

Looking Forward: A Longitudinal Analysis of Individuals' Future Hopes and Fears at Ages 26 and 32

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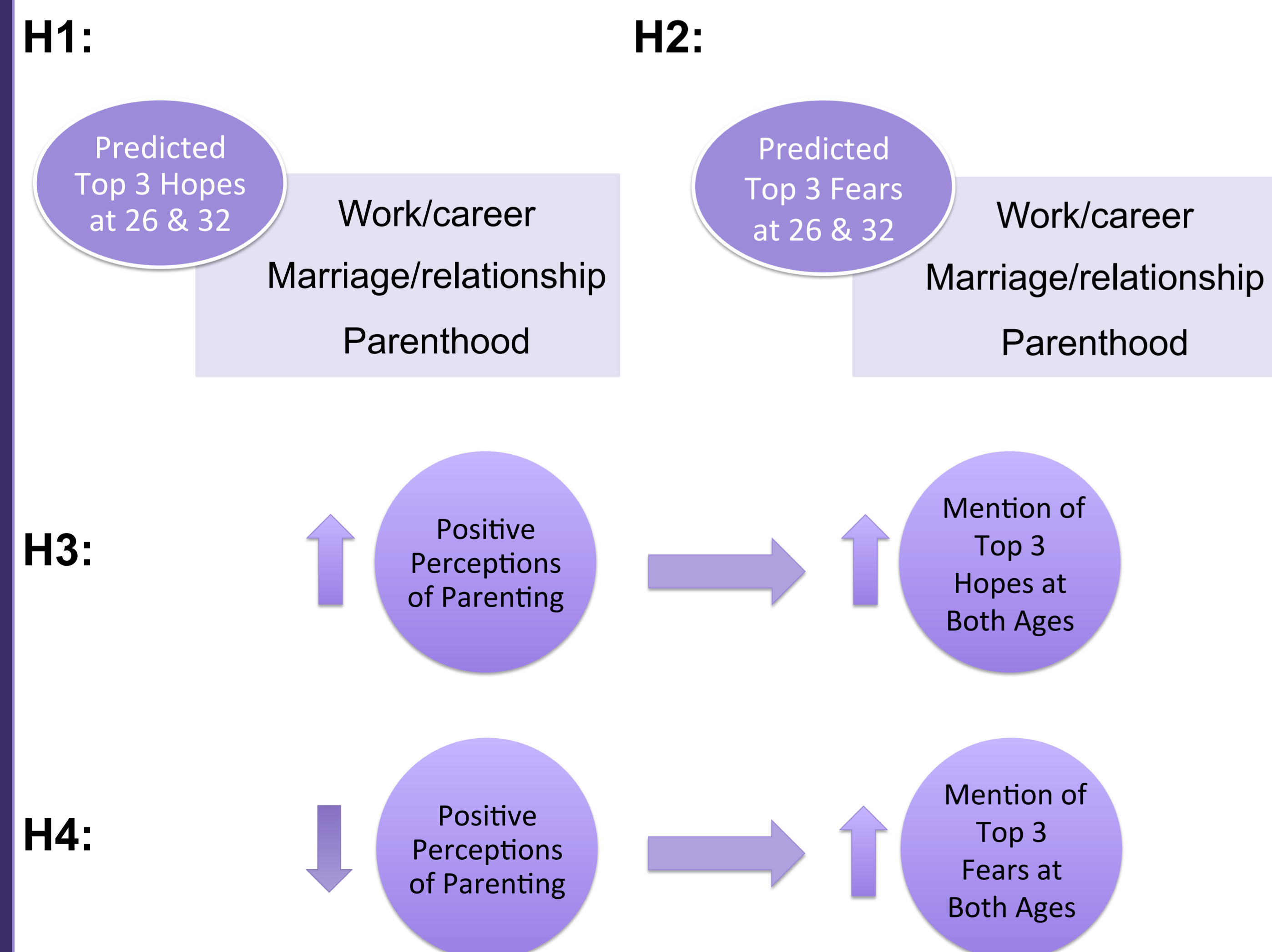
INTRODUCTION

- Erikson (1963) argues that a person's radius of care extends outward throughout the life span:
 - Identity Stage: Self focus in adolescence (ages 12 to 18)
 - Intimacy Stage: Building relationships in young adulthood (ages 18 to 40)
 - Generativity Stage: Emphasis on children and the larger society in middle adulthood (ages 40 to 65)
- Young adults actively construct narratives of the future, reflecting the beliefs they hold about what events and experiences should happen in their lives and when (Greene, 1990)
- Possible selves are representations of individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become (hoped-for self) and what they fear becoming (feared self) (Markus & Nurius, 1986)
- Parenting styles that one experiences during youth have consistently been shown to impact an individual's vocational development, intimacy in romantic relationships, and future parenthood (e.g., Cenksvein-Onder, Kirdok, & Isik, 2010; Scharf & Mayseless, 2011; Seiffge-Krenke, Shulman, & Kiessinger, 2001)

OBJECTIVE

The current study uses a longitudinal design to examine the influence of adolescents' perceptions of parenting styles on their reported possible selves at ages 26 and 32.

