



Effects of Parents' Conflicts on Children in District Rahim Yar Khan

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the effects of parents' conflicts on children in the District of Rahim Yar Khan. The objectives of this study are to know the impact of parents' conflicts on children's mental health, physical health, academic performance, and social life. A descriptive quantitative survey design was chosen for this investigation. The study's population is all colleges (Government and Private) in the District of Rahim Yar Khan and the sample was 20 colleges. Of these 20 colleges, 380 students (boys and girls) and 120 teachers (males and females) participated as a sample. Simple random sampling is used. For collecting data, two self-structured questionnaires were used; one for students which consists of 40 items, and one for teachers which consists of 30 items. So, quantitative data from students and teachers was gathered, and checked the effects of parents' conflicts on children. The collected data was analyzed with the help of SPSS. The results revealed that parents' conflicts affect children's academic performance, focus, and performance in the class. Parental conflict and bad inter-parental behaviors negatively impact children's ability, their social life, and their mental and physical health. To conclude, there is a strong correlation between children's behavior and parents' inadequate role modeling. Parents must provide a solid foundation for their children that will enable them to lead fulfilling and successful lives.

Keywords: *Effects, Parents' Conflicts, College Students, Rahim Yar Khan District*



Introduction

Family is a crucial socializing symbol, teaching children to think, see, explore, and interact with the outside world. Parental interactions significantly influence a child's personality, emotional and physical health, and self-confidence. A cohesive family environment, where parents meet their children's needs and share concerns, fosters a maintenance-focused environment and allows family members to express their wants and worries.

Conflict can manifest through negative emotions, false beliefs, inadequate communication, and bad behaviors. Parents' disagreements on views, values, and priorities can lead to arguments and affect their children. This type of conflict has a profound effect on their kids and can result in a host of problems, such as behavioral and academic problems. Many emotional health issues grow increasingly common in the teen years and early adolescence. Teenagers are most commonly affected by depression, which has a significant impact on how they develop as people (WHO, 2017).

A child's cognitive performance may be hampered by the stress of living in a high-conflict household (El-Sheikh et al., 2013). Children have more trouble controlling their emotions and focus when their parents battle frequently, according to research. There is a greater chance of dropping out of high school and receiving inadequate marks if you live in a high-conflict home. These inter-parental squabbles have a powerful effect on them and can cause significant disruptions to the lives of their offspring. The results showed that children's persistent hostility was driven by unresolved parental conflicts and bad inter-parental behaviors, which also negatively impacted their academic performance. Children's conduct and parents' poor role modeling are closely related.

Parental conflict has been linked to delinquency, violence, and behavioral problems in children. Additionally, children are more likely to suffer in school and have social issues. Children who are raised in conflict-ridden homes are more likely to have negative opinions of their family dynamics. Furthermore, they are more likely to have a negative self-perception. According to the study, kids who witness their parents fighting are also more likely to have low self-esteem. Parents are responsible for giving their children a strong foundation that will support a successful and satisfying life.



In short, early childhood development of these foundations is crucial. These foundations must be formed early in life, particularly in infancy and adolescence. Strong parental contact was necessary during these stages of life for a child's healthy personality development. To provide their children with a sense of accomplishment and belonging, parents must communicate their emotions and ideas to them and include them in family affairs. It helps children to build a solid personality when they communicate their thoughts, feelings, and difficulties to their parents.

Significance of the Study

There are five institutions in every culture: the family, the economy, politics, education, and religion. The family is the most important institution in society and has many responsibilities, although all institutions play a part. The primary responsibilities of the family include providing goods and services, shelter, socialization, affection, interest, protection, education, religious and cultural values, emotional satisfaction, spiritual development, intellectual advancement, and maintaining physical and mental health. Children's behavior deteriorates when parents argue more and more. Children's emotional and social development is slowed down when parents argue. They didn't receive the affection and guidance from their parents, which prevented them from picking up the values necessary to lead fulfilling lives. When parent-child conflict arises, personality development begins to deteriorate. The conflict between parents stunts children's development on the social and psychological fronts. They were not morally formed to lead satisfying lives and were deprived of their parents' love.

