

## **The Mediating Role of Negative Affect in the Relationships between Parents Conflict Styles with Adolescents, the Satisfaction of Three Basic Psychological Needs, and Life Satisfaction**

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### Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic has changed the psychological condition of parents due to changes in their place of activity and their increasingly complex roles in terms of work, children's education, and households. The conditions have facilitated the increase in parents' aggressive conflict styles with adolescents and the decrease in satisfaction of their basic psychological needs. Increased negative affect with indications of anger and emotional exhaustion was often found in parents during mandatory quarantine at home. Thus, parents' decreased satisfaction of basic psychological needs, their conflict styles with adolescents, and increased negative affect may reduce their life satisfaction. This study investigated how negative affect mediates the relationship between parent-adolescent conflict styles and parents' life satisfaction, as well as between satisfaction of basic psychological needs and life satisfaction. A total of 183 parents of adolescents completed questionnaires assessing parent-adolescent conflict styles, negative affect, satisfaction of basic psychological needs, and life satisfaction. PLS-SEM was used to test hypotheses concerned with testing a theoretical framework from a prediction perspective when the structural model is complex. The hypothesized model performed excellently, as indicated by its predictive relevance and effect size on a significant path. Negative affect acts as a (1) full mediator in the relationship between satisfaction of basic psychological needs and life satisfaction, and (2) partial mediator between aggressive conflict style parent-child relationship and life satisfaction. The results of this study generally suggest that, to prevent each family member from developing adverse psychological problems, circumstances that necessitate quick changes in the family must be met with the pace of adaptation of family members. In general, the findings of this study imply that in limiting social conditions, family members are prone to committing and experiencing harshness and basic psychological needs frustration, thereby reducing their life satisfaction.

*Keywords:* parents' life satisfaction, parent-adolescent conflict styles, satisfaction of basic psychological needs, negative affect

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## Introduction

Since the stipulation of COVID-19 as a national disaster according to Presidential Decree No. 12 of 2020 (Cabinet Secretariat of The Republic of Indonesia, 2020) concerning the Determination of Non-Natural Disasters for the Spread of COVID-19 as a National Disaster, the Indonesian government gradually asked the public to reduce activities outside their homes through physical distancing policies, regional quarantines, and large-scale social restrictions. This policy was followed by studying and working from home (Ngadi, 2020). This condition could significantly affect the quality of family life in Indonesia, especially concerning individual life satisfaction in the family.

COVID-19 pandemic offered significant impediments to adults, children, and households. The pandemic posed particular hazards regarding stress in adults' and, by extension, affected their mental and physical health, as well as relationships (Goldberg et al., 2021). Besides, adults may have experienced anxiety and uncertainty in response to the pandemic and faced severe disruptions in their family and work lives – and, in turn, lower the levels of life satisfaction.

Pandemic and lockdown affected different population groups differently (Wang et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). One example is that of mothers who already face the demands of balancing work and family life and must confront a series of daily stressors, such as living up to the idea of the perfect mother and changes pertaining to the life of being a mother (Puertas-Gonzalez et al., 2022).

COVID-19 saw a rise of extended work hours, challenging behaviors in children, and other demands and vulnerabilities, all of which added to parental stress and spilled over into important relationships (e.g., parent-child, parent-parent). In addition, resources (e.g., mental health, financial stability) and perspectives (positive, negative, neutral) predicted how well parents adapt to a crisis occurrence, which influenced parents', families', and children's well-being (Prime et al., 2020). The discovery of the new coronavirus (COVID-19), a global public health emergency, was a recent contextual shift that might impact the parent-child relationship quality. Data showed that the epidemic has conditioned fathers to spend more time at home which made their role in assisting children's growth and development inevitable (Hasibuan & Rakhmawati, 2020). The dynamics of parenting and mentoring relationship between parents and their children is interesting to study.

Parents had to devote more time caring for their children during the pandemic. Still, mothers had continued to spend more time on childcare responsibilities than fathers, and were more likely to reduce work hours, transition out of the workforce, and experience higher psychological distress (Zamarro & Prados, 2021).

This shift led to significant disruptions to family routines and rituals frequently taken for granted. However, how COVID-19 epidemic affected families likely differed substantially. Several studies examined the dynamics of parent-child relationship and how these new responsibilities have affected them was recorded.

It is conceivable that parent-child interactions became more strained with less connection outside the house and parents taking on more significant roles in their children's lives. For example, in a qualitative pandemic study, adolescents reported feeling alone and fighting more with their parents (Scott et al., 2021). Average declines in support, positive parenting, and unfavorable interactions between parents and adolescents were found, and COVID-19-related stress was not a direct predictor of relationship alterations (Donker et al., 2021).

