

## INTER-PARENTAL CONFLICT, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND IMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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### Abstract

At present, impulsivity among adolescents has been attracted globally among psychologists, sociologists, criminologists and medical professionals. By the same token, there is a growing concern for school authorities, media, and parents' need for adolescents' mental health, security, and safety. Although it has greater importance, little research has incorporated adolescents' impulsive behavior with inter-parental conflict and social media in Bangladeshi culture. As for considering the burgeoning area of research, the current study intends to figure out the association between inter-parental conflict, social media and adolescents' impulsive behavior. A quantitative research approach and a cross-sectional research design were employed and data were collected from secondary schools in Dhaka city using a random sampling technique. Results illustrate that social media, a threat to self, and self-blame are predictors of impulsive behavior. Among three variables social media represent the strongest predictor. The study could bring more insights into several professionals to prevent and relieve the impulsive behavior from adolescents and society in a large scale. Implications of future research for theory, practice, and interventions are discussed.

**Key words:** *Inter-parental Conflict, Social Media, Impulsive Behavior, Adolescence.*

### Introduction

Adolescence is a burgeoning stage in the evolution of adult's cognitive-emotional, social, and behavioral performance in the industrialized world (Lerner *et al.*, 1997). While the adolescent period has aptly been called a 'turning point' and a 'great transition', this research significantly focuses on the interpretation of complex or tailoring patterns of behavioral functioning (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995) which are related to impulsivity, usage of social media, and parental conflict during this period. Impulsivity is used extensively within psychology that refers to behavior that is carried out with little or inadequate premeditation (Evenden, 1999). To scientists as well as

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scholars, impulsivity is usually understood as a susceptibility toward rapid, unorganized reactions to internal or external stimuli with adverse outcome of these reactions to the individual or others (Moeller *et al.*, 2001 and Potenza & de Wit, 2010). It is also related to the lack of self-control, anxiety related things, and so on (Bosworth & Espelage, 1995). Furthermore, impulsivity is associated with compound mental ailment including substance-use, bipolar, and several diverse personality disorders (Chamorro *et al.*, 2012). It generally refers to a dysfunctional attribute in line with acts which can be considered criminal and violent offenses, substantially detrimental to the self or inappropriate particular accepted social standards (Verdejo-García *et al.*, 2008).

In similar fashion, self-report measures of parental conflict are closely associated with a future increase in impulsivity among adolescents (Luengo *et al.*, 1994). Moreover, negative psychological status or symptoms of adolescents are the outcome of inter-parental conflict (Davies & Lindsay, 2004 and Harold *et al.*, 2004). Hence, the adolescents' perception towards inter-parental conflict causes adolescent mental sickness (Dadds *et al.*, 1999 & Oh *et al.*, 2011). Similarly, spousal relationship with anger generate aggressive, delinquency, violence, and attachment insecurity behavior among adolescents (Cummings *et al.*, 2001 & Emery, 1999). Thus, scholars often uncover an inverse link between self-blame and emotional acclimation (Aldwin & Revenson, 2007 and Meyer & Taylor, 2006). A myriad of studies suggested that perceived threats - potential adverse physical condition, propensity to dire interaction of parent and toddler - are prognostic of adolescent psycho-physical sufferings (Buehler *et al.*, 2007; Dadds *et al.*, 1999; Gerard *et al.*, 2005 and Grych *et al.*, 2003). Apart from, the most common practice of contemporary younger generation is social media. While social media including a wide range of virtual sites offer today's youth a threshold for recreation as well as communication and have dramatically expanded in the contemporary era (O'Keefe & Pearson, 2011), teenagers tend to discover what their friends post on social media and waste their valuable times by responding all posts regularly (Udorie, 2015). They are eager to keep exchanging messages and sharing inner thoughts, feelings and personal data (Lundahal, 2013). These activities continue till late night and thus inadequate sleep develops insomnia (Lemola *et al.* 2015). Some studies contended that social media expedite a risk factor of depressive behavior among teenagers (Weale, 2015). On the other hand, by using social media, teenagers share relevant information with their friends in order to develop their social skills, problem-solving skills, and creative ideas as well (Boyd, 2014).

So, several literatures focus on the adverse impact of inter-parental strife, and also contradicting the finding of using social media on impulsivity. Despite it, surprisingly, psychologists have paid little attention to impulsivity, global social media, and inter-parental conflict. The outcome of the current research will help to prevent and relieve the emotional and physical suffering, including impulsive behavior that is produced by using

social media and inter-parental conflict. The present study intends to explore the association between inter-parental conflict, social media and adolescents' impulsive behavior. The following hypotheses were formulated based on previous research and objectives.

1. Conflict properties and impulsive behavior would be positively correlated.
2. Threats to self and impulsive behavior would be positively related.
3. Self-blame and impulsive behaviors are also positively correlated.
4. Using social media and impulsive behavior will be positively associated.

