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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Adolescents' relationships with parents and romantic partners in eight countries

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Abstract

Introduction: Creating romantic relationships characterized by high-quality, satisfaction, few conflicts, and reasoning strategies to handle conflicts is an important developmental task for adolescents connected to the relational models they receive from their parents. This study examines how parent–adolescent conflicts, attachment, positive parenting, and communication are related to adolescents' romantic relationship quality, satisfaction, conflicts, and management.

Method: We interviewed 311 adolescents at two time points (females = 52%, ages 15 and 17) in eight countries (China, Colombia, Italy, Kenya, the Philippines, Sweden,

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Thailand, and the United States). Generalized and linear mixed models were run considering the participants' nesting within countries.

Results: Adolescents with negative conflicts with their parents reported low romantic relationship quality and satisfaction and high conflicts with their romantic partners. Adolescents experiencing an anxious attachment to their parents reported low romantic relationship quality, while adolescents with positive parenting showed high romantic relationship satisfaction. However, no association between parent–adolescent relationships and conflict management skills involving reasoning with the partner was found. No associations of parent–adolescent communication with romantic relationship dimensions emerged, nor was there any effect of the country on romantic relationship quality or satisfaction.

Conclusion: These results stress the relevance of parent–adolescent conflicts and attachment as factors connected to how adolescents experience romantic relationships.

KEYWORDS

adolescence, attachment, conflicts, parent–adolescent relationships, romantic relationships

1 | INTRODUCTION

1.1 | Romantic relationships in adolescence

Adolescence represents a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood (Dahl et al., 2018). Adolescents encounter specific developmental tasks on their path toward adulthood as they need to adapt to physical and sexual changes, create a new identity, establish emotional and psychological independence from their parents, and form more stable relationships with peers (Bernaras et al., 2019; Raemen et al., 2022; Santona et al., 2022; Schulz et al., 2023). One critical developmental task for adolescents is the creation of romantic relationships, which are voluntary and intense interactions with expressions of affection, warmth, and sexual connections (Chen et al., 2020; Collins, 2003; Collins et al., 2009; Gómez-López et al., 2019; van de Bongardt et al., 2015; Xia et al., 2018).

Adolescents create committed relationships with partners by distancing themselves from their parents and adapting to new affective contexts (Collins et al., 2009; Schulz et al., 2023). Romantic relationships have been explored by focusing on quality and satisfaction. Quality refers to the presence of intimacy, affection, nurturance, and mutual respect within the couple, and satisfaction has been defined as measuring the individual's subjective experience in the romantic relationship (Fortin et al., 2022; Mirsu-Paun & Oliver, 2017). Researchers have emphasized that romantic relationship quality and satisfaction are more important than merely the presence of a romantic relationship for the development of adolescents (Kansky & Allen, 2018).

Creating a significant and meaningful romantic relationship is essential to happiness, self-esteem, and well-being (Collins et al., 2009; Xia et al., 2018), and adolescents who successfully establish a satisfying romantic relationship are more likely to experience better psychological adjustment in later life. High-quality romantic relationships are linked to high satisfaction and less internalizing and externalizing behavior (Demir, 2010). Nevertheless, if adolescents are involved in romantic relationships characterized by conflict or violence, they can develop depressive symptoms and externalizing behaviors (Kansky & Allen, 2018; Price et al., 2016).

Romantic relationships are also influenced by cultural context, as every culture has its own traditional gender role ideologies, social norms, and values that regulate the timing and ways that adolescents bond with peers (Shen et al., 2020). Cultural groups differ in whether they promote or discourage adolescents' romantic relationships. In countries such as China, romantic relationships are discouraged, whereas in the United States and many European countries, romantic relationships are more encouraged, sometimes even with adult-sponsored events such as school dances. Cultural groups also vary in gender role beliefs, with Western cultures encouraging boys to be focused on independence and girls on affiliative values, while other cultures pressure girls to be shyer and less engaged in romantic relationships (Zhi Hong Li et al., 2010). The proportion of adolescents who report being involved in romantic relationships varies across countries (e.g., Zhi Hong Li, et al., 2010). Nevertheless, most research on adolescent romantic relationships has been conducted in North America and Europe, and more studies still need to be done in other geographical areas (Espinosa-Hernández et al., 2020; Furman & Rose, 2015). For example, a meta-analysis examining longitudinal associations between adolescent romantic relationships and parent–adolescent relationships highlighted that 63% of the 42 samples analyzed represented racial-ethnic majority families from Western countries, with racial-ethnic minorities representing between 0% and 36% in samples considered (Schulz et al., 2023). More studies exploring adolescents' relationships in different cultures should be conducted to develop

generalizable and inclusive psychological theories and practices, including the cultural environment as an essential element for adolescents' development.

