

Influence of Competence, Relatedness, and Autonomy as Predictors of Well-Being of Solo Parents

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Abstract

Poor well-being among solo parents is distressing. The significance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as predictors of well-being among solo parents was determined. Predictive research design was used in the study. 155 solo parents were involved selected through quota sampling. Results showed that autonomy, relatedness, and competence significantly and moderately predict (52.1%) the well-being of solo parents. Self Determination Theory was affirmed. Further studies utilizing other variables to trace the 47.9% variance in well-being, and supportive programs to enhance solo parents' autonomy, competence, relatedness, and well-being are recommended.

Keywords: *Influence of competence; relatedness; autonomy; well-being; solo parents*

1.Introduction

Poor well-being among solo parents has become a growing concern in the global context as the number of single-parent households continues to rise. Studies show that solo parents often experience lower levels of overall well-being compared with parents in two-parent families, making them one of the vulnerable groups in society (Dierker et al., 2025).

In several countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, poor well-being among solo parents is also widely reported. Research indicates that solo parents in these countries often experience greater psychological strain and lower well-being compared with partnered parents (McLanahan & Tach, 2023).

In the Philippines, poor well-being among solo parents is also observed in many communities, including General Santos City. Studies show that many Filipino solo parents experience well-being while fulfilling their responsibilities as the sole caregiver in the family (Cruz et al., 2024).

Poor well-being among solo parents may lead to negative consequences affecting their personal functioning and family life. However, limited studies have examined the well-being of solo parents within the local context. This gap highlights the need to conduct research that will provide a clearer understanding of the well-being conditions experienced by solo parents in the area. Hence, this study was pursued.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This research utilized a correlational design to examine the relationship between single parents' autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and their psychosocial well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000), allowing the study to explore how these psychological needs are connected and collectively influence overall well-being, providing insights into the experiences of solo parents in General Santos City and offering implications for interventions, policies, and future research to support their mental health and quality of life.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in General Santos City, an urbanized center in the SOCCSKSARGEN region of Mindanao, Philippines, chosen for its growing and diverse population, including a significant number of single-parent households across different socioeconomic backgrounds. The city provides a dynamic social environment with employment opportunities and access to social support services, making it an ideal setting to examine the daily experiences and well-being of solo parents. Its accessibility and the researcher's familiarity with the area facilitated efficient data collection, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of how solo parents manage their responsibilities and maintain their mental health in an urban Mindanao context.

2.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The respondents of the study were male or female single parents. They come from different age groups and socioeconomic backgrounds. These individuals were selected because they could provide relevant information regarding the relationship between autonomy, competence, relatedness, and psychosocial well-being among single parents. The sample size ranged from 150 to 200 respondents, which was considered sufficient to provide reliable data for examining the relationships among the variables through correlational analysis.

This study employed quota sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which the population is divided into subgroups based on specific characteristics such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status, and participants are selected from each subgroup until the required number is reached. This method ensures that important segments of the population are represented in the study (Nikolopoulou, 2023). It is commonly used in social science research because it allows researchers to gather participants with relevant characteristics while making the data collection process more practical and efficient (Taherdoost, 2022).

2.4 Data Gathering Technique

This study utilized a survey questionnaire as the primary data gathering instrument. A survey questionnaire is a structured method of gathering information from respondents through a systematic set of questions designed to collect data on their characteristics, perceptions, behaviors, or experiences for analysis in research studies (Better Evaluation, 2026).

Under This Technique, utilized four modified survey questionnaires to measure the major constructs of the research were utilized. The first instrument was adapted from Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction Scale (BPNS) developed by Deci & Ryan (2000) consisting of seven items. Its Cronbach's alpha results was 0.803. The second

instrument was adapted from Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction Scale (BPNS) developed by Deci & Ryan (2000) consisting of seven items. Its Cronbach's alpha results is 0.70. The third instrument was adapted from Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction Scale (BPNS) developed by Deci & Ryan (2000) consisting of seven items. Its Cronbach's alpha results is 0.72. Lastly, well-being instrument was adapted developed by Deci & Ryan (2000) consisting of seven items. Its Cronbach's alpha results is 0.732. No items were deleted.

2.5 Data Analysis Technique

In this study, descriptive, correlation, and regression analysis were employed to examine and interpret the data. Descriptive analysis utilized the mean and standard deviation statistical tools. The mean was used to determine the level of the variables, while the standard deviation indicated the degree of variation or dispersion in the respondents' answers. In addition, correlation analysis applied the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient to identify the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables. Furthermore, multiple linear regression analysis was applied to assess the predictive capability of autonomy, relatedness, and competence on well-being, particularly through the interpretation of the Beta (β) coefficient to determine the strength of each predictor.

