

Parent-adolescent Conflict during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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KEYWORDS Parent-Adolescent Conflict. Parent-Adolescent Relationship. COVID-19. Vietnamese. Adolescent

ABSTRACT In Vietnam, schools and businesses had to temporarily close due to the severity of the COVID-19 outbreak. As a result, many families encountered financial difficulties, health issues, and a lack of social and physical activities, all of which negatively impacted adolescents' mental and emotional health. This study attempts to comprehend better the psychological problems between adolescents and their parents in Vietnam, during the COVID-19 outbreak. Between June and July 2021, 239 adolescents were evaluated using the Issues Checklist Scale for a sociological survey. The findings indicate that the social separation policy causes conflict between adolescents and their parents. Home responsibilities and privileges, social life, and friendships are the points of contention between adolescents and their parents. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when the social distance policy was implemented, 13- and 14-year-olds were more prone to dispute with their parents than 11- and 12-year-olds.

INTRODUCTION

Parent-child conflict is an indication of relationship discord (Laursen et al. 1998). Parent-adolescent conflict, according to Shantz (1987), is a dyadic, interpersonal occurrence characterised by overtly antagonistic behaviours such as quarrels, disputes, and arguments. The source of conflict between adolescents and their parents is ordinary, routine family life (Montemayor 1983). These concerns may include home responsibilities and privileges, social life and friendships, disobedience, and intra-family relationships (Holmbeck et al. 1995; Montemayor 1983).

Increased family conflict and stressors have been linked to adolescents devoting more time to housework and chores (Gager et al. 2009), less time to homework (Bang 2011), less time to physical

activities (Iannotti et al. 2009), less time to pro-social behaviours (Silke et al. 2018), and more time to computer and television use (Bonnaire and Phan 2017; Lee et al. 2009; Sela et al. 2020; Wu et al. 2016). Male adolescent conflicts with their parents revolve around personal hygiene, whereas female adolescent conflicts involve peer groups, such as dating or friendships (Renk et al. 2005).

Depending on the child's gender and age, the nature of parent-adolescent conflicts varies (Renk et al. 2005). Intensity of conflict has been found to increase between 11 and 12 years of age and remain constant until 14 and 15 years of age (Galambos and Almeida 1992). However, according to De Goede et al. (2009), parent-adolescent conflict intensity increases between the ages of 11 and 15 and decreases between 16 and 19 years old.

During the outbreak of COVID-19 (Sohrabi et al. 2020), countries worldwide have compelled citizens to live in social isolation to avoid the spread of infectious diseases (Hale et al. 2021). The spread of the coronavirus has been slowed down partly due to social isolation (Milne and Xie 2020). As most people are at home during social distancing, parents and children spend more time together, and parents must sort out their jobs and many

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other issues (Spinelli et al. 2020). These changes have increased family conflict, financial hardship, and mental problems among children and their parents. It seems that young adolescents show more negative behaviours (Cluver et al. 2020; Van Bavel et al. 2020) and emotional problems than usual (Liang et al. 2020).

Conflicts between parents and adolescents have grown significantly in the COVID-19 pandemic, including disagreements about schoolwork, problematic behaviours, and the amount of time spent on phones or computers (Fioretti et al. 2020). Orgilés et al. (2020) studied the psychological effects of isolation on children and young people in Italy and Spain, two of the most impacted countries by COVID-19. There were 1,143 participants who are parents of Italian and Spanish children aged three to eighteen who responded to an informal survey on the effects of isolation on their children and themselves before and after the lockdown order. Parents reported observing changes in their children's emotional states and conduct during isolation periods, including boredom and irritation, restlessness, anxiety, and loneliness. Youngsters' sleep patterns have shifted compared to prior to social distancing, children tended to use phones more frequently, engage in less physical activities, and sleep more hours during social distancing, resulting in more family strife. It is noticed that social distancing affects both parents and teenagers.

