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A Study Concerning the Generalization Effects of Perspective Differences among Adolescent Middle School Students

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Abstract: Conflicts arising from divergent perspectives are common in adolescence, a stage marked by the ongoing formation of beliefs. This study surveyed 103 adolescents to investigate the generalization effects of perspective differences. The findings show that value-based differences among middle school students mainly appear in attitudes toward financial issues and emotional factors, while differences in understanding objective facts are concentrated in beliefs about the malleability of intelligence and the importance of effort. Variations in personal preferences are reflected in favored sports teams and the choice of celebrating birthdays by the lunar or solar calendar. Gender did not produce significant differences across values, factual understanding, or preferences, whereas age differences were evident: high school students exhibited greater conceptual divergence than middle school students across all dimensions. Perspective consistency among middle school students produced a moderate positive generalization effect, where agreement on values, preferences, and factual understanding corresponded to higher levels of relational harmony, personal and regional idealization, and familial idealization. In contrast, perspective divergences elicited a moderate negative generalization effect. Only differences in preferences and factual understanding were associated with relational conflict, personal criticism, regional bias, and familial bias, while value discrepancies did not trigger negative effects. Based on these results, the study provides recommendations to help middle school students manage conceptual differences more effectively in future interactions.

Keywords: Adolescents; Middle school students; Perspective differences; Generalization effect

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1. Introduction

During the middle school years, adolescents experience rapid physical and psychological changes alongside shifts in social roles and relationships. A prominent phenomenon in this stage is the divergence of perspectives among peers, often reflected in disagreements, conflicting interests, and value-based differences. When poorly managed,

these discrepancies may escalate into interpersonal disputes or even physical confrontation. Such incidents are not uncommon; for instance, a conflict over differing opinions at the Affiliated Experimental Middle School of the Sichuan Academy of Sciences escalated from argument to violence and ultimately resulted in a student's suicide. These conflicts may further lead to clique formation, adversely influencing mental health, academic outcomes, and social development. Against this backdrop, the present study investigates how middle school students articulate and navigate perspective differences, examines group disparities and their consequences, and aims to identify effective strategies to support harmonious peer interactions.

Existing research primarily centers on conceptual development, peer influence, conflict mechanisms, and intervention strategies. Mu Xiaoyong [3] outlined the developmental stages of conceptual thinking—oscillation-progression, plateau, and mutation—emphasizing that increasingly abstract concepts require longer periods for maturation. Li Shiyuan [2] found that peer tutoring may harm adolescents' emotional well-being and academic achievement due to emotional contagion and behavioral imitation, and that decisions to join or withdraw from tutoring do not substantially mitigate these risks. Xie Yongxiang (2023) reported that collective prosocial behavior strengthens adolescents' prosocial tendencies through school belonging, whereas class-level deviance predicts adolescent deviance, with weaker mediation from school alienation. Tang Xuelian [5] highlighted the dual impact of peer groups: positive groups promote moral growth and belonging, whereas negative groups narrow moral cognition and foster moral rigidity through weakened moral emotion and will. Nie Chaoju [4] noted that adolescents, driven by emerging self-awareness yet constrained by limited cognitive and social experience, are prone to conceptual disagreements and conflict. Karimova [7] found that supportive collective psychological climates enhance peer affinity, promoting compromise and cooperative strategies in conflict resolution. Research on peer bullying further enriches this understanding; Marwick and Boyd [8] proposed that "dramatization" serves as a self-protective strategy enabling adolescents to distance themselves from adult-defined notions of bullying while maintaining agency and dignity.

Although current research on adolescent issues provides theoretical guidance for behavioral interventions, it predominantly emphasizes peer influence, cognitive development during adolescence, and potential conflicts, while largely neglecting the phenomenon of conceptual opposition among adolescents themselves. This study seeks to investigate this phenomenon in depth, with the objective of elucidating the mechanisms driving the generalization effect of conceptual opposition, thereby contributing to more effective strategies for supporting and guiding adolescent mental health**.**

2. Research Process

2.1. Research Methods

2.1.1. Design of Research Methods

Regarding research design, this study primarily utilizes a questionnaire survey approach, organized around three principal dimensions:

(1) The expression of opposing viewpoints among adolescents.

(2) The group-based variations in these opposing viewpoints within the adolescent population.

