

Relationship between filial piety and mother-child conflict



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The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between filial piety and parent-child conflict. Respondents were 285 secondary school Malaysian Chinese students aged between 12 to 16 years, who were selected by using cluster sampling based on class. A self-administered questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. Dual Filial Piety Scale was employed to measure the reciprocal and authoritarian filial piety to mother and Parent-child Interaction Scale was administered to measure the perceived conflict frequency with mother. Female who are in early adolescence are prone to have higher mother-child conflict frequency. It was found that a significant negative relationship between filial piety and mother-child conflict. Policy makers and school counsellors can work together to promote filial piety among adolescents.

Keyword: Filial piety; Mother-child conflict; Adolescents

Introduction

Parent-child conflict is inevitable in a family. Adolescence is the high time where the battle of power and autonomy between parent and child whereby failure to resolve with cause increase parent-child conflict and frequency (Santrock, 2008). Parent-child conflict is also one of the significant predictors for adolescents' adjustment in term of behavioural, social, and emotional adjustments (Barber & Delfabbro, 2000). When adolescents have more conflict with parents, they experience more intense negative emotions (Chung, Flook, & Fuligni, 2009). However, upon effective management of parent-child conflict, adolescents are able to assume adult roles and responsibilities successfully (Hill, 1988, as cited in Laursen et al., 1998).

Situations such as parent's demand is conflicting with children's desires or exceed children's ability, conflicting filial duties with children's other obligation, unreasonable parental behaviours, immoral parental demands, and interparental conflict will breed the parent-child conflict (Yeh, 1995; Yeh, 1996). The conflicts may happen over everyday issues, such as household chores, appearances, homework-schoolwork, social life, bedtime-curfew, health, telephone use, choosing activities, money, behaviour-personality, and relationships with friends (Barber & Delfabbro, 2000; Smetana, 1989).

In Chinese society, children assume significant role in avoiding conflict with parents to live up the social expectation on being a filial child (Yeh, 2004; Yeh & Bedford, 2004). Children are socialized to be filial to parents at all time and occasion (Blustein, 1982) from various sources ranged from the immediate family to almost every aspect of society (Yeh & Bedford, 2004). Due to the Chinese filial piety cultural values seems to put greater responsibility to children to avoid conflict with parents (Yeh & Bedford, 2004), this research aimed to examine the relationship between filial piety and mother-child conflict. The term filial piety in this research was understood based on the Dual Filial Piety Model (Yeh, 1998; Yeh & Bedford, 2003). It identifies the two aspects of filial piety, namely reciprocal filial piety and authoritarian filial piety. Literally, the reciprocal filial piety states that children are good to parents due to a sense of gratitude and love. The authoritarian filial piety refers to children forming good relationship with parents due to sense of owing and submission (Yeh & Bedford, 2004).

1. Method

1. 1 Respondents

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A total of 286 Chinese students (110 male and 176 female, $M = 14.17$, $SD = 1.32$) from a secondary school in Federal Territory Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia were involved in the research. The sample was selected by using cluster sampling based on class. The sample size was determined using power analysis. According to Cohen's Table 3.3.1 (1988, p. 84-85), for $\alpha = .01$, with small effect size ($r = .2$) and high power ($> .8$), the minimum sample size needed is 250.

Questionnaire

The data was collected by using self-administered questionnaire. It consists of Dual Filial Piety Scale (Yeh, 2004) and Parent-Child Interaction Scale (Yeh, 1998).

1.2.1. Background

Respondents provide information on their age and gender.

1.2.2. Adolescent's filial piety to mother

The Dual Filial Piety Scale (DFPS) developed by Yeh (2004) was used to measure respondents' filial piety to mother. It measured two filial piety aspects, namely reciprocal filial piety and authoritarian filial piety. It was selected as it gives equal emphasize of reciprocal and authoritarian filial piety as compared to other scales (Yeh & Bedford, 2003). The Dual Filial Piety Scale consists of 16 items. Each filial piety aspect is measured by 8-items. Example of reciprocal filial piety item is "be grateful to my mother for raising me". Example of authoritarian filial piety item "disregard promises to friends in order to obey my mother. Its response format is six point likert

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scale (1 = extremely unimportant, 6 = extremely important). For the scoring calculation, the odd number items are computed to yield reciprocal filial piety score and the even number items are computed to yield authoritarian filial piety score. A high score represent high level of filial aspect and a low score represent low filial aspect. Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis showed that DFPS is highly reliable, with the subscale reliability for reciprocal filial piety, $\hat{\alpha} = .82$ and reliability for authoritarian filial piety, $\hat{\alpha} = .72$

1. 2. 3. Parent-child conflict

Parent-child Interaction Scale (PIS) developed by Yeh (1998) was use to measure the perceived mother-child conflict frequency from the adolescents perspective. The scale is unique as the items were developed based on the Chinese children's perspective. Respondents were required to indicate their mother-child conflict frequency based on the 25 items. Example of sample item is " My mother talks in a harsh, rude and mean manner". Its response format is four point scale (1 = Never, 4 = Always). In term of scoring, all the responses for the 25 items are computed as total score. A high score indicates more frequent parent-child conflict and a low score indicates less frequent parent-child conflict. In this research, the alpha model of reliability analysis revealed that its Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient value for mother-child conflict is .83, which indicates that it is highly reliable.

