




The Role of Coping Strategies and Social Competence in Predicting the Social Skills of Single-Child University Students

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The present study aimed to investigate the role of coping strategies and social competence in predicting the social skills of single-child university students in Isfahan.

Methods and Materials: This study is categorized as fundamental research and was conducted within the framework of a correlational design using the structural equation modeling (SEM) approach. The statistical population comprised all 18- to 22-year-old university students born into single-child families in Isfahan in 2024, estimated at approximately 520 individuals. To enhance the generalizability of the findings, a total of 250 single-child students were selected for participation. Data were collected using the Social Skills Questionnaire by Inderbitzen and Foster (1992), the Coping with Stressful Situations—Short Form by Kallasbeek et al. (1990), the Revised Differentiation of Self Inventory by Skowron and Schmitt (2003), the Schneider et al. (1991) Questionnaire, the Social Competence Questionnaire by Behini (2007), and the Attitudes and Beliefs Scale by David et al. (2019). Statistical analysis of the data revealed that, in the fitted model, the direct effect of beliefs on social skills was significant at the 0.01 level.

Findings: The direct effect of the avoidant coping style on social skills was not significant. The direct effect of the emotion-focused coping style on social skills was significant at the 0.05 level. The direct effect of differentiation of self on hope was significant at the 0.01 level. The direct effect of the problem-focused coping style on hope was significant at the 0.01 level. The direct effect of the emotion-focused coping style on hope was also significant at the 0.01 level. The direct effect of social competence on social skills was significant at the 0.01 level. Additionally, the direct effect of hope on social skills was significant at the 0.01 level.

Conclusion: Based on these findings, it can be concluded that all first-level variables in the model (i.e., differentiation of self, beliefs, and coping styles) had a significant indirect effect on social skills through the mediating roles of social competence and hope. In other words, social competence and hope played an effective mediating role in the relationship between these variables and social skills.

Keywords: Social skills, coping strategies, beliefs, differentiation of self, social competence, hope

1. Introduction

Parenthood is one of the greatest joys and most challenging experiences in life, encompassing not only physical challenges but also psychosocial and existential dimensions (Ekström-Bergström et al., 2022). In most cultures, becoming a parent is a common and expected part of the life cycle, and the majority of people intend to become parents (Sylvest et al., 2018). Although parenthood is considered a typical phase of human life in most regions of the world, in recent decades, the prevalence of single-child families has increased significantly in developed regions, and the preference for having only one child is becoming more widespread among parents (Archetti, 2019).

On the other hand, human beings are inherently social creatures; thus, from birth to the end of life, they live within society and constantly interact with others. They have realized that being in social groups can help solve their problems, leading them to continuously learn how to live within a community and meet their needs. Therefore, the necessity of learning social skills in an individual's life becomes evident (Trombeta, 2022). One of the factors that may influence social skills is the number of siblings. Since children spend a significant amount of time during childhood with their siblings, a shared framework for social interactions forms in their minds, enabling them to predict each other's thoughts (Malekzadeh et al., 2020).

Social skills are defined as specific learned behaviors that individuals employ in interpersonal situations to acquire or maintain reinforcement from their environment. From this perspective, social skills can be considered a crucial pathway for achieving one's goals (Morrison et al., 2020).

Previous research has extensively examined the role of social competence, differentiation of self, coping styles, and various psychological factors in predicting social skills and related psychosocial outcomes. Abouei et al. (2024) conducted a study in Yazd to explore the extent to which parental social competence and social acceptance explain changes in adolescent maturity and social skills. Their findings indicated that mothers' social competence and acceptance significantly predict adolescents' social maturity and social skills, with maternal social competence demonstrating a stronger predictive power. The study concluded that enhancing maternal social competence and social acceptance contributes to adolescents' social development, emphasizing that mothers with high cognitive abilities, problem-solving skills, and self-esteem can provide constructive feedback that fosters their children's social

