

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES OF ADOLESCENTS IN MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP BELONGING TO INDIVIDUALISTIC AND COLLECTIVISTIC CULTURES[#]

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Conflict in close relationships during the period of adolescence has been the focus of research in Western cultures where individualism is stressed. To examine the conflict management styles of adolescents belonging to individualistic and collectivistic cultures, 80 dyads of British (White) and Pakistani mothers and their adolescent daughters were studied. On the basis of the theories of Cultural Variability Dimensions and Conflict Face-negotiation, it was hypothesized that Pakistani mothers and daughters will use a greater degree of an avoiding style, whereas British mothers and daughters will use a greater degree of either dominating or compromising style. It was also argued that Pakistani daughters and mothers will express more intimacy and relational harmony, will exhibit greater connectedness and mutuality, and demonstrate lesser individuality and self-assertion compared to their British counterparts. However, it appeared that both the groups used avoiding styles equally in a conflictual situation, although the British group used dominating style more than Pakistani group. As hypothesized Pakistani mothers and daughters expressed more intimacy, relational harmony, connectedness/mutuality, and lesser individuality compared to British mothers and daughters.

It appears that cultural context may have an effect on peoples' ways of handling disagreements/conflicts¹ and their selection of one set of disagreement/conflict management style over others (Ting-Toomey, 1988). It is the larger cultural frame, which provides ways of expressing and handling disagreements and/or conflicts for its people.

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¹ In this article the words conflict and disagreement will be used interchangeably.

A commonly used dimension to measure cultural variability is that of Individualism and Collectivism, which has emerged as a key construct for analysing the underlying norms of different societies (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Chau, 1988; Hofstede, 1991; Kagitcibasi, 1990; Ting-Toomey, 1988, 1991; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, & Lucca, 1988; Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, & Lin, 1991). This includes social exchange and communication styles (Gudykunst, 1992; Triandis, 1988). Individualism refers to the tendency to be more concerned with one's own needs, goals, and interests. According to Hui and Triandis (1986), highly individualistic cultures emphasize the importance of the unique self and the 'I' identity. Its' people prefer independence and self-sufficiency, belong to many in-groups, and are less likely to be dependent on any of them. They are less concerned about shame or 'loss of face' if they fail to satisfy the expectations of the in-group/s. Their success and failure is their personal affair and they feel guilt rather than shame if they fail to achieve something. They do not like expressing dependency on others and will emphasize independence and self-sufficiency.

Collectivism, on the other hand, refers to the tendency to be more concerned with the group needs, goals, and interests. Hui and Triandis (1986) suggest that cultures that are high in collectivism emphasize the importance of group membership and the 'We' identity. Individuals in collectivist cultures consider the implications of their actions from the perspective of the group. They believe in the sharing of the resources which maintains a network of reciprocation. They are more likely to be influenced by the majority and so, and are more likely to conform to these influences. They would be more likely to go along with the group in order to avoid rejection, as they are attached to the group and will feel shame if they have to break away from the group. They are more concerned about gaining the approval of group members and feel embarrassed if they fail to get it. They value interdependence and share its outcomes. One person's misbehavior or failure is a disgrace to the whole family or even to the entire clan. Parents are usually involved in their children's choice of friends, studies, jobs, place to live, marriage, etc. Individuals feel involved in the lives of other members of the group and not only share, but also feel the success and failure of others.

It is also noticed that their cultural framework does influence people's selection of one set of conflict management style over another (Ting-Toomey, 1988). It affects the overall conflictual exchange process as well as the specific conflict style of communication among people of a given culture (Triandis et. al, 1988; Ting-Toomey, 1988).

The cultural framework provides ways of expressing and handling conflict. In other words, differences are expected from the people of individualistic and collectivistic cultures in terms of their styles of managing their disagreements or conflicts.

Rahim and Bonoma (1979) have identified conflict management styles for handling disagreements in interpersonal relationships. They specified two basic dimensions to differentiate styles of handling interpersonal conflicts: (i) Concern for self: The degree (high or low) to which a person tries to satisfy his/her own concern or needs, and (ii) Concern for others: The degree to which a person tries to satisfy the concern or needs of others. By the combination of these two dimensions they further developed five styles of managing conflict. These are:

- *Integrating*, which involves exchange of information and examination of differences in order to reach a solution, which is acceptable to both parties. It requires an active solution of problems.
- *Compromising or sharing*, in which both the parties give up something in order to achieve something and seek a solution, which is mutually acceptable.
- *Dominating*, in which a person uses all his/her resources and attempts to force a win.
- *Obliging*, which involves attempts to play down the differences and emphasize commonalities to satisfy the concern for the other party.
- *Avoiding*, which involves withdrawing, bypassing, and side-stepping the conflicting situations. The person fails to satisfy his/her own concern and also the concerns of the others.

