

## Parental Overprotection and Youth Anger Expression: The Mediating Role of Experiential Avoidance

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The objective of this study was to examine the mediating role of experiential avoidance in the relationship between parental overprotection and anger expression among adolescents and young adults.

**Methods and Materials:** This study used a descriptive–correlational design with a sample of 400 adolescents and young adults from Turkey, determined using the Krejcie and Morgan sampling table. Participants completed the State–Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2 (STAXI-2) to assess anger expression, the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (AAQ-II) to measure experiential avoidance, and the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) to assess parental overprotection. Data were analyzed using SPSS-27 for descriptive and correlational analyses, and AMOS-21 for structural equation modeling (SEM).

**Findings:** The results indicated that parental overprotection was positively correlated with both experiential avoidance ( $r = .42, p < .001$ ) and anger expression ( $r = .39, p < .001$ ). Experiential avoidance was also positively correlated with anger expression ( $r = .46, p < .001$ ). SEM analyses revealed that parental overprotection significantly predicted experiential avoidance ( $b = 0.47, \beta = .42, p < .001$ ), and experiential avoidance significantly predicted anger expression ( $b = 0.62, \beta = .44, p < .001$ ). The direct path from parental overprotection to anger expression was significant ( $b = 0.28, \beta = .21, p < .001$ ), and the indirect effect through experiential avoidance was also significant ( $b = 0.29, \beta = .18, p < .001$ ).

**Conclusion:** The findings suggest that experiential avoidance partially mediates the relationship between parental overprotection and anger expression, highlighting avoidance as a key transdiagnostic mechanism.

**Keywords:** Parental overprotection; experiential avoidance; anger expression; adolescents

## 1. Introduction

Parental behaviors and the quality of parent–child interactions are among the most influential determinants of youth socioemotional development. Within the spectrum of parenting styles, parental overprotection has emerged as a particularly critical factor that may inhibit autonomy, foster dependency, and contribute to emotional dysregulation in children and adolescents (Mounts & Allen, 2019; Wang & Fang, 2024). Overprotection often involves excessive control, intrusive monitoring, and restriction of independent behaviors, which can undermine self-efficacy and increase vulnerability to maladaptive coping strategies (Xu & Yan, 2022; Zhang, 2024). Although protective parenting may stem from parents’ concern for safety and well-being, an overprotective style tends to communicate mistrust, limit opportunities for self-regulation, and intensify internal conflicts during adolescence, a developmental period when identity formation and autonomy are crucial. These dynamics may have significant implications for emotional experiences such as anger, which is a core but often misunderstood emotion during youth.

Anger expression in adolescence is a complex process shaped by both individual differences and contextual influences. The literature highlights that trait anger and maladaptive anger regulation strategies are linked with a range of psychological problems, including depression and interpersonal difficulties (Crisan & Nechita, 2021; Grădinaru et al., 2022). The failure to appropriately express or regulate anger can lead to either externalizing behaviors, such as aggression, or internalizing difficulties, such as withdrawal and rumination (Shi et al., 2019). Given that family environments are the primary socialization context for emotion regulation, overprotective parenting may contribute to either suppression or uncontrolled expression of anger. For example, excessive parental control often reduces adolescents’ opportunities to learn adaptive emotion regulation, thereby predisposing them to frustration intolerance and maladaptive coping (Leal et al., 2023; Long & Prikhidko, 2024). The question, then, is not only whether parental overprotection influences anger expression, but also through which mechanisms this relationship unfolds.

One candidate mechanism that has received increasing attention is experiential avoidance. Experiential avoidance refers to a tendency to avoid, suppress, or control unwanted internal experiences—such as negative emotions, thoughts, or bodily sensations—even when doing so creates additional psychological harm (Cunha et al., 2016). This construct is

central to the psychological flexibility model, and a growing body of evidence indicates its critical role in mediating the effects of dysfunctional parenting on mental health outcomes (Castilho et al., 2017; Lewis & Loverich, 2019). For instance, adolescents exposed to harsh or inconsistent parenting often rely on experiential avoidance to cope with distress, which paradoxically strengthens emotional reactivity and leads to poorer adjustment (Lin et al., 2023; Stone et al., 2024). Within this framework, overprotective parenting may create environments where children are discouraged from experiencing or expressing difficult emotions, thereby fostering reliance on avoidance strategies that ultimately heighten maladaptive anger expression.

