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The Mediation Role of Parental Self-Control in the Association between Religion and Burnout in Iranian Mothers

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ABSTRACT

SUBJECT & OBJECTIVES: Parenting as a continuous, non-stop, and challenging responsibility always results in ponderable parental consequences, especially for mothers. This study aimed to examine the mediating role of parental self-control in the relationship between religious orientation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and parental burnout among Iranian mothers, analyzing both direct and indirect associations.

METHOD & FINDING: This study employed an analytical descriptive-correlational method. The participants included 272 Iranian mothers with Mage = 39.83, SDage = 6.65 who voluntarily participated in the online study and completed the Self-Control Scale (SCS), the Religious Orientation Scale (ROS), and the Parental Burnout Assessment (PBA). For testing the mediating role of self-control in the relationship between religious orientation and parental burnout, the mediation analysis method (Model 4) using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2017) was applied in SPSS version 27. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between intrinsic religious orientation and self-control ($p < 0.01$), a negative and significant correlation between parental burnout and intrinsic religious orientation ($p < 0.05$), and a negative and significant correlation between self-control and parental burnout ($p < 0.01$). The results also showed that the indirect effect of intrinsic religious orientation through self-control on parental burnout was significant, and it plays a mediating role in this relationship (CI 0.95 [-0.20, -0.08]).

CONCLUSION: Intrinsic religious orientation mitigates the risk of parental burnout by fostering greater self-control, which in turn helps mothers manage parenting stressors more effectively.

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Introduction

The absence of adequate resources to cope with parenting-related stress can increase the risk of parental burnout (Mikolajczak et al., 2019). Parental burnout is a condition characterized by severe exhaustion related to parenting, emotional distancing from children, and a sense of parental disengagement (Mikolajczak & Roskam, 2020). Parental burnout has gradually become a serious social issue in the modern world as a result of high expectations and limited energy in parenting (Ren et al., 2024).

According to an international parenting burnout survey, the prevalence of parental burnout worldwide ranges from about 1% to 8% (Zhang & Zhao, 2024). Research shows that there is a significant negative relationship between parental burnout and family cohesion (Bian et al., 2025), quality parent–child relationships (Jia-Yuan et al., 2025), and parental perceptions of children's well-being (Grandjean et al., 2025). There is also a significant positive relationship between parental burnout and parental violence and neglect (Roskam et al., 2025), violent parenting (Jia-Yuan et al., 2025), child maltreatment (Gawlik et al., 2025), and parent–child conflict (Yang et al., 2025). Parental burnout, which is associated with undesirable conditions for parents and children, has been explored in connection with various factors. A research gap in this regard is the role of the religious and ethical beliefs of parents, including their religious orientation and self-control as a personality trait and an ethical virtue that serve to provide protection against burnout.

Individuals are often faced with motivational conflicts in which they must somehow choose between a highly pleasurable and tempting option and an option that is more long-term or socially acceptable. In this situation, self-control becomes very important. "Self-control" is usually defined as the process by which an individual prioritizes and advances the goal of self-control over conflicting motivations (Hofmann, 2024). Self-control includes the capacity to adapt to reasonable demands, adaptation of behavior according to circumstances and situation, and postponement of pleasure within frameworks that are socially accepted without intervention and guidance (Alaie Raḥmani & Motamad Langrudi, 2025). High self-control can be viewed as a form of agency that is associated with greater power (Wu et al., 2024).

Research has shown that parental self-control has a significant positive relationship with children's adjustment (Li et al., 2024) and children's self-control (Gentzler et al., 2025; Bolger et al., 2022). Self-control, as the ability to adjust one's behavior, thoughts, and emotions and to control unwanted social shocks, relates religious faith to psychological and behavioral

consequences (Tangney et al., 2004). One factor that can positively influence parents' attitudes toward childbearing is religiosity (Yavarian Baei et al., 2021).

