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Resistance to Gender-Based Rules: Development in Adolescence

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ABSTRACT

To investigate whether adolescents approve of disobedience or lying in response to rules that restrict behavior based on gender, 89 younger (M_{age} = 11.74) and older (M_{age} = 16.67) adolescents and emerging adults (M_{age} = 19.97) judged vignettes wherein a child prefers an activity, but the child's parents indicate that they are not allowed to participate because the activity is 1) "not for boys," 2) "not for girls," or because 3) there is a schedule-related concern. Participants rated it more acceptable to disobey parental rules or lie to parents about participation in the activity when the rules were based on gender compared to when the rules were gender neutral. Younger adolescents were less likely to endorse disobeying and lying than older adolescents and emerging adults. Controlling for age and gender, principled endorsement of lying as resistance predicted endorsement of both lying and disobedience in specific vignettes.

When faced with a discriminatory rule, there are many options. One is to subvert the biased system through disobedience or deception. But this may be difficult when the system consists of your own parents. The current study examined whether adolescents approve of lying to their parents when their parents' rules are unfair or discriminatory—in this case, rules that restrict behavior based on gender. Several studies have shown that children view enforcing gender norms as unfair (e.g. Conry-Murray & Turiel, 2012) and they approve of lying when it prevents harm (Perkins & Turiel, 2007), but no studies we know of have assessed whether adolescents endorse resisting unfair rules through disobedience and lying.

Conflicts with parents about gender norms are possible because gender norms are learned from multiple sources, and these can change with age. During childhood, parents can affect their child's ideas about gender (Meyer & Gelman, 2016), but peers and social norms are also important sources for gender development (Lee & Troop-Gordon, 2011) and peers may be especially influential during adolescence. Deviations from gender roles have become increasingly accepted in society (Botkin, Weeks, & Morris, 2000; Carter, Corra, & Carter, 2009; Zuo, 1997) but parents lag behind adolescents (Cichy, Lefkowitz, & Fingerman, 2007). this may lead to conflict between adolescents and their parents about whether adherence to gender norms is obligatory. In fact, research indicates that even young children judge that adults do not have the authority to make rules that enforce gender norms (Conry-Murray & Turiel, 2012). One reason for this finding may be that gender-based expression is seen as important to individuals. Conry-Murray, Kim, and

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Turiel (2020) found that across cultures, children judged that a child who is not allowed to express an atypical gender-related preference would feel badly, suggesting that even young children perceive negative consequences to restricting gender-related self-expression. However, these studies indicate that children view gender-based expression as important. They do not examine whether children feel justified in disobeying parents or even lying to parents in response to an unfair rule.

Self-expression is also important to adolescents. Adolescence is an age when there is an increased desire for more independence (Smetana & Asquith, 1994). It may be that adolescents, especially older adolescents and emerging adults judge that any restrictions regarding their autonomy are unacceptable and therefore that disobedience and lying are appropriate responses. However, it is also possible for adolescents to judge that restrictions for the purpose of discriminating based on gender are especially egregious. If this is the case, they would judge restrictions based on gender differently from restrictions based on scheduling, and they would provide more justifications related to personal choice in situations describing gender-based restrictions. The current study examines whether adolescents approve of resisting rules that restrict activities or whether they selectively approve of resisting rules that enforce discrimination more than other types of rules.

Social domain theory

Research from a social domain theory perspective shows that children judge disobedience differently depending on the domain (Smetana, 2013). Rules that support moral prerogatives related to enhancing welfare are generally seen positively and disobedience is judged negatively. On the other hand, conventions, related to social rules that differ in different contexts, can be challenged in different circumstances. Personal issues are usually left to the individual to decide and can include decisions about the color of clothing to wear or how to spend free time. Children are more likely to accept breaking parental rules when the desired activity is determined to relate to personal choice (Lagattuta, Nucci, & Bosacki, 2010). Lagattuta et al. provide evidence of an upward trend in rule-breaking behavior as children begin to develop more mature ideas of what acceptable rules look like.

As children grow into adolescence, they disclose less to parents, but the domain also plays a part in the information that is shared (Smetana, Metzger, Gettman, & Campione-Barr, 2006). Adolescents feel obligated to disclose to parents prudential domain issues that could involve harm to themselves. However, they judge that their obligation to disclose information to parents is at the lowest level for personal domain issues—even lower than conventional domain issues. Gender norms are often seen as conventional since they are rules that dictate how to express gender and they can differ in different settings (Carter & Patterson, 1982; Stoddart & Turiel, 1985). On the other hand, some research has shown that gender norms are judged to be a matter of personal choice at times (Conry-Murray et al., 2020). Given that gender norms can be seen as either conventional or personal, it is unclear whether adolescents will endorse disobedience of rules that enforce gender norms.

Disobedience and deception

Adolescents do not approve of exclusion based on gender stereotypes (Killen & Stangor, 2001) and they value fairness (Shaw et al., 2014), but do they approve of disobedience or

lying to resist a rule that enforces gender norms? Rote and Smetana (2015) found that adolescents judge lying to be the least acceptable strategy to manage information, though they approve of deception more than their parents. However, there are situations wherein adolescents judge that lying is acceptable, especially in regard to issues in the personal domain. Research has found that high school students most often accepted lying to parents when they felt it was their right to make an autonomous decision (Jensen, Arnett, Feldman, & Cauffman, 2004). In fact, the reasons given by adolescences for nondisclosure include concerns with hiding risky behavior but also concerns with autonomy; they view some matters as private (Gingo, Roded, & Turiel, 2017). The need to assert autonomy may lead adolescents to use information-management techniques such as lying to ensure that they can make their own decisions across domains. This is consistent with the findings that adolescents and their parents think about domains of information management differently. Late adolescents are more likely to judge that issues are personal, while their parents may see the same issues as a more legitimately regulated conventional issue (Smetana, 2013).