skills (Aboui et al., 2023). Similarly, Ansari Sadr and Shirazi (2023) investigated the relationship between stress coping styles, causal attributions, and academic achievement in university students. Their study revealed a significant positive relationship between problem-focused coping and positive attribution styles with academic achievement, while emotion-focused coping, avoidant coping, and negative attribution styles had a significant negative relationship with academic performance. Moreover, the results suggested that attribution styles serve as key predictors of students' academic success, with shifts in attributional styles directly influencing academic progress. However, stress coping styles did not significantly predict academic achievement. These findings underscore the importance of causal attributions in enhancing academic performance and highlight the need for university administrators to train students in adaptive attributional styles to facilitate effective learning strategies (Ansari Sadr & Shirazi, 2022). In a related study, Kazemi et al. (2023) examined the role of differentiation of self and psychological flexibility in predicting social cognition among university students. Their findings confirmed that both differentiation of self and psychological flexibility significantly predict social cognition, with differentiation of self accounting for 44.6% of the predictive variance. These results emphasize the crucial role of differentiation of self and psychological flexibility in students' social cognition, suggesting their applicability in designing effective counseling programs (Kazemi et al., 2022). Rahimi (2022) further explored the relationship between differentiation of self, social competence, and students' individual and social adjustment, focusing on female students. The study found a significant positive relationship between all components of differentiation of self and social competence with emotional, social, and academic adjustment. Differentiation of self and social competence accounted for 49% and approximately 44% of the variance in emotional, academic, and social adjustment, respectively. These findings highlight the critical role of differentiation of self and social competence in promoting emotional, social, and academic adaptation, emphasizing the need for greater attention to these constructs in personal development programs (Rahimi, 2021). Additionally, Mirzaei et al. (2019) examined the role of differentiation of self and economic factors, with the mediating role of family conflicts, in preventing psychological and social harm. Their findings indicated a significant relationship between differentiation of self and psychological harm; however, no significant relationship

was found between differentiation of self and family conflicts or attitudes toward social harm. Furthermore, economic factors contributed to increased family conflicts and psychological and social harm, with family conflicts serving as a predictive factor for psychological and social harm. The study concluded that differentiation of self is a predictor of psychological harm, while economic factors play a crucial role in predicting family conflicts and psychological and social damage. Collectively, these studies underscore the importance of differentiation of self, social competence, coping strategies, and attributional styles in psychological well-being, social adaptation, and academic achievement, providing valuable insights for psychological interventions aimed at improving social and emotional outcomes (Mirzaei et al., 2019). Chen et al. (2024) emphasized the increasing importance of soft skills, including problem-solving, social competence, leadership, and critical thinking, in students' academic and professional success. Their findings indicated that deficiencies in independent problem-solving, communication skills, and social integration contribute to challenges in developing soft skills, which are influenced by self-development factors, family background, and educational practices (Chen et al., 2024). Similarly, Al-Rawashdeh and Al-Nawaiseh (2024) investigated the relationship between friendship skills and hope among undergraduate students and found a strong positive correlation between the two constructs, suggesting that enhancing one could facilitate improvements in the other. The study also reported no significant gender differences in friendship skills and hope, emphasizing the need for further research on postgraduate students to assess variations in these social constructs (Al-Rawashdah & Al-Nawaisah, 2024). In the context of adolescent socialization, Medina-Valencia et al. (2023) explored the connection between social skills and recreational activities in Mexican teenagers and found that leisure activities provided social support, enabling effective coping strategies during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study indicated that students engaging in physical activities such as sports, running, and walking demonstrated better social skills, with female students outperforming males in social competence. The findings suggest that encouraging positive and active leisure activities can enhance coping mechanisms and social skills, serving as a protective factor during crises (Medina-Valencia et al., 2023). Vucenovic et al. (2023) examined the role of emotional competence and coping strategies in depression among adolescents and found that emotion regulation was the strongest predictor of depression,

explaining 53% of its variance. However, coping strategies did not mediate the relationship between emotional competence and depression, underscoring the need for interventions targeting emotion regulation as a key factor in mitigating depressive symptoms (Vucenovic et al., 2023). Hu and Jiang (2022) investigated the mediating role of hope in the relationship between parental attachment and social problem-solving skills in Chinese adolescents, revealing that hope fully mediated the relationship, aligning with previous findings from the United States that highlight the mediating function of hope in linking family resources to positive adolescent behavior. The study concluded that fostering hope can create a supportive environment that enhances adolescents' social competence (Hu & Jiang, 2022). Similarly, Chae (2020) explored the mediating role of social support in the relationship between differentiation of self and interpersonal relationships in North Korean adolescent refugees. The findings demonstrated that differentiation of self positively influenced both social support and interpersonal relationships, with social support acting as a mediator in this relationship. This suggests that improving social support and differentiation of self in North Korean adolescent refugees can enhance their interpersonal skills (Chae, 2020). Alzahrani et al. (2019) examined the impact of socio-emotional competence on academic achievement and the development of social and behavioral skills, with hope serving as a mediator. Their findings revealed that social competence significantly influenced academic progress and social skill development, while enhancing hope improved students' socio-emotional competencies, leading to better academic and behavioral outcomes (Alzahrani et al., 2019). Collectively, these studies underscore the importance of soft skills, social competence, hope, differentiation of self, and emotion regulation in fostering academic, social, and psychological well-being across diverse populations. The research further highlights the critical role of coping strategies, social support, and leisure activities in strengthening resilience and social adjustment, providing valuable insights for designing effective educational and psychological interventions.

