Journal of Family Psychology
2013, Vol. 27, No. 6, 896–904


0893-3200/13/$12.00 DOI: 10.1037/a0034693

# Socioeconomic Status and Parenting in Ethnic Minority Families: Testing a Minority Family Stress Model

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According to the family stress model (Conger & Donnellan, 2007), low socioeconomic status (SES) predicts less-than-optimal parenting through family stress. Minority families generally come from lower SES backgrounds than majority families, and may experience additional stressors associated with their minority status, such as acculturation stress. The primary goal of this study was to test a minority family stress model with a general family stress pathway, as well as a pathway specific to ethnic minority families. The sample consisted of 107 Turkish–Dutch mothers and their 5- to 6-year-old children, and positive parenting was observed during a 7-min problem-solving task. In addition, mothers reported their daily hassles, psychological distress, and acculturation stress. The relation between SES and positive parenting was partially mediated by both general maternal psychological stress and maternal acculturation stress. Our study contributes to the argument that stressors specific to minority status should be considered in addition to more general demographic and family stressors in understanding parenting behavior in ethnic minority families.

*Keywords:* positive parenting, psychological distress, acculturation stress, ethnic minority, socioeconomic status



The ability to correctly observe and interpret children's signals and to respond to those signals in a prompt and appropriate way, known as sensitive parenting, has been found to be lower in ethnic minority parents than majority parents (Fuligni et al., 2013; Yaman, Mesman, Van IJzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Linting, 2010), but the link between minority status and parenting disappears or becomes substantially smaller when socioeconomic status is controlled for (Mesman, Van IJzendoorn, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2012). This is in line with the family stress model (FSM; Conger & Donnellan, 2007), which posits that economic pressures increase parental stress, which in turn predicts lower quality parenting. However, in some studies, differences in sensitive parenting behavior between minority and majority parents remain even after taking into account socioeconomic status (e.g., Berlin, Brady-Smith, & Brooks-Gunn, 2002; Yaman, Mesman, Van IJzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg, et al., 2010). It may be that ethnic minority families do not only experience heightened stress related to economic difficulties, but also experience stressors specific to their minority status (such as acculturation stress), which have also been found to negatively affect parenting quality (Leidy, Guerra, & Toro, 2010; Martinez, 2006). In the present study, a minority family stress model was tested, taking into account general family stress, as well as stress that is specific to ethnic minority families in a sample of Turkish–Dutch mothers.

Across cultures, sensitive parenting in early childhood is among the most important predictors of positive child development, namely, cognitive ability, social behavior, and emotion regulation (Mesman et al., 2012). The broader construct of positive parenting includes constructs such as sensitivity, but also related parenting skills and characteristics such as scaffolding, respect for the child's autonomy, and positive affect. Higher SES has been found to be related to positive parenting, in both majority and minority groups (e.g., Bakermans-Kranenburg, Van IJzendoorn, & Kroonenberg, 2004; Berlin et al., 2002; Yaman, Mesman, Van IJzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg, et al., 2010). According to the FSM, stressors such as socioeconomic strains lead to psychological distress (e.g., depression and family dysfunction), which in turn leads to nonoptimal parenting (e.g., lack of warmth and support). Several studies found support for this model (e.g., Belsky, Schlomer, & Ellis, 2012; Parke et al., 2004; White, Roosa, Weaver, & Nair, 2009). In most countries, ethnic minority families are overrepresented in the lower SES groups (Crul & Doomernik, 2003; Mesman et al., 2012), and in line with the FSM, they have been found to experience more daily hassles and psychological distress than majority families (Stefanek, Strohmeier, Fandrem, & Spiel, 2012; Yaman, Mesman, Van IJzendoorn, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2010). Daily hassles refer to the experience of stress

This article was published Online First November 4, 2013.

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Financial support from NORFACE (New Opportunities for Research Funding Agency Cooperation in Europe) research programme on Migration in Europe–Social, Economic, Cultural and Policy Dynamics (Grant NORFACE-292) is acknowledged. We thank all parents and children who participated in our study, as well as all students who assisted in various phases of the Social Integration of Migrant Children: Uncovering Factors Promoting Resilience (SIMCUR) project.

