



Counselling and Its Effect on Conflict Resolution Skills among Young Adults

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author SSR designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author MSD managed the helped in analyses of the study. Author NB managed the literature searches and aranged them accordingly. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was, to find out the effect of counselling on conflict resolution skills among young adults pre and post counselling. The current article presents the mean differences of conflict resolution skills among young adults before and after counselling. To conduct the study a sample of 120 young adults belonging to the age group of 20-40 years were selected. To measure the conflict resolution skills among young adults Conflict resolution skill questionnaire consisting of six domains such as physical, emotional, family, financial, academic & career-related and problem-solving skills was used. Highly significant mean differences were observed in all the domains of conflict resolution skills. Young adults after intervention were better able to manage conflicts with respect to career, emotional, problem-solving skills domains. Therefore, it was found that counselling techniques were effective in enhancing conflict resolution skills and enhancing better ways to deal with the conflicts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Young adulthood is a life transition phase for young men and women as they need to take many decisions about their future. According to Erickson, [1] classification of adulthood (18-40 years) is considered as young adulthood period. Young adults come across many conflicts during this phase in personal relationships, with family parents, caregivers, friends, partners and work mates. Sometimes conflicts can also happen within self when we learn something new that is different to what is believe earlier. Conflict refers to some form of friction, disagreement or discord arising between two individuals or within a group of members when the beliefs or actions between them are unacceptable. Conflicts can assist in making changes but it depends upon whether how the individual is better able to resolve the conflict. As conflict is a normal part of everyone's life, the ability to resolve conflicts effectively is a crucial skill for everyone to have. Conflict resolution is the employment of cooperative, beneficial strategies, like negotiating, reasoning, and more, to find solutions for disagreements with others. Poor conflict resolution skills are considered as a barrier for progress [2]. Unresolved conflicts can result in feelings of unhappiness, dissatisfaction, depression, stress and hopelessness. These emotions can manifest themselves in behaviours such as violence, emotional withdrawal, a breakdown in communication, avoiding personal relations affecting mental health.

It was also observed that environmental factors also affect individuals conflict resolution skills. Young adults, when exposed to conflicts at home, would turn down and react and reflect methods that they are influenced since childhood. Children's own social relationships can also be affected, with children prone to developing poor interpersonal skills [3]. As a result, children and young people in high conflict homes may have difficulties getting on with others, such as parents, siblings [4], teachers, peers and, in the longer term, romantic partners [5]. Effective problem-solving can increase situational coping and behavioural competence, which in turn may prevent or reduce emotional distress [6]. Therefore, it is necessary for young adults to learn conflict resolution skills to lead a satisfying life. Conflict resolution therapy is one of the best approaches to help individuals with

enhancing their conflict resolution skills. It is developed with a goal to help individuals feel as if they are in a win-win scenario. Conflict resolution training helps young adults to redirect conflict without emotional detouring and integrates imagery and communication as the primary tools for exploration and resolution [7]. Therefore, to understand the effectiveness of conflict resolution skills the current study aimed at helping young adults with varied problems such as career-related, financial, depression, anxiety, higher education and marital discord.

2. METHODOLOGY

Young adults belonging to the age group of 20-40 years were selected for the study. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. Young adults who had approached counselling centres in order to seek help from professionals for their inability to deal with conflicts and other related problems were part of the study. An equal sample of 60 men and 60 women were selected for the study. To find out the conflict resolution skills among young adults, the investigator used self-developed questionnaire on "Conflict resolution skills". It assesses the degree to which participants evaluate their conflict resolution skills in varied domains such as, physical domain, emotional domain, family domain, financial domain, academic and career domain, problem-solving skills domain. The data on conflict resolution skills were collected in two stages one before counselling sessions and the other after a minimum of 5 counselling sessions. The collected data were coded and analysed using frequency, percentages and paired t-test.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Physical Domain

It was evident from the above Table 1 that in physical domain majority comprising eighty-one per cent of the sample had scored low on physical domain. Only nineteen per cent of the sample were in the moderated category. None of the samples had scored high on physical domain. This might be because young adults were not pleased with their body and food habits, irregular sleep hours had made them score low on physical domain. Irregular sleep patterns due to long hours of usage of technology before sleep might have hindered their regular sleep

Table 1. Conflict resolution skills of young adults before counseling (N=120)