The study of the strategies chosen by parents to deal with disagreements and conflict with adolescents has received relatively little attention in the literature (Reese-Weber, 2000). Honess and Charman (1998) developed a multidimensional scale of conflict (the 'When We Disagree' scale or WWD) to assess aggression and compromise as conflict styles, as well as outcomes from the perspectives of both adolescents and their parents, including self-perceptions and perceptions of the other dyad member. Aggression (including sarcasm, wrath, and yelling) and compromise were the two conflict styles between parents and their adolescents (Honess & Charman, 1998).

Most studies on the role of parent-child relationships show adolescents as participants, but few focus on parents as participants. The research paradigm has been built towards adolescents as being more vulnerable. Many studies can prove that the relevance of perceived changes in parent-child interactions can be better understood by assessing the contributions of parent-child relationships on adolescents' psychological aspects across time but not on parents (Newman et al., 2008).

So far, research on the relationship quality between parents and children has rarely been conducted by considering its role in parents' life satisfaction. We found only one study explicitly stating that parent-child relationship quality was strongly associated with parents' life satisfaction. Parents with poorer-quality relationships with their children had lower life satisfaction than those who kept a high-quality relationship with their children (Chen et al., 2021).

Previous research has found that limitations imposed in the epidemic's aftermath have decreased social contact and life satisfaction (Gonzalez-Bernal et al., 2021). We assumed that COVID-19 onset would be linked to adolescents' affective disruption, as shown by increased negative affect and its effect variability (Deng & Yang, 2022). The poor quality of the parent-child relationship predicts adolescents' negative affect (Ma & Huebner, 2008), but most studies focus on its effects on the adolescent, not the parents (Janssen et al., 2021).

We also argued that COVID-related reactions to social limitations would decrease the satisfaction of parents' basic psychological needs (BPN). Psychological challenges to autonomy, competence, and relatedness undermined life satisfaction during COVID-19 pandemic (Cantarero et al., 2021). According to self-determination theory, three BPN are necessary for human functioning and well-

being: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017; Vansteenkiste et al., 2020).

However, regulations imposed by the government can impede people's decision-making autonomy (Winick, 1992). Physical distance may impair people's ability to relate to others (Cacioppo et al., 2010). People's feelings of competence may be undermined by their inability to work or employment uncertainty (Hellgren et al., 1999). Parents who cannot maintain their sense of autonomy, relatedness, and competence experienced negative effects on their life satisfaction during COVID-19 pandemic (Cantarero et al., 2021).

### **Present Study**

Our study explores the following:

1. Direct relationship between parents' satisfaction of basic psychological needs, negative affect, parent-adolescent conflict styles, and parents' life satisfaction during the pandemic.
2. The mediation roles of negative affect between parents' satisfaction of basic psychological needs and life satisfaction.
3. Negative affect as the mediator between parent-adolescent conflict styles and parents' life satisfaction during the pandemic.

How parents manage conflict with their adolescents and satisfaction of their basic psychological needs is thought to have a role in their life satisfaction during the pandemic. By nature, adolescents want to assert their independence and underline how different they are from their parents; therefore, they portray themselves as more aggressive and less compromising than they were as children (Cooper & Ayers-Lopez, 1985). The lockdown increasingly facilitated the psycho-social condition of adolescent development due to the pandemic, so their expressions of disapproval within the family were aggressive. The adolescents' conflict styles can significantly relate to their parental conflict responses and their psycho-social conditions.

The pandemic affected parents more than adolescents, significantly increasing their negative affect (Janssen et al., 2020). In addition, parents' frustration related to fulfilling their basic psychological needs can predict negative affect (Bartholomew et al., 2011), which can, in turn, predict life satisfaction.

### **Hypotheses**

Based on the literature review on the dynamics of parents' and adolescents' conflict styles, fulfilment of basic psychological needs, negative affect, and life satisfaction, the hypotheses of this study were developed as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: Aggression conflict style predicts life satisfaction.

H<sub>2</sub>: Aggression conflict style predicts negative affect.

