



The relationship of parenting stress to family resiliency among displaced community parents

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Abstract

Introduction: Parenting stress may not hinder resilience and productivity when handled and managed responsibly and innovatively. Among resettled community parents, stress that is assessed yields family resiliency and the capability to manage life no matter how hard it is. The transactional model of stress and coping proves that stress serves as a challenge that is transacted with the environment so the whole family will not only cope but thrive.

Methods: A total of forty relocated community parents were involved in this quantitative survey of parenting stress and family resiliency. Scales were found to be reliable and valid measures of the constructs were taken.

Results: Findings describe a moderate level of parenting stress and a high level of family resiliency ($M=4.15$) among the parents sampled, implying that stress can be an impetus to resiliency. There was a positive correlation between parenting stress and family resiliency; a unit increase in parenting stress will enable employing family communication and problem solving (FCPS, $r=0.64^{***}$), maintaining a positive outlook (MPO, $r=0.64^{***}$), maintaining family connectedness (FC, $r=0.65^{***}$), and family spirituality (FS, $r=0.43^{***}$), and finding meaning in adversity (MMA, $r=0.55^{***}$). There was no significant correlation with utilization of social and economic resources (USER), implying a tendency for self-reliance.

Conclusions: The findings encourage the family values of resilience and connectedness during hard times. With policies on orientation and community mental health support, global health is attained. Faith-based coping and internal resource mobilization allow displaced populations to sustain wellbeing through adaptive functioning.

Keywords: community parents, family resiliency, parenting stress, resettlement, sustainable cities

Introduction

Developing countries often face systemic challenges related to housing insecurity and informal settlements.¹ In the Philippines, families who cannot afford titled property often reside in precarious areas, such as the “home along the riles” (dwellings beside railway

tracks) in Bulacan.² While these communities often develop strong neighborhood familiarity and shared lifestyles, they are frequently displaced by government infrastructure projects.³

The transition to government resettlement areas, while intended for development, often places families in sites distant from their

occupations and accustomed resources.⁴ This displacement generates significant parenting stress, particularly for mothers who typically bear the primary responsibility for child-rearing and family adjustment.^{5,3} Early stages of relocation are often marked by psychosocial disruptions, including neighborhood conflict and educational hurdles for children.⁶

The Global Health and Sustainable Development Context

This study aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 3 (ensuring healthy lives and well-being) and SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities).^{7,8} By examining how displaced families develop resilience, we gain insights into the “inner resources” that allow families to contribute to community sustainability rather than succumbing to the “maladaptive resilience” of mere survival marked by chronic distress.^{9,10,11}

Theoretical Framework: Stress as a Catalyst

The study integrates two primary frameworks: the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping and Resilience Theory.

Transactional Model: The model posits that stress is a result of an individual’s appraisal of the environment. When parents cognitively re-frame relocation stress as a challenge rather than an insurmountable threat, they mobilize communication and social resources to adapt.^{12,13} The model entails assessment of the stressful situation and thinking of ways to solve the problem. Many spiritually inclined families would resort to praying. Christianity holds that praying helps regulate thoughts and feelings and therein arrive at a positive resolution to the problem at hand.

As parenting stress tends to be a specialized form of stress, parents, especially mothers⁴, take the lead in thinking of a solution. Transactions dealing with it must be facilitated. Stress may come in the form of financial hardship or daily budgeting, discipline of children, technology addiction, irresponsible husband and the like.

These must be acknowledged and confronted. Parenting stress relates to the overall family conditions with emphasis on the well-being of the entire family.

