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Role of Personality Traits and Perceived Social Support in Difficulty of Transition to Parenthood in Women

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The transition to parenthood represents one of the uniquely significant experiences encountered by couples, and the quality of this transition for both parents, particularly the mother, may be influenced by a multitude of factors. The present investigation sought to examine the influence of personality traits and perceived social support on the challenges associated with the transition to parenthood in primiparous women and was conducted utilizing a correlational descriptive design.

Methods: The statistical population comprised all primiparous women with infants aged between one and two months residing in Yazd city, who were selected via a convenience sampling method. A total of 100 individuals were chosen as the sample, and they completed the modified scale assessing the difficulty of the transition to parenthood, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support as well as the NEO-FFI-60 (NEO-FFI-60). Data were subjected to analysis utilizing correlation and regression tests.

Results: The findings indicated that the dimension of parental satisfaction (derived from the difficulty scale of the transition to parenthood) is positively predicted by the personality trait of extroversion, while the trait of conscientiousness is able to predict the dimension of personal responsibility (from the difficulty scale of the transition to parenthood) in a negative direction. No significant correlation was identified between perceived social support and the various dimensions of difficulties related to the transition to parenthood.

Conclusions: It appears that the challenges associated with transitioning to parenthood constitute a multifaceted variable influenced by numerous factors, with certain fundamental personality traits also playing a significant role in this context.

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Introduction

Transitions represent intricate processes that unfold over a period and may encompass alterations in health status, social roles, interpersonal relationships, and environmental contexts, ultimately resulting in a redefinition of both self and reality (Meleis et al., 2000; Sawyer et al., 1997). For the majority of adults, the transformations experienced during the transition to parenthood constitute one such significant event (Miller & Sollie, 1986). The transition to parenthood may be characterized as a potentially stressful experience for couples. Although the period of pregnancy affords couples the opportunity to prepare, individuals are abruptly confronted with the roles and responsibilities inherent in parenthood. Indeed, immediately upon the birth of a child, couples are compelled to embrace the role of parents, and societal expectations regarding these roles are distinctly delineated (Seraj et al., 2014).

The transition to parenthood represents an unprecedented experience for parents; however, the role of the mother as the primary determinant in fulfilling the child's fundamental needs is unequivocally articulated, and it is arguably during pregnancy, childbirth, and the subsequent adjustment to the newborn that a woman encounters her most sensitive developmental stage. During this period, a physiological, psychological, and emotional crisis transpires, resulting in confusion and a transformation of the individual's identity. A multitude of factors influences the navigation of this experience and the overall well-being of mothers: for instance, the stress associated with parenthood, anxiety, feelings of inadequacy in parental capabilities, various demographic variables, apprehension regarding childbirth and the birth of a child with abnormalities, diminished attraction to the partner, and ambivalent sentiments concerning the care of the newborn, as well as employment considerations and maladaptive coping strategies may collectively contribute to heightened anxiety among numerous mothers, thereby rendering the postpartum period, particularly the six weeks following childbirth, a time of considerable vulnerability for the emergence of mental disorders and other complications (Leahy-Warren & McCarthy, 2007). In general, a majority of prior research underscores the implications of parental transition on diminishing the quality of parental relationships and psychosocial well-being, while simultaneously amplifying daily concerns, particularly during the early stages of parenthood (Holden, 2019). Conversely, there exists substantial empirical evidence indicating that parents, as a collective entity, tend to report greater life satisfaction, perceive life as more meaningful, and

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experience more positive emotions when compared to their childless counterparts (Nelson-Coffey & Stewart, 2019). In summary, pregnancy and childbirth constitute pivotal events for most married women, necessitating physical, interpersonal, familial, and relational adjustments to effectively navigate. Overall, irrespective of the manner in which a woman assumes the role of mother, she encounters distinct challenges in her transition to motherhood (Fontenot, 2007), and various significant factors may play a crucial role in facilitating adaptation to pregnancy and the complexities of the parental transition, several of which have garnered the attention of researchers in recent years. Throughout the course of pregnancy, not only does the fetus undergo transformation, but the woman herself also experiences changes, both physical and psychological, with personality traits serving as influential elements in the resolution and confrontation of crises (Sedaghat & Ghorbano, 2014).

