



## Conflict Resolution with Grace and Courtesy Lessons from Montessori School Environment

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### Abstract:

Conflicts are a natural part of life. The study was designed to investigate if Grace and Courtesy lessons improved children's ability to independently resolve conflicts. The study took place in a Montessori school environment with 615 participants teaching in Montessori and ECE classes. The researcher used self-developed questionnaire to record the response of participants towards conflicts and how they resolved conflicts in their class. In addition, I observed whether the participants utilized a grace and courtesy lesson to resolve the conflict. It was observed participants who used grace and courtesy techniques to resolve the conflicts enable their students to independently resolve their conflicts and they face fewer conflicts in their classroom. Independently resolved conflicts increased, as well as a decrease in children requesting help from adults during the conflict resolution process. The study was conducted to explore the effect of grace and courtesy on conflict resolution at Montessori level. It is clear from findings that grace and courtesy have a positive impact on the student's social performance. Grace and courtesy techniques are foundational to promoting effective student's social performance which is supported by various researchers before. These studies used collective Culture affects the behavior of teachers, students, staff, and community. Individuals' thoughts, attitudes, and actions are influenced by larger-scale social and cultural forces.

**Key Words:** Conflict Resolution, Grace, Courtesy, Montessori School, School Environment.



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## Introduction

Everyday life is full of conflict. Children are also subjected to conflict. As they adapt to their environment and culture, children at Montessori school learn how to solve issues, collaborate, and achieve independence (Carter & Dasson, 2017). The youngsters in the school range in age from thirty-three months to six years old. The adult's role in aiding the child to attain independence is to provide opportunities for practice, so that the child can gain confidence and comfort through repetition (Larsen, Lee, & Ganea, 2018). Grace and civility are taught through role plays with children and adults, in which the children engage in conflict resolution with the Both provide opportunities for the child to gain experience in a variety of situations (Gregoire, 2017).

As children develop, they gain greater degrees of freedom. In truth, growth throughout infancy is the rising capacity to satisfy one's requirements without the support of others (Kokoszka & Smith, 2016). The capacity to settle disagreements is no exception. To grow socially, children must learn to manage problems without the assistance of an adult. Therefore, a key component of teaching conflict resolution to young children is not just offering them skills to use during a disagreement but also assisting them to activate the tools at the proper times (Haslip, Allen-Handy, & Donaldson, 2018).

As a kid learns to navigate relationships and conditions with other children, conflict resolution is a natural component of their development. Every day, conflict arises in the classroom, and it frequently demands the intervention of an adult to help resolve the situation (Anez-Moronta, 2018). Children react to events in a variety of ways, and they may want assistance or recommendations in utilizing language to work through or settle problems in a mutually agreeable manner. Situations that might lead to a fight should be practiced ahead of time, such as how to get a drink of water a kid at a time or how to give and accept help from another child. The goal of these lessons is for the child to be able to use what they've learned when the opportunity arises, then put that knowledge to good use in their interactions (Gregoire, 2017).

## Statement of the Problem

As a teacher in a Montessori classroom, I have had this experience repeatedly. The more it occurred, the more firmly I felt that something had to change. The children were frustrated with the mediation process, and they were losing faith in one another as well. The classroom started to seem like a minefield of unexploded, unresolved memories that the students carried with them from day to day. I was overwhelmed by the unpredictability of feeling and routine that the regular and significant disagreements were having on the classroom. How might I transform the dispute resolution process into a good experience for the children?

## Objective of Study

The study was aimed at the achievement of the following objectives:

1. To investigate strategies that would help create a safe and tranquil learning environment for the students in Montessori environment.
2. To explore the impact of grace and courtesy lessons on resolution of conflicts.
3. To assess the impact of grace and courtesy instruction on children's social behaviors.

## Significance of Study

The results of the study will be useful for the following reasons:

1. Conflict resolution skills coupled with emotional learning and support should be offered to children in an organized fashion to create stability and order.
2. It is crucial to recognize the vast variety of children's emotions.
3. Negative emotions are viewed as an opportunity to go further into the discourse and understanding of the child's feelings, as well as those of their classmates.
4. Emotional intelligence, or the ability to comprehend and recognize one's own and others' emotions, can also

be a predictor of school readiness and academic accomplishment.

### Hypothesis

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant impact of Grace and Courtesy Lessons to improve children's ability to independently solve issue with their peers.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is significant impact of Grace and Courtesy Lessons to improve children's ability to independently solve issues with their peers.

### Review of Literature

Conflict is an unavoidable part of life. Learning to deal with and resolve problems in a kind manner speaks to how individuals seek to coexist in the world (Shoshani & Slone, 2017). For conflict resolution, several skills such as consciousness, creative thinking, personality, and interaction must be developed. Practice and training are essential for improving these abilities. "The goal of education is to promote lasting peace," Montessori (1972) said. Adults' role at this stage of development is to provide children with appropriate language and the opportunity to practice conflict resolution in a safe environment (Fosnot, 2023).

