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ADOPTION OF A CHILD: FIRST-TIME PARENTS' VERSUS NON-FIRST-TIME PARENTS' FEELINGS ABOUT PARENTING

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ABSTRACT

Previous research suggests that a biological tie is not necessary for effective parenting and that positive parent feelings about parenting vary among mothers and fathers. This research drew on that literature to inform current hypotheses about how parent efficacy and parents' report of parenting daily hassles vary in three different adoptive parenting groups: first-time parents, non-first time parents with at least one biological child, and non-first-time parents with at least one adopted child. It was predicted that non-first-time parents with at least one adopted child would display the greatest parenting efficacy and first-time adoptive parents would display the least. First-time parents were hypothesized to report the least hassle and non-first-time parents with at least one adopted child were predicted to report the most. The study found no significant difference in parenting efficacy among the three parent groups. First-time parents reported feeling the least hassled while non-first-time parents with at least one adopted child reported feeling the most. Differences in report of parenting daily hassle were minimal among the two non-first-time parent groups.

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Introduction

Research has focused to a large extent on the implications of adoption in the development of adopted children. Generally, studies comparing adopted and non-adopted children's psychological and academic development (Brodzinsky, Schechter, Braff & Singer, 1984), intelligence (IJzendoorn, Juffer & Poelhuis, 2005), and behavior problems (Brand & Brinich, 2003) have failed to show significant differences between the two groups. However, few studies in this area have focused on adoptive parents. Results are mixed in regard to the importance of biological relatedness in parenting and rarely focus on how these parent-child relationships affect parents' overall feelings about parenting. The proposed research examines this underdeveloped topic in three groups of parents who share the experience of adopting a child into their family. The three groups include: (1) first-time parents, (2) non-first-time parents with at least one biological child, and (3) non-first-time parents with at least one adopted child.

This study examined parents' feelings about parenting a 9 month old child for differences among the three parent groups mentioned above. Specifically, this study examined parents' sense of parenting self-efficacy and their perception of hassle in daily parent-child interactions. This research provides insight about the effect that parent status, first-time versus non-first-time, has on feelings about parenting. Differences among the two non-first-time parent groups may also suggest an effect of a genetic, biological tie in parents' feelings about parenting.

Parenting Efficacy and Perception of Daily Parenting Hassles

The transition to parenthood is marked by a wide array of emotional responses and feelings in anticipation of a new arrival. The majority of research on becoming a parent focuses on the pregnancy and birth of a child born to biological parents. Parenting satisfaction and efficacy in these parents often stems from a number of factors including: support from friends

and family, parents' conception of how prepared they are to deal with the arrival of a baby, changes in the parents' relationship with one another, and postnatal experiences such as breastfeeding (Deave, Johnson & Ingram 2008). Parents commonly report that they are overwhelmed by the birth of their first child, with mothers and fathers expressing slightly different anxieties over the course of the first year (Deave et al. 2008).

Both first-time mothers and fathers express concerns about their efficacy in providing care for their child and their satisfaction in doing so (Nystrom & Ohrling 2003). Parenting efficacy, as described here, is often conceptualized in terms of Bandura's (1986) descriptions of perceived self-efficacy. It is defined as an individual's belief that he can perform a task effectively and confidently and has implications for the development of a positive sense of self. Self-efficacy may be influenced by various aspects of the past, present, and future. This might be of particular importance in this study which includes both first-time and non-first-time parents. Non-first-time parents who have already taken part in the child-rearing process are likely to be more efficacious in their parenting than first-time parents who do not share the same past experiences. Non-first-time parents who have already been exposed to the adoption process are hypothesized to report the greatest parenting efficacy of the three parent groups as a result of their additional past experiences. Those with greater perceived self-efficacy are expected to perform better than those with lower self-efficacy in particular situations. Parents who report greater efficacy in providing care for their infant are therefore expected to perform better overall in the broad sense of child-rearing.

Hudson, Elek, and Fleck (2001) used Bandura's theory on self-efficacy as the basis of their research. One study in particular was conducted to observe differences in parenting efficacy and parenting satisfaction among first-time mothers and fathers. The study also analyzed the

relationship between the two variables: parenting efficacy and satisfaction. Parent efficacy in this study was defined in terms of infant care self-efficacy. This included how comfortable parents were and how satisfied they felt in their ability to effectively care for their infant. The efficacy variable also incorporated how parents felt about their interactions with their infant and about the developing relationship with their infant (Hudson, Elek, & Fleck, 2001). This research used the *Infant Care Survey* (ICS) to assess parent self-efficacy in caring for an infant. This scale is similar to the Parenting Efficacy Scale (cite) used in the current research. Hudson et al. (2001) conceptualized pleasure in parenting as parenting satisfaction which exists as a measure of how interested parents are in investing their time and whether or not they enjoy doing so.

