

Parental Burnout in Lebanon: Validation Psychometric Properties of the Lebanese Arabic
Version of the Parental Burnout Assessment (PBA)

Myrna Gannagé, Eliane Besson, Jacqueline Harfouche, Isabelle Roskam, & Moïra
Mikolajczak

Author Note

Myrna Gannagé and Eliane Besson are affiliated to the Department of Psychology, Saint-Joseph University, Beirut, Lebanon. Jacqueline Harfouche is affiliated to the Observatory of Social and Economic Reality, Saint-Joseph University, Beirut, Lebanon.

Moïra Mikolaiczak and Isabelle Roskam are affiliated to the Psychological Sciences Research Institute, UCLouvain, Belgium. Correspondence may be addressed to Myrna Gannagé: myrna.gannage@usj.edu.lb.

Abstract

This study — the first study on parental burnout in an Arabic speaking country in the Middle East — aimed to examine the psychometric properties of the Lebanese translation of the Parental Burnout Assessment (PBA-Lebanese). The PBA-Lebanese was administered to 200 Lebanese parents (67% mothers). The results showed parental burnout is a valid construct relevant to Lebanese culture. In particular, we replicated the original four-factor structure of the PBA and we tested a second order factor structure through confirmatory factor analysis. The first and second order factor model fitted the data, and reliability indexes were high ($\alpha = .97$ for exhaustion, .95 for contrast, .92 for feelings of being fed up, .80 for emotional distancing and .98 for the global score). There was no significant gender difference in the prevalence of parental burnout, but mean levels were higher in mothers than in fathers. Both less educated parents and single parents reported higher parental burnout, pointing to the possible role of education and social relations as protective factors for Lebanese parents.

Keywords: parenting, validation, test, translation, culture

Parental Burnout in Lebanon: Psychometric properties of the Lebanese Arabic Version of the Parental Burnout Assessment (PBA)

Parenting in Lebanon

Lebanon has been known for strong familial and social ties as well as high religiosity, all of which are presumed to serve as protective factors for mental health. The Lebanese society is a pluralist, multi-community society. There are 18 officially recognized religious groups, which can be classified into three distinct categories: Christian, Muslim and Druze communities. Although religion plays an important role in Lebanon, family is the main and primary group entity for identification (Tannous, 1942, cited by Zaatari, 2018; Zaatari, 2006). Family plays a predominant role in the education of the child and the transmission of values. In Lebanon, family identity is much more important than personal or any other identity. Each family has a number of anchor points. These attributes function as signs of recognition from which an individual's unique identity can be inferred (Gannagé, 1999).

Despite the importance of the family in Lebanon, there are relatively few published studies on families or parenting. In 1967, Mounir Chamoun distinguished the rural family, the recently urbanized family and the urban family. The rural family is patriarchal. Its main values are honor and solidarity. Recently urbanized families with strong ties to their country origins continue most of their rural traditions. Urban families who have a long history in the city are open to other societies and raise their children as individuals in line with the rights of liberty, autonomy and personal development, regardless of the child's gender.

Over the last decades, Lebanese families linearly evolved towards more modernity (Zaatari, 2018), with a change from traditional values to modern values, identified as a move away from family identification to a civic one and from gender inequality to parity. Women participated to this evolution. The "culture of motherhood" used to constitute a very important avenue for women's participation in civil society. However, post-civil war transformations,

religious identity and harsh economic conditions in Lebanon have promoted behaviors allowing women to better evade patriarchal structures and continue to be creative agents of social change. This being said, family remains of utmost importance in Lebanon, especially after the war. It seems important here to specify that the war in Lebanon started in 1975 and stopped in 1991 in all the country. During those sixteen years, residential neighborhoods, schools, hospitals and other institutions were often systematically shelled. Active life could neither stop, nor follow a normal course. The uncertainty, on a practically daily basis, made projection into the future difficult. Danger was a part of daily life. This situation resulted in a strengthening of nuclear family ties (Gannagé, 2019). The support provided by family members and to a larger extent by friends and neighbors helped the parents overcome difficult circumstances. Unfortunately, in the last decade, this support was reduced because of economic crisis and long working hours. The experience of parenting became more intense and more stressful and, at the same time, social support was not able to play a significant role in alleviating parental psychological distress. This makes the study of parental burnout particularly relevant in Lebanon.

