

## Frequency and Intensity of Conflict between Adolescents and their Parents in Assiut Governorate

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### Abstract

Conflicts are an inevitable feature of human interactions. Especially in adolescence, conflicts with parents about everyday issues are common mainly due to the change of the parent-adolescent relationship and adolescents' struggle for independence. **Aim of the study** was to investigate the frequency and intensity of conflict between adolescents and their parents in Assiut Governorate. **Research Design:** Descriptive correlational research design was used. **Setting:** The study was carried out at 8 preparatory schools in Assiut governorate. **Subjects:** One thousand and two hundred adolescents in the selected preparatory schools. **The sample** was selected by using stratified random sampling. **Tools of data collection:** Two tools were used, socio-demographic questionnaire and parent-adolescent issues checklist. **Results:** It was found that 93.9% of adolescents had conflict. Also, 95.4% of preparatory school children in the early adolescents had more conflict frequency than those in the middle adolescents (89.2%). Statistically significant differences were found between the mean score of conflict domains as home tasks, acceptable behavior, family rules/obligations and school concerns domains in the early and middle adolescents. **Conclusion:** Children in the early adolescents had more conflict frequency than those in the middle adolescents. **Recommendation:** Health education program for parents to increase their awareness about developmental changes during adolescence period.

**Key words:** *Frequency, Intensity of Conflict, Adolescents & Parents.*

### Introduction

Nowadays adolescents and their parents as a family can face many challenges in daily life communication. These challenges can deliver tension, disagreements or quarrels between adolescent's autonomy and parents' desires which need to be managed and resolved (Shearman & Dumlao, 2008). "Adolescence" is a critical period of life that includes physiological and psychological changes which start between the beginning of puberty and establishment of social independence (Steinberg, 2014).

Adolescence can be a very difficult period; the changes that occur during this period are often confusing for both adolescents and their parents. One goal of every adolescent is to be accepted as an autonomous adult. Adolescent's desire for independence and peer acceptance often contributes to the tendency to conform to peer group influences and to challenge of parental authorities (Shehata & Ramadan, 2010).

Conflict is defined as any disagreement, difference, and argument about an issue that a rise in family life. Conflict is a complex and multifaceted construct as it includes any differences of opinions, whether it is negative or positive between parents (Cummings & Davies, 2011 & Kouros, 2010). These differences range from minor daily stresses and disagreements to severe verbal, emotional, and physical arguments (Esfandyari et al., 2011). In spite of this fact about

conflict, conflict can be either destructive as the adolescent may witness their parents' displays of anger and hostility or constructive conflict which depicts good role modeling and the use of problem-solving strategies and affection (Pinheiro, 2006).

Disagreements are not a central characteristic of parent-adolescent relationships. Moderate disagreements are viewed as a normal and functional feature in adolescents' development into independent, autonomous individuals and in the transformation of family relationships (Scharf & Mayseless, 2007 & Collins & Steinberg, 2006).

Flannery (2013) stated that parents and adolescents innately have many opportunities to have conflict. Conflict on the side of adolescents happens when parents are not providing the emotional support that adolescents want, or because parents believe adolescents are not meeting the expectations held for them, or because of a lack of consensus about family or societal values. Shearman & Dumlao (2008) mentioned that communication and conflict between adolescents and their parents often involve renegotiating rules, roles, and relationships concerning day-to-day issues like activities, friends, responsibilities, and school. Also, Shah et al., (2016) found that use of social media through the website and mobile application was also a main cause of conflict.

Nurses play a vital role in assessing and minimizing the impact of parental conflict on adolescents in their

care. Therefore, they require knowledge and skills to be able to work effectively with the adolescent who grows up in environments where they witness inter-parental conflict and to engage appropriately with the parents to educate them about the impact of their interactions on their child (Power, 2016 & McDowall, 2010).

### Significance of the study

During adolescence most families experience an increase in the frequency of parent-adolescent conflicts. Which are particularly prominent during early adolescence and typically occur over everyday issues (Allison & Schultz, 2004) Adolescents represented one-fourth of the total populations (25%) in Egypt according to the statistics of UNICEF (2011) Aggarwal Cited in Zinabie, (2015) mentioned that “adolescence” and “conflict” have been regarded practically synonymous terms both in informal theory and in particular stereotypes. A comprehensive assessment of parent-adolescent conflict would require description of the topics and processes of parent-adolescent conflict.

### Aim of the study was to

Investigate the frequency and intensity of conflict between adolescents and their parents in Assiut Governorate.

### Research question

What is the relation between the frequency and intensity of conflict among adolescents and their parents in Assiut Governorate?