It has been found that the 'dominating style' reflects the person's need to satisfy his/her own concern or own 'face' needs, so it is represented by a direct style of communication. The integrating and compromising styles reflect a solution-oriented approach to handle conflicts. This shows the need for control of choices, which requires individuals to take an active role to initiate and resolve the conflict with other parties. For that purpose, they are likely to choose a direct style of communication instead of an indirect one. The obliging and avoiding styles are specific to people who value relational harmony and compliance. For that, they would tend to use an indirect style of conflict resolution. They would withdraw or back pass in order to satisfy the concern of others.

The theory of Conflict Face-negotiation (Ting-Toomey, 1988) proposed a link between the cultural variability, face-management processes (i.e., to fulfill particular statuses and roles in socially prescribed manner), and conflict communication styles. It suggests that people from individualistic cultures will choose either the dominating, compromising, or the integrating style more often for managing interpersonal conflicts. These reflect a solution-oriented approach, a need for control of choice, and require a direct approach to solve the problem. On the other hand, belongingness to the group or the approval of the group is very important for those who belong to collectivistic cultures. So, collectivists will either avoid confronting or will try to oblige the other person. Thus, they would tend to use an obliging or an avoiding style to handle the conflict.

Adolescence and the Mother-Daughter Relationship

Like any other close relationship, mothers and daughters are likely to have disagreements and conflicts. The likelihood of having conflicts increases during adolescence. It is the usual time when the process of separation and self-assertion starts taking place and a separate sense of self and identity develops. Compared to the sons, separation from mothers is usually a more difficult process for the daughters, as gender similarity and close relationships with the mother make the process of independence more difficult for daughters (Fischer, 1986; Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991).

The mother-daughter dyad was the centre of attention for many researchers for a long time. This relationship has been examined through different theoretical frameworks. For a long time, this area of research has been dominated by the psychodynamic model which stressed that due to the prolonged unresolved Oedipus Complex, the relationship of mothers and their teen age daughters was inevitably characterized by conflict (Freud, 1925, 1931). Researchers who worked within the framework of Freudian model (Eichenbaum & Orback, 1983; Erikson, 1951; Fox, 1979; Greenacre, 1976; Hammer, 1975), and those who had different points of view, have contributed a lot in the understanding of mother-daughter relationship (Apter, 1990; Block, 1983; Gilligan, 1982; Rubin, Provenzano, & Lauria, 1974; Will, Self, & Datan, 1974).

However, research on the mother-daughter dyads during adolescence was mostly conducted in Western and European countries. Keeping in view the cultural diversities and their powerful impact on

the relationship patterns, one does question the generalizability of such findings in non-western socio-cultural environments. It appears that their ways of relating to each other and their patterns of managing the disagreements/conflicts may also differ as social exchange and communication styles differ across cultures and communities (Gudykunst, et al. 1988; Triandis, et al. 1988).

The present research was designed to investigate the ways of handling the conflicts/disagreements between mothers and daughters belonging to individualistic and collectivistic cultural backgrounds i.e., Britain and Pakistan, respectively. Keeping the theory of cultural variability in perspective, it was hypothesized that:

- 1) In order to handle conflicts, Pakistani mothers and daughters will use a greater degree of an avoiding style, whereas British mothers and daughters will use a greater degree of dominating/compromising style.
- 2) Pakistani daughters (collectivistic cultural background) will express greater connectedness and mutuality, and demonstrate lesser individuality and self-assertion with their mothers as compared with their British counterparts (individualistic cultural background).

METHOD

Sample

Forty British (White) and forty Pakistani (Muslim immigrants in Britain) dyads of mothers and their teen age daughters were the participants for the study. The girls were selected from different sixth form colleges of the Borough of Waltham Forest (London). The age range of the girls for both the groups was 17 to 18.5 years. The mean age of the British daughters was 18.1 years and of the Pakistani daughters was 17.6 years. All the participants belonged to similar socioeconomic status (i.e., middle class), which was verified through the family income/s and their locality of residence. They had intact families and daughters were living with their natural parents.

