

Effectiveness of the Self-Harmonization Counseling Model Based on the Sharing Approach in Reducing Mother-Adolescent Conflicts: A Case Study

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Article Info

Article type:

Original Research

How to cite this article:

Jormoze, F., Ahadi, H., & Khalatbari, J. (2024). Effectiveness of the Self-Harmonization Counseling Model Based on the Sharing Approach in Reducing Mother-Adolescent Conflicts: A Case Study. *Journal of Adolescent and Youth Psychological Studies*, 5(4), 51-64.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.61838/kman.jayps.5.4.7>



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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the self-harmonization counseling model based on the sharing approach in reducing mother-adolescent conflicts.

Methods and Materials: The research method was quasi-experimental, employing case studies. For this purpose, three mother-adolescent pairs, characterized by non-sharing, high-conflict mothers, were selected in 2022 from Tehran using purposive sampling based on entry criteria. Over the course of eight 60-minute sessions, they underwent counseling using a sharing-focused self-harmonization model. Mothers and adolescents completed the Parent-Adolescent Conflict Questionnaire by Asadi Younesi et al. (2011) at baseline and intervention stages, while only mothers responded to the Sharing Lifestyle Questionnaire by Esmaeili et al. (2022) during these phases. Additionally, before treatment, both mothers and adolescents filled out the General Health Questionnaire GHQ-28 (Goldberg & Hillier, 1979). Data were analyzed using visual plotting, reliable change index, and percentage of improvement formula.

Findings: The results indicated that the overall percentage of improvement in conflict post-intervention from the perspectives of parents and adolescents was 58.11% and 42.17% for the first participant, 47.01% and 37.13% for the second participant, and 28.29% and 27.75% for the third participant, respectively. Also, the increase in sharing by mothers was 62.23%, 51.88%, and 34.76% for the first, second, and third participants, respectively. These values represent successful short-term counseling outcomes.

Conclusion: Therefore, the self-harmonization model based on the sharing approach provides an opportunity for mothers to foster self-harmonization across various dimensions by adopting a sharing attitude and implementing productive strategies, thereby experiencing reduced conflicts with their adolescents. The findings can be utilized by counselors in the fields of family and adolescent.

Keywords: Mother-adolescent conflicts, self-harmonization, sharing approach.

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a unique period characterized by multiple changes at various developmental levels including emotional, social, and physical (Saadati & Parsakia, 2023), and with the onset of this differentiation process, family relationships of adolescents with their parents undergo changes (Nebel-Schwalm, 2006). Adolescents, increasingly relying on their peers, seek to increase personal independence and are less inclined to see themselves as part of a hierarchy led by their parents. Consequently, the parent-adolescent relationship primarily experiences an increase in conflict levels and a reduction in intimacy during this period (Fuligni & Eccles, 1993). Additionally, as adolescents enter this period, parental behavior is considered one of the most effective factors in the quality of the relationship between parents and adolescents (Bijur et al., 1991; Turner et al., 1993). Adolescents' expectations for independent decision-making, questioning parental authority, and challenging pre-established boundaries and rules due to their capacity for abstract thinking easily provide a breeding ground for parent-adolescent conflicts (Heath, 2018). Moreover, the emotional reactions of puberty, along with the adolescent's emotion regulation that is newly forming during this period, can lead to an increase in the severity of parent-adolescent conflicts (Laursen et al., 2017). On the other hand, adolescence usually coincides with the middle age of parents, which is often a challenging stage of their lives that requires reevaluating their life path, adapting to new work conditions, and redefining life satisfaction, and this situation increases the intensity of parent-child conflict during the teenage years (Rogers et al., 2020).

Studies in this area also indicate that an increase in parent-adolescent conflict predicts the onset of depression in both adolescents and their parents (Rognli et al., 2020). Generally, numerous studies have consistently reported a relationship between parent-adolescent conflicts and a decrease in social adaptability, academic performance, psychological issues, and tendencies towards substance use in adolescents (Dehghan & Rasooli, 2016; Mahdavi & Mirzavandi, 2020). Based on research history, relational conflict among family members carries emotional elements such as feelings of tension, friction, resentment, and hostility (Jehn, 1995; Jehn & Mannix, 2001), psychosomatic pains, stress, and burnout (De Dreu et al., 2002). Moreover, it causes interpersonal violence, disrupts harmony (Choi & Cho, 2011), and is associated with anger (Curşeu et al.,

2012), low levels of trust (Lu et al., 2011), and feelings of disinterest (Martínez-Moreno et al., 2009). Furthermore, if conflict is handled in an unhealthy manner, it can lead to separation, grudges, and irreparable rifts among family members, but if managed properly, it can increase understanding between individuals, create trust, and strengthen communication bonds among family members (Aye et al., 2016).

Moreover, the theory of intra-family conflict begins with the hypothesis that family members, under conflict, have lost coordination and during the occurrence of conflicts, their sense of security in relationships is threatened. This discord, whether stemming from within the family unit or from external sources, causes each family member to experience a range of negative emotions and consequences; such that if the members do not receive help, this unresolved conflict can irreparably destroy the entire family (Aye et al., 2016). In this regard, research by Perry, Harris, & Minnes (2004) revealed that poor coordination in the family is a strong predictor of stress creation in the family (Perry et al., 2004). Fabrizio et al. (2013) also found in their research that parents who have more control and less warmth in their relationship with their child experience more conflict and less coordination in the parent-child relationship. This while coordination pertains to a situation where family members coexist in peace and security, pay attention to each other, and respect each other without any disputes. In such a family, each member is aware of their duties, commitments, and responsibilities, feels joy, and also has harmonious relationships with other members (Fabrizio et al., 2013). The relationship between parents and children in such a family is full of emotions and understanding, with guidance aimed at enhancing the skills of the children. Adolescents who grow up in families with such coordination are well equipped with the ability to socialize and adapt to their surrounding environment (Sitepu, 2018) but in case of conflict in the family and lack of coordination, aggressive and destructive behaviors of children as well as the likelihood of alcohol consumption among them increase and may reduce their ability to regulate emotions. (Zhou et al., 2006).

