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PARENTING SENSE OF COMPETENCE IN AT PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK FAMILIES AND CHILD WELL-BEING

Competencias parentales percibidas de las familias en riesgo psicosocial y bienestar infantil

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INTRODUCTION. Parenting sense of competence is a central construct to understand the dynamics and processes that occur within the family system. It is a major determinant of competent parenting behaviors, and it is closely linked to a healthy child development and their overall well-being. The aim of the present study is to obtain a better understanding of parenting sense of competence in Portuguese at-risk families and, more specifically, to analyze the relations between sociodemographic variables, perceived parenting efficacy, satisfaction with the parenting role and the child well-being. **METHOD.** The participants were 207 families (168 mothers and 39 fathers) receiving family preservation interventions in the Algarve (South of Portugal). The Parenting Sense of Competence Scale and a sociodemographic questionnaire were applied by trained interviewers, through an individual interview. Furthermore, the Child Well-Being Scales were filled by 21 case managers. **RESULTS.** Results showed that the majority of participants lived under a precarious economic and occupational situation, and had a low educational level. On average, families consisted of four people and of two children with 58,5% living below the national poverty line. Participants presented, on average, medium-high levels of perceived parenting efficacy and satisfaction, although they scored significantly higher on efficacy. We observed significant and positive correlations between parenting efficacy and satisfaction with all the child well-being dimensions (child well-being score, parental disposition and child performance) with the exception of household adequacy. **DISCUSSION.** These findings highlight the need to include the boosting of parental satisfaction and the readjustment of parental sense of efficacy as the primary aim of psycho-educational interventions in at-risk families. The implications for social policies for this vulnerable group are discussed.

Keywords: *At risk families, Parenting competence, Parenting satisfaction, Parenting self-efficacy, Child well-being.*

Introduction

Parenting sense of competence is a cognitive and emotional construct that consists in the judgments that parents hold about their abilities to perform parenthood-related tasks (Farakas & Valdés, 2010; Jones & Prinz, 2005; Montigny & Lacharité, 2005). It also encompasses parents' beliefs about their ability to influence their children's development in a positive manner (Ardelt & Eccles, 2001) and the satisfaction derived from the parenting role (Johnston & Mash, 1989). According to these authors, parental satisfaction involves parental attitudes towards their children, the nature of their relationship with them and the attitudes towards the responsibilities inherent to the parenting role. Parenting sense of competence is one of the most relevant dimensions to be assessed in order to grasp the dynamics and processes that occur within the family system.

Parenting sense of competence has been associated with several important parental outcomes such as parental behavior and actual competence (Coleman & Karraker, 1997; Shumow & Lomax, 2002), parental depression (Cutrona & Troutman, 1986; Gondoli & Silverberg, 1997; Teti & Candelaria, 2012) and parenting stress (Ayala-Nunes, Lemos & Nunes, 2014; Begle & Dumas, 2011; Bloomfield & Kendall, 2012; Scheel & Rieckmann, 1998).

Parents who feel more competent are more likely to address successfully their children's problem behaviors (Hastings & Brown, 2002). Teti and Candelaria (2012) argue that high levels of perceived competence and satisfaction with the mother role facilitate adaptive parenting skills, such as a sensitive and responsive behavior and a more secure mother-child attachment.

Research has shown that parental sense of competence in at-risk families has somewhat different features than in normative families (Menéndez, Jiménez & Hidalgo, 2011). At-risk families

are those who live under personal or environmental circumstances that hamper children's wellbeing, but whose situation is not severe enough to warrant children's out-of-home placement (Rodrigo & Byrne, 2011). Although studies with high risk EE-UU populations have found that parents from families at psychosocial risk tend to perceive themselves as being less competent in their parenting role than community populations (Coleman & Karraker, 1997; Raikes & Thompson, 2005), other researchers from Spain note that the perception at-risk parents have about their own abilities may be distorted. Specifically, families with a more severe risk profile tend to perceive themselves as highly efficacious and competent in their self-evaluations as parents (Martín, Alemán, Marchena & Santana, 2015; Menéndez *et al.*, 2011; Nunes & Ayala-Nunes, 2015; Pérez *et al.*, 2015; Rodrigo & Byrne, 2011).