The children's life is full of learning. Children learn to master movement and language throughout these years. Youngsters start social life and contact with other children as well (Shoshani & Slone, 2017). When kids want something, they take it, whatever it is. Although developed, this kind of contact may be disruptive in the children's classroom and might lead to push, hit and even bite to communicate (Heydenberk, & Heydenberk, 2019). T

eachers utilize sports casting to give a term to what youngsters do in Montessori's classroom where I work. The teacher, for instance, says, "I see you both want that block, when a child takes building block and pulls it from a new youngster (Larsen, Lee, & Ganea, 2018). Is another block there? This is the block Louisa is using, and Claudia will be turned next." The instructor explains what is going on and provides words and answers for any potential thoughts or sentiments. "Claudia, let's go find another block," the instructor suggested, otherwise one of the youngsters may quit the block (Greene, 2020).

Jones (2022) reports that as children grow, greater levels of freedom are achieved. Childhood growth is the increased ability to satisfy one's needs without the assistance of others (Shoshani & Slone, 2017). There is no exception to conflict resolution.

Children need to learn to manage problems without the help of an adult to progress socially. Consequently, an important part of educating young children conflict resolution does not only provide them with tools for conflict resolution but also supports them at suitable times to activate these tools (Kokoszka & Smith, 2016). Montessori has therefore integrated into her pedagogy grace and courtesy instruction. She thought that children would acquire positive social conduct and self-regulation if the teachers' provided children with pleasant and healthy communities and showed grace and courtesy (Kelley, 2019).

Children acquire a variety of skills through their early school years, including how to tie a bow, write their names, and make friends. Disagreements amongst children are unavoidable when they are exercising and improving these abilities (Kararmak & Güloğlu, 2014). This might be because children want to manufacture the same things, children refusing to play games, or how words can harm a buddy.

Children have a hard time dealing with sentiments of extreme conflict (Larsen, Lee, & Ganea, 2018). This applies to youngsters from early childhood. Kids display physical outbursts, such as striking, kicking and pressing, rather than words (Kokoszka & Smith, 2016). They are harmful when the words are used. A skill that must be taught is how to rebuild relations following a conflict. Fostering friendships among children, increasing willingness and expanded exposure to others involves adult thinking and observation. Master skills of children are guided by the people in their lives, for example, comprehend how their actions influence people and express their wants and requirements politely (Mahan, 2018).

Conflict is a natural event for kids throughout their lives. In some cases, children must be given and learned the skills needed to handle disagreement favorably (Flynn & Schachter, 2017). Many people can resolve the argument in a somewhat courteous way by compromising, negotiating, and recognizing their feelings, but they don't think much about how they learned these concepts. Hopefully, as young children they were given skills, but also adults were taught and developed by growing and experience conflict resolution. However, this experience and practice are not obtainable to young children (Kokoszka & Smith, 2016).

Conflict could occur within a preschool context and young children should be provided the tools and tactics to resolve social conflicts without recourse to verbal and/or threats, such as shouting, punching and pushing. Teachers should treat conflicts as educational moments, a chance to enable children to face difficult social situations in a positive way (Larsen, Lee, & Ganea, 2018). The faster, easier option for teachers can be to inform youngsters how to solve an issue and to implement a seemingly working solution (Shoshani & Slone, 2017). Outside the situation may seem to have been resolved, but youngsters have never had the ability to resolve conflicts independently. Investigations have revealed that youngsters better respond to conflicts when encouraged and may rehearse and implement conflict resolution tactics when conflict occurs (Pekrun & Kersey, 2020).

Strategies for conflict resolution and emotional learning and support should be developed to provide consistency and discipline in children in a standardized manner. The vast array of children's emotions is vital to recognize. Negative emotions are considered as a way of exploring the debate and knowledge of the emotion of your child and of your peers deeper (Larsen, Lee, & Ganea, 2018).

Youngsters can also predict school readiness and academic performance through emotional awareness of their emotions and the identification of other emotions (McClelland *et al.*, 2017). This study analysis demonstrates that youngsters require skills that they may actively practice and mimic to manage disagreements (Shoshani & Slone, 2017). It emphasizes that instructors should be helpful, not push their own solutions rapidly. In addition, instructors should also reduce their conflict engagement; data suggests that, when the children are supplied with methods, they are eventually more autonomous and sophisticated in their problem resolution skills (Rafferty & Hinitz, 2018).

## Materials and Methods

The population of this study comprised of all Montessori and ECE teachers at public and private schools in the district of Muzaffargarh. The population size of this research is 827 Montessori and primary public and private schools situated in the Punjab province of Pakistan. 615 Montessori and ECE teachers teaching up to six years students in public and private schools of Muzaffargarh district were randomly selected as the sample of this study. The following table shows the exact number of respondents that broke down.

