

Original Research Article

The Current Situation of Conflict between Parents and Teenage Children

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Abstract: The prevalence of conflicts between parents and children is a common issue in families and needs to be addressed properly to ensure the development and happiness of every family member. This is a sensitive and complex problem that requires knowledge, empathy, and love to resolve. The article surveyed and evaluated 706 adolescents in the age group of high school students (15-17 years old). The research surveyed the common content of conflicts within families, such as education, social relationships with friends, finances, and the use of the internet/technology. The frequency of conflicts was measured on different levels: no conflict, infrequent (a few months), frequent (daily/weekly), and severe. Additionally, the study analyzed factors influencing the frequency of conflicts between parents and children. The survey results and analysis serve as a basis for building solutions to foster better relationships among family members.

Keywords: Family, parents, children, conflicts, reality.

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INTRODUCTION

In family life, conflicts between parents and teenage children are a common and frequent issue. It involves clashes in perspectives, values, and desires between two generations, creating significant tensions and difficulties. Conflicts can stem from various reasons, including differences in lifestyles, beliefs about education, demands, and individual freedom. Parents often aim to create a safe and stable environment for their children, which can lead to control and limitations on their freedom. However, teenagers often have their own opinions, seeking to express their independence and explore the world around them. This is a stage where children begin to develop their personalities and individual awareness, and conflicts with parents are inevitable.

Family conflicts can arise from lack of understanding, communication, and misjudgment. Parents and children often have different expectations regarding behavior, achievements, and personal development. Without understanding and flexibility, conflicts can escalate into arguments, quarrels, and more, affecting the relationships and harmony within the family. To resolve family conflicts, listening, respect, and understanding from both sides are necessary. Most importantly, building an open and sincere communication environment, where both parents and children can express their viewpoints

without fear of criticism or restriction, is crucial. Empathy, willingness to listen, and seeking common solutions are essential factors in resolving conflicts and ensuring the development and happiness of the family.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Steiberg (1989) and Montemayor (1983) approached parent-adolescent conflict from a biological and developmental perspective, considering it an inevitable discord during the process of adolescence. According to these authors, parent-adolescent conflict arises from the biological demands of adolescents - the urge for peer interaction and a greater involvement with the social world outside the family than with their parents. From the authors' viewpoint, conflicts do not have severe consequences on the development of teenagers since a deep bond is established between children and their parents during early childhood. Maja Dekovic (1999) suggests that conflict has an inverse relationship with the quality of the parent-child relationship. Although some studies argue that the closer parents and children are, the more likely conflicts arise due to increased frequency of interaction and freedom to express emotions and viewpoints during conversations, Maja Dekovic believes that frequent conflicts tend to occur more often in parent-child pairs with poor relationship quality.

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Using a regression model in the analysis, the author includes two variables: the impact of conflict and the quality of the parent-child relationship, with negative outcomes such as low self-confidence and depression resulting from the quality of the parent-child relationship rather than the frequency of conflicts between parents and children. On the contrary, the author suggests that parent-child conflicts have a more negative impact on parents than on teenagers. Onongha (2015) considers conflict to occur when the values and beliefs of two individuals differ. From this perspective, both parents and children face numerous conflicts. From the perspective of adolescents, conflicts arise when parents do not respond emotionally as expected, when parents believe that the child cannot meet their expectations, or due to a lack of agreement within the family. Thus, the causes of conflicts are diverse, including differences in values, behavior patterns, and communication quality between parents and children.

Methods for studying and measuring parent-child conflict

One of the important indicators to describe conflicts is measuring the content and frequency of conflicts. Based on accessible literature, it can be said that the common method is to list a catalog of behaviors and topics that may cause conflicts. Respondents can then self-identify whether they have conflicts in these areas and, if so, at what frequency. However, in each study, this catalog may vary, and the frequency scale may also differ depending on the research objectives and scope. Farzana Ashraf's study (2017) used the measurement scale by Prinz, Foster, Kent, and O'Leary (1979), which included 44 potential conflict areas (such as doing homework, tidying up clothes, etc.). In each area, adolescents and parents were asked to indicate the topics of conflicts that occurred in the past month. This is a measurement scale that many researchers use to understand and analyze the state of parent-child conflict, such as the study by Brett Laursen (2005).

