Exploring the Impact of Parent-Adolescent Conflict on Adolescent Academic Performance, Retention, and Concentration in the South Dayi District, Ghana

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Abstract

Parent-adolescent conflict is a global problem that confronts most families. It remains a key concern due to its consequences on emotional, social, and psychological well-being, as well as its long-term implications for the family and adolescents' overall development. This study explored the impact of parent-adolescent conflict on adolescents' academic performance, retention, and concentration in South Dayi District, Ghana. The objectives of the study were to examine the causes of adolescent-parent conflict on adolescents' academic performance, retention, and concentration, and the consequences of parent-adolescent conflict on adolescents' academic performance, retention, and concentration. This study adopted a qualitative approach and a case study design. Thirty-two (32) participants were purposively selected from two Senior High Schools in the South Dayi District, and the data were thematically analyzed. The findings showed that poverty, neglect of parental obligations, broken homes, early relationships with the opposite sex, and single parenting, among others, were the leading causes of conflict between parents and adolescents. The study also revealed that parent-

adolescent conflict resulted in school dropouts, lack of concentration in school, and early relationships with the opposite sex, among others. It was concluded that the adolescent stage is delicate; therefore, effective interventions and strategies must be initiated by the government in collaboration with district authorities and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), to enable educators, parents, and school counsellors to help adolescents who may be experiencing academic difficulties as a result of conflict at home. It is recommended that schools develop comprehensive counselling services, including frequent counselling sessions, to help students facing challenges at home due to clashes with parents to enable them to focus on their academic work and manage their time properly. In addition, the Government of Ghana, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, should support poor and single parents with alternative Income-Generating Activities (IGAs) to enable them to effectively provide the needs of their adolescents.

Keywords: Phytosociological characterization, *Turraeantho-Heisterietum* association, Banco National Park

1. Introduction

Parent–adolescent conflict is a challenge that confronts families worldwide, including in Ghana. The role of parents in shaping the lives of their adolescents has increased recently due to the high rate of social vices among adolescents. Conflict is a disagreement or struggle between two people or groups with opposing views. The stronger the emotions and intimacy between the people involved, the more likely it is that conflict will emerge (Adams, 2008). Parent-adolescent conflict refers to a situation in which the smooth interaction and relationship between parents and their adolescents is disrupted and characterized by acrimony resulting from disagreement.

In Ghanaian traditional societies, child training was the responsibility of the entire community. However, this trend has changed due to a shift in focus from the extended family system to nuclear families arising from modernization. Child training is no longer the responsibility of the entire community but the unique responsibility of parents. Steinberg (2010), asserts that the early years of adolescence, particularly the period of ages 10 to 15, have been linked with the emergence and escalation of conflict between young adolescents and parents. The more intense conflict that surfaces in the family presents unique challenges to parents and their young adolescents as they attempt to deal with the challenging nature of their relationships.

Many studies on families have found that conflict is part of growing up, but parent-child relationships that are very high in conflict and low in support impair normal adolescent development (Steinberg & Silk, 2002).

Parent-adolescent conflict remains a critical concern because of its adverse consequences on emotional, social, and psychological well-being and the potential long-term implications for the family and the overall development of adolescents. In South Dayi District, evidence suggests that such conflicts are common. However, there is a noticeable dearth of comprehensive research investigating the negative effects of these conflicts on adolescents' academic performance, retention, and concentration.

In view of the critical role education plays in personal and national development, understanding how parent-adolescent conflict affects the academic performance, retention, and concentration of adolescents is vital for parents, educators, counsellors, and policymakers, as it allows for the development of more informed, targeted, and effective strategies to support students, improve educational outcomes, and create a conducive learning environment. This study seeks to explore the impact of parent-adolescent conflict on the academic performance, retention, and concentration of students in the South Dayi District, Ghana. The questions this study seeks to answer are as follows: a) What are the causes of conflict between parents and their adolescents? b) How does parent-adolescent conflict negatively affect the academic performance, retention, and concentration of adolescents?

2.   Literature Review
2.1   Causes of Parent-Adolescent Conflict

The related literature underscores that parent-adolescent conflict is a regular occurrence, particularly during early adolescence, and may have a substantial impact on both parents' and adolescents' well-being (Santrock, 2014; Allison, 2000). Conflict tends to escalate during this period due to the hormonal, cognitive, and social changes connected with puberty and the adolescent's search for independence and identity. Adolescents' growing idealism causes them to compare their parents to an internalized image of the "ideal parent," which frequently results in dissatisfaction and tension (Santrock, 2014). Adolescents' cognitive growth leads to conflict by questioning authority, challenging contradictions, and seeking autonomy (Steinberg and Silk, 2002). Teenagers are more prone to argue over personal habits, social ties, clothes, friends, and family rules (Zeleke, 2021; Smetana et al., 2006). During early adolescence, mothers and daughters experience frequent and intense conflict.