Research Objectives

- To explore the effects of parents' conflicts on a child's mental health.
- To know the impact of parents' conflicts on the physical health of children.
- To study the effects of parents' conflicts on children's social life.
- To discover the effects of parents' conflicts on the academic performance of children.

Literature Review

Family life will inevitably involve arguments and conflicts, and one of the most common parent-driven issues that adversely affects children's and teenagers' home surroundings is inter-parental conflict (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2017). Several studies have identified parental disagreements as important risk factors for children's mental health, emotional and behavioral issues, and social conduct (Auersperg et al., 2019). Along with the theoretical grounds



described above, there is much empirical support for the idea that parents' happiness, life, and mental health have a significant impact on the well-being of children and teenagers. Children's opposition to harmful behaviors like smoking, mental health, and socially acceptable conduct may all be determined by the traits and actions of their parents (Dickerson, 2021).

A child's home environment is just as crucial to their development as their parents. A child's home environment influences their development into a well-balanced, cooperative, calm adult, or vice versa. A house might have a healthy or unhealthy atmosphere. A positive and firm relationship between parents fosters a comfortable and secure home environment, which in turn gives teens a sense of emotional safety and community integration, all of which eventually enable them to practice successful self-regulation.

On the other hand, a bad home environment harms the physical and mental health of children when parents have a difficult and insensitive relationship. Inter-parental conflict may have much more profound consequences. These kids are not very socially competent and have weak communication skills. The impact of many family problems on an adolescent's vulnerability to psychological and physical health issues is exacerbated by marital strife. Together with negative thought patterns, they brought up several symptoms of mood disorders, depression, flawed biological structure, difficulties adjusting to new circumstances, psychological issues, and social problems.

Pro-social behavior and appropriate peer behavior are crucial for flourishing in today's society because they foster success in both personal and professional spheres and are linked to a higher standard of living for children and teenagers (Dou et al., 2019; Lavy, 2020; Shek & Chai, 2020; Zhou et al., 2021). This emphasizes the importance of comprehending the factors that contribute to those behaviors.

Inter- Parental Conflicts and their Effects on Children

One of the most prevalent parent-driven issues that negatively affect the home environments of children and teens is inter-parental conflict. Families inherently involve arguments and disagreements (Brummert Lennings & Bussey, 2017). Parent-child conflicts have been repeatedly demonstrated in the literature to be important risk factors for children's mental health, behavioral and emotional problems, and social conduct (Auersperg, Vlasak, Ponocny, & Barth, 2019). A wide range of processes, which fall under direct and indirect impacts, are put



out by the literature to explain this link. Inter-parental conflict has been shown to have a direct negative impact on children's well-being under the former heading because it weakens parent-child bonds and lowers children's sense of security inside the home (Brock & Kochanska, 2016). Inter-parental conflict can seriously disturb parenting behavior, which might negatively impact children's challenges indirectly (Coln, Jordan, & Mercer, 2013).

When arguments occur or during challenging times in the family's history, there's a good chance that inter-parental conflict may increase. Most crucially, because inter-parental conflict modifies the general dynamics within the family, kids may respond differently to rising levels of it than to steady ones. Apart from the above-mentioned theoretical grounds, a plethora of empirical data suggests that parents' lifestyle, mental health, and happiness have a significant impact on the well-being of children and adolescents. It is possible to ascertain whether children reject harmful habits like smoking, are mentally well, and behave in ways that are acceptable to others based on the characteristics and actions of their parents (Dickerson, 2021).

Numerous transmission mechanisms have been identified by studies as the reason for the impact of inter-parental conflict on children's well-being. It seems that parents' parenting styles are the main transmitters (Camisasca, Miragoli, & Di Blasio, 2016). It has frequently seemed that both positive and negative child-rearing techniques, such as mental control and negative communication, are the intervening factors at the intersection of inter-parental conflict and children's pro-social behavior, school change, and overall well-being (Coln et al., 2013).

Importance of Studying Parental Conflicts and Their Effects on Children

El-Sheikh & Al-Zahrani (2006) asserts that family stress may have devastating effects on children. In the research, they found that there was a connection between the children's sleep quality and how stressed out their parents felt about their marriage. The quantity and quality of children's sleep decreases with the degree of dispute they perceive between their parents; nevertheless, even low levels of stress have been linked to negative outcomes. They add that loud family arguments may be detrimental to children.

