

# The mediating role of sadness caused by separation and perceived stress in the relationship between the quality of parental involvement and separation from the previous relationship in divorced women

DOI:10.22098/JPC.2025.16082.1272

Amirhosein Sobhaninia<sup>1</sup>; Mohsen Golmohammadian<sup>2\*</sup>

1. Master of Family Counseling. Shahid Chamran University. Ahvaz. Iran.

2. Department of Counseling. School of Social Sciences. Razi University. Kermanshah. Iran.

\* Correspondence Author: mgolmohammadian@gmail.com

## Abstract

**Aim:** Parenting after divorce is one of the most important tasks for divorced parents. This research was conducted to investigate the mediating role of grief and sadness caused by separation and perceived stress in the quality of parental participation and release from the previous relationship in divorced women with children in Yasuj city.

**Method:** Research method this correlation study and was based on structural equation modeling. The population of included all the women in divorcees with children who were referred to the counseling centers of Yasouj city, 314 people who in 2023 voluntarily declared their readiness to participate in this research. From among the volunteers, 202 people who were eligible to participate in the research responded to the indicators of release from the previous relationship (DFPR, Fisher and Bierhaus, 2007), perceived stress (PSS, Cohen et al, 1983), Quality of parental Coparental Communication (QCCS, Constance and Aarons, 1981) and sadness caused by separation (SCS, Fisher and Bierhaus, 2007). The data were analyzed using the path analysis of structural equations method.

**Finding:** The results showed that the proposed model is a good fit. The results showed that the two variables of perceived stress and sadness caused by separation had an indirect and significant effect on the relationship between the quality of parental involvement and separation from the previous relationship ( $p = 0.001$ ) and also found shows a direct effect on the quality of the shared relationship on separation of the previous relationship ( $p = 0.001$ ). According to the obtained findings, it can be concluded that the low quality of shared communication (high conflict and low support) can cause people not to let go of their previous relationship by increasing stress and sadness caused by separation.

**Results:** In general, it can be concluded that therapists should pay attention to resolving grief resulting from divorce and separation from the previous relationship to strengthen the participation and constructive support of both parents in raising children after divorce.

**Keywords:** perceived stress, release from previous relationship, sadness caused by separation, quality of joint relationship.

## Introduction

Divorce, which is the legal termination of a marital relationship, as one of the unfortunate events in an individual's life, imposes the most stress on a person, to the extent that some experts and researchers such as Lin and Brown (2020) They know that it is the biggest stress that a person can face during his life, because the unfortunate effects of divorce will stay with him for a long time. According to research, the effects of divorce on women have more stable results, and compared to divorced men, divorced women experience more acute psychological and emotional conditions at the time of divorce and after (Can and Aksu, 2016; Leopold, 2018). Today, the divorce rate is increasing sharply in many countries, and the multifaceted effects of divorce on women lives show the need for a better understanding of this life experience (Demirbas, 2018). Divorce, which leads to a number of changes in the level of life, may disturb the adaptation of the divorced women in terms of cognitive, emotional and physical (Cobilar and Yilmaz, 2022). Adaptation after divorce is conceptualized as finding meaning for the experience of divorce, which includes getting rid of physical symptoms and signs of mental illness, the ability to perform assigned tasks and responsibilities in personal and professional life. It is the productivity of free time and the development of individual independence (in a way that is not tied to the marital status or ex-wife) (Assanjrani et al., 2018; Alpasalan, 2018).

One of the important issues related to adjustment after divorce for women is getting rid of the previous relationship. Disputes caused by legal arrangements such as custody, child rearing issues after divorce may have a negative effect on getting rid of the previous relationship and adjustment after divorce women (Pilinszki et al., 2025; Demirbash 2018). In this context, getting rid of the previous relationship, which means getting rid of the emotional relationship of living together with the ex-spouse, constructive management of mental distress and disorders caused by divorce and letting go of it (Alpaslan, 2018). Many studies show that not letting go of a previous relationship is generally associated with factors such as an increase in the level of perceived stress and some psychological problems such as sadness caused by separation and anxiety and a reduction in life goals in women (Guyette et al., 2025). Despite individual differences, getting rid of a previous relationship is a difficult process that is influenced by factors such as depression, grief, anxiety and stress in a divorced person (Albahrani, 2021). Therefore, the necessity of all-round adaptation of divorced women to the process of divorce is an undeniable necessity (Cobilar and Yilmaz, 2022) so that one of the main duties of women after divorce, which can cause fundamental changes be in a thay life, is the reconstruction of this The balance is messed up so that it can be released from its previous relationship in a suitable way (Nilofar and Ildrum, 2023).

Many factors affect getting rid of a previous relationship, one of which is having a child and the quality of parental involvement. Parental involvement refers to the continuous commitment of divorced parents to their child's upbringing despite the dissolution of their marital relationship (Ferraro Lucille-Garle and Ohm, 2018). Various studies have shown that negative family processes, including triangulation, are related to release from the previous relationship and lead to incompatibility after divorce in women (Cobilar and

Yilmaz, 2022; Van Dyck et al., 2020). Also, Staliniko, Demol, Henrik and Gago (2022) believe that intense emotions related to leaving a previous relationship (anger, sadness, betrayal, revenge) are related to parental involvement. Similarly, women who feel irreparably hurt by marital separation may attempt to psychologically cope by transforming feelings of vulnerability into powerful feelings of injustice with complaints and a desire to receive justification and reparation for the harm caused by the other parent. to protect themselves, and for this reason, instead of participating in parental duties, their actions respond to their own needs in relation to the wounds of marital separation (Dembi, 2017; Demol, 2022). In addition, Lamela and Figurdio, Bastos and Feinberg (2016), Nielsen et al. (2018) believe that co-parenting cohesion indicates behaviors that show compatibility and agreement among families, while open parental conflict indicates it is a great inefficiency and leads to direct, obviously aggressive or negative exchanges between the parents and endangers the proper adaptation and release from the previous relationship. Therefore, today, not only divorce is not considered the end of the family, but divorced parents enter divorce training programs and a new reconstruction process in order to continue their parenting relationships even with the end of marriage (Nilofar and Ildrum, 2023) to By reducing co-parenting conflict and increasing co-parenting support, they help to get rid of the previous relationship and adapt to divorce (Beckmeier et al., 2018; Wilkins-Clark, Wu & Markham, 2024).

