



## Parental life satisfaction based on parenting myths

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### *Journal of Research & Health*

*Social Development & Health Promotion*

*Research Center*

*Early View 16 Apr 2019*

**Original Article**

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Received: 21 Jan 2018

Accepted: 6 Oct 2018

How to cite this article: Shooa Kazemi M, Emrani SN. Parental life satisfaction based on parenting myths. *J Research & Health* 16 Apr 2019; Early View.

### **Abstract**

Parents' beliefs and attitudes about parenting have a significant effect on their life satisfaction. The purpose of this study was to assess the satisfaction with life in parents based on parental myths of Iranian parents. To examine the parental myths, two questionnaires of Seidi's parenting myth with 69 questions and Kansas family life satisfaction with 4 items were used. Inferential statistics (multivariate regression) were used to analyze the data. The results showed that there was a significant relationship between parenting myths and life satisfaction. In the best-of-breed prediction model for satisfying the lives of parents, the excessively calm parenting, efficacy, and pre-marriage-behavioral myths were able to predict the criterion variable. Excessively calm parenting myth contributed mostly to life satisfaction. The myth of pre-marriage-behavioral was also a negative predictor of life satisfaction. In sum, the results of this study showed that although parental myths seem to cause physical fatigue in Iranian parents, in Iranian society, the level of satisfaction with life was high despite the efforts to improve the effective education of children.

**Keywords:** Family, Parenting Behavior, Personal Satisfaction

### **Introduction**

When interacting with children, parents feel better, have better self-care and preventive behaviors, have better accountability and social interactions, are better able to cope with problems, and thus experience more satisfaction with their lives [1]. Parents take a very long time to choose the best, most accurate, and most effective forms of communication and educational methods. Nevertheless, what kind of childcare is considered effective in each family and in different cultures? Researchers believe that many people suffer from many difficulties because of their desire to be a mythical and ideal parent [2]. The myth is a kind of belief that is generally accepted as an irrefutable truth, but not based on the existing facts [3].

Parents can also create myths that affect the

behavior of parents. Studies by conceptualizing the myths of love and marriage confirmed the effect of these myths on the quality of couples' relationships [4,5]. Satisfaction with life is a comprehensive concept reflecting the general opinion of the people of a society about the world in which they live [6,7]. In the area of factors determining the effect of single family on life satisfaction among families with children, research has emphasized the considerable role of family functioning [8], parenting styles [9], the quality of family relationships [10], marital satisfaction of parents [11], and family link [12]. Ideas for childbearing in families vary with one's imagination of life and satisfaction over the years [12].

Several studies have been published between 1990 and 2000, showing that satisfaction and quality of life in the families of the owner of the child are not higher than those of the unaffiliated families [13] are. Parents in Hong Kong reported a low level of satisfaction with parental care because they spent a lot of time taking care of the child and had a low income [14]. Most German mothers had a lower level of satisfaction than they had before childhood for some reasons such as pregnancy and delivery problems, postpartum insomnia, and a long time spent for the child [15]. Parental unreasonable expectations and their concern about their mistakes and doubts about their actions have a negative effect on marital satisfaction [16]. Many researchers have argued that parental well-being is a category associated with the children and parents' mental myths. That is if the children are healthier and the parents are accepted, the parents will feel happier. The stress of accepting the role of the mother in mothers has caused them to be dissatisfied and depressed. The depression and dissatisfaction of the mother and father also affect the level of their satisfaction with life [17]. Of course, their parents do not understand these myths and their subjective ideologies, and all the problems of themselves and their foes that arise from this are due to the external factors. Parenting myths and the anxiety and stress caused by it lead to many problems in parents and a feeling of dissatisfaction among them [18]. Life satisfaction is realized when the person experiences what he/she is in communication with. It turns into life dissatisfaction when what happens is not in line with his/her expectations of the conditions. These expectations are common in most people. The family, media, and culture of each society are the most important sources of intellectual parenting ideas and ideal children. Since what and how the content and process of healthy and unhealthy performance of the family vary in different cultures [1], the study and comparison of different views in this field can clearly show the shortcomings and strengths in each of the theories, and the best strategy to take advantage of a better and healthier life. The study of

parents' mental myths and its effect on family relationships and life satisfaction in the literature of our country has been neglected. According to the studies and research carried out, in the internal research literature, no studies have been carried out on parenting myths in parents regarding the social structure and culture of the Iranian society. At a global level, researchers such as Schfer [2,19] have addressed some parenting myths, of course, derived from parenting counseling sessions, not in quantitative or qualitative systematic studies. Therefore, the main issue in the current research is that Iranian families are facing problems due to the growing influence of the media in their minds and their belief in childbearing. Therefore, in this research, the relationship between parenting myths and satisfaction with life in parents was attempted despite all the difficulties in the acceptance of the role of a parent.

