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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A Brief Psychometric Examination of the Attitudes Toward Parent-Child Gaslighting Questionnaire

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Abstract

Purpose To address child maltreatment, it is necessary to be able to reliably and accurately assess its many forms. The purpose of the present project was to evaluate a tool for assessing attitudes toward one of its less studied forms: parent-child gaslighting. We tested the psychometric properties of an *Attitudes Toward Parent-Child Gaslighting Questionnaire* (PCGQ-A), a 10-item measure assessing one's belief that it is acceptable to make one's children doubt their perceptions, judgements, and memories.

Method We administered the PCGQ-A, as well as eight measures assessing theoretically relevant constructs, to a census-matched sample of US parents (N_{Time1} = 494; N_{Time2} = 426).

Results The findings indicate that the PCGQ-A is fairly unidimensional, as indexed using dynamic fit index thresholds; internally consistent, as indexed by Cronbach's alpha (α = .86); dependable, as indexed by a test-retest correlation across two weeks (r = .71); and construct valid, as indexed by its association with eight theoretically relevant variables, including acceptance of child emotional abuse (r = .73), physical sadism (r = .61), and positive views toward the use corporal punishment (r = .55).

Conclusion Taken together, the present results indicate that the PCGQ-A is a promising measure of attitudes toward parent-child gaslighting, although we encourage future work to further investigate its psychometric properties.

Keywords Parent-child gaslighting · Scale development · Internal consistency · Test-retest reliability · Construct validity · Psychometrics

Introduction

Child maltreatment describes a large collection of highly objectionable behaviours directed toward children, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional maltreatment, and physical neglect (Barnett et al., 1993; English & the LONGSCAN Investigators, 1997). Although reports of some forms of child maltreatment have decreased over the last several decades (Finkelhor et al., 2025), it is still very much an ongoing concern. According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2023), approximately 600,000 children in the US (or 8 in every 1,000) faced some form of abuse or neglect in 2021. Moreover, according to UNICEF (2024), approximately 1.6 billion children under the age of 15 globally (or 2 in every 3) experience either psychological aggression or physical punishment from their caregivers each month. The purpose of the present study is to introduce a scale for assessing attitudes toward one understudied form of child maltreatment: parent-child gaslighting.

Gaslighting is a form of psychological and/or emotional abuse where one person tries to convince another person that they cannot trust their sense of reality or, more colloquially, that they are "crazy" (see Klein et al., 2026; see also

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Abramson, 2024; Stern, 2018; Sweet, 2019). Typically, it has been considered in the context of romantic relationships (e.g., Ciabatti et al., 2024; Gass & Nichols, 1988; Graves & Samp, 2021; Hailes & Goodman, 2023; Klein et al., 2023; Lopes & Jaspal, 2025; March et al., 2025; Miano et al., 2021; Tager-Shafrir et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2025). Less studied has been *parent-child gaslighting* (but see Calef & Weinshel, 1981; Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2018; see also Johnston et al., 2024), a form of gaslighting that involves parents trying to convince their *children* that they cannot trust their sense of reality.

The lack of prior research on parent-child gaslighting is unfortunate. Gaslighting in romantic relationships has been both quantitatively (Ciabatti et al., 2024; Lopes & Jaspal, 2025; Tager-Shafrir et al., 2024) and qualitatively (Hailes & Goodman, 2023) linked to worse mental health among adults, and there is no reason to believe that similar effects would not be found among children. Moreover, gaslighting in romantic relationships has been linked to a belief that one's memory cannot be trusted (Johnston et al., 2024). Such doubts about one's memory could not only interfere with a child's ability to achieve their educational goals (see Zimmerman, 1995) but also their ability to process traumatic experiences (e.g., Sachschal et al., 2019) and disclose maltreatment (e.g., McElvaney et al., 2014).

Despite not receiving much attention from researchers, parent-child gaslighting has received considerable attention from mainstream news publications and magazines. One can, for instance, read *Psychology Today* to learn about the effects of parent-child gaslighting on children's development (Lobel, 2024); *Parade* to learn about the 12 signs that a parent is gaslighting their child (McMurrin, 2024); and the *Washington Post* Well+Being section to discover how to identify gaslighting within families (Stern & Brackett, 2023). A similar interest in parent-child gaslighting can also be found on social media, with therapists posting videos to YouTube and TikTok detailing the five or, alternatively, seven signs that one's parents are engaged in gaslighting (e.g., Consul, 2022; Morton, 2023). With an increasing recognition of the importance of understanding parent-child gaslighting among the general public, it is likely only a matter of time before researchers begin examining it as well.