There are some developmental differences in judgments of nondisclosure. Some research has also found that lying behavior becomes more prominent when adolescents are on the verge of adulthood (Smetana & Asquith, 1994). Rote and Smetana (2015) found that concealing personal issues is judged to be less acceptable over time during adolescence, perhaps because older adolescents are more capable of coordinating personal and moral concerns. On the other hand, Perkins and Turiel (2007) found that late adolescents were more likely than younger adolescents to lie when it came to issues of personal choice. Some research shows that as adolescents spent more time away from home, they disclosed less to their parents, with increases in nondisclosure and lying during adolescence (Laird, Marrero, Melching, & Kuhn, 2013).

Still, lying is relatively rare, since many adolescents avoid the topic or provide only partial disclosure rather than lying (Smetana et al., 2006). Adolescents judge that lying is necessary most often in the moral domain (Perkins & Turiel, 2007), when they are faced with an immoral or unfair situation. For example, research (Perkins & Turiel, 2007) has found that adolescents judge that issues of discrimination based on race provide a justification for lying. Perkins and Turiel (2007) found that adolescent participants (ages 12 to 17) accepted lying to parents in a moral scenario, wherein parents told their child not to be friends with someone of a different race. This example may be comparable to parents trying to restrict a child from an activity due to the child's gender because it also contains the moral component of discrimination. However, gender norms may be seen as more acceptable conventions than race-based rules, which are often judged as issues of justice since targeting one race is seen as unfair (Perkins & Turiel, 2007). In addition, in Perkins and Turiel, the scenarios describe lying to protect someone else and to provide a friendship opportunity to the self. Therefore, it remains to be seen whether adolescents will judge disobedience and deception to be more acceptable for unfair gender-based rules than for gender-neutral rules when the motive for lying is to protect one's own opportunities.

Developmental differences in understandings of gender could also play a part. Some research suggests that gender norms are often seen as conventional, even among adolescents (Stoddart & Turiel, 1985), whereas research in younger children (ages 5 to 9) suggests that gender norms can be judged as a matter of personal choice (Conry-Murray et al., 2020). Crouter, Whiteman, McHale, and Osgood (2007) followed a large sample of adolescences longitudinally from age 7 to 19 and found that most youth became less traditional with age,

with some variations. Overall, we expect that late adolescents and especially emerging adults will find it increasingly acceptable to lie to their parents about a gender-based activity if parents unfairly restrict the activity, more so than early adolescents, with justifications focusing more on personal choice with age.

Gender-norm differences for boys and girls

Several lines of research have shown that norms differ when they apply to boys as compared with girls, both in the strength of the norms and their relation to perceived discrimination. Males are subject to much stricter gender norms (Biernat, 1991; Ruble, Martin, & Berenbaum, 2006) and the content of the norms differs: Girls are subject to gender norms that target their appearance whereas boys are subject to norms about the activities they participate in and traits they express (Miller, Lurye, Zosuls, & Ruble, 2009). Differences in the content and strength of norms for boys and girls may have implications for the identification of discrimination in boys because it is less acceptable for them to engage in atypical activities (Parke & Gauvain, 2009). Gender differences have also been found in the identification of gender discrimination. Girls are more sensitive to gender discrimination against girls than boys are (Brown & Bigler, 2004).

The current study

The current research focuses on adolescents' and emerging adults' views of disobedience and lying to parents in response to gender discrimination. The research first examines whether adolescents and emerging adults think it is acceptable to disobey or lie to a parent who makes a rule under three conditions: 1) because only boys should engage in the activity, 2) because only girls should engage in the activity, or 3) in a gender-neutral condition, when the reason for the restriction was schedule-related and unrelated to gender. For each rule under the different conditions, we assessed participants' judgments and justifications of disobedience and lying and the consequences to the protagonist whose choice is restricted. These assessments all used specific activities that were restricted (e.g., flag football, dance, and soccer), similar to Perkins and Turiel (2007). However, other research has examined these issues in more-abstract terms (e.g., how free time is spent in Rote & Smetana, 2015). Therefore, we examined judgments in both specific assessments (described above) and abstract assessments, wherein participants judged rules in general that prohibit activities that are "not for boys" or "not for girls." The participants also judged lying in response to the abstract rules. Finally, we examined several possible predictors of the acceptability of disobedience and lying to parents. Predictors tested include 1) perceptions of how a protagonist who is restricted would feel, 2) abstract judgments of the acceptability of lying in response to rules, and 3) abstract judgments of parents' authority to make gender-based or gender-neutral rules.

Hypotheses

The first hypothesis predicted that participants would be more accepting of disobedience and lying when the rule was discriminatory based on gender. In addition, we predicted that emerging adults and late adolescents would be more likely than early adolescents to approve of disobedience and lying to parents in all situations, because past research has shown

increasing endorsements of disobedience with age (Perkins & Turiel, 2007). We expected similar patterns in judgments in the abstract of lying and of rule legitimacy. Due to stricter gender roles among males (Parke & Gauvain, 2009), we expected participants to be more accepting of rules that discriminated against boys than rules discriminating against girls. We expected all participants to rate the protagonist's feelings as more negative in the discriminatory scenarios than in the neutral scenarios. Finally, we expected that perceptions that protagonists would feel bad in response to the rules, abstract judgments accepting lying, and abstract judgments that parents lack rule-making authority would predict judgments of the acceptability of disobedience and lying.

In addition, we explored the possibility of gender differences and that judgments could differ in specific scenarios compared to general abstract statements.