### **Method**

The present research was conducted as an analytical research with a correlational design. The research population included the parents of primary school students (3rd–5th grade: 10–12-years-old) in the first education district of Tehran, Iran in the school year 2016–17. This research was done by a convenience sampling method. An inventory of parenting myths and the Kansas family life satisfaction scale were distributed to all boy students in third to fifth grades. The participant of this study included 150 parents of students in control schools in the first education district of Tehran, who completed the questionnaires. One of the theoretical methods for determining the sample size is designating 5 to 15 observations per each measured variable:  $5Q < n < Q$ , in which  $n$  is the number of variables observed or the number of questionnaires (questions of the questionnaire) and  $Q$  is the sample size [20]. The researcher predicted a dropout rate of 30 to 40 percent for this sampling. The measurement tools are detailed below:

*Parenting myths scale:* This instrument was

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developed based on the results of a doctoral thesis by Seidi [4]. After extracting and verifying the themes related to parenting myths, a scale was developed and validated for the assessment of these myths. The scale has 50 items and 17 subscales. The items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale (from 1= strongly disagree to 4= strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.94 and for individual subscales, it varied from 0.58 to 0.78. Content

validity of the scale was verified by 11 experts, and its face validity was assessed by 13 participants. After the administration of the questionnaire to 119 participants, a correlation coefficient of 0.55 was obtained for the total score of the scale. The instrument's construct validity was assessed using factorial analysis method, which indicated a high psychometric quality and the resulting model had desirable goodness-of-fit indices.

**Table 1** Alpha coefficients for factors

Factors	Items	$\alpha$
1 Faultlessness	12, 34	0.67
2 Tirelessness	1, 4, 13, 24	0.78
3 Separation of work and personal life	3, 25, 35	0.6
4 Excessively calm parenting	2, 14	0.7
5 Giving up marriage	5, 16, 26, 36	0.75
6 Efficacy	8, 23, 37, 40	0.62
7 pre-marriage-educational	28	0.58
8 pre-marriage-behavioral	17, 38	0.6
9 Pregnancy	7, 18, 29, 39	0.69
10 Afterbirth (parent-child identity)	5, 6, 19, 30	0.6
11 Obsessive problem solving	20, 32, 41	0.67
12 Overemphasis on educational achievement	42	0.69
13 Being overprotective	9, 21, 47, 48, 50	0.64
14 Limitless friendship with child	10, 43, 46, 49	0.71
15 Sufficient affection	11, 33, 44	0.65
16 Refusal to punish	22, 45	0.7
17 Relationship restoration by childbirth	31	0.75
Total	50	0.94

*Kansas life satisfaction scale:* This instrument was designed by Schum, Jurich, and Bollman in four ways to assess the overall satisfaction of family life [21]. These clauses address three key areas of family relationships, including marriage, parenthood, and sister-brother. The score of the questionnaire is on a 7-point Likert spectrum. For those who are very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, sometimes dissatisfied, indifferent, sometimes satisfied, satisfied, and highly satisfied, the scores of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 are designated. In Schum et al. study, Cronbach's alpha of 0.83 was obtained. The validity of its structures, as well as the convergent validity of the instrument, was confirmed [21]. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha of 0.8 was obtained and the one-factor structure of this scale was confirmed using the

CFA and the maximum likelihood method.

## Results

Demographic data of the participants showed that most of the families participating in the study had two children, and a few of them had four children or more. The parent's education level varied from diploma to doctoral levels. Parents were self-employed, employee, or retired. The monthly income, as an indicator of socio-economic class, ranged from 600\$ to 2500\$.