This research — the first on parental burnout in an Arabic speaking country in the Middle East — aimed to examine the psychometric properties of the Lebanese translation of the Parental Burnout Assessment (PBA-Lebanese) by replicating the work of Roskam, Raes, & Mikolajczak (2017) among a sample of Lebanese mothers and fathers. To this end, we assessed whether the four interrelated factors of the PBA (i.e., emotional exhaustion, constrast, feelings of being fed up and emotional distancing) could also be found in a sample of 200 Lebanese parents. Next, we tested the relationships between socio-demographic factors (age, gender, number of children, nationality, marital status, type of family) and parental burnout. We also examined preliminary cut-offs and the prevalence of parents reporting burnout in the Lebanese context.

Parental Burnout

Ordinary stressors specific to parenting such as shopping, preparing food, getting children home from school, managing the programs of different members of the nuclear family... are usually bearable by most of the parents, especially when balanced with the sense of "joy" that comes from many aspects of parenting, such as playing with children, watching them grow up, being healthy, etc. (Mikolajczak and Roskam, 2018). Nevertheless, stressors specific to the contemporary life style make parenting more complex and stressful; in fact, parents must nowadays meet society's expectations by enabling their child to succeed in life. They must also satisfy the needs of their offspring, regardless of their emotional or physical conditions. In addition, they have to maintain a successful marital and professional life, as well as to find time for themselves to recharge their batteries. These stressors can make it difficult for parents to maintain balance. In fact, parental stress increases significantly if the protective factors or parental resources are insufficient to meet the demands (risk factors). When there is a chronic imbalance of demands over resources, parents are thus at risk of burnout (Mikolajczak and Roskam, 2018).

Research on parental burnout has only very recently become a subject of scientific interest (Pelsma, 1989 for the only exception before 2007), with empirical results showing that chronic parental stress can lead to parental burnout (Lindstrom, Aman, & Norberg, 2009; Lindström, Aman, & Norberg, 2011; Norberg, Mellgren, Winiarski, & Forinder, 2014).

Parental burnout encompasses four dimensions. The first is emotional and physical exhaustion: parents feel that being a parent requires too much investment; they feel emotionally exhausted from parenting and completely drained. The second dimension is an emotional distancing from their children: exhausted parents become less involved in the emotional relationship with their children; interactions are limited to functional aspects. The third dimension is a sense of ineffectiveness and a loss of fulfilment in the parental role: parents feel

fed up with parenting, and they no longer enjoy being with their children. The fourth dimension relates to contrast with previous parental self: the parent does not recognize himself anymore in his actual parenting (Roskam et al., 2017; Mikolajczak et al., 2018)

Maslach and Jackson (1981) specify that when the three factors, emotional exhaustion, emotional distancing, and lack of personal accomplishment originate and express in the work domain, the resulting condition is called job burnout; when they originate and express in the parental sphere, the resulting condition is called parental burnout. As shown by Roskam et al. (2017) and by Roskam, Brianda & Mikolajczak (2018), parental burnout can be reliably measured. It forms a unique syndrome empirically and factorially distinct from job burnout, parenting stress and depression (Mikolajczak, Gross, Stinglhamber, Lindahl-Norberg & Roskam, 2020). The prevalence of parental burnout ranges between 8% and 36% (Lindström, Aman, & Norberg, 2011; Roskam, et al., 2017) depending on the type of parents studied (single parents, parents living with a partner, parents of severely ill or disabled children...). It affects both mothers and fathers (Lindström, Aman, & Norberg, 2011), but mothers in greater proportion than fathers (Roskam & Mikolajczak, 2020).

There are many risk factors related to parental burnout. Researchers have pointed out that families of a child diagnosed with a disability experience more instability, stress and dysfunction than “typical” families (Picardie et al, 2011; Davis and Carter, 2008). Sociodemographic factors, single parenthood, financial difficulties, lack of professional activity, number of children under parent’s care, age of parent and children, age of parents when the first child is born, health issues, parents’ education, low emotional intelligence and poor perception of child’s need, personality traits such as neuroticism, are all also risk factors that have been associated to exhaustion and burnout (Sanchez Rodriguez, 2019; Le Vigouroux & Scala, 2018; Mikolajczak, Raes, Avalosse, Roskam, 2018).

Parental burnout can have serious consequences for both parent and child, notably in

terms of neglect and violence towards one's children, whereas parents may have suicidal and escape ideation, addictions, sleep disorders, and marital conflicts (Mikolajczak, Brianda, Avalosse, and Roskam, 2018; Mikolajczak, Gross and Roskam, 2019). Furthermore, the study conducted by Mikolajczak et al. (2018) show that parental and job burnout have comparable effect on the parent him/herself, while parental burnout's effect on neglectful and violent behavior toward the child(ren) is much larger than that of job burnout. Parental burnout explains 31% of the frequency of neglectful and violent behavior toward children, while job burnout explains <1% (Mikolajczak et al., 2018). These consequences highlight the need to dispose of reliable measures to diagnose parental burnout.

