

Self-Efficacy and Parenting Stress as Predictors of Psychological Well-Being in Parents of Young Children

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Abstract:

Psychological well-being is a crucial aspect of the psychological functioning of parents with young children, as it relates to an individual's ability to accept themselves, build positive relationships, manage their environment, maintain life goals, and develop their potential. In fulfilling their parenting roles, parents face various demands that can increase parenting stress, whereas self-efficacy can serve as a psychological resource helping individuals cope with these demands. This study aimed to analyze the influence of parenting stress and self-efficacy on psychological well-being and to examine the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being among parents of young children. A quantitative approach was employed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) analysis. The results indicate that parenting stress has a significant negative effect on both psychological well-being ($\beta = -0.273$; $p < 0.001$) and self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.363$; $p = 0.001$). Conversely, self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.384$; $p = 0.001$). Analysis of the indirect effect reveals that self-efficacy significantly mediates the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being ($\beta = -0.139$; $p = 0.001$). The research model explains 29.8% of the variance in psychological well-being. These findings demonstrate that the psychological well-being of parents with young children is linked not only to the level of parenting stress but also to their belief in their own ability to handle parenting demands. Therefore, strengthening self-efficacy and managing parenting stress should be addressed concurrently to support the psychological well-being of parents with young children.

Keywords: early childhood; parenting stress; parents; psychological well-being; self-efficacy.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a critical period in an individual's development, as the experiences a child gains during this early stage play a role in shaping cognitive, social, and emotional development, as well as lifelong health. Such development is determined not only by the child's characteristics but also by the quality

of the caregiving environment they experience. The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies responsive caregiving and a safe, healthy, and supportive environment as essential components of "nurturing care" to ensure optimal child growth and development. Within this framework, the well-being of parents or caregivers is integral to the quality of care, as caregivers require an adequate psychological state to provide responsive and consistent care (WHO, 2022; World Health Organization, 2019).

The psychological state of parents becomes increasingly significant when viewed in the context of the demands associated with raising young children. At this developmental stage, children require attention, guidance, stimulation, and supervision, as well as consistent responses to their physical and emotional needs. These demands coincide with various other responsibilities parents must fulfill within family life. The accumulation of such demands can influence how parents carry out their caregiving roles and maintain their psychological well-being. Consequently, parental psychological well-being is a crucial aspect to consider when seeking to understand the experience of raising young children. Psychological well-being reflects an individual's positive psychological functioning in navigating life, rather than merely the absence of psychological problems. Ryff describes psychological well-being as a multidimensional construct comprising six aspects: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. Thus, parents with a high level of psychological well-being are not only free from psychological distress but are also capable of accepting themselves, building positive relationships with others, managing their life environments, maintaining autonomy, possessing a sense of purpose, and developing their personal potential (Ryff, 1989).

In the context of parenting, psychological well-being can be challenged when parents face high parenting demands. Parents must meet their children's needs while simultaneously maintaining other life functions, including managing the household, work, family relationships, economic circumstances, and personal needs. Research on factors associated with parenting stress indicates that such stress is influenced by a combination of parental, child, and environmental factors (Fang et al., 2024). These conditions demonstrate that the parenting experience is not solely related to the child's characteristics but also to the psychological resources parents possess to cope with these various demands. Parenting stress is a psychological condition that can potentially impair psychological well-being. It refers to the pressure that arises when the demands associated with the parental role are perceived to exceed the resources available to cope with them. According to Abidin's model, parenting stress is linked to parental characteristics, child characteristics, and the dynamics of the parent-child interaction. Thus, parenting stress does not stem solely from the child's characteristics but is also related to how parents perceive parenting demands and their own ability to manage them (R. R. Abidin, 1995).

Empirical evidence indicates a consistent relationship between parenting stress and parental well-being. A meta-analysis by Rusu et al. covering 86 studies and a total of 22,108 parents—found a moderate negative correlation between parental stress and well-being ($r = -0.40$). These findings suggest that higher levels of parental stress are associated with a lower likelihood of experiencing positive well-being. This relationship is particularly significant for parents of young children, as the intense demands of caregiving during this period can deplete parents' emotional and psychological resources (Rusu et al., 2025). Parenting stress can also impact a child's developmental environment. A meta-analysis by Ribas et al. identified a link between parental stress and emotional and behavioral problems in children. These findings reinforce the view that parental psychological well-being is a crucial component of the parenting environment and that the well-being of parents must be considered in efforts to create an environment that supports child development (Ribas et al., 2024). Consequently, understanding the factors that explain parental psychological well-being is essential, particularly for parents raising young children. However, the psychological state of parents is not determined solely by the magnitude of the pressure they experience. Parents also possess psychological resources that can influence how they perceive and cope with parenting demands. One such resource is self-efficacy. Bandura defines self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute the actions required to achieve specific goals. This belief influences how individuals view situations, determine their level of effort, persist in their behavior when facing obstacles, and respond to failure (Bandura, 1997).

From Bandura's perspective, individuals with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident in their ability to cope with demands and obstacles. This belief can motivate individuals to persist in their efforts when facing difficulties and to view obstacles as manageable challenges (Bandura, 1997). Conversely, low self-efficacy can foster self-doubt and lead individuals to perceive certain demands as harder to control.

Thus, self-efficacy serves as a psychological resource that influences how individuals handle the various demands of life. In the context of parenting, self-efficacy is relevant because parents face various demands requiring decision-making, problem-solving, emotional response management, and the ability to sustain effort when dealing with a child's changing needs and behaviors. Belief in one's own ability to fulfill the parenting role is known as parental self-efficacy. Parental self-efficacy represents the application of the self-efficacy concept to the parenting domain and has been extensively studied in relation to parents' psychological well-being and parenting processes (Fang et al., 2021).