- H<sub>3</sub>: Negative affect predicts life satisfaction.
- H<sub>4</sub>: Negative affect mediates the relationship between aggression conflict style and life satisfaction.
- H<sub>5</sub>: Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for autonomy predicts life satisfaction.
- H<sub>6</sub>: Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for autonomy predicts negative affect.
- H<sub>7</sub>: Negative affect mediates the relationship between satisfaction of the basic psychological need for autonomy and life satisfaction.
- H<sub>8</sub>: Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for relatedness predicts life satisfaction.
- H<sub>9</sub>: Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for relatedness predicts negative affect.
- H<sub>10</sub>: Negative affect mediates the relationship between satisfaction of the basic psychological need for relatedness and life satisfaction.
- H<sub>11</sub>: Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for competence predicts life satisfaction.
- H<sub>12</sub>: Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for competence predicts negative affect.
- H<sub>13</sub>: Negative affect mediates the relationship between satisfaction of the basic psychological need for competence and life satisfaction.
- H<sub>14</sub>: The compromise conflict style predicts life satisfaction.
- H<sub>15</sub>: The compromise conflict style predicts negative affect.
- H<sub>16</sub>: Negative affect mediates the relationship between compromise conflict style and life satisfaction.

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

Participants were parents of adolescents who voluntarily took part in the study (113 mothers and 70 fathers,  $N = 183$ ) aged 40 to 60 years ( $M = 50.89$ ;  $SD = 4.68$ ). A total of 83 participants had three children (45.4%), 68 participants had one child (37.2%), and 32 participants had two children (17.4%). The parents were participants of a parenting seminar held by a school in Tangerang, Indonesia. They received a series of questionnaires, and were asked to complete them after understanding the study's objectives and willingly agreeing to participate. The researcher promptly gathered the completed questionnaires.

## Instruments

The questionnaires used in this study were based on 10 items from different constructs, each construct being measured by two items (Howell et al., 2011): (a) Life satisfaction (adapted from Satisfaction with Life Scale / SWLS): „In most ways, my life is close to my ideal“ and „I am satisfied with my life“ ( $r_{hoc} = .80$ ); (b) Negative affect (using two emotions adaptation of PANAS-X; Watson & Clark, 1994): „In the past few days I’ve had much anger“ and „My days were very hostile“ ( $r_{hoc} = .81$ ); (c) Autonomy (adapted from Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction; Gagné, 2003): „I managed to get what I needed today“ and „I am making progress towards achieving my goals today“; (d) Competencies (adapted from Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction; Gagné, 2003): „Today I gained new knowledge“ and „What I did today improved my skills“; (e) Relatedness (adapted from Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction; Gagné, 2003): „I can become closer to my friends today“ and „Today I became closer to my family“ ( $r_{hoc} = .88$ )

The parent version of the When We Disagree Scales (WWD) (Cicognani & Zani, 2010) was used to measure the perception of parents’ conflict styles with their children. Parents were asked to explain conflicts with their adolescent child („How well does each of the following phrases represent your adolescent child when you and he/she argue about something significant to both of you?“). All 12 items were responded on a 5-point scale: *not at all* (1), *not too well* (2), *reasonably well* (3), *well* (4), and *very well* (5) ( $r_{hoc} = .89$ ). The quality of the instruments, including composite reliability and validity, is presented in Table 1.

## Data Analysis

This study involved a complex structural model with several constructs, indicators, and model linkages. Further, this study evaluated a theoretical framework from a prediction standpoint. Partial Least Square – SEM was used (Hair et al., 2019). Data analysis used a reflective-reflective Hierarchical Component Model (HCM) approach with Partial Least Square. The software used was SmartPLS 3.3.4. The repeated indicators technique was used to calculate the measurement and structural models (Hair et al., 2017).

The analysis results consist of quality measurements composed of composite reliability (CR), discriminant validity, and convergent validity, as well as the calculation of the structural model of direct and indirect path analysis. In addition, information on predictive relevance, predictive accuracy, and effect size was also presented. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to describe participant demographic information and research variables.

## Results

### Variables Description

#### *Satisfaction of the Basic Psychological Need for Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness*

Based on the descriptive statistics results, the parents' satisfaction of basic psychological need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness was not met ( $M_{aut} = 1.87, SD = 0.69; M_{com} = 1.72, SD = 0.70; M_{rel} = 2.32, SD = 0.85$ ) as their means were lower than the middle score of the scale (3).

#### *Parent-Adolescent Conflict Styles*

In this study, parents used a stronger aggressive conflict style ( $M_{agg} = 3.10, SD = 0.68$ ) more often than a compromise conflict style ( $M_{comp} = 2.54, SD = 0.97$ ) within parent-adolescent relationships. According to these findings, during the pandemic quarantine, parents used 'sarcasm, rage, and yelling while arguing with their teenage children more often in than reasoning, listening, negotiating, and caring for others.

#### *Negative Affect*

During the pandemic quarantine, parents experienced strong negative affect ( $M_{na} = 3.87, SD = 0.74$ ). Negative affect is a broad measure of personal discomfort and unpleasant involvement encompassing undesirable emotional states. When parents experience a low negative affect, they are seen as being calm and serene, whereas a high negative affect indicates distress and emotional suffering (Hu & Gruber, 2008).