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related to daily life routines, such as house cleaning and maintenance, and unexpected minor events, such as being interrupted by unexpected company (Almeida, 2005; Kanner, Coyne, Schaefer, & Lazarus, 1981; Serido, Almeida, & Wethington, 2004). An individual's economic, social, and cognitive resources can make a person resilient or vulnerable to the experience of stress from daily hassles. For example, although highly educated individuals report more daily stressors, they have been found to react less strongly to daily stressors and consider these stressors less severe than do less educated individuals (Almeida, 2005; Grzywacz, Almeida, Neupert, & Ettner, 2004). Daily hassles are, in turn, positively related to psychological distress (e.g., Serido et al., 2004; Stefanek et al., 2012).

Factors and stressors other than SES, daily hassles, and psychological distress could also play roles in explaining differences in parenting behavior between minority and majority groups. Cultural differences in ideas about parenting are often viewed as possible explanations for observed differences in behavior between different cultural groups (Harwood, Schoelmerich, Schulze, & Gonzales, 1999; Pinderhughes, Dodge, Bates, Pettit, & Zelli, 2000). However, there is evidence to suggest that minority and majority families have highly similar views of the ideal sensitive mother (Emmen, Malda, Mesman, Ekmekci, & Van IJzendoorn, 2012). In addition, minority groups are very diverse in their cultural and religious background and lower average levels of sensitivity have been found in these diverse minority groups. It is thus unlikely that (only) cultural factors are responsible for the difference in parenting between minority and majority groups (Mesman et al., 2012). Rather than looking at culture as an explanatory variable in itself, it may be more helpful to examine contextual variables that are associated with ethnic minority status. In addition to general stressors, ethnic minority parents may experience stressors that are more directly related to their immigrant history, such as acculturation stress.

Acculturation is a process in which cognitions (e.g., cultural identity) and behaviors (e.g., ways of speaking, dressing, and eating) of individuals may change as a result of intercultural contact. Berry's two-dimensional model of acculturation distinguishes the independent dimensions of maintaining one's heritage culture and having contact and participating in the dominant society (Berry, 2001, 2006). Acculturation stress is a reaction to events that occur during the process of acculturation, such as discomfort with unfamiliar norms, missing family members, and lack of social support (Leidy et al., 2010). Conflicting acculturation strategies between and within ethnic groups can also lead to acculturation stress. Acculturation preferences of majority and minority groups have been found to differ (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2003; Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker, & Obdrzálek, 2000) and these differences can challenge individuals in their cultural norms, values, and behaviors, and thus in how they should live (Berry, 2006). Acculturation gaps between minority parents and children have also been identified (Kim, Chen, Li, Huang, & Moon, 2009; Martinez, 2006; Smokowski, Rose, & Bacallao, 2008). Children tend to be more engaged with the dominant society, whereas the parent is more involved in the minority community, leading to differences in norms and behaviors between parent and child (García Coll & Pachter, 2002; Leidy et al., 2010). These differences can lead to less-than-optimal family functioning (Smokowski et al., 2008) and family (cultural) stress (Martinez, 2006).

Economic stress has been found to be positively related to acculturation stress (Stein, Gonzalez, & Huq, 2012; White et al., 2009). This association may be due to several mechanisms, such as a larger discrepancy between parental and child acculturation in lower SES ethnic minority families. Low-educated parents are less likely to participate in the broader society through work or other social networks (Conger & Donnellan, 2007), whereas children might get more acculturation opportunities in the school setting. A family from a lower SES background may also have fewer resources to deal with acculturation experiences (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987). In turn, acculturation stress has been found to be related to less positive parenting (Kim et al., 2009; Martinez, 2006). Only few studies have examined minority-specific stressors in relation to parenting practices, and most of these studies focused on adolescents and did not include observed parenting practices. In one relevant study, depressive symptoms mediated the relation between economic stress and parenting, but the role of acculturation stress (assessed by host-language pressure) in the prediction of parenting showed inconsistent association patterns (White et al., 2009). In the current study, the mediating roles of both acculturation stress and general psychological distress in the relation between SES and observed positive parenting was examined in a Turkish–Dutch sample of young children and their mothers.