In fact, personality constitutes a significant determinant in the transition to parenthood. Our comprehension of this phenomenon can be elucidated through two distinct perspectives. Firstly, individual variances can be scrutinized as a pivotal variable influencing mothers' experiences of motherhood, and secondly, the interplay of diverse factors such as demographic variables, contextual circumstances, and the individual's personality can substantially impact the quality of this transition.

Scholarly discourse (McCrae & Costa Jr, 1997; McCrae & Costa, 2008) posits the existence of five personality traits as foundational structures: neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, and conscientiousness. Despite a consensus among researchers regarding these five traits as fundamental personality structures, an ongoing debate persists concerning the trajectory of personality development. Given that the transition to parenthood represents a critical juncture in the human lifespan, individuals may undergo alterations in their personality development during this period (McCrae & Löckenhoff, 2010). Prior investigations have predominantly concentrated on the implications of the transition to parenthood for personal growth and development, particularly regarding significant personality traits. For instance, early adulthood is correlated with enhancements in emotional stability, conscientiousness, and agreeableness (Roberts et al., 2006), which some theorists contend are associated with pivotal transitions occurring during this life stage, including employment, marriage, and parenthood, which establish new social roles for the individual.

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Conversely, other studies have indicated that the effects of the transition to parenthood on personality are relatively weak. In general, prior research concerning the implications of parenthood on parental development has yielded mixed and occasionally contradictory findings (Galdiolo & Roskam, 2012). Overall, the majority of studies have emphasized personality transformations during the transition to parenthood (Deave & Johnson, 2008; Kluwer, 2010; Saxbe et al., 2018), while the role of personality in forecasting the quality of the transition to parenthood has garnered relatively scant attention.

Social support emerges as another variable that appears to exert a significant influence on the quality of the transition to parenthood. By mediating the relationship between life stressors and the manifestation of physical and psychological challenges, as well as enhancing cognitive functioning, social support diminishes psychological distress, bolsters individuals' cognition, elevates survival rates, and ameliorates the quality of life (Leal et al., 2021). Mercer and Ferkehch (1990) asserts that one of the critical determinants in fulfilling the maternal role is the availability of support resources (Saraian & Sajjadian, 2016). The social support received by the mother exerts a profound influence on her assimilation of the maternal role, and during the assumption of this new role, the feedback from the spouse and social networks is crucial for validating maternal competence (Saraian & Sajjadian, 2016). Perceived social support, or the nature of the attitudes exhibited by those surrounding the woman, along with the assistance received from the spouse and others in her environment, strengthens the individual's sense of coping efficacy and, consequently, reinforces self-esteem, self-confidence, and psychological adjustment for individuals confronted with significant health-related stressors (Tiitinen et al., 2014). In reality, the absence of social support constitutes a notable source of postnatal stress. The insufficiency of social support significantly impacts women's perceptions regarding their competencies and adequacy in fulfilling maternal obligations, thereby exacerbating levels of postpartum stress. Indeed, social support functions as a protective barrier and is recognized as a critical determinant in forecasting both emotional and physical well-being (Navidian et al., 2015).

In conclusion, existing research suggests that the quality of the transition to parenthood can be shaped by a myriad of factors, with an overarching influence stemming from a confluence of elements both internal and external to the individual, although the findings of these studies exhibit inconsistencies across various societies and cultures. While the phenomenon of the transition to

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parenthood has garnered considerable scholarly attention in numerous countries, there exists a dearth of studies within Iran, with notable exceptions including the investigation by Seraj et al. (2014) that explored the relationship between the challenges associated with the transition to parenthood and the degree of involvement in parental responsibilities. Overall, notwithstanding generational transformations, the evolving patterns and frameworks of family, marriage, and childbearing, along with the contradictory outcomes of studies regarding the transition to parenthood, a significant gap in research persists within the domestic academic landscape. In this context, the current study sought to explore the influence of personality traits and perceived social support in forecasting the level of difficulty experienced during the transition to parenthood among primiparous women.