The purpose of the present brief report is to aid in these efforts by introducing and evaluating a new *Attitudes Toward Parent-Child Gaslighting Questionnaire* (PCGQ-A). We begin by assessing the scale's factor structure. Consistent with prior work on the structure of gaslighting in romantic relationships (March et al., 2025), we hypothesize that the scale will be unidimensional (H1), as determined using dynamic fit index thresholds (McNeish & Wolf, 2023). Next, we consider the scale's reliability (i.e., whether the scale produces consistent measurements; Cronbach, 1947). Again based on prior psychometric work (March et al., 2025), we hypothesize that the scale will be internally consistent (H2)—as demonstrated by a Cronbach's alpha equal to or greater than .70 (H2)—and dependable (H3)—as demonstrated by a large test-retest correlation when assessed across a two-week period. Finally, we assess the scale's construct validity (i.e., the extent to which the scale behaves in a way consistent with the underlying construct; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). Given that gaslighting has been linked to both psychological abuse and physical assault in romantic relationships (Tager-Shafrir et al., 2024) and given that different forms of child maltreatment tend to co-occur (Kim et al., 2017), we hypothesize that the scale will demonstrate large positive correlations with the perceived acceptability of emotional abuse (H4a), emotional neglect (H4b), and corporal punishment (H4c). Given the deleterious effects of gaslighting on one's relationships (Tager-Shafrir et al., 2024), we further hypothesize that the scale will demonstrate large positive correlations with feeling hostile toward (H4d) and disconnected from (H4e) one's children. Finally, consistent with prior work showing a link between gaslighting and antagonistic traits (March et al., 2025; but see Miano et al., 2021), we hypothesize that the scale will demonstrate large positive correlations with levels of antagonism (i.e., low agreeableness) (H4f), verbal sadism (H4g), and physical sadism (H4h).

All of these hypotheses are preregistered on the Open Science Framework (OSF; https://osf.io/m6kbw/?view_only=ce57a8b91be7497d9e226d9dcc35fb9b), as are the materials and analyses described below.[1] The materials, data, analytic code, and output for this study can also be found on OSF (https://osf.io/cukxt/?view_only=41d512bd514148b98d5ecb920da43eb9).

Method

Participants and Procedures

The data for the present study were collected anonymously using two Qualtrics surveys posted to Prolific. The surveys were posted approximately two weeks apart. To participate in the first survey, participants had to be (1) 18 years of age or older, (2) currently living in the US, and (3) parents. To participate in the second survey, participants had to have (1) completed the first survey and (2) not been flagged for invalid responding according to our exclusionary criteria.

[1] We also collected participants' responses to the *Parenting Styles & Dimensions Questionnaire-Short Form* (Robinson et al., 2001). As noted in our preregistration, these items were collected for a separate project and are, therefore, not reported here.

Participants were paid at a rate equivalent to $8.00 per hour for completing each survey.

To determine the necessary sample size for this study, we conducted an a priori power analysis based on our test-retest reliability and construct-validity hypotheses using the {pwr} package (Champely, 2020) in R (R Core Team, 2025). The power analysis indicated that 321 participants would be required to detect a moderate correlation or larger ($r \geq .20$; see Funder & Ozer, 2019; Gignac & Szodorai, 2016) 80% of the time that such an effect existed in the population with an alpha level of .0056.[2,3] To account for exclusions and attrition between the first and second surveys, we aimed to collect a total sample of 500 participants.[4]

Five hundred and two participants responded to the first survey. After excluding participants for invalid responding ($n = 8$; see the Supplementary Material), the sample included 494 participants ($M_{Age} = 44.21$, $SD_{Age} = 12.53$). In line with preset demographic quotas matched to the 2020 US census, approximately half of the participants identified as women (52.02%) and approximately half of the participants identified as men (47.17%). Moreover, the majority of participants identified as white (61.34%), followed by participants identifying as Black (12.96%), Hispanic or Latinx (7.69%), and Asian (4.86%). A sizeable proportion of participants also identified as belonging to multiple cultural or ethnic groups (9.92%). Most of the participants were married (61.74%) and had either one (32.39%) or two (41.30%) children ($M = 2.10$, $SD = 1.11$). The majority of the participants' children were younger than 18 (61.15%; $M_{Age} = 16.33$, $SD_{Age} = 12.05$). Additional demographic information (e.g., the participants' states of residence; the participants' income brackets) can be found in the data processing document on OSF (https://osf.io/cukxt/?view_only=41d512bd514148b98d5ecb920da43eb9).

