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Predicting Life Satisfaction and Eudaimonic Well-being through Hope for Parenting with the Mediating Role of the Sense of Relational Entitlement

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Abstract

Abstract

Life satisfaction and eudaimonic well-being are considered key indicators of psychological well-being, and identifying their influential factors holds particular significance within healthcare systems, given the reciprocal relationship between mental and physical health. Accordingly, the present study was conducted to predict life satisfaction and eudaimonic well-being through hope for parenting with the mediating role of the sense of relational entitlement among parents. This research was descriptive-correlational and based on structural equations. The statistical population comprised parents of first-grade middle school students in Zanjan in 2025; among them, 245 individuals were selected using a multi-stage cluster random sampling method. Data were collected using the Parental Hope Scale (Cole & Molloy, 2019), the Sense of Relational Entitlement (Tolmacz et al., 2021), the Riverside Eudaimonia Scale (Margolies et al., 2022), and the Life Satisfaction Scale (Margolies et al., 2019). The data were then analyzed using SPSS (version 27) and Smart PLS (version 4). The results indicated that hope for parenting had a direct and significant effect on life satisfaction and eudaimonic well-being. Furthermore, maladaptive relational competence played a significant mediating role in this relationship. Investigations revealed that excessive relational competence did not exhibit a significant mediating role; however, restricted relational competence, as the sole validated subscale, fulfilled this role. The suppression of genuine needs by parents, despite possessing parental hope, could lead to a reduction in satisfaction and well-being through the weakening of relationships and emotional needs. Therefore, it is recommended that family counselors assist in improving parents' psychological state by focusing on enhancing hope for parenting and reducing restricted relational competence.

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Introduction

Parenting plays a fundamental role in improving parents' quality of life. It is possible to reduce parenting stress and anxiety, and enhance life satisfaction and virtue-oriented well-being by increasing cognitive flexibility, fostering positive relationships, and reducing self-criticism (Wang et al., 2025). In the meantime, hope is one of the important factors related to well-being, and research has shown it is positively related to life satisfaction and the quality of marital relationships (Vélez et al., 2024). Despite domestic research emphasizing the importance of hope in the family, most studies have addressed the general dimensions of hope and have paid less attention to parenting hope as an independent construct (Alipour Gorand et al., 2022). This limitation highlights the need to examine the role of parenting hope in explaining positive psychological outcomes. One of the constructs that can explain the relationship between parenting hope and well-being indicators is the sense of relational entitlement, which refers to the individual's perception of his or her entitlement in relationships and is classified into the three forms of assertive, extreme, and limited (Tolmacz & Mikulincer., 2011). Assertive entitlement refers to a healthy and realistic expression of needs, while extreme and limited types are associated with unrealistic expectations, avoidance of expressing needs, and negative consequences in relationships. The significance of this construct in the family is that it has been associated with attachment styles, mental health, emotions, life satisfaction, and the quality of marital relationships (Tolmacz et al., 2016). Evidence has also shown that maladaptive forms of this construct are associated with interpersonal conflicts, reduced relationship quality, and increased depression and anxiety, while the assertive form has more adaptive effects (Çıkrıkçı., 2024). On the other hand, parental hope may help strengthen the assertive form and weaken maladaptive forms by increasing self-efficacy and reducing self-criticism (Zhang., 2024).

Given the central role of the family in Iranian society, it is important to examine factors that can promote parents' life satisfaction and eudaimonic well-being (Karimi et al., 2023). Parental hope, as a psychological resource, can directly and indirectly affect these outcomes, especially when the sense of relational entitlement plays a mediating role in its limited and extreme forms or in its adaptive form. Based on positive psychology theories, Bandura's self-efficacy theory, and parenting hope theory, the present study examines a model in which parenting hope predicts parental forms of relational entitlement, life satisfaction, and eudaimonic well-being through the lens of positive psychology. The innovation of the study lies in its focus on negative forms of relational entitlement and its attention to eudaimonic well-being in Iranian families; an issue that, in addition to enriching the research literature, can have important practical implications for family counselors and mental health professionals.

Method

The present study was applied in terms of objective and descriptive-correlational in terms of method; it was conducted using structural equation modeling (SEM). The statistical population included parents of first-year secondary school students in Zanjan in 2025. After receiving the permissions from the General Directorate of Education and Executive Coordination, sampling was carried out using a multi-stage random cluster method. First, one of the education districts was selected, and then two boys' first-year secondary schools were randomly selected. Parents eligible for inclusion received the link to the online questionnaires after explaining the objective of the study and obtaining informed consent. Inclusion criteria included willingness to participate, marriage and cohabitation, ability to respond online, and lack of psychological disorders or use of psychiatric medications based on self-declaration. Incomplete or invalid questionnaires were excluded from the data.