Assessment of Parental Burnout

The conceptualization and measurement of parental burnout was first inferred from that of job burnout (Pelsma, 1989; Norberg, 2007). Roskam et al. (2017) were the first authors to validate an instrument to measure parental burnout specifically. They first adapted the items of the Maslach Burnout Inventory© (MBI, Maslach, et al., 1986) so that all items referred unambiguously to the parental context. After two studies and a few item adaptations, the Parental Burnout Inventory (PBI, Roskam, et al., 2017) was born and validated. This scale contains 22 items assessing emotional exhaustion in one's parental role, emotional distancing from one's children and parental accomplishment or efficacy. Roskam, Brianda and Mikolajczak (2018) went deeper into the conceptualization and measurement of parental burnout using an inductive approach, whereby they reconstructed the parental burnout phenomenon based solely on the experience of burned-out parents. The factorial analysis resulted into the Parental Burnout Assessment (PBA), a 23-item questionnaire assessing four dimensions among which two replicated the PBI, i.e. exhaustion in parental role, emotional distancing from one's children, and two were somewhat different, i.e. feelings of being fed up, and contrast. To date, the PBA is considered as the gold measure of parental burnout because

of its background, good psychometric properties, and free access. The present study sought to validate a Lebanese version of the Parental Burnout Assessment by replicating and extending the pioneering work of Roskam et al. (2018).

Method

Sample

Data were collected from a sample of 200 Lebanese parents (96% born in Lebanon): 66 fathers (33%) and 134 mothers (67%). The participants' ages ranged from 20 to 55 ($M_{Age} = 37.51$; $SD = 8.40$). 93.5% of participants were raising their child(ren) with a partner who was the other biological parent (two-parent family), 5% were single parents, 1% were in a step-family, and 0.5 % were in a multigenerational family. Overall, the participants had from 1 to 6 children (either biological or living in their household), aged from 0 to 36 years old ($M_{Age} = 10.56$; $SD = 8.02$) for the oldest and from 0 to 34 years old ($M_{Age} = 6.74$; $SD = 5.86$) for the youngest. The parents spent 2 to 16 hours per day with their child(ren) ($M_{Hours} = 7.19$, $SD = 2.44$). 69.5% of the parents lived in an average neighborhood, while the remaining participants either lived in a relatively prosperous neighborhood (24%) or in a relatively disadvantaged neighborhood (6.5%). 41.5% of participants were educated to secondary level, 53.5% had a university degree, and 5.5% had a technical degree. 67.5% of the parents had a paid professional activity. On average, 1.21 ($SD = .49$) women and 1.00 man ($SD = .28$) were living in the household caring for the children on a daily basis. This means that some parents were supported in their parenting role by another woman (a grand-mother, an aunt, an au-pair) living in the household; there was never more than one man in the household.

Procedure

The current study was conducted as part of the International Investigation of Parental Burnout (IIPB), a consortium gathering 40 countries over the world. 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 from French to Arabic was achieved with a double check procedure. We translated the Questionnaire from French to Arabic and then from Arabic to French to check the faithfulness of the Arabic version to the original version. The Ethics Committee of the Saint-Joseph University of Beirut approved the study protocol. Data were collected over a two-month period, from August 7th 2018 to September 15th 2018, by a team of 7 data collectors managed by a supervisor. Parents were recruited from the six governorates that constitute the official divisions of the country: Beirut (20%), Mount Lebanon (45%), North Lebanon (10%), South Lebanon (10%), Nabatieh (7.5%) and the Beqaa (7.5%). Parents were interviewed face-to-face with an offline questionnaire developed on tablets on ISURVEY application in a mean duration of 30 minutes.

Measures

Socio-demographics. Participants were asked about their age, gender, number of children, nationality, marital status (single, cohabiting, married, divorced, widowed), type of family (single-parent, living with the father/mother of the children, step-family), number of women and men in the household taking care of children on a daily basis, level of education, whether or not the parents had a paid professional activity, number of hours spent with the children on a daily basis, neighborhood (disadvantaged, average, prosperous).

Parental burnout was assessed with the Lebanese translation of the Parental Burnout Assessment (PBA, Roskam, et al., 2018; Lebanese translation in Appendix of the current paper), a 23-item self-report. The PBA consists of four subscales: Emotional Exhaustion (9 items; e.g., *I feel completely run down by my role as a parent*), Contrast (6 items; e.g., *I'm no longer proud of myself as a parent*), Feelings of Being Fed Up (5 items; e.g., *I can't stand my role as father/mother any more*), and Emotional Distancing (3 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 (i.e. the sum score of all PBA items) (Roskam, et al., 2018).