Hudson et al. (2001) documented two pertinent findings. First, mothers consistently reported greater self-efficacy than fathers. The second relevant finding by Hudson et al. (2000) was that self-efficacy and pleasure in parenting are positively correlated. Elek, Hudson, and Bouffard (2002) conducted additional research that again focused on infant care self-efficacy, parenting satisfaction, and marital satisfaction at 4 and 12 months after the birth of a child to observe the relationship between variables. Elek and her colleagues found similar results: at both stages, mothers' and fathers' reports of self-efficacy and satisfaction became more positive over time and were significantly correlated with one another. Mothers' reports for both measures were significantly higher than fathers'.

Earlier studies conducted by a number of researchers focused on the impact that major life events have on parenting and child outcome (Crnic, Greenberg, Ragozin, Robinson, & Basham, 1983; Turner & Avison, 1985; Weinraub & Wolf, 1983). These major life stresses were most consistent with negative individual outcomes. However, researchers began to question the practicality of such a measure because very few parents actually experienced major life events or

stressors (Crnic and Greenberg, 1990). Delongis and colleagues (Delongis, Coyne, Dakof, Folkman, and Lazarus, 1982) documented findings concerning the beneficial use of daily hassle scales rather than major life stressor scales. Their analysis of these scales in relation to the past major life stressor scales revealed that the daily hassle scales were more relevant and significantly stronger predictors of overall health. Delongis et al. (1982) concluded that daily hassles were beneficial to the study of stress and its relation to aspects of everyday life such as parenting.

Later studies conducted by Crnic et al. (1990) therefore focused on the impact that minor daily life stresses have on parenting in terms of satisfaction, overall parent well-being, family cohesion, and parent-child relationships. Parent daily hassles in these studies were defined by parental reports of inconveniences and minor stresses associated with parenting their children. Examples of daily hassles include: "being nagged or whined to," "continually cleaning up the same messes," and "difficulty getting privacy" (Crnic & Greenberg, 1990). The researchers documented that parents' reports of daily hassles were predictive of the variables mentioned earlier. In particular, results indicated a significant negative relationship between report of daily hassles and parent satisfaction, overall life satisfaction, and level of social support. These results were consistent among both mothers and fathers (Crnic et al., 1990).

In the current study, non-first-time adoptive parents are expected to show higher efficacy than first-time adoptive parents as a result of their previous parenting experience(s). This is supported by research conducted by Elek et al. (2000,2002) in which parents were found to report greater efficacy over time. Parents who have parented in the past are therefore expected to feel more confident in their ability to parent a second child. Among non-first-time parents, those with biological children only are expected to show slightly less efficacy than those who already

have adopted children as a result of their decision to embark on a new and vastly different parenting experience.

Coleman and Karraker's (2003) research, like Hudson and her colleagues' (2000), focuses on parenting efficacy. However, Coleman & Karraker (2003) study how high maternal efficacy has been correlated with positive parenting in terms of responsiveness and caretaking responsibilities. Coleman & Karraker's (2003) research focuses on self-efficacy in mothers and whether or not this correlates with parenting competence and positive child behavior. Parenting competence was assessed through quality of parenting in different situations (e.g., unstructured free play, teaching tasks that became increasingly difficult, separation from the parent) of parent-child interaction designed to evoke varying behaviors in the parent and child. Quality of parenting was based on two dimensions which included supportive presence (involvement and support) and quality of assistance (helping the child with tasks and little assistance with tasks) (Coleman et al., 2003).

In the Coleman study, efficacy was operationalized using The Self-Efficacy for Parenting Tasks Index, which is a 53 item scale measuring domain-specific parenting self-efficacy. Domain-general measures (e.g., "I meet my own personal expectations for expertise in caring for my child") have been previously used in measuring self-efficacy, but Bandura's (1986) research suggests that specific measures (e.g., emotional availability, nurturance, etc.) allow the recognition of more precise correlates between sense of self and overt behavior. Examples of domain-specific measures of parenting efficacy include: emotional availability, nurturance, protection from harm or injury, discipline and limit setting, play, teaching, and instrumental care and establishment of structure and routines (Coleman et al. 2003).