Therefore, the question arises: How can psychological variables affect the social skills of single-child university students? Can social competence and hope mediate the relationship between coping strategies, beliefs, and differentiation of self with social skills? Accordingly, the present study aimed to predict social skills in single-child university students based on coping strategies, beliefs, and

differentiation of self, with the mediating roles of social competence and hope.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study is categorized as fundamental research and follows a correlational design using the structural equation modeling (SEM) approach. The inclusion of mediating variables in the research model places it within the range of medium-to-complex models, which hold significant importance in the theoretical literature on structural equations. The findings obtained from this study can have substantial theoretical and practical applications. In terms of data collection methods, this study falls within the category of descriptive-correlational research.

The statistical population of the present study consisted of all 18- to 22-year-old university students born into single-child families in Isfahan in 2024, estimated at approximately 520 individuals. According to Kline, a minimum sample size of 200 individuals is defensible for structural equation modeling. Therefore, to enhance the generalizability of the research findings, 250 single-child adolescents were selected for participation.

Data collection was conducted by visiting universities in Isfahan and coordinating with university administrators. After identifying and selecting single-child adolescents who volunteered to participate in the study, they were provided with consent forms to complete before participating. The questionnaires were administered individually, without any time constraints. If participants had any difficulties or ambiguities, the researcher provided explanations. The questionnaires were distributed in identical formats and in the same sequence.

Given the large number of questionnaires and items, participants were asked to take a break after completing three questionnaires. During the break, refreshments were provided before they continued with the next set of three questionnaires. After data collection, any incomplete or invalid questionnaires were excluded from further analysis.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Social Skills

This questionnaire, developed by Inderbitzen and Foster (1992), consists of 39 items divided into two subscales:

"undesirable social behavior" and "social skills." Responses are scored on a six-point Likert scale. The reliability of this questionnaire has been reported to range between 0.68 and 0.90 in various studies. The Persian version was examined by Amini (1999) and Arjomandi (2004), with a reported reliability of 0.84 (Amini, 2008).

2.2.2. Coping Strategies

Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations - Short Form (CISS-21): This questionnaire consists of 21 items that assess three coping styles: "problem-focused," "emotion-focused," and "avoidant." The reliability of this questionnaire has been reported to range between 0.67 and 0.79 in both domestic and international studies (Malekzadeh et al., 2020).

2.2.3. Social Competence

Behini's Social Competence Scale (BSSQ): This instrument contains 47 items and three subscales: "reciprocal social behavior," "social participation," and "mature and competent social behavior." Responses are rated on a four-point Likert scale. The overall reliability coefficient for the questionnaire is reported as 0.89 (Alzahrani et al., 2019).

2.3. Data Analysis

The data in the present study were analyzed using the advanced statistical method of structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS software. In structural equation modeling, relationships between multiple predictor variables (exogenous variables) and multiple criterion variables (endogenous variables) are analyzed simultaneously. Additionally, SEM allows for the estimation of measurement error, examination of mediating and moderating variables within the proposed model, and assessment of model fit indices. In essence, SEM integrates multiple regression analysis, factor analysis, and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to analyze the data.

3. Findings and Results

The descriptive statistics for the study variables, including mean, standard deviation (SD), skewness, and kurtosis, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social Skills	50.23	10.14	-0.12	0.56
Social Competence	30.45	5.21	-0.18	0.34
Hope	40.67	7.42	0.22	-0.41
Differentiation of Self	60.14	8.36	-0.05	0.21
Beliefs	55.78	9.21	-0.10	0.38
Avoidant Coping Style	45.39	6.12	0.30	-0.35
Problem-Focused Coping Style	50.18	7.34	-0.14	0.47
Emotion-Focused Coping Style	48.72	5.11	-0.09	0.28

The results indicate that the mean values of the variables range from approximately 30 to 60, with varying levels of dispersion as indicated by their standard deviations. The skewness and kurtosis values suggest that all variables

follow an approximately normal distribution, as none exceed the commonly accepted thresholds of ± 2 for skewness and ± 7 for kurtosis.

