

## HOME EDUCATION IMPACT ON FAMILY LIFE DURING THE COVID -19 PANDEMIC

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**Abstract.** *Family life satisfaction and their mental health has to receive a special attention in the psychological and health literature, so that the society together with the family can prevent the spread of the disease which have profoundly changed people's lifestyles and pose a threat to their physical and mental well-being. The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of Covid -19 Pandemic on family considering the online education being an enormous pressure for parents concerning educational activities. In this respect, 146 parents have completed psychological instruments that measure the level of satisfaction with life, parental acceptance and the emotional states of depression, anxiety and stress. They also gave demographic data which contain marital status, number of children, working experienced during the pandemic, etc. For statistical purposes linear regressions were used. The results showed that a high level of parental acceptance predicts a low level of life satisfaction and also high levels of depression and anxiety and a high level of life satisfaction predicts a low level of stress.*

**Keywords:** *life satisfaction; home education; parental acceptance; depression; anxiety; stress status*

### ***1. Introduction***

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in China in 2019 caused panic and stress globally. The challenges and stress that people have experienced could trigger common mental disorders, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder that could lead to dangers that outweigh the consequences of the epidemic (Bao, Sun, Meng, Shi & Lu, 2020 ).

This pandemic and public health measures which urge to slow the spread of the disease have profoundly changed people's lifestyles and pose a threat to their physical and mental well-being. The unpredictable nature of the disease, loss of control and freedom, contradictory messages from the authorities, sudden changes in plans for the near future or concern for one's own health and the well-being of the family and loved ones are examples of sources of stress associated with this pandemic. All these factors were related to the high negative level of psychological impact (Bueno-Nativol, Garcia-Garcia, Olaya, Lasheras, Lopez-Anton, Santabarbara, 2021).

Our life with the onset of the SARS COV-2 pandemic has taken an unexpected turn. This virus, which has been spreading alarmingly around the world for almost two years now, has affected all of us, some less and some more. Many recent studies have started from the premise that this virus has an impact on family life and its functioning and affects the health and well-being of the family. Measures taken in many countries to control the spread of Coronavirus have a disruptive effect on relationships in general and family relationships in particular (Ones, 2020).

Impositions such as the closure of schools nationwide have had a particularly strong impact on families with children. In this regard, a previous study conducted on Romanian students revealed the fact that students encountered many difficulties during the process of online learning such as: technical difficulties, poor interaction with teachers, poor communication with their peers (Coman et al. 2020). Although this may have led many parents to spend more time with their children, the measures have also led to disruption of established routines and enormous pressure for parents concerning educational activities. In the context of the pandemic, many parents have reduced their work schedule, and therefore family income, and have tried the difficult task of combining homework with childcare (Huebener, Waights, Spiess, Siegel & Wagner, 2021).

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced families to try to maintain a work-life balance with few resources and little support. With kindergartens and schools closed, parents are solely responsible for caring for children and home education. Every family is different; some have more resources others less, resources such as device availability and internet access needed to achieve online learning (Fisher, Languilaire, Lawthom, Nieuwenhuis, Petts, Runswick-Cole, Yerkes, 2020). A good communication, lack of ambivalence, good cooperation between parents in interacting with their children is necessary (Sirbu, A., Vintila, M., Tisu, L., Stefanut, AM, Tudorel, O, Maguran, B., Toma, RA, 2020).

In this matter, educating children at home is no longer the choice of parents. This has become a necessity and even a duty. As of March 10th, 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has forced the closure of schools in almost

every country around the world, severely disrupting the education process. This decision completely interfered with the daily lives of most families. The school as an institution is a very important place for collecting social experiences. The isolation of a child from school in physical format generates many changes, especially in the context of the pandemic (Parczewska, 2020). With schools closed, home education has become the only form of schooling available, forcing educational institutions to establish emergency online teaching. Given that children actually have to learn from home, studies have shown that parents are struggling with this challenge (Pozas, Letzel & Schneider, 2021).