## **Material and Methods**

### **Participants**

A total of 390 adolescents participated in this research. They were selected by a two-stage cluster sampling technique from 8 different secondary schools in Dhaka. Among 390 participants, 195 were boys while girls were the same number (195). Their ages ranged between 14 and 18 years. Total participants reported currently living with their parents.

### **Measuring Instruments**

#### *Demographic and Personal Characteristics Questionnaire*

This questionnaire collected data on sex, age, educational qualification, socio-economic status, parents' educational status, and parents' occupation.

#### *Children's Perception of Inter-Parental Conflict Scale*

The adapted Bangla version of children's perception of inter-parental conflict scale (Grych *et al.*, 1992) was used for measuring adolescents' inter-parental conflict. The CPIC is a made up of 48-items with three dimension. It has nine subscales: 18 items for conflict properties, 16 items for the threat to self and 14 items for self-blame. The 48 items of English version were translated into Bangla. English and Bangla version was administrated on 50 participants with a gap of 7 days. The subjects were administrated English version first, and after seven days, the same subjects were administrated into the Bangla version first. The significant correlation between English and Bangla version conflict properties, [ $r(48) = .801, p < .0005$ ], threat to self, [ $r(48) = .866, p < .0005$ ] and self-blame, [ $r(48) = .891, p < .0005$ ] were obtained between scores of English and Bangla version indicating high translation reliability of the scale. Inter-parental conflict scale is a 3-point Likert types scale. The highest scores on CPIC sub-scales represented the greater or more distressing perception of inter-parental conflict.

#### *Media and Technology Usage and Attitude Scale*

The adapted Bangla version of (Rosen *et al.*, 2013) this scale was applied for measuring how participant frequently uses general social media. This instrument consists of 7 dimensions that regulate seven aspects of technology uses variable, i.e., email, mobile phone, watching TV, media sharing, internet searching, Video gaming, and general social media. The social media has nine items that measure social media related activities (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Viber, and YouTube, etc.). A nine-item scale was translated into Bangla. Bangla and English version scales were given to experts for checking the correction of translations. After correcting Bangla and English version scale were administered to 50 subjects, the subjects were conducted English version first, and the same subjects were given the Bangla version with a gap of 07 days. A significant correlation between English and Bangla version [ $r = .89$ ,  $p < .0005$ ] was found. Correlation indicates that the English to Bangla translation measured the same thing. The items were responded on the ten-point format. The highest scores indicate higher levels of using social media.

#### *Bangla Version of Impulsive Teen Conflict Behavior Scale*

This scale was developed initially by (Bosworth & Espelage, 1995). The instrument is made up of four items and used for measuring the impulsive behavior of participants. The scale was translated into Bangla. Bangla and English version scales were given to experts for checking the correction of translations. After the process of correction, Bangla and English version scale were administered to 50 subjects with a gap of 07 days, half of the subjects were conducted English version first, and the rest of the subjects were given Bangla version first. The items were rated on a five-point response format. The highest scores indicate higher levels of impulsive behavior. The significant correlation between English and Bangla version [ $r(50) = .778$ ,  $p < .0005$ ] indicating high translation reliability of the scale.

The questionnaires were administered to the individual participant. Necessary rapport was established before administering the questionnaire. The general instruction of all scales was given separately for each participant. They were allowed to ask questions freely if they had regarding any item of the scale. Your answer will be anonymous and confidential and will be employed only for research purposes.

## **Results and Discussion**

The current study intends to figure out the association between inter-parental conflict, social media and adolescents' impulsive behavior. Thus, correlation of conflict properties, self-blame, and a threat to self with impulsive were calculated. Stepwise multiple regressions were applied to estimate a model for predicting impulsive behavior. The mean and standard deviation of impulsivity ( $M = 19.01$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ), conflict properties ( $M = 40.06$ ,  $SD = 1.82$ ) threat to self ( $M = 39.10$ ,  $SD = 1.55$ ) self-blame ( $M = 39.86$ ,  $SD = 1.58$ ) and social media ( $M = 59.76$ ,  $SD = 3.28$ ) scores indicate that the

adolescents perceive higher parental conflict and using social media site, they are large level of impulsive behavior in their life. Pearson correlations coefficients illustrate that there is a statistically significant relationship of conflict properties, a threat to self, self-blame, and social media with impulsive behavior.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics of study variables (N = 390).*

Factors	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1.Impulsive behavior	19.01	0.85	-				
2.Conflict properties	40.06	1.82	.479**	-			
3.Threat to self	39.00	1.55	.529**	.700**	-		
4.Self-blame	39.86	1.58	.540**	.271**	.418**	-	
5.Social Media	59.76	3.28	.670**	.636**	.670**	.710**	-

\*\* Correlation significant at .01 levels

Impulsive behavior is significantly associated with conflict properties [ $r(390) = .479$ ,  $P < .01$ ]; threat to self [ $r(390) = .529$ ,  $p < .05$ ]; self-blame [ $r(390) = .540$ ,  $p < .0005$ ] and social media [ $r(390) = .670$ ,  $p < .01$ ]; (table-2). Perhaps, the result indicates that adolescents with a higher score on any of the independent variable represent excessive level of impulsive behavior.