On the other hand, different approaches have explained family member conflict in various ways; from the perspective of the sharing approach, the underlying cause of conflict in interpersonal relationships is considered an effort to share by the parties, and it is believed that the existence of sharing relationships, as a common style of communication in families, is an effective factor in creating conflicts. Thus, the main goal of sharing is to change the attitude and

performance of individuals from the point of taking and benefiting from others to the point of sharing in relation to others and the family. Also, one of the prominent principles in the sharing approach, which has high potential for resolving interpersonal conflicts and benefiting humans from an authentic life, is the principle of coordination with general rules in which a happy human is introduced as someone who acts in harmony with existence (Esmacaily et al., 2023).

According to the sharing approach, if a person has a conflict in one of their interpersonal relationships, in addition to being aware not to take control of another's authority, they must also pay continuous attention to the mental space of the other person. In this view, the sharing individual is a person with an expanded self who sees themselves connected and continuous with other people, does not separate their interests from the interests of others, and sees any change in themselves and from themselves as dependent on other people, and knows that the smallest change in them will lead to a change in the space around them. In this way, the person is informed to be able to see the issue and conflict that has arisen in a larger context, identify their minimal role and share in creating or continuing the conflict, focus on their sharing choices, attitudes, or behaviors, and accept responsibility for them. Subsequently, the person, considering their capacity and potential, will identify their role and share in resolving this relational conflict and improving their relationship, will focus on presenting their possible share in the relationship, will also accept the responsibility of sharing, and after taking action, will monitor the outcomes and quality of their relationship. Therefore, the sharing individual is a person with authority who accepts the responsibility of their permanent choices. Faced with challenging situations and stressful positions, they focus on the share they can put in the relationship and in this way are able to regulate their relationships, reduce intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, and ultimately achieve a harmonious and adaptive performance in various dimensions based on this, sharing, relying on a monotheistic worldview, and offering a purposeful, meaningful, and teleological attitude towards life, well aligns the individual with themselves, others, and the universe, enabling them to form an array of living in harmony with a vibrant, purposeful, and dynamic existence, and with realism combined with a sense of security derived from the connection to the singular existence, enhance their capabilities and functions (Esmacaily et al., 2023).

Moreover, since the sharing approach seems to use concepts derived from religious attitudes, and is compatible with the intellectual and cultural fabric of our country, it has great potential for preventing and resolving conflict in interpersonal relationships and shaping harmonious relationships; as a result, we decided to take a step towards reducing mother-adolescent relational conflict through the self-harmonization counseling model based on the sharing approach. Therefore, the researcher in the present study seeks to answer the question of whether the self-harmonization counseling model based on the sharing approach is effective in reducing conflict between mothers and adolescents?

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The current study was conducted within the framework of an AB-type single-case experimental design. In other words, a single-subject design with an AB baseline involving different subjects was utilized. The population of this study consisted of mother-adolescent pairs attending the Shemim Kowsar Counseling Center in Tehran during the autumn of 2022, who had conflicts with each other, and purposive (or convenience) sampling was carried out. Entry criteria for the study included: 1) willingness to participate in the study, 2) having informed consent, 3) the presence of both parents in the family, 4) age range of 14 to 18 years for adolescents, 5) scoring above the average in the Parent-Adolescent Conflict Questionnaire by Asadi Younesi et al. (2011) by both mother and adolescent, 6) scoring below average in the Sharing Lifestyle Questionnaire by Esmacaily et al. (2022) by the mother, and 7) scoring above average in the General Health Questionnaire GHQ-28 by Goldberg & Hillier (1979) by both mother and adolescent. The General Health Questionnaire was used solely as an entry criterion for the samples to ensure that despite the conflicts in their relationships, mothers and adolescents had acceptable mental health indicators. Subsequently, an 8-session counseling process, whose goals, content, process, and techniques were based on the self-harmonization model, was conducted for three mother-adolescent pairs who met the research entry criteria. After selecting the eligible samples, participants completed the Parent-Adolescent Conflict and Sharing Lifestyle Questionnaires twice before the intervention as a baseline. The General Health Questionnaire was also administered only before the sessions for sample selection. Then, the research sample received counseling

over 8 sessions of 60 minutes each, and during the interventions in the fourth, sixth, and eighth sessions, both questionnaires were completed again. The Parent-Adolescent Conflict Questionnaire served as an objective indicator to reveal the intensity and frequency of conflicts for both mother and adolescent; the Sharing Lifestyle Questionnaire was administered during the first, second, fourth, sixth, and eighth sessions for the mother. The counseling sessions alternated with the administration of questionnaires and conducting interviews regarding the quality of the mother-adolescent relationship and the mother's sharing-focused self-harmonization. Additionally, a one-month follow-up was also conducted for the research samples using the same questionnaires. Ultimately, after completing the counseling sessions, the effectiveness of the designed model was preliminarily assessed by examining the results and comparing the baseline, intervention, and follow-up periods for the participants. To comply with ethical considerations of the research, in addition to voluntary participation and obtaining informed consent from participants, convincing scientific and practical explanations about the nature and purpose of the research, the methodology, duration of the research, outcomes, and the provision of free sessions were provided to all participants.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Parent-Adolescent Conflict