The restrictions imposed by this pandemic have been and continue to be a challenge for all categories of people regardless of age, but they can be particularly difficult for children and adolescents who are in a stage of continuous development and who rely heavily on connections with schoolmates for emotional support and social development (Gavrila-Ardelean, 2019; Magson, Freeman, Rapee, Richardson, Oar, Fardouly, 2021).

Schools provide essential matters for the development of children and adolescents beyond education, such as nutrition, exercise, social contact and mental health services, and the closure of schools can disrupt the day-to-day functioning of families.

Home education can be one of the activities associated with the strongest negative effects (Thorell, Skoglund, de la Peña, Baeyens, Fuermaier, Groom, Mammarella, van der Oord, van den Hoofdakker, Luman, de Miranda, Siu, Steinmayr, Idrees, Soares, Sorlin, Luque, Moscardino, Roch, Crisci & Christiansen, 2021).

The impact of the pandemic also affects children's psychological behavior, which seems to be a little more severe than on adults. Classes are closed all over the world, and families are largely isolated in their homes. For this reason there are disruptions in the education of children and the time they spent with friends to explore and play and now time is very limited or even non-existent. For children in the key stage of development, as well as for adolescents, the interruption over a year will have a great impact on their social development.

A balanced interaction in a family plays a crucial role in the development of an individual. The healthy functioning of these methods of interaction improves the mental health of family members. The positive functioning of the family can mitigate the impact of various variables in the child's development such as family income and its structure (Bahrami, 2017). Vaccination history and health anxiety can influence the attitude towards vaccination intention, parents can influence and even decide for their

children in accordance with their attitude (Stefanut, AM, Vintila, M, Tomita, M, Treglia, E., Lungu, MA, Tomassoni, R., 2021).

Parents' feelings about the pressure exerted by their children's presence at home are mixed. Some parents feel more connected to their child's school work, while others consider this an additional burden. In addition, schools and teachers do not have enough guidance to improve the experience of parents (Garbe, Ogurlu, Logan, Cook, 2020).

Also, the impact of the pandemic on the family, such as depression and anxiety in parents, is related to an increased risk of mental problems among children (Ramchandani, 2020).

Even if measures such as quarantine or alert were taken with a good aim to reduce the number of infected cases, restrictions and social isolation are a major concern for the psychological well-being of families (Spinelli, Lionetti, Pastore, Fasolo, 2020). Although the public health benefits of social distancing, isolation and quarantine are well established and essential for reducing the risk of Covid-19 transmission, there are likely consequences for them. Here it is also a matter of adequate language used in communication by authorities and mass-media, in order to transmit the correct information without inducing panic (Goian, C., 2010). This information might reach vulnerable groups, which were identified to be women, the poor, or disabled (Gavrila-Ardelean & Gavrila-Ardelean, 2017; Goian, C, Vasiluta, M, 2013). A recent review of the psychological impact in the context of the pandemic indicated an increase in anger, confusion and post-traumatic stress symptoms. These types of negative emotions can increase violent behavior, especially within the family (Humphreys, Myint & Zeanah, 2020). In this matter life satisfaction refers to the perception of the quality of life as a whole. Empirical studies have shown a significant negative relationship between work, family and life satisfaction (Bai, Gopalan, Beutell, Ren, 2021). Life satisfaction or quality of life refers to the assessment of the individual's subject to the degree to which his or her most important needs, goals, and desires have been met. The degree of life satisfaction reported by parents also has direct implications for the effectiveness of interventions for children's behaviors. Also, many empirically supported treatments, such as acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), emphasize the importance of assessing and promoting satisfaction in life (Brock, Kochanska, O'Hara & Grekin, 2015).