### Operational Definitions

- **Adolescence:** A developmental period of an individual that covers the age from 13 to 15 years in this context. According to Hockenber & Wilson (2015) early adolescence (ages 11 to 14), middle adolescence (ages 15 to 17), and late adolescence (ages 18 to 20).
- **Frequency of conflict:** The rate of disagreement that occurs between adolescents and their parents over a given issue during the last 4 weeks.
- **Intensity of conflict:** The amount of discussion hotness that occurs between adolescents and their parents over a given issue during the last 4 weeks.
- **Parent-adolescent conflict:** A disagreement between adolescents and their parents over varied issues.

## Subjects & Method

### Study Design

A descriptive correlational research design was used.

### Study Setting

The study was carried out at 8 preparatory schools, 4 urban and 4 rural schools of Assiut governorate, Upper Egypt.

## Subjects

One thousand and two hundred adolescent students in the selected preparatory schools have represented the sample of the current research. A stratified random sampling technique was used. The researchers obtained a list of school names; its residence, type and directions (East, West, North, and South) which were taken from the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education in Assiut governorate. Eight preparatory schools; 4 urban and 4 rural were selected by simple random sample. Two schools selected from each direction one from the rural areas and the other from the urban one. Also, two classes were selected from each school level (one, two and level three) per school. About thirty students were taken from each class. The researchers interviewed all students to fill the sheet.

### Tools of data collection

#### Two tools were used for this study

**Tool I:** Socio-demographic questionnaire included two parts:

**Part I:** Adolescents' personal characteristics such as age, sex, school level, residence, birth order, number of siblings, living status, and having chronic illness.

**Part II:** Parents' personal characteristics such as parents' age, educational level, employment status, relation between parents and medical history of chronic illness.

**Tool II: Parent-Adolescent Issues Checklist (Robin and Foster, 1989).** It was adapted by the researchers in this study. This scale aims to assess frequency and intensity of the parent-adolescent conflict. It included 44 items encompassing issues of conflict. Students were asked to select “yes” for topics they had discussed with their parents during the last 4 weeks and “no” for topics that had not come up. For each issue marked “yes,” the respondent uses the rating scale to indicate how “hot” discussion of the issue was. Their answers were computed in two ways:

**Assess Conflict Frequency:** It was calculated by the sum of items checked “yes.” when adolescents checked only 13 items or more from 44 items. Higher scores indicate higher levels of conflict frequency.

**Conflict Intensity:** The conflict intensity was estimated based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1= “very calm” to 5= “very angry”. This score adjusts for the possibility that highly intense conflicts might be related to frequently discussed issues that caused conflict. When adolescents had a mean intensity rating of 1.7 or higher were considered as having conflict intensity. Higher scores indicate more intense conflicts and lower scores indicate less intense conflicts.

The researchers translate tool two into Arabic form. The content validity of tool two was estimated by

five experts in the pediatric and psychiatric nursing field. The content validity index was 0.73 and internal consistency was tested, by using Cronbach's alpha and it was  $r=0.83$ .

#### **Method**

Formal approval was obtained for data collection from the prime minister of education. The first tool was developed by the researchers. The content validity of the tool one was done by five experts in the field of pediatric and psychiatric nursing. It was equal to 0.9. Also, its internal consistency was done by using Cronbach alpha coefficient, it was  $r=0.98$ . A written consent was obtained from the studied adolescents to collect the data after explaining the purpose and the nature of the study.

#### **Ethical considerations**

The research proposal was approved by Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Assiut University. The written approval of the prime minister of education was taken. The adolescent students were informed about the study. They were advised that they were under no obligation to participate in the study and the study would not affect their education or assessment. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured. Adolescents had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any rationale.

A pilot study was carried out on 10% of the students. It was conducted to assess the clarity of the study tools and to estimate the time required to fulfill the questionnaire. Based on the results of the pilot study necessary modifications were done for three items 2 items (item 20,22) were deleted "using drugs" and "drinking beer or other alcoholic beverages" because it did not match with our culture and tradition) and added "using the internet " to item number (6).

The researchers modified tool two according to **Özmete & Bayolu, (2009)**. The scale items were divided into four domains; home task, acceptable behavior, family rules/obligations and school concerns, each domain contains several items.

The researchers interviewed the students during activity lessons and introduced themselves. They had explained the aim, nature of the study and the main parts of the questionnaire. After that, the questionnaire was distributed to the students. The researchers gave instructions about completing the questionnaire and answered any question for the

students. The time needed for filling the sheet was about 45-60 minutes for each class. The data were collected during the period of four months from February to May 2016.

During data collection 1600 sheets were distributed considering any missed or incomplete return data (188 students refused to participate in the study and about 200 students returned the sheet incomplete). They were excluded from the study sample.

#### **Statistical analysis**

Data entry was done using SPSS version 20.0 statistical software package. It was presented using descriptive statistics as Mean and standard deviation, frequencies and percentages. Variables were compared using chi-square test. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was calculated to assess the relationship among the study variables. Statistical significance was considered at  $p$ -value  $<0.05$ .