This questionnaire was designed by Asadi Younesi et al. (2011) to assess parent-adolescent conflict. It consists of separate forms for parents and adolescents, and both forms were used in this study. The parent form contains 89 questions across 14 factors, and the adolescent form includes 92 questions across 14 factors. In both forms, each question has two parts that measure the frequency of conflict (meaning the number of conflicting topics between parent and adolescent) and the intensity of conflict (meaning the emotions associated with the conflict), with scoring based on a five-point Likert scale. The fourteen conflict-related factors include: order and organization, relationships with friends, family facilities, financial issues, parental behavior, leisure time, attire, freedom of action, education, family relationships, sleep and food, media, customs and values, discipline, and sensitive and taboo issues. The total score in both aspects of intensity and frequency of conflict has high internal consistency. In the parent form, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for frequency and intensity of conflict are respectively 0.96 and 0.97. Retest reliability with a two-

week interval is also very high. Pearson's correlation coefficient in the parent form between the first and second administrations for the total score of frequency and intensity of conflict are respectively 0.78 and 0.79. Concurrent and convergent validity of the questionnaire was also examined, such that the correlation coefficient calculated between the total score of the behavioral conflict questionnaire and the total score of frequency and intensity of conflict in the parent form are respectively 0.64 and 0.41. Additionally, in the adolescent form, alpha coefficients for frequency and intensity of conflict are respectively 0.96 and 0.98. The retest reliability coefficients for this questionnaire for the conflict frequency section is 0.72 and for the conflict intensity section is 0.74.

2.3. Intervention

2.3.1. Parent-Adolescent Conflict

The source for designing the counseling session protocol was the parental sharing-focused self-harmonization paradigm model derived from the researcher's doctoral dissertation in 2023. The counseling sessions were held individually for each client, focusing on non-sharing, high-conflict mothers in relation to their adolescents, conducted twice a week for one month. It is worth mentioning that only in the first session, to assess the mother-adolescent relationship, counseling interviews were conducted with both, but from the second session onward, counseling interventions focused on the mother (Shadabmehr et al., 2023).

Session 1: Establishing a Positive Counseling Relationship and Exploring Parent-Adolescent Communication from Both Perspectives

The first session focuses on establishing a "me-you" relationship and assesses areas of conflict from both the parent's and adolescent's perceptions, current strategies used by the parent in conflicts and their outcomes, and the realism and controllability of the parent's information. This session introduces the overall goal of the eight-session program, fostering a connection and trust-building between the parent and adolescent, encouraging them to discuss their relationship and the issues that typically create conflict. Both participants also describe their previous methods for improving the relationship or reducing conflicts. The counselor actively listens, empathizes, and asks targeted questions to understand the conflict areas and strategies each party perceives and uses. Additionally, the session aims to motivate and inspire both parent and child towards

improving the quality of their relationship. For homework, the mother is asked to read about adolescence and its characteristics online and a book on adolescence is recommended. She is also tasked with noting her thoughts just before, during, and after conflicts with her child before the next session.

Session 2: Familiarizing the Parent with Their Perspective and Teaching Sharing Attitude Indicators

This session starts with a review of homework from the first session and obtains a descriptive account of the current state of the mother-child relationship. The counselor evaluates the mother's descriptions of herself, her desires, her future, her parenting style, the conflicts, and her expectations from her child. Insights are provided on the mother's mental models and worldview, helping her understand her cognitive structure and its consequences. Additionally, the session addresses the main problem, defines the scope of the mother's issue, and enhances her awareness of her mental schemas about the world, rule-following, goal-setting, and her responsibilities in parenting. Homework for this session involves the mother clarifying her goals and responsibilities as a parent, setting short-term and long-term goals for her parenting role, defining boundaries between her responsibilities and those of her child, and documenting her thoughts on different aspects of her role as a mother for discussion.

Session 3: Introducing the Concept of Inclusion and Teaching Other Indicators of a Sharing Attitude

Building on the previous sessions, this session further clarifies the mother's role and attitudes toward inclusive versus exclusive relationships and their outcomes in parenting. It educates the mother about agency, autonomy, understanding the impacts of actions, and finding significance in her parenting. It also emphasizes that both the mother and adolescent are independent agents, focusing on the mother performing her parenting role in the best possible way. The session discusses the actions the mother takes with her child and how these impact the child's personality and future. Homework involves the mother identifying and documenting her inclusive thoughts and behaviors in relation to her child, focusing on inclusive goals, and considering the implications of these actions.

Session 4: Teaching Self-Harmonization to the Parent in Personal and Interpersonal Dimensions

This session reviews the previous homework and continues with a descriptive review of the mother-child relationship. It assesses contradictions the mother experiences between different dimensions of her behavior,

thoughts, goals, words, and actions, providing insights on how to reduce these inconsistencies. The mother's various capabilities that can affect her parenting are evaluated and feedback is provided. Homework for this session asks the mother to focus on contradictions between her beliefs and behaviors, uncover mismatches between what she says and what she does, and work on harmonizing these aspects. She is also encouraged to link her goals in the relationship with her child to her everyday behaviors and past experiences, documenting and manifesting these in her actions while focusing on her inner strengths for optimal parenting rather than on her weaknesses and failures.

