

Parental burnout in Iran: Psychometric properties of the Persian (Farsi) version of the Parental Burnout Assessment (PBA)

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Abstract

Parental burnout is a severe exhaustion syndrome resulting from lasting exposure to overwhelming parenting stress. The current gold-standard instrument to evaluate parental burnout is the Parental Burnout Assessment (PBA), which has recently been used in the International Investigation of Parental Burnout (IIPB), a global study on the prevalence of parental burnout. The IIPB has stimulated worldwide interest in the construct of parental burnout, but efforts are still needed to validate the PBA in different languages. The current study is aimed at examining the psychometric properties of the Persian translation of the PBA (PBA-Persian). The PBA-Persian was administered to 448 Iranian parents along with the Kansas Parental Satisfaction Scale and the Well-Being Index (WHO-5). Results showed that the PBA-Persian version is a promising tool, but the “Emotional Distancing” subscale should be used with caution. The PBA-Persian had good criterion validity vis-à-vis parental satisfaction and well-being. Future research is needed on gender invariance.

KEYWORDS

exhaustion, Iran, parent, test, translation, validation

Becoming a parent is the biggest and most permanent decision in one's life (Siegel & Hartzell, 2013). Although the birth of a child can be the happiest and most exciting event in a couple's life, parenthood can also be challenging. Bringing up a child can be a difficult task and an emotional burden for the parents (Machalicek, Lang, & Raulston, 2015). When child(ren)-related demands outweigh supporting and protective factors, parenting can result in overwhelming stress and exhaustion. The construct of parental burnout (i.e.,

intense exhaustion in the parenting role, loss of parenting pleasure and efficiency, and emotional distancing from one's children; Mikolajczak, Brianda, et al., 2018a; Mikolajczak, Raes, et al., 2018b) has recently emerged as pivotal to understanding the experience, antecedents, and consequences of severe parenting stress (Mikolajczak & Roskam, 2018; Mikolajczak, Gross, & Roskam, 2019; Roskam, Brianda, & Mikolajczak, 2018). Assessing the relevance and validity of this construct in Iran seems important to foster the study of parental burnout in the country (and in the Persian region more broadly), and to lay down solid foundations for the inclusion of parental burnout research in parent-child interaction studies.

1 | PARENTING IN IRANIAN FAMILY

From the past to the present, the family institution has been considered essential in Iranian society (Armaki & Bahar, 2006; Parvizy & Ahmadi, 2009). The ideal pattern for Iranian family is hierarchical and pluralist structure (Panaghi, Mokhtarnia, & Kalantary, 2016). The father's authority in the family, the value of childbirth and childrearing for the stability of marriage, the respectful status of the parents are important characteristics of the Iranian family (Armaki & Bahar, 2006). This significance stems from both historical/cultural background and religious beliefs (Aghajanian, 2001; Mobasher, 2012). In Iran, families' commitment to religious values is seen as one of the characteristics of a healthy family (Panaghi et al., 2016), and couples with a higher religious orientation tend to have more children (Kalantari et al., 2010). Families are traditionally large, and bringing up children in an intimate family environment that promotes love, feelings of belonging, security, and coherence is of utmost importance in the Iranian society (Fereidouni et al., 2015; Parvizy & Ahmadi, 2009).

In such a culture, women, according to their traditional gender role (e.g., being a wife and a mother), are the main caregivers: they are responsible for children's upbringing and take care of children's issues and problems (Farshi et al., 2018; Tashakkori & Mehryar, 1982). Although things tend to change, especially in big cities where gender roles evolve and the number of children decreases (Falahati, 2016; Hosseini, 2009; Piltan & Rahmanian, 2015), having children is still seen as a natural and essential need for couples (Montazeri, 2016) and for mothers in particular. In the Iranian culture, women consider motherhood as a social, cultural, and psychological experience that brings self-actualization and satisfies the growth needs. Becoming a mother is considered a step to achieve a successful identity (Hashemi, Rajabi, & Ahmadi, 2017). The significance of this issue is expressed in the phenomenology of the life experience of single women in Tehran (i.e., Iran's capital) as a feeling of loneliness and having incomplete and undeveloped gender identity (Hosseini & Izadi, 2016).

Yet, recent changes in the lifestyle of Iranian families, the tendency of women to get higher education and job promotion, the delay in the age of marriage, the desire for more prosperity, the increasing costs of child care, the growing concerns for the future of children, all drastically increased the pressure on both parents (Alikhani, Manzari Tavakoli, & Manzari, 2013; Hosseini, 2009; Piltan & Rahmanian, 2015; Tahmassian, Anari, & Fathabadi, 2011). It might, therefore, be a particularly important time to examine the concept of parental burnout.

