




Positive Illusions in Parenting: Systematic Review

Ebeveynlikte Olumlu Yanılsamalar: Sistematik Derleme

 Gülçin Karadeniz¹,  Rabia Hıdırlar¹,  İlaydanur Taşdemir¹

¹Istanbul 29 Mayıs University, Istanbul

ABSTRACT

Positive illusions in parenting refer to the tendency of parents to hold overly favorable beliefs about their children's abilities, intelligence, character, or achievements, often diverging from objective reality. These illusions, encompassing superiority illusion, positive bias, optimism bias, illusion of control, overvaluation, and self-reflection, serve as psychological mechanisms that enhance parental well-being, self-efficacy, and motivation while fostering supportive parenting behaviors. However, they also pose risks, including unrealistic expectations, neglect of children's developmental needs, and the potential for fostering narcissistic traits or distorted self-concepts in children. This systematic review synthesizes findings from 25 studies (1988–2024) identified through Google Scholar, ProQuest, and Wiley Library, exploring the effects of positive illusions on parenting attitudes, behaviors, and parent-child interactions. The results indicate that while positive illusions can bolster parenting satisfaction and emotional resilience, excessive or unbalanced illusions may lead to detrimental outcomes, such as overlooking children's shortcomings, fostering performance anxiety, or hindering autonomy development. Notably, parents with higher socioeconomic status and education levels exhibit stronger positive illusions, potentially as a strategy to enhance social competitiveness. The review underscores the importance of balancing positive illusions with realistic expectations to support healthy child development and effective parenting. Recommendations include targeted education in psychological counseling and parenting programs to help parents recognize their children's true potential while mitigating the adverse effects of cognitive distortions.

Keywords: Positive illusions, parenting, systematic review

ÖZ

Ebeveynlikte olumlu yanılsamalar, ebeveynlerin çocuklarının yetenekleri, zekâları, karakterleri veya başarıları hakkında nesnel gerçeklikten saparak aşırı olumlu inançlar geliştirme eğilimini ifade eder. Üstünlük yanılsaması, olumlu önyargı, iyimserlik önyargısı, kontrol yanılsaması, aşırı değer biçme ve öz-yansıma gibi türleri kapsayan bu yanılsamalar, ebeveynlerin iyilik halini, öz-yeterlik algısını ve motivasyonunu artırırken destekleyici ebeveynlik davranışlarını teşvik eden psikolojik mekanizmalar olarak işlev görür. Ancak, gerçekçi olmayan beklentiler, çocukların gelişim ihtiyaçlarının ihmal edilmesi ve çocuklarda narsistik özellikler veya çarpık benlik algıları oluşma riski gibi olumsuzlukları da beraberinde getirir. Bu sistematik incelemede, Google Scholar, ProQuest ve Wiley Library üzerinden belirlenen 1988-2024 yılları arasındaki 25 çalışmanın bulgularını sentezleyerek olumlu yanılsamaların ebeveynlik tutumları, davranışları ve ebeveyn-çocuk etkileşimleri üzerindeki etkilerini araştırılmıştır. Sonuçlar, olumlu yanılsamaların ebeveynlik memnuniyetini ve duygusal direnci artırabileceğini, ancak aşırı veya dengesiz yanılsamaların çocukların eksikliklerini göz ardı etme, performans kaygısı yaratma veya özerklik gelişimini engelleme gibi zararlı sonuçlara yol açabileceğini göstermektedir. Özellikle, daha yüksek sosyoekonomik statü ve eğitim seviyesine sahip ebeveynler, sosyal rekabeti artırmak için daha güçlü olumlu yanılsamalar sergilemişlerdir. Bu inceleme, sağlıklı çocuk gelişimini ve etkili ebeveynliği desteklemek için olumlu yanılsamaların gerçekçi beklentilerle dengelenmesinin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Psikolojik danışmanlık ve ebeveynlik programlarında, ebeveynlerin çocuklarının gerçek potansiyelini tanıırken bilişsel çarpıtmaların olumsuz etkilerini azaltmalarına yardımcı olacak hedefe yönelik eğitimler önerilir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Olumlu yanılsamalar, ebeveynlik, sistematik derleme

Introduction

In many areas of life, people may have positive, exaggerated thoughts, perceptions, and beliefs about themselves and their environment that do not correspond to reality. This phenomenon, which occurs when people's thinking styles, perceptions, and beliefs deviate from reality, is called positive illusion (Kart 2004). Positive illusions mean that the person sees himself/herself, his/her life, and relationships in a more positive way (Wenger and Fowers 2008). This may cause the person to see himself/herself as more skilful, successful, and attractive and to underestimate the problems in his/her relationships. It is also a concept that refers to the tendency of individuals to have unrealistic and overly positive beliefs about themselves, their abilities, and the world around them. Positive illusions include prejudiced thinking and decision-making that lead to overly optimistic views about oneself and the future and often result in unrealistic expectations and behaviours (Wenger and Fowers 2008).

In the literature (Taylor and Brown 1988, 1994), it is emphasised that psychologically healthy individuals are those who can establish and maintain close contact with reality. On the other hand, illusion is defined as the tendency to see and interpret a perceived situation in a way that is different from the actual situation (Taylor and Gollwitzer 1995). For this reason, the individual creates an unrealistic image or concept about himself/herself in his/her mind. Taylor and Brown (1994) discussed positive illusions of individuals under three main headings. These are believing that individuals have more control over what is going on around them than they actually do, evaluating themselves more positively than they really are, and seeing the future as overly optimistic and trouble-free.

Therefore, the positive illusions that exist in the lives of many people may cause the individual not to have objective and realistic perceptions about himself/herself and the world he/she lives in. These illusions may also spread to the person's close environment. This can lead to an unrealistically positive view of loved ones (Wenger and Fowers 2008). These illusions may have an important place in the establishment and execution of individual relationships. Some of the positive illusions may be related to marriage itself, and some may be related to parenthood. Fowers et al. (1996) stated that positive illusions about marriage (positive belief that marriage will not result in divorce) have a significant effect on marital satisfaction, satisfaction, and divorce rates. Similarly, having unrealistically positive perceptions about the parent's relationship with his/her child also plays a decisive role in how the parent perceives the parenting experience.

Parenthood is defined as an important life transition for many people (Smith 2010). The roles of mothers and fathers have a significant impact on children's preparation for life and development. These effects depend on the quality of parents' attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts towards their children (Kaya 2010). Parents' recognising their children's potential, appreciating their children's achievements, and supporting them form the basis of positive parenting (Jeon and Nepl 2016). However, these positive attitudes and beliefs may sometimes not coincide with reality and may lead to excessive optimism. The fact that parents have unrealistically optimistic attitudes and beliefs about their children is considered within the scope of positive illusions (Karadeniz 2024).

Positive illusion in parenting is the tendency of parents to have overly positive beliefs about their children's personality traits, abilities, intelligence levels, social competences, or achievements that deviate from reality. Such illusions may lead the parent to see his/her child as better, more successful, or more special than he/she really is, thus preventing the child from realising his/her deficiencies or weaknesses (Taylor and Brown 1988). Such a situation may cause the parent to over-exalt his/her child by using an emotional filter and ignoring his/her negative characteristics. Positive illusions, defined as the tendency to think positively by detaching from reality, play an important role in parent-child relationships. Therefore, positive illusions greatly affect parents' behaviours and opinions towards their children. Having positive illusions in parenting is important for the development of parents and the experiences they gain (Cohen 2001).

Positive illusions serve a psychologically protective function for parents. They not only support the parent's sense of self-efficacy but also reduce stress under challenging parenting conditions. They have also been

shown to be associated with satisfaction and reinforce positive parenting behaviours by increasing emotion-based investment in the parent-child relationship (Taylor and Brown 1988, Mazur 2006). Studies have shown that there are various types of positive illusions that affect parents' perceptions about their children.