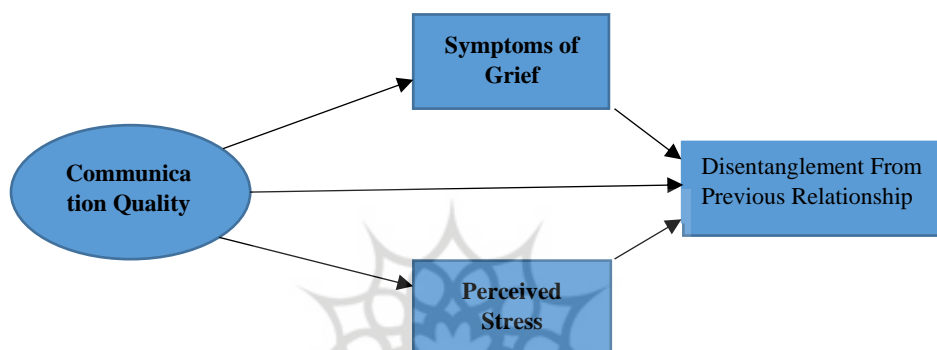
In addition to getting rid of the previous relationship, the quality of parental involvement predicts the psychological well-being of women after divorce. Parents involved in complex divorces face adjustment problems such as aggression, excessive sadness, withdrawal from important people, perceived stress, and stress-related illnesses, such as hypertension (Mejia-Hans, 2024; van der Wall et al., 2019). Most researchers agree that complicated divorces are characterized by long-term post-separation conflicts over co-parenting (Demby, 2016; Smith & Moloney, 2017). Kopjan et al (2021) showed that parents in complex divorces experience more negative emotions (fear, shame, guilt, and sadness, anger, hatred, and humiliation) than parents in normal divorces, which are the main barriers to parental involvement. It is complicated in divorces and disrupts self-regulation. Based on this, the findings show that joint parenting programs that help divorced parents provide their psychological well-being by improving the quality of parental involvement as an important factor in post-divorce adaptation (Piklikova, Wasselska, Bobakova, Palfiova and Gochegwa, 2019; Ferraro and Lucier-Gerer, 2022). One of the main predictors of getting out of a previous relationship is grief, which is caused by the loss of a loved one or an important relationship (Hoff, Markman, Larkin, & Bauer, 2020). The amount of sadness caused by separation in women is related to the degree of release from the relationship, and high sadness predicts incompatibility and not letting go of the previous relationship (Zalesca and Basista, 2016; Al-Bahrani et al. 2021). Some authors believe that the loss of a relationship, especially if it is accompanied by a child, can make the process of emancipation from the previous relationship difficult by causing grief to the women (Alpaslan, 2018). Additionally, separation for parental and especially for women after divorce is typically associated with emotional problems, including grief and perceived stress, and endangers their well-being (Johnson, Litland, Hallström, 2018; Chiang & Bai, 2024; Paklikova, Veselska, Bobakova, Palfieva, Gkova,

2019). In this regard, Kalmera et al. (2017) and Hird and Hemphill (2018) believe that the collaborative cohesion of parents and their cooperation in parental duties as a source of support has positive consequences for them, which in case The lack of this powerful source of support and protection means that both parents have less support for each other and collaborative conflict and provides the background for emotional problems. Therefore, taking advantage of parental participation as a source of support and using psychological support programs in order to process grief caused by divorce are some of the effective goals for a successful transition process that have a significant impact on women's adjustment levels after divorce (Hoff et al., 2020; Const, 2022). Among other predictors of breaking free from a previous relationship is perceived stress, which has been conceptualized as an important construct in divorce literature (Ferraro et al., 2019; Pattern et al., 2021). Markusen et al (2019) considering the importance of dynamics in interpersonal relationships after divorce believe that the quality of parental involvement as a source of support is one of the most important predictors of factors related to parents' mental health, including the amount Perceived stress. For example, parental alienation syndrome, which means that one parent tries to consciously shape their child's perception of the other parent in a negative way, is one of the problematic areas of custody and is emotionally difficult for both the child and the parent. It is also very tiring and stressful for foreign parents (Pilinszki et al., 2025). In other words, having a child is a secondary stress factor in the adjustment process after divorce, and the involvement of parents in the collaborative parental conflict model by increasing the level of perceived stress causes lack of adjustment and release from the previous relationship (Hardesti and colleagues, 2019; Ilhan, 2020; Konstam et al., 2016; Oyar and Yildirim, 2022). In this context, several studies have shown that co-parenting training improves women outcomes, including the perceived stress of divorced parents by reducing collaborative conflicts (Ferraro and Lucier-Gerer, 2022; Wang, Choi, Shin and Redish, 2021). Jam et al., 2021; Choi and Becher, 2019). Therefore, according to the determining role of parental involvement in improving psychological resources and mental health, it can be concluded that joint parental relationships have a special importance in post-divorce adaptation and liberation from the previous parental relationship. (Tullius et al., 2022; Paklikova et al., 2019).