Data Analyses

We first performed a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to examine to what extent the Lebanese data fit with the initial measurement model (Roskam et al., 2018), i.e., four interrelated factors: Emotional Exhaustion (9 items), Contrast (6 items), Feelings of Being Fed Up (5 items) and Emotional Distancing (3 items). We also tested whether the data would fit with a second-order factor model that has been found in other countries (e.g., Finland: Aunola et al., 2020) and that makes even more sense theoretically speaking: four first-order factors forming a second-order factor: Parental burnout. Skewness and kurtoses indicated indeed 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. The estimation method used was Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (DWLS) with asymptotic covariance and polychoric correlation matrices. We used several goodness-of-fit indices to determine the acceptability of the models: Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square statistics ($S-B\chi^2$; Satorra and Bentler (1994)), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI). For CFI and GFI, 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 conducted these analyses in the LISREL software (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2012). We then tested the reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) of the four subscales and the total score of the PBA with the Lebanese data.

With regard to the relation between the PBA and other variables, we computed correlations between the PBA and the mean scores of the ordinal/continuous variables, i.e., age, educational level, number of children, number of women and men in the household, time spent with children, age of young children and age of oldest children (we also broke down the correlation by gender, expecting, as stated in the introduction, that the correlation between these variables and parental burnout would be stronger in mothers). We also computed one-way ANOVAS and t-test to test mean differences for categorical variables, i.e. gender, having a paid professional activity, and family type.

Finally, we looked at the prevalence of parental burnout based on the PBA. Given that there is currently no formally defined cut-off scores on the PBA (nor on any other instruments), we investigated the prevalence of parental burnout in Lebanon using two different cut-off scores: the one used in the original validation article (i.e., 76; mean score of a parent displaying 2/3 of the symptoms (66.6%) every day; Roskam et al., 2018) and the one used in the IIPB survey (92; mean score of a parent displaying every symptom/item at least once a week). We calculated the percentage of Lebanese parents of which score at the PBA was equal or above to 76 and 92, respectively.

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The CFA revealed that all the estimated factor loadings were statistically significant at $p < .001$. As displayed in the Table 1, the standardized factor loadings ranged from .72 to .98. In any case, the cut-off criterion of being above .40 was fulfilled (Pituch & Stevens, 2016). Correlations between the four latent factors were 0.95 (Emotional Exhaustion and Contrast with previous parental self), 0.98 (Emotional Exhaustion and Feelings of Being Fed Up), 0.95 (Emotional Exhaustion and Emotional Distancing), 0.98 (Contrast with previous parental self

and Feelings of Being Fed Up), 0.96 (Contrast with previous parental self and Emotional Distancing), and 0.93 (Feelings of Being Fed Up and Emotional Distancing).

Table 1

Standardized Regression Weights from CFA and reliability estimates for the final 23-item Arabic version in Lebanese sample