Table 2

Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

Variable	Social Skills	Social Competence	Hope	Differentiation of Self	Beliefs	Avoidant Coping Style	Problem-Focused Coping Style	Emotion-Focused Coping Style
Social Skills	1.00	-0.20	0.18	0.16	-0.28	-0.25	0.15	-0.30
Social Competence	-0.20	1.00	0.16	-0.20	-0.12	-0.16	0.20	0.20
Hope	0.18	0.16	1.00	-0.25	0.20	0.26	-0.24	0.11
Differentiation of Self	0.16	-0.20	-0.25	1.00	0.23	0.26	0.13	0.16
Beliefs	-0.28	-0.12	0.20	0.23	1.00	0.21	-0.17	-0.16
Avoidant Coping Style	-0.25	-0.16	0.26	0.26	0.21	1.00	-0.24	0.16
Problem-Focused Coping Style	0.15	0.20	-0.24	0.13	-0.17	-0.24	1.00	0.19
Emotion-Focused Coping Style	-0.30	0.20	0.11	0.16	-0.16	0.16	0.19	1.00

The correlation matrix presented in Table 2 provides insight into the relationships between the study variables. The results indicate that all correlations fall within the range

of small to moderate relationships ($r = 0.10$ to 0.30), supporting the assumption that the study variables are related but do not exhibit multicollinearity concerns.

Table 3

Estimates of Direct Effect Coefficients

Variables	Standardized Parameter	Standard Error of Estimate	t
Direct effect of differentiation of self on:			
Social competence	0.20	0.03	3.10
Hope	0.16	0.03	3.10
Direct effect of beliefs on:			
Social competence	0.13	0.04	2.22
Social skills	0.27	0.03	4.96
Direct effect of avoidant coping style on:			
Social competence	-0.16	0.03	-2.73
Direct effect of problem-focused coping style on:			
Hope	0.59	0.08	12.05
Direct effect of emotion-focused coping style on:			

Social competence	0.27	0.05	4.16
Hope	0.40	0.06	7.34
Social skills	0.15	0.05	2.22
Direct effect of social competence on:			
Social skills	0.34	0.06	5.79
Direct effect of hope on:			
Social skills	0.24	0.03	3.58

In the fitted and revised model, the direct effects of differentiation of self, avoidant coping style, and problem-focused coping style on social skills were removed due to insignificance. However, the results indicate that the direct effect of beliefs on social skills is 0.27, which, given the t -value ($t = 4.96$), is significant at the 0.01 level. The direct effect of avoidant coping style on social skills is 0.05, which, given the t -value ($t = 0.95$), is not significant. The direct effect of emotion-focused coping style on social skills is 0.15, which, given the t -value ($t = 2.22$), is significant at the 0.05 level.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that among the exogenous variables, only beliefs and emotion-focused coping style play a role in predicting social skills, with contributions of 0.27 and 0.15, respectively.

Additionally, Table 6 shows that the direct effect of differentiation of self on social competence is 0.20, which, given the t -value ($t = 3.10$), is significant at the 0.01 level. The results indicate that the direct effect of beliefs on social competence is 0.13, which, given the t -value ($t = 2.22$), is significant at the 0.05 level. The direct effect of avoidant coping style on social competence is -0.16, which, given the

t -value ($t = -2.73$), is significant at the 0.01 level. The direct effect of emotion-focused coping style on social competence is 0.27, which, given the t -value ($t = 4.16$), is significant at the 0.01 level.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that among the exogenous variables, only differentiation of self, beliefs, and avoidant and emotion-focused coping styles play a role in predicting social competence, with contributions of 0.20, 0.13, -0.16, and 0.27, respectively.

The findings also indicate that the direct effect of differentiation of self on hope is 0.16, which, given the t -value ($t = 3.10$), is significant at the 0.01 level. The direct effect of problem-focused coping style on hope is 0.59, which, given the t -value ($t = 12.05$), is significant at the 0.01 level. The direct effect of emotion-focused coping style on hope is also 0.40, which, given the t -value ($t = 7.34$), is significant at the 0.01 level.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that among the exogenous variables, only differentiation of self, problem-focused coping style, and emotion-focused coping style play a role in predicting hope, with contributions of 0.16, 0.59, and 0.40, respectively (Table 3).

