

Title: Peer Conflicts and Coping Strategies of Adolescents in Taiwan

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Peer Conflicts and Coping Strategies of Adolescents in Taiwan

Der-Hsiang Huang

Abstract

The purposes of the study are to explore the main issues and related problems of peer conflicts and to find the significant predictors of the choice of coping strategies in conflict of adolescents in Taiwan. The subjects consist of 386 junior high school students in the middle of Taiwan. They are investigated by Background Questionnaire, Checklist of Peer Conflict, Coping Strategies in Conflict, and Egocentrism Scale. The data is analyzed by descriptive statistics method, one-way ANOVA and Step-wise regression. The major findings are as follows:

The criticism, devilmment, stupid, low academic achievement, selfish, insult, irresponsibility, snitch, and immorality are the main issues of peer conflicts in Taiwan.

The gender differences has found in factors of vanity and deviant behaviors of conflict issues of adolescents. The different groups of academic achievement have statistically significant differences in the conflict issues, including personal deviant behavior, grade and family financial situation. Meanwhile, the different egocentric groups have significantly differences in the conflict issues, including personal vanity, snobbish and in appropriate behavior.

Concerning coping strategies used by adolescents in conflict with peer, the variables of gender, academic achievement and disorder can predict the cooperative strategy statistically. The variables of disorder, egocentrism, gender, and academic achievement can significantly predict the competitive strategy. Moreover, the variables of egocentrism, grade and family financial situation can predict the avoid strategy used by adolescents in Taiwan.

According the findings, some suggestions for educators and school counselors are made.

Key Words: Peer Conflict, Coping Strategies, Egocentrism.

I. Introduction

1. Motivation and purpose for this study

Teenage is a critical stage for physical and mental development and change in the lifetime of a human being, such as growth on physiology, cognition, sexual character, ego, and career planning, accompanied with new reflects and expectation from family, peer, school, society, and culture(Huang, 1994). Amongst, peers would perform the most significant impacts on leisure, clothing, sexual attitudes, and heterosexual relationship for teenagers; therefore, peer relationship becomes not only the concerned topic for teenagers, but the most focused issue for education and remediation workers (Meurling, Ray, & LoBello, 1999).

When those teenagers enjoy freedom, convenience, well-being and comfortable lives, some, on the one hand, tend to be selfish and neglect welfare of surrounding people due to their egocentrism and pleasure affectation, and, on the other hand, conduct aberration or bullying and alie nation on interpersonal relationships due to absence of morality and social responsibility (Huang & Li, 2000). Therefore, problems of adolescents resulted from failure of human relationship and social intercommunication are increasing.

Peer conflicts may not be avoided under concept differences, egocentrism,

and self-identity. Conflicts of adolescence are positive to relationship readjustment and developing and maintaining close relationship, and closely related to social and mental acclimation, social cognition, social skill, and role replacement although bringing pressure and annoyance (Adams & Laursen, 2001; Morrill, Yalda, Adelman, Musheno, & Bejarano, 2000).

In practice, peer conflicts usually happen in daily life, and thus become a part of school life (Turan, Selahattin, & Taylor, 1997). According to Adams and Laursen (2001), average 0.8 time of peer confrontation may occur every day, while average 3 campus violent and aberration events every day in Taiwan's campus (China Evening News, 2001). Campus fighting is often discovered by publication, for example, 28 death and 208 hurt by campus violence in year 1999 in Taiwan (China Evening News, 2001). Fighting events were greatly emphasized in the previous researches, however, impact factors resulting to campus violence were relatively absent (Collins & Laursen, 1997), and researches for issues and processes about peer conflict in Taiwan used to be extensively lacking. Advanced exploration for reasons about peer conflicts, for how do teenagers face those conflicts, and for related factors shall be substantially urgent and important.

Meanwhile, peer conflicts may impact on school, family, and juvenile, and

be closely related to peer violence continuously occurring in a current (Kendra & Tina, 2000). According to Laursen (1996), the percentage for conflicts resulting in better relationship is less than 23%, 63% for no impacts on relationship, and 10% to 14% for worse relationship. National Statistical Profiles reveal that teenage criminal rate during 10 years from 1985 to 1995 has raised 66% (Szyndrowski, 1999). From 1992 to 1996, the juvenile delinquency rate rises to the highest, and it tends to decline in recent years with more heavy crimes and cruel measurement by the way in Taiwan (Statistical Division of Judicial Yuan, 2001; National Police Administration of Ministry of the Interior, 2001). Therefore, prevention from worsening peer conflict, helping teenagers effectively respond to conflicts, and understanding what character teenagers play in the event are critical for education and remediation. Accordingly, coping strategies of peer conflicts could be divided into three strategies, including cooperative, preventive, and competitive. The cooperative strategy could help to raise personal cognition and moral level, readjust inter-relationship, and promote mutual understanding and concerning; the preventive one could just postpone the resolution for conflicts, possibly deepening gaps, but effectively preventing from accidental attack; and competitive one might induce destruction under antagonism and fighting competition rather than resolve problems, which needs careful treatment (Adams & Laursen, 2001).

Peer conflict involves parties, related to egocentrism and lack of social skills. Egocentrism means an individual could not distinct concept difference between him and others. According to practical research, egocentrism could last to teenage period from infant, and the egocentrism restriction may be avoided through cognition promotion and conceptual thinking during teenage term, but teenage specific egocentrism may occur(Huang, 1994; Conger & Galambos, 1996). On the other hand, social skills are significantly related with peer conflicts. Social skills are which the individual applies through appropriate communication under specific social condition and regulation to properly play a social role and promote his social status and adjustment capability (Lie, 1999). The teenagers with different social skills may have distinct cognition for conflicts, reflecting on their reactions. Practical researches have revealed that lack of social skills may result to ferocious human relationship confrontation, while better skills help mental health and do not induce anti-social or violent behaviors(Willert & Willert, 2000). Demand and cognition for peer relationship may change with teenager's growing, shifting from focuses of the number of friends to dependence and compassion among peers(Meurling, Ray, & LoBello, 1999). Besides, sexual factors may be relevant to peer conflicts. The number of friends for girls may not large, but they are more closed and mutual depended; however, the friendship is mostly built with common interest, sport appetite, and

hobby for boys, who better emphasize their statuses in group (Schonert-Reichl, 1999).