Another example is the research by Susan J.T. Branje and colleagues (2009), which measured the frequency of conflicts based on Laursen's Interpersonal Conflict Inventory (1993), consisting of 35 topics measured on a 5-point frequency scale. In Brian K. Barber's study (1994), conflicts were described based on 10 topics using a 6-point scale ranging from "never" to "daily" over a one-year period. Another example is the study by Atya Mohammed Hasan and colleagues (2016), which used the Parent-Adolescent Issues checklist by Robin and Foster (1989). In this study, adolescents were asked to select how many conflict topics they had with their parents from a list of 44 topics. However, unlike some other studies, in this method, adolescents only needed to choose between "Conflict" or "No conflict." Cases with 13 or more conflicts were defined as "frequent conflicts."

Areas of frequent parent-child conflict can be examined from the following perspectives: Firstly, conflicts between parents and children can arise from differences in thinking, behavior, and lifestyle between parents and children. Secondly, within the scope of the research topic, conflicts can be measured through the evaluation of students regarding this issue. Thirdly, conflicts between parents and children can be viewed from various dimensions, such as the frequency of conflicts, the severity of conflicts, conflict resolution strategies, and the consequences of conflicts. Fourthly, based on the findings from the literature review, parent-child conflicts can be categorized into 10 indicators:

Use of free time, including time spent using technology devices, the internet, and socializing with friends. *Academic matters*: grades, studying at home, tutoring, school selection. *Financial matters*: part-time jobs, ownership of money, spending money. (Note: The translation of the remaining indicators is cut off. Please provide the complete text, and I'll be happy to translate it for you.)

RESEARCH METHODS

Direct interviews with family members can be used to gather information about conflicts. The questions can focus on aspects such as the level of conflict, the causes of conflicts, the impact on the child, and how the family resolves conflicts. Surveys can be conducted to collect data from a larger number of participants in the study. The questions can be related to the level of conflict, changes over time, emotions, and perspectives of family members. The study focuses on analyzing 10 indicators related to the use of free time, academics, and finances. To understand the frequency of parent-child conflicts, each conflict indicator will be measured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0: Almost no conflict, 1: A few times a month, 2: A few times a week, 3: Almost daily.

Observing family behavior to track interactions between parents and children in a natural environment. Researchers observe and record behaviors, body language, and emotions of family members to assess the level of conflict and social interaction. Using self-report data, external assessments to reference external sources of information such as teachers, social workers, or other concerned individuals to gather information about conflicts within the family.

THE FREQUENCY OF CONFLICTS BETWEEN PARENTS AND ADOLESCENTS (15-17 YEARS OLD)

Frequency of conflicts between parents and adolescents regarding academic-related topics

Regarding the content of conflicts, the most common cause between adolescents and parents is related to studying at home. The percentage of adolescents having conflicts with their mothers regarding studying at home is 63.3%, while the

percentage of conflicts with their fathers on this topic is 54.6%. Among these, the percentage of adolescents having conflicts with their fathers ranging from a few times a week to daily is 19%, compared to 25.5% with their mothers. After regular school hours, additional tutoring, and extracurricular activities, studying at home is when they complete assignments, do homework, review old knowledge, and learn new concepts. Therefore, whether they study during their time at home and how they utilize that time can often lead to conflicts between adolescents and their parents. The second most common field of conflicts is grades. The percentage of adolescents having conflicts with their fathers about grades, occurring a few times a month, is 41.1%, while on a weekly to daily basis, it is 11.4%. The corresponding percentages for conflicts with mothers are 46.2% and 16.9%. Tutoring and choosing schools are two areas with fewer conflicts compared to studying at home and grades. Approximately 35% of respondents have conflicts with their fathers regarding tutoring, and the percentage of conflicts with their mothers is about 42%.