Moreover, a matrix presenting the scale, descriptive level, and corresponding interpretation for each variable was included. This measure was used to describe the levels of autonomy, relatedness, competence, and well-being in the study.

2.6 Ethical Consideration

The research study strictly adhered to established ethical guidelines and the SMILE framework, ensuring participant safety, informed consent, confidentiality, and proper handling of personal data. Data were collected from single parents while excluding minors, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups. Participation was voluntary, with an informed consent form explaining the study objectives, procedures, minimal risks, and participants' right to skip questions or withdraw at any time without consequences. Strict measures were implemented to maintain confidentiality, including secure storage of data for research use only, compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, and obtaining ethical clearance and necessary approvals from the Graduate School Dean and Holy Cross of Davao College.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses. Likewise, the summary of the findings is also presented.

3.1 Descriptive Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the study variables, namely, autonomy, competence, relatedness, and well-being of single parents, along with their respective indicators. The table includes the sample size, computed mean scores, standard deviations, and the corresponding descriptive interpretations.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis, n = 155

Variables	SD	Mean	Interpretation
Autonomy	0.32	3.18	High
Decision Making	0.38	3.23	High
Personal Choice	0.39	3.24	High
Self-Direction	0.36	3.06	High
Competence	0.35	3.17	High
Role Management	0.41	3.15	High
Financial And Household Capability	0.34	3.18	High
Relatedness	0.31	3.11	High
Family Support	0.37	3.19	High
Peer And Community Support	0.33	3.03	High
Well-Being	0.35	3.26	Very High
Life Satisfaction	0.40	3.29	Very High
Emotional Functioning	0.36	3.22	High
1.00-1.75 Very Low, 1.76-2.50 Low, 2.51-3.25 High, 3.26-4.00 Very High			

Specifically, Table 1 reveals that Autonomy variable ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.32$) is described as high. It indicates that autonomy of the respondents is strong. All indicators of autonomy variable are described as High. The standard deviation value obtained is 0.32, described as very low level of variability. It denotes that consistency of the responses is tightly clustering around the mean. Moreover, Competence variable ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.35$) is described as very low. it indicates that competence of the respondents is very poor. All its indicators are described as High. The standard deviation value obtained is 0.35, describe as very low level of variability. It denotes that consistency of the responses is tightly clustering around the mean. In addition, Relatedness variable ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.31$) is described as High. It indicates that relatedness of the respondents is very low. All indicators of relatedness are described as High. The standard deviation value obtained is 0.31, described as very low level of variability. It denotes that consistency of the responses is tightly clustering around the mean. Finally, Well-Being variable ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.35$) is described as Very High. It indicates that well-being of the respondents is very low. All its indicators are described as High. The standard deviation value obtained is 0.35, described as very low level of variability. It denotes that consistency of the responses is tightly clustering around the mean.

The findings indicate that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are generally high, suggesting that respondents demonstrate strong independence, capability, and social connections. Among these variables, well-being is interpreted at a very high level, indicating that respondents experience very positive psychological and emotional health. Overall, the results suggest that the strong presence of these psychological needs corresponds with the respondents' very high level of well-being.

3.2 Correlation Results

Table 2 is correlation table. It includes the predictors namely, autonomy, competence, and relatedness. It also includes well-being as criterion variable. Lastly, it contains r-value, p-value and interpretation.

Table 2. Correlation Analysis

Predictors	Well-Being			
	r-value	p-value	Decision on H_0	Interpretation
Autonomy	0.563	0.000	Reject	Significant
Competence	0.686	0.000	Reject	Significant
Relatedness	0.598	0.000	Reject	Significant

Confidence level: 0.05

Specifically, Table 2 shows that the correlation between autonomy and well-being obtained a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that the relationship between autonomy and well-being is significant. With an r-value of 0.563 falling between $\pm 0.51 - \pm 0.74$, the correlation is interpreted as moderately high. Moreover, the correlation between competence and well-being yielded a p-value of 0.000, which is also less than the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that competence is significantly related to well-being. With an r-value of 0.686 falling between $\pm 0.51 - \pm 0.74$, the correlation is interpreted as moderately high. Finally, the correlation between relatedness and well-being obtained a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that relatedness has a significant relationship with well-being. With an r-value of 0.598 falling between $\pm 0.51 - \pm 0.74$, the correlation is interpreted as moderately high.

The findings indicate that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are all significantly associated with well-being, suggesting that individuals who experience greater independence, stronger capability in managing responsibilities, and better social connections tend to report higher levels of well-being. Among the predictors, competence demonstrates the strongest relationship, highlighting the importance of perceived capability in enhancing well-being.