Religious beliefs influence various areas such as lifestyle, worldview, and child rearing. In today's society, there are a variety of parenting styles that may be rooted in the parents' religious background or religious beliefs (Pusztai & Fényes, 2022; Rich et al., 2024).

Religious orientation, in the sense of a certain attitude toward religion or rituals, is addressed in its external domain, where religion is the means of achieving non-religious goals, and its internal domain, where living based on religious teachings is the very goal (Kite et al., 2022). In the external domain, extrinsic religiosity involves engaging in religious practices for instrumental purposes rather than for the sake of religion itself. People with an extrinsic orientation may participate in religious activities to gain social status, emotional comfort, security, or other personal and societal benefits (Pauzi et al., 2025). When parents use religion or religious beliefs as a means of connecting and participating in their children's lives, it highlights the constructive role of faith in shaping their parenting (Rich et al., 2024). Considering the significant role of the internal sustainable protective factors in the face of the undesirable outcomes of parental behavior, the present study seeks to examine the role of self-control in the relationship between the burnout of mothers and the two types of religious orientation. Specifically, the study seeks to (1) determine the direct association between religious orientation and parental burnout, (2) assess the impact of parental self-control on burnout, and (3) test whether self-control mediates the link between religious orientation and parental burnout.

By emphasizing the role of self-control within a religious framework, the study offers practical strategies that can be applied to strengthen mothers' coping capacities in everyday parenting. This study represents one of the first attempts in Iran to empirically examine the mediating role of parental self-control in the relationship between religious orientation and parental burnout. By focusing specifically on Iranian mothers, it introduces a novel perspective that integrates cultural, religious, and psychological dimensions, thereby contributing to both the national and international literature on parental burnout. Thus, the study not only addresses a critical gap in the Iranian context but also enriches the broader understanding of parental burnout through the lens of religion and self-control.

Accordingly, this study responds the following central research question: Does parental self-control mediate the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations and parental burnout among Iranian mothers?

Conceptual Framework

To set out a solid theoretical framework for the proposed model, this study examines four basic constructs:

1. Parental Burnout

Parental burnout can be defined as a protracted response to parental stress, which involves such symptoms as exhaustion, opposition to one's previous parental self, the feeling of being fed up with parenting, and emotional detachment from one's own offspring (Roskam et al., 2018). As opposed to professional burnout, parental burnout specifically takes place in the family setting, where the stresses of parenting consistently exceed available resources (Mikolajczak & Roskam, 2020).

2. Parental Self-Control

Self-control is the ability of individuals to modify, direct, and adapt their cognitions, emotions, and behaviors to achieve long-term goals or social norms (Tangney et al., 2004). In the case of parenting, parental self-control can be viewed as the ability of parents to control parenting-related impulses, cope with stress, and engage in positive parenting practices despite stress (Li et al., 2024).

3. Intrinsic Religious Orientation

Intrinsic religious orientation views religion as an end in itself. People who have intrinsic orientation internalize their religious beliefs and incorporate them thoroughly into their lives, values, and decision-making process (Allport & Ross, 1967). In parenting, intrinsic orientation serves as an internal framework that guides parents' moral values and child-rearing attitudes (Rich et al., 2024).

4. Extrinsic Religious Orientation

Extrinsic religious orientation views religion as a means to an end. People having an extrinsic orientation use religion as an instrument for some specific purpose like gaining social prestige, security, comfort, or integration in the community (Allport & Ross, 1967). In the family context, extrinsic religiosity often appears when parents engage in religious practices to gain social support or to align with cultural expectations regarding parenting (Pauzi et al., 2025).

