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Understanding the Role of Co-Parenting Quality in Mediating the Effect of Parenting Stress on Child Adjustment

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A B S T R A C T

This study aimed to investigate whether co-parenting quality mediates the relationship between parenting stress and child adjustment among parents in Italy. A descriptive correlational design was employed using a sample of 491 parents from Italy, selected based on the Morgan and Krejcie sample size table. Participants completed three standardized instruments: the Parenting Stress Index–Short Form (PSI-SF), the Co-Parenting Relationship Scale (CRS), and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Data were analyzed using SPSS-27 for descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation, and AMOS-21 for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to assess the mediating role of co-parenting quality in the relationship between parenting stress and child adjustment. The results showed that parenting stress was significantly negatively correlated with co-parenting quality ($r = –.48$, $p < .001$) and positively correlated with child adjustment difficulties ($r = .52$, $p < .001$). Co-parenting quality also showed a significant negative correlation with child adjustment problems ($r = –.43$, $p < .001$). SEM analysis confirmed a good model fit ($\chi^2 = 163.29$, $df = 84$, $\chi^2/df = 1.94$, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .044, TLI = .96) and revealed that co-parenting quality partially mediated the effect of parenting stress on child adjustment. The total effect of parenting stress on child adjustment was $\beta = .23$ ($p < .001$), with a direct effect of $\beta = .36$ ($p < .001$) and an indirect effect via co-parenting quality of $\beta = –.13$ ($p < .001$). The findings underscore the importance of co-parenting quality as a protective relational factor that can buffer the adverse impact of parenting stress on children's psychological adjustment. Enhancing co-parenting practices may be a key target in interventions aimed at promoting child well-being in stressed family systems.

Keywords: *Parenting stress, co-parenting quality, child adjustment, structural equation modeling, family functioning.*

1. Introduction

Parental functioning plays a pivotal role in shaping a child's developmental trajectory, particularly in terms of psychological adjustment and emotional well-being. Within family systems, the interplay of parenting stress and co-parenting dynamics has garnered increasing scholarly attention as a crucial predictor of children's socio-emotional outcomes. Parenting stress—defined as the experience of distress or discomfort resulting from the demands of child-rearing—can impair parental functioning and subsequently hinder child adjustment across multiple domains including behavior regulation, emotional resilience, and peer relationships (Bishop et al., 2019). As the landscape of modern parenting continues to evolve in response to shifting socio-cultural norms and external stressors, it is critical to examine not only the direct consequences of parenting stress but also the mechanisms through which its impact on children may be mitigated. One such mechanism is the quality of the co-parenting relationship, which refers to the degree of support, cooperation, and mutual involvement shared by parents in raising their child (Richardson et al., 2019).

Parental stress is not a monolithic experience but rather a multidimensional construct influenced by individual, relational, and contextual factors. Elevated levels of parenting stress have consistently been associated with poorer child outcomes, including increased behavioral problems, reduced emotional regulation, and diminished academic performance (Cheung & Wang, 2022; Gong & Ju, 2024). These outcomes are not limited to specific populations; they have been observed in parents of children with chronic illnesses (A. e. Yacoub et al., 2023), developmental disorders (Sartor et al., 2023), and children undergoing normative developmental challenges (Hartzell et al., 2022). Parenting stress may also reflect broader systemic pressures such as socioeconomic hardship, lack of social support, or role strain—especially for working parents balancing professional and caregiving responsibilities (Jeong & Lee, 2020).

The negative effects of parenting stress often spill over into parenting behaviors and the parent-child relationship. Stressed parents may display less sensitivity, be more authoritarian or inconsistent in discipline, and struggle to respond appropriately to their child's emotional needs (Aldoney et al., 2023; Annisa et al., 2023). These behaviors, in turn, contribute to maladaptive child outcomes such as externalizing and internalizing problems. However, research increasingly suggests that the co-parenting relationship serves as a crucial context in which parenting stress unfolds and can either exacerbate or buffer its effects on children (Han & Lee, 2020; Park et al., 2023). A high-quality co-parenting relationship—characterized by shared responsibilities, mutual support, and alignment in parenting values—has been shown to moderate the adverse effects of parenting stress on child development (Zhu et al., 2024).