S. No	Domain	Low		Moderate		High	
		F	P	F	P	F	P
1.	Physical Domain	97	81	23	19	0	0
2.	Emotional Domain	102	85	18	15	0	0
3.	Family Domain	90	75	30	25	0	0
4.	Financial Domain	78	65	29	24	13	11
5.	Academic and Career Domain	81	68	30	25	9	8
6.	Problem solving skills domain	96	80	24	20	0	0

Note: 'F' represents frequency and 'p' represents percentage

patterns which affected their physical health and developed insomnia. The results of the study are in congruence with reviewed research found that comorbid mental-physical illness/conditions were evident across a wide age span. Specific physical health problems, including pain, gastrointestinal, and respiratory disorders, were apparent in those 18 years to those in their mid-late 20s, and/or with first episode psychosis [8].

3.2 Emotional Domain

It was evident that eighty-five per cent of the young adults scored low on the emotional domain. Only fifteen per cent of the sample were found in moderate category and none of the sample found in the high category before counselling. Low scores on emotional domain depict that young adults had difficulty in managing their emotions such as irritability, frustration, lack of energy, avoiding social behaviour, restlessness and agitation. Among the opportunities and independence which young people experience, there are challenges, key choices, new experiences and difficult life events where their resilience has been tested and inability to cope these will lead to emotional instability among them. A recent study revealed that the number of suicides for categories of professions like government service, private service, or students, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have reported the significantly higher number of suicides in each category compared to UP and Bihar due to debts. In 2013 the rural indebtedness in Indian households had gone up to 31 per cent. Telangana has the highest Incidence of indebtedness (IOI) with 59 per cent of rural households in debt which is close to the country average [9].

3.3 Family Domain

It was clear from Table 1 that seventy-five per cent of the sample had scored low on family

domain followed by twenty-five per cent scored moderately. None of the sample were found in high category. This might be due to lack of support from family in terms of decision making, conflicts with family members and least attention provided by the family members to the young adults have resulted in low scores in family domain. A study on effects of family conflict, divorce, and attachment patterns on the psychological distress and social adjustment of college freshmen and found that Parent-child conflict has been linked to lower perceptions of parental support which in turn lead to a higher likelihood of reported depressive symptoms in young adults [10].

3.4 Financial Domain

It was noticed from Table 1 that sixty-five per cent of the sample scored low on financial domain followed by twenty-four per cent in moderate. Only eleven per cent of the sample was found in high category. This means that more than half of the young adults had difficulty in managing their finances. This might be because of socioeconomic conditions and uncontrolled expenditures of young adults led to a low score in financial domain. It is said that money and mental health are often linked. Poor money management leads to debt and worrying about money can make mental health worse causing depression and stress. A study revealed that an estimated 11-31 million youth suffer from reported mental health problems in India. Results suggest that the household and individual factors like place of residence, wealth quintile, age, education, and occupation are the most important determinants of mental health problems among Indian youth. Parental factors lose their statistical significance once individual factors are controlled. 2015, WHO study further emphasized that between 30 and 40 people per 100,000 Indians aged between 15 -29 years kill

themselves. This accounts for about a third of all suicides in the country.

3.5 Academic and Career Domain

The Table 1 clearly states that sixty-eight per cent of young adults had scored low on career domain followed by twenty-five per cent in moderate category and eight per cent in high for the same. This means that young adults were not contented with their academic and career choices. This might also be due to lack of appreciation and growth in career, parental pressures in a choice of career, lack of financial support to acquiring higher studies and settling down in misfitted career led to low scores on academic and career domain in young adults. The correlation between psychological distress and educational achievement. She proposed a higher need for a provision in the schools for the children suffering from the psychological difficulties as it is seen that low achievement in school can have a substantial effect on opportunities in adult life, therefore, it implies in order to achieve the best possible outcomes in the long-term [11]. Another study conducted by Ohio State University has found that job satisfaction had some impact on physical health, its effect was particularly strong for mental health. The study also states that those who were less than happy with their work early in their careers were more depressed and worried and had more trouble sleeping. And the direction of job satisfaction — whether it is getting better or worse in an early career — has an influence on later health, the study showed.

