Phenomenological Explanation of Parent-Adolescent Conflict Among Girls Aged 16 to 17 Years

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A r t i c l e   I n f o

A B S T R A C T

Objective: Adolescence is characterized as a developmental and challenging period marked by a wide range of changes in various psychological and physiological dimensions. One of the most significant issues reported by both adolescents and parents is the intensification of conflicts between them, which necessitates a deeper examination. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to provide a phenomenological explanation of the parent-adolescent conflict among girls aged 16 to 17 years.

Methods and Materials: The data for this qualitative study were collected using the research tradition of lived experience and the method of semi-structured in-depth interviews through the process of coding (the 7-step Colaizzi method). The research population included 30 adolescent girls aged 16 to 17 years from the city of Kashan in 2023, who were analyzed using purposeful sampling and adherence to the principles of theoretical saturation.

Findings: The results indicated the extraction of 7 main themes and 23 sub-themes. The main themes included: 1. Concerns about clothing and hijab, 2. Communication skills, 3. Value issues, 4. Academic challenges, 5. Preservation of dignity and individual respect, 6. Family-related factors, 7. Alignment with societal changes, which were examined in detail in the findings section.

Conclusion: Utilizing the results of the present study facilitates the development of educational and therapeutic models to reduce conflict between adolescents and parents, and therapeutic interventions can also be performed on themes that were more frequently reported by adolescents.

Keywords: lived experience, conflict, parent-adolescent, phenomenology.

1. Introduction

Parent-adolescent conflict is considered an indicator of a communication disorder between parents and their child. Conflict refers to the inability to resolve differences, which is often accompanied by tension, hostility, or aggression, and is most fundamental in families with adolescent children (Gutterswijk et al., 2023). Parent-adolescent conflict is defined as a disagreement or opposition in goals or mutual antagonism between parents

and adolescent children, characterized by incompatibility, opposition, negative emotions, and hostile and aggressive behaviors (Saadati & Parsakia, 2023; Shadanloo et al., 2023; Tuohy et al., 2023). It often manifests as extensive discussions about specific issues between parents and adolescents. Parent-adolescent conflicts are among the most significant family problems and processes, with the fundamental factor being the perception or feeling of incompatibility. These conflicts play a crucial role in the development of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive problems in family members and adolescents (Anderl et al., 2022). During adolescence, the emergence of characteristics such as self-exploration and an increasing sense of independence provides a basis for redefining and recognizing their roles in situations like school, home, and work environments (Khodaei et al., 2021). During this period, adolescents are highly sensitive, and according to many developmental psychologists, the vulnerability and incidence of mental disorders and conflicts are higher in this period than in other developmental stages (Rincón Uribe et al., 2022). Additionally, during this period, the sensitivity, supervision, and control of some parents change, and due to a lack of awareness of both adolescents and parents about proper communication principles, conflicts arise between them (Javidi et al., 2015).

Parent-adolescent conflict is considered a communication problem when the parent-child communication pattern requires clinical attention, indicating that the family's defective communications have reached a level that causes disruption in family functioning and individual performance (Marshall et al., 2023). Moretta et al. Koenig (2023) define parent-adolescent conflict as the emergence of verbal disputes and negative family interaction patterns between adolescents and parents on various issues such as household regulations, which often remain unresolved (Moretta et al., 2023). Consequently, one of the groups suffering from conflicts is adolescent girls. Adolescent girls, in their previous developmental stages, had the most interaction and communication with their family and relied on their family and parents to meet their needs. However, upon entering adolescence and discovering a sense of independence and inclination towards peer groups, their interaction and communication with parents decrease, considering their peer group as confidants. On the other hand, this noticeable reduction in communication is concerning for parents, often leading to behaviors involving strict supervision, control, and inhibition, creating a ground for conflict (Haker et al., 2022). Yoon et al. (2023) believe that the type of conflicts

between adolescent girls and boys with parents is different, with girls focusing more on concepts of freedom in choice and independence, while boys focus more on lifestyle and living conditions different from their parents (Yoon et al., 2023). Persistent parent-adolescent conflicts have numerous psychological effects on the adolescent and family members, as Javidi, Asadi, and Ghasemi (2015) believe that increased parent-adolescent conflict leads to more psychological problems in adolescents, reducing resilience and problem-solving ability (Javidi et al., 2015).