The results of this study will contribute to the body of information on family conflict and might be useful to educators and parents. Parents will benefit from the study, particularly those who deal with issues in their families. They will be aware of the short- and long-term effects that family issues can have on their students. This will motivate these parents to seek out



communication and understanding as a means of resolving their issues. Additionally, the study will add to the body of knowledge regarding family conflicts and how counselors, particularly those working in schools, can find it useful. To assist students from conflict-ridden homes in focusing on their education and fostering positive relationships with their peers, they can provide intervention strategies. Since educators spend more time with students in the classroom, the findings might be very helpful to them.

According to Grych (2005), children are more at risk from parental conflict than from many other stressful events related to divorce, such as acute loss from being separated from a parent (usually the father), affective distress, and psychological disorders within parents (usually the caring mother). They looked at the connection between kids' views of family cohesiveness and their sense of self-worth. Five different family types—one- and two-parent cohesive, split, parent coalition, and solitary child—were used to categorize closeness to the family. The findings showed that children from various family types received differing levels of support and closeness.

Causes of Conflict in Modern Families

The fundamental reason why so many individuals get into disagreement is that they don't apply excellent decision-making techniques. Power sharing is at play when people fight because nobody enjoys losing and everyone wants to have their own way. While a couple has minimal issues with the choice itself, they frequently wind up fighting over how the decision was reached because they fail to think through their decision-making process. Anger inside the family can lead to rejection, carelessness, unfaithfulness, evading responsibilities, and thoughtlessness. Conflicts cannot be resolved if there is a lack of trust between the parties. Unfavorable emotions will take hold. There are several categories of conflict, including fundamental, non-basic, interpersonal, acute, chronic, overt, covert, rational, and irrational.

Unrealistic Expectations

Some examples of this include men expecting their spouses to be like their mothers or better than them, women wanting their husbands to be like their dads (if they were good), and men expecting their wives to be gentle and constantly at home. A few couples enter into matrimony to alter certain characteristics of their partners. They don't realize that changing an adult is rarely feasible. Rather, one should practice tolerance and compromise.



External Pressure

The following factors have a direct impact on the couple and sometimes if not well handled, can lead to marital discord. Some of them are:

- **Extended Family:** In-laws who choose to spend "what belongs to their brother or sister" may reside with a person.
- **Mothers-in-law:** Some men let their moms manage their families while others listen to their mothers rather than their wives.
- **Career:** Men may have extremely hectic lives, leaving little time for their families. Careers for women can be just as cutthroat. This indicates that the pair doesn't have time for their family or each other.
- **Divorce due to Employment:** This occurs when a husband and wife work in separate regions of the nation. Each is separate, which makes it extremely difficult for them to acclimate to one another. Because they are all accustomed to making their own decisions, none of them is prepared to yield to the other when they can live together once more.
- **Children Related Problems:** The number of children to have (in-laws may insist on naming a child after them, which may result in having more children than one originally planned); birth control methods (some couples may detest all family planning methods and thus they continue getting more children than they can raise); replacing a spouse with children (focusing too much on the kids at the expense of your partner); and the lack of children (not having a boy means no future, while not having a girl means no wealth) are some examples of these.
- **Money Problems:** There may be competition, stress, and feelings of insecurity if your spouse is unaware of your income and expenses. Significant issues may occur if a spouse distributes the entire estate as he sees fit without consulting the wife. Suspicion and mistrust will always surface. Another issue can be insufficient funds. Tension and discord arise between the spouses as a result. Another issue is job loss, which also includes impulsive purchases.
- **Communication Breakdown:** A marriage needs to accept and have a shared agreement about money and children, among other things. When there is insufficient or misconstrued communication, problems occur. A person's upbringing in an urban or rural setting and cultural differences are two things that might lead to inadequate or inaccurate communication.



Explosion (being enraged and complaining) and silence (not speaking up when someone wrongs you) are two examples of communication killers.