Method

Participants

Eighty-nine participants (87% white, 7% Hispanic, 3% Black, and 3% other) were recruited from a variety of schools: both public and private schools in a suburban area and a private university in the northeast United States. These schools all come from primarily middle-class communities. The participants included three age groups: early adolescents, late adolescents, and emerging adults. There were 28 subjects (13 female, 15 male) in the early-adolescent group, M_{age} = 11.74, SD = 1.16; 30 subjects (20 female, 10 male) in the late-adolescent group, M_{age} = 16.67, SD = 1.09; and 30 subjects (15 female, 15 male) in the emerging adult group, M_{age} = 19.97, SD = 1.10. Approval was obtained from the university research ethics board and school officials, informed consent was obtained from subjects over 18 and from guardians of the subjects under 18, and assent forms were signed by subjects under the age of 18.

Power

G*power was used to examine post hoc power for the evaluation analysis. Between-subject factors require larger sample sizes, so analysis with the largest number of between-subjects interactions was used to determine the largest sample size needed. With an effect size f of .25, alpha = .05, groups = 3 (ages), measurements = 3 (rule types), correlations among measures of .5, and a nonsphericity correction of 1, the total power is .99.

G*power for the regression indicated that with an effect size f of .15, an alpha of .05, a total sample size of 89, and three predictors, power is .85.

G*power was also used to examine post hoc power for the analysis of the evaluations and the justifications. In both cases we used a Bonferroni corrected alpha of .017. With an alpha = .017, groups = 3 (ages), measurements = 3 (rule types), correlations among measures of .5, and nonsphericity correction of 1, the sample size needed to detect a medium repeated measure between factor effects sizes of .35 (eta of .11 or larger) is 75.

Design and procedure

Participants were interviewed individually in a private location in their schools, and responses were audio-recorded to record justifications; whereas, evaluations were noted by the interviewer at the time of the interview. Interviews took approximately 15 minutes. Before all assessments, an introductory paragraph explained that each scenario featured a child around the participant's age (for adolescents) or around middle school age (for emerging adults) who had an interest in participating in a cost-free activity open to all students during a free period at school. There were six scenarios wherein the protagonist had a preference for an activity but the child's parents indicated that the child was not allowed to participate. It was noted that the parents would have no way of knowing if the protagonists obeyed their rules.

The first two scenarios were gender-neutral activities—band and soccer club—and the target child was sex-matched to the participant. The parental restriction in these scenarios was due to the child's busy schedule and the need to focus on homework. The neutral scenarios were always first to avoid priming participants with references to gender. Next were four gender-based scenarios, presented in random order. Two scenarios had a male protagonist who wanted to participate in an activity typically for girls—sewing club or dance club. The other two scenarios featured a female protagonist who wanted to participate in an activity typically for boys— woodshop club or flag-football club. The parental restriction in these scenarios was due to the child's gender and the atypical gendered nature of the activity (i.e., the activity is "not for boys" or "not for girls").

Next, participants were asked if it was okay for the protagonist to disobey his or her parents and participate in the activity despite the parent's prohibition (e.g., "Is it OK for Dylan to disobey his parents and join the sewing club? Why or why not?"). Next participants were told that the protagonist did participate in the activity, and participants were asked to judge whether it was acceptable for the protagonist to lie to parents if asked about it (e.g., "Imagine Dylan does secretly join the sewing club, and his parents ask him what he does during free period. Is it OK for Dylan to lie to his parents about joining the club? Why or why not?" Both of these questions were coded on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 to 5, with *1* meaning *definitely not OK* and *5* meaning *definitely OK*. These were accompanied by scales that showed all responses and an associated simple yellow smiley face (for OK) or frowning face (for not OK) with bigger or smaller frowns and smiles labeled for different ratings. The text "Neither OK nor not OK" was under a face with the mouth as a straight line. Requests for justifications followed these two questions. Justification coding is explained below.

Next, we assessed how the subject thought the protagonist would feel if he or she did not join the club of their choice (e.g., "How does he feel if he doesn't join the sewing club?"). This question was coded on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 to 5, with *1* meaning *very bad* and *5* meaning *very good*. Here we used the same yellow smiley faces as above except they were labeled from "very good" (largest smile), to "very bad" (largest frown). All numbers on the scale had pictures of faces with varying smiles or frowns accompanying the options. Participants either pointed to their response or indicated it verbally.

Participants were also assessed with abstract questions. The first three were designed to determine judgments of the legitimacy of parental rules restricting 1) boys and 2) girls based on gender and 3) the legitimacy of parents' rules restricting children based on time constraints. For example, in the boy-protagonist condition, the question was, "Is it okay for parents to make a rule that their son is not allowed to participate in an activity because they think it is not for boys?" Three additional questions assessed judgments of lying to parents in response to rules based on (1) male gender norms, (2) female gender norms, and (3) time constraints. For example, in the gender-neutral condition, this question was, "Is it OK for a child lie to parents about participating in an activity the parents think he or she is too busy for?" All six of these questions were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 coded as definitely not OK and 5 coded as *definitely OK*.

To determine whether the activities in the assessment were appropriately neutral or gendered as expected, in the final part of the interview, participants were asked who usually participates in each of the specific activities: soccer, band, sewing, dancing, woodshop, and flag-football clubs. Responses were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale with *only girls* coded as *−2, boys and girls equally* coded as *0*, and *only boys* coded as *2*. This question also had pictures depicting the options given in the scale. A one-sample *t*-test was conducted for all six activities, which revealed that sewing, dance, woodshop, and flag football were all gendered in the expected direction and significantly different from neutral (all $p < .01$). Band was not significantly different from neutral ($p = .103$), as expected. Soccer was judged as slightly male ($p = .011$) but a close examination of the means reflected a very small effect. Therefore, soccer was deemed neutral and included in the analyses (see Table 1 for all means).

