

Examining The Differential Implications of Parental Conflict in Adolescents Community

Akshara Dubey^{1*}, Dr. Deepanjana Chakraborty²

ABSTRACT

Addressing the aspect of gender differences, the current study tried to investigate the parental quarrel and teenage resilience. One of the personality characteristics that enable individuals to cope with stresses was hardiness, the objective of the research was to find out the perceived hardiness and conflict between the parents and to define the relationship between hardiness and parental conflict. A comparative and correlational approach was used as the quantitative study design. The random sampling was done by taking a sample of 120 teenagers (60boys and 60 girls) between the ages of 12 and 18. The use of Children Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC) helped to measure parental conflict, and the Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS-15) helped to measure hardiness with no recognizable gender difference in the outcomes of the independent samples t-test. Nevertheless, gender discrepancies were significant in all areas of parental warfare. Females compared to males scored higher in terms of frequency, intensity, resolution, child content and triangulation according to negative mean differences, and parental conflict and hardiness were both positively correlated according to correlation analysis. It means that the rates of hardiness among adolescents increase proportionally to the perceived conflict with parents. Comprehensively, an overall version of the results is that as much as there exists gender differences in perception of parental conflict, hardiness is not a gender-specific trait and is moderately related to higher levels of perceived parental conflict among this population.

Keywords: *Adolescents, Gender differences, Hardiness, Parental Conflict, Stress*

Adolescence is a fast phase of development that is marked by rapid social, emotional, and physical changes in life. The family life plays a very important role in determining the psychological development and overall adaptation at this age. One of the most important family factors is parental conflict which comprises of disagreements, arguments and aggressive encounters among the parents. Frequent or severe interparental conflict may affect the perceptions of adolescents regarding family stability, the level of stress, or emotional security. The perception and management of such conflict can be very influential on the coping strategies and psychological outcomes of adolescents.

¹BA Student, AIBAS, Amity University Uttar Pradesh Lucknow Campus

²Assistant Professor, AIBAS, Amity University Uttar Pradesh

*Corresponding Author

Received: March 4, 2026; Revision Received: March 18, 2026; Accepted: March 22, 2026

Examining The Differential Implications of Parental Conflict in Adolescents Community

Though the emotional and behavioural issues can often be associated with the conflict between parents, not every teenager responds in the same way. Some would find it upsetting, but other individuals would have better managed to cope with dealing. One of the personality traits that determine how individuals cope with stressful situations is hardiness and this factor is characterized by dedication, control, and challenge.

Adolescents who have a higher degree of hardiness tend to perceive stressful events as manageable and meaningful as opposed to overwhelming. Therefore, hardiness can be used as a protective factor in the context of the family conflict. There is also a possibility that gender differences influence the emergence of resilience-related characteristics and the perception of conflict in parents. Males and females who are adolescents can possess various coping strategies, stress, and emotional sensitivity. To learn more about adolescent adjustment under home conditions, one has to decide on the presence of gender differences in the variables of perceived parental conflict and hardiness and explore the correlation between these variables.

Significance

The research is significant in that the family experiences significantly influence the psychological development and emotional stability in adolescence period, which is a sensitive period of developmental stages. To encourage healthy growth, the role of determining teenagers perceptions and responses to conflict within the family is essential since this is one of the main sources of family stress. This research helps in concluding the influence of the family structure on the emotional and personality outcomes of the teens in the consideration of reported parental conflict.

This study is also important because it considers hardiness as a positive psychological trait and does not necessarily talk of its negative aspects such as anxiety or sadness. Hardiness is reflected by resilience, dedication, self-control and ability to cope with stress. The discussion of the relationship between parental conflict and hardiness helps to understand how exposure to conflict in a family can have an impact on the development of adaptive coping strategies by teenagers.