Based on the sample size recommendations in structural equation modeling and considering three independent variables, at least 124 samples were sufficient for 80% effect size and 5% error level; however, to increase the accuracy of the estimates and the possibility of sample dropout, 270 individuals were selected; 245 valid questionnaires were finally analyzed. Data were collected through the Parenting Hope Scale (Cole & Molloy, 2021), Sense of Relational Entitlement (Tolmacz et al. 2011), Eudaimonic Well-Being (Margolis et al., 2022), and Life Satisfaction (Margolis & Lyubomirsky, 2019). All stages of the study were conducted in accordance with ethical considerations, voluntary participation, and confidentiality of information. Finally, the data were analyzed using SPSS (version 27) and SmartPLS (version 4) software.

Findings

The participants in the present study were 245 individuals, including 65% women (159 individuals) and 35% men (51 individuals). Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics and correlation matrix of the research variables.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix of the research variables*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean	Std deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. Hope for parenting	1						34.67	4.57	-1.31	2.07
2. The sense of relational entitlement (general)	**-.18	1					32.10	6.97	-0.31	.23
3. The sense of relational entitlement (excessive)	*-.12	** .78	1				14.97	4.06	-.35	-.15
4. The sense of relational entitlement (limited)	** -.17	**.83	**.3	1			17.13	4.56	-.32	.04
5. Eudaimonic well-being	** .21	*-.13	*-.10	*-.12	1		29.15	4.69	-.59	.30
6. Life satisfaction	** .25	** -.20	** -20	*.12-	**.14		26.75	7.42	-.41	.27

Table 2 and Table 3 show the direct and indirect relationships of the variables and path coefficients.

Table 2. *Examination of the direct relationships of the research variables*

Criterion structure	Path coefficient (β)	t-value	Significance level	F2
Eudaimonic well-being → Hope for parenting	.40	6.039	.000	.18
Life satisfaction → Hope for parenting	.23	2.306	.021	.06
The sense of relational entitlement → Hope for parenting	-.42	6.655	.000	.25
Eudaimonic well-being → The sense of relational entitlement	-.16	2.238	.025	.03
Life satisfaction → The sense of relational entitlement	-.35	4.816	.000	.14

According to Table 2, the relationships between the research variables were statistically significant (P <0.05). Hope for parenting had a positive effect on life satisfaction and eudaimonic well-being, and a negative effect on the sense of relational entitlement. Examining the effect of the sense of relational entitlement on life satisfaction and eudaimonic well-being also showed that this effect was negative.

Table 3. *Indirect relationships between research variables*

Criterion structure	Path coefficient (β)	t-value	Significance level
Hope for parenting → The sense of relational entitlement →Eudaimonic well-being	.07	2.08	.003
Hope for parenting → The sense of relational entitlement →Life satisfaction	.15	3.90	.000
Hope for parenting → The sense of excessive relational entitlement →Life satisfaction	.05	1.42	.15
Hope for parenting → The sense of excessive relational entitlement →Eudaimonic well-being	.06	1.69	.09
Hope for parenting → The sense of limited relational entitlement →Life satisfaction	.11	2.99	.000
Hope for parenting → The sense of limited relational entitlement →Eudaimonic well-being	.12	2.97	.000

According to Table 3, it was found that the general sense of sense of relational entitlement had a mediating role in the relationships between hope for parenting and life satisfaction and eudaimonic well-

being (P <0.05). However, the mediating role of excessive sense of relational entitlement was not statistically supported, but this role was supported for the limited sense of relational entitlement.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to predict life satisfaction and eudaimonic well-being through hope for parenting with the mediating role of the sense of relational entitlement in parents. The results showed that the limited sense of relational entitlement acted as a transmitter of the negative effects of hope on well-being; a finding that is linked to the previous research gap on the mediating role of negative forms of relational entitlement in the Iranian cultural context (Alipour Gorand et al., 2022) and highlights the need to pay attention to targeted interventions. Although the indirect effect of hope for parenting through the path of limited relational entitlement seems paradoxical, it can be interpreted as a coping strategy in stressful family situations based on self-determination theory. In other words, hopeful parents may suppress the need for autonomy in order to maintain family harmony (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In addition, resource conservation theory also considers this process as a type of resource investment; parents use the psychological resource of "hope" to prevent larger threats, but they erode other personal resources, such as emotional expression (Hobfoll, 1989). Therefore, hope can lead to the formation of maladaptive relational patterns in the face of persistent obstacles, yet its direct and positive effect still persists.

The findings also showed that the research model had a good fit and hope for parenting directly and significantly predicted life satisfaction and eudaimonic well-being, while the sense of relational entitlement played a mediating role. These results provide a practical framework for developing family-centered interventions and suggest that professionals can help reduce restricted patterns of relational entitlement and improve the quality of family relationships by designing structured educational programs. However, the research study included limitations such as cross-sectional design and sampling selected from a limited population, which reduced the generalizability of the findings.

Future research can increase the accuracy of the findings by utilizing longitudinal designs and larger samples in different cultures. Examining new mediating variables, including social support and parenting perfectionism, can also provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between life satisfaction, eudaimonic well-being, hope for parenting, and relational entitlement, and provide a broader understanding of parenting's psychological processes.

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Conflict of interest

There are no conflicts of interest among the authors.

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