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The Effect of Family Communication Factors toward Adolescent Psychosocial

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Abstract

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the psychosocial issues that a person fears and how it interacts with others in a social setting have become increasingly concerning, particularly for adolescents. The effects of psychosocial problems among adolescents can lead to cases of depression, deviant behaviour, and suicidal events. Statistics released by the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) show that suicide cases among teenagers are the highest. This is a challenge for family institutions to deal with issues related to adolescence. Communication in the family is one way to restore harmony and well-being among adolescents. The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of family communication factors on adolescent psychosocial. While this study uses quantitative methods and the data is analysed by Statistical Package for Social Science software (SPSS). Respondents were selected using simple random sampling. The results showed that the conversational orientation family communication factor is a factor that affects the psychosocial of adolescents, yet it does not show a significant effect. It is therefore found that there are other factors out there that can affect the psychosocial well-being of adolescents such as peers, teachers, neighbors, etc.

Keywords: Family Communication, Psychosocial, Adolescents

Introduction

The institution of the family plays an important role in the formation of human society and civilization (Musa et al., 2020; Noh & Yusoff, 2011). This institution begins with the consolidation of a legitimate marital relationship followed by having children as the successors of the human generation (Jusoh, 2015). Each family member has their position and role to maintain harmony in a family. Nevertheless, today's social conditions such as divorce, suicide attempts, running away from home have shown the failure of family institutions to play a good role. This has bad implications for family members consisting of children and shows that society and the country are in a state of insecurity and harmony.

Thus, families need to act wisely in managing stress in the family (Rose & Mustaffa, 2018). The way to determine a family is happy and harmonious is to look at the role of communication in a family, because it will bring changes to attitudes, ways of thinking, and opinions when dealing with people around (Aswandy, 2020). Family communication can be defined as a process of interaction between parents and children using words, attitudes, and

intonation of voice to explain a real meaning (Rae, 1985). Whereas according to (Galvin et al., 2019), family communication is a vehicle for discussion, dialogue, and negotiation between family members, indirectly able to resolve personal problems and conflicts in the family (Cangara, 2006; Galvin et al., 2019); Therefore, it can be concluded that family communication is an interaction that occurs between parents and children either formally or informally to explain the true meaning of something and can produce a harmonious and effective family.

A study conducted by Hendra (2017) shows that families are the largest contributor of communication with children which is 0.398% compared to teachers and peers with 0.302% and 0.218% respectively. The involvement of adolescents with social problems is due to family communication not taking place effectively, and it causes the relationship of adolescents and their parents to be strained (Alavi et al., 2012; Min & Jewa, 2015). In Islam, it is laid that the foundation of happiness starts at home by making the home a paradise (Rouzi, 2002). The application of 'my home, my paradise' will be manifested when family members communicate and carry out their responsibilities well. Therefore, all methods applied by parents will affect the growth of children because when they grow up, any events happening during adolescence will be etched in their memory (Robiah, 1997: 1)

However, all members of the world are currently being tested with the COVID-19 epidemic and teenagers are no exception. The new norms are hindering them from performing activities as usual which can lead to adolescent mental health disorders. According to a scientific study by Professor Shweta Singh in 'Psychiatry Research 2020', COVID-19 brings disruption to the psychosocial stability and mental health of adolescents as well as children. According to Erik Erikson, psychosocial can be defined as two components namely psychological and social that interact and influence each other (Erikson, 2010). Baron and Byrne (1997) argue that psychosocial is a branch of psychology used to understand how the presence of others influences the behaviour, feelings, and thoughts that one has. Relatively, according to Chaplin, (2011), psychosocial is a condition that occurs to a person due to his mental and social around. Thus, it can be concluded that psychosocial is related to the influence of psychological and social factors on individual development.

Psychosocial issues toward adolescents are gaining attention from experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States. There are five psychosocial and mental health issues of adolescents and children that are highlighted by the center, namely disruption of daily living routine, disruption of the educational process, disruption of health care, loss of important episodes of life, and loss of security in life (Ithnin, 2021). Disorders experienced by adolescents can lead to concerning matters if the problem persists. Statistics released by the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) show that suicide cases involving teenagers aged 15-18 years are the highest at 872 cases compared to 668 cases involving adults aged 19 to 40 years (Rahman, 2021)

Hence, in realizing the national policy to achieve the psychological prosperity of the people through family communication, the objective of this study is formed to:

- 1) measure the relationship of family communication factors to adolescent psychosocial
- 2) assess the effect of family communication factors on adolescent psychosocial.