Resilience Theory: Emphasizes the family’s collective ability to “bounce back” and thrive amidst adversity.^{14,15,16}

Family Resiliency and Spirituality

Family resiliency is not a single trait but a multidimensional construct. Following Walsh’s framework, it includes dimensions such as Family Communication and Problem Solving (FCPS), Maintaining a Positive Outlook (MPO), and Family Connectedness (FC).^{17,18,19,20}

For many Filipino families, Family Spirituality (FS) is a cornerstone of this resilience.^{20,21} In the face of displacement, Christian faith acts as a protective factor, allowing parents to leverage their belief in divine providence to “make meaning of adversity” (MMA).^{20,21} Rather than stress hindering productivity, the integration of faith and adaptive communication allows parents to lead their families from a state of “surviving”—characterized by minimal existence and misery,—to “thriving,” characterized by productivity and the ability to help others.^{20,21,22}

The Current Study

The objective of this research is to examine the relationship between parenting stress and the specific facets of family resiliency among resettled parents in Bulacan. We hypothesize that parenting stress relates positively and significantly to the facets of resiliency when parents view the stressful event as a manageable challenge, drawing on inner spiritual strength and collective family support.^{23,20,24,25}

Materials and Methods

Design and Setting

This study utilized a quantitative cross-sectional survey design.^{23,25} The research was conducted in a resettlement community in Bulacan, Philippines, specifically serving families displaced by government railway development projects.^{5,26}



Participants and Sampling

The study involved forty (40) relocated community parents. Participants were identified through household listings provided by the local *barangay* captain's office.²⁵ The sample consisted of 35 housewives and five "mother leaders" holding local positions.²⁷ Participant ages ranged from 25 to 59 years, with average monthly family incomes between PHP 5,000 and PHP 20,000.²⁵ Educational backgrounds ranged from high school to college levels.²⁷

Instruments

Data were collected using a three-part, survey instrument:

1. Sociodemographic Inventory: This section recorded family composition, educational background, and economic characteristics.²⁷

2. Family Resilience Assessment Scale (FRAS): Adapted from Walsh and Yang et al., this 30-item scale measures family functioning across six dimensions: Family Communication and Problem Solving (FCPS), Utilizing Social and Economic Resources (USER), Maintaining a Positive Outlook (MPO), Family Connectedness (FC), Family Spirituality (FS), and Making Meaning of Adversity (MMA).⁵ Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale (1=never to 5=always).¹³ The scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha=0.96).¹³

3. Parental Stress Scale (PSS): Adapted from Fang et al., this 18-item scale assesses parents' perceptions of stress, role demands, and coping appraisal).⁵ It utilizes a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).⁵

Ethical Considerations

The study received formal approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Bulacan State University. Permission was also secured from *barangay* authorities prior to data collection. All participants provided written informed consent).²⁴ Procedures ensured participant anonymity and confidentiality, adhering to ethical standards for human research).¹¹

Data Analysis

Surveys were administered individually in private settings following an orientation).⁴ Data were cleaned, coded, and analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine mean levels of stress and resiliency).²⁶ Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients (*r*) were employed to examine the relationship between parenting stress and the various dimensions of family resiliency).²⁶

Results

Table 1. Level of Parenting Stress and Resilience

Parenting Stress	Mean	SD	Level
Parenting Stress	3.07	0.74	Moderate Parenting Stress
Resilience Subscale	Mean	SD	Level
Family Communication and Problem Solving (FCPS)	4.22	0.49	High Resilience
Utilizing Social and Economic Resources (USER)	2.93	0.99	Low Resilience
Maintaining a Positive Outlook (MPO)	4.09	1.01	High Resilience
Family Connectedness (FC)	4.01	0.99	High Resilience
Family Spirituality (FS)	4.13	1.04	High Resilience
Make Meaning of Adversity (MMA)	4.14	0.97	High Resilience
Total	4.15	0.91	High Resilience

Descriptive Statistics of Parenting Stress and Family Resiliency

The analysis revealed that relocated community parents experience a moderate level of parenting stress ($M = 3.07$). Despite this stress, the participants demonstrated a high level of family resiliency, with an overall mean score of 4.15.