Empirical studies have begun to establish these connections. Research demonstrates that negative or intrusive parenting styles are associated with increased experiential avoidance in adolescents, which in turn predicts addictive behaviors and emotional dysregulation (Basharpoor et al., 2024; Lee & Bong, 2015). Similarly, studies show that parental psychological control and problem drinking significantly heighten children’s experiential avoidance, further linking early adverse family environments with emotional difficulties in emerging adulthood (Rehman & Asghar, 2015; Zhang, 2024). In addition, attachment-focused studies highlight that insecure parental bonds promote avoidance-based coping, reinforcing maladaptive patterns of dealing with anger and interpersonal conflict (Messina et al., 2023; Yoo & Córdova, 2022). Collectively, this evidence supports the notion that experiential avoidance may serve as a key mediator between parental overprotection and anger expression.

Theoretical models of anger regulation also provide support for this mediational pathway. The systematic review by Grădinaru and colleagues underscores that anger is highly influenced by both intrapersonal strategies and external social contexts, with avoidance-based regulation consistently linked to poorer outcomes (Grădinaru et al., 2022). Similarly, studies have documented that specific beliefs about emotions—such as the idea that anger is dangerous or must be suppressed—are strongly associated with reliance on experiential avoidance strategies (Trincas et al., 2016; Wan & Savina, 2015). Adolescents raised in overprotective environments are more likely to internalize such beliefs, given that parental overprotection often restricts open emotional communication. Consequently, avoidance becomes a habitual response, reducing opportunities for adaptive anger regulation and reinforcing maladaptive expression.

Anger suppression, in particular, appears central to the interplay between overprotection and avoidance. Messina et al. demonstrated that “holding in anger” serves as a mediator between attachment insecurities and borderline personality features, highlighting how avoidance-based strategies exacerbate anger-related difficulties (Messina et al., 2023). Furthermore, studies suggest that overprotected children may display heightened physiological reactivity to stressors because they lack opportunities to develop frustration tolerance (Leal et al., 2023). This aligns with evidence showing that maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, including suppression and avoidance, significantly predict the severity of depression and other internalizing outcomes (Crisan & Nechita, 2021; Meydani et al., 2022). Taken together, these findings suggest that experiential avoidance is a critical bridge linking overprotective parenting to anger-related maladjustment.

From a developmental perspective, adolescence is particularly sensitive to the dynamics of parenting and emotional regulation. This stage is characterized by heightened emotional intensity and increased striving for autonomy. However, when autonomy is restricted through parental overprotection, adolescents may struggle to develop flexible and adaptive strategies for managing anger (Holman & Popușoi, 2020; Wolk et al., 2016). The resulting imbalance often manifests in either externalized anger (e.g., aggression, hostility) or internalized anger (e.g., suppression, resentment). Both extremes are maladaptive and may increase vulnerability to mental health problems, peer difficulties, and impaired academic performance. Importantly, research on anger coping styles in Chinese adolescents revealed that friendship quality mediates the relationship between coping styles and mental health, emphasizing the significance of both family and social contexts in shaping anger expression (Shi et al., 2019). This underscores the multifaceted pathways through which overprotection and avoidance may interact in predicting anger outcomes.

Cross-cultural research further illuminates these dynamics. Studies comparing emotion regulation strategies across Western and Eastern samples show that cultural norms regarding autonomy and family interdependence shape both parental practices and adolescent emotional responses (Wan & Savina, 2015; Yoo & Córdova, 2022). Overprotective parenting may therefore carry different implications depending on cultural context, yet the underlying mechanism of experiential avoidance appears robust across settings. For instance, research in Asian

samples indicates that parental overcontrol is consistently associated with higher levels of experiential avoidance and depressive symptoms in youth (Lin et al., 2023; Zhang, 2024). Similarly, studies in Western populations suggest that attachment-related avoidance mediates the relationship between parental dynamics and emotional dysregulation, highlighting the universality of this mechanism (Castilho et al., 2017; Stone et al., 2024).

Physiological studies also support this mediational model by linking emotion regulation strategies with biological processes. For example, vagal suppression has been shown to moderate the relationship between psychological flexibility and observed parenting behaviors, suggesting that psychophysiological regulation is intertwined with parental practices and avoidance tendencies (Zhang et al., 2019). These findings align with broader evidence indicating that experiential avoidance contributes not only to psychological but also to physiological stress reactivity, reinforcing maladaptive anger patterns. Thus, parental overprotection may contribute to both psychological and physiological vulnerabilities through its impact on avoidance.