Table 2. Regression analysis of impulsive behavior with social media, a threat to self, and self-blame.

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> change	$\beta$	SE	t	p	F	p
Social media	.670	.449	.449	.456	.017	7.051	.001	315.92	.0005
Threat to self	.679	.460	.012	.161	.026	3.208	.001	165.12	.0005
Self-blame	.686	.479	.011	.149	.029	2.814	.005	114.69	.0005

Results suggest that social media ( $\beta = .456$ ,  $p < .001$ ), a threat to self ( $\beta = .161$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and self-blame ( $\beta = .149$ ,  $p < .005$ ) are significant predictors of impulsive behavior. The results also show that social media had the most substantial contributor to the variance of impulsivity. It provides 45.6% of the difference in impulsive behavior. Threats to self and self-blame contributed to the variation of impulsive behavior are 16.1% and 14.9%, respectively. All three variables combined contribute 47.9.0 % of the total variance of impulsive behavior. Pearson correlations coefficients showed that there were statistically significant relationships among study variables. Thus, conflict properties, self-blame and a threat to self are found to be significantly associated with impulsive behavior (Table-1). The results show that using social media has the most influential contribution to the variance of impulsivity. It contributes 44.9% of the variation in impulsive behavior. All three variables combined 47.1 % of the total difference in impulsive behavior. The findings can be explained that almost all the students at the secondary and tertiary level use electronic devices such as computers, smart phones thanks to easy access, which is caused by cutting-edge technology. On this ground, students are inevitably using social

media, particularly Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and youtube for various needs. As a result of excessive using social media, adolescence may develop aggressive or impulsive behavior. However, in some cases, although social media offers a variety of opportunity to create new things for younger generation, it can have a detrimental effect upon them. The long duration and excessive use of general social media have adverse impact on mental health that could turn into severe mental diseases and deviant behavior among the young people like impulsivity. It is speculated that an adolescent who spends most of the time in the virtual experience of a day can't complete his or her daily necessary works, and it creates anxiety followed by impulsive behavior. Adolescents' perceptions of inter-parental conflict affect their impulsive behavior, it can be explained when they perceive their parents often quarrel as a results they fell insecurity, they blame himself or herself, unable to think what to do and even they sometimes involve in illegal as well as unethical activities. Our research results illustrate that threat to self is highly associated with the adolescents' impulsive behavior because adolescents feel insecurity, sometimes they think their parent separation from each other, sometimes they believe their parent hatred each other, sometimes they feel their parent beat them when they lose any activities their parent quarrel about his or her injuries. In this way, adolescents develop impulsive behavior because of their inter-parental conflict.

The overall result provides that adolescents who have perceived a higher level of parental conflict and using social media they show a higher level of impulsive behavior outcome in his or her life and also found that threat to self-has the most substantial contribution to the variance of impulsivity. The empirical evidence suggested that the unscrupulous and inefficient use of the Internet and social networking sites is associated with greater manifestations of psychological problems in youth (Caplan, 2010 & Marengo *et al.*, 2018). Another study showed that higher levels of impulsivity, anger, and hostility and poor impulse control are increased in adolescence, owing to excessive use of the Internet and Social Networking Sites (Grüsser *et al.*, 2007). Likewise, Marino *et al.* (2018) also identified that the troublesome use of Face book generate some psychological distress like anxiety and depression, and low life satisfaction. More specifically, juvenile who spent more time on social networking sites; they express more peer aggression behaviors such as bullying and cyberbullying (Ko *et al.*, 2012).

By the same token, findings of this research are robust and significant. The results show strong evidence that self-blame, a threat to self; using social media have a predictive relationship of impulsivity. These findings and previous findings that threat to self, self-blame, and using social media are also independently predictive of impulsive behavior among high school students have important clinical implications for impulsive behavior

assessment and prevention. Moreover, the findings suggest that such behavior prevention programs, campuses based counseling centers, and psychology clinic should include their evaluation and identification of individuals who may be at risk for related to impulsive behavior.

## **Conclusion**

While the present study is not beyond limitations, a new horizon of knowledge has been added into the existing scholarship through this research. Although the samples were drawn inhomogeneous and data were collected from a specific area, only in Dhaka City, this study can have explored a significant relationship among social media, a threat to self, and self-blame with adolescence impulsive behavior. Social media has the most substantial contribution to the variance of impulsive behavior. Furthermore, since socioeconomic status and socio cultural conditions of adolescents may play a dominant role in order to understand inter-parental conflict, using social media and adolescents' impulsive behavior, it is important to consider these issues while exploring this area. However, it was not accounted for. Henceforth, this study strongly recommends including these phenomena for future research.

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