1.2 | Parent–adolescent and romantic relationship conflict

An important task for romantic partners is to find a way to manage conflicts arising in their relationship (Vangelisti & Perlman, 2006). Several forms of conflict (e.g., disagreements, verbal aggression) and ways to solve them (e.g., avoiding arguments, seeking a compromise) could characterize romantic relationships. Still, it is not the absence of conflicts, but how they are handled that defines high-quality and satisfying romantic relationships (Heinze et al., 2020). If conflicts are not followed by functional problem-solving methods, the overall romantic relationship quality and satisfaction decrease (Mirsu-Paun & Oliver, 2017; Straus & Douglas, 2007). Destructive and dysfunctional conflict management abilities predict psychological problems in adolescence and adulthood, as adolescents experiencing problematic conflict behaviors are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, and tend to establish dysfunctional adult romantic relationships (Collins et al., 2009; Gómez-López et al., 2019; Mirsu-Paun & Oliver, 2017).

Conflict can be transmitted intergenerationally (Rothenberg et al., 2018). Conflict management in the family is associated longitudinally with conflict management in romantic relationships experienced later in life (Hare et al., 2009; van Doorn et al., 2011). Indeed, the family is the primary context where children experience conflicts and learn how to negotiate them. Adolescents use their parents as models to develop conflict resolution skills that transfer to their relationships with friends and romantic partners (van Doorn et al., 2011). Adolescents exposed to harmful or violent parental models are likely to carry these dysfunctional strategies into their future romantic relationships (Heinze et al., 2020; Kan et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2009). In addition, adolescents who use avoidant or aggressive problem-solving to manage conflicts with their parents are more likely to report more problematic behaviors in conflicts with romantic partners than those who compromise with their parents (Dost-Gözkan, 2019). On the other hand, adolescents with functional parent–adolescent conflict resolution exhibited warmth and affection toward their partners and constructed high quality and satisfying romantic relationships (Walper & Wendt, 2015).

1.3 | Parent–adolescent relationships and adolescents' romantic relationships

According to different developmental theories, a positive relationship with parents in childhood and throughout adolescence is critical for the future development of good romantic relationships (Collins et al., 2009; Walper & Wendt, 2015). The emotional and behavioral continuity between parent–adolescent and romantic relationships has been explained as stemming from parent-child relationships as the first contexts where individuals experience care and emotional intimacy (Jorgensen-Wells et al., 2021). If adolescents construct a secure attachment with their parents, they acquire internal working models of relationships as being safe and supportive, which generalize to expectations regarding other significant relationships. By contrast, the construction of an anxious attachment constitutes a risk factor for future romantic relationships (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Cassidy & Shaver, 2016; Schulz et al., 2023) as it often leads to fear of abandonment and requesting exaggerated proximity and reassurance from partners (Dinero et al., 2008; Santona et al., 2022).

The quality of childhood attachment seems to affect the timing and the characteristics of romantic relationships. An insecure attachment to parents could push adolescents to rely on peers too early and too much, having dysfunctional romantic relationships (Flykt et al., 2021). Moreover, adolescents with poor levels of intimacy with their parents perceive lower romantic relationship quality than adolescents with supportive and authoritative parents (Hadiwijaya et al., 2020). Finally, adolescents with a history of emotional insecurity and affective instability with their parents are more likely to repeat these negative relational patterns with their partners (Walper & Wendt, 2015).

1.4 | Positive parenting and parent–adolescent communication

Positive parenting and good communication experienced in the past with the parents are also critical for the development of romantic relationships in adolescence characterized by quality, satisfaction, and functional ways to handle conflicts (Auslander et al., 2009; Collins et al., 2009). Positive parenting is characterized by consistent caring actions, parental warmth, and support (Seay et al., 2014), while parent–adolescent communication patterns include dimensions related to monitoring, such as parental solicitations of information from their children, parental rule-setting, and adolescents' spontaneous disclosure and secrecy (Dykstra et al., 2020; Kapetanovic et al., 2020; Smetana, 2008).

Although parenting adolescents can be challenging, as parents need to develop new communication strategies by adjusting them to adolescents' rapidly changing requests for more autonomy (Dykstra et al., 2020), positive parenting and good parent–adolescent communication contribute to satisfying parent-child relationships (Khaleque & Ali, 2017; Lansford et al., 2018), adolescents' development of social and emotional skills and romantic relationship satisfaction (Auslander et al., 2009; Schulz et al., 2023). Adolescents who previously did not experience positive parenting reported unsatisfactory romantic relationships.

1.5 | The present study

The current study examines how parent–adolescent relationships are related to adolescents' romantic relationship quality, satisfaction, negative conflict, and reasoning conflict management. We focused on four important parenting dimensions that allow us to explore relational dynamics within the family: attachment, conflicts, positive parenting, and communication.