Research shows Post-divorce incompatibility can have profound and negative effects on mothers' parenting. These effects can include increased stress and anxiety (Katz Woodin, 2002), decreased quality of relationships with children (Amato, 2001), emotional problems, inability to manage conflict, and creating an unstable environment for children (Cummings Davies, 2002). Adaptation after divorce in Iran and abroad has been the focus of many researches, but few studies have investigated the role of parental involvement, perceived stress and sadness caused by separation in predicting release from the previous relationship (concepts related to with adjustment after divorce) in divorced women. Therefore, considering the high importance of post-divorce compatibility and getting rid of the previous relationship (as a component that researchers have not paid much attention to), according to what was said and with a review of the research background Therefore, the present study sought to examine the following model and answer two questions: Do parental involvement, perceived stress, and sadness caused by separation play a role in

getting rid of a previous relationship in divorced women with children? Is there a relationship between parental involvement and release from a previous relationship with the mediating role of perceived stress and grief caused by separation in divorced women with children?

**Figure 1.** Hypothetical model of the mediating role of grief and sadness caused by separation and perceived stress in the relationship between the quality of parental involvement and release from the previous relationship.



## Methods

This research is a type of correlational research and the method of structural equation modeling (path analysis) was carried out in 2023. The statistical population of this research included all the women in the divorcees with children who referred to the counseling centers of Yasouj city in the number of 314 people who voluntarily declared their readiness to participate in this research. In this study, based on the formula proposed by Colin (2015), 20 people were considered for each observable variable in the model, and considering the number of 5 observable variables, the minimum sample size was estimated to be 100 people; However, in order to prevent possible dropout and distorted data, among 314 divorced people, 202 people were selected to participate in the research by observing the inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria. The criteria for the participants to enter the research were: 1) women divorced and in the over 18 years old and less than 55 years old, 2) married only once, 3) less than three years since the divorce. 4) desire to participate in research, 5) have at least one child. Also, the participants were free to participate in the survey and they were assured of confidentiality of personal information.

**1-Perceived Stress Scale (PSS):** Cohen et al.'s (1983) Perceived Stress Scale is used to measure perceived general stress in the past month. This scale includes questions about a person's thoughts and feelings about stressful events, as well as how to control, overcome and cope with psychological pressure and experienced stress. This scale includes 14 questions with 5 options with a Likert scale of 1 to 5 points. Questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13 are scored inversely. The lowest score is 14 and the highest score is 70. Perceived



stress scale has 2 subscales. A) The subscale of negative perception of stress (perceived helplessness) which includes items 1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 12 and 14. b) The subscale of positive perception of stress (perceived self-efficacy), which includes items 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 13, which are scored in reverse (Cohen et al., 1983). A higher score indicates more perceived stress. In relation to the psychometric properties of this scale, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.84, 0.85, 0.86 and the retest reliability was 0.85 (Cohen et al., 1983). The construct validity coefficient of this scale was 0.63 using a simple correlation calculation with a question created by the researcher. In the research of Sephond et al. (2015), the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.80. Also, in the research of Akbarvand, Mirhashmi and Akbar Dost (1401), the reliability of this questionnaire with Cronbach's alpha method for the subscale of negative perception (helplessness) equals 0.86 and positive perception (self-efficacy) equals 0.87 and for the whole questionnaire equals 0.93. Is obtained. In this study, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the total perceived stress index was 0.84.

**2-The scale of liberation from the previous relationship:** Liberation from the previous relationship is a component of the adjustment scale after divorce which was made by (Fisher and Bierhaus, 2007). This sub-scale has 22 questions (questions: 10, 12, 17, 25, 30, 41, 43, 49, 51, 57, 59, 64, 66, 71, 76, 77, 80, 82, 86, 91, 99) that the questions (10, 12, 43, 49, 57, 91) are marked inversely. The questions of this questionnaire are graded using the Likert method in a range from 1 to 5, respectively from 1 (always), 2 (most of the time), 3 (sometimes), 4 (rarely), 5 (never). High scores indicate less liberation from the previous relationship and low scores indicate higher liberation from the previous relationship. Getting rid of the previous relationship means getting rid of the emotional relationship and living together with the ex-spouse (Fisher and Bierhaus, 2007). The creators of this scale have reported the reliability of the mentioned subscale by Cronbach's alpha method for the subscale of getting rid of the previous relationship as 0.92 (Fisher and Bierhaus, 2007). In another study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for getting rid of the previous relationship was 0.91, which indicates a high degree of its overall stability (Assanjrani et al., 2018). In addition, Salanbakan et al. (2015) showed that getting out of a previous relationship with self-anger ( $p = 0.05, 0.21$ ), separation sadness (0.58), social trust (0.52) and social value (0.48) have a significant relationship, which is a sign of high validity. Also, Gonzales et al. (2017) showed in a research that low release from a previous relationship has a positive relationship with depression, anxiety and stress and a negative relationship with life satisfaction. In this study, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the total separation index from the previous relationship was obtained as 0.82.

**3-The measure of sadness caused by separation:** The sadness caused by separation is known as a component of the adjustment scale after divorce by Fisher and Bierhaus (2007). This subscale has 24 questions (2, 7, 11, 16, 18, 24, 29, 36, 40, 42, 44, 48, 50, 56, 58, 65, 75, 81, 87, 89, 90, 94, 96, 98) that question (24) is graded in reverse. The questions of this questionnaire are graded by the Likert method in a range from 1 to 5, respectively from 1 (always), 2 (most of the time), 3 (sometimes), 4 (rarely), 5 (never). High scores indicate high sadness and low scores indicate lower sadness caused by the previous relationship. The symptoms of grief refer to the mental state in a person that is caused by

the loss of something important or the loss of a loved one (Fisher and Bierhaus, 2007). The makers of this scale have reported the reliability of the entire subscale as 0.87 using Cronbach's alpha method (Fisher and Bierhaus, 2007). In the research of Selanbakan et al. (2015), the reliability of the sub-scale of sadness caused by separation was obtained using Cronbach's alpha method (0.94). In another study, Asanjrani et al. (2018) Cronbach's alpha coefficient for separation sadness was 0.89, which indicates a high degree of overall stability. In their research, Asanjrani et al. (2018) showed that there is a negative relationship between the sadness caused by separation and general health and life satisfaction, and its validity is different. Also, in a research, Salanbekawa et al. (2015) reported the correlation between sadness caused by separation with liberation from the previous relationship (0.58) and with self-anger (0.80), which shows the validity of the construct. It is above it. In this study, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the total index of sadness caused by separation was 0.87.