Yousefi et al. (2021) found that continued conflict conditions with the family increase the parents' risk of physical (including cardiovascular issues, diabetes, and hypertension) and psychological (such as depression and anxiety) damage (Yousefi et al., 2021). Studies indicate that few research efforts have been made to explore and discover the grounds of parent-adolescent conflicts. For example, LoBraico et al. (2020) found that the anger and conflict between parents and adolescents form a feedback loop, where conflict results from past anger and is also a presumption of future anger, both internally and interpersonally (LoBraico et al., 2020). Mastroteodoros et al. (2020) found that resilient adolescents, mothers, and fathers experience lower levels of conflict intensity compared to others (Mastrotheodoros et al., 2020). In qualitative research, Yousefi et al. (2021), in a study on the outcomes of parent-adolescent conflict from parents' perspectives in Yazd city, found that the consequences of parent-adolescent conflict depend on the strategies used to resolve the conflict and that such conflicts can cause multiple harms to both parents and adolescents (Yousefi et al., 2021). Similarly, Keshavarz, Navabinejad, and Zahrakar (2020) concluded that environmental stressors, friends and technology, low family quality of life, incomplete family functioning, adolescence, unpleasant past experiences, and adolescents' unawareness are the most important factors causing parent-adolescent conflicts from parents' perspectives (Keshavarz et al., 2020). Lawrence and Adebowale (2023) believe that prolonged communication between parents and adolescents in conflict conditions leads to attachment disruption and greater distancing of adolescents from the family, resulting in harmful effects such as a tendency towards risky and delinquent behaviors (Lawrence & Adebowale, 2023). Moreover, it has been shown that adolescents engaged in conflicts with their parents are more prone to academic decline and dropout (Cao & Tam, 2023).

Reflecting on the research background of parent-adolescent conflict shows that while quantitative research

results are generalizable and useful, they often address only a few questions and hypotheses regarding the existence of certain factors and variables, neglecting the deeper layers of this phenomenon. Furthermore, it has been indicated that the problems and challenges of adolescence are subjective, and through cooperation, these issues can be explored through interviews. Lived experience is one of the qualitative research traditions emphasizing individuals' inner experiences. Additionally, this limited number of quantitative and qualitative studies is insufficient to fully grasp adolescents' problems and challenges, necessitating more qualitative research to explore the concept and factors of conflict from adolescents' perspectives. Therefore, the present study aims to answer the question: What are the most important factors and causes of parent-adolescent conflicts from adolescents' perspectives?

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study was qualitative, utilizing the phenomenological method. This research aimed to identify the reality as it appears to the participants using the lived experience research tradition and phenomenological method. Instead of using data to test hypotheses derived from the literature, which is common in quantitative studies, this research used participants' verbal reports of their experiences as data. The study population included all high school girls in Kashan during the academic year 2023-2024, who were studied in one of the high schools. Initially, a joint session was held with all 16- to 17-year-old students, explaining the research objectives and ensuring ethical principles. Students experiencing conflict and intellectual disagreement with their parents were asked to volunteer for the study. The concept of parent-adolescent conflict was explained to ensure participants' correct understanding, and those whose understanding aligned with the researchers' entered the interview phase.

The inclusion criteria were: 1) willingness to participate in the study, 2) being 16 to 17 years old, 3) no history of chronic physical and mental illness based on initial assessments, 4) experiencing conflict with both parents based on participants' reports, and 5) scoring above 60 on the Parent-Adolescent Conflict Questionnaire by Mokhtarnia, Zadeh Mohammadi, and Habibi (2016), indicating high conflict with both parents. Purposeful sampling was used based on the research method. Qualitative data analysis began simultaneously with data collection. This cyclical process of data collection and analysis continued until a point where no new categories or themes emerged, indicating theoretical saturation (Crabtree, 1999). From the seventh interview onwards, the extracted meaning units repeated previous findings, and the data from the last two interviews supported the previous findings without introducing new data. Therefore, sampling ended, and the final sample size was 30 participants.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Semi-Structured Interview

Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured individual and face-to-face interviews in a separate room from the classroom. The questions focused on the problems and issues these adolescents had experienced in conflict with their parents, including: 1) What does conflict with parents mean to you? 2) What challenges and problems have you experienced with your parents that lead to conflict? 3) On what issues do you mostly have conflicts with your parents? During the interview, probing questions such as "Can you explain more about this?" "Can you clarify what you mean?" and "Can you give an example?" were used.