2 | BURNOUT IN PARENTS

The concept of "burnout" can be traced back to the multi-dimensional job burnout concept which was introduced by Freudenberger (1974) and Maslach (1976). Job burnout man-

ifests itself as emotional exhaustion, cynicism or depersonalization, and a decrease in professional efficiency (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Burnout is a gradual process that begins with an imbalance between resources and demands, leading to emotional exhaustion. In the next phase, cynicism, detachment, and negative attitudes develop as a defense mechanism which is called depersonalization. At such a point, the individual distance oneself mentally from the stressful situation in order to reduce emotional exhaustion and protect oneself. This coping strategy not only does not reduce tension but also increases problems. As a result, one feels inefficient and doubtful about one's professional abilities (Edelwich & Brodsky, 1980; Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Nuallaong, 2013).

The burnout concept was later discussed in other contexts, such as for instance the educational context in which learning activities of students were considered as "work" that can sometimes lead to academic burnout or school burnout (Parker & Salmela-Aro, 2011; Salmela-Aro, Kiuru, Leskinen, & Nurmi, 2009). Studies on burnout in the parenting context started with Pelsma (1989) and continued with Norberg (2007). In these studies, parenting tasks and responsibilities are considered as "work" requiring a considerable amount of time and energy expenditure, which can also lead to burnout. Parental burnout is a syndrome of psychological, mental, and emotional exhaustion related to one's parenting role, which alters parents' perspective on parenting (Luescher, Dede, Gitten, Fennell, & Maria, 1999). Empirical studies conducted in Western countries (Belgium, Finland, France, Spain, United Kingdom, United States) suggest that parental burnout manifests in four core symptoms: (1) overwhelming exhaustion related to one's parental role (Exhaustion, EX): Parents feel emotionally drained by their parental role. The mere thought of what they will have to do with or for their children make them feel they have reached the end of their tether; (2) Feelings of being fed up with one's parental role (Feelings of Being Fed Up; FU): Parents feel so fed up with parenting that they lose the pleasure of being with their children; (3) Emotional distancing from one's children (Emotional Distancing; ED): parents have so little energy that they become emotionally distant from their children: they are less likely to engage in active interactions with their children, and do the bare minimum for them, and (4) Contrast with previous parental self (Contrast; CO): The parents do not recognize themselves as the parents they used to be; they are ashamed of the parents they have become (Roskam et al., 2018; for cross-cultural replication see, e.g., Aunola, Sorkkila, & Tolvanen, 2020). Parental burnout can lead to negative outcomes for children and parents, such as child neglect, thoughts of escaping the family and suicide, feelings of alienation in relation to their spouses, and marital conflicts (Mikolajczak et al., 2018a).

Actually, research has already shown that some factors including the age of mothers (especially when the first child is born) and children, the number of children (Le Vigouroux & Scola, 2018; Mikolajczak et al., 2018b), the number and gender of caregivers (Mikolajczak et al., 2018b), having an adopted child (Denby, Rindfleisch, & Bean, 1999) or having children with disorders or diseases (Blanchard, Gurka, & Blackman, 2006; Lindström, Åman, & Norberg, 2011; Mousavi, 2020; Norberg, 2007), shorter length of the marriage (Mousavi, 2020), low level of mother's knowledge about parenting, poor perception of child's needs, a too high or too low sense of responsibility in mothers, the quality of the father's presence at home (Alikhani et al., 2013) all influence the risk of exhaustion in parents. However, personal factors such as low emotional intelligence, low parental self-efficacy beliefs, as well as some interpersonal factors such as poor parenting practices, lack of cooperation between parents, all play an even stronger role in parental burnout than sociodemographic factors (Mikolajczak et al., 2018b). Whichever the nature of the risk and protective factors of the parent, parental burnout occurs when demographic, personal, interpersonal, or cultural factors that increase parenting stress chronically outweigh the factors that alleviate it (Roskam et al., 2018). The negative consequences of parental burnout for both parents

and children highlight the need to dispose of reliable and valid instruments to evaluate this construct.