#### **Results**

Personal characteristics of studied adolescents showed that; early adolescents represented 30.7% and 35.2% at age group 13 and 14 years respectively. In addition, 51.1% of the studied adolescents were females. And 36.8% of them were in level two at school. Also, 53.0% of adolescents had resided in urban areas. It was observed that the first birth order represented 35.6%. While 47.8% of the studied adolescents had 3-4 siblings. Moreover, 79.2% were living with their parents. Finally, only 2.4% of adolescents had a chronic illness.

Regarding the personal characteristics of adolescents' parents; it was found that the ages of 52.7% of adolescents' mothers were 30-40 years and the age of more than half of adolescents' fathers (51.5%) was 45-55 years. As regards the educational levels (30.9%) and (38.2%) of mothers and fathers had a university level of education. The majority of the mothers (70.8%) were housewives and 62.3% of the fathers were employer. Also, the vast majority (95.4%) of adolescents' parents were living together. Finally, most of parents (77.9%) didn't have any chronic illness.

Table (1): Mean distribution of Frequency &amp; Intensity of Parents-Adolescent Conflict Issues:

Adolescent Conflict issues *	Intensity	Frequency	
	Mean $\pm$ SD	No	%
<b>Home tasks</b>			
Cleaning bedroom	1.4 $\pm$ 1.3	904	75.4
Adolescent eats	1.05 $\pm$ 1.2	772	64.4
Taking care of things	1.0 $\pm$ 1.4	618	51.4
Putting away clothes	1.3 $\pm$ 1.3	884	73.7
Cleanliness (washing, showers, brushing teeth)	1.04 $\pm$ 1.3	712	59.4
<b>Acceptable behavior</b>			
Battle with the siblings	1.9 $\pm$ 1.8	873	72.8
How money is spent.	1.0 $\pm$ 1.1	729	60.7
Bothering parents when they want to be left alone	0.8 $\pm$ 1.3	512	42.7
Bothering adolescent when he/she wants to be left alone	0.8 $\pm$ 1.3	551	46.0
Putting feet on furniture	1.1 $\pm$ 1.4	661	55.1
Falsehood	1.7 $\pm$ 1.7	787	65.6
Cursing	1.0 $\pm$ 1.5	498	41.5
Creating troubles and noise at the house	1.8 $\pm$ 1.6	928	77.3
Playing stereo or radio too loudly	1.1 $\pm$ 1.5	645	53.8
Sex	1.0 $\pm$ 1.3	709	59.1
How neat clothes look	1.03 $\pm$ 1.2	775	64.6
Messing up the house	1.3 $\pm$ 1.5	716	59.7
<b>Family rules/ obligations</b>			
Coming home on time	1.05 $\pm$ 1.2	798	66.5
Going places without parents	1.0 $\pm$ 1.4	624	52.0
Going on dates	1.1 $\pm$ 1.3	666	55.5
What time to have meals		682	56.8
Using the internet and watching TV	1.7 $\pm$ 1.5	900	75.0
Selecting new clothes	1.1 $\pm$ 1.04	830	69.2
Turning off lights in house	1.1 $\pm$ 1.2	738	61.4
Allowance	1.0 $\pm$ 1.0	858	71.5
Which clothes to wear	1.01 $\pm$ 1.2	761	63.5
Sleep time	1.2 $\pm$ 1.2	881	73.5
Selecting friends	1.1 $\pm$ 1.1	864	72.0
Table manners	1.1 $\pm$ 1.3	775	64.6
Earning money away from the house	0.9 $\pm$ 1.4	569	47.5
Picking books or movies	0.8 $\pm$ 1.0	632	52.7
Buying records, games, toys, and other things	0.7 $\pm$ 1.1	525	43.7
Helping out around the house	1.3 $\pm$ 1.4	644	53.6
Talking back to parents.	1.3 $\pm$ 1.4	769	64.1
Spending leisure time	1.0 $\pm$ 1.2	729	60.8
Smoking/spit tobacco	0.8 $\pm$ 1.5	373	31.1
Telephone calls	1.2 $\pm$ 1.3	707	59.0
Getting up in the morning	1.04 $\pm$ 1.5	739	61.6
<b>School concerns</b>			
Getting low scores in school	1.8 $\pm$ 1.9	806	67.2
Getting to school on time	1.04 $\pm$ 1.3	746	62.2
Performing homework	1.3 $\pm$ 1.3	882	73.5
Making trouble at school	1.4 $\pm$ 1.6	732	61.0

\* More than one answer

Table (2): Parents-Adolescents Conflict Issues among Early &amp; Middle Adolescents.