Moreover, parenting self-efficacy has a relevant role on children's psychosocial adjustment (Teti & Candelaria, 2012; Coleman & Karraker, 2003; Jones & Prinz, 2005). Being a major determinant of competent parenting behaviors (Jones & Prinz, 2005), parenting self-efficacy is closely linked to healthy child development and wellbeing (Ardelt & Eccles, 2001; Coleman & Karraker, 2003). More specifically, many studies have found a positive relation between parental self-efficacy and children's adjusted behavior (Coleman & Karraker, 2003), socio-emotional positive functioning (Ardelt & Eccles, 2001; Hill & Bush, 2001) and academic achievement (Bogenschneider, Small & Tsay, 1997; Ardel & Eccles, 2001). Furthermore, an indirect relationship between parental self-efficacy and child maltreatment has been suggested (Mammen, Kolko & Pilkonis, 2002) as well as with child abuse potential (Begle & Dumas, 2011).

Additionally, some links have been found between parental role dissatisfaction and internalizing and externalizing problems in children (Johnston & Mash, 1989; Ohan, Leung & Johnston, 2000; Rogers & Matthews, 2004).

Although there is a relationship between parental satisfaction and self-efficacy, the direction of the effect is unclear. Self-efficacy may have a direct impact on the satisfaction of parents with their role as parents (Coleman & Karraker, 2000) or parental satisfaction may increase self-efficacy (Jones & Prinz, 2005).

All these findings point out to the importance of assessing the determinants of parental self-efficacy (Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2010), particularly in at-risk families. Families at psychosocial risk generally face serious problems, live in deprived contexts and tend to accumulate multiple stressful life events. These circumstances hinder their parenting competences and compromise their ability to provide appropriate parenting, consequently jeopardizing children's development and well-being (Nunes & Ayala-Nunes, 2015; Nunes, Lemos, Ayala-Nunes & Costa, 2013). The concept of child well-being has been defined and measured in multiple ways, and the absence of theories that guide empirical research has been outlined frequently (e.g., Pollard & Lee, 2003). There is, however, consensus in considering that well-being is a multidimensional and ecological construct, and thus its measurement should go beyond the intrapersonal indicators, encompassing at least part of a child's lived experience in several aspects, such as physiological needs, cognitive stimulation or emotional security (Raghavan & Alexandrova, 2015). According to these authors, children are doing well when they develop stage-appropriate abilities that will, at least to some extent, guarantee him or her a healthy functioning in the future and when they engage with their environment in child-appropriate ways (e.g. exploring). Child well-being has been an understudied topic in at-risk families from Portugal, and there are still research gaps concerning which modifiable psychological parental dimensions are associated to children's adjustment and wellness. This study aims to get a better understanding of parenting sense of competence in Portuguese at-risk families and more specifically to analyze

the relations between perceived parenting perceived efficacy, satisfaction with the parenting role and child well-being.

Method

Participants

The sample was composed of 207 parents (168 mothers and 39 fathers) from at-risk families receiving family preservation interventions in Algarve (South of Portugal) and 21 professionals who were the participants' case managers. Parents who met the following criteria were selected by professionals: (1) having at least one child under the age of 18 living in the household and (2) To experience several problems and risky situations for the children (such as work problems or financial strain) that were not severe enough to require child out-of-home placement.

Parents had in average 38.02 years ($SD = 7.75$), and their educational level was quite low: 40.13% had not completed primary school, 37.68% completed primary school, and only 17.87% and 3.35% had finished high school or university studies, respectively. Concerning their labor situation, 53.11% were employed, mainly with low qualification jobs (71.30% worked as seller, cleaner, etc.). Families were composed of four people ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.48$) and two children and/or adolescents ($M = 1.97$, $SD = 1.08$) in average. Regarding family structure, 39.23% were single-parent, 30.62% were biological two-parent and 30.14 were two-parent blended families. Nearly a third (31.62%) of the participants received a form of welfare aid. Family income was described as unstable by 37.75% of the sample, and was in average 881.21€ ($SD = 470.68$). Furthermore, 58.54% of participants lived below the national poverty line.

Regarding case managers, they were mostly women (90.48%) aged between 30 and 40

years-old (66.67%). The professionals were mostly psychologists (47.62%), but there were also educators (28.57%), social workers (19.05%) and one lawyer (4.76%). The majority of the case managers had five or more years of experience working with families (61.90%).