Theoretically, parents with stronger self-efficacy possess greater psychological resources to cope with the demands of parenting. They tend to be more confident in making decisions, persist in their efforts when facing difficulties, and view obstacles as surmountable challenges. Conversely, low self-efficacy can lead to parenting demands being perceived as more difficult and increase doubts regarding one's ability to fulfill the parental role. A systematic review by Fang et al. indicates that parenting self-efficacy is associated with various psychological and contextual factors in parenting, including parenting stress, depression, social support, and satisfaction with the parental role (Fang et al., 2021). The relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being also finds empirical support. A systematic review of 115 studies by Albanese et al. demonstrated that parental self-efficacy is associated with various aspects of parent and child well-being, including parental mental health, the parent-child relationship, and family functioning. These findings indicate that a parent's belief in their ability to fulfill their parenting role is a relevant psychological resource for understanding parental well-being (Wilde & Dozois, 2019).

From a psychological perspective, the relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being can be understood through an individual's ability to assess the demands placed upon them and the resources at their disposal. When parents believe in their capacity to handle parenting demands, they tend to perceive challenging situations as manageable. Such perceptions can help individuals maintain motivation, regulate emotional responses, direct their efforts, and employ problem-solving strategies in a more adaptive manner (Bandura, 1997). This dynamic is relevant to various dimensions of psychological well-being, particularly environmental mastery, autonomy, self-acceptance, and personal growth (Ryff, 1989). On the other hand, parenting stress can be linked to a diminished belief in one's own abilities. When parenting demands are persistent and perceived as exceeding available resources, parents may experience frustration, emotional exhaustion, and a sense of inadequacy. Such conditions can influence an individual's assessment of their own competence. In other words, high levels of parenting stress not only have the potential to directly impair psychological well-being but may also be associated with a decline in an individual's confidence in their ability to handle parenting demands.

The relationship between parenting stress and self-efficacy is supported by previous research. Studies involving mothers of children with intellectual disabilities have demonstrated a negative association between parenting stress and parenting self-efficacy. Similarly, research on mothers with children aged 9–12 years found a negative relationship between parenting self-efficacy and parenting stress. These findings indicate that parenting stress and beliefs regarding one's own capabilities are interconnected; thus, an increase in parenting stress may coincide with a decline in an individual's confidence in their ability to fulfill their parenting role. This relationship provides an important foundation for a more comprehensive understanding of parental psychological well-being. If parenting stress represents pressure that can deplete psychological resources, then self-efficacy represents the internal belief that enables individuals to cope with such demands. Consequently, these two constructs should be understood not merely as standalone factors, but as components of an interconnected psychological process. Within this framework, self-efficacy can serve as a mechanism explaining the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being. As parenting stress intensifies, individuals may experience a decline in confidence regarding their own abilities. This diminished confidence can, in turn, be linked to a reduced capacity to maintain positive psychological functioning. Conversely, stronger self-efficacy can help individuals sustain their efforts, manage demands, and cope with parenting challenges in a more adaptive manner, thereby supporting psychological well-being.

This framework is significant because much prior research has examined the relationships between parenting stress, self-efficacy, and parental well-being in isolation. Albanese et al. (2019) demonstrated the importance of parental self-efficacy for the well-being of both parents and children, while Fang et al. (2021) highlighted the link between parenting self-efficacy and various psychological factors, including parenting stress. Meanwhile, Rusu et al. provided meta-analytic evidence that parental stress is negatively associated

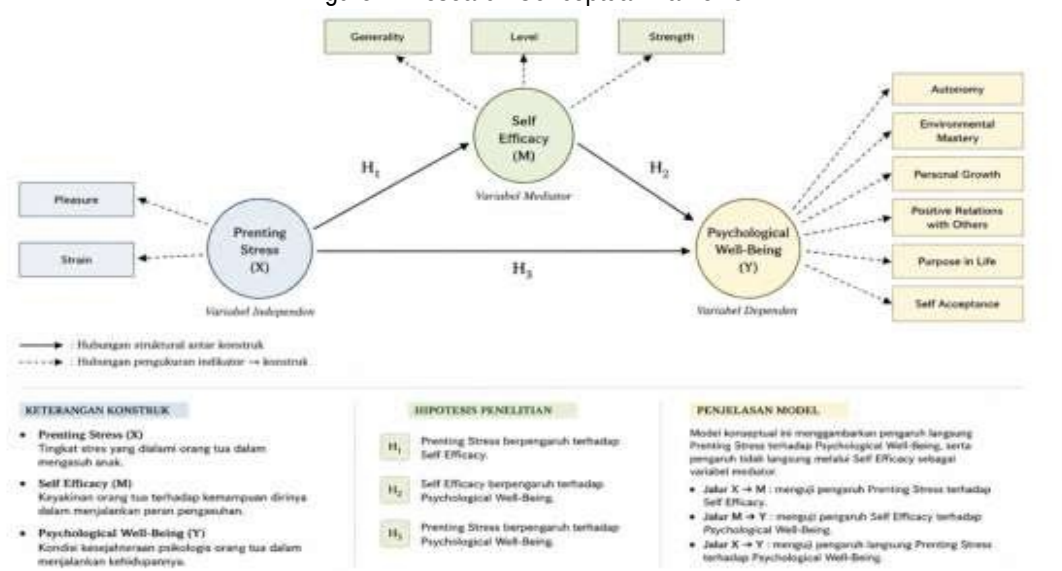
with well-being. Although these findings offer a robust empirical foundation, further understanding is needed regarding the psychological mechanisms linking parenting stress to psychological well-being (Rusu et al., 2025). These limitations are particularly relevant for parents of young children. At this stage, children require relatively intensive parental involvement to meet their physical, emotional, and social needs, as well as to provide developmental stimulation. Simultaneously, parents must manage various family and personal responsibilities. This creates a situation where parenting pressures and individual psychological resources interact to determine the parents' psychological well-being.