To explain the conflicts between parents and adolescents regarding academics, quantitative and qualitative data suggest two main reasons. Firstly, it is due to the academic pressure created by parents on their children. Secondly, it is because adolescents cannot effectively communicate their difficulties in studying with their parents. Data analysis shows that 42.8% of adolescents have been pressured by their parents to study even when they are tired. Approximately 57% of them share that their parents put pressure on them to achieve high grades, although at a regular frequency, it is only about 10%, while occasionally it accounts for 47%. Supporting the quantitative data, during qualitative interviews, some adolescents also expressed reasons for conflicts in studying with their parents. For example, some mentioned that their mothers are very strict and have high expectations regarding academic performance.

Factors influencing the frequency of conflicts between adolescents and parents regarding education can be identified.

Firstly, the living area is a statistically significant factor related to conflicts with both parents on all four educational topics. The proportion of adolescents in urban areas experiencing conflicts with their parents regarding education is significantly higher than in rural areas. While the percentage of rural adolescents experiencing conflicts with their parents about grades is 41.6% and 49.7% respectively, this percentage is 61.8% and 74.5% in urban areas, representing a 1.5-fold increase. Similarly, only 22.7% of rural adolescents experience conflicts with their parents about additional schooling, whereas this figure rises to 45.1% in urban areas. In rural areas, conflicts between adolescents and mothers regarding school selection account for 21%, while in urban areas, this

rate is nearly 2.5 times higher, reaching 51.7%. These numbers suggest that in urban areas, where specialized schools and tutoring centers flourish, along with intensive exam preparation courses, the academic pressure on adolescents is higher compared to rural areas. Exploring the rates of parents pressuring their children to study even when exhausted and the rates of adolescents facing pressure regarding grades, survey data clearly indicate a distinct difference between rural and urban areas. Adolescents in urban areas face more pressure than their counterparts in rural areas. The percentage of urban adolescents being pressured by their parents to study even when tired is approximately 50%, with occasional to frequent pressure accounting for 27.6%. Meanwhile, in rural areas, only about 35% report experiencing such pressure. Similarly, concerning grade-related pressure, if in rural areas the occasional/frequent rates of parental pressure are 24.6%, in urban areas, this number rises to 37%. This statistically significant difference demonstrates that the urban learning environment is more competitive, achievement-oriented, and a contributing factor to increased conflicts between parents and children.

The gender of the adolescent is also a factor that contributes to the differences in conflicts with parents regarding education. Male adolescents experience more conflicts with their parents than females. The percentage of male adolescents experiencing conflicts with their parents regarding grades is 59.2% with fathers, and 67.6% with mothers, whereas these percentages for female adolescents are 48% and 59.9% respectively. In addition to grades, the proportion of male adolescents experiencing conflicts with their fathers regarding studying at home is 60.6%, whereas only 50.3% of female adolescents experience such conflicts with their fathers. The grade level also has a statistically significant relationship with conflicts between parents and children regarding additional studying and class selection. 12th-grade students experience higher conflicts with their parents regarding additional studying and class selection compared to 11th-grade students, and the lowest conflict rates are found among 10th-grade students. This can be explained by the fact that 12th grade is a crucial period for preparing for university entrance exams, which leads to increased worries and academic pressure, resulting in more conflicts with parents.