Instruments

Parenting Sense of Competence. A Portuguese version of the 16-item version of PSOC (Johnston & Mash, 1989) was used, measuring Efficacy and Satisfaction with parenting (Nunes, Jiménez, Menéndez, Ayala-Nunes & Hidalgo, 2014). Efficacy reflects the degree to which the parent feels competent with his/her role and capable of solving child-rearing related problems (7 items, e.g., “*I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary to be a good mother to my child*”). Satisfaction reflects the extent to which the parent feels anxious and poorly motivated in the parenting role (9 items, e.g., “*My talents and interests are in other areas, not in being a parent*”). For both subscales, ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*), higher scores indicate greater parenting sense of competence. The minimum and maximum scores are 16-96. In the present study the omega coefficient was .74 to efficacy and .79 to satisfaction.

Child Well-being. The Child Well-Being Scales (CWBS, Magura & Moses, 1987) were used, measuring 43 separate dimensions covering 4 areas: Parenting role performance, familial capacities, child role performance, and child capacities. This instrument has been designed to be filled by the professional who manages the child's case in child welfare/family preservation services. Items 1-28 of the CWBS consist of the Family Scales that address family issues, with the Child Scales consisting of items 29-43. Each scale is anchored in 4–6 levels that range from adequacy to increasing degrees of inadequacy on each dimension. The maximum score on any item in the scales is 100. Higher scores indicate higher levels of child well-being. It

provides an overall score that includes the 43 scales and three dimensions: (i) household adequacy (HA; 10 scales on family functioning); (ii) parental disposition (PD; 14 scales on family functioning and children well-being); and (iii) child performance (CP; 4 scales on children wellbeing). There is still no available adaptation of the CWBS to Portuguese language, therefore authors translated the instrument with the back-forward translation method and piloted tested it on two professionals that were not included in the present analysis. Reliability indexes obtained with this sample were $\omega = .85$ to household adequacy, $\omega = .87$ to parental disposition and $\omega = .59$ to child performance.

Procedure

After establishing a collaboration protocol with child protection services of nine areas at the South of Portugal, parents who met the inclusion criteria were asked to participate by their professional (psychologists and social workers) of reference. Parents who agreed to participate signed an informed consent form stating the anonymity and confidentiality of their answers and the possibility of terminating their participation in the study at any moment without negative consequences.

The PSOC and sociodemographic questionnaire were administered in an individual interview by nine trained interviewers, and interviewees took approximately 20 minutes to complete both questionnaires. The 21 professionals who were the participants' case managers filled the Child Well-Being Scales after attending a formative training session of three hours.

Statistical analysis Missing data on the item level were extrapolated using the missing value analysis of SPSS (EM algorithm) after checking that data were missing completely at random using Little's MCAR test ($p = .08$). If more than 10% of the items of a questionnaire were missing, the

case was excluded from the corresponding analyses. Therefore, 4 cases were deleted from subsequent analysis. Data were computed and analyzed using the statistical package IBM SPSS Statistics v20 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Statistical assumptions for parametric analyses were checked following Tabachnick and Fidell's (2007) recommendations, with satisfactory results.

For descriptive statistics, the percentage distribution of the qualitative variables and the mean, standard deviation and range of the quantitative variables are presented. Snedecor's F test was used to compare quantitative variables and a Chi-square test was performed for qualitative variables. The correlations were analyzed using Pearson's r coefficient.

Results

Parenting sense of competence and sociodemographic characteristics

Participants showed a mean score of 30.82 for the efficacy subscale ($SD = 6.19$, $range = 12-42$)

and 33.81 for satisfaction ($SD = 7.94$, $range = 14-54$). Weighted averages were computed to test differences in both subscales, and repeated-measures ANOVA showed that participants scored higher on efficacy ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.88$) compared with satisfaction ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.88$), $F(1, 206) = 77.38$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .27$. Both subscales were positive and significantly associated, $r(207) = .29$, $p < .001$.