In the Netherlands, the Turkish represent the largest ethnic minority group, and their population is increasing, which is mostly due to the increase in number of second-generation individuals (Distelbrink & Hooghiemstra, 2005). The Turkish first came to the Netherlands as invited guest workers around the 1960s. They intended to return to their country of origin, but many stayed in the Netherlands. The Turks have a collectivistic background in which values such as obedience and strong family ties are considered more desirable than in the individualistic Dutch culture (Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001). They have limited contact with members of the host society, prefer to marry within their own ethnic group, and maintain their own ethnic language (Crul & Doomernik, 2003; Gijsberts & Dagevos, 2009, Gijsberts, Huijnk, & Dagevos, 2012); these factors limit integration. In the Netherlands, the Turkish minority group, compared with the Moroccan minority group, remains more traditional in their norms and values (Crul & Doomernik, 2003). Acculturation stress has been found to occur in second-generation immigrants (e.g., Crockett et al., 2007), and there is evidence for diverging acculturation preferences between the Dutch majority and the Turkish minority (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2003). Turkish minority mothers with young children in the Netherlands have been found to behave less sensitively than Dutch majority mothers (Leseman & Van den Boom, 1999; Yaman, Mesman, Van IJzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg, et al., 2010), although it is important to note that maternal age and education partially accounted for the difference in parenting between these groups (Yaman, Mesman, Van IJzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg, et al., 2010).

In the present study, positive parenting is defined as (a) the amount of positive affect and appropriate responsiveness of the mother toward the child (sensitivity), (b) the extent to which the mother provides helpful guidance and suggestions according to the needs of the child (structuring), and (c) the mother's ability to refrain from intrusions on the child's autonomy (nonintrusiveness).

Across cultures, early parenting qualities are among the most important predictors of positive child development, namely cognitive development, social behavior, and emotion regulation (Mesman et al., 2012). The experience of positive parenting during early childhood is also an important predictor of later child and adolescent development (Carlson, Sroufe, & Egeland, 2004; Jaffari-Bimmel, Juffer, Van IJzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Mooijaart, 2006). In addition, parenting experiences during early childhood affect children's own parenting qualities in adulthood (Belsky, Sligo, Jaffee, Woodward, & Silva, 2005). It is thus important to investigate which factors contribute to positive parenting in early childhood, especially in minority families since they have been found to be at risk for nonoptimal parenting compared with majority families (e.g., Fuligni et al., 2013; Yaman, Mesman, Van IJzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg, et al., 2010). The present study tests the hypothesis that both maternal psychological distress and maternal acculturation stress mediate the relation between family SES and maternal positive parenting. In addition, it is hypothesized that the extent to which mothers experience daily stress mediates the relationship between SES of the family and maternal psychological distress. This study is unique in its focus on both general psychological distress and acculturation stress, the focus on families with young children (rather than adolescents), and the use of observational measures of parenting (rather than self-reports).

## Method

### Sample and Procedure

The sample consisted of 107 Turkish minority mothers in the Netherlands and their 5- to 6-year-old children ($M = 6.10$, $SD = 0.32$). To ensure the homogeneity of the immigrant sample and to make sure that all mothers had at least some years of education in the Netherlands, only second-generation Turkish mothers (i.e., born in the Netherlands, with at least one of their parents born in Turkey) and first-generation immigrant mothers who migrated to the Netherlands before the age of 11 years were included. All children were in the 2nd year of Dutch primary school (which corresponds to the kindergarten year in the U.S.) at the time of the home visit. The mothers were recruited from municipal registers of several cities and towns in the western and middle region of the Netherlands. In total, 639 families were reached, of whom 113 (18%) agreed to participate. Six (7%) of these 113 mothers were not included, because they did not give consent for the video observation of mother–child interactions. A subgroup of mothers who did not want to participate ($n = 151$) provided some general information about their families by filling out a form. These families did not differ significantly from the participating families in age of father, mother, child, child gender, country of birth of mother and father, mother's marital status, and family situation ($ps = .12$ to $.83$).

All participating mothers gave written consent for their families' participation. Both parents first completed a questionnaire they had received by regular mail. Then, mother and child participated in a 2-hr home visit by two trained (under)graduate students, which included another questionnaire for mother, an interview with mother, child testing, and videotaping mother–child interactions. The home visit was conducted in Dutch, but instruction cards for the video observation and the questionnaires for the parents were available in both Dutch and Turkish. Most mothers indicated that they understood Dutch very well (91%) and they evaluated their own spoken Dutch language ability as very good (92%). Questionnaires for which no Dutch or Turkish versions were available were translated from English into Dutch and Turkish and back-translated to ensure correct wording. Most mothers (91%) chose to complete the Dutch version of the questionnaire.