2.3. Data analysis

With ethical approval and informed consent from participants, school staff, and parents, the interviews were recorded anonymously. Depending on participants' willingness and interview conditions, the duration ranged from 30 to 60 minutes. Interviews were listened to five times, and their text was transcribed verbatim. Data analysis was conducted using Colaizzi's (1978) 7-step method, including: 1) reading all descriptions and significant findings from participants, 2) extracting significant phrases and sentences related to the phenomenon, 3) giving meaning to the extracted significant sentences, 4) categorizing participants' descriptions and common concepts into specific categories, 5) converting all derived ideas into comprehensive and complete descriptions, 6) summarizing and providing a concise real description of the phenomenon, and 7) final validation. To achieve validity, initial interview questions were reviewed by experts, and detailed questions were asked based on interviewees' responses. Data rigor was ensured through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. To ensure credibility, participants reviewed their information after analysis for validation. To ensure dependability, codes, main themes, and sub-themes

were reviewed by research team members and experts familiar with qualitative research in the psychology and social sciences departments of Kashan University for review and correction. To ensure confirmability, researchers tried to set aside their opinions and preconceptions as much as possible. To provide transferability, a rich description of the study findings was provided.

3.   Findings and Results

The participants in this study were 30 individuals aged 16 to 17 years, with an average age of approximately 16 years and 4 months. Their educational levels were in the 10th and 11th grades. After analyzing the data, 7 main themes and 23 sub-themes were extracted, representing the experiences of adolescent girls regarding parent-adolescent conflict. Table 1 summarizes the main and sub-themes extracted from the research and is discussed in detail below.

Table 1

Extracted Themes from Interviews

Main Theme	Sub-Theme
Concerns about Clothing and Hijab	Dressing Style
	Observing Hijab
Communication Skills	Distrust
	Emphasis on Confidentiality
	Verbal Communication Methods
	Conditional Family Environment
Value Issues	Social Reaction
	Fear of Reputation
	Cross-Gender Interactions
Academic Challenges	Academic Study
	Selection of Academic Major
Preservation of Dignity and Individual Respect	Physical Punishment
	Privacy
	Seeking Independence
	Acceptance of Opinions and Attitudes
	Acceptance of Individual Differences
	Gender Discrimination
Family-Related Factors	Conflict Between Parents
	Being an Only Child
Alignment with Societal Changes	Personal Grooming
	Surgery
	Pet Keeping
	Mobile Phones and Virtual Space

Main Theme 1: Concerns about Clothing and Hijab

Individuals at different ages have varied choices and preferences for their type of clothing. Typically, an adolescent's views, influenced by societal cultural orientations, significantly differ from those of their parents. This theme includes two sub-themes: dressing style and observing hijab, as discussed below.

A: Dressing Style

According to fashion models and styles, bright colors, short coats, open-front coats, ripped jeans, etc., are more favored and selected by adolescents. However, these styles often conflict with family norms, with adolescent girls frequently reporting family disputes about dressing styles.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 1, 2, 28, 30: "They criticize my clothing choices."
- Code 8: "My mom thinks home dress codes should be like office dress codes, requiring formal wear."
- Code 9: "In our family, a short coat is seen as improper."
- Code 17: "My dad says my coat should reach my ankles, but I don't like it."
- Code 25: "I want to dress fashionably, but my mom disapproves."

B: Observing Hijab

Among adolescent girls, hijab is a contentious issue. Many are confused about the extent and limits of covering,

often influenced by family beliefs that may or may not align with their personal acceptance.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 1 and 9: "My family is religious, and hijab is very important to them; if they see someone without it, they disapprove."
- Code 11: "Families are strict about hijab."
- Code 18: "I want my hair to show, I don't want to look old-fashioned."
- Code 25 and 26: "Whenever I go to a party, there's always a fight about wearing a chador and adjusting my shawl."
- Code 28: "My mom says either wear a chador or don't go out at all."

Main Theme 2: Communication Skills

Effective communication skills are crucial in both personal and social life, significantly impacting one's ability to establish positive and constructive relationships. In the parent-adolescent relationship, these skills are essential for creating a healthy, tension-free interaction.