When examining the specific dimensions of resiliency, five out of six subscales were rated as "high." Notably, Family Connectedness (FC) and Maintaining a Positive Outlook (MPO) emerged as strong pillars for these families. However, the dimension of Utilizing Social and Economic Resources (USER) received the lowest mean

score ($M=2.93$), falling into the “moderate” range. This indicates that while families are internally strong, they may be less inclined to seek or access external institutional support.

Correlation Between Stress and Resiliency

A Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between parenting stress and the dimensions of family resiliency. Contrary to the traditional view that stress diminishes functioning, the results showed a significant positive correlation between parenting stress and five key resiliency factors.

Table 2. Correlation Between Parenting Stress and Family Resiliency Dimensions

Resiliency Dimension	Pearson Correlation (r)	Significance (p)
Family Communication & Problem Solving (FCPS)	0.64	< .001***
Maintaining a Positive Outlook (MPO)	0.64	< .001***
Family Connectedness (FC)	0.65	< .001***
Family Spirituality (FS)	0.43	< .001***
Making Meaning of Adversity (MMA)	0.55	< .001***
Utilizing Social/Economic Resources (USER)	0.33	Insignificant

Note. *** $p < .001$; $N = 40$

The data suggest that as parenting stress increases, there is a corresponding significant increase in the employment of family communication, spiritual practices, and efforts to find meaning in their situation. This confirms that for this population, stress serves as a catalyst for mobilizing internal family resources.

Discussion

This study demonstrates that parenting stress is positively associated with family resiliency among resettled community parents in the Philippines. Contrary to the assumption that stress inherently undermines family functioning, these findings suggest that stress may serve as a motivating force that activates

adaptive coping strategies. This aligns with the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which posits that when parents cognitively appraise relocation not as an insurmountable threat but as a challenge, they are more likely to mobilize family resources and communicate effectively to foster resilience.

The high levels of Family Communication and Problem Solving (FCPS), Maintaining a Positive Outlook (MPO), and Family Connectedness (FC) indicate that these families engaged in robust collective coping. These findings support resilience theory, emphasizing that growth and spiritual deepening can emerge directly from adversity.

Internal Resourcefulness and the Filipino Context

A notable finding was the low reliance on external social and economic resources (USER). While this may suggest limited access to institutional support, it also highlights a deep sense of empowerment and internal resourcefulness. This aligns with the Filipino cultural values of *pamilya* (family solidarity) and *bayanihan* (collective responsibility). Families in this study demonstrated that while external aid is beneficial, the cultivation of internal coping mechanisms is what primarily sustains them during displacement.

Family Spirituality and Christian Resilience

One of the most salient findings is the significant positive correlation between parenting stress and **Family Spirituality (FS)**. This underscores the role of Christian faith as a vital protective factor. Faith-based practices—such as prayer, worship, and trust in divine providence—provide families with existential meaning and emotional regulation during the trauma of relocation.

Christian theology frames suffering as a context for growth and redemptive meaning, as seen in **Romans 8:28**. This belief system enables families to interpret relocation not merely as a loss of a “home along the riles,” but as an opportunity for transformation and reliance on God’s providence. Such spiritual coping reduces distress and fosters the optimism



necessary to strengthen the family unit, contributing to broader global health outcomes.

Conclusion

The high level of family resiliency observed reflects the innovative and adaptive capacities of resettled parents in Bulacan. While parenting stress was moderate, families demonstrated a profound ability to transform that stress into a catalyst for cohesion. This study contributes to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by illustrating how faith-based coping and internal resource mobilization allow displaced populations to sustain well-being. When appropriately managed and supported by a foundation of faith, parenting stress functions not as a barrier, but as a gateway to adaptive functioning.

Recommendations

Policy Development: National and local governments should prioritize housing and city development policies that prevent displacement-related psycho-social harm by considering the proximity to livelihoods and established social networks.

Faith-Integrated Programming: Design community orientation programs for resettled families that specifically integrate Christian values with stress management and parenting education.

Future Research: Conduct longitudinal studies to identify culturally appropriate values for psychosocial interventions and to assess the long-term mental health outcomes of children within these resilient households.

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