Social attractiveness, deemed as an important factor for human interaction for long, is also a research topic. Good looking may help teenagers get more positive feedback and cognition, to develop better peer relationship (Huang, 1994); however, the adverse may bring exclusion from peers and improper critics, as a cause of peer conflicts. Besides, academic achievement emphasized by school, individual, and family is noticeable, which is not only highly related to individual problem perception and responding capability (Schommer & Dunnell, 1997), but the main reason for school reputation, individual confrontation, or violent behavior (Lie, 1999). Relationship between learning achievement and peer conflict should be paid more attention to. Pope and Bierman (1999) also analyzed connection between teenager's fighting and peer refusal, and found strength of feelings may have significant impacts on correspondence of teenagers for conflicts. Adams and Laursen (2001) considered the conflict process may include conflict issue, strength of feelings, and correspondence and results for conflicts, and feelings in conflicts could influence the copying strategy of an individual. Thus, feelings work as a inter-medium for conflict treatment, needing more advanced exploration.

Accordingly, previous researches have explored analysis and discuss for peer conflicts, but not included differentiation for factors resulting to conflicts, and meta-

analysis for relevant variables. Therefore, this study will refer to concepts of Adams & Laursen (2001) and hold a deep study on related factors influencing peer conflicts with an integration idea with the concrete purposes listed below:

- (1) To understand factors in teenager's conflicts in Taiwan;
- (2) To discuss differentiation on peer conflicts caused by gender, age, social attractiveness, study achievement, egocentrism, and social skills; and
- (3) To predict copying strategies to conflicts in variables of background, peer conflict, and inter-medium.

2. Definition

(1) peer conflict

Peer conflict refers to behaviors of one party to object or refuse the other by teenagers, usually accompanied with animosity and fighting (Adams & Laursen, 2001). The research defines six issues of "aberration", "snobbism", "vainglory", "improper behavior", "study achievement", and "human relationship" as focuses for conflict initiation.

(2) copying strategies

Copying strategies indicate the behavior modes corresponding to conflicts by the individual teenager, mainly including "cooperative", "competitive", and "avoid"

in a current (Lie, 1999; Huang & Lie, 1999).

(3) Egocentrism

Egocentrism means an egocentric inclination on behavior or concept without considering other's demands (Huang , 1994). In the research, the egocentrism is divided into two faces, such as "fake" and "self imagination" for the factor analysis.

II. References Review

Conflict is a kind of mostly unavoidable experience as a crucial impact on individual social and feelings development. Conflict is not only a critical factor for individual cognition development, but has key functions on self-understanding and interaction with others, and even developing close relationship (Adams & Laursen, 2001). The following paragraphs introduce relevant researches about peer conflicts:

1. Conflict issues

Conflict is a situation of inconsistent opinion caused by cognition difference of peers, including distinct copying strategies targeting to different issues. Laursen (1996) found that conflict objects have different conflict issues with focuses related friendship and love from a variety of research objects. Canary, Cupach, and Messman

(1996) generalized the previous studies and concluded that thinking, subject selection, derision, critics, and negligence were major causes in conflicts besides love and friendship. Moreover, Conger and Galambos (1996) indicated that distrust, insufficient concern, irrespectful, and unacceptable behavior caused peer conflicts through their study, amongst distrust is the main issue. Adams and Laursen (2001) observed from parent-children and peer conflicts that family related issues indicated daily stuff (55.5%), independence (28.1%), and relationship of each other (16.4%) listed according to the ratio; and peer conflicts involved relationship maintenance (48.0%), independence (32.4%), and daily stuff (19.6%). The below table 2-1 lists finding of Conger and Galambos (1996):

Table 2-1 Major issues in ferocious peer conflicts

Conflict issues	Female (times)	Males (times)
Distrust: cannot keep secret, speak illness behind, bring troubles, cannot keep promise, lie, bereave job, bereave girl (boy) friend, and date with other's boy (girl) friend	59	43
Insufficient concern: Neglect others, not participate parties, cannot contact with calls, spend time on others, not participate planes, stay with the heterosexual, and neglect me when staying with the heterosexual	28	13
Irrespective Arrogance, rude, call name, joke, bully, make use of others, hurt others, anger, fighting, steal, and breach	17	39
Unacceptable behavior Too much talkative, moody, alcoholic, bad mood, love out-stripping, lie, drop from school, stubborn, bereave objects, blague, stupid behavior, and smoking space	18	14

Source: Conger & Glambos (1996), p.187

Kratcoski and Kratcoski (1996) generalized factors in teenage aberration, and found that the major issues causing improper treatment for conflicts included mal-social relationship, body image, nutrition, unsatisfied life demand, and social regulation. When facing those issues, teenagers usually apply avoid strategy, such as anxiety, suicide, feeding dystonic, drug abuses; or competitive strategy, such as aberration, life threatening, and conducting negative impacts on others and society.

Table 2-2 organized by Kratcoski and Kratcoski (1996) indicated negative copying behaviors in conflicts.

Table 2-2 Conflict issues causing negative copying behaviors

Copying behaviors	Conflict issues
Blueness	Unsatisfied on self content, hope, confidence, power feeling, being welcomed, and capability.
Suicide	Lack of hope, mal-human relationship, and unstable feelings and belonging
Feeding dystonic	Body image, nutrition
Schizophrenic	Lack of concept, cognition, and emotional integration, and hurts by escaping from reality
Drug abuse or alcoholic	Discontented life, unable to refuse addiction in drug and alcohol
Aberration	Social regulation

Data resources: Kratcoski and Kratcoski (1996), p.41.

Therefore, previous studies have revealed the multiple factors for conflicts, including friendship, love affair, personal concept, and object selection, and even relationship maintenance as the major causes. Accordingly, peer conflicts can be divided into 4 parts. The first is about feelings; that is, one may neglect the other for sake of other friends or boy or girl friend, or one expresses his objection for the other's friend choices. The second is about object selection, indicating not consensus between peers about object selection and treatment. The third is about personal characters; that is, the teenagers have some behaviors cannot be accepted by

peers, such as alcoholic, drop from school, blague, and foolishness. The last is about peer interaction, meaning lack of trust and respect in interaction, such as unable to keep secret for close partners or rude, arrogant, and hurting behaviors.