**Table1**  
*Sample of District Muzaffargarh Montessori & Primary Schools*

| Sr. No | Tehsil       | No of Schools |            | No Montessori/ECE Teachers |
|--------|--------------|---------------|------------|----------------------------|
|        |              | Male          | Female     |                            |
| 1      | Muzaffargarh | 146           | 118        | 264                        |
| 2      | KotAdu       | 110           | 87         | 197                        |
| 3      | Jatoi        | 51            | 29         | 80                         |
| 4      | Ali Pur      | 43            | 31         | 74                         |
|        | <b>Total</b> | <b>350</b>    | <b>365</b> | <b>615</b>                 |

## Results and Discussion

To determine the effects of Grace and Courtesy Lessons on Conflict Resolution in Montessori School Environment, a questionnaire was developed which was accordingly validated and administered upon the teachers. The questionnaire was improved considering the feedback received, whereas difficulties and ambiguities pointed out were removed in consultation with the experts. Researchers personally visited all the schools and collected the data.

Teacher's participation for survey was classified into two categories i.e. 1: "Grace and Courtesy Lessons Applied" and 2: "Grace and Courtesy Lessons not Applied". Conflict outcome was classified into three categories referred as the 'Resolved Peacefully' in comparison to 'Escalated' and "Teacher Intervention". Chi-square distribution was applied to ascertain the effects of Grace and Courtesy Lessons on Conflict Resolution in Montessori School Environment. The significance of the effects was estimated at 0.05 level of significance. The Chi-square distribution was calculated through the following formula:

**Table 2**

*Observed Data*

| <b>Conflict Approach</b> | <b>Resolution Grace and Courtesy Lessons Applied</b> | <b>Resolution Grace and Courtesy Lessons Not Applied</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------------------|--|--|--------------|
| Resolved Peacefully      | 160  | 50   | 210          |
| Escalated                | 45   | 105  | 150          |
| Teacher Intervention     | 95   | 145  | 240          |
| Total                    | 300  | 300  | 600          |

To measure the effects of Grace and Courtesy Lessons on Conflict Resolution in Montessori School Environment, Chi-square distribution was used. Calculated Chi-square value was found to be 92.04, against the Table value of 5.99 at = 0.05 degree of freedom. Calculated value being much greater than tabulated value i.e.  $92.04 > 5.99$  refers to a significant relationship among the two variables at 0.05 level of significance. Hence  $H_1$  "There is significant impact of Grace and Courtesy Lessons to improve children's ability to independently solve issue with their peers." was accepted.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

In perspective of the data analysis concerning effects of Grace and Courtesy Lessons on Conflict Resolution in Montessori School Environment the calculated value of Chi-square was found as 92.04, which was greater than that of the Table value i.e. 5.99. It was thus concluded based on calculated data that there is a significant effect of Grace and Courtesy Lessons on Conflict Resolution in Montessori School Environment. It was further concluded that there is a direct relationship between the two variables and Grace and Courtesy Lessons improve children's ability to independently solve their conflicts with their peers. This study aimed investigation of the effects of Grace and Courtesy Lessons on Conflict Resolution in Montessori School Environment. A questionnaire was developed, validated and administered upon the Montessori teachers. Data was analyzed through Chi-square distribution, being the most appropriate statistical analysis technique for this study. It was found that Grace and Courtesy Lessons improve children's ability to independently solve their conflicts with their peers. Findings and conclusion of the study led researchers to the following recommendations:

1. Grace and courtesy are the best way for conflict resolution at Montessori level. It's recommended that children in Montessori and ECE classes must have deal with grace and courtesy.
2. There should be ECE training courses for teachers to enhance their student's conflict resolution capabilities.
3. Grace and courtesy should be practiced by adults in front of Montessori students to groom their social interactions.
4. They should separate Montessori school for early childhood.

## Limitations and Future Directions

The population of this study comprised of all Montessori and ECE teachers in only one district of Muzaffargarh, hence sample size was very limited and small. Therefore, the results of the study applied to the specific areas wherefrom the samples were drawn. However, to generalize the result in the whole province, future studies need to conduct study with a larger sample size including urban and rural areas of the province. Further they can compare the gender differences to get deeper understanding regarding the views of the respondents.



## Declarations

**Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate:** This study strictly adhered to the declaration of Helsinki and relevant national and institutional ethical guidelines. Informed consent was not required as secondary data available on websites was obtained for analysis. All procedures performed in this study were in accordance with the ethical standards of the Helsinki Declaration.

**Consent for Publication:** Not Applicable.

**Availability of Data and Material:** Data for this study will be provided upon a written request to the corresponding author.

**Competing Interest:** The authors declare that they have no competing and conflict of interest.

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