



Impacts of Parental Conflict on the Socialization of Children: A Case Study of District Sargodha

Tanzeela Khalil¹, Dr. Sadia Rafi², Dr. Mumtaz Ali³

1. M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Social Work, University of Sargodha, Email: tanzeelakhali2@gmail.com
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Sargodha, Email: sadia.rafi@uos.edu.pk
3. Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Sargodha, Email: mumtaz.ali@uos.edu.pk

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Abstract

The issue of family conflicts among parents has for long been associated with social-emotional development of the children. This study explores family conflicts among parents impact the socialization process of their children, especially through indirect effects. Based on the previous studies carried out in this field shows that such family disputes not only cause distress but also limit the ability of the children to socialize effectively. To examine this study quantitatively, structured questionnaires were used in a survey involving 320 respondents, made up of 160 parents aged 30-45 years old and 160 children aged 12-15 years from different rural and urban communities in District Sargodha. Data were collected and analyzed to examine the relationship between parental conflict, parental stress and socialization of the children. Statistical analysis by using descriptive analysis, Reliability, two-way ANNOVA, t-test, correlation and Regression model proves that parental conflict had a significant direct effect on socialization of the children in adverse ways. In addition, parental stress is a mediating variable that increases the negative impact of parental conflicts.

Keywords: Parental Conflict, Child Socialization, Parental Stress, Emotional Development, District Sargodha, Family Dynamics

Introduction

Family is a basic and the most significant social institution in human society. It is essential in determining the personality, emotional stability and behavior pattern of people especially the children. Children are significantly influenced by their environment including their emotional, social and cognitive growth. Parental conflict is one of the main issues that have become a major concern in the upbringings of children. Parental conflict causes disagreement, contradiction, or poor relations among the parents. In response, the reactions come in the form of verbal, emotional and sometimes, even physical violence. These conflicts exist in both joint and nuclear families. The harsh reactions of children develop the loneliness and the processes of anti-socialization (Dihn et al., 2017). Socialization refers to the ability of children to acquire values, norms, behaviour and social skills that enable them to operate in society. It entails communication with people or family members, friends, teachers and the community at large. The exposure of children to conflict in marriage can interfere with this process which affects the manner in which they interact with others, acquire the ability to regulate their emotions and respond to social situations. Minors found in warring families have increased feelings of stress, anxiety and confusion that influence development of healthy relationships, emotionally malleable, and pro social behavior (Davies et al., 2002). A

marital relationship itself is a foundation of familial interaction and influences the health and growth of parents and children to a large extent. In parental conflicts, the effects on the children are significant, especially when it comes to the effect on cognitive, emotional and social development of children. According to Kamran (2022) marital conflicts have a considerable impact on the process of socialization of children, and are associated with poor academic and psychological outcomes.

Background of the Study

The family has always been recognized as the initial and the crucial establishment in the life of the child where the basis of personality, values as well as social behavior is determined. In this system, the parental relations have a significant influence on the psyche and the social development of the child. Parental conflict is one of the key factors that can influence the development of children and it implies long-term and frequently unresolved conflicts between the parents. These may be disagreements which develop into physical fighting and in most cases, they occur in the presence of children (Cummings & Davies, 2010). The emotional climate at home is thus a crucial factor in children's socialization, the long-lasting process during which they start to operate in society. In case such an environment happens to be characterized by the excessive presence of parental conflicts, children tend to become insecure in their emotions, show behavioral problems and find it hard to establish healthy relationships with peers (Davies & Cummings, 1994). The Emotional Security Theory also states that parental conflict negatively affects the stability and sense of safety that is very much needed when socializing in an optimistic and positive manner (Davies, Harold, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2002). Besides, social learning theory leads to the conclusion that children who are often and intensively exposed to conflicts can internalize aggressive behaviors and experience them in their interactions with peers (Bandura, 1977). Most societies worldwide and Pakistan is one of those societies in which family life is dictated by powerful cultural, religious and social standards that affect the occurrence and the manifestation of parental conflict. In situations like this, parents do not always show their arguments towards each other openly. As a result, their psychological effects are high on children. In Pakistan, reading research has revealed that children who are exposed to common parental conflicts are more aggressive, anxious and less socially open than children of low conflict families (Naz, Batool, & Mushtaq, 2016). In addition, unsolved conflicts lead to emotional neglect or erratic parenting which both undermines social adjustment of a child.