Poverty, unemployment, and financial stress are associated with increased family conflict. Financial difficulties may limit parental emotional availability and increase irritation, resulting in strained interactions (Conger et al., 2010; Vu et al., 2022). Education level and work-related stress also impact parenting quality, with lower educational attainment and longer working hours associated with less effective parenting and more conflict (Crouter et al., 1999;

Dotterer et al., 2008). Technological improvements and social media have created new points of contention in the field. Parents frequently struggle to manage digital activities, but teenagers appreciate autonomy in media usage, resulting in friction (Buzzetta, 2011; Nanglu, 2014). Furthermore, peer influence and generational or cultural differences may conflict with parental expectations, especially in individualistic societies (Chao, 2001; Collins & Steinberg, 2020; Phinney et al., 2001).

Family structure is also important in this regard. Conflict levels are greater in single-parent and polygamous families, where adolescents may receive insufficient parental participation or uneven treatment (Amato 2001; Al-Sharfi et al. 2016; Macabangon 2022). Pervez and Batool (2016) found that adolescents from polygamous households had distant and detached relationships with their fathers. Marital instability and divorce often affect family dynamics, causing role uncertainty, split loyalties, and increased conflict (Cummings and Davies 2010; Fosco and Grych 2010). Excluding adolescents from decision-making processes frequently impedes effective resolutions of disputes. In contrast, shared decision-making improves relationships and reduces tension (Xia et al., 2004; Steinberg and Silk, 2002). Mental health concerns in parents or adolescents, trauma, and unfavorable childhood experiences exacerbate conflict, frequently with long-term consequences (Frazer et al., 2021; Melching, 2011). Differences in parental and adolescent aspirations for autonomy are linked to higher levels of conflict (Smetana, 2017). Conflict may arise from growing adolescent resistance to parental authority and demands for more autonomy (Rathus, 2014), and parental efforts to maintain control over particular areas related to adolescent safety, home responsibilities, and academic success, on the other hand (Smetana et al., 2006). Conflict between teenagers and parents frequently results from adolescents discovering that they are different from their parents and that their parents can make mistakes. Teenagers who have largely followed their parents' guidance may start to quarrel and deviate (Noller & Collan, 2016). Adolescents from neglectful, indulgent, and authoritarian homes reported higher levels of autonomy expectations, which were associated with more frequent and intense parent-adolescent conflict (Bi et al., 2018).

2.2   Negative Consequences of Parent-Adolescent Conflict on Adolescents' Academic Performance, Retention and Concentration

Parent-adolescent conflict, as a common developmental event, can have serious consequences for adolescents' academic performance (Dotterer et al. 2008). Research indicates that the nature, frequency, and severity of these disagreements can influence academic achievement positively or negatively

(Smetana, 2010; Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011). Adolescents who experience frequent and intense conflicts with their parents are more likely to encounter adverse effects on their academic performance (Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011). Conversely, higher levels of conflict sometimes correlate with increased academic achievement (Gadalla et al., 2016). Adolescents who maintain positive relationships with their parents tend to view conflict as a constructive catalyst for academic success, whereas those with negative relationships may view conflict as detrimental (Smetana et al., 2006). A supportive home environment is vital for optimal learning (Ghana Ministry of Education, 2018), and adolescence is a crucial period for developing academic skills (Jimerson et al., 2000). Frequent and severe disagreements can disrupt learning by inducing stress, anxiety, and impaired cognitive functioning, all of which hinder academic engagement and achievement (Cummings et al., 2006; Goeke-Morey et al., 2009). Teenagers caught in ongoing parent-adolescent conflict often struggle to concentrate, retain knowledge, and perform well in school (Goeke-Morey et al., 2009), increasing the likelihood of withdrawing from school activities and experiencing diminished academic self-efficacy. This disengagement frequently results in poor study habits, absenteeism, and low academic performance (Fosco et al., 2012). The quality of the parent-child relationship plays a significant role; constructive conflicts over academic matters can foster motivation and independence, leading to better outcomes (Smetana et al. 2006). Conversely, conflicts over non-academic issues, such as curfews and friendships, tend to have negative effects (Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011). Conflict within the family can undermine healthy communication patterns and make it more challenging for parents to support their children's academic endeavors (Deater-Deckard et al., 2006). Parents preoccupied with conflict may be less receptive to their children's educational needs or availability, which can decrease their motivation and academic performance (Katz & Woodin, 2002). Furthermore, parent-adolescent conflict can influence how engaged adolescents are with school, including their attitude towards learning, attendance, and participation in extracurricular activities (Lansford et al., 2006). High levels of conflict may directly impede academic achievement by making it difficult for adolescents to focus, retain information and perform well (McGinnis, 2016). Parental support, such as academic advising, supervision, and involvement, can also be disrupted by conflict in the parent-adolescent relationship. Lack of support and inconsistent parenting styles resulting from conflict can harm adolescent motivation, self-esteem, and engagement in their studies (Deb, 2018). Although adolescent conflict with parents is a normal part of development and may facilitate independence, it can also contribute to a decline in academic success over time (Dotterer, Hoffman, Crouter & McHale, 2008). Such conflicts are linked to lower self-esteem, depressive symptoms and feelings of worthlessness (Ozdemire, 2014).

