

Family Conflict and Adolescent Aggression: A Structural Equation Modeling Study of Parental Psychological Control, Autonomy Frustration, and Anger Dysregulation

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E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the sampling description, the sentence “A multistage cluster-sampling procedure was used” requires substantially more procedural detail. Please specify the number of school boards approached, the number that agreed to participate, the number of schools selected, the number of classes sampled within each school, and the criteria used to select urban and suburban sites. The analysis should also clarify whether clustering by school or classroom was modeled, because standard errors may be underestimated when adolescents are nested within shared educational settings.

The demographic paragraph reports that “The sample included 321 girls, 289 boys, and 14 adolescents who identified as nonbinary or reported another gender identity.” The handling of gender in the inferential analyses needs clarification. The manuscript later states that gender was included as a covariate and that boys and girls were compared, but it does not explain how the 14 participants in the third category were coded or treated. The authors should report the exact coding scheme and avoid excluding or collapsing these participants without a transparent methodological justification.

In Table 1, the observed ranges and mean scores should be checked against the stated scoring procedures. For example, family conflict is reported with an observed range of 9–43, whereas the preceding methods imply a five-point response format

but do not clearly state the number of items or the possible theoretical range. Similar concerns apply to the autonomy-frustration and anger-dysregulation measures. Please add theoretical ranges and confirm that all descriptive statistics are mathematically consistent with the reported instruments.

The paragraph reporting Table 1 states that “none of the correlations exceeded .80, suggesting that the constructs were related but empirically distinguishable.” A correlation threshold alone is insufficient evidence of discriminant validity. The authors should report latent correlations, heterotrait-monotrait ratios, and confidence intervals for the correlations. Because anger dysregulation and aggression were correlated at .69, a formal test is particularly important to establish that these constructs are not empirically redundant.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the ethics paragraph, the statement “The research protocol was reviewed and approved by the responsible institutional research ethics board” is incomplete for a manuscript-ready report. Please provide the full name of the approving institution, the ethics approval number, and the date or year of approval. Because the participants were minors, the manuscript should also explain whether active parental consent or passive consent was used and identify the legal basis for independent adolescent consent where applicable.

The sentence “The target sample size was determined before data collection on the basis of the complexity of the proposed structural equation model” should be replaced with a formal a priori power analysis or Monte Carlo simulation. General statements that a sample larger than 500 is adequate do not demonstrate that the study was sufficiently powered to detect the smallest hypothesized indirect effect. Please report the assumed effect sizes, alpha level, desired power, number of latent variables, number of estimated parameters, and the expected rate of missing data used in the calculation.

In the Data Collection Tools section, the description of the Family Environment Scale states that participants responded on “a five-point scale ranging from 1, indicating strongly disagree, to 5, indicating strongly agree.” This response format may not correspond to the original scoring format of the Conflict subscale. The authors should verify whether an adapted version was used, identify the exact version, provide the number of items, describe any modifications, and cite evidence supporting the validity of the modified scoring procedure. Any adaptation should be justified and psychometrically evaluated.

The paragraph describing parental psychological control states that adolescents responded with reference to “the caregiver whose behavior had the greatest influence on their daily decisions and emotional experiences.” This instruction may introduce substantial interpretive variability because participants could select mothers, fathers, stepparents, or other caregivers according to subjective criteria. Please report the distribution of selected caregivers and consider whether psychological control should be modeled separately for maternal and paternal figures. At minimum, caregiver identity should be tested as a covariate or moderator.

The manuscript states that “Autonomy frustration was treated as conceptually different from low autonomy satisfaction,” but the measurement model does not demonstrate this distinction because autonomy satisfaction was not assessed. The authors should either limit this claim to a theoretical statement or include empirical evidence demonstrating that the autonomy-frustration indicators capture an active experience of coercion rather than merely low autonomy. The wording should avoid implying that discriminant validity was tested against a construct that was absent from the dataset.

In the description of adolescent aggression, the authors state that “the total aggression score was used as the principal outcome variable” and that supplementary analyses examined reactive and proactive aggression. These supplementary analyses are not subsequently reported. Because anger dysregulation is theoretically more proximal to reactive aggression than proactive aggression, combining the two dimensions may obscure meaningful differences. The authors should report separate structural models for reactive and proactive aggression or provide a strong empirical justification for treating aggression as a unitary construct.

The Data Analysis section indicates that “For longer multidimensional measures, theoretically balanced item parcels were created only after the dimensional structure of the corresponding scale had been confirmed.” Item parceling requires greater transparency because it can conceal localized misfit, cross-loadings, and multidimensionality. Please identify exactly which scales were parceled, how many parcels were created, which items were assigned to each parcel, and which parceling algorithm was used. A sensitivity analysis using item-level indicators would strengthen confidence in the measurement model.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.