(3) The consequences arising from such opposing viewpoints among adolescents.

The questionnaire was developed accordingly, and data were gathered through online distribution via the Wenjuanxing platform. The research findings were subsequently obtained through systematic analysis of the

collected data.

2.1.2. Statistical Data Analysis Methods

The statistical analysis of the data was conducted primarily using Excel and SPSS software. Excel was utilized for data analysis, preprocessing, and visual representations following the data exported from the Wenjuanxing platform. SPSS was employed for conducting statistical tests pertinent to the research questions, including descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and regression analysis. Specifically, descriptive statistics were applied to address Question 1, which examined the manifestations of view differences among middle school students. Independent samples t-tests were used to analyze Question 2, focusing on group differences in view differences among middle school students. For Question 3 about the generalization effects of view differences among middle school students, both descriptive statistics and regression analysis were employed.

2.2. Research Procedures

2.2.1. Data Collection Procedures

This study primarily employed a self-designed questionnaire for data collection. First, questions regarding demographic variables such as gender, age, and educational background were designed to clearly describe the sample characteristics. Secondly, subsidiary questions were formulated to investigate the manifestation of divergent perspectives among middle school students, variations across different groups, and the effects of generalization. The questionnaire was constructed based on established authoritative surveys and utilized a five-point Likert scale to evaluate the participants' subjective perceptions, with response options spanning from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree"). An illustrative item from the questionnaire was: "You have significant personal preference conflicts with the classmate/friend whose views differ most from yours."

2.2.2. Data Collection Procedure

The study subjects were middle school students, and sufficient samples were obtained through self-distribution. The researcher first entered the compiled survey questionnaire into the Wenshuangxing platform, creating an electronic questionnaire for distribution. The sampling process utilized a snowball sampling technique. Specifically, the researcher disseminated the Wenshuangxing survey link within social media networks and middle/high school class groups, directly forwarded it to close acquaintances from middle school, and subsequently relied on these initial contacts to facilitate further distribution, thereby acquiring additional participants.

2.3. Sample Characteristics

This study collected 103 valid samples, as shown in Table 1. Among the valid samples, the number of female participants (n = 36, 34.95%) was lower than that of male participants (n = 67, 65.05%). Regarding age, the majority of respondents were between 14 and 16 years old (n = 65, 63.11%), followed by those aged 17 to 19 years (n = 38, 36.89%). In terms of educational background, most participants were enrolled in high school (n = 97, 94.17%), which was substantially higher than the proportion attending junior high school (n = 6, 5.83%). This predominance of high school students can likely be attributed to the dissemination of the survey primarily involved close friends and secondary contacts who were also predominantly high school students, thereby contributing to the majority representation of high school respondents.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	67	65.05%
	Female	36	34.95%
Age	10-13 years old	0	0.00%
	14-16 years old	65	63.11%
	17-19 years old	38	36.89%
Education background	Junior High School	6	5.83%
	High School	97	94.17%

Note: n=103.

3. Research Results

3.1. Manifestations of Value Differences among Middle School Students

3.1.1. Value Systems

The value systems of middle school students are in a formative stage and may demonstrate conceptual variations compared to their peers during this developmental period. This study initially conducted an investigation and statistical analysis of the perspective differences present within the value systems of middle school students. As depicted in **Figure 1**, the most prominent differences among middle school students' values are observed in their attitudes toward money (e.g., the perceived importance of money) (80 out of 103 participants) and emotional responses (e.g., contrasting strategies for resolving interpersonal conflicts, such as avoidance versus negotiation) (81 out of 103 participants). In contrast, differences in views on nation(e.g., China-US relations and China-Japan relations) (24 out of 103 participants) and on life-related concepts (e.g., the meaning of life) (33 out of 103 participants) were comparatively less pronounced.

