

“Unintentional Verbal Abuse against Teenagers by Chinese Parents.”

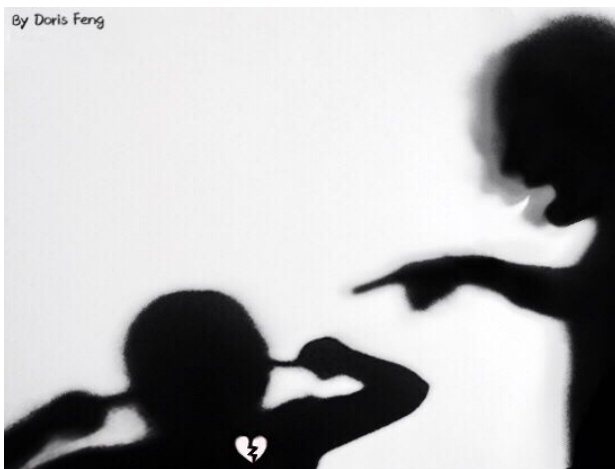
Explore deeper rationales behind verbal abuse and the further influence to children.

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In Chinese traditional culture, there is an old saying: “love deep, whip well.” In our daily life, Chinese parents tend to regard criticizing kids and denying their credits, as being responsible and a way of cultivating. Sentences like “How stupid you are!” or “You never gonna make it.” could be heard in many Chinese family when educating the kids. Parents themselves don’t even realize such a negative and denying attitude has almost become a tradition. Then, why is this approach so prevailing? Is it really effective?

Interviews have been done among a large number of parents and their children. Here are some typical comments which could demonstrate the family’s opinion on verbal abuse. Among over 16 families that we have interviewed, we actually find lots of typical examples and cases.



RATIONALE 1: Culture and own experience

“In our traditional thoughts, scolding is a way of teaching. It is a long-lasting tradition.”

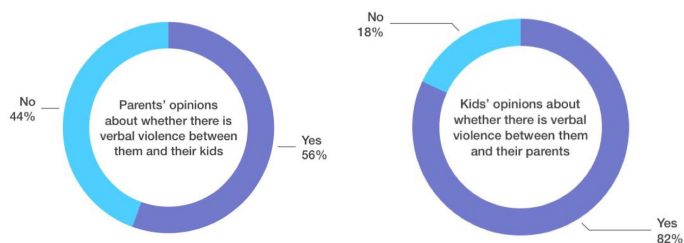
Obviously, one of the main triggers of verbal violence of one family could be the traditional culture.

In ancient China, it is widespread known that patria poetasters had flourished for a long period of time, indicating the absolute power and supreme status of parents in the family. All the rights, including, the power of economy, law and religion etc., were all under parents’ control and obligated sons and daughters to obey. This kind of tradition has been inheriting until now. Parents nowadays still hold the special status and overwhelming attitude towards their children. Parents consider scolding as

a kind of unique approach of educating their children. Meanwhile, through the research we have done before, 65.8% parents have been scolding by insulting words when they were young(especially adolescent period), which explains the other main rationale for parents to use verbal abuse unintentionally to their children. Parents themselves received such tradition to inherit because they always treat their own parents as the model to educate their children. Parents themselves were also the victims in the past, and this kind of incorrect approach for children has been widespread in today's society. Thus, children would be given an unsound personality, causing the vicious circle for next generation.



Mrs. Chen, a mother of 17-year-old two sons, said that she considers scolding her sons as an effective way since she was treated the same way by her mother during Mrs.Chen’s teenager time . According to the research our group have done before, 54.61% children think their origin families do have some tendency or expression of verbal violence. In addition, although 94.6% of these parents said that they know about verbal abuse, 55.4% of them still admitted that there is an existence of verbal abuse in their family. “This is inevitable to deal with teenagers ,” Mrs. Chen said, “I believe I’m doing the right thing for my boys.”



RATIONALE 2: the connection to social impact

"It is tacitly approved that the present condition in our society contributes to the growth of verbal abuse."

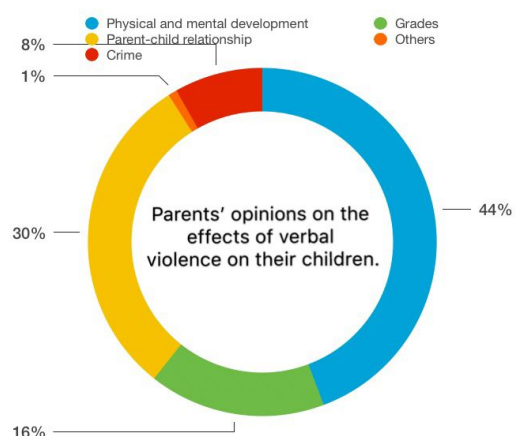
When we asked Yang Fangying, a 37-year-old mother, about her opinion on verbal abuse in her own social circle, she acknowledged the existing social circumstance that Chinese parents rarely regard verbal abuse as a problem which threaten kids’ psychological health and personal mould. By contrast, Chinese parents intend to make “ways of educating”(verbal violence) as an interesting topic to discuss and share.