Indeed, co-parenting quality represents a unique and robust predictor of child adjustment beyond individual parenting behaviors. When parents function as a cooperative unit, children benefit from consistent routines, greater emotional security, and clearer behavioral expectations (Lim, 2022; Savela, 2025). Conversely, conflictual or disengaged co-parenting relationships have been linked to emotional and behavioral problems in children, particularly when coupled with elevated levels of parental stress (Molano et al., 2023). In the context of dual-earner households and post-pandemic family systems, the importance of coordinated parenting efforts has become even more pronounced. In such settings, co-parenting quality may not only influence the efficacy of parenting practices but also act as a protective buffer against contextual stressors (Lam et al., 2022).

Empirical studies support the notion that co-parenting quality mediates the association between parenting stress and child adjustment. For instance, recent findings indicate that co-parenting quality mediates the impact of parental stress on children's executive functioning and social competence (Lim, 2022). Other studies highlight how supportive co-parenting can enhance parenting self-efficacy, reduce conflict, and promote healthier family dynamics, all of which contribute to positive child outcomes (Annisa et al., 2023; Park et al., 2023). In longitudinal research, co-parenting quality has also been shown to mediate the effects of stress over time, underscoring its central role in long-term child development (Qian et al., 2024).

Beyond its mediating function, co-parenting quality may interact with parental stress in dynamic ways, such as buffering the effects of acute stress or amplifying the impact of chronic strain. For instance, a study examining families of children with leukemia found that high-quality co-parenting reduced the impact of medical stressors on overall family functioning (A.-E. N. Yacoub et al., 2023). Similarly, research involving children with atopic dermatitis showed that co-parenting quality influenced how stress contributed to marital conflict and child well-being (Han & Lee, 2020). Such findings support the need to consider co-parenting not

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only as a mediating variable but as a central relational process with far-reaching implications for family health and resilience (Lam et al., 2021).

Moreover, there is evidence that the psychological impact of parental stress may be partially contingent on the parent's perception of their co-parent's involvement and support. When one parent perceives the other as engaged and aligned, the emotional burden of stress may be distributed more equitably, resulting in more adaptive coping strategies (Nana & Mamat, 2023; Rusu & Bogdan, 2024). Conversely, perceived disengagement may heighten feelings of isolation, intensify stress reactions, and lead to more maladaptive parenting behaviors. These mechanisms may also operate differentially across parent gender, family structure, or child developmental stage, suggesting a need for further nuanced exploration (Cheung & Wang, 2022; Gong & Ju, 2024).

There is also growing interest in understanding how child adjustment is influenced not just by direct parenting behaviors but by the emotional and psychological context in which those behaviors occur. Child adjustment encompasses a range of developmental outcomes, including behavioral regulation, social competence, emotional well-being, and academic engagement. Adverse parenting environments characterized by stress and co-parenting conflict have been linked to increased externalizing behaviors, such as aggression and defiance, as well as internalizing symptoms like anxiety and withdrawal (Bikic et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2024). Children exposed to high levels of parental conflict or emotional disengagement often display difficulties in attention, peer relationships, and self-regulation (Goti et al., 2020).

Recent scholarship has further highlighted how intergenerational processes may shape parenting stress and its impact. For instance, parents with histories of trauma or unresolved attachment issues may experience heightened stress in response to parenting demands, which may subsequently influence co-parenting patterns and child adjustment (Hartzell et al., 2022; Savela, 2025). Similarly, findings from studies on parental empowerment and self-efficacy suggest that fostering positive co-parenting experiences can contribute to more confident parenting, ultimately benefiting children's developmental trajectories (Savela, 2025; Virani et al., 2021). This integrative perspective underscores the interconnectedness of parental well-being, relational quality, and child development.