#### **4- The scale of the quality of parental participation (quality of joint communication):**

This index was designed by Constance and Aarons (1981) to measure the amount of interactions that are only related to the obligations and responsibilities of raising children, and it has ten items and two conflict sub-indices (items 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) and support (Articles 1, 2, 3, 4). The items of this index are scored on a 5-point Likert scale (never = 1 to always = 5) and the range of scores varies from 10 to 50. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients have been reported for the sub-indices of conflict (0.88 for women and 0.89 for men) and support (0.74 for women and 0.75 for men) (Constance and Aarons, 1991). Varschi and Borsik (2005) reported that verbal aggression in the conflict tactics scale (Strash et al., 1996) has a positive relationship with the conflict subscale, but has a negative relationship with the support subscale. Also, the total Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this index was 0.93 for women and 0.92 for men, which indicates a high degree of overall stability of this scale (Constance and Aarons, 1981). In another study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the conflict sub-indices were 0.94 and 0.87, and for the whole index it was 0.93 for women and 0.92 for men, which indicates a high degree of overall stability. (Ferraro et al., 2018). In addition, Ferraro et al. (2018) showed that satisfaction with the divorce decree (Shet and Braver, 1996) has a positive relationship with the conflict subscale and a negative relationship with the support subscale. Also, in this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the conflict sub-indices were 0.77 and support 0.86, and the total reliability coefficient of the joint parental relationship quality index was 80.00. In this study, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the total quality index of parental involvement was 0.79.

In this research, after receiving the necessary permits and coordinating with the welfare managers of Yasouj city in order to select the desired sample, a notice with the theme of participating in this research project was distributed and installed in the Baran counseling center and other counseling centers of this city (public and private). After providing the necessary explanations about the objectives of the research, questionnaires were distributed to women who are divorced. Of course, before presenting the questionnaires and collecting the information, the target sample was individually informed about the goals and strengths of the research, and the necessary communication was made with them. established After obtaining the consent of all the sample members, the

questionnaires were presented to the subjects to complete them. This work was done individually, and in case of any ambiguity while answering the questionnaires, the necessary explanations were provided to the subject in the framework of how to implement the relevant questionnaires. It should be noted that the data collection process started in November 1401, and after 11 months (October 2023), 202 people responded to the research questionnaires. Also, if the participants wanted, their e-mail addresses were received so that they would know the results of the research. The obtained data were entered into the SPSS24 software for analysis, in order to analyze the data, descriptive statistics methods were used to obtain the mean, standard deviation and check the normality of the data. to use this software; And then, in the inferential statistics section, AMOS24 software was used to obtain Pearson's correlation coefficient and path analysis of structural equations.

## Results

202 women participated in the present study with an average age of 35.12 and a standard deviation of 6.58. In this study, 93 people (46%) of the participants of the experimental group have diploma and associate degrees, 58 people (28.07%) have bachelor's degrees, 27 people (13.04%) have master's degrees and 24 people (11/09) percent) had a doctorate degree. In addition, according to the number of children, 105 people (52%) had one child, 67 people (33.02) had two children, and 30 people (14.09%) had three children. Also, the average, standard deviation, Pearson correlation coefficient matrix, skewness, kurtosis and Kolmogorov-Smirnov scores of the research variables are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Descriptive information, correlation matrix, skewness, kurtosis and Kolmogorov-Smirnov variables of the research (202 people).

	Mean	SD	Skewn ess	Elonga tion	k-s test		correlation matrix			
					statis tic	sig	Confl ict	release	stress	sadn ess
conflict	29/55	8/35	- 0/05	- 0/45	0/50	0/20	1			
release	91/06	8/38	- 0/03	-0/26	0/52	0/20	0/37 **	1		
perceive d stress	48/75	8/48	0/5	-0/24	0/61	0/06	0/28 **	0/69* *	1	
Sadness	95/04	7/42	-0/06	-0/21	0/59	0/64	0/32 **	0/70* *	0/40* *	1

\*p< 0/05, \*\*p< 0/01

As Table 1 shows, between the quality scores of parental participation and release from the previous relationship ( $r=0.37$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), between the perceived stress and the quality of parental participation ( $r=0.28$ ). ,  $p < 0.01$ ), there is a significant relationship between the quality of parental participation and grief caused by separation ( $r = 0.28$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This table shows that between the scores of getting rid of the previous relationship and perceived stress ( $r= 0.69$ ,  $p< 0.01$ ), sadness caused by separation ( $r= 0.70$ ,  $p< 0.01$ ), and there is a significant relationship between perceived stress scores and sadness caused by separation ( $r=0.40$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). In the following for review The mediating role of sadness



caused by separation and perceived stress in the relationship between the quality of parental involvement and separation from the previous relationship in divorced women with children The statistical method of path analysis structural equation modeling was used in the software environment (AMOS24). Before using this test, the statistical assumptions were checked. By checking the coefficient of skewness and elongation and the Kolmogorov-Smirinov test, it was found that the assumption of normality was met in all research variables; That is, our data is subject to normal distribution in all variables. In addition, the results showed that Watson camera statistics was equal to 1/63; according to That this statistic is in the range of 1/5 to 2/5 desirability, That is, It can be said that the default of independence of the residuals and errors is established. Also, whatever amount The higher the tolerance (closer to 1), the lower the degree of collinearity; in this study, the tolerance of predictor and mediator variables is between 0/66 and 0.84 was calculated, which indicates a favorable collinearity situation. The results of the analyzes in Figure 2 show that there is a good fit between the data and the model.