Adolescent Conflict issues #	Early adolescents n= 791		Middle adolescents n= 409		X <sup>2</sup>	P-value*
	No	%	No	%		
<b>Home tasks</b>						
Cleaning bedroom	628	79.4	276	67.5	20.58	0.000
What adolescent eats	510	64.5	262	64.0	0.02	0.5
Taking care of things	437	55.2	181	44.2	13.04	0.000
Putting away clothes	605	76.5	279	68.2	9.51	0.001
Cleanliness (washing, showers, brushing teeth)	490	61.9	222	54.3	6.57	0.006
<b>Acceptable behavior</b>						
Battle with the siblings	586	74.1	287	70.1	2.08	0.1
How money is spent.	489	61.8	240	58.7	1.11	0.2
Bothering parents when they want to be left alone	357	45.1	155	37.9	5.77	0.01
Bothering adolescent when he/she wants to be left alone	390	49.3	161	39.4	10.73	0.001
Putting feet on furniture	454	57.4	207	50.6	5.02	0.01
Falsehood	532	67.2	255	62.3	2.88	0.05
Cursing	350	44.2	148	36.2	7.22	0.004
Creating troubles and noise at the house	637	80.5	291	71.1	13.54	0.000
Playing stereo or radio too loudly	441	55.7	204	49.9	3.74	0.03
Sex role	466	58.9	243	59.4	0.28	0.5
How neat clothes look	541	68.4	234	57.2	14.73	0.000
Messing up the house	517	65.4	199	48.6	31.26	0.000
<b>Family rules/ obligations</b>						
Coming home on time	531	67.1	267	65.3	0.41	0.3
Going places without parents (shopping, movies, etc.)	408	51.6	216	52.8	0.16	0.4
Going on dates	459	58.0	207	50.6	6.0	0.01
What time to have meals	463	58.5	219	53.5	2.73	0.05
Using the internet and watching TV	599	75.7	301	73.6	0.65	0.2
Selecting new clothes	567	71.7	263	64.3	6.88	0.005
Turning off lights in house	517	65.4	221	54.0	14.61	0.000
Allowance	575	72.7	283	69.2	1.62	0.1
Which clothes to wear	539	68.1	222	54.3	22.33	0.000
Sleep time	619	78.2	262	64.0	27.84	0.000
Selecting friends	586	74.1	278	68.0	5.1	0.01
Table manners	525	66.4	250	61.1	3.24	0.04
Earning money away from the house	397	50.2	172	42.0	7.16	0.004
Picking books or movies	443	56.0	189	46.2	10.37	0.001
Buying records, games, toys, and other things	379	47.9	146	35.7	16.35	0.000
Helping out around the house	444	56.13	200	49.0	5.67	0.01
Talking back to parents.	512	64.7	257	62.8	0.42	0.2
Spending leisure time	489	61.8	240	58.7	1.11	0.2
Smoking/spit tobacco	248	31.3	125	30.6	0.1	0.4
Telephone calls	487	61.6	220	53.8	6.74	0.006
Getting up in the morning	508	64.2	231	56.5	6.83	0.005

Adolescent Conflict issues #	Early adolescents n= 791		Middle adolescents n= 409		X <sup>2</sup>	P-value*
	No	%	No	%		
<b>School concerns</b>						
Getting low scores in school	530	67.0	276	67.5	0.03	0.5
Getting to school on time	512	64.7	234	57.2	6.74	0.01
Performing homework	598	75.6	284	69.4	5.26	0.01
Making trouble at school	497	62.8	235	57.4	3.27	0.04