Literature Review

Parental burnout is not a phenomenon isolated from any surrounding influences because it is an outcome of the interaction of various individual, family, and cultural variables. Two of the most important but still poorly researched protective factors against parental burnout include religious orientation and self-control. Religious beliefs can affect the behavior of parents (Rich et al., 2024; Aisyah, 2025). Self-control, in turn, is an important variable influencing coping strategies and emotional regulation (Tangney et al., 2004; Li et al., 2024). Nevertheless, little is known about the

possible ways in which both religious orientation and self-control might be related to parental burnout. This paper discusses the existing studies that describe three key relationships: (a) the relationship between religious orientation and self-control, (b) the relationship between self-control and parental burnout, and (c) the direct relationship between religious orientation and parental burnout:

1. The Impact of Religious Orientation on Self-Control

Religion is intrinsically a favorable entity or can be used as a means of achieving goals (Allport & Ross, 1967); therefore, its effects on different aspects of human life have always been of interest to researchers. Many have referred to it as a protector and promoter (Marks, 2008). A great body of evidence has shown that religiosity is negatively correlated to anti-social behaviors and felonious thoughts (Kelly et al., 2024; Saladino et al., 2024; Cooper & Bouffard, 2025). In this respect, attending religious gatherings and adopting their norms are considered to be protective against misdoings (Ghossoub et al., 2022). This protective role, however, is not always relevant, which is due to the variety of religious beliefs and the ways of looking at religiosity. For example, Klanjšek et al. (2012) showed that every type of religious orientation cannot prevent deviations. According to them, in a context of religiosity, intrinsic religious orientation can better prevent deviations, and those with poor self-control have no adequate intrinsic religious motivation to avoid deviations. So, religiosity is considered a cultural adaptation mechanism that enhances self-control; once individuals are invariably but tacitly reminded of religious concepts, they feel enabled to restrain themselves in the face of evil (Rounding et al., 2012) or to adjust their behavior (Watterson & Giesler, 2012).

2. The Impact of Self-Control on Parental Burnout

Self-control, defined as the ability to organize emotions, thoughts and behavior in the face of shocks (DeLisi, 2014), is considered to be a cognitive process of adjusting one's behavior to achieve certain goals (Diamond, 2013). As reported in the literature, the practice of self-control by parents results in a healthier lifestyle (Tangney et al., 2004), fewer behavioral problems for children (Cobb-Clark et al., 2022), and a lower level of stress and emotional coping reactions in mothers (Jakobsen & Elklit, 2021).

Considering the theory of control orientation (Rotter, 1966), those with an internal locus of control and an extended sense of personal control over the significant events of life are capable of facing stresses and challenges with effective coping reactions (Jakobsen & Elklit, 2021). However, low self-

control in parents is considered a good indicator of children's antisocial behavior (Meldrum et al., 2016) and parents' individual and family problems (Campbell et al., 2019). Parental self-control, through beliefs about emotion controllability and the use of positive emotion regulation strategies, can significantly reduce parental burnout (Lin & Szczygieł, 2025). Parental self-control was related to perceived parental stress and mindful parenting. People with good self-control tend to cope with stress and use positive parenting (Li et al., 2024). As a result, these parents are less likely to experience parental burnout. Research has also shown that the self-control of mothers can affect their choice of punishment, the way of monitoring their children, and the children's self-control. Parents bestowed with high self-control mainly focus on their children's needs and prefer them to their own, but those with low self-control fail to monitor their children's behavior sufficiently (Nofziger, 2008). In this context, Yuan et al. (2022) found the mediating role of self-control to weaken the effect of parents' burnout on children's problematic behavior.

3. The Impact of Religious Orientation on Parental Burnout

In many cultures, especially religious ones, religious beliefs have fundamental roles in the functions of families. Indeed, they serve as a shock absorber when a family is in trouble. In this regard, the religious beliefs of the parents can noticeably shape household affairs such as presenting a plan for childrearing (El-Khani & Calam, 2018). Religion not only provides moral guidance, but also significantly shapes the way parents raise, educate, and guide their children (Aisyah, 2025). In the case of young parents, religiosity is effectively involved in parental functions by affecting the satisfaction as well as the stress of the parents (Henderson et al., 2016). Some researchers have found a relationship between the parental stress of mothers and how religious they are. This regards the ability of religious faith to mitigate the depression and stress of mothers who are concerned about their child-rearing function (You et al., 2019). The latest studies in this context point to the power of faith in God to effectively prevent the burnout of parents during the COVID-19 pandemic (Marbun et al., 2022). The results of a study also showed that, among the dimensions of religiosity, a weak negative relationship was observed between religious beliefs, interest in religious issues, and the intensity of religiosity, praying, and the overall level of parental burnout (Szałachowski et al., 2025).

