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THE EFFECTS OF PARENTAL DISCREPANCY ON LIFE SATISFACTION AND ANXIETY IN TURKISH IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand how perceived agreement and disagreement regarding parental control affect life satisfaction and anxiety levels in adolescents from families with a Turkish immigrant background. Secondary data analysis was conducted using data from 146 mother-child pairs participating in the first wave of the SIMCUR project. Response Surface Analysis (RSA) was used to test the effect of agreement on Life Satisfaction (SWLS), and Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) was used to identify specific risk profiles associated with Anxiety (SDQ). RSA results showed that perceived agreement did not significantly predict life satisfaction. Subsequent LPA identified three distinct profiles: "Relaxed," "Harmonious," and "High Discrepancy" (Risk Group). While no significant difference was found in life satisfaction across the profiles, anxiety levels in the "High Disagreement" group were statistically significantly higher than in the "Comfortable" group. The findings suggest that a high level of control alone does not affect life satisfaction; however, differences in parental and child perceptions may be a risk factor for anxiety in adolescence.

KEYWORDS: Parental Control, Perceptual Dissonance, Response Surface Analysis, Latent Profile Analysis, Turkish Immigrant Families.

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature generally does not portray parental authority over children as desirable. For example, Self-Determination Theory identifies three foundations of individual well-being: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Costa et al., 2019; Teuber et al., 2021). When parents support their children's autonomy (by taking the child's perspective, offering choices and justifications), they help them achieve higher levels of satisfaction and mental well-being (Bradshaw et al., 2024; Inguglia et al., 2018; Li & Hein, 2019). Parental psychological control (guilt, shame, lack of affection, intrusive control), on the other hand, is associated with thwarted needs, frustration in autonomy and relatedness, and lower life satisfaction (Doepke & Zilibotti, 2012; Inguglia et al., 2021; Zhu & Shek, 2021). Baumrind's (2005) theory of parenting styles similarly posits that parental attitudes characterised by high control, low warmth, and limited autonomy can lead to internalising distress and low competence in children (Bosca & Cojocar, 2023; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Grey & Steinberg, 1999; Sorkhabi, 2005).

Collectivist cultures, unlike Western societies, emphasise family harmony, respect for elders, and fulfilling responsibilities towards the group. Parents constantly regulate and guide their children in accordance with this value system (Novianti et al., 2023; Öztürk et al., 2023). Such authoritarian behaviours have become the norm and are not considered a situation that warrants a response (Yaman et al., 2010). In fact, parental control can be culturally viewed as care, guidance, and the protection and preparation of the child for the future (Cho et al., 2020; Nisançi, 2020; Novianti et al., 2023; Rudy & Grusec, 2001). Kağıtçıbaşı states that in the model of reciprocal psychological dependence, parental authority is accepted as a sign of love (Özdemir, 2012; Türk, 2019).

In the parent-child relationship, how both parties perceive control determines the relationship's health. Studies indicate low agreement between parents and children on this issue. While parents describe their approach as warm and permissive (Inguglia et al., 2021; Korelitz & Garber, 2016), children perceive their approach as controlling and restrictive (Zhai et al., 2024). Children, especially adolescents who need autonomy, may perceive parental guidance or protection as interference (Rodríguez-Menéndez et al., 2025; Zheng & Chen, 2025). To assess this difference in perception between both parties, pairwise analysis may yield more reliable results than intergroup difference analysis.

The data for this study are drawn from the SIMCUR (Social Integration of Migrant Children – Enhancing Resilience Through Family and School Factors) project. The study examines how family environments and school contexts shape the social integration and psychological resilience of migrant children. The project, conducted by researchers from Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway, seeks to understand how parenting practices, in-school relationships, peer interactions, and school policies support the well-being, sense of belonging, and successful integration of migrant children (Leyendecker et al., 2016). The project aims to generate evidence that can inform child-centred, integration-friendly policies and daily practices in schools and families, helping to reduce risks such as discrimination and social exclusion while revealing and recommending the impact of protective factors such as social support, identity integration, and resilience (Hu & Wu, 2020; Ni et al., 2016; Serrano et al., 2024). Using a subset of the SIMCUR dataset included in the research variables, this study aims to examine the extent to which parent-child perceptual congruence predicts life satisfaction and to determine how perceptual differences contribute to internalising symptoms, such as anxiety. To this end, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Does perceived control lead to unhappiness or a sense of security in Turkish migrant children?
2. Does discord in the mother-child relationship cause anxiety or unhappiness?