# More than one answer

\* P < 0.05

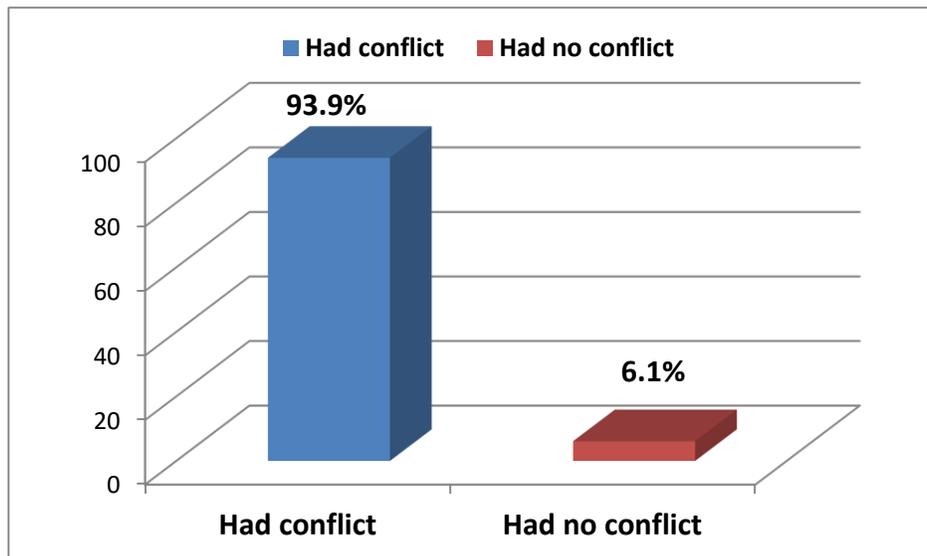


Figure (1): Conflict Frequency among the studied Adolescent

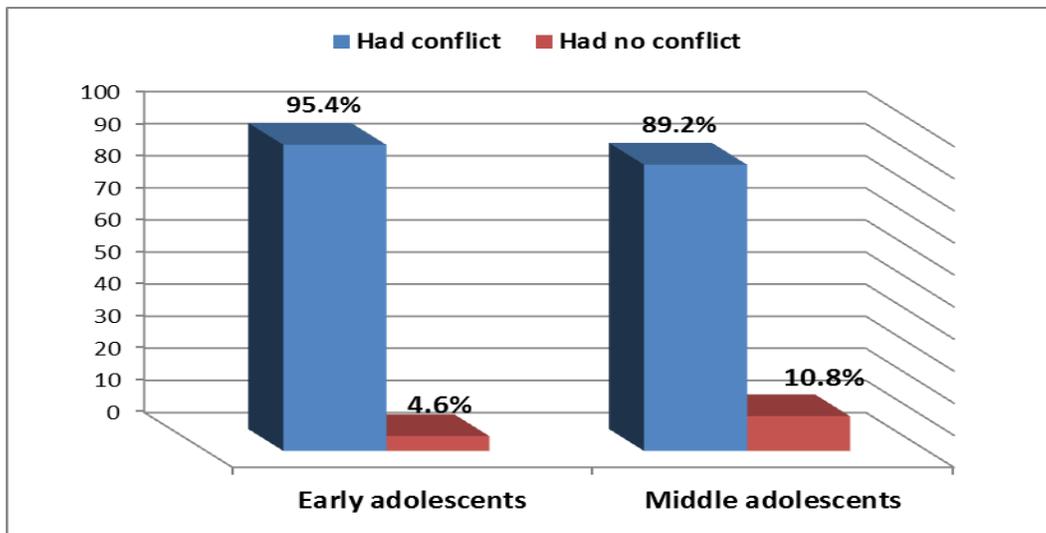


Figure (2): Conflict Frequency among Early & Middle Adolescent Students.

**Table (3): Mean Score of Conflict Domains in the Early and Middle Adolescents.**

Items	Domains of conflict							
	Home tasks		Acceptable behavior		Family rules/ obligations		School concerns	
	Mean $\pm$ SD	P-value	Mean $\pm$ SD	P-value	Mean $\pm$ SD	P-value	Mean $\pm$ SD	P-value
Early adolescents (n=791)	3.4 $\pm$ 1.3	0.000001	6.8 $\pm$ 2.6	0.000001	11.9 $\pm$ 4.1	0.000000	2.7 $\pm$ 1.1	0.004
Middle adolescents (n=409)	3.0 $\pm$ 1.4		6.0 $\pm$ 2.7		10.6 $\pm$ 4.4		2.5 $\pm$ 1.2	

\*  $P < 0.05$ **Table (4): Correlation between Conflict Domains and Personal Characteristics of Adolescents and their Parents.**

Characteristics	Domains of conflict							
	Home tasks		Acceptable behavior		Family rules/ obligations		School concerns	
	r	P-value	R	P-value	r	P-value	r	P-value
Adolescents' age	-0.14	0.000	-0.13	0.000	-0.14	0.000	-0.08	0.01
Sex	-0.1	0.003	-0.1	0.002	-0.14	0.000	-0.13	0.000
Residence	0.17	0.000	0.1	0.000	0.24	0.000	0.2	0.000
Birth order	0.1	0.003	0.05	0.1	0.05	0.1	0.07	0.02
Number of siblings	0.1	0.000	0.04	0.1	0.13	0.000	0.1	0.02
Mothers' age	-0.3	0.3	-0.02	0.5	-0.4	0.2	-0.02	0.4
Fathers' age	-0.05	0.1	-0.03	0.2	-0.1	0.01	-0.03	0.3
Mothers' education	-0.1	0.001	-0.04	0.14	-0.12	0.000	-0.13	0.000
Fathers' education	-0.04	0.2	0.001	1.0	-0.05	0.1	-0.05	0.1
Mothers' employment	-0.04	0.1	0.03	0.3	-0.1	0.01	-0.03	0.2
Fathers' employment	-0.04	0.1	-0.06	0.05	-0.05	0.06	-0.07	0.01

\*  $P < 0.05$  \*There is no statistical significant difference between parent-adolescents conflict and other characteristics

**Table (1):** Illustrates the frequency & intensity of parent-adolescent conflict issues. It was found that cleaning bedroom and putting away clothes were the highest frequent issues (75.4% and 73.7%) respectively as regards home tasks domain. Concerning the acceptable behavior domain, the more frequent issues were creating troubles and noise at the house and battle with the siblings (77.3% and 72.8%) respectively. Also, the findings indicated that using the internet and watching TV, sleep time, selecting friends and allowance represented the highest frequency between the adolescent students as regard family rules/obligations domain (75%, 73.5%, 72% and 71.5%) respectively. While performing

homework and getting low scores at school were the highest frequent items (73.5% and 67.2%) respectively as regard school concerns domain.

