

# The Relationship between Interparental Conflict Perception and Inferiority Complex of Junior School Students<sup>1</sup>

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**Key words:** Interparental conflict, Interparental conflict perception, Inferiority complex.

**Abstract. Aim.** The aim was to explore the relationship between interparental conflict perception and inferiority complex of junior school students. **Method.** In this research, the authors used The Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC) and The Feelings of Inadequacy Scale (FIS) to test some of the junior school students in XianNing. **Results.** (1) Correlation analysis showed that between interparental conflict perception and inferiority complex of Junior school Students, it had correlation, and it achieved significant level. (2) The interparental conflict perception of junior school students had a positive predictive effect on their inferiority complex. **Conclusions.** Interparental conflict conception affected children's inferiority complex.

## Introduction

Interparental conflict is the most important interpersonal conflict in family. It can be defined by factors such as frequency, intensity, content, style, being resolved or not<sup>[1]</sup>. Almost every marriage has conflicts, but not all the conflicts put stress on children. Hetherington and his workmates found that only the marital conflicts being perceived by children can affect their development<sup>[2]</sup>. Interparental conflict conception means children's perception of interparental conflict, including emotional confrontation between parents, disagreement, complaints, the silent war, quarrel, abuse, and even physical collision and beating between the parents, etc<sup>[3]</sup>. Faced with the same conflict, each family member will have a different understanding and interpretation as well as the evaluation criteria. Because parents and children have different age and experiences, their cognition and evaluation often have a great difference. It may be more reasonable to assess the influence of parents' marital conflict on children's physical and mental development from their children's viewpoint.

Inferiority complex refers to feeling inferior, and generating shame, shyness, frustration, fear, and other complex emotions when people evaluate themselves. Meanwhile, they will feel self denial, self doubt, listlessness, weakness, depression and other unhealthy psychological issues<sup>[4]</sup>. Junior school students are in the special period, because they are very sensitive to interpersonal relationship and the evaluation from others, so they are more likely to have a sense of inferiority. Many researches showed that interparental conflict was closely related to a series of children's problem<sup>[5][6][7]</sup>. So, how interparental conflict perception affects their inferiority complex? This study explored this issue in an empirical way.

## Method

204 Junior school students in Xianning City Hubei Province were investigated with The Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC) (revised by Chi Liping & Xin Ziqiang)<sup>[1]</sup> and The

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Feelings of Inadequacy Scale(FIS)(revised by Fleming&Courtney)<sup>[8]</sup>.

**Results**

**The correlation between interparental conflict perception and inferiority complex of junior school students.** The correlation between parental conflict perception and inferiority complex of junior school students was analyzed using SPSS22.0. Results were shown in Table 1

Table1 The correlation between parental conflict perception and inferiority of junior school students

	Conflict frequency	Conflict intensity	Conflict resolution	Cognitive threat	Coping efficacy	Self attribution	Conflict content	Interparental conflict Perception
Self respect	.082	.111	.133	.204**	.293**	.253**	.212**	.277**
Social confidence	.175*	.134	.100	.343**	.423**	.219**	.199**	.350**
Academic ability	.238**	.206**	.218**	.295**	.375**	.256**	.165*	.388**
Appearance inferiority	.249**	.191**	.184**	.270**	.256**	.099	.245**	.329**
Physical fitness	.038	.063	.099	.190**	.264**	.103	.171*	.202**
Inferiority complex	.206**	.183**	.192**	.327**	.440**	.245**	.235**	.402**

Note: \* \* means p<0.01 (bilateral). \* meansP<0.05 (bilateral)

Based on table1, Interparental conflict perception and all dimensions of CPIC were significantly correlated to inferiority complex(P<0.01). Inferiority complex and all dimensions of FIS were significantly correlated to interparental conflict perception.

**The regression analysis of the interparental conflict perception to inferiority complex.** With interparental conflict as the independent variable, inferiority complex as the dependent variable, made the linear regression analysis, and the results were shown in table2

table2 The regression analysis of the interparental conflict perception to inferiority complex

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	t	B	Beta
intercept						49.072	
interparental conflict perception	.402	.161	.157	38.859***	6.786	0.442	0.402

Based on table 2, F=38.859(p=0.000), Adjusted R2 =0.157, it showed that Junior school students' interparental conflict perception had a significant positive predictive effect on their inferiority complex, and explained 15% of the total variation. Non standardized regression equation was: inferiority complex= 49.072+.442×interparental conflict conception; standardized regression equation was: inferiority complex=49.072+.402×interparental conflict conception.

**Discussion**

Many researches had shown that high levels interparental conflict would cause children to produce a series of psychological or behavioral problems. This study showed that there was a significant positive correlation between interparental conflict conception and junior school students' inferiority

complex. It was consistent with the conclusions of others' research: the more intense the interparental conflict conception, the greater the impact on the children<sup>[9]</sup>. So we realized that frequent conflicts between husband and wife were more likely to make their children have a sense of inferiority. On the contrary, a harmonious family atmosphere would make their children have a lower sense of inferiority.

In the results of this survey, the cognitive threat dimension, coping efficacy dimension of CPIC were significantly correlated to each dimension of FIC and the inferiority complex, and the correlation was higher than other dimensions. It suggested that when the conflicts between parents were perceived by their children, these two factors were more likely to cause children's inferiority complex: the threat level of interparental conflict to children's cognition and the children think they have the ability to regulate their parents' conflict or not.

The academic ability dimension of FIC was significantly correlated to interparental conflict conception and each dimension of CPIC, and the correlation was higher than other dimensions. It suggested that when junior school students perceived the conflicts between their parents, this would be more likely to influence their sense of inferiority in academic ability.

In the regression analysis, interparental conflict conception had a significant positive predictive effect on the inferiority complex of junior school students. A large number of researches had shown that parents' conflict was closely related to a series of children's problems, such as behavior disorder, aggression, depression, shrink, anxiety etc<sup>[10]</sup>. This study also verified other researches made by Jiang Ruixia<sup>[3]</sup>、Jenkins<sup>[11]</sup>、Grych & Fincham<sup>[12]</sup>. They all found that children's perception of parents' open and obvious marital conflicts would seriously affect their development.

## Summary

Through this study, it was proved that the interparent conflict perception would affect the children's sense of inferiority to a certain extent. This result gives us some useful lessons. First, if there is a conflict between parents, and they always fight and quarrel in front of their children, ignore the feeling and emotion of the children, these behaviors are likely to affect the children's character, resulting in a sense of inferiority. In order to promote children's mental health, parents should strive to manage the relationship between husband and wife, to provide a harmonious environment for the development of children. Secondly, in the mental health curriculum in junior schools, teachers should help student to learn how to deal with the conflicts between their parents, to establish a health relationship with their parents, and then, they can promote their parents' relationship and reduce their conflicts.

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