A: Distrust

Due to adolescents' lack of experience in making significant decisions, parents often try to control this period with caution. However, excessive parental sensitivity can prevent the development of trust in adolescents' abilities.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 21: "My mom doesn't trust me; she calls and asks where I am as if she's trying to catch me in a lie."
- Code 25: "It's painful to feel distrusted, like I'm not treated as a capable person."
- Code 29: "My family doesn't trust me, and this distrust ruins things."

B: Emphasis on Confidentiality

Maintaining confidentiality and privacy in relationships is crucial. Family matters should remain within the family to prevent shame or embarrassment and protect the individual's reputation.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 17: "I tell my mom something and ask her not to tell anyone, but then I hear it from others the next day."
- Code 20: "Whenever I talk to my mom, she tells my dad everything; she can't keep secrets."
- Code 21: "My mom shares my secrets with my aunts and grandmother, and they bring it up later."

C: Verbal Communication Methods

Verbal communication is a primary means of interaction in families. The choice of words can significantly impact the relationship's positivity or negativity.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 7: "My mom constantly criticizes my mistakes, changing my feelings towards her."
- Code 14: "They bring up past mistakes, making me feel useless."
- Code 16: "There's a lot of swearing in our house; the way they talk is hurtful."
- Code 17: "My dad always speaks harshly and yells."
- Code 20: "I struggle to connect with others because my mom mocked me first, which was very hurtful."
- Code 24: "My mom often speaks with sarcasm and belittles me."
- Code 26: "My dad often swears and addresses us harshly."

D: Conditional Family Environment

Parents sometimes use conditions to compel their children to comply with their wishes, which may temporarily achieve goals but can lead to long-term conflicts.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 1: "Most of our agreements come with conditions."
- Code 6: "They promise a new phone if I study hard, but it's been three years, and nothing has happened."
- Code 15: "They set conditions for my behavior, promising things if I improve, but they never follow through."
- Code 23: "My mom sets conditions for everything, like 'if you don't do this, you can't buy that.'"

Main Theme 3: Value Issues

Value issues encompass the set of rules and principles guiding behavior and life in society. Each family has its own values, influenced by social status, class, and core beliefs.

A: Social Reaction

Some behaviors may not align with societal norms. Generational changes often lead to differences in values between adolescents and their parents.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 3, 9, 16: "My parents are always worried about what people will say; most of our arguments are about social perception."

- Code 18: "I went through a lot of trouble to attend a concert in another city, but they refused, worrying about what people would say."
- Code 22: "Concern about social perception leads families to restrict their daughters to avoid gossip."
- Code 26: "My mom says, 'Don't act in a way that makes people think you are irresponsible.'"

B: Fear of Reputation

Reputation involves the respect and honor others accord based on past behavior and social standing. Families often try to avoid any behavior that could harm their social reputation.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 6: "Families with daughters are always concerned about reputation."
- Code 7, 8, 11, 14: "I wonder if my family cares more about me or their reputation."
- Code 20: "Because the perpetrator was known, they said it would ruin our reputation; I don't want this reputation when I'm suffering."
- Code 30: "My dad has said multiple times that I've ruined his reputation."

C: Cross-Gender Interactions

Adolescents often wish to form emotional relationships with the opposite sex, viewing such relationships as opportunities for future understanding.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 1: "My family is afraid I'll go out with a boy."
- Code 9: "I think having a boyfriend or emotional partner is a need, but families oppose it."
- Code 27: "They've made interactions with boys seem like a big deal."
- Code 29: "I had a boyfriend, and when my mom found out, the restrictions became severe."

Main Theme 4: Academic Challenges

Academic challenges can disrupt the educational process, causing tension between parents and adolescents.

A: Academic Study

Study methods vary based on individual factors, such as goals, intelligence, focus, and frequency of study. Parents often expect continuous and lengthy study sessions, which can alienate adolescents from academic enthusiasm.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 4: "They expect me to study constantly, but my study style is different."

- Code 19: "My dad criticizes me harshly about my studies, saying I'm stupid for not understanding math."
- Code 20: "I'm stressed about studying, but they keep saying I don't study."
- Code 25: "My mom always says she sees me with a book but doesn't believe I'm studying."