Research Methodology

This research is descriptive. For this study, a quantitative design was used. Quantitative research is collecting and evaluating numerical data to investigate the connections between variables, find patterns, or detect trends. "Any group of entities that share one or more characteristics and that the researcher is interested in is referred to as a population" (Best & Kahn, 2006). The target population is the group of respondents that are participating in the study. The target population of the study (students and teachers of Govt. and Private Colleges) was informed through the principles with the following information: purpose and introduction to the study, the approval consent form of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur.

In order to conduct pilot testing, researchers individually contact respondents, provide pertinent questionnaires to them, and ask them to openly share any recommendations they may have for improving the surveys. In pilot testing, data was collected from randomly selected 20 college teachers (male and female) and 25 college students (girls and boys) from district RYK.

During the research process, 500 questionnaires were distributed at various government and private colleges on both the male and female sides. The total sample of the study consisted of 500 respondents which included 380 students and 120 teachers, from 20 government and private colleges of District Rahim Yar Khan. Institutions are randomly selected from District Rahim Yar Khan. A simple random sampling technique was used to collect the data from respondents. Two self-structured questionnaires were employed to gather data. The questionnaires have close-ended questions consisting of a total of 70 items, of which 40 items are for students and 30 items for teachers. The tool was designed to elicit particular information from the intended respondents. The data analysis was done by using SPSS. The data has been acquired, arranged, and examined.

Data Analysis

After the data collection from teachers and students, it was analyzed with the help of the software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). SPSS used for quantitative analysis of complex data. SPSS version 27 was used to input all of the data that was collected. The data



were double-verified to guarantee that they were entered correctly. Descriptive statistics like the percentage, frequency, standard deviation, and mean, as well as inferential statistics like the t-test and correlation were used to accurately depict the data and offer answers to the research issues raised by the study.

Table 1
 Reliability Statistics of Students' Questionnaire

| Cronbach's Alpha | Number of Items |
|------------------|-----------------|
| .992 | 40 |

Table 1 shows the Cronbach's Alpha value of the results. The value as indicated should lie in between 0.7 to 0.9 brackets. This table shows the reliability of the result data. The Cronbach's Alpha value in the above table is 0.992 which clearly shows that the result data is reliable and accurate.

Table 2
 Reliability Statistics of Teachers' Questionnaire

| Cronbach's Alpha | Number of Items |
|------------------|-----------------|
| .895 | 30 |

The above table shows the Cronbach's Alpha value of the results. The value as indicated should lie in between 0.7 to 0.9 brackets. This table shows the reliability of the result data. The Cronbach's Alpha value in the above table is 0.895 which clearly shows that the result data is reliable and accurate.

Findings of Students' Data

- **78.6%** of the participants agreed that parents' conflicts make a child feel exhausted.
- **78.7%** of the students agreed that a child experiences physical symptoms like headaches or stomachaches when his parents argue.
- **76%** agreed that the child feels trouble sleeping because of his parents' conflicts.
- **79.5%** agreed that parents' conflicts have affected a child's appetite or eating habits.



- **70.2%** agreed that the child engages in physical activities like exercise or sports to cope with his parents' conflicts.
- **76.6%** agreed that parents' conflicts affect a child's overall physical health.
- **74%** agreed that children face physical tension and stiffness when their parents argue.
- **76.1%** think that parents' conflicts have affected a child's ability to engage in physical activities he enjoys.
- **76.3%** agreed that children have trouble making friends because of parents' conflicts.
- **72.2%** of the students agreed that parents' conflicts make children feel like they don't fit in with their peers.
- **75.5%** agreed that children struggle to trust others because of their parents' conflicts.
- **79.5%** agreed that parents' conflicts have affected a child's ability to form healthy relationships with others.
- **73.7%** of the students agreed that children feel alone when their parents argue.
- **72.6%** of the respondents agreed that children feel fear to communicate effectively with others because of parents' conflicts.
- **73.4%** of the students agreed that children feel like they're constantly trying to please others to avoid conflicts.
- **79.7%** agreed that a child feels sad and depressed when his parents argue.
- **78.9%** agreed that parents' conflicts make children feel angry or frustrated.
- **79.7%** agreed that children feel scared or anxious when their parents fight.
- **75.6%** agreed that parents' conflicts make children feel unloved or unworthy.
- **73.7%** agreed that children have difficulty regulating their emotions because of parents' conflicts.
- **70.6%** of the students agreed that parents' conflicts have made the child feel like he is responsible for their fight.
- **77.4%** agreed that parents' conflicts distract children from their studies.
- **78.4%** of the students agreed that children feel trouble concentrating in class because of parental conflicts.
- **76.9%** of the students agreed that parents' conflicts make children feel too stressed to focus on their studies.