The children had a mean age of 6.10 years ($SD = 0.32$) at the time of the home visit. The sample included 45 boys (42%). The mothers' average age was 33 years ($SD = 4.19$, range = 24–43). Just under one third of the mothers ($n = 33$) were born in Turkey and migrated to the Netherlands at a mean age of 5.06 years ($SD = 3.04$). Most children lived in two-parent families with both their biological parents ($n = 98$). The majority of the children had one sibling ($n = 64$), and 32 had two or more siblings. Firstborn comprised 57% ($n = 61$) of the sample of children.

### Measures

**Socioeconomic status (SES).** Family SES was based on gross annual family income and the highest completed educational level of both parents. Gross annual family income was measured on a 7-point scale ranging from (1) *no income* to (7) *50,000 euro or more*. Parents' highest completed educational level was measured on a 7-point scale from (1) *no qualification* to (7) *university-level degree*. Because this study was part of a larger international study, the educational categories were recoded into the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED; UNESCO, 2011). Factor analysis showed that gross annual family income and maternal and paternal education loaded on one single factor (loadings = .80, .83, and .78, respectively). SES was computed as the mean of the standardized scores of income and educational level of both parents. For single mother families (8%), mother's educational level was counted twice.

**Daily hassles.** Thirteen items from the Daily Hassles Questionnaire (Kanner et al., 1981) were used to assess the experience of hassles in daily life. These 13 items were selected based on the outcome of a principal component analysis (PCA) and reliability analyses in a Turkish–Dutch immigrant sample (Yaman, Mesman, Van IJzendoorn, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2010). Mothers were asked to rate the intensity of their hassles, such as house cleaning or maintenance, on a 5-point scale from (1) *no hassle* to (5) *big hassle*. If mothers indicated that they did not experience the hassle, the item was coded as 0. The average of 13 items was computed. The internal consistency of the scale was adequate (Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$).

**Acculturation stress.** Maternal acculturation stress was measured with six items from the Ingroup and Outgroup Acculturation Hassles Scale that was developed for the Youth, Culture, and Competence (YCC) study by Oppedal (2006). In the development of the scale the items from two acculturation hassles scales (Lay & Nguyen, 1998; Vinokurov, Trickett, & Birman, 2002) were discussed in focus groups with immigrant and refugee mothers and secondary school students with different national origins, addressing problems associated with the acculturation process both within the cultural context of the majority society and within the heritage cultural context. The

final version of the scale comprised of items that most participants agreed occurred frequently, were stressful, and they themselves or somebody they were close to had experienced. Mothers were asked to rate how much of a burden the stated events had been during the last 12 months. Examples of items are "You have been frustrated because you don't understand Dutch ways of thinking and behaving," "Your child behaves too much like Dutch children and adolescents," and "You miss friends and family living in Turkey." Answer categories ranged from (1) *not a burden* to (4) *very much a burden*. If mothers indicated they did not experience the event, the item was coded as 1. The six items loaded on a single factor and explained 42% of the total variance (factor loadings ranged from .37 to .80).The average of six items was computed. The internal consistency of the scale was adequate (Cronbach's $\alpha = .72$).

**Psychological distress.** Maternal psychological distress was based on depressive symptoms and life dissatisfaction. Maternal depressive symptoms were measured using a Dutch translation of the 10-item short form of the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Andresen, Malmgren, Carter, & Patrick, 1994; Hanewald, 1987; Radloff, 1977). Mothers were asked to indicate for each statement (e.g., "I felt depressed") how often they felt or behaved that way during the past week from (1) *rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)* to (4) *all of the time (5–7 days)*. The total score consisted of the average of 10 items. The internal consistency of the scale was adequate (Cronbach's $\alpha = .78$).