Parenting efficacy showed a significant negative association with child age ($r = -.22$; $p = .001$), with parents of older children reporting lower scores. Also, parents with more children and more people living in the household showed higher scores on parenting efficacy ($r = .18$, $p = .009$; $r = .15$, $p = .035$, respectively). Parenting satisfaction was significant and negative correlated only with child' age. Parents with young child showed higher scores on satisfaction ($r = -.21$, $p = .003$) (table 1).

We observed significant differences in parenting satisfaction scores according to family type $F(3, 203) = 2.79$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .04$, with a small effect size. The Games–Howell post hoc test revealed that parenting satisfaction was significantly

TABLE 1. Correlation matrix between parenting efficacy and satisfaction and sociodemographic dimensions

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Parenting efficacy	-	.29***	-.02	-.22**	.18**	.15*	-.09
2. Parenting satisfaction		-	-.08	-.21**	-.07	-.06	-.01
3. Participant's age			-	.43***	.24***	-.07	.08
4. Child's age				-	.15*	-.02	.07
5. Number of children					-	.47***	.02
6. People in the household						-	.12
7. Family income							-
M	30.82	33.81	38.02	10.72	2.55	4.06	881.21
SD	6.19	7.94	7.75	4.56	1.39	1.48	470.68
Range	12 - 42	14 - 54	20 - 68	0 - 18	1 - 8	1 - 10	100 - 2700

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

lower on extended families ($M = 30.79$, $SD = 6.53$) than on blended families ($M = 35.14$, $SD = 8.30$, $p < .05$) (table 2). No differences were found on satisfaction according to parents' gender, age, studies level, child's gender, work situation and poverty situation (table 2).

Regarding parenting efficacy, on average, participants with a lower educational level reported higher scores ($F(2, 204) = 29.75$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$), with a moderate effect size. The Games–Howell post hoc test revealed that parenting efficacy was significantly higher on

participants with incomplete primary studies ($M = 32.96$, $SD = 5.42$) than on parents with a higher study level (both $ps < .01$).

There were also significant differences with a small effect in parenting efficacy according to child's gender ($F(1, 205) = 6.82$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .03$) and parents' work status ($F(1, 205) = 6.15$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$). Girls' parents and unemployed participants showed higher scores than their counterparts. No differences were found on parenting efficacy according to parents' gender and poverty status.

TABLE 2. Comparison of means and standard deviations of Parenting Efficacy and Satisfaction scores according to type of family, parents' studies level, child's gender, work situation and poverty situation

Type of Family	Nuclear one-parent (N = 59)	Nuclear two-parent (N = 49)	Extended (N = 42)	Blended (N = 57)	F	p	η^2
Efficacy	30.37 (5.86)	30.94 (6.44)	31.19 (6.62)	30.89 (6.13)	0.16	.924	.00
Satisfaction	34.07 (7.99)	34.53 (8.11)	30.79 (6.53)	35.14 (8.30)	2.79	.042	.04
Parents studies' level		Incomplete primary (N = 83)	Primary completed (N = 78)	Secondary or more (N = 46)	F	p	η^2
Efficacy		32.96 (5.42)	29.87 (6.21)	28.54 (6.39)	9.75	.000	.09
Satisfaction		33.20 (7.63)	33.51 (8.09)	35.39 (8.20)	1.21	.300	.01
Parents' gender			Father (N = 39)	Mother (N = 168)	F	p	η^2
Efficacy			32.10 (5.05)	30.52 (6.41)	2.08	.151	.01
Satisfaction			34.03 (6.56)	33.76 (8.25)	0.04	.849	.00
Child's gender			Boy (N = 128)	Girl (N = 79)	F	p	η^2
Efficacy			29.95 (4.47)	32.23 (5.61)	6.82	.001	.03
Satisfaction			33.66 (7.90)	34.04 (8.05)	0.11	.743	.00
Work Status			Employed (N = 109)	Unemployed (N = 98)	F	p	η^2
Efficacy			29.82 (6.34)	31.93 (5.87)	6.15	.014	.03
Satisfaction			33.47 (7.80)	34.18 (8.12)	0.42	.519	.00
Poverty			Non Poor (N = 85)	Poor (N = 120)	F	p	η^2
Efficacy			30.18 (6.50)	31.23 (6.00)	1.42	.235	.01
Satisfaction			34.75 (7.89)	33.19 (7.94)	1.93	.166	.01

Parenting sense of competence and child well-being

As shown in table 3, parenting efficacy and satisfaction were significant and positively associated with all child well-being dimensions, except with household adequacy. Parenting satisfaction was the PSOC subscale with a stronger association with child well-being.