The age range of the mothers of both the groups was 46 to 55 years. The mean age of the British mothers was 49.3 years, and of the Pakistani mothers was 54 years. 25% of the British mothers were working full time, 58% were part time employees, and 17% were house wives, while 20% of

the Pakistani mothers were full time employees, 20% were working part time, 25% were child-minders, and 35% were housewives.

Instrument

The Disagreement Scale (Camara & Resnick, 1989). This scale was originally designed to study the disagreements/ conflicts between husbands and wives and was modified to be used with the mother-daughter dyads. It is a 4-point scale that has 17 statements, which pertain to the styles of managing conflicts. It has four subscales: Avoidance (of Conflict), (ii) Compromise, (iii) Verbal Attack, and (iv) Physical Anger. It was used to measure the first hypothesis. The combination of the last two factors was used to observe Dominance in the mother-daughter relationship as verbal attack and expressions of physical anger are signs of efforts to dominate the situation.

The scale had two versions i.e., one for daughters and one for mothers. With the help of two judges, translated version of the mothers' scale was prepared in Urdu for those Pakistani mothers who could not read English. In order to have a reliable translated version, the scale was double translated i.e., first it was translated from English to Urdu by a translator, and then from Urdu to English by another translator. Both the translators had command over both Urdu and English languages. Statements on which both the translators agreed were chosen.

Interview. To test the second hypothesis, target girls were interviewed separately to collect some qualitative information. Semi-structured questions were asked about the nature of the mother-daughter relationship at present and in the past, i.e., during their early teens. Questions specifically focused on intimacy and closeness with mothers, their dependence on them, and their assertion in relation to their mothers. The questions were asked in English since both the groups were fluent in English.

As the cultural variability dimension of individualism and collectivism was used to develop hypotheses, it seemed necessary to observe this dimension at an individual level. In the second part of the interview, questions were asked about their views concerning their family as a group and their own individual self. Two broad categories were developed for content analysis: (i) The statements/phrases directed at the self. That is, they gave priority to their selves and their personal or individual motives over their families, and (ii) statements/phrases directed at the family or the in-group. That is, they gave priority to

their families and collective interest of the group over their personal interest. This was done to try and understand their relationship with their mothers as well as with their families in broader cultural terms.

Reliability of the Measures

Cronbach's Alpha for internal consistency of the items for each subscale of Disagreement Scale were obtained. Alpha for Avoidance was found to be .85, for Compromise it was .82, and for Dominance it was .91. Contents of the interviews were first analyzed by the researcher and then by an independent rater who was familiar with the coding procedures of interview schedule. Cohen's Kappa was used for the inter-rater reliability, which was found to be .86.

Procedure

Girls were interviewed first and they filled the questionnaire afterwards. All the interviews were tape-recorded. The college authorities were able to provide a quiet and independent room for research purposes. Mothers filled their scales at homes and mailed them back to the researcher.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results did not support the first hypothesis, as there was no difference in the responses of daughters and mothers of both the groups on the subscale of Avoidance of the Disagreement Scale. The scores on this scale were low overall, and daughters of both the groups felt that their mothers often try to avoid conflict. Mothers' responses were also similar to their daughters, as shown in Table 1. British daughters scored higher on the subscale of Dominance but lower on the Compromise compared to the Pakistani daughters.

British daughters said that their mothers would become sarcastic or say something to hurt their feelings whenever they had conflicts. They also stated that their mothers would sometimes become physically aggressive and throw things or hit during disagreements. They perceived their mothers as not very compromising. Pakistani daughters, in contrast, did not report verbal or physical aggression, and felt that their mothers do compromise in conflicting situations. The response pattern of mothers of both the groups was quite similar to the response

pattern of their daughters. The correlation between the responses of mothers and daughters of both the groups was obtained to observe the similarities and/or differences between their responses (see Table 1). It was significant on Dominance and Avoidance. The response pattern of British mothers and daughters on Compromise was also very similar to each other. On the contrary, Pakistani daughters perceived their mothers to compromise more, whereas mothers' responses were not similar to their daughters'.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, t-values, and Correlation of Daughters and their Mothers on the Disagreement Scale