Due to the lack of studies incorporating domain-specific measurements, Coleman et al. (2003) decided to include both types of measurement (domain-general and domain-specific) in their research to draw conclusions about the accuracy and precision of each of the measures (Coleman et al., 2003). The more specific measures were better predictors of efficacy and produced more significant associations with variables than the general measures (Coleman et al., 2003). This suggests that the proposed research scale which consists of specific parenting domains in caring for infants will yield successful results. The scale used in this study was very similar to the one used in Hudson, Elek, and Fleck (2000) study described above. The success of these similar scales in each of the two studies also provides reason to believe that a measurement system of this type will be valid.

The research reviewed above helps to describe the two variables that will be used to measure parents' feelings in the current study: parenting efficacy and parenting daily hassle (Hudson, Elek, & Fleck, 2000; Coleman & Karraker, 2003; Crnic & Greenberg, 1990). Parenting efficacy and parents' reports of how hassled they felt in certain situations are expected to be highest among non-first-time parents and lowest among first-time parents. Based on previous research, domain-specific measures of parenting self-efficacy and impact of minor life stresses serve as strong indicators of parents' overall feelings about parenting.

Adoptive versus Biological Parents

Researchers have been contemplating the differences between adoptive and biological parenting for decades. The common concerns of first-time biological parents (e.g. routine infant care, how to deal with a fussy baby, breast-feeding) are somewhat different for adoptive parents, who worry more about issues such as: parenting the adopted child, expressing negativity toward their adopted child due to a lack of genetic relatedness, underestimating cultural differences

between themselves and their adopted child, a lack of attachment between parent and child, and dealing with the biological parents of the child in the future (Sherwen, Smith & Cueman, 1984; Osman, Chaaya, El Zein, Naassan, & Wick, 2010).

Some research in this area has attempted to split the adoption process into distinct phases such as: decision to adopt, process of adopting, and waiting for the adopted child to arrive (Lobar and Phillips, 1996). Lobar and Phillips (1996) attributed a multitude of negative feelings to each of the stages described above and found that participants in the study expressed that they somehow managed to force themselves through these tough stages knowing that parenthood might not be the end result. The process is different for biological parents who can experience the physical aspects that accompany the waiting period in becoming a new parent (Sandelowski, Harris, & Holditch-Davis, 1993). A subsequent study by the same group also focused on how the negative effects of the adoption process might harmfully impact parenting of the adopted child. Specifically, adoption was proposed as a "stressor" for parents because they must face their inability to conceive biologically while participating in a seemingly never-ending process involving legal action and an unpredictable ending (Holditch-Davis, Sandelowski, & Harris, 1998). This perspective suggests a difference in first-time parents of biological and adopted children that stems from the actual process of "conception". No significant differences were found in early parent-infant interactions between adoptive and biological parents.

Other studies suggest that adoptive parents are better adjusted to the expectant parent process with fewer marital issues, fewer instances of depression, and greater social support (Levy-Shiff, Bar, & Har-Even, 1990). Adoptive parents might have a stronger, more trusting relationship with their partner which has allowed them to make the relatively tough decision to

adopt. Their opportunity to become parents after such a lengthy process is the most likely factor contributing to their diminished reports of depression and strong sense of social support.

The period following legalization of the adoption has also been observed by a number of researchers to account for differences between adoptive and biological mothers in their feelings about parenting. Overall feelings about parenting among the two groups were found to be relatively consistent post-legalization, with neither adoptive nor biological mothers expressing significantly more pleasure in their new parent experience (Koepke, Anglin, Austin, & Delesalle, 1991). Koepke et al. (1991) did find differences in the ways in which mothers described their children, with adoptive mothers focusing more on ownership of the child and biological mothers more on physical traits. This research also revealed that adoptive mothers reported being less drained by their new role as a mother. Their responses were more often characterized by their bliss in finally receiving the opportunity to parent whereas biological parents were more likely to report being overwhelmed and exhausted (Koepke et al. 1991).

These differences in parent responses to biological versus adopted children can be attributed to the current research in which first-time adoptive parents are expected to report the least hassle among the three parent groups. First-time adoptive parents are likely to be more focused on the rewards and the opportunity to parent and are therefore expected to be more tolerant and/or less likely to report daily hassle than first-time biological parents.