**Figure 2.** The standard final model of the mediating role of sadness caused by separation and perceived stress in the relationship between the quality of parental involvement and release from the previous relationship.

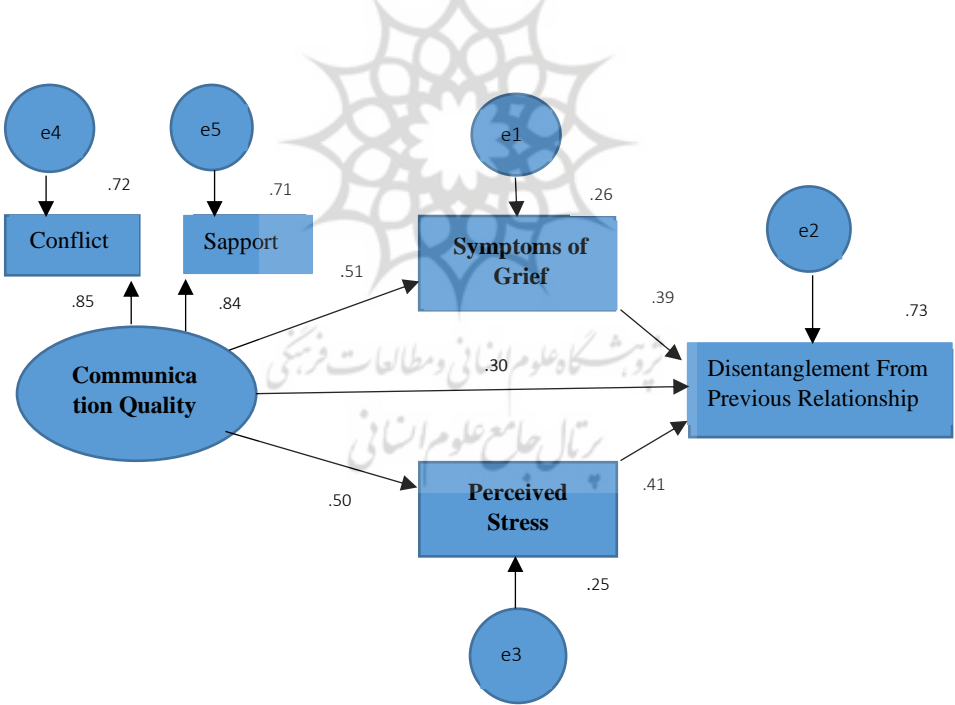


Table 3: The obtained values, description and test types

Test type	description	acceptable values	The obtained values
CAMIN/DF	chi-square	<3	<b>2/80</b>
RMSEA	The square root of the approximation error	<0/1	<b>5/8</b>
GFI	Adjusted fitness index	> 0/90	<b>0/98</b>
NFI	Normalized fit index	> 0/90	<b>0/96</b>
CFI	Comparative fit index	> 0/90	<b>0/98</b>
AGFI	Adjusted goodness of fit index	> 0/90	<b>0/91</b>
RMR			<b>2/81</b>

According to Table 3, the root mean square index of approximation error (RAMSEA) had an acceptable value and other fit indices were all at a suitable level; therefore, the model fit indices show that the investigated model has a good fit. Table 3 shows its indirect and significant paths.

Table 3. Indirect and significant paths of the mediating role of sadness caused by separation and perceived stress in the relationship between collaborative parental conflict and release from the previous relationship.

Table 4: the indirect effect of variables

variable	path	sig
Conflict/participatory support → perceived stress → release from the previous relationship	0/24	<b>0/001</b>
Conflict/participatory support → sadness → release from the previous relationship	0/23	<b>0/001</b>

As Table 4 shows, the indirect effect of parental support/conflict on getting rid of the previous relationship with the mediation of sadness caused by separation is 0.23, which is significant based on the bootstrap test ( $P < 0/01$ ). Also, the indirect effect of the quality of parental involvement on getting rid of the previous relationship with the mediation of perceived stress has been found to be 0.24, which is significant based on the bootstrap test ( $P < 0/01$ ). Table 4 shows its direct and significant paths.

Table 4. Indirect and significant paths of the mediating role of sadness caused by separation and perceived stress in the relationship between collaborative parental conflict and release from the previous relationship.

**Table 5:** direct and significant paths

<b>variable</b>	<b>path</b>	<b>sig</b>	<b>Lower limit</b>	<b>Upper limit</b>	<b>statistic (C.R)</b>
Quality of shared communication → Sadness caused by separation	0/51	0/001	0/37	0/63	<b>7/09</b>
Quality of shared communication → perceived stress	0/50	0/001	0/39	0/61	<b>7/08</b>
Quality of shared communication → release from the previous relationship	0/30	0/001	0/19	0/39	<b>4/95</b>
Sadness caused by separation → release from the previous relationship	0/39	0/002	0/25	0/46	<b>8/51</b>
perceived stress → release from the previous relationship	0/40	0/001	0/28	0/52	<b>8/69</b>

As Table 5 shows, the direct effect of the quality of parental involvement on grief caused by separation (0.51 percent), the direct effect of the quality of parental involvement on perceived stress (0.50 percent), the direct effect of the quality of involvement Parenthood on grief and sadness caused by separation (0.30 percent), the direct effect of grief and sorrow caused by separation on getting rid of the previous relationship (0.39 percent) and the direct effect of perceived stress on getting rid of the previous relationship ( 0.51 percent) which is significant based on bootstrap test ( $P < 0.01$ ). Therefore, all significant direct paths are reported. Also, as you can see in Figure 2, 0.73 percent of the release from the previous relationship is predicted by our proposed model.