		EX	CO	FU	ED
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 أشعر بالتعب سلفاً عندما أستيقظ صباحاً ويكون عليّ أن أقضي يوماً آخر مع أولادي	0.94			
EX2	I have the sense that I'm really worn out as a parent أشعر بأنني لم أعد قادراً (قادرة) فعلاً على التحمل باعتباري والداً (والدة)	0.91			
EX1	I feel completely run down by my role as a parent أشعر بالتعب الشديد بسبب دوري كوالد (والدة)	0.91			
EX6	I have zero energy for looking after my child(ren) لا أملك الطاقة والقوة للتعامل مع أولادي	0.90			
EX5	I find it exhausting just thinking of everything I have to do for my child(ren) أشعر بالإرهاق لدى التفكير في كل ما يتعين عليّ القيام به من أجل أولادي	0.88			
EX8	I sometimes have the impression that I'm looking after my child(ren) on autopilot أشعر بأنني أعتني بأولادي بشكل آلي	0.88			
EX7	My role as a parent uses up all my resources إن دوري كوالد (والدة) يستنزف قواي بالكامل	0.86			
EX9	I'm in survival mode in my role as a parent إنني في حالة صمود وبقاء عند تأدية دور الوالد (والدة)	0.87			
EX3	I'm so tired out by my role as a parent that sleeping doesn't seem like enough إن أداء دور الوالد (الوالدة) يرهقني إرهاباً فحتى النوم لا يستعيد نشاطي	0.81			
CO6	I feel as though I've lost my direction as a dad/mum أشعر بأنني أضعت طريقي في تأدية دوري كوالد (والدة)		0.90		
CO3	I'm ashamed of the parent that I've become أشعر بالخجل من الحالة التي وصلت إليها كوالد (والدة)		0.98		
CO2	I tell myself that I'm no longer the parent I used to be أعتقد أنني لم أعد أؤدي دور الوالد (الوالدة) نفسه كما كنت أفعل في السابق		0.86		
CO1	I don't think I'm the good father/mother that I used to be to my child(ren) أظن أنني لم أعد أمثل الأب الصالح/الأم الصالحة لأولادي كما كنت أفعل في الماضي		0.89		
CO5	I have the impression that I'm not myself any more when I'm interacting with my child(ren) أشعر أنني لم أعد على طبيعتي عندما أتفاعل مع أولادي		0.90		
CO4	I'm no longer proud of myself as a parent لم أعد فخوراً بنفسي كوالد (والدة)		0.94		
FU3	I feel like I can't take any more as a parent أشعر كوالد (والدة) بالإرهاق وبأنه "طفع الكيل"			0.89	
FU1	I can't stand my role as father/mother any more لا يمكنني تحمل أداء دور الوالد (الوالدة) بعد اليوم			0.94	
FU4	I feel like I can't cope as a parent أشعر بأن دوري كوالد (والدة) يتقّل كاهلي			0.91	
FU2	I can't take being a parent any more لم أعد أحتمل دوري كوالد (والدة) بعد اليوم			0.94	
FU5	I don't enjoy being with my child(ren) لا أستمتع بقضاء الوقت مع أولادي			0.72	
ED3	I'm no longer able to show my child(ren) how much I love them لم أعد أستطيع أن أظهر لأولادي كم أحبهم				0.92
ED2	Outside the usual routines (lifts in the car, bedtime, meals), I'm no longer able to make an effort for my child(ren) يستهيل عليّ أن أكرس نفسي لأولادي خارج النشاطات الروتينية (كمثل الرحلات بالسيارة، ووقت الخلود إلى النوم، والوجبات)				0.88
ED1	I do what I'm supposed to do for my child(ren), but nothing more أقوم بواجبي، ليس إلا، إزاء أولادي				0.72
α		0.97	0.95	0.92	0.80

Note All Factor loadings $>|.50|$; EX: Exhaustion in Parental role; CO: Contrast in parental self, FU: Feelings of being fed up; ED: Emotional Distancing.

In terms of model fit to the data, the chi square test was significant, $S-B\chi^2(224) = 532.05$ ($p < .001$), indicating possible discrepancies or misfit. As the SEM is a large-sample technique, it is not uncommon to obtain a statistically significant chi-square test. Other fit measures demonstrated a very good fit to the data with CFI = .99, GFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .084; 90% CI, [.074, .093], and SRMR = .055. Likewise, considering the high correlations between the four factors and the theoretical conceptualization of parental burnout, we tested a second-order model with the four factors as first-order factor and “Parental burnout” as second-order factor. The results of the second-order model are presented in Figure 1. Similarly to the previous model, this higher order model showed a good fit to the data with $S-B\chi^2(226) = 545.39$ ($p < .001$), CFI = .99, GFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .085; 90% CI, [.076, .094], and SRMR = .055. These results confirmed the validity of both the first and second order factor internal structure of the Lebanese version of the PBA.