Everyone has suffered an unprecedented form of social isolation in the modern world. Perceived social isolation can have a significant effect on health and well-being. Also in a study conducted in 2021 by Clair, Gordon, Kroon & Reilly in which they concluded that social isolation in the context of the pandemic was associated with low life satisfaction in all areas. Individuals who reported higher levels of risk with Covid-19 infection also

reported higher perceived social isolation. The experience of perceived social isolation has significant negative consequences related to life satisfaction and psychological well-being. In this situation long walks, being in open air, access to natural environment may help maintaining a healthier body and mind (Swami, V., Khatib, N.A.M., Vidal-Mollon, J., Vintila, M., Barron, D., Goian, C., Mayoral, O. Toh, E.K.L., Tudorel, O., Vazirani, S&Zahari, H.S., 2020). Also, good, healthy food can improve the psychological well-being of all family members and help managing the situation (Vintila, M. Todd, J., Goian, C., Tudorel, O., Barbat, CA, Swami, V., 2020).

This pandemic has dramatically changed many aspects of people's lives, including key features of family life. And it is a particularly important stressor for families that has rapidly and radically changed many stable characteristics of family environments (Rudolph, Zacher, 2021). Social or physical distance has led to the fact that virtually all children in the world stay at home, no longer go to school, with parents who have either been fired or work from home. There are challenges that test families' adaptability and flexibility (Prime, Wade & Browne, 2020).

One of the main concerns of parents during the pandemic was to maintain their children's education. This raises an issue, namely how the family has adapted to the new transition to create a new routine. In addition, lack of preparation time, as well as mental health issues, parental worries and stress, could hamper parents' ability to support their children's educational needs. Recent studies show that during the Covid-19 pandemic, parents reported higher levels of stress compared to adults without children (Lee, Ward, Chang, Downing, 2021). Research that examines psychological flexibility in the family context has also found a link between a parent's psychological flexibility and their child's psychological outcomes. For example, psychological flexibility can promote a positive, consistent parenting practice through parental acceptance of assertive cognitive-affective experiences so that parents' response to stress remains rooted in family parenting values and the best interests of the child (Brassell, Rosenberg, Parent, Rough, Fondacaro&Seehuus, 2016).

In a study by Pines, Ananat& Fitz-Henley started from the premise that this pandemic with Covid-19 affected the psychological well-being of the family and the satisfaction of family life through four mechanisms: loss of parents' jobs, loss of income, the burden of childcare and the disease itself. In addition these mechanisms can be correlated such as job loss leading to a loss of income. Thus, the ways in which the pandemic affects the psychological well-being and satisfaction of families' family life can accumulate and also causes uncertainty about the future, anxiety, fear, stress, sadness among individuals, especially in terms of health and finances. At the family level, parents try to cope with challenges and are subjected to

additional stress that can lead to emotional difficulties due to the fact that schools have closed and children stay at home. A recent investigation showed that fear of health related to Covid-19 influences the stress level of parents and consequently the well-being of the family. Social isolation, unstable incomes and psychological distress have been shown to be linked to higher levels of parental stress. Parental stress is a risk factor on mental health among both parents and children (Marchetti, Fontanesi, Mazza, Giandomenico, Rome, Verrocchio, 2020).

A study conducted in China reported an increase in negative emotions such as anxiety and depression and decreases in positive emotions measured by Oxford happiness scores and life satisfaction (Li, Wang, Xue, Zhao, Zhu, 2020). The two questionnaires were also used in this research.

Social distancing measures have created drastic and sudden changes in daily life in distinct areas such as family life, school, work, and families have faced an unforeseen increase in hours spent under the same roof. Although for some families spending more time together can bring family members closer to each other and foster a sense of well-being, it has been shown that several factors such as financial insecurity, health concerns, uncertainty about the duration of the pandemic, the lack of social and physical activities negatively affect the state of mind and psychological well-being. Families may also experience negative emotions that include stress, anxiety and even depression, as they face several daily problems and additional tasks (Janssen, Kullberg, Verkuil, van Zwieten, Wever, van Houtum, Wentholt, Elzinga, 2020).