2. Gender, age, study achievement, and appearance for peer conflict

Traditionally, gender plays the social function for male and female behaviors, for example, the male shall be strong and independent, while the female is gentle and obedient, inducing different treatment for conflicts, ferocious strategies by the male and the cooperative and avoid strategies by the female. Meurling, Ray, and LoBello (1999) explained that the cognition of the male relied on ability and purpose behavior, and that of the female was about resolving problems related to others or social behavior disturbance. Cognition character and problem resolution may differentiate with gender, with negative competitive strategy by the male, tending to provoke conflicts. Black (2000) explained conflicts might differentiate with the gender from the viewpoint of friendship development. The male more involved in group activity while the female inclined to single interaction with friends, therefore, the female might apply better communication skills in conflicts. Kendra and Tina (2000) indicated the gender factor revealed significant differentiation on peer fighting from 273 testees in fourth to sixth grades. Phillipsen (1999) also pointed out that the male

teenagers may have more ideas, asks, and deviations in peer interaction while the female would like acceptance. Until now, most researches concluded the same. That is, the gender has a significant impact on peer conflict and copying strategy.

Besides, with physical and mental growth, the teenagers increase consciousness about conflicts. Phillipsen (1999) divided subjects into junior (8-10 years old) and pre-teenage (11-13 years old), and found the former had higher peer satisfaction than the latter. Laursen (1996) indicated that individual development may stimulate teenagers' sensitive consciousness about aggravation peer relationship, and make them apply compromise to mediate conflicts and to maintain close relationship. He considered differences on copying strategies selected by different aged teenagers, with conflicts mostly caused by objection issues and applying body correspondence for younger students, but with social issues and oral negotiation for older students. With physical and mental maturity, there is significant differentiation on peer interaction and conflict correspondence, that is the older involved in more gentle strategy and different conflict issues when comparing to the younger.

Furthermore, study achievement impacts on peer relationship of teenagers. McWhirten (1998) considered that improper behaviors and fighting were closely related to learning frustration and peer exclusionary. Students of lower achievement may suffer peer's exclusion, stimulating behavior problems and personal attack.

Besides, a research found teenagers with higher achievement could have better performance on mental maturity and human relationship skill (Ma & Shek, 1996). Chiao (1998) pointed out that students with higher IQ and learning achievement could have better relationship skills and better understanding and resolution from problems than those with lower ones (Schommer & Dunnell, 1997). In conclusion, those with higher study performance could better catch up the problem key point, and try to understand others and think from other's place, proving positive human relationship.

As for social attractiveness, the adolescents of good looking, one of teenagers' concerns, will be easy to make friends because the first impression for appearance bridges the heterosexual relationship. Huang (1996) found clear appearance is the significant key point for teenagers to make a friend whether like him or not. Yen (1998) held the case study and believed in a current the juvenile really concerned about clean appearance and clothing when choosing friends, especially about body shape and face for heterosexual friends. Messman and Mikesell (2000) investigated 449 college students about prediction for impact correspondence by factors of achievement, social skills, altruism, social attractiveness, disputes, feelings, and pleasure, and found significant prediction by disputes, social attractiveness, and altruism. Social attractiveness plays a key role for peer's intimate relationship and better getting along.

3. Social skill and egocentrism for peer conflict

Social skill indicates the proper action for different social objectives in the specific situation, including how to participate groups, how to respond to vague condition, and how to effectively manage human relationship conflicts (Rose & Asher, 1999). According to an empirical study, not only peer conflicts but copying strategies are related to social capability and skill (Collins & Laursen, 1997). Kendra and Tina (2000) found the reasons resulting to lack of peer relationship included family factor, peer refusal, and absence of social skills in their researches about teenage social cognition and fighting, so did Hagenere, Jackson, Lohr, and Stenger (1998). They considered students lacking of social skills, such as sympathy, self control, problem resolution, and emotional management tended to conduct conflicts, effectively decreased through mediation training. In research about conflict resolution, Lane-Garon and Nelsen (1998) pointed out that students with social skills inclined to conduct compromise and non-body application.

Egocentrism is the key character in teenage period, deeply influencing the peer relationship. Collins and Laursen (1997) collected research about conflicts and found that copying strategy not only lay on social skills, but also personal development. Ma and Shek (1996) considered violent strategies had relevance with egocentrism. Low ego-concept and self-respect are positively related to aberration, so are altruism

to self respect. Therefore, persons of altruism may more easily maintain harmony peer relationship while those with egocentrism emphasize self-expression and sink in potential danger in conflicts. John and Reed (1996) held researches focusing on improvement of resolution ability for conflicts, collected causes for conflicts through behavior check table, and concluded that lack of communication ability and understanding for the other's concept, and high demand for power and control as the three major factors. Accordingly, causes for peer conflicts may include effective social skills and egocentrism.

4. Feelings strength for peer conflicts

Conflict emotion results from being unable to effectively manage emotional conditions, thus, fighting behaviors may be applied to release disharmony between physical and mental under conflict and emotional impacts (Willert & Willert, 2000). In an empirical research, Alison and Shery (2000) found active and passive conflicts could effectively predict social adaptation, behavior disorder, or social status when exploring emotional role in peer conflicts. Pope and Bierman (1999) discovered the emotional factor had its mediation function for attacking behavior when individuals refused by peers; the angrier they were, the more ferocious responds they applied. Miller and Olson (1999) pointed out the importance of emotional express in conflicts,

that is, emotional and feeling reaction in conflicts may be highly related to active peer relationship. In conflicts between closed peers, feelings expression could build up an active peer relationship afterwards, but did the adverse in conflicts between ordinary friends. Feelings strength significantly works on conflict treatment, however, how is its prediction and whether it makes different with peer relationship are worthy of advanced studies.

II. Methodology

The following paragraph will describe research framework, instruments, implementation procedure, and data processing methods in order.

1. Research framework

Based on research motivation, purpose and references review, Figure 3-1 research framework is proposed.