B: Selection of Academic Major

Parents often consider the selection of an academic major as a critical step in shaping the adolescent's future, striving to guide them towards fields with better job prospects.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 8: "I wanted to study graphic design at a vocational school, but my parents didn't let me."
- Code 17: "I didn't want to go into humanities; I wanted to study interior architecture at a vocational school, but my parents opposed it."
- Code 22: "I might abandon my major in a few years because I don't like it. If I had chosen my preferred field, I would have pursued it to a doctoral level."
- Code 23: "Once I turn 18 and become independent, I'll change my major."

Main Theme 5: Preservation of Dignity and Individual Respect

Respecting identity, maintaining dignity, accepting differences, opinions, tendencies, and tastes are essential for preserving individual dignity and fostering positive self-esteem.

A: Physical Punishment

Physical punishment can severely damage self-esteem. Repeated physical punishment can lead to emotional, psychological, and physical harm, fostering resentment and fear towards parents.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 16: "It's awful for a girl my age to be beaten; it breaks you."
- Code 18: "My dad has hit me a few times, and now I flinch whenever he raises his hand."
- Code 27: "They sometimes use physical punishment to enforce their views."
- Code 30: "I've been beaten; when they can't talk, they hit."

B: Privacy

Privacy encompasses a person's defined mental, physical, and intellectual space. Adolescents often seek a secure, private space, which may be overlooked or violated in the family context.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 8: "I have no privacy at home; I have to block the door with my bear or coat stand to prevent anyone from coming in."
- Code 13: "I have no privacy; my family intrudes so much that I ask them about my private matters."
- Code 19: "They check my phone without permission; I have no control over my personal belongings."
- Code 29: "We don't have personal lockers at home; everything is communal, leading to arguments."

C: Seeking Independence

Adolescents seek independence as they transition from childhood to adulthood, striving to establish their identity in society.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 14: "I'm trying to move out and live independently, but my mom says I'm a girl and can't do it."
- Code 26: "I want to be independent and have my own place, but my mom says I'm not abandoned."
- Code 30: "We planned to rent a place with friends, but my family opposed it strongly. I study and work, so I can support myself."

D: Acceptance of Opinions and Attitudes

Individuals develop a unique set of beliefs and attitudes based on their experiences, which may conflict with those of their parents, leading to tension.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 1: "Our differing opinions lead to arguments because they think things are still like the old days."
- Code 26: "My parents impose their beliefs, but I can't live like they imagine."
- Code 29: "Parents think we should learn from their experiences, but their views were shaped by different times and conditions."

E: Acceptance of Individual Differences

Recognizing and respecting individual differences is crucial for harmonious relationships. Parents often use a single standard to evaluate all children, failing to appreciate unique circumstances.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 18: "We live in two different worlds; they don't understand me, and I don't understand them."
- Code 22: "I feel misunderstood; if they put themselves in my place, there wouldn't be so many arguments."

- Code 25: "My mom is from a different era and doesn't understand me."
- Code 30: "They don't understand the things happening today and can't understand my adolescence."

F: Gender Discrimination

Parents may discriminate between children based on logical or illogical reasons, often favoring boys over girls, leading to freedom and autonomy disparities.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 8: "My mom likes my brother more; she treats us differently, and I feel she doesn't like me."
- Code 20: "My brother can come home at 4 a.m., but I can only go out between 4 and 7 p.m."
- Code 25: "My mom coddles my brother before school but doesn't show me the same affection."
- Code 26: "When boys argue with their fathers, they leave the house; when girls argue with their mothers, they stay in their rooms and cry."
- Code 27: "Girls are confined, boys are free, and you fear what you've created."

Main Theme 6: Family-Related Factors

Family dynamics, including parental behavior, economic decisions, and the number of children, significantly impact an adolescent's development and well-being.

A: Conflict Between Parents

Parental conflicts, even when not physical, can create a tense and negative home environment, affecting adolescents' emotional security and behavior.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 19: "My parents argue a lot; I've never seen them speak kindly to each other."
- Code 24: "My mom always fights with my dad, affecting my view of him."
- Code 25: "I've given up on my parents; they only notice me when their arguments end."
- Code 28: "They undermine each other in front of me, making it hard to respect them."
- Code 29: "My mom complains about my dad to me, ruining his image."

B: Being an Only Child

Due to lifestyle changes, many couples have only one child, leading to increased attention and expectations, but also potential psychological harm.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 1: "As an only child, I'm under constant scrutiny and questioned for minor actions."