Session 5: Teaching Self-Harmonization Considering the Adolescent's Characteristics and the Contextual Environment

This session again starts with reviewing the homework and obtaining a description of the current mother-child relationship. It explains the importance of paying attention to the various aspects related to the adolescent and the characteristics of adolescence, urging the mother to focus on the strengths of her child rather than just on mistakes, shortcomings, and expectations. Discussions also cover the adolescent's moods in different situations, his perspectives, needs, and interests, and how the mother can align more closely with these aspects. Homework tasks the mother to focus on her adolescent to extract his interests and strengths, recognize his essential needs and emotional states at different times, and document these insights to apply them. She should also consider the existing conditions and the presence of others during conflicts with her child.

Session 6: Educating the Parent About Some Productive and Expansive Parenting Strategies

This session revisits the past homework and the descriptive state of the relationship, focusing on how the mother expresses affection both verbally and non-verbally, and the level of intimacy between her and the adolescent. The mother is taught ways to empathize, reflect feelings, support her child, and create a safe and trusting environment. Additionally, discussions include the mother's use of social media platforms used by the adolescent to enhance her understanding and her need to become familiar with the temporal requirements of the times. Experiences from effective role models, personal experiences, and extended family that the mother can draw from are evaluated. Homework asks the mother to observe how she establishes affectionate verbal and non-verbal relationships appropriate to the situation with her child, practice support, empathy, and feeling reflection, especially during disagreements, become

familiar with the social networks her child uses, establish a positive relationship with her child's close friends, and gather and document experiences from relatives who have successful relationships with their children for modeling purposes.

Session 7: Educating the Parent About Other Productive and Expansive Parenting Strategies

Starting with a review of the homework and the current state of the mother-child relationship, this session discusses the mother's use of language in various situations that have led to conflicts or have been used in conflict resolution. Necessary training is provided on voice tone, word choice, indirect opposition through questioning, and targeted storytelling. Strategies to reduce conflict with the adolescent, such as assigning responsibilities to the child, having direct and clear conversations, cooperating with the spouse in dealing with the adolescent, consulting and involving the child in decision-making, protecting the child, setting rules and frameworks, educating about the consequences of choices, guiding through effective or ineffective role models, mutual monitoring between parent and adolescent, using silence, flexibility, persuading each other, reaching bilateral agreements, offering alternatives, ensuring fairness, and maintaining a respectful relationship, are taught. Homework asks the mother to focus on using her language in speaking with her child, discover her verbal mistakes that negatively affect the relationship, practice silence, question-asking, and offering alternatives instead of rash and explicit opposition, assign specific responsibilities to her child, use cooperation from her spouse, consult her child in some day-to-day decision-making, discuss the consequences and tell targeted stories in dealing with her adolescent.

Session 8: Reviewing the Topics of the Sessions and Summarizing

This final session starts with a review of the homework and obtains a descriptive overview of the mother-child relationship. Discussions focus on how the mother has developed existentially in various dimensions through parenting her adolescent and the conditions and possibilities for implementing the learned strategies to expand her role in parenting. The session concludes with a general summary of all sessions and consolidates the learnings obtained. Homework emphasizes the continuation of practicing the

skills acquired in real-life scenarios to further internalize and apply them effectively in various life and relationship contexts.

2.4. Data analysis

Data were analyzed using visual plotting, reliable change index, and percentage of improvement formula.

3. Findings and Results

The participants of this study included 3 mother-adolescent pairs, with the mothers' age range from 38 to 41 years and the adolescents' ages ranging from 16 to 18 years; demographic information of the participants is presented below. (1) The first participant was a 38-year-old mother, a teacher with a bachelor's degree, having one child, along with her 16-year-old daughter. (2) The second participant was a 41-year-old homemaker with a bachelor's degree, having two children, along with her 18-year-old son. And (3) the third participant was a 46-year-old homemaker with a high school diploma, having two children, along with her 17-year-old daughter. For the analysis of the research question, scores related to each of the three participants at baseline and during intervention sessions (sessions four, six, and eight), as well as a one-month follow-up were collected and charts depicting changes in the intensity and frequency of conflict from the perspectives of both mothers and adolescents, and changes in mothers' sharing levels were drawn. Finally, data were analyzed using visual plotting, reliable change index, and percentage of improvement formula.

As is evident, the trend of changes in participants' scores during self-harmonization sharing-focused counseling sessions, along with the percentage of improvement and the reliable change index in two situations after the completion of counseling sessions and after a one-month follow-up, is presented in [Table 1](#). In general, the decrease in conflict scores and the increase in sharing scores, as well as the comparison of the percentage of improvement of participants in the post-test with the pre-test and the relative stability of the improvement percentage during the follow-up period, confirm the trend of reducing these conflicts and the effectiveness of the counseling model presented, reporting satisfactory counseling success in the short term.

