

Abstract

The present study investigated interparental conflicts, attachment styles, and psychological manipulation in bullies and victims. The sample of adolescent middle and high school students (N=400) was taken from public and private schools, and were distributed in four groups: public school boys (n=100), public school girls (n=100), private school boys (n=100), and private school girls (n=100). The Urdu-translated versions of Children's Perception of Interparental Conflicts scale (CPIC) (Fincham, 2013), Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment – Revised (IPPA) (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987), Tactics of Manipulation (Buss, 1987) and Illinois Bullying Scale (IBS) (Espelage, 2001) were used for the study and were administered on the participants. Data was statistically analysed through Pearson Moment Correlation Analysis, Multiple Hierarchical Regression analysis, and Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). Significant relationship was found between interparental conflicts, attachment styles and psychological manipulation. Moreover, interparental conflicts was a strong positive predictor of psychological manipulation than attachment styles which was a weak yet significant positive predictor of the variable. Likewise, gender, parent-child relationship and peer relationship, and time spent with peers were also significant predictors of psychological manipulation. Additionally, differences in gender, grade, school and bully-victim groups were identified in the study across the dependent variables. There was a significant difference in males and females on manipulation tactics: males scored higher on psychological manipulation than females. There were also significant differences in grades and schools in terms of psychological manipulation. High school students in public schools showed more manipulative tendencies than middle schoolers in private schools. Also, bullies showed strong attachment to peers, while victims were more emotionally attached to mothers. In terms of psychological manipulation, victims scored higher on tactics of manipulation and used charm, silent treatment, regression and debasement to manipulate others. Findings of the current study may be helpful to combat negative effects of interparental conflicts, insecure attachment styles, and psychologically manipulative behaviours in adolescents, and bullying-victimization in school students in and out of school settings by formulating family and student guidance counseling, and educational and public awareness programs.

Keywords: interparental conflicts, attachment styles, manipulation tactics, psychological manipulation, bully-victimization.