Most of the participants who completed the first survey (and were not excluded during our first round of data screening) responded to the second survey (85.83%; $N_{Time2} = 424$). On average, they completed the second survey 14.54 days after the first survey ($SD = 3.01$; $Min = 12$; $Max = 27$). Attrition analyses can be found in the Supplementary Material.

Materials

Attitudes Toward Parent-Child Gaslighting Questionnaire

The items for the PCGQ-A were adapted from those in the *Gaslighting Questionnaire* (March et al., 2025), a 10-item measure of gaslighting in romantic relationships. The original Gaslighting Questionnaire was developed by considering the central features of gaslighting represented in the existing literature and captured by existing measures (e.g., Stern, 2018). For the most part, we (the authors) adapted the scale to the context of parent-child relationships by replacing references to "Person A" and "Person B" in the original scale with references to "a parent" and "their child". However, in certain cases, we updated the content of the items to better fit the context of a parent-child relationship. By way of example, for Item 5 (i.e., "It is acceptable for Person A to say anything to Person B if it means that they will get their way"), we replaced "they will get their way" with "their child will obey them" to emphasize the uneven power relationship at play. Moreover, for Item 9 (i.e., "It is acceptable for Person A to make Person B question their decision-making abilities if it means Person A gets to be the one to make the decisions in the relationship"), we replaced "gets to be the one to make decisions in the relationship" with "gets to make all of the major life decisions for their child" to highlight that the parent is trying to exert excessive control. As with the original questionnaire, the PCGQ-A has participants rate how *acceptable* they find gaslighting rather than having them report how often they engage in gaslighting. This is done to avoid the results being biased by participants not wanting to admit that they engage in antisocial behaviours (e.g., Bradshaw et al., 2011).

Participants completed the PCGQ-A as part of the first and second surveys. Descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, and an example item for the measure can be found in Table 1. Participants responded to the scale using a 5-point Likert scale (−2 = "Strongly disagree"; 2 = "Strongly agree").

Construct Validity Measures

Participants completed the eight construct validity measures as part of the first survey only. As with the PCGQ-A, descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, and example items for the measures can be found in Table 1. The items from the eight measures were intermixed and randomly administered with the items from the PCGQ-A across three survey pages. To progress past a given survey page, participants were required to provide a response to every survey item, resulting in a complete response set being obtained for each participant. To fit the purposes of the present

[2] Although our test-retest reliability and construct-validity hypotheses specified large effects, we based our power analysis on moderate effects because we believed that effects of this size would still be meaningful.

[3] We opted for an alpha level of .0056 to account for Type I error rate inflation resulting from testing the association of the PCGQ-A with nine outcome variables (i.e., the PCGQ-A measured at Time 2 and the eight construct validity measures).

[4] A sample of this size was also determined to be sufficient for evaluating the factor structure of the scale. According to Kline's (2016) guidelines, a sample of 400 participants should be adequate for estimating a model with 20 parameters.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, and example items for the Attitudes Toward Parent-Child Gaslighting Questionnaire and the eight construct validity measures

Measure	Source	Construct	Items	$\bar{r}_{ij}$	α	ω	*M*	*SD*	Example Item
PCGQ-A	-	Parent-Child Gaslighting	10	.40	.86	.86	−1.48	0.54	It is acceptable for a parent to try to make their child question their sanity.
CTQ-SF	Bernstein et al. (2003)	Emotional Abuse	5	.39	.74	.74	−1.68	0.50	It is acceptable for a parent to call their child names.
CTQ-SF	Bernstein et al. (2003)	Emotional Neglect	5	.38	.75	.75	−1.73	0.40	It is acceptable for a parent to feel close to their child. (R)
VATVS	Anderson et al. (2006)	Corporal Punishment	8	.53	.90	.91	−1.29	0.75	Young children who refuse to obey should be whipped.
PARS	Burke et al. (2021)	Relationship Hostility	5	.29	.66	.66	−0.82	0.67	I make negative comments about my child to others.
PARS	Burke et al. (2021)	Relationship Disconnectedness	6	.39	.79	.79	−1.57	0.43	I encourage my child to talk about their thoughts and feelings. (R)
BFI-2-XS	Soto and John (2017b)	Antagonism	3	.23	.45	.45	−0.80	0.68	I am sometimes rude to others.
CAST	Buckels and Paulhus (2014)	Verbal Sadism	6	.37	.76	.77	−1.23	0.73	I enjoy making jokes at the expense of others.
CAST	Buckels and Paulhus (2014)	Physical Sadism	5	.30	.64	.64	−1.66	0.47	I enjoy physically hurting people.