The current study was guided by three hypotheses. First, we hypothesized a connection between conflicts with parents and romantic relationship characteristics, expecting lower levels of destructive conflicts with parents at age 17 to be linked to higher quality romantic relationships and more satisfaction and positive conflict resolution with parents to be related to lower negative conflicts and higher reasoning with the romantic partner. Second, we hypothesized that high levels of anxious parent–adolescent attachment at age 17 would be related to higher negative conflicts in the couple and lower adolescent romantic relationship quality, satisfaction, and reasoning with the partner. Third, we hypothesized that positive parenting and good parent–adolescent communication characteristics at age 15 would be related to higher quality and satisfaction in adolescents' romantic relationships and reasoning in the couple while being related to lower negative conflicts within the couple.

In addressing these questions, we consider the role of culture, as adolescents were nested in countries. However, given the paucity of cross-cultural research on parenting in relation to adolescents' romantic relationships, no specific hypotheses regarding moderation by culture were made. Similarly, no specific hypotheses about differences or similarities across countries regarding adolescents' engagement in romantic relationships were made. Nevertheless, the sample division in eight countries should be noted as an attempt to explore adolescents' relationships with a more culture-informed and globally applicable line of research (van de Vijver, 2013), considering countries historically underrepresented in the developmental literature (Arnett, 2008; Henrich et al., 2010).

2 | METHOD

2.1 | Participants

The current study's participants were part of a larger longitudinal study called Parenting Across Cultures (PAC). To increase socioeconomic diversity and the general representativeness of the sample, participants were recruited through public and private schools from nine countries (Chongqing, China; Medellín, Colombia; Rome and Naples, Italy; Zarqa, Jordan; Kisumu, Kenya; Manila, Philippines; Trollhättan/Vänersborg, Sweden; Chiang Mai, Thailand; and Durham, NC, United States). This sample of countries was diverse on several socio-demographic dimensions (e.g., predominant race/ethnicity and religion, economic indicators, indices of child well-being, individualism, and collectivism). The purpose of recruiting participants from these countries was to create an international sample that would be diverse concerning several socio-demographic and psychological characteristics. Sampling focused on including families from the majority ethnic group in each country; two exceptions were in Kenya where we sampled Luo (3rd largest ethnic group, 13% of the population), and in the United States where we sampled equal proportions of White, Black, and Latino families.

For the current study, we focused on two-time points spanning ages 15–17 years and included only participants who, at age 17, defined themselves as being in a committed romantic relationship (Table 1). This sample comprised 311 adolescents (females = 58%). Adolescents' parents received an education of 12 years on average (mothers: $M = 12.67$, SD = 4.5; fathers: $M = 12.63$, SD = 4.8). When participants were age 15, of the adolescents who had two parents completing the measures, 85% were living with parents who were married, 4% with parents who were divorced, 4% with parents who were separated, 6% with parents who were cohabiting, and 2% whose parents were in another arrangement (such as in a relationship but not cohabiting). Twelve percent of the adolescents had just one parent complete the interview.

The participants having a romantic relationship were from China (4%, $N = 11$), Colombia (10%, $N = 31$), Italy (26%, $N = 81$), Kenya (7%, $N = 21$), the Philippines (10%, $N = 32$), Sweden (9%, $N = 29$), Thailand (8%, $N = 24$), and the United States (26%, $N = 82$). Families in Jordan participated in the larger PAC project, but adolescents in Jordan did not report on romantic relationships, so we eliminated Jordan from analyses in the present paper.

TABLE 1a Adolescents reporting being involved in a romantic relationship.

	Involvement in a romantic relationship		
Country	**PAC adolescents**	**Yes**	**No**
China	96	12% (11)	88% (85)
Colombia	79	39% (31)	61% (48)
Italy	186	44% (81)	56% (105)
Kenya	51	41% (21)	59% (30)
Philippines	85	38% (32)	62% (53)
Sweden	62	47% (29)	53% (33)
Thailand	89	27% (24)	73% (65)
United States	208	40% (82)	60% (126)

Abbreviation: PAC, Parenting Across Cultures.

TABLE 1b Descriptive statistics for romantic relationship quality, satisfaction, and couple conflict and reasoning: percentage of participants in the categories (sample size) and mean (SD).

	Romantic Relationship Quality		Romantic Relationship Satisfaction		Negative Couple Conflict	Reasoning in Conflict
Country	**Low/medium**	**High/extremely high**	**Low/medium**	**High/extremely high**	**Mean (SD)**	**Mean (SD)**
China $N = 11$	36% (4)	64% (7)	55% (6)	45% (5)	0.65 (0.56)	2.95 (1.87)
Colombia $N = 31$	52% (16)	48% (15)	52% (16)	48% (15)	0.99 (1.13)	3.27 (1.37)
Italy $N = 81$	52% (42)	48% (39)	52% (53)	48% (28)	1.00 (0.71)	3.34 (1.50)
Kenya $N = 21$	43% (9)	57% (12)	14% (3)	86% (18)	0.85 (1.40)	4.88 (1.69)
Philippines $N = 32$	84% (27)	16% (5)	50% (16)	50% (16)	1.16 (0.81)	3.99 (1.56)
Sweden $N = 29$	38% (11)	62% (18)	55% (16)	45% (13)	0.55 (0.66)	2.58 (1.44)
Thailand $N = 24$	83% (20)	17% (4)	63% (15)	37% (9)	1.06 (0.79)	4.73 (1.55)
United States $N = 82$	39% (32)	61% (50)	39% (32)	61% (50)	0.74 (0.77)	3.21 (1.59)