Thus, while each of these three relationships has been examined separately, no study has yet integrated them into a single mediation model.

Method

The present study employed a descriptive correlational design. It included 272 Iranian mothers, selected through convenience sampling from Tehran, Alborz, Mazandaran, Qom, and Qazvin provinces, each of whom had at least one child at home. The sample size exceeded the minimum required by Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) criterion of 10-15 samples per predictor variable. Data were collected online through the Porsline platform, and the questionnaire link was distributed to mothers' social networks along with explanations and consent forms. Inclusion criteria included having a child under their care, good physical health, no history of psychiatric disorder or medication, and voluntary consent; exclusion criteria included incomplete responses, severe physical illness or disability, history of psychiatric treatment or medication, and withdrawal from participation. These criteria ensured that mothers reported reliably on religious orientation, self-control, and parental burnout. The mothers' ages ranged from 18 to 65 years, and the number of children ranged from 1 to 7. Preliminary analyses did not show a significant relationship between age, number of children, and the main variables, so these factors were not considered covariates. Ethically, the study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki; full information was provided, and informed consent was obtained; voluntary participation and data confidentiality were observed, and responses were analyzed collectively so that individual identity was not determined. The Ethics Committee of Alzahra University approved the protocol with the ethics code IR.ALZAHRA.REC.1401.062. To analyze the mediating role of self-control in the relationship between religious orientation (predictor) and parental burnout (outcome), the mediation analysis method (Model 4) with the PROCESS macro in SPSS version 27 (Hayes, 2017) was used.

Psychometric Properties of the Self-Control, Religious Orientation, and Parental Burnout Scales

1. Tangney's Self-Control Scale (SCS): This scale was devised by Tangney et al. (2004) to assess self-control based on a set of 13 items answered across a 5-point Likert spectrum, from never (1) to very often (5). The validity of the scale was proved through measuring its correlation with the scales of adaptability, positive relations, and interpersonal skills. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the scale were also found to be 0.83 and 0.85 for the two studied groups (Tangney et al., 2004). In the study conducted by Cheshme Sangi et al. (2016), Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.79. In the present study, however, the alpha coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.74.

2. Religious Orientation Scale (ROS): This questionnaire, originally developed by Allport and Ross (1950), had 20 items. Feagin (1964) then developed a 21-item version of the questionnaire that included all the items in the original questionnaire plus one additional option. This item, added by Feagin, had a high correlation with extrinsic religious orientation (0.61). In this questionnaire, items were answered on a 4-point Likert scale. This questionnaire has been translated and standardized in Iran and has been used in several studies. The findings of Dehqan-Tanha et al. (2013) indicated, through principal component analysis with oblimin rotation, a two-factor structure of internal and external religious orientation consistent with the theoretical foundations of the scale, explaining 40.78% of the variance. In the study by Garavand (2019), the reliability of the internal orientation and external orientation subscales using Cronbach's alpha was 0.83 and 0.85, respectively. In the present study, however, reliability coefficients for both subscales were 0.67.

3. Parental Burnout Assessment (PBA): To evaluate parental fatigue and burnout, Roskam et al. (2018) proposed the PBA scale on a 7-point Likert scale from never (0) to always (6) with 23 items addressing the four subscales of fatigue, conflict with one's past parenthood, sense of exhaustion, and emotional distancing from children. The scores in this questionnaire range from 0 to 138 points. Roskam et al. (2018) reported high internal reliability for the instrument, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.96. The Persian version of this questionnaire has been validated, demonstrating strong internal and criterion validity. Its internal consistency was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93 (Mousavi et al., 2020). In the present study, the total reliability of the scale was found to be 0.94.

