

The Impact of Family Communication Patterns on Emotional Well-Being Among Adolescents

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Abstract

Background: Healthy communication in families is crucial to teens' emotional well-being. Family communication patterns such as support, openness and communication style impact on emotional well-being. Poor communication or communication restrictions can lead to emotional distress, anxiety and aggression in adolescence. **Objective:** This research sought to understand how family communication influences the emotional health of adolescents, and what type of communication is related to better mental health. **Methodology:** A cross-sectional survey of 250 adolescents (12-19 years of age) was undertaken. Family communication and mental health were measured with standardised questionnaires. Data were analysed using correlation and regression analyses. **Findings:** The findings showed 48% of the study's participants reported open communication with their families, which was related to better emotional well-being ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.01$). However, restrictive communication was positively associated with anxiety and distress (mean score = 26.8 ± 5.4). Participants with supportive families had better mental health. **Conclusion:** Healthy family communication plays a vital role in improving adolescents' emotional well-being, suggesting a need for family-focused interventions and education initiatives.

Keywords: Adolescents, Family communication, Emotional well-being, Mental health, Parenting styles, Psychological development

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Adolescence is a pivotal period that involves emotional, psychological and social transformations that impact well-being. It is a time when they are establishing their identity, emotional skills and social relationships. Parents are a significant source of socialization and family communication is an important predictor of the emotional well-being of adolescents [1][2]. Open, empathetic and responsive family communication allows adolescents to communicate their emotions, seek advice, and respond to stressors [6]. On the other hand, poor communication such as criticism, non-responsiveness, and an authoritarian parent-child relationship style may impede emotional development and lead to mental health problems [3]. Studies show that teens who have supportive and responsive communication with their families have greater self-esteem, emotional regulation, and resilience, while teens who have limiting and restrictive family relations have lower levels of well-being and greater psychopathology [4][5]. On the other hand, negative or hostile communication patterns are linked with emotional difficulties and antisocial behavior [6]. Additionally, the impact of contemporary stressors (such as academic and online influences) on adolescent well-being underscores the importance of family communication in adolescent development [7].¹

1.2 Problem Statement

Adolescents' well-being is affected by ineffective family communication. This age group is increasingly experiencing emotional distress, anxiety, depression and behavioral issues [8]. Poor communication patterns can result in a lack of understanding, emotional support and trust between parents and their teens, which then further contributes to the psychological distress. Researchers have found that adolescents who come from less communicative families are more likely to develop internalizing disorders, such as anxiety and depression, and externalizing disorders, such as aggression and withdrawal [9]. Lack of communication also may hinder adolescents' ability to seek support in times of stress, which could result in long-term mental health problems [10]. While the importance of communication patterns in families has

been acknowledged in recent years, research is needed to understand how patterns in communication affect emotional well-being in different groups of people.

1.3 Research Objectives

The aim of this study is to understand the role of family communication patterns on the emotional well-being in adolescents. The specific objectives are:

- a. To measure family communication patterns of adolescents
- b. To assess level of emotional well-being
- c. To examine communication-emotion link

2 Literature review

2.1 Family Communication Patterns

In recent years, it has been stressed that family communication is an important predictor of adolescent development, including emotional and psychological adjustment. Convivial communication, with active listening, emotional support and respect, for instance, has been linked to favorable adolescent outcomes and improved parent-child relationships [11]. On the other hand, a restrictive communication pattern, signaling little communication, power, and emotion, is associated with adolescents' emotional distress and lower self-esteem [12]. Parenting styles such as authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive, also affect the nature of communication and adolescents' emotional expression [13]. Furthermore, in recent times, studies note that families' use of computer-based communication can strengthen or weaken relationships.

2.2 Emotional Well-Being in Adolescents

Adolescent emotional well-being is often measured as self-esteem, life satisfaction, and emotional regulation, absence of anxiety or depression [14]. This can be achieved through the family system. Positive family dynamics, such as warmth, family cohesion and communication, play a crucial role in promoting good psychological outcomes [15]. In contrast, family conflict and lack of communication contribute to increased stress, anxiety and depression. Recent research also suggests that teens that experience high levels of emotional support from their families are more resilient and effective in coping with stress [16].