Adolescents who perceive conflict as hostile and leading to social withdrawal tend to have poorer academic performance, lower self-esteem, and less developed social skills than those involved in more constructive conflicts who maintain social interaction afterwards (Collins et al., 2022). A home environment filled with conflict and lacking responsiveness can hinder a teen's learning and diminish their confidence in their academic abilities (Yuin & Yaacob, 2016). Adolescents who report more frequent and intense disagreements with their parents are more likely to engage in problematic behaviors and face academic challenges (Xiong et al., 2008). High conflict levels can lead children to lose interest in learning, reduce their motivation, and struggle to focus and regulate their emotions (Riggio & Valenzuela, 2016). Intrinsic motivation and persistence in tasks are associated with conflicts characterized by warmth, support, and constructive resolution strategies, which can enhance involvement and effort in academic activities, thereby improving academic outcomes (Barber, 2013).

2.3   Theoretical Background: The Social Learning Theory, Attachment Theory and Family Systems Theory.

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) and Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) explain how unresolved conflict can harm emotional security, influence behavior, and impair relationships with teachers and peers. Conflicts therefore have emotional implications, such as anxiety, sadness, and low self-esteem, all of which are associated with poor academic performance (Fosco & Grych, 2010; Ozdemire, 2014). A lack of effective parental communication and support may discourage adolescents from seeking academic assistance, compounding their low performance (Fan & Chen, 2001; Deater-Deckard et al., 2006). Conflict has the potential to diminish student involvement, raise absenteeism, and impede participation in school activities (Lansford et al., 2006). Economic hardship can exacerbate conflict and limit access to academic resources, especially in low-income families (Conger et al., 2002; Park & Bauer, 2002). Parenting styles and engagement are critical factors. Authoritarian parenting, defined by warmth and strong demands, is associated with improved academic performance (Spera 2005). Neglectful or dictatorial techniques, on the other hand, may demotivate employees and degrade their performance. High parental expectations, along with support and communication, increase academic self-efficacy and motivation (Brotman et al., 2018; Jeynes, 2005).

In essence, empirical studies show that conflict and academic difficulties are linked through both direct (e.g., cognitive disruption) and indirect pathways (e.g., reduced support) (McGinnis, 2016; Deb, 2018). Conflict may also alter adolescents' perceptions of parental warmth and

support, affecting their emotional control and academic attention (Kim et al., 2015; Carrera, 2019).

However, moderate levels of constructive conflict may foster independence, emotional regulation, problem-solving, and communication skills necessary for academic success (Cummings & Davies, 2010; Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Fabes et al., 2018). The study was also anchored on Bowen's (1978) Family Systems theory, which views the family as an emotional unit or system of which all members are interconnected. Thus, according to Bowen (1978), any conflict between parents and adolescents can destabilize family dynamics, creating stress that interferes with adolescents' academic success. Therefore, underscores the fact that family conflicts need to be appropriately managed, as what happens to one member of the family affects all the others. Thus, conflict, stress, or emotional struggles in one relationship (such as between parents and adolescents) can influence the functioning and well-being of other family members, including the adolescent's school performance.

3.   Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach, and the analysis was based on themes. A qualitative research approach was employed because it enabled the researcher to delve into the participants' experiences, motivations, and feelings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It minimally organizes and describes the dataset in rich detail and further interprets various aspects paramount to the study (ibid). This was a case study. A case study design was used because it is one of the most practical ways to solve a problem, ascertain the current condition, and gather rich and comprehensive data about the problem at hand in the community (Yin, 2014). In this study, the community involved was that of the inhabitants of South Dayi. A sample of 32 participants was purposively selected from two Senior High Schools (SHS) in the South Dayi District, consisting of 12 adolescents (aged 14-17years), 12 parents, 5 teachers, 2 counsellors, and 1 district education officer at the Municipal Assembly in charge of adolescents. The sample (32 participants) was based on data saturation, in which additional data could not add any new knowledge (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). This enabled the researcher to gather rich and credible information on the ground, making the research reliable, worthwhile, and valid. Data were collected using in-depth interviews and focus group discussion guides, and the results were analyzed using a thematic analytical approach. **Table 1** depicts the units of observation and their proportional representation of participants.