Also, the research contributes to the understanding of gender differences in the perception of hardiness and parental conflict. Teachers, counsellors, and mental health providers can design gender-sensitive interventions and support systems by establishing the difference between male and female adolescents in these areas. Altogether, the findings of this paper may guide families, counsellors in schools, and psychologists to develop methods that would make teenagers more resilient and more willing to employ coping strategies in cases where family stress prevails.

Objectives

1. To examine relationship.
2. To explore the difference in hardiness among male and female adolescents.
3. To explore the difference in perceived parental conflict among male and female adolescents.

Rationale

The experiences in the family have a major influence on the emotional and mental development during the adolescent stage of development, which is a sensitive period in development. The conflict between parents is considered to be one of the primary factors in

Examining The Differential Implications of Parental Conflict in Adolescents Community

the family that leads to stress and may affect the perceptions of teenagers toward relationships, the ability to control their emotions, and overcome challenges. Continuing parental discord could affect adolescents and their psychological development as well as their feeling of security. Hardiness, however, is an essential characteristic of personality which helps individuals deal with stress adequately and be resilient in the situations they find themselves. It is characterized by dedication, domination and difficulty. The analysis of gender differences is essential in order to understand perception differences and flexibility as male and female teenagers might possess varying coping styles and emotional reactions. To further explain the interaction of family stress and resilience in adolescence stages, the present study contrasts the perceptions of parental conflict and hardiness among adolescents of both genders and also looks into the connection between these factors.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The current review focuses on literature related to examining the differential implications of parental conflicts in adolescent's community with special emphasis on understanding how exposure to parental conflict impacts adolescents adaptive capacities and hardiness. As per the global perspective, parents have been playing stimulating role in training, upbringing and personality growth and development of their children. The ongoing process of child rearing is usually based on parent's interests, interaction, moralities and behavioral practices in the learning, caring and training of their children. (Alan,2019)

Parental conflict refers to an openly hostile relationship between married, separated and divorced parents which is considered as a destructive conflict that may threaten a child's emotional sense of security (Cummings and Miller – Graff, 2015; Georing and Mrug, 2023). It is also found that high frequency and intensity of parental conflict in the family system has a negative impact on children's mental health since it causes parents to focus on conflict, reducing sensitivity to their children's needs (Deng and Li, 2024).

Adolescents not only observe parental conflicts but also actively interpret and internalize them. Male and Female adolescents offer differ in how they perceive and respond to conflicts. While female adolescents show more emotional and internalizing behavior, male adolescents show more externalizing behavior such as aggression or withdrawal. Grych and Fincham in 2002, proposed that children's perceptions and the way they interpret parental conflicts play an important role on their behavioral and emotional adjustment. Children who see conflict as threatening and feel incapable to cope well are likely to go through feelings of helplessness and anxiety. When conflict occurs, and children who held themselves responsible for parental conflicts experience shame, guilt and grief.

Psychological hardiness is conceived as a personality disposition involving commitment, control, and challenge, and has been recognized as an essential protective factor that allows individuals to resist and adapt to stressful life events (Kobasa and Maddi, 2002). Researches on teenagers indicate that elevated levels of hardiness are linked with better emotional control, reduced psychological distress, and more effective coping mechanisms in the face of challenges (Sheard & Golby, 2010; Hystad et al.,2011). However, studies examining family environment indicates that adverse familial conditions including increased levels of parental disputes, may negatively affect the development of hardiness by decreasing adolescent's sense of control and emotional safety (Petrov & Smirnov, 2019; Harold & Sellers, 2018). It has been shown that the family environment, through their steady and emotionally supportive relationships in families, is a key factor in making adolescents resilient. Similarly, Dadich (2013) says that students who have friendships with their teachers are

Examining The Differential Implications of Parental Conflict in Adolescents Community

likely to develop a deeper level of resilience as well as being able to cope adaptively. Conversely, constant unresolved conflicts amongst parents could be offering a chronic stressor hence interfering with emotional security and feelings of control among adolescents which are key building blocks for hardiness (Cummings & Davies 2002). Furthermore, adolescents who experience high levels of parental conflict are often found to have lower coping skills and suffer from greater stress which in turn hinder the building of resilience as a valuable psychological defense mechanism (Harold & Sellers, 2018; Petrov and Smirnov, 2019).

