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Don't Your Parents Bother You? Examining the Quality of Communication among Emerging Adults with Their Parents

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Why parental communication?

- ▶ Parental communication during adolescence
 - ▶ A component of optimal parenting behaviors (Barnes & Olson, 1985)
 - ▶ Promotes healthy adjustment (Collins et al., 2000)

- ▶ What role does parental communication play during emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004)?
 - ▶ Emerging adults (EAs) living with their parents (Mitchell, 1998; 2006)
 - ▶ Negotiating roles with parents
 - ▶ Do EAs feel bothered?

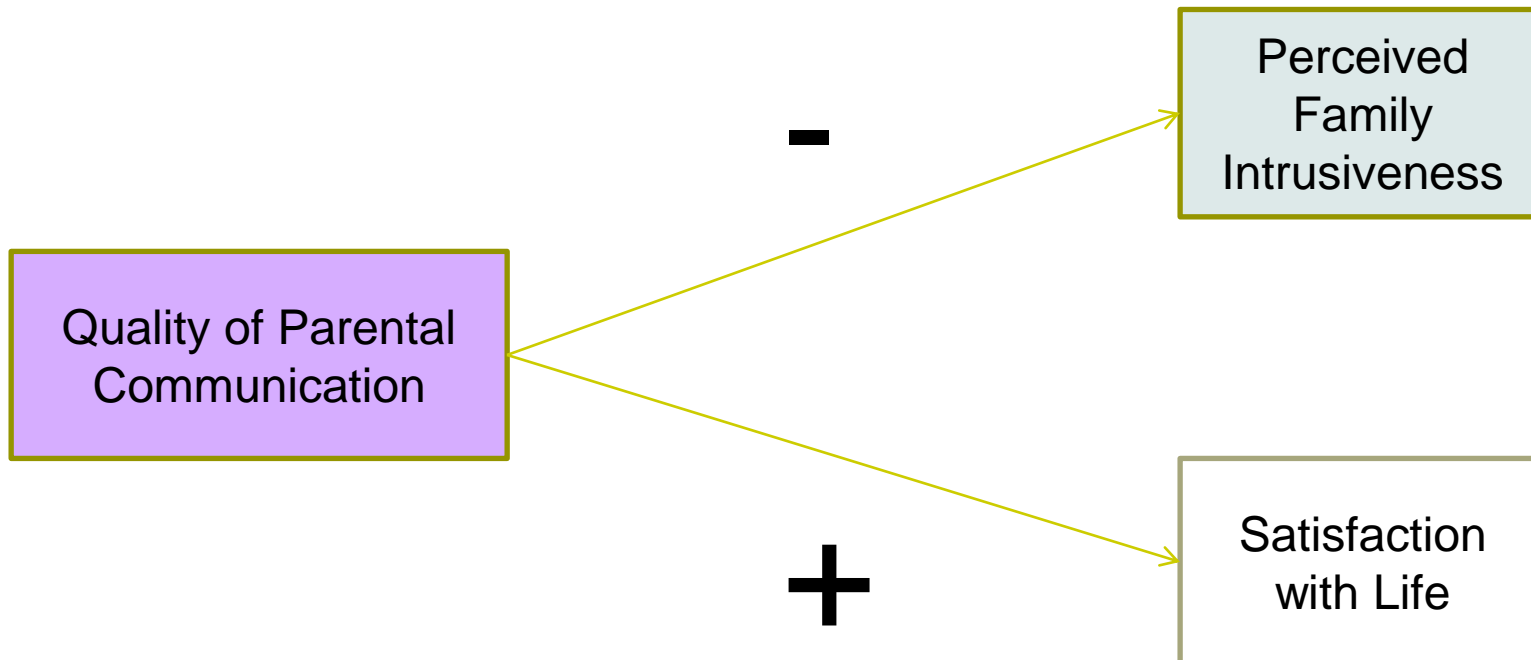
Sociocultural Approach

- The cultural context may affect parent-child communication and relationship during EA.
- Considering cultural context
 - Family structure within the household (Baca Zinn & Wells, 2000; Chao & Tseng, 2000)
 - Nuclear vs. Extended Family
 - Family expectations (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999)
 - Come home and care for aging parents

Present Study

- ▶ How do emerging adults' perceived quality of communication with their parents relate to their own perceptions of family intrusiveness and life satisfaction?
 - ▶ Are their differences in these relations based on generational immigrant status and racial/ethnic background?