Therefore, this study examines not only the direct relationships of parenting stress and self-efficacy with psychological well-being but also the relationship between parenting stress and self-efficacy, as well as the role of self-efficacy as a mechanism within that relationship. This model allows for a more integrative understanding of how parenting stress relates to parents' psychological well-being through changes in beliefs regarding their own capabilities. Thus, the position of this study differs from approaches that treat self-efficacy and parenting stress merely as two independent predictors. This study develops a model that positions parenting stress as a condition potentially undermining self-efficacy, while self-efficacy, in turn, plays a role in explaining psychological well-being. The model enables an examination of whether parenting stress has psychological consequences not only directly but also through the individual's internal psychological resources.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated examination of these relationships among parents of young children in Rantau Utara District, Labuhanbatu Regency. The study positions psychological well-being as a psychological outcome explained by a combination of parenting stress and self-efficacy. Specifically, it investigates self-efficacy as a psychological mechanism mediating the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being. Through this approach, the study not only addresses whether parenting stress is associated with lower psychological well-being but also elucidates a potential psychological process underlying that relationship. Conceptually, the research model can be formulated as follows:

Parenting Stress (X) → Self-Efficacy (M) → Psychological Well-Being (Y). In addition to this indirect path, the study also examines the direct relationships: Parenting Stress (X) → Psychological Well-Being (Y) and: Self-Efficacy (M) → Psychological Well-Being (Y)

Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework



Source: Conceptual map processed by the researcher, 2026

Based on the aforementioned theoretical framework and empirical findings, this study aims to examine the extent to which parenting stress is associated with psychological well-being and self-efficacy, the extent to which self-efficacy is associated with psychological well-being, and whether self-efficacy acts as a mechanism explaining the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being among parents of young children in Rantau Utara District, Labuhanbatu Regency. Research on

the psychological well-being of parents with young children needs to be situated within the context of parenting demands and the psychological resources available to parents. Early childhood is a crucial period in a child's development; consequently, parents play a significant role in providing care, stimulation, and emotional support, as well as creating an environment that fosters the child's growth. While these various demands can yield positive experiences for parents, under certain conditions, they can also become sources of psychological stress. Therefore, the psychological state of parents is a vital aspect of the ongoing parenting process.

Psychological well-being describes a state of positive psychological functioning that enables individuals to accept themselves, build positive relationships with others, maintain autonomy, manage their environment effectively, possess a sense of purpose in life, and continue to experience personal growth (Ryff, 1989). In the context of parenting, psychological well-being entails not only the absence of psychological disorders but also the ability to lead a fulfilling life while navigating the various demands of child-rearing. Parents with a high level of psychological well-being are expected to perform their parenting roles more adaptively, maintain positive relationships with their children and family members, and continue to have opportunities to develop their own personal potential. The psychological well-being of parents can be influenced by various factors, both internal and external. One significant internal factor is self-efficacy—an individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute the actions required to achieve specific goals (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy relates not merely to a person's actual capabilities, but primarily to their belief regarding those capabilities. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident in facing demands, more persistent when encountering obstacles, and better able to sustain the effort needed to complete tasks.

In the context of parenting, self-efficacy can be understood as a parent's belief in their ability to perform parenting tasks and meet the demands of raising a child. This belief is crucial because early childhood parenting involves various situations requiring the ability to make decisions, manage a child's behavior, provide emotional support, and adapt to the child's developmental needs. When parents possess strong self-efficacy, parenting demands tend to be viewed as manageable challenges. Conversely, low self-efficacy can foster doubt and lead to the perception that parenting demands are more difficult to handle. The concept of self-efficacy in this study draws upon Bandura's theory, encompassing the dimensions of level, strength, and generality. "Level" refers to the degree of task difficulty an individual believes they can successfully complete; "strength" pertains to the intensity of the belief in one's own capabilities when facing obstacles; and "generality" relates to the scope of applying that belief across various situations. Empirical support for utilizing these dimensions is demonstrated by Ariska et al. (2021) through the development of a self-efficacy scale based on Bandura's theory. Confirmatory factor analysis results indicate that the dimensions of level, strength, and generality effectively reflect the self-efficacy construct and demonstrate good reliability.

Furthermore, self-efficacy can serve as a psychological resource for coping with various life demands, including those associated with parenting. Parents who are confident in their abilities tend to believe they can resolve problems, persist in their efforts, and devise strategies when facing difficulties. This state fosters a sense of competence and the ability to manage one's environment—key components of psychological well-being (Bandura, 1977; Ryff, 1989). A systematic review by Albanese et al. also demonstrates that parental self-efficacy is linked to various aspects of well-being for both parents and children (Wilde & Dozois, 2019). Thus, both theoretically and empirically, self-efficacy can be regarded as a protective factor with the potential to enhance parental psychological well-being. Beyond internal psychological resources, parental well-being is also linked to the stress associated with fulfilling parenting roles. Parenting stress refers to the pressure parents experience when parenting-related demands are perceived to exceed the resources available to cope with them (R. R. Abidin, 1995; Deater-Deckard, 2004). Such stress can stem from parental characteristics, child characteristics, or environmental conditions. In the context of early childhood parenting, the demands for providing attention, supervision, stimulation, and emotional support can become sources of stress if not balanced by adequate psychological, social, or material resources.

High levels of parenting stress can impact a parent's psychological well-being, as persistent pressure drains energy and emotional resources. Parents may experience exhaustion, frustration, anxiety, and a sense of inadequacy in their caregiving roles. Ultimately, these conditions can hinder an individual's ability to maintain positive psychological functioning. Fang et al. demonstrate that parenting stress is linked to various factors stemming from the parent, the child, and the caregiving situation; therefore, parenting stress

must be understood as a complex phenomenon. The relationship between parenting stress and parental well-being is strongly supported by research conducted by Rusu et al. A meta-analysis of 86 studies involving 22,108 parents revealed a negative association between parental stress and well-being. These findings indicate that higher levels of stress experienced by parents correspond to lower levels of perceived well-being. Consequently, parenting stress can be identified as a risk factor that potentially diminishes parents' psychological well-being (Fang et al., 2024; Rusu et al., 2025).

When self-efficacy and parenting stress are considered together, they represent two distinct psychological aspects of the parenting experience. Self-efficacy reflects an internal resource—specifically, the belief in one's own capabilities—whereas parenting stress signifies the psychological strain that arises when parenting demands are perceived to exceed available resources. High self-efficacy is thought to help parents cope with demands more adaptively, while high parenting stress potentially diminishes the psychological capacity needed to maintain well-being. This relationship indicates that the psychological well-being of parents can be understood not only by the level of parenting stress experienced but also by the strength of the psychological resources available to cope with that stress. Parents with high self-efficacy may possess a greater capacity to manage parenting demands, whereas parents experiencing high levels of parenting stress face a greater risk of a decline in psychological well-being. Therefore, examining both variables simultaneously can provide a more comprehensive picture of the factors that support or hinder the psychological well-being of parents with young children.