3.6 Problem-solving Skills Domain

From the Table 1 it was noticed that eighty per cent of young adults scored low on problem-solving skills domain followed by twenty per cent

in the moderate category. This means that young adults were unable to solve their day-to-day problems and had difficulty in finding the best possible solution to their problems. Problem-solving and critical thinking refer to the ability to use knowledge, facts, and data to effectively solve problems. Problem-solving skills are considered a coping strategy that increases general competence and adaptation in real-world settings. Inability to cope up with these problems leads to depression, anxiety and suicidal tendencies among young adults [6]. In one study with 1,262 Turkish university students, found that 42% of the sample reported suicidal ideation during the past 12 months or lifetime, and 7% reported that they attempted to kill themselves during their lifetime or in the past 12 months. Past suicidal thoughts and attempts in young people are risk factors for future suicidality [12].

In total, it was observed that more than three fourth of the sample had scored low on all the dimensions of conflict resolution skills. This infers that young adults had low levels of conflict resolution skills before counselling. Individuals inability to deal with conflicts leads to anger, hurtful and resentful reactions. They also tend to the withdrawal of love, resulting in rejection, isolation, shaming and fear of abandonment. Poor communication and poor conflict resolution skills in the marriage relationship contributed to challenges within the marriage [13]. Research studies also revealed that having a highly avoidant partner or highly anxious partner contributed to marital challenges because it played a role in communication problems between the couple. family environmental factors such as inter-parental conflict and harsh parenting practices affect children's psychological development irrespective of whether parents and children are genetically related or not [14].

Table 2. Conflict resolution skills of young adults after counselling (N=120)

S.No	Domain	Low		Moderate		High	
		F	P	F	P	F	P
1.	Physical Domain	74	62	33	28	13	11
2.	Emotional Domain	48	40	38	32	34	28
3.	Family Domain	70	58	38	32	12	10
4.	Financial Domain	58	48	41	34	21	18
5.	Academic and Career Domain	61	51	36	30	23	19
6.	Problem solving skills domain	48	40	35	29	37	31

Note: Data presented in percentages

3.7 Physical Domain

From the above Table 2, It was evident from the table that eleven percent of the sample scored high on the physical domain in post-test followed by twenty-eight percent in moderate and sixty-two percent in the low category. It can be observed that when compared to pre-test young adults had improved on their physical domain compared to pre-test scores across all the categories. This resembles that young adults were conscious about their health and were able to exercise well and have healthy diet habits. This might be because counselling had enabled them to adapt healthy ways of livings by developing consciousness about themselves. Stress management and physical activity had significantly lowered levels of perceived stress and improved consciousness about physical health was noted at the end of the semester than the control group. These findings indicated that it is helpful for students to have some type of outlet or structure to manage conflicts and stress [15].

3.8 Emotional Domain

From the Table 2 it was clear that twenty-eight percent of them scored high on emotional domain compared to pre-test followed by thirty-two percent in moderate and forty percent in low category. This infers that more than half of the young adults had scored on moderate and high on emotional category compared to pre-test. This might be because young adults had developed necessary skill sets to overcome their negative emotions and were able concentrate on their tasks and eliminating negative emotions. Counselling therapies had reduced their feelings of frustration and anger and enabled them to be more socially active. A review study to explore the use of Complementary alternative medicine (CAM) in addressing stress levels for patients with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The authors found that CAM interventions such as relaxation, exercise, and meditation often addressed mental and emotional problems that exacerbate stress [16].

3.9 Family Domain

From the Table 2 it was observed that ten percent of the sample scored high on family domain followed by thirty-two percent in moderate and fifty-eight percent in the low category in post-test after counselling. The low scores in the post-test might be the sample needed more support and time as the degree of

their problem was more severe. However, when compared to pre-test very few samples had shown the difference in their family domain in post-test. This might be because young adults were better able to adjust with their families and also developed satisfying relationships with them. Moreover, families were also educated about varied techniques in dealing with tough situations. Such methods counselling will result in better outcomes as the constructively think together and help each other in times of distress. The results of the study are in congruence that when parents are trained with conflict resolution strategies by setting clear expectations, parental authority, negotiation, cooling down, and feedback to solve disagreements with their young adults were reduced and they were better able to resolve conflicts than earlier compared to non-structured or controlled group [17].

3.10 Financial Domain

From the Table 2 it was evident that eighteen percent of the sample were in high category followed by thirty-four percent in moderate and forty-eight percent in the low category in post-test. This infers that more than half of the sample were in moderate and high categories compared to pre-test. This might be because young adults had control over their expenditures and were able to manage their finances based on their income. Impact of financial literacy on level of stress and academic achievement among college students revealed that a very satisfactory level of financial literacy may lead to a low level of stress and an excellent academic performance [18]. Further results revealed that financial literacy in terms of cash management significantly predicts the level of stress and academic achievement of college students.