One aim of this study was to examine whether overall feelings about parenting differed for non-first-time parents with at least one biological child versus non-first-time parents who already have an adopted child or children. Sandelowski et al. (1993) suggest that adoptive parents are capable of "unblooding" the attachment between a parent and child; parents can be taught to look past the lack of any genetic relatedness and experience the same love for their

adopted child as they would for a biological child. Golombok, Murray, Brinsden and Abdalla's (1999) research also embarks on the idea of a genetic tie between parent and child. This research focuses more intently on the lack of such a biological tie in families who have used egg or sperm donation, but this can be paralleled with research in adoption where there is the same lack of parent-child genetic relatedness. The concerns with gamete donation are that parents are thought to possibly invest less in their parenting and evoke fewer positive behaviors toward their children. Some have argued that children conceived by egg or sperm donation may not ever be fully seen as a true part of the family because they are not genetically related (Golombok, Murray, Brinsden & Abdalla, 1999). However, there were no significant differences in parenting; both biologically related and unrelated parents displayed the same quality of parenting. Research conducted in 1995 by the same group found slightly different results; Golombok and colleagues observed that there was actually more involvement among donor egg and sperm parents than those who conceived with their own egg and sperm. This may be the result of a long-awaited opportunity to parent; one that could not be achieved with the egg and sperm of the parents. These parents may therefore have been more invested in their parenting role. This could potentially be attributed to adoptive families who have experienced a long, emotionally draining adoption process. Acquiring a child through adoption is therefore analogous to acquiring a child through egg and sperm donation. The ability to parent by way of adoption might similarly lead to a greater investment in parenting.

Findings from a study of adoptive families were similar as those reported above. Specifically, positive and/or negative behaviors expressed by parents towards their biological and adopted children were examined in a study of 85 families consisting of couples with one adopted child and one biological child. Measures of parental positivity and negativity toward

each child were collected through the *Parent Feelings Questionnaire* (PFQ) and parents also completed the *Child Behavior Checklist* to index internalizing and externalizing behaviors in the children (Glover, Mullineaux, Deater-Deckard, & Petrill, 2009). No significant differences were found for parents and their biological child vs. parents and their adopted child for positivity/negativity in parent feelings for mothers or fathers, nor were there significant differences in internalizing or externalizing behaviors across the two groups of children (Marshaun et al. 2009). This research suggests that non-first-time parents with a biological child will show no greater efficacy or pleasure in parenting than those who already have an adopted child.

Previous research, as mentioned earlier, has found that self-efficacy and pleasure in parenting are positively correlated and that self-efficacy is often defined in terms of Bandura's definition of self-efficacy. Parenting daily hassles are found to be more predictive of parent feelings about parenting than major life stresses, so more recent research has focused on these minor stresses. Researchers have also discovered differences in mother's descriptions of children, with adoptive mothers focusing more on ownership and biological mothers more on physical traits. The current research uses parenting efficacy and parenting daily hassles to analyze parents' overall feelings about parenting within three adoptive parent groups. The current study will focus on how adoptive parents who already have biological or adopted children differ from one another in terms of efficacy and report of daily hassle.

Hypotheses:

- Non-first-time parents with an adopted child or children will show the greatest parenting efficacy followed by non-first-time parents with a biological child or

children. First-time adoptive parents are expected to show the least parenting efficacy.

- Non-first-time parents with an adopted child or children are expected to report the greatest of daily hassle followed by non-first-time parents with a biological child or children. However, based on previous research, the differences in reports of daily hassle for these two groups are expected to be minimal.
- First-time adoptive parents are hypothesized to report the least daily hassle.
- Mothers are expected to report greater efficacy and fewer daily hassles across all three groups.

Method

Participants

The Early Growth and Development Study consists of 361 sets of adoptive families (including adoptive parents and birth parents linked through the adopted child) (Leve et al., 2010). This study used data from adoptive mothers and fathers, who were split into the three groups consisting of: first-time parents, non-first-time parents with at least one biological child and non-first-time parents with at least one adopted child.

Measures

Demographic Recruitment Form. Parent status (first-time, non-first-time with biological child, non-first-time with adopted child) was determined based on demographic recruitment data from The Early Growth and Development Study. The form contains two separate birth mother and birth father pages that ask about the number of biological and adopted children the parent has in their home. Other data included in the form, but not relevant to this particular study, are items such as annual gross income, religious affiliation, ethnicity, etc.

The Parenting Efficacy Scale. Parents' perceptions of their own parenting efficacy were assessed using The Parenting Efficacy Scale (Teti & Gelfand, 1991). This is a 10-item scale with 9 items devoted to parents' sense of competence in performing specific parenting behaviors (e.g. soothing the baby, understanding what the baby wants, amusing the baby, etc.) and 1 item concerning global feelings of efficacy. Participants rank their efficacy in each domain on a 4-point scale ranging from "not good at all" to "very good". Higher scores therefore represent greater feelings of parent efficacy.