Previous research has extensively examined self-efficacy and parenting stress in relation to the psychological state of parents. However, there is a need for further research that specifically investigates self-efficacy and parenting stress simultaneously as predictors of psychological well-being among parents of young children. Prior studies have tended to examine these variables separately or within the context of different outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining the combined contribution of self-efficacy and parenting stress in predicting the psychological well-being of parents with young children. Thus, this study positions self-efficacy as a positive predictor and parenting stress as a negative predictor of psychological well-being. The model rests on the assumption that belief in one's own capabilities can serve as a psychological resource supporting positive functioning, whereas high levels of parenting stress can act as a risk factor for psychological well-being. Based on this framework, the study examines the extent to which self-efficacy and parenting stress predict psychological well-being—both individually and simultaneously—among parents of young children.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory design to examine the relationships and predictive capabilities of parenting stress and self-efficacy regarding the psychological well-being of parents with young children in Rantau Utara District, Labuhanbatu Regency. Data collection was conducted using a cross-sectional method, meaning data for all research variables were gathered during a single measurement period. The research model comprises three main constructs: parenting stress as the exogenous construct, self-efficacy as both an endogenous construct and a mediator, and psychological well-being as the endogenous construct. The structural model tested encompasses the direct effects of parenting stress on psychological well-being, parenting stress on self-efficacy, and self-efficacy on psychological well-being, as well as the indirect effect of parenting stress on psychological well-being mediated by self-efficacy.

The research subjects were parents with young children residing in Rantau Utara District, Labuhanbatu Regency. Based on the study data, the analysis included 219 parents. Respondents were selected based on criteria relevant to the research objectives: parents with young children who are directly involved in caregiving roles. Demographic characteristics collected included education level, employment status, average income, number of children, and respondent age. Among the respondents, the majority held a high school education (152 individuals or 69.4%), were housewives (184 individuals or 84.0%), had an average income of IDR 2–4 million (161 individuals or 73.5%), and had one to two children (160 individuals or 73.0%). Regarding age groups, the majority of respondents fell into the early adulthood category (171 individuals or 78.1%). This study employs three main constructs, namely:

1. Parenting Stress (X) as a predictor variable and an exogenous construct.
2. Self-Efficacy (M) as a mediator variable and an endogenous construct.
3. Psychological Well-Being (Y) as a criterion variable and an endogenous construct.

The relationships between variables in the research model are formulated through three direct influence paths and one indirect influence path. These paths include:

1. Parenting Stress → Psychological Well-Being;
2. Parenting Stress → Self-Efficacy;
3. Self-Efficacy → Psychological Well-Being; dan
4. Parenting Stress → Self-Efficacy → Psychological Well-Being.

Data collection was conducted using psychological instruments designed to measure the constructs of Parenting Stress, Self-Efficacy, and Psychological Well-Being. These instruments were developed or adapted based on the theoretical foundations of each construct and administered to respondents in the form of psychological scales. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute the actions required to achieve specific goals (Bandura, 1997). In this study, the concept of self-efficacy is used to describe parents' beliefs regarding their ability to cope with and manage various life demands, including those related to child-rearing.

The measurement of self-efficacy is based on Bandura's concept, which encompasses the dimensions of level, strength, and generality. The use of these three dimensions is supported by Ariska, Diponegoro, and Tentama, who developed and tested a self-efficacy scale based on Bandura's theory using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Their research demonstrated that the dimensions of level, strength, and generality effectively reflect the self-efficacy construct with adequate psychometric characteristics. In the present study, the measurement model evaluation revealed that the self-efficacy indicators had factor loading values ranging from 0.706 to 0.888. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.720, Composite Reliability of 0.769, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.627 indicate that the self-efficacy construct possesses adequate internal consistency and convergent validity. Parenting Stress refers to the psychological pressure that arises when the demands associated with the parenting role are perceived as overwhelming the resources available to the parent. This construct describes the level of stress parents experience while fulfilling their child-rearing roles and responsibilities.

In this study, Parenting Stress is measured using indicators related to both the experience of strain and the experience of pleasure associated with the parenting role. Evaluation of the measurement model indicates that the "Strain" indicator has a loading factor of 0.759, while the "Pleasure" indicator has a loading factor of 0.843. The Parenting Stress construct yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.750, Composite Reliability of 0.768, and AVE of 0.512. These values indicate that the construct possesses adequate internal consistency and convergent validity for use in structural model analysis. Psychological Well-Being refers to a state of positive psychological functioning characterized not merely by the absence of psychological problems, but also by an individual's capacity for self-acceptance, positive relationship building, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth (Ryff, 1989). In this study, the Psychological Well-Being construct is used to describe the psychological well-being of parents as they navigate life and the role of raising young children. Evaluation of the measurement model shows that the Psychological Well-Being indicators have loading factors ranging from 0.688 to 0.795. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.783, Composite Reliability of 0.832, and AVE of 0.658 indicate that the Psychological Well-Being construct possesses adequate internal consistency and convergent validity.

Data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with the aid of SmartPLS 4.1 software. PLS-SEM was employed because the study aimed to examine predictive relationships between constructs while simultaneously evaluating the model's ability to explain endogenous constructs. The analysis was carried out in two main stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model). The measurement model evaluation was conducted to ensure that the indicators used validly and reliably represented the research constructs. The evaluation encompassed outer loadings, internal reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was evaluated using outer loading values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Indicators with adequate loading values demonstrate the ability to reflect the construct being measured, while AVE values indicate the proportion of indicator variance explained by the construct. Construct reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. A construct is considered to possess adequate internal consistency if its reliability values meet the criteria recommended for PLS-SEM analysis. Discriminant validity was assessed to ensure that each construct in the study was empirically distinct and did not measure the same concept. The evaluation was based on discriminant validity criteria appropriate for the PLS-SEM approach.