Table 1: Unit of Observation and Proportional Representation of Participants

| Participant Categories	Total Number	Proportion	Location
Adolescents	12	37.5	Kpeve &
Parents	12	37.5	Kpeve &
Teachers	5	15.625	Kpeve &
School Counsellors	2	6.25	Kpeve &
District Adolescent Officer	1	3.125	South Day District
Total	32	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

3.1   The Study Setting

This study was conducted in the South Dayi District of the Volta Region of Ghana. The district is among the 261 Metropolitan, Municipal, and Districts in Ghana and forms part of the 18 Municipalities and Districts in the Volta Region. It was formerly part of the Kpando District until the southern portion was carved out of the Northern Belt to form the South Dayi District in 2004. The district's administrative capital is Kpeve, located in the Volta Region, which shares a boundary with the Asuogyaman District of the Eastern Region. Agriculture is the dominant economic activity in the district, and the major agricultural activities are crop production, animal rearing, and fishing. The main crops cultivated are maize, cassava, yam, and plantain. According to the 2021 population and housing census in Ghana, the total population of the South Dayi District was 57,526, of which the majority, 68.3% of the population, lived in rural areas, while the rest (31.7) lived in urban areas. Males consisted of 49.9% whilst female comprised 50.1%. The population structure depicts a high youthful population of 60.2% between the ages 15-64, with children and adolescents aged 0-14 comprised 33.5%. This signifies a very high adolescent and youthful population in the district and highlights the need to focus on adolescents and youth by addressing their challenges to promote high productivity and development in both the district and Ghana. **Figure 1** depicts the District Map of South Dayi, showing the study sites.

Figure 1: Map of South Dayi District

Source: South Dayi District Assembly
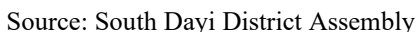
4.   Results of the Study
Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Study Participants

Table 2: Sex Distribution of Study Participants

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male Adults	9	28.1
Male Adolescents	6	18.7
Female Adults	11	34.4
Female Adolescents	6	18.8
Total	32	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The sex distribution shown in **Table 2** shows that female adults constituted the majority (34.4%), while male adults comprised 28.1% of the study participants. Moreover, male and female adolescent participants constituted 18.7% and 18.8% part of the sample, respectively.

Figure 2: Age Distribution of Study Participants
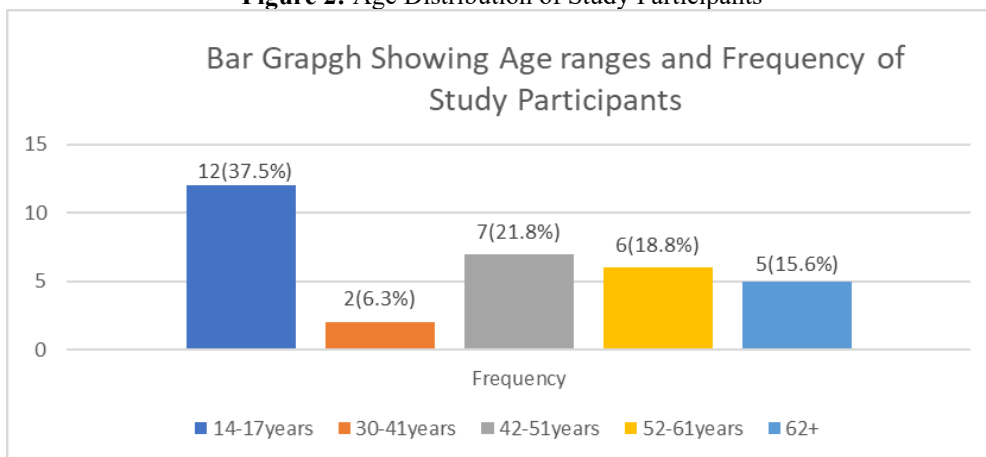
Source: Field Survey, 2024

Figure 2 shows that the majority of the participants were adolescents aged 14-17 years (37.7 %). Participants between 30-41years constitute 6.3% and those within the ages 42-50years are approximately 21.8%. Participants aged 52-61years are about 18.8% of the sample, and the remaining 15.6% were aged 61 years and above
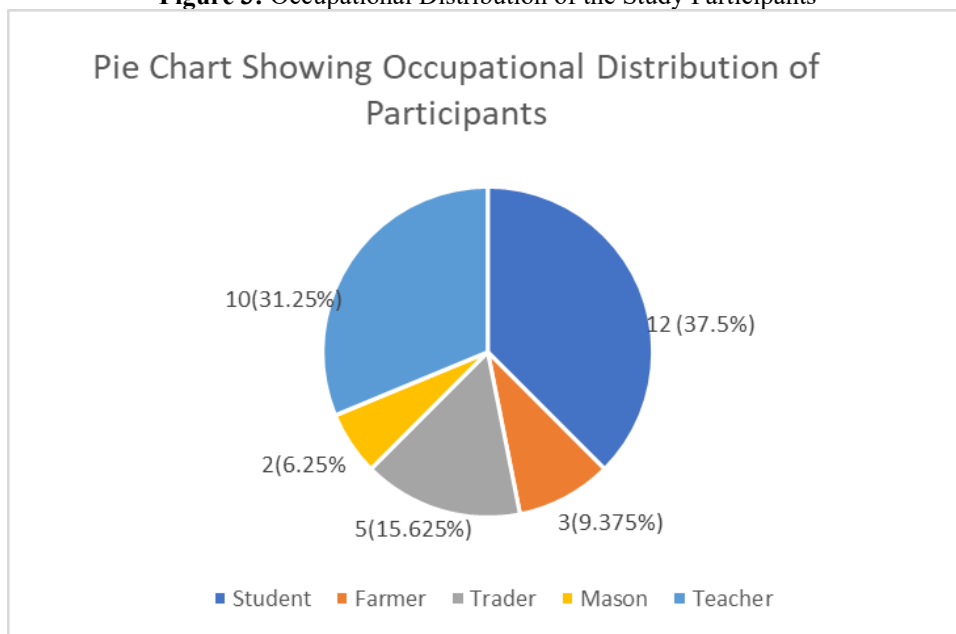
Table 3: Distribution of Caregivers of Adolescents