Parenting Daily Hassles Scale.(Crnic & Greenberg, 1990) Parents' reports of daily hassles were measured using a 20-item scale that focused on typical parent-child encounters that might be conceived as a hassle. Parents were asked to rate the frequency of these encounters on a 5-point scale (rarely, sometimes, a lot, constantly, does not apply) and how hassled they felt during such encounters. Parents' reports of how hassled they felt were also measured using a 5-point scale ranging from no hassle (1) to big hassle (5).

Procedure

After descriptive statistics and correlations were examined for the two dependent variables (Table 1), the sample was split by parent status. Adoptive mothers and fathers were first split according to first-time and non-first-time parent status. The statistics and analyses mentioned above were then run separately for first-time and non-first-time parent groups. Next, the data set was further divided into the three parent groups (first-time, non-first-time with at least on biological child, non-first-time with at least one other adopted child). These three parent groups were also subject to the statistical and correlational analyses mentioned above for parent efficacy and parent daily hassles.

Next, Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) were used to test the effects of parent gender and status on parents' feelings about parenting. The first set of analyses examined mean differences in parenting self-efficacy and parenting hassles among first versus non-first-time parents. The second examined mean differences in these variables with parent status (first-time parents, non-first-time parents with at least one biological child, non-first-time parents with at least one adopted child) as the between subjects factor. Post-hoc tests with Bonferroni correction were conducted when appropriate. All analyses were run separately for adoptive mothers and fathers, and controlled for child gender.

Results

Results are organized in two sections, preliminary analyses, and Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) and Post Hoc Tests. The preliminary analyses contain observed correlations for the dependent variables (Parenting Efficacy and Parenting Daily Hassles) among mothers and fathers. The correlations are reported so that parent groups become more specific as the section progresses. The ANOVAs section contains the bulk of the information concerning relationships between the two dependent variables and each of the three parent groups (first-time parents, non-first-time with a biological child or children, non-first-time with an adopted child or children). The results of the post hoc tests are provided where appropriate to show multiple comparisons of the three parent groups to display which groups differed significantly from one another.

Preliminary Analyses

Parenting efficacy among mothers and parenting efficacy among fathers were significantly positively correlated ($r = .23$, $p < .01$), as were reports of parenting daily hassles by mothers and reports of parenting daily hassle by fathers ($r = .45$, $p < .01$). Parenting efficacy among mothers was significantly negatively correlated with reports of parenting daily hassle by mothers ($r = -.31$, $p < .01$). Parenting efficacy among fathers was significantly negatively correlated with reports of parenting daily hassle by fathers ($r = -.21$, $p < .01$), but slightly less correlated than the two variables were among mothers. These results are outlined in Table 2.

First-time versus Non-first-time Parents

When mothers and fathers were split into first-time and non-first-time parents, the same pattern of findings emerged. Within the first-time parent group, parenting efficacy for mothers and fathers were significantly positively correlated ($r = .23$, $p < .01$), as were reports of parenting daily hassle by mothers and fathers ($r = .35$, $p < .01$). The correlations were slightly higher for

parenting efficacy of mothers and reports of parenting daily hassle by mothers (r = -.38, p < .01). Parenting efficacy among fathers was significantly negatively correlated with reports of parenting daily hassle by fathers (r = -.32, p < .01) but the correlation was lower than that of mothers. Among first-time parents, parenting efficacy among fathers and reports of parenting daily hassle by mothers were also found to be significantly negatively correlated (r = -.24, p < .01). The correlations for first-time parents are outlined in Table 3.

Within the non-first-time parent group, the correlation for parenting efficacy of mothers with parenting efficacy of fathers was slightly higher than the first-time parent group (r = .24, p < .05). Reports of parenting daily hassle among mothers, on the other hand, were slightly less correlated with reports of parenting daily hassle by fathers than the first-time parent group (r = .33, p < .01). Parenting efficacy of mothers was also less correlated with reports of parenting daily hassle by mothers than the first-time parent group (r = -.32, p < .01), as were parenting efficacy of fathers and reports of parenting daily hassle by fathers (r = -.23, p < .05). The correlations for non-first-time parents are outlined in Table 4.