Figure 1

The Trend of Scores for Adolescents

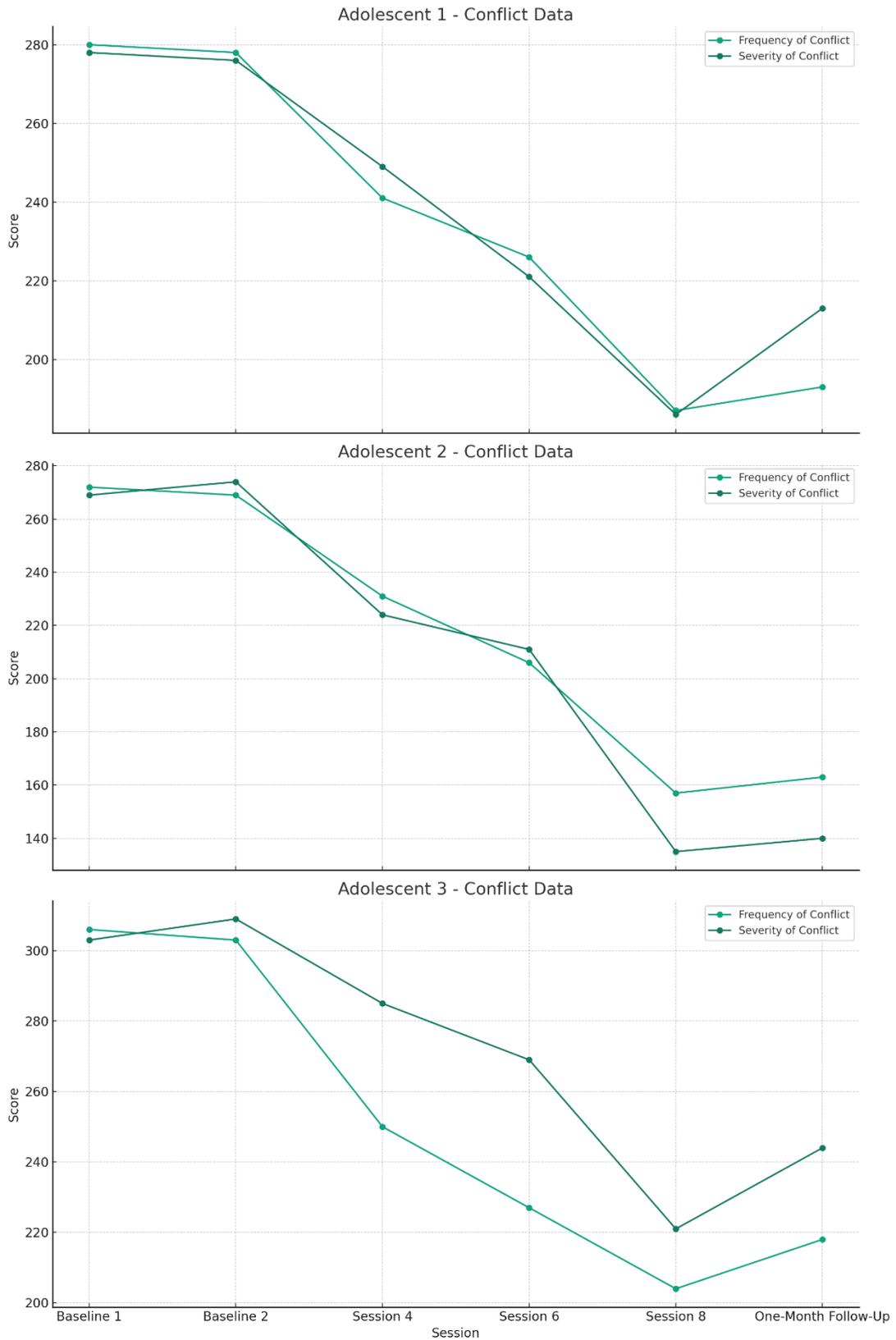


Figure 2

The Trend of Scores for Mothers

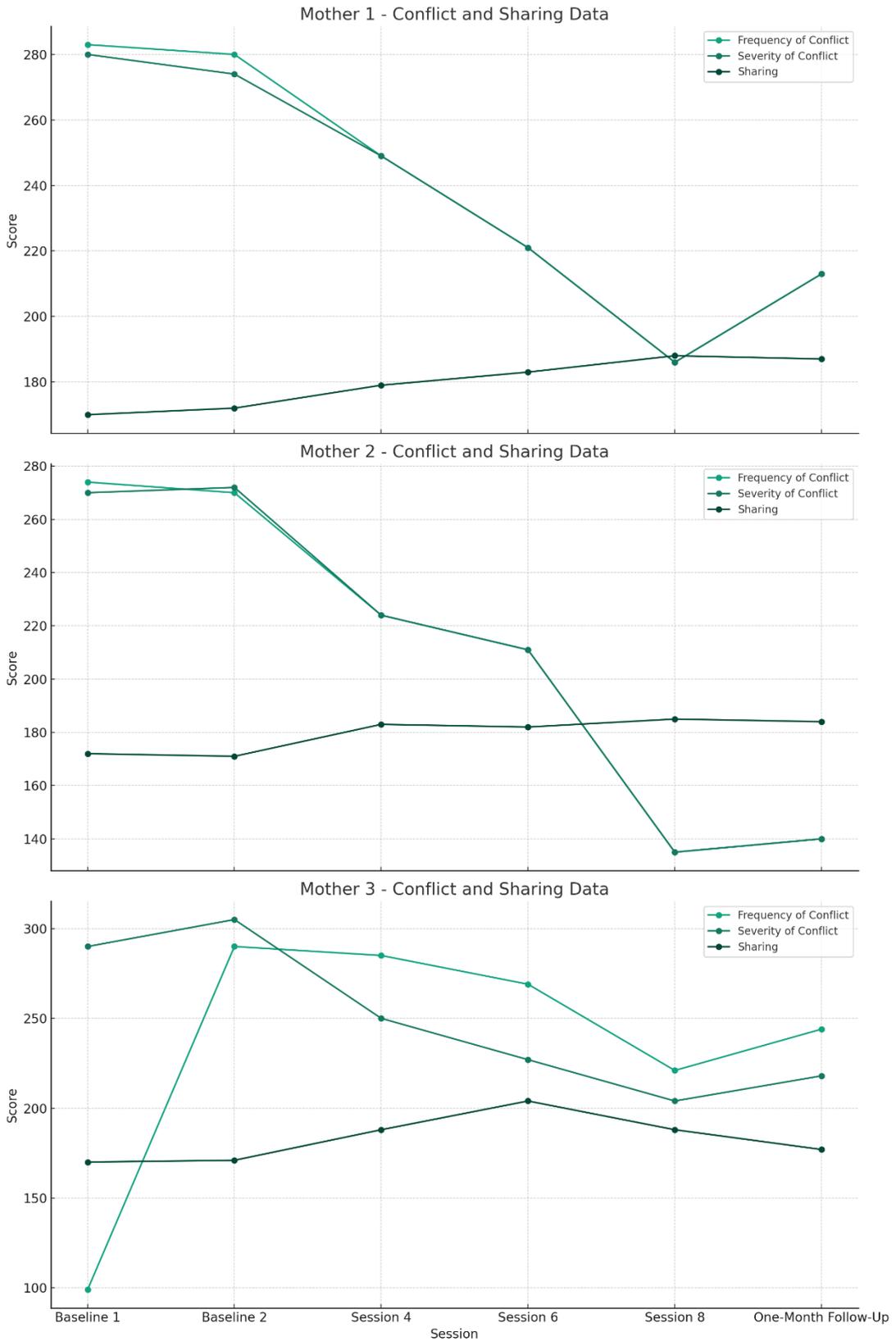


Table 1

Trends in Participants' Scores During Self-Harmonization Sharing-Focused Counseling Sessions

	Adolescent 1 Freq	Adolescent 1 Sev	Mother 1 Freq	Mother 1 Sev	Mother 1 Share	Adolescent 2 Freq	Adolescent 2 Sev	Mother 2 Freq	Mother 2 Sev	Mother 2 Share	Adolescent 3 Freq	Adolescent 3 Sev	Mother 3 Freq	Mother 3 Sev	Mother 3 Share
Baseline 1	280	278	283	280	170	272	269	274	270	172	306	303	99	290	170
Baseline 2	278	276	280	274	172	269	274	270	272	171	303	309	290	305	171
Session 4	241	249	249	249	179	231	224	224	224	183	250	285	285	250	188
Session 6	226	221	221	221	183	206	211	211	211	182	227	269	269	227	204
Session 8	187	186	186	186	188	157	135	135	135	185	204	221	221	204	188
Percentage of Improvement ^a	41.51%	42.83%	42.83%	42.83%	62.23%	52.83%	63.40%	63.40%	63.40%	51.88%	41.66%	32.60%	32.60%	32.60%	34.76%
Reliable Change Index	9.48%	13.36%	13.36%	13.36%	7.31%	9.51%	11.48%	11.48%	11.48%	8.16%	8.86%	14.25%	14.25%	14.25%	6.71%
One-Month Follow-Up	193	213	213	213	187	163	140	140	140	184	218	244	244	218	177
Follow-Up Improvement Percentage ^b	38.83%	39.91%	39.91%	39.91%	58.82%	50.08%	61.12%	61.12%	61.12%	48.41%	35.93%	22.98%	22.98%	22.98%	27.82%
Reliable Change Index for Follow-Up	8.39%	9.98%	9.98%	9.98%	6.71%	8.43%	10.07%	10.07%	10.07%	6.36%	7.78%	10.12%	10.12%	10.12%	5.55%

^a Overall Improvement Percentage After Counseling: Average improvement in conflict from mothers' perception: 44.47%; Average improvement in conflict from adolescents' perception: 35.68%; Average improvement in mothers' sharing: 49.62%.

^b Overall Improvement Percentage After Follow-Up: Average improvement in conflict from mothers' perception: 40.61%; Average improvement in conflict from adolescents' perception: 31.34%; Average improvement in mothers' sharing: 45.01%.

As observed above, throughout the intervention sessions, there was a decrease in the intensity and frequency of conflict between the mother and adolescent in all participants, as well as an increase in the mothers' sharing levels. Both mothers and adolescents perceived and reported this decrease in conflict. In all participants, the downward trend in conflict and the upward trend in sharing continued until the final session, with the greatest decrease in conflict and increase in sharing observed in the first sample. During the follow-up stage, the scores of all three participant groups slightly increased but still remained significantly lower than baseline. Ultimately, the results obtained from the data demonstrate a reduction in the amount and intensity of conflicts between mothers and adolescents and confirm the preliminary effectiveness of the self-harmonization counseling model in the short term.