Furthermore, among the four educational topics, whether adolescents hold class officer positions or not is also related to conflicts with parents regarding additional studying. Adolescents who hold class officer positions have higher rates of conflicts with their parents compared to those who don't hold such positions. Additionally, academic performance of adolescents shows a statistically significant relationship with conflicts with parents. The percentage of high-achieving students experiencing conflicts with their parents in all four educational areas is significantly

higher than the percentage in the non-high-achieving group. Nearly 40% of high-achieving adolescents experience conflicts with their fathers regarding additional studying, and regarding this topic, the rate of conflicts with mothers is approximately 48%. However, these percentages in the non-high-achieving group are 24% and 30% respectively. Similarly, the percentage of conflicts between high-achieving students and parents regarding class selection is 30% higher than the percentage in the non-high-achieving group.

Among the two factors related to adolescents' family life, birth order does not have a statistically significant relationship with conflicts between parents and children. However, the variable of birth order shows that adolescents with fewer than two siblings experience more conflicts with their parents compared to those with two or more siblings. In families with three or more siblings, the percentage of conflicts with fathers regarding grades, additional studying, class selection, and studying at home are 47.6%, 27.7%, 22.8%, and 49.4% respectively, while these percentages are significantly higher in families with fewer than two siblings, reaching 55.6%, 39.1%, 37.5%, and 57.9% respectively. Similarly, in families with more siblings, adolescents experience more conflicts with their mothers regarding education compared to families with fewer siblings.

Frequency of conflicts between parents and children regarding Internet/technology usage

In order to describe the ownership of technology devices among adolescents today, the study identified seven devices that can connect to the Internet, enabling convenient communication, social connections with friends, online information retrieval, and other recreational activities. These devices include smartphones, laptops, desktop computers, tablets, e-readers, and smartwatches. According to the findings, the highest ownership rate is for smartphones, reaching 90.4%, followed by laptops (47%), desktop computers (23.8%), tablets (17.7%), smartwatches (5.7%), and finally e-readers (3.7%). Approximately 70% of the adolescents own two or more technological devices, indicating the increasing prevalence of technology device ownership among adolescents. However, the data also reveals that the ownership rate of technology devices is primarily concentrated in urban areas, where living standards are higher and it is assumed that adolescents receive better material care compared to rural areas. This can be explained by the contrast in the two scenarios shared by adolescents in rural and urban areas, where owning technological devices becomes easier in urban areas.

The percentage of conflicts between adolescents and parents regarding Internet usage is quite high. The majority of interviewed adolescents reported experiencing conflicts with both their fathers and mothers regarding the time spent using the

Internet/technology devices in the past month. The percentage of conflicts with fathers on a weekly/daily basis is 36.6%, while the percentage of conflicts with mothers is 44.1%. At the level of conflicts occurring several times a month, the percentage of conflicts with fathers regarding Internet/technology usage is 38.3%, and with mothers, it is 37.8%.

Factors influencing conflicts between parents and children in Internet usage and technology device usage

Considering the living areas, if there is no difference in conflicts regarding the time spent on technology devices/Internet between rural and urban areas, there is a difference in the content of websites accessed by adolescents, resulting in varying rates of conflicts between parents and children based on the living areas. Specifically, in urban areas, the percentage of conflicts between parents and children regarding the content of websites accessed by adolescents is significantly higher compared to rural areas. 49.1% of adolescents in urban areas experience conflicts with their fathers regarding the content of websites accessed, and the conflict rate with mothers in urban areas is 40.1%. However, in rural areas, these rates are only 24.5% and 25.6% respectively.

Among the factors related to the school environment of adolescents, such as taking on class officer roles and academic performance, the factor of being a class officer does not have a statistically significant relationship with conflicts between parents and children regarding technology device/Internet usage. However, the academic variable shows that academically high-achieving students tend to have more conflicts with their parents regarding the content of Internet websites they frequently access compared to non-high-achieving students. Furthermore, although the education level of parents does not affect the occurrence of conflicts between parents and children regarding the time spent on Internet/technology devices, it strongly influences the content of websites adolescents frequently access. Parents with higher education levels tend to have more conflicts regarding this topic compared to parents with lower education levels.