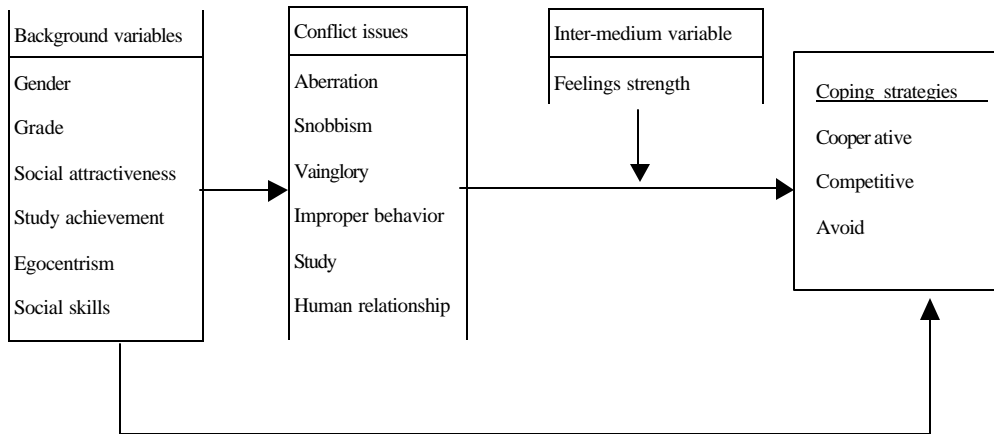


Figure 3-1 Research Framework

According to the above figure, the research will firstly apply descriptive statistics to understand causes for peer conflicts in a current, and secondly explore whether teenager's background variable has significant differentiation on each issues with background variables as independent one and conflict issues as dependent variables. Finally, it will explore the prediction for copying strategies by background variables, conflict issues, and inter-medium variables through stepwise multiple regression to catch which is the key factor on copying strategies in conflicts.

2. Research object

The population for this research includes junior high school students in Taiwan and approachable population targets on junior high school students in central Taiwan. The research applies the stratified random sampling to pick up 386 subjects from ChiangTai Junior High School, PiTou Junior High School, TongChi Junior High

School, HsiHu Junior High School, MingLun Junior High School, and ShanMing Junior High School, of 195 male and 191 female students, and of 150 from first grade, 116 from second grade, and 120 from third grade. The distribution of testees on basic variables is quite equal.

3. Instruments

To achieve preset purpose, the research develops and organizes the below scale to collect data for statistic analysis, including the following measuring tools:

(1) Background Questionnaire

According to previous researches, gender and age are basic factors for individual behavior modes; study achievement, and social relationship and attractiveness may influence peer relationship and copying strategies for teenagers; and finally, egocentrism is the most important personality character during teenage period, but seldom explored in the past. Thus, the research will cover gender, age, study achievement, social relationship, social attractiveness, and egocentrism as basic variables.

(2) Checklist of Peer Conflict

The checklist is designed based on theories of Conger and Galambos (1996), and open questionnaire, with major purposes on exploring causes for teenage conflicts.

The scale refers to suggestions from Fanshawe & Burnett (1991) and Stevens (1986) on factor analysis, reliability analysis, and question selection standard, picking up factors with Eigen value greater than 1 and with 5 factor loading over 0.40. Factors below standard will be abandoned, and questions with the relevance below 0.30 through correction shall be deleted. Scale contents and classification are described in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Classification for conflict issue

Factor classification	Conflict issues
Aberration	Drink, gamble, drug abuse, smoke, reading erotic publication, sexual harassment, and steal
Snobbism	Sneak, fake, piggy, brick, selfish, and narrow-minded
Improper behavior	Without civism, scolding, mischief, insulting, irresponsible
Vainglory	Eager to be in limelight, know nothing about fashion, under grade, cool showing, love out-stripping, showing as a big man
Human relationship	Opinion inconsistent, too cheapskate, uneasy to contact with, not accepting dates, hard to play with
Study	Somehow stupid, poor, bad study performance, witling, despite

1. Factor analysis

The research holds an analysis for reaction of subjects about questions in the scale, with the Principal Component and Varimax, picking six factors to explain 57.5% total variation. The results and titles for factors are listed below:

- (1) Factor 1: Aberration with Eigen value 5.47 to explain 13.2% of total variation, including question 1, 2, 16, 17, 18, 31, and 32 of factor loading 0.84 to 0.43 for each.
- (2) Factor 2: Snobbism with Eigen value 4.81 to explain 11.46% of total variation, including question 3, 4, 5, 19, 20, and 21 of factor loading 0.69 to 0.58 for each.
- (3) Factor 3: Improper behavior with Eigen value 4.03 to explain 9.59% of total variation, including question 6, 7, 8, 22, and 23 of factor loading 0.72 to 0.49 for each.
- (4) Factor 4: Vainglory with Eigen value 3.93 to explain 9.37% of total variation, including question 7, 10, 24, 25, 26, and 33 of factor loading 0.61 to 0.42 for each.
- (5) Factor 5: Human relationship with Eigen value 3.14 to explain 7.47% of total variation, including question 11, 12, 27, 28, and 34 of factor loading 0.72 to 0.52 for each.
- (6) Factor 6: Study achievement with Eigen value 2.77 to explain 6.60% of total variation, including question 13, 14, 15, 29, and 30 of factor loading 0.76 to 0.61 for each.

2. Reliability analysis and point calculation

Cronbach α in this scale is 0.95, a fairly satisfying reliability (McDanniel, 1994). The point calculation applies dichotomy of “no” or “yes” with “0” or “1” point; the larger on point, the more character on the factor, totaling from 0 to 33 points. As for calculation for feelings strength, the research applies the method of Robin and Foster (1989), and adds an emotional index following to each issue, in which subjects could check for emotional condition in conflicts through five-point scale, covering from “calm” to “very angry” with the higher points to mean the more angry.

3. Coping Strategies in Conflict

The scale is organized based on the pre-said relevant theories and open questionnaires, with purpose of exploring the coping strategies to peer conflicts by teenagers. Intent sampling is applied as a pretest scale, which are collected back and held for factor and reliability analyses to test for reliability and validity of the scale. As for standard of question selection, the research refers to suggestion of Fanshawe and Burnett (1991) and Stevens (1986), and picks up 20 questions for the formal scale.

(1) Factor analysis:

The research holds an analysis for responds of subjects about questions, and

select three factors to explain 46.72% total variation through the Principal Component and Varimax. The results and titles for factors are listed below:

A. Factor 1: Cooperative strategy with Eigen value 4.04 to explain 18.36% of total variation, including question 1, 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 15 of factor loading from 0.75 to 0.48 for each.

B. Factor 2: Competitive strategy with Eigen value 3.87 to explain 17.60% of total variation, including question 3, 4, 8, 9, 13, 16, 19, and 20 of factor loading from 0.70 to 0.45 for each.