Theoretical Background

Immigrant parents may be perceived as more controlling due to both the cultural codes they bring with them and their perception of being at risk in their new society, their lower familiarity with the society, and their high expectations regarding social mobility. This controlling approach is not intended to exert pressure but rather to protect their children and secure their future. Güngör (2008), in her research with young people of Turkish origin living in Belgium, concluded that these young people felt they experienced greater parental pressure than their peers in both Belgium and Türkiye. Accordingly, with migration, traditional control mechanisms become more frequent, and parents may expect greater obedience from their children to keep them on the right path and maintain their culture (Güngör, 2008; Leyendecker et al., 2018).

Given expectations that children will move up the social ladder through education, immigrant parents may resort to strategies such as increasing their

children's study time, enrolling them in courses, and meticulously planning their daily schedules. This situation can also be perceived as pressure by children (González-Falcón et al., 2022; Melzi et al., 2021; González-Falcón et al., 2022). Similarly, parents who themselves experience difficulties in their new community, such as low income, job insecurity, language barriers, and a lack of social connections, may translate this insecurity outside the home into an overprotective attitude (Antony-Newman, 2019; Salami et al., 2020). Unlike their children, who can quickly adapt to the new culture and values, immigrant parents may be slower to do so. They may find it easier to manage this perceived risk by behaving more controllingly. Children of immigrant families generally interpret such a protective approach as a sign that they are valued and protected, and they do not allow this situation to lead to low self-esteem (Güngör, 2008; Martins et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2025).

In immigrant families, parents and children may have culturally differing views and values. This mismatch stems from differences in acculturation and can lead to divergent judgments about what constitutes good parenting. Children generally adapt more quickly to the culture into which they are born or encounter at a young age than their parents—from the second generation onward, shared time and environments within the family decrease, which can lead to a decline in adaptation (Harris & Chen, 2022; Renzaho et al., 2017). This mismatch can ultimately be associated with lower academic achievement or a more problematic mental state (Lui, 2015; Ying & Han, 2007; Nair et al., 2018). Different interpretations of time spent together or differing future expectations also deepen this divide. Parents' perception of their parenting styles as more positive than their children's experiences is negatively correlated with children's academic success and

overall health (Hou et al., 2017).

Life satisfaction is generally viewed as a cognitive evaluation of one's own life experiences. It is typically associated with an individual's perception of their quality of life (Meule & Voderholzer, 2020; Kjell & Diener, 2020). It requires a reflective thought process regarding health, relationships, and financial status, rather than focusing on immediate feelings (Li et al., 2022). In contrast, anxiety requires interpretation of bodily responses. These responses can be emotional, such as fear or worry, or physiological, such as sweating or a high heart rate (Brown et al., 2019). Therefore, anxiety was included as a variable in this study.

This mismatch, as outlined, leads to unsupportive parenting. This can affect the alienation between mother and child, ultimately resulting in depression and low grades in the child (Harris & Chen, 2022; Kim et al., 2013; Qin, 2006). While this mismatch is often associated with unhappiness, it can lead to differing perceptions among children. Therefore, this incompatibility can be a source of stress. Evaluating the effects of this incompatibility by comparing mothers' and children's scores on the scale items is limited by several factors. Edwards (2002) lists these problems as low reliability, loss of information resulting from pairwise comparisons, and insufficient examination of the effects of untested assumptions. The Polynomial Regression method models the relationship between these two variables as a 3-dimensional surface and enables examination of individual effects in nonlinear relationships.

2. METHOD

This study was designed as a cross-sectional study. However, it has some distinctive features inherent in its nature.