3 | ASSESSING PARENTAL BURNOUT

Since Freudenberger (1974) conceptualized burnout in professional settings, and Maslach and Jackson (1981) turned it into a measurable construct, this concept has been used in different contexts and situations including the educational context (Salmela-Aro et al., 2009), sport (Raedeke & Smith, 2009), and parenting (Norberg, 2007; Pelsma, Roland, Tollefson, & Wigington, 1989). Pelsma et al. (1989) was the first to adapt the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach, Jackson, Leiter, Schaufeli, & Schwab, 1986) to the parenting context. However, the psychometric properties of the resulting instrument were poor. Roskam, Raes, and Mikolajczak (2017) also tried to adapt the MBI to the parenting context and were confronted with the same problem as Pelsma: the depersonalization factor did not hold. After discussion in two focus groups of parents, the “depersonalization” subscale was replaced by “emotional distancing from children”. The resulting instrument, named PBI for *Parental Burnout Inventory* assesses three dimensions: emotional exhaustion from parental role (eight items), emotional distancing from one’s children (eight items), and reduced parental efficiency (six items). In Roskam et al.’s study (2017), this 22-item scale showed proper fit and good psychometric properties. Yet, because the PBI was built from the MBI via a deductive approach, it remained unclear whether the tridimensional structure was the best representation of parental burnout.

Roskam et al. (2018) went therefore deeper into the conceptualization and measurement of parental burnout using a totally different method. An inductive approach was used to reconstruct the parental burnout phenomenon based solely on the experience of burned-out parents. Testimonies of burned-out parents were subjected to interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) by colleagues unaware of the tridimensional structure mentioned above (Hubert & Aujoulat, 2018). Then, about 50 items representing the various themes that emerged from IPA were extracted from the testimonies of burned-out parents and were then presented to a large sample of French- and English-speaking parents. The factorial analysis resulted in the parental burnout assessment (PBA), a 23-item questionnaire assessing four dimensions among which two replicated the PBI, including exhaustion in the parental role, emotional distancing from one’s children, and two were somewhat different, including feelings of being fed up with parenting, and contrast with previous parental self. To date, the PBA is considered as the gold measure of parental burnout because of its background, good psychometric properties, large usage, and free access (Aunola et al., 2020). However, it has not yet been validated in Persian-speaking countries.

4 | THE CURRENT STUDY

The aim of the current study is to examine the psychometric properties of the Persian translation of the PBA (PBA-Persian). In order to do so, we examined both the internal validity and the criterion validity of the instrument. We started by examining the factorial structure of the instrument and its level of congruence with the four-factor original model. Given that the original four-factor structure of the PBA had been replicated in several countries and seemed therefore pretty robust across countries (e.g., Roskam et al., 2018; International Investigation of Parental Burnout, under review), we expected to replicate the four-factor structure of PBA in Iran. We also tested whether a second-order factor model with parental burnout as a latent variable to the four factors would also fit the data (e.g., Aunola et al.,

2020). We then examined the internal consistencies of the global score and its subscales. Finally, we examined the correlation of the PBA-Persian with other variables (sociodemographic variables, parental satisfaction, and psychological well-being). The PBA-Persian was expected to correlate strongly and negatively with both parental satisfaction and psychological well-being.

5 | METHOD

5.1 | Participants

Data were collected from a sample of 448 Iranian parents (98.2% born in Iran), among which 226 (50.4%) were only mothers and 222 (49.6%) were only fathers. Participants were independent, not dyads. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 67 ($M_{\text{age}} = 40.33$; $SD = 8.17$). 85.4% of participants were raising their child(ren) with a partner who was the other biological parent (two-parent family), 10.1% were single parents, 2.9% were in a step-family, 0.9% were in the multi-generational family, 0.4% were in polygamous families, and 0.2% did not report the information. Overall, the participants had one to eight children (either biological or living in their household), aged 0–44 years ($M_{\text{age}} = 13.98$; $SD = 9.23$) for the oldest and from 0 to 33 years old ($M_{\text{age}} = 9.74$; $SD = 7.30$) for the youngest. The parents spent from 1 to 16 hours per day with their child(ren) ($M_{\text{hours}} = 5.84$, $SD = 3.49$). Their home was located in a relatively disadvantaged neighborhood (11.7%), in the average neighborhood (59.7%), or in the relatively prosperous neighborhoods (28.6%). The number of the successfully completed school years from the age of 6 was 13.73 on average ($SD = 3.45$). And 67.2% of the parents had a paid professional activity. On average, 1.8 ($SD = 0.40$) women and 1.00 ($SD = 0.31$) men were living in the household caring for the children on a daily basis.