While considerable evidence supports the link between overprotection, avoidance, and anger, gaps remain in the literature. Much prior research has focused on general emotion regulation rather than anger specifically, or has examined related outcomes such as depression and anxiety (Lin et al., 2023; Meydani et al., 2022). Moreover, existing studies have primarily explored direct effects of parenting on emotional outcomes, often neglecting the mediational role of avoidance. The present study addresses these gaps by explicitly testing experiential avoidance as a mediator between parental overprotection and anger expression in a youth sample. In doing so, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how overprotection shapes maladaptive emotional trajectories.

In summary, the literature demonstrates that parental overprotection is linked to maladaptive emotional outcomes in youth, particularly difficulties with anger expression (Long & Prikhidko, 2024; Wang & Fang, 2024). Experiential avoidance emerges as a central mechanism in this process, with evidence from attachment, parenting, and emotion regulation research converging on its mediating role (Basharpoor et al., 2024; Cunha et al., 2016; Messina et al., 2023). Building on this evidence, the present study aims to investigate the mediating effect of experiential avoidance on the relationship between parental overprotection and anger expression among Turkish adolescents and young adults.

## 2. Methods and Materials

### 2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study employed a descriptive–correlational design to examine the relationships between parental overprotection, experiential avoidance, and youth anger expression. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan sampling table, a total sample of 400 participants was determined to be adequate for the population size. Participants were recruited from various high schools and universities across Turkey using a stratified random sampling method to ensure diversity in age, gender, and educational background. All participants were informed of the study’s objectives, assured of confidentiality, and provided informed consent before participation.

### 2.2. Measures

The dependent variable, anger expression, was assessed using the State–Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2 (STAXI-2) developed by Spielberger (1999). This widely used instrument measures different facets of anger, including how it is experienced and expressed. It consists of 57 items grouped into six primary scales and several subscales: State Anger, Trait Anger (with subscales Angry Temperament and Angry Reaction), Anger Expression-Out, Anger Expression-In, Anger Control-Out, and Anger Control-In. Items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“almost never”) to 4 (“almost always”). Higher scores indicate greater frequency of anger experience or expression, depending on the subscale. The STAXI-2 has been shown to have strong psychometric properties, with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the subscales typically ranging from 0.73 to 0.95, and its validity and reliability have been confirmed across diverse populations in previous studies.

Experiential avoidance was measured with the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (AAQ-II), developed by Bond et al. (2011). This 7-item self-report instrument assesses the extent to which individuals are unwilling to experience unwanted thoughts and emotions and attempt to control or avoid them. Each item is rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“never true”) to 7 (“always true”), with higher scores indicating greater experiential avoidance and lower psychological flexibility. The AAQ-II has a unidimensional structure and has been validated across various clinical and non-clinical samples. Previous research has consistently reported acceptable internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.78\text{--}0.88$ ) and strong test–retest

reliability, as well as evidence of convergent and discriminant validity, making it the most widely used standard tool for assessing experiential avoidance.

Parental overprotection was assessed using the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) developed by Parker, Tupling, and Brown (1979). The PBI is a retrospective self-report measure of perceived parental rearing practices during the first 16 years of life and consists of 25 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (“very unlike”) to 3 (“very like”). It measures two main dimensions: Care (emotional warmth vs. coldness) and Overprotection (control, intrusion, and prevention of autonomy). The Overprotection subscale specifically reflects the extent to which parents restricted or controlled the child’s behavior. Higher scores on this subscale indicate greater perceived parental overprotection. The PBI has been widely validated internationally, with good psychometric properties, including internal consistency coefficients typically above 0.80 and evidence of construct and criterion validity. Its reliability and validity have been consistently confirmed in both clinical and non-clinical populations.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in two main stages. First, Pearson’s correlation coefficients were calculated to assess the bivariate relationships between the dependent variable (anger expression) and the independent variables (parental overprotection and experiential avoidance). These analyses were performed using SPSS version 27. Second, to test the hypothesized mediational model, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted using AMOS version 21. SEM allowed for simultaneous estimation of direct and indirect effects, and model fit was evaluated using standard indices, including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio ( $\chi^2/\text{df}$ ). Statistical significance was set at  $p < .05$ .