Material and Methods

The framework of this quantitative and descriptive investigation is characterized as correlational in nature and is classified as a basic-applied design with regard to its objectives. The statistical population encompassed all women in Yazd who were experiencing their initial encounter with childbirth and motherhood (primiparous women), with the stipulation for their participation in the study being that they had delivered a child no older than two months. A total of 100 participants were selected as the research sample utilizing the available sampling technique. The methodological approach of the study was executed as follows: subsequent to securing approval from the university's ethics committee and obtaining a letter of introduction from the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery as well as the provincial health center, the researchers proceeded to the health centers. Nevertheless, after a period of time, due to the mothers' lack of cooperation for various reasons, the questionnaires were converted into digital links, and by acquiring contact information for 400 primiparous mothers through the maternity ward of the hospitals, ultimately 240 questionnaires (for those who fulfilled the inclusion criteria) were dispatched. Following the exclusion of incomplete questionnaires, the data from 100 viable questionnaires were ultimately entered into the SPSS22 software for analytical purposes and were subjected to correlation and regression analyses. The criteria for inclusion encompassed being primiparous, possessing literacy skills, having the capability to utilize a smartphone and access the Internet, lacking any history of mental disorders or disabilities, and expressing a willingness to partake in the research. The

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research instruments comprised the Modified Parenthood Difficulty Scale (Twiss, 1989), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) developed by Zimet et al. (1988), and the Neo-Short Form Personality Questionnaire (NEO-FFI-60) created by Costa Jr and McCrae (1992).

The Parenthood Difficulty Scale: This scale was formulated by Twiss (1989) and consists of 37 items categorized into four dimensions: Parental Responsibilities and Restrictions (PRR), Parental Gratification (PG), Marital Intimacy and Stability (MIS), and Personal Commitment (PC). This scale assesses the extent of transition difficulties encountered by new mothers. The PRR dimension, encompassing 13 items, addresses issues such as fatigue, alterations in social dynamics with friends, child behavior, and parental anxieties. The PG dimension, consisting of 12 items, evaluates positive parental rewards and includes aspects such as experiences of happiness and sadness, feelings of closeness to one's spouse post-birth, feelings of fulfillment, and having a sense of purpose in life. The MIS dimension comprises 7 items pertinent to marital dynamics, which assess intimacy and transformations resulting from the addition of a child to the family, concerns regarding the availability of time to spend with the spouse, the ability to communicate effectively with the spouse, and changes in the sexual aspects of the relationship, while the PC dimension encompasses concerns related to personal circumstances and employment that the new mother may confront. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from not at all (1) to a great extent (5) was employed to evaluate the responses to the items. An elevated score on each dimension signifies greater challenges in the transition to parenthood (Twiss, 1989). In light of the fact that the transition to parenthood difficulty scale has been employed solely once in domestic investigations, the current study undertook the initial translation of the original version, which was subsequently submitted to three esteemed professors from the psychology department and one distinguished professor from the midwifery and nursing department for the purpose of assessing content validity. Thereafter, the constructive feedback provided by the professors was incorporated, facilitating the collection of data. The reliability analysis concerning the difficulty of transitioning to parenthood scale as devised by Twiss (1989) yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.9. In the research conducted by Seraj et al. (2014), the overall alpha coefficient was reported at 0.86, with the subscale coefficients ranging from 0.68 to 0.79. Within the framework of the present investigation,