Conflicts between parents and children regarding socializing activities with friends

Socializing activities with friends were measured over the past year and included activities such as visiting each other's homes, going for walks, having coffee or tea, playing games, etc. (excluding activities within the school premises or extracurricular activities). The scale used in this question was a 5-level scale: 1-Every day; 2-A few times a week; 3-A few times a month; 4-A few times a year; 5-Almost never. With the three options: 1-Interacting and socializing with friends; 2-Engaging in personal activities alone; 3-Participating in recreational activities with parents, survey data shows that regardless of whether it is a school day or a

weekend, the majority of adolescents still spend their free time engaging in personal activities such as being online, playing games, reading books/newspapers/stories, etc. The second most common activity is meeting and socializing with friends, with a rate of 36.9% on school days and 36% on weekends.

The data indicates that the majority of adolescents have conflicts with their parents regarding the time spent socializing with friends rather than the choice of friends. 43.1% of adolescents reported conflicts with their fathers regarding the time spent socializing with friends, and the conflict rate with mothers on this topic is approximately 50%. On the other hand, when it comes to choosing friends, the percentage of adolescents experiencing conflicts with their fathers and mothers is significantly lower, at 28.2% and 33.6% respectively. The survey data also shows that nearly 45% of adolescents reported that their parents do not intervene at all in their choice of friends, while a small intervention rate accounts for approximately 40%, and a high intervention rate fluctuates around 15%. This indicates the level of autonomy of adolescents aged 15-17 in establishing their own social relationships.

Factors influencing the frequency of conflicts between adolescents and parents in relation to friendships

Considering the correlation with the living area, the rate of rural adolescents occasionally or frequently being prevented by their parents from going out to play is 40.1%, while this rate in urban areas accounts for only 21.5%. Nearly 50% of urban adolescents reported never being hindered by their parents when going out to play, while in rural areas, only around 26% of adolescents do not face parental obstacles. This also raises a suggestion: perhaps parents in urban areas tend to have a more open-minded view towards friendships? Furthermore, when considering the academic performance of adolescents, nearly 40% of those who do not achieve good academic results are occasionally or frequently hindered by their parents from going out to play, while this rate is only about 26% among the high-achieving group. Could it be that high-achieving students gain more trust from their parents in managing their leisure time with friends compared to the low-performing group? Additionally, parents with low academic performance may prioritize their children's study time over leisure activities, leading to stricter control over socializing time with friends, and this could be a contributing factor to conflicts. On the other hand, variables such as gender or class level do not show any statistically significant relationship with parents preventing children from going out to play with friends.

Frequency of conflicts between parents and adolescents regarding financial management.

Survey data shows that approximately 80% of adolescents express the viewpoint that, at their age, they have the right to own and decide how to spend their money. In reality, 74.3% of adolescents reported having their own discretionary money, while only 25.7% did not. This money could be provided by parents/grandparents, scholarship funds, or money earned by the adolescents themselves. When considering the living area, the percentage of adolescents with their own discretionary money is higher in urban areas compared to rural areas, specifically 83.6% versus 56.6%. Furthermore, among different grade levels, 10th-grade students have the lowest percentage of adolescents with discretionary money compared to 11th and 12th-grade students.

While 67.4% of adolescents believe that the amount of discretionary money they have is sufficient or more than enough, 32.6% feel that they are in a state of insufficient/very insufficient discretionary funds. The percentage of adolescents in rural areas who feel they have insufficient discretionary funds is 42.2%, while this figure is 29.1% in urban areas. This statistically significant difference also indicates that in rural areas, the percentage of adolescents with low discretionary funds is higher compared to urban areas, and these adolescents also perceive that the amount of money they have is insufficient for their needs. However, 42.4% of adolescents feel uncomfortable or very uncomfortable asking their parents for more money if needed.