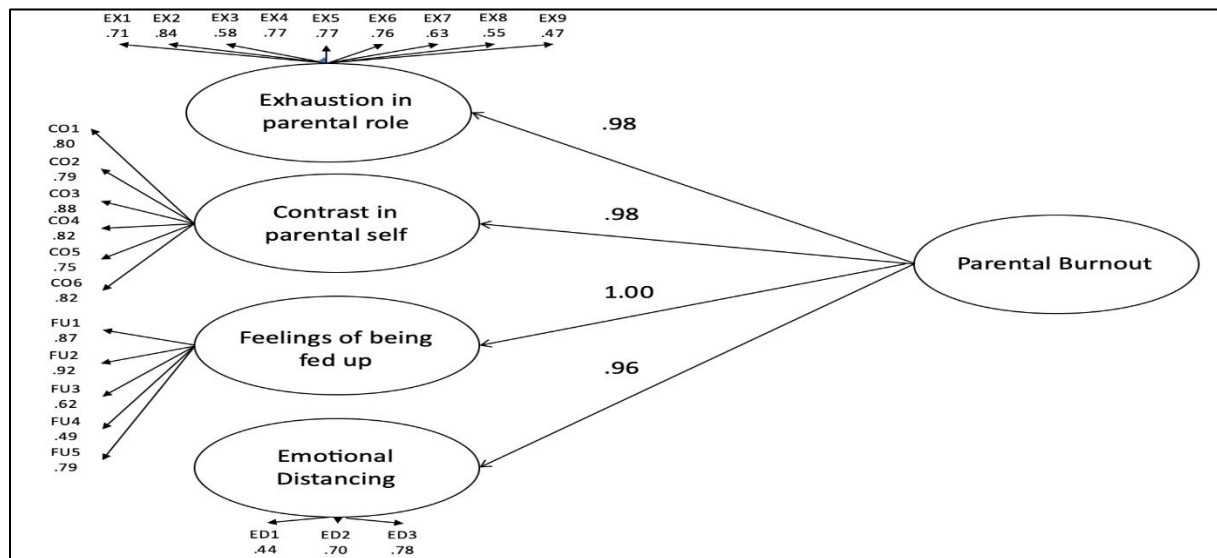


Figure 1. Results of the confirmatory factor analysis for the second order factor model of the PBA

Reliabilities

We tested the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of the four subscales and the total score of the PBA with the Lebanese data. The examination of the reliabilities of the original four subscale and global score showed that Cronbach's alphas were $\alpha = .97$ for exhaustion, $\alpha = .95$ for contrast, $\alpha = .92$ for feelings of being fed up and $\alpha = .80$ for emotional distancing.

Reliability for the total score of the PBA was .98. All our construct obtained Cronbach's alpha above the threshold of 0.80.

Relations with Other Variables

Descriptive statistics are given in Table 2. We compared the mean level of parental burnout according to gender. Contrary to what was expected, we did not find significant differences in the prevalence of parental burnout between mothers and fathers, either in the total score or in the four subscales. However, mothers displayed higher levels of burnout than fathers in the total score and the four subscales.

In terms of professional activity, contrary to what was expected, we did not find significant differences between parents with a paid professional activity and parents who do not exercise a gainful professional activity.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics of PBA subscales and global score according to gender, family Type, and having a paid professional activity

and having a paid professional activity												
		EX			CO		FU		ED		Total Score	
		N	M (SD)	Valeur p	M (SD)	Valeur p	M (SD)	Valeur p	M (SD)	Valeur p	M (SD)	Valeur p
Gender												
	Mothers	134	9.74 (13.05)	0.408	4.32 (7.49)	0.279	3.93 (6.41)	0.811	2.4 (3.36)	0.873	20.39 (29.19)	0.474
	Fathers	66	8.21 (10.38)		3.23 (4.7)		3.74 (4.62)		2.32 (2.91)		17.5 (21.08)	
Family Type												
	Two-parent family	187	8.8 (11.74)	0.013	3.7 (6.31)	0.057	3.63 (5.46)	<0.01	2.2 (3.04)	<0.01	18.32 (25.29)	<0.01
	Single-Parent family	10	12.9 (14.97)		6.8 (10.73)		5.9 (8.9)		4.7 (5.03)		30.3 (39.19)	
Having a paid professional activity												
	Yes	135	9.47 (11.9)	0.691	3.65 (5.72)	0.413	3.8 (5.42)	0.809	2.31 (2.97)	0.709	19.24 (24.73)	0.881
	No	65	8.74 (12.96)		4.6 (8.41)		4.02 (6.76)		2.49 (3.68)		19.85 (30.77)	

Note EX: Exhaustion in Parental role; CO: Contrast in parental self, FU: Feelings of being fed up; ED: Emotional Distancing.

As regards the bivariate relations between parental burnout and ordinal or continuous sociodemographic variables, the correlations are low to moderate (Table 3). For the mothers, some variables as their age, educational level, age of the oldest child and the number of hours

spent with the child are significantly related to the global score of parental burnout. For the fathers, the number of hours spent with the child is highly correlated with parental burnout. Results showed also that less educated mothers displayed higher parental burnout than those with a university diploma. Having a certain level of education gives the women better opportunities to pursue various life goals (Roskam, et al., 2017).