The relationship between parental conflict and hardiness in adolescents is progressively understood through stress, resilience and emotional security substructures. Chronic exposure to destructive parental conflict results as a tenacious family stressor that can wear away adolescent's sense of control, commitment, and capacity to view difficulties as feasible, thereby negatively affecting the occurrence of hardiness (Cummings & Davies, 2010). From a stress resilience outlook, repeated interparental dispute disrupts emotional security and adaptive coping processes, building adolescents more vulnerable to stress and less likely to develop hardy personality characteristics (Repetti, Taylor & Seeman, 2002).

The Emotional Security Theory argues that interparental conflict endangers the feeling of security and emotional stability of the adolescents in the family system and has an influence in the psychological adjustment of the adolescents (Davies and Cummings, 1994). According to this theory, children and youths strive to maintain emotionally steady conditions and recurring exposure to destructive parental conflict may provoke dysregulation of behaviours, emotional distress, and maladaptive coping styles (Cummings and Davies, 2010). The hypothesis states that emotional response and the ultimate developmental outcome of teenagers largely depends on the severity, frequency and resolution of conflict (Davies, Harold, Goeke-Morey, and Cummings, 2002). According to the Cognitive-Contextual Framework, adolescents perceptions and assessments of conflict between their parents dilute its influence on the adjustment (Grych and Fincham, 1990). According to this model, the perceived threat, self-blame and coping efficacy are the factors that will dictate the intensity of conflict on psychological well-being (Grych, Fincham, Jouriles, and McDonald, 2000). Thus, behavioural and emotional outcomes are conditioned by the subjective feeling of conflict in parents as opposed to their actual existence (Grych and Fincham, 1990).

Hardiness Theory is a psychological attribute comprising of hardiness that consists of challenge, control, and commitment, which can be used as a resistance resource in times of pressure (Kobasa, 1979). People who possess high hardiness originally tend to perceive stressful situations as meaningful, manageable and growth oriented rather than perceiving them as overwhelming threats as most individuals do (Maddi, 2002). Resilience theory expands this perspective by showing the interaction between protective and risk factors to produce developmental outcomes (Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker, 2000). Research that is based on this approach also suggests that hardiness promotes adaptive coping and minimizes the harmful impact of stress on psychological health (Maddi, 2002). This theory suggests that hardiness may be considered as an internal defence that may help to reduce the effect of external stresses such as parental conflict (Zimmerman, 2013). Taken collectively, these theoretical positions provide the foundation upon which the relations between differences in the hardiness of teenagers and parental exposure to conflict could be investigated.

Examining The Differential Implications of Parental Conflict in Adolescents Community

Destructive conflict between parents can directly and indirectly influence their connections with their children and the child's overall adjustment. Fauchier and Margolin (2004) narrate how children deal with parental conflicts by internalizing or externalizing these impacts. Internalization takes place when children react emotionally to the dispute, which may exhibit as a mix of emotions or even an absence of emotion, leading to withdrawal. If children perceive the dispute as a threat to their own safety and the stability of their family, they may feel impotent and overwhelmed with anguish. On the other hand, in positive parental disputes, couples deal with disagreements constructively, for example, by showing better communication, increasing intimacy, offering physical affection, supporting one another, and alluring in resolution (Cummings, Harold, & Shelton, 2003).

Researchers have raised questions if it is possible to apply findings on parental conflict to different cultures and social settings since virtually all principal theories have been developed with Western populations (Harold & Sellers, 2018). Cross - cultural studies and meta - analysis demonstrate that family norms, parenting practices, and culturally derived understandings are key factors that determine adolescents perceptions, appraisal, and emotional response towards inter - parental conflict (Chung et al.,2009). The research reveals that cultural elements for instance communalism, connection, and large family support structures could either help adolescents deal with conflicts or change the effects of conflicts on them in particular (Kim et al.,2013).