2.3 Previous Studies

Recent research consistently shows a strong association between family communication and adolescent psychopathology. Positive family communication styles protect children and adolescents against depression and anxiety, whereas negative family communication styles create vulnerability [17]. But there are still questions to be answered, such as longitudinal and cross-cultural evidence. A lack of causal evidence is evident in many studies, which use self-report and cross-sectional designs. Further, the influence of contemporary issues, such as technology use and family dynamics, needs to be investigated [18].

3 Methodology

3.1 Study Design

We used a cross-sectional study design to investigate the effects of family communication on adolescent well-being. A cross-sectional design facilitates data collection from a population at a specific time point, and subsequently identifies potential associations between family communication and psychological well-being [20]. Furthermore, a limited mixed-method approach was taken by offering an optional semi-structured interview to gain further qualitative understanding of adolescents' views on family communication. This approach increases the validity of the results by taking into account both quantitative and qualitative data [19].

3.2 Study Population

Participants were adolescents (12-19 years old) from secondary schools and community centres. A sample size of 250 was calculated using statistical methods at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. This involved stratified random sampling to represent diverse age, gender, and family types.

Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

| Criteria Type | Description |
|---------------|--|
| Inclusion | Adolescents aged 12–19 years |
| | Living with at least one parent/guardian |
| | Provided informed consent |
| Exclusion | Diagnosed severe psychological disorders |
| | Incomplete or inconsistent responses |

3.3 Data Collection Tools

It used validated assessment measures for data collection.

1. Family Communication Scale: This questionnaire evaluated family communication styles including expressiveness, problem-solving, and non-openness.
2. Emotional Well-Being Questionnaire: A standardized questionnaire was administered to assess psychological well-being measures such as emotional stability, self-esteem, anxiety and stress.
3. Interviews (Optional): Some individuals were subject to interviews to add detail to their self-reported families' communication.

Table 2: Variables and Measurement Tools

| Variable | Instrument Used | Scale Type |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Family Communication | Family Communication Scale | Likert scale |
| Emotional Well-being | Well-being Questionnaire | Likert scale |
| Coping/Perceptions (Qual.) | Semi-structured Interviews | Thematic analysis |

considerations were adhered to (confidentiality, consent). Data were analyzed using statistical software, descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses, to explore associations between variables [20].

3.4 Conceptual frame work

This conceptual framework shows the impact of family communication patterns on adolescents' well-being, including direct and indirect effects as shown in figure 1. It is based on family systems theory and psychological development theories that stress the significance of interpersonal relationships within the family system within the environment.

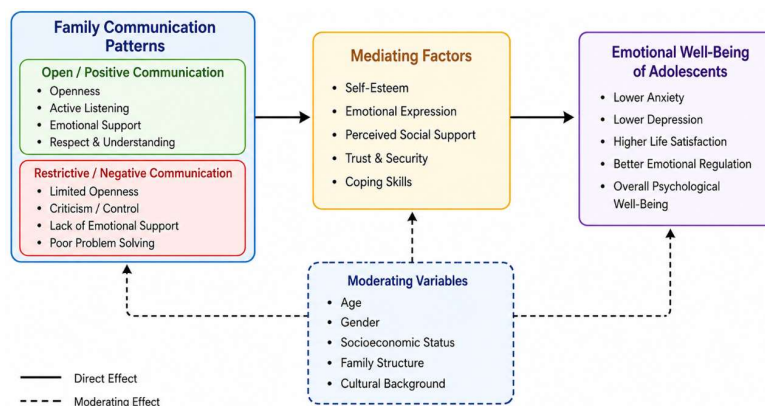


Fig.1. Conceptual framework

- The key elements are family communication patterns, which are:
- Open communication (supportive, expressive, empathetic)
 - Closed communication (conflictive, controlling, less supportive)

These are the independent variables for adolescents’ emotional well-being. As per the model, communication has an impact on the following mediating factors

- Self-esteem
- Emotional expression
- Perceived social support

Positive communication leads to positive constellations of variables, including good self-esteem and emotional regulation, whereas negative communication may cause poor emotional expression and perceived support. In conclusion, the model shows that positive family communication boosts well-being through strong psychological mediators, while restrictive communication is associated with a risk for emotional distress. This framework offers a foundation for understanding the role of family communication in the lives of adolescents and intervention efforts for improving family communication.