5.2 | Procedure

The current study was conducted as part of the International Investigation of Parental Burnout (IIPB) which is a consortium gathering 40 countries over the world, coordinated by Isabelle Roskam and Moïra Mikolajczak at *UCLouvain* in Belgium. Because the study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in Belgium, the submission was not required by the IRB in Iran. Parents were eligible to participate in the study only if they had (at least) one child still living at home. The informed consent they signed allowed participants to withdraw at any stage without having to justify their withdrawal. They were also assured that data would remain anonymous.

The translation of the survey in Persian was achieved with a double-checks procedure. A pilot study based on 48 participants was conducted. The final data collection was based on a convenience sample recruited in Tehran by proposing a paper-pencil version of the survey to parents in shopping malls, sports clubs, beauty salons, shops, parks, and streets, between August and September 2018.

5.3 | Measures

Demographic questions. Participants were asked about their age, gender, number of children, nationality, type of family (single parent, living with the father/mother of the children, step-family, multi-generation, and so on), level of education, age of the oldest and

the youngest child, number of women and men who are responsible for caring, neighborhood type (disadvantaged, average, advantaged), the number of hours spent by the parent with the child, and employment status.

Parental burnout was assessed with the PBA (Roskam et al., 2018), a 23-item self-report. The PBA consists of four subscales: Emotional Exhaustion (nine items; e.g., “*I feel completely run down by my role as a parent*”), Contrast (six items; e.g., “*I’m no longer proud of myself as a parent*”), Feelings of Being Fed Up (five items; e.g., “*I can’t stand my role as father/mother anymore*”), and Emotional Distancing (three items; e.g., “*I do what I’m supposed to do for my child(ren), but nothing more*”). Items are rated on 7-point Likert scales: never (0), a few times a year or less (1), once a month or less (2), a few times a month (3), once a week (4), a few times a week (5), every day (6). In the initial validation study conducted with French- and English-speaking parents, Cronbach’s alphas were .93, .93, .90, and .81 for the four subscales and .96 for the global score (the sum score of all PBA items) (Roskam et al., 2018). Cronbach alphas in the current study are given in the Results section.

Psychological well-being was measured by the WHO-5 Well-Being Index, a short 5-item self-report questionnaire designed by the World Health Organization (WHO). Items (e.g., “*I woke up feeling fresh and rested*”) are rated on a 6-point Likert scale going from 0 (never) to 5 (all of the time). Higher scores represent higher well-being and lower scores indicate a lack of well-being. The Cronbach’s alpha of the Persian Version of WHO-5 was calculated as .89 (Dehshiri & Mousavi, 2016a). In the current study, Cronbach’s alpha was .93.

Satisfaction with parenting role was assessed by Kansas Parental Satisfaction Scale (KPSS) (James et al., 1985), a 3-item self-report scale rated on five-point Likert scales from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This scale assesses the level of satisfaction of parents vis-à-vis their child(ren)’s behavior (“*I’m satisfied with my child(ren)’s behavior*”), their role as a parent (“*I’m satisfied with myself as a parent*”), and their relationship with their child(ren) (“*I’m satisfied with my relationship(s) with my children.*” In the study of James et al. (1985), the Cronbach’s alpha was .85 in fathers and .78 in mothers. Mousavi (under review) translated this scale into Persian and reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .84. In the current research, the internal consistency coefficient of KPSS was .84 (.83 in fathers and .84 in mothers).

5.4 | Data Analyses

We first performed a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to examine to what extent the Iranian data fit with the initial measurement model (Roskam et al., 2018), that is, four interrelated factors: Emotional Exhaustion, Contrast, Feelings of Being Fed Up, and Emotional Distancing (henceforth Model 1). We also tested whether the data would fit with a second-order factor model that has been found in other countries (e.g., Aunola et al., 2020; Poland: Szczygiel et al., 2020) and that makes even more sense theoretically speaking: four first-order factors forming a second-order factor: Parental burnout (henceforth Model 2). We used Structural Equation Modelling software Stata 15. We conducted analyses based on the covariance matrix and using maximum likelihood estimation with Satorra–Bentler correction for non-normal data. Skewness and kurtoses indeed indicated that PBA items displayed deviations from normality. Conceptually, these deviations from normality make sense: burnout is not expected to be normally distributed in the population. Like most mental health indicators, burnout is expected to present an asymmetric distribution (i.e., to be positively skewed, like most psychological disorders). However, as normality is a critical assumption underlying the maximum likelihood procedure used for CFA, Satorra–Bentler correction for non-normal data was applied. Model 1 included four latent variables

representing the concepts of exhaustion, contrast with previous parental self, feelings of being fed up and emotional distancing, and their indicators consisting of nine items for exhaustion, six for contrast with previous parental self, five for feelings of being fed up, and three for emotional distancing. Model 2 included these factors as first-order factors and a second-order factor: Parental burnout. Several goodness-of-fit indices were used to determine the acceptability of the model. In addition to the chi-square model, which may lead to model rejection even when the model misspecification is relatively minor (Byrne, 1998; Hayduk, 1996), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) were used (Acock, 2013). For CFI and TLI, values close to .90 or greater are acceptable to good. RMSEA and SRMR should preferably be less than or equal to .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

We then tested the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of the four scales and the total score of the PBA with the Iranian data first on the pooled sample and then separately for the mothers and the fathers.