Hypothesis



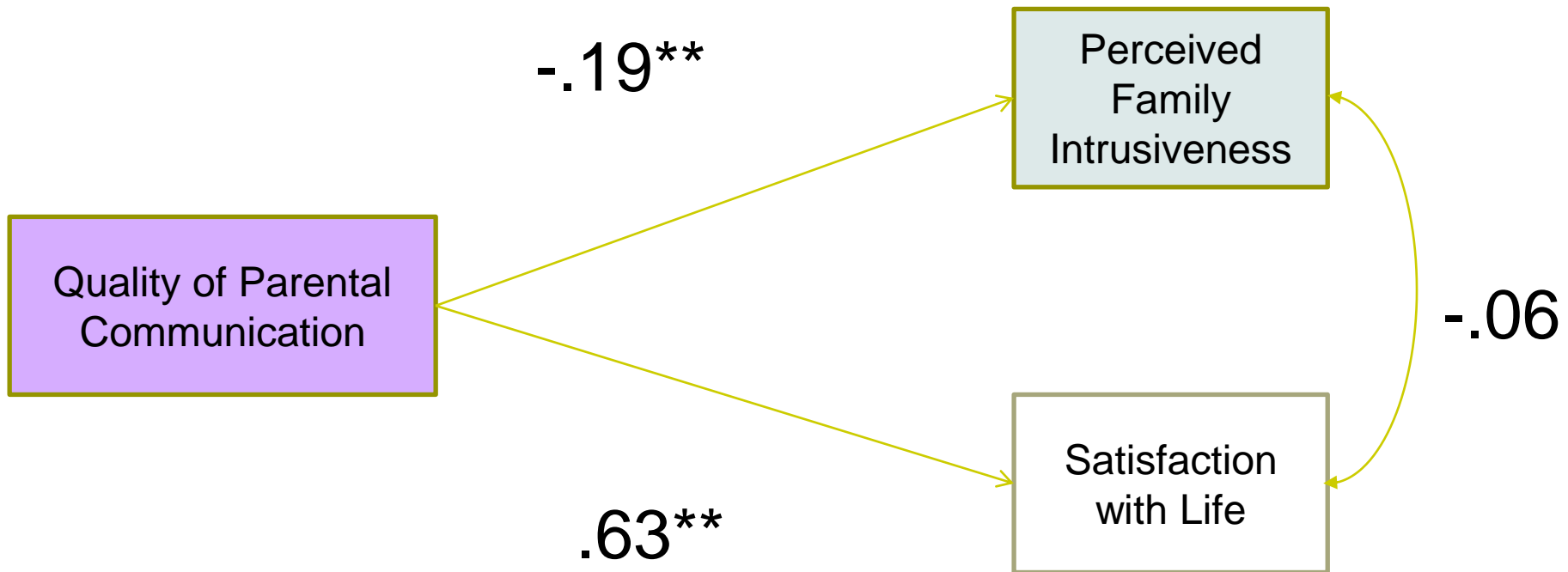
Method

- ▶ Diversity in Pathways to Adulthood Project
 - ▶ ($N = 397$)
- ▶ Subsample ($N = 256$)
 - ▶ 39% Chinese, 34% Mexican, and 28% European Americans
 - ▶ 63% female
 - ▶ Age_{Mean} = 19.55 years
 - ▶ 11% first-generation, 54% second-generation, 25% third-generation