In the following, they were identified and removed using a single-variable perforated Box Plot. The descriptive indices of research variables after the removal of overlays are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2** Descriptive characteristics of parenting myths and spouses' life satisfaction

Variable	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Faultlessness	105	1	3.67	2.41	0.49
Tirelessness	108	1.86	4	2.94	0.50
Separation of work and personal life	107	2	4	3.39	0.50
Excessively calm parenting	107	1.67	3.67	2.74	0.46
Giving up marriage	106	1.29	3.29	2.26	0.43
Efficacy	108	2	4	3.64	0.55
Pre-marriage–educational	98	2	3.50	2.72	0.47
Pre-marriage–behavioral	107	1	4	2.53	0.77
Pregnancy	107	2.25	4	3.20	0.44
Afterbirth (parent-child identity)	94	2.33	3.33	2.84	0.33
Obsessive problem solving	100	2.33	4	2.97	0.39
Overemphasis on educational achievement	107	2	4	3.50	0.60
Being overprotective	108	1.75	4	2.90	0.50
Limitless friendship with child	108	2	4	3.05	0.43
Sufficient affection	108	1.50	4	3.37	0.61
Refusal to punish	108	2	4	3.06	0.49
Satisfaction with the life of the spouses	106	14	28	22.42	3.35

The results of Table 2 show that among the parental myths, efficacy had the highest mean score (3.64) and the giving-up marriage had the lowest mean (2.26). The mean and standard deviation of life satisfaction were 22.42 and

3.35, respectively. Considering the inflict of  $\pm 2$  and stretch of  $\pm 7$ , inflict and stretch in all variables were at the optimum level and the normality of the single-variable was achieved [22,23].

**Table 3** Correlation coefficients of parental myths with life satisfaction

Variable	n	R	p	Variable	n	R	p
Faultlessness	103	0.18	0.06	Pregnancy	105	0.15	0.14
Tirelessness	106	0.24	0.01	Afterbirth(parent-child identity)	92	0.03	0.82
Separation of work and personal life	105	0.10	0.32	Obsessive problem solving	98	0.05	0.61
Excessively calm parenting	105	0.19	0.06	Overemphasis on educational achievement	105	0.12	0.21
Giving-up marriage	104	0.14	0.15	Being overprotective	106	0.22	0.03
Efficacy	106	0.22	0.02	Limitless friendship with child	106	0.02	0.88
Pre-marriage–educational	96	0.12	0.23	Sufficient affection	106	0.06	0.53
Pre-marriage–behavioral	105	0.30	0.002	Refusal to punish	106	0.01	0.91

Subsequently, a multiple stepwise regression was used to answer the hypothesis of parental life satisfaction prediction by parenting myths. Parents' myths as predictive variables and husband's life satisfaction as a variable were regressed in the equation. Prior to the analysis, the regression assumptions included the normal distribution of errors, the independence of errors, and the multiple synchronizations between the predictor variables. Regarding the normal distribution of errors using the normal

diagram and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the error distribution was normal ( $p \leq 0.20$ , Kolmogorov-Smirnov  $Z = 0.07$ ).

After the realization of assumptions, regression analysis was performed. A summary of the regression model is the step-by-step view of the satisfaction of spouses living in terms of parenting myths in Table 4.

The results of the Table 5 show that in the best predicting model (the third model), the correlation coefficient of predictive variables

with spouses life satisfaction is 0.56, indicating a moderate to the high relationship between predictor variables and criterion variables. The value of the coefficient of determination is 0.32, indicating that 32 percent of the variation

(variance) of the satisfaction of the spouse's life is related to the predictive variables. The indicators of variance analysis show the regression significance and linear relationship between variables.

**Table 4** A summary of the regression and analysis of variance in life satisfaction of spouses in terms of parenting myths

Model	Predictive variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>Adjusted</sub>	F	p
1	Excessively calm parenting	41.0	17.0	16.0	86.15	0001.0
2	Excessively calm parenting Efficacy	50.0	25.0	23.0	58.12	0001.0
3	Excessively calm parenting Efficacy pre-marriage-behavioral	56.0	32.0	29.0	50.11	0001.0

**Table 5** Regression coefficients of stepwise regression of the spouse's life satisfaction with parental myths

Model	Predictive variables	Nonstandard coefficients		Beta	T	p
		B	Standard error			
1	Excessively calm parenting	36.3	84.0	41.0	98.3	0001.0
2	Excessively calm parenting	31.3	81.0	41.0	10.4	0001.0
	Efficacy	90.1	68.0	28.0	81.2	01.0
3	Excessively calm parenting	84.2	80.0	35.0	56.3	001.0
	Efficacy Pre-marriage-behavioral	13.2 24.1-	65.0 46.0	32.0 27.0-	26.3 69.2-	002.0 01.0

**Discussion**

The results showed that only myths of tirelessness, efficacy, pre-marriage-behavioral, and being over protective had meaningful relationships with life satisfaction. Excessively calm parenting, efficacy, and pre-marriage-behavioral myths were able to predict the criterion variable. Excessively calm parenting myth contributed most to predicting life satisfaction. Pre-marriage-behavioral also was a negative predictor of life satisfaction.