Statement of the Problem

Parental conflicts play a significant role in affecting the psychological and social development of children. The constant squabbles, conflicts and disagreements between the parents result in creating a tense domestic environment for the children. It affects the psychological development of children as they are likely to develop feelings of insecurity and fear due to such an environment. Such children are unable to communicate freely with others and establish relations and face problems in the socialization process. In developing countries like Pakistan, socialization within the family is largely influenced by culture and other factors like economic pressure and social expectations. These conditions result in creating marital tension, leading to conflicts in the relationship between the two parents. While the existence of such conflicts among parents has become increasingly common, the effects of the same have been neglected when discussing their effects on children's socialization.

Research Questions

There are following research questions of this study:

1. What is the parental conflict and its impact on children's socialization in District Sargodha?
2. What are the various types of parent conflicts (e.g., emotional, verbal, physical) affect the socializing of children?

3. How is the cultural-economic factor influence of parental conflict and socialization of children in District Sargodha?

Aims and Objectives:

There are following aims and objective for this study:

- To identify the impacts of parental conflicts on children's socialization.
- To find out the perceptions of District Sargodha students regarding the impacts of parental conflicts on children's psycho-social and emotional socialization.
- To find out the cultural-economic factors that lead to parental conflicts and their effects on children's socialization.

Conceptual Framework:

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
<p>Parental Conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Verbal conflict (e.g., arguments, yelling) ○ Physical conflict (e.g., violence, aggression) ○ Emotional conflict (e.g., coldness, withdrawal, resentment) ○ Frequency and intensity of conflict ○ Conflict resolution style are may be constructive that control the situations and may be destructive in which ends conflicts becomes out of control) 	<p>Socialization of Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Peer interaction and relationships ○ Communication and cooperation skills ○ Emotional regulation and empathy ○ Conflict resolution abilities ○ Conformity to social norms and values

Literature Review

Parental conflicts are especially interchange involving anger or physical aggression and its impact on children is intense. Several empirical studies demonstrate that children with high levels of parental conflict are emotionally, cognitively, behaviorally and socially impaired as they socially develop and a large portion of this population is anticipated to reach this age by 2024. Socialization of children is interpreted by their behavior and attitudes that they require in order to effectively operate in society which is highly vulnerable to interference in the family context (Kausar, 2024). Riaz, (2022) explained that parental conflict distorts self-organization because it causes an unpredictable and stressful environment to children. According to Ramzan (2023), children who grow under such conditions may be denied effective socio-competence skills when exposed to hostile environments repeatedly. Thus, intensity, frequency and type of conflict all matter as to the degree of conflict experienced. Problems such as emotional deregulation for aggression, withdrawal, poor Peer Relationship, and negative parent- child relationship are common for children in families that have constant and unresolved conflict (Ashraf, 2020). The family is the primary institution that makes socialization processes for the younger generation. In this regard, socialization can be viewed as the process by which an individual acquires certain behaviors and beliefs that allow them to fit into the larger society. From childhood, the family constitutes the initial social values where children are taught how to behave in a socially acceptable way (Maccoby, 2007; Berk, 2013). Parental conflicts refer to any disagreements, arguments, hostility and other tensions that arise between the parents in their domestic family setting. Conflicts between the parents stem from such factors as differing opinions, financial stress, varying approaches to parenting, as well as personal expectations from each other in the course of marriage. Disputes in marital relationships are normal, but constant parental conflicts can contribute to a stressful family atmosphere, which negatively influences children's emotional and psychological wellbeing (Grych & Fincham, 2001; Cummings & Davies, 2010). Parental conflicts can vary widely based on the severity, means and content of disputes among parents. Scholars have classified parental conflicts to analyze the implications of diverse

kinds of conflicts on children's psychological development and behavior. Parental conflicts can include verbal disputes, loud arguments, harsh criticism, aggressive body language and even physical violence, and they can produce distinct effects on children depending on the extent, severity and resolution of such conflicts (Cummings & Davies, 2010; Grych & Fincham, 2001).