The spread of external culture has been a factor of verbal violence for family. Many parents nowadays are influenced by incorrect things such as some articles without any evidence, some videos cut with wrong standard of value or some blind followings.

Yang's daughter points out that her father always sends some videos to his WeChat and to remind her of some wrong opinions. Those videos or articles, including some implications of using verbal

violence to children, are extremely popular among parents, and the contents have great possibility of misleading parents to distinguish between verbal violence and the constructive criticism. And then her mother expressed her strong agreement to the content. Therefore, Yang's daughter does not feel comfortable at all, resulting in not receiving her mother's messages. However, Yang does not realize that her daughter still hates this kind of education. She even cannot believe her daughter just deletes her WeChat, resulting in a worse situation for their relationship. In conclusion, parents at present lack of some education standards for their own children while they still do not have any consciousness.

Mr. Liu, a father of a high-school student, claims that he never considers verbal abuse with some laws, since he thinks it is proper for parents to educate their own children with verbal violence sometimes.



In Chinese society, although pre-existing *Anti-domestic Violence Law* effectively restrains the happening of physical violence, the latent impact of

verbal violence has not been noticed and controlled due to the absence of the relevant law, which provides a grey area for children's psychological damage. Such a dilemma should be attributed to the cultural background and public opinion environment.

Of course, this is not all. Other relatively special classifications need to be mentioned. In terms of economic development and geographical location, the influence of public opinion on urban families is relatively positive, but the psychological pressure on the leaders in society from workplace competition and economic problems is more obvious and prominent than before. This may lead to parents being more impatient in their living environment, and to create an environment in which family language violence is more likely to exist.

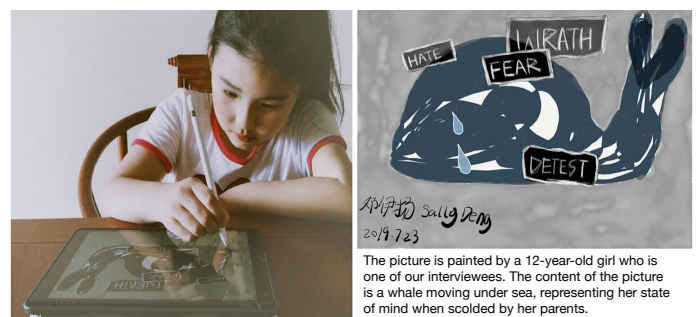
For instance, some rural families's life qualities are limited by educational resources, so parents' educational values are more backward or feudal, resulting in the fact that parents are more likely to use language violence in order to maintain their position of authority because of their impatience of considering other solutions. One of families we have interviewed comes from a countryside near Chengdu. The father named Zhu Ping says that he does not know any correct way to educate his children, so the only approach he thinks it's useful is to have some verbal abuse to his children. He always warns his children that if they do not study hard, they will be in the lowest class forever and become the most useless people in the world, remaining in the poor village. After abusing, his children will become docile. However, his children at present become pretty autistic.

RATIONALE 3: the physiological status influence parents and teens' behaviors

“ I don't know what's going on with our temper. It seems both of us are getting more easily to lose our temper recently.”

As we all know, adolescence is one of the most significant period of time in one ' s life. Hall, who was the first president of the American Psychological Association, viewed adolescence primarily as a time of internal turmoil and upheaval (Sturm and Drang).[1] On one hand, while teenagers are experiencing both physical and psychological development during the adolescence, the eager of being treated equally and becoming independent has been a major cause of conflict between parents and teenagers. Adolescence marks a rapid change in one's role within a family. Young children tend to assert themselves forcefully, but are unable to demonstrate much influence over family decisions until early adolescence, when they are increasingly viewed by parents as equals.

On the other hand, In China, as we have mentioned in the first part of our article, parents are considered to have an overwhelming status in the family. In addition, the physiological status of parents is also a “catalyst” to make parent-teen relationship tighter. As teens are growing stronger gradually, parents are finding themselves getting weaker. Parents ' sense of fear is evoked by the rapid physical difference between themselves and their children. Parents in China are afraid of the lost in control of their teenager kids. Moreover, most of parents have to bear the financial pressure to support their elders, but also busy keeping their families running, and even dealing with their own dilemmas in the workplace. Under such stress, it is difficult for parents to manage their expression and emotions. Even if they realize mistakes after verbal violence, which is due to emotional or child resistance, incidents often remain unresolved.