## Discussion

The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the mediating role of grief and sadness caused by separation and perceived stress in the quality of parental participation and release from the previous relationship in divorced women with children in Yasouj city. The current research method is correlation and structural equation modeling analysis method (path analysis). The results showed that the two variables of perceived stress and sadness caused by separation had an indirect and significant effect on the relationship between the quality of parental involvement and release from the previous relationship. This finding is in agreement with the research findings of Hardesty et al. (2019); Ilhan (2020); Konstam et al. (2016) and Oyar and Yildirim (2022) are aligned. Thus, research indicates that when people get divorced and have children, they experience a secondary stress factor in the adjustment process after divorce. In other words, the involvement of parents in the collaborative parental conflict pattern through increasing the level of perceived stress causes incompatibility and liberation from the previous relationship. In order to explain this finding, it can be said that when parents are involved with their children, it seems that parenting roles take away the necessary context from the person to deal with the mourning process of the previous relationship. In turn, the length of time to reach mental divorce as the last stage slows down and delays the

divorce process, especially if the parents are involved in a new relationship and a new marriage, which makes the process even more difficult.

Another finding of this research was the significant direct effect of the quality of the joint relationship on getting rid of the previous relationship. The results of this hypothesis are in line with the findings of the research conducted by Joyce (2016), van der Waal et al. (2019), Staliniko et al. (2022), Lamela et al. Regarding the explanation of this finding, it was concluded that the presence of behaviors indicating intimacy in different dimensions and the quality of interaction and good listening can be effective in strengthening the feeling of security and hope for the future. Therefore, a person's attention to the present instead of dealing with the previous relationship and the sense of self-confidence in creating and nurturing the relationship can play an important and essential role in facilitating the release from the previous relationship. The confirmation of this claim is the findings of Faq's research, which indicated that joint parenting has an effect on compatibility and agreement among families, and on the contrary, open conflict between parents leads to direct, obviously aggressive or negative exchanges between parents, and compatibility and It endangers the correct liberation from the previous relationship. As a result, intense emotions related to leaving a previous relationship (anger, sadness, betrayal, revenge) are related to parental involvement. In this regard and in support of this claim previous research findings suggest that post-divorce incompatibility can have profound and negative effects on mothers' parenting. If couples remain emotionally cold and unfeeling, this can have a negative impact on children, leading to behavioral and emotional problems (Cummings Davies, 2002). Children may learn negative behaviors from their parents and repeat these behaviors in their future relationships (Katz Woodin, 2002).

The findings of this study highlight the intricate dynamics between parental involvement, emotional distress, and the challenges faced by divorced women with children. Specifically, the mediating roles of sadness resulting from separation and perceived stress underscore the emotional toll that divorce can exert on mothers. This aligns with previous research indicating that the psychological impact of divorce, including feelings of sadness and stress, can significantly influence parenting quality (Amato, 2000; Cummings Davies, 2002).

Higher levels of parental involvement are often associated with better outcomes for children; however, when a mother experiences significant emotional distress, her ability to engage positively with her children may diminish. The mediating effects observed in this study suggest that as mothers navigate their feelings of sadness and stress post-separation, these emotions can detract from their capacity to provide a nurturing environment. This finding is consistent with the work of McLanahan and Sandefur (1994), who noted that emotional well-being is crucial for effective parenting after divorce.

## Conclusion

According to the obtained findings, it can be concluded that the low quality of shared communication (high conflict and low support) can cause people not to let go of their

previous relationship by increasing stress and sadness caused by separation. It should be mentioned that humans are the result of relationships, and as mentioned before, the quality of parental involvement predicts the psychological well-being of people after divorce, in addition to getting rid of the previous relationship. Parents who are involved in complex divorces face adjustment problems such as aggression, great sadness, and withdrawal from important people in life, perceived stress and stress-related diseases, such as high blood pressure. The sadness caused by the divorce process will affect the functional aspects of his life for a long time, including raising children and the relationship with his new wife. In other hand the results emphasize the need for targeted interventions that address both the emotional health of divorced mothers and their parenting practices. Support systems that reduce perceived stress and help mothers process their sadness could enhance parental involvement and ultimately benefit children's adjustment to divorce (Buchanan et al., 1996). This suggests that mental health resources should be integrated into divorce support services to foster healthier family dynamics post-separation.

Regarding the practical and research suggestions of this research, the following can be mentioned. Counselors and experts in the field of divorce should keep in mind the role of parental participation variables and its strengthening in divorce counseling sessions and because it can have an effective role in accelerating the release of a person from a previous relationship. Considering educational programs in the justice and welfare of the provinces to educate parents after divorce and participate in parenting has an important role in strengthening the mental health of divorced people. It is necessary for welfare counseling centers and the country's psychology and counseling system organization to hold specialized training courses for their experts on how to deal with and face the unease of psychological divorce process. It is suggested that the role of cultural, social, and economic context as well as the main families in the process of getting rid of the previous relationship should be addressed in future researches. It is necessary to carry out qualitative research in order to better understand the variables with in-depth interviews as well as an intervention to facilitate the adjustment process after divorce for couples. The following limitations can be mentioned in this research. The statistical population is limited to the city of Yasouj and the results cannot be generalized to other cultures. The role of family of origin, economic and spiritual factors in adjusting after divorce and facilitating the process of getting rid of the previous relationship has not been determined in this research.

### **Disclosure Statements**

According to the authors' statements, this article has no financial support or conflict of interest.