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In the present study, the effectiveness of the self-harmonization counseling model based on the sharing approach in reducing mother-adolescent conflicts was examined and demonstrated. For this purpose, three mother-adolescent pairs participated in the study, where the mothers lacked sharing lifestyle indicators and experienced high levels of conflict with their adolescents. For the first participant, evaluations showed that the main problems between the mother and her daughter were related to the daughter's educational issues, leisure time activities, dress code, manners and values, and maintaining order. Also, according to the model, the mother had issues with sharing

attitude indicators, particularly in terms of agency, autonomy, and boundary setting between her areas of responsibility and her child, as well as evident misalignments in verbal, non-verbal, and functional dimensions. The mother felt extreme pressure and coercion in her actions, feeling victimized and wronged in her relationship with her adolescent. The second participant also had problems between the parent and adolescent in terms of the son's relationships with friends, freedom of action, leisure time activities, maintaining order, bedtime, and financial matters. According to evaluations based on the model, the mother had issues with sharing attitude indicators, particularly in the areas of agency and autonomy, and in adopting correct strategies for expressing emotions, criticism, guidance, and resolving disagreements with her child, thereby leading to controlling and authoritative behaviors in relation to her adolescent. Furthermore, evident misalignments were observed in her behavioral and cognitive dimensions. Additionally, evaluations in the third participant indicated that the amount and intensity of conflict between the mother and adolescent were above average, with the main issues being the adolescent's relationships with friends, freedom of action, leisure activities, dress code, manners and values, family relationships, maintaining order, and media use. Based on the evaluations, the mother exhibited strong sharing attitudes, particularly in the aspects of purposefulness, rule-abidance, agency, and autonomy, while also displaying behavioral misalignments in various dimensions and controlling and perfectionistic behaviors

with rigid standards as a factor for conflict with the adolescent.