The first of these positive illusions is the tendency of parents to believe that their children are more talented and intelligent than the average. This is called the illusion of superiority (Alicke 1985). Illusory superiority (illusory superiority/better-than-average effect) is the tendency of individuals to evaluate their own characteristics or their relatives more favourably than objective reality compared to others (Alicke 1985, Taylor and Brown 1988). While this parent thought that his/her child's social skills were much more developed than his/her peers, it was actually found that the child was at an average level in objective evaluations with peers in the same age group. This parent perceives his/her child as unrealistically superior to other children; that is, he/she exhibits the illusion of superiority. Such perceptions are characterised by the fact that the majority of parents tend to perceive their children as above average, as indicated in Fowers and Wenger (2008) and Wenger (1998). In the Fowers and Wenger (2008) study, nearly 90 percent of parents rated their children as better than other children in terms of both positive characteristics and distance from negative ones. It was also found that parents perceived themselves as more successful, more altruistic, or more accurate parents than other parents. This illusion of superiority causes parents to idealise their own parenting style and maintain it without questioning it.

Epley and Dunning (2000) point out that individuals have an illusion of superiority when they tend to see themselves as more competent, moral, or skilful compared to others. Parents may tend to see their own child-rearing skills as better than those of other parents. This may result in being closed to criticism, externalising the child's problems (I am a good parent; the problem is in the child's nature), or overconfidence. Such an illusion may reduce self-awareness in the parent-child relationship and hinder development-supportive attitudes.

Some parents tend to focus on the positive characteristics of their children and ignore their negative aspects. This situation is defined as positive bias (Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968). Positive prejudice is an individual's exaggeratedly positive evaluation of himself/herself, embracing positive characteristics and minimising negative ones. This prejudice stems from the individual's need to protect and increase self-esteem (Mezulis et al. 2004, Sedikides and Gregg 2008). Positive bias is also defined as individuals evaluating their own competencies, achievements, or social values more positively than reality and is frequently observed in the context of parenting through perceptions towards the child. Positive bias can form the basis for both supportive and misleading parenting behaviour. Positive bias involves a bidirectional mechanism that both contributes to the subjective well-being of the parent and shapes the developmental processes of the child.

When evaluating their child's behaviour, a parent may overemphasise their child's positive characteristics and underestimate their child's negative behaviours. For example, when a child makes a small mistake in class, the parent ignores it and continues to describe the child as intelligent, hard-working, and successful. This reflects the parent's positive bias towards their child and their need to perceive their own parenting success positively. It is thought that this situation is intended to protect and increase the self-esteem of both the parent and the child.

Parents tend to see their children's social competences, cognitive skills, or moral qualities as superior to their peers. Such favourable biases may increase subjective parental satisfaction and at the same time strengthen the sense of parental self-efficacy. However, overdoing this bias may lead to ignoring the child's actual developmental needs, creating erroneous expectations, or rationalising the child's failures. For example, the parent of an academically underperforming child may find the teacher's expectations unrealistic and explain the child's failure with external factors.

Many parents tend to approach their children with optimism bias and believe that they will be successful in the future in all situations (Seligman 1990, Peterson et al. 2000). Optimism bias is the tendency of individuals to exaggerate the possibility of good things happening to them in the future and to have an unrealistic belief that they will be protected from bad events. This includes an unrealistic form of optimism

(Weinstein 1980, Karadeniz 2024). A parent may underestimate the risks related to his/her child's health, education, or social development and believe that negative outcomes will never harm him/her or his/her child. For example, he/she may believe with excessive optimism that his/her child will not fall into harmful habits (unhealthy diet or excessive screen use, etc.), fail in school, or enter a negative circle of friends.

This optimism bias may lead the parent to unrealistically underestimate the likelihood of bad events in the future and thus not adequately prevent risks. By having overly optimistic expectations about the future, parents underestimate the potential problems that their child may face, and this prevents them from taking realistic precautions. The Wright et al. (2020) study is an important piece of evidence proving that parents systematically assess their children's future health risks more favourably. This study shows that optimism bias may lead to delay of some health interventions by influencing parental decision processes. The study also highlights that cognitive distortions in parenting are effective at both psychological and behavioural levels.

The illusion of control is the belief that individuals have unrealistic efficacy and control over situations determined by random or external factors (Langer 1975). In the context of parenting, this cognitive illusion may occur as parents overestimate their influence on their children's development, success, and personality traits. This feeds parents' positive illusions, as they tend to associate their children's future well-being and success directly with their own parenting practices. This illusion is thought to be especially functional in coping with stress (Taylor and Gollwitzer 1995).

Positive illusions are thought to motivate positive and optimistic beliefs about the self (Taylor and Brown 1988). The illusion of control, as a part of this structure, prepares the ground for the parent to see himself/herself as the 'chief architect' of the child's life journey. The parent thinks that positive results will be obtained in many areas, such as school success, emotional health, and social relationships of his/her child, thanks to his/her intervention. This perception creates a positive illusion by giving the parent a strong, successful, and sufficient sense of self. For example, a mother may direct her child to four different courses per week (chess, piano, robotics, and drama) and think that these programs will guarantee that her child will be successful both socially and academically in the future. However, many external variables, such as the child's individual interests and abilities, the teacher factor, or socioeconomic conditions, also affect this process. However, by ignoring these multiple factors, the mother acts with the belief that "the more I guide the child, the more successful he/she will be" and overestimates her influence on the child. This situation is an indication of the illusion of control as well as positive illusions such as optimism bias and overvaluation.

The concept of overvaluation was introduced to the literature by Brummelman et al. (2013) and defined as an important form of cognitive bias in child development and parenting. The researchers developed the Parental Overvaluation Scale as a measurement tool for this concept. The scale aims to measure the tendency of parents to evaluate their children as extraordinary, unique, or special in unrealistic ways. According to Brummelman et al. (2014), overvaluation is the perception of a child in an exaggerated and idealised way, rather than an objective evaluation of the characteristics of a child. Such cognitive distortions lead parents to develop positive illusions about their children and may cause them to interpret even their children's ordinary behaviours as extraordinary achievements. Overvaluation has been particularly associated with the development of narcissistic tendencies, and it has been suggested that such parental perceptions may have long-term effects on the child's self-development (Brummelman et al. 2013). In this context, overvaluation is important both as an indicator of positive illusions and as a measurable dimension of cognitive biases related to parenting.

Overvaluation and positive misconceptions can also be considered as over-authoritarian child-rearing attitudes. Over-authoritarian parents may tend to exaggerate their children's strengths and positive characteristics. The reason for this behaviour is explained as supporting the child's self-esteem and encouraging positive development. Over-authoritarian parenting style is an attitude that approaches children with high expectations both in the warmth dimension and the control dimension of parenting (Darling and Steinberg 1993). This may cause parents to see their children as superior or successful in their own eyes, which is a form of superiority illusion or overvaluation.

The last type of positive illusion found in parents is self-reflection or self-investment. Self-reflection refers to the parent's tendency to reproduce their own positive characteristics, desires, or idealised self-design through their child (Wenger 1998, Cohen 2001). In this form of illusion, the parent tends to see their child not only as an independent individual but also as an extension or reflection of their own identity. Thus, the parent may act with the desire to realise his/her own failures through his/her child or to reinforce his/her self-worth by seeing his/her own positive aspects in his/her child. The child, on the other hand, becomes the carrier of the expectations and meanings consciously or unconsciously attributed by the parent. In this process, the parent may try to shape the child's development in a way that coincides with his/her own ideal self, ignoring the child's individual boundaries and uniqueness. Therefore, self-reflection is considered both as an attitude that makes it difficult for the child to individuate and as a form of positive illusion used by the parent to maintain self-integrity. This illusion may arise from emotional needs. Parenting can be challenging; the mother/father provides psychological relief by seeing herself and her child positively. It can also develop as processual learning. Over time, parents can transform positive interpretations into their own belief systems (Mezulis et al. 2004).