2.2 | Procedure and measures

Measures were administered in the predominant language of each data collection site, following forward- and back-translation and meetings to resolve any item-by-item ambiguities in linguistic or semantic content (Erkut, 2010). The measures were used to assess every variable presented in the current study in all countries. Interviews lasted 2 h in participant-chosen locations and were conducted after parent consent and adolescent assent were given. Participants were given the choice of completing the measures in writing or orally. Families were given modest monetary compensation for participating or compensated in other ways deemed appropriate by local IRBs. Procedures were approved by IRBs in each participating country.

2.2.1 | Adolescent romantic relationship quality and satisfaction

Adolescent romantic relationships were assessed using a 14-item questionnaire based on the Index of Marital Satisfaction (Russell & Wells, 1993; Schumm et al., 1983), administered to adolescents at age 17, on average. The first two questions ask adolescents to indicate whether they are currently in an exclusive romantic relationship and how long they have been with

TABLE 1c Descriptive statistics for predictors: means (standard deviation).

Country	Destructive conflict with parents	Attachment with parents	Positive parenting	Parent–adolescent communication'
China $N = 11$	0.30 (1.72)	1.71 (0.71)	−0.63 (0.49)	24.09 (5.02)
Colombia $N = 31$	−0.01 (2.20)	2.15 (0.95)	0.03 (0.85)	26.63 (10.09)
Italy $N = 81$	0.53 (1.70)	1.57 (0.64)	−0.13 (0.61)	24.77 (8.48)
Kenya $N = 21$	−0.27 (2.11)	1.41 (0.92)	0.36 (0.70)	31.00 (7.71)
Philippines $N = 32$	0.06 (1.37)	1.65 (0.76)	−0.19 (0.58)	36.31 (6.52)
Sweden $N = 29$	−0.72 (1.35)	1.29 (0.45)	0.20 (0.44)	25.09 (5.92)
Thailand $N = 24$	0.23 (1.41)	1.72 (0.64)	0.06 (0.62)	22.04 (7.89)
United States $N = 82$	−0.42 (1.56)	1.56 (0.71)	0.09 (0.66)	25.98 (7.51)

their partner. The other parts of the questionnaire measure romantic relationship quality and satisfaction, which are two essential and connected aspects (as satisfaction is a measure of individual's subjective experience in the romantic relationship). Quality was evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *no*, 2 = *somewhat no*, 3 = *neither yes nor no*, 4 = *somewhat yes*, 5 = *yes*) with nine questions (e.g., "Do you enjoy your partner's company?" "Do you respect your partner?"). Satisfaction was evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *very dissatisfied* to 7 = *very satisfied*) with three questions (e.g., "How satisfied are you with your romantic relationship?").

We created two separate binary variables for romantic relationship quality and satisfaction by dividing participants' scores into high/extremely high and low/medium categories. Participants with a mean of 5 for quality and 7 for satisfaction were categorized into the high/extremely high category; participants with a mean score below 5 for quality and below 7 for satisfaction were labeled as low/medium romantic relationship quality and satisfaction. The internal consistencies of the romantic quality and satisfaction scales were high ($\alpha = .87$, $\alpha = .94$, respectively). Of the sample, 48% ($N = 150$) reported high/extremely high quality, and 49% ($N = 143$) had high/extremely high satisfaction. There were no significant differences in romantic quality and satisfaction for males and females (males = 0.54, females = 0.49, t (309) = 0.850, $p = .39$; males = 0.52, females = 0.49, t (309) = 0.544, $p = .58$, respectively).

2.2.2 | Adolescent romantic relationship conflict

We investigated adolescent romantic relationship conflicts using an adaptation of the revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2) Short Form (Straus & Douglas, 2007; Straus, 1979). The 18-item instrument was administered to adolescents at age 17 and examined the presence and management of conflicts within romantic relationships by asking adolescents to report on a 7-point Likert scale (0 = *never* to 6 = *almost every day*) how much they (nine items) or their partner (nine items) engage in specific actions during disagreements and conflicts. Items refer to reasoning (e.g., "How often have you tried to discuss an issue calmly"), verbal aggression (e.g., "How often has your partner yelled, insulted or swore at you"), indirect hostility (e.g., "How often have you sulked or refused to talk about it"), and violence (e.g., "How often has your partner hit you"). We created a composite scale that included the actions that both adolescents and their partners do to have a global measure of overall conflict in romantic relationships.

