

CONFLICTS BETWEEN TEACHER AND STUDENT: MECHANISMS OF ORIGIN AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TACTICS FOR THEIR RESOLUTION

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Abstract

This article analyzes the causes and psychological mechanisms of conflicts that arise between teachers and students within the pedagogical process, as well as effective and constructive tactics for their resolution. It highlights the role of a teacher's emotional intelligence, communicative competence, and stress resilience in preventing conflicts in the educational environment and resolving them positively. Based on the research, practical psychological recommendations have been developed to stabilize relationships among participants in the educational process.

Keywords

pedagogical conflict, teacher, student, conflict mechanisms, psychological tactics, emotional intelligence, communication culture, constructive solution, conflict situation.

In the modern world, the transformation and humanization of the education system have become priority tasks on a global scale. Today, a school is not just a place for imparting knowledge, but a dynamic environment where a student develops as an individual and undergoes socio-psychological adaptation. Improving the quality of education largely depends on the emotional and psychological stability of the relationships among participants in the pedagogical process, especially between teachers and students. However, given the complexity of the educational environment, the differences in the age and individual psychological characteristics of the subjects, and the imbalance of social expectations, the emergence of conflicts at various levels within the teacher-student system is a natural occurrence. Therefore, scientifically studying the mechanisms behind these conflicts and developing modern psychological tactics to resolve them are among the most pressing issues in pedagogical psychology today.

As a strategic direction for laying the foundation of the Third Renaissance in the Republic of Uzbekistan, the fundamental reform of school education, the enhancement of the teacher's prestige in society, and the creation of a safe and healthy psychological environment for students have been elevated to the highest level of state policy. Specifically, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-158, dated September 11, 2023, "On the 'Uzbekistan-2030' Strategy," places special emphasis on advancing the education system to a new stage, changing teaching methodologies in schools, and, most importantly, fostering a favorable spiritual and psychological environment for the comprehensive development of students [1]. The task set forth in this strategy—to raise an intellectually and mentally healthy younger generation—necessitates reducing destructive conflicts in educational institutions and redirecting them toward a constructive nature.

Furthermore, one of the most significant historical documents adopted in recent years is the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the Status of the Pedagogue," which came into force on February 1, 2024 [2]. This law legally guarantees the protection of the rights, honor, and dignity of educators and puts an end to any interference that obstructs their professional activities. The essence of the law demonstrates that teacher-student relationships in schools should be built not on command or subordination, but on the principles of mutual respect, pedagogical ethics, and the rule of law. Conflicts between teachers and students often arise from the violation of these statuses and legal-moral boundaries. Consequently, these legislative initiatives by our head of state serve as a fundamental methodological basis for organizing the psychological prevention of conflicts within the educational environment.

The nature of conflicts in the pedagogical process is such that if not resolved positively and in a timely manner, they can lead not only to a decline in the quality of education but also to the development of professional deformation syndrome (emotional burnout) in teachers, and the emergence of school-related phobias, aggression, and suicidal tendencies in students. The instructions from our head of state regarding the fundamental reform of the psychological services system in schools and its alignment with international standards are also specifically aimed at stabilizing conflict-ridden relationships among educational subjects. Cognitive (perceptual), motivational, emotional, and behavioral factors are predominant in the mechanisms of conflict emergence. As today's students (representatives of Generation Alpha and Z) are growing up in a highly information-rich environment, their expectations regarding a teacher's communication tactics have also changed.

The authoritarian pedagogical method has now completely lost its effectiveness and remains the primary factor that triggers conflicts.

Regarding the level of research on the problem, the issue of pedagogical conflicts has been extensively studied in both global and local psychological science. While Western and CIS psychologists such as N.V. Grishina, M.M. Rybakova, and B.I. Khasanov have studied the structure and dynamics of conflicts, scholars from our country, including E.G. Goziyev, V.M. Karimova, R.I. Sunnatova, and G.B. Shoumarov, have analyzed the socio-psychological characteristics of relationships within Uzbek families and educational institutions. However, in the context of the current digital transformation, the implementation of inclusive education principles, and the aforementioned new law "On the Status of the Educator," the specific manifestations of teacher-student conflicts and the innovative psychological tactics for resolving them have not been sufficiently studied in a systematic and holistic manner. This defines the problem area of this research. However, in the context of today's digital transformation, the implementation of inclusive education principles, and the aforementioned new legislation "On the Status of the Educator," the features of manifesting teacher-student conflicts, as well as innovative-psychological tactics for their resolution, have not been sufficiently studied systematically and comprehensively.