With regard to the relation between the PBA and other variables, we computed correlations between the subscales and total score of the PBA and the mean scores of the ordinal/continuous variables, including age, educational level, number of children, number of women and men in the household, neighborhood, time spent with children, age of young children, parental satisfaction, and psychological well-being. We also computed one-way ANOVAs to test mean differences for categorical variables, such as having a paid professional activity, and family type (single-parent vs. two-parent families).

6 | RESULTS

6.1 | Confirmatory Factor Analysis

As shown in Table 1, all the estimated factor loadings of Model 1 were significant at $p < .001$. Standardized factor loadings ranged between .32 and .91, only two (including EX7 and EX8) were below .40. Correlations between the four latent factors were .96 (Exhaustion–Contrast with previous parental self), .86 (Exhaustion–Feelings of Being Fed Up), .86 (Exhaustion–Emotional Distancing), .87 (Contrast with previous parental self–Feelings of Being Fed Up), .81 (Contrast with previous parental self–Emotional Distancing), and .63 (Feelings of Being Fed Up–Emotional Distancing). With regard to fit indices, $S-B\chi^2(224) = 569.08$, was significant at $p = .001$, indicating that there is some discrepancy between the hypothesized model and the data. Despite high factor loadings, fit indices suggested that the model displayed a poor fit to the data, with CFI = .85, TLI = .83, RMSEA = .06, and SRMR = .07. The modification fit indices suggested a few covariances between error terms, in particular covariances between five within-factor error terms, that is, EX1–EX2, EX5–EX9, EX7–EX8, FU1–FU3, FU4–FU5. When these were considered in the model, fit indices suggested that Model 1 has acceptable to good fit to the data, with $S-B\chi^2(219) = 442.36$, $p < .001$, CFI = .90, TLI = .89, RMSEA = .05, and SRMR = .07. Considering the high correlations between the four factors, we tested a second-order model with the four factors as a first-order factor and “Parental burnout” as the second-order factor (Model 2). Model 2 (see Figure 1) also showed an acceptable to good fit to the data, with $S-B\chi^2(221) = 450.28$, $p < .001$, CFI = .90, TLI = .89, RMSEA = .05, and SRMR = .07. These results confirmed the validity of both the first- and second-order factor internal structure of the Persian version of the PBA.

TABLE 1 Items and standardized regression weights from CFA in Iranian sample (Model 1, N = 448)

		Iranian sample (CFA)			
		EX	CO	FU	ED
EX2	I have the sense that I'm really worn out as a parent احساس می‌کنم که به عنوان یک پدر/مادر کاملاً فرسوده شده‌ام	.76	—	—	—
EX4	When I get up in the morning and have to face another day with my child(ren). I feel exhausted before I've even started وقتی صبح از خواب بیدار می‌شوم و باید یک روز دیگر را با فرزند(ان)م بگذرانم، حتی قبل از شروع روز، احساس خستگی می‌کنم	.65	—	—	—
EX5	I find it exhausting just thinking of everything I have to do for my child(ren) حتی فکر کردن به کارهایی که باید برای فرزند(ان)م بکنم، خسته‌کننده است	.69	—	—	—
EX7	My role as a parent uses up all my resources نقش من به عنوان پدر/مادر تمام توانم را مصرف می‌کند	.36	—	—	—
EX1	I feel completely run down by my role as a parent در نقشم به عنوان پدر/مادر احساس فرسودگی می‌کنم	.78	—	—	—
EX3	I'm so tired out by my role as a parent that sleeping doesn't seem like enough آنقدر از نقش پدر/مادری (ام) خسته‌ام که خوابیدن خستگی را رفع نمی‌کند	.63	—	—	—
EX9	I'm in survival mode in my role as a parent فقط می‌خواهم از پدر/مادر بودن خلاص شوم	.59	—	—	—
EX6	I have zero energy for looking after my child(ren) اصلاً برای مراقبت از فرزند(ان)م انرژی ندارم	.76	—	—	—
EX8	I have the impression that I'm looking after my child(ren) on autopilot احساس می‌کنم که دارم به طور خودکار از فرزند(ان)م مراقبت می‌کنم	.32	—	—	—