## 3. Findings and Results

Of the 400 participants, 221 (55.3%) were female and 179 (44.7%) were male. The age of participants ranged from 16 to 24 years, with a mean age of 19.62 years ( $SD = 2.13$ ). In terms of educational background, 142 (35.5%) were high school students, 198 (49.5%) were undergraduate students, and 60 (15.0%) were postgraduate students. Regarding marital status, 368 participants (92.0%) were single, while 32 (8.0%) were married. These demographic distributions

indicate a sample that adequately represents youth and young adults in Turkey.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 400)*

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max
Anger Expression (STAXI-2)	74.32	12.47	52	105
Experiential Avoidance (AAQ-II)	29.68	6.54	14	46
Parental Overprotection (PBI)	18.45	5.73	8	31

The descriptive statistics (Table 1) indicate that participants reported moderate levels of anger expression ( $M = 74.32$ ,  $SD = 12.47$ ) and experiential avoidance ( $M = 29.68$ ,  $SD = 6.54$ ). Perceived parental overprotection was also moderate ( $M = 18.45$ ,  $SD = 5.73$ ). The ranges of scores suggest adequate variability for all three constructs, which justifies further correlation and structural analyses.

Before conducting the main analyses, statistical assumptions were examined and confirmed. The results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test indicated that the variables did not significantly deviate from normality (anger

expression:  $D = 0.036$ ,  $p = .086$ ; experiential avoidance:  $D = 0.041$ ,  $p = .073$ ; parental overprotection:  $D = 0.033$ ,  $p = .112$ ). Additionally, skewness values ranged between  $-0.41$  and  $0.52$ , and kurtosis values ranged between  $-0.67$  and  $0.48$ , all within the acceptable range of  $\pm 1$ . Multicollinearity was also assessed, with variance inflation factor (VIF) values between  $1.12$  and  $1.47$  and tolerance values above  $0.68$ , indicating no multicollinearity concerns. These results confirmed that the assumptions for correlation and SEM analyses were adequately met.

**Table 2**

*Pearson Correlations Between Study Variables (N = 400)*

Variable	1	2	3
1. Anger Expression	–		
2. Experiential Avoidance	.46** ( $p < .001$ )	–	
3. Parental Overprotection	.39** ( $p < .001$ )	.42** ( $p < .001$ )	–

As shown in Table 2, anger expression was significantly and positively correlated with both experiential avoidance ( $r = .46$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and parental overprotection ( $r = .39$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Experiential avoidance was also significantly

associated with parental overprotection ( $r = .42$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These findings indicate that higher levels of overprotection are linked to greater reliance on avoidance strategies, which in turn are related to heightened anger expression.

**Table 3**

*Fit Indices for the Structural Equation Model*

Fit Index	$\chi^2$	df	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AGFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Model	142.36	78	1.83	.94	.91	.96	.95	.046

The results of the structural equation modeling (Table 3) show that the hypothesized model achieved a good fit to the data. The chi-square value was 142.36 with 78 degrees of freedom, yielding a ratio of  $\chi^2/df = 1.83$ , which is below the

recommended cutoff of 3. The incremental indices ( $GFI = .94$ ,  $AGFI = .91$ ,  $CFI = .96$ ,  $TLI = .95$ ) all exceeded the .90 criterion for acceptable fit, while RMSEA was .046, also within the good fit threshold.



