

The Influence of Parental Conflict on Primary School Students' Academic Self-Efficacy

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Abstract. Parental conflict refers to the disputes and conflicts caused by the difference of parents' views in a family environment. This will have a negative influence on the child's psychology and behavior. Academic Self-efficacy (ASE) refers to students' overall belief in their capacity to cope with many different types of academic challenges in school and is an important prerequisite for well-being and academic performance. Parental conflict not only affects children's emotional development, but also their behavior and sense of academic self-efficacy. This experiment uses the method of questionnaire to study the effect of parental conflict on the academic self-efficacy of primary school children, hoping to provide some enlightenment and suggestions for educators and parents. The average score of academic self-efficacy was 70.95. The average parental conflict was 109.33. The intensity dimension was 15.57 and the frequency dimension was 14.04. The mean value of academic self-efficacy is slightly lower than the median, the mean value of parental conflict, the mean value of intensity and the mean value of frequency are much higher than the median. The results show that parental conflict frequency has a significant negative linear relationship with academic self-efficacy, there is no significant relationship between parental conflict intensity and academic self-efficacy. And there is a significant negative linear relationship between parental conflict and academic self-efficacy. The more parental conflict occurs, the lower children's academic self-efficacy will be. Parents should reduce conflict and ensure that children have a high sense of academic self-efficacy.

Keywords: Primary school students, parental conflict, academic self-efficacy.

1. Introduction

Parental Conflict refers to disputes and conflicts between parents in a family environment due to differences in educational concepts, lifestyle, financial issues, etc. This conflict can lead to disharmony in the family environment and negatively affect the child's psychology and behavior. Parental conflict may make children feel confused, upset, helpless, or fearful and may affect their self-esteem and sense of self-worth [1].

According to the data of the Program for the Development of Chinese Children (2021-2030), among the main problems in the family environment of Chinese urban children, family atmosphere disharmony accounts for the highest proportion, reaching 30.5% [2].

General academic self-efficacy (ASE) refers to students' overall belief in their ability to cope with different types of academic challenges in school, which is an important prerequisite for well-being and academic achievement. As a social cognitive process, ASE focuses on cultivating the belief that a person has the ability to acquire and optimize cognitive, behavioral, emotional and social resources in order to better accomplish study-related tasks. [3].

Among the existing studies, in 2016, a scholar studied the relationship between parents' parenting styles and learning self-efficacy of primary school students. Experimental data showed that when parents adopted strict parenting styles, boys' learning self-efficacy was higher than that of girls. And when the punishment is severe, it has a great impact on students' self-efficacy [4].

In 2023, another scholar proposed that when students with a high sense of self-efficacy face learning pressure and difficulties, they have greater confidence, are not only more willing to accept challenges, but also good at evaluating and reflecting on their own learning process and adjusting learning methods, so as to achieve learning success. On the contrary, students with low self-efficacy are full of anxiety and fear about learning, and choose to give up when they encounter difficulties, thus hindering learning [5].

Parental conflict not only affects children's emotional development, but also their behavior and sense of academic self-efficacy. In recent years, there are more and more researches on parental conflict, but there are still some controversies about the effect of parental conflict on the children of elementary school students. Therefore, this article mainly discusses the effect of parental conflict on primary school children, and provides some enlightenment and suggestions for parents and educators.

2. Research Method

2.1. Research Design

In this research, 150 primary school students were selected as research objects, 75 boys and 75 girls. They are between 10 and 13 years old and are all students in grade five and grade six. They have different family environments and different social backgrounds, Parents vary in age and all of them are studying in CBD Branch School attached to Tsinghua University in Chaoyang District, Beijing. This research adopts the research method of questionnaire, sampling method is opportunity sampling. Data of 150 participants were obtained through the questionnaire. The total score of these two scales was calculated after data collection and then analyzed with SPSS. Correlation analysis and regression analysis were conducted according to the collected data, Firstly, the mean values of the two scales are calculated. Secondly, the correlation analysis in SPSS is used to analyze whether the independent variables and dependent variables are correlated. In the end, regression analysis of SPSS was used to analyze the relationship between different types of parental conflict and academic self-efficacy.