All these concepts have a common basis as cognitive distortions that aim to perceive and protect oneself and the environment positively. However, while illusion of superiority and overvaluation are more related to the evaluation of current situations, optimism bias and illusion of control are related to future expectations and perceptions. The concept of illusory superiority is closely related to favourable bias. Moreover, while favourable bias is a general attitude, others represent different aspects or forms of this attitude (Mezulis et al. 2004, Sedikides and Gregg 2008). When the literature on the role of positive illusions in parenting is examined (Roger 2006, Mazur 2006), it is revealed that positive effects arising from positive illusions of parents are more dominant than negative effects. Therefore, it is thought that parents' tendency to see their children at a higher level can support their children's development and help them achieve positive outcomes. However, it is important to establish a balance in this tendency in terms of the future living standards of both the parent and the child. The present study aims to review the research on positive illusions conducted with parents.

The problems of the study were addressed within the framework of the following questions:

1. What are the effects of the types of positive illusions used in parenting on parenting attitudes and behaviours?
2. How do the types of positive illusions used in parenting play a role in parents' interactions with their children?

Method

A systematic review study is a disciplined research method that aims to minimise bias and is carried out meticulously in accordance with specified protocols. This method aims to summarise and synthesise the information obtained by conducting a comprehensive literature review on a specific topic (Hanley and Cutts 2013). The studies included in this review were selected according to the following inclusion criteria:

1. The studies should have been published in national or international scientific journals, published as a book or book chapter, or prepared within the scope of a graduate or doctoral thesis study.
2. The research findings include the keywords positive illusion, superiority illusion, positive bias, optimism bias, illusion of control, overvaluation, and self-reflection.

The literature search to identify the studies to be included in the study was conducted between 4 March 2024 and 24 March 2024 using Google Scholar, ProQuest, and Wiley Library article and thesis search engines. The English keywords "positive illusion," "parent," and "parenting" and the terms positive illusion, superiority illusion, positive bias, optimism bias, illusion of control, overvaluation, and self-reflection were used in the search. As a result of this search, a total of 25 studies published between 1988 and 2024 were examined, and they were found to be suitable for the predetermined inclusion criteria and included in the

review. In these studies, the name of the study, the author(s), and the year of publication of the study were compiled by three researchers (Table 1).

Table 1. The studies included in the review and related positive illusion types		
Reference	Study Results	Type of Positive Illusion
Taylor and Brown 1988	Parents' unrealistic but psychologically functional positive bias towards their children (self-enhancement bias) causes them to support both their self-worth and their parenting experience. This helps to maintain well-being.	Positive cognitive distortions
Taylor and Brown 1994	Individuals develop unrealistic but positive perceptions about themselves, their relatives, and their lives that make them feel good. This tendency contains both positive and risky structures in terms of psychological well-being.	Positive bias
Wenger 1998	The study draws attention to the fact that parents hold positive, exaggerated views of their children and their parenting experiences beyond realistic limits.	Self-aggrandising prejudice
Cohen 2001	The parent's positive misconceptions about the child are greatly influenced not only by the genetic link but also by the process of adopting the parental role.	Positive bias
Cohen and Fowers 2004	The intensity of the biological bond as well as the level of parental role assumption determine the positive illusion.	Deceptive illusion of superiority and control
Alicke and Govorun 2005	In the research, individuals It has been found that they evaluate their characteristics,abilities and performances above the average or above other people. It is influenced by cognitive distortions (selective information processing, comparison biases) and social psychological processes (self-protection, social acceptance, motivational factors).	Illusion of superiority
Wenger and Fowers 2008	When the parent's own self-esteem is high, he/she tends to evaluate his/her child more positively.	Parental positive illusion
Paczkowski and Baker 2008	Parents of children with developmental delay had more positive, more optimistic beliefs and overly optimistic expectations than other parents.	Optimism bias
Eibach and Mock 2011	Individuals with children were directed to think about the costs of parenthood, they evaluated the emotional rewards of parenthood more highly. In addition, when individuals reflect on the benefits of having children, they intend to invest more in the time they spend with their children and positive perceptions of parenting.	Exaggerated idealisation
Mezulis et al.2011	In individuals with high negative emotionality during adolescence, brooding plays a significant mediating role in the increase of depressive symptoms compared to reflective thinking.	Reflective thinking
Brummelman et al.2013	Parents' tendency to exaggerate and overvalue their children by detaching from reality can prepare the ground for the unrealistic growth of the child's self perception and the development of narcissistic tendencies.	Overvaluation

Table 1. The studies included in the review and related positive illusion types

Reference	Study Results	Type of Positive Illusion
Horton and Tritch 2014	As the levels of grandiose narcissism in children increased, a self-serving bias was found that is, children tended to exaggerate positive experiences while minimising their parents' controlling and cold attitudes towards them.	Illusion of superiority
Brummelman et al.2014	Exaggerated praise (for example, saying "incredibly beautiful" instead of "beautiful") has negative effects, especially on children with low self-esteem. It has been found that exaggerated praise, i.e., overvaluation, can increase performance anxiety in children and cause children with low self-esteem to avoid success.	Overvaluation
Brummelman et al.2015	The result of parents' overvaluation and warm parenting (e.g., affection and support) approaches determined narcissistic tendencies. In particular, it is emphasised that the parent's seeing his/her child as special from others paves the way for this situation.	
Tasimi and Johnson 2015	Children produce memories that are distorted in their own favour. The findings reveal how early self-protective and self-glorifying tendencies develop in the process of evaluating the social world.	Overvaluation
Correa et al.2019	Parents' beliefs about children with developmental delays shape parental practices by focusing on the delays experienced by the child and emphasising the child's achievements.	Illusion of self
Coppola et al.2020	The tendency of parents (especially fathers) to glorify and overvalue their children more than necessary develops narcissistic characteristics in children.	Optimism bias
Krauss et al.2020	Excessive controlling attitudes of parents can weaken children's sense of control over their own behaviour.	Overvaluation
Lukavská et al.2020	Parental control and warmth were found to have significant and directive effects on adolescents' problematic Internet use.	Optimism bias
Green et al.2020	Individuals' memories of parenting styles suggest that gender plays a decisive role in the development of narcissism.	Illusion of control
Farzand et al.2021	The support and valuing styles that individuals perceive from their parents reinforce their tendency to see themselves as superior to others.	Illusion of superiority
Rowell and Jaswal 2021	The development of children's self-reflections and social perceptions can be affected by parenting attitudes.	Illusion of superiority
Lin and Szczygiel 2022	Perfectionistic parents' tendency to hide their emotions from their children increases parental burnout, but this effect is attenuated by parents with high emotional intelligence. This may be associated with positive illusions based on parents' positive perceptions of their own emotional resilience and parenting success.	Self-development memory bias

Table 1. The studies included in the review and related positive illusion types

Reference	Study Results	Type of Positive Illusion
Bruysters and Pilkington 2023	Overprotective parenting experiences were associated with early maladaptive schemas in adolescence and adulthood. It has been found that parents' overprotection of their children damages the child's need for independence.	Illusion of control and illusory superiority

Results

Taylor and Brown (1988) study, which is a classical approach explaining the contribution of positive illusions to an individual's psychological resilience, emphasises that positive cognitive distortions (superiority illusion, optimism bias, and illusion of control) should be considered as positive bias in general. These illusions support mental health by enabling individuals to see themselves, their environment, and their future more positively. In their study, Taylor and Brown (1988) asked participants to compare themselves with the "average person" in terms of various characteristics (e.g., social skills, intelligence, moral values). The results usually show that individuals consider themselves to be above the average, i.e., they make a self-evaluation above everyone else. This presents itself as a common form of the illusion of superiority. According to the study, individuals' unrealistic but positive perception of themselves and their environment serves an adaptive function for psychological resilience and well-being. The illusion of superiority, when people see themselves as superior to others, protects their self-confidence and self-esteem. This makes it easier for them to cope with stress and provides motivation. Optimism bias: optimistic expectations for the future ensure that individuals do not lose hope when faced with difficult situations. This increases psychological resilience and reduces the risk of depression. The illusion of control: exaggerating control over events makes the individual feel more powerful in the face of environmental threats. This reduces the level of anxiety and encourages action. According to the study, these three types of illusion provide this function in different but complementary ways. Taylor and Brown (1988) emphasise that the illusion of superiority is a very common and cross-culturally observed phenomenon. According to them, it is not a cognitive distortion but a universal psychological tendency.