In the field of methodology, there is a debate as to whose perspective should be measured. Adolescents and their parents offer differ in perceiving the intensity and quality of conflicts which causes discrepancies in reports. Some studies show that adolescents perceive conflict intensity higher than parents and these perceptual differences themselves might be meaningful for outcomes (e.g., higher depressive symptoms). This question raises issues regarding the issue of measurement validity and whether research should reply on adolescent's self-report, parental report or both (De Los Reyes, A., & Kazadin, A.E. 2005).

Parental conflict and hardiness are perceived as real mental and relational categories that exist in the context of actual families with adolescents, i.e., requiring emotional, cognitive and interpersonal skills that impinge on development. Unlike bushido, hardiness is a more steady yet context - bound personality trait that has to do with ability to withstand stress and demonstrate resilience (Kobasa, 1979; Maddi, 2002). This ontological perspective is in harmony with the ideas of critical realists and constructivists because according to them psychological phenomena should be treated as autonomous constructs which exist independently from observers yet are shaped by social, cultural and relational contexts (Bhaskar, 1978, Ungar 2011).

Notably, the knowledge about parental conflict and adolescent resilience can be gained through deep - rooted systems of scientific research that analyzes observable family interactions and adolescent's psychological response utilizing standardized measure self - reports (Grych & Fincham 1990). Researchers use quantitative methods including surveys, statistical analyses as well as qualitative approaches interviewing adolescents to understand how parental conflicts affect their resilience capacity (Creswell 2014; Compas et al. 2017). It is necessary to pay attention not only to the quantifiable patterns but also subjective experiences of adolescents with regard to family conflict (Lazarus & Folkman 1984).

Research Gap

Even though a substantial amount of research has been conducted to investigate the effects that parental conflict has on adolescent emotional and behavioural adaptation, the prevalent studies in the research have focused more on negative psychological factors like anxiety, depression, and aggression and also in the area of academic challenges. Little consideration has been given on learning about positive personality traits that may arise under stressful circumstances in a family.

Specifically, the personality disposition that is little studied in connection to parental conflict during adolescence is hardiness, which is a resilience-related personality disposition. Moreover, the current literature tends to discuss parental conflict as a direct risk factor without considering the ways in which adolescents can adjust to such situations or react positively to them. Although it is hypothesized that exposure to stress may occasionally reinforce the coping strategies, there are few empirical studies that directly determine the relationship between parental conflict and hardiness. This leaves a loophole in comprehending whether family conflict could be applied to develop adaptive traits in some situations.

The other point is that there are no concentrated gender-based comparisons. The presence of gender variations in reactions to emotional responses to the conflict between parents is found in a number of studies, however, most studies do not determine male and female adolescents in the perceived parental conflict as well as in their perceived hardiness levels. This reduces the understanding as to whether gender is a moderating factor in the way adolescents experience family conflict and develop resilience-oriented characteristics. Additionally, the majority of the studies are based on Western samples and this creates doubts about cultural generalizability. The family members, gender roles and coping styles are culturally different, but there is a lack of evidence testing these variables in different groups of adolescents. This limits the external validity of present results. As such, there is still a strong need to conduct a study that can address the issue of correlation between parental conflict and hardiness and a comparison between male and female adolescents. The need to fill this gap can help bring a more balanced perspective of both risk and resilience process in the context of family settings in adolescence.