Table 3

Correlations between the PBA and sociodemographic variables in Lebanese parents

		PBA	EX	CO	FU	ED
Age	Father	-.17	-.19	-.16	-.14	-.06
	Mother	.22*	.20*	.23**	.22*	.22**
	All	.12	.09	.13	.13	.14*
Educational level	Father	.13	.19	.06	.12	.00
	Mother	-.18*	-.08	-.25**	-.23**	-.28**
	All	-.10	.00	-.17*	-.14	-.20**
Number of children	Father	.01	-.06	.08	.01	.16
	Mother	.21*	.17*	.22**	.21*	.25**
	All	.15*	.10	.18**	.16*	.22**
Age of oldest child	Father	-.06	-.11	-.03	-.05	.05
	Mother	.30**	.25**	.32**	.31**	.35**
	All	.21**	.15*	.24**	.21**	.26**
Age of youngest child	Father	-.12	-.14	-.07	-.11	-.06
	Mother	.24**	.20*	.26**	.25**	.28**
	All	.15*	.11	.18**	.16*	.18*
Number of women	Father	-.04	.01	-.13	-.04	-.02
	Mother	.12	.15	.09	.09	.06
	All	.08	.11	.04	.06	.04
Number of men	Father	. ^c	. ^c	. ^c	. ^c	. ^c
	Mother	.00	.03	.00	-.05	-.05
	All	.00	.03	.00	-.04	-.04
Hours spent with children	Father	.42**	.45**	.26*	.35**	.46**
	Mother	.30**	.31**	.28**	.26**	.29**
	All	.32**	.33**	.28**	.26**	.30**

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, c. cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant; EX: Exhaustion in Parental role; CO: Contrast in parental self, FU: Feelings of being fed up; ED: Emotional Distancing

Prevalence of parental burnout

Depending on the cut-off score used (i.e., 76 or 92), the analyses yielded a prevalence of parental burnout of 6.5% (7.5% among mothers, 4.5% among the fathers) or 5.5% (6.7% among mothers, 3% among the fathers), respectively, in Lebanese parents.

Discussion

The present study constituted a preliminary investigation of the psychometric properties of the Lebanese translation of the Parental Burnout Assessment (PBA). It shows that the PBA is a valid and reliable measure for Lebanese parents. We both replicated the initial factor structure with its four dimensions and provided support to the second-order factor model encompassing the four first-order factors and a second-order factor, i.e. Parental Burnout. However, this should not obscure some particularities of the cultural context of parenting in Lebanon. Despite the influence of occidental culture on the Lebanese society, parenting is considered as a sacred duty imposed by both religious and social rules; exhausted parents may feel guilty and ashamed if they evoke being overwhelmed by their children. As we mentioned above, family ties grew stronger during the war and the family unit became a solid point of attachment constituting a protective agent from external violence. Parents would not dare thus to admit not enjoying being with kids, by fear of punishment: thoughts may turn into reality.

This being said, and despite the fact that all parents were interviewed face-to-face which considerably increase social desirability, we found a point-prevalence of 6.5% (using the cut-off score of 76) or 5.5% (using the cut-off score of 92) in Lebanese parents. Given the context explained in the previous paragraph, it can be assumed that prevalence would have been higher if questionnaires were filled-in individually and anonymously. Therefore, although the prevalence of parental burnout reported here appears to place Lebanon around the median of the 40 countries surveyed in the IIPB study (IIPB Consortium, submitted for publication), Lebanon might actually figure in the list of countries most at risk of parental burnout. Studies that replicate the current study on a larger Lebanese sample, using anonymous internet surveys, are urgently needed. Such a study would also be important to test the robustness of the absence of difference in parental burnout's prevalence between mothers and fathers.

Another striking finding is indeed that this study did not reveal any significant gender difference in parental burnout. This result can either be a biased result attributable to the data collection method (face-to-face interviews); in this case, mothers might be reluctant to reveal intense feelings of exhaustion in a face-to-face interview, by fear of negative judgment. It is also possible that this absence of gender difference reflects a true gender equality, explained by the fact that in times of war, gender relations were renegotiated and women have acquired new skills and unfamiliar role. Since the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on mainstreaming gender issues in conflict, the international community has given attention to the impact of war on women and the role of women in peace-building (Nusair, 2009). Funds were provided for the empowerment of women in the context of post war and conflict resolution. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs. This strategy aims to diminish inequality between men and women and to increase adoption of a specialist attitude considering that women are equal to men but socialized in different roles.

Concerning the influence of some sociodemographic factors such as the educational level, the number of children, the age of the oldest child, the number of hours spent with children, the results confirm the usefulness of studying parental burnout, looking at each specific dimension (Table 3). The association between mothers' burnout and the age of the eldest child could be explained by the fact that Lebanese mothers are very close to their children. Most of them were children of the war. Real events due to the war that took place during their childhood affect their mental health. They cannot carry out the normal functions of support that they are supposed to ensure. They feel excessively attached to their child and have concerns about his future. Watching him growing up puts them under great stress and reactivates in them a separation anxiety that they have experienced during the war (Gannagé 2019).