To measure maternal life dissatisfaction we used reversed scores of a Dutch translation of the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Arrindell, Heesink, & Feij, 1999; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). The SWLS consists of five statements rated on a scale from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree*. An example of a statement is "In most ways my life is close to my ideal." The total score on life dissatisfaction consisted of the average of five items. The internal consistency of the scale was high (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$). Maternal depressive symptoms were positively related to maternal life dissatisfaction, $r(105) = .40$, $p < .001$. Maternal psychological distress was computed as the sum of the standardized scores of maternal depressive symptoms and maternal life dissatisfaction.

**Positive parenting.** The fourth edition of the Emotional Availability Scales (EA Scales; Biringen, 2008) was used to measure positive parenting of mothers toward their child during a seven minute problem-solving task. The mother and child were asked to use a set of wooden blocks to copy two different structures (a chair and a house) from example pictures. The two structures were somewhat too difficult considering the age of the child. The mother was instructed to help her child as she would normally do. The adult dimensions Sensitivity, Structuring, and Nonintrusiveness were coded. Sensitivity reflects the amount of positive affect and appropriate responsiveness of the mother toward the child. Structuring measures the extent to which the mother provides helpful guidance and suggestions according to the needs of the child. Nonintrusiveness refers to the mother's ability to refrain from intrusions on the child's autonomy. Each dimension is divided into seven subscales, of which the first two subscales are coded on a 7-point Likert scale and the other subscales on a 3-point Likert scale. The third author, who is an experienced coder of parent–child interactions, completed the online training provided by Zeynep Biringen, the designer of the scales, and then trained a team of coders. During this training, some subscales led to persistent interpretation problems, resulting in adjustments to improve intercoder agreement. Three types of adjustments were made: (a) subjective criteria were removed, (b) scorings of some subscales were changed to make them more linear, and (c) overlap between the dimensions was removed to improve their independence. For example "a healthy and secure connection" on Subscale 1 (affect) of the Sensitivity dimension was removed (adjustment Type I). On the same subscale, the difference in behavioral descriptions between the scores of 6 (bland, neutral affect most of the time) and 7 (balanced, genuine, congruent, relaxed, low-keyed, gentle, soft spoken, OR animated in appropriate ways, clear enjoyment of child) was much larger than the differences between other scores on this subscale. The descriptions were changed so that a score of 6 referred to behavior that was the same as for a score of 7, but somewhat more neutral or less positive (adjustment Type II). An example of the third type of adjustment was the criterion that a high score on Nonintrusiveness could only be given when the adult "lets the child lead and follows the childs" was dropped. This criterion included both Nonintrusiveness ("lets the child lead") and Sensitivity ("follows the child)", and would not allow for the option to code a very passive parent as highly nonintrusive. The corresponding author can be contacted for more details about the adjustments that were made.

To investigate the factor structure of the EA Scales, a PCA with promax (oblique) rotation was performed on all subscales, excluding four subscales with very little variance, and another two subscales because they measure child behavior instead of parental behavior. The PCA revealed three clear components, explaining 63.5% of the total variance. Component 1 (labeled as Sensitivity) consisted of four subscales (1, 2, 4, and 6) of the original Sensitivity dimension. Component 2 (labeled as Structuring) consisted of three subscales (1, 3, and 6) of the original Structuring dimension and subscale three of the original Sensitivity dimension. The last component (labeled as Nonintrusiveness) consisted of the first six original Nonintrusiveness subscales. Cronbach's alphas of the new Sensitivity, Structuring, and Nonintrusiveness scales were respectively .75, .79, and .79. Subscale 5 of the original sensitivity subscale was excluded because the factor loadings were below .35 on all three components, and there was also little variation in scores on this subscale (91% of mothers had the highest score on this subscale). Positive parenting was computed as the mean of the standardized scores of the three EA dimensions. Factor analysis showed that Sensitivity, Structuring, and Nonintrusiveness loaded highly on one single factor (loadings of .88, .86, and .81, respectively).

A team of four coders (who did not visit the mother during data collection) rated the videotapes on the EA dimensions. All coders successfully completed a reliability set of 27 videotapes. For the original emotional availability dimensions, the intraclass correlation coefficients (absolute agreement) ranged from .60 to .79 ($M = .72$) for Sensitivity, from .76 to .89 ($M = .83$) for Structuring, and from .64 to .90 (M = .75) for Nonintrusiveness. For the new scales, the intraclass correlation coefficients ranged from .67 to .84 ($M = .76$) for Sensitivity, from .76 to .83 ($M = .79$) for Structuring, and from .64 to .89 ($M = .75$) for Nonintrusiveness.