Key Findings

Key findings of the study helped to understand the relationship between gendered differences in teenagers, toughness, and conflict between their parents. Frequencies, intensity, resolution, child content and triangulation of all perceived parental conflict aspects indicated significant gender differences. The negative mean differences showed that the females always had a greater rate of parental conflict as compared to boys, meaning that teenagers perceive and interpret interparental conflict differently. These differences demonstrate that the understanding of conflict-related practices at home and being sensitive to familial relations might be gender-dependent. However, no significant gender difference in the level of hardiness could be observed despite these significant differences in the sense of conflict in the family. This indicates that gender is not necessarily a major factor that affects stress coping and stress response considering that both male and female teens exhibit comparable resilience-associated quality such as commitment, control, and challenge. Another finding of the study was a moderately positive relationship between hardiness and parental conflict which was persistent and statistically significant. The outcome indicates that higher hardiness among the teens is associated with greater reported parental conflict. This means that the exposure to family conflict can be a stressor, and it can also be linked to

Examining The Differential Implications of Parental Conflict in Adolescents Community

the adaptive coping strategies adopted by some teenagers. In general, the findings support the idea that, in this group, perceptions of parental conflict depend on gender differences, whereas hardiness does not and is significantly positively associated with perceived family conflict.

Future Implications

Future studies ought to look into the processes behind the occurrence of how exposing a child to family conflict can lead to the emergence of resilience-related characteristics since a positive relationship was found between hardiness and parental conflict. Future studies should identify the possible moderating and mediating factors that may alter the relationship between parental conflict and hardiness or whether individual personality traits would influence the perception of conflict. The way adolescents respond to a family conflict can also be highly determined by numerous factors among them being parenting style, emotional control, social support, family cohesion, and cultural background. Considering these factors, one can perhaps obtain more comprehensive understanding of the processes of resilience development in challenging family environments. It can also be considered that future studies can investigate gender-specific coping strategies and emotional processing as gender differences were observed in the perceived parental conflict and not in hardiness. The exploration of qualitative perspectives might contribute to the comprehension of the way male and female adolescents perceive and respond to interparental conflict in their daily lives. Finally, the results can be used in counselling and intervention programs. The research in the future can focus on designing and evaluating interventions in schools and families that are aimed to increase adaptive coping mechanisms and toughness among teenagers who are exposed to parental conflict. Such programs might be applied to enhance psychological strength and more successful adaptation of adolescents.

CONCLUSION

The current research was done to investigate the differences in perceived parental conflict and hardiness between adolescents and the correlation existing between the two variables. The results are used to better understand the way in which family and personality interact through the most crucial developmental process at the adolescent stage. The study gives a balanced approach to adolescent adjustment in the family setting by concentrating on risk (parental conflict) and resilience (hardiness). The findings showed that there was a difference in the gender in the perception of parental conflict in all the dimensions measured such as frequency, intensity, resolution, child content and triangulation. Such results show that male and female teenagers differ with respect to perceiving and experiencing interparental conflict. There was however no significant gender difference in hardiness which implies that the personality traits that relate to resilience like being committed, having control, and challenging are equally developed between genders. Notably, a moderate positive relationship between parental conflict and hardiness was discovered in the study to be consistent and statistically significant. This implies that the greater the levels of perceived parental conflict, the greater the levels of hardiness in the adolescents in the sample.

Even though parental conflict is tend to be regarded as a risk factor, the results have shown that the exposure to family stress can also be correlated with the emergence of adaptive coping characteristics in some situations. These results indicate that parental conflict is not always accompanied by adverse consequences and adolescents can react to family stress differently. Hardiness as the factor of resilience indicates that, not all adolescents fail to cope and endure mentally in difficult family settings. On the whole, the article highlights the need to study both processes of vulnerability and resilience during adolescence. Comprehending

Examining The Differential Implications of Parental Conflict in Adolescents Community

the relationship between the parental conflict and hardiness and gender differences in the sense of creating a better perception of conflict, the study provides some valuable information on enhancing healthy adolescence psychological growth and adaptive coping.