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

		Iranian sample (CFA)			
		EX	CO	FU	ED
FU1	I can't stand my role as father/mother any more دیگر نمیتوانم نقشم را به عنوان پدر/مادر تحمل کنم	—	.86	—	—
FU3	I feel like I can't take any more as a parent احساس می‌کنم دیگر نمیتوانم نقشم را به عنوان والد (پدر/مادر) بازی کنم	—	.87	—	—
FU2	I can't take being a parent any more دیگر نمیتوانم والدین را تحمل کنم	—	.70	—	—
FU4	I feel like I can't cope as a parent احساس می‌کنم نمیتوانم با نقش والد (پدری/مادری) کنار بیایم	—	.89	—	—
FU5	I don't enjoy being with my child(ren) از بودن با فرزند(ان) لذت نمی‌برم	—	.75	—	—
ED1	I do what I'm supposed to do for my child(ren) but nothing more من فقط کارهای ضروری را برای فرزند(ان) می‌کنم، نه بیشتر	—	—	.47	—
ED2	Outside the usual routines (lifts in the car, bedtime, meals) I'm no longer able to make an effort for my child(ren) به جز کارهای روزمره (رساندن با ماشین، غذادادن و خواباندن) کار دیگری نمیتوانم برای فرزند(ان) انجام دهم.	—	—	.74	—
ED3	I'm no longer able to show my child(ren) how much I love them دیگر نمیتوانم به فرزند(ان) نشان دهم چقدر دوستش(ان) دارم	—	—	.71	—

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Iranian sample (CFA)			
	EX	CO	FU	ED
CO4	—	—	—	.69
	I'm no longer proud of myself as a parent دیگر به خودم به عنوان یک والد (پدر/مادر) افتخار نمی‌کنم			
CO3	—	—	—	.73
	I'm ashamed of the parent that I've become از این نوع پدر/مادری که به آن تبدیل شده‌ام، شر منده‌ام			
CO2	—	—	—	.78
	I tell myself that I'm no longer the parent I used to be به خودم می‌گویم دیگر آن پدر/مادری که بودم نیستم			
CO5	—	—	—	.52
	I have the impression that I'm not myself any more when I'm interacting with my child(ren) احساس می‌کنم وقتی با فرزند(ان)م تعامل دارم دیگر خودم نیستم			
CO1	—	—	—	.83
	I don't think I'm the good father/mother that I used to be to my child(ren) فکر نمی‌کنم که دیگر مثل قبل پدر/مادر خوبی برای فرزند(ان)م باشم			
CO6	—	—	—	.81
	I feel as though I've lost my direction as a dad/mum احساس می‌کنم که مسیرم را به عنوان یک پدر/مادر گم کرده‌ام			

Note. Factor loadings in CFA >|.40| are in bold.

Abbreviations: EX, Exhaustion in parental role; CO, Contrast in parental self; FU, Feelings of Being Fed Up; ED, Emotional Distancing.