Psychological and behavioural symptoms in children and adolescents in Europe, particularly in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, have altered significantly since the COVID-19 epidemic began. Studies showed that many youngsters had increased emotional and behavioural problems because of isolation, increased screen time, decreased physical activity, and sleep deprivation. According to parents, more than half of the children reported feeling bored, irritable, restless, stressed, anxious, and insecure, compared to the pre-isolation period. Also, the likelihood of arguing with family members also increased, and the proportion of children with healthy habits decreased, compared to the pre-COVID-19 pandemic period (Ezpeleta et al. 2020; Francisco et al. 2020; Orgilés et al. 2020). Parental and adolescent stress may be exacerbated by the pandemic's prolonged length, the lack of a vaccine, and additional lockdowns in several nations (Gruber et al. 2021).

In recent years, scant research has been done about adolescent-parent conflict in Vietnam. Le (2015) studied junior high school students, including 1350 parents and 1350 students from junior high schools in Hanoi, Son La, Thanh Hoa, Thua Thien Hue, Dak Lak, Ho Chi Minh City, and Kien Giang in Vietnam. The study found that psychological conflicts between parents and adolescents occur at relatively high and frequent levels. The domains of study and connections with friends frequently cause more conflicts than adolescents' value orientation and living style. Than (2016) studied 250 pairs of parents and secondary school students in Bac Giang City in Vietnam, and found that conflict between parents and children is frequently strong regarding attitudes and behavioural awareness. Academic tasks and daily activities are common sources of conflict between parents and teenagers.

Objectives

Although the conflict between adolescents and parents is not a new subject, few studies have been done in Vietnam, especially in the setting of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, this study on the conflict between teenagers and their parents in Vietnam during the COVID-19 epidemic was conducted to bridge this research gap.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of this study were 239 young Vietnamese adolescents, including 95 boys and 144 girls. The detailed demographic information is shown in Table 1. In this study, an online survey was carried out in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam using Google Forms. The survey was conducted between June and July 2021, immediately following the onset of the fourth pandemic wave in Vietnam on

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of respondents in terms of socio-demographic variable

Age	Gender group		
	Boy	Girl	Total
11-year-old	18	36	54
12-year-old	37	47	84
13-year-old	20	31	51
14-year-old	20	30	50

April 27, 2021. Vietnamese adolescents were selected at random to participate. After explaining the research objectives, all participants were given the informed consent form and absent form to obtain their agreements. Among the 239 youngsters surveyed, there were more girls (60.3%) than boys (39.7%). The demographic background of the subjects can be found in Table 1.

Measurements

Participants were asked to fill out the Issues Checklist written in Vietnamese (IC). This Checklist is based on a 44-item questionnaire created by Prinz et al. (1979) and Robin and Foster (1989) to investigate topics that may lead to disputes between parents and adolescents. Based on the original, a 20-item questionnaire might potentially lead to conflicts between parents and teenagers. These elements are referred to as the Home obligations and Privileges (HP), Social life and Friendships (SF), Disobedience (DO), and Intrafamilial interaction (II).

The twenty components of IC were translated into Vietnamese by two researchers who were both bilingual and familiar with the investigated construct. One researcher's native tongue is Vietnamese, while the other's is English, and the back-translation method was utilised. The index was translated into Vietnamese, but the arrangement of the items did not change. All participants were instructed to read the questions carefully and choose the responses that best reflected themselves. The adolescents also rated the intensity of their anger on a seven-point scale ranging from calm to angry. The adolescents' scale reliability was estimated to range between 0.47 and 0.72 (Robin and Foster 1989). It has been demonstrated that the IC discriminates between distressed and non-distressed groups and is sensitive to treatment effects (Foster et al. 1983; Prinz et al. 1979; Robin and Weiss 1980).

Statistical Analysis

After screening and cleaning the data, Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the instruments. The researchers wanted to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the boys' and girls' responses to the Issues Checklist (IC), including Home obligations and Privileges (HP), Social life and Friendships (SF), Disobedience (DO), and Intrafamilial interaction (IF) (II). For each Issues Checklist scale, the average item means, average standard deviation, F values, and effect

sizes were calculated using MANOVA. IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was utilised for the statistical analysis.