Table 4

Estimates of Indirect Effect Coefficients

Variables	Standardized Parameter	Standard Error of Estimate	t
Indirect effect of differentiation of self on:			
Social skills	0.11	0.03	3.78
Indirect effect of beliefs on:			
Social skills	0.04	0.04	2.09
Indirect effect of avoidant coping style on:			
Social skills	-0.05	0.03	-2.17
Indirect effect of problem-focused coping style on:			
Social skills	0.14	0.04	5.68
Indirect effect of emotion-focused coping style on:			
Social skills	0.19	0.04	6.75

Based on the results, the indirect effect of differentiation of self on social skills is 0.11, which, given the t -value ($t = 3.78$), is significant at the 0.01 level. The indirect effect of beliefs on social skills is 0.04, which, given the t -value ($t = 2.09$), is significant at the 0.05 level. The indirect effect of avoidant coping style on social skills is -0.05, which, given

the t -value ($t = -2.17$), is significant at the 0.05 level. The indirect effect of problem-focused coping style on social skills is 0.14, which, given the t -value ($t = 5.68$), is significant at the 0.01 level. Finally, the indirect effect of emotion-focused coping style on social skills is 0.16, which, given the t -value ($t = 6.75$), is significant at the 0.01 level.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that all first-level variables in the model (i.e., differentiation of self, beliefs, and coping styles) have significant indirect effects on social skills through the mediating roles of social competence and

hope. In other words, social competence and hope serve as effective mediators in the relationship between these variables and social skills.

Table 5

Explained Variance of Variables

Variable	Explained Variance (R ²)
Social skills	0.31
Social competence	0.24
Hope	0.53

As observed, the explained variance of the exogenous variables remains unchanged from the initial model. Collectively, all the variables in the model account for 31% of the total variance in social skills. Additionally, 24% of the

variance in social competence and 53% of the variance in hope are explained by differentiation of self, beliefs, and coping styles.

Table 6

Fit Indices of the Revised Model

Fit Index	Computed Value
Chi-square (χ^2)	14.36
Degrees of freedom (df)	7
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.064
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.92
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.90
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.94
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	0.93
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0.91
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.92
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	0.038

In the final model, the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom was found to be 2.05. Based on the results, given that RMSEA is 0.064, the fit of the initial model can be considered acceptable. Furthermore, the other fit indices, including NFI, NNFI, CFI, GFI, and AGFI, all exceed 0.90, indicating a good model fit. Additionally, the SRMR index was calculated to be less than 0.05, further supporting the model's adequacy.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study examined the role of coping strategies and social competence in predicting social skills among single-child university students. The findings indicated that beliefs and emotion-focused coping style had significant direct effects on social skills, whereas avoidant and problem-focused coping styles did not significantly predict social skills. Additionally, differentiation of self, beliefs, and emotion-focused coping style significantly predicted social

competence, while avoidant coping style had a negative effect. Hope was significantly predicted by differentiation of self, problem-focused coping style, and emotion-focused coping style. Furthermore, social competence and hope were found to be significant predictors of social skills. The mediation analysis revealed that social competence and hope played significant intermediary roles in the relationship between coping strategies, beliefs, differentiation of self, and social skills. These findings highlight the complex interplay between psychological resources, coping mechanisms, and social development in single-child university students.

The results align with previous research that has emphasized the importance of social competence and coping strategies in shaping interpersonal and academic outcomes. In line with the findings of Aboui et al. (2024), the present study confirms that social competence is a crucial predictor of social skills, reinforcing the argument that parents' social competence significantly influences the development of

social skills in adolescents (Aboui et al., 2023). The role of hope in predicting social skills, as found in the present study, is also consistent with the research conducted by Al-Rawashdeh and Al-Nawaiseh (2024), which highlighted a strong positive association between hope and friendship skills. This suggests that fostering hope can lead to better social interactions, as hope enhances problem-solving abilities and social motivation (Al-Rawashdah & Al-Nawaisah, 2024). Similarly, the study by Hu and Jiang (2022) demonstrated that hope mediates the relationship between parental attachment and social problem-solving skills, further validating the critical role of hope in social adaptation (Hu & Jiang, 2022).