We observed significant differences in household adequacy scores according to parent study level $F(2, 202) = 6.94, p < .01, \eta^2 = .06$, with a moderate effect size. The Games–Howell post hoc test revealed that household adequacy was significantly lower on parents with incomplete primary studies ($M = 86.45, SD = 7.94$) than on parents with complete primary studies ($M = 90.88, SD = 9.24, p < .05$) and secondary or higher ($M = 92.26, SD = 8.03, p < .01$). Also, employed parents scored higher on household adequacy ($M = 91.22, SD = 8.24, F(1, 203) = 7.93, p < .01, \eta^2 = .04$) than unemployed parents ($M = 87.44, SD = 10.90$).

We also found significant differences according to child's gender with a small effect size in CWBS ($F(1, 203) = 11.13, p < .01, \eta^2 = .05$) and

parental disposition ($F(1, 203) = 3.94, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02$). On both variables girls scored higher ($M = 89.48, SD = 6.42; M = 79.10, SD = 11.55$, respectively) than boys ($M = 86.04, SD = 7.57; M = 75.80, SD = 11.58$).

Discussion

The aims of this study were to explore the parenting sense of competence of at-risk families and its relationships with child well-being. Participants from our study live in precarious economic, employment and educational conditions and therefore constitute a vulnerable group. The high rates of unemployment, low-qualified jobs, poverty and low education levels among this population constitute serious risk factors that jeopardize the development and wellbeing of children growing up in these families and demands attention from political decision-makers and civil society.

Participants presented a medium-high sense of efficacy as parents and on average were moderately satisfied with their parenting role. These findings do not corroborate those of other studies (e.g. Elder, Eccles, Ardel & Lord, 1995;

TABLE 3. Correlation matrix between parenting efficacy and satisfaction and child well-being scales

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. CWBS		.67***	.72***	.62***	.16*	.21**
2. Household adequacy			.49***	.20**	-.02	.06
3. Parental disposition				.40***	.14*	.17*
4. Child performance					.15*	.20**
5. Parenting efficacy						.29***
6. Parenting satisfaction						
M	87.35	89.41	77.06	91.01	30.82	33.81
SD	7.33	9.77	11.65	9.62	6.19	7.94
Range	58–100	51–100	49–100	59–100	12–42	14–54

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

Sanders & Woolley, 2005), however they are not as contradictory as they may seem at a first glance. Participants have to deal daily with several adversities (such as economic pressure and unemployment) and despite these difficulties, still manage to raise and educate their children. This can contribute to increase their sense of parenting efficacy. Another possible explanation is that participants have a somewhat idealized vision of their parenting competences. Some research on Spanish at-risk families suggests that mothers tend to hold a distorted vision regarding their skills and abilities as caregivers (Menéndez, Hidalgo, Jiménez, Lorence & Sánchez, 2010; Rodrigo & Byrne, 2011). In considering these findings, improving parental sense of competence must be included as one of the main goals of the psychosocial interventions with at-risk families.

Individual comparisons between parenting efficacy and satisfaction showed that participants felt more efficacious than satisfied with parenting role. Menéndez and colleagues (2010) and Gilmore and Cuskelly (2008) obtained similar results with a sample of mothers at psychosocial risk and with a non-clinical sample, respectively.

We found no differences between fathers and mothers in parenting efficacy and satisfaction. Regarding satisfaction, our findings differ from those of Gilmore and Cuskelly (2008), Johnston and Mash (1989) and Rogers and Matthews (2004) studies. These authors have found that fathers were more satisfied with their parenting role than were mothers. However, in relation to efficacy they are similar to the latter two studies. Another possible explanation for the absence of differences between genders is the unbalanced distribution of the sample (81.16% of the participants were women).