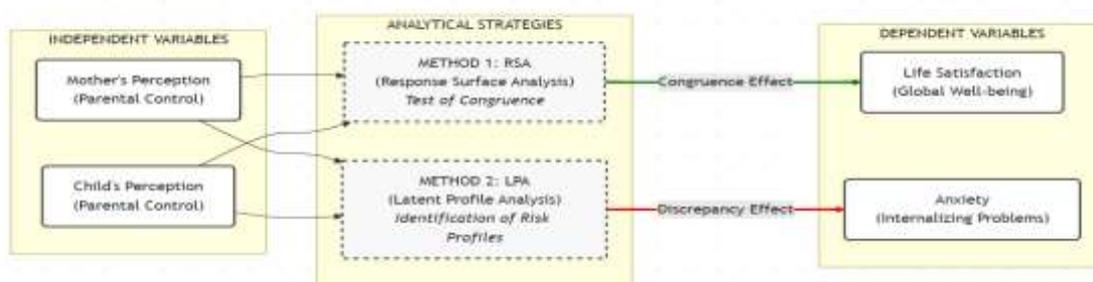


Figure 1. The study's conceptual model illustrates the dual-analytical approach. Note. RSA = Response Surface Analysis (used to test the effect of congruence on well-being); LPA = Latent Profile Analysis (used to identify discrepancy profiles and their link to anxiety).

Within the scope of the research, Response Surface

Methodology (RSM), which visualises how mother-

child compatibility affects the happiness variable, was used to perform regression analysis on a three-dimensional model. Subsequently, based on individuals' responses, risky groups were identified by grouping individuals into specific sub-profiles using Latent Profile Analysis. The research model is shown in Figure 1.

2.1. Sample

The study sample comprises 148 mother-child pairs who participated in the first-wave data collection for the SIMCUR project. The average age of the children is 150.34 months (SD = 5.29; approximately 12.5 years), and their age range is 139-162 months. 52.7% of the participants are boys (n=78) and 47.3% are girls (n=70). The average age of the mothers was 37.79 years (SD = 4.71). The participants' demographic characteristics are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample.

Variable	Category/ explanation	N	%	Mean (Ss)	Min - Max
Gender (Child)	Male	78	52.7	-	-
	Female	70	47.3	-	-
Age	Month	146	-	150.34 (5.29)	139 - 162
Mother Age	Year	146	-	37.79 (4.71)	29 - 52

2.2. Process

We used RStudio and the R programming language for data analysis. In the first stage, we performed data cleaning and identified mother-child pairs. We removed missing values using listwise deletion. We used Response Surface Analysis (RSA) to evaluate mother-child agreement/difference and Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) to identify groups and identify potential differences. We calculated EMBU ratios from mother-child measurements to represent perceived parental control. We conducted Pearson correlation analyses between variables.

In the first stage of the research, we applied Response Surface Analysis in RStudio using the RSA package (Schönbrodt & Humberg, 2020) to examine how similar or different mothers' and children's control perceptions were and how this affected life satisfaction scores (SWLS). Polynomial regression and RSA (Edwards, 2002) were performed in this stage. To address multicollinearity and facilitate coefficient interpretation, we centered the independent variables (Mother Perception and Child Perception) using the pre-analysis means. We included the child's gender and the mother's education level as covariates to control for potential

confounding factors. In the Polynomial Regression analysis, the dependent variable (Z) was estimated by mother perception (X), child perception (Y), the squares of these variables (X², Y²), the interaction (XY), and the covariates. The overall significance of the model (F-test) was interpreted for the parameters on the a1 and a4 surfaces. Then, we used Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) to subdivide the mother-child sub-pairs into subgroups to achieve greater homogeneity. Instead of testing profiles 1-5, we used the AIC, BIC, and SABIC fit indices and entropy values indicating the quality of classification according to Nylund *et al.* (2007) method. Finally, we found that the optimal number of profiles was three when the smallest group ratios were used. At the end of the study, we used a one-way ANOVA followed by Tukey post hoc tests to assess whether the profile groups differed significantly in child anxiety (SDQ: Emotional Findings). We also used the Kruskal-Wallis H test to see the effect of the low representation number in the third group.

3. RESULTS

To examine the relationships among the research variables, we first conducted a correlation analysis. We examined the relationships among mothers' and children's perceptions of control, life satisfaction, and anxiety scores as shown in Table 2. We observed a weak positive correlation ($r = .20$) between mothers' and children's perceptions of control. This low correlation indicates perceptual dissonance between mother and child and confirms the dyadic analysis approach. Children's mean perception of control was relatively high ($M=2.55$), while mothers' was lower ($M=2.33$). This can be interpreted as the child feeling greater control.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation Values of Study Variables.