Parents/Guardians	Frequency	Percentage
Father	1	8.3
Mother	6	50.0
Both parents	2	16.7
Siblings	2	16.7
Self	1	8.3
Total	12	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 shows the distribution of adolescents' caregivers. From the table, mothers form the majority (50.0%) of adolescent caregivers. Both parents and siblings of adolescents comprised 16.7% and 16.7%, respectively, while fathers constituted 8.3%, and adolescents who cared for themselves comprised 8.3%. The caregiver distribution implies that many adolescents are being cared for by single mothers, which means that many mothers have to provide for their adolescents' needs singlehandedly. This could be a source of pressure for single mothers, presenting a possibility of inefficiency in extending support to adolescents and a potential source of conflict between single mothers and their adolescents. and the accompanying challenges. In addition, a few of them had to be taken care of by their siblings and, in some cases, by the adolescents themselves, which could be challenging for both the adolescents and their siblings.

Figure 3: Occupational Distribution of the Study Participants

Pie Chart Showing Occupational Distribution of Participants

10(31.25%)
12 (37.5%)
2(6.25%
5(15.625%)
3(9.375%)

■ Student ■ Farmer ■ Trader ■ Mason ■ Teacher

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Figure 3 above is a pie chart showing the occupational distribution of adolescents. The pie chart demonstrates that the majority of the participants were students (37.5 %), followed by farmers (9.375%), traders (15.635%), masons (6.25%), and teachers (31.25%). The teaching occupation outnumbering the other occupations means that caregivers of adolescents are in relatively good job,s but they could be single mothers, making it difficult for caregivers to effectively care for adolescents, hence presenting a potential for conflict.

4.1 Factors Accounting for Parent-Adolescent Conflict.

The causes of parent–adolescent conflict revealed by the study include poverty, neglect of parental responsibilities, broken homes, single parenting, and misattribution by parents.

4.1.1 Poverty

The findings demonstrated that parents who struggle to pay for their adolescents' basic needs, particularly education, frequently have disputes with them. From the participants' perspective, many adolescents expressed that their parents' inability to provide their basic needs as a result of poverty, particularly educational needs such as textbooks, practical fees, feeding fees, provisions, and extra tuition fees, frequently causes conflict between them. Most parents also confirmed this by indicating that their inability to meet the

needs of their adolescents as a result of poverty accounted for the conflict. The study found that most adolescents feel angry and frustrated because they are unable to access the same opportunities as their peers due to financial limitations. Describing the situation, A1, a female adolescent, stated:

> *"Because of poverty, after my BECE, although my mother asked me to stay in the house and help her sell water, I refused because I want to go to Senior High School. She insisted that I should not go because she did not have the money to send me to school. This brought conflict between us" (A1, 17-year-old female adolescent, Peki 2024).*

4.1.2   Neglect of parental responsibilities

Moreover, the study found that most adolescents in the district experience constant parental irresponsibility and feel abandoned and abhorrent because their parents were unable to offer them the required assistance. Participants explained that their parents' inability to fulfil their responsibilities made them feel neglected, leading to resentment and conflict. A few adolescent participants also revealed that their parents, especially fathers, do not even know that they are in school and have never visited them or attended any Parent-Teacher Association meeting for them. According to them, they sometimes cry upon seeing their colleagues' parents visiting. A8, a male adolescent participant narrating his story, said:

> *"The conflict I have with my father is that he gave birth to me, but he is not taking care of me. He has neglected me ever since I was born. It is said that we should not wish for death, but I wish he was dead so that I know I do not have a father." (A8, 18-year-old male adolescent, Peki 2024).*

4.1.3   Broken Home

Findings also revealed a broken home as one of the leading causes of conflict between parents and their adolescents in the district. A broken home is a term used to describe a home when the parents are not living together as a couple. From the participants' perspectives, many of the adolescents reported that their parents were separated, and some remarried. According to the participants, they have challenges dealing with stepmothers and fathers, as they always receive unfair treatment from their stepparents because they are not their biological parents. A few other participants also reported that they had conflicts with their parents, particularly fathers, because they refused to take care of them after breaking up with their mothers. Sadly, this, according to a few of them, has negatively affected them. For instance, one of the female adolescent participants mentioned that at an early age, 16 years, she started

taking boyfriends with the hope of getting support from them. Explaining the situation, C2, a female school counsellor, narrated:

> *"According to one of the girls who came to me, her mother and father broke up because of conflict, and her father had to leave the house he built for the mother and went to rent a different place. Now her mother decided to marry another man and brought him to the father's house, which she (the adolescent) was against. The girl became very angry and refused to talk to her mother and her stepfather, and this brought conflict between the girl and her parents, such that the mother refused to provide her with basic needs. The girl, therefore, went in for a boyfriend who would support her." (C2, female school counsellor, Peki,2024).*

This indicates that the process of separation was awfully difficult for adolescents, as they need to get used to living with stepfathers and mothers in blended families.