In addition, taking on part-time jobs is quite common among high school students. Survey data shows that 30.1% of respondents engage in part-time jobs (paid or unpaid, such as volunteer work). The choice to take on part-time jobs can stem from various reasons. To understand the motivations behind adolescents at this age choosing to take on part-time jobs, the survey posed multiple choices, including reasons such as: to have more spending money, to have more opportunities for social interaction, to enhance life skills and communication skills, to work for fun, to avoid staying at home or because parents require it. According to the survey results, the highest percentage, 64.3%, chose to work in order to have more spending money, followed by the purpose of enhancing life skills (66.3%), and 46.2% chose to work for more social interaction opportunities. The percentage of those working due to parental requirements is very low, only 1.6%, equivalent to three cases in the entire sample.

Factors influencing the frequency of conflicts between adolescents and parents regarding financial activities.

Investigating the factors that contribute to conflicts between adolescents and parents regarding financial activities, survey data shows no gender

differences in conflicts in all three areas. The percentage of male and female adolescents in conflict with their parents is nearly equivalent. For example, 24.1% of male adolescents are in conflict with their fathers regarding part-time work, while the percentage for female adolescents is 23.5%. In terms of conflicts related to spending money, 48.2% of male adolescents are in conflict with their mothers, while the percentage for female adolescents is 51.1%.

When considering the living area, there are differences between rural and urban areas in the percentage of conflicts with parents regarding part-time work and ownership of money. In urban areas, the percentage of conflicts with parents is higher compared to rural areas. Nearly 30% of adolescents in urban areas are in conflict with their fathers regarding earning money, while the percentage for adolescents in rural areas is only around 20%. Regarding the reasons for ownership of money, 37.9% of urban adolescents are in conflict with their fathers, while in rural areas, this percentage is only 24.5%. The same pattern applies to conflicts with mothers. However, the living area factor does not show a statistically significant relationship with the percentage of conflicts related to spending money. In rural or urban areas, the percentage of conflicts with parents on this topic is equivalent.

DISCUSSION

Several studies worldwide have surveyed the impact of conflicts on adolescents specifically and parent-child relationships in general, based on three dimensions: Psychological effects Increased risk of confrontation in relationships Enhanced closeness in relationships (Elvira Cicognani *et al.*, 2010). It can be observed that alongside the negative emotions and effects conflicts bring, only 10.4% of adolescents believe that conflicts help them better understand their parents. This partly indicates the detrimental nature of conflicts to parent-child relationships. The question arises as to whether the harmfulness of conflicts is determined by the conflict resolution methods, the nature of the conflicts themselves, or the interaction process between parents and children. Within the scope of this study, the data has not provided a definitive answer to this question, which also suggests directions for future research in identifying the beneficial/harmful nature of conflicts and the influencing factors.

The percentage of adolescents who perceive conflicts as creating a risk of confrontation with parents, as indicated by the statement "I feel angry and dissatisfied with my parents," accounts for 18.3%. Meanwhile, other negative emotions such as "frustration," "wishing to die," "wanting to run away from home," "feeling offended," "feeling inadequate" range from 11.4% to 27.8%, with the most common emotion being frustration. In-depth interview data also reveals more detailed descriptions of adolescents' states with the influences of conflicts. These influences can

lead to distance between parents and children when the nature of the conflicts remains unresolved, making it difficult for children to grasp their parents' desires and perceive those desires as "illogical."

CONCLUSION

By gaining a better understanding of conflicts and their impact on parent-child relationships, we can comprehend the effects of family conflicts on children's development and well-being. It provides detailed insights into how conflicts affect the emotions, behaviors, psychology, and social relationships of children. Additionally, identifying the influencing factors and causes of conflicts serves as a basis for finding effective ways to resolve conflicts between parents and children. This research helps us develop programs and solutions to support families in reducing conflicts and fostering a healthy family environment. These programs may include family counseling, parental skills training, and activities to strengthen family relationships.

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