Variable	Mean (M)	(SD)	Min- Max	1	2	3
1. Mother: Control Perception	2.33	0.48	1.0 - 3.8	-		
2. Child: Control Perception	2.55	0.51	1.2 - 3.8	.20*	-	
3. Child: Life Satisfaction	3.22	0.58	1.5 - 4.0	.11	.15	-
4. Child: Anxiety (SDQ)	0.47	0.42	0.0 - 1.6	.17	.38**	-.20*

*Note: N = 146. *p < .05, **p < .001.*

Although the correlation coefficients in Table 2 indicate linear relationships between the variables, they are insufficient to clearly demonstrate the effects of congruence or discrepancy between mothers' and children's perceptions on children's life satisfaction. Contrary to the assumption that parental control may

harm the child, a comprehensive model examining the effect of perceptual congruence between mother and child on this issue would yield more valuable results. For this purpose, Polynomial Regression and Response Surface Analysis (RSA) were applied to test the nature of dyadic congruence and discrepancy in a three-dimensional plane; the findings are presented in Figure 2.

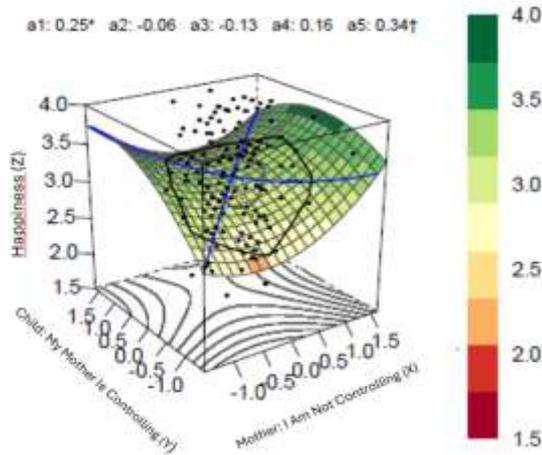


Figure 2: Perception Congruence and Discrepancy.

Response Surface Methodology (RSM) was used to examine the effect of congruence in perceived control between parent and child on the child's life satisfaction. The results of the polynomial regression analysis, presented in Table 3, indicated that the overall model was not statistically significant ($R^2 = .08$, $F(7, 138) = 1.60$, $p = .14$). Although the slope along the congruence line (a_1) reached nominal statistical significance ($p = .045$) as shown in Table 3, this individual coefficient was not interpreted as a substantive finding. In line with methodological standards, since the omnibus F-test for the overall model was non-significant ($p = .14$), any apparent significance of individual parameters is considered spurious (Type I error). Therefore, to ensure statistical rigor, we report these values solely for transparency but refrain from drawing conclusions based on them.

This finding implies that, contrary to expectations, perceptual congruence regarding parental control does not directly predict adolescent life satisfaction in this sample. While the visual representation in Figure 1 might suggest a trend, the statistical evidence confirms that neither congruence (agreement) nor discrepancy (disagreement) in control perceptions has a statistically significant linear effect on the child's reported happiness. This lack of a direct relationship directed the study to explore potential 'hidden' costs of discrepancy through Latent Profile Analysis (LPA), focusing on

anxiety.

Table 3: Surface Parameters and Coefficients of the RSA Model.

Surface Tests	Coefficient(Est.)	Standart Error (SE)	T	p
a_1 (Slope along LOC)	0.25	0.13	2.01	.045
a_2 (Curvature along LOC)	-0.06	0.27	-0.21	.833
a_3 (Slope along LOIC)	-0.13	0.14	-0.93	.354
a_4 (Curvature along LOIC)	0.16	0.20	0.78	.436
a_5 (Incongruence Curvature)	0.34	0.17	1.96	.051
Model Summary	$R^2 = .08$, $p = .14$			

Note1: $N = 146$. LOC = Line of Congruence, LOIC = Line of Incongruence, * $p < .05$.

Note2: Although the a_1 coefficient appears significant ($p < .05$), the overall model did not reach statistical significance ($p > .05$). Therefore, individual coefficients should be interpreted with caution or disregarded.

Following the results from the RSA model, Latent Profile Analysis was performed to identify which maternal profiles affect the child. The values for this analysis are given in Table 4. Accordingly, Entropy and Information Criteria (AIC/SABIC) were particularly decisive in model selection. In the 2-profile solution, the Entropy value remained unacceptably low at 0.305, indicating that the groups were not clearly separated in this model. In contrast, when switching to the 3-profile model, the Entropy value increased dramatically to 0.815, indicating that the groups (Comfortable, Agreeable, Perception Difference) could be separated with high precision. In addition, the 3-profile solution showed a better fit to the dataset, with significant reductions in AIC (840) and SABIC (838) relative to the 1- and 2-profile models. Although AIC decreased for the 4-profile solution (838), the 3-profile solution was selected as the most suitable model under the parsimony principle (simplicity) because BIC (877) increased, indicating greater model complexity.