Subscales	Pakistan		British		<i>t</i>	<i>r</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		Pakistan	British
<i>Avoidance</i>							
Daughters	8.60	2.76	8.00	2.76	0.97	.56**	.64***
Mothers	7.59	1.78	6.93	2.67	0.89		
<i>Dominance</i>							
Daughters	18.40	4.64	21.20	5.62	2.43*	.45**	.64***
Mothers	20.56	6.08	20.76	5.21	2.32*		
<i>Compromise</i>							
Daughters	16.73	2.38	14.88	3.02	3.30**	.29	.61***
Mothers	15.82	3.29	16.41	2.65	0.15		

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

These results of Pakistani daughters are similar to those of Trubisky et. al. (1991), who found that the Taiwanese sample (collectivistic cultural background) scored higher on compromise compared to the United States sample (individualistic cultural background). In their view the difference was probably because of the prevalence of the Confucian work ethic in the Chinese culture that emphasizes completion of tasks and hard work, that may have driven

the respondents to seek an active approach to manage conflict task problem. Confucian philosophy is not rooted in Pakistani culture. It seems that mothers and daughters compromise more during conflicts because of concern with mutual face saving and concern for others. The aim may not be to resolve the conflict actively but may be to achieve harmony and avoid unpleasantness in their relationship.

Table 2

Frequencies of Daughters' Statements Expressing 'Separation' and 'Self-assertion' in Relation to their Mothers

<i>Relationship Description</i>	Pak.	Brit.	<i>Personal Description</i>	Pak.	Brit.
Patronizing	0	5	Can not show her love	1	1
Overprotective	7	0	Not very understanding	2	7
Do not get on well	0	10	Irritable	1	3
Do not miss her	2	15	Hot-headed	0	3
Feel distant	2	5	Unapproachable	0	5
Do not consult with her	12	17	Narrow minded	2	0
Do not confide in her	8	11	Old fashioned	8	3
Total	31	63	Total	14	22

Contents of the daughters' interviews were analyzed to examine connectedness/mutuality and their individuality/self-assertion in relation to their mothers. Two broad categories were developed. Individuality was expressed through those statements that the girls used (for their mothers) showing their 'separation' from their mothers. Connectedness was expressed through their statements showing their 'mutuality' and closeness with their mothers. Each of these either pertained to their "relationship" with their mothers or to the description of mothers as "persons. Statements that were used by the daughters for their mothers expressing their relationship with them, or describing them as persons, were identified. Frequencies in both the categories were obtained from each interview (see Tables 2 & 3).

Table 3

Frequencies of Daughters' Statements Expressing their 'Mutuality' and 'Permeability' with their Mothers

<i>Relationship Description</i>	<i>Pak. Brit.</i>		<i>Personal Description</i>	<i>Pak. Brit.</i>	
Feel secure in her presence	8	3	Loving Person	15	8
Get on well	1	3	Very Caring	20	9
Very Special	2	1	Nice Person	8	7
Always there for me	17	5	Understanding	10	3
Miss her when away from her	38	18	Large hearted	6	0
Consult with her	25	18	Broad Minded	1	0
Confide in her	25	10	Trustworthy	27	8
Total	116	58	Total	87	35

Overall, British girls used words or phrases showing their separateness/self-assertion (from their mothers), and their mutuality with them almost equally. They had 85 statements together for separateness and self-assertion and 93 for mutuality (Tables 2 & 3). On the other hand, Pakistani girls used 203 words or phrases related to mutuality compared to the British girls and 45 related to separateness. The chi-square analysis revealed highly significant difference between the statements of the two groups ($\chi^2 = 42.84$; $df = 1$; $p < .001$).

These response patterns suggested that most of the girls in the British group considered themselves to be as assertive and separate from their mothers as they were mutual and connected with them. However, in the Pakistani group there were substantial differences between their individuality and connectedness. They talked about themselves being far more connected with their mothers rather than as separate and assertive.

Both the groups reported mutually close relationships with their mothers. However, there were some important differences in their levels of mutuality and closeness. British daughters reported positive feelings for their mothers as well as incidents of tensions and distance from them and most of them did not see that they had much in common with

their mothers. On the other hand, only a few Pakistani daughters reported incidents of conflicts and tension and the majority reported having a sense of security and pleasure in presence of their mothers.