Structural model evaluation is conducted after the measurement model meets the criteria for validity and reliability. The evaluation encompasses R^2 values, effect size (f^2), collinearity/VIF, and path coefficient testing. The R^2 value is used to determine the ability of predictor variables to explain the variance in endogenous constructs. The effect size (f^2) value is used to assess the magnitude of the contribution of each exogenous construct to the endogenous construct. Collinearity testing is performed by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value. The VIF value is used to ensure there are no collinearity issues among predictor variables within the structural model. Additionally, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value serves as supplementary information for evaluating model fit. Direct effects between variables are tested using path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. Testing is conducted on three primary structural relationships, namely:

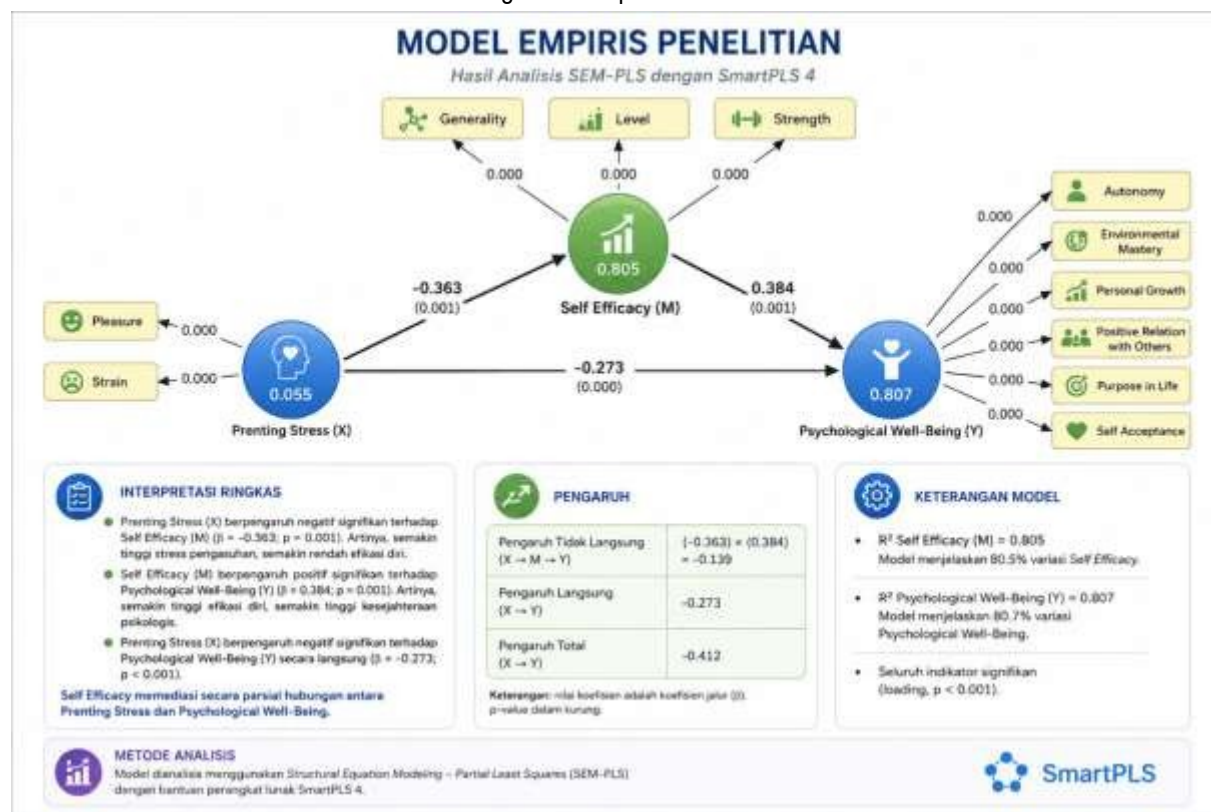
1. Parenting Stress $\rightarrow$ Psychological Well-Being;
2. Parenting Stress $\rightarrow$ Self-Efficacy;
3. Self-Efficacy $\rightarrow$ Psychological Well-Being.
4. The effect is declared significant if the p-value meets the significance level set in the research.
5. Testing the Indirect Effect

Testing the indirect effect was conducted to determine the role of self-efficacy as a mediator in the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being. The analysis was performed by testing the path: Parenting Stress $\rightarrow$ Self-Efficacy $\rightarrow$ Psychological Well-Being.

The mediation effect is evaluated based on the indirect effect value, path coefficient, t-statistic, and p-value. If the indirect effect is significant, it can be concluded that self-efficacy plays a role in explaining the mechanism underlying the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being. Based on the theoretical framework and research objectives, the empirical model tested is:

1. Parenting Stress (X) $\rightarrow$ Psychological Well-Being (Y)
2. Parenting Stress (X) $\rightarrow$ Self-Efficacy (M)
3. Self-Efficacy (M) $\rightarrow$ Psychological Well-Being (Y) and the mediation process:
Parenting Stress (X) $\rightarrow$ Self-Efficacy (M) $\rightarrow$ Psychological Well-Being (Y)

Figure 2. Empirical Model



Source of Analysis Results: SmartPLS 4.1 2026

The model enables the study not only to examine whether parenting stress and self-efficacy are associated with psychological well-being but also to explain the potential psychological mechanism—involving self-efficacy—underlying the relationship between parenting stress and parental psychological well-being.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

The respondents' demographic characteristics are used to provide an overview of the social and family contexts of the parents participating in the study. The data were analyzed descriptively using IBM SPSS Statistics 26. A summary of the respondents' characteristics is presented in the following table..

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Karakteristik	Kategori	n	%
Education	No school	4	1,8
	Elementary	5	2,3
	Middle	37	16,9
	High School	152	69,4
	College	21	9,6
Employment status	Housewife	184	84,0
	Employee	21	9,6
	Self-employed	5	2,3
	Other	9	4,1
Average income	< Rp. 2 million	10	4,6
	Rp. 2–4 million	161	73,5
	> Rp. 4 million	48	21,9
Number of children	1 child	75	34,2
	2 children	85	38,8
	3 children	36	16,4
	4 children	22	10,0
Age	Young adult	171	78,1
	Adult	40	18,3
	Missing	8	3,7
Total		219	100,0

Source: SPSS Analysis Results version 26 3026

Based on Table 1, the respondents' characteristics indicate that this study primarily focuses on parents actively raising young children. In terms of educational background, secondary education predominates, while the majority of respondents are homemakers. These conditions suggest that caregiving activities within the study sample are largely situated in the domestic sphere; consequently, the daily experience of raising and meeting the needs of their children serves as a crucial context for understanding the respondents' psychological state. From an economic perspective, the concentration of income within the IDR 2–4 million range indicates that the majority of respondents carry out parenting duties under relatively uniform economic conditions. In the context of research on parenting stress, self-efficacy, and psychological well-being, this characteristic is significant because parenting demands are linked not only to children's developmental needs but also to parents' ability to manage family resources and the pressures of daily life (Deater-Deckard, 2004; Fang et al., 2024).