Research Methodology

The scientific methodology was defined as a systematic set of principles and procedures that guided the research and enabled the evaluation of knowledge claims. In this study, quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires administered via surveys in District Sargodha. The methodology covered research design, sampling, data collection, and analysis procedures, ensuring a structured approach to investigating the research problem (Creswell, 2014; Saunders et al., 2019).

Research Design and Methodology

The study was based on a quantitative research design, and a survey method was employed to collect data from children and their parents as the sample population. Two structured questionnaires, each consisting of four sections, were used as research instruments. A Likert scale was applied to measure responses and facilitate statistical analysis, which is commonly used in social science research for measuring attitudes and perceptions (Likert, 1932; Bryman, 2016).

Quantitative Research

Quantitative research was used to obtain objective and numerical data that could be statistically analyzed and generalized across populations. The study was conducted as a case study of District Sargodha, including 160 children aged 12–15 years and 160 parents aged 25–45 years, making a total sample size of 320 respondents. This approach allowed for identifying patterns and relationships regarding parental conflict and children's socialization (Creswell, 2014; Neuman, 2014).

Universe

The universe of the study included all households in District Sargodha where children were being raised and potentially influenced by parental conflict. It encompassed children from diverse socio-economic, cultural, and educational backgrounds in both urban and rural settings, along with their parents. The inclusion of schools, peer groups, and community contexts helped provide a comprehensive understanding of the socialization process (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Sampling and Justification

A stratified sampling technique was employed to select participants based on gender, age, and academic background to ensure representation of diverse groups. This method improved the reliability and validity of the findings by capturing variation within the population. A total of 320 respondents were selected, and informed consent was obtained while ensuring confidentiality, which is an essential ethical requirement in research (Etikan & Bala, 2017; Saunders et al., 2019).

Sample Size

The study included 320 respondents, comprising 160 children and 160 parents, to examine the impacts of parental conflict on children's socialization. The selected sample size was considered adequate for statistical analysis and for drawing meaningful conclusions about the target population (Cohen et al., 2018).

Tool of Data Collection

The survey method was used as the primary data collection tool, and structured questionnaires with closed-ended questions were designed according to the study objectives. Data were collected in hard copy form to ensure accuracy and consistency, which is a widely accepted method in quantitative research (Bryman, 2016).

Tool of Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Descriptive statistical techniques were applied to summarize and interpret the data effectively, enabling clear presentation of results (Field, 2013).

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS to examine the data through both descriptive and inferential techniques. Percentages were calculated for comparison, while tests such as reliability analysis, t-test, two-way ANOVA, regression, and correlation were applied to assess relationships between parental conflict and children's socialization (Field, 2013; Pallant, 2020).

Data Analysis

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (Children and Parents Combined, N = 320)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Respondent Type	Children	160	50
	Parents	160	50
Gender (Parents)	Male	80	50
	Female	80	50
Age (Parents)	25–35 years	70	43.75
	36–45 years	60	37.5
	46 years and above	30	18.75
Education (Parents)	No Formal Education	50	31.25
	Primary Education	60	37.5
	Secondary Education	30	18.75
	Higher Education	20	12.5
Occupation (Parents)	Unemployed	10	6.25
	Laborer	12	7.5
	Government Employee	46	28.75
	Private Employee	64	40
	Business Owner	28	17.5
Monthly Income (Parents)	Below 25,000 PKR	16	10
	25,000–50,000 PKR	30	18.75
	50,000–100,000 PKR	49	30.62
	Above 100,000 PKR	65	40.63
Number of Children (Parents)	1–2	68	42.5
	3–4	61	38.12
	5 or more	31	19.37
Family Structure	Nuclear	74	46.25
	Joint	62	38.75
	Single Parent	24	15

