The Effects of Socio-demographic Variations on the Self-concept of Single Rural Mothers

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Introduction

- Growth of single motherhood
- Rural mothers
- Women and stress
- Self-concept and depression
Introduction (continued…)

- Self-concept: “a wide ranging and highly inclusive phenomenon which comprises… individuals’ generalized conceptions of themselves…that define or describe the type of person they perceive themselves to be” (Baum, Rahav, and Sharon 2005:48)

- Mastery: perceived control over one’s own life

- Self-esteem: view of the self in relation to the expectations of the self and others
Research Questions

- Do variations in sociodemographic factors influence self-concept?

- Does the strain produced from variations in these factors act as a mediator between the sociodemographic variables and self-concept?
Research Questions (continued…)

- Independent Variables
  - Age
  - Marital Status
    - Divorced
    - Never married
  - Employment
  - Education
  - TANF Receipt
  - Number of Children
Research Questions (continued…)

- Dependent Variables
  - Mastery
  - Self-Esteem
Research Questions (continued)

- Mediating Variables
  - Financial Strain
  - Parenting Strain
Sampling and Methods

- **Data collection**
  - Random digit dial telephone interviews
  - 508 unmarried women aged 18-39 in rural and semi-rural northern New England

- **Measures**
  - Structured questions answered on a Likert-type scale
Bivariate Analyses

- To determine simple associations between sociodemographic factors and the self-concept measures.

- Employment (Mastery and Self-Esteem)
- TANF Receipt (Mastery and Self-Esteem)
- Yearly Personal Income (Self-Esteem)
## Multivariate Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mastery</th>
<th>Eq. 1</th>
<th>Eq. 2</th>
<th>Eq. 3</th>
<th>Eq. 4</th>
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<td>Employment</td>
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<td>.03</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.09 *</td>
<td>-.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Strain</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.29 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.12 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Strain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.43 ***</td>
<td>-.38 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† $p<.10$  * $p<.05$  ** $p<.01$  *** $p<.001$
## Multivariate Analyses

### Self-Esteem

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
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<td>.08</td>
<td>.09 †</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANF Receipt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>.10 *</td>
<td>.09 †</td>
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<td>-.41***</td>
<td>-.36***</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Conclusions

- TANF Receipt and Mastery
  - Bivariate findings
  - Multivariate findings
    - Mediated by Financial Strain
    - Why?
Conclusions (continued…)

- Employment and Self-Esteem
  - Bivariate findings
  - Multivariate findings
    - Mediated by Financial Strain
    - Why?
Conclusions (continued…)

- Parenting Strain as an independent effect
  - Significant in all equations
    - Motherhood as a source of identity

- Suppressor effect on number of children
Conclusions (continued…)

- Limitations
- Future Research