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the reliability of the difficulty of transitioning to parenthood scale was substantiated, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS): The multidimensional scale of perceived social support was established by Zimet et al. (1988) to evaluate the perceived social support derived from family, friends, and other significant individuals in one's life. This instrument comprises three distinct subscales: family, represented by items 3, 4, 8, and 11; friends, indicated by items 6, 7, 9, and 12; and other significant individuals, consisting of items 1, 2, 5, and 10. Each item within the scale offers six response options, ranging from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 6. A higher score attained by an individual signifies an increased perception of social support, and conversely, a lower score reflects diminished perceived support. The validity and reliability of this scale have been substantiated through numerous empirical studies. Bruwer et al. (2008) reported the internal reliability of the instrument within a sample of 788 high school students, utilizing Cronbach's alpha values between 0.90 and 0.86 for the subscales, and an overall alpha of 0.86 for the complete instrument. Salimi et al. (2009) indicated the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the three dimensions of social support received from family, friends, and significant others as 0.89, 0.86, and 0.82, respectively. In the context of the current study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all items aggregated to 0.91, while the coefficients for the three dimensions of family, friends, and significant others were found to be 0.90, 0.90, and 0.85, respectively.

Neo-Form Personality Inventory (NEO-FFI-60): This instrument was conceptualized by McCrae and Costa to assess the five-factor model of personality, which encompasses psychoticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. The abbreviated version of this instrument comprises 60 items derived from factor analyses of NEO-PI scores collected in 1986 (Rezaee Jamalooi et al., 2019). Concerning the construct validity of the NEO-FFI, findings from multiple studies suggest that the subscales of the NEO-FFI demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency. For instance, McCrae and Costa Jr (1997) documented Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.68 (for achievement) to 0.86 (for neuroticism). The NEO-FFI instrument was standardized within the Iranian population by Garrosi (1998). The reliability of this instrument was established through the test-retest methodology involving a cohort of 208 students over a three-month interval, yielding coefficients of 0.83, 0.75, 0.80, 0.79,

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and 0.79 for the N, E, O, A, and C dimensions, respectively. In the current investigation, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness dimensions were found to be 0.75, 0.64, 0.72, 0.62, and 0.79, respectively.

Results

In this investigation, data derived from a sample of 100 questionnaires were meticulously analyzed, and statistical metrics such as frequency, percentage, mean index, standard deviation, correlation, and regression were computed employing a stepwise methodology. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of demographic variables.

Table 1. Descriptive index of demographic variables

Variable	Dimension	Frequency	Percentage
Education	Diploma	35	35
	Associate diploma	12	12
	Bachelor	41	41
	Master degree	7	7
	Ph.D.	5	5
Job status	House kipper	70	70
	Employed	30	30
Type of delivery	Normal	50	50
	Cesarean	50	50
Type of pregnancy	Preplanned	82	82
	Unplanned	18	18

To assess the assumption of normality pertaining to the variables, both skewness and kurtosis were evaluated, with the findings delineated in Table 2. The kurtosis and skewness values for all variables fall within the range of (2+ to -2), thereby indicating that the current distribution adheres to the properties of a normal distribution.

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Table 2. Examination of the assumption of normality of research variables

Variable		Kurtosis	Skewness
Challenges associated with the transition to parenthood	Parental responsibility and limitations	0.05	-0.83
	Parental gratification	0.06	1.33
	Marital intimacy and stability	-0.14	-0.59
	Personal task	0.21	-0.25
Personality traits	Neuroticism	0.48	0.19
	Extroversion	-0.17	-0.006
	Openness to experience	0.03	0.64
	Agreeability	0.07	-0.13
	Conscientiousness	-0.03	0.28
Perceived social support	Family support	-1.29	1.12
	Friends' support	-0.23	-0.83
	Important others' support	-0.96	0.35

In order to investigate the influence of personality traits on the predictive dimensions of the challenges associated with the transition to parenthood, a correlation matrix was initially derived, followed by the incorporation of the dimensions of the transition challenges into regression analysis as the dependent variable, alongside five personality factors designated as independent variables.