Taylor and Brown (1994) study deals with the type of positive bias (self-enhancement bias). It focuses on the unrealistic but psychologically functional perceptions that individuals develop to make themselves and their relatives appear positive. The study argues that individuals continue to develop unrealistic but feel-good positive perceptions about themselves, their relatives, and their lives, and discusses both the benefits and limitations of this tendency in terms of psychological well-being. From this point of view, Taylor and Brown (1994) focus on three main types of positive illusions. These are self-superiority (superiority illusion), optimistic expectations for the future (optimism bias), and exaggeration of control (illusion of control). However, these three are generally categorised under the concept of positive bias because they all involve unrealistic perceptions in order to portray oneself or one's immediate environment in a positive light.

Wenger (1998) examined that parents' unrealistic positive perceptions of their children are related to parents' self-esteem and perception of social success and reported that it is more common, especially in more educated and socioeconomically advantaged parents. The findings of the doctoral study prepared by Wenger (1998) draw attention to the fact that parents carry positive, exaggerated views of their children and parenting experiences beyond realistic limits. This is referred to as general cognitive distortion, in which the individual tends to evaluate himself/herself and those he/she sees as close more favourably. According to the study, this illusion stems from parents' need to protect and strengthen self-esteem. This study addressed the type of positive bias (self-enhancement bias), which refers to parents' unrealistic, general, and exaggerated positive views about their children and parenting experiences.

In Cohen's (2001) study, unrealistic positive attitudes in the way parents evaluate their (biological or step) children were evaluated within the scope of positive bias (self-enhancement bias). The study shows that this tendency stems from both biological bonding and identification with the parental role; thus, the

reflection of the parent's self-perception on the child is the basic mechanism. The study reveals that both biological parents and stepparents develop overly positive perceptions about children beyond realistic limits. This tendency is directly related to self-enhancement bias, which is a general form of cognitive distortion of the individual's self-enhancement. The parent's positive misconceptions about the child are greatly influenced not only by the genetic link but also by the process of adopting the parental role. This is a strong example of self-enhancement in the sense that the parent projects the self-worth in his/her mind to the child.

In Cohen and Fowers's (2004) study positive illusions, fuelled by biological investment and emotional investment such as blood, sweat, and tears, emerge in order to increase the parent's self-worth. It examined both biological parents' and stepparents' unrealistically positive perceptions of their own children or individuals they regarded as their children. The research shows that the intensity of the biological bond as well as the level of parental role assumption determine the positive illusion. This finding can be considered as a general reflection of self-worth related to the perception of my child rather than a child-specific overvaluation. The prominent type of positive misconception in this study is positive bias.

In Alicke and Govorun's (2005) study the tendency of individuals to see themselves as more positive, more successful, or more superior compared to others is discussed. This illusion indicates that people evaluate their own characteristics, abilities, or performances above the average or above other people. Alicke and Govorun (2005) explain the superiority illusion as a complex phenomenon that occurs in the interaction of both cognitive distortions (selective information processing and comparison biases) and social psychological processes (self-protection, social acceptance, and motivational factors). This combination enables people to evaluate themselves unrealistically favourably and to see themselves above everyone else. Narcissism is generally characterised by seeing oneself as superior, special, and more valuable than others, which directly overlaps with the concept of illusion of superiority (Alicke and Govorun 2005). The study shows how the support and valuing styles that individuals perceive from their parents reinforce their tendency to see themselves as superior to others (i.e., the illusion of superiority). The reason for focusing on the illusion of superiority in the study is that it explains the tendency to see oneself as superior to others, which underlies narcissism, and this perception is related to perceived parenting experiences. Narcissism is associated with the tendency to see oneself as superior, special, and more valuable than others, which directly points to the concept of illusion of superiority (Alicke and Govorun 2005). It is emphasised in the study that parenting styles, especially overvaluing and supportive behaviours, contribute to the formation of the illusion of superiority and thus narcissistic tendencies in individuals. It is also stated that gender differences are also important in this process.

Positive illusions in parenting: every child is above average conducted by Wenger and Fowers (2008), clearly revealed that parents' overly positive perceptions of their children stem from the motivation to protect their own self-esteem and self-worth. The main finding of the study is that parents tend to see their children as much above average during the evaluation. The same parent reflects his/her own self-esteem and perceptions towards his/her child. In the study, it is emphasised that this exaggerated positive perception within the family is a motivation based on the parent's reflection of his/her own valuable self-perception. This means that the parent makes an equivalent positive evaluation of his/her child based on his/her positive misperceptions about himself/herself, which is called self-reflection. In their study, Wenger and Fowers (2008) systematically addressed the view that every child is above average through the parent's reflection of the positive perception of their own self to their child. Participants tended to report that their children were much above average. This is considered to be an indication of an unrealistically positive perception of the child that the parent associates with their own self-worth. The study provides an example of an exaggeratedly positive view of others (the child with whom they have a close relationship) in order to glorify the self in a broad sense. This is a cognitive bias within the scope of self-enhancement bias. In the study, it was also found that when the parent's own self-esteem was high, he/she tended to evaluate his/her child more positively. This finding indicates that positive perceptions function as social projection (self-reflection). In the study conducted by Wenger and Fowers (2008), which revealed the tendency of parents to perceive their children as above average, it was stated that illusion was associated with parenting satisfaction and especially with highly educated parents.

Paczkowski and Baker (2008), in their study conducted with parents of children with developmental delays, point out that parents with a high voice level have a higher tendency to evaluate their children's potential positively. In Paczkowski and Baker's (2008) study, the type of positive illusion is optimism bias. In the study, the positive and optimistic beliefs of parents of children with developmental delays about the future of their children are examined. These parents, despite the difficulties that their children may face, often display an unrealistic optimism that there will be positive developments in the future.

Eibach and Mock (2011) examined how the high-cost nature of parenting is made sense of and why it is often experienced as a meaningful and rewarding experience despite these costs. They offer an explanation for this contradiction within the framework of cognitive dissonance theory. In particular, they argue that the high sacrifices of parenthood (time, money, loss of freedom, etc.) create a "dissonance" in individuals and that the solution to this dissonance is manifested in exaggerating the benefits and meaning of parenthood. According to Eibach and Mock (2011), this may result in parents idealising their own parenting role. Two experiments were reported in the study. In the first experiment, when individuals with children were directed to think about the costs of parenting, they tended to rate the emotional rewards of parenting higher. In the second experiment, individuals' reflection on the benefits of having children was associated with an intention to invest more in time spent with children. The results suggest that high-cost decisions are rationalised by meaningfulness and that this meaningfulness may feed positive perceptions (positive illusions) of parenting. This may be closely related to positive illusions such as self-enhancement/self-justification and overvaluation.