2.2. Variables and Scales

The independent variables of this experiment are parental Conflict, the intensity dimension and frequency dimension of parental conflict, and the dependent variable is the academic self-efficacy of primary school Children. Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale is used to measure primary school children's feelings about parental conflict. The Academic self-Efficacy Scale was used to measure the learning self-efficacy of primary school children.

The academic self-efficacy Scale was developed on the basis of Albert Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory and incorporated into the framework of social cognitive theory. This scale is based on the contribution of a student's effectiveness on each dimension of academic work to overall academic self-efficacy. which has 20 positive statements and 20 negative statements [6].

Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC) is a questionnaire developed under the guidance of the theoretical framework of interparental conflict and children's adaptive relationship, which can be used to evaluate children's views on several aspects of marital conflict. The scale has good reliability and validity after testing. There are 9 dimensions and 51 questions in the scale [7].

2.3. Data Analysis

SPSS was used to analyze the mean value of ASE, the mean value of parental conflict, and the mean value of intensity dimension and frequency dimension in parental conflict. Secondly, SPSS was used for correlation analysis to explore the intensity dimension and frequency dimension of parental conflict, and whether parental conflict is related to academic self-efficacy. Finally, SPSS regression analysis is used to analyze the intensity dimension and frequency dimension of parental conflict, and the relationship between parental conflict and academic self-efficacy.

2.4. Hypothesis

Based on the above experiments, the experimental hypothesis is as follows:

H0: parental conflict has a negative effect on pupils' children's sense of academic self-efficacy.

H1: the frequency dimension of parental conflict has a negative impact on ASE.

H2: the intensity dimension of parental conflict has a negative impact on ASE.

3. Result

3.1. Mean Analysis

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
academic self-efficacy	150	43	144	70.95	20.513
Parental conflict	150	75	126	109.33	10.561
intensity	150	9	19	15.57	2.169
frequency	150	9	17	14.04	1.690
Valid N (listwise)	150				

According to the Table 1 results of descriptive analysis, the average score of academic self-efficacy was 70.95. The average parental conflict was 109.33. The intensity dimension was 15.57 and the frequency dimension was 14.04.

Table 1 shows that the mean value of academic self-efficacy is slightly lower than the median, the mean value of parental conflict, the mean value of intensity and the mean value of frequency are much higher than the median.

3.2. Correlation Analysis

Table 2. Correlations

		intensity	frequency	Parental conflict	academic self-efficacy
intensity	Pearson Correlation	1	.532**	.731**	-.116
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.156
	N	150	150	150	150
frequency	Pearson Correlation	.532**	1	.505**	-.179*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.028
	N	150	150	150	150
Parental conflict	Pearson Correlation	.731**	.505**	1	-.236**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.004
	N	150	150	150	150
academic self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	-.116	-.179*	-.236**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.156	.028	.004	
	N	150	150	150	150

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis in Table 2 showed that there was a significant negative correlation between parental conflict and academic self-efficacy, and the correlation coefficient was 0.236, the significance $p=0.004<0.01$. There was no significant correlation between parental conflict intensity and academic self-efficacy. The significance was $p>0.05$. There was a significant negative correlation between frequency and ASE, the correlation coefficient was 0.179, and the significance $p=0.028<0.05$.

3.3. Regression Analysis

3.3.1 The impact of parental conflict intensity on students' academic self-efficacy

Table 3. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.116a	.014	.007	20.443	.014	2.032	1	148	.156

a. Predictors: (Constant), intensity

Table 4. ANOVAa

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	849.271	1	849.271	2.032	.156b
1 Residual	61850.302	148	417.907		
Total	62699.573	149			

a. Dependent Variable: academic self-efficacy

b. Predictors: (Constant), intensity

Table 5. Coefficientsa

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	88.092	12.142			7.255	.000
1 intensity	-1.101	.772	-.116		-1.426	.156

a. Dependent Variable: academic self-efficacy

The results of parental conflict intensity and ASE shows in the table 3, table 4 and table 5, the F-test significance level of the overall model was greater than 0.05, which did not pass the F-test, indicating that the model was invalid as a whole. In indicates that there is no significant relationship between parental conflict intensity and ASE.