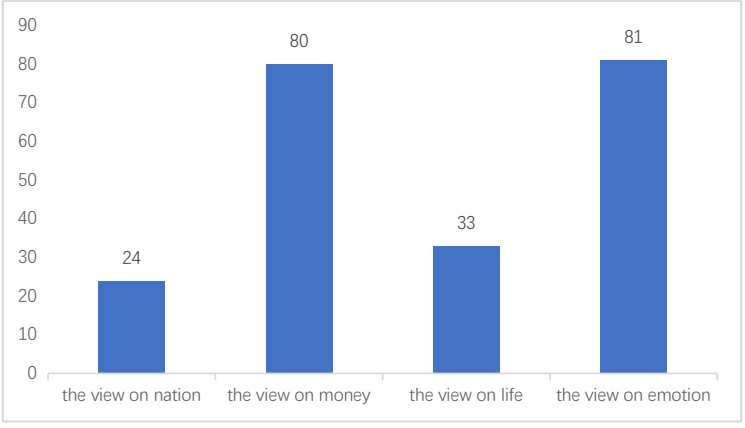

Figure 1. Differences in Value Concepts among Middle School Students

3.1.2. Objective Facts Understanding

Differences and disputes may also arise among middle school students regarding objective facts understanding (such as the correct answer to a specific question). This study examined and conducted a statistical analysis of variations in students' perceptions of objective facts understanding. As illustrated in **Figure 2**, 84 middle school

students reported divergent opinions from their peers concerning the question of "whether effort is significant," 74 students indicated differing views on "whether IQ (Intelligence Quotient) is malleable," and 43 students expressed disagreement regarding "the correct answer to a question." These results indicate that discrepancies in objective facts understanding are prevalent among middle school students.

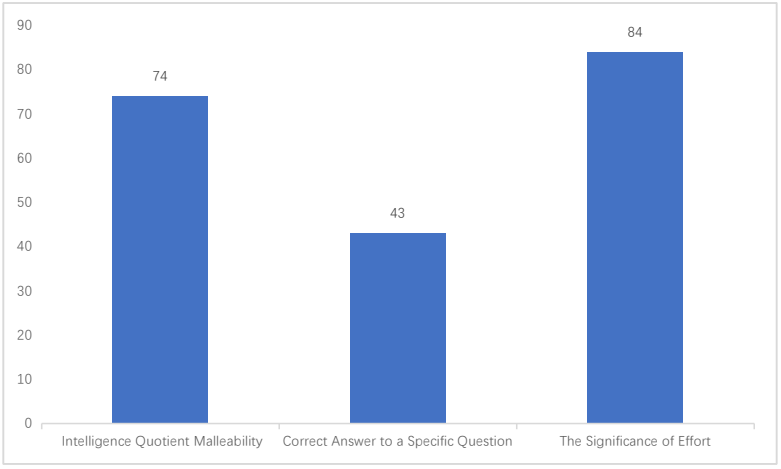

Figure 2. Differences in Middle School Students' Perceptions of Objective Facts Understanding

3.1.3. Personal Preferences

During adolescence, middle school students often place a strong emphasis on individuality, which may result in varying views based on personal preferences. This study examined and conducted a statistical analysis of the differences in middle school students' perceptions of personal preferences. As illustrated in **Figure 3**, notable differences were identified among students concerning their "favorite sports teams" (56 out of 103) and the "actual date for birthday celebration (lunar versus solar calendar)" (52 out of 103). Moderate variability was observed in preferences related to "favorite celebrities" (43 out of 103), "favorite foods" (35 out of 103), and "favorite bloggers" (27 out of 103). Conversely, disparities in preferences regarding favorite games, lifestyle choices, and political views were comparatively minimal, with fewer than 20 students indicating divergent opinions from their peers in these domains. These results suggest that although differences in personal preferences are prevalent among middle school students, they are most prominently manifested in the selection of favorite sports teams and the choice of birthday celebration date based on a different calendar.