Mezulis et al. (2011), in their study examining the relationship between temperament characteristics and depressive symptoms in adolescence, reported that brooding (negative obsessive thinking) and reflection (self-questioning thinking) processes may be mediators in this relationship. This study does not specifically focus on positive reflections of parents (self-reflection) or positive illusions in parenting; however, these individual-level cognitive processes provide an important context for understanding the potential role of positive illusions on emotional stability and psychological resilience. The type of positive illusion addressed in the study "My child is God's gift to humanity: development and validation of the Parental Overvaluation Scale" by Brummelman et al. (2013) is overvaluation. The study aims to measure parents' tendency to exaggeratedly glorify and overvalue their children by detaching from reality. Overvaluation means that parents endow their children with more positive characteristics than normal and idealise them (Brummelman et al. 2013). This attitude may pave the way for the unrealistic growth of the child's self-perception and the development of narcissistic tendencies. In the study, it is emphasised that this excessive valuation is related to parental attitudes and their effects on children's personality development.

In Horton and Tritch's (2014) study the most prominent type of positive illusion is the illusion of superiority. In the study, the relationships between narcissism and parenting styles are analysed. Grandiose narcissism is defined as an individual who considers himself/herself extremely important, special, and superior. Narcissistic parents may exhibit similar superiority-based attitudes towards their children. These parents may tend to see their children as superior to the children of others or idealise their own parenting skills. In the study, while emphasising how this grandiose self-perception is effective in the child-rearing styles of narcissistic individuals, especially their tendency to glorify themselves and to see themselves as better than the average parent comes to the fore. It is emphasised that the reflection of grandiose narcissism in parenting is directly related to the parent's belief that both he/she and his/her child are superior to others. This coincides with the classical "better-than-average effect."

Brummelman et al.'s (2014) research, the type of positive illusion addressed in their study is overvaluation. The study analyses the effects of exaggerated praise in which the child is glorified in a way that is disconnected from reality. In this experimental study, the researchers examined the negative effects of exaggerated praise given to children (for example, saying "incredibly beautiful" instead of "beautiful"), especially on children with low self-esteem. The basic concept here is exaggerated praise, i.e., overvaluation, of the child's achievements in a way that deviates from reality. The results of the study show that such praise can increase performance anxiety in children and lead children with low self-esteem to avoid achievement. In this context, when parents or adults create a false perception of competence in the

child by evaluating the child's achievement above the objective level, it directly fits the definition of overvaluation. Although it was found that the included studies did not report demographic characteristics such as age, socioeconomic status, education level, marital status, etc. in detail while conducting cognitive, emotional, and behavioural analyses of parents' positive illusion level, it was found that parents with middle-upper socioeconomic status tended to exaggerate their children's potential (Brummelman et al. 2014, Coppola et al. 2020).

The type of positive illusion addressed in the study by Brummelman et al. (2015) is parental overvaluation. In order to explain the origins of narcissism in children, this study focuses on parents' overvaluation behaviours towards their children. The research distinguishes between overvaluation and warm parenting (e.g., affection and support) in the development of narcissism and finds that narcissistic tendencies develop particularly through the parent's view of the child as unrealistically superior, special, and different from others. In addition, the findings draw attention to the fact that parents' approaching their children with expressions such as "more special than other children" and "the most talented child in the world" inflates the child's self-perception and lays the foundations of narcissistic traits. The study examines the link between parents' (especially fathers') tendency to over-exalt and overvalue their children and the development of narcissistic traits in children. Overvaluation means that parents view and value their children in an exaggeratedly positive way that deviates from reality (Brummelman et al. 2015). According to the study, parents' overvaluation attitudes towards their children are an important mechanism in the emergence of narcissistic traits in the child. This situation creates exaggerated positive misconceptions in the child's self-perception and paves the way for the formation of narcissism.

Tasimi and Johnson's (2015) study was conducted directly on parents, but this study allows us to establish an indirect but meaningful link with parents' positive illusions about their children by showing how children remember their own experiences and social interactions in a self-centred (self-serving) way. The motivation for self-preservation and glorification is the underlying mechanism that fuels positive illusions in both children (as shown in this paper) and parents. As the child positively adapts their experiences to themselves, the parents develop narratives that emphasise these positive aspects of the child. This can turn into a mutual cycle of positive illusions.

The aim of the study conducted by Correa et al. (2019) is to qualitatively examine the beliefs of parents of children with different developmental delays. In the study, the answers to the question "What do I believe, and how do I approach this as my child develops?" were evaluated. Both parents' negative perceptions about delays and their positive expectations about gains such as speech, walking, or social behaviour were examined; it was emphasised that these beliefs guide parental practices. The findings are important in terms of positive illusions because parents' optimistic and self-protective beliefs ("illusion of control" and "unrealistic optimism"), such as "My child is highly gifted/talented and progressing rapidly," may both increase expectations for the child and reduce parental stress. Such positive beliefs are parallel to a concept known as "learnt optimism" in the literature.

Coppola et al.'s (2020) study found that fathers' overvaluation attitudes towards their children can increase the narcissistic traits of children; this effect is related to the narcissistic tendencies of fathers (Coppola et al. 2020). Krauss et al. (2020) examined the effects of parents' control and warmth levels on adolescents' problematic internet use. They focused on how the way parents control their children's internet use can affect children's perception of these behaviours and thus their own sense of control. As a result of the study, it is pointed out that parents' over-controlling attitudes may weaken children's sense of control over their own behaviours, and this may lead to problems related to the illusion of control.

Lukavská et al.'s (2020) prospective cohort study demonstrated the potential mismatch between parental perception and the child's actual digital behaviour. The findings emphasise that focusing only on "control" may be a positive illusion by underlining neglected factors such as parental warmth, which has a strong protective role. Green et al. (2020), in their study found that the type of positive illusion is the illusion of superiority. The study examines the role of individuals' memories of parenting styles in the development of narcissism and how this process is affected by gender. In the research of Farzand et al. (2021) the concept of positive illusion was indirectly included. In the study, the effect of individuals' self-concept on

narcissism and the mediating role of perceived parenting attitudes in this process are examined. The findings draw attention to the fact that the influence of the parent on the child may cause the child to construct his/her self-perception in an exaggerated way.

Rowell and Jaswal (2021) examined whether children tend to remember their own behaviour more positively than the behaviour of others. In four experiments with more than 400 children, the study compared the way children remembered the gifts they gave and received and examined their positive memory bias towards their own experiences. The results showed that children remembered more exaggeratedly what others gave than what others received. By making social comparisons, children remembered their social world. This can be seen as a positive illusion of the self-reflection type. Researchers have emphasised that the development of children's self-reflection and social perceptions may be influenced by parenting attitudes. In the study of Lin and Szczygiel (2022), the type of positive illusion is the illusion of control. The study examines how perfectionistic parents increase both their own internal difficulties and parenting stress by hiding their emotions towards their children. Perfectionist parents tend to think that they have excessive control over their children and the parenting process; this is directly linked to the illusion of control, which refers to the unrealistic expectation of control over events (Langer 1975). This illusion fuels parents' belief that they can manage everything perfectly by suppressing their emotions, but this can lead to emotional burnout.

In Bruysters and Pilkington's (2023) study the type of positive delusion is positive bias. In the study, while examining the relationship between overprotective parenting experiences and the development of early maladaptive schemas in adolescence and adulthood, the tendency of parents to see themselves and their parenting roles positively towards their children and to underestimate critical or negative aspects is emphasised. This means an exaggeratedly positive evaluation of oneself and the situations one is related to, which is directly related to the concept of "positive bias." Moreover, this positive bias of the parents in the study leads them to perceive their own parenting styles and effects unrealistically, thus paving the way for the continuation of overprotective behaviours.