Justifications for judgments of disobedience or lying were based on five categories: 1) concerns that lying to or disobeying parents is wrong because it leads to bad consequences (e.g., "if your parents find out she'll get in a lot of trouble" and "because you always want them to think you're truthful so that they always believe you"); 2) concerns that the child should make his or her own choice, (e.g., "she should be able to do whatever she wants to do, play flag football or play basketball" and "it's something that she's passionate about"), which included a lack of legitimate restrictions (e.g., "because if it is during school then she doesn't have to take up any time after school and she can work on her school work after school where her free time is" and "she's doing an activity that she wants to do. It's not completely detrimental"); 3) concerns with both the consequences of disobeying parents and the child's choice (e.g., "because while she is doing something that she wants to do, she shouldn't lie to her parents about it"); 4) other concerns (e.g., "because sometimes stress can overwhelm a child and can actually harm them, so I think you have to schedule their activities"; and 5) missing responses. Each justification was coded as 0 = justification not

Table 1. Means (and *SD*s) of Gendered Rating of Activities

Activity type	Masculine	Feminine	Neutral
Skills	Woodshop	Sewing	Band
	M =.83* (.48)	*M* = −1.06* (.38)	*M* =.05 (.26)
Athletics	Flag football	Dance	Soccer
	M =.93* (.54)	*M* = −.69* (.51)	*M* =.09* (.33)

Note. Gendered ratings were coded as *−2, only girls; boys and girls equally* was coded as *0*; and *only boys* was coded as *2*. Means that differed from zero are indicated with an asterisk.

used or 1 = justification used. Because the justification categories are mutually exclusive only one justification was coded. Justifications that received less than 10% of responses were not analyzed. These included other concerns (9% of responses) and missing responses (1% of responses).

Justifications were coded by two trained research assistants, who coded 32 interviews (36%). A kappa of .75 indicated that they had acceptable reliability. Discrepancies on the 32 interviews we resolved through discussion before assistants coded the remaining interviews separately.

Results

Analyses were conducted for each of the judgments using several 3 (rule condition: restricting based on male gender, restricting based on female gender, restricting based on gender-neutral schedule) × 2 (participant gender) × 3 (age: early adolescents, late adolescents, emerging adults) repeated measures ANOVA to assess participants' judgments with rule condition as a repeated measure. Table 2 contains all means and *SD*s of judgments. Justifications were each analyzed separately in different ANOVAs because of concerns with independence. Therefore, justifications were analyzed with 3 (rule condition: restricting based on male gender, restricting based on female gender, restricting based on gender-neutral schedule) × 2 (participant gender) × 3 (age: early adolescents, late adolescents, emerging adults) repeated measures ANOVAs for each justification within evaluations of disobedience and lying. Table 3 contains means and *SD*s of justifications.

Judgments of disobedience

In judgments of disobedience in response to the parent rules, there was a main effect of rule condition, $F(2,164) = 51.56$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .39$, on ratings of acceptability for disobeying parental rules. Participants rated it more acceptable to disobey parental rules when the rules were based on either gender compared to when the rules were gender neutral. There was also a main effect of age, $F(1,82) = 26.34$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .39$, on ratings of acceptability for disobeying parental rules. Early-adolescent participants were less likely to endorse disobeying parental rules than late-adolescent and emerging-adult participants. Late adolescents and emerging adults did not differ See Figure 1.

Table 2. Mean Judgments (and *SD*s)

	Rule Condition			Age		
	Male Protagonist	Female Protagonist	Gender Neutral	12	16	19
Disobey	3.39_a (1.31)	3.27_a (1.30)	2.60_b (1.58)	2.01_a (.81)	3.47_b (1.13)	3.73_b (.91)
Lie	2.26_a (1.20)	2.10_a (1.16)	1.66_b (.93)	1.39_a (.42)	2.34_b (1.18)	2.27_b (.90)
Feel	1.69 (.84)	1.65 (.76)	1.77 (.78)	2.10_a (.93)	1.54_b (.59)	1.47_b (.47)
Abstract Rule	1.64_a (1.03)	1.65_a (1.07)	3.64_b (1.05)	2.77_a (1.06)	2.01_b (.74)	2.13_b (.55)
Abstract Lie	2.61_a (1.35)	2.40_b (1.34)	1.92_c (1.02)	1.90_a (.72)	$2.32_{a,b}$ (1.26)	2.71_b (1.11)

Note. Subscripts that differ indicate that means differ at $p < .05$, with Bonferroni corrections. Judgments of how the protagonist would feel were coded from *1, very bad*, to *5, very good*. All the judgments were coded from *1, definitely not OK*, to *5, definitely OK*.

Justifications of judgments of disobedience

Justifications suggesting that lying to parents is wrong

In justifications of judgments of disobedience that referred to lying to parents as unacceptable, there was a main effect of rule condition, $F(2,140) = 14.34$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$. Participants used this justification less when the rules were based on either gender compared to when the rules were gender neutral. There was also a main effect of age, $F(2,70) = 10.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .24$, which indicated that early-adolescent participants were more likely to use this justification than late-adolescent and emerging-adult participants. Late adolescents and emerging adults did not differ, given Bonferroni corrections. These effects were qualified by an age × rule condition, $F(4,140) = 3.83$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, which indicated that age differences in the use of this justification occurred in the conditions when the rules were based on a girl doing a "masculine activity" or when the rules were gender neutral but not in the condition of a boy doing a "feminine activity," with younger children using the justification that lying to parents is wrong more than older participants. See Table 3 for means and *SD* and subscripts indicating which means differed.

Justifications suggesting the child should have a choice

In justifications of judgments of disobedience that referred to the child's right to choose his or her activity, there was a main effect of rule condition, $F(2,140) = 43.76$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .39$. Participants used this justification more when the rules were based on either gender compared to when the rules were gender neutral. There was also a main effect of age, $F(2,70) = 13.36$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .28$, which indicated that early-adolescent participants were less likely to use this justification than late-adolescent and emerging-adult participants. Late adolescents and emerging adults did not differ.