The results show that participants included 298 mothers. Twenty-six cases (8.7% of the sample) were excluded due to low variance in responses and the presence of statistical outliers. Outliers were identified using both univariate and multivariate criteria. Specifically, cases with standardized Z-scores greater than ±3 on key variables were considered univariate outliers, and multivariate outliers were detected using Mahalanobis distance with a chi-square distribution cut-off ($p < .001$). After these exclusions, statistical analyses were conducted with the remaining 272 mothers. The average age of participants was approximately 40 years (SD = 6.65), and the majority (92.6%) were raising children in households with both parents present. Detailed demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

Characteristic	M ± SD / N (%)	Range
Maternal age (years)	39.83 ± 6.65	18-65
Duration of married life (years)	18.38 ± 7.09	-
Duration of motherhood (years)	15.29 ± 7.50	-
Eldest child's age (years)	15.41 ± 7.38	-
Youngest child's age (years)	8.78 ± 6.18	-
Age difference between children (years)	6.76 ± 6.93	1-7
Mother's education (years)	14.44 ± 6.49	-
Husband's education (years)	14.18 ± 4.58	-
Both parents present	252 (92.6%)	
Mother alone	5 (1.8%)	
Multigenerational	14 (5.1%)	
More than two caretakers	1 (0.4%)	
Employed	139 (51.1%)	
Not employed	133 (48.9%)	
Well-provided	81 (29.8%)	
Average	175 (64.3%)	
Poor	16 (5.9%)	

Table 2, in the following, shows the correlation matrix between intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation with self-control and parental burnout:

Table 2. The Association Between the Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Extrinsic orientation	_							
2. Intrinsic orientation	-.24**	_						
3. Self-control	-.048	.37**	_					
4. PB. Exhaustion	.11	.13*	-.34**	_				

5. PB. Contrast	.085	-.17**	-.36**	.51**	_			
6. PB. Fed up	-.006	-.14*	-.21**	.42**	.41**	_		
7. PB. Emotional Distance	-.017	-.02	-.19**	.46**	.35**	.22**	_	
8. Parental burnout	.081	-.15*	-.38**	.90**	.74**	.58**	.67**	_
Mean	22.97	24.61	48.88	8.72	2.58	1.02	2.54	14.86
SD	5.35	3.68	5.85	6.79	3.44	2.03	3.31	12.08

**p< .01, *p< .05

It can be seen that there was a positive and significant relationship between intrinsic religious orientation and self-control (p< .01, r= .37). But the relationship between extrinsic religious orientation and parental burnout is not significant (p> .05, r= .05). Also, the correlation between parental burnout with intrinsic religious orientation is negative and significant (p< .05, r= -.15) and was insignificant with extrinsic religious orientation (p> .05, r= -.08). The correlation between self-control and parental burnout was also negative and significant (p< .01, r= -.38). Since the relationship between extrinsic religious orientation and self-control and parental burnout was not significant, it was not included as a predictor variable in the mediation analysis.

Table 3. The Results of Mediation Analysis of Self-Control

	Self-control				**Parental burnout**			
	b	SE	B	*p*	b	SE	B	*p*
Intrinsic orientation	.59	.09	.37*	.05	-.04	.2	-.01	.52
Self-control	-	-	-	.003	-.78	.12	-.38*	.05
R^2	.14				.15			
F	43.44**				22.95**			

*p< .05

In order to analyze the mediating role of self-control in the relationship between intrinsic religious orientation and burnout, model 4 of PROCESS was used, the results of which are presented in Table 3 and Figure 1. The significance of the indirect effect was tested with 5000 bootstrap samples and calculating the 95% confidence interval.