3.11 Academic and Career Domain

From the Table 2 it was observed that nineteen percent of the sample scored high in academic and career domain followed by thirty percent in moderate category and fifty-one percent in the low category in post-test after counselling. This can be inferred that nearly fifty percent of the sample were in moderate and high categories compared to pre-test. This might be due to the psychological, behavioural and educational intervention during the counselling session. They were able to channelize their energies in their interest areas and were getting better results which helped them score better in post-test. Clients' career decision difficulties significantly

decreased and their life satisfaction increased through the intervention [19]. These findings suggest that working alliance represents an important variable to better understand career interventions' underlying mechanisms. Moreover, face-to-face career counselling is effective considering career-specific as well as broader, life-related indicators.

3.12 Problem-solving Skills Domain

It was observed from the Table 2 that thirty-one percent of the sample scored high on problem-solving skills in post-test followed by twenty-nine percent in moderate and forty percent in low category after counselling. This means that more than half of the sample were in the moderate and high category when compared to pre-test. Young adults after counselling were valued and felt they listened as the counsellor was non-judgemental and given appropriate time to eliminate their blocks and rework on their thoughts. Multifaceted approaches used in the counselling sessions were effective in enhancing problem-solving skills of young adults. Individualized outcome measures on problem-solving counselling showed that problem-solving ability among the subjects in the experimental group had improved after four counselling sessions and suicidal behaviour has been reduced. The results are statistically significant [20].

In total, it was observed that more than fifty per cent of the sample had scored better in emotional and problem-solving skills domain compared to rest of all the other domain in post-test. Nearly fifty percent of the sample was found in moderate and high categories from

financial, academic and career domain after counselling. Fewer differences were found in physical and family domain. However, when compared to pre-test enhanced conflict resolution skills were witnessed in the post-test after counselling. It can be inferred that counselling was effective in helping young adults with conflicts in varied situations.

From the above table, it was evident that mean scores of conflict resolution skills with respect to pre and post-test scores of counselling had shown significant differences.

It was interesting to note that mean scores with respect to all the domains such as physical, emotional, family, interpersonal, financial, academic and problem skills had low scores in the pre-test. This might be because young adults were having difficulty in communicating with and confronting others in a conflicting context. Conflict resolution skills that are observed in growing up ages are likely to be adapted by the majority of the young adults. These might be good or faulty conflict management skills. Faulty management skills end up in disrupted relations among individuals at work, family and sometimes inability to face the conflicts will also lead to turmoil. Emotions which are suppressed for too long may erupt when control weakens and typically there would be an outburst in a moment of heat and stress. Such aggressive nature results in feelings of anger, frustration, anxiety and depression.

In contrast, from Fig. 1. it was evident that high scores were observed in all the domains of conflict resolution skills after counselling

Table 3. Mean differences in conflict resolution skills among young adults before and after counselling

S. No	Conflict resolution skills	Pre		Post		t-value	p-value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1.	Physical Domain	18.8	6.9	24.4	8.4	-9.0**	0.000
2.	Emotional Domain	18.9	6.9	28.2	9.7	-13.9**	0.000
3.	Family Domain	20.2	7.4	26.9	8.2	-9.7**	0.000
4.	Financial Domain	23.0	8.9	27.8	9.2	-9.9**	0.000
5.	Academic and Career Domain	20.9	8.4	26.0	9.8	-12.7**	0.000
6.	Problem solving Skills Domain	18.7	6.6	28.1	9.7	-16.8**	0.000
	Total	181.5	34.0	245.7	35.4	-30.3**	0.000

Note: *Significance at ($P < 0.05$),
**Significance at ($P < 0.05$), NS- Not Significant