Literature Review

Many past studies state that family communication is closely linked to adolescent psychosocial. The theory put forward by Koerner and Fitzpatrick, (2002) emphasizes two

dimensions namely conversational orientation and conformity orientation. Conversational orientation emphasizes more on openness and acceptance towards the views of the children whereas conformity orientation emphasizes obedience and acceptance of the children towards what is suggested by the parents (Mahmood & Mohammed, 2018). There are also previous studies that focus on Imam al-Ghazali's model which is a family communication approach that emphasizes exemplary orientation (Nawi & Jusoh, 2019). The application of exemplary orientation is an emphasis on the relationship with God and the relationship with humanity.

Ramadhana et al (2019) conducted a study on 214 adolescents in a school in Bandung to see family communication on the personal identity and social identity of adolescents. It is found that conversational orientation has a positive relationship with social identity and personal identity. According to Koerner and Schrodtt (2014) when conversational orientation remains high, it indicates that the family members are independent and regularly interact with one another (Mahmood & Mohammed, 2018). The effect of this conversational orientation will allow teenagers or children to comfortably tell stories and express all their feelings to their parents.

Contrarily (Bakar, 2015) affirms that the conversational orientation applied by parents can contribute towards an argument by the adolescent because they have gotten comfortable with voicing out their dissatisfactions in an occurring conflict. Thus, only family communication using conversational orientation will affect the psychosocial of adolescents when expressing their satisfaction and dissatisfactions towards their surroundings through their attitudes and behaviours. Meanwhile, a study conducted by (Andrew, 2002) finds that family communication based on conformity orientation is mostly practiced by Chinese parents. This is because, Chinese parents argue that exercising control over their children is a great and lofty act (Bakar, 2015). On average, parents in Asia, including Malaysia, use conformity orientation as it results in children who are civilized and not rebellious with their parents (Andrew, 2002; Bakar & Afthanorhan, 2016). According to a study conducted by again, conformity orientation can also affect a person's self-esteem, especially towards adolescents (Bakar, 2013) Studies conducted by (Hassan et al., 2013) show that the application of conformity orientation will exhibit a lack in the usage of technology in children. Additionally, family and love expert, Dr. Rozieta, says that the impact on conformity orientation towards adolescents will cause them to live in fear and can lead to the inability to express certain emotions and anger.

Hujjatul Islam, namely Imam al-Ghazali, has also highlighted the methods of family communication through his book that is *afat al-lisan* (Nawi & Jusoh, 2019). There are five methods of family communication highlighted by Imam al-Ghazali, 1) Limited Speech, 2) Smart of Oral, 3) Fun of Oral, 4) Trusted Conversation, and 5) Alertness in Question and Answer. The first family communication, Limited Speech, is a good method of educating parents with their children, such as protecting themselves and their children from saying things that are not beneficial. It is also reminded to hold limits within any conversation so as not to fall into worldly negligence and away from Allah SWT. Next, the second method of Smart Verbal, i.e. parents will ensure that children do not express words, or behaviors that may offend others, such as cursing, swearing, and so on social media (Noh & Ibrahim, 2014). The following method of family communication according to imam al-Ghazali is Fun of Lisan, which involves parents monitoring their children from doing worldly pleasures that can lead to disobedience. Trusted Conversation is a method of communication that splits the elements of lies, breaking promises and swearing. Finally, with the Alertness in Question

and Answer method, that is, parents are sensitive to the questions posed by children and should be associated with the greatness of Allah SWT. Therefore, each of these methods is consolidated under an exemplary orientation as it is an Islamic value and how one maintains a relationship with Allah and with human beings. In the end, it is the role of the parents to be a good example to children so that their behaviour and feelings are directed to please God (Noh et al., 2013)