HYPOTHESES



METHOD

Participants

- Participants were part of a Canadian longitudinal study consisting of a series of three 2-hour interviews regarding life events and perceptions at ages 17, 26 & 32.
- Age 17 (1997): N= 896, 49% males, 61% females
- Age 26 (2005): N= 100, 31% males, 69% females
- Age 32 (2011): N= 112, 29% males, 71% females

Measures

- Future self narratives** (Markus & Nurius, 1986)
 - Q1: Briefly describe 3 most important hoped for possible selves
 - Q2: Briefly describe 3 most important feared possible selves
- Positive parenting index** (Dumas, Lawford, Tieu, & Pratt, 2009)
 - Aggregated standardized scores from:
 - Family Assessment Device
 - Authoritative Parenting Scale
 - Parent Interaction Inventory

EXAMPLE NARRATIVES

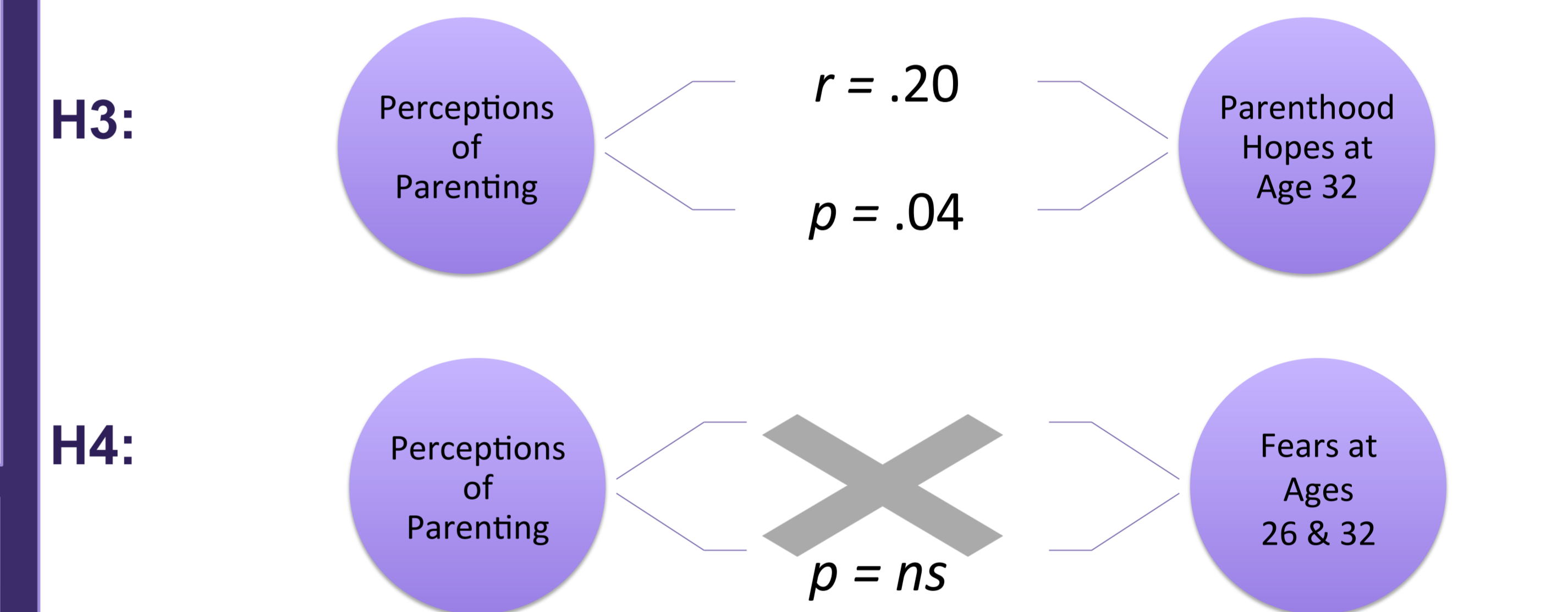
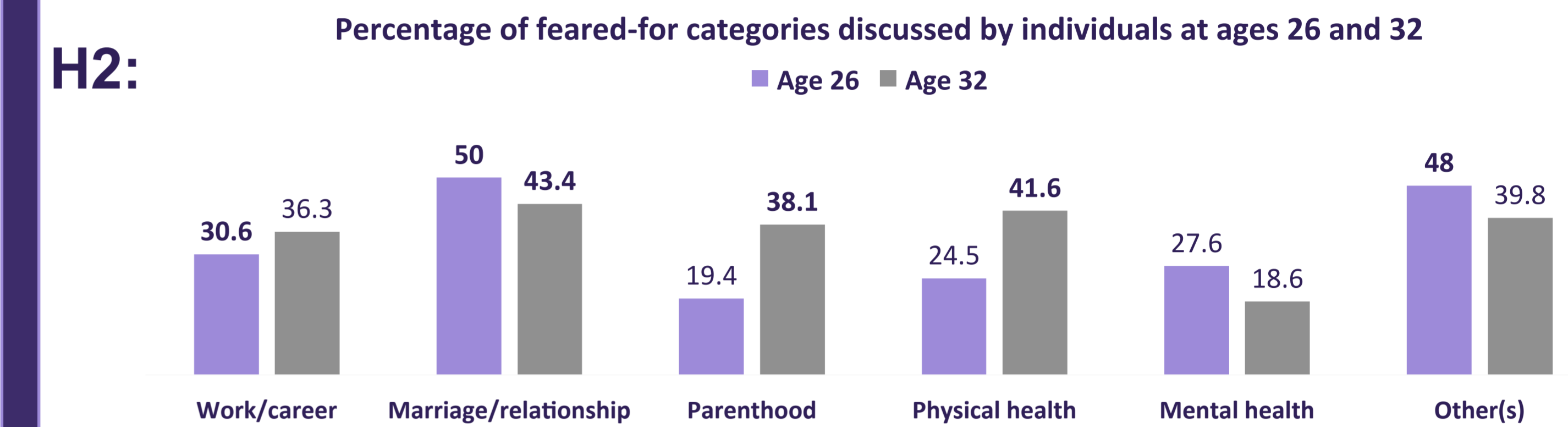
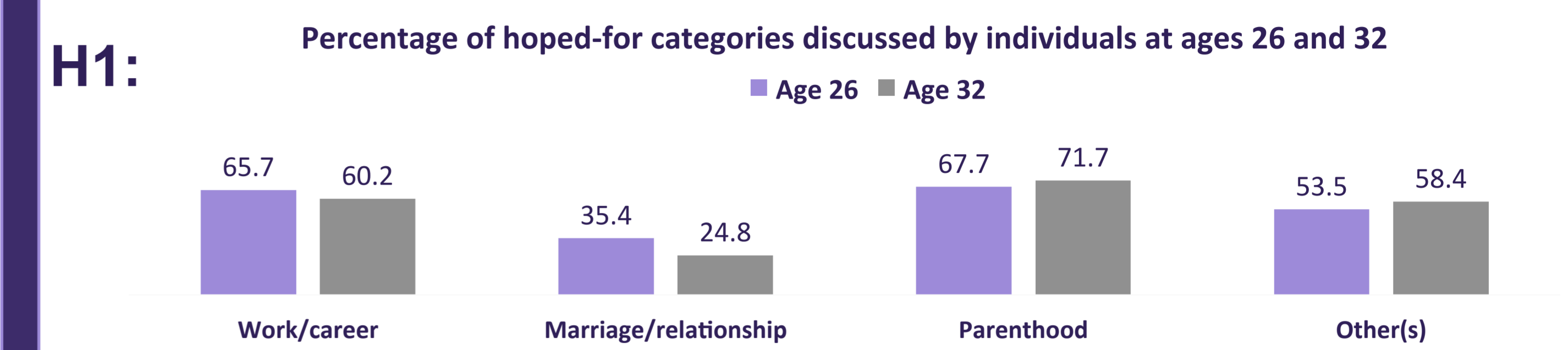
Coded for: marriage/relationship, parenting, work/career

"Um, I just, three things I really hope for are, **I would like to get married some day**. Um, **being a great parent to my kids**. And, my biggest hope is, like **I'm a musician so I would really like to make it big one day**."

"[FEARS] Um, like again, **I'd have to say dying alone**. Dying along with **no offspring, no kids**, and just **working a factory job** the rest, being a lifer at a factory, that's very scary."



RESULTS



CONCLUSION

- Consistent with Erikson's intimacy stage, participants mentioned hopes and fears related to marriage/relationships at age 26.
- Interestingly, parenthood related hopes were mentioned at both ages, as well as fears related to physical and mental health.
- Delayed work/career outcomes may have resulted in the postponement of relationships and parenthood, potentially explaining the different relationships between adolescents' perceptions of parenting and future hopes related to parenthood at ages 26 and 32.
- Some of the practical implications of the current study may include application in educational and career counseling settings.