



# Adolescent Conflict With Parents And Its Effect On Adjustment

Dr.Suchandra Banerjee Assistant Professor Department of Education, Mahitosh Nandy Mahavidyalaya, Jangipara Hooghly. West Bengal, India

## Abstract

The adolescent has to make many adjustments in life (Elliot, 2000). This adjustment can be physical, emotional, social and educational. Research has shown that adolescents who have been victims of corporal punishment at home are at greater risk of developing problem behaviours such as depressive symptoms, thoughts of suicide, addiction towards drugs and alcohol etc. (Straus and Kantor, 1994). Problem is to find whether conflict between young adults and their parents affect their adjustment in life. Objective is to investigate whether conflict between young adults and their parents affect their adjustment (Straus and Kantor, 1994). The variables of the study include Conflict Score as the independent variable and adjustment as the dependent variable. Adjustment related variable include Emotional Adjustment, Social Adjustment and Educational Adjustment. Hypotheses of the study were formulated.

. Population consists of Plus 2 (age group 16-18 years) and 1<sup>st</sup> year degree college students (age group 18-19 years) of Kolkata, North 24 Parganas and Hooghly districts of West Bengal from both urban and rural areas. *Sample for Quantitative phase* consisted of 545 students of Plus 2 and 1<sup>st</sup> year of college. *Sample for Qualitative phase* consisted of 30 students selected based on their Conflict Score. Tools of the study consisted of Conflict Scale- Questionnaire titled "Young Adults' Conflict with Parents" constructed by the investigator and Adjustment Inventory for School Students (Sinha and Singh, 2005) Results showed that the correlation between Conflict Score and Emotional Adjustment is positive and significant at 1% level. That is, increased conflict has a deleterious effect on emotional adjustment. The correlation between Conflict Score and Social Adjustment is positive and significant at 1% level. As conflict increases social adjustment score increases which implies that increased conflict improves social adjustment. The correlation between Conflict Score and Educational Adjustment is positive and significant at 1% level. That is, conflict has a deleterious effect on Educational Adjustment (Sinha and Singh, 2005). Qualitative analysis was also done.

The aggression that is generated from conflict has a potential of emotional maladjustment. It can destroy the young minds. It is a cause of concern for the future of our society. Not only does it call for parental education, but it also calls for more socially oriented teachers in high schools and colleges.

## Index Terms

Adolescent conflict with parents, Emotional Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Educational Adjustment

## INTRODUCTION

The adolescent has to make many adjustments in life (Elliot, 2000). This adjustment can be physical, emotional, social and educational. Conflict and resultant aggression deranges the balance of life. It results in issues that require to be resolved. The girl who is suddenly made conscious of the need to cover up her sexual characteristics feels resentment. She has to adjust both physically and emotionally. The college goer, whose ego has been stamped on feels the needs to assert himself/ herself and restore self-confidence. The

student who is stumbled in the academic milieu feels the need to maintain the balance between studies and his/her abilities.

Research has shown that adolescents who have been victims of corporal punishment at home are at greater risk of developing problem behaviours such as depressive symptoms, thoughts of suicide, addiction towards drugs and alcohol etc. (Straus and Kantor, 1994).

Thus conflict has malevolent outcomes. It builds up aggression and upsets the adjustment scaffolding of the young adult (Choi, He and Harachi, 2008). It leaves parents grieving and breaks up the tranquillity of the home, and ultimately the peace and wellbeing of the society.

## Problem

To find whether conflict between adolescents and their parents affect their adjustment in life.

## Objective

To investigate whether conflict between young adults and their parents affect their adjustment.

## Variables

### 1. Independent Variable

❖ **Conflict**- It is the extent of conflict (Banerjee and Ghose, 2012)

### 2. Dependent Variable

❖ **Adjustment**- Adjustment is a change in a person's behaviour or thinking (Collins Dictionary, 2024)

#### Adjustment related variable

- Emotional Adjustment
- Social Adjustment and
- Educational Adjustment

## Hypotheses of the study

H<sub>OCSEA</sub>-There is no significant correlation between Conflict Score and Emotional Adjustment

H<sub>OCSSA</sub>- There is no significant correlation between Conflict Score and Social Adjustment

H<sub>OCSEDA</sub>-There is no significant correlation between Conflict Score and Educational Adjustment

## Population for the Study

Population consists of Plus 2 (age group 16-18 years) and 1<sup>st</sup> year degree college students (age group 18- 19 years) of Kolkata, North 24Parganas and Hooghly districts of West Bengal from both urban and rural areas.

## Sample for the Study

Quantitative phase - 545 students of Plus 2 and 1<sup>st</sup> year of college.

Qualitative phase - 30 students were selected based on their Conflict Score

## Tools of the study

Conflict Scale- Questionnaire titled “Young Adults’ Conflict with Parents” constructed by the investigator

Adjustment Inventory for School Students (Sinha and Singh, 2005)

## Scoring

Emotional Adjustment- Students having low scores are emotionally stable

Social Adjustment- Students having high scores have good social adjustment

Educational Adjustment- Low scores indicate high educational adjustment

The following is a table showing descriptive statistics for Conflict Score, Emotional Adjustment, Social Adjustment and Educational Adjustment

**Table35 Descriptive Statistics of the variables**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	S	E
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic		
ConflictScore	545	7	219	97.13	43.490	.278	.105	-.567	.2	
EmotionalAdjustment	545	0	18	4.26	2.615	1.110	.105	1.962	.2	
SocialAdjustment	545	0	17	6.53	2.985	.707	.105	.223	.2	
EducationalAdjustment	545	0	17	5.05	3.393	.781	.105	-.066	.2	
Valid N (listwise)	545									

With the exception of Conflict Score, none of these distributions are normal. The relationship between Conflict Score and each of these variables were calculated.