Measures

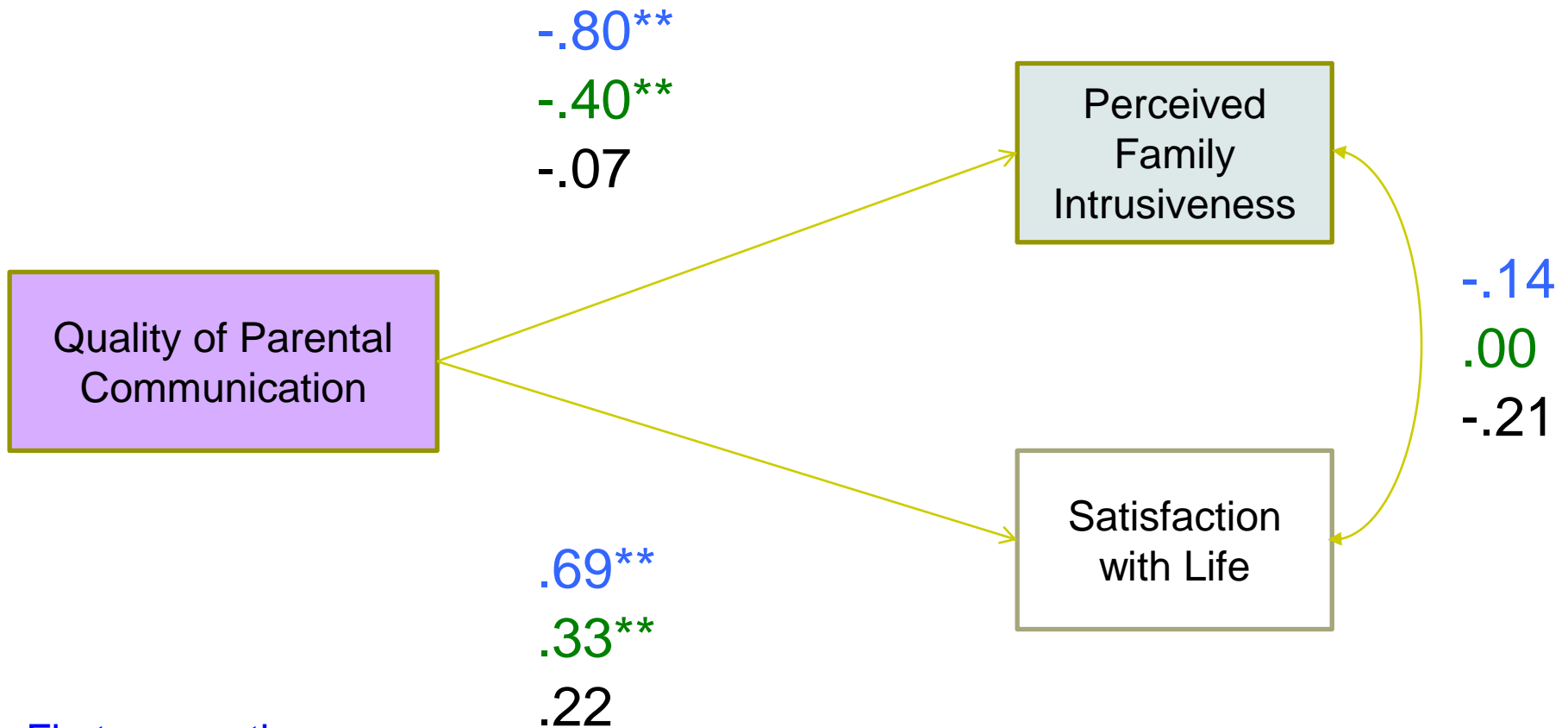
- ▶ **Perceived Quality of Communication** (5 items; Barnes & Olson, 1985; Boutakidis & Lisman, 2001)
 - ▶ 1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*
 - ▶ “I find it easy to discuss problems with my parent;” “I feel that when I try to talk with my parent, s/he misunderstands me.”
- ▶ **Family Intrusiveness** (13 items; Gavazzi, Reese, & Sabatelli, 1998)
 - ▶ 1 = *Never*, 5 = *Always*
 - ▶ “Family members criticize the way I run my life;” “Family members question my loyalty to the family”
- ▶ **Satisfaction with Life** (5-items; Diener et al., 1985)
 - ▶ 1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*
 - ▶ “The conditions of my life are excellent;” “I am satisfied with my life.”