Table 3. Correlation matrix of personality traits and challenges in transitioning to parenthood

Variable		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Personality traits	1. Neuroticism	1								
	2. Extroversion	0.22**	1							
	3. Openness to experience	0.004	0.24**	1						
	4. Agreeability	0.06	0.25**	0.29**	1					
	5. Conscientiousness	015	0.28**	0.22**	0.03	1				
Challenges of transition to parenthood	6. Parental responsibility and limitations	0.06	0.09	-0.16	-0.08	0.04	1			
	7. Parental gratification	0.08	0.21**	0.10	0.01	0.03	0.34**	1		
	8. Marital intimacy and stability	-0.02	0.02	-0.06	-0.10	0.08	0.41**	0.35**	1	
	9. Personal task	0.04	-0.07	-0.24**	-0.18	-0.22**	0.27	0.05	0.11	1

The findings from the stepwise regression analysis concerning the dimension of parental satisfaction and contentment are outlined in Table 4.

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Table 4. Outcomes of the regression analysis evaluating the impact of personality traits on the dimension of parental gratification (PG)

Variable	R	R^2	F	P	Beta	P
Extraversion	0.21	0.045	4.56	0.035	0.21	0.03

The coefficient of determination (R^2) obtained (0.045) as illustrated in Table 4 indicates that among the five personality factors, only extraversion exhibits a limited capacity to elucidate parental satisfaction and contentment following the birth of the first child. The results pertaining to the regression analysis for the personal task dimension are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Outcomes of the regression analysis evaluating the impact of personality traits on the personal task dimension

Variable	Beta	P	R	R^2	F	P
Openness to experience	-0.24	0.014	-0.24	0.06	6.24	0.014
Conscientiousness	-0.17	0.07				

As indicated in Table 5, based on the significance levels, only empiricism demonstrates a marginal ability to meaningfully predict the personal task dimension. Considering that in the conducted regression analysis, none of the personality dimensions were able to significantly forecast the dimensions of parental responsibility, restriction, intimacy, or marital stability concerning the challenges of transitioning to parenthood, the corresponding results have been excluded. Subsequently, the relationship between the perceived social support variable and each dimension of the transition challenges was investigated. The outcomes of the correlation analysis between perceived social support and the dimensions of the transition challenges are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Correlation analysis between perceived social support and dimensions of transition challenges

Dimensions of the challenges of transitioning to parenthood	Parental responsibility	PG	Intimacy	Personal task
Correlation	-0.10	0.030	0.013	-0.148
P	0.32	0.76	0.89	0.14

As the results presented in the table 6 indicate, perceived social support did not exhibit a significant correlation with any of the dimensions related to the challenges of transitioning to parenthood. To further elucidate this variable, each specific dimension of perceived social support—namely support from family, friends, and significant others—was also subjected to correlation testing with the four dimensions of the transition challenges, yielding no significant relationships. In light of

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the absence of significant correlation results, the findings from the regression analysis have also been omitted.

Discussion

The current investigation was undertaken to address two pivotal inquiries: Do the Big five personality dimensions exert influence in forecasting the challenges associated with the transition to parenthood among primiparous women? Furthermore, can perceived social support serve as a predictive factor for the various aspects of the difficulties encountered during the transition to parenthood? To elucidate these inquiries, the empirical data collected were analyzed through correlation and regression methodologies. Ultimately, the findings indicated that of the personality traits investigated, only extraversion possesses the capacity to predict parental gratification (PG) concerning the challenges of transitioning to parenthood, with this relationship being characterized as positive. This implies that an increase in the personality trait of extraversion within the mother correlates with heightened difficulties and complications experienced in terms of parental gratification following the birth of her first child. Additionally, the personal task dimension of the challenges associated with the transition to parenthood is forecasted by the dimension of openness to experience (or empiricism). Notably, neither the overall score nor the individual dimensions of perceived social support demonstrated a significant correlation with the various challenges of transitioning to parenthood.