**Table 4**

*Total, Direct, and Indirect Path Coefficients in the Structural Model*

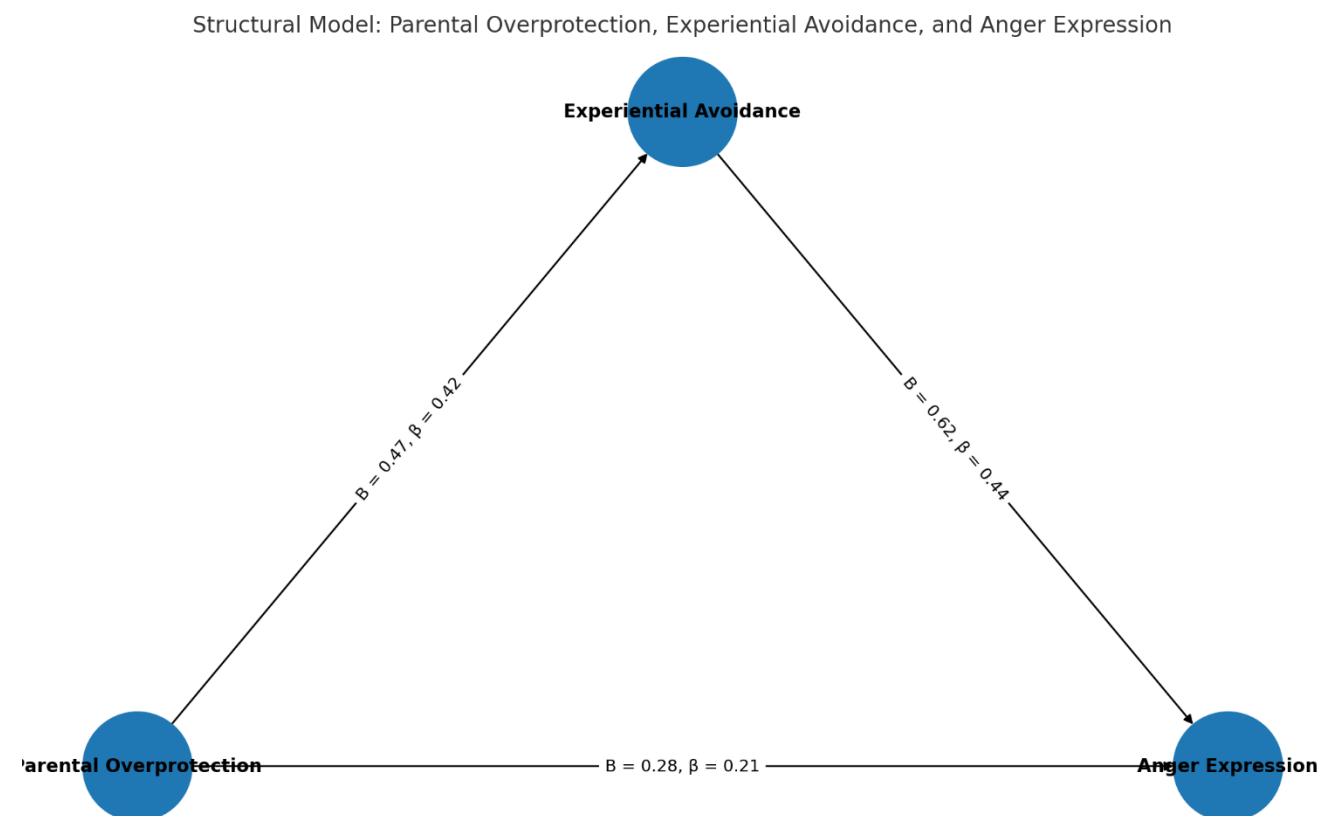
Path	b	SE	$\beta$	p
Parental Overprotection → Experiential Avoidance	0.47	0.08	.42	< .001
Experiential Avoidance → Anger Expression	0.62	0.09	.44	< .001
Parental Overprotection → Anger Expression (direct)	0.28	0.07	.21	< .001
Parental Overprotection → Anger Expression (indirect via avoidance)	0.29	0.06	.18	< .001
Parental Overprotection → Anger Expression (total)	0.57	0.08	.39	< .001

As shown in Table 4, parental overprotection significantly predicted experiential avoidance ( $b = 0.47$ ,  $\beta = .42$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and experiential avoidance significantly predicted anger expression ( $b = 0.62$ ,  $\beta = .44$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The direct path from parental overprotection to anger expression remained significant ( $b = 0.28$ ,  $\beta = .21$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Importantly, the indirect effect through experiential

avoidance was also significant ( $b = 0.29$ ,  $\beta = .18$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The total effect of parental overprotection on anger expression was  $b = 0.57$ ,  $\beta = .39$ , indicating that both direct and indirect mechanisms contributed to the outcome. These findings confirm the hypothesized mediational model, with experiential avoidance partially mediating the relationship between overprotection and anger expression.

**Figure 1**

*Model with Beta Coefficients*



#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study confirmed that parental overprotection is significantly associated with youth anger expression, and that experiential avoidance serves as a

mediating mechanism linking these two constructs. The bivariate analyses demonstrated that higher levels of perceived parental overprotection were associated with greater anger expression, while structural equation modeling highlighted the indirect pathway through experiential

avoidance. This indicates that overprotected adolescents and young adults tend to internalize avoidance-based coping styles, which subsequently heighten maladaptive patterns of anger regulation. In other words, parental overprotection contributes to the development of avoidance tendencies, which limit adaptive processing of negative emotions and increase the likelihood of anger dysregulation.