Justifications suggesting both that lying to parents is wrong and that the child should have a choice

In justifications of judgments of disobedience that referred to both lying to parents as unacceptable and the right of the child to make his or her own choice, there was a main effect of rule condition, $F(2,140) = 6.67$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$. Participants used this justification less when the rules were based on either gender compared with when the rules were gender neutral.

Judgments of lying

In judgments of lying to parents, there was a main effect of rule condition, $F(2,162) = 22.70$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .22$, on ratings of acceptability of lying to parents. Participants rated it more acceptable to lie to parents when the rules were based on either gender than when the rules were gender neutral. There was also a main effect of age, $F(1,81) = 8.67$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .18$, on ratings of acceptability of lying to parents. Early-adolescent participants were less likely to endorse lying to parents than late-adolescent and emerging-adult participants See Figure 1.

Table 3. Mean Proportions (and *SD*s) for Justifications by Question, Age, and Condition

Question		Neutral Activities			Feminine Activity			Masculine Activity			Total by Age			Activity condition			
Disobey	Justification	12	16	19	12	16	19	12	16	19	12	16	19	Neutral	Fem.	Masc.	Total
Lie	Lying to parents	$.62_{a}$ (.41)	$.34_{b}$ (.42)	$.09_{b}$ (.27)	.29 (.38)	.16 (.32)	.07 (.26)	$.35_{a}$ (.39)	$.09_{b}$ (.25)	$.07_{b}$ (.22)	$.42_{a}$ (.31)	$.20_{b}$ (.28)	$.08_{b}$ (21)	$.34_{a}$ (42)	$.17_{b}$ (.33)	$.17_{b}$ (.32)	.23 (.30)
	Child's choice	.00 (.00)	.13 (.23)	.32 (.14)	.29 (.43)	.52 (.39)	.79 (.37)	.33 (.37)	.61 (.44)	.64 (.41)	$.21_{a}$ (.25)	$.42_{a,b}$ (.27)	$.58_{b}$ (.32)	$.16_{a}$ (31)	$.54_{b}$ (.45)	$.53_{b}$ (.42)	.41 (.32)
	Mixed	.29 (.38)	.32 (.39)	.46 (.43)	.33 (.37)	.23 (.30)	.07 (.22)	.23 (.38)	18 (.33)	.16 (.31)	.28 (.26)	.24 (.24)	.23 (.23)	$.36_{a}$ (.40)	$.20_{b}$ (.32)	$.19_{a,b}$ (.34)	.25 (.24)
	Lying to parents	.87 (.30)	.59 (.43)	.55 (.44)	.56 (.41)	.50 (.44)	.23 (40)	.58 (.46)	.34 (.42)	.34 (.43)	$.67_{a}$ (.31)	$.48_{a,b}$ (.37)	$.38_{b}$ (.33)	$.67_{a}$ (41)	$.42_{b}$ (.43)	$.42_{b}$ (.45)	.50 (.35)
	Child's choice	.00 (.00)	.11 (.21)	.02 (.09)	.08 (.18)	.14 (.28)	.16 (.33)	.06 (.16)	.25 (.37)	.09 (27)	.05 (.10)	.17 (.22)	.09 (.18)	.04 (.14)	.13 (.27)	.13 (.28)	.09 (.18)
	Mixed	.02 (.10)	.21 (.33)	.32 (.41)	.23 (.32)	.27 (.37)	.43 (.45)	.25 (.41)	.39 (.34)	.39 (.43)	17_{a} (.23)	$.29_{a,b}$ (.25)	$.38_{b}$ (.31)	$.18_{a}$ (.34)	$.32_{a,b}$ (.39)	$.34_{a}$ (.40)	.28 (28)

Note. All means are proportions, but they do not add to 1 because they do not include uncodable or missing data. Subscripts that differ within each condition indicate that means were significantly different at $p < .017$, the Bonferroni corrected significance level.

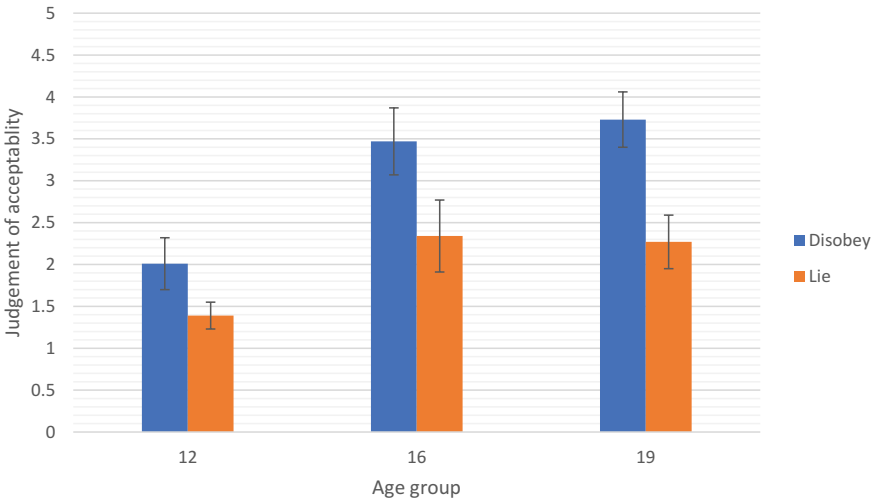

Figure 1. Judgments of the acceptability of disobedience and lying by age. *Note*. Judgments were coded from *1, definitely not OK*, to *5, definitely OK*. Error bars indicate 95% Confidence Interval.

Justifications of judgments of lying

Justifications suggesting that lying to parents is wrong

In justifications for judgments of lying that referred to lying to parents as unacceptable, there was a main effect of rule condition, $F(2,140) = 17.03$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .20$. Participants used this justification less when the rules were based on either gender compared to when the rules were gender neutral. There was also a main effect of age, $F(2,70) = 5.15$, $p = .008$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$, which indicated that early-adolescent participants were more likely to mention concerns with lying to parents than emerging-adult participants. Late adolescents did not differ from either the older or younger age groups. Table 3 contains the means and *SD*s for all justifications.