C. Factor 3: Avoid strategy with Eigen value 2.37 to explain 10.76% of total variation, including question 5, 10, 14, 17, and 18 of factor loading from 0.79 to 0.40 for each.

(2) Reliability analysis and point calculation

Cronbach α in this scale is 0.70, a fair reliability (McDanniel, 1994). The point calculation applies Likert four-point scale with four choices of “extremely disagree”, “disagree”, “agree”, and “totally agree” with points from “1” to “4”; the larger on point, the more character on the factor, totaling from 20 to 80 points.

4. Egocentrism Scale

The scale is organized based on opinions of Huang (1994), and Kimmel and

Weiner(1996), with main purpose of exploring the extent of teenager's egocentrism. Intent sampling is applied as a pretest scale, which are collected back and held for factor and reliability analyses to test for reliability and validity of the scale. As for standard of question selection, the research refers to suggestion of Fanshawe and Burnett (1991) and Stevens (1986), and picks up 20 questions for the formal scale.

(1) Factor analysis:

The research holds an analysis for responds of subjects about questions, and select two factors to explain 43.50% total variation through the Principal Component and Varimax. The results and titles for factors are listed below:

A. Factor 1: Fake with Eigen value 2.62 to explain 21.86% of total variation, including question 3, 5, 7, 10, 11, and 12 of factor loading from 0.72 to 0.56 for each.

B. Factor 2: Self-imagination with Eigen value 2.60 to explain 21.64% of total variation, including question 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 of factor loading from 0.69 to 0.57 for each.

(2) Reliability analysis and point calculation

Cronbach α in this scale is 0.70, a fair reliability (McDanniel, 1994), and reliabilities in the sub scales include 0.73 and 0.71. The point calculation

applies Likert four-point scale with four choices of “extremely disagree”, “disagree”, “agree”, and “totally agree” with points from “1” to “4”; the larger on point, the more character on the factor, totaling from 12 to 48 points.

4. Implementation procedure and statistics

The research chooses junior high school students of ChungHo Junior High School in Taipei County as the targets, induces research results, and refers to Canary, Cupach, and Messman (1995) and Conger and Calambos (1996) to organize pretest questionnaires. Pretest is held for 215 students from FungLiao Junior High School, ChungSheng Junior High School, SheTou Junior High School, and WanFung Junior High School, and questionnaire analysis refers to Fanshawe and Burnett (1991) and Stevens (1986) to select questions and build up a formal scale. In the formal study, 386 subjects from ChungTai Junior High School, PiTou Junior High School, Tongchi Junior High School, HsiHu Junior High School, MingLung Junior School, and SunMing Junior High School in Central Taiwan Area are selected, and collected questionnaire results are then processed and analyzed with SPSS 8.0.

The research applies descriptive statistics as the method to calculate times and percentage of conflict issues, approaching currently critical issues in peer conflicts. Then, based on points in the egocentric scale for teenagers, the subjects are divided

into “high grade”, “medium grade”, and “low grade” teams according to the average and 0.5 upward and downward standard deviation. The one-way ANOVA is used to analyze the differentiation on conflict issue by background factors (gender, grade, study achievement, social attraction, egocentrism, and human relationship). Finally, the stepwise multiple regression is applied to forecast the conflict correspondence by

IV Results and Discussion

The main purpose of the research is to explore peer conflicts among adolescents, and whether conflict issues are different with background variable, and then to discuss causes for teenage conflicts in Taiwan. The below paragraphs include research findings.

1. The peer conflict issues in Taiwan

Targeting to the first purpose, the research would like to explore the conflict causes among peers. The descriptive statistics is applied as the study method to list issues in order from highest percentage to lowest, and calculate occurrence percentage for each issue, showing the results in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1 The peer conflict issues in Taiwan

Issues	Times	Percentage as the whole subjects
1. inconsistent opinion	187	48.5%
2. scolding	179	46.4%
3. mischief	154	39.9%
4. somehow stupid	114	29.3%
5. bad study performance	110	28.5%
6. selfish	103	26.7%
7. insulting	95	24.6%
8. irresponsible	90	23.3%
9. sneak	85	22.0%
10. without civism	79	20.5%
11. despite	73	19.0%
12. cool showing	68	17.6%
13. narrow minded	67	17.4%
14. eager to be in lime light	64	16.6%
15. love out-striping	63	16.4%
16. piggy	60	15.5%
17. witling	59	15.3%
18. uneasy to contact	57	14.8%
19. fake	53	13.7%
20. know nothing about fashion	52	13.5%
21. brick	50	13.0%
22. showing as a big man	47	12.2%
23. under grade	46	11.9%
24. not accepting date	43	11.1%
25. hard to play with	41	10.7%
26. drink	38	9.8%
27. too cheapskate	34	8.8%
28. gamble	34	8.8%
29. steal	31	8.0%
30. smoke	28	7.3%
31. poor	24	6.2%
32. reading erotic publication	20	5.2%
33. sexual harassment	13	3.4%
34. drug abuse	5	1.3%

The major topics for peer conflicts in Table 4-1 include “opinion inconsistent”, “scolding”, “mischief”, “somehow stupid”, “bad study performance”, “selfish”, “insulting”, “irresponsible”, “sneak”, and “without civism”. Accordingly, the issues causing peer conflicts cover broad ranges, such as selfish behavior, personal wit, study performance, and even personal civism, besides inconsistent cognition. Compared to previous studies, this research has found personal character, study performance, and peer interaction as the major conflict issues in Taiwan, amongst consistent to foreign studies (Adams & Laursen, 2001; Canary, Cupach & Messman, 1995; Laursen, 1996) about peer interaction issues. However, study performance causes conflicts in Taiwan more than abroad, but feelings inclination does in adverse.

Analyzing deeply, conflict causes mean the followings:

(1) highly egocentric

From Table4-1 “inconsistent opinion” and “selfish” reflect the egocentrism of teenagers in human relationship due to well-being life and spoiled, proving that emphasis or self-showing and lack of sympathy with others may induce conflicts. Education and remediation personnel shall more focus on transforming teenagers from egocentrism to respect and sympathy to others, besides on maintaining personal freedom and dignity, decreasing conflicts by over individualism.