- Code 5: "If I had a sibling, my parents wouldn't be so strict; only children often feel isolated."
- Code 17: "Being an only child raises their expectations of me."
- Code 26: "As an only child, my parents fear I'll ruin my future, so they are stricter."

Main Theme 7: Alignment with Societal Changes

With rapid technological advancements and societal changes, adolescents adapt to new cultural and social norms, influencing their behavior and identity.

A: Personal Grooming

Adolescents desire personal grooming for social acceptance, including facial grooming and body management.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 5: "I want to dye my hair, but my mom forbids it, saying I'll be responsible for all my life decisions."
- Code 9: "I begged to get my nails done, but my mom made it a big issue."
- Code 16: "I want to get eyelash extensions, but my mom says it's harmful."
- Code 29: "I got a tattoo on my left arm; if my mom finds out, it'll be a big deal."

B: Surgery

Advancements in medical and cosmetic surgery entice many, including adolescents, to enhance their appearance.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 11: "I've been talking about getting a nose job for months, but my parents won't agree."
- Code 20: "I'd rather my dad spend the money on a nose job than on my dowry, but he refuses."
- Code 24: "I dislike my nose and don't want to see myself in the mirror, but my mom says we can't afford surgery."
- Code 29: "I wanted to get lip fillers, but my dad said if I did, I couldn't come home."
- Code 30: "My mom says I need to pay for my nose job myself, so I'm saving money and working."

C: Pet Keeping

Keeping pets has become popular among adolescents, offering emotional solace but often conflicting with family preferences.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 8: "I want a hamster or guinea pig, but my mom dislikes them."

- Code 19: "I secretly kept a cat, but my mom was furious when she found out."
- Code 27: "I argued with my family for a month about keeping a cat; my mom said it was either me or the cat."
- Code 30: "I got a small dog from a friend, but my mom almost had a heart attack when she saw it."

D: Mobile Phones and Virtual Space

In modern times, mobile phones have become essential, creating personal space and enabling social connections, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sample Quotes:

- Code 2, 12, 15, 18: "They criticize me for using my phone."
- Code 5, 9: "Families see phones as a huge problem, acting like using them is a crime."
- Code 24: "My mom blames my phone for any ailment."
- Code 28: "They set time limits for phone use, leading to constant arguments."

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to provide a phenomenological explanation of parent-adolescent conflict among girls aged 14 to 17 years. The findings align indirectly with the prior research (Cao & Tam, 2023; Forresi et al., 2023; Goering & Mrug, 2023; Haverfield & Theiss, 2023; Javidi et al., 2015; Keshavarz et al., 2020; Khodaei et al., 2021; LoBraico et al., 2020; Marshall et al., 2023; Mastrotheodoros et al., 2020; Mokhtarnai et al., 2021; Mokhtarnia et al., 2016; Sadatian et al., 2020; Valinezhad et al., 2021; Yousefi et al., 2021). The results of this study revealed that the most significant factors contributing to parent-adolescent conflict included 7 main themes and 23 sub-themes. The main themes were: concerns about clothing and hijab, communication skills, value issues, academic challenges, preservation of dignity and individual respect, family-related factors, and alignment with societal changes.

One of the main themes identified was the conflict between parents and adolescents regarding clothing and hijab. Concerns about clothing and modesty are fundamental parental concerns, as parents strive to instill this social value and religious duty in the next generation. They worry about how to ensure their child adopts and commits to this value. Over recent years, the significant attention given to clothing and hijab has led to numerous societal changes, observable

even in adolescent boys' clothing (Mokhtarnai et al., 2021; Mokhtarnia et al., 2016).

Another main theme leading to parent-adolescent conflict is communication skills. The absence of effective communication skills within the family can lead to conflicts. Many psychologists believe that as adolescents enter this developmental stage, their cognitive abilities evolve, altering their expectations of parental behavior and attitudes. Issues such as distrust, lack of confidentiality, verbal communication methods, and conditional family environments were frequently mentioned by adolescent girls in interviews. Effective communication skills not only fulfill psychological needs and provide security for adolescents but also foster mutual understanding between them and their families (Goering & Mrug, 2023). The importance of communication skills is such that many conflicts between parents and adolescents begin with examining family communication quality. Hence, teaching this crucial skill to both parents and adolescents can significantly reduce conflicts (Haverfield & Theiss, 2023).