All the subscales showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$ for reasoning, $\alpha = .74$ for verbal aggression, $\alpha = .73$ for indirect hostility, $\alpha = .89$ for violence). Still, verbal aggression, indirect hostility, and violence subscales presented high levels of correlations (r verbal aggression-hostility = .63, r verbal aggression-violence = .50, r hostility-violence = .54). So, we averaged them into a single variable reflecting negative couple conflict ($\alpha = .87$) and used this new variable and the reasoning conflict management to evaluate conflict in adolescents' romantic relationships. There were no significant differences in the means of negative couple conflict and reasoning conflict management for males and females (males = .92, females = .86, t (307) = 0.608, $p = .54$; males = 3.65, females = 3.39, t (308) = 1.33, $p = .18$, respectively).

2.2.3 | Parent–adolescent conflicts

We assessed parent–adolescent conflict using 49 items on an instrument developed by Honess et al. (1997), administered to adolescents at age 17. Adolescents were asked to report if the statements describe their parents (e.g., "I try to avoid talking about it: this describes my interaction with my mother when we disagree/this describes my interaction with my father when we disagree"). Each item is rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all* to 4 = *very well)*.

We first standardized and averaged items and calculated the total destructive conflict score adolescents experienced from both parents. We found a high internal consistency ($\alpha = .95$) and no significant difference in the means of total destructive conflict for males and females (males = −0.22, females = 0.12, t (260) = −1.59, $p = .11$).

2.2.4 | Parent–adolescent attachment

We assessed parent–adolescent attachment using a 10-item adapted version of the Adult Attachment scale (Cook, 2000) administered to adolescents when they were aged 17, on average. Adolescents were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with statements about their relationships with mothers and fathers (separately).

The instrument includes five items reflecting anxiety about the attachment relationship (e.g., "Often I worry that my mother does not really love me"), and each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Composite scales were created by averaging the five items ($\alpha = .87$ for adolescents' anxiety with mothers, $\alpha = .91$ for adolescents' anxiety with fathers). We created single parent–adolescent anxiety in attachment relationship scores by averaging adolescents' ratings for mothers and fathers. The new composite obtained a high internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$). There were no significant differences in the means of anxiety with parents for males and females (males = 1.57, females = 1.65, t (265) = −0.910, $p = .36$).

2.2.5 | Positive parenting

Positive parenting was assessed when adolescents were age 15, on average, using a 4-item instrument from Capaldi and Patterson (2012). The measure evaluates the time parents spend with adolescents talking with them, doing something special the adolescents enjoy, communicating that they are doing a good job, and showing appreciation if adolescents help around the house. The first item is rated from 1 to 7, and the other three are on a 5-point Likert scale (0 = *never* to 4 = *almost every day*). The four items were standardized and averaged to create a total composite score of positive parenting experienced by adolescents from both parents ($\alpha = .79$). There was no significant difference in the means of positive parenting for males and females (males = 0.00, females = −0.02, t (265) = 0.28, $p = .78$).

2.2.6 | Parent–adolescent communication

We assessed parent–adolescent communication using the Youth Knowledge, Disclosure, Control, and Solicitation Scale (Stattin & Kerr, 2000) administered to adolescents when they were age 15, on average. The instrument measures parental behavioral control, solicitation, adolescent disclosure, and secrecy. The items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale (0 = *never* to 3 = *always*) and reflect adolescents' perception of how much their parents know and try to know about important aspects of their lives (e.g., "Do your parents require that you tell them how you spend your money?"), and how much adolescents disclose to their parents (e.g., "Do you spontaneously tell your parents about your friends?") or keep secrets from their parents (e.g., "Do you hide a lot from your parents about what you do during nights and weekends?"). By summing items, we created a composite score of parent–adolescent communication, with higher scores indicating greater communication ($\alpha = .85$). There was a significant difference in the means of parent–adolescent communication for males and females (males = 24.38, females = 26.41, t (289) = −2.13, $p = .034$).

2.2.7 | Covariates

To adjust for characteristics that could affect adolescents' reports of romantic relationship quality and satisfaction, we tested whether adolescents' age and gender moderated associations between parent–adolescent relationships and adolescents' romantic relationships. As we did not find any significant moderation effects, in all analyses we simply controlled for adolescents' gender, age, and the number of years of education completed by mothers as an indicator of socioeconomic status.