We also observed that parents of older children felt less efficacious and less satisfied as parents. These results were also reported by Ardel and Eccles (2001), in a study of African-American mothers who lived in dangerous and deprived

neighborhoods. However, other authors did not observe a link between children's age and parental sense of competence (Coleman & Karrarer, 2000; Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2008; Johnston & Mash, 1989; Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2010). These results can be explained by the fact that some of the aforementioned studies did not include parents of adolescents. Adolescence is a particularly challenging developmental period for parents due to their children's increased autonomy, which may lead to feelings of lack of control and to more frequent and intense conflicts in the parent-child relationship.

Also, parents with a lower educational level, more children, and more people living in the household showed higher scores on parenting efficacy. Girls' parents and unemployed participants showed higher scores than their counterparts. Other studies have also identified child sex as a relevant characteristic that may influence parenting beliefs and behavior (Jones & Prinz, 2005).

Regarding satisfaction with parenting role, except for the child's age and family type, we found no significant differences between parental satisfaction and other sociodemographic variables (parents' gender, parents' studies level, child's gender, work situation and poverty situation).

We must notice that studies that assessed the relationship between perceived parenting competences and sociodemographic variables have had mixed results. Some authors found no associations between parenting self-efficacy and sociodemographic variables (child gender, number of children, marital status, parents' age, parents' educational level and household income) (Coleman & Karrarer, 2000, 2003; Farkas & Valdés, 2010; Johnston & Mash, 1989; Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2010), while Ohan and colleagues (2000) observed that girls' parents reported higher scores in efficacy than boys' parents. Others authors observed that family income and marital status were correlates of perceived maternal competence (Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2008; Teti & Candelaria, 2012).

Concerning child well-being levels, in general the case managers of our study reported higher scores in all subscales than those from other studies with maltreating families in the Basque Country (De Paúl & Arruabarrena, 1999) and with families receiving family preservation interventions in Andalusia (Grimaldi-Puyana, Garrido & Jiménez, 2012). The latter study also found that families in which parents had a lower education level and a more precarious work situation showed lower scores in child well-being, findings which were replicated in our study. Unlike our study, De Paúl and Arruabarrena (1999) did not observe significant differences in CWBS scores according to child's gender. We must note that until this date there are still limited data regarding the sociodemographic correlates of child well-being (namely, on gender, age, ethnicity, migrant status and socioeconomic variables) (Statham & Chase, 2010). Therefore, further enquiries are warranted to elucidate which groups of children are more at risk.

We observed significant and positive associations between parental sense of competence and child well-being except for the Household Adequacy dimension. This finding is to be expected, because this dimension measures mainly the tangible, material resources that parents have (e.g., "Household furnishings", "Clothing", "Household sanitation", or "Availability of utilities"), and parenting might attribute the lack of these resources to external factors that do not fall within their responsibility, therefore not affecting their sense of competence as parents. The strongest correlations were found between participants' satisfaction with the parenting role and the CWBS score, which includes all items. Many authors have noted an association between parental sense of competence and child

socioemotional, psychological, behavioral, and academic adjustment (see Jones & Prinz, 2005 for a review). The fact that parents' levels of satisfaction with their parenting role showed a stronger association with child well-being might indicate that psycho-educational interventions must focus on augmenting the enjoyment of the parenting task and alleviate stress levels associated to it. Moreover, these interventions should also aim to promote a more objective and adaptive sense of efficacy as parents, since extremely low levels may lead to learned helplessness and extremely high levels may lead to unawareness of maladaptive parenting practices, hence impeding positive changes in parental behaviors.

Some limitations must be noticed. First, the cross-sectional design makes it difficult to determine the direction of causality between the studied variables. Second, the narrow location of the sample does not allow a generalization of the results to Portuguese families at psychosocial risk from other regions. Nonetheless, this study is one of a few on this subject that includes fathers and professionals as informants; samples of most other studies have been exclusively composed of mothers. Additionally, the sample size is considerable and slightly larger than most studies performed in Portugal on families at psychosocial risk. Future research studies may include more fathers in the sample to allow a deeper analysis of gender differences and testing for interaction effects.