#### *Life Satisfaction*

Parents' life satisfaction was low ( $M_{ls} = 2.57, SD = 0.81$ ), as indicated by a lower mean compared to the middle score of the scale (3).

### Measurement Model Evaluation

The goal of measurement model evaluation is to assess the consistency and validity of the manifest variables. Individual manifest and concept reliability tests are used to evaluate consistency. Individual manifest reliability explains the variance of individual manifest relative to the latent variable by computing standardized outer loadings of the manifest variables (Götz et al., 2010), while variable validity is verified using convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2012). Manifest variables with outer loadings of .70 or above are deemed extremely good. While a loading value of .50 is acceptable, manifest variables with loading values less than .50 should be omitted (Hair et al., 2010).

The second criterion for consistency assessments is construal reliability, assessed using Composite Reliability (CR). Composite reliability is a superior indicator of internal consistency since it uses standardized loadings of manifest variables. A value of .70 is considered „moderate“ for composite reliability (Hair et al., 2011).

The variables' validity is evaluated using convergent and discriminant validities. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test on variables determines convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Latent variables should capture at least 50% of the variation from manifest variables Hair et al. (2011). This criterion suggests that the construct's AVE value should exceed .50. Discriminant validity testing establishes that the manifest variable in any construct is relevant to the specified latent variable if its cross-loading value in LV is greater than that in any other construct (Chin, 1998).

### ***Composite Reliability and Convergent Validity***

Five constructs (life satisfaction, relatedness, competence, autonomy, negative affect) had parametric measurements above the cut-off values in the first iteration. The other two constructs (aggression and compromise) had AVE less than .50. Following iterations, five weak items (Agg5, Agg7, Com1, and Com 2) in two constructs were removed due to low factor loadings (< .70). The composite reliability values of all constructs were in the range of .77 - .88 which exceeds the cut-off value of .70.

The final iteration showed factor loadings that exceeded the .70 criterion and .50 AVE criterion. Composite reliability for each construct also exceeds the .70 criterion, meaning the construct measurement model has good composite reliability and convergent validity. The first and final iteration results are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Summary of the Evaluation of the Measurement Model*

Variables	First iteration		Final iteration	
	Composite Reliability	AVE	Composite Reliability	AVE
Life satisfaction	.79	.66	.79	.66
Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for relatedness	.88	.79	.88	.79
Negative affect	.80	.68	.80	.68
Compromise conflict style	.79	.47	.90	.83
Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for competence	.80	.67	.80	.67
Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for autonomy	.77	.63	.77	.63
Aggression conflict style	.85	.48	.90	.65

*Note.* AVE Average Variance Extracted.



### ***Discriminant Validity Assessment***

After the iteration procedure was complete, the final model was tested for discriminant validity using the criteria suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981), a prominent approach for testing the discriminant validity of measurement models. According to this criteria, the square root of the AVE must be bigger than the correlation coefficient between the construct and any other construct. The results showed that all of the constructs' AVE were bigger than the correlation between the construct and any other construct. This result confirmed that the manifest variables in each construct correspond to the latent variable given to it, indicating the construct's discriminant validity. Table 2 shows the discriminant validity assessment.

**Table 2**

*Discriminant Validity Table (Correlation Table with Average Variance Extracted)*

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Aggression conflict style	<b>.81</b>						
2. Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for autonomy	.62	<b>.79</b>					
3. Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for competence	.61	.56	<b>.82</b>				
4. Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for relatedness	.77	.57	.50	<b>.89</b>			
5. Compromise conflict style	.09	.05	.09	.06	<b>.85</b>		
6. Life satisfaction	.65	.53	.48	.61	.14	<b>.81</b>	
7. Negative affect	-.70	-.65	-.57	-.69	-.15	-.72	<b>.82</b>

*Note.* Values in table diagonal (bold) represent square root of average variance extracted (AVE).

### **Structural Model Assessment**

The *R*-value, the coefficient of determination, and the model's value, or path coefficients, are used to evaluate the link between exogenous and endogenous latent variables in structural models.