2.3 | Analytic plan

We used R software (version 4.2.2., Core Team, 2020) to perform all statistical analyses. Before performing more complex models, we checked the normality for all variables. As the Shapiro-Wilk test (see Table 1) showed that the distribution of both predictors and outcomes departed significantly from normality, we performed non-parametric tests (Spearman's ρ for correlations, generalized and linear mixed models nesting our participants within countries; Royston, 1992). Before performing the analyses, most continuous variables were standardized to a grand mean of 0 and an SD of 1 to yield easily interpretable relations between predictors and outcomes. Moreover, as China had only 11 adolescent participants who reported having a romantic partner, we ran the analyses both including and excluding China. As the results did not differ, we included China in the analyses reported below. As a preliminary step, we also conducted a logistic regression with adolescents' involvement in a romantic relationship as the outcome and parental dimensions as predictors, but we did not discover any significant relations between the four parenting constructs and adolescents' reports of being in a committed romantic relationship (results available from first author upon request).

We used multiple imputation to handle missing data (Enders, 2010). Data were missing on 15% of the destructive conflict with parents, 14% of positive parenting and anxiety with parents, and 6% of parent–adolescent communication. No data were missing for couple conflict, reasoning conflict management, and romantic relationship quality and satisfaction. Participants with missing data on any variable did not differ from those with complete data on either dependent variable (results available from first author upon request). The missing completely at random (MCAR; Little, 1988) coefficient test indicated that data were missing at random ($\chi^2 = 87.59$, $df = 85$, $p = .402$). The imputation model included all study variables and covariates and created five analysis datasets. Incomplete variables were imputed under fully conditional specification, using the mice 3.0 R package (van Buuren & Groothuis-Oudshoorn, 2011). The parameters of substantive interest were estimated in each imputed data set separately and then were combined using Rubin's rules (Rubin, 2004).

3 | RESULTS

3.1 | Descriptive analyses and bivariate correlations

Tables 1 and 2 report the means and standard deviations of the scale within each country and the Shapiro-Wilk tests. Table 3 reports the correlations among all the variables.

3.2 | Generalized and linear mixed models

Two regressions were computed to test whether adolescents' conflict management with parents at age 17 (research question 1), parent–adolescent attachment at age 17 (research question 2), and parent–adolescent communication and positive parenting at age 15 (research question 3) are related to adolescents' romantic relationship quality and satisfaction, conflicts, and reasoning with the romantic partner at age 17. Table 4 shows that experiencing negative conflict with the parents decreased the odds of having a higher romantic relationship quality (odds ratio [OR] = 0.916, $\beta = -.203$, $p = .039$). Moreover, a significant association between anxious attachment and romantic relationship quality emerged: Adolescents who report

TABLE 2 Shapiro–Wilk normality test for all variables.

	W
Romantic Relationship Quality	0.78***
Romantic Relationship Satisfaction	0.72***
Negative Couple Conflict	0.84***
Reasoning in Conflict	0.95***
Destructive Conflict with Parents	0.97***
Attachment with Parents	0.81***
Positive Parenting	0.98*
Parent–Adolescent Communication	0.98**

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

TABLE 3 Correlation coefficients.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Romantic Relationship Quality	1.00							
2. Romantic Relationship Satisfaction	0.516***	1.00						
3. Negative Conflict in the Couple	−0.203**	−0.254***	1.00					
4. Reasoning in Conflict	0.020	0.099	0.190***	1.00				
5. Destructive Conflict with Parents	−0.231***	−0.238***	0.345***	−0.017	1.00			
6. Attachment with Parents	−0.201***	−0.198**	0.199**	−0.041	0.352**	1.00		
7. Positive Parenting	0.130*	0.246***	−0.239***	0.013	−0.342**	−0.262***	1.00	
8. Parent–Adolescent Communication	0.096	0.169**	−0.106	0.083	−0.076	−0.137*	0.497**	1.00

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

TABLE 4 Generalized mixed models and linear mixed models.

	Romantic Relationship Quality	Romantic Relationship Satisfaction	Negative Conflict in the Couple	Reasoning in Conflict
Country Random Effect	0.728	0.502	0.115	0.591
Log-likelihood	−191.80	−194.99	−599.85	−385.27

	Romantic Relationship Quality				Romantic Relationship Satisfaction			
	β (SE)	Wald	OR (95% CI)	*p*-value	*β* (SE)	Wald	OR (95% CI)	*p*-value
Adolescent Age	−.239 (0.191)	−1.31	0.787 (0.550, 1.25)	.189	.100 (0.163)	0.612	1.10 (0.809, 1.52)	.540
Adolescent Gender	−.189 (0.273)	0.692	1.20 (0.709, 2.06)	.488	.212 (0.264)	0.806	1.23(0.737, 2.07)	.419
Mother Education	−.032 (0.029)	−1.10	0.967 (0.913, 1.02)	.269	−.031 (0.30)	−1.03	.968 (0.911, 1.03)	.303
Destructive Conflict with Parents	−.203 (0.096)	−2.10	0.816 (0.673, 0.989)	**.039**	−.211 (0.099)	−2.11	.809 (0.661, 0.990)	**.040**
Attachment with Parents	−.605 (0.205)	−2.94	0.546 (0.365, 0.816)	**.003**	−.242 (0.224)	−1.08	.784 (0.498, 1.23)	.285
Positive Parenting	.175 (0.279)	0.626	1.91 (0.684, 2.07)	.532	.525 (0.261)	2.01	1.69 (1.01, 2.82)	**.044**
Parent–Adolescent Communication	.001 (0.020)	0.088	1.00 (0.963, 1.04)	929	.013 (0.019)	0.657	1.01 (0.974, 1.05)	.510