Non-first-time with biological versus Non-first-time with adopted

One of the three parent groups consisted of those who were first-time parents and therefore displayed the same correlations as the first-time parent group above. Among non-first-time parents with another biological child or children, parenting efficacy among mothers and parenting efficacy among fathers were not found to be significantly correlated. Reports of daily hassle by mothers and fathers, however, were significantly positively correlated (r = .32, p < .05). Parenting efficacy among mothers and reports of parenting daily hassle by mothers were also significantly negatively correlated (r = -.40, p < .01), as were parenting efficacy among

fathers and reports of parenting daily hassle by fathers (r = -.34, p < .05). The correlations for non-first-time parents with at least one biological child are outlined in Table 5.

Among non-first-time parents with another adopted child or children, parenting efficacy among mothers and fathers were significantly positively correlated (r = .33, p < .01), as were reports of parenting daily hassle by mothers and fathers (r = .35, p < .01). Parenting efficacy among mothers and reports of parenting daily hassle by mothers were significantly negatively correlated (r = -.26, p < .05), but less correlated than the variables were among non-first-time parents with a biological child or children. The correlations for non-first-time parents with at least one other adopted child are outlined in Table 6.

Analysis of Variance

The first set of analyses examined mean differences in parenting self-efficacy and parenting hassles among first-time versus non-first-time parents. The second set of analyses examined mean differences in the same variables with parent status (first-time parents, non-first-time parents with at least one biological child, non-first-time parents with at least one adopted child) as the between subjects factor. For parenting efficacy, no significant differences were observed between groups (all F's non-significant). The following results are therefore those of the ANOVAs for parenting daily hassle.

First-time versus Non-first-time Parents

Reports of parenting daily hassle differed significantly among first-time and non-first-time mothers, $F(1,1) = 153.83$, $p < .001$, with non-first-time mothers reporting more daily hassle on average (M = 40.26) than first-time mothers (M = 25.41). Reports of parenting daily hassle also differed significantly among first-time and non-first-time fathers, $F(1,1) = 130.57$, $p < .001$. Non-first-time fathers reported more daily hassle on average (M = 38.44) than first-time fathers

(M = 24.02), with fathers reporting slightly less daily hassle on average than mothers among both first-time and non-first-time parents.

Differences among First-time Parents, Non-first-time parents with biological child, and Non-first-time parents with an adopted child

Reports of parenting daily hassle differed significantly among first-time mothers, non-first-time mothers with a biological child, and non-first-time mothers with an adopted child, $F(2,1) = 77.07$, $p < .001$. First-time mothers reported the least daily hassle on average (M = 25.41) followed by non-first-time mothers with a biological child (M = 39.33) and non-first-time mothers with an adopted child (M = 40.79). Post hoc tests were conducted for the analyses of the three parent groups to illustrate the pattern of findings and direction of effects. Bonferonni post hoc comparisons of the three groups indicated that first-time mothers reports of parenting daily hassle (M = 25.41) were significantly different from reports by non-first-time parents with at least one biological child (M = 39.33) and from reports by non-first-time parents with at least one adopted child (M = 40.79) at $p < .001$. Reports of daily hassle by non-first-time mothers with at least one biological child were not significantly different from reports of daily hassle by non-first-time mothers with at least one adopted child, $p = 1.00$.

Reports of parenting daily hassle also differed significantly among first-time fathers, non-first time fathers with a biological child, and non-first-time fathers with an adopted child, $F(2,1) = 74.27$, $p < .001$. Fathers displayed the same trends as mothers, with first-time fathers reporting the least daily hassle (M = 24.02) followed by non-first-time fathers with a biological child (M = 33.41) and non-first-time fathers with an adopted child (M = 41.05). Post hoc tests revealed that first-time fathers' reports of parenting daily hassle (M = 24.02) were significantly different from reports of daily hassle by non-first-time fathers with at least one biological child

(M = 33.41) and from reports of daily hassle by non-first-time fathers with at least one adopted child (M = 41.05) at $p < .001$. Reports of daily hassle by non-first-time fathers with at least one biological child were also significantly different from reports of daily hassle by non-first-time fathers with at least one adopted child, $p = .001$.

The analyses above were repeated for each of the three parent groups, this time controlling for gender of the adopted child. Reports of parenting daily hassle by mothers still differed significantly among the three parents groups, $F(3,1) = 48.140$, $p < .001$. The same results were observed for fathers; reports of parenting daily hassle by fathers differed significantly even when controlling for gender of the adopted child, $F(3,1) = 47.60$, $p < .001$.