Table 4: Comparison of Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) Model Fit Indices.

Profile Number(k)	AIC	BIC	SABIC	Entropy	Smallest Group Probability*
1	846	858	845	1	1
2	847	868	846	.305	.62
3	840	869	838	.815	.80
4	838	877	835	.828	.61
5	842	890	839	.656	.50

Table 5 lists descriptive statistics regarding the

characteristics of the three groups identified by LPA. Accordingly, the group with the lowest perceived level of control, both for mother and child, was identified as the Relaxed Family (mother M=2.17; child M=1.92). The second profile and the largest group, identified as the Harmonious Family. Both sides reported an average level of control. In the High Discrepancy group, mothers' (M=2.39) and children's (M=3.66) control scores differ significantly. Adding to this, the higher anxiety score (M=0.61) compared to other groups, we classified this group as a risk group.

Based on the LPA results, three profiles were identified: 'Relaxed' (Group 1), 'Harmonious' (Group 2), and 'High Discrepancy' (Group 3). As shown in Table 6, the ANOVA results revealed no significant differences in Life Satisfaction among the groups ($F = 1.90, p > .05$). However, a significant difference was found in Anxiety levels ($F = 5.30, p = .006$). Post hoc Tukey tests indicated that adolescents in the 'High Discrepancy' profile reported significantly higher anxiety ($M = .61$) than those in the 'Relaxed' profile ($M = 0.33$). These findings highlight that while perceptual discrepancy may not affect reported happiness, it is associated with increased internalising symptoms.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Latent Profiles (Mean and Standard Deviation).

Profile	N	Mother Control Perception		Child Control Perception		Life Satisfaction		Anxiety SDQ	
		M	Sd	M	Sd	M	Sd	M	Sd
Profile 1: Relaxed Family (Mother: Low-Child: Low)	42	2.17	.52	1.92	.23	3.07	.54	.33	.25
Profile 2: Harmonious Family (Mother: moderate - Child: Moderate)	97	2.39	.46	2.71	.25	3.28	.57	.44	.27
Profile 3: High Discrepancy (Mother: Low-Child: High)	9	2.39	.31	3.66	.14	3.22	.67	.61	.32

The graph in Figure 3 shows the relationship between the created parenting profiles and the children's anxiety scores. The height of the lines in the graph represents the average anxiety level for the children in each group. Accordingly, a significant increase is observed from Group 1 to Group 3. The 'Relaxed Family' (Group 1), where both the mother and the child perceive low control, is represented by the shortest bar and has the lowest anxiety level

($M=0.33$). In contrast, Group 3 has the highest anxiety level.

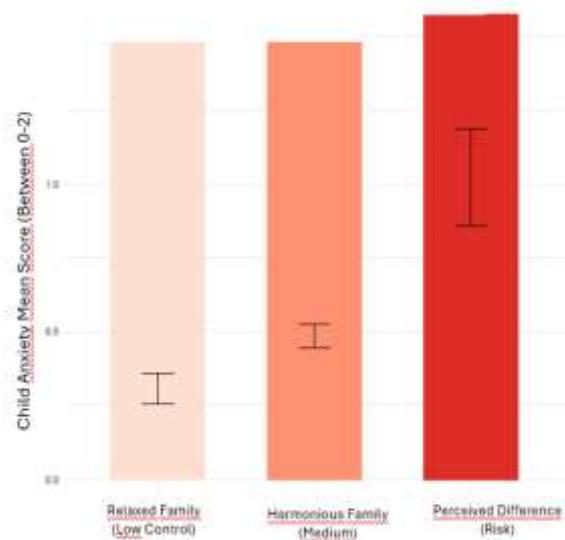


Figure 3: Anxiety Levels of Children According to Parent-Child Perception Profiles.

An ANOVA test was conducted to examine the effect of the determined profiles on children's anxiety and life satisfaction scores. The test results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Comparison of Life Satisfaction and Anxiety Levels According to Parent-Child Perception Profiles (ANOVA).