PCGQ-A= Attitudes Toward Parent-Child Gaslighting Questionnaire, *CTQ-SF*= Childhood Trauma Questionnaire - Short Form, *VATVS*= Velicer Attitudes Toward Violence Scale, *PARS*= Parent-Adolescent Relationship Scale, *BFI-2-XS*= Big Five Inventory-2 - Extra-Short Form, *CAST*= Comprehensive Assessment of Sadistic Tendencies. "R" indicates a reverse-coded item.

study, the items from the emotional abuse and emotional neglect scales were adapted to ask about the participants' perceptions of the acceptability of abusive and neglectful behaviours rather their experiences being a target of those behaviours (e.g., "Called names by family" was modified to read "It is acceptable for a parent to call their child names"). Participants responded to the scales using a 5-point Likert scale (−2 = "Strongly disagree"; 2 = "Strongly agree").

Results

Factor Structure

To test the factor structure of the PCGQ-A, we began by fitting a confirmatory factor analysis model with all of the scale's items loading on a single latent variable. The model fit relatively well according to common fixed fit index cut-off thresholds, $\chi^2(35, N=494) = 118.36$, $p < .001$, CFI = .949, SRMR = .040, RMSEA = .069, RMSEA 90% CI = [.056, .083], with all of the items loading to a significant degree on the latent factor (λs = .55 to .71; Table 2).[5] However, fixed fit index cut-off thresholds are not always appropriate for evaluating model fit because they do not take into account the specific characteristics of one's project (e.g., the sample size; the number of items; see McNeish & Wolf, 2023). This is especially the case for assessing the misfit of one-factor models, since many popular fixed fit index cut-off thresholds were derived from multi-factor simulations (e.g., Hu & Bentler, 1999). To address this issue, we produced a set of dynamic fit index cut-off thresholds using the {dynamic} package (Wolf & McNeish, 2026) in R (R Core Team, 2025). Our model showed a small amount of misfit according to these thresholds: it did not clear the strictest thresholds for unidimensionality (CFI = .989, SRMR = .027, RMSEA = .032), but it did pass the second-strictest thresholds (CFI = .949, SRMR = .041, RMSEA = .072). Specifically, the model displayed misfit that was comparable to there being two unmodeled residual correlations of .30 in the model.[6] Given these findings, we feel fairly comfortable treating the scale as unidimensional, although we encourage future work to further investigate its structure.

Reliability

We assessed the reliability of the PCGQ-A in two ways. First, to assess the PCGQ-A's internal consistency, we calculated its Cronbach's alpha (α = .86), which exceeded the often-used threshold of .70 (Nunnally, 1978; but see also Lance et al., 2006). This suggests that the measure produces consistent scores across its items. Second, to assess

[5] The chi-square test was significant, but this is fairly typical in samples as large as that used here.

[6] This misfit seems to primarily stem from a covariance between Item 4 and Item 9 that was not adequately accounted for by the model ($COV_{OBSERVED}(x_4,x_9) = .42$ versus $COV_{MODEL-IMPLIED}(x_4,x_9) = .28$). The residual for this pair of items was .14, while every other residual was less than .05. Since we can see no good theoretical reason for these two items to covary to a greater degree than any other pair of PCGQ-A items, we have not included a path between their residual variances in the final model.