Discussion

This study focused on observing the differences in parents' feelings about parenting through measures of parenting efficacy and reports of daily hassle among three different adoptive parent groups. These groups included: first-time adoptive parents, non-first-time adoptive parents with a biological child or children, and non-first-time adoptive parents with an adopted child or children. It was hypothesized that the highest efficacy would be observed in non-first-time parents with an adopted child, followed by non-first-time parents with a biological child. First-time adoptive parents were hypothesized to report the least parenting efficacy. Non-first-time parents with an adopted child were hypothesized to report the most parenting daily hassle, followed by non-first-time parents with a biological child. First-time parents were expected to report the least parenting daily hassle.

Preliminary correlational analyses provided results that were consistent with hypotheses about the relationship between the two dependent variables: parenting efficacy and parenting daily hassles. Parenting efficacy and parenting daily hassle were found to be negatively correlated, so that an increase in efficacy would correspond to a decrease in reported daily hassle and vice versa. This finding is consistent with other work in this area which found that parenting satisfaction is predictive of parents' reports of daily stresses (Crnic & Greenberg, 1990). Based on these findings and that of the current report, a parent who feels more efficacious about their parenting appears to be less likely to focus on and report daily nuisances because they are more comfortable in their parent role.

Other significant correlations proved interesting when looking at the differences between first-time parents and non-first-time parents with biological versus adopted children. Within the first-time parent group, parenting efficacy among mothers was significantly negatively correlated

with reports of parenting daily hassle by mothers (r = -.376, p < .01), as were parenting efficacy and reports of parenting daily hassle by fathers (r = -.320, p < .01). The correlations for non-first-time parents with a biological child or children were relatively similar to the correlations observed among first-time parents. These correlations between first-time parents and non-first-time parents with at least one biological child might be more similar because both parent groups are adopting for the first time. Non-first-time parents who already have at least one adopted child are familiar with the adoption process and might therefore be slightly more comfortable in their adoptive parent role.

The analyses performed on parenting efficacy did not reveal any significant differences among the three adoptive parent groups. The range for parenting efficacy scores in this sample was restricted, with no parents reporting toward the low end of the scale (M = 33.44). This lack of significance could be due to the fact that all three groups shared the experience of adopting a child. Previous research by Lobar and Phillips (1996) and Sanelowski et al. (1993), as mentioned earlier, discussed differences in the new-parent process among adoptive and biological parents. Adoptive parents are forced to deal with the long, drawn-out process of adopting a child without ever being guaranteed rights to that child. This is vastly different from biological parents who can experience the physical growth of their developing baby while knowing that the baby is theirs so long as they can provide for it. The three parent groups in this particular study are all experiencing the adoptive process, regardless of the biological relatedness of their previous children. It makes sense that these parents would report similar parenting efficacy because they have all made the decision to parent through adoption. The lack of significant results for parenting efficacy may have also been due to reporting bias by parents taking the questionnaire. In other words, parents may have responded in a more socially acceptable way rather than

responding honestly about their feelings about parenting. In this case, it would make sense that parenting efficacy was relatively similar across the three parent groups. Another potential reason for the lack of significant findings is that there was limited variability in the efficacy scores. The scale consisted of only 10 items that were responded to on a 4 point scale. All of the items included in the scale seemed to foster similar responses from parents.

The results for parenting daily hassles were consistent with hypotheses. First-time mothers reported the least daily hassle, and non-first-time mothers with at least one adopted child reported the most. This same trend was observed in reports of daily hassle by fathers. The differences in reports of daily hassle were significant for first-time mothers versus non-first-time mothers. However, non-first-time mothers with at least one biological child did not report significantly less daily hassle than non-first-time mothers with at least one adopted child. This may be a result of the fact that the non-first-time mothers in this particular study are similar in their parent status and only differ in the genetic relatedness of their previous children. Research conducted by Marshaun et al. (2009), as mentioned earlier, specifically focused on families with both biological and adopted children. These researchers did not observe any significant difference in scores of positivity/negativity or report of internalizing/externalizing behaviors by mothers and fathers toward their adopted and biological children. Based on this research, it makes sense that reports of parenting daily hassle would not be significantly different for the two non-first-time parent groups regardless of genetic relatedness. However, reports of parenting daily hassle among non-first-time fathers did differ significantly for those with at least one adopted child versus those with at least one biological child. It is unclear why these results were significant for fathers, but not for mothers. These results suggest that genetic relatedness may play a larger role in fathers' feelings about parenting in terms of reports of daily hassles.