### **ORCID**

orcid: 0000-0001-7739-0316



## References

- Ahrons, C. R. (1994). *The good divorce: Keeping your family together when your marriage comes apart*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Ahrons, C. R. (2007). Family ties after divorce: Long-term implications for children. *Family process*, 46(1), 53-65. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2006.00191.x>
- Ahrons, C. R., & Rodgers, R. H. (1987). *Divorced families: Meeting the challenges of divorce and remarriage*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co
- Ahrons, Constance R. (1981). "The continuing coparental relationship between divorced spouses." *American journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 51,3,415. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1111/j.1939-0025.1981.tb01390.x>
- Al-Bahrani, M. A. (2021). Post-Divorce experience within Arab context: Gender differences. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 11(3), 54-58. doi: <https://doi.org/10.18178/ijssh.2021.11.3.1039>
- Alpaslan, A. H. N. (2018). Reframing the death of the marital relationship as an opportunity for growth: A programme for facilitating post-divorce adjustment. *Social Work*, 54(3), 308-326. <https://doi.org/10.15270/52-2-651>
- Amato, P. R. (2000). The consequences of divorce for adults and children. *Journal of Marriage and Family*\*, 62(4), 1269-1287. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.01269.x>
- Amato, P. R. (2001). The impact of family formation change on the cognitive, social, and emotional well-being of the next generation. *Future of Children*\*, 11(2), 75-96. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1602692>
- Asanjarani, F., Jazayeri, R., Fatehizade, M., Etemadi, O., & De Mol, J. (2018). The effectiveness of fisher's rebuilding group intervention on divorce adjustment and general health of Iranian divorced women. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 59(2), 108-122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2017.1375334>
- Asanjarani, F., Jazayeri, R., Fatehizade, M., Etemadi, O., & De Mol, J. (2017). Examining the Reliability and Validity of the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale: The Persian Version. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 1, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2017.1402653>
- Beckmeyer, J.J., Markham, M.S., & Troilo, J. (2018). Postdivorce coparenting relationships and parent-youth relationships: are repartnership and parent-youth contact moderators? *Journal of Family Issues*, 40(5), 613-636. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X18821395>
- Buchanan, C. M., Maccoby, E. E., Dornbusch, S. M. (1996). Adolescents' adjustment during and after divorce: The role of parental involvement. *Journal of Family Psychology*\*, 10(4), 452-470. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.10.4.452>
- Cabılar, B. Ö., & Yılmaz, A. E. (2022). Divorce and post-divorce adjustment: Definitions, models and assessment of adjustment. *Psikiyatri Guncel Yaklasimlar*, 14(1), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.18863/pgy.910766>

- Can Y, Aksu NB (2016) Boşanma sürecinde ve sonrasında kadın. *Elektronik Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 15, 888-902. <https://doi.org/10.18863/pgy.910767>
- Chiang, S. C., & Bai, S. (2024). Bidirectional associations between parenting stress and child psychopathology: The moderating role of maternal affection. *Development and Psychopathology*, 36(4), 1810-1820. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00723.x>
- Choi, J.-K., & Becher, E. H. (2019). Supportive coparenting, parenting stress, harsh parenting, and child behavior problems in nonmarital families. *Family process*, 58(2), 404–417. <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12373>
- Cohen ,S., Kamarak ,T.& Mermelstein, R.(1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health Society Behavior*, 24(4), 385-396. <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>
- Cummings, E. M., Davies, P. T. (2002). Effects of marital conflict on children: Recent advances and future directions. *\*Current Directions in Psychological Science\**, 11(3), 104-108. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.00187>
- Demby, S. (2017). Commentary on entrenched postseparation parenting disputes: The role of interparental hatred. *Family Court Review*, 55(3), 417-423. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12286>
- Demby, S. L. (2017). Commentary on entrenched postseparation parenting disputes: The role of interparental hatred [Comment/Reply]. *Family Court Review*, 55(3), 417–423. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12286>
- Demirbaş A (2018) Güncel tartışmalarla yoksulluk nafakası. *İstanbul Medipol Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, 5, 219-235. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00723.x>
- Ferraro, A. J., & Lucier-Greer, M. (2022). The case for multidimensional co-parenting behaviors as sources of chronic stress: understanding pathways to mental health symptomology among divorced and separating adults. *Journal of Family Nursing*, 28(4), 353-367. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10748407221124235>
- Ferraro, A. J., Lucier-Greer, M., & Oehme, K. (2018). Psychometric evaluation of the multidimensional co-parenting scale for dissolved relationships. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 27, 2780-2796. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-1124-2>
- Ferraro, A. J., Petren, R. E., & Pasley, K. (2019). Patterns of parental interactions after divorce and individual well-being. *Journal of Child & Family Studies*, 28(5), 1413–1424. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-019-01373-0>
- Fisher, B. F & Bierhaus,j,(2007). Facilitators Manual for Rebuilding When Your Relationship ends. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-016-0139-y>
- Guyette, E., Wilkins-Clark, R., Ferraro, A. J., Markham, M. S., Beckmeyer, J. J., & Brimhall, A. (2025). Bridging parental conflict: Findings from a parent education course developed by family therapists working with high-conflict coparents. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 47(1), 38-50. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-024-09698-9>
- Hardesty, J. L., Ogolsky, B. G., Raffaelli, M., & Whittaker, A. (2019). Relationship dynamics and divorcing mothers' adjustment: Moderating role of marital violence,