1. 3. Procedures

Eight classes were randomly selected from the selected school. Data was collected by using self-administered questionnaire in classroom

administration setting by researcher. Researcher explained the purpose of <https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-filial-piety-and-mother-child-conflict/>

study and the confidentiality nature of their responses. Respondents were given about one-hour in completing the questionnaire. The questionnaires were collected individually upon completion.

1. 4. Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by using IBM SPSS Statistics 19. 0. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the demographic background, filial piety aspects, and mother-child conflict. The statistical procedures are selected based on the scale of measurement.

Results

2. 1 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Table 1 presented the descriptive statistics of filial piety and mother-child conflict of respondents. Results show that mean score of reciprocal filial is 41. 12 (SD = 5. 40) and mean score of authoritarian filial is 30. 43 (SD = 6. 84). The mean score of mother-child conflict frequency is 47. 87 (SD = 10. 66). The skewness statistics were used as indicator of normality. Its statistics values of between -2 to + 2 warrant that the variables can be tested by using inferential statistics in later analysis.

Correlation between age, filial piety, and mother-child conflict

The correlation between age, filial piety and mother-child conflict were tested by using Pearson moment-product correlation procedure. It was found that age is significantly inversely related to mother-child conflict, with $r = -.24$, $p < .01$. Reciprocal filial piety is found significantly correlated with

mother-child conflict, $r = -.24$, $p < .01$. Similarly, authoritarian filial piety is also found significantly inversely correlated with mother-child conflict, $r = -.25$, $p < .01$.

2.3 Gender Differences in Filial Piety and mother-child conflict

The gender differences in the variables measured were tested by independent samples t-test analysis. There is no significant mean difference in term of filial piety between the male and female adolescents. However, it was found that female adolescents have significantly more conflict frequency with mother, $t(283) = -3.48$, $p < .001$.

2.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to provide a better picture on the contribution of each predictor variables (age, gender, reciprocal filial, and authoritarian filial) on the criterion variable (mother-child conflict). As presented in Table 4, age, gender, reciprocal filial, and authoritarian filial are significant predictors of mother-child conflict, with $R = .423$, $R^2 = .179$, and $\{F(4, 280) = 15.25, p < .05\}$. This R^2 value means that 17.9% of the variance in mother-child conflict increase is explained by adolescent's age, gender, reciprocal filial, and authoritarian filial. The beta coefficient for age was $-.235$, for gender was $.207$, for reciprocal filial was $-.173$, and for authoritarian filial was $-.154$. This means that age is the strongest predictor gender, authoritarian filial, and reciprocal filial to explain the criterion variable (mother-child conflict).

3. 0 Discussion

Results found that as age increased, the conflict frequency with mother decreased. This means that as adolescents who are in late adolescence are likely to have fewer conflicts with mother as compared to those in the early adolescence stage. This is consistence with previous finding which identified that conflict frequency will gradually decrease when approaching late adolescence (Laursen et al., 1998). As the late adolescents have more logical reasoning, it reduces the likelihood of conflict with parents (Santrock, 2008).

Female are found to have more conflict frequency with mother as compared to male adolescents. The socialization of children to be feminine girls and muscular boys will contribute to different social expectation and thus it will trigger conflict between the mother and adolescents for different issues (Allison & Schultz, 2004). Therefore, the female adolescents have more conflicts with mothers, especially over the issue on dressing and going-out with friends.

There is no significant gender difference on reciprocal and authoritarian filial aspects as a whole. Interestingly, when the items were examine individually, it was found that more proportion of female than male adolescents who perceived mother's consent or opinion is important in mate selection. On the other hand, there are more proportion of male than female adolescents who perceived that having at least a son for the succession of family name is important.

The research finding showed a significant negative relationship between filial piety and parent-child conflict. Adolescents with high reciprocal and high

authoritarian filial piety had less conflict frequency with parents. This was consistent with the correlational research conducted by Yeh and Bedford (2004) based on Taiwanese sample. The findings suggest that filial piety is an important variable to be considered in understanding parent-child conflict among Malaysian Chinese. As the relationship implied, policy makers should implement programs for filial education. For example, the Ministry of Education planned to incorporate to extend the teaching of Di Zi Gui in moral studies to secondary school and tertiary institutions (Sin Chew Jit Poh, 2008). School counsellors may prepare the video clip on the pregnancy stages to illustrate the joys and pain of parents in raising adolescents. Parenting education program or bonding program can be conducted by school counsellors as well.

Nevertheless, this research also found non-significant findings. There was no significant relationship between age and filial piety and there was no significant difference in filial piety by gender. Although age and gender is an important antecedent variables in most research, and its influence is ought to be studied as it may influence the understanding in filial piety. These are new findings and probably future research can be done to validate these findings.

This research had two limitations. First, the filial piety scale only focus on the cognitive dimension of filial piety despite that it gives equal emphasize on the reciprocal and authoritarian filial aspects. Holistic dimension which inclusive of filial intention and behaviours are ought to be studied to provide a comprehensive understanding on it. Experimental research could be conducted to examine the effect of filial education. Also, the conflict intensity

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should be included in the future study as well in order to observe the emotional component of the parent-child conflict. Secondly, the research population in this research is meant for the school involved in this research. Readers need to make careful evaluation should they want to generalize the finding to others target groups.