3.3.2 The impact of parental conflict frequency on students' academic self-efficacy

Table 6. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.179a	.032	.026	20.250	.032	4.908	1	148	.028

a. Predictors: (Constant), frequency

Table 7. ANOVAa

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	2012.597	1	2012.597	4.908	.028b
1 Residual	60686.976	148	410.047		
Total	62699.573	149			

a. Dependent Variable: academic self-efficacy

b. Predictors: (Constant), frequency

Table 8. Coefficientsa

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	101.472	13.877			7.312	.000
1 frequency	-2.174	.981	-.179		-2.215	.028

a. Dependent Variable: academic self-efficacy

In the table 6, table 7 and table 8, the results of parental conflict frequency and academic self-efficacy show that the F-value of the overall model is 4.908, which is significant at the level of 0.05.

The F-test indicates that the model is effective as a whole. The final adjusted judgment coefficient R2 is 0.026. This means that the regression equation explains 2.6% of the total variation.

From the results, the coefficient regression between parental conflict frequency and academic self-efficacy is -0.179, which is significant at the level of 0.01. Therefore, parental conflict frequency has a significant negative linear relationship with academic self-efficacy.

3.3.3 Parental conflict on academic self-Efficacy

Table 9. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.236a	.056	.049	20.002	.056	8.714	1	148	.004

a. Predictors: (Constant), Parental conflict

Table 10. ANOVAa

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	3486.263	1	3486.263	8.714	.004b
1	Residual	59213.310	148	400.090		
	Total	62699.573	149			

a. Dependent Variable: academic self-efficacy

b. Predictors: (Constant), Parental conflict

Table 11. Coefficientsa

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	121.025	17.043		7.101	.000
	Parental conflict	-.458	.155	-.236	-2.952	.004

a. Dependent Variable: academic self-efficacy

In the table 9, table 10 and table 11, the results of parental conflict and academic self-efficacy show that the F-value of the overall model is 8.714, which is significant at the level of 0.01. The F-test indicates that the model is effective as a whole. The final adjusted judgment coefficient R2 is 0.049. This means that the regression equation explains 4.9% of the total variation.

On the basis of the results of regression coefficient, the regression coefficient of parental conflict and academic self-efficacy is -0.236, which is significant at the level of 0.01. As a consequence, there is a significant negative linear relationship between parental conflict and ASE.

4. Discussion

4.1. Analysis of Cause

According to the regression analysis of the questionnaire survey results, parental conflict frequency has a significant negative linear influence on ASE, which indicates that the more conflicts parents have, such as quarrels, their children's confidence and love for academic self-efficacy will be lower and lower. This result may be due to the fact that when parents have conflicts, their children need to mediate frequently and contribute to the rehabilitation of their parents' relationship, which also diverts their energy from their original study, may sometimes interrupt the planned study plan, and may be dragged into the dispute between parents when parents are fighting. Let the original enthusiasm for learning is greatly reduced, and even the mood of weariness. This can lead to a decrease in the student's motivation and ability to learn, which may cause the student to get a poor score in later exams and start doubting himself. After parents and teachers question why the student did poorly in the exam, the student's self-confidence may be seriously damaged. After this, the

student's parents may also have frequent conflicts, which can lead the student to enter an endless cycle of less and less confidence and love for learning. Reduce students' sense of academic self-efficacy.

The second possible reason for this result is that when the frequency of parental conflict increases, children will be afraid that their parents' frequent quarrels will hurt each other and themselves, and they will also worry that frequent quarrels will cause irreparable damage to their parents' relationship and eventually lead to bad results such as divorce. In such an environment, the child's self-confidence and even self-esteem will become smaller and smaller, and in the end, the child may not only have no confidence in life and learning, but also have a very serious distrust of their parents, doubting whether they really have the ability to learn, whether their parents really love themselves. This will undoubtedly reduce the child's sense of ASE.