As can be seen, the direct effect of intrinsic religious orientation on parental burnout is not statistically significant (β= .01, p> .05) in the condition that the self-control is kept constant. The

indirect effect of intrinsic religious orientation through self-control on parental burnout is significant (β= -.14, CI .95[- .20, -.08]).

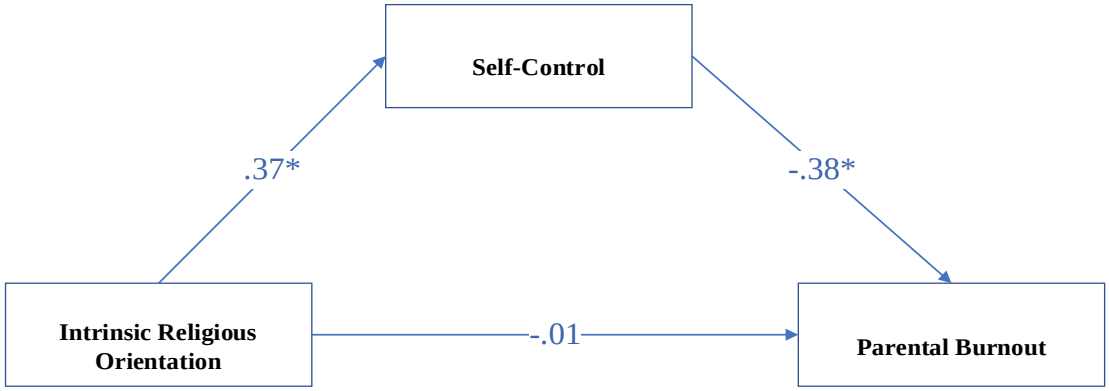


Figure 1: Mediation Model of Self-Control in The Relationship Between Intrinsic Religious Orientation and Parental Burnout

Conclusion

Apart from its pleasures, motherhood is considered a cumbersome, nonstop, and stressful practice. This is the case in most cultures, especially the Iranian culture, in which childrearing is expected to be mainly undertaken by mothers (Tirgari et al., 2020; Rahkar Farshi et al., 2018). This imposes pressure on mothers and sometimes adversely affects the mother–child interactions (Liang & Chen, 2025). In these circumstances, religion, as a cultural factor, can considerably protect parents from the stresses that lead to burnout (Szałachowski et al., 2025).

The results of this study showed that, of the two types of religious orientation, intrinsic orientation is significantly correlated with the burnout of mothers. So far, there has been little research in this field, but there is some evidence that religiosity can enhance satisfaction with child interaction and reduce the stress of parents. Indeed, religion provides the capacity required for resistance to the challenging situations of life, hence a means of coping with stress (Marbun et al., 2022). Individuals whose intrinsic orientation is based on religious teachings are guided well in the face of stressful situations, equipped with a set of principles to effectively and systematically deal with challenges, and bestowed with the enlightenment that life is meaningful and there is a supernatural being to trust in (Reza Pour Mirsaleh & Reyhani Keyvi, 2010).

This study also showed a significant relationship between intrinsic religious orientation and self-control. Numerous reports in the literature suggest the positive role of religiosity in psychological outcomes, reduction of antisocial acts and thoughts, and protection against abnormal reactions. In this regard, one may refer to Kelly

et al. (2024), Saladino et al. (2024), Cooper and Bouffard (2025), and Ghossoub et al. (2022).