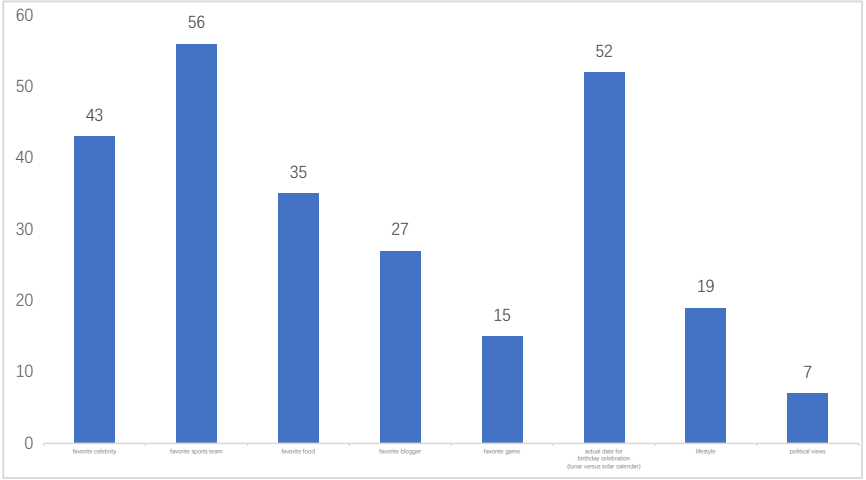

Figure 3. Differences in Personal Preference Concepts among Middle School Students

3.2. Group Differences in Middle School Students' Perspectives

3.2.1. Gender Differences in Middle School Students' Perspectives

Male and female students may prioritize different dimensions, resulting in distinct patterns of conceptual variation. For example, female students might emphasize values more, whereas male students may concentrate on objective facts. Accordingly, this study investigated gender-based differences in perspective variations among middle school students. As indicated in **Table 2**, no statistically significant differences were observed between male and female students regarding objective facts understanding ($t = 0.80$, $p > 0.05$), personal preferences ($t = 0.08$, $p > 0.05$), or values ($t = 0.62$, $p > 0.05$). These results imply that male and female students demonstrate comparable patterns of perspective differences.

Table 2. Gender Differences in Middle School Students' Perspective Variations

	Male	Female	t	p
Objective Facts Understanding	3.16	3.06	0.80	0.43
Personal Preferences	3.14	3.13	0.08	0.94
Values	3.11	3.03	0.62	0.54

Note: Two-tailed test.

3.2.2. Age Differences in Middle School Students' Perspectives

Middle school students of varying ages may prioritize distinct factors, resulting in differences in their conceptual understandings. For example, junior high school students tend to emphasize personal preferences, whereas junior high school students are more inclined to focus on objective facts. This study investigated age-related differences in conceptual distinctions among middle school students, with the results summarized in **Table 3**. According to **Table 3**, junior high school students showed significantly greater divergence in perspectives compared to junior high school students across all measured dimensions: objective facts understanding ($t = -6.04$, $p < 0.001$), personal preferences ($t = -5.54$, $p < 0.001$), and values ($t = -5.33$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that junior high school students exhibit substantially more pronounced conceptual differentiation than the junior high school students.

Table 3. Age Differences in Perspectives Discrepancies Among Middle School Students

	Junior High School	High School	t	p
Objective Facts Understanding	1.89	3.20	-6.04***	<0.001
Personal Preferences	1.94	3.21	-5.54***	<0.001
Values	1.79	3.16	-5.33***	<0.001

Note: *** indicates p<0.001, two-tailed test.

3.3. Generalization Effects of Middle School Students' Perspective Differences

3.3.1. Descriptive Statistics Analysis of Positive Generalization Effects concerning Perspective Consistency

When discrepancies in perspectives among middle school students are minimal, they may demonstrate a state of attitudinal consistency. Encountering peers with similar viewpoints can also elicit a positive generalization effect. For example, sharing admiration for the same celebrity with a classmate may promote harmonious interpersonal relationships, potentially leading to one's idealization of the classmate. This study performed a statistical analysis

of the positive generalization effect resulting from attitudinal congruence among middle school students, with the results illustrated in **Figure 4**. As depicted in **Figure 4**, the generalization effect associated with perspective consistency among these students is manifested in dimensions such as relationship harmony, personal idealization, regional preference, and family background embellishment, with mean scores of 2.94, 3.12, 3.10, and 3.11, respectively. The overall distribution centers around the midpoint of 3 on a 5-point scale, indicating that the positive generalization effect derived from perspective consistency among middle school students is moderate in magnitude

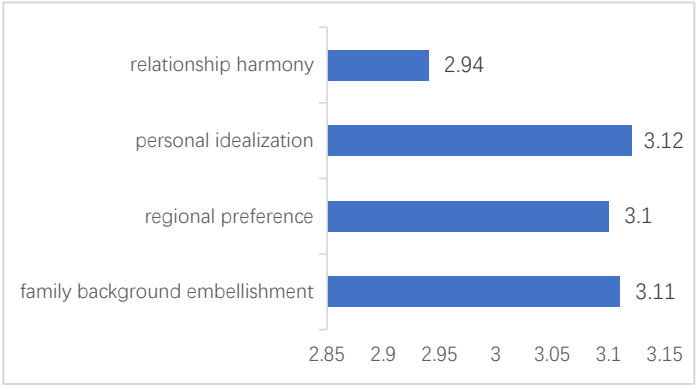

Figure 4. Positive Generalization Effect concerning Perspective Consistency among Middle School Students