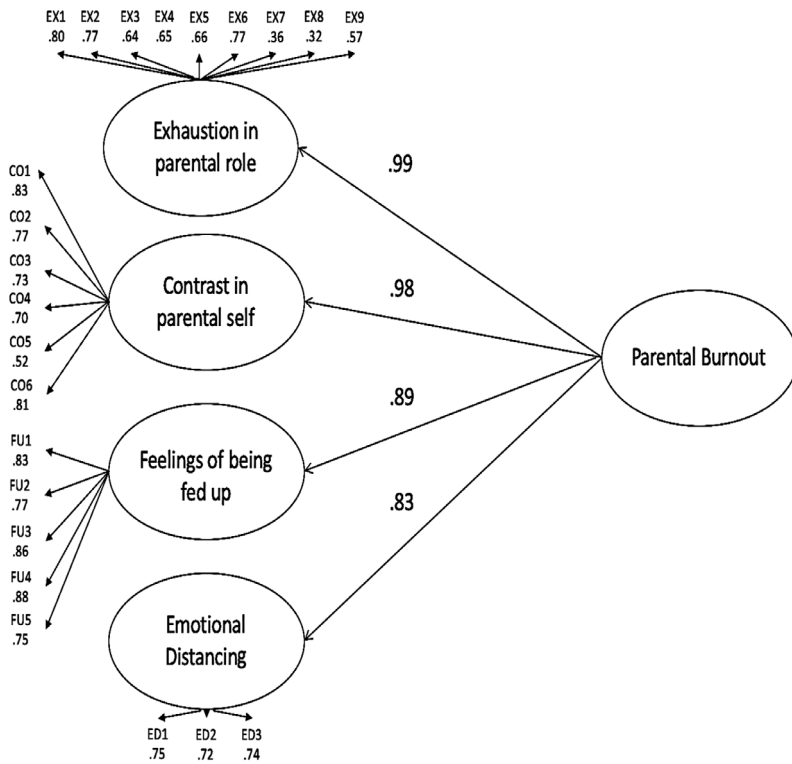


FIGURE 1 Graphic representation of the second-order factor model (Model 2) in the current sample. EX, Exhaustion in parental role; CO, Contrast in parental self; FU, Feelings of Being Fed Up; ED, Emotional Distancing. Fit indices: CFI = .90, TLI = .89, RMSEA = .05, and SRMR = .07

6.2 | Internal Consistency

The examination of the reliabilities of the original four subscales and the global score showed that Cronbach’s alphas were $\alpha = .82$ (.77 for fathers and .85 for mothers) for exhaustion, $\alpha = .87$ (.79 for fathers and .91 for mothers) for contrast, $\alpha = .90$ (.86 for fathers and .93 for mothers) for feelings of being fed up, but only $\alpha = .60$ (.54 for fathers and .64 for mothers) for emotional distancing. Reliability for the total score of the PBA was high, $\alpha = .93$ (.90 for fathers and .95 for mothers).

6.3 | Relations with Other Variables

Descriptive statistics are given in Table 2. All correlation coefficients are displayed in Table 3. The bivariate relations between parental burnout and sociodemographic variables are low. The only demographic variable that is significantly related to the global score of parental burnout is the number of children: more children are related to slightly higher scores of parental burnout. We then computed ANOVAs for nominal or ordinal variables. With regard to the most frequent types of family (two parent, single parent), we found a significant differences for the total score, $F(1, 422) = 13.94, p < .001, \eta^2 = .032$ for exhaustion, $F(1, 422) = 13.46, p < .001, \eta^2 = .031$, for contrast, $F(1, 422) = 5.74, p < .01, \eta^2 = .013$, for fed up, $F(1, 422) = 21.33, p < .001, \eta^2 = .048$, and for emotional distancing, $F(1, 422) = 4.24, p < .04, \eta^2 = .01$. In all cases, parental burnout was higher in single-parent families compared

TABLE 2 Descriptive statistics of PBA subscales and global score for parents according to family type, and having a paid professional activity

	Family type			Having a paid professional activity	
	All parents	Two-parent family	Single-parent family	Yes	No
	(<i>N</i> = 448) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	(<i>N</i> = 380) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	(<i>N</i> = 45) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	(<i>N</i> = 294) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	(<i>N</i> = 141) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
EX	7.73 (9.27)	7.16 (8.51)	12.36 (12.20)	6.71 (7.74)	9.43 (10.98)
CO	3.53 (6.34)	3.19 (5.48)	5.44 (9.09)	3.03 (5.34)	4.33 (7.47)
FU	1.83 (4.65)	1.46 (3.77)	4.69 (8.15)	1.53 (3.95)	2.24 (5.43)
ED	2.41 (3.63)	2.24 (3.33)	3.38 (4.77)	2.04 (3.11)	3.04 (4.22)
Total Score	15.50 (21.05)	14.05 (18.22)	25.87 (31.78)	13.31 (16.95)	19.05 (25.50)

Abbreviations: EX, Exhaustion in parental role; CO, Contrast in parental self; FU, Feelings of Being Fed Up; ED, Emotional Distancing.

TABLE 3 Correlations between the PBA, sociodemographic variables, parental satisfaction, and psychological well-being

	PBA	EX	CO	FU	ED
Age	.04	.00	.03	.10*	.03
Educational level	.00	-.02	.02	.06	-.04
Number of children	.09	.06	.09	.12*	.05
Number of women taking care of the children	-.01	-.03	.04	-.04	.01
Number of men taking care of the children	-.01	-.02	.04	-.06	.02
Hours spent with children	-.05	-.04	-.04	-.06	-.02
Neighborhood	-.01	-.07	.03	.10*	-.07
Age of youngest child	.13*	.09	.13*	.20**	.07
Parental satisfaction	-.31**	-.27**	-.36**	-.18**	-.23**
Psychological well-being	-.28**	-.28**	-.31**	-.15**	-.17**

The correlation between parental satisfaction and psychological well-being is .49**.