In addition, this table revealed that battle with the siblings, getting low scores in school, creating troubles and noise at the house, falsehood and using the internet and watching TV were the more intense issues that affect the adolescents' disagreement with their parents, its mean scores were  $1.9 \pm 1.8$ ,  $1.8 \pm 1.9$ ,  $1.8 \pm 1.6$ ,  $1.7 \pm 1.7$  and  $1.6 \pm 1.5$  respectively.

**Table (2):** Reveals the parents-adolescents conflict issues among early & middle adolescents. This table illustrated that there was a statistically significant difference as regard home tasks domain between

cleaning bedroom and putting away clothes at  $P=0.000$ ,  $0.001$  respectively, with higher frequency in the early adolescents (79.4% and 76.5%) than middle adolescents (67.5% and 68.2%).

Concerning the acceptable behavior domain, it was observed that creating troubles and noise at the house were the more frequent issues (80.5% and 71.1%) respectively in early and middle adolescents with a statistically significant difference. Also, battle with the siblings was more frequent (74.1%) in the early adolescents than those in the middle adolescents (70.1%) with no statistically significant difference.

Looking at the family rules/obligations domain, the results revealed that there were more frequent conflict issues among early adolescents than middle adolescents regarding sleep time (78.2% vs. 64.0%), using the internet and watching TV (75.7% vs. 73.6%), selecting friends (74.1% vs. 68.0%), allowance (72.7% vs. 69.2%) and selecting new clothes (71.7% vs. 64.3%).

Moreover, the present study reported that performing homework and getting low scores in school were the more frequent items as regards school concerns domain (75.6% vs. 69.4% and 67.0% vs. 67.5%) respectively among early and middle adolescents. Statistically significant difference was found between the two groups as regard "performing homework" issue.

**Figure (1):** Represents the conflict frequency among the studied adolescent. The figure illustrates that 93.9% of the studied adolescents had conflict frequency. While only 6.1% of them had no-conflict frequency.

**Figure (2):** Shows the conflict frequency among early & middle adolescent students. It was observed from the figure that, most of preparatory school children in the early adolescents had more conflict frequency (95.4%) than those in the middle adolescents (89.2%).

**Table (3):** Illustrates the mean score of conflict domains in the early and middle adolescents. The table indicated that statistically significant differences were found between mean score of all conflict domains of early and middle adolescents as regard home tasks domain ( $3.4 \pm 1.3$  vs.  $3.0 \pm 1.4$ ,  $p=0.00001$ ), acceptable behavior domain ( $6.8 \pm 2.6$  vs.  $6.0 \pm 2.7$ ,  $p=0.000001$ ), family rules/obligations domain ( $11.9 \pm 4.1$  vs.  $10.6 \pm 4.4$ ,  $p=0.000000$ ) and school concerns domain ( $2.7 \pm 1.1$  vs.  $2.5 \pm 1.2$ ,  $p=0.004$ ) respectively.

**Table (4):** Indicates the correlation between conflict domains and personal characteristics of adolescents. It was found that there was a statistically negative correlation between adolescents' ages and conflict domains which includes home tasks, acceptable

behavior, family rules/obligations and school concerns domain at ( $r= -0.14, -0.13, -0.14, -0.08$ , and  $P= 0.000, 0.000, 0.000$  and  $0.01$ ) respectively. Regarding sex; the study found that male adolescents tend to have more conflict than female adolescents (95.1% vs. 92.8% respectively). Moreover, there was a statistically negative correlation between adolescents' sex and all conflict domains at ( $r=-0.1, -0.1, -0.14, -0.13$ , and  $P= 0.003, 0.002, 0.000$  and  $0.000$ ) respectively. In addition, the study indicated that rural adolescents had more frequent conflict than adolescents from urban areas (96.4% vs. 91.7% respectively) with a positive statistical correlation between adolescents' residence and all conflict domains. Also, a statistically significant difference was found between birth order and number of siblings concerning home task and school concern domains with positive correlation at  $r= 0.1, 0.1$  and  $0.7, 0.1$  and  $P= 0.003, 0.000$  and  $0.02, 0.02$  respectively. Also, family rules/obligations domain had a statistically positive correlation with the number of siblings ( $r=0.13, P=0.000$ ).