Variable	Group 1: Relaxed (n=42)	Group 2: Harmonious (n=97)	Group 3: Perceived Difference (Risk) (n=9)	F(2,143)	p	η ²
Life Satisfaction	3.07	3.28	3.22	1.90	.153	.026
Anxiety	.33 ^a	.44 ^{ab}	.61 ^b	5.30	.006*	.068

Note: Values represent means (M). Differences between groups with different superscript letters (a, b) in the same row are statistically significant according to the Post-hoc Tukey test ($p < .05$). Group 2, which shares a common letter (ab), did not differ significantly from the other two groups. $**p < .01$.

When Table 6 is examined, no statistically significant difference was found between the groups in terms of Life Satisfaction ($F = 1.90, p > .05$). That is, children experiencing high perception discordance with their mothers (Group 3) reported being as happy as children in other groups. However, a significant difference was found between the groups when anxiety levels were examined ($F = 5.30, p =$

.006). According to the Post-hoc Tukey test results, the anxiety level of children in Group 3 (Perception Difference) ($M=0.61$) is significantly higher than that of children in Group 1 ($M=.33$) ($p < .05$). Group 2, however, took an intermediate value and was not statistically different from either group. This finding indicates that the 'Relaxed' environment, where parental control is perceived as low by both mother and child, is associated with the lowest anxiety; conversely, it significantly increased anxiety scores in Group 3.

Given the unequal group sizes and the small sample size of the 'High Discrepancy' profile ($n=9$), a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to confirm the robustness of the ANOVA findings. The analysis confirmed that the differences in anxiety levels across the profiles remained statistically significant ($\chi^2(2) = 8.49$, $p = .014$), supporting the validity of the reported group differences.

4. DISCUSSION

This study, utilising the SIMCUR dataset, offers a detailed perspective on how maternal control influences children in Turkish immigrant families. Although the variable-centred analysis (RSA) did not show a significant direct link between perceptual congruence and life satisfaction, the person-centred analysis (LPA) revealed that perceptual incongruence is a significant risk factor for anxiety. Most research indicates that higher life satisfaction is associated with parenting styles aligned between mother and child (Zhu & Shek, 2021; Stafford et al., 2015). Additionally, positive parent-child bonds and behavioural regulation are associated with better psychological adjustment and higher self-esteem (Bacikova-Sleskova et al., 2023). In contrast, supportive attitudes enhance children's well-being (Young et al., 1995). However, within this specific cultural setting, our findings suggest that the absence of perceptual mismatch may serve more as a safeguard against anxiety than as a direct source of increased life satisfaction. Although factors like family satisfaction and good communication predict adverse outcomes such as anxiety and stress (Maglica et al., 2021; Novak et al., 2020), our data show that when perceptions are misaligned – particularly when the child perceives more control than the mother intends – there is a 'hidden cost' through heightened internalising symptoms.

Conversely, when perceptions are inconsistent, and the child perceives the parent's behaviour as controlling, the result is high anxiety (Chyung et al., 2021; Zhu & Shek, 2021; Lønfeldt et al., 2017; Affrunti & Ginsburg, 2012). When there is a high level of

closeness between mother and child, this mismatch in control can be partially overlooked (Zhai et al., 2024). According to the profiles created by Latent Profile Analysis, the mismatch between mother and child directly affects the anxiety level. The mother's perception of herself as applying low pressure, while the child has the opposite view, causes cognitive dissonance.

This situation shows that control can be coded as love in a cultural context, but it can also be a cause of anxiety. In interdependent and collectivist cultures, control is evaluated within the scope of filial love, respect, family loyalty, and moral education, and is considered the right path for the child's success and good character (Cho et al., 2020; Halgunseth et al., 2006). For example, in Confucian traditions, the concepts of love and discipline are closely intertwined, and control can be understood as an investment in and a form of guidance for the child (Soenens et al., 2012; Gao et al., 2022). Therefore, the meanings attributed to parental control may differ between a Korean adolescent and their North American peer (Rohner & Pettengill, 1985). For Chinese youth, parental control may be perceived more positively when framed as love and acceptance rather than as a desire to dominate (Chen-Bouck & Patterson, 2017).