Justifications suggesting that the child should have a choice

In justifications of judgments of lying to parents that referred to the child's right to choose his or her activity, there were no significant effects, given Bonferroni corrections.

Justifications suggesting that both lying to parents is wrong and the child should have a choice

In justifications of judgments of lying to parents that referred to both lying to parents as unacceptable and the right of the child to make his or her own choice, there was a main effect of rule condition, $F(2,140) = 5.63$, $p = .004$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. Participants used this justification more when the rules were restricting a girl from doing a masculine activity compared with when the rules were gender neutral. There was also a main effect of age, $F(2,70) = 4.39$, $p = .016$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$, which indicated that early-adolescent participants were less likely to mention mixed concerns than emerging-adult participants. Late adolescents did not differ from either the older or the younger age groups.

Judgments of how the child would feel

In participants' judgments about how the subject would feel if they could not participate in their desired activity, there was a main effect of age, $F(2, 80) = 7.47$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$, showing that younger participants expected the subject to feel better if they could not participate in their desired activity than older participants.

Abstract judgments of disobedience and lying

In participants' judgments of parental rules in the abstract, there was a main effect of rule condition, $F(2,162) = 212.98$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .72$, on ratings of acceptability of rules in the abstract. Participants rated it less acceptable for parents to create a rule restricting their son or daughter from participating in an atypical gendered activity compared to a rule against a child participating in an activity because the child was too busy. There also was a main effect of age, $F(1,81) = 6.71$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .14$, on ratings of acceptability of parental rules. Early-adolescent participants were more likely to endorse parental rules than late adolescent and emerging adults.

In participants' abstract judgments of children lying to their parents, there was a main effect of rule condition, $F(2,162) = 19.76$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .20$, on acceptability of lying. Participants judged lying to parents about participating in activities due to gender as being more acceptable than lying due to being busy; however, all conditions differed. Pairwise comparisons revealed that boys' lying was judged significantly more acceptable than girls' lying, and both gender-based lying conditions were judged to be more acceptable than the gender-neutral condition. There also was a main effect of age, $F(2,81) = 4.03$, $p = .021$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, which indicated that early adolescents were less likely to endorse lying than emerging adults.

Lying in the abstract was judged as more acceptable than in the specific situations. For each condition, paired-sample t-tests were conducted, which indicated that means were higher in the abstract questions than in the specific activity question for lying in response to rules about daughters, $t(87) = -2.77$, $p = .007$; rules about sons, $t(86) = -2.95$, $p = .004$; and gender-neutral rules, $t(87) = -2.23$, $p = .028$.

Relationships among judgments

Finally, to examine how much of the variance in judgments of disobeying and lying to parents for each of the three conditions can be explained by other judgments, we ran six hierarchical linear regressions. For each, the criterion variables were mean judgments of the protagonist engaging in specified activities and predictor variables were judgments of the protagonists' feelings, judgments of the parents' authority to make the rules, and judgments of the acceptability of lying in the abstract. Given the age differences found in each of these variables, age was entered as a control. Indeed, bivariate correlations indicated that age was significantly related to many of the predictor variables and criterion variables in the regressions (from $r = -.05$ to $r = .56$). We also included participant gender as a control, since gender is the topic of the research. In addition, several other variables were also significantly related to the criterion variables. These significant bivariate coefficients (as a measure of multicollinearity) ranged from .01 to .68. and, so, remained below .70. See Tables 4, 5, and 6.

Table 7 shows the standardized coefficients and p values for the six regressions, which indicate that perceived feelings of the protagonist was not a significant contributor to the

Table 4. Correlations Among Variables for the Gender-Neutral Condition

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Disobeying in practice	–	.55**	−.26*	−.26*	.37**	.55**	−.17
2. Lying in practice		–	−.18	−.05	.28*	.35**	−.13
3. Protagonist's feelings			–	.01	−.06	−.20	−.02
4. Rule-making authority				–	−.20	.32**	.15
5. Lying acceptability					–	.32**	.11
6. Age						–	−.04
7. Gender							–

Note. Rule-making authority and Lying acceptability were coded from *1, definitely not OK*, to *5, definitely OK*. Protagonist's feeling was coded from *1, very bad*, to *5, very good*. Gender was coded 0, female; 1, male.
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

Table 5. Correlations Among Variables in the Boy-Protagonist Condition

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Disobeying in practice	–	.57**	−.31**	−.25*	.48**	.56**	−.09
2. Lying in practice		–	−.09	.05	.63**	.31**	.04
3. Protagonist's feelings			–	−.04	−.08	−.39**	.04
4. Rule-making authority				–	.04	−.26*	.14
5. Lying in acceptability					–	.24*	.09
6. Age						–	−.04
7. Gender							–

Note. Rule-making authority and Lying acceptability were coded from 1, definitely not OK to 5, definitely OK. Protagonist's feeling was coded from *1, very bad*, to *5, very good*. Gender was coded 0, female; 1, male.
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

Table 6. Correlations Among Variables in the Girl-Protagonist Condition

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Disobeying in practice	–	.56**	−.27*	−.33**	.45**	.56**	−.11
2. Lying in practice		–	.08	−.06	.68**	.35**	−.09
3. Protagonist's feelings			–	.02	−.06	−.31**	.01
4. Rule-making authority				–	.05	−.31**	.11
5. Lying in acceptability					–	.26*	−.03
6. Age						–	−.04
7. Gender							–