3.3.2. Descriptive Statistical Analysis of the Negative Generalization Effect Related to Divergent Perspectives among Middle School Students

Notable differences in the viewpoints of middle school students often give rise to conceptual disagreements. Encountering peers with conflicting opinions can elicit a negative generalization effect. For example, tensions arising from differing preferences for sports teams may result in generalized personal criticisms directed at classmates in all dimensions. This study conducted a statistical examination of the negative generalization effect associated with divergent perspectives among middle school students. As illustrated in **Figure 5**, the generalization effect related to inconsistencies in viewpoints among middle school students is evident in dimensions such as family background bias, regional bias, personal attacks, and interpersonal conflicts, with mean scores of 3.01, 3.01, 2.99, and 3.06, respectively. The overall distribution centers around the midpoint of 3 on a 5-point scale, suggesting that the negative generalization effects resulting from divergent perspectives among middle school students occur at a moderate intensity.

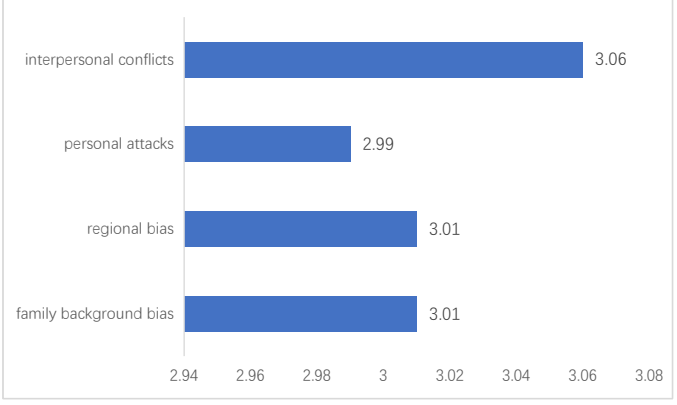

Figure 5. Negative Generalization Effect of Divergent Perspectives among Middle School Students

3.3.3. Regression Analysis of Positive Generalization Effects concerning Perspective Consistency among Middle School Students

The effects of positive generalization may differ across various dimensions of Perspective Consistency. Specifically, value harmony is generally associated with the enhancement of personal idealization, whereas preference consistency is more closely linked to the promotion of relationship harmony. In this study, value harmony, preference consistency, and factual harmony were selected as independent variables, and their impacts on relationship harmony, personal idealization, regional preference, and family background embellishment were examined through regression analyses. **Table 4** summarizes the results and reveals that value harmony exerts a significant positive effect on personal idealization ($\beta = 0.49$, $p < 0.001$), regional preference ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$), and family background embellishment ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.05$). Preference consistency was found to significantly and positively influence relationship harmony ($\beta = 0.65$, $p < 0.001$), personal idealization ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.05$), and regional preference ($\beta = 0.72$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, factual harmony demonstrated a significant positive effect on personal idealization ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$) and family background embellishment ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that Perspective Consistency among middle school students in terms of values, personal preferences, and objective facts understanding substantially contributes to a positive generalization effect.

Table 4. Regression Analysis of Generalization Effects on Middle School Students' Perceptions

	relationship harmony	personal idealization	regional preference	family background embellishment
Gender	-0.14	-0.31	0.03	-0.1
Age	-0.08	-0.1	-0.01	-0.1
Educational Background	-0.38	0.02	-0.17	-0.04
Value Harmony	0.01	0.49***	0.18*	0.19*
Preference Consistency	0.65***	0.17*	0.72***	0.12
Factual Harmony	0.15	0.28**	0.07	0.61***
R^2	0.65	0.67	0.7	0.67
F	29.55	31.85	37.38	31.81

Note: * indicates $p<0.05$, *** indicates $p<0.001$, two-tailed test.