However, even if parental control is considered emotional care in such cultures, it can still be a source of anxiety (Soenens et al., 2012; Scharf & Goldner, 2018). The relationship between parental control and anxiety is not unique to Western societies (Salaam & Kyere, 2025). In the Eastern societies listed above, higher levels of parental control lead to higher social anxiety, which can create a vicious cycle by further increasing parental control, thus eroding the sense of self (Zhou et al., 2024).

Self-Determination Theory posits that parental control can threaten autonomy. It distinguishes between control and support. In the context of supporting autonomy, adopting the child's perspective, offering meaningful choices, explaining the reasons behind rules, and encouraging independent action are considered important (Bradshaw et al., 2024; Grolnick, 2009; Guay, 2021; Chen et al., 2024). Psychological control, on the other hand, occurs through instilling feelings of guilt in the child, depriving them of affection, shaming them, and interfering in their inner world. This also impedes the need for autonomy (Costa et al., 2015; Liga et al., 2024; Ryan et al., 2016; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010). However, in the RSA analysis conducted in this study, life satisfaction increases when parents and children share similar perceptions

of control. Culturally, control can be perceived as protection and possessiveness. This can be considered the opposite of neglect. This compatibility can be assessed using the Psychological Interdependence Model developed by Kağıtçıbaşı (2007).

In this study, the results for Life Satisfaction (SWLS) and Anxiety (SDQ) were inconsistent. This may indicate that Turkish immigrant children prioritise family harmony due to their value systems. This seemingly normal situation for children may be reflected in their anxiety scores. Family harmony and well-being: In immigrant families, subjective well-being is generally based on family security, togetherness, and improved living conditions rather than the absence of internal distress (Doğutaş, 2024; Kim et al., 2018). Immigrant parents often frame immigration as a sacrifice “for the children,” and children, even if they feel anxious, can view life positively when the family is together and safer (Doğutaş, 2024). In Turkish and other collectivist contexts, family relationships and parental warmth are key determinants of youth well-being (Dost-Gözkan, 2022). Although adolescents may experience anxiety related to discrimination, language, school, or cultural adjustment, they can maintain high life satisfaction scores if family functioning, support, and harmony are perceived positively.

Qualitative and family systems work with immigrant families shows that children and parents normalise high levels of strain as part of migration and adaptation, while giving more weight to safety, opportunity, and family unity when judging how “good” life is (Kim et al., 2018; Doğutaş, 2024; Bergnehr, 2018). This supports your idea that what is “normal for children” in this group—ongoing anxiety linked to war, displacement, language, or status—may raise SDQ anxiety scores without proportionally lowering SWLS scores.

Implications and Limitations

This study demonstrates that, from a practitioner's perspective, simply observing high levels of life satisfaction or happiness in immigrant children is insufficient for assessing their well-being. Measuring the views of both parents and children regarding family dynamics separately is crucial for understanding the balance between parental intentions and children's perceptions.

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This dataset is taken from cross-sectional data collected in the first wave of the SIMCUR analysis. Furthermore, although clearly separated in the profile analysis and exhibiting a high effect size, Group 3 is represented by a relatively small sample. Currently, conducting such measurements with larger sample groups would allow for a more detailed explanation of the causal relationship. Additionally, it is recommended that data from fathers be included in analyses of SIMCUR and similar studies. This limitation restricts the generalisability of the findings to the broader Turkish immigrant population. Therefore, the emergence of this specific risk profile should be interpreted as a preliminary pattern that warrants replication in larger, representative samples to confirm its prevalence and stability across different immigrant contexts.

5. CONCLUSION

Parents instinctively need control over their children's psychological and physiological well-being. The child can perceive this control as either restrictive or satisfying. Immigrant families living in a country with a different origin may be more controlling due to concerns about preserving their identity and not losing their children, or children may interpret their parents' behaviour differently depending on the culture in which they grow up. This secondary data analysis examined the relationship between maternal control and children's perceptions in Turkish-origin immigrant families, using first-wave data collected as part of the SIMCUR project. The results showed that maternal control does not inherently involve negative motivation; instead, potential problems stem from perceptual differences between mother and child. In this study, we did not see an effect of perceptual agreement on children's life satisfaction; however, we observed that when a significant difference in perception occurs, it becomes a source of anxiety for children. Therefore, although Turkish-origin immigrant children may have high overall life satisfaction in their culture, a perceptual disagreement with their parents can appear as an invisible cost and increase their anxiety levels.

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