Family structure data indicate that respondents generally have one to two children; thus, the caregiving burden within the sample largely falls upon families with a relatively limited number of children. Concurrently, the predominance of respondents in the early adulthood stage suggests that most parents are currently in a life phase characterized by active engagement in family roles. The interplay of this age stage, responsibilities associated with early childhood caregiving, and socioeconomic conditions provides a relevant context for understanding how parents navigate caregiving demands, build self-efficacy, and maintain psychological well-being (Fang et al., 2021, 2024; Ryff, 1989). Overall, the respondents' characteristics indicate that the research findings primarily reflect the experiences of parents of young children within a family context characterized by stay-at-home mothers, secondary education, an income of IDR 2–4 million, one to two children, and early adulthood. Therefore, these demographic characteristics should be considered as the context for interpreting the relationships between research variables, rather than merely as descriptive information about the sample.

Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model evaluation was conducted to ensure that the indicators used adequately represent the research constructs. The evaluation encompassed indicator loadings, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (J. Hair et al., 2022; J. F. Hair et al., 2019). The test results indicate that the indicators for the Parenting Stress, Self-Efficacy, and Psychological Well-Being constructs generally demonstrate an adequate capacity to represent the constructs being measured. Indicator loadings ranged from 0.688 to 0.888. For the Parenting Stress construct, the *Strain* indicator had a loading of 0.759, and the *Pleasure* indicator had a loading of 0.843. Regarding the Psychological Well-Being construct, indicator loadings ranged from 0.688 to 0.795, while Self-Efficacy indicators showed loadings between 0.706 and 0.888. In addition to indicator loadings, internal consistency and convergent validity also yielded adequate results. Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.720 to 0.783, Composite Reliability ranged from 0.768 to 0.832, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values fell within the 0.512–0.658 range. These values indicate that the constructs possess adequate internal consistency and are capable of explaining a sufficient proportion of indicator variance (J. Hair & Alamer, 2022; Michael & Fusté-Forné, 2022). In summary, the results of the reliability and convergent validity evaluations are presented in the following table.

Table 2. Evaluation of Reliability and Convergent Validity of Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Parenting Stress	0,750	0,768	0,512
Psychological Well-Being	0,783	0,832	0,658
Self-Efficacy	0,720	0,769	0,627

Sumber: Hasil analisis SEM-PLS

Furthermore, discriminant validity indicates that the analyzed constructs are empirically distinct from one another (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2015). The values presented in the analysis results show that the inter-construct relationships are weaker than the constructs' ability to explain their respective indicators. Thus, the three constructs can be retained in the structural model for testing the relationships between variables..

Structural Model Evaluation

Once the measurement model was deemed adequate, the analysis proceeded to the evaluation of the structural model to determine the model's ability to explain endogenous variables and to assess the magnitude of the contribution of exogenous constructs to endogenous constructs. The test results yielded an R^2 value of 0.298 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.292 for Psychological Well-Being. Meanwhile, Self-Efficacy showed an R^2 value of 0.131 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.127. These findings indicate that the model explains 29.8% of the variation in Psychological Well-Being through Parenting Stress and Self-Efficacy, while Parenting Stress explains 13.1% of the variation in Self-Efficacy (J. Hair et al., 2022; J. F. Hair et al., 2021). The magnitude of each construct's contribution is also evident from the effect size (f^2) values. Parenting Stress has an effect size of 0.092 on Psychological Well-Being and 0.151 on Self-Efficacy, whereas Self-Efficacy has an effect size of 0.183 on Psychological Well-Being (Cohen, 1988; Hair et al., 2017).

Table 3. Predictive Capability and Effect Size of the Structural Model

Construct Endogen	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Psychological Well-Being	0,298	0,292
Self-Efficacy	0,131	0,127

Sumber: Hasil analisis SEM-PLS

Table 4. Relationship between Variables

Connection f^2

Parenting Stress → Psychological Well-Being	0,092	Parenting Stress → Self-Efficacy
0,151 Self-Efficacy → Psychological Well-Being	0,183	

Sumber: Hasil analisis SEM-PLS.

Collinearity testing revealed VIF values ranging from 1.000 to 1.151 for the structural relationships. These values indicate the absence of problematic collinearity within the model. An SRMR value of 0.087 was also reported as part of the model evaluation (J. Hair & Alamer, 2022).

Testing Direct Effects

Testing for direct relationships was conducted to determine the direction and significance of the effects between variables in the model (J. Hair et al., 2022). The path coefficient estimation results indicate that all direct relationships tested yielded p-values ≤ 0.001 and were statistically significant.

Table 5. Results of Direct Effect Testing

Relationships Between Variables	β	t	p	Information
Parenting Stress $\rightarrow$ Psychological Well-Being	-0,273	3,663	<0,001	Significantly negative
Parenting Stress $\rightarrow$ Self-Efficacy	-0,363	3,363	0,001	Significantly negative
Self-Efficacy $\rightarrow$ Psychological Well-Being	0,384	3,338	0,001	Significantly positive

Source: SEM-PLS analysis results.

The results indicate that parenting stress has a significant negative effect on psychological well-being ($\beta = -0.273$; $t = 3.663$; $p < 0.001$). This means that an increase in parenting stress is associated with a decline in psychological well-being; thus, the higher the pressure experienced in the parenting role, the lower the level of psychological well-being observed in the research model. Parenting stress also demonstrates a significant negative effect on self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.363$; $t = 3.363$; $p = 0.001$). These findings indicate that increased parenting stress is linked to a decrease in an individual's confidence in their ability to handle and meet the demands they face. Conversely, self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.384$; $t = 3.338$; $p = 0.001$). These results show that the higher an individual's confidence in their own abilities, the higher their level of psychological well-being. Overall, the pattern of direct relationships within the model reveals three consistent associations: parenting stress is negatively related to both self-efficacy and psychological well-being, whereas self-efficacy is positively related to psychological well-being.