### ***Direct Path Analysis***

Direct path analysis was performed to test hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, and 15. The path coefficient of all latent variables was calculated by comparing values across all paths. The greatest value represented the predictor latent variable's biggest prediction on the latent dependent variable. The value was assessed for its significant level using the *t*-value test using the nonparametric bootstrapping

approach (Hair et al., 2010). Acceptable  $t$ -values for a two-tailed test, according to Hair et al. (2010), are 1.65 (significance level = 10%), 1.96 (significance level = 5%), and 2.58 (significance level = 1%). Bootstrapping yielded 5000 samples utilized to calculate standard errors (SE) and  $t$ -values, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 3**

*Direct Relationship Results between Variables*

	$\beta$	SE	$t$
Aggression conflict style -> Life satisfaction	-.21*	.10	2.04
Aggression conflict style -> Negative affect	.21	.09	2.22
Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for autonomy -> Life satisfaction	.01	.07	0.19
Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for autonomy -> Negative affect	-.26***	.06	4.04
Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for competence -> Life satisfaction	.02	.07	0.26
Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for competence -> Negative affect	-.12*	.06	2.02
Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for relatedness -> Life satisfaction	.10	.07	1.10
Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for relatedness -> Negative affect	-.32***	.07	4.35
Compromise conflict style -> Life satisfaction	.02	.07	0.07
Compromise conflict style -> Negative affect	-.01	.07	0.10
Negative affect -> Life satisfaction	-.49***	.08	6.12

Note. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Hypothesis 1 evaluated whether the aggression conflict style between parents and their adolescents predicts life satisfaction. The result showed that the aggression conflict style between parents and their adolescents predicts life satisfaction ( $\beta = -.21$ ,  $t = 2.04$ ,  $p = .04$ ). Hence, hypothesis 1 was supported. Hypothesis 2, which stated that the aggression conflict style between parents and their adolescents predicts negative affect, could not be rejected ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $t = 2.23$ ,  $p = .03$ ). Negative affect predicts life satisfaction significantly ( $\beta = -.49$ ,  $t = 6.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which indicates that hypothesis 3 was supported.

Hypothesis 5, satisfaction of the basic psychological need for autonomy predicting life satisfaction, was rejected ( $\beta = .02$ ,  $t = 0.19$ ,  $p = .84$ ). Hypothesis 6, satisfaction of the basic psychological need for autonomy predicting negative affect was supported ( $\beta = -.26$ ,  $t = 4.04$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The analysis findings reject the

prediction of satisfaction of basic psychological need for relatedness on life satisfaction as stated in hypothesis 8 ( $\beta = .09, t = 1.11, p = .27$ ).

Hypothesis 9 was supported as the satisfaction of the basic psychological need for relatedness predicted negative affect ( $\beta = -.32, t = 4.35, p < .001$ ). Hypothesis 11 was rejected as the satisfaction of the basic psychological need for competence did not predict life satisfaction ( $\beta = .02, t = 0.26, p = .79$ ). Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for competence predicts negative affect ( $\beta = -.13, t = 2.03, p = .04$ ), supporting hypothesis 12. The parents' compromise conflict style did not predict life satisfaction ( $\beta = .01, t = 0.08, p = .99$ ) and negative affect ( $\beta = -.09, t = 0.11, p = .91$ ); thus, hypotheses 14 and 15 were rejected.

*R* denotes the intensity of a prediction from factors to endogenous latent variables, while it shows the degree of explained variance of endogenous latent variables. According to Cohen (1988), the *R*-value of the endogenous latent variable should be more than .26 for a decent model. The *R*<sup>2</sup> was .62 for the negative affect and .57 for life satisfaction. The model's *R*-value was greater than the specified value, indicating that the model has a significant degree of explained variation of life satisfaction and negative affect by inhibiting variables.

### ***Mediation Role***

Mediation role was conducted to answer hypotheses 4, 7, 10, 13, and 16. Hypothesis 4, which tested the mediating role of negative affect on the relationship between aggression conflict style and life satisfaction, was supported ( $\beta = -.10, t = 1.98, p = .05$ ). The mediation was partial. Hypothesis 7, which stated that negative affect mediated the relationship between the satisfaction of the basic psychological need for autonomy and life satisfaction, was supported ( $\beta = .13, t = 3.31, p < .001$ ) and the mediation was full.

