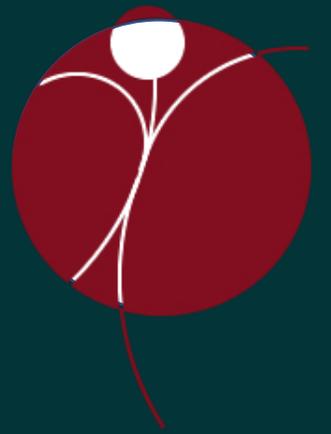




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Stress and parental competence reflecting in texts of visually impaired mothers

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Presenter: **Tímea Bata**
Pedagogical Services of Budapest and ELTE Bárczi
Gusztáv Faculty of Special Needs Education

Authors: **Tímea Bata**
Judit Csákvári Phd¹
Beáta Prónay²

^{1,2}ELTE BGGYK Institute for the Psychology of Special Needs

Theoretical background

Cognitive and emotional reactions created in context of parenthood

- Parental stress
- Parental competence

Theoretical background

Parental stress

Changes in one's life in all cases require adaptation and varying degrees of stress depending on the nature of the event (Holmes, Rahe, 1967; Hobson et al., 1998; Szabó, 2013.)

There are **normative crises periods** in everyone's life, but these are predictable life cycle changes that are accompanied by stress (Erikson 1991). Becoming a parent is one of these periods.

It can influence:

- Sense of competence and self-efficacy
- Emotional self-regulation
- Applied coping strategies

Theoretical background

Parental stress

Parental stress is the combination of the cognitive and emotional reactions that the caregiver can perceive in the context of child rearing that can make significant or excessive use of parent's resources (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Cronin et al., 2015)

Stress can be defined as **positive stress** (eustress) and **harmful stress** (distress) (Selye, 1976; Dhabhar, 2011), but the most important aspect is how the parent interprets the situation and copes with the event (Cronin et al., 2015).

Theoretical background

Parental competence

Parental competence – usually studied with the use of Parenting Sense of Competence Scale – PSOC (Gibaud-Wallston and Wandersman, 1978; Johnston and Mash, 1989)

- **Parental self-efficacy:** A parent's beliefs in their ability to influence their child and the environment in ways that would foster the child's development and success (Ardelt & Eccles, 2001).
- **Parental satisfaction:** consists of impacts of parenting role and childcare (Pridham és Chang, 1989; Salonen, 2010).

Theoretical background

Constant sources of stress

It makes the normative crisis period more difficult if constant stress factors, such as the changed life situation resulting from a disability are present in the life of an individual (Danis and Kalmár, 2011).

Manifestations of constant stress factors:

- Social attitude – e.g. questioning the parenting abilities and the right to raise a child, (Danek, 1992; Lloyd, 1992; Meadow-Orlans, 2002)
- Feeling fear regarding the inheritance of the disability
- The lack of visual information - e.g. In connection with intuitive parental behaviours (Papousek and Papousek, 2002; Meadow-Orlans, 2002)
- More time needed to learn new parental skills and advanced techniques
- Access to information and services
- Lack of emotional support (Limaye, 2015)

These factors can influence the sense of competence.

Goal

Analysing mothers' texts and reflections on motherhood to find out their thoughts, moods, stress and competence.

Questions and expectations

Questions

- Does the presence of visual impairment provoke different emotional processes in motherhood, more stress, distress?
- How the presence of visual impairment influences the competence experience in mothers?

Expectations

- The applied method will highlight the most relevant topics for the mothers regarding parenting.
- The results will show that the mood of the most relevant topics are tend to be rather positive or rather negative in regards to parental stress and sense of competence.

Method

Overview

Analyses of personal documents written by visually impaired mothers:

- Documents are blog posts and personal records (N=21)
- One document from one person
- Only documents that are describing parenting experiences
- Sources of the documents are UK, US and Canadian websites
- Application of quantitative and qualitative content analyses methods with Atlas.ti 8 software

Method

Quantitative content analyses

- Word frequency analyses to identify the most relevant topics
- Identify the most frequent expressions with their relevant synonyms
- Final analyses of the most relevant topics

Method

Qualitative content analyses

- Definition of code categories for stress, sense of competence and emotional quality based on academic literature

STRESS

- Stress from a life event
- Stress from parenting
- Stress from visual impairment