In the regression analysis of the questionnaire results, there was no significant relationship between parental conflict intensity and ASE, indicating that the intensity of parents' arguments did not have a significant impact on ASE, which may be because when parents' intensity of arguments was low, their children might not realize that parents were in conflict. And ignore the conflict between the parents and go about their business so that it doesn't have any effect on the child. When the parents quarrel intensely, their children may shut themselves in the room because they are very afraid, and take the initiative to isolate the negative influence caused by the parental conflict. When the parental conflict is very serious, most parents will choose to make up immediately after the quarrel, and there will be no new conflict for a period of time. So these factors don't have a big impact on children's self-efficacy.

4.2. Suggestions for Reduce The Negative Impact of Parental Conflict on Children

According to the regression analysis of the questionnaire results, there are nine dimensions of parental conflict (stability, intensity, content, triangulation, frequency, self-blame, perceived threat, resolution, efficacy). There is a significant negative linear relationship between the sum of stability and academic self-efficacy, because the nine dimensions will influence each other.

The negative influence on children in any one dimension will lead to the negative influence in the other dimensions. So it all reduces academic self-efficacy.

parental conflict has a great effect on children's sense of ASE. If the parental conflict is serious, it may also cause harm to children's self-confidence and make children's childhood shadow. Parents should reduce the conflict between parents, especially in frequency should be reduced. If there is a dispute between parents, it can be discussed when the child is not around, and do not let the child face the conflict between the parents. This is an effective way to enhance children's sense of academic self-efficacy.

When children are often in the situation of parental conflict and poor living environment, it is easy to make children appear depression, panic and other negative emotions [8].

To cherish the parent-child relationship is very important for family education, and the parent-child relationship determines the effect of family education. The loss of parent-child relationship will lose family education, and the strained parent-child relationship is a devastating disaster for the child and an unspeakable pain for the parent [9].

Parents should take the initiative to comfort the frightened children after a violent conflict, communicate with the children who experience parental conflict, and apologize to the children. After letting children face the conflict between parents, parents can relieve their children's fear or unhappy emotions in many ways, such as taking children to eat a big meal, buying toys for children, accompanying children to the playground and so on.

Parents can also try to change their coping mechanisms when they have different opinion, and they can try to reduce the number of conflicts. Instead by kind to each other when there is disagreement, put themselves in others' shoes, be tolerant of others, and speak calmly. It is also a good idea to have a family meeting, where you can draw a family structure so that both parents and children can recognize each other's importance. At the same time, children can put forward their needs and ideas

with their parents, and parents can also put forward their ideas with their children. This is also one of the ways to repair the parent-child relationship [10].

5. Conclusion

This study found that parental conflict frequency has a significant negative linear influence on learning self-efficacy, while parental conflict intensity has no significant effect on ASE. And the sum of the nine dimensions (stability, intensity, content, triangulation, frequency, self-blame, perceived threat, resolution, efficacy) of parental conflict has a significant negative linear relationship with learning self-efficacy. This suggests that parental conflict can affect a child's confidence and passion of learning, as well as their academic performance. Today's parents should reduce conflict to improve their children's learning self-efficacy, or prevent children from discovering conflict between parents when conflict cannot be avoided.

In addition, parents should communicate well when they have disputes to avoid bigger conflicts. When conflict occurs, parents should also calm down quickly, actively put themselves in others' shoes and find ways to solve the problem. Minimize the impact on their children.

In future study of this field, the case study of some families with serious parental conflicts can be conducted, so as to obtain more detailed and specific information for analysis, find more relationships between parental conflicts and the academic self-efficacy of primary school children, explore the intermediary mechanism of it. And also find better solutions to solve the problems. At the same time, it either can help those participants family effectively deal with the serious problem of parental conflict.

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