Exploring the Impact of Gender on Parent – Adolescent Conflict: Frequency, Conflict Topics,and Popular Resolution Methods

Evdoxia Vasilogeorgi

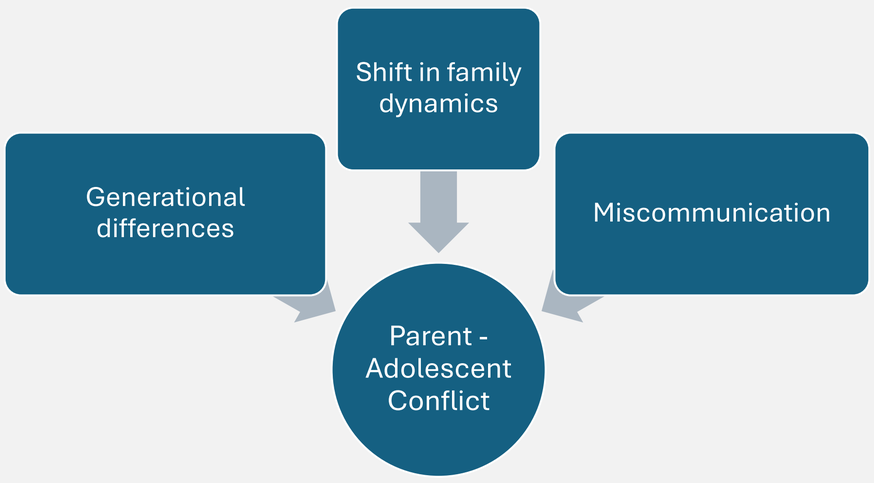
Psychology Department, Deree – The American College of Greece
Supervisor: Dr. Ganetsou Evanthia

Abstract

The present work explores gender differences in parent-adolescent conflict, with an emphasis on the frequency of conflict, popular conflict topics, and common resolution strategies. Overall, male adolescents experience more frequent conflicts than females. Boys usually argue over academic performance and lifestyle, whereas girls quarrel more often about issues related to appropriate behavior, autonomy, and physical appearance. Boys employ conciliation methods and avoidance, while girls resort to third-party interventions, assertion, and avoidance when quarreling with both parents. Patterns vary across culture and age. Finally, conflicts help transform parent-adolescent relationships, contributing to the renegotiation of boundaries, emotional growth, and autonomy within the family environment.

Introduction

- Adolescence involves rapid emotional, social, and cognitive changes.
- Adolescents seek independence and autonomy, the search of which often leads to parent-adolescent conflict.

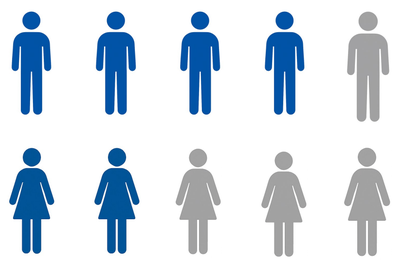


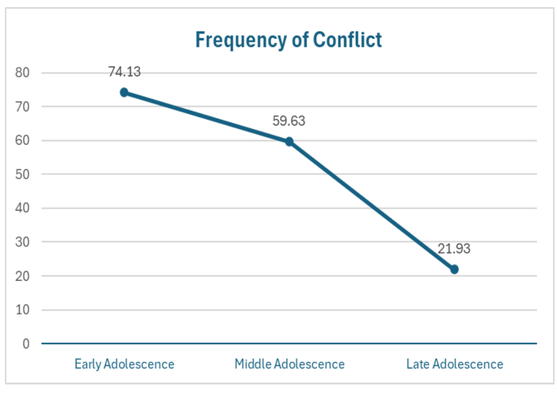
- Some conflict is inevitable and part of healthy development, **but** excessive conflict may harm family relationships and adolescent well-being.

This study examines:

1. The role of gender on **frequency** of conflict, **topics** of conflict, and common **resolution methods**.
2. The **transformative role** of conflict in **shaping parent-adolescent relationships.**

Gender Differences in Frequency of Parent-Adolescent Conflict





Male adolescents have more frequent conflict with their parents than female adolescents, especially with the parent of the opposite sex.

Gender Differences in Topics of Parent-Adolescent Conflict

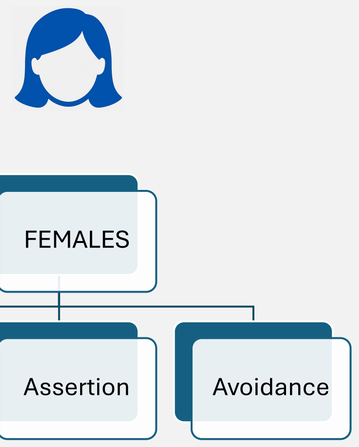
MALES

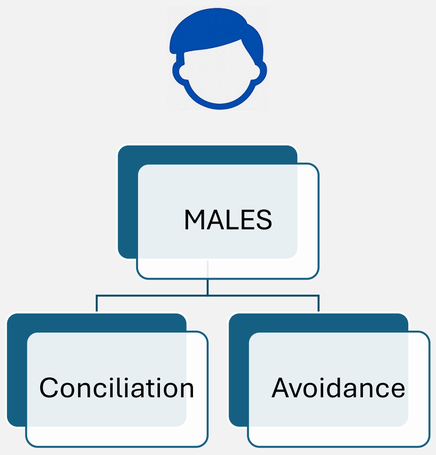
- academic performance
  - low grades; homework
  - negative attitude towards school
  - complaints from school
- hygiene
- alcohol use
- tobacco smoking

FEMALES

- disrespectful attitude towards parents
- excessive screen time
- extreme dieting
- drug use
- excessive make-up
- desire for designer clothes
- autonomy

Gender Differences in Resolution Methods





(Zhao et al., 2015)

- As adolescents age, they resort to more mature coping strategies.
- There is an increase in conciliation and decrease in assertion methods from early to middle adolescence.
- Conflict resolution is influenced by culture, with distinct Eastern – Western cultural differences.

Reorganization of Parent – Adolescent Relationships

- Conflict helps **redefine** parent-adolescent **boundaries.**
- Conflict leads to a shift from vertical to horizontal relationships:

  from parents holding authority **to** mutual respect and shared decision making
- This transition is more common in Western cultures (Branje, 2016).

- Conflict interactions foster **emotional variability,** i.e. one's ability to flexibly shift between emotions during conflict.
- Emotional variability builds:
  - emotion regulation skills
  - constructive & supportive communication
  - stronger connections

References

SCAN to view full reference list

SCAN to view full paper