(2) lack of respect

Compared to the previous topic, the expression of teenagers reveal their absence of respect, “scolding”, “mischief”, and “insulting” are the disputable topics. That shows teenager’s bunker mentality and lack of respects to others on the one hand, and inclination to seek stimulus (Huang & Lie, 1999), and to get funs or revenge from irresponsible attitude with aggressive behavior of a little bit animosity. Those are challenging for peer interaction and teacher’s class management, that is, how to judge between fun or aggression, how to prevent or control the minor hurting behavior, and how to effectively mediate conflicts are examining teacher’s corresponding treatment.

(3) emphasis of study achievement

From the above table, “bad study performance”, and “somewhat stupid” are ones of current major issues, influenced by the traditional concept for pursuing higher social status by studying. Study performance may impact on parent-child and teacher-student relationships, and even the harmony of peer relationship. Multiple school entrance standards trend to be applied, but a variety of exams are still the main stream filters for advanced studies, which makes parents, schools, and teenagers deem the test grades as the main life objective, and the study achievement as the major standard for self dignity and evaluation (Carroll, Durkin, Hattie, & Houghton, 1997). Meanwhile, this is a warning for peer’s getting along, students of higher study achievement despising and lacking interaction with those of lower one, and thus

shaping contrast sub-groups. For those of less achievement, jealousy and group differentiation may become a fuse for conflicts. How to adjust the conceptual difference, to accept and respect others' distinct characters, and to learn to cognize oneself and be positive for self value shall be the concern of schools, families, and teenagers in a current.

(4) lack of civism

According to Table 41, “without civism” and “irresponsible” are also major reasons for peer conflicts. That seems to express anti-social and rule-subversion hippie characters of teenagers, on the one hand; and bring review demands on suitability of social and school regulations subjective to the juvenile and on whether traditional thinking and rules are coping to current trends about students and environment on the other. In particular, when cooperative model among schools, parents, and students is more emphasized, whether school rules could bear student's frankly expressing is worthy of rethinking. The definition of civism shall be adjusted with times and also include opinion and demand of adolescents because the traditional “civism” seems increasingly vague for them under the mainstream social value for “old stuff”.

2. The difference on conflict issues by different background variable

The second purpose of the research is to explore whether exist the differentiation

on conflict issues by background variable, helping deeper analyses of causes with Table 4-2 to show the results.

On “aberration” topic, there are variables of “gender” ($F=17.59$, $p<.001$) and “study achievement” ($F=5.51$, $p<.01$) showing difference; moreover, through average method and Scheffé method, the male conduct more peer conflicts by “aberration” than the female, and students of “lower” study achievement suffer more “aberration” related conflicts than others. On the “snobbism” topic, only “egocentrism” ($F=7.36$, $p<.01$) shows significant difference, amongst “higher grade” team conducting more conflicts than “medium grade” and “lower grade”. As for “improper behavior”, also only “egocentrism” ($F=9.65$, $p<.001$) has significant difference, and “higher grade” team holds more conflicts than “medium grade” and “lower grade”. For “vainglory” issue, “gender” ($F=7.11$, $p<.01$) and “egocentrism” ($F=10.36$, $p<.001$) reveal difference, the male conducting more conflicts than the female through average method, and the “relatively egocentric” team producing more conflicts through Scheffe’ method.

Finally, on “human relationship” and “study achievement” topics, only teenagers with different achievement ($F=3.68$, $p<.05$) hold difference; however, no further findings through Scheffé method. Rigidly speaking, no personal variables produce difference on “human relationship” and “study achievement” issues.

Table 4-2: Difference on conflict issues by different background variables

Conflict issue	aberration			snobism			Improper behavior		
	average	Standard deviation	F value	average	Standard deviation	F value	average	Standard deviation	F value
gender									
(1) male	.64	1.10	17.59***	1.16	1.46	.07 ^{NS}	1.69	1.54	3.65 ^{NS}
(2) female	.24	.73		1.06	1.49		1.40	1.37	
grade									
(1) first year	.31	.70	2.23 ^{NS}	1.15	1.51	1.79 ^{NS}	1.41	1.41	2.91 ^{NS}
(2) second year	.48	1.06		.87	1.20		1.46	1.40	
(3) third year	.55	1.10		1.21	1.64		1.82	1.56	
Study achievement									
(1) lowest	1.03	1.21	5.51***	.64	1.08	1.43 ^{NS}	1.61	1.30	.40 ^{NS}
(2) medium	.46	1.01		1.03	1.36		1.63	1.45	
(3) medium	.34	.86		1.18	1.57		1.47	1.47	
(4) highest	.18	.53		1.24	1.82		1.71	1.90	
Social attractiveness									
(1) least	.95	1.18	1.94 ^{NS}	1.16	1.64	.96 ^{NS}	1.95	1.72	1.14 ^{NS}
(2) less	.40	.95		.94	1.21		1.45	1.43	
(3) more	.42	.94		1.20	1.64		1.63	1.49	
(4) most	.46	.88		1.23	1.79		1.23	1.17	
Human relationship									
(1) least	.50	.76	.51 ^{NS}	1.25	1.58	.08 ^{NS}	2.38	1.85	1.17 ^{NS}
(2) not	.46	.98		1.04	1.29		1.43	1.31	
(3) harmony	.40	.94		1.10	1.52		1.59	1.51	
(4) most	.60	1.04		1.05	1.56		1.43	1.40	
egocentric									
(1) low grade	.41	.92	1.03 ^{NS}	.79	1.12	7.36*	1.26	1.33	2.02*
(2) medium	.38	.88		.97	1.41		1.41	1.40	
(3) high grade	.54	1.08		1.49	1.74		2.23	1.57	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

(cont.) Table 4.2: Difference on conflict issues by different background variables