In elucidating the correlation between the extraversion dimension and parental gratification, one may reference the distinctive characteristics inherent to extraversion. Individuals exhibiting extraverted tendencies are predisposed to engage with the external environment, displaying sociability, vivacity, activity, and a propensity for thrill-seeking, while adopting an optimistic perspective towards their surroundings and endeavoring to interpret experiences as opportunities rather than adversities. McCrae and Costa (2008) delineate six facets of the extraversion construct as follows: warmth, sociability, activity, thrill-seeking, and positive affect. Generally, elevated levels of activity and social interaction constitute the primary attributes of individuals scoring high on the extraversion scale. It is reasonable to surmise that the advent of a newborn, coupled with the consequent role adjustment for the mother, particularly during the initial months, significantly alters the lifestyle of an extraverted mother. Constraints on time, increased obligations towards the

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child, and even inherent physical challenges post-delivery can markedly curtail the interpersonal and unrestrained communication typical of an extroverted mother. Consequently, the confinement of the extroverted mother to her internal world subsequent to childbirth may elucidate the direct correlation between extraversion and the challenges experienced by the mother in the realm of parental gratification.

On the contrary, a significant aspect of postmarital dynamics encompasses the interaction with one's spouse. The construct of parental gratification, stemming from the challenges associated with the transition to parenthood, fundamentally denotes the affirmative rewards experienced by parents, including a sense of joy, a feeling of intimacy with the spouse, and a sense of personal flourishing. The constraints experienced by mothers' post-childbirth can substantially influence the quality of the spousal relationship, particularly when individuals lack the psychological preparedness necessary for navigating this new phase. This quality of the relationship may encompass various forms of interaction, shared leisure activities, pleasurable experiences, and sexual relations. The limitations imposed by the arrival of a newborn can temporarily impact all these dimensions. For instance, Thompson and Walker (2004) identify sexual satisfaction as a pivotal factor associated with parental gratification, positing that extraversion plays a predominant role in predicting sexual satisfaction. In light of the aforementioned findings, it can be posited that extraversion, through mediating variables such as sexual satisfaction and the quality of intimate marital interactions, mitigates the challenges associated with the transition to parenthood, warranting further scholarly investigation.

The research outcomes additionally indicated that the personal task aspect of the challenges linked to the transition to parenthood is solely inversely predicted by the dimension of empiricism, or openness to experience. Individuals characterized by high openness are those who exhibit a profound curiosity regarding both their internal experiences and the external world, leading to lives rich in varied experiences. These individuals actively seek to explore innovative theories and unconventional values, and in comparison, to those with lesser degrees of this trait, they experience a wider array of both positive and negative emotions, possess vivid imaginations, and maintain an active imaginative life, with their emotional responses being relatively composed and subdued. A salient characteristic of individuals displaying a high degree of openness to experience is their adaptability and receptiveness to novel experiences. The experience of becoming a first-time

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mother, while notably exhilarating and positive, also presents the mother with a myriad of significant responsibilities and tasks, which, although unacquainted, are crucial and imperative. Given the inherent vulnerabilities and needs of newborns, alongside the critical importance of caregiving during the initial months post-birth, this experience can prove to be quite formidable for new mothers. In this context, it is reasonable to anticipate that mothers with elevated levels of openness to experience will approach the responsibilities and demands of this new domain with a more favorable psychological disposition. Individuals exhibiting elevated levels of openness to experience demonstrate a propensity to modify their perspectives and attitudes towards various encounters, contingent upon situational factors, thereby enabling the experience of a diverse range of emotions. Generally, alongside their responsibilities pertaining to the newborn, women engage in numerous additional duties across different domains, which encompass household management, obligations related to their spouse and immediate family, and, if in the workforce, professional responsibilities. The possession of the intrinsic characteristic of openness to experience may serve to mitigate the challenges associated with the execution of the aforementioned tasks. The personality characteristic of conscientiousness, despite its notable correlation with the dimension of personal responsibility, did not exhibit a significant predictive capacity within the framework of regression analysis. This observation may be attributable to the potential influence of critical variables, such as attitudes, which warrant consideration in subsequent research endeavors.