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Resumen

Competencias parentales percibidas de las familias en riesgo psicosocial y bienestar infantil

INTRODUCCIÓN. Las competencias parentales percibidas son un constructo central para comprender las dinámicas y procesos que ocurren en el sistema familiar. Son un determinante importante del comportamiento parental competente y están estrechamente relacionadas con el desarrollo saludable y el bienestar infantil. El objetivo del presente estudio fue obtener una mejor comprensión de las competencias parentales percibidas de las familias en riesgo psicosocial portuguesas y, más específicamente, analizar las relaciones entre las variables sociodemográficas, la eficacia parental percibida, la satisfacción con el rol parental y el bienestar infantil. **MÉTODO.** Participaron 207 familias (168 madres y 39 padres) que recibían intervenciones de preservación familiar en el Algarve (sur de Portugal). La Escala de Competencias Parentales Percibidas y un cuestionario sociodemográfico fueron aplicados por entrevistadores entrenados en entrevistas individuales. Las Escalas de Bienestar Infantil fueron completadas por 21 profesionales responsables de los casos. **RESULTADOS.** La mayoría de los participantes vivía bajo una situación económica y laboral precaria y tenía un bajo nivel educativo. De media, las familias estaban compuestas por cuatro personas y tenían dos hijos. El 58,5% vivía por debajo del umbral de pobreza nacional. Los participantes presentaban niveles medio-altos de eficacia parental percibida y satisfacción a pesar de que puntuaron significativamente más alto en eficacia. Observamos correlaciones significativas y positivas entre la eficacia y satisfacción con todas las dimensiones de bienestar (bienestar infantil global, disposición parental y trato recibido por el niño), excepto con la adecuación del hogar. **DISCUSIÓN.** Estos resultados ponen de relieve la necesidad de incluir como objetivo principal de las intervenciones psicoeducativas dirigidas

a estas familias el incremento de la satisfacción parental y el reajuste de la eficacia percibida. Se discuten las implicaciones para las políticas sociales dirigidas a este grupo vulnerable.

Palabras clave: *Familias en riesgo, Competencias parentales, Satisfacción parental, Autoeficacia parental, Bienestar infantil.*

Résumé

Les compétences parentales perçues des familles en risque psycho-social et le bien-être de l'enfant

INTRODUCTION. Les compétences parentales perçues sont une construction conceptuel clé pour comprendre les dynamiques et les processus des systèmes familiaux. Elles sont déterminantes pour le comportement des familles compétents et sont liées étroitement avec le développement sain et le bien-être de l'enfant. L'objectif de cette étude a été d'obtenir une meilleure compréhension des compétences parentales perçues des familles portugaises en risque psycho-social et, d'une manière plus spécifique, d'analyser les relations entre les variables sociodémographiques, l'efficacité parentale perçue, la satisfaction avec le rôle parental et le bien-être de l'enfant. **MÉTHODE.** Les 207 familles (parmi lesquelles 168 étaient des mères et 39 des pères) repris dans l'étude ont reçu des interventions de préservation familiale à l'Algarve (au sud de Portugal). L'Échelle des Compétences Parentales Perçues et un questionnaire de type sociodémographique ont été appliqués pour enquêteurs expérimentés dans des entretiens individuels. Les Échelles de Bien-être de l'Enfant ont été remplies par 21 professionnels chargés des cas. **RÉSULTATS.** La plupart des participants vivait dans une situation économique et de travail précaires et d'un faible niveau d'éducation. Le numéro moyen des membres qui faisaient partie de chaque famille était de quatre personnes (avec deux enfants). Le 58,5% vivait en dessous du seuil de pauvreté nationale. Les participants montraient des niveaux demi-hautes d'efficacité parentale perçue et de satisfaction, malgré qu'ils ont obtenu une ponctuation significativement plus élevé dans efficacité. Des corrélations significatives et positives entre l'efficacité et la satisfaction de toutes les dimensions du bien-être (bien-être de l'enfant au niveau global, disposition parentale et le traitement reçu par l'enfant), la seule exception étant l'adéquation au sein du foyer, ont été constatées. **DISCUSSION.** Ces résultats mis en relief la nécessité d'avoir comme objectif principale l'augmentation de la satisfaction parentale dans les interventions éducatives ave les familles ainsi que de réaligner l'efficacité perçue. On a réfléchi sur l'impact que ces faits ont sur les politiques sociaux qui visent á soutenir la vulnérabilité de ce collectif.

Mots clés: *Familles en risque, Compétences parentales, Satisfaction parentale, Auto-efficacité parentale, Bien-être de l'enfant.*

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