Generally, British girls felt that they had relatively more conflicts and arguments with their mothers when they were in their early teens. They reported that their relationship had progressed from one dominated by conflict to one of independence and understanding. They stated that compared to when they were younger, they felt closer to their mothers at present. They expressed feelings of intimacy with their mothers and said that they miss them when they are away from the family. Some of these girls said that they and their mothers are like friends and without any hesitation discussed matters of mutual interest like female hygiene, boyfriends, dresses, jewellery, etc. These young women said that they could sometimes confide in their mothers, trusted them, and consulted with them when they had a problem. At the same time they did express separateness from their mothers and provided evidence of tension in the past and present. Generally, the areas of tension were related to the issues of control and autonomy as evidenced by statements such as, ---“She would always treat me as if I am a child, she had a very patronizing attitude, and I did not like it at all”. “We had a lot of arguments. Her attitude towards my friends and my going out was very negative”. “She won’t understand, I have tried it---I mean---telling her if something goes wrong in my life---we ended up having serious arguments---- she jumps to the conclusions and has the habit of thinking that it is always my fault---and I have to be more careful more thoughtful.”

Most of the Pakistani girls reported having a close relationship with their mothers in the past and at present. The majority stated that they did not remember any tension or prolonged unpleasantness between them. They said that they had disagreements and conflicts occasionally but usually it was for a brief while. Some of them also felt that they had a special relationship with their mothers, which they did not or could not have with any one else. They thought that their mothers were more understanding than their fathers and they liked spending time with their mothers than with their fathers during the day. Most of them (84%) stated that they confide in their mothers and consult with them whenever they experienced something negative or upsetting. A small number (16%) of these girls did express that they could not discuss such matters with their mothers because of their (mothers’) lack of experience in the outside world. In their opinion, sensitive matters like these would upset them, and they might become

overprotective. The girls certainly did not want that. Generally, Pakistani girls felt that they had a positively close and mutually interdependent relationship with their mothers and did not express negative feelings towards them. As some of them reported: "She is there for me whenever I need her. She is always ready to give full support to us. She is very caring and supportive". "When I am not with my family, I miss my mother the most. I miss her hugs and kisses---I just miss her. Last year I went to Birmingham for about two months and I actually cried on telephone when I heard her voice." "She is very caring---very loving and large hearted. Sometimes I really get surprised and think---how can a person be so nice? I can be rude to her but---she deals with it so calmly---that I really feel guilty afterwards."

To analyze those parts of the interview which were focused on individualism/collectivism at a personal level, content analysis was employed. Two broad categories were developed (i) the statements/phrases directed at the self and (ii) the statements/phrases directed at the family or in-group. The statements/phrases falling in these categories were tabulated. British girls used 144 statements altogether that were directed toward themselves. For example, 'Its my life', 'My decision is important for me', 'I have my own identity', 'I'll stick to my own guns' etc. Pakistani girls used 24 such statements (see Table 4).

Table 4

Frequencies of Statements Directed at the Self

Statements	Pakistani Girls	British Girls
Its my life	2	25
My choice/decision important for me	2	12
Have my own identity	4	26
Stick to my own guns	4	19
Try to convince them	4	30
Ought to be limits of family loyalty	8	32
Total	24	144

As shown in Table 5, Pakistani girls used 158 statements altogether which were directed at the family: Statements like, 'Its lucky to have a family', 'Everyone must share the responsibilities', 'I'll sacrifice my personal interests for my family', 'My family is the, 'most

important thing for me', etc. British girls used 35 such statements. On the whole British girls used more statements giving priority to the self and Pakistani girls used more statements giving priority to the family or in-group.

Table 5

Frequencies of Statements Directed at the Family/In-group

Statements	Pakistani Girls	British Girls
Lucky to have a family	20	8
Will sacrifice for the family	15	7
Everyone must share responsibilities	28	12
Exploration of self within family limits/rules	38	0
Try to understand their reasons for opposition	20	5
If there is clash, I will choose my family	37	3
Total	158	35

British girls expressed individualistic attitude stating that their goals and desires are important for them and they are not dependent on their families for their achievements in life. Responses of most Pakistani girls were very collectivistic in nature. They showed an emotional and psychological dependence on their families. their priority in life was the welfare of the whole family even if it meant to sacrifice their personal needs and desires.