RESULTS

Utilising the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, statistical analyses were conducted (SPSS 22.0). Using descriptive statistics, the gathered data was examined. Two independent variables (gender and age) and subscales of the IC were analysed using a two-way MANOVA. For each IC scale, the average item means, average standard deviation, F values, and effect sizes were calculated using MANOVA. These analyses examined variations in adolescents' home responsibilities and privileges, social life and friendships, disobedience, intrafamilial interaction, and age group.

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to examine IC's internal consistency for testing its reliability (0.914). The mean score on the IC (total score) for the sample was 3.95 (SD = 1.25). The average score on the HP subscale was 4.64 (SD = 1.59), the average score on the SF subscale was 4.35 (SD = 1.67), the average score on the DO subscale was 3.47 (SD = 1.46) and the average score on the II subscale was 2.66 (SD = 1.78). Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for dependent variables including HP, SF, DO, and II by gender and age groups. A two-way multivariate analysis of variance was utilised to test the null hypotheses (MANOVA). Covariance matrices were examined for multicollinearity and homogeneity as part of a preliminary analysis.

Using Pearson correlations between two dependent variables, the MANOVA hypothesis that dependent variables will be moderately correlated was tested (Meyers et al. 2016). The correlation coefficient r cannot exceed 0.90 (Tabachnick et al. 2007). Table 3 displays a strong correlation pattern between the two dependent variables, indicating that MANOVA was appropriate.

MANOVA is resistant to variance/covariance matrix homogeneity violations if group sizes are roughly equivalent or the difference between the largest and smallest groups is less than 1.5 (Leech et al. 2005). The largest group in this sample ($n = 47$) was approximately 2.61 times the size of the smallest group ($n = 18$), and the Box's M test for multivariate homogeneity of covariance matrices revealed that the M value of 91.272 was not statistically significant ($p = 0.102$). Consequently, the

Table 2: Summary of Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) of IC questionnaire

Gender	Age group				
	11-year-old	12-year-old	13-year-old	14-year-old	Combined
Boy (N)	18	37	20	20	95
IC					
M	3.33	3.88	4.57	4.38	4.02
SD	1.35	1.49	1.49	0.76	1.39
HP					
M	3.80	4.57	5.53	5.52	4.82
SD	1.53	1.61	1.67	1.44	1.68
SF					
M	3.38	4.13	5.35	5.08	4.45
SD	1.80	1.81	1.71	1.14	1.79
DO					
M	2.85	2.80	2.61	2.40	2.68
SD	1.91	1.96	2.06	1.37	1.84
II					
M	3.07	3.47	3.69	3.46	3.44
SD	1.42	1.80	1.72	1.41	1.63
Girls (N)	36	47	31	30	144
IC					
M	3.33	3.88	4.57	4.38	4.02
SD	1.35	1.49	1.49	0.76	1.39
HP					
M	4.33	3.91	5.20	4.98	4.51
SD	1.39	1.46	1.46	1.47	1.52
SF					
M	3.93	3.88	5.00	4.64	4.29
SD	1.52	1.52	1.39	1.73	1.59
DO					
M	2.70	2.41	3.10	2.50	2.65
SD	1.77	1.58	1.86	1.82	1.74
II					
M	3.31	3.44	3.78	3.51	3.49
SD	1.32	1.24	1.44	1.48	1.35

Table 3: Correlation matrix

	IC	HP	SF	DO	II
IC	1	.847**	.879**	.516**	.752**
HP	-	1	.790**	.180**	.444**
SF	-	-	1	.187**	.443**
DO	-	-	-	1	.557**
II	-	-	-	-	1

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

homogeneity of covariance matrices assumption was met. As a result, Wilks' Lambda value was utilised in the reporting of the result. The MANOVA revealed a significant multivariate effect for the age group, Wilks' Lambda = 0.841, $F(12, 603.523) = 3.404$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.056$, and a non-sig-

nificant multivariate effect for gender, Wilks' Lambda = 0.987, $F(4, 228) = 0.737$, $p = 0.567$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.013$. A non-significant multivariate effect for interaction was also found, Wilks' lambda = 0.960, $F(12, 603.523) = 0.773$, $p = 0.679$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.013$.