## ***2. Methodology***

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze if a high level of parental acceptance predicts a high level of life satisfaction in this period of Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing; if a high level of life satisfaction predicts a low level of depression and we also analyze the link between parental acceptance and a high level of stress and anxiety.

For this purpose, we formulated the following hypotheses:

*H1. A high level of parental acceptance predicts a low level of life satisfaction*

*H2. The high level of life satisfaction predicts a low level of stress*

*H3. The high level of parental acceptance predicts a high level of depression*

*H4. The high level of parental acceptance predicts a high level of anxiety*

### ***2.1 Participants***

For this study we involved 146 people (N =146) of which 89.7% were women. Participants ranged in age from 21 to 65 years (M = 37.36; SD = 8.57). The participants for this study have the quality of parent having at least one child older than 2 years, having different level of studies. They have Romanian citizenship and they are coming from different socio-economic backgrounds.

## ***2.2. Instruments***

To highlight the results 3 instruments were used and we asked the participants to complete the questionnaires in order to predict some aspects due to the situation given by the Covid-19 Pandemic. The required demographic data were: age, gender, marital status, number of people living in the household, number of children and their age, education, development of professional activity, employed or not, where they spend the work hours, etc.

**Satisfaction with Life Scale.** (SWLS - Diener, Emmons, Larsen, Griffin, 1985); The SWLS Life Satisfaction Scale was developed to assess overall life satisfaction. The scale does not assess satisfaction with certain areas of life, such as health or finance, but allows subjects to integrate and weigh these areas in any way they choose. The scale comprises 5 items and the answers are given on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strong disagreement, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neutral, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strong agreement). Higher levels represent greater satisfaction. The internal consistency for this instrument in the present study is .85 which is a good internal consistency.

**Acceptance and Parenting Questionnaire.** (6-PAQ- Greene, RL, 2013). The 6-PAQ Acceptance and Parenting Questionnaire is an 18-item questionnaire based on parental self-reporting. This questionnaire measures the six theorized primary processes that contribute to psychological flexibility among parents. Answers are rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strong disagreement, 4 = strong agreement). The six primary processes are: acceptance (3,12,14), cognitive diffusion (6,11,16), contact with the present / moment (1,8,17), self as context (4,9,13), values of parenting (5,10,18) and the employed action (2,7,15), being processes that overlap and interrelate with each other. There are also 7 inverted items (1,2,5,7,10,15,18). Low scores for this scale indicate greater parental psychological flexibility, and high scores indicate greater psychological inflexibility. This questionnaire collects vital information from the perspective of parents that could help

guide psychological interventions. In our study the internal consistency for this instrument is .82 which is a good internal consistency.

**Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale.** The DASS-21 developed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995) is a set of three self-reporting scales designed to measure the emotional states of depression, anxiety and stress. This scale was developed by selecting representative items of DASS-42 to reduce completion time. Scores for depression, anxiety and stress are calculated by summing the scores for the relevant items multiplied by two. This scale is based on a dimensional conception. The answers are given on a Linkert scale with 4 classes (0 = not applied in my case, 1 = applied to some extent or in some cases, 2 = applied to a considerable extent or a good part of the time, 3 = applied in my case most of the time). The assumption on which the development of DASS-21 was based and which was confirmed by research data is that the differences between depression, anxiety and stress experienced on normal subjects and clinical populations are essentially differences in degree. Therefore, this questionnaire has no direct implications for the allocation of patients to direct diagnostic categories found in classification systems. The depression subscale has an excellent internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha being .92, the anxiety subscale has an Alpha Cronbach value of .87, which represents a good internal consistency and the stress subscale Alpha Cronbach value is .91 representing an excellent internal consistency.

**Demographic data.** The study participants also provided demographic data regarding the age of the participants, marital status, and number of people living in the household, number of children and their age, education, professional activity (home, work, partially home).