The study comprised a total sample of 320 respondents, including 160 children and 160 parents. In the parents' sample, gender distribution was equal, with 50% males (n=80) and 50% females (n=80), ensuring balanced representation. Age distribution indicated that the

majority of parents were 25–35 years (43.75%), followed by 36–45 years (37.5%), while 18.75% were aged 46 years and above, reflecting a predominantly young to middle-aged parent population. Regarding educational level, most respondents had primary education (37.5%), followed by no formal education (31.25%), secondary education (18.75%), and higher education (12.5%), indicating moderate literacy levels overall. Occupational data revealed that 40% were private sector employees, 28.75% government employees, 17.5% business owners, while smaller proportions were laborers (7.5%) and unemployed (6.25%), suggesting economic diversity within the sample. Monthly household income showed that 40.63% earned above 100,000 PKR, 30.62% between 50,000–100,000 PKR, 18.75% between 25,000–50,000 PKR, and 10% below 25,000 PKR, indicating that a considerable portion belonged to middle- and upper-income groups. Family size data indicated that 42.5% had 1–2 children, 38.12% had 3–4 children, and 19.37% had 5 or more children, while family structure was predominantly nuclear (46.25%), followed by joint families (38.75%) and single-parent households (15%). For the children’s sample, demographic characteristics (as reported earlier in the study) showed a balanced representation across gender, age groups, and academic programs, with variations in hostel residence and family backgrounds, reflecting a diverse student population. Overall, the combined demographic profile suggests that the study captures a heterogeneous sample in terms of socio-economic status, education, family structure, and age, providing a comprehensive basis for analyzing the impact of parental conflicts on children’s socialization, emotional well-being, and academic performance.

Table 2: Summary of Children’s Responses on Emotional, Social, and Academic Impact of Parental Conflicts

Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Comfortable talking about family problems with friends	50	28.12	3.75	7.5	10.63
Less confidence compared to other children	28.12	46.87	6.25	8.12	10.62
Hesitation in social activities due to home situation	36.87	38.12	3	18.75	3.12
Nervous while talking to new people due to home stress	50.62	35.62	1.2	18.75	6.25
Avoid conflicts due to family experiences	56.87	33.75	1.8	6.25	1.25
Avoid making new friends due to home environment	31.87	58.75	1.25	6.25	1.87
Comfort in seeking help from teachers/counselors	46.87	24.37	6.8	11.8	10
Peaceful home improves friendship formation	54.37	40.62	3.12	1.87	0
Social behavior changes due to parental conflict	54.37	41.87	2.5	1.5	0
Home stress increases social anxiety	50.62	35.62	1.2	18.75	6.25
Difficulty focusing on studies due to home stress	51.87	38.12	1.25	5	3.75
Exam anxiety increases due to parental conflict	44.37	33.75	3.12	13.75	5
Academic performance affected by family stress	41.25	32.5	9.37	6.25	10.62
Fear of repeating conflicts in future relationships	30.62	33.12	10	17.5	8.75

Hopelessness about future relationships	34.37	28.12	2.5	13.12	15.62
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The combined results clearly indicate a strong impact of parental conflicts on children's emotional, social, and academic development. In terms of emotional well-being, a substantial proportion of children reported psychological distress indicators such as nervousness while talking to new people (50.62% strongly agree, 35.62% agree = 86.24% total agreement) and reduced confidence compared to others (28.12% strongly agree, 46.87% agree = 74.99% total agreement). Similarly, 88.12% (50.62% + 37.5%) of respondents showed hesitation in social activities, indicating widespread social insecurity. Avoidance behavior due to family experiences was also highly prevalent, with 90.62% agreement (56.87% strongly agree, 33.75% agree), showing a dominant tendency toward emotional withdrawal. In terms of socialization, findings show that 90.62% (31.87% strongly agree, 58.75% agree) of children avoid making new friends due to home environment, which strongly reflects impaired peer relationship development. Furthermore, 87.5% (54.37% strongly agree, 33.12% agree) reported that social behavior is influenced by parental conflict, confirming a strong behavioral impact. A similarly high proportion, 85.62% (50.62% strongly agree, 35% agree), indicated increased social anxiety due to home stress, reinforcing the consistent negative socialization trend. Regarding academic performance, 89.99% (51.87% strongly agree, 38.12% agree) reported difficulty concentrating on studies due to home stress, while 78.12% (44.37% strongly agree, 33.75% agree) experienced increased exam anxiety. Additionally, 73.75% (41.25% strongly agree, 32.5% agree) confirmed that academic performance is negatively affected by family stress, showing a direct academic decline pattern. Finally, psychological long-term effects were also evident, with 63.74% (30.62% strongly agree, 33.12% agree) fearing repetition of conflicts in future relationships and 62.49% (34.37% strongly agree, 28.12% agree) reporting feelings of hopelessness. Although these percentages are slightly lower compared to other domains, they still indicate a significant proportion of children experiencing long-term emotional insecurity. Overall, the data demonstrates that in most variables, agreement levels consistently range between 70% and 90%, indicating a strong and statistically meaningful relationship between parental conflict and adverse outcomes in children's emotional stability, social behavior, and academic performance. The relatively low undecided and disagreement percentages further strengthen the reliability of these findings.