Regarding parents' characteristics, it was found that there was a negative correlation with no statistical significant difference as regard mothers' age and all conflict domains at ( $r= -0.3, -0.02, -0.4, -0.02$ ) respectively. Also, negative correlation were detected between fathers' age and all conflict domains at ( $r= -0.05, -0.03, -0.03$  and  $P= 0.1, 0.2, 0.3$  respectively). While a statistically negative difference was found as regard family rules/obligations at ( $r= -0.1$  and  $P= 0.01$ ).

In addition, there was a negative correlation between mothers' education and all conflict domains at ( $r= -0.1, p = 0.001, r = -0.04, p= 0.14, r= -0.12, p 0.000, r= -0.13, p = 0.000$ ) respectively. Also, a negative correlation was found between mothers' employment and home tasks, family rules/obligations and school concerns domains at ( $r= -0.04, -0.1, -0.03$  respectively).

## Discussion

Adolescents and their parents might experience conflict over serious issues that affect each family member, a significant number of adolescents and their parents experience minor conflicts over the daily details of family life. Conflicts with parents about everyday issues are common mainly due to the realignment of the parent-adolescent relationship and adolescents' striving for autonomy (Smetana cited in Zinabie, 2015 & Smetana, 2008).

The current study found that the majority of the studied adolescents had conflict frequency as shown in figure (1). This result was in agreement with GadAllah et al., (2016), Pajkic (2013) & Ozmete & Bayoglu (2009). According to Steinberg (2006) a

conflict was more noticeable during adolescence than during childhood or adulthood. The transformation from childhood to adolescence creates a disturbance in the relation between adolescents and their parent (Shehata and Ramadan, 2010).

This might be due to that adolescents were struggling to search for a separate strong identity, autonomy and formation of the personal identity from their parents. During this formation they face different viewpoints from their parents. Besides, they form a strong relationship with peers which affect parent-adolescent relation.

The present study indicated that most preparatory school children in the early adolescence had more conflict frequency than those in the middle adolescence as presented in figure (2). This result was in the same line with GadAllah et al., (2016) & Pajkic (2013).

This result was concurrent with Melching (2011) who stated that early adolescence is characterized by multiple physical, emotional, and intellectual changes associated with puberty. So, this age is better associated with conflict frequency and conflict intensity. A series of meta-analyses conducted by Laursen et al., cited in Van Doorn et al., (2011) supported the disagreements that occur most frequently in early adolescence and decreased during early to middle adolescence and continue to decline from middle to late adolescence.

The findings of the current study found that the highest frequent conflict issues were cleaning the bedroom and putting away clothes as regard home tasks domain. Creating troubles and noise at the house, battle with the siblings and falsehood were regarding the acceptable behavior domain. Using the internet and watching TV, sleep time, selecting friends and allowance were the most frequent issues as regard family rules/obligations domain. Moreover, performing homework and getting low scores in school were the most frequent issues as regard school concerns domain. Regarding intensity of conflict, the more intense topics were creating troubles and noise at the house, battle with the siblings, falsehood, using the internet and watching TV and getting low scores in school as indicated by table (1) These results were concurrent with the findings of Pajkic (2013), & Ozmete & Bayoglu, (2009).

The results were in agreement with the findings of Çopur et al., (2007) who found that the previously mentioned events were the most common issues of conflict involved in the everyday events of family life. The results indicated that falsehood was more frequent because parents were firm and the adolescents were afraid from punishment. Also, the presence of social rules in the family contradicts with

the degree of freedom or allowance which put the adolescents under stress and this led to falsehood.

Nowadays, with advanced technology the adolescent had become occupied and spent much time using mobile, WhatsApp, Facebook and/or watching TV. These could be factors that delayed bedtime and getting up very late. Also, the adolescents didn't have enough time to arrange clothes or cleaning bedroom as their parents wish. These results could increase conflict between the adolescents and their parents. It can create an atmosphere of disagreement. Also, affects their academic achievement as doing homework and getting low scores in school.

The findings of the current research indicated that a statistically significant difference was found between mean score of conflict measures among early and middle adolescents as regard home tasks, acceptable behavior, family rules/obligations and school concerns domains as clarified in table (3). Also, the findings of the current research in table (2) indicated that there was a higher frequency of conflict issues in the early adolescents than middle adolescents with a statistically significant difference between cleaning the bedroom and putting away clothes as regard home tasks. The results were consistent with Allison cited in Zinabie (2015) & Nebel-Schwalm (2006).

This can be explained by that early adolescents have physical changes that include body parts which may grow at different times and rates. Hands and feet, for example, may grow faster than arms and legs. Because movement of their bodies require coordination of body parts and these parts are of changing proportions, young adolescents may be clumsy and awkward in their physical activities (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Also, Kehily, (2007) concluded that rebellious, immaturity and irresponsibility are normal and healthy features of adolescence which will disappear over time.