Despite this growing body of literature, gaps remain in our understanding of how co-parenting quality functions within diverse cultural contexts and under varying stress conditions. While many studies have been conducted in clinical or high-risk populations, fewer have examined these dynamics in normative settings, particularly within European countries such as Italy. This study addresses this gap by focusing on a large, community-based sample of Italian parents to examine whether co-parenting quality mediates the relationship between parenting stress and child adjustment. Given Italy's unique cultural emphasis on family cohesion and shared caregiving, exploring these dynamics in an Italian context may yield important insights into how co-parenting operates within different familial and social frameworks (Lam et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2024).

The current study is informed by both ecological and family systems perspectives, which emphasize the interdependence of individuals within relational networks. Parenting does not occur in isolation but within the context of dyadic and systemic interactions that can either amplify or attenuate the effects of stress on child development. By focusing on co-parenting quality as a mediating mechanism, this study seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how relational processes shape the well-being of both parents and children (Lim, 2022; Richardson et al., 2019).

In sum, this study investigates the mediating role of co-parenting quality in the relationship between parenting stress and child adjustment among parents in Italy.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study employed a descriptive correlational design to examine the mediating role of co-parenting quality in the relationship between parenting stress and child adjustment. The target population consisted of parents residing in Italy with at least one child aged between 6 and 12 years. Based on the sample size determination table developed by Morgan and Krejcie (1970), a sample size of 491 participants was deemed sufficient to ensure adequate statistical power for correlational and structural equation modeling analyses. Participants were recruited through online parenting forums, school networks, and community outreach initiatives. Inclusion criteria required that participants be actively co-parenting and able to complete the study questionnaire independently. The sample included a diverse range of socioeconomic backgrounds to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

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2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Child Adjustment

Child adjustment was measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) developed by Goodman (1997). This widely used behavioral screening tool assesses psychological adjustment in children aged 3 to 16 years through 25 items divided into five subscales: Emotional Symptoms, Conduct Problems, Hyperactivity/Inattention, Peer Relationship Problems, and Prosocial Behavior. Each item is rated on a 3-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (Not True) to 2 (Certainly True), with higher scores on the total difficulties score indicating greater adjustment problems. The SDQ provides both a total difficulties score (sum of the first four subscales) and individual subscale scores, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of child functioning. Numerous studies across diverse populations have confirmed the SDQ's reliability and validity, including high internal consistency and strong convergent validity with other diagnostic measures (Goodman, 1997; Mikaeeli & Moradikelardeh, 2021; Tehrani Doost et al., 2006).

2.2.2. Co-Parenting Quality

Co-parenting quality was assessed using the Co-Parenting Relationship Scale (CRS) developed by Feinberg, Brown, and Kan (2012). The CRS consists of 35 items that evaluate the perceived quality of the co-parenting relationship across seven subscales: Support, Undermining, Endorsement of Partner's Parenting, Division of Labor, Exposure to Conflict, Joint Family Management, and Childrearing Agreement. Items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree), with higher scores indicating more positive co-parenting interactions. The CRS has been demonstrated to possess excellent psychometric properties, including high internal consistency and strong construct validity in both community and clinical samples, making it a robust tool for evaluating co-parenting dynamics (Cao et al., 2024; Guida, 2023; Park et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2024).

2.2.3. Parenting Stress

Parenting stress was measured using the Parenting Stress Index–Short Form (PSI-SF) developed by Abidin (1995). The PSI-SF includes 36 items derived from the longer version of the Parenting Stress Index and is designed to assess overall parenting stress in parents of children from 1 month to 12 years of age. The tool encompasses three subscales: Parental Distress, Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction, and Difficult Child. Respondents rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with higher scores reflecting greater levels of parenting stress. The PSI-SF has been extensively validated in numerous studies, demonstrating high internal consistency, strong factorial validity, and significant correlations with measures of parental mental health and child behavior outcomes (Çelebi & Acar, 2024; Park et al., 2023; Qian et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2024).