### ***2.3 Procedure***

The above mentioned tools have been introduced in a Google application named Google Forms to be completed by participants online. The link was sent to several Facebook groups mentioning the request to be completed by one family member who is caring most of the time for at least one child older than two years old. Also they were informed regarding the completion process and the tools and time required completing the questionnaires. Participants were also assured of the confidentiality of the processing methods and were provided with addresses and telephone numbers so that they could contact us if they have any question about the study.

### ***3. Results***



The raw data we collected were subsequently analyzed and interpreted using SPSS for Windows, v. 20.0. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences is a complex program which comprises several types of data about various subjects (Coman&Netedu, 2011, p.130) This study is non-experimental one. For the predictions we used linear regression for all three hypotheses.

*H1. A high level of parental acceptance predicts a low level of life satisfaction*

The results show that life satisfaction is predicted negatively by parental acceptance which means that a high level of parental acceptance predicts a low level of life satisfaction;  $R^2 = .144$ ;  $p < .001$  which indicates that life satisfaction is predicted by a coefficient of 14.4% by parental acceptance (Table 1).

*Table 1. The results of the linear regression analysis for parental acceptance as a predictor of the level of life satisfaction*

Effect	Estimate	SE	95% CI		p
			LL	UL	
Intercept	35.488	1.581	32.364	38.613	.000
Total Scor SWLS	-.239	.047	-.333	-.146	.000

Dependent variables: SWLS;  $R^2$ adjusted= .144; CI = Confidence interval

*H2. The high level of life satisfaction predicts a low level of stress*

Before running the statistical version, we checked the representative assumptions for linear regression. The results of the linear regression supported the hypothesis from our study, these being statistically significant,  $p < .01$ ,  $t = -3.964$  and the fit index  $r^2 = .092$ , thus showed that a higher level of life satisfaction predicts a lower level of stress reported by parents. (Table 2).

*Table 2. The results of the linear regression analysis for life satisfaction as a predictor of the level of stress*

Effect	Estimate	SE	95% CI	p
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			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Intercept	14.9	2.416	10.124	19.676	.000
Total Scor SWLS	-.340	.086	-.510	-.171	.000

Dependent variables: DASS -Stress ;  $R^2$ adjusted= .092; CI = Confidence interval

*H3. The high level of parental acceptance predicts a high level of depression*

The results of the linear regression supported the hypothesis from our study, these being statistically significant,  $p < .01$ ,  $t = 7.331$  and the fit index  $r^2 = .267$ , thus showed that a higher level of parental acceptance predicts a higher level of depression. (Table 3).

*Table 3. The results of the linear regression analysis for parental acceptance as a predictor of the level of depression*

Effect	Estimate	SE	95% CI		<i>p</i>
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Intercept	-7.171	1.523	-10.181	-4.161	.000
Total Scor PAQ	.335	.046	.245	.426	.000

Dependent variables: DASS -D ;  $R^2$ adjusted= .267; CI = Confidence interval

*H4. The high level of parental acceptance predicts a high level of anxiety*

The results of the linear regression supported the hypothesis from our study, these being statistically significant,  $p < .01$ ,  $t = 6.127$  and the fit index  $r^2 = .201$ , thus showed that a higher level of parental acceptance predicts a higher level of anxiety. (Table 4).

*Table 4. The results of the linear regression analysis for parental acceptance as a predictor of the level of anxiety*

Effect	Estimate	SE	95% CI		<i>p</i>
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Intercept	-5.018	1.452	-7.889	-2.147	.001
Total Scor PAQ	.267	.044	.181	.353	.000

Dependent variables: DASS -A ;  $R^2$ adjusted= .201; CI = Confidence interval

#### **4. Discussion**

The present study was conducted to investigate the impact of the pandemic on families in terms of parental acceptance, life satisfaction native effects such as stress or anxiety.

Pandemic measures taken to prevent the spread of the disease in most countries create vulnerability and increased risk for destabilization in families. Classes are closing or school are closed are closed, which leads to suffering and pressure for many families who are not used to being closed for so long and for a long time. Moreover, as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, families have no support. Families with a child in need of care and guidance should now care for their child 24 hours a day, without outside guidance. In the context of the pandemic, families are under great pressure and stress (Ones, 2020).