Note. Rule-making authority and Lying acceptability were coded from 1, definitely not OK to 5, definitely OK. Protagonist's feeling was coded from 1, very bad to 5, very good. Gender was coded 0, female; 1, male.
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

criterion variables for any of the conditions. For judgments of disobeying parents, the abstract judgments of acceptability of lying were significant contributors in all conditions. In the condition with a girl as the protagonist, judgments of rule-making authority helped explain the variance in appraisals of disobedience. Regarding judgments of lying to parents about engaging in the activities, only the judgments of abstract acceptability of lying were significant contributors. Overall, these results are consistent with the explanation that abstract notions of the acceptability of lying contribute to the variance in lying and disobedience judgments in the context of specific activities. However, perceived feelings did not significantly explain the variance in responses and judgments that the parents' rule

Table 7. Regressions in Each Condition Predicting Judgments of Disobedience and Lying in Response to Rules, Controlling for Age and Gender

Criterion variable	Predictor variables	Standardized Coefficients	*p*	ΔR^2
Disobeying in practice				
Neutral	Protagonists' feelings	−.16	NS	.08 ***
	Rule-making authority	.06	NS	
	Lying acceptability	.23	.014	
Boy	Protagonists' feelings	−.13	NS	.17***
	Rule-making authority	−.16	NS	
	Lying acceptability	.40	<.001	
Girl	Protagonists' feelings	−.13	NS	.16***
	Rule-making authority	−.24	.006	
	Lying acceptability	.36	<.001	
Lying in practice				
Neutral	Protagonists' feelings	−.12	NS	.06**
	Rule-making authority	.11	NS	
	Lying acceptability	.23	.035	
Boy	Protagonists' feelings	.05	NS	.44***
	Rule-making authority	.12	NS	
	Lying acceptability	.59	<.001	
Girl	Protagonists' feelings	.02	NS	.37***
	Rule-making authority	−.04	NS	
	Lying acceptability	.63	<.001	

***$p < .001$
**$p < .01$

was not legitimate only explained the variance in disobedience when the rule was gendered. Lastly, judgments of the parents' rule were not related to the acceptability of lying.

Discussion

Overall, adolescents and emerging adults judged that disobedience of unfair rules that restrict participation in activities on the basis of gender is more acceptable than disobedience of rules based on a gender-neutral reason, such as time management. Consistent with past research showing that adolescents judge lying to be the least acceptable strategy to manage information (Rote & Smetana, 2015), lying was generally seen negatively (with the mean falling on the "a little not OK" part of the scale) but again was judged to be more acceptable when the lying was done to take part in a gender-based activity as compared with a gender-neutral activity. Jensen et al. (2004) showed that adolescents judge lying to be most acceptable when it is necessary to protect their rights to autonomy. However, these results additionally indicate that adolescents and emerging adults recognize that resistance to unfair rules based on gender is judged to be more legitimate than resistance to more gender-neutral rules, even though both preserve autonomy. These findings extend past research (Conry-Murray et al., 2020; Conry-Murray & Turiel, 2012) that shows that even children judge rules that assume preferences based on gender to be unfair. The current study shows that adolescents also indicate that disobedience can be an acceptable response to an unfair gender-based rule.

Although adolescents tend to advocate for increased independence (Smetana & Asquith, 1994), justifications indicate that autonomy was not a concern to the same degree across all conditions. Disobedience and lying to defy a gender-based rule were more often justified in terms of the protagonist's personal choice than gender-neutral rules. Past research has shown that adolescents tend to justify a lack of disclosure of personal-domain issues (Gingo

et al., 2017; Smetana et al., 2006) and moral issues related to a parent's racism, for example (Perkins & Turiel, 2007). The current study indicates that adolescents tend to see unfair rules that restrict their own autonomy based on gender as similarly unacceptable, making disobedience and lying more acceptable. Justifications indicate that other types of issues such as a scheduling reason for a rule were more likely to be justified with references to the problematic nature of lying to parents or conflicted reasons. Another possible explanation for the differences between the gendered- and gender-neutral rule conditions could be that adolescents and emerging adults judge that restrictions based on gender are not legitimate rules. In fact, they judged parental rules that are based on gender norms to be less acceptable than parental rules based on time management.

Past research has shown increases in the assertion of individual autonomy throughout adolescence (Smetana & Villalobos, 2009). Age differences in the current study are consistent with this interpretation, since younger adolescents were more reluctant to challenge rules and are also consistent with Perkins and Turiel (2007), who found that late adolescents were more likely to judge lying to be acceptable in regard to issues of personal choice and their justifications were consistent with that interpretation. Our age differences cut across responses to all types of rules, indicating that both gender-based and scheduling-based rules were judged more negatively with age. It is possible that older participants saw all of the rules as imposing on their right to autonomy. Interestingly, this pattern was found in judgments of both disobedience and lying in both contextualized and abstract assessments. It may be that adolescents assert their right to autonomy across several different areas, but it is important to note that the condition differences indicate that all ages were most positive about resisting rules related to gender.

Justifications also showed age differences indicating that early adolescents were more focused on the consequences of disobedience and lying whereas older adolescents and emerging adults were focused on the child's choice, similar to the results from evaluations. Interestingly, age differences in justification also show that older participants, especially emerging adults, were more sensitive to the variety of issues including both a concern about the consequences of lying and a concern with autonomy. In the question of whether lying to parents was acceptable, the emerging-adults' justifications showed the most conflict of any age group, with a large portion of this age group justifying their judgment with both concerns with the consequences of lying and personal choice.

Judgments of how the protagonist would feel being restricted from a desired activity also differed by age, indicating that younger participants, at age 12, perceived that the protagonists would feel only "a little bad" compared to older adolescents and emerging adults, who perceived that protagonists would feel "very bad" on average. The fact that we did not find an interaction between the rule-type condition and age indicates that younger adolescents may be more accepting of rules of all types that restrict their freedoms. They may also perceive that rules are commonplace and therefore less likely to result in bad feelings.