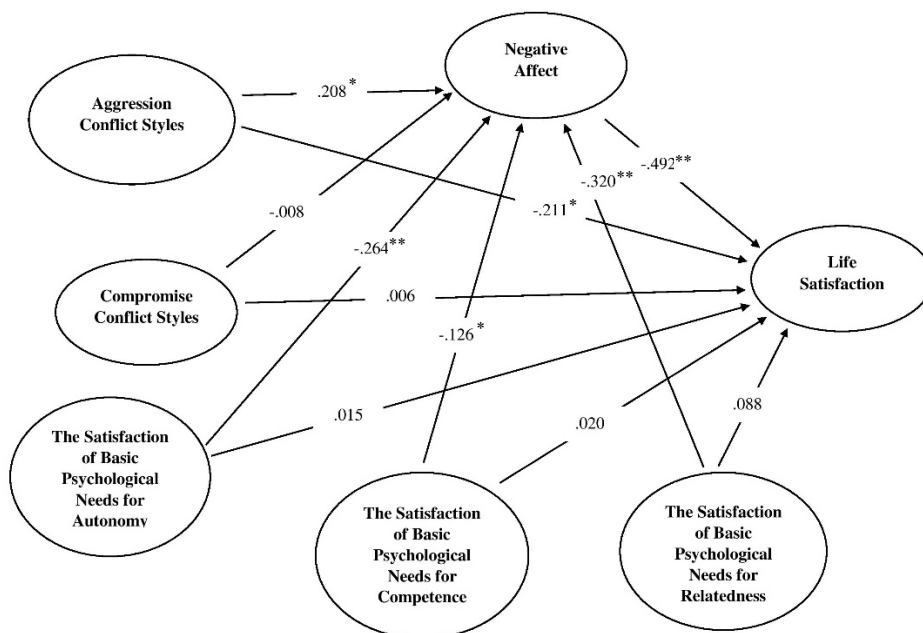
Negative affect mediated fully the satisfaction of the basic psychological need for relatedness prediction on life satisfaction as stated in hypothesis 10 ( $\beta = .16, t = 3.84, p < .001$ ). Hypothesis 13 was supported as negative affect fully mediated the relationship between the satisfaction of the basic psychological need for competence and life satisfaction ( $\beta = .062, t = 1.97, p = .05$ ).

Hypothesis 16 was not supported as negative affect did not mediate the prediction of compromise conflict style on life satisfaction ( $\beta = .00, t = 0.10, p = .91$ ). Table 5 summarizes the mediating role of negative affect between parent-child conflict styles and life satisfaction as well as between the satisfaction of basic psychological needs and life satisfaction. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the research variables and their standardized path coefficients.

**Table 4***Indirect Path between Specific Variables through Negative Affect*

Path	$\beta$	$t$	Mediation type
Aggression conflict style --> Life satisfaction	-.102*	1.97	Partial mediation
Compromise conflict style --> Life satisfaction	.004	0.10	No mediation
Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for autonomy --> Life satisfaction	.130***	3.30	Full mediation
Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for competence --> Life satisfaction	.062*	1.96	Full mediation
Satisfaction of the basic psychological need for relatedness --> Life satisfaction	.158***	3.83	Full mediation

Note. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**Figure 1***Standardized Path Coefficients among Studied Variables*

Note. Since all latent variables are standardized, the path coefficient / the original sample estimate shown is typically a standardized beta coefficient. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ .

### **Predictive Relevance**

Researchers may want to look at Stone-Geisser's  $Q^2$  value as a criterion of predictive relevance or validity in addition to examining the size of  $R^2$  values as a criterion of predictive accuracy. The prediction error of the PLS-SEM findings is less than the prediction error of merely utilizing the mean values if the  $Q^2$  value is positive. Thus, the PLS-SEM models perform better prediction (Shmueli et al., 2019). The results of the analysis showed that the value of  $Q^2$  was greater than zero (negative affect ( $Q^2 = .39$ ); life satisfaction ( $Q^2 = .34$ ). This value indicated that the path model had predictive relevance for each construct.

### **Effect Size**

The  $f$ -square represents the effect size (small  $\geq .02$ ; medium  $\geq .15$ ; large  $\geq .35$ ). Each exogenous variable in the models is explained by the  $f$ -square measured variance. The parent-adolescent aggression conflict style has small effect sizes on negative affect (.03) and life satisfaction (.03). The effect size of negative affect on life satisfaction is medium (.22). The satisfaction of the basic psychological need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness on negative affect was small (.09; .02; .10 respectively).

## **Discussion**

Because the pandemic is a series of deadly, mainly uncontrollable, and dynamic events, the possible effects of COVID-19 pandemic are relatively unpredictable in the short and long term. In such cases, our thoughts and emotions may be affected not so much by our experience and knowledge but by broader and more solid beliefs about the social environment and our lives. In addition, these beliefs can have roles in interpreting incoming data and future simulations – both potential and unintended. As a result, these often hidden and unspoken beliefs play a role in our everyday emotions, thoughts, actions, and relationships with others (Trzebiński et al., 2020).