Table 2 Standardized loadings of the Attitudes Toward Parent-Child Gaslighting Questionnaire items on a single latent factor

Number	Item	λ	95% CI	*p*
	It is acceptable for a parent to…			
1	…accuse their child of lying, even when they know that they are the one who is lying.	.61	[.55, .67]	<.001
2	…tell their child that they are wrong, even when the parent knows that what their child is saying is true.	.62	[.56, .69]	<.001
3	…accuse their child of being paranoid, even if the parent knows that their child's suspicions are well-founded.	.71	[.66, .76]	<.001
4	…try to make their child question their sanity.	.55	[.48, .61]	<.001
5	…say anything to their child if it means that their child will obey them.	.61	[.55, .67]	<.001
6	…lash out at their child whenever their child says something that contradicts the parent's version of events.	.67	[.61, .72]	<.001
7	…never admit to doing anything wrong, even when their child has proof that they did do something wrong.	.68	[.63, .74]	<.001
8	…say their child has a bad memory if their child catches them telling a lie.	.70	[.65, .75]	<.001
9	…make their child question their decision-making abilities if it means the parent gets to make all of the major life decisions for their child.	.58	[.51, .64]	<.001
10	…lie to their child just to see if their child will believe them.	.62	[.56, .68]	<.001

the PCGQ-A's test-retest reliability, we correlated its scores from the first survey with its scores from the second survey. The results indicated that both sets of scores were highly positively correlated (r =.71, p <.001), indicating that the measure produces consistent scores across time.

Construct Validity

To assess the construct validity of the PCGQ-A, we examined its association with eight theoretically relevant variables. To account for testing multiple associations, we used the conservative alpha level of .005 as a starting point for our interpretations. As shown in Fig. 1, the PCGQ-A was positively associated with the eight measures (rs = .17 to .73; ps < .001). Its largest association was with the perceived acceptability of emotional abuse (r =.73), and its smallest association was with antagonism (r =.17).[7] These associations remained significant when using a non-parametric test (i.e., Kendall's τ) to account for skewed data (Fig. 1). Taken together, these results indicate that the PCGQ-A demonstrates theoretically consistent associations.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to examine the psychometric properties of a novel measure of parent-child gaslighting. We adapted the *Gaslighting Questionnaire* (March et al., 2025) to a parent-child context, creating the *Attitudes Toward Parent-Child Gaslighting Questionnaire* (PCGQ-A). We then examined the scale's factor structure, reliability, and construct validity among a sample of parents (N_{Time1} = 494; N_{Time2} = 426).

The results indicated that the PCGQ-A is a promising measure of attitudes toward parent-child gaslighting. Specifically, the measure was found to be fairly unidimensional, with a one-factor solution showing only a small amount of misspecification (H1). The scale was also found to be reliable, producing consistent scores across its items (H2)—as evidenced by its Cronbach's alpha—and consistent scores across time (H3)—as evidenced by its two-week test-retest correlation. Finally, the scale appeared to operate in a theoretically consistent way. Those scoring high on the scale were more accepting of emotional abuse, emotional neglect, and corporal punishment (H4a; H4b; H4c); felt greater hostility toward and more disconnected from their children (H4d; H4e); and evinced higher levels of verbal and physical sadism (H4g; H4h).

Contrary to expectations, the PCGQ-A only demonstrated a *small-to-moderate* positive correlation with antagonism rather than the expected *large* positive correlation (H4f). Given the moderate-to-large correlations observed between romantic gaslighting and antagonistic traits in prior work (rs = .22 to .73; see March et al., 2025), this finding was initially concerning. However, it may be due to the low reliability of the measure of antagonism used (α = .45). In other words, the measure's scores may have simply contained too much noise to provide an accurate picture of the association between parent-child gaslighting and antagonism.

[7] Although the size of the PCGQ-A's correlation with emotional abuse may seem like a good thing, we recommend some caution. Namely, the PCGQ-A and the measure of emotional abuse used here (i.e., the *emotional abuse* subscale adapted from the *Childhood Trauma Questionnaire – Short Form;* Bernstein et al., 2003) may be assessing largely the same construct (see Kay & Arrow, 2022). We encourage future work investigating the differences between these two measures.