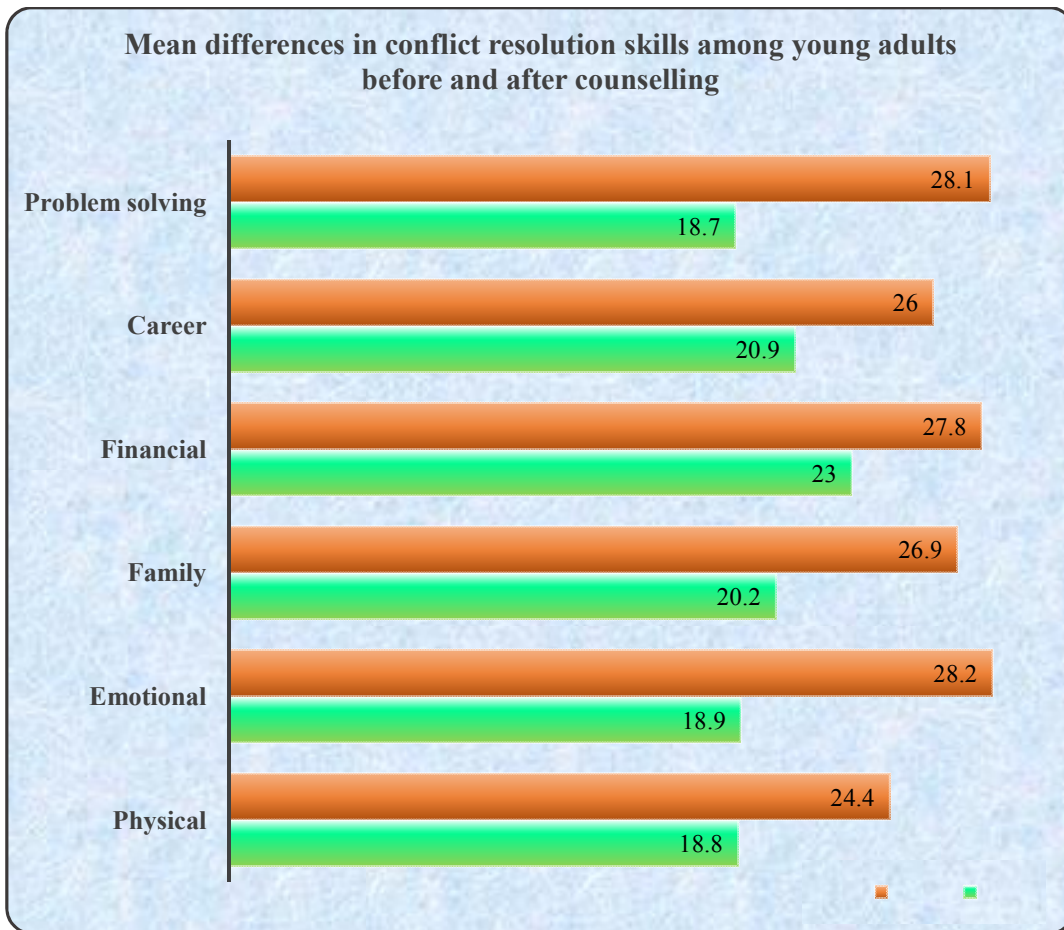


Fig. 1. Mean differences in conflict resolution skills among young adults before and after counseling

resulting in enhanced conflict resolution skills among young adults. Young adults had a better understanding of themselves with regard to their physical fitness and developed healthier sleeping habits. Feelings of stress had been reduced with the help of behavioural therapies and helped young adults in coping up with stress.

Counselling also had a significant effect on the family domain where individuals had received support and were able to communicate and express their feelings of low. Post counselling young adults were also better able to manage conflicts by drawing out a possible solution in a meaningful way. They had clear priorities set and goal orientation has enabled them to choose the best for them and eliminate the misfit choices. It shows that young adults were able to deal with day to day conflicts in a more passive and healthier way. The effects of the problem-solving to enhance effective coping skills and

psychological adjustment among college students showed that approach coping responses and psychological adjustment had increased after the program for the problem-solving training group. The results of this study suggest that self-appraised social problem-solving ability is concerned with the way in which individuals perceive and cope with problems encountered in everyday life [21].

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study reveal that counselling focused on conflict resolution skills among young adults had brought about enhanced conflict resolution skills in the post-test after counselling. It was evident that strategies used in counselling were effective in enhancing the conflict resolution skills among young adults. Low scores resulted in pre-test revealed that young adults had feelings of frustration, irritability and

hopelessness leading to depression and anxiety among young adults which led them in having poor conflict resolution skills. High conflict resolution skills in post-test revealed that young adults were equipped with enhanced conflict resolution skills and decreased levels of irritability and frustration and were positively related to enhanced self-confidence and well-being among young adults. Highly significant differences were observed in emotional, problem-solving skills and career domain reflecting that young adults were better able to manage their emotions and resolve problems in a more amicable way. Therefore, it can be concluded that counselling was effective in enhancing the conflict resolution skills among young adults.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author

ETHICAL APPROVAL

It is not applicable.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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