The aim of the research: To identify the socio-psychological mechanisms behind the emergence of conflicts between teachers and students, and to develop effective psychological tactics for their resolution and management in the modern educational environment.

The object of the research: The system of relationships that arise between teachers and students during the educational process in general secondary education institutions.

The subject of the research: The components, dynamics, and psychological mechanisms of conflicts between teachers and students, as well as the psychological tactics (methods) for their correction and resolution.

Research objectives:

1. To systematize and analyze the scientific-theoretical approaches to the problem of conflicts between teachers and students in pedagogical psychology;
2. To reveal the specific features of modern teacher-student relations in the context of presidential decrees and new legal norms;
3. To empirically (practically) study the interpersonal, cognitive, and emotional mechanisms that cause conflicts (e.g., a teacher's communication style, a student's age-related crises, etc.);

4. To diagnose the decision-making tendencies and behavioral strategies of teachers in conflict situations;

5. To develop psychological recommendations and a training program for school psychologists and educators aimed at constructive conflict resolution and increasing teachers' emotional intelligence.

The interpersonal relationship between the teacher and the student, who are the central subjects of the pedagogical process, is distinguished by its dynamism and emotional saturation. In scientific and psychological literature, the concept of pedagogical conflict is interpreted not merely as a bilateral disagreement but as a clash of goals, motives, values, and behavioral norms among the participants of the educational process. The renowned psychologist M.M. Rybakova divides teacher-student conflicts into three main groups based on their nature and content: conflicts related to educational activities, conflicts related to behavior and discipline, and conflicts arising on the basis of interpersonal relationships [3]. While activity-related conflicts often arise from a student's low academic performance or the subjective perception of a grade given by a teacher, relationship conflicts have a deeper emotional basis and are formed as a result of personal prejudices and mutual antipathies. Empirical research shows that approximately 60 percent of conflicts arising in the school environment become destructive in nature due to communicative barriers and misunderstandings during the communication process.

The phenomena of cognitive dissonance and subjective interpretation hold a leading position within the system of psychological mechanisms behind conflict emergence. Relying on their professional role, the teacher expects a certain level of discipline and academic responsibility from the student, while the student, in turn, demands recognition of their personal freedom and emotional support from the teacher. This imbalance of social roles and mutual psychological expectations creates the foundation for a conflict situation. According to the Thomas-Kilman model, people's behavior in conflict situations is formed along two axes: the degree to which they protect their own interests and the degree to which they consider their partner's interests [4]. Many educators traditionally choose a strategy of competition or pressure in conflict situations, which activates psychological defense mechanisms (aggression, negativism, or class avoidance) in the student. As a result, the conflict transitions from a stage of simple work-related disagreement to one of personal animosity, triggering the mechanism of the conflict's affective (emotional) polarization.

From the perspective of developmental psychology, conflicts between a teacher and a student are often inextricably linked to the psychophysiological and

social crises of adolescence. As noted in the research of renowned psychologists such as L.S. Vygotsky and E. Erikson, an individual's self-perception changes radically during adolescence, dominated by a sense of adulthood and a striving for independence. If a pedagogue continues to use an authoritarian, commanding, and strictly hierarchical communication style—typical for younger school-aged children—with students during this period, it will inevitably provoke strong resistance from the adolescent. Scientific facts confirm that in many cases, schoolchildren's lack of discipline is a specific form of protest and a psychological compensation mechanism against a teacher's unfair treatment or public humiliation. Therefore, failing to consider the student's age-specific characteristics in the mechanism of conflict emergence indicates the teacher's insufficient methodological and psychological literacy.

Pedagogical communication styles also serve as a determinant (defining) factor in the prevention or escalation of conflicts. According to the classic typology proposed by Kurt Lewin, conflicts in the classrooms of teachers with an authoritarian communication style occur frequently and have an explosive character. In such an environment, latent aggression accumulates among students, and any trivial reason can serve as a trigger for the conflict to enter an open stage. Conversely, when a democratic style is employed, conflicts and disagreements are accepted as a natural part of the learning process and are resolved through joint discussion of the problem. Psychological research has proven that the incidence of conflict in classes where the teacher demonstrates high communicative tolerance and empathy is 4 times lower than in classes with authoritarian or liberal styles. This situation shows that managing the psychological climate in pedagogical activity is directly dependent on the personal and professional qualities of the teacher.