Pakistani mothers and their adolescent daughters did not have a conflicting relationship, rather, they exhibited connectedness and mutuality. It is suggested that other factors like people's ways of relating to each other, sex role expectations of a society and status of women, could be important inter-related and underlying factors that may contribute in close association of mothers and daughters of the Pakistani group. A plausible explanation of the results of the British group could be that British teenagers (girls as well as boys) are expected to discontinue their dependencies on their parents. It is considered important for them to develop individuality and personal identity. As a result of such societal expectations, British teenagers become reasonably independent by the time they reach the age of 17 or 18 years (Noller & Callan, 1991). As the emotional dependencies of daughters on their mothers reduce with age, they may also want to

assert their independence and separation from them. Mothers may find it difficult to handle this change and express their resentment on and off. Conflict of interest brings these feelings forward and mothers may express their resentment verbally or physically.

Pakistani girls, on the other hand, are not expected to be independent like British girls. Belongingness to the in-group is more important for them than the development of a personal identity or individuality. Mothers and daughters may not want to drift apart after the disagreement and confrontation: To maintain relational harmony and be with each other may be more important than the assertion of individual rights.

The difference in the emphasis on the hierarchy of older and younger generations in Pakistani and British societies could be another important factor in this regard. In Pakistani culture it is a normal pattern that the older generation has authority over, and expects respect from the younger generation. It is considered impolite to contradict or differ with elders. Such cultural norms reduce the chances of conflicts between parents and teenagers. In British culture hierarchy, in terms, of age is not as clearly defined as it is in Pakistani culture. It is not considered impolite or undesirable for teenagers to contradict parent/s, or assert their individual rights. Under such circumstances the chances of conflicts could be stronger.

Markus and Kitayama (1991) have tried to explain the differences in people's ways of relating to each other through the concepts of 'independent' and 'interdependent' construals of the self. In their view the most significant difference between these two construals is in the role that is assigned to 'others' in self-definition. The surrounding social context or 'others' have importance in both construals, but are less significant for the independent self. For the interdependent self, others are included within the boundaries of the self. Relationships with others in specific contexts are the defining features of the self for them. The interdependent self has a sense of individuality that includes an attentiveness and responsiveness to others, which is assumed to be reciprocated by these others. They suggest that the way self is construed may be one powerful theoretical element which could be an explanatory factor in terms of the differences of peoples' ways of relating to each other in different societies. Keeping this in perspective, we could say that the British group might be stressing the attendance to the self and appreciating their differences from others. Pakistani group on the contrary might be emphasizing attendance to, and fitting in, with others and the importance of harmonious interdependence with them.

CONCLUSION

There were some important differences among the two groups. Pakistani group did not have a conflicting relationship, they were more connected with their mothers, and were less separate/assertive in their manner. They also exhibited a collectivistic attitude toward themselves and their families. On the other hand, British daughters reported relatively more conflicts, had equal levels of individuality from, and connectedness with their mothers, and were individualistic in their manner. These results are a reminder of the 'individuation' thesis extended by Grotevant and Cooper (1986) who suggested that individuality and connectedness both involve the management of boundaries between the self and others and have special significance in the process of identity formation during adolescence. According to this definition, an individuated relationship has the components of both individuality and connectedness and displays a balance between the two. British girls in our sample expressed mutuality as well as connectedness at almost equal levels. So, according to this theory, they have an individuated relationship with their mothers. Whereas, Pakistani girls exhibited more connectedness and less individuality, which is an expression of an unhealthy connectedness. But, before reaching such a conclusion, one must keep in mind the social and cultural backgrounds of both the groups and its people's ways of relating to each other. The family is integrated in society and is inherently tied to the social structure, which includes social norms and values. Families also differ profoundly with variations in this social structure. These variations can not and should not be ignored in the psychological research by generalizing typical pattern of Western nuclear families. As Kagitcibasi (1990) stressed, the family itself is both the context and also a part of larger socio-cultural context of socialization. Basic family processes require meaning within the particular socio-cultural context in which the family is embedded.

From the above discussion the question of the definition of individuality in collectivist social environment emerges. There might be other ways of expressing it. For example, in ways of keeping the relational ties intact and in fulfilling the personal needs as well as maintaining harmonious relationships with others. It makes one wonder about the use of such models in those social settings where separateness and self-assertion are not considered desirable personality traits, especially for daughters.

People from different social settings have unique ways of relating to each other and thereby, have unique styles of conflict management. Mother-daughter relationship should also be seen in terms of its cultural and societal context in which all relations are embedded.

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