4.1.4 Single Parenting

It was also found that most adolescent participants were facing challenges living with single parents. The majority of the participants reported that their parents were struggling to cope with the challenges of single parenthood and financial instability; as such, they find it extremely difficult to provide them with their basic needs, as they are not doing any meaningful work. This lack of involvement from their parents made them feel neglected, fueling conflict and rebellious behaviour. Describing the situation, P1, a 66-year-old female parent participant, has this to say:

> *"I am a single parent and a farmer, so anytime my daughter asks for money or any other thing that I am not able to provide for her, it tends to lead to tension between us, particularly her practical items, because she is doing home economics. Sometimes I call her father's family, but I do not get any form of assistance from them, and this often bring conflict between my daughter and me" (P1, a 66-year-old parent, Kpeve 2024).*

4.1.5 Misattribution by parents

The study findings also revealed that parents' wrongful blame of their adolescents contributed to conflict between parents and their adolescents in the district. From the participants' perspective, a few adolescents stated that frequent criticisms from parents, especially when they believe they are not at fault, make them feel unjustly treated and undermine their autonomy. According to the participants, this triggered anger, rebellion, and resistance in

an attempt to show their innocence. Describing the situation, A6, a male adolescent participant, narrated this:

> *"On the 26th of October, 2022, I had a conflict with my mother about stolen money. My mother placed Gh₵100.00 on the table and went out, and I was the only one left in the house because my sister went to school. My mother said I was the one who took the money without even giving me the chance to explain myself, but I was not the one who took it. I was unhappy and felt like am being disrespected. I frequently ponder on the clash I had with my mum and this makes me unable to concentrate on my academic work that term I did not do well at school at all"* (A6, male adolescent, Kpeve,2024).

4.2 Negative Effects of Parent-Adolescent Conflict on Adolescent Academic Performance, Retention and Concentration.

Findings revealed a lack of concentration during academic activities, high absenteeism and truancy, poor time management, high school dropout rate and early relationship with the opposite sex among adolescents as the factors that negatively impact adolescents' academic performance, retention and concentration.

4.2.1 Lack of Concentration

The results of the study revealed that parent-adolescent conflict impairs the adolescent's ability to focus on their studies. Conflict with parents may be extremely stressful for adolescents, who may continue to worry about the tension between their parents and themselves. According to the participants, the majority of the adolescents reported feeling bored and finding it difficult to pay attention in class and to their academics, while they had conflicts with their parents. According to adolescents, conflict with their parents makes them become sad because they frequently reflect on the scenario at home and the words their parents used to them, making it difficult for them to take advantage of any opportunities. According to the participants, recalling the issue always bothers them, making it difficult for them to concentrate in class and on schoolwork. As a result, several of the participants stated that they are unable to concentrate, and even when they force themselves to study, they are unable to recall anything; thus, they always place their heads on the table when the teacher is teaching. In contrast, a few other participants stated that they frequently ask permission to walk outside to relieve themselves and will not return until the session is completed. A5, a male adolescent participant, expressed this concern in the following quote:

"Because of the conflict when I come to prep, I could not focus and learn anything because I continue to think about the issue and when I go to class too and the teacher is teaching, I will just be watching him but my mind will not be on what his teaching because I will still be thinking" (A5,18-year-old male adolescent, Peki,2024).

This finding suggests that teenagers who are in conflict with their parents fail to cope with their academic work.

4.2.2 Absenteeism and Truancy

It was also discovered that adolescents who have had conflicts with their parents are less likely to attend school and are more likely to be absent. Regular school attendance allows adolescents to participate in class discussions, complete class exercises and assignments on time, and participate in extracurricular activities. However, according to the participants, many of the adolescents were truant and regularly absent from school as a result of their parents' failure to provide them with their fundamental requirements, including their educational needs, due to conflict. According to the participants, they often lack pens and exercise books to write with, so they have to miss school or leave class to work for others to support themselves. This made them highly stressed psychologically to the point of falling asleep whilst in class. In contrast, a few parent participants stated that they had ceased caring for their adolescents' basic needs to make them disciplined and force them to take instructions seriously. This circumstance is particularly alarming since it undermines the adolescents' efforts to concentrate and do well in school. Speaking about the scenario, A8, a male adolescent participant, disclosed that:

"Formerly, in a class of 40 students, I can say I placed 10th but as this problem started, I sometimes absent myself from school or leave class and go and do some job for people whiles my colleagues are in class learning. This affecting my performance because the time I am supposed to attend class and also study my books is what I use to work for money to enable me fed for myself" (A8, 18-year-old male adolescent, Peki,2024).