The findings of this study showed a meaningful relationship between parental myths and parents' satisfaction, and parenting myths were a positive predictor of life satisfaction. The existence of children and their needs, if they are united and disadvantaged between couples and even if they are accompanied by difficulty, can be a source of double energy for the survival of parents and life satisfaction. A number of studies that examined parental involvement in this role, both before and

after childbirth, showed that for some parents to become parents, anxiety and tensioners are ready to be planted. These parents believe in the behaviors and characteristics of a good parent and as a result, a successful child, which is shaped even before the child's birth. For example, parents think that a good parent never misses and does not feel tired and nervous; in solving all the problems of children, he has enough expertise and dedication and sacrifices all his existence for his children and their values retied to the behavior of the children. The ideals and pangs that parents bring about will make them happy in terms of both life satisfaction and successful parenting. Having children and addressing their needs, if they are united and homogeneous between couples, even if they are in difficulty, can be a source of double energy for the survival and satisfaction of the parents with life. Because of looking at life

from the parental perspective to the family with calculations, the material life is different. Value is different from what is seen from a mother or father. Perhaps a part of this view would return to the context, social, and cultural beliefs of a community. From the outside, reaching the myths may be tough and overwhelming, but what we achieved in this study was that family life, with the child, has a special meaning. The existence of children will stimulate and create a goal in life. Parents consider paternity benefits in terms of semantic and outspokenness, not what appears to be apparent. The paternal and maternal feelings of their family life are such as to make many appearances in isolation [24]. The analysis shows that although parents are less satisfied with spending their leisure time, social communication, and relationships, they still have a deeper life than their offspring [12]. Successful parenting performance can lead to a successful family and a higher level of life satisfaction [1]. A study conducted in Russia on parenting and happiness showed that parenting varies according to the cultural context and beliefs in every region. There are societies with a materialistic view of the maternal and paternal issues of parenthood as being stressful and responsible for reducing the satisfaction with life [25]. Many researchers have argued that parental well-being is a category that is associated with the children's and parents' mental myths. That is, if children are healthier and more accepted by the parents, the parents feel happier [26, 27]. Some studies abroad reported a level of life satisfaction after becoming parents and adopting lower father and paternal roles, often due to stress and anxiety caused by parenting myths. Of course, there are different parameters effective on the level of satisfaction such as social welfare, planned pregnancy, social and economic status, and mothers' employment or unemployment. A study was conducted among 100 countries to assess the level of satisfaction with life in parents. Despite increasing interest in parenting by welfare, the existing evidence is not conclusive and different studies have shown different effects on mental well-being by parental affiliation. Moreover, there was a negative relationship

between the level of gross domestic product and the level of wealth as a mediator variable in satisfying the life of parents [28]. Long-distance studies have conducted to show that childbearing is a source of vitality and that the lives of unaccompanied children are absurd and unhealthy [24,12]. The research considers the age of parents to be successful in accepting the paternal and maternal role. What is important is paying attention to the fact that the media are an important means of conveying the message to the whole society and culture. The limitations of this study is that the sample in this study was a sample from the general population living in Tehran who volunteered to participate in the research. This limits the ability to generalize the results. Also the influence of factors such as the state of mind when completing the questionnaire, which was beyond the control of the researchers.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study showed a meaningful relationship between parental myths and parents' satisfaction, and parenting myths were a positive predictor of life satisfaction. The existence of children and their needs, if they are united and disadvantaged between couples and even if they are accompanied by difficulty, can be a source of double energy for the survival of parents and life satisfaction.

### **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank all the families of students who have filled out the questionnaire carefully.

### **Contribution**

Study design: SNE, MSH

Data collection and analysis :SNE, MSH

Manuscript preparation: SNE, MSH

### **Conflict of Interest**

"The authors declared that they have no competing interests."

### **Funding**

The author (s) received no financial support

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for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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