- **78.5%** of the pupils agreed that the child feels like he is not meeting his academic potential because of parents' conflicts.
- **73.7%** agreed that parents' conflicts have led to a decline in their child's grades.
- **75.8%** agreed that parents' conflicts make the child feel like he is not important to them which affects his motivation to do well in his studies.
- **76.1%** of the students agreed that a child has to miss his school/college sometimes because of parental conflicts.
- **78.2%** agreed that the child feels like he is not getting the support that he needs from his parents to succeed academically.
- **79.5%** agreed that parents' conflicts may affect a child's self-esteem.
- **74.2%** agreed that children were caught in the middle of parents' conflicts.
- **79.9%** agreed that parental conflict can impact a child's trust in relationships.
- **79.5%** agreed that changes in a child's behavior because of parents' conflicts.
- **74.2%** agreed that children raised in conflict-ridden homes have a higher risk of substance abuse in adulthood.
- **79.2%** agreed that the presence of domestic violence exacerbates the negative effects of parental conflict on children.
- **78.9%** agreed that having positive role models in a child's life (e.g. parents, teachers, and relatives) lessen the impact of conflict.
- **79%** of the students agreed that a child feels embarrassed and ashamed when his parents argue in front of others.
- **72.4%** agreed that parental conflicts make the child feel like he is a burden to his family.
- **72.1%** of the students agreed that children can't express their emotions and needs to their parents during conflicts.
- **75.2%** of the students agreed that they tried to resolve their parents' conflicts.

Findings of Teachers' Data

- **81.7%** of the teachers agreed that parents' conflicts affect children.
- **82.5%** of the participants agreed that parents have to maintain open lines of communication with their children during times of conflict.
- **84.2%** agreed that parental conflicts can impact on child's academic performance.



- **79.2%** agreed that parents' conflicts can affect a child's physical health.
- **83.3%** agreed that parents' conflicts can affect on child's emotional development.
- **84.1%** agreed that parental conflicts may affect on child's social life.
- **80%** of the teachers agreed that the psychological development of a child can be affected by parents' conflicts.
- **75%** of the teachers agreed that parents' conflicts can affect a child's relationship with his peers or friends.
- **75.9%** agreed that children from high-conflict homes are more likely to have conflicted relationships in their own adult lives.
- **81.7%** of the teachers agreed that parental conflicts can impact a child's self-esteem and sense of security.
- **80%** of the teachers agreed that parental conflicts can affect a child's confidence.
- **78.3%** agreed that parents' conflicts affect a child's ability to form secure attachments in later relationships.
- **78.3%** agreed that a child can face any specific challenges or difficulties when his parents are going through conflicts.
- **90%** agreed that parental conflicts can impact a child's ability to focus on studies.
- **90%** agreed that parental conflicts can affect a child's performance in the class.
- **89.2%** of the teachers agreed that parents' conflicts can create fear in children.
- **72.5%** of the teachers agreed that children experiencing difficulties due to parents' conflicts exhibit poor grooming.
- **87.5%** of the teachers agreed that parents' conflicts have a long-lasting impact on children's emotional regulation skills.
- **80%** agreed that parents' conflicts have a significant impact on children's sleep patterns.
- **81.6%** agreed that children facing difficulties due to parents' conflicts often exhibit emotional symptoms like anxiety or depression.
- **81.6%** agreed that teacher has to be confident in identifying children who are experiencing parents' conflicts.
- **85%** of the teachers agreed that children from high-conflict homes are more likely to have low self-confidence.