Testing the Mediating Effect of Self-Efficacy

Mediation analysis was conducted to determine whether self-efficacy plays a role in explaining the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being (Hair et al., 2017; Hayes, 2018). The results of the indirect effect analysis indicate that parenting stress has an indirect effect on psychological well-being through self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.139$; $t = 3.323$; $p = 0.001$).

Table 6. Results of Indirect Effect Testing

Mediation Process	β	t	p	Information
Parenting Stress $\rightarrow$ Self-Efficacy $\rightarrow$ Psychological Well-Being	-0,139	3,323	0,001	Significant

Source: SEM-PLS analysis results.

These results indicate that self-efficacy plays a significant role in the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being (Hayes, 2018). The negative direction of the indirect effect reveals a pattern wherein higher parenting stress is associated with reduced self-efficacy, which in turn is linked to lower psychological well-being. These mediation findings complement the results regarding the direct effect. Parenting stress not only shares a negative direct relationship with psychological well-being but also influences it through changes in self-efficacy. Thus, self-efficacy serves as a psychological mechanism that helps explain the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being within this research model. Overall, the analysis reveals the following pattern of relationships: Parenting Stress $\rightarrow$ Self-Efficacy $\rightarrow$ Psychological Well-Being, characterized by a negative relationship between parenting stress and self-efficacy, a positive relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being, and a significant negative indirect effect. These findings provide a basis for further discussion regarding the psychological mechanisms linking parenting stress to psychological well-being.

Parenting Stress and Psychological Well-Being

Research results indicate that parenting stress has a significant negative impact on psychological well-being. These findings suggest that the higher the stress an individual experiences in fulfilling their parenting role, the lower their psychological well-being (R. R. Abidin, 1995; Deater-Deckard, 2004). This negative relationship demonstrates that parenting demands are not merely linked to stress experienced within the parental role but can also be associated with broader psychological conditions. These findings can be understood by considering the nature of parenting stress as a state in which perceived parenting demands exceed available psychological resources. When parenting demands are persistent, individuals may face pressure to simultaneously meet their children's needs, manage their children's behavior, fulfill family responsibilities, and maintain other aspects of their lives. Such conditions can diminish opportunities for individuals to experience positive emotions, feel a sense of environmental mastery, build healthy relationships, or engage in personal growth.

From the perspective of psychological well-being, a healthy psychological state is characterized not only by low levels of stress or negative symptoms but also by self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth (Ryff, 1989). Consequently, increased parenting stress has the potential to simultaneously impair these various aspects. When psychological energy is largely consumed by coping with parenting demands, the psychological space available for personal development and maintaining life balance may become increasingly limited. These findings align with previous research demonstrating a link between parenting stress and parental mental health (Lan, 2005; Rusu et al., 2025). For instance, a study involving parents of young children in Hong Kong showed that the experience of parenting demands and pressures is associated with parental mental health, identifying parenting self-efficacy as a crucial factor in this relationship (Lan, 2005). Other research on parents of children with developmental delays has also found that parenting stress is negatively associated with parental quality of life (Y. Wang, 2024). Thus, these results indicate that parenting stress should be viewed not merely as an issue concerning the successful execution of parenting duties, but also as a factor with consequences for the quality of parents' psychological lives. Consequently, efforts to enhance psychological well-being should not focus solely on strengthening coping skills; they must also consider mitigating the sources of stress that arise during the parenting process (Fang et al., 2024; Rusu et al., 2025).

Parenting Stress and Self-Efficacy

Further research findings indicate that parenting stress has a significant negative impact on self-efficacy. These results suggest that increased parenting stress is associated with a decline in an individual's belief in their own ability to cope with the demands they face. This relationship is significant because self-efficacy is a psychological resource linked to how individuals assess their capabilities when confronting tasks and demands (Bandura, 1997). In the context of parenting, individuals who repeatedly face demands without feeling they possess adequate resources may experience a decline in confidence regarding their abilities. Thus, high levels of stress not only result in unpleasant emotional experiences but can also influence an individual's evaluation of their own competence. From a psychological perspective, this relationship can be explained through the appraisal process (Bandura, 1997; Deater-Deckard, 2004). When parenting demands are perceived as difficult to control or as exceeding one's capabilities, individuals may increasingly experience failure or an inability to meet those demands. Such experiences can ultimately reinforce the perception that they are ill-equipped to handle parenting tasks.

The findings of this study are supported by previous research (Fang et al., 2021). Studies involving mothers of children with intellectual disabilities have identified a significant negative relationship between parenting stress and parenting self-efficacy. More recent research on mothers with children aged 9–12 years also found a negative relationship between parenting self-efficacy and parenting stress, indicating that higher parenting self-efficacy corresponds to lower perceived parenting stress. These findings are noteworthy because they demonstrate a similar directional relationship; however, in the SEM-PLS model employed here, self-efficacy is positioned as a mechanism that helps explain the link between parenting stress and psychological well-being. Thus, self-efficacy is relevant not only as a standalone psychological characteristic but also as a psychological resource that helps elucidate the consequences of parenting stress for psychological well-being.

Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being

Research results indicate that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on psychological well-being. These findings suggest that the stronger an individual's belief in their own abilities, the higher the level of psychological well-being they exhibit. This positive relationship is understandable, as individuals who believe in their own capabilities tend to hold a more positive perception of their capacity to cope with life's demands. Such belief enables individuals to view various challenges not merely as threats, but as situations that can be faced and managed. In the context of parenting, self-efficacy can foster a sense of competence when individuals encounter the various demands associated with the parental role. This sense of capability helps individuals maintain control over situations, make decisions, manage parenting demands, and sustain a positive outlook on life. These factors are directly relevant to several dimensions of psychological well-being, particularly environmental mastery, autonomy, self-acceptance, and personal growth (Bandura, 1997; Fang et al., 2021; Ryff, 1989).