Those whose religious beliefs determine their paths and programs and set their goals have been found to be more autonomous than others in controlling their own acts and thoughts. Research shows that religion is correlated with many measures of self-control. Engagement in religious rituals such as prayer may enhance self-control. Over time, increases in religiousness appear to lead to greater self-control (Marcus & McCullough, 2021). Religious values may help individuals strengthen their self-control; the ability to delay the pleasures of desire (i.e., gratification or excitement) that underpin behavioral choices becomes an important driving force for religious individuals (Rusman et al., 2023). This is because religion contains certain precepts and principles that are essential for self-restraint or self-control and, thus, for protection against abnormal acts. When religious themes are activated, people show greater self-control. Invoking religious beliefs may provide important psychological resources that are necessary for a variety of socially beneficial behaviors (Rounding et al., 2012). From the viewpoint of morality, self-restraint is recommended as a virtue, especially in Islamic ethics. It helps one to live clean amidst social and moral abnormalities. Therefore, mothers with intrinsic religious orientation can better withstand the adversities of everyday life.

Another important finding of this study concerns the mediating role of parental self-control. Results indicated that intrinsic religious orientation was significantly associated with mothers' burnout only through self-control. In other words, parental self-control fully mediated the relationship between intrinsic religious orientation and parental burnout. This means that religiosity, when internalized, strengthens self-control capacities, which in turn reduce stress and maladaptive coping reactions, thereby lowering the risk of burnout. These findings are consistent with previous research (Lin & Szczygieł, 2025; Jakobsen & Elklit, 2021; Nofziger, 2008), which has shown that self-control can buffer stress and promote more adaptive coping strategies. Thus, self-control emerges as a key psychological mechanism explaining how intrinsic religiosity protects mothers against parental burnout.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights for psychologists, counselors, and policymakers in designing culturally sensitive interventions aimed at reducing parental burnout. Mental health professionals can enhance mothers' self-control through mindfulness training and emotion regulation programs, while also integrating clients' intrinsic religious

beliefs as protective coping resources. Culturally tailored parenting programs that combine self-control strategies with spiritual coping mechanisms may be particularly effective in the Iranian context. Additionally, collaboration between religious institutions and mental health services could help reach at-risk mothers and provide holistic support.

This correlational study found that intrinsic religious orientation was positively associated with self-control and negatively associated with parental burnout, and that self-control mediated the relationship between intrinsic religious orientation and parental burnout. While these findings suggest that mothers who internalize religious values may experience greater self-regulatory capacity and, in turn, lower burnout, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference. Practically, culturally sensitive interventions that strengthen self-control skills—potentially framed in ways that resonate with families' religious values—may be useful for addressing parenting-related stress. Future research should test these implications using longitudinal or experimental designs and culturally validated measures of religiosity to establish directionality and enhance applicability.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample consisted only of mothers, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to fathers or other caregivers. Second, the reliance on self-report questionnaires raises the possibility of social desirability bias and response distortion. Third, the online data collection method may have excluded mothers without internet access, thereby limiting representativeness. Finally, future studies are encouraged to broaden the sample to include fathers and diverse caregivers, employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs to strengthen the robustness of the findings, and incorporate objective or multi-informant measures to reduce potential bias associated with self-reports.

Despite these limitations, this study has several strengths. First, it addresses a novel research gap by examining the mediating role of parental self-control in the relationship between religious orientation and parental burnout, a topic rarely studied in Iran. Second, the focus on Iranian mothers provides culturally relevant insights that enrich both national and international literature. Third, the use of advanced analytical methods allowed the identification of both direct and indirect effects, thereby strengthening the validity of the findings. Finally, the practical implications of the results highlight the potential for culturally sensitive interventions aimed at reducing parental burnout.

To conclude, the current research highlights the protective effect of

internalized religiosity on maternal mental health, with self-control as the key psychological construct in this association between spirituality and successful parental adaptation. Further longitudinal and cross-cultural research is needed to confirm the direction of these relationships and to develop culturally relevant programs combining religious and self-regulation perspectives.

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Authors' Contributions

Study conception and design were performed by the corresponding author, who also collaborated with the second author on writing the original draft and editing the final manuscript. The third author conducted the data analysis, and the fourth author was responsible for data collection. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Negative AI Statement

The author(s) declare that no AI tools or services were not used or not highly applied during the preparation of this work.

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