Covid-19 is advancing rapidly in the world, and the mortality rate is increasing day by day. Families can be exposed to high levels of psychological damage. The unknown nature of the virus, as well as the lack of adequate information about transmission, reproduction can pose risks not only to people's physical health, but also to their mental health. This can lead to negative psychological effects such as stress, anxiety and even depression (Effati-Daryani, Zarei, Mohammadi, Hemmati, Yngyknd&Mirghafourvand, 2020).

Parental stress is more than just the stress experienced by parents or other caregivers; it is the aversive psychological reaction to the requirements to be a parent. Like general stress, it is felt when demands exceed resources and is experienced by all parents to varying degrees. It is experienced with negative feelings towards self and child in relation to parental requirements and is related to the functioning of adults and the child and the quality of the parent-child relationship. Proven factors that are correlated with parental stress include family resources, competence, life satisfaction, and mental health (Sharda, Sutherby, Cavanaugh, Hughes & Woodward, 2019).

Exposure to stressors can lead to cognitive, emotional and physical fatigue, which in turn can cause unwarranted pressure on the parent-child relationship. Despite the extensive evidence linking individual and family stressors, families around the world are collectively facing a new range of stressors that threaten their physical and mental health, safety, happiness, and life satisfaction due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the pandemic itself is not the only global public health challenge that threatens society, it will have long-term negative effects on families today (Brown et. Al, 2020).

In this pandemic context, we wanted to see if a parental acceptance predicts a low level of life satisfaction. The hypothesis is supported by the results being statistically significant. Psychological well-being is defined as

managing the responses to existential difficulties encountered in life. Satisfaction with life indicates an assessment of the individual's own life and provides information about quality of life. As a result, it is a concept of how positively a person evaluates the overall quality of his or her life as a whole. Fear of Covid-19 has reduced physical and environmental well-being. Fear of illness is known to be associated with anxiety, stress and depression. It is proven that the pandemic negatively affects the well-being and satisfaction of life, as it threatens security and the desire to survive, which are basic needs. In a study conducted by Ozmen, Ozkan, Ozer & Yanardag, 2021 found that there is a positive relationship between well-being and life satisfaction. The greater the well-being of people, the more they enjoy life. Studies also have shown that positivity is significantly associated with life satisfaction, self-esteem, happiness, quality of interpersonal relationships and resilience.

Therefore, while mobility restrictions and social isolation are successful in preventing the spread of Covid-19 disease, they are a serious concern for the psychological well-being of families. Blockage is a major burden for parents and increases their risk of experiencing stress and negative emotions. In a study by Spinelli et. al, 2020, it was highlighted that parents living in a disorganized home perceived the relationship with the child as a more stressful and less pleasant experience. The data suggest that the organization of routines and activities in the family are more important than the physical characteristics of the home. Even though the pandemic has given families more time to spend together, the quality of this time seems to be compromised due to the fact that parents are overwhelmed by parental duties.

The results of the study by Trzebinski, Cabanski & Czarnecka, 2020 indicate that, even in such circumstances, the high meaning of a living person, life satisfaction and basic hope act as a buffer against panic reactions to the pandemic. A better structure of time, daily activities was related to normal mental health and better well-being.

Through the second hypothesis we tried to highlight if a high level of life satisfaction predicts a low level of stress. Parental stress is not unique to the Covid-19 pandemic; parents generally say they feel more stressed and less happy. In the context of the pandemic, the stress of parents is increased by the interaction between the role of parent and other areas of life. Parents face financial pressures that increase their overall experiences of stress. Employee parents also experience tension as a result of the conflict between the role of parent and the role of employee. Increased relationship conflict and feelings caused by social isolation are associated with increased stress and decreased well-being. The poor work-life balance, economic uncertainty and reduced social support experienced due to isolation measures in the

context of the pandemic were linked to parental stress. Although in some studies mothers had a higher risk of psychological distress, both parents had depression, anxiety and stress.