Overall Sample



$X^2 (296) = 763.42, p < .01, CFI = .843, TLI = .828, RMSEA = .079$

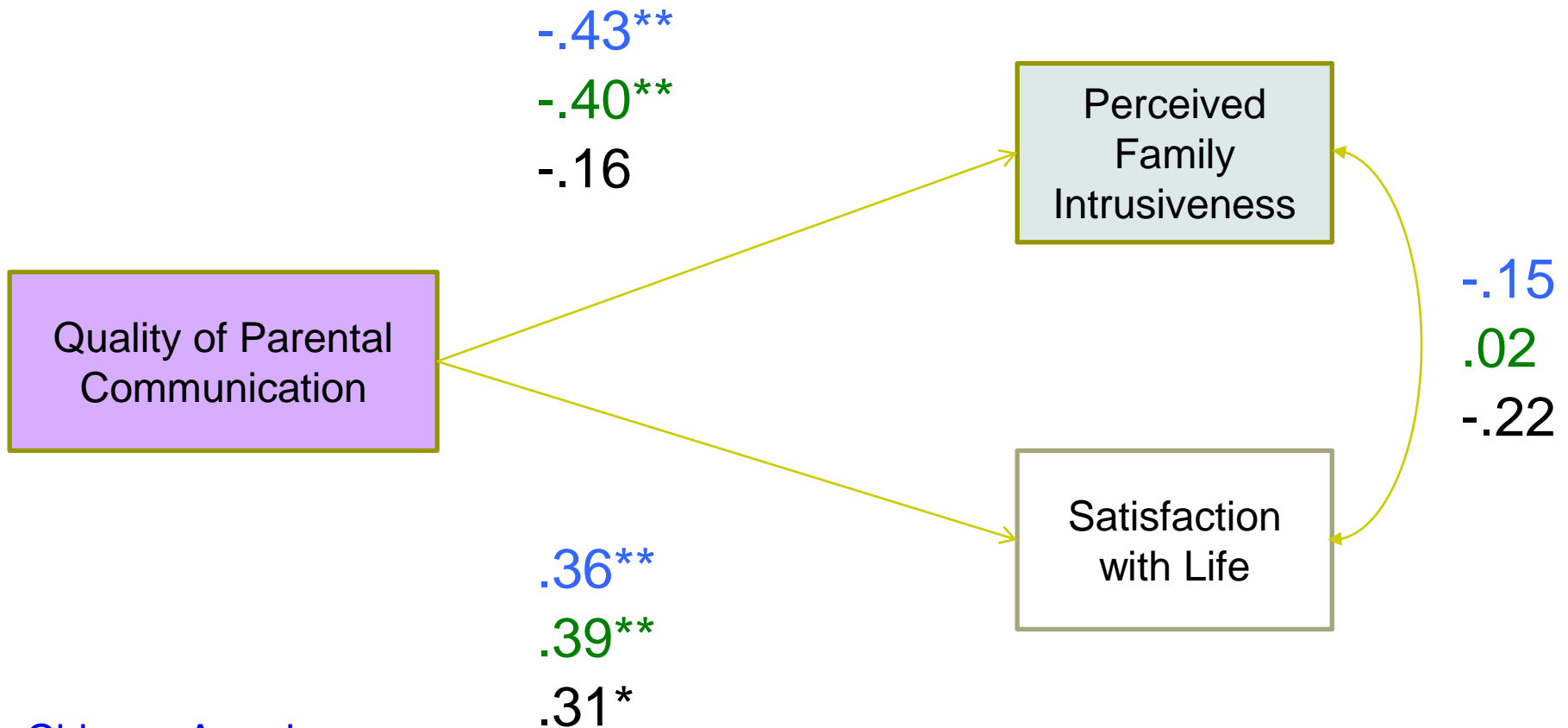
Immigrant Generational Status



First-generation
 Second-generation
 Third-generation

$X^2 (638) = 3,025.90, p < .01, CFI = .796, TLI = .792, RMSEA = .087$

Ethnic Background



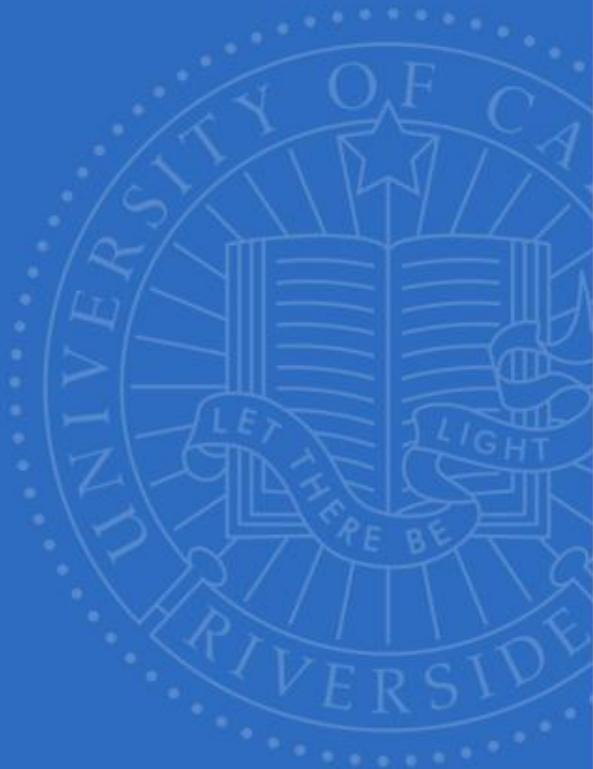
Chinese Americans
 Mexican Americans
 European American