	Negative Conflict in the Couple			Reasoning in Conflict		
	B (SE)	*t*	*p*-value	*B* (SE)	*t*	*p*-value
Adolescent Age	0.004 (0.052)	0.080	.936	0.019 (0.115)	0.171	.863
Adolescent Gender	−0.117 (0.092)	−1.26	.206	−0.117 (0.187)	−0.627	.530
Mother Education	−0.006 (0.010)	−0.619	.536	0.004 (0.022)	0.192	.847
Destructive Conflict with Parents	0.153 (0.031)	4.93	**.001**	−0.011 (0.070)	−0.167	.868
Attachment with Parents	0.058 (0.068)	0.852	.394	−0.085 (0.131)	−0.650	.515
Positive Parenting	−0.144 (0.088)	−1.64	.101	−0.087 (0.228)	−0.380	.707
Parent–Adolescent Communication	−0.003 (0.006)	−0.490	.623	0.011 (0.015)	0.772	.441

Note: Bold values are the significant *p*-values, to highlight a significant result.

higher levels of anxious attachment toward parents were less likely to have a romantic relationship of high quality (OR = 0.546, $\beta = -.605$, $p = .003$). No significant relation emerged between parent–adolescent communication or positive parenting at age 15 and adolescents' later romantic relationship quality.

As for romantic relationship satisfaction, destructive conflicts with parents (OR = 0.809, $\beta = -.211$, $p = .040$) decreased adolescents' odds of having a more satisfying romantic relationship. In contrast, adolescents who experienced positive parenting at age 15 were more likely to have a satisfying romantic relationship (OR = 1.69, $\beta = .525$, $p = .044$). There were no

significant relations between parent–adolescent communication at age 15 and adolescents' later romantic relationship satisfaction.

Destructive conflict with parents ($\beta = .153$, $t = 4.93$, $p < .001$) was significantly related to negative couple conflict: adolescents with destructive conflicts with parents were more likely to experience negative conflict with their partners. There were no significant relations between other parent–adolescent relationship aspects and adolescents' conflict and reasoning in conflict management with the romantic partner.

4 | DISCUSSION

The psychological relevance of quality and satisfaction in romantic relationships has been studied widely. Recently, studies have directly connected adolescent romantic relationships to the affective and relational models adolescents receive from their parents (Schulz et al., 2023; Walper & Wendt, 2015). The current study aimed to understand whether quality, satisfaction, and couple conflicts and their management in adolescents' romantic relationships are associated with dimensions of parent–adolescent relationships (positive parenting and parent–adolescent communication) measured when adolescents were 15 years old and other ones (conflicts with parents and attachment) when adolescents were 17 years old.

Concerning our first research question, our hypotheses were partially supported as lower levels of destructive conflicts with parents were linked to higher quality romantic relationships, more satisfaction, and lower conflicts within the couple, but not to higher reasoning management. Our results are consistent with previous studies showing that conflict management with parents is connected to how adolescents experience romantic relationships (Mirsu-Paun & Oliver, 2017; Straus & Douglas, 2007). Adolescents who effectively manage conflicts with their parents are more likely to have positive and healthy romantic relationships (Schulz et al., 2023). Indeed, the family is the first social environment where adolescents have conflicts and shape their conflict resolution skills. It is then essential to take into consideration this aspect while exploring one of the most challenging developmental tasks for adolescents, which is learning how to create a romantic relationship with high-quality, satisfaction, few conflicts, and good strategies to handle conflicts that do arise (Hare et al., 2009; van Doorn et al., 2011).

Moreover, our results are consistent with the literature stating that conflict experienced in the family is associated with conflicts in romantic relationships (Hare et al., 2009; van Doorn et al., 2011). Adolescents use their parents as models to develop essential developmental skill, learning to manage conflicts (Heinze et al., 2020; Vangelisti & Perlman, 2006), so future studies should explore further the connection between parent–adolescent relationships and adolescents' reasoning in conflicts with their romantic partners.

Concerning our second research question, our hypothesis that high levels of anxious parent–adolescent attachment would be related to adolescents' higher conflicts, lower romantic relationship quality, satisfaction, and reasoning was partially supported, as we discovered a significant association between anxiety in attachment between parents and adolescents only for adolescents' romantic relationship quality. Nevertheless, our results are consistent with previous studies highlighting that adolescents with difficulties in attachment with their parents perceive low romantic relationship quality (Hadiwijaya et al., 2020). Moreover, our results support the essential role attachment with parents has for adolescents in bonding with peers (Collins et al., 2009; Walper & Wendt, 2015) and the role of anxious attachment as a risk factor for future romantic relationships (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Cassidy & Shaver, 2016; Schulz et al., 2023).