According to the self-harmonization counseling model focused on sharing, three main mechanisms explain and account for the observed counseling changes: 1) nurturing sharing attitude indicators in the mother, 2) forming matrix self-harmonization in the mother, 3) employing productive and expanding strategies within a connective framework with the adolescent.

In a broader explanation of the main mechanisms driving change, sharing attitude indicators essentially set the stage for parents' self-harmonization across various dimensions and also serve as a precursor to parents employing strategies in their relationships with their adolescents, being paramount over other factors in that a parent with a sharing attitude can perform self-harmonization in various dimensions. Thus, matrix self-harmonization in the parent is a prerequisite for employing strategies by parents, and the effectiveness of parents' productive and expanding strategies depends on the efficacy of parental matrix self-harmonization and is thus cited as a causal factor in the model. Employing productive and expanding parental strategies within a connective framework with the adolescent is also a primary strategy in the research that ultimately reduces conflict between parents and adolescents, enhancing peace and satisfaction in parent-adolescent interactions.

In the present study, mothers created self-harmonization by aligning their verbal and non-verbal actions, the verbal dimension and performance, and their context and behavior. Furthermore, they established harmony between their goals, thoughts, feelings, received experiences, and perceived abilities with their behavior, thereby reducing communication conflicts with their adolescents. These findings align with the results of prior research (Aye et al., 2016; Di Fabio & Tsuda, 2018). Additionally, mothers considered the needs, talents, strengths, interests, desires, thoughts, attitudes, moods, autonomy, and decision-making of their adolescents, as well as characteristics of adolescence and the context of communication with the adolescent. This enabled them to experience a satisfying relationship with minimal conflicts with their adolescents. Moreover, since conflict in any relationship fundamentally means perceiving differences, inconsistencies, and incompatible desires between parties in a relationship (Jones, Respass, Segars, & Jain, 2012) and at the time of its occurrence, one or both parties of the conflict perceive a threat as the sense of security in the relationship is compromised (Ai et al., 2016).

Therefore, when high levels of conflict are seen in family relationships, it means that members have experienced a lack of coordination (Zhou et al., 2006). Studies have shown that parents play a very important role in creating a balanced harmony in family relationships (Sitepu, 2018). Parents with coordination not only create peace and comfort for their children but also ensure they receive proper parental guidance and support (Sitepu, 2018). In line with research findings, Di Fabio and Tsuda (2018) in their research on human multi-dimensional harmonization, consider self-harmonization to have a relational nature that includes harmonization with oneself, with others, with communicative contexts, and with nature (the whole universe). They also include caring for and respecting oneself and others, and connection in relationships with others as part of harmonization, which aligns with the findings in participating mothers (Di Fabio & Tsuda, 2018). Therefore, it can be said that a mother who has acquired a sharing attitude as a fundamental cognitive foundation perceives herself in a broader world and understands her connection with her child, others, and all levels of existence more fully, and has ongoing and permanent awareness of her choices. Thus, mothers endeavored to create coordination within their internal and external dimensions and also consider the characteristics of their child and the situational context in which they communicate with the adolescent, thereby creating some degree of harmonization in various dimensions related to it. In short, they were able to achieve some level of multi-dimensional or matrix self-harmonization. Ultimately, with mothers benefiting from matrix self-harmonization, the effectiveness of the strategies significantly increased, and the effectiveness of the strategies was contingent upon how much the mother was able to consider self-harmonization in various dimensions of her relationship with the adolescent.

One of the strategies employed by the mothers was the use of human knowledge in the field of adolescence, utilizing resources such as studying books related to adolescence, utilizing media and social networks on this subject, leveraging environmental capacities like school, bonding with the temporal requirements, interacting with friends and peers of the adolescent, connecting with effective role models, using personal lived experiences, interacting with nuclear family members, and also engaging with extended families, which were effectively used to prevent and reduce conflicts with their adolescents. Erickson et al. (2016), in line with the above findings, deemed parents' awareness of new technologies essential for framing

adolescents and having effective relationships with them. Furthermore, mothers were able to use some of these strategies such as delegating responsibilities to the child, engaging in direct and clear dialogues, collaborating with the spouse in dealing with the adolescent, consulting and involving the child in decision-making, protecting the child, setting rules and frameworks, educating about the consequences of choices, guiding through the presentation of effective or ineffective models, mutual monitoring of parent and adolescent, maintaining silence and restraint, parental flexibility in dealing with the child, persuading each other, and reaching mutual agreements, offering alternative options, ensuring fairness, and maintaining respectful communication, to experience a peaceful relationship and significantly reduce conflicts in this relationship. Many studies support the effect of employing these strategies (Arbabi et al., 2023). Additionally, another strategy used by the mothers in this research was affect generation, including non-verbal expressions of affection, verbal expressions of affection and longing, warmth and intimacy, empathy and understanding of the child, reflecting feelings, accompanying the child, supporting the child, creating a safe environment, and trusting the child, which enabled them to experience a reduction in conflict with their adolescent. Many studies in line with the above findings believe that parents who have a warm and accepting relationship with their adolescents and who encourage and support them, experience not only fewer conflicts but also less tendency for defiant and rebellious behaviors and opposition to parents (Qamari et al., 2015; Turner et al., 1993). On the other hand, mothers in this research, through the strategy of language generation using affirming and praising sentences, humorous sentences, calm and gentle tone of voice, adolescent-friendly vocabulary, direct teaching of communication skills, indirect opposition through questioning, storytelling, and targeted story-telling, were able to prevent some conflicts from arising in their relationship with the adolescent and experience a relaxing relationship. In line with these findings, studies have shown that establishing a heartfelt dialogue between parents and adolescents not only reduces conflicts between them but also fosters positive emotions and protects the adolescent from risky behaviors (Bijur et al., 1991; Qamari et al., 2015; Zakizadeh 2017).