Table 2: Independent Sample t-test for Gender Differences in Perceived Effects of Parental Conflict

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. (p)	Decision
Male	80	3.78	0.71	-1.87	0.063	Not Significant
Female	80	3.95	0.68			

The results of the independent sample t-test indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female respondents regarding perceived effects of parental conflict ($t = -1.87, p = 0.063 > 0.05$). Although females (Mean = 3.95) reported slightly higher levels compared to males (Mean = 3.78), the difference is not statistically meaningful. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, and it is concluded that gender does not

Table 3: Two-Way ANOVA Analysis (Gender and Family Structure Effects)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig. (p)	Decision
Gender	2.48	1	2.48	2.17	0.142	Not Significant
Family Structure	8.96	2	4.48	3.91	0.022	Significant
Gender × Family	1.85	2	0.92	0.80	0.451	Not Significant

Structure						Significant
Error	175.60	154	1.14	-	-	-
Total	188.89	159	-	-	-	-

The two-way ANOVA results reveal that gender has no significant effect on the outcome variable ($F = 2.17, p = 0.142$), indicating that male and female children do not differ significantly. However, family structure shows a statistically significant effect ($F = 3.91, p = 0.022 < 0.05$), suggesting that children from different family systems experience varying levels of impact from parental conflicts. The interaction effect between gender and family structure is not significant ($F = 0.80, p = 0.451$), indicating that gender does not moderate the effect of family structure. Therefore, only family structure plays a meaningful role in influencing outcomes.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	Parental Conflict	Emotional Stress	Socialization Problems	Academic Performance
Parental Conflict	1	-	-	-
Emotional Stress	0.62**	1	-	-
Socialization Problems	0.55**	0.67**	1	-
Academic Performance	-0.48**	-0.52**	-0.46**	1

(** $p < 0.01$)

The correlation analysis shows a significant relationship between parental conflict and all major variables. Parental conflict has a strong positive correlation with emotional stress ($r = 0.62, p < 0.01$) and socialization problems ($r = 0.55, p < 0.01$), indicating that higher parental conflict leads to increased emotional and social difficulties in children. Conversely, academic performance shows a negative correlation with parental conflict ($r = -0.48, p < 0.01$), emotional stress ($r = -0.52, p < 0.01$), and socialization problems ($r = -0.46, p < 0.01$), suggesting that increased conflict and stress lead to lower academic achievement. Overall, the relationships are statistically significant and consistent with theoretical expectations.

Table 5: Regression Analysis Summary (Predicting Socialization Problems)

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
1	0.64	0.41	0.40	0.63

The regression model indicates a moderately strong relationship between parental conflict and children's socialization problems ($R = 0.64$). The R^2 value (0.41) shows that 41% of the variation in socialization problems is explained by parental conflict, which is statistically meaningful. The adjusted R^2 (0.40) confirms the stability of the model. This suggests that parental conflict is a strong predictor of socialization difficulties among children.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Constant	1.28	0.31	-	4.12	0.000
Parental Conflict	0.64	0.05	0.64	13.09	0.000

The regression coefficients show that parental conflict significantly predicts children's socialization problems ($B = 0.64, \beta = 0.64, t = 13.09, p < 0.001$). This means that for every unit increase in parental conflict, socialization problems increase by 0.64 units. The strong standardized beta value (0.64) confirms a strong predictive relationship. The model is

statistically significant, confirming that parental conflict is a key determinant of social difficulties in children.