These results are consistent with previous findings showing that parental psychological control and overprotective styles are linked to maladaptive emotional outcomes, particularly difficulties in regulating anger and related emotions (Mounts & Allen, 2019; Wang & Fang, 2024). Overprotection restricts opportunities for autonomy and self-regulation, depriving adolescents of experiences in frustration tolerance and independent problem solving. The present results also align with studies demonstrating that parental psychological control predicts depressive and anxiety symptoms through increased avoidance of emotions and cognitions (Lin et al., 2023; Zhang, 2024). By extending this literature to anger expression, our study highlights the central role of experiential avoidance as a process that mediates how intrusive parenting contributes to emotional dysregulation.

The mediating role of experiential avoidance resonates with a growing body of research emphasizing its significance in emotional and behavioral adjustment. For example, Castilho et al. found that experiential avoidance mediated the relationship between attachment styles and paranoid ideation (Castilho et al., 2017), while Lewis and Loverich reported that experiential avoidance strongly predicted post-traumatic stress symptoms in family contexts (Lewis & Loverich, 2019). Similarly, Cunha and colleagues identified experiential avoidance as a central predictor of maladaptive coping in infertility contexts (Cunha et al., 2016). In line with these findings, the present study suggests that experiential avoidance is not only a generalized risk factor but also a specific mechanism through which parental overprotection intensifies anger dysregulation in youth.

Our findings also complement recent research by Basharpour et al., who demonstrated that experiential avoidance mediated the link between parenting styles and adolescents' tendencies toward internet addiction (Basharpour et al., 2024). Both studies converge on the conclusion that avoidance-based coping strategies are pivotal in explaining how parenting styles influence maladaptive outcomes. In our case, rather than behavioral addictions, the outcome of interest was maladaptive anger expression, yet the mediational process was similar. These

findings also extend the results of Lee and Bong, who found that experiential avoidance mediated the impact of childhood trauma and parental problem drinking on university students' drinking problems (Lee & Bong, 2015). Together, this evidence highlights the transdiagnostic nature of experiential avoidance, supporting its role as a bridge between adverse family dynamics and diverse emotional or behavioral problems.

The direct link observed between overprotection and anger expression is in line with theoretical frameworks of parenting and emotion socialization. Mounts and Allen noted that overprotective practices limit autonomy and promote dependency, thereby intensifying emotional reactivity (Mounts & Allen, 2019). Long and Prikhidko further observed that intensive parenting attitudes contribute to parental anger through emotion regulation difficulties (Long & Prikhidko, 2024). While their focus was on parents' own anger, our findings suggest that similar processes occur in youth: restrictive parental environments foster maladaptive emotional processing, which manifests as heightened anger expression. Additionally, Xu and Yan documented that negative parenting styles predicted poor social adjustment in university students through complex mediational chains (Xu & Yan, 2022). Our findings extend their work by emphasizing that avoidance-based coping, specifically experiential avoidance, plays a direct role in anger outcomes.

The role of avoidance as a maladaptive regulation strategy in anger has also been supported by studies exploring specific emotion regulation patterns. Grădinaru and colleagues' systematic review concluded that anger regulation is particularly vulnerable to maladaptive strategies such as suppression and avoidance (Grădinaru et al., 2022). Likewise, Crisan and Nechita showed that maladaptive regulation strategies and trait anger jointly predict depression severity (Crisan & Nechita, 2021). Our findings provide further empirical confirmation by demonstrating that experiential avoidance—an avoidance-based regulation strategy—serves as a mediational link between family dynamics and anger expression.

In addition, research on the suppression of anger offers convergent support. Messina et al. demonstrated that holding in anger mediates the relationship between attachment orientations and borderline personality features (Messina et al., 2023). Their findings, like ours, suggest that avoidance-based responses to anger exacerbate maladaptive outcomes. Similarly, Meydani and colleagues found that experiential avoidance and difficulties in emotion regulation mediated

the relationship between attachment styles and obsessive-compulsive relationship symptoms (Meydani et al., 2022). These findings underscore the idea that avoidance processes act as general mediators between interpersonal difficulties and maladaptive outcomes, which the present study confirms in relation to parental overprotection and anger.