- **82.5%** agreed that parents have to maintain open lines of communication with their children during the time of conflict.
- **77.5%** agreed that parents' conflicts can impact a child's overall well-being.
- **85%** agreed that there are long-term consequences on children's social skills and relationships due to parents' conflicts.
- **81.6%** agreed that teachers should be confident in their ability to support students who are affected by parental conflicts.
- **89.2%** of the teachers agreed that parental conflicts can impact a child's ability to form healthy attachments.
- **82.5%** agreed that teachers lack resources and support to deal with the effects of parents' conflicts on students.
- **75.8%** agreed that teachers should be confident in their ability to identify and support students who are at risk of self-injury due to parental conflicts.
- **74.2%** of the teachers agreed that teachers should use strategies to support children who are facing parents' conflicts.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study sought to investigate the effects of parental conflict on children in District Rahim Yar Khan. Nowadays, parents' conflicts are spreading very rapidly. Due to parents' conflicts, a child faces many problems. Through this research, we know what the effects of parents' conflicts are and how they affect children.

In Pakistani culture, those who experience parental division or separation are likely to have long-term health problems, such as a significant rise in injury rates or a higher chance of asthma-related emergencies. Development in adolescents is greatly impacted by the nature of the bonds between their parents. By observing it clearly and bearing the worst effects of how the argument affects their parents' eager accessibility, they subdue their parents' arguments. Trauma can arise from seeing violence against one's parents. Children's personalities are influenced by their family environment.

Children's personality development was greatly influenced by several circumstances. In a developing nation like Pakistan, girls are often neglected and forced to stay at home while males are allowed to enjoy their freedom outdoors. As a result, girls are more likely to experience the



negative effects of marriage conflict on their personal growth. The results show that teenagers who grew up in contentious homes were more likely to take drugs, which led to their decline in health. When parents argue frequently, their children may experience many problems. The following things have been found by researchers looking at the consequences that parental arguing may have on children.

The most important areas of research in family psychology and child development are the effects of parental conflict on children's physical health. Studies reveal that children's physical health may be significantly impacted by the stress and emotional strain that arises from parental conflicts. Children's stress levels become higher when they experience parental conflict. Reduced engagement in physical activities might be a result of stress and mental suffering. Exercise deficiency can aggravate conditions like obesity and heart disease and lead to poor physical health.

The research project is on the effects of parents' conflicts on children's social life. It is studied that Children who witness a lot of parental conflict might isolate themselves from society. For fear of being judged or having their issues interfere with social relationships, individuals may lose interest in hanging out with friends or taking part in group activities. A child's ability to create strong connections may be affected if they observe frequent parental conflict or trust concerns. It might be difficult for them to trust their peers or to be honest with others.

Exploring the effects of parents' conflicts on a child's mental health is one of the objectives. The majority of the participants thought that parental conflict has a significant and diverse impact on a child's mental health, affecting their emotional, cognitive, and psychological well-being. High levels of parental conflict can cause children to become more stressed and anxious, which can show up in a variety of ways. Most responders had the opinions that parental conflict has been shown to have a large and negative influence on children's academic achievement because a child's educational success can be greatly impacted by the emotional and psychological strain of their home life. Offspring who see regular or severe parental arguments frequently encounter elevated stress and anxiety levels, which can negatively impact their capacity to concentrate and focus in the educational setting. This ongoing emotional upheaval might make it harder to focus, plan, and finish projects, which can undermine academic success. Moreover, a child's interest



and involvement in school may be negatively impacted by the instability and insecurity resulting from parental conflict, thereby making scholastic difficulties worse.

To sum up, the findings indicate that children's personality development is significantly influenced by their parents' relations, status, and behaviors. Knowing that marital discord harms teenagers, well-educated women have made an effort to create a kid-friendly atmosphere in their homes. The young people whose moms were on the jobs had a strong personality and supportive attitudes toward women at work. Their personal growth also depends on the tension between parents and adolescents. So, home conflicts should be handled carefully as adolescents are dependent on their parents and innocent.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in light of the results:

- Promote family therapy to help parents become better communicators and conflict resolvers, which will lessen the damaging effects of conflicts on children.
- Implement parenting programs that emphasize positive reinforcement, effective discipline, and supportive interactions to foster a nurturing environment.
- Create a regular, distraction-free study environment at home to help children concentrate and learn in spite of family conflicts.
- Through extracurricular activities or community events, create opportunities for children to form supportive connections and participate in positive social interactions.

Suggestions for Future Research

- Future research may be conducted at a broad divisional level.
- Additional research can employ qualitative techniques.
- Experimental research may be employed in future studies.



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