COMPETENCE

- Parental self-efficacy
- Parental satisfaction

EMOTIONAL QUALITY

- Rather positive
 - Rather negative
 - Rather neutral
- + Other category

The coding process

- 2 independent encoders were involved
- The exact definitions of the codes were discussed
- Test encoding was conducted in Atlas.ti 8
- Final encoding was conducted in Atlas.ti 8

Results and discussion

Most relevant topics - overview

1. **Child** – topics related to the child's birth and care
2. **Visual impairment** – experiences due to VI, crucial role of VI in parenting situation, application of special technics
3. **Parenting** – topics about motherhood or fatherhood (rare case)
4. **Feelings** – expressions describing feelings about parenthood
5. **Help** – thoughts about different forms of help (need of help, getting help etc.)
6. **Other people** – appearance of social attitude in the documents

Results and discussion

Expressions about the child

Results

- Occurs more times in **positive** context, especially in regards to **self-efficacy** and **satisfaction**
- **Lack of competence** -> child related expressions were used in a higher percentage
- In regards to stress sources it occurs mostly together with **positive emotions**
- The topic of children occurs in about the same times when mothers expressing stress from **parenting** or stress from a **visual impairment**

Discussions

- Child rearing usually appears as a positive source of emotion (Wilson et al., 2011; Williamson et al., 2003)
- Stress caused by child rearing is normative, inevitable to some extent (Cronin et al., 2015)
- Certain areas of childcare were highlighted as difficulty due to visual impairment based on previous researches (Arsnow et al., 1985; Meadow-Orlans, 2002; Rosenblum et al., 2009)

Results and discussion

Expressions about visual impairment

Results

- Occurs mostly with a **positive** mood in regards to **competence** – the visual impairment is not influencing negatively the parental sense of competence
- Regarding **parental stress** the feelings about visual impairment are around the same times **positive** and **negative**

However,

- The discussion of visual impairment is in a **negative** context most of the times, in connection with **stress from visual impairment** – significant stressor

Discussions

- Usually VI persons can successfully solve the challenges of child rearing (Limaye, 2015)
- Improved self-efficacy results less stress (Ferenczi et al., 2015)
- In case of VI parents neither the emotional and coping reactions nor the feelings experienced in a parenting role were not studied

Results and discussion

Expressions about parenthood

Results

- The parenting role was in a **positive** context most of the times in regards to both **stress** and **competence**.

Discussions

- Studies about parenting with visual impairment are not focusing on feelings experienced in a parenting role, but they note that parenthood, despite its difficulties is a positive and joyful life period (Wilson et al., 2011; Williamson et al., 2003)

Results and discussion

Expressions about feelings

Results

- The **negative feelings** are expressed more often especially in connection to stress
- Competency occurs more times in a **positive** context
- However, in regards to **negative sense of competence** the expression of emotions are more frequent in proportion - there is an increased need to share the negative feelings

Discussions

- The parents highlights in the documents the importance of emotional support
- Some studies also draw attention to the emotional aspect
 - Feelings of exclusion, the emotional impacts of visual impairment on the child (Rosenblum et al., 2009)
 - Significance of support communities (Meadow-Orlans, 2002)

Results and discussion

Expressions about help

Results

- Occurs in a higher percentage in connection to **negative** emotional quality
- Proportionally more frequent, especially while expressing **lack of competence** – we can assume that the parents did not get enough and proper help
- In regards to stress from visual impairment the **positive** and **negative** context is about the same amount – the mothers' need for help may not be because of their visual impairment

Discussions

- If VI parents are looking for Information about practical issues it is relatively easy to find, but these sources might not be reliable and accessible in all the cases
- The help that the parents can get from rehabilitation and support organisations is depending on the preparedness of the professionals
- Literature highlights the Importance of the social network for both practical and also emotional help (Limaye, 2015)

Results and discussion

Expressions about other people

Results

- Mostly occurs in a **positive** context
- Occurs more frequently in case of **negative stress** – the social attitude can be identified as a source of frustration

However,

- In terms of the **sense of competence**, the opinions of others do not clearly have a negative impact

Discussions

- Internalisation of the negative social attitudes might have a negative impact on the sense of competence (Meadow-Orlans, 2002)
- Negative social attitudes can increase the use of emotional resources (Limaye, 2015)
- The impact of negative social attitudes and stereotypes on parenting is also emphasized in the analysed documents

Thank You for your attention!

batatimi@gmail.com