$X^2(975) = 4,117.52, p < .01, CFI = .775, TLI = .776, RMSEA = .092$

Discussion and Future Directions

- ▶ Life-course approach to parenting (Rossi & Rossi, 1990)
- ▶ Life satisfaction and positive perceptions of one's family may be predicted by high quality parental communication.
- ▶ May vary based on:
 - ▶ Generation status
 - ▶ Racial/ethnic background
- ▶ Possible reasons for these differences
 - ▶ Perceived parental sacrifice (Chao & Kaeochinda, 2010)

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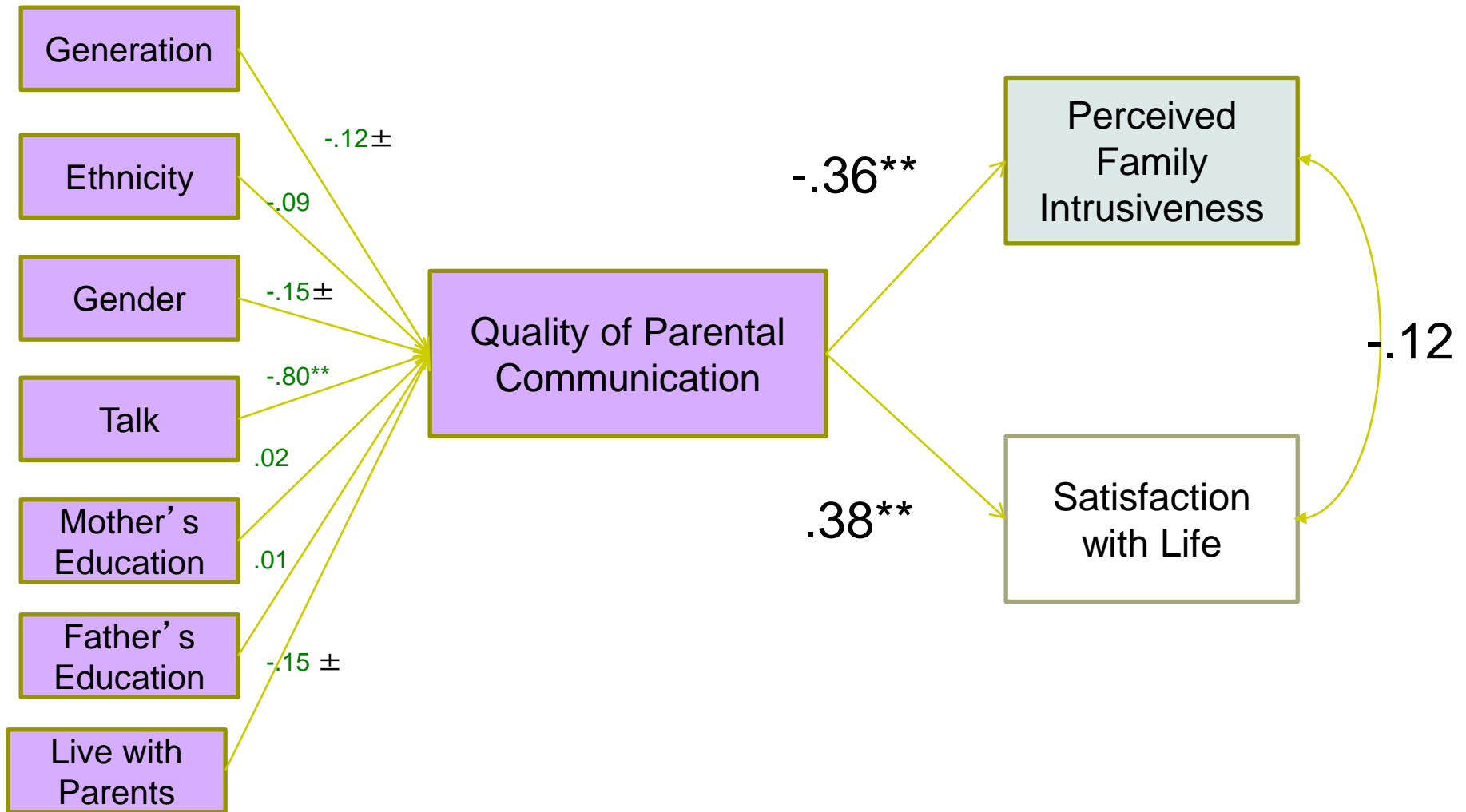
Thank you!

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Base Model with Covariates



$X^2 (7) = 14.32, p < .05$