Discussion

The aim of this study is to compile the studies on parents' positive illusions about their children and to determine how these illusions affect parenting attitudes, behaviours, and parents' interactions with their children. In the light of the reviewed studies, positive illusion in parenting is defined as parents' perception of their children's characteristics—for example, intelligence, moral standing, abilities, or achievements—in a more positive, idealised way than they actually are. This situation occurs when the parent deviates from the objective reality about his/her child and sees him/her as superior, special, or free from problems (Taylor and Brown 1988, Brummelman et al. 2013).

When the included studies are analysed, it is noteworthy that the sample of the studies consists of mothers (Cohen 2001, Brummelman et al. 2015). In the study of Brummelman et al. (2015), it was emphasised that especially mothers tended to evaluate their children as special, superior, and unique more than fathers. This can be explained by the fact that the caregiving role often falls on the mother.

Firstly, the problem of what the effects of positive illusion types on parenting attitudes and behaviours are was addressed in the study. It was found that parents with high levels of positive illusions showed high levels of parenting satisfaction. Wenger (1998) stated that the level of parenting satisfaction is relatively higher in mothers compared to fathers. Wenger and Fowers (2008) found that positive illusions were an important component of parenting satisfaction, and parents reported high levels of parenting satisfaction.

Parents who show superiority illusions tend to see their own parenting skills or their children's characteristics better than others. This may increase parental self-confidence and perception of parenting competence (Taylor and Brown 1988). With the illusion of superiority, parents may exhibit more stable behaviours in the process of child rearing by seeing their parenting above the average and increasing their confidence (Taylor Brown 1988). The parent's desire to protect his/her own self-worth is fuelled by the desire to feel adequate in parenting and to be socially accepted (Alicke and Govorun 2005).

However, it may lead to unrealistic expectations and closedness to criticism; it poses the risk of overlooking the developmental needs of the child.

It is emphasised that parents who exhibit positive bias contribute to the child's feeling of self-worth by keeping the emotional climate within the family warm (Taylor and Brown 1988); it is also stated that they can increase their own parenting motivation by keeping their hopes for their children's future alive (Taylor and Brown 1994). However, this may lead to behavioural neglect, such as denying problems and ignoring discipline problems. It may also make it difficult for parents to critically evaluate their own attitudes (Bruysters and Pilkington 2023) and cause parents to maintain overprotective parenting behaviours. Because parents either do not realise or underestimate the negative effects of these attitudes. Thus, positive bias supports the continuation of attitudes that may lead to negative consequences by preparing the ground for parents to perceive their own parenting styles and approaches towards their children unrealistically.

The illusion of control may increase the desire to take responsibility and direction in parents. In addition, it may cause intense parenting stress and emotional burnout with the expectation of excessive control by hiding parents' feelings (Smith 2010). It is thought that excessive controlling attitudes may prevent the child's autonomy development and cause high conflicts in adolescence (Krauss et al. 2020). Optimistic expectations for the future strengthen parents' sense of hope, morale, and psychological resilience. However, this may sometimes result in underestimation of risks and needs (e.g., neglecting health problems, etc.). (Taylor and Brown 1994, Paczkowski and Baker 2008). From this perspective, parents' perception of their children, their parenting performance, or their family life as more positive than it actually is may be considered not only as a cognitive distortion but also as a psychological defence and emotional stabilisation tool. Since parenting is an experience that requires intensive labour, uncertainty, and emotional investment, these positive illusions may help parents develop resistance to burnout, cope with stress, and make sense of their parenting role (Eibach and Mock 2011).

It is emphasised that through overvaluation bias, parents may increase their child's self-worth and self-confidence in the short term but may pave the way for the development of narcissistic traits. In this way, it is pointed out that the parent weakens the ability to receive realistic feedback (Brummelman et al. 2013, 2015). Parents' overvaluation attitudes may not only increase the child's self-confidence but also lead to the emergence of potentially harmful personality traits. In this context, the relationship between parenting attitudes and overvaluation, one of the types of positive illusions, is critical for understanding the long-term effects of parenting behaviours on children. It has been shown that parents' tendency to see their children as superior and special, detached from reality, exaggerates children's self-perception and thus lays the foundation for narcissistic traits. This finding is a warning that overvaluation not only favours children's self-confidence but may also lead to potentially harmful personality tendencies (Brummelman et al. 2014, 2015).

Parents with strong self-reflection strengthen their parenting identity, increase their sense of commitment, and evaluate emotional rewards more highly when focusing on parenting costs (Eibach and Mock 2011). This supports that parents use a strategy of resolving cognitive dissonance with positive illusions to balance negativity and reinforce the meaning they derive from parenting. Moreover, focusing on the benefits of having children increases parents' intention to spend more time with their children, which shows that positive illusions are reflected in behaviour. However, it should be kept in mind that this situation may prevent the child's individualisation and create performance pressure.

Secondly, the study addressed the problem of how types of positive illusions play a role in parents' interactions with their children. The illusion of superiority is defined as the tendency of parents to see themselves or their children as superior to other parents or children (Smith 2010). This illusion may cause parents to exaggerate their children's abilities, social skills, or moral values, which may lead the child to develop an unrealistic self-worth and contribute to the formation of narcissistic tendencies (Brummelman et al. 2015). Attitudes based on the illusion of superiority may lead to unrealistic expectations and communication problems in the parent-child relationship. This may also lead to problems in the child's self-perception and contribute to the development of narcissistic traits in the long term (Horton and Tritch

2014). In addition, parents' over-exaltation of their own parenting skills may cause negative consequences in the parenting process by preventing the behaviour of seeking support or help when necessary (Lee et al. 2012).

Positive bias in parents may lead to a tendency to underestimate their children's deficiencies or difficulties; this may reduce the capacity of parents to give realistic feedback to their children and intervene when necessary (Cohen 2001). However, positive bias may also contribute to parents' developing more protective and supportive attitudes towards their children, thereby strengthening the child's psychological resilience (Cohen 2001). The parent not only glorifies the child but also tries to maintain an idealised self-image in his/her judgements about the child (Cohen and Fowers 2004). It operates as a mechanism for rationalising the parent's own psychological investment and maintaining self-worth. This suggests that many types of positive illusions observed in parenting are based not only on the individual characteristics of the child but also on perceptions of the parent's own identity. The internalisation of the identity of 'my child' causes the parent to display a more positive, idealising attitude towards the child, which may be supportive in terms of the child's emotional attachment but may also bring the risk of the parent ignoring the real needs of the child (Cohen and Fowers 2004).

Illusion of control refers to parents' belief that they have an unrealistic level of control over their children's behaviours or life events (Krauss et al. 2020, Taylor and Brown 1988). This illusion may lead parents to try to control their children's every behaviour, thus hindering the development of children's autonomy and responsibility skills (Krauss et al. 2020). This may affect children's perception of internal control. In addition, parents' efforts to manage the situation by suppressing their emotions may lead to increased stress and burnout in parents. Children, on the other hand, may develop resistance to excessive controlling attitudes and may tend to experience conflict with their parents (Smetana 2011).

Optimism bias is defined as parents' unrealistically positive expectations about their children's future success and well-being (Sharot 2011). According to Paczkowski and Baker (2008), optimism bias plays a role as an important psychological mechanism in parents' interaction with their children. This may lead parents to ignore possible risks and problems and therefore not make adequate preparations (Weinstein 1980). However, optimism can also strengthen psychological resilience by increasing child and parent motivation (Carver and Scheier 2014). Thus, parents show a more supportive and motivating attitude towards their children by maintaining their hope and psychological resilience despite challenging conditions.