Finally, concerning our last research question, our hypotheses were partially confirmed as we discovered a significant association only between positive parenting at age 15 and later romantic satisfaction, with no connection between parent–adolescent communication and other romantic relationship dimensions. These conclusions are inconsistent with studies describing how positive parenting and parent–adolescent communication contribute to the well-being of adolescents (Khaleque & Ali, 2017). However, one possible explanation could be rooted in the nature of adolescence itself, as parenting adolescents is challenging and constantly changing. As their children move through adolescence, parents need to create new communication strategies and practices following adolescents' requests for more autonomy (Dykstra et al., 2020). The rapidity and flexibility of parenting and communicative styles could have made the relations between the variables we were interested in difficult to comprehend, as only one longitudinal exploration could not be enough to capture these rapidly changing relations fully. Future studies should be conducted to understand the connections among positive parenting, parent–adolescent communication, and romantic relationships by exploring these connections more than two times (as we did with ages 15 and 17) and with a larger sample.

The current findings advance knowledge regarding adolescents' romantic relationships. One of the novel aspects of the current study is that it is part of a larger research project that explores parenting dimensions and parent-child relationships across cultures (PAC) to generate a more universal and inclusive psychology. As romantic relationships are experienced differently in different cultural contexts (Shen et al., 2020) but have been studied mostly in North America and Europe (Espinosa-Hernández et al., 2020), the current study's participants from eight different countries should be noted, even though we did not find significant country effects. Indeed, our purpose in recruiting participants from these different

countries was to create an international and inclusive sample that would be diverse concerning both socio-demographic and psychological characteristics. This diversity allowed us to examine our research questions from a global perspective and in a sample more generalizable to a wider range of the world's populations than is typical in most research to date (Ijzerman et al., 2021). Nevertheless, we note that the sample sizes of adolescents with romantic partners in some of the countries were small, so future research with larger international samples of adolescents with romantic partners is warranted.

In addition, our findings help researchers and clinicians studying or working with adolescents and have implications for intervention and prevention efforts, as they stress the relevance of parent–adolescent conflicts and attachment as connected to adolescents' romantic relationships. These results may be used for psychoeducational and psychological interventions in different cultural contexts by focusing on the spillover effect of conflicts and conflict management skills from the family to the romantic couple or preventing difficulties in romantic relationships for adolescents not securely attached to their parents.

However, the study has some limitations. First, as our dependent variables (romantic relationship quality and satisfaction and negative conflict) were significantly correlated, this could influence our results. Second, we caution that the samples were not nationally representative, so findings may not generalize to entire populations from the countries included and should not be used to generalize beyond the specific groups included. Third, study samples within each culture were small, so we were not able to conduct multigroup analyses to test differences in associations among the variables across the different cultural groups. For these reasons, future works using nationally representative and larger samples would be beneficial for investigating whether parent–adolescent relationships are related to quality and satisfaction with romantic partners for adolescents in consistent ways across cultural contexts. Finally, we focused primarily on adolescents' reports regarding the dimensions evaluated in the current study, although we also had mothers' and fathers' reports of anxious parent–adolescent attachment relationships. We focused primarily on how adolescents perceive their relationships with parents and romantic partners, but future studies should investigate adolescents' romantic relationships by exploring different respondents' points of view.

Finally, two aspects should be noted when interpreting the findings of the current study. Firstly, we observed significant intercorrelations among parenting variables (particularly between positive parenting and parent–adolescent communication). This might explain why some parent–adolescent variables did not demonstrate independent effects on the dimensions of romantic relationships. Second, the timing of the assessment of parenting dimensions could also influence the results. Parent–adolescent conflicts and attachment were measured closer to assessing adolescents' romantic relationships' satisfaction and quality, being more proximal to the experience of being in a romantic relationship and thus having a more substantial predictive power. By highlighting these aspects, we underscore that the observed effects could be net effects within the context of the other predictors.

5 | CONCLUSION

Taken together, the results suggest several main conclusions. First, conflicts between adolescents and their parents are connected to the romantic relationships adolescents experience. Adolescents who encounter negative forms of conflicts with parents are more likely to be in romantic relationships with lower quality and satisfaction and higher conflict with their partner. Second, an anxious attachment to parents relates to lower romantic relationship quality during adolescence, confirming attachment's important role in adolescent development. Third, although past positive parenting related to current higher romantic satisfaction, no significant relations were found between adolescent-parent communication and the dimensions of romantic relationships studied. These findings advance understanding of how parent–adolescent relationships are linked to adolescents' romantic relationships in diverse cultural contexts.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Procedures were approved by IRBs in each participating country.

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