This result shows that adolescents who were absent from school missed out on critical instruction time and were unable to complete class exercises and assignments. This causes gaps in their understanding of the content being taught, making it difficult for them to keep up with their classmates and perform effectively.

4.2.3   Poor Time Management

The result of the study again revealed that, adolescents who had problems with their parents were unable to effectively manage their time at school. According to the participants, the majority of the adolescents claimed that because of the difficulties they were experiencing, they regularly squandered time meant for study to chat with friends and this affected their performance negatively. Meanwhile, effective time management is one of the factors that could help adolescents perform better in school. Talking about the situation, A3, a male adolescent disclosed this:

> *"I always do not learn and do my homework. I will go to my friends and we will discuss things we do at home" (A3,17-year-old male adolescent, Kpeve,2024).*

4.2.4   High School Dropout Rate

It was found that a lack of parental support due to adolescent parent conflict made it difficult for some adolescents to remain in school and they had to compromise school to resort to working to fend for themselves and pay for practicals and PTA dues. However, adolescent could not comfortably combine academic work with working effectively, as a result, they finally dropped out of school. A7, a female adolescent participant, described the situation as follows:

> *"The lack of support as a result of the conflict really affected me a lot. I work to help myself, so I get tired so when I go to class, I always dose off when the teacher is teaching. I wasn't concentrating and that was why I drop out for about one and half years to sell cloth." (A7, female adolescent, Peki,2024).*

4.2.5   Early Relationship with the Opposite Sex

Early sexual relationship was one of the effects of conflict among adolescents and their parents in the South Dayi District in Ghana. It was found that adolescents were confronted with financial challenges after having disagreements with their parents. From the participants' perspectives, a few of the adolescents expressed that because they struggle to finance their education, they compromised their moral upbringing by engaging in early sexual relationship with the opposite sex for financial support. Most of these female adolescent participants indicated that they routinely engaged in phone conversations or chats with their boyfriends without attending prep, and that they spent the entire night speaking without resting, causing them to fall asleep in class. Describing the situation, A7, a female adolescent, participant narrated:

"If my father were to be that type of father that will support me, I don't think I will go out of the house and come back the next morning before going to school. I don't think I will take a boyfriend that will be calling me during the time that I am supposed to be at preps I spent the whole night talking to my boyfriend, when I go to class I sleep in class." (A7, female adolescent, Peki,2024).

4.3   Result Discussion

Poverty was found as one of the key causes of parent-adolescent conflict. It was found that parents who found difficulty paying for the basic needs of their adolescents' such as payment of educational needs (textbooks, provisions, extra tuition, among others) had frequent disagreements with parents. This result agrees with the works of Conger et al. (2020), who found that conflict between parents and adolescents is worsened by socioeconomic pressures such as poverty, unemployment, and financial instability. Similarly, Schofield et al. (2010) argue that financial hardships may make it more difficult for parents to assist their children emotionally. It was also found that most adolescents in the district experience constant parental neglect and feel abandoned and neglected by their parents for inability to offer the required assistance they need leads to conflict between parents and their adolescents. Adolescents feel rejected for seeing their peers' needs being met by parent whilst theirs neglected by their parents. This finding gives credence to the Developmental System Theory, which explains that conflict between parents and their adolescents is not solely determined by individual factors, such as personality or temperament, but rather by the complex interactions between the individual and their environment (Lerner, 2018).

Further, a broken home was found to be one of the leading causes of conflict between parents and their adolescents in the district. A broken home is a term used to describe a home when the parents are not living together as a couple but live apart. The majority of the participants indicated that their parents had separated and remarried and they had difficulty living with stepmothers and fathers due to partial treatment. This finding seems to align with Amato (2001), Steinberg & Silk (2002) and Fosco & Grych (2010) who argued that, conflict between parents and teenagers is influenced by the makeup and structure of the household. According to Amato (2001), conflict levels may increase as a result of increased pressures brought on by divorce that destabilize family dynamics. Similarly, Steinberg & Silk (2002), emphasized that, conflict is common in households where teenagers have to adjust to parental remarriage. Families experiencing divorce or separation may have greater levels of parent-adolescent conflict, as adolescents frequently take sides or battle with conflicting loyalties (Fosco & Grych, 2010).

Moreover, it was evident that adolescents had challenges living with single parents. The majority of the participants reported that their parents were struggling to cope with the challenges of single parenthood and financial difficulties. Amato (2001) similarly discovered that conflict levels may increase as a result of increased pressures brought on by single-parent households that destabilize family dynamics. Erroneous blaming of children by parents was another factor resulting in adolescent-parent conflict in the district. Unfair criticisms faced by adolescents make them think they are being wrongfully blamed for misconduct. Adolescents however feel unfairly treated hence undermining their autonomy. Smetana (2011) and Laursen & Collins (2009) also found unjust blaming of adolescents as a factor that disrupts parent-adolescent relationships, creating anger, misunderstanding, and emotional suffering among teenagers. Laursen & Collins (2009), argued that when parents mistakenly blame their children for behavioral problems or home disputes, adolescents may experience emotions of unfairness and dissatisfaction. These sentiments, if not addressed, contribute to ongoing parent-adolescent conflict (Laursen & Collins, 2009).