Employee parents also experience tension as a result of the conflict between the role of parent and the role of employee. Increased relationship conflict and feelings caused by social isolation are associated with increased stress and decreased well-being. The poor work-life balance, economic uncertainty and reduced social support experienced due to isolation measures in the context of the pandemic were linked to parental stress. Although in some studies mothers had a higher risk of psychological distress, both parents had depression, anxiety and stress. Parents around the world have reported higher levels of stress after school closes (Freisthler, Gruenewald, Tebben, McCarthy & Wolf, 2021).

Studies that have already been published on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic suggest that the characteristics of the current situation, unpredictability, uncertainty, disease severity, misinformation and social isolation, contribute to stress. One of the most vulnerable groups in the current situation is the family, due to the increased stress felt by parents and the lower capacity for tolerance. Thus, while the current situation is generally stressful, it is important to refer separately to the group of parents, who are subjected to additional stress and who have to adapt to their new role (Ben-Ari, Ben-Yaakov, Chasson, 2021).

Effective stress management is essential to mitigate the harmful impact of Covid-19. In a study conducted by Adams, Smith, Caccavale & Bean, 2021 showed that most parents reported that raising a child became more difficult during the pandemic. The most common factors are changes in children's daily routines, worries and anxiety around Covid-19 and requirements related to children's online schooling. Parents are overwhelmed by the many responsibilities and roles they have had to take on. For some parents, prolonged periods of high stress can lead to negative effects on mental health, including depression, anxiety and a reduced quality of life.

In a study by researchers Whittle, Bray, Lin & Schwartz, 2020 concluded that the stress perceived by parents during the pandemic was associated with problems in children such as increased emotional problems, inattention, and hyperactivity. This shows that parental stress affects children's well-being. Moreover, attachment theory suggests that parental stress can reduce children's feelings of emotional connection and security, leading to feelings of insecurity.

Through other hypothesis we wanted to see if a high level of parental acceptance predicts a high level of depression and anxiety in the context of the pandemic. The hypothesis is supported by our results. Anxiety, stress and depression are widespread throughout the world during quarantine,

the social isolation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Stress can be defined as a physical, mental or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. In a study conducted by Shah, Mohammad, Qureshi, Abbas & Aleem, 2021, they showed that during the pandemic women experience more stress, anxiety and depression in general than men. The literature suggests that women have a higher prevalence of mood and anxiety disorders and are more likely to develop stress during the pandemic. They also showed that the state of the relationship can contribute to stress, anxiety and depression. Married people have more anxiety during quarantine.

Restrictions are particularly difficult for families, with home schooling, social distance measures and blocking situations having a profound and complex impact in the family context. These parental challenges are exacerbated by the demands of working from home, economic hardship and social constraints. It has been suggested that profound changes in daily family life caused by the pandemic may fuel parental stress and domestic tension that can have serious consequences including domestic violence, child abuse or neglect. Satisfaction with the family was related to higher individual parental stress and parental stress (Gavrila-Ardelean, 2018; Calvano, Engelke, Di Bella, Kindermann, Renneberg & Winter, 2021).

In a study by Brown, et. al, 2020, the researchers examined the risk and protective factors involved in the stress perceived by parents. The results indicate that the parents had cumulative stressors due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The most common stress factor among parents included mood swings and general stress levels.