In explaining the productive and expansive strategies of mothers, it can be stated that skills for positive communication and the use of correct strategies regularly permit logical discussions about relevant issues and conflict

topics. One of the communication problems between parents and adolescents is parents' use of ineffective and non-adaptive conflict resolution strategies. In this context, parental hostility in conflicts represents combative strategies, while withdrawal and adaptation represent evasive strategies, which are considered ineffective in resolving parent-adolescent conflicts (Heath, 2018; Mahdavi & Mirzavandi, 2020). Therefore, a mother with a sharing attitude focuses on desires that pertain to herself and her own sphere of will and role-playing, rather than controlling or engaging in conflict with her child. Such a mother realizes that she can only try to be an informative, introducing, presenting, and good guiding parent for her child but cannot change her child's decisions and choices. In every aspect, she only changes and modifies her own controlled strategies to present them better, and at the same time, she knows she is not responsible for her child's choices, only for how she behaves in her parental role. Thus, she strives to be skilled in her conscious choice-making in communicative situations with her adolescent. These mothers, having a sharing attitude and creating multi-dimensional harmonization, were able to move towards adopting productive and expansive strategies that ultimately prevented the occurrence of conflicts and aided in their management. Therefore, these strategies are indeed methods that the mother uses to manage conflict with the adolescent and to have a satisfying and peaceful relationship with her child, as well as to develop her own personality towards better role-playing in parenting.

A counselor, engaged in a counseling relationship based on such a model, strives to create a safe space to facilitate not only the resolution of the participant's problem but also their growth and changes in line with their overall life choices. Therefore, in sessions with the participant, the counselor uses concepts that fall within the participant's ontological scope, first listening to how they think about the world, then gradually proceeding with them based on that foundation and discussing within the participant's semantic range. In other words, the counselor talks to each participant as much as their understanding and perception levels allow, and tries to create a mutual understanding with the participant, understanding their worldview. How does the participant see the world? Where do they see themselves in it? What desires do they have? How do they see the future? How do they describe their own plight? What role do they see for themselves, and how do they play their roles? All these form the individual's assumptions, which are assessed by the counselor. Subsequently, it is necessary for the counselor to evaluate how much the participant is focused

on their role in their life and how much they focus on the roles of others in their life. This is important because when a person does not see their role in an issue, it diminishes their power and ability to change. Moreover, the counselor focuses on the participant's relationship with their problem: Do they see the problem as separate from themselves or integrated with themselves? What do they want to change, and who or what situation do they want to change? Who do they consider the agent of change?

In this way, during the counseling sessions, the counselor and participant produce a space through joint analyses that allow the participant to make decisions for change, which are encouraged by the counselor, and the participant has the will to change while the counselor accompanies them on this path. The focus of change in these sessions is on the participant, and the scope of change is also personally defined by them through responses about their world and desires. Therefore, if the participant is dissatisfied with the outcomes of their actions, they must understand that these are the results of their own actions that reflect back to them, and to change the outcomes, they must change their actions, to change actions they must be able to change their assumptions, and to change assumptions they must be able to change their attitudes and expand their perspective. Subsequently, the participant gains the awareness that the actions humans perform are not imposed upon them but are based on their own choices and will. The presented model provides an opportunity for clients to achieve growth and development at the end of the sessions, which allows them to harmonize themselves in different situations and in various roles. The realization of peace and personal growth predicts the stability and sustainability of changes in the counseling model and reduces the recurrence of conflicts in self-harmonization counseling sessions. It should be noted that all the above information will be conveyed to the participant based on their capacity, their desire for change, and the value they place on change, which naturally will be unique and different for each participant. Generally, the results and analyses indicated that the self-harmonization counseling model based on sharing could effectively reduce conflicts between parents and their adolescents and by fostering sharing and harmonization, decrease communicative conflict.

5. Limitations & Suggestions

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that this research was conducted as a case study and only examined the short-term

effects of the self-harmonization counseling model, which is considered a limitation of the research. Furthermore, the effect of the designed counseling model was only examined on conflicts between mothers and adolescents. Therefore, future research should consider evaluating the impact of this model on the relationships and conflicts between fathers and adolescents. Moreover, this research was conducted only among mothers and adolescents residing in Tehran, while different cities might have unique cultural issues. Therefore, considering the importance of managing conflicts between parents and adolescents, it is suggested that the effect of this model on parent-adolescent relationships in other cities be explored. Additionally, the current study focused solely on counseling with parents to avoid expanding the research scope, thus future research should also focus on self-harmonization and sharing for adolescents. Finally, since the preliminary findings of the research suggest that implementing this counseling model can be effective in reducing parent-adolescent conflicts, it is recommended that this model be used more broadly in parent-adolescent counseling sessions by family specialists in the field of adolescence, and its impact be evaluated.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to all those who cooperated in carrying out this study.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethics Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

Funding

This research was carried out independently with personal funding and without the financial support of any governmental or private institution or organization.

Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed equally.

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