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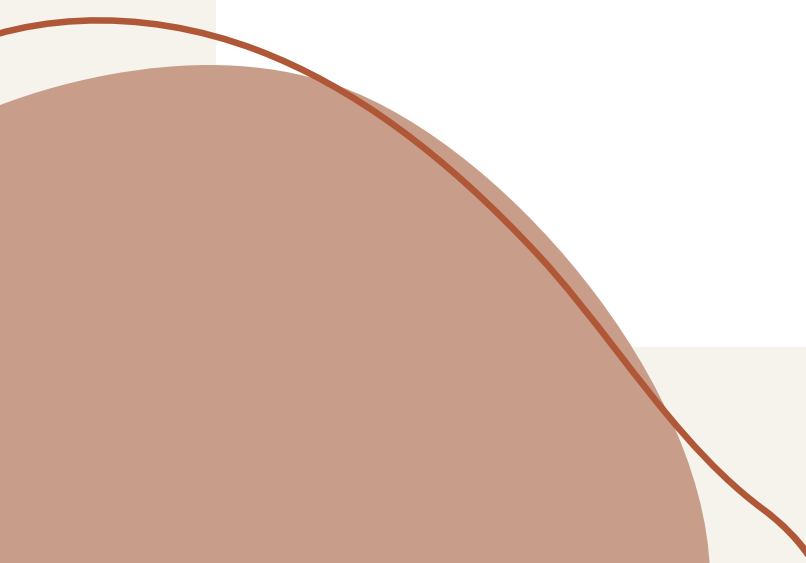
Armenian daughters' lived experiences and perspectives  
on their mother's involvement in teaching them sex  
education



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# Abstract

This qualitative research study explores Armenian daughters' lived experiences and perspectives on their mother's involvement in teaching them sex education-related topics. Five women aged twenty-one to twenty-five were interviewed. Thematic analysis revealed that mothers were not actively involved in teaching their daughters sex education-related topics. Moreover, daughters were not very comfortable engaging in such conversations with their mothers, and thus sex education-related topics remain a taboo subject in Armenia. Although all the participants expressed a positive attitude towards breaking the pattern, they were also severely concerned about the existing challenges that make the process even harder.



# Introduction

Parents' engagement in providing sex education to their children cannot be assumed to happen in each household. The conducted literature review shows the contradicting opinions of parents regarding their role in their children's and young adolescents' understanding of sex education. We lack the data on what occurs in conversations between Armenian parents and their children and how they make meaning of their communication or its absence. This qualitative research study investigates how Armenian daughters reflect on their lived experiences, as well as their mothers' involvement in teaching them sex education.



# Key Terms and Definitions

Sex education is defined as “teaching about human sexuality, including intimate relationships, human sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, sexually transmitted infections, sexual activity, sexual orientation, gender identity, abstinence, contraception, and reproductive rights and responsibilities” (Breuner, 2016, p. 1).



# Literature Review



Research shows that there is a division of agreement between parents regarding their role being a critical factor in raising children's and young adolescents' understanding of sex education. It reveals through the following two questions:


Why do parents think sex education should be part of a normal childhood development?

Why do parents refuse to teach sex education to their children and young adolescents?




Why do parents think sex education should be part of a normal childhood development?

According to Modise, positive parental views regarding sex education are based on the belief of developing fundamental knowledge and necessary skills for healthy relationships and responsible decision making, which will protect them from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and optimize their health (Modise, 2019).




Children should be aware of the difference between a “good touch” and a “bad touch.” According to Manisha, research in India showed that children are targets of sexual abuse because of their inability to differentiate between the right and wrong touches (Manisha, 2018).



Why do parents refuse to teach sex education to their children and young adolescents?

One reason behind resistance to sharing information is the belief of harming children's "innocence" by exposing them to sexual matters. All the 110 UK parents and carers of children participating in the parental "Interpretations of 'Childhood Innocence'" research expressed their concern to openly talk about sex education, which can harm their children's innocence (McGinn et al., 2016)



Some parents choose to take a passive role in discussing sex education since they are poorly equipped with skills to communicate on sexual and reproductive health matters. Thematic analysis in South Africa revealed that parents were not comfortable engaging in sex education discussions with their children due to the awkwardness around the taboo topic (Modise, 2019).





# Local Context

There is a huge gap in the literature evaluating the Armenian schools' performance level in providing sex education to adolescents and the role that parents have in their children's sex education. Therefore, the conducted qualitative research further explores the reasons behind not receiving the proper sex education and analyzes daughters' lived experiences and the extent to which their mothers were involved in teaching them sex education.

# Research Questions

## Research Question

How do Armenian daughters reflect on their lived experiences and perspectives on their mother's involvement in teaching them sex education?

## Sub Question

What are the changes that they would make to break the pattern?



# Methodology

The design for this capstone research is an investigative method exploring the Armenian daughters' lived experiences and their mothers' involvement in teaching them sex education by conducting one-on-one in-depth interviews with five women aged twenty-one to twenty-five.



# Research findings and analysis



Four major themes have emerged out of the five interviews

Theme 1: How do participants reflect on their experiences of learning about sex education related topics with their mothers? How comfortable do they feel talking to their mothers? What are the obstacles that might prevent the talk?

Theme 2: Menstruation: period talk and feelings associated with it



# Research findings and analysis



Four major themes have emerged out of  
the five interviews

Theme 3: Shame and awkwardness around  
sex education related topics

Theme 4: Challenges: What are the changes  
that participants will make to break the  
patterns of their lived experiences? What are  
the potential challenges that they would  
encounter while doing so?

# Research findings and analysis

One of the findings of the research is the lack of information about sex education coming from the mothers to daughters. Most of the participants only had a very limited talk with their mothers, which included mainly period talks.

Research also revealed that all the participants find mothers' roles in teaching sex education to their children to be very significant, which alludes to thinking that the pattern is already being tackled. However, the task is not an easy one as there are multiple challenges that daughters identified throughout the research, which are thoroughly discussed in the research study.

# Limitations and avenues for future research

The most significant limitation of the research is the number of conducted interviews.

Another limitation of the findings is the scope of the research question that requires understanding how daughters reflect on their lived experiences.

Conducting a thorough investigation that will include parents and their daughters and sons is necessary to be precise in the final findings.

The interviews also produced other themes that were not discussed in the findings as they did not fall under the larger themes that reflected the research question.

# Limitations and avenues for future research

Further research is also required to understand how school and society can play a role in teaching sex education to children and adolescents

Another interesting but not thoroughly investigated pattern was the use of language, which can be further researched.

Further qualitative research can also concentrate on participants' body language, pauses, facial expressions, neglect and bypassings of some topics, etc



# Conclusion

Children and adolescents need suitable sources to get accurate and sufficient information about sex education, as the absence of it can put a child's health at risk. Unfortunately, not every child is lucky enough to have access to such information from their mothers, and the research shows children in Armenia are not an exception. Although, research study showed daughters' willingness to break the pattern, the topic remains taboo in society due to various identified challenges.

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Thank You!