The limitations of the study stem from an inability to control for a number of extraneous variables that could potentially influence the results of the study. For example, most couples who make the decision to adopt have higher than average incomes because they are usually older and because the adoption process is usually very costly (Bachrach, London, & Maza, 1988). Their incomes may therefore provide an added sense of financial security that leaves them feeling more positive about the adoptive parent experience. Couples who do not fit into this above average income category might experience the opposite; more financial stress that ultimately adds to more negative feelings about parenting. The age of the children (9 months) may have also influenced the results of the study because certain aspects of parenting may become more or less pleasurable as the child ages. It might be hard to distinguish parenting efficacy at 9 months, especially among first-time parents, who have not had earlier experiences to build upon. Parents tend to become more comfortable with their role and therefore more confident about their parenting with time.

The above limitations provide possibilities for future studies which specifically focus on the extraneous variables in question. An additional study might focus on annual gross income among parents within each group to determine if this has an effect on their overall positive feelings about parenting. Future studies might also follow parents and children as the child ages. It might be interesting to observe differences in parenting efficacy and parent reports of daily hassle during different stages of child development: toddler, pre-teen, teenager, etc. Ideally, the questionnaires addressing parent efficacy and parenting daily hassle should be administered in a more formal setting. The parents should be allowed to record their responses anonymously but in a location where their responses will not be rushed and have the potential to be vastly different from their true feelings.

Based on the results of the present study, no significant conclusions can be drawn concerning parenting efficacy among the three parent groups. However, the results do reveal a significant effect of parent status (first-time versus non-first-time) on parents' feelings about parenting in terms of parent reports of parenting daily hassle. Specifically, the results show that first-time adoptive parents report the least daily hassle while non-first-time parents with at least one adopted child report the greatest daily hassle. Among non-first-time parents, report of daily hassle does not differ significantly for parents with at least one biological child versus parents with at least one adopted child. Overall, this research suggests that feelings about parenting in terms of parents' report of hassle do differ significantly for first-time versus non-first-time parents.

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Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics of Parenting Efficacy and Parenting Daily Hassles Variable

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parenting Efficacy- Mothers	373	27	40	34.84	2.62
Parenting Efficacy- Fathers	357	21	40	33.44	3.11
Parenting Daily Hassles- Mothers	359	0	29	12.48	4.94
Parenting Daily Hassles- Fathers	350	0	26	11.82	4.89

Table 2.

Correlations Among Parenting Efficacy and Parenting Daily Hassles Variables

	Parenting Efficacy- Mothers	Parenting Efficacy- Fathers	Parenting Daily Hassles- Mothers	Parenting Daily Hassles- Fathers
Parenting Efficacy- Mothers		.23**	-.31**	-.07
Parenting Efficacy- Fathers			-.09	-.21**
Parenting Daily Hassles- Mothers				.45**

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

Table 3.

Correlations Among Parenting Efficacy and Parenting Daily Hassles Variables: First-time Parents

	Parenting Efficacy- Mothers	Parenting Efficacy- Fathers	Parenting Daily Hassles- Mothers	Parenting Daily Hassles- Fathers
Parenting Efficacy- Mothers		.23**	-.38**	-.18**
Parenting Efficacy- Fathers			-.24**	-.32**
Parenting Daily Hassles- Mothers				.35**

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

Table 4.

Correlations Among Parenting Efficacy and Parenting Daily Hassles Variables: Non-first-time Parents

	Parenting Efficacy- Mothers	Parenting Efficacy- Fathers	Parenting Daily Hassles- Mothers	Parenting Daily Hassles- Fathers
Parenting Efficacy- Mothers		.24*	-.32**	-.04
Parenting Efficacy- Fathers			.07	-.22*
Parenting Daily Hassles- Mothers				.33**

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

Table 5.

Correlations Among Parenting Efficacy and Parenting Daily Hassles Variables: Non-first-time Parents with at Least One Biological Child

	Parenting Efficacy- Mothers	Parenting Efficacy- Fathers	Parenting Daily Hassles- Mothers	Parenting Daily Hassles- Fathers
Parenting Efficacy- Mothers		.11	-.40**	-.16
Parenting Efficacy- Fathers			.19	-.34*
Parenting Daily Hassles- Mothers				.32*

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

Table 6.

Correlations Among Parenting Efficacy and Parenting Daily Hassles Variables: Non-first-time Parents with at Least One Other Adopted Child

	Parenting Efficacy- Mothers	Parenting Efficacy- Fathers	Parenting Daily Hassles- Mothers	Parenting Daily Hassles- Fathers
Parenting Efficacy- Mothers		.33**	-.26*	.00
Parenting Efficacy- Fathers			.00	-.16
Parenting Daily Hassles- Mothers				.35**

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

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