## Results

### Preliminary Analyses

Descriptive statistics of the main variables of the original dataset are presented in Table 1. Missing data were estimated with multiple (5-fold) imputations based on predictive mean matching. This procedure assumes that the missing data are missing at random (Van Buuren, 2012). The imputation model was based on background variables (child's gender and age and maternal age) and all the variables in the proposed FSM. The percentage of missing data for the final sample ranged from 0% (EA Scales) to 14% (family income). All variables were inspected for possible outliers that were defined as values larger than 3.29 *SD* above or below the mean. There was one outlier on acculturation stress which was winsorized to be higher than the next highest value that was not yet an outlier (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Acculturation stress and life dissatisfaction were positively skewed and were therefore transformed with a base-10 logarithmic and a square root transformation, respectively.

Table 2 presents the pooled bivariate correlations between the main variables of the five imputed datasets. Lower SES was related to more maternal acculturation stress, more maternal psychological distress, and less positive parenting. Family SES was not significantly related to daily hassles. More daily hassles were related to higher maternal psychological distress, but not to maternal acculturation stress or positive parenting. Higher maternal acculturation stress and higher maternal psychological distress were both significantly related to lower maternal positive parenting. There was no significant relation between maternal acculturation stress and maternal psychological distress.

### Testing the Minority family stress Model

Structural equation modeling (SEM) with EQS 6.1 (Bentler, 2001) was used to test the minority FSM with a general family stress pathway (SES to daily hassles to maternal psychological distress to positive parenting) as well as a pathway specific for ethnic minority families (SES to maternal acculturation stress to positive parenting). The model is presented in Figure 1. Pooled *p* values were calculated of path coefficients according to Rubin (1987). Standardized coefficients and fit indices were averaged across imputed data sets. SEM analysis showed that the model fit the data well, $\chi^2(3) = 1.81$, $p = .63$, normed fit index (NFI) = .96, comparative fit index (CFI) = 1.00, root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) < .001. Both maternal acculturation stress and maternal psychological distress significantly mediated the relation between SES and positive parenting. The direct path from SES to maternal positive parenting was also significant.

The path from daily hassles to psychological distress was significant. However, because the path from family SES to daily hassles was not significant, daily hassles did not mediate the relation between family SES and psychological distress. The daily hassles variable was therefore dropped from the model to make the model more parsimonious. The new model also fitted the data well, $\chi^2(1) = 0.34$, $p = .64$, NFI = .99, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA < .001. Both maternal acculturation stress and maternal psychological distress significantly mediated the relation between SES and positive parenting. The direct path from SES to maternal positive parenting was also significant (see Figure 2). Higher SES was related to more positive parenting. In addition, higher SES was related to less acculturation stress and less psychological distress, which were also related to more positive parenting. The total and specific indirect effects were bootstrapped using Preacher and Hayes (2008) macro package for SPSS. The bootstrap estimates were based on 5000 bootstrap samples. The results were comparable to the results in EQS and showed that the two specific

Table 1
*Descriptive Statistics of SES, Acculturation Stress, Psychological Distress, and Positive Parenting*

| Variable | *N* | *Range* | *M* | (*SD*) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Family SES | 91 | −1.60–1.35 | 0.04 | (0.81) |
| Family annual gross income | 92 | 2–7 | 4.96 | (1.60) |
| Mother's highest education | 107 | 0–5 | 3.16 | (1.24) |
| Father's highest education | 102 | 0–5 | 3.22 | (1.38) |
| Daily hassles | 95 | 0–3.54 | 1.85 | (0.60) |
| Acculturation stress | 105 | 1–4 | 1.55 | (0.57) |
| Psychological distress | 89 | −2.79–3.09 | −0.06 | (1.64) |
| Depressive symptoms | 103 | 1–2.80 | 1.57 | (0.42) |
| Life dissatisfaction | 92 | 1–7 | 2.87 | (1.55) |
| Positive parenting | 107 | −1.99–1.72 | 0.00 | (0.85) |
| Sensitivity | 107 | 8–20 | 14.62 | (2.67) |
| Structuring | 107 | 5–16 | 11.86 | (2.63) |
| Nonintrusiveness | 107 | 8–25 | 18.29 | (3.63) |

*Note.* SES = socioeconomic status.