H<sub>OCSEA</sub>- There is no significant correlation between Conflict Score and Emotional Adjustment

H<sub>OCSSA</sub>- There is no significant correlation between Conflict Score and Social Adjustment

H<sub>OCSEDA</sub>- There is no significant correlation between Conflict Score and Educational Adjustment

## Correlation Table

	Conflict Score	Emotional Adjustment	Social Adjustment	Educational Adjustment		
Spearman's rho	Conflict Score	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.227**	.112**	.222**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.009	.000
		N	545	545	545	545

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

- ❖ The correlation between Conflict Score and Emotional Adjustment is positive and significant at 1% level. Therefore,  $H_{0CSEM}$  is to be rejected. Therefore,  $H_{0CSEM}$  is to be rejected. Thus, as conflict increases, Emotional Adjustment Score increases. That is, increased conflict has a deleterious effect on emotional adjustment (Sinha and Singh, 2005).
- ❖ The correlation between Conflict Score and Social Adjustment is positive and significant at 1% level. As conflict increases social adjustment score increases which implies that increased conflict improves social adjustment. Therefore,  $H_{0CSSA}$  is to be rejected. That is, conflict does not have a deleterious effect on Social Adjustment (Sinha and Singh, 2005).

The correlation between Conflict Score and Educational Adjustment is positive and significant at 1% level. Therefore,  $H_{0CSEDA}$  is to be rejected. That is, conflict has a deleterious effect on Educational Adjustment (Sinha and Singh, 2005).

Conflict with parents hampers emotional and educational adjustment of young adults. However, conflict appears to have a beneficial effect on social adjustment of young adults. Though this may appear enigmatic it can be explained by the need of the young adult to associate with his/her peers and other significant people when he/she feels that a distance has been created through conflict with parents (Ehrlich, Dykas and Cassidy, 2012).

Qualitative Analysis was also done.

The investigator established rapport by previously acquainting herself with the participants through repeated meetings. Further, the participants were assured of confidentiality regarding their responses. The participants were interviewed individually. The investigator made some notes during interview, but supplemented it with further explanatory data as soon as the interview was over.

#### **From the responses the following observations were made:**

- ❖ During conflict parents generally win because if the adolescent tries to get an upper hand parents curtail their pocket money or forcibly withdraw the basic amenities which the adolescent needs. When asked why parents generally win during conflict we find a common link between the viewpoints of boys and girls and that is economic dependency. Both feel that if they carry on the conflict too far parents would not fulfill their needs.
- ❖ Adolescents feel that parents ignore their viewpoints and are always unwilling to understand logic. They also feel that parents deliberately ignore their view points, even when they are right.
- ❖ Most participants of both genders feel justified about the demands they make on their parents and insist on them.
- ❖ They feel they are matured, logical and rational. They know what they want and what they want is fully logical.
- ❖ Both boys and girls feel that parents are too much illogical and often unwilling to understand logic
- ❖ Boys said that parents feel that they are superior (since they are senior) and they try to dominate the adolescent without realising that they too are grown up and can decide what is right and what is wrong for them.
- ❖ Economic dependence forces the adolescent to sometimes agree to parental whims and fancies (be it selection of a course or vocation) without being mentally ready for it. As a result they feel frustrated and depressed.
- ❖ Both feel that parents do not give them the scope to decide their technique of preparing for the exam. As a result adolescents are often unable to perform in accordance with their potential and naturally they feel depressed.

- ❖ They further said that parents compel them to select the vocation which they feel is suitable for the adolescent without realising the adolescent's interest area. This again leads to depression
- ❖ The adolescent wants to break the shackles of dependency (specially, economic), but do not know how to do so. Their anger, frustration and helplessness is often channelized in the form of tears.
- ❖ As a result of continuous parental dominance and lack of space adolescents become irritated, depressed and frustrated

## Discussion

Education is asking the adolescent to learn so many things which they are not interested in. Often they are forced by their parents to study certain subjects in which they are not interested, since parents feel that studying those subjects will help the adolescent to enter an esteemed and lucrative vocation. The adolescent is teetering between failure and stability. Poor scores in examinations need not imply that the adolescent is unable to study. It may imply that the adolescent is unable to adjust educationally.

Conflict with parents arises from several issues. These issues are related to social mores, educational practices and emotional well being. Adolescents are often restricted on all these counts. Conflict with parents undermines their adjustment educationally, socially and emotionally.

The investigation thus exposes the lack of tranquillity in the relationship between parents and their young adult children of urban, semi urban and rural homes in Kolkata, North 24 pgs and Hooghly districts of West Bengal. The aggression that is generated from conflict has a potential of emotional maladjustment. It can destroy the young minds. It is a cause of concern for the future of our society. Not only does it call for parental education, but it also calls for more socially oriented teachers in high schools and colleges.

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