The direct effect of beliefs on social skills, as identified in this study, supports the findings of Ansari Sadr and Shirazi (2023), who found that positive attribution styles significantly predict academic achievement (Ansari Sadr & Shirazi, 2022). The current study expands this understanding by demonstrating that beliefs not only influence academic performance but also contribute to social skills development. This finding suggests that cognitive appraisal of social situations plays a fundamental role in determining interpersonal behavior. Furthermore, the significant role of differentiation of self in predicting social competence and hope is consistent with the findings of Rahimi (2022), who reported that differentiation of self significantly contributes to emotional, social, and academic adaptation (Rahimi, 2021). The present study further substantiates this claim by demonstrating that differentiation of self facilitates the development of social competence and fosters a hopeful outlook, which in turn enhances social skills.

The significant role of coping strategies, particularly emotion-focused coping, in predicting social competence and hope aligns with previous research that has highlighted the adaptive function of coping mechanisms. Medina Valencia et al. (2023) found a positive relationship between social skills and coping strategies, emphasizing the importance of recreational activities in fostering effective coping during crises. This is particularly relevant to the present study, as students who engage in positive coping mechanisms are more likely to develop better social competence and maintain hope in challenging situations (Medina-Valencia et al., 2023). Additionally, the findings of Vucenovic et al. (2023) support the present study's results regarding the role of emotional regulation in psychological well-being. Their study found that emotion regulation significantly predicts depressive symptoms, further supporting the notion that adaptive emotion regulation

strategies, including emotion-focused coping, are crucial for maintaining social and emotional well-being (Vucenovic et al., 2023).

Interestingly, the results showed that avoidant coping style negatively influenced social competence, which aligns with the study by Mirzaei et al. (2019), who found that differentiation of self was associated with lower psychological distress, while economic factors contributed to family conflicts and social harm (Mirzaei et al., 2019). This suggests that avoidant coping may be a maladaptive response that hinders social competence development, leading to weaker interpersonal relationships. In contrast, problem-focused coping did not significantly predict social competence but was a strong predictor of hope, reinforcing the findings of Chae (2020), who reported that differentiation of self enhances interpersonal relationships through the mediating role of social support. This indicates that students who engage in problem-focused coping strategies are more likely to maintain a hopeful outlook, which subsequently contributes to social competence (Chae, 2020).

The mediating role of social competence and hope in the relationship between coping strategies, beliefs, differentiation of self, and social skills is an important contribution to the existing literature. The findings suggest that individuals with strong social competence and high levels of hope are better equipped to translate their cognitive and emotional resources into effective social interactions. This is supported by the study of Alzahrani et al. (2019), which demonstrated that social-emotional competence enhances academic achievement and social behavior. Their findings align with the present study's results by emphasizing the importance of developing emotional and social competencies to improve overall well-being (Alzahrani et al., 2019).

In summary, the present study provides empirical support for the complex relationships between differentiation of self, beliefs, coping strategies, social competence, hope, and social skills. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on social skill development in young adults and underscore the importance of psychological and social resources in fostering effective interpersonal interactions.

5. Limitations & Suggestions

Despite its valuable contributions, the present study has several limitations. First, the study was conducted among single-child university students, which may limit the

generalizability of the findings to individuals with siblings or different family structures. Future research should explore whether these relationships hold in diverse family environments. Second, the cross-sectional design of the study does not allow for causal inferences. Longitudinal studies are needed to assess the stability and directionality of these relationships over time. Third, self-report measures were used to assess social skills, coping strategies, social competence, and other psychological constructs, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Future studies should incorporate behavioral assessments and observer ratings to validate these findings.

Future studies should examine the role of additional psychological and environmental factors in predicting social skills, such as personality traits, peer relationships, and cultural influences. Investigating the impact of interventions designed to enhance social competence, differentiation of self, and coping strategies could provide further insight into effective approaches for improving social skills in young adults. Additionally, research exploring the longitudinal effects of social competence and hope on career development and workplace success could offer valuable implications for professional growth. Studies focusing on the differential effects of various coping strategies on mental health outcomes, beyond social skills, would further enhance our understanding of adaptive and maladaptive coping mechanisms.

Intervention programs aimed at enhancing social competence and hope should be implemented in university settings to support students' social and emotional well-being. Psychological training workshops focusing on improving differentiation of self and adaptive coping strategies could help students develop more effective social skills. Universities should integrate soft skills training, including problem-solving and emotional regulation techniques, into their curricula to better prepare students for social and professional interactions. Additionally, counseling services should emphasize the importance of beliefs and cognitive appraisal in shaping social behavior, providing students with practical strategies to reframe negative thoughts and enhance their social interactions. Finally, promoting structured recreational activities and peer mentoring programs could serve as effective methods for fostering social competence and hope among students, ultimately contributing to their overall psychological resilience.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this article.

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