Conflict issues	vain glory			Human relationship			Study achievement			Unpaired comparison
	average	deviatio	F value	average	Standard deviation	F value	average	deviatio	F value	
gender										
(1) male	1.05		1.41		1.06	.39 NS.	1.03	1.16	.55 NS.	
(2) female	.71		1.02		.94		.94	1.05		
grade										
(1) first year	.89		1.24		1.02	1.00 NS.	1.03	1.15	.33 NS.	
(2) second year	.76		1.17	.71 NS.	1.02		.92	1.11		
(3) third year	.97		1.31		.96		.98	1.05		
Study achievement										
(1) lowest	.45		.67		.85	.18 NS.	1.27	1.09	3.68*	
(2) medium	.90		1.20	1.65 NS.	1.04		1.16	1.10		
(3) higher	.95		1.35		1.02		.83	1.09		
(4) highest	.71		.92		.66		.71	.99		
Social attractiveness										
(1) least	.89		1.15		1.11	.65 NS.	1.47	1.47	1.98 NS.	
(2) less	.74		1.10	1.48 NS.	1.03		1.03	1.13		
(3) more	.99		1.32		.95		.91	1.05		
(4) most	1.15		1.86		1.08		.69	.75		
Human relationship egocentric										
(1) least	.50		1.41		1.50	1.17 NS.	1.50	1.07	2.20 NS.	
(2) not harmony	.76		.94	.95 NS.	.93		1.20	1.29		
(3) harmony	.90		1.30		1.02		.92	1.04		
(4) most	1.10		1.38		.81		.86	1.07		
Study achievement										
(1) low grade	.56		.89		.76	2.80 NS.	.90	1.12	.57 NS.	
(2) medium grade	.82		1.27	.10 NS.	1.04		1.04	1.16		
(3) high grade	1.27		1.40		.98		1.00	1.02		

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

As a whole, the part generalizes the following issues:

- (1) For “aberration” issue, the male conduct more conflicts than the female, and so do those of lower study achievement than higher one.
- (2) For “snobbism” issue, persons with high egocentrism produce more conflicts, but other personal variables do not make significant difference
- (3) For “improper behavior” issue, persons of highly egocentric also produce more conflicts, but other personal variables do not make significant differentiation.
- (4) For “snobbism” issue, “gender” and ‘egocentrism” variables exist significant differentiation, amongst the male do more than the female, and so do those of high egocentrism.
- (5) For “human relationship” and “study achievement” issues, no variables achieve the significant difference.

3. The prediction of each variables for copying strategy

According to the third research purpose, this paper explores how background variables, conflict issue, feelings strength predict for various copying strategies, further to understand social reality causes for those strategies. The research has applied stepwise multiple regression to introduce results as Table 4-3.

From Table 4-3, in cooperative strategies, conflicts by gender, study achievement,

and improper behavior can predict best, and the make are more absent on application of the strategy than the female observing from β values. As for study achievement, students with higher achievement tend to apply cooperative strategies, and vice versa. The “improper behavior” in conflicts has significant prediction to cooperative strategies.

For prediction to competitive strategies, variables of “improper behavior” issue, “egocentrism of teenagers”, “gender”, and “study achievement” have significant predictions. Amongst, conflicts caused by “improper behavior” and students with higher “egocentrism” may induce competitive strategies. The female or those with better study achievement use less competitive respond methods. As for prediction to avoid strategies, the research found “egocentrism” and “study” related conflicts could perform better prediction; that is, the individual conducting conflicts due to higher “egocentrism” and “study” causes tends to apply avoid strategies.

Table 4-3: Prediction of each variable for copying strategy

Cooperative strategy					
Input variable	R	R ²	R ² increment	βvalue	F value
accumulation					
Gender	.18	.03	.03	.16	3.08* *
Study achievement	.22	.05	.02	.12	2.48*
Improper behavior	.25	.06	.01	- .11	- 2.10*
Competitive strategy					
Input variable	R	R ²	R ² increment	βvalue	F value
accumulation					
Improper behavior	.26	.07	.07	.20	4.12* * *
Egocentrism	.33	.11	.04	.22	4.37* * *
Gender	.37	.14	.03	- .16	- 3.27* *
Study achievement	.39	.15	.01	- .11	- 2.13*
Avoid strategy					
Input variable	R	R ²	R ² increment	βvalue	F value
accumulation					
Egocentrism	.20	.04	.04	.20	3.94* * *
Study confrontation	.26	.07	.03	.16	3.19* *

* $P < .05$. ** $P < .01$. *** $P < .001$.

As a whole, the research has provided a noticeable cause, proving higher prediction by “egocentrism” of teenagers more than “conflict issues” and “feelings

strength”, but “conflict issue” does less prediction. Thus, highly-egocentric students inclines to apply extreme strategies of competitive and avoid when facing peer conflicts. In growing conflicts stimulated by “improper behavior”, teenagers would like to use competitive strategies, but cooperative ones for the adverse condition. Accordingly, when conflicts caused by “without civism”, “scolding”, “mischief”, “insulting”, and “irresponsible” issues are not observed in advance and mediated by teachers and the third party, serious body collision and violence may be induced. However, those peer conflicts could be easily resolved and promote cooperative attitudes if properly mediated in time.

V. Conclusion and Suggestion

1. Conclusion

Through above analyses, the research targets to explore major conflicts and relevant factors in teenager’s interaction, and understand which factor could better predict for selection of respond strategy through study of conflict copying strategies. With frequency distribution, ANOVA, and stepwise multiple regression, the research upholds the followings:

- (1) In a current, inconsistent opinion, scolding, mischief, somehow stupid, bad study performance, selfish, insulting, irresponsible, sneak, and without

civism cause most conflicts.

- (2) “Gender” induces differentiation on “aberration” and “vainglory” issues; “study achievement” causes differentiation on “snobbism”, “improper behavior”, and “vainglory” issues. However, variables of grade, social attractiveness, and human relationship do not make any difference.
- (3) For prediction variables, “gender”, “study achievement”, and “improper behavior” issues could do well for cooperative strategies. “Improper behavior”, “egocentrism”, “gender”, and “study achievement” issues have better prediction for competitive strategies. At last, “egocentrism” and “study” issues predict better for avoid strategies.

2. Suggestion

Teenager’s conflicts reveal a complicated social interaction, and cover comprehensive issues and different copying strategies. From statistics, 80% of peer conflicts occur in campus (Collins & Laursen, 1997), therefore, the prevention from peer violence shall be based on school program. The research concludes that peer interaction and study are major conflict faces, and “egocentrism”, “gender”, and “study performance” are main variables. Suggestions from the research targeting to school and education related personnel hope to help education and remediation

institutions face with conflict potentials and act effectively.

(1) Right judgment for student behaviors

Teachers and staff shall make right judgement and proper treatment for teenagers' interaction behaviors, such as judging games from conflicts, oral from body conflicts, and serious from minor confrontation. That prevents from conflict aggravation and over intervention by teachers.