Table 2
*Correlations Between SES, Acculturation Stress, Psychological Distress, and Positive Parenting (Pooled Result of Five Imputed Datasets)*

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Family SES | — | | | | |
| 2. Daily hassles | .02 | — | | | |
| 3. Acculturation stress | −.21* | .06 | — | | |
| 4. Psychological distress | −.22* | .30** | .00 | — | |
| 5. Positive parenting | .33** | −.07 | −.24* | −.29** | — |

*Note.* SES = socioeconomic status.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

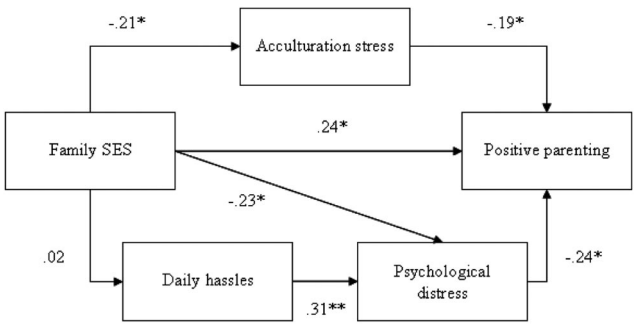


*Figure 1.* Minority Family Stress Model. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

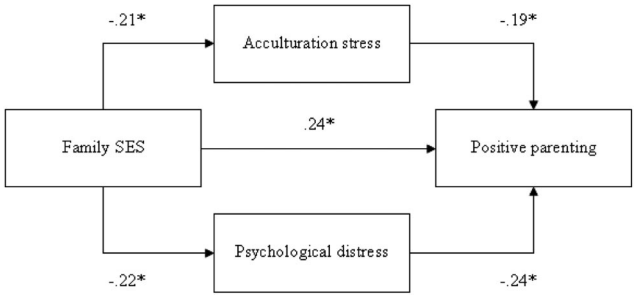


*Figure 2.* Final minority Family Stress Model (without daily hassles). $^{*}p < .05$.

indirect effects through acculturation stress and general psychological distress were significant and equal.

## Discussion

The present study tested a minority FSM with a general family stress pathway, as well as a pathway specific to ethnic minority families. The relation between SES and positive parenting was partly mediated by both general psychological stress and acculturation stress.

In line with our hypothesis, lower SES was related to more psychological distress and more acculturation stress, which were both, in turn, related to less positive parenting. These findings support the general FSM that proposes that economic strains lead to family stress, which then leads to less optimal parenting behavior (Conger & Donnellan, 2007). Several other studies found support for the relations between SES, psychological distress, and parenting (e.g., Belsky et al., 2012; Parke et al., 2004; White et al., 2009) and for the relations between SES, acculturation stress, and parenting (Kim et al., 2009; Martinez, 2006; Stein et al., 2012; White et al., 2009). To the best of our knowledge, our study was the first to investigate the unique contribution of acculturation stress above general psychological stress in the prediction of observed positive parenting. In our study, acculturation stress and general psychological distress only partly mediated the relation between SES and positive parenting. This suggests that there may be additional mediating and moderating effects or independent predictors of positive parenting, such as teenage motherhood, single parenthood, number of children, neighborhood quality, marital discord, social support, discrimination, and parenting beliefs (e.g., Berlin et al., 2002; Conger et al., 2002; Davis-Kean, 2005; McConnell, Breitkreuz, & Savage, 2011; Murry, Brown, Brody, Cutrona, & Simons, 2001; Pinderhughes et al., 2000). Future research is necessary to investigate the unique contribution and role of each predictor, in addition to other predictors of positive parenting.

In line with previous research (e.g., Serido et al., 2004; Stefanek et al., 2012), daily hassles were positively related to psychological distress. However, in contrast to our hypothesis, SES was unrelated to daily hassles (measured as the extent to which a person experienced hassles as a burden). Previous research has shown that more highly educated individuals report more daily stressors, but they experience these stressors as less severe than less educated individuals (Grzywacz et al., 2004). A possible explanation for the fact that we no relation between SES and daily hassles may be that the enduring stressors that our sample faces due to their ethnic background mask the systematic variation in daily hassles due to socioeconomic disadvantage (Grzywacz et al., 2004). Minorities may experience stressful life events, such as discrimination, overcrowding, and poor neighborhood quality, which are related to the experience of daily hassles and depression (Banks, 2010; Grzywacz et al., 2004; Ornelas & Perreira, 2011), but were not assessed in the present study.