3.3.4. Regression Analysis of Negative Generalization Effects from Opposing Perspectives among Middle School Students

Negative generalization effects arising from opposing perspectives may vary across domains. For example, inconsistencies in objective facts understanding are more likely to provoke personal attacks, whereas divergences in preferences tend to result in relational conflicts. This study utilized differences in values, objective facts understanding, and preferences as independent variables to perform regression analyses on dependent variables, including relational conflicts, personal attacks, regional bias, and family background bias. According to the results indicated by **Table 5**, differences in values did not exert a statistically significant effect on relational conflict ($\beta = 0.02$, $p > 0.05$), personal attacks ($\beta = -0.17$, $p > 0.05$), regional bias($\beta = 0.08$, $p > 0.05$), or family background bias($\beta = 0.01$, $p > 0.05$). In contrast, differences in preferences demonstrated a significant positive association with relational conflict ($\beta = 0.65$, $p < 0.001$), personal attacks ($\beta = 0.69$, $p < 0.001$), regional bias ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$), and family background bias($\beta = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, differences in objective facts understanding were

significantly and positively related to personal attacks ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.01$), regional bias ($\beta = 0.44$, $p < 0.001$), and family background bias($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$). These results indicate that value differences among middle school students do not contribute to negative generalization effects, whereas variations in personal preferences and objective facts understanding tend to exacerbate such effects, manifesting as relational conflicts, personal attacks, and biases based on region and family background.

Table 5. Regression Analysis of Generalization Effects from Perspectives Differences among Middle School Students

	Relational Conflicts	Personal Attacks	Regional Bias	Family Background Bias
Gender	0.15	-0.19	0.04	-0.12
Age	0.06	-0.17	-0.12	-0.06
Educational Background	0.23	0.05	0.1	-0.23
Differences in Value	0.02	-0.17	0.08	0.01
Differences in Preference	0.65***	0.69***	0.29***	0.50***
Differences in Objective Facts Understanding	0.16	0.39**	0.44***	0.35**
R^2	0.62	0.76	0.46	0.48
F	30.12	21.84	13.8	14.62

Note: ** denotes $p<0.01$, *** denotes $p<0.001$, two-tailed test.

4.1. Conclusions

This study examined perspective differences among middle school students and their generalization effects through a questionnaire survey. The results show that such differences mainly manifest in three domains: values, objective factual understanding, and personal preferences. Value-related differences are reflected in divergent attitudes toward money and emotions; disagreements in objective understanding focus on IQ malleability and the role of effort; preference differences appear in favored sports teams and whether birthdays are celebrated using the lunar or solar calendar.

Group comparisons revealed no significant gender differences across these domains. However, high school students exhibited significantly greater divergence than junior high school students in values, objective understanding, and preferences.

Regarding generalization effects, perspective consistency among middle school students generated moderate positive effects, enhancing relational harmony and contributing to personal, regional, and family idealization. In contrast, perspective differences produced moderate negative generalization effects. Notably, only divergences in preferences and objective understanding—rather than values—were associated with relational conflict, personal attacks, regional bias, and family background bias.

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. Manifestations of Perspective Differences

The findings indicate clear divergences among middle school students in three domains: values, objective factual understanding, and personal preferences. Value-related differences mainly concern attitudes toward money and emotion, which are strongly shaped by family upbringing and the variability of familial environments during adolescence. Differences in understanding objective facts—particularly beliefs about IQ malleability and the role

of effort—may stem from academic experiences. Students who achieve success through effort tend to believe IQ is changeable, while those who struggle despite exertion may view IQ as fixed, resulting in contrasting interpretations of ability and effort.

Personal preference differences, such as support for particular sports teams or choosing lunar versus solar birthday celebrations, largely reflect sociocultural influences, including gendered leisure activities and family traditions linked to rural or urban backgrounds.

4.2.2. Greater Perspective Differences among High School Students

High school students exhibit significantly greater divergence than junior high school students across all three domains. This can be explained by their higher cognitive maturity, which enables more complex reasoning about facts, preferences, and values. Their longer and more intensive academic exposure further broadens their knowledge base, fostering more differentiated viewpoints. Additionally, expanded social interaction with diverse peer groups increases contact with varied opinions, promoting the development of more heterogeneous perspectives. Together, cognitive development, enriched learning experiences, and wider social environments contribute to the heightened diversity of perspectives among high school students.