3.3 Regression Analysis

Table 3 is regression table. The table contains the following columns: Predictors, Unstandardized Beta (B), SE (Standard Error), t-value (t), p-value (p), and Interpretation.

Table 3. Regression Results

Predictors	Unstandardized Beta (B)	SE	T	P	Decision on Null Hypothesis	Interpretation
Intercept	0.548	0.234	2.35	0.020	—	—
Autonomy	0.112	0.098	1.14	0.254	Fail to Reject H_0	Not Significant
Competence	0.432	0.099	4.35	0.000	Reject H_0	Significant
Relatedness	0.316	0.081	3.88	0.000	Reject H_0	Significant
$R = 0.722$, $R^2 = 0.521$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.512$, $F = 54.8$, $Sig. = 0.000$ Regression Model: $WB = 0.112 A + 0.432 C + 0.316 R + 0.548$						

Specifically, Table 3 shows that the overall regression model for well-being, using autonomy, competence, and relatedness as predictors, is $WB = 0.112A + 0.432C + 0.316R + 0.548$. With a p-value of 0.000 obtained, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the model is considered statistically significant. This indicates that autonomy, competence, and relatedness collectively contribute to predicting the well-being of the respondents. This implies that for every unit change in autonomy, there is a corresponding 0.112 unit change in well-being of solo parents. Likewise, it infers that for every unit change in competence, there is a corresponding 0.432 unit change in well-being of solo parents. Moreover, it implies that for every unit change in relatedness, there is a corresponding 0.316 unit change in well-being of solo parents.

Furthermore, the table presents an R^2 value of 0.521, which means that 52.1% of the variance in well-being is collectively explained by the three predictors. The regression analysis further reveals that individually; competence and relatedness significantly predict well-being; while autonomy does not show a significant independent effect.

3.4 Correlation Between Autonomy and Well-being

The study shows a moderately high correlation between Autonomy and Well-being among 155 solo parents. This finding aligns with the study of Akram et al. (2022) who found that autonomy relates with psychological well-being, suggesting that higher autonomy is associated with better well-being among university students. Similarly, current finding affirms the study of Martella et al., (2020) stating that individuals' sense of autonomy was positively related to subjective well-being across data from nearly 100,000 people in 66 countries.

In contrary, this current finding stating that autonomy significantly correlate well-being opposes the study of Yusof, Ma'rof et al., (2024), who found that autonomy did not consistently relate to higher psychological well-being among 100 Malaysian undergraduate students, suggesting that the link between autonomy and well-being may be influenced by cultural context and not always significant.

3.5 Correlation Between Competence and Well-being

The study shows a moderately high correlation between competence and well-being among solo parents. This finding aligns with the study of Reis et al. (2020), who reported that satisfaction of competence significantly predicted daily well-being, indicating that individuals who perceive themselves as capable and effective experience higher psychological well-being. Similarly, the present finding is consistent with the claim of Ryan and Deci (2021), which emphasized that competence, as one of the basic psychological needs, is essential for promoting psychological growth, optimal functioning, and overall, well-being.

In comparison, this current finding stating that competence significantly correlates with well-being opposes the study of Sheldon & Niemiec (2006), who found that in some contexts, competence satisfaction did not independently predict well-being after controlling for autonomy and relatedness, suggesting that the influence of competence on well-being may be mediated by other psychological factors.

3.6 Correlation Between Relatedness and Well-being

The study shows a significant correlation between relatedness and well-being among solo parents. This finding aligns with the study of La Guardia, Ryan, Couchman, & Deci (2024), who reported that individuals who experience stronger social connections and a sense of belonging exhibit higher levels of psychological well-being. Moreover, the current finding affirms the study of Baumeister & Leary (2025), who emphasized that humans have a fundamental need to form interpersonal relationships, and fulfillment of this need is strongly associated with emotional health and life satisfaction.

Conversely, this current finding stating that relatedness significantly correlates with well-being disagrees with the study of Huta & Ryan (2022), who found that relatedness satisfaction did not consistently predict well-being outcomes once autonomy and competence were statistically controlled, suggesting that relatedness may not always be a standalone predictor of well-being.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that autonomy, relatedness, and competence have moderate (52.1%) but significant collective strength to predict well-being of solo parents. This conclusion supports Self-Determination Theory, highlighting the essential role of autonomy, relatedness, and competence as significant predictors of well-being.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, it is recommended that further studies may be undertaken utilizing other variables and indicators that were not covered in this study to determine potential predictors that may account for the remaining 47.9% variance in well-being of solo parents. Exploratory studies may identify emerging themes and sub-themes as potential variables and indicators. Furthermore, the school leaders may implement programs to enhance solo parents'

autonomy, competence, and relatedness to promote their well-being.

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