5 Results & Discussion

This section reports the results of family communication patterns on adolescents’ emotional well-being. The findings are grouped into demographic variables, forms of communication, level of emotional well-being, and associations among the variables. Data were analysed using descriptive and correlation analyses. The data on participants and variables are reported in tables while figures enhance the understanding of relationships and patterns in communication styles and adolescents' emotional well-being.

5.1 Participant Characteristics

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

| Variable | Frequency (%) |
|----------------|---------------|
| Age 12–15 | 47% |
| Age 16–19 | 53% |
| Male | 49% |
| Female | 51% |
| Nuclear Family | 62% |
| Joint Family | 38% |

The sample significantly included more middle adolescents (16-19 years) shown in table 1. The sample was equal in terms of gender and most of the respondents were from nuclear families, mostly smaller family sizes.

5.2 Family Communication Patterns

Table 2: Communication Types

| Communication Type | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Open Communication | 48% |
| Moderate | 32% |
| Restrictive | 20% |

This table 2 shows that open communication is the most common (48%), indicating a preference for transparency and free expression. Moderate communication accounts for 32%, suggesting balanced interaction. Restrictive communication is least common (20%), reflecting fewer limitations in exchanges. Overall, the data highlights a strong tendency toward openness in communication styles.

5.3 Emotional Well-Being Levels

Table 3: Emotional Well-Being

| Level | Percentage (%) |
|-------|----------------|
| High | 36% |

| | |
|----------|-----|
| Moderate | 44% |
| Low | 20% |

The majority of the adolescents showed moderate emotional well-being, with significant proportion showing high well-being. The results also show a proportion of 20% was at risk of low emotional well-being as shown in table 3.

5.4 Association between Variables

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

| Variable Pair | Correlation (r) |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Communication vs Emotional Well-being | +0.55 |
| Restrictive Communication vs Anxiety | +0.42 |
| Open Communication vs Self-esteem | +0.50 |

This table 4 shows moderate positive correlations between communication styles and psychological outcomes. Communication is positively linked with emotional well-being ($r = +0.55$), indicating better communication improves well-being. Open communication also enhances self-esteem ($r = +0.50$). Restrictive communication is associated with higher anxiety ($r = +0.42$), suggesting negative emotional effects.

5.5 Key Findings

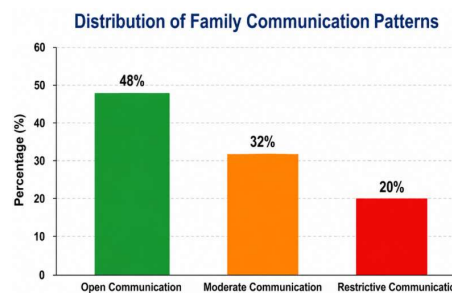


Fig.2. The distribution of communication patterns and emotional well-being levels among adolescents

The bar and correlation model shows the distribution of communication patterns and emotional well-being in adolescents. Figure 2 are used to demonstrate the dominance of open communication and moderate emotional well-being, while correlation graphs (scatterplots) show a positive relationship between open communication and well-being. These figures also demonstrate a link between restrictive communication and increased anxiety, aligning with the statistical results, and offering a simple interpretation of the associations. This figure 2 shows ratios of family communication styles experienced by adolescents. Supportive communication is the most common (48%), followed by intermediate (32%) and restrictive communication (20%). This suggests that almost half of the sample live in supportive and expressive families while others are living in families with moderate or restricted forms of communication which might hinder their emotional development.

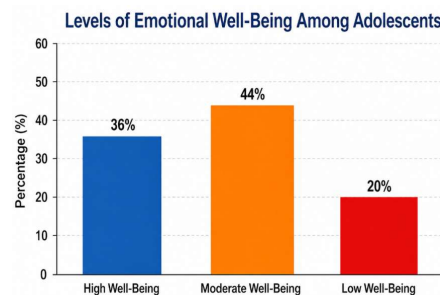


Fig.3. Levels of emotional well being among Adolescents

This figure 3 shows the levels of emotional well-being. A large proportion of adolescents (44%) reported moderate well-being, with 36% having high well-being and 20% having low well-being. This indicates that though most have adequate emotional health, there are some at risk of emotional disturbance.