The psychological tactics for effective conflict resolution and management are primarily determined by the development of the teacher's emotional intelligence (EQ). According to Daniel Goleman's concept, emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions, as well as to correctly perceive the emotional state of others [6]. At the moment a conflict arises, the educator must not fall into the trap of emotional reactivity—that is, they must not respond to aggression with aggression. Instead, a tactic is employed to pause the state of affect, make a cognitive assessment of the situation, and stabilize the student's emotional state. In psychological practice, this method is called emotional de-escalation. By slowing their rate of speech, softening their tone of voice, and signaling to the student that their feelings are understood, the teacher can reduce the conflict's

intensity within seconds, which opens the way for discussing the problem on a rational level.

Within the scope of communication tactics, the "I-message" technique proposed by Thomas Gordon and Carl Rogers's method of reflective (active) listening show the highest effectiveness in constructively resolving pedagogical conflicts. The "You-message" technique ("You are always late," "You are disorganized") evokes feelings of guilt and defensiveness in the student, leading to an escalation of the conflict. The "I-message" technique, however, allows the teacher to openly express the feelings caused by the student's behavior and the resulting disruption to the lesson, without insulting the student's character ("When someone is late for class, I get distracted and worry that I won't be able to explain the topic fully"). The tactic of active listening, in turn, eliminates semantic barriers in communication by fully listening to the student's point of view and rephrasing (paraphrasing) their statements. These psychological tactics instill a sense of being respected in the student and compel them to move from a position of confrontational resistance to one of collaborative problem-solving.

One of the most promising and scientifically-backed approaches to resolving teacher-student conflicts in the modern educational environment is school mediation. Resolving a conflict with the help of a neutral third party—a school psychologist—while balancing the rights and obligations of both sides, serves to restore mutual trust. Within the framework of a systemic-activity approach, conflicts should be viewed not merely as negative phenomena to be eliminated, but as sources of development that reveal imbalances in the education system and elevate relationships to a new, higher-quality level. Psychological tactics for managing pedagogical conflicts require the continuous improvement of a teacher's conflict resolution competence, ensuring their professional psychological well-being, and creating a student-centered, safe educational environment in the school. Only then will the school transform from a place of conformism and destructive clashes into a platform for creative collaboration and integrated education.

Conclusion: A number of systematic conclusions have been reached as a result of the scientific-theoretical and practical study of the mechanisms behind teacher-student conflicts and the psychological tactics for their resolution. In the context of the fundamental reform and humanization of modern school education, and its restructuring based on the requirements of the Law "On the Status of the Pedagogue," it is an urgent task to base teacher-student relations on the subject-subject principle and to ensure the psychological safety of the educational environment. Research indicates that pedagogical conflicts are not just random disagreements, but complex socio-psychological processes arising from an

imbalance of roles, goals, age-related crises, and communicative competencies among participants in the educational process. In particular, the clash between an adolescent student's self-awareness, desire for independence, and sense of adulthood, and the teacher's traditional authoritarian management style, serves as the main trigger for destructive conflicts in the school environment. The subjective perception of each other by the parties, emotional reactivity (i.e., the inability to control emotions), and semantic barriers in communication play a leading role in the mechanism of conflict emergence.

Empirical evidence has proven that the constructive resolution of conflicts and the reduction of their negative consequences on the educational process are directly dependent on the teacher's conflict resolution competence and emotional intelligence. In the pedagogical process, a strategy of responding to aggression with aggression or pressure is counterproductive; on the contrary, it leads to the affective polarization of the conflict and its transformation into interpersonal animosity. Instead, scientifically-backed psychological tactics such as emotional de-escalation, the "I-message" technique, and reflective listening enable a student to transition from a defensive and resistant stance to a stage of collaborative problem-solving. At the same time, establishing a person-centered and democratic communication style in educational institutions is the most effective preventive measure against conflicts. The systematic implementation of mediation services led by a school psychologist makes it possible to stabilize a positive psychological climate within the school community, reduce school phobia in students, and prevent professional burnout syndrome in teachers. In conclusion, the effective practical application of the proposed psychological tactics for managing pedagogical conflicts not only improves the quality of education but also serves as a favorable spiritual and psychological foundation for the younger generation to develop into the mentally healthy and well-rounded individuals envisioned by the head of our state.

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