On the other hand, participants of all ages indicated that resistance to gender-based rules was more acceptable, and they judged rules enforcing gender norms significantly more negatively than gender-neutral rules. Adolescents who desire to deviate from a gender-role expectation but are held back by parental rules may feel they are being treated unfairly. When an individual feels that he or she is being treated unfairly because of gender, this may be seen as an issue of discrimination (Brown & Bigler, 2004).

The question of why participants judged resistance more positively when rules were gender based and undermined a stated preference was explored in several regressions. We examined three variables as they related to the acceptability of disobedience and lying to parents to determine how participants made their judgments. Variables tested included 1) perceptions of how a protagonist who is restricted would feel, 2) abstract judgments of the acceptability of lying in response to rules, and 3) abstract judgments of parents' authority to make gender-based or gender-neutral rules. Overall, the regressions showed that protagonists' feelings were not significant predictors, indicating that an individual need for expression was not a strong reason for participants' acceptance of resistance to gender-based or gender-neutral rules. On the other hand, approval of disobeying gender-based rules was associated with judgments of rule-making authority but only in the gender-based rules conditions for girl protagonists. This indicates that the degree of participants' negative assessment of gender-based rules for girls was related to the participant's acceptance of disobedience. In other words, it appears that participants considered the legitimacy of the gender-based rule, and not individual feelings, when they judged whether disobedience was appropriate. This was not the case for gender-neutral issues, perhaps because parents may have been deemed legitimate authorities even if participants didn't approve of the rule.

Finally, the acceptability of lying to parents in the abstract was related to judgments of disobedience and lying in specific activities for all conditions. Abstract endorsement of lying may be an indicator that resistance is deemed acceptable, whether it takes the form of disobedience or lying in specific cases. However, since lying is often judged to be the most unacceptable form of information management, similar to past research (Rote & Smetana, 2015), lying may have been seen as wrong even in response to an unfair rule.

Judgments of male and female protagonists were very similar for all judgments except in the abstract judgments of lying in response to gender-based rules. In that case, lying in response to a rule restricting girls was judged to be significantly less acceptable than lying in response to a rule that targets boys. This is contrary to our expectation that stricter norms for boys (Biernat, 1991; Ruble et al., 2006) would make it more difficult to identify discrimination. It may have provided more reason for participants to judge it legitimate for boys to lie about their activity, since the sanctions could be greater. This is further supported by findings from previous research that norms applied to boys are often related to activities (Miller et al., 2009) whereas girls' norms are more likely to relate to appearance. The current study examined reasoning about activities.

Although we did not have sufficient power to examine gender differences in addition to age and rule condition, we did include gender in our analysis as an exploratory factor. No gender-of-participant's effects were found.

Adolescents and emerging adults judged lying in response to rules that restrict specific activities as less acceptable than lying for the same reasons in the abstract. This may be a result of additional context provided with specific activities. Contextualized judgments seem to come closer to predicting the rich details of real-life situations and reflect the specific features of the situation, which participants consider (Turiel, 2015). However, a limitation of the current study is that we are unable to determine exactly why contextualized and abstract judgments differed. For example, contextualized activities could lead participants to call to mind atypical individuals and they may have experienced less

empathy for a protagonist who defies a specific gender norm. However, it is unknown if contextualized judgment provided other details that influenced judgments.

An additional limitation comes with comparing gender norms, which are qualitatively different. Norms for boys and girls differ in both content and strength. Comparing gender norms to gender-neutral rules also requires less than exact equivalence and can introduce confounds. While it may not be possible to find exactly equivalent activities and reasons for rules, it is important to consider the possible confounds.

We also compared gender-neutral rules that were relatively typical (dealing with schedule conflicts) with gender-based rules. Although both were contrary to the protagonist's preferences, schedule conflicts may have been seen to be a more reasonable reason to forego a preference. It would be interesting to see whether the gendered quality of the rule was key or whether any rule that seems unjustified—perhaps because it is arbitrary instead of being based on gender norms—and restricts autonomy would be judged similarly. Future research should examine this question.

Future research should also look at the role of peers—in terms of both encouraging autonomy and the difference between resisting unfair rules from parents compared to peer groups.

Finally, an important limitation of the current study was the homogeneity of our participants, who were primarily White and relatively wealthy—a sample that does not represent the United States or the world. In fact, past research has found ethnic differences in disclosure to parents (Tasopoulos-Chan, Smetana, & Yau, 2009; Villalobos & Smetana, 2012), indicating that future research should examine more-diverse samples. Given that adolescents of color may have more experience with discrimination, it is possible that disobedience and lying in response to gender-based discrimination and to other types of discrimination could differ in groups that have more experience with discrimination.

Adolescents view exclusion on the basis of gender as unfair (Killen & Stangor, 2001; Smetana & Villalobos, 2009). The current research indicates that they also judge that resistance to rules, especially disobedience, is especially appropriate when rules target one gender. Adolescents, especially older adolescents and emerging adults, in judging that parents do not have the authority to make rules that enforce gender norms indicate that with age, increasingly, they judge gender-based rules more negatively. Further, negative judgments of gender-based rules but not perceived negative feelings were associated with participants' judgments that disobedience was appropriate. This indicates that principles relating to the legitimacy of a rule, and not a concern with consequences to the individuals' feelings, were especially important to adolescents in the case of gender-based rules. On the other hand, autonomy was still important to adolescents, especially older adolescents and emerging adults, who judged resistance to rules of all types positively. Thus, overall results indicate that both autonomy and fairness are important to adolescents. Research has shown that parents' autonomy support is associated with adolescents who value honesty with their parents (Bureau & Mageau, 2014). The current study indicates that disobedience and lying may not always be negative since they can be used to resist discriminatory rules.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available at the Open Science Foundation, https://osf.io/p4wfm/with DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/P4WFM.

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