In the outcomes derived from the examination of the relationship between the variable of perceived social support and the dimensions pertaining to the challenges of the transition to parenthood, no significant correlation was identified. These results align with the findings of the study conducted by Splonskowski and Twiss (1995). The authors of this research postulate that mothers may predominantly concentrate on the novelty of the experience and the newly assumed roles following childbirth, thereby perceiving no immediate necessity for external support, while prioritizing the positive facets of this transformative event and directing their focus entirely towards the sentiment of motherhood, potentially overlooking the support offered by others. Conversely, a multitude of studies has underscored the significance of social support in facilitating appropriate adaptation to stressors and substantial life transitions (Navidian et al., 2015; Saraian & Sajjadian, 2016). Certain scholars assert that in women, the perception of social support or the attitudes exhibited by those in their surroundings, along with the assistance received from their partner and immediate circle,

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enhances the individual's sense of coping efficacy, which consequently bolsters self-esteem, self-confidence, and psychological adjustment among individuals confronting significant health-related stressors (Saraian & Sajjadian, 2016) Hence, it is anticipated that the dimensions of perceived social support will play a pivotal role in the challenges associated with the transition to motherhood, which stands in contrast to the findings of the current study.

In light of the cultural context of Iran, particularly within the urban environment of Yazd, it is observed that a considerable number of primiparous women benefit from substantial support from their familial and social networks during the initial two months postpartum. Consequently, the apprehensions associated with this transition may be less pronounced in the early stages, as partners and parents are likely to possess a more nuanced understanding of the emergent circumstances and their inherent constraints. Subsequent investigations, characterized by an expanded sample size and increased heterogeneity in the demographic attributes of the participants, may yield significant findings. For instance, the predominant demographic of mothers within this study consisted of individuals who are both natives and residents of Yazd, thereby enhancing the probability of heightened social support while simultaneously diminishing the potential for variability and individual disparities in the social support metrics.

The current investigation encountered notable constraints concerning its implementation and sampling methodology. The original research framework was designed as a longitudinal study aimed at evaluating the challenges associated with the transition to parenthood across two-month, six-month, one-year, and two-year intervals; however, this design proved insufficient for comprehensive data collection at later stages due to various impediments encountered during the sampling process. A future longitudinal study could provide insightful outcomes, given that the development of maternal identity is inherently variable and adaptable. Scholars posit that the transition to motherhood is profoundly influenced by individual and sociocultural interpretations of identity. As the child matures and the mother acquires further knowledge, her identity as a mother evolves and aligns with the developmental needs of the child. This maternal identity can coexist with her established identities as a daughter, sister, friend, spouse, and colleague, among others. Over time, new mothers devise strategies to amalgamate their emergent identity with their pre-existing identities, thereby achieving equilibrium and coherence as an integral aspect of their self-concept. This phenomenon inherently facilitates the transition process itself. Conversely, the

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absence of a culturally relevant Iranian scale designed to measure the challenges of the transition to parenthood represents a significant limitation that may have influenced the outcomes of this study. This is particularly pertinent as motherhood and the quality of the mothering experience are profoundly shaped by cultural influences. Researchers assert that sociocultural attitudes regarding the body, pregnancy, and motherhood can either facilitate or impede this transition. These two aspects warrant further exploration in subsequent research, especially in light of the limited scholarly discourse surrounding the challenges of transitioning to parenthood, particularly concerning the implications of personality traits and perceived social support. In this context, employing a larger sample size could enable the exploration of pivotal mediating and moderating variables, such as marital satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, self-efficacy, problem-solving abilities, emotional self-regulation, and even cognitive and emotional schemas, in the interplay between significant personality traits and the challenges associated with the transition to parenthood through structural equation modeling. Additionally, investigating the comparative challenges faced by fathers versus mothers during the transition to parenthood, along with its correlation to other variables, is likely to yield intriguing insights that, considering the existing research gap, should be prioritized by future scholars.

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Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by ethics committee of Yazd University.

Author contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design, material preparation, data collection and analysis. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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