Based on the significant MANOVA effects, a separate two-way univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for each dependent variable without inflating the Type I error rate of the experiment (Grimm and Yarnold 1995). Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances examines the MANOVA and ANOVA assumption that the variances of each variable are equal across groups. If Levene's test is significant, the assumption has not been satisfied. In this study, the value of Levene's test was significant for IC scale [$F(7, 231) = 1.482$, $p = 0.174$], HP [$F(7, 231) = 0.249$, $p = 0.972$], SF [$F(7, 231) = 1.582$, $p = 0.141$], and II [$F(7, 231) = 1.679$, $p = 0.115$], DO [$F(7, 231) = 0.884$, $p = 0.520$]. Therefore, for the IC, HP, SF, HP, DO, II subscale, the assumption that the variances of each variable are equal across the groups was met. When the follow-up ANOVAs were conducted, results were interpreted thoroughly, as shown in Table 4.

Each dependent variable was subjected to its own ANOVA, and each ANOVA was tested at an alpha level of 0.01 (or 0.05/5). The assumption that the variances of each variable are equivalent across groups was therefore supported for the DO and II subscales. The IC, HP, and SF results of the subsequent ANOVAs were interpreted with caution. There was a significant difference regarding the age of adolescents when they had conflicts with their parents about IC problems: $F(3, 231) = 7.468$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.088$; with 13-year-olds ($M = 4.50$; $SD = 1.22$) and 14-year-olds ($M = 4.22$; $SD = 0.99$) scoring higher than 11-year-olds ($M = 3.57$; $SD = 1.19$) and 12-year-olds ($M = 3.70$; $SD = 1.34$). There was a significant difference among adolescents of different ages when they were in dispute with their parents over HP concerns: $F(3, 231) = 10.761$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.122$, with 13-year-olds ($M = 5.32$; $SD = 1.53$) and 14-year-olds ($M = 5.19$; $SD = 1.46$) scoring higher than 11-year-olds ($M = 4.15$; $SD = 1.44$) and 12-year-olds ($M = 4.20$; $SD = 1.56$). There was a significant difference among adolescents of different ages when they had quarrel with their parents over SF concerns: $F(3, 231) = 10.252$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.117$, with 13-year-

Table 4: Effects of gender and age on parent-adolescent conflict

Source	Dependent variable	df	F	p	Partial η^2
Gender	HP	1	1.494	.223	.006
	SF	1	.327	.568	.001
	DO	1	.194	.660	.001
	II	1	.004	.952	<.001
	IC	1	.239	.625	.001
Age	HP	3	10.671	<.001	.122
	SF	3	10.252	<.001	.117
	DO	3	1.069	.363	.014
	II	3	.514	.673	.007
	IC	3	7.468	<.001	.088
Sex* Age	HP	3	1.771	.153	.022
	SF	3	.977	.404	.013
	DO	3	.083	.969	.001
	II	3	.646	.586	.008
	IC	3	.863	.461	.011
Error	HP	231			
	SF	231			
	DO	231			
	II	231			
	IC	231			

olds ($M = 5.14$; $SD = 1.52$) and 14-year-olds ($M = 4.82$; $SD = 1.52$) scoring higher than 11-year-olds ($M = 3.75$; $SD = 1.62$) and 12-year-olds ($M = 3.99$; $SD = 1.65$). There was no significant difference among adolescents of different ages when they conflicted with their parents over II issues: $F(3,231) = 1.069$, $p = 0.363$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.014$, and DO problems $F(3,231) = 0.514$, $p = 0.673$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.007$.

DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the society, especially family life (Masten and Motti-Stefanidi 2020). Many people have suffered from stress because of the pandemic's protracted duration and the uncertainty surrounding future events. The parent-adolescent connection has been strained (Polizzi et al. 2020). In addition, the researchers investigated if there are gender and age disparities in a conflict between adolescents and parents while implementing social distancing and isolation policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers predicted that the restriction of freedom is the factor disrupting the parent-adolescent relationship since teenagers' rising demand for freedom is a driving force for relationship changes, and disputes may arise when it comes to decision-making. However, during the lockdown, the level of conflicts, behavioural con-

trol, and psychological control did not abruptly shift, contrary to the researchers' predictions.

The conflict between adolescents and their parents occurred because of the deployment of social distancing and isolation policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. HF and SF issues are the most common among adolescents and their parents. The findings of this study are congruent with the findings of the study by Orgilés et al. (2020). When the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, and social distancing and isolation were imposed, children experienced a number of changes in their daily lives. Boredom and irritation and sleeping habits have altered in comparison to before pandemic. Adolescents use phones more frequently, spend less time on physical activities, and sleep more during the social distancing and isolation period, causing more conflicts in the family. Furthermore, parental tension has increased dramatically throughout COVID-19 and shown no sign of abating (Adams et al. 2021).

There is no discernible difference between boys and girls on the Issues Checklist. This study resembles Furman and Buhrmester's (1992), which stated no gender difference for parents engaging in teenage conflict. However, according to Adams and Laursen (2021), conflict in the parent-adolescent relationship is greater in girls than in boys, and girls' early development can explain these differences.

When the Issues Checklist, HP, SF components were analysed, there were variances in parent-adolescent conflict based on adolescent age. When social distancing policies were used during the COVID-19 outbreak, 13-year-olds and 14-year-olds were more likely to have a conflict with their parents than 11- and 12-year-olds. This is consistent with what has been found in previous studies regarding age differences. The intensity of adolescent conflict increased between the ages of 11 and 15 and decreased between 16 and 19 (De Goede et al. 2009; McGue et al. 2005). The intensity of conflict has been found to decrease between the ages of 11 and 12 and remain stable until 14 years of age (Galambos and Almeida 1992). According to research on the development of adolescents' self-reported conflict intensity between the ages of 14 and 17, the majority of adolescents report persistently low negativity, while a minority report increased negativity (Seiffge-Krenke 2020). Certain empirical studies on the trajectories of conflict intensity have found an increase in intensity, while others have found stabilisation. This discrepancy may be attributable to the fact that research on different age groups was conducted at different times.

This research has several limitations. The researchers employed straightforward random sampling techniques, and the sample size was small. The study only looked at adolescents, creating a vacuum in the researchers' understanding of how the severity of parent-adolescent conflict changes over time for adolescents, mothers, and fathers. The researchers intend to resolve these difficulties in the future with additional research. Furthermore, future studies should use observational or experimental approaches to assess the psychological conflict of both parents and adolescents. In addition, it is suggested that future research should concentrate on comprehending the underlying constructs of parental psychological conflict, especially the individual and societal characteristics of parents, on providing more suitable suggestions to reduce adolescent-parent conflict in the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on adolescent-parent relationships. There was no difference in adolescent parents'

conflict regarding adolescents' gender. Furthermore, this study found age differences in the conflict between adolescents and their parents. This study contributes to the data that will be used in future studies to learn more about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on families. The study's findings serve as the foundation for encouraging parents to change the way they treat and care for their children, thereby reducing family conflicts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study demonstrated that the social separation policy causes conflict between adolescents and their parents. The restriction of freedom is the factor that disrupts the parent-adolescent relationship, given that the adolescent's increased drive for independence is a driving force for relationship changes, and arguments over decision-making may occur.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researchers value the participants' contributions of assistance and insight.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare they have no relevant competing interests.

FUNDING

The authors disclosed that this research received no outside funding.

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Paper received for publication in March, 2022
Paper accepted for publication in June, 2022