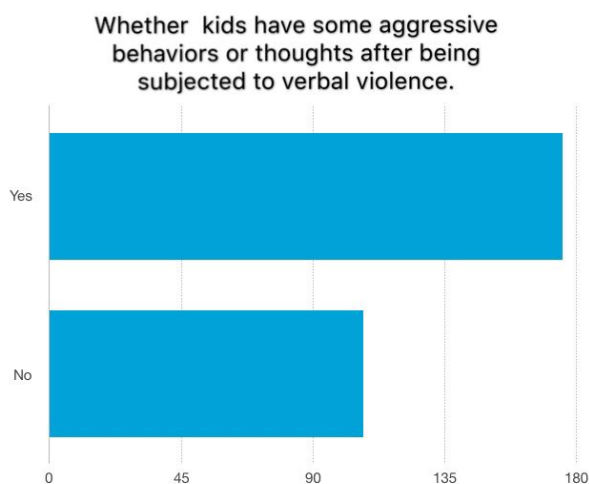


More seriously, after experiencing resistance or verbal conflict from their children, parents' emotions tend to go a step further in negative developments, ending in a vicious circle that is difficult to resolve.

Mr. Hu, a father who is anxious about his relationship with his son, “ He always tries to act against me. ” Mr. Hu had just shouted at his son the day before.“I had no choice but to use terrible words to threaten him since he is even taller and stronger than me. I know this gonna make our relationship even worse, but I was just furious.” By contrast, Mr. Hu’s son, Mike, argued against his father by telling us that Mr. Hu is always trying to control Mike’s life. “He pays no attention to my own opinion. I know he is experienced and I shall take his advice, but it’s just impossible for us to communicate calmly. I think I’m mature enough to decide on my own.”

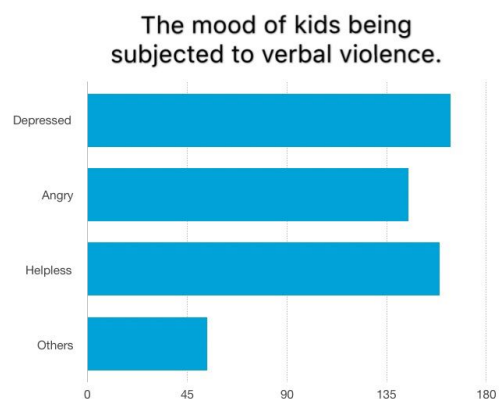
EFFECT: family relationship and teenagers’ personality

“I don't know how to deal with the distance between my son and me. I'm afraid of the ultimate consequence.”



Family is the first classroom in which people live and grow up with a life community that is linked by

marriage and blood relationship. The socialization process of a person begins with the family such as the mastery of basic skills, the determination of living goals, the formation of lifestyles, and the cultivation of social roles. British educator Locke once said, family education must be very careful, which cannot be taken lightly. Parents' mistakes in their children's education are like a wrong medicine. When they get it wrong the first time, it is difficult to remedy. Therefore, the family's influence on juveniles, especially on the formation of juvenile personality and the impact of emotions, is extremely important. Parents' words and deeds are vital to the healthy growth of their children.[2]



The influence of parents' bad behaviors can easily lead to juvenile misconduct and even crimes. According to the survey The Central Comprehensive Governance Office and the China Juvenile Research Center among over 1000 ordinary minors across the country, when asking about juvenile offenders "What do you think of your personality?" and "How do your family members treat you?", the correlation analysis between the two groups of data shows that children who are frequently shackled at home are most characterized by poor personality. 25.7% of the children were inferior, 22.1% were cold, and 22.1% were violent. 2 Family verbal abuse provides a hotbed and environment for juvenile delinquency. The transgression model of family language

violence itself is an example for children and adolescents to learn.

Since their self-concept and self-control ability are poor, the character of children and teenagers has born to incomplete. Among other effects, verbal abuse can undermine your child's self-esteem, damage his ability to trust and form relationships, and chip away at academic and social skills. In fact, current research shows that verbal abuse of children can be just as destructive emotionally as physical and sexual abuse and puts them in as much risk for depression and anxiety.[3]



The photo is about a 17-year-old student who just finished his interview and felt depressed.

When experiencing violence, the seeds of violent model existing in their kids' minds will be just like plant seeds in the land, whether the repressed seeds come from the subject itself or from the parents and other outside world, when encountering suitable scenarios, it always breaks through the soil and grows. This is an inevitable law and a growth of natural forces. Therefore, the final consequence is uncontrollable.



Luo Jiayi is interviewing her friend, discussing about the interviewee's opinion about the verbal abuse.

Gandhi once said, your beliefs become your thoughts. Your thoughts become you words. Your words become your actions. Your actions become your habits, your habits become your values, and your value, they become your destiny.[4]

Although no parents hate their kids, hundreds of parents haven't managed the proper method to educate their children. "Children are especially sensitive to verbal abuse. Typically, the more verbal abuse a child suffers, the more problems the child is likely to develop as a result"[5] Parents are almost a kid's whole world, no matter how old a kid is. Every single word, even any facial expression of parents could make a huge difference of a kid's heart. Every sentence of wounding words blurted out by parents, is like a nail piercing into the child's heart. Perhaps with time, the love in hindsight is able to pull out the nail slowly, but that ugly scar caused by the nail cannot be smoothed again. Please try to stop insulting words to criticize the children and make the children's world softer.

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