2.3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using both SPSS version 27 and AMOS version 21. Descriptive statistics were first computed to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample. To examine the bivariate relationships among the study variables, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between parenting stress, co-parenting quality, and child adjustment. Following this, a Structural Equation Model (SEM) was conducted using AMOS-21 to test the hypothesized mediation model, with co-parenting quality serving as the mediating variable between parenting stress and child adjustment. Model fit indices, including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Chi-square statistics, were used to evaluate the adequacy of the proposed model. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$ for all analyses.

3. Findings and Results

The final sample consisted of 491 parents from various regions of Italy. Among the participants, 284 (57.83%) were mothers and 207 (42.17%) were fathers. The majority of participants were between 31 and 40 years old (n = 232, 47.25%), followed by those aged 41 to 50 years (n = 174, 35.44%), and a smaller proportion aged 21 to 30 years (n = 63, 12.83%). A total of 22 participants (4.48%) were over 50 years old. Regarding educational attainment, 178 participants (36.26%) held a bachelor's degree, 151 (30.75%) had completed high school, 98 (19.96%) held a master's degree, and 64 (13.03%) reported having other educational backgrounds. In terms of employment status, 289 participants (58.86%) were employed full-time, 103 (20.98%) worked part-time, and 99 (20.16%) were unemployed or homemakers.

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Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Main Variables (N = 491)

Variable	M	SD
Parenting Stress	82.36	11.48
Co-Parenting Quality	172.45	21.27
Child Adjustment	15.82	4.93

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 show that the mean parenting stress score was 82.36 (SD = 11.48), indicating a moderately elevated stress level among participants, considering the PSI-SF's possible range of 36 to 180. Co-parenting quality had a relatively high mean of 172.45 (SD = 21.27), reflecting generally supportive co-parenting relationships based on the CRS scale (possible range: 35 to 245). Child adjustment, measured via the SDQ, had a mean score of 15.82 (SD = 4.93), suggesting a moderate level of adjustment difficulties within the sample.

Prior to conducting the main analyses, the assumptions for Pearson correlation and Structural Equation Modeling were assessed and confirmed. Normality of the main variables was verified through skewness and kurtosis values, all of which fell within the acceptable range of -2 to +2 (e.g., skewness for parenting stress = 0.41, kurtosis = -0.38; skewness for child adjustment = -0.29, kurtosis = 0.71). Linearity was visually examined using scatterplots, which indicated linear relationships among the key variables. Homoscedasticity was assessed through residual plots, showing no pattern of heteroscedasticity. Additionally, multicollinearity was evaluated through tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, with all tolerance values above 0.62 and VIF values below 1.61, indicating no issues with multicollinearity. These results confirmed that the data met the assumptions required for Pearson correlation and SEM analyses.

Table 2

Pearson Correlations Between Main Variables

Variable	1	2	3
1. Parenting Stress	—		
2. Co-Parenting Quality	–.48 ($p < .001$)	—	
3. Child Adjustment	.52 ($p < .001$)	–.43 ($p < .001$)	—

As shown in Table 2, parenting stress was significantly negatively correlated with co-parenting quality ($r = –.48$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher parenting stress was associated with lower co-parenting quality. Additionally, parenting stress was positively correlated with child adjustment difficulties ($r = .52$, $p < .001$), suggesting that higher levels of stress were related to poorer child outcomes. Co-parenting quality was negatively correlated with child adjustment difficulties ($r = –.43$, $p < .001$), supporting its role as a potential protective factor.

Table 3

Fit Indices for Structural Equation Model

Fit Index	Value
χ^2 (Chi-Square)	163.29
df (Degrees of Freedom)	84
χ^2/df	1.94
GFI	.95
AGFI	.92
CFI	.97
RMSEA	.044
TLI	.96

The model fit indices reported in Table 3 indicate that the structural model had a good overall fit to the data. The Chi-square value was 163.29 with 84 degrees of freedom (χ^2/df = 1.94), which is below the recommended threshold of 3.