4.4 Impact of Parent-Adolescent Conflict on Adolescent Academic Performance, Retention and Concentration.

The result of this study shows that parent-adolescent conflict weakens adolescent's ability to focus on their studies. Conflict with parents may be tremendously traumatic for adolescents, who may continue to worry about the tension between their parents and themselves. The majority of the adolescents reported feeling bored and finding it difficult to pay attention in class. According to adolescents, clashes with their parents make them sad because they regularly reflect on the conflict scenario at home and the verbal humiliation from parents makes it difficult for them to concentrate in class and on schooling and school demands. On some occasions, adolescents requested permission from teachers to leave class for some time. Cummings et al. (2006), argued that children frequently experience emotional pain as a result of parent-adolescent conflict, which can affect how well they learn and function cognitively. Goeke-Morey et al. (2009), further emphasized that these negative emotional states are associated with decreased attention, memory problems, and poorer cognitive flexibility. As a result, adolescents who have conflicts with their parents may struggle to focus, recall information, and perform well at school.

It was again found that adolescents who have had conflicts with their parents rarely attended school. The majority of the adolescents were truant and mostly absent from school due to the failure of parents to provide them with the basic school needs. According to the participants, they often lack pens and exercise books to write and have to miss school or leave class to engage in

economic activities to support themselves. This made them highly exhausted and they mostly fell asleep in class. In contrast, some parents confirmed they had stopped the basic need to make them disciplined and take instructions. These findings conflict with the objectives of the Ghana's Ministry of Education (2018), which requires parents to perform their home-school obligations or expectations in order to meet their children's needs, but align with Chung (2015) and Lansford et al. (2006) findings that stressed that, the degree of adolescents' school engagement, including their attitudes about school, commitment to academic work, attendance, and interest in extracurricular activities, is influenced by parent-adolescent conflict.

Findings also revealed that adolescents who had disagreement with their parents were unable to effectively manage their time at school. Adolescents disclosed that, when they had clashes with their parents, they spent more time chatting with friends instead of concentrating on their studies and this affected their performance, retention and concentration in school. According to Smetana (2011), persistent and severe conflicts can affect teenagers' psychological and behavioral functioning, particularly their capacity to properly manage time. Repetti, Robles, & Reynolds (2011), further accentuated that, adolescents who have frequent conflicts with their parents may struggle to focus on their academic and personal duties, resulting in procrastination and poor time management.

It was discovered that a lack of parental support as a result of adolescent-parent conflict made it difficult for some adolescents to remain in school and they finally had to resort to economic activities to help themselves. However, adolescents were unable to combine education with economic activities with ease and finally dropped out of school. This result seems consistent with that of the Ghana Ministry of Education (2018), which emphasized the importance of parental involvement in children's education, stating that parents' involvement in their children's education improves academic success. This finding is also related to that of Yuin & Yaacob (2016), who argued that, parents who want their adolescent children to achieve well in school should stay close to them and provide them encouragement and support to boost their academic self-efficacy. In contrast, conflict-related lack of support and erratic parenting techniques were found to be detrimental to the adolescents' motivation, self-esteem, and academic engagement (Deb, 2018).

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study revealed that parent-adolescent conflict in the district is influenced by a variety of socio-economic and behavioral factors, including poverty, single parenting, broken homes, and the neglect of parental obligations. Furthermore, behavioral issues such as misattribution by parents contribute to strained relationships. The effects of these conflicts on

adolescents' academic performance are severe, resulting in absenteeism, truancy, lack of concentration and poor time management. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to improve parent-child relationships and enhance adolescents' academic success. As advocated by Bowen (1978), parents should allow adolescents to develop independence while staying emotionally connected. This implies that open communication and clear boundary-setting should be strengthened, allowing adolescents to express their views respectfully, while parents provide supportive guidance without exerting excessive control over adolescents' behaviour. Besides, the socio-cultural expectations of children by parents in Ghana need some adjustments since children are socialized to adhere to instructions from parents with little space for children to voice their concerns. Based on the conclusion, it is recommended that:

1. Heads of senior high schools should develop comprehensive counselling services, including frequent counselling sessions, to help students focus on schoolwork and manage their time properly.
2. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, including local authorities and non-governmental organizations, should provide resources for family support services, adolescent counselling, and conflict resolution programs.
3. Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society Groups should organize workshops and mentorship programs to help adolescents develop self-discipline, goal-setting skills, and responsible behaviour.
4. Ghana Education Service, in collaboration with Parent-Teacher Association, should organize a sensitization program for parents on the importance of effective communication, positive discipline, and monitoring their children's activities.
5. The Government of Ghana in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection should support poor and single parents with alternative income generating activities to enable them effectively provide the needs of their adolescents.

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