Our results also resonate with physiological and attachment-related studies. Zhang et al. highlighted that vagal suppression moderated the relationship between psychological flexibility and observed parenting behaviors (Zhang et al., 2019), while Stone et al. documented the association between attachment, experiential avoidance, and bereavement guilt (Stone et al., 2024). Both studies emphasize that avoidance tendencies undermine adaptive emotional functioning across contexts, whether in parental interactions, grief, or in our case, anger regulation. Furthermore, Yoo and Córdova identified that intimacy with parents predicts emerging adults' social connectedness (Yoo & Córdova, 2022), implying that restrictive or overprotective parental practices may undermine such intimacy, thereby reinforcing reliance on avoidance strategies.

The study's results are also consistent with cross-cultural research highlighting the universality of avoidance as a maladaptive process. Wan and Savina found that emotion regulation strategies differed across cultural contexts, but maladaptive strategies such as avoidance consistently predicted poorer outcomes (Wan & Savina, 2015). Rehman and Asghar reported that attachment styles significantly influenced adolescents' adjustment (Rehman & Asghar, 2015), providing indirect evidence for how overprotective dynamics can foster insecure attachment and avoidance. Trincas et al. also noted that specific beliefs about emotions predicted different emotion-regulation strategies, with avoidance playing a central role in maladaptation (Trincas et al., 2016). The current findings extend these insights by illustrating that across cultural and contextual variations, experiential avoidance remains a critical mediator between parental styles and anger outcomes.

The consistency of our results with prior studies reinforces the robustness of the mediational model tested. By integrating evidence from attachment theory, parenting styles, and emotion regulation research, the study contributes to the growing literature that conceptualizes experiential avoidance as a transdiagnostic mechanism. The findings emphasize the necessity of focusing on avoidance-based coping strategies when designing interventions to address anger-related problems in adolescents. In particular,

interventions aimed at reducing experiential avoidance—such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)—may help buffer the negative emotional impact of parental overprotection. By targeting avoidance, such interventions may promote healthier anger regulation, thereby reducing risk for both internalizing and externalizing outcomes.

## 5. Limitations & Suggestions

Despite its contributions, the present study is not without limitations. First, the use of self-report measures raises the possibility of response bias, including social desirability and recall inaccuracies. Parental overprotection and anger expression, in particular, may be under- or over-reported depending on the adolescent's current emotional state and relationship quality with parents. Second, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which prevents causal inferences from being drawn. While the hypothesized mediational model is supported, longitudinal or experimental designs are required to establish temporal precedence. Third, the sample was limited to adolescents and young adults in Turkey, which may constrain generalizability to other cultural contexts where parenting norms differ. Finally, although experiential avoidance was identified as a mediator, other potential mechanisms such as attachment insecurity, emotion regulation difficulties, or peer influences were not included in the model and may also play important roles.

Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to examine how parental overprotection, experiential avoidance, and anger expression evolve over time, thereby clarifying the causal pathways among these variables. Multi-informant approaches incorporating parent and peer reports, along with observational data, would provide more comprehensive insights beyond adolescents' self-perceptions. Cross-cultural comparisons are also warranted to examine the universality of these mechanisms, particularly in collectivist versus individualist contexts. Additionally, future research should consider integrating physiological measures of emotional regulation, such as heart rate variability, to better capture the biopsychosocial processes underlying avoidance and anger. Finally, it would be valuable to explore whether interventions targeting experiential avoidance, such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, moderate the relationship between overprotection and anger in clinical and non-clinical populations.



The findings of this study carry several implications for practice. Clinicians working with adolescents should assess family dynamics, particularly parental overprotection, when addressing anger-related difficulties. Interventions should incorporate strategies to reduce experiential avoidance, helping youth to approach and process negative emotions rather than suppressing or avoiding them. Parent training programs may also benefit from emphasizing the balance between protection and autonomy, educating parents on the unintended consequences of overprotection. Schools and community programs can integrate emotion regulation training into curricula, equipping adolescents with adaptive strategies to manage anger. By simultaneously addressing parental practices and adolescents' coping styles, practitioners can help foster healthier emotional development and reduce maladaptive anger expression.

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### Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

### Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

### Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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### Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed in this article.

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