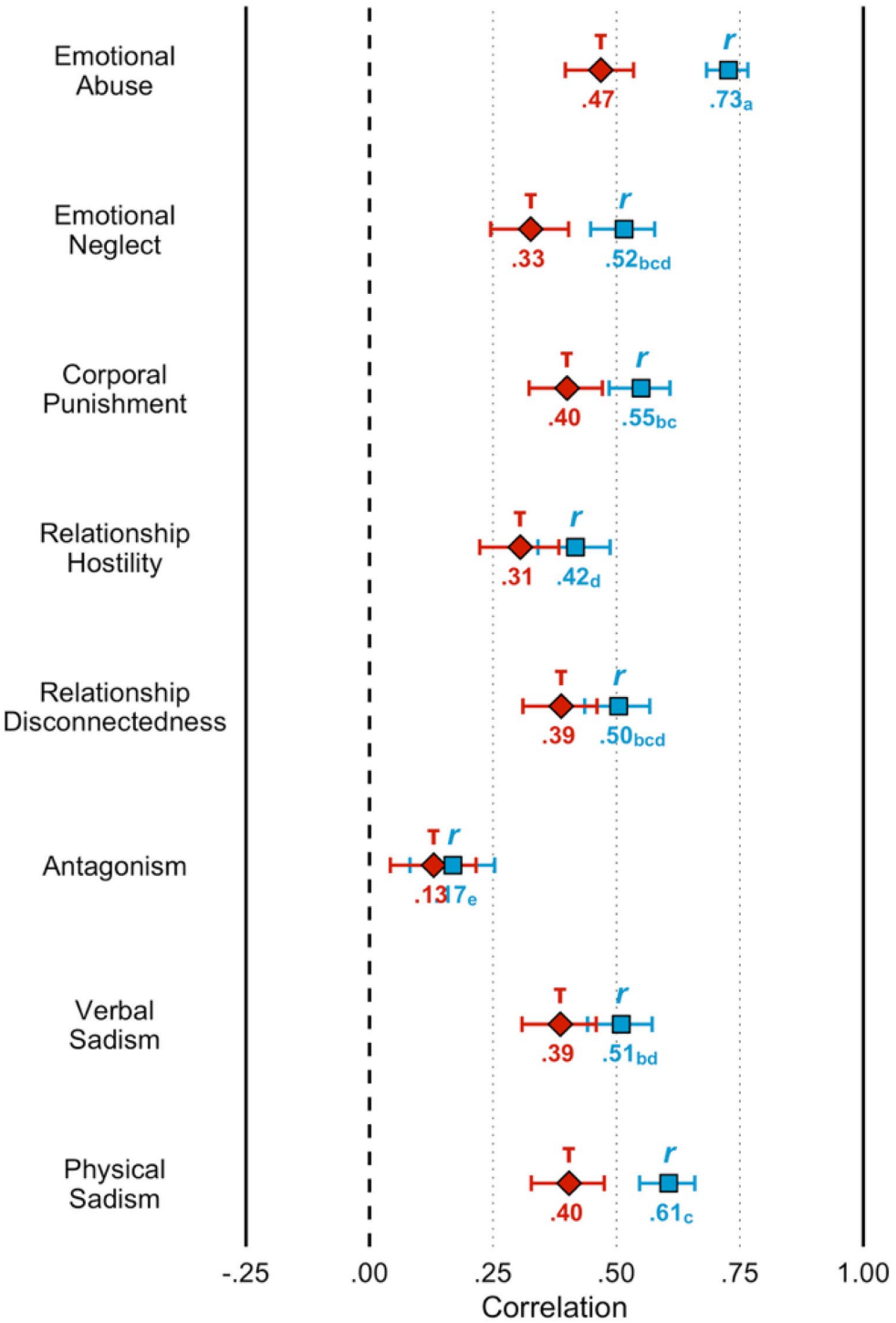


Fig. 1 Pearson *r* and Kendall τ correlations between the Attitudes Toward Parent-Child Gaslighting Questionnaire and the eight theoretically relevant variables. All of the correlations are significant at $p < .001$. Pearson *r* correlations that do not share a subscript are significantly different at $p < .005$ (Hittner et al., 2003).

The PCGQ-A also demonstrated a larger association with physical sadism ($r = .61$) than verbal sadism ($r = .51$), which may seem counterintuitive. Namely, one would expect the PCGQ-A to demonstrate larger associations with deriving pleasure from *verbal* acts of cruelty than *physical* acts of cruelty because, after all, it is a measure of emotional maltreatment. However, this finding can potentially be explained by the fact that only one of the five items from the physical sadism measure makes explicit reference to physically harming another person. Two of the items simply mention tormenting and dominating another person; one of the items mentions pushing another person around (which participants may interpret in its figurative sense to mean bullying another person); and one of the items mentions hurting a person during sex (which likely calls to mind physical harm but could also call to mind the use of degrading language).

This is all to say that the larger association between the PCGQ-A and physical sadism may be due, in part, to the physical sadism measure not solely assessing physical sadism.

