

PARENTAL PERCEIVED STRESS AND ADOLESCENTS' EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS: FINDINGS FROM A COMMUNITY SAMPLE**Evren Morgul¹, Gamze Soysal²**¹*Psychology Department, University of Roehampton, London, UK*²*Psychology Department, TED University, Ankara, Türkiye*

BACKGROUND AND AIM: Parental stress has consistently been associated with child and adolescent mental health outcomes. However, adolescence represents a distinct developmental period characterized by increased emotional reactivity and autonomy, which may alter the nature of parent-child dynamics. The present study aimed to investigate whether parental perceived stress predicts adolescents' internalizing and externalizing problems after controlling for key demographic factors (child age, child gender, parental education level, and country of residence).

METHODS: (Ethics Committee Approval must be obtained and the number should be specified). The sample consisted of 223 adolescents aged 12-18 years (52.9% girls) and their parents. Adolescents' problems were assessed using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), yielding internalizing and externalizing composite scores. Parental perceived stress was measured using the 4-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-4).

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted separately for internalizing and externalizing problems. Child age, gender, parental education, and country of residence were entered in the first step, followed by parental perceived stress. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional ethics committee (E-64577500-050.99-79416).

RESULTS: Parental perceived stress was significantly correlated with adolescents' internalizing problems ($r=.17$, $p=.013$) but not with externalizing problems ($r=.12$, $p=.064$). After controlling for demographic variables, parental perceived stress significantly predicted higher levels of internalizing problems ($\beta=.14$, $p=.033$), accounting for an additional 2% of the variance ($\Delta R^2=.020$). In contrast, parental perceived stress did not significantly predict externalizing problems ($\beta=.09$, $p=.202$).

CONCLUSIONS: Findings indicate that parental perceived stress is specifically associated with adolescents' internalizing symptoms rather than externalizing behaviors. This pattern underscores the importance of considering developmental stage and symptom profiles when evaluating family-related risk factors, as emotional difficulties during adolescence may be more sensitive to parental stress. These findings suggest that interventions aimed at reducing parental stress and improving parental coping may play a protective role in adolescents' emotional well-being.

Keywords: perceived stress, adolescence, internalizing-externalizing problems