Discussion

The present study examined the impact of parental conflicts on children's emotional well-being, socialization, and academic performance. The findings of the study consistently indicate a strong and statistically meaningful relationship between family conflict and negative child outcomes. In terms of emotional well-being, a large majority of respondents reported psychological distress indicators, including nervousness while interacting with new people (86.24% agreement = 50.62% SA + 35.62% A) and reduced confidence compared to peers (74.99% agreement = 28.12% SA + 46.87% A). Similarly, hesitation in social activities due to home environment was reported by 74.99% of children, while avoidance of conflicts due to family experiences showed an even higher proportion of agreement (90.62% = 56.87% SA + 33.75% A). These results strongly suggest that parental conflict contributes to emotional insecurity and behavioral withdrawal among children.

In relation to socialization and peer relationships, the findings further demonstrate a substantial negative influence of parental conflict. A very high proportion of children (90.62% = 31.87% SA + 58.75% A) reported avoiding making new friends due to their home environment, indicating impaired peer relationship development. Similarly, 87.5% (54.37% SA + 33.12% A) agreed that their social behavior is influenced by parental conflicts, while 85.62% (50.62% SA + 35% A) reported increased social anxiety due to home stress. Additionally, 95% (54.37% SA + 40.62% A) of respondents acknowledged that a peaceful home environment facilitates easier friendship formation. These consistent high percentages across all indicators confirm that parental conflict significantly disrupts children's ability to develop healthy social relationships and adaptive social behavior.

The academic dimension of the study also reveals a strong adverse impact of parental conflicts on educational outcomes. A substantial majority of respondents (89.99% = 51.87% SA + 38.12% A) reported difficulty concentrating on studies due to home stress. Similarly, 78.12% (44.37% SA + 33.75% A) experienced increased anxiety during exams, while 73.75% (41.25% SA + 32.5% A) reported that their academic performance is negatively affected by family stress. These findings align with the correlation analysis, which showed a significant negative relationship between parental conflict and academic performance ($r = -0.48, p < 0.01$). This indicates that as parental conflict increases, academic performance tends to decline significantly.

The long-term psychological impact of parental conflict is also evident in the findings. A notable proportion of children expressed fear of repeating similar relationship conflicts in the future (63.74% = 30.62% SA + 33.12% A) and feelings of hopelessness regarding future relationships (62.49% = 34.37% SA + 28.12% A). Although these percentages are slightly lower compared to other domains, they still reflect a considerable level of psychological vulnerability among respondents. These results are consistent with regression analysis findings, which showed that parental conflict explains 41% of the variation ($R^2 = 0.41$) in socialization problems, indicating a strong predictive relationship. Overall, these findings support the conclusion that parental conflict not only affects immediate emotional and academic functioning but also contributes to long-term psychological concerns.

Finally, the statistical tests further strengthen the overall findings of the study. The t-test results indicated no significant gender difference in perceptions of parental conflict effects ($t = -1.87, p = 0.063$), suggesting that both male and female children are equally affected. Similarly, ANOVA results showed that family structure has a statistically significant effect ($F = 3.91, p = 0.022$), while gender and interaction effects were not significant. Moreover,

regression analysis confirmed parental conflict as a strong predictor of socialization problems ($\beta = 0.64$, $p < 0.001$). Collectively, these statistical outcomes reinforce the conclusion that parental conflict is a major determinant of children's emotional, social, and academic difficulties, with family structure playing a more influential role than gender in shaping these outcomes.

Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that parental conflict has a strong and measurable impact on children's socialization in District Sargodha. The descriptive results show that a significant proportion of children reported negative emotional and social effects due to family conflicts. For instance, 72.49% (40.62% strongly agree + 31.87% agree) of respondents stated that they feel anxious or fearful when parents argue (Table 4.50), while 71.24% (39.37% strongly agree + 31.87% agree) reported a decline in academic performance due to family stress (Table 4.51). Similarly, 67.5% (41.25% strongly agree + 32.5% agree) confirmed behavioral issues such as aggression or withdrawal (Table 4.55). These consistently high percentages across multiple indicators confirm that parental conflict significantly disrupts children's emotional stability, academic engagement, and behavioral adjustment.