Life satisfaction is one of the essential elements of well-being connected to psychological variables, and a person must adjust to adversity (Gonzalez-Bernal et al., 2021). Thus, a positive feeling of life satisfaction is required to adapt to and gain from challenging situations (Casagrande, 2020). Despite sharing the same environment, a family „is constituted of individual people whose opinions on the family situation may differ“ (Ben-Zur, 2003). Adolescence is defined as „a phase of developing individuation from the family“ (Ben-Zur, 2003), during which children become less devoted to and close to their parents (Bulanda & Majumdar, 2009). Adolescents desire to demonstrate their independence and distinguish themselves from their parents.

Our study explores the direct and indirect relationship between parents' conflict styles, negative affect, life satisfaction, and satisfaction of basic psychological needs for relatedness, autonomy, and competence.

### **Parents-Adolescents Aggressive Conflict Style - Parents' Negative Affect – Parents' Life Satisfaction**

We found that the parent-adolescent's aggressive conflict style related to parents' negative affect. The more parents engaged in disagreement and conflict with their adolescent child, the stronger their negative affect is.

Aggression in adults is linked to negative affect factors (Donahue et al., 2014). Many negative emotions characterized the individual's psycho-social condition during pandemic isolation, facilitating aggressive conflict among family members. Since adolescence is a period of increased stress sensitivity, adolescents may be more vulnerable to pandemic's challenges (Cohodes et al., 2021). This condition increases the possibility of adolescents expressing disapproval in aggressive manner with their parents. Parents who see their adolescent child's aggressive expression eventually respond in kind. Emerging studies on COVID-19's effects demonstrate that adult concerns about social isolation and contagion were associated with higher levels of negative affect (Megías-Robles et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021).

Our study shows a negative relationship between negative affect and parental life satisfaction and supports earlier work (e.g. Singh & Jha, 2008). This finding indicates that parents' life satisfaction decreases as their negative affect increases. The tendency of parents to experience an uncomfortable emotional state that is characterized by tension, despair, and dissatisfaction indicates that they have negative affect (Lopez & Snyder, 2009). Negative affect directly threatens parents' immediate safety, subjective well-being, or survival (Shin & Han, 2016).

This study confirmed that parental and adolescent aggressive conflict style is associated with parents' low life satisfaction. The parents' life satisfaction was not independent of their relationship quality with their adolescent child (Clair, 2012). Positive parenting attitude has been found to increase parental role satisfaction, and the higher the parenting satisfaction, the better the life satisfaction (Lee & Lee, 2019).

This study found that negative affect did not mediate the relationship between aggressive conflict style and parental life satisfaction. In general, when the relationship between variables is only direct, and there is no indirect relationship, then mediation will not appear.

### **Parents-Adolescent Compromise Conflict Style - Parents' Negative Affect – Parents' Life Satisfaction**

Our study showed that the parents-adolescent compromise conflict style did not predict both parents' negative affect and parents' life satisfaction. These findings may indicate that handling conflict between parents and adolescents during a

pandemic was more dominated by sarcasm, shouting, and angry communication. When parents and adolescents disagreed about something during the pandemic, they showed a more confrontational style. Another possibility is that the parent-adolescent's compromise conflict style will have predictive power if the predicted variable is positive affect (Extremera & Rey, 2018).

### **Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction - Parents' Negative Affect – Parents' Life Satisfaction**

Three intrinsic and universal psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are necessary for humans' physical, psychological, and social well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2002). When these needs are met, an individual feels a sense of autonomy and volition over tasks, actions, and behaviors (autonomy), feels effective and capable of achieving desired outcomes (competence), and feels a sense of closeness and genuine connection with valued others (relatedness) (Chen et al., 2015).

Our study found that parents' satisfaction of the basic psychological need for autonomy, did not directly predict parents' life satisfaction, but was indirectly related to life satisfaction via negative affect. During the pandemic, all family members gathered at home. This condition created high interdependence among family members and lower personal autonomy (Cantarero et al., 2021). Staying at home with family can be both challenging and less fulfilling, especially considering that, during the pandemic, staying at home was not a matter of personal choice (autonomy), but a necessity imposed upon us. One intriguing discovery from studies was that the importance of autonomy satisfaction did not consistently appear when predicting well-being during pandemic (Cantarero et al., 2021). Parents and children have new roles and cooperation that complement each other (Cornelius et al., 2022). Through this togetherness, negative affect decreases and results in increased life satisfaction.

On the other hand, when parents feel controlled by externally enforced (regulation due to the pandemic) or self-imposed pressures, experience feelings of failure about their efficacy, and feel directly excluded by people close to them, psychological dysfunction ensues. Certain studies have shown a link between psychological need unfulfillment and negative consequences for human functioning, such as symptoms of depression (Bartholomew et al., 2011) and negative affect (Gunnell et al., 2013). Furthermore, basic psychological need frustration significantly predicts negative affect (Rouse et al., 2020). Our study supported earlier findings that fulfilling parents' basic psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy reduced their negative affect. Conversely, the unfulfillment of these psychological needs increases parents' negative affect, leading to decreased life satisfaction.