It is also notable that acculturation stress and general psychological stress were unrelated, suggesting that general and minority family stress pathways are distinct. This finding was contrary to findings from previous research, which has shown that more acculturation stress is related to more psychological stress (e.g., Crockett et al., 2007). In the present study, only second-generation minorities and first-generation immigrants who immigrated before the age of 11 were included. Thus, all participants spent all or most of their lives in the Netherlands. The acculturation experiences in our sample may not have been stressful enough to be related to depressive symptoms. The mean score of acculturation stress indicated that the stress experienced was indeed relatively low. In addition, a recent study has suggested that discrimination, and not acculturation, stress plays a central role in psychological distress (Stein et al., 2012).

Several limitations of this study should be noted. First, although much effort was put into the recruitment of families, the response rate was low, which resulted in a small sample size, as is the case in virtually all studies of this type. The small sample size may have resulted in limited statistical power to detect significant effects for some associations between variables. In addition, although we found no significant differences in background variables between participating and nonparticipating families, the small sample size may have been subject to some self-selection. Higher nonresponse rates among ethnic minorities, especially families with low SES living in urbanized areas, in the Netherlands have been previously reported (Feskens, Hox, Lensvelt-Mulders, & Schmeets, 2007). The low response rate may have resulted in lower representativeness of the general Turkish population in the Netherlands. For example, 11% of the Turkish minority group in the Netherlands are highly educated (Gijsberts et al., 2012), whereas in our sample 25% of the mothers were highly educated. The educational level of our sample was more comparable to the Dutch population in general than with the Turkish ethnic minority group. It is important to note that this overrepresentation of highly educated mothers in this type of research is very common, regardless of ethnic group, and is often even higher than in the current study. We would like to think that our intensive recruitment efforts have kept this overrepresentation within reasonable bounds. Consistent with recommended recruitment practices in ethnic minority families (Yancey, Ortega, & Kumanyika, 2006), letters and brochures in both Dutch and Turkish language were sent and attempts were made to reach families through personal contact three times at different times and days. In addition, it has to be noted that most studies in this area use convenience samples, for which nonresponse rates can generally not be estimated. Second, our measure of acculturation stress was used with a limited number of items (six items), and has not been formally validated yet. However, the meaningful relations of this measure with relevant family variables (SES and parenting) do give the measure some preliminary credibility. Future studies are

needed to explore how our measure relates to more commonly used measures of acculturation stress and to explore global and more specific forms of acculturation stress in relation to parenting behaviors. Third, due to the cross-sectional design of this study, no firm conclusion about the direction of effects can be drawn. However, the general model does converge with findings from longitudinal studies (e.g., Belsky et al., 2012). Furthermore, the present study only focused on maternal behavior. Future research should include fathers as well, because the role of acculturation stress in positive parenting and child outcomes may differ between fathers and mothers. For instance, a study among Chinese American families showed that only the acculturation discrepancy between father and adolescent related to adolescent depressive symptoms through paternal parenting (Kim et al., 2009). Future research should also include ethnic majority mothers and children of a similar age and from comparable socioeconomic backgrounds to be able to compare parenting behaviors and family stressors and their interrelations between ethnic minority and majority families.

Our results inform scientists as well as practitioners working with minority families by providing insight into the unique influence of cultural stressors, in addition to general psychological distress, on maternal parenting behavior. Our study has also contributed uniquely to the literature by including families with young children (rather than adolescents) and observational measures of parenting (rather than self reports). Across cultures, positive parenting is one of the most important predictors of positive child development, such as cognitive development, social behavior, and emotion regulation (e.g., Leidy et al., 2010; Mesman et al., 2012). Parenting interventions in ethnic minority families may be more effective if they also aim at reducing general and minority-specific family stressors.

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Received March 21, 2013
Revision received September 5, 2013
Accepted September 9, 2013 ■