Abbreviations: EX, Exhaustion in parental role; CO, Contrast in parental self; FU, Feelings of Being Fed Up; ED, Emotional Distancing.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$.

to two-parent family. Also, parents having a paid professional activity displayed lower level of parental burnout, $F(1, 434) = 7.75, p < .01, \eta^2 = .02$; they were less exhausted, $F(1, 434) = 8.92, p < .01, \eta^2 = .024$, they reported less contrast with previous parental self, $F(1, 434) = 4.30, p < .05, \eta^2 = .011$, as well as being less distant from their children, $F(1, 434) = 7.75, p < .01, \eta^2 = .018$.

As regards the correlation with parental satisfaction and psychological well-being, the result (Table 2) showed, as expected, a strong negative association between PBA (global score and subscales) with parenting satisfaction ($p < .01$) and a strong negative correlation between PBA (global score and subscales) with psychological well-being ($p < .01$).

7 | DISCUSSION

Parenting is a culture-based construct (Harkness & Super, 1996): childrearing behaviors and parental roles are developed within the context of the culture and social norms (Kre-

mer, 2007). Therefore, the psychometric properties of measures of parental burnout must be examined in each culture in which the construct is used. These have never been investigated in Iran, the largest and most populated Persian-speaking country in the Middle East. The current study revealed the internal validity and consistency of the PBA-Persian and its criterion validity vis-à-vis parental satisfaction and psychological well-being. In spite of these strengths, the factor emotional distancing was found to have only borderline internal consistency. Although Cronbach's alphas of .60 are often deemed acceptable for scales including less than ten items (emotional distancing includes only three items) (Loewenthal & Lewis, 2018), the lower internal consistency of this subscale suggests that it does not form an as uniform subscale as in Western cultures. The context of collective, traditional, religious beliefs in Iranian families might shed some light on these findings (Aghajanian, 2001; Mobasher, 2012). It is possible that in the Iranian culture, where bringing up children in an intimate family environment that promotes love, feelings of belonging, security, and coherence is of utmost importance (Fereidouni et al., 2015; Parvizy & Ahmadi, 2009), exhaustion does not necessarily lead to emotional distancing from one's children, or at least not in the same way. This finding highlights the need for further quantitative and qualitative research to shed light on the cultural differences in the expression of parental burnout in non-Western cultures.

As it had been shown in the previous study (Mikolajczak, et al., 2018), our findings confirmed that parents with a paid professional activity report fewer symptoms of burnout which can be explained by many reasons, including the fact that having a job allows to "breathe out" from parenting and to replenish once resources before taking care of the children, and the fact that having a job reduces the most important concern of parents for financial needs of child care (Mousavi & Bashi, 2013). These results are reassuring in a context in which more and more women want to pursue a career in parallel to their motherhood.

Finally, our results indicated that single parents had higher PB scores than parents in two-parent families. This is not surprising for several reasons. First, it is not rare that single parents lose communication and emotional network with others, leading to social support deprivation. Second, single parents being alone to cover for their children's emotional and financial needs, they might suffer more from psychological and economic pressures than bi-parental families. Finally, in a family-based culture such as in Iran, children of single-parents exhibit more behavioral problems, which further increase the difficulty and pressures on single parents (Baxter et al., 2004; Sharak et al., 2016).

This study yielded valuable findings particularly for a Persian-speaking country in the Middle East. However, they must be interpreted in light of several limitations. First, the sample is not representative of the whole Iranian population. It mostly reflects the urban population, especially the metropolitan area. Future studies are needed to examine Parental Burnout in rural and small cities with a more traditional context. Second, gender differences were not examined here because the sample size did not allow to test PBA measurement invariance across genders. Although previous studies have already shown measurement invariance of the PBA across genders (e.g., Roskam et al., 2018), future studies will need to go deeper into this issue to ensure that this is the case in Iran too. Third, our parents were recruited face to face and completed a paper-and-pencil version of the PBA. It is possible that results, and especially mean scores of parental burnout in mothers, would have been different if a fully anonymous online survey had been used. Lastly, our indicators of criterion validity are limited to two and are cross-sectional. Longitudinal studies are therefore needed to go deeper into the consequences of parental burnout in Iranian Parents. It is our hope that the encouraging results regarding the validity of the PPA-Persian will facilitate such research. Meanwhile, the instrument will help diagnose parental burnout more clearly and provide parents with early and appropriate help.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This research does not directly or indirectly conflict with any financial or professional interests with the individual or organization.

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