4.2.3. Positive Generalization Effects from Perspective Consistency

Perspective consistency produces moderate positive generalization effects among middle school students. Agreement in values, preferences, or factual understanding enhances relational harmony and increases the likelihood of forming friendships. Such consistency also promotes personal idealization, in which students overlook minor flaws and attribute positive traits to peers who share their viewpoints. Furthermore, once identification with an individual is established, favorable perceptions may extend to their family and regional background, generating family and regional idealization.

4.2.4. Negative Generalization Effects from Perspective Differences

Perspective differences lead to moderate negative generalization effects, particularly when involving preferences and factual understanding. Discrepancies in these areas are more salient to middle school students because their preferences and perceptions of objectivity are solidifying at this developmental stage, increasing their attachment to personal beliefs and intensifying conflicts, personal attacks, and regional or family biases. In contrast, value-based differences do not exert comparable negative effects. As value formation is a gradual, long-term process that continues into adulthood, middle school students' value systems remain relatively fluid, reducing the likelihood that value disagreements trigger strong negative generalizations.

5. Recommendations

5.1. Practical Recommendations

5.1.1. Guiding Middle School Students to Address Perspective Differences

The study shows that students differ in objective factual understanding, preferences, and values. To help them manage such differences, schools should promote objective thinking through examples, case analyses, and scientific reasoning to strengthen evidence-based judgment while fostering respect for alternative viewpoints. Respect for diversity should be cultivated through exposure to varied cultural, artistic, and athletic activities, broadening students' perspectives and reducing preference-based conflicts. Value education is also essential;

integrating ethical instruction and discussions on moral decision-making and social responsibility can improve inclusivity and tolerance. Strengthening communication and debate skills through structured discussions and mock debates further enables students to express ideas clearly and understand others' positions.

5.1.2. Targeted Guidance for Different Groups

Since junior high school students exhibit less conceptual divergence than high school students, differentiated guidance is needed. Junior students should focus on developing basic reasoning and communication skills, using situational cases to understand the consequences of differing opinions. High school students, who show greater ideological divergence, require advanced analytical and debating training to engage deeply with opposing viewpoints. Because negative generalization effects intensify with age, both schools and families should reinforce guidance that promotes recognition and acceptance of diverse opinions.

5.1.3. Preventing the Generalization of Perspective Conflicts

Given that divergent perspectives can generalize into relational conflict, personal attacks, and regional bias, targeted preventive measures are necessary. First, schools should prioritize critical thinking and information literacy so that students rely on credible evidence and avoid escalating disagreements into personal conflicts. Second, cross-cultural activities can enhance awareness of varied values and preferences, reducing the risk of disputes turning into biases. Third, establishing safe communication platforms and providing communication training can facilitate respectful dialogue. Fourth, conflict-resolution instruction can equip students with constructive strategies to manage disagreements. Finally, interdisciplinary and experiential learning that simulates real-world scenarios can foster comprehensive cognition, reducing conflicts rooted in misunderstandings.

5.2. Research Limitations and Future Directions

5.2.1. Further Exploration of the Impact of Perspective Differences

This study examined manifestations, group differences, and generalization effects of perspective divergence. Future research should deepen analyses of cognitive development, focusing on how developmental stages, reasoning patterns, and logical capacity influence viewpoint formation and expression. Studies should also investigate the role of family socialization—such as parenting style, communication, and family culture—in shaping students' oppositional attitudes. Additionally, school practices and peer influence warrant exploration, including curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, school climate, and the role of peer groups in reinforcing or mitigating opposing viewpoints.

5.2.2. Expanding the Sample Through Random Sampling

The study collected 103 responses using snowball sampling, resulting in a sample primarily from Shanghai. While sufficient for preliminary investigation, future research should expand sample size and geographic diversity through stratified random sampling across multiple provinces to improve representativeness.

5.2.3. Employing More Diverse Research Methods

This study relied on survey methods. Future research should incorporate mixed methods by integrating quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or focus groups to capture deeper contextual insights. Field observations could provide ecological data on how conflicting viewpoints emerge in natural settings. Social network analysis would help reveal how perspectives spread and cluster among students in online environments. Experimental designs

could further identify causal mechanisms underlying perspective divergence, thereby enhancing theoretical and practical understanding.

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