

Examining the Relationship between Social Support, Parenting Stress, and Depression in South Korean Single Mothers

Undergraduate Article Critique

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Researchers assessed if social support was associated with the stress level in single mothers, specifically if more social support from friends, family and neighbors was linked to decreased stress levels in women. Researchers examined if a single mother's stress led to the mother having depression. Results showed that the more stress and pressure the single mother was experiencing, the higher her self-reported depression scores. There was also an association in the relationship between social support and depression levels within the mother. The less social support the mother received from informal subjects, the higher her depression scores were. For the data collection and participants, researchers sent out a self-report survey link to single mothers with young children. Researchers used Park's social support scale, which consists of statements regarding social support. These statements the mother answered on a scale of 1-5, with one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree. Researchers used the Parenting Stress Index-Short Form for measuring parenting stress. The same concept of a scale used for measuring social support was also used in this study. Lastly, researchers used the Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale to gather data on single mothers and their depression. This was on a 4-point Likert scale, with higher scores representing greater depression and lower scores representing lower depression. There was a significant relationship between all variables in this study.

From this article, I learned that single-mother households are increasing in South Korean culture, with one in every ten households comprised of a single-parent family. This increase is because of these individuals' values on marriage, family, gender roles for women, sexual openness, and the nonrestrictive attitude toward divorce. While reading this article, I also learned that a mother's stress level, depression level, and social support received affect how they parent their children.

These key findings relate heavily to what I learned while studying parenting. Single mothers are predicted to be under more stress, leading to high rates of depression because they are under more economic pressure. Maternal stress and depression have a significant effect on the relationship between mother and child. The more time a mother must work, the less time she spends with her child leading to more depression in the mother.

This article relates to Child Development and Family Studies for many reasons. The family dynamic of a single-family household along with the stress and depression the mother faces directly affect her parenting and the child's development. The family dynamic is entirely different if the mother and child have a broken relationship because of the aforementioned factors.

Reference

Song, S.-M., Park, B., Lee, W. K., Park, N.-S., & Kim, M. N. (2021). Examining the relationship between social support, parenting stress, and depression in South Korean single mothers. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 31(5), 1232–1245. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-021-02084-1>