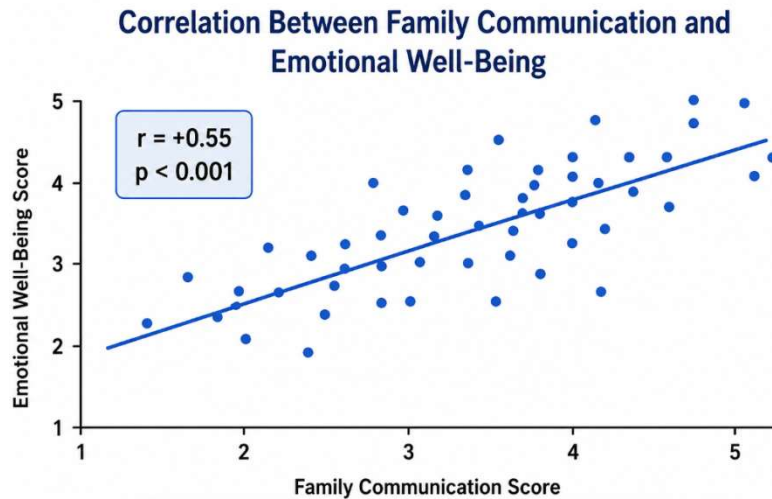


Fig.4. Correlation between family communication and emotional well being

This scatter plot shows a positive relationship between family communication and emotional well-being ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.001$) shown in figure 4. The better communication, the higher the emotional well-being. This suggests that open and supportive communication with families is an important aspect of mental health during adolescence.

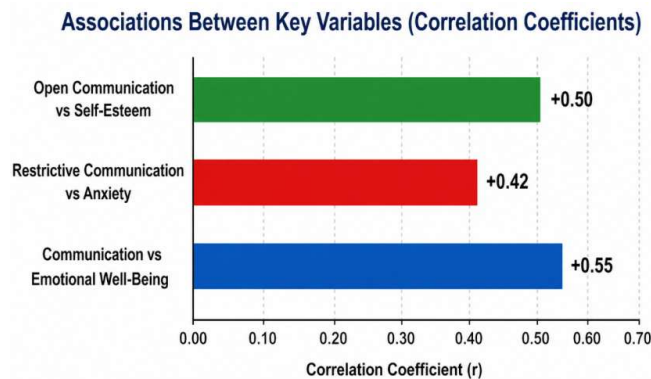


Fig.5. Associations between key variables

This figure 5 illustrates the correlations between variables. Open communication is positively related to self-esteem ($r = 0.50$) and well-being ($r = 0.55$), and restrictive communication is positively related to anxiety ($r = 0.42$). These outcomes underline the role of supportive communication in promoting positive emotional well-being and how restrictive communication may relate to poor psychological outlook.

6 Discussion

This study shows how family communication patterns are important for explaining adolescents' feelings of well-being. The positive relationships between open communication and emotional well-being and self-esteem suggest that family support and absence of criticism play a buffering role in adolescents' mental health. Restrictive communication was associated with greater anxiety and distress, implying that restricted communication and support in families may have negative effects on mental health. The moderate well-being scores of most participants also stress the importance of better communication strategies. Our findings are consistent with prior research, confirming the benefits of supportive families. In essence, the encouragement of positive communication and the establishment of bonding relationships

between parents and their children can improve the emotional well-being and prevent mental health among adolescents.

7 Conclusion and future scope

The findings of this study demonstrate that communication patterns in families are an important factor in adolescents' emotional health. It shows that positive supportive family communication is positively related to greater psychological well-being, self-esteem, and mental health. By contrast, constraining family communication is linked to higher levels of anxiety, higher emotional upset and poorer well-being. This research underscores the role of nurturing healthy family environments in adolescents' lives where they know they are listened to, understood and valued. Positive family communication positively impacts on emotional development and helps adolescents better cope with stressors. The research also highlights the importance of programs to promote mothers' and fathers' communication with their adolescents. Parenting classes, family therapy and campaigns can aide in creating positive communication habits. This research can be expanded by extending it to longitudinal studies to draw causal links between communication and emotional development. Future work should also take into account cross-cultural and socioeconomic differences, include more and diverse samples and test interventions to promote effective family communication and enhance mental health among adolescents.

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