

# The mediating roles of religious coping styles in the relationship between parenting stress and depressive symptoms in adolescent mothers

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## Abstract

Previous research has predominately focused on the direct effects of parenting stress on depressive symptoms in adolescent mothers and overlooked the possible mediating processes. The main aim of this study is to examine the mediating roles of positive and negative religious coping styles in the relationship between parenting stress and depression. A total of 571 adolescent mothers aged 13-19 years ( $M = 18.21$ ,  $SD = .94$ ) in Lusaka Zambia participated in a survey by completing measures of parenting stress, positive and negative religious coping, and depressive symptoms. Results from regression-based mediation analyses using SPSS PROCESS Macro (after controlling for sociodemographic factors) indicated that only negative religious coping style significantly mediated the relationship between parenting stress and depression in adolescent mothers, suggesting that negative religious coping partly explains the influence of parenting stress on adolescent mothers' depressive symptoms. The non-significant mediating effect of positive religious coping suggests that positive religious coping is unrelated with depressive symptoms. Future research could therefore examine whether interventions aimed at reducing negative religious coping are effective in reducing depressive symptoms among adolescent mothers.

**Keywords:** adolescent mothers, depressive symptoms, negative religious coping, parenting stress, positive religious coping