- negative life events, and social support. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 36(11-12), 3651-3672. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407519833178>
- Huff, S. C., Markham, M. S., Larkin, N. R., & Bauer, E. R. (2020). Therapy for divorcing couples: Managing the transition out of the Relationship. *The Handbook of Systemic Family Therapy*, 3, 295-316. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119438519.ch72>
- İlhan, Ü. D. (2020). 21. yüzyılda çalışma hayatında bir damgalama ve sosyal dışlanma unsuru olmaya devam eden boşanma olgusu: Kadın çalışanlar üzerine nitel bir analiz. *İzmir İktisat Dergisi*, 35(3), 511-530. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-016-0139-y>
- Jam, F. G., Maarefvand, M., Hosseinzadeh, S., & Khubchandani, J. (2021). The effectiveness of a co-parenting intervention on parenting stress among divorced Iranian adults. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 130, 106265. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2021.106265>
- Johnson, I.O., Litland, A.S., & Hallstrom, I.K. (2018). Living in two worlds - children's experience after their parents' divorce - a qualitative study. *Journal of pediatric nursing*, 43, 44-51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedn.2018.09.003>
- Joyce, A. N. (2016). High-conflict divorce: A form of child neglect. *Family Court Review*, 54(4), 642-656. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12249>
- Katz, L. F., Woodin, E. M. (2002). Interparental conflict and children's adjustment: An integrative review of the literature. *\*Journal of Family Psychology\**, 16(3), 328-346. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.16.3.328>
- Klemra, E., Brooks, F.M., Chester, K.L., Magnusson, J., & Spencer N. (2017). Selfharm in adolescence: protective health assets in the family, school and community. *International Journal of Public Health* 62, 631-638. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00038-016-0900-2>
- Konstam, V., Karwin, S., Curran, T., Lyons, M. Celen-Demirtaş, S. (2016). Stigma and divorce: A relevant lens for emerging and young adult women? *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 57(3), 173-194. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2016.1150149>
- Kunst, F. (2022). *The effect of divorce and co-parenting on emotional problems: The role of conflict at home and resilience* (Master's thesis). <https://studenttheses.uu.nl/handle/20.500.12932/427>
- Leopold, T. (2018). Gender differences in the consequences of divorce: A study of multiple outcomes. *Demography*, 55(3), 769-797. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-018-0667-6>
- Lin, I. F., & Brown, S. L. (2020). Consequences of later-life divorce and widowhood for adult well-being: A call for the convalescence model. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 12(2), 264-277. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12366>
- Marcussen, J., Hounsgard, L., Bruun, P., Golles Laursen, M., Thuen, F., & Wilson, R. (2019). The Divorced Family-Focused Care Model: A nursing model to enhance child and family mental health and well-being of doubly bereaved children following parental divorce and subsequent parental cancer and death. *Journal of Family Nursing*, 25(3), 419-446. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10748407221124235>

- McLanahan, S., Sandefur, G. (1994). *\*Growing Up with a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps\**. Harvard University Press.
- Mejia-Hans, B. (2024). *Generational Drama: The Legacy of Parental Conflict on Attachment Style and Conflict Management Skills in Adult Children of Divorce* (Doctoral dissertation). <https://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/193012>
- Nilsen, S.A., Breivik, K., Wold, B., & Boe, T. (2018). Divorce and family structure in Norway: Associations with adolescent mental health. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 59(3), 175-194. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2017.1402655>
- Nilüfer, U. Y. A. R., & YILDIRIM, İ. (2023). Post-Divorce Emotion/Social Adjustment of Women: Effectiveness of a Psycho-Education Program Based on Cognitive Behavioral Theory. *Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Journal*, 13(70), 330-344. <https://doi.org/10.17066/tpdrd.1265738.5>
- Paclikova, K., Veselska, Z.D., Bobakova, D.F., Palfiova, M., & Geckova, A.M. (2019). What role do family composition and functioning play in emotional and behavioural problems among adolescent boys and girls? *Journal of Public Health*, 64(5), 209 -217. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00038-018-1171-x>
- Petren, R. E., Ferraro, A. J., Zimmermann, M. L., Anthony, M., & Pasley, K. (2021). A cross-lagged panel model of coparental interaction and father involvement shortly after divorce. *Family Relations*, 70(3), 808–822. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12508>
- Pilinszki, A., Bata, E., Demjén, A., Gervai, J., & Danis, I. (2025). Coparenting Relationship Scale (CRS): Validation and Psychometric Properties of the Hungarian Version. *European Journal of Mental Health*, 20, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.5708/EJMH.20.2025.0037>
- Sheets, V. L., & Braver, S. L. (1996). Gender differences in satisfaction with divorce settlements. *Family Relations*, 15, 336-342. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/585506>
- Slanbekova, G. K., Kabakova, M. P., Duisenbekov, D. D., Mun, M. V., & Kudaibergenova, S. K. (2015). Testing of the "Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale" Questionnaire for Russian Sample in Kazakhstan. *Asian Social Science*, 11(6), 83. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ass.v11n6p83>
- Smyth, B. M., & Moloney, L. J. (2017). Entrenched postseparation parenting disputes: The role of interparental hatred? *Family Court Review*, 55(3), 404–416. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12294>
- Stolnicu, A., De Mol, J., Hendrick, S., & Gaugue, J. (2022). Healing the Separation in High-Conflict Post-divorce Co-parenting. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 913447. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.913447>
- Straus, M. A., Hamby, S. L., Boney-McCoy, S., & Sugarman, D. B. (1996). The revised conflict tactics scales (CTS2) development and preliminary psychometric data. *Journal of family issues*, 17(3), 283-316. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019251396017003001>
- Tullius, J. M., De Kroon, M. L., Almansa, J., & Reijneveld, S. A. (2022). Adolescents' mental health problems increase after parental divorce, not before, and persist until

- adulthood: a longitudinal TRAILS study. *European child & adolescent psychiatry*, 31(6), 969-978. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-020-01715-0>
- Van der Wal, R. C., Finkenauer, C., & Visser, M. M. (2019). Reconciling mixed findings on children's adjustment following high-conflict divorce. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28(2), 468-478. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-1277-z>
- Van Dijk, R., Van Der Valk, I. E., Deković, M., & Branje, S. (2020). A meta-analysis on interparental conflict, parenting, and child adjustment in divorced families: Examining mediation using meta-analytic structural equation models. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 79, 101861. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2020.101861>
- Vareschi, C. G., & Bursik, K. (2005). Attachment style differences in the parental interactions and adaptation patterns of divorcing parents. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 42(3-4), 15-32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2020.101861>
- Wang, D., Choi, J.-K., Shin, J., & Reddish, L. (2021). Longitudinal effects of co-parenting for successful kids: Using mixed-effects models. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 30(1), 220-229. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-020-01866-3>
- Wilkins-Clark, R. E., Wu, Z., & Markham, M. S. (2024). Experiences of post-divorce parentification and parental affection: Implications for emerging adults' well-being. *Family Relations*, 73(4), 2690-2708. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.13013> +