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The Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI = .95), Adjusted GFI (AGFI = .92), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI = .97) all exceeded the minimum acceptable value of .90, indicating excellent model fit. Additionally, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = .044) and Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI = .96) further confirmed the model's adequacy.

Table 4

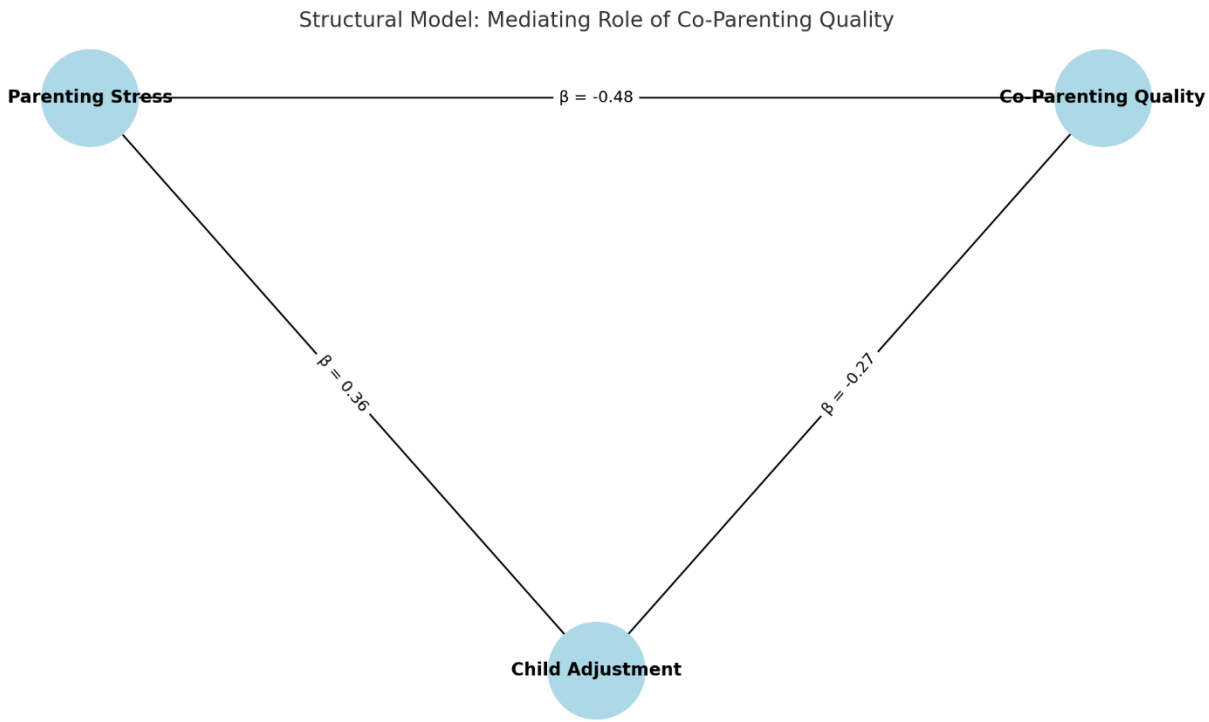
Standardized Path Coefficients: Total, Direct, and Indirect Effects (N = 491)

Path	B	S.E	β	p
Parenting Stress → Co-Parenting	–0.71	0.08	–.48	< .001
Co-Parenting → Child Adjustment	–0.10	0.02	–.27	< .001
Parenting Stress → Child Adjustment	0.23	0.04	.36	< .001
Parenting Stress → Child Adj. (indirect via Co-Parenting)	–0.07	0.02	–.13	< .001
Parenting Stress → Child Adj. (total effect)	0.16	0.03	.23	< .001

As reported in Table 4, parenting stress had a significant negative direct effect on co-parenting quality (B = –0.71, β = –.48, p < .001), indicating that higher stress reduces co-parenting effectiveness. Co-parenting quality had a significant negative effect on child adjustment difficulties (B = –0.10, β = –.27, p < .001), demonstrating that better co-parenting is associated with improved child outcomes. The direct effect of parenting stress on child adjustment was positive and significant (B = 0.23, β = .36, p < .001). The indirect path from parenting stress to child adjustment through co-parenting was also significant (B = –0.07, β = –.13, p < .001), confirming a partial mediation. The total effect of parenting stress on child adjustment (including both direct and indirect paths) was significant (B = 0.16, β = .23, p < .001), emphasizing that co-parenting quality plays a meaningful mediating role in this relationship.