(2) Introducing concepts about respect and equity

Currently, teenagers tend to be egocentric and less consider others' opinions, and exclude those disadvantaged for themselves. The research finds gender, egocentrism, and study achievement play critical roles in conflicts, proving that school shall design the conflict resolution as a course integrated into core courses (LeBoeuf & Delany, 1997). Teachers shall promulgate sexual equity and negotiation skills for mutual respects for teenagers, and collect instructive and active materials and apply cooperative teachings in order to introduce how to accept, getting along, and communicate with others in teaching activities.

(3) Mediation for peer conflicts

Teachers shall endue teenagers with responsibilities for conflict resolution, teach about mediation skills, understand teenagers' demands and compromise for both parties, and cooperate with students to resolve problems (Bickmore, 1999).

Besides, teachers shall divide conflicts into different serious levels for treatment, execute fair, efficient, wise, and stable principles, and provide equal share of mental and material resources and mediation function cognized by both parties. LeBoeuf and Delany (1997) found the mediation training could resolve 86% of peer conflicts, proving significantly decreased school conflicts and body violence, and promotion of mediation skills and self respects for mediators.

(4) Communication and cooperation between parents and teachers

Close cooperation between parents and teachers are positive for children's adaptation for school life (Willert & Willert, 2000). Simultaneously, the research found some conflicts are highly related to family or school environments, such as "somehow stupid", "bad study performance", "selfish", and "irresponsible". Therefore, communication and cooperation between parents and teachers needs to be especially emphasized to make parents acquainted with children's behavior and problems when children facing conflicts, avoiding misunderstanding from parents on the one hand, and seeking for cooperation opportunities for campus violence prevention on the other. The recent researches also prove the interaction between parents and children may impact on peer relationship(Collins & Laursen, 1997). Szyndrowski (1999) also pointed out: (1) family ruling styles influence children's conflict correspondence, (2) harmony parent-child relationship

impacts on child's emotional mediation in conflicts, and (3) parent's behavior are learning objects for children. It seems that schools have necessities to plan for parent education programs to provide courses about family ruling and conflict resolution, and to design mediation training for parents as mediators.

(5) Timely applying media functions

TV programs have become the major recreation for teenagers and influence their thinking and behaviors through media promulgation. Therefore, violence, conflict and bloody pictures in TV programs have produced negligence about social goodness and cultivation function of media (Anderson, 2000). The research finds out teenagers of "improper behavior", low "study achievement", and high "egocentrism", and the male incline to apply competitive strategies for conflict responds, and thus school or family shall pay more attention to students with this kind of character, especially to influences from media violence. The society shall guard for program quality, including with program grading system, and parents shall company children for TV program watching in order to timely correct mistaken messages gave by the media. TV programmer shall enhance on violent prevention and conflict resolution, provide concepts of respect, responsibility, self defense, and getting helps and relevant information and available resources for teenagers.

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Appendix 1: Factor analysis for conflict issue check table

Question	Factor loading	explaining variation(%)	accustomed variation(%)
Factor 1: aberration		13.020	13.020
1.drink	.840		
2.gamble	.827		
16.drug abuse	.823		
17.smoke	.761		
18.read erotic publication	.663		
31.sexual harassment	.614		
32.steal	.433		
Factor 2: Snobbism		11.461	24.481
3.sneak	.694		
4.fake	.692		
5.piggy	.649		
19.brick	.610		
20.selfish	.603		
21.narrow-minded	.584		
Factor 3: improper behavior		9.590	34.071
6.without civism	.717		
7.scolding	.659		
8.mischief	.603		
22.insulting	.560		
23.irresponsible	.492		
Factor 4: vainglory		9.365	43.435
9.eager to be in lime light	.608		
10.know nothing about fashion	.557		
24.under grade	.502		
25.cool showing	.481		
26.love out-striping	.476		
33.showing as a big man	.420		
Factor 5: human relationship		7.468	50.903
11.incosistent opinion	.717		
12.too cheapskate	.686		
27.unseasy to contact with	.633		
28.not accepting date	.606		
34.hard to play with	.522		
Factor 6: study		6.595	57.498
13. somehow stupid	.755		
14.poor	.691		
15.bad study performance	.677		
29.witling	.660		
30.despise	.605		

Appendix 2: Factor analysis for conflict coping strategy scale

Number	Question	Factor loading	Explaining (%)	variatAccumulated variation(%)
Factor 1: cooperative			18.358	18.358
	1.we will completely exp ress opinions	.745		
	2.I will consider the other’s demand and seek resolution	.728		
	6.I will provide a resolution accepted by both	.709		
	7.I will consider the other’s place and make a little amendment	.677		
	11.I will seek for other’s helps to resolve problem	.677		
	12.We will face problems with peaceful and rational methods	.612		
	15.I am willing to share worries and help for friends at any time	.481		
Factor 2: competitive			17.604	35.962
	3.I will wait for revenge	.701		
	4.I have a cold war with him for days	.678		
	8.I think I am right	.611		
	9.I won’ t give up fighting with friends	.599		
	13.I will apply violent applications	.586		
	16.I will deliberately make mistakes and piss him up	.585		
	19.admit mistakes, no excuses	.467		
	20.I will consider to breach with him	.449		
Factor 3: avoid			10.762	46.724
	5.I will deliberately avoid him to express my dissatisfaction	.790		
	10.I forgive him, and compromise	.708		

14.I don ' t care	.593
17.I would like to bear for friends	.588
18.I would rather suffer myself	.403

Appendix 3: Factor analysis for teenage egocentrism scale

Number	question	Factor loading	Explaining (%)	variatAccumulated variation(%)
Factor 1: Fake			21.855	21.855
11.	I will do the superficial work	.715		
12.	I am an ambidexter	.701		
7.	saying is one thing, doing is the other	.668		
3.	I will pretend foolish	.659		
5.	I hide my wit and show as a fool in order to achieve my goal	.595		
10.	I will lie for goodwill	.555		
Factor 2: self imagination			21.641	43.496
8.	I am critical for the society	.692		
2.	My ideas are important for the group	.685		
1.	I feel myself as the focus in the group	.651		
4.	I have characters ably attract others ' attention.	.636		
9.	I work conscientiously	.580		
6.	I will express myself as keen and capable	.565		