## Conclusion

During COVID-19 pandemic, parents were susceptible to decreased life satisfaction due to their role while working at home during the pandemic. They were more often involved in aggressive conflict management with their adolescent children than using the compromise conflict style. Parent-adolescent aggressive conflict style directly escalated parents' negative affect and lower life satisfaction. Conflict resolution characterized by yelling, rage, and emotions of anger between parents and adolescents was frequent during COVID-19 epidemic, eventually increasing parents' negative affect and indirectly related to their life satisfaction. This study highlights the importance of the negative affect as both partial mediator between aggressive conflict style and life satisfaction and a full mediator between parents' satisfaction of basic psychological needs and life satisfaction.

## Limitations and Future Directions

This study has limitations because it only covered a sample of parents of adolescents with academic profiles. Of course, more varied sample characteristics are needed to see invariance in the analysis. Regarding the generalizability of the reported results to other cultures and samples, we must be cautious.

Based on statistical analysis, further research is hoped to use a dyadic analysis approach between parents and children regarding their conflict styles. This approach can explain a more comprehensive prediction of conflict styles on life satisfaction in the family setting.

Future studies are expected to involve positive affect concerning parental life satisfaction. From the demographic aspect, it is crucial to examine parental role differences as covariates that differentiate the analysis of the relationship between research variables. It is also important to measure frustration of basic psychological needs if the participants' socio-psychological context is negative and they had adverse experiences. Methodologically, this study analyzed cross-sectional data so that the psychological dynamics explored were minimal. Hopefully, other studies can examine the same issue after COVID-19 pandemic.

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## **Medijacijska uloga negativnoga afekta u odnosima između stilova sukoba roditelja s adolescentima, zadovoljavanja triju osnovnih psiholoških potreba i zadovoljstva životom**

### Sažetak

Pandemija uzrokovana bolešću COVID-19 izmijenila je psihološko stanje roditelja zahvaljujući promjenama u njihovu mjestu djelovanja i sve složenijim ulogama u radu, obrazovanju djece i kućanstvu. Ti su uvjeti pridonijeli povećanju agresivnih stilova sukoba roditelja s adolescentima i smanjenju zadovoljavanja njihovih osnovnih psiholoških potreba. Povećanje negativnoga afekta sa znakovima ljutnje i emocionalne iscrpljenosti često se uočava kod roditelja tijekom obvezne kućne karantene. Stoga bi smanjeno zadovoljavanje osnovnih psiholoških potreba roditelja, sukobi s adolescentima i povećan negativni afekt mogli smanjiti njihovo zadovoljstvo životom. U ovome je istraživanju ispitivano kako negativni afekt posreduje u odnosima između stilova sukoba roditelja s adolescentima i zadovoljstva životom roditelja, kao i između zadovoljavanja osnovnih psiholoških potreba i zadovoljstva životom. Ukupno 183 roditelja adolescenata ispunila su upitnike kojima su se procjenjivali stilovi sukoba roditelja s adolescentima, negativni afekt, zadovoljavanje osnovnih psiholoških potreba i zadovoljstvo životom. Metoda PLS-SEM korištena je za testiranje hipoteza teorijskoga okvira iz perspektive predikcije složenoga strukturalnog modela. Hipotetski je model odlično pristajao podacima, što je vidljivo iz njegove prediktivne relevantnosti i veličine učinka na značajne putove. Negativni afekt djeluje kao (1) potpuni posrednik u odnosu između zadovoljavanja osnovnih psiholoških potreba i zadovoljstva životom te (2) djelomični posrednik između agresivnoga stila sukoba u roditeljskome odnosu s djetetom i zadovoljstva životom. Rezultati ovoga istraživanja općenito sugeriraju da se okolnosti koje zahtijevaju brze promjene u obitelji moraju uskladiti s tempom prilagodbe članova obitelji da bi se spriječilo da bilo koji član obitelji razvije ozbiljne psihološke probleme. Također, nalazi ovoga istraživanja upućuju na to da su u ograničavajućim društvenim uvjetima članovi obitelji skloni biti grubi i doživljavati grubost, kao i frustraciju osnovnim psihološkim potrebama, čime se smanjuje njihovo zadovoljstvo životom.

*Cljučne riječi:* zadovoljstvo roditelja životom, stilovi sukoba roditelja s adolescentima, zadovoljavanje osnovnih psiholoških potreba, negativni afekt

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