Figure 1

Model with Beta Coefficients



4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study investigated the mediating role of co-parenting quality in the relationship between parenting stress

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and child adjustment in a large sample of Italian parents. The results of the Pearson correlation analyses revealed significant positive associations between parenting stress and child adjustment difficulties, as well as significant negative associations between parenting stress and co-parenting quality. Moreover, higher co-parenting quality was associated with better child adjustment. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) further supported the hypothesized mediation model, indicating that co-parenting quality partially mediated the effect of parenting stress on child adjustment. These findings underscore the importance of relational dynamics between parents in shaping children's psychological outcomes and provide empirical support for co-parenting quality as a protective factor that can buffer the negative impact of stress in parenting contexts.

The significant relationship between parenting stress and poor child adjustment aligns with previous literature demonstrating the detrimental effects of heightened stress on children's emotional and behavioral development (Bishop et al., 2019; Gong & Ju, 2024). High levels of stress may compromise parents' emotional availability and responsiveness, which are foundational for effective parenting and child well-being. Consistent with past findings, the present study supports the assertion that when parents are overwhelmed by stress, their ability to provide structure, warmth, and consistency in parenting practices diminishes, leading to increased behavioral and emotional problems in children (Cheung & Wang, 2022; Molano et al., 2023).

Additionally, the inverse relationship between parenting stress and co-parenting quality observed in this study echoes prior research showing that stress disrupts the coordination, communication, and mutual support that define high-quality co-parenting relationships (Han & Lee, 2020; Nana & Mamat, 2023). When one or both parents experience elevated stress, their ability to maintain cooperative parenting dynamics may decline, leading to increased conflict, inconsistent discipline, and misaligned parenting goals (Park et al., 2023). These disruptions not only affect the parenting dyad but also create an unstable emotional climate for children, which has been linked to maladaptive child outcomes in prior studies (Rusu & Bogdan, 2024; Zhu et al., 2024).

Most notably, the mediation analysis revealed that co-parenting quality plays a partial mediating role in the association between parenting stress and child adjustment. This finding highlights the complex interplay between individual and relational processes in the parenting context and supports the conceptualization of co-parenting as a relational buffer that mitigates the spillover of stress into negative child outcomes (Lim, 2022; Qian et al., 2024). In high-stress situations, couples who are able to maintain supportive and aligned co-parenting behaviors appear more capable of preserving a stable and nurturing environment for their children, thereby reducing the likelihood of behavioral or emotional adjustment difficulties (Lam et al., 2021; Savela, 2025).

These results align with emerging literature suggesting that cooperative co-parenting strengthens family resilience and protects children from the adverse impacts of parental distress. For instance, research by Annisa et al. (2023) found that mothers who reported supportive co-parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic experienced less stress and, consequently, reported fewer behavioral problems in their children (Annisa et al., 2023). Similarly, Lam et al. (2022) demonstrated that co-parenting quality mediated the relationship between parental symptom burden and child well-being among families coping with childhood cancer (Lam et al., 2022). These studies, together with the present findings, underscore the utility of targeting co-parenting quality in interventions aimed at improving child outcomes in stressed family systems.

The present study also corroborates earlier findings by Yacoub et al. (2023), who documented that higher levels of parenting stress were associated with lower co-parenting satisfaction and diminished parental quality of life in parents of children with leukemia (A.-E. N. Yacoub et al., 2023). While these clinical populations often experience unique stressors, the current results suggest that even within non-clinical, community-based samples, similar dynamics unfold, demonstrating the broad relevance of co-parenting quality across diverse family contexts. Furthermore, Hartzell et al. (2022) have emphasized the intergenerational transmission of stress and its potential impact on parenting behaviors and child adjustment, particularly in the presence of trauma (Hartzell et al., 2022). These findings suggest that relational processes such as co-parenting may serve as key intervention points in disrupting negative cycles of stress and maladaptation.