Overvaluation is defined as parents glorifying their children with exaggerated and unrealistic positive qualities (Brummelman et al. 2015). This attitude may pave the way for the child's self-perception to deviate from reality and lay the foundation for narcissistic traits (Brummelman et al. 2014, Coppola et al. 2020). In addition, parents' overvaluation may prevent the child from objectively evaluating his/her achievements and deficiencies, making healthy development difficult (O'Brien and Bierman 1988). In addition, overvaluation may cause performance anxiety and social relationship problems in the child (Brummelman et al. 2014).

Self-enhancement/self-reflection is the tendency of parents to see and evaluate their children positively, like themselves, in order to protect their own self-worth. This may cause parents to perceive their children overly positively and may function to close the gap between the psychological needs of the parent and the actual situation of the child (Brummelman et al. 2013). Thus, while the parent increases his/her own self-worth through the child, it may limit the child's independent development and lead to overlooking the child's real potential and needs (O'Brien and Bierman 1988, Wenger and Fowers 2008). However, Rowell and Jaswal (2021) emphasise that in this process, children can be functional for better self-perception, psychosocial adjustment, and self-esteem by making social comparisons. In future research, the effects of different parenting styles on children's self-reflections should be examined in more detail, and the role of cultural factors should be investigated.

In summary, the level of positive illusion shapes both supportive and challenging aspects of parenting. While a balanced and realistic positive illusion supports parents' psychological well-being and positively affects child development, excessive or misleading positive perceptions may lead to problems.

Conclusion

In the studies reviewed, it is suggested that parents with middle-upper socioeconomic status tend to overestimate their children's potential and develop positive illusions in order to prepare their children for social competition (Coppola et al. 2020). It has been found that parents with higher education levels have stronger positive evaluations of their children, and although these individuals have more knowledge about child development, they still tend to exaggerate their children's performance (Brummelman et al. 2014). In this context, the positive illusions of educated parents may sometimes be a conscious support strategy and sometimes a reflection of implicit competitive pressure.

Farzand et al. (2021) addressed the relationship between perceived parenting and self-concept in the context of socioeconomic interaction and emphasised that higher levels of perceived parenting are associated with more positive self-evaluations. These findings support the relationship between positive parental beliefs and socioeconomic advantage. In addition, it has been found that these parents generally have higher self-esteem, higher parenting satisfaction, and more idealised perceptions of children (Wenger 1998, Cohen 2001).

According to Lareau (2003), especially middle-upper-class parents constantly direct their children to structured activities (sports, music, courses), closely monitor their academic and social development, are in constant communication with teachers and experts, and encourage the child's individuality and self-expression. Middle-class parents, as defined by Lareau (2003), see their parenting style as "better than others." This is thought to be an illusion of superiority (better-than-average effect).

The positive illusions of the parent about himself/herself are transferred to the perceptions of the child; the parent indirectly reinforces his/her own value through his/her child (Wenger and Fowers 2008). In this context, self-reflection is not only limited to the development of positive thoughts about oneself but also emerges as a process that operates through perceptions towards important relatives such as children. In parent-child interactions, this may both strengthen emotional attachment and create risks such as high expectations and performance pressure on the child (Wenger 1998). In future studies, the causal relationship between parents' self-esteem levels and their overly positive evaluations of their children should be examined in more detail.

The illusion of superiority provides an important theoretical framework for understanding the mechanisms underlying parents' overestimation of their children's intelligence, achievement, social skills, or character traits. Such evaluations may support parental psychological well-being in the short term; however, in the long term, they may carry risks such as a failure to recognise the child's real needs, excessive expectations, or a parenting style that is closed to criticism. Therefore, the functional limits of these illusions should be taken into consideration. In addition, the illusion of superiority may form the basis of narcissistic tendencies in individuals. The attitudes of role model parents in their interactions with their children (e.g., overvaluation and support) may reinforce the child's tendency to see himself/herself as superior to others (Farzand et al. 2021).

It is suggested that the effects of the illusion of superiority on the perception of self-efficacy in parenting, expectations towards the child, and parent-child communication should be examined multidimensionally. In particular, both positive (e.g., motivation, resilience) and negative (e.g., blindness, detachment from reality) outcomes of this illusion can be suggested to develop balancing cognitive strategies in parenting.

Positive bias plays a role in the protection of the parent's self-construct as well as feelings towards the child (Wenger 1998). Positive biases may be functional in terms of protecting the subjective sense of parental competence; however, they may also overshadow the realisation of the real characteristics and needs of the child. Parents' positive biases may lead to the development of early maladaptive schemas that emerge in adolescence and adulthood. These attitudes can also be seen as overprotective behaviours that hinder the healthy development of children.

Future research should clarify when positive bias is functional in the parenting context (e.g., boosting the child's self-esteem) and when it becomes dysfunctional (e.g., ignoring the child's actual developmental

areas). In addition, variables such as socio-cultural factors, attachment styles, and parental personality traits that affect the relationship between the level and content of parental role adoption and positive bias should also be addressed in a holistic manner. Such studies will contribute to a more refined understanding of the effect of cognitive distortions in parent-child interactions. In future studies, it would be useful to analyse the boundaries and functions of positive bias more explicitly. In particular, how the balance between the parent's tendency to maintain his/her own psychological investment and the developmental needs of the child should be addressed in more detail. Furthermore, whether these biases operate differently in the contexts of biological parenting and social parenting (step-parenting, adoption, etc.) should be evaluated in the light of cultural and contextual factors. In this way, the boundaries between the situations where positive biases contribute to parent-child interaction and the situations where they harm it can be drawn more accurately.

Understanding the effects of parents' overvaluation tendencies on child development is critical for both psychological interventions and parenting education programs. In particular, it is important to encourage realistic and balanced positive evaluations while supporting children in guidance for parents. Thus, overinflation of children's self-perceptions can be prevented, and healthy personality development can be supported.

In planned studies, it is recommended to clarify the line between overvaluation and healthy parenting warmth and to examine the long-term psychosocial effects of these attitudes on children in more detail. In addition, studies on the effects of overvaluation in different cultural contexts and how parents shape these attitudes will enrich the literature in both theoretical and practical terms. Thus, parenting attitudes in the context of overvaluation, one of the types of positive illusions, can be understood more comprehensively and in depth.

Optimism bias becomes a source of trust, morale, and positive motivation in parents' relationships with their children and shows the positive functioning of optimism bias in parent-child interactions. On the other hand, excessive optimism may cause the child to set unrealistic goals and lead to disappointment.

There is a need for detailed research on which psychosocial outcomes in the parent-child relationship occur according to the level of parents' positive illusions about their children. In addition to the benefits of these illusions, such as reducing parental stress and increasing parental satisfaction, it is also recommended to examine their possible suppressive effects on the child and their developmental consequences. Whether the positive illusion is supportive or detached from reality should be analysed contextually.