These findings align with previous research regarding the role of parenting self-efficacy in psychological well-being. Studies involving mothers of children with intellectual disabilities have shown that parenting self-efficacy and optimism play a role in the mothers' psychological well-being. Such research also identifies parenting-related stress and uncertainty as factors linked to psychological well-being. Thus, self-efficacy can be understood as a psychological resource that helps individuals maintain their well-being when facing the demands of parenting. However, the results of this study also indicate that strengthening self-efficacy cannot be separated from the issue of parenting stress, as higher levels of parenting stress are associated with a decline in self-efficacy.

The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy in the Relationship Between Parenting Stress and Psychological Well-Being

The study's key finding is the existence of an indirect effect of parenting stress on psychological well-being, mediated by self-efficacy. These results indicate that self-efficacy serves as a psychological mechanism explaining part of the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being. The observed pattern of relationships can be understood as follows (M. Z. Abidin & Mulyasa, 2021; Bandura, 1997): higher parenting stress is associated with reduced self-efficacy, and this reduction in self-efficacy is linked to lower psychological well-being. In other words, parenting stress relates to psychological well-being not only directly but also through changes in an individual's belief in their own capabilities. This finding makes a significant contribution by demonstrating that the psychological consequences of parenting stress arise from more than just the direct experience of stress itself. One pathway explaining this relationship involves changes in an individual's internal psychological resources (Bandura, 1997). As individuals feel increasingly unable to control or cope with parenting demands, their belief in their own capabilities may diminish; this, in turn, can contribute to a decline in psychological well-being.

This pattern is supported by prior research that specifically examined the role of parenting self-efficacy as a mediator. Studies involving parents of children with developmental delays found that parenting stress was negatively correlated with parenting self-efficacy and quality of life, whereas parenting self-efficacy was positively correlated with quality of life; notably, these studies specifically tested parenting self-efficacy as a mediator between parenting stress and quality of life. More recent findings also indicate that parenting self-efficacy can serve a mediating function in the relationship between parenting stress and parental burnout. In a study of 456 parents in Turkey, parenting self-efficacy was found to be negatively associated with both parenting stress and parental burnout, with mediation analysis confirming the role of parenting self-efficacy in this relationship (Pratama et al., 2026; Z. Wang et al., 2023). The results of the present study extend this pattern of findings by positioning psychological well-being as the psychological outcome. While previous research demonstrated the link between parenting self-efficacy and quality of life or parental burnout, the current findings indicate that this same mechanism is relevant to understanding psychological well-being. This implies that an individual's belief in their ability to cope with parenting demands serves as a crucial factor in explaining the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being.

Psychological Implications

Theoretically, the results of this study indicate that the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being must be understood from a multidimensional perspective (Rahman et al., 2022; Ryff, 1989). Parenting stress is not merely a matter of the intensity of the pressure experienced; it also relates to the

psychological resources an individual possesses to respond to such demands. In this research model, self-efficacy serves as one such resource. The practical implication is that interventions aimed at enhancing parents' psychological well-being should not focus solely on stress reduction but should also aim to strengthen their belief in their own capabilities to fulfill their parenting roles. Psychological programs can focus on developing parenting skills, fostering successful experiences, strengthening coping strategies, and providing support that enables parents to experience a sense of competence in meeting parenting demands.

These findings also establish a basis for viewing the management of parenting stress and the strengthening of self-efficacy as interconnected processes. Reducing pressure without simultaneously bolstering an individual's psychological capacity may yield suboptimal results. Conversely, strengthening self-efficacy can serve as an effective approach to helping individuals maintain psychological well-being while navigating the demands of parenting (Bandura, 1997; Fang et al., 2021, 2024).

Synthesis of Findings

Overall, this study reveals a consistent psychological pattern: parenting stress is associated with reduced self-efficacy and psychological well-being, whereas self-efficacy is linked to enhanced psychological well-being. Furthermore, self-efficacy plays a role in the indirect pathway between parenting stress and psychological well-being. These findings suggest that psychological well-being in the context of parenting is determined not only by the level of stress parents face but also by how individuals perceive their own ability to cope with that stress (R. R. Abidin, 1995; Bandura, 1997; Rusu et al., 2025). Consequently, self-efficacy can be viewed as a crucial psychological mechanism for understanding the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being. Thus, the primary contribution of this study lies not merely in demonstrating a negative association between parenting stress and psychological well-being, but also in identifying the psychological mechanism—specifically self-efficacy—that helps explain this relationship. These findings provide a foundation for developing intervention approaches that focus not only on reducing parenting stress but also on strengthening parents' psychological capacity to cope with parenting demands in a more adaptive manner.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that parenting stress and self-efficacy are psychological factors that play a role in explaining the psychological well-being of parents with young children. SEM-PLS analysis results indicate that parenting stress has a significant negative effect on psychological well-being. These findings suggest that the higher the stress parents experience in fulfilling their parenting roles, the lower their psychological well-being. Parenting stress was also found to have a significant negative effect on self-efficacy. This means that higher levels of parenting stress are associated with lower parental confidence in their ability to handle and meet the demands of parenting. Conversely, self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on psychological well-being, indicating that stronger self-efficacy is linked to better psychological well-being. Another key finding indicates that self-efficacy acts as a mediator in the relationship between parenting stress and psychological well-being. The indirect effect of parenting stress on psychological well-being via self-efficacy was found to be negative and significant ($\beta = -0.139$; $t = 3.323$; $p = 0.001$). These results suggest that higher parenting stress is not only directly linked to lower psychological well-being but is also associated with reduced self-efficacy, which in turn contributes to a decline in psychological well-being. Overall, this study demonstrates that the psychological well-being of parents with young children should be understood through the balance between risk factors and psychological resources. Parenting stress acts as a factor that can undermine psychological well-being, whereas self-efficacy serves as a psychological resource that supports it. The research model explains 29.8% of the variance in psychological well-being, implying that other factors outside the model may also contribute to the psychological well-being of parents. Consequently, efforts to enhance the psychological well-being of parents with young children need to simultaneously address two aspects: reducing the stress arising from the parenting process and strengthening parents' belief in their own capabilities. An approach that integrates parenting stress management with the strengthening of self-efficacy could serve as a foundation for developing more comprehensive psychological support and parenting programs for parents of young children.

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