REFERENCES

- Amato, P. R. (2001). Children of divorce in the 1990s: An update of the Amato and Keith (1991) meta-analysis. *Journal of Family Psychology, 15*(3), 355–370.
- Buehler, C., & Gerard, J. M. (2002). Marital conflict and youth maladjustment. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 64*(1), 78–92.
- Compas, B. E., Jaser, S. S., Bettis, A. H., Watson, K. H., Gruhn, M. A., Dunbar, J. P., Williams, E., & Thigpen, J. C. (2017). Coping, emotion regulation, and psychopathology in childhood and adolescence: A meta-analysis and narrative review. *Psychological Bulletin, 143*(9), 939–991.
- Cui, M., & Conger, R. D. (2008). Parenting behaviour as mediator between marital conflict and adolescent adjustment. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 18*(2), 261–284.
- Cummings, E. M., & Davies, P. T. (2010). *Marital conflict and children: An emotional security perspective*. Guilford Press.
- Cummings, E. M., & Schatz, J. N. (2012). Family conflict, emotional security, and child development. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 15*(1), 14–27.
- Cummings, E. M., Goeke-Morey, M. C., & Papp, L. M. (2003). Children's responses to everyday marital conflict tactics in the home. *Child Development, 74*(6), 1918–1929.
- Davies, P. T., & Cummings, E. M. (1994). Marital conflict and child adjustment: An emotional security hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin, 116*(3), 387–411.
- Davies, P. T., Harold, G. T., Goeke-Morey, M. C., & Cummings, E. M. (2002). Child emotional security and interparental conflict. *Child Development, 73*(2), 544–562.
- Davies, P. T., Martin, M. J., & Cicchetti, D. (2012). Delineating the sequelae of destructive and constructive interparental conflict. *Developmental Psychology, 48*(4), 939–955.
- El-Sheikh, M., Buckhalt, J. A., Cummings, E. M., & Keller, P. (2007). Sleep dMasten, A. S. (2014). *Ordinary magic: Resilience in development*. Guilford Press.
- Grych, J. H., & Fincham, F. D. (1990). Marital conflict and children's adjustment: A cognitive-contextual framework. *Psychological Bulletin, 108*(2), 267–290.
- Grych, J. H., Fincham, F. D., Jouriles, E. N., & McDonald, R. (2000). Interparental conflict and child adjustment. *Child Development, 71*(6), 1648–1661.
- Harold, G. T., & Sellers, R. (2018). Interparental conflict and youth psychopathology. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 59*(4), 374–402.
- Jouriles, E. N., McDonald, R., Rosenfield, D., & Stephens, N. (2010). Correlates of adjustment in children exposed to domestic violence. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 78*(3), 321–332.
- Kobasa, S. C. (1979). Stressful life events, personality, and health: Hardiness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37*(1), 1–11.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer.
- Luthar, S. S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience. *Child Development, 71*(3), 543–562.
- Maddi, S. R. (2002). The story of hardiness. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 54*(3), 173–185.
- Maddi, S. R. (2006). Hardiness: The courage to grow from stresses. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 1*(3), 160–168.
- Maddi, S. R., Harvey, R. H., Khoshaba, D. M., Fazel, M., & Resurrection, N. (2009). Hardiness training facilitates performance in college. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 4*(6), 566–577.

Examining The Differential Implications of Parental Conflict in Adolescents Community

- Repetti, R. L., Taylor, S. E., & Seeman, T. E. (2002). Risky families. *Psychological Bulletin*, 128(2), 330–366.
- Rutter, M. (2012). Resilience as a dynamic concept. *Development and Psychopathology*, 24(2), 335–344.
- Shelton, K. H., & Harold, G. T. (2008). Interparental conflict and children's adjustment. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22(5), 712–724.
- Skinner, E. A., & Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J. (2007). The development of coping. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 58, 119–144.
- Zimmerman, M. A. (2013). Resilience theory. *Health Education & Behaviour*, 40(4), 381–383.

Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Dubey, A. & Chakraborty, D. (2026). Examining The Differential Implications of Parental Conflict in Adolescents Community. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 14(1), 1923-1931. DIP:18.01.193.20261401, DOI:10.25215/1401.193