17	5.851	21.00	5.889	-1.138
Total Stress	268.96	2.77	267.07	22.505	.373

Insignificant at 0.01 level

Total Stress and subscales of Parenting Stress in context of gender and nature of job in dual earner families.

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