An important contribution of this study is its focus on families in Italy, providing a cultural context where family cohesion and interdependence are particularly valued. Italian cultural norms often emphasize shared parenting responsibilities and strong familial bonds, which may enhance the protective effects of high-quality co-parenting (Goti et al., 2020; Lam et al., 2022). At the same time, these

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cultural expectations can intensify the experience of parenting stress when co-parenting coordination falters or when societal pressures to maintain idealized parenting roles become overwhelming (Jeong & Lee, 2020; Nana & Mamat, 2023). Thus, understanding how co-parenting functions within such cultural frameworks can inform culturally sensitive interventions and public policies.

It is also worth noting that the partial mediation observed in this study suggests that other variables may further explain the relationship between parenting stress and child adjustment. For example, parental self-efficacy, coping style, and mental health may influence how stress impacts parenting behaviors and child outcomes. This is consistent with previous studies emphasizing the role of psychological flexibility, emotion regulation, and adaptive coping strategies in moderating the effects of stress in family systems (Lam et al., 2021; Virani et al., 2021). Moreover, findings by Sartor et al. (2023) suggest that fluctuations in parental stress levels over time may differentially affect partnership quality, especially in parents of children with autism, highlighting the dynamic and bidirectional nature of these relationships (Sartor et al., 2023).

Taken together, these findings reinforce the need to adopt an ecological and systems-based perspective when examining child development. Children's psychological adjustment is not solely the result of individual traits or parental behaviors but is shaped by a broader network of relational processes that include the quality of interparental collaboration. The current study provides further evidence for this systemic approach and emphasizes the importance of promoting co-parenting quality as a means of enhancing child well-being in both clinical and non-clinical populations (Richardson et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2024).

Despite its strengths, this study is not without limitations. First, the use of a cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal inferences about the directionality of the relationships among parenting stress, co-parenting quality, and child adjustment. Future longitudinal research is needed to capture the temporal sequence and stability of these associations over time. Second, the data were collected using self-report questionnaires, which are subject to social desirability bias and may not fully capture the complexity of family interactions. Third, while the sample was relatively large and drawn from diverse regions of Italy, it may not reflect the experiences of families in other cultural contexts or underrepresented subgroups such as single parents, same-sex parents, or immigrant families. Finally, while the study focused on co-parenting quality as a mediating variable, other potential mediators and moderators, such as parental mental health, child temperament, and social support, were not included in the model and warrant further exploration.

Future research should employ longitudinal and mixed-method designs to better understand the evolving nature of co-parenting dynamics and their impact on child development over time. Studies could explore the role of additional mediating or moderating factors, such as parental emotion regulation, attachment style, or socioeconomic status. Comparative studies across different cultures would also help to identify universal versus culturally specific mechanisms in the co-parenting–stress–adjustment pathway. Additionally, qualitative studies involving dyadic or triadic interviews with both parents and children could enrich our understanding of how family members perceive and experience co-parenting quality in the face of stress. Future investigations might also examine intervention efficacy by evaluating how improvements in co-parenting quality influence parenting stress and child outcomes in clinical trials or real-world family support programs.

Practitioners working with families should consider incorporating co-parenting support into parenting programs, especially for families experiencing high levels of stress. Interventions that promote alignment in parenting goals, enhance communication between partners, and reduce interparental conflict can have positive downstream effects on children's psychological adjustment. Schools and community health centers should be equipped to screen for parenting stress and offer resources or referrals that include family-based support. Policy initiatives should prioritize family-friendly policies, such as parental leave, flexible work arrangements, and access to mental health services, to reduce systemic stressors that can undermine co-parenting. By addressing both the individual and relational dimensions of parenting, practitioners and policymakers can better support holistic family well-being.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

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Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

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

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