Our results indicate also that parental burnout is higher in single-parent families than in two-parent families. We found significant differences for the total score, $F(2, 196) = 4.86$, $p < .001$, for exhaustion, $F(2, 196) = 4.48$, $p < .01$, for Feelings of Being Fed Up, $F(2, 196) = 6.92$, $p < .001$ and for emotional distancing, $F(2, 196) = 5.17$, $p < .001$. Our findings are consistent with previous literature on parental burnout, parental stress and partner support (Mikolajczak et al. 2018; Mikolajczak et al. 2019; Mikolajczak et al. 2020; Sanchez-Rodriguez et al. 2019). Lebert-Charron, et al. (2018) also reported that parental burnout was higher among single mothers.

The analysis of the results at the facet level also yielded interesting findings. The fact that exhaustion is associated to emotional distancing also in Lebanese parents is particularly noteworthy because emotional distancing is not congenial to Lebanese culture that tends to promote interdependence, relationality and connectivity (Joseph, 1993), viz. that valorize linkage, bonding and sociability. In “relational” and “connected” cultures, persons’ boundaries are relatively fluid so that persons feel a part of significant others (Joseph, 1993, p. 467). It is interesting to note that even in these type of cultures, emotional exhaustion can lead to emotional distancing. The analysis between sociodemographic variables and facets of parental burnout suggest that being an older mother is a risk factor for emotional distancing. Having many children and having a low educational level are all significant risk factor for emotional distancing.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study identified interesting findings. However, some limitations must be acknowledged, which leave ample room for future research. The first and most obvious limitation is the sample size, which is relatively small ($N = 200$). Future studies in Lebanon would benefit from relying on larger sample sizes. The second potential limitation is that our parents were recruited face to face and completed a paper-and-pencil version of the PBA. It is

likely that results in terms of prevalence would have been different if a fully anonymous online survey had been used. Third, neglect and violence toward children as well as escape and suicidal ideations are shown to be specific consequences of PBA (Mikolajczak, Brianda, et al., 2018 ; Mikolajczak et al., 2019). A next step in the validation process should be to test the prospective prediction of these specific consequences (and any other consequence that might be relevant for Lebanese parents) using the PBA. This being said, this limitation can also be viewed as a strength as it shows that even in a culture that values family and that promotes interdependence, “relationality” and “connectivity, parents openly admit that they are sometimes so exhausted that they are emotionally distant and fed-up of their children. Despite these limitations, it is our hope that this preliminary validation study of the PBA-Lebanese will facilitate future research on parental burnout in Lebanon and explore in deeper details the challenges of families living in vulnerable conditions, such as families with a child diagnosed with a disability, or families living in precarious socio-economic conditions, in comparison with “typical” families.

Follow-up Note

The present study shows that Lebanon might actually figures in the list of countries most at risk of parental burnout. After the August 4, 2020 explosion at the Port of Beirut that killed at least 200 people and injured around 5,000 others, the prevalence of parental burnout might certainly increase. In this context, the therapists have to be aware that culture is composed of values that constitute protective factors against PBA. Psychologists have to promote the importance of cultural factors that in influencing what is possible for parents to achieve will help vulnerable people to become more resilient.

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Appendix:
Arabic (Lebanese version of the PBA)

		Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
		أبداً	بضع مرّات في السنة أو أقل	مرّة كل شهر أو أقل	بضع مرّات في الشهر	مرّة في الأسبوع	بضع مرّات في الأسبوع	كل يوم
EX3	I am so tired by my role as a parent that sleeping doesn't seem like enough							
CO6	I feel as though I've lost my direction as a dad:mum							
EX1	I feel completely run down by my role as a parent							
EX6	I have zero energy for looking after my children							
CO1	I don't think I'm the good father:mother that I used to be to my child(ren)							
FU1	I can't stand my role as father / mother any more							
FU3	I feel like I can't take any more as a parent							
EX8	I sometimes have the impression that I'm looking after my child(ren) on autopilot							
EX2	I have the sense that I'm really worn out as a parent							
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							
FU5	I don't enjoy being with my children							
FU4	I feel like I can't cope as a parent							
CO2	I tell myself that I'm no longer the parent I used to be							
ED1	I do what I am supposed to do for my child(ren), but nothing more							
EX7	My role as a parent uses up all my resources							
FU2	I can't take being a parent any more							
CO3	I am ashamed of the parent that I've become							
CO4	I'm no longer proud of myself as a parent							
CO5	I have the impression that I'm not myself any more when I'm interacting with my children							
ED3	I'm no longer able to show my child(ren) how much I love them							
EX5	I find it exhausting just thinking of everything I have to do for my children							
ED2	Outside the usual routines (lifts in the car, bedtime, meals), I'm no longer able to make an effort for my child (ren)							
EX9	I'm in survival mode in my role as a parent							