Another main theme was value issues, which included social reaction, fear of reputation, and cross-gender interactions. This theme reflects parents' attitudes, judgments, and concerns about their adolescents, indicating that some parents strive to avoid receiving negative societal judgments due to their children's behavior (Javidi et al., 2015). According to the participating adolescent girls, while societal norms and judgments are unavoidable, the most distressing aspect is the comparison and lack of recognition of individual differences, leading to self-censorship to avoid judgment by others (Valinezhad et al., 2021).

Academic challenges were another main theme, comprising academic study and selection of academic major. Academic issues can be examined from various angles. As adolescents transition to high school and approach crucial academic decisions like selecting a major and preparing for university entrance exams, parental supervision and sensitivity towards their studies increase, exerting additional pressure on the adolescents. Adolescents themselves face significant challenges in choosing their academic and career paths, which further contributes to parent-adolescent conflict (Sadatian et al., 2020).

Another main theme from the interviews with adolescent girls was the preservation of dignity and individual respect. This theme included physical punishment, privacy, seeking independence, acceptance of opinions and attitudes, acceptance of individual differences, and gender discrimination. These factors emerged as the most critical causes of parent-adolescent conflict. As adolescents seek more independence and recognition of their individuality, they demand greater respect for their personal space and differences within the family. Jiang et al. (2022) assert that physical punishment in adolescence has more severe and lasting negative effects than in childhood, causing significant psychological harm (Jiang et al., 2023). Furthermore, Fagan, Cabrera, and Ghosh (2023) believe that adolescents, with their enhanced cognitive development, no longer accept parental opinions without question, preferring to express their own beliefs and have them accepted by their parents (Fagan et al., 2023). The disparity in granting autonomy and freedom between sons and daughters in some families also causes dissatisfaction and conflict, as discussed under gender discrimination.

Family-related factors were another main theme, including parental conflict and the phenomenon of being an only child. Some adolescent girls attributed conflicts with their parents to the existing conflicts between the parents themselves, leading to a tense family atmosphere. Forresi et al. (2023) noted that in families with parental conflicts, children also experience friction and damage, particularly adolescents, who reflect this conflict in their relationships with parents (Forresi et al., 2023). Another sub-theme, being an only child, was mentioned by participants as leading to increased parental attention and expectations, along with more intense supervision and control (Mokhtarnai et al., 2021).

Another main theme was alignment with societal changes, including personal grooming, surgery, pet keeping, mobile phones, and virtual space. Adolescents' attention to their appearance and keeping pace with societal changes is a significant aspect of adolescence (Yousefi et al., 2021). The desire for cosmetic surgery, popular among adolescents, often leads to conflicts with parents (Carpinelli & Watzlawik, 2023).

5.   Limitations & Suggestions

The importance of addressing parent-adolescent conflict at this time is underscored by the extensive changes in Iranian society over the past few decades. Numerous studies indicate that the family is the primary arena for cultural transformations. These changes are evident when comparing the current status of young and older generations. To understand the evolving dynamics of parent-adolescent conflict in contemporary society, a timely and comprehensive study is crucial. This study aimed to

understand the underlying factors of conflict from adolescents' perspectives, providing a phenomenological description of the issue and qualitatively exploring the influential factors in the parent-adolescent relationship. The consequences of parent-adolescent conflict, as perceived by adolescents, are influenced by the strategies parents use to resolve conflicts or as perceived by the adolescents. Increased parent-adolescent conflict can lead to psychological disorders and family discord, potentially affecting the family's social role and even harming society. One limitation of this study was the inability to access a more culturally and socially diverse group of adolescents. Another limitation was the lack of examination of parent-adolescent conflict with boys. Given the sensitivity of the topic and the need to delve into adolescents' private lives, persuading eligible individuals to participate and conducting interviews took a significant amount of time, which hindered sample homogenization. Furthermore, given that the participants were adolescents, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings. The findings of this study can help reduce conflicts, particularly by improving the quality of parent-adolescent relationships. Using the themes extracted in this study to develop educational packages for parents and adolescents and conducting similar research with male adolescents are among the recommendations of this study.

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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. This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Kashan University under code IR.KASHANU.REC.2023.025.

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.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed equally.

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