Concerning the acceptable behavior, it was observed that creating troubles and noise at the house, battle with the siblings were the more frequent issue with statistically significant difference. The results were consistent with Ozmete, & Bayoglu, (2009). Santrock, (2012) Andkehily, (2007) described early adolescence as a period of storm and stress. Also, the early adolescence is a turbulent period with conflicts and mood swings with the basic character of not being able to share feelings with adult and an impulse to experience adventure. In addition, this was explained by that; the early adolescents have behavioral changes as overwhelming emotions that can lead to impulsive behavior, which can be harmful to themselves as well as others.

Regarding the family rules/obligations domain, it was found that bedtime, using the internet and watching the television, selecting friends, allowance and

selecting new clothes were the more frequent issues among early and middle adolescents with a statistically significant difference. While there was no statistically significant difference found between watching the television and allowance. The results were consistent with **Arneff cited in Zinabie, (2015)** Early adolescence often conveys with it new concerns about body image and appearance (**U.S. Department of Education, 2005**). According to Erikson cited in **Kafle & Thakali, (2013)** adolescents are often preoccupied with how they appear in the eyes of others rather than what they feel they are. Both Winnicott & Erikson cited in **Kafle & Thakali (2013)** young people should be treated as an important category that requires attention.

This could explain that peer influence in the early adolescents was quiet strong with regard to appearance, socialization and attitudes. At the same time adolescence is a time when the individual is striving to wean himself/herself away from the control of parents and elders. They want to give expression to their feelings, emotions and ideas.

As regard school concerns, it was observed that doing homework was the more frequent item among early and middle adolescents with a statistically significant difference. This result was in agreement with **Onongha (2015), Zinabie (2015) & Flannery (2013)** who indicated that school concerns issue is the major leading source of conflict. This may be interpreted as the middle adolescents had a sense of responsibility than early adolescents who need more guidance and arguments in school study.

The present study clarified that the younger age and first school levels, were responsible for the higher parent-adolescent conflict with a statistically significant difference as was mentioned by table (4). This result was consistent with **Helland et al., (2017) & Whiteman et al., (2007)** who stated that conflict between parents and adolescents increases and peaks during the early years of adolescence and is associated with the onset of puberty. Age is a powerful bonding agent in adolescence (**Hurlock cited Inzinabie, 2015**). According to the present study, male adolescents had more conflict than female adolescents with a statistically negative correlation. This was in line with **Wohabie (2007)**. According to **National Association for Single Sex Public Education (2003)** males are more likely to use one side of the brain for a given task, while females use both sides of the brain.

The findings also reported that the oldest birth order had a higher frequency of conflict than other orders with a statistically positive correlation. This finding was in agreement with the findings of **Helland et al., (2017) & Shanahan et al., (2007)** who found that parent-adolescent conflicts are generally high during

the adolescent transition of the firstborn child, compared with that of younger siblings. In addition, the results of the present study found that increasing the number of the sibling increases the conflict frequency. This can be interpreted that the parents become more stressed and tense when dealing with their large number of children. At the same time, the adolescents were emotionally unstable.

Moreover, the results indicated that the adolescents who reside in the rural areas had a higher conflict frequency than urban one with a significant positive correlation. This can be explained by that parenting styles, rearing strategies, rules and culture in rural areas differ from those in urban areas. The study findings reported that younger age of parents was associated with increased parent-adolescent conflict. This may be due to that parents in this age were less expert with child-rearing strategies, social, emotional and cognitive development of the children at this age and this might lead to thinking contradiction with viewpoints of their children.

Finally, the results clarified that the parent-adolescent conflict increased with the mothers who had a lower educational level and were housewives. In line with **Papalia et al., (2004)** who found that parents' employment and educational level are also factors that affect parent-adolescent relationships. The adolescent children of educated and working mothers tend to be better adjusted socially than other teenagers; they feel better about themselves, have more sense of belongingness and get along better with families and friends.

## Conclusion

The present study concluded that; the majority of adolescents had a higher conflict frequency and most of children in the early adolescents had more conflict frequency than those in the middle adolescents. The study indicated that statistically significant differences were found between mean score of conflict domains in the early and middle adolescents regarding home tasks, acceptable behavior, family rules/obligations and school concerns. There was a negative correlation between adolescents' ages, sex, mothers' age, education, employment and conflict issues. While there was a positive correlation between adolescents' birth order, residence, number of siblings and conflict issues.

## Recommendations

- Health education program for parents to increase their awareness about physical, cognitive and psychosocial changes during adolescence period to decrease conflict frequency and intensity with the adolescents.

- Use the mass media to raise awareness of the adolescents and their parents by issues and sources of parent-adolescent conflict.
- Social workers in schools should provide the teen children with guidelines or counseling about topics that cause parent-adolescents conflict.
- School counselors should provide advice to the adolescent students about positive interpersonal relationships, coping with stress, emotion and family issues.

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