References

- Alicke MD (1985) Global self-evaluation as determined by the desirability and controllability of trait adjectives. *J Pers Soc Psychol*, 49:1621-1630.
- Alicke MD, Govorun O (2005) The better-than-average effect. In: *The Self in Social Judgment* (Eds MD Alicke DA Dunning, JI Krueger):83-106. New York, Psychology Press.
- Brummelman E, Thomaes S, Nelemans SA, Orobio de Castro B, Bushman BJ (2013) My child is God's gift to humanity: development and validation of the parental overvaluation scale. *J Pers Soc Psychol*, 103:665-676.
- Brummelman E, Thomaes S, Orobio de Castro B, Nelemans SA, Overbeek G, Bushman BJ et al. (2015) Narcissism in children is cultivated by parental overvaluation and undermined by parental warmth. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*, 112:3659-3662.
- Brummelman E, Thomaes S, Orobio de Castro B, Overbeek G, Bushman BJ (2014) "That's not just beautiful- that's incredibly beautiful!" The adverse impact of inflated praise on children with low self-esteem. *Psychol Sci*, 25:728-735.
- Bruysters NYF, Pilkington PD (2023) Overprotective parenting experiences and early maladaptive schemas in adolescence and adulthood: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Clin Psychol Psychother*, 30:10-23.
- Carver CS, Scheier MF (2014) Dispositional optimism. *Trends Cogn Sci*, 18:293-299.
- Cohen JD, Fowers BJ (2004) Blood, sweat, and tears biological ties and self-investment as sources of positive illusions about children and stepchildren. *J Divorce Remarriage*, 42:39-59.
- Cohen JD (2001) Positive illusions: a comparison of the unrealistically positive views parents and stepparents hold of their children [Doctoral dissertation]. Miami, FL, University of Miami.

- Coppola G, Musso P, Buonanno C, Semeraro C, Iacobellis B, Cassibba R et al. (2020) The apple of daddy's eye: parental overvaluation links the narcissistic traits of father and child. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, 17:4672.
- Correa W, Minetto MF, Cappellaro Kobren R, Kruszielski L (2019) Parental beliefs on child development of children with developmental delays. *Paidéia*, 29:e2928.
- Darling, N Steinberg, L. Parenting style as context: An integrative model. *Psycho Bull*, 113, 487-496.
- Eibach RP, Mock SE (2011) Idealizing parenthood to rationalize parental investments. *Psychol Sci*, 22:203-208.
- Epley N, Dunning D (2000) Feeling "holier than thou": are self-serving assessments produced by errors in self- or social prediction? *J Pers Soc Psychol*, 79:861-875.
- Farzand M, Cerkez Y, Baysen E (2021) Effects of self-concept on narcissism: mediational role of perceived parenting. *Front Psychol*, 12:674679.
- Fowers BJ, Lyons EM, Montel KH (1996) Positive marital illusions: self-enhancement or relationship enhancement? *J Fam Psychol*, 10:192-208.
- Green A, MacLean R, Charles K (2020) Recollections of parenting styles in the development of narcissism: the role of gender. *Pers Individ Dif*, 167:110246.
- Hanley T, Cutts L (2013) What is a systematic review? *Couns Psychol Rev*, 28:3-6.
- Horton RS, Tritch T (2014) Clarifying the links between grandiose narcissism and parenting. *J Psychol*, 148:133-143.
- Jeon S, Neppi TK (2016) Intergenerational continuity in economic hardship, parental positivity, and positive parenting: the association with child behavior. *J Fam Psychol*, 30:22-32.
- Karadeniz G (2024) Unrealistic parental optimism. *Psikiyatride Güncel Yaklaşımlar*, 16:723-730.
- Kart ME (2004) Pozitif yanılama ve psikolojik sağlık. *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, 59:1.
- Kaya İ (2010) Anne-babaların akılcı olmayan inançları ölçeğinin geliştirilmesi: psikometrik özelliklerinin incelenmesi (Yüksek lisans tezi). Gaziantep, Gaziantep Üniversitesi.
- Krauss S, Orth U, Robins RW (2020) Family environment and self esteem development: a longitudinal study from age 10 to 16. *J Pers Soc Psychol*, 119:457-478.
- Langer EJ (1975) The illusion of control. *J Pers Soc Psychol*, 32:311-328.
- Lareau A (2003) *Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Los Angeles; CA, University of California Press.
- Lee MA, Schoppe-Sullivan SJ, Kamp Dush CM (2012) Parenting perfectionism and parental adjustment. *Pers Individ Dif*, 52:454-457.
- Lin GX, Szczygieł D (2022) Perfectionistic parents are burnt out by hiding emotions from their children but this effect is attenuated by emotional intelligence. *Pers Individ Dif*, 184:111187.
- Lukavská K, Vacek J, Gabrhelík R (2020) The effects of parental control and warmth on problematic internet use in adolescents: a prospective cohort study. *J Behav Addict*, 9:664-675.
- Mazur E (2006) Biased appraisals of parenting daily hassles among mothers of young children: predictors of parenting adjustment. *Cogn Ther Res*, 30:161-175.
- Mezulis A, Simonson J, McCauley E, Stoep AV (2011) The association between temperament and depressive symptoms in adolescence: brooding and reflection as potential mediators. *Cogn Emot*, 25:1460-1470.
- Mezulis AH, Abramson LY, Hyde JS, Hankin BL (2004) Is there a universal positivity bias in attributions? a meta-analytic review of individual, developmental, and cultural differences in self-serving attributional bias. *Psychol Bull*, 130:711-747.
- O'Brien SF, Bierman KL (1988) Conceptions and perceived influence of peer groups: interviews with preadolescents and adolescents. *Child Dev*, 59:1360-1365.
- Paczkowski E, Baker BL (2008) Parenting children with developmental delays: the role of positive beliefs. *J Ment Health Res Intellect Disabil*, 1:156-175.
- Peterson C, Seligman MEP, Vaillant GE (2000) *Healthiest Minds: A Decade of Positive Psychology Research*. Washington, DC, American Psychological Association.
- Roger PR (2006) Parents' hope, optimism, and positive illusions and the resilience of their children adopted from Russia [doctoral dissertation]. Fordham University.
- Rosenthal R, Jacobson L (1968) *Pygmalion in the Classroom: Teacher Expectations and Pupils' Intellectual Development*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Rowell, SF, Jaswal VK (2021) I remember being nice: self-enhancement memory bias in middle childhood. *Memory*, 29:261-269.
- Sedikides C, Gregg AP (2008) Self-enhancement: food for thought. *Perspect Psychol Sci*, 3:102-116.
- Seligman MEP (1990) *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*. New York, Simon and Schuster.
- Sharot T (2011) The optimism bias. *Curr Biol*, 21:844-946.

- Smetana JG (2011) Adolescents' social reasoning and relationships with parents: conflicts and coordinations within and across domains. In *Adolescent Vulnerabilities and Opportunities: Constructivist and Developmental Perspectives* (Eds E Amsel, JG Smetana JG):139-158. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Smith M (2010) Good parenting: making a difference. *Early Hum Dev*, 86:689-693.
- Tasimi A, Johnson MK (2015) A self-serving bias in children's memories? *J Exp Psychol Gen*, 144:528-533.
- Taylor SE, Brown JD (1988) Illusion and well-being: a social psychological perspective on mental health. *Psychol Bull*, 103:193-210.
- Taylor SE, Brown JD (1994) Positive illusions and well-being revisited: separating fact from fiction. *Psychol Bull*, 116:21-27.
- Taylor SE, Gollwitzer PM (1995) Effects of mindset on positive illusions. *J Pers Soc Psychol*, 69:213-226.
- Weinstein ND (1980) Unrealistic optimism about future life events. *J Pers Soc Psychol*, 39:806-820.
- Wenger A (1998) Positive illusions: an examination of the unrealistically positive views parents hold of their children and of the parenting experience [doctoral dissertation]. University of Miami.
- Wenger A, Fowers BJ (2008) Positive illusions in parenting: every child is above average. *J Appl Soc Psychol*, 38:611-634.
- Wright C, Heron J, Campbell R, Hickman M, Kipping RR (2020) Adolescent multiple risk behaviours cluster by number of risks rather than distinct risk profiles in the alspac cohort. *BMC Public Health*, 20:290.

Authors Contributions: The author(s) have declared that they have made a significant scientific contribution to the study and have assisted in the preparation or revision of the manuscript

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Ethical Approval: This review study does not require ethical clearance.

Conflict of Interest: No conflict of interest was declared.

Financial Disclosure: No financial support was declared for this study..