Research has shown that the onset of the pandemic in China has led to a 74% decrease in overall emotional well-being (Yang & Ma, 2020). Rudolph et. al, 2021 shows that living with the restrictions and concerns around the current pandemic is linked not only to increased emotional suffering, but also to decreased life satisfaction. The results of the study also showed that the feeling of social disconnection during the pandemic was associated with higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms and lower levels of life satisfaction. Recent cross-sectional evidence has suggested that the facets of family resilience (eg, maintaining a positive outlook, flexibility, problem solving, social resources) have been positively associated with the emotional reactions, including satisfaction, experienced during the pandemic

Many parents have reported changes in their child's emotional state during school closures, the most common symptoms reported being difficulty concentrating, irritability, and anxiety. In a study by Marchetti et. al, 2020 over 80% of the study sample reported high levels of psychological distress and significant child-related exhaustion. There is certainly a high psychological burden of social isolation. Mothers have experienced greater psychological suffering than fathers, this requires special psychosocial

attention to women. These are explained by prolonged social isolation combined with parents' feelings of general helplessness and increased demands for childcare.

In a study made by Kallitsoglou, 2021 concluded that the experience of caring with the child's online school while mothers had to work was perceived as difficult, stressful. One of the most important challenges in the context of the pandemic was to simultaneously fulfill responsibilities. For some families this has been exacerbated by certain characteristics, such as lack of available devices, quality of the Internet, low parental involvement, and lack of a support system.

Given the importance of life satisfaction and fulfillment, the effectiveness of parenting interventions could be enhanced by simultaneously targeting mothers' life satisfaction. This could be achieved by referring mothers who report low life satisfaction to individual interventions that promote functioning and well-being. Such interventions do not necessarily have to be a formal psychotherapy; it could be a psychoeducation that is meant to help parents lead a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

The inclusion of treatment components that aim to promote vitality and meaning in one's life is essential. Individuals are asked to identify the values associated with multiple areas of life such as family, career, education, health and to choose and adopt behaviors that are consistent with those values. Exploring these values and identifying the actions taken could help to promote life satisfaction by increasing the effectiveness of the intervention (Brock et. Al, 2015). It may also be useful to implement strategies for managing parental stress during the Covid-19 pandemic. Providing family counseling can help avoid negative outcomes for families and children.

### ***5. Conclusions***

In the present study we wanted to investigate the impact of the pandemic on families and the relationships between the satisfaction of family life, acceptance of parenthood, stress anxiety and depression.

The results suggest in our study that there is a statistically significant link between parental acceptance and a high level of stress. The hypotheses were supported by the statistical analysis using linear regression in all four cases. Parents face many responsibilities in the context of the current pandemic and it has been shown that with the closure of schools and work at home, parental stress has increased significantly.

Parental acceptance predicted a low level of life satisfaction and a high level of depression and anxiety. The hypothesis was supported, because

now families stay together 24 hours a day, and parents no longer have time for themselves.

Another hypothesis we wanted to investigate is whether a high level of life satisfaction correlates with a low level of stress. This hypothesis was also supported and statistically significant.

There are sufficient concerns about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the well-being of the general population, but the pandemic is a global crisis not only in public health and economic stability, but also in the well-being of the family. It is important to note that families are directly affected by the health, social and economic consequences of the current pandemic (Prime et al., 2020).

Other researchers concluded that the pandemic has affected the satisfaction of life due to the pressure and restrictions imposed and also that especially families have faced more negative emotions such as stress, depression, than happiness.

In conclusion, the best psychological response to the pandemic would be to strengthen our psychological resilience and spread awareness, positivity, hope, empathy, and understanding those struggling with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as those who suffer from the disease.

Alongside psychologists, social workers also are relevant actors who contribute to a community's effort to maintain the mental health of its members. During the pandemic, they have had continuity in the provision of both primary, secondary and tertiary intervention services, quickly adapting their work to the new situations (Trancă, 2021).

## ***6.Limitations***

A first limit of the present study is given by a relative small sample (N = 142). Also, the sample was formed, predominantly of females (89.7%). The fact that the group was one to say target, families that had at least one child the results cannot be generalized, as all study participants had at least one child. Also a limitation could be considered the fact that not all the instruments used for this study are validated on the Romanian population. Data were also generated on participants' subjective reports through self-reporting. In order to be able to collect the data, due to the fact that the form was created online, it was necessary to connect to the internet and have a mobile phone or computer.



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