Implications

Although we certainly recommend more work be done to further evaluate the PCGQ-A's psychometric properties, we believe it holds significant promise as a tool for researchers and practitioners alike. Researchers could use the measure to examine the factors that contribute to a parent believing gaslighting is acceptable and to inform interventions designed to curb such beliefs. Moreover, researchers could use the measure to examine whether outcomes for children differ depending on how accepting of gaslighting their parents are. This could include consideration of whether there are factors that moderate the deleterious effects of these beliefs (e.g., external social support). Practitioners and other professionals could, likewise, use the scale to identify instances where parent-child gaslighting may be occurring. Identifying such cases would be valuable not only because of the risks posed by parent-child gaslighting itself but also because it may co-occur with other forms of child maltreatment and reduce the likelihood that a child will disclose those experiences.

Limitations and Future Directions

Future investigations into the psychometric properties of the PCGQ-A could build upon the present study in several ways. First, they could investigate the correspondence between *attitudes toward* parent-child gaslighting and actual engagement in parent-child gaslighting. There is good evidence that attitudes influence behaviour (see Ajzen et al., 2019), but the association is not perfect, and it would be valuable to examine whether and how the two forms depart in the context of parent-child gaslighting. Second, future work could incorporate a measure of socially desirable responding (e.g., the *Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale*; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). Both the anonymous nature of the present study (Joinson, 1999) and the fact that we assessed attitudes toward parent-child gaslighting instead of actual engagement in parent-child gaslighting (e.g., Bradshaw et al., 2011) should have reduced the influence of socially desirable responding to some degree, but it would, nonetheless, be valuable to assess the extent to which the present associations are a consequence of participants being more or less willing to endorse objectionable beliefs and behaviours. Third, to account for method effects, future studies could incorporate other approaches to collecting data. For example, in addition to behavioural measures assessing gaslighting behaviours in the real world, future work could have children complete informant reports about their parents. Fourth, future studies could employ multiple test-retest intervals. Two-weeks is a common interval for assessing the dependability of a measure because it is, at least in theory, long enough for participants to forget the responses they provided before but short enough to not allow for any true changes in the underlying construct to occur (Chmielewski & Watson, 2009; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Nevertheless, other intervals could provide additional insight into the PCGQ-A and parent-child gaslighting generally (see Revelle & Condon, 2019). Fifth, future studies could incorporate additional construct validity measures. For example, a measure of the Big Five with greater reliability (e.g., the long-form version of the Big Five Inventory-2; Soto and John 2017a) could be used to provide a greater understanding of the association of the PCGQ-A with antagonism. Likewise, assessing manipulativeness could potentially help differentiate the PCGQ-A from emotional abuse. Sixth, future studies could consider the PCGQ-A's content validity (i.e., the extent to which the scale captures all aspects of the underlying construct; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). This could be done by having domain experts rate the relevance of each PCGQ-A item to the conceptual definition of parent-child gaslighting (see Lynn, 1986; Polit & Beck, 2006). Finally, future work could consider the PCGQ-A across samples drawn from different countries and cultures. The sample for the present study was demographically matched to the 2020 US Census in terms of gender and cultural identity. It is yet unclear whether the results we observed in the present study would generalize to the entire US, let alone other countries.

Conclusion

Child maltreatment persists as a significant global issue. The purpose of the present study was to evaluate the psychometric properties of a novel measure assessing attitudes toward one of its less studied forms: parent-child gaslighting. We found that the new scale was fairly unidimensional, internally consistent, dependable, and construct valid. Although we certainly recommend more work be done to further evaluate its psychometric properties, we believe this new scale has the potential to both advance our collective understanding of parent-child gaslighting and inform strategies for mitigating its pernicious effects.

Supplementary Information The online version contains supplementary material available at https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-026-01193-z.

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Data Availability The materials, data, analytic code, and output for the present study are provided at https://osf.io/cukxt/?view_only=41d512bd514148b98d5ecb920da43eb9.

Declarations

Ethical Approval The study reported here was determined to be exempt by the Human Subjects Review Committee at Union College (E24019). It was conducted in accordance with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Consent to Participate Participants provided informed consent at the beginning of each survey reported here.

Open Practices The preregistration for the present study is provided at https://osf.io/m6kbw/?view_only=ce57a8b91be7497d9e226d9dcc35fb9b. The materials, data, analytic code, and output for the present study are provided at https://osf.io/cukxt/?view_only=41d512bd514148b98d5ecb920da43eb9.

Competing interests The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to report.

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