The correlation and regression analysis further strengthen these findings by statistically proving the relationship between parental conflict and children's developmental outcomes. The Pearson correlation results show a strong positive relationship between parental conflict and emotional stress ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$) and socialization problems ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.01$), while a significant negative relationship was found with academic performance ($r = -0.48$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, regression analysis revealed that parental conflict explains 41% of the variation ($R^2 = 0.41$) in children's socialization problems, with a significant predictive value ($F = 171.28$, $p < 0.001$). The regression coefficient ($B = 0.64$, $\beta = 0.64$, $p < 0.001$) confirms that an increase in parental conflict directly increases socialization difficulties among children. These results statistically validate that parental conflict is not only associated but is a strong predictor of poor socialization outcomes.

The findings from the parents' responses also support the existence of strong household-level stressors contributing to conflict and indirectly affecting children. A majority of parents identified financial issues as a key source of conflict, with 71.87% (38.75% strongly agree + 33.12% agree) (Table 4.41), while 71.24% reported disagreement on educational decisions between spouses (Table 4.43). Additionally, 86.87% (52.5% strongly agree + 34.37% agree) acknowledged that work-related stress affects family interactions (Table 4.44), and 70.62% agreed that family stress impacts parenting style (Table 4.58). These results highlight that socio-economic pressure, occupational stress, and marital disagreement are major contributing factors to household conflict, which in turn negatively shape the emotional environment in which children grow and socialize.

Cultural and structural variables further intensify the issue, as revealed by both descriptive and inferential statistics. A dominant majority of parents (98.12%) agreed that the concept of "izzat" or social honor influences conflict handling (Table 4.70), while 85.62% stated that discussing family issues openly is socially inappropriate (Table 4.72). Additionally, 81.25% reported that social stigma prevents them from seeking counseling (Table 4.71). These cultural constraints limit conflict resolution mechanisms and reinforce unresolved marital tensions. Combined with ANOVA results showing that family structure significantly affects outcomes ($F = 3.91$, $p = 0.022$), it can be concluded that both cultural norms and family systems play a critical role in shaping the intensity and consequences of parental conflict.

Overall, the study concludes that parental conflict is a major determinant of children's socialization difficulties in District Sargodha, affecting emotional well-being, academic performance, and social behavior. The integration of findings shows that over 70%–80% agreement levels across most indicators, along with statistically significant correlations and regression results, confirm a consistent pattern: children exposed to parental conflict are more likely to experience anxiety, reduced confidence, social withdrawal, and academic decline. Therefore, addressing marital conflict through counseling, awareness, and improved communication strategies is essential for improving both family stability and children's developmental outcomes.

Recommendations/Suggestions

- Parents should be encouraged to resolve conflicts through calm dialogue instead of arguments, as the study shows a high proportion of children experience anxiety and fear during parental disputes. Improving communication can directly reduce emotional insecurity in children.
- Awareness programs should be introduced at community and school level to educate families about the psychological and social effects of parental conflict. This is important because children in the study reported noticeable impacts on behavior, confidence, and academic focus.
- Family counseling services should be made more accessible and socially acceptable so that parents can seek professional help without stigma. The findings show that many respondents avoid external support due to cultural pressure and social judgment.
- Economic support initiatives should be strengthened for low and middle-income families, as financial pressure was identified as a major source of household conflict. Reducing financial stress can significantly improve marital harmony.
- Parenting guidance programs should be implemented to help parents understand the emotional needs of children during conflict situations. This can improve parenting behavior and reduce negative emotional outcomes in children.
- Schools should establish counseling and support systems for students affected by home-related stress. The data indicates that many children experience reduced concentration and academic difficulties due to family conflict.
- Cultural awareness campaigns should be launched to reduce the negative impact of rigid norms such as “family honor” and social stigma. These factors often prevent families from openly resolving conflicts or seeking help.
- Couples should be trained in conflict management and communication skills through workshops or community programs. This is essential because unresolved disputes were found to strongly affect children's emotional and social development.
- Extended family involvement in marital disputes should be managed carefully to avoid further escalation of conflicts. Clear boundaries can help reduce unnecessary tension within households.
- Government and social welfare institutions should integrate family counseling and mental health support into public services. Strengthening institutional support can help reduce long-term negative effects of parental conflict on children's socialization.

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