On another account, according to research conducted by (Rizal & Ishak, 2016) parents are the determinants of children's morals and ethics. The interaction of parents and children on religious matters will encourage the soul to always be obedient to the commandments of God. The effect of this application will be to produce individuals who maintain a relationship with Allah (Hablum Minallah) and maintain a relationship with human beings (Hablum Minannas). The application of parental communication using exemplary orientation is also acknowledged by (Abdullah et al., 2014) because an act will become a person's culture and habit regardless of setting and environment. Therefore, parents would need to set a good example as children will always observe their every action either in word or deed

Researchers found that there are three factors of family communication on adolescent psychosocial, namely conversational orientation, conformity orientation, and exemplary orientation. According to Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002) conversational orientation and conformity orientation are influenced by a family's philosophy, beliefs, and outlook on life. However, the family communication approach held by Fitzpatrick and Koerner does not emphasize the relationship with God. Therefore, in this study, we see that exemplary family communication can produce a relationship with the creator as well as have a relationship with humans to implement a family that can achieve well-being.

Therefore, based on the literature review, a conceptual framework can be formulated to assess the impact of family communication factors on adolescent psychosocial. Three dimensions refer to family communication as in figure 1. Conversational orientation refers to the open attitude of parents to receive views from children, conformity orientation is the emphasis on children obeying and accepting what is suggested by parents (Mahmood & Mohammed, 2018) while exemplary orientation is an example of behaviour or good words portrayed by parents to connect children with creators and humans consisting of five methods namely Limited Speech, Smart Speech, Fun of Speech, Trusted Conversation and Alertness Question and Answer (Nawi & Jusoh, 2019)



Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Methodology

This research uses quantitative methods by examining the population through measurement data from a specified sample. The population in this study were adolescents aged 13 to 16 years. The sample was 101 respondents. A survey questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect data adapted and modified from (Noh & Yusooff, 2011). Measurements used a five-point Likert scale from the lowest scale of 1 'strongly disagree' to the highest scale of 5 'strongly agree'. The questionnaire contained 45 items and three dimensions of family communication. Interactions between variables were tested using

regression weights while the number of predictions was calculated by R squared using the correlation method and regression test in SPSS. The reliability tests analyzed are given in

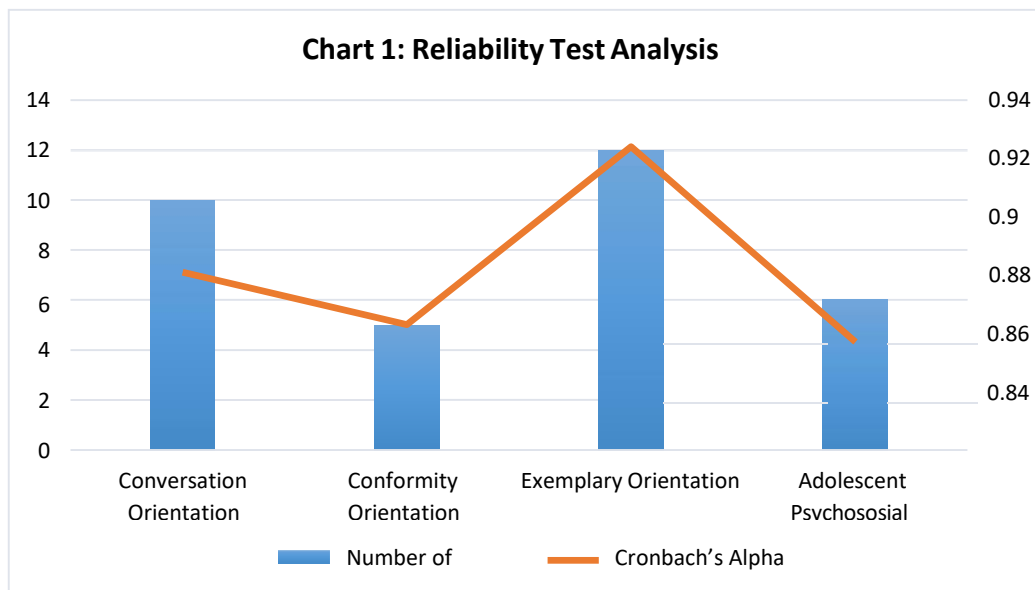


Chart 1

Chart 1 shows Cronbach's Alpha values for the family communication dimension. They are 0.881, 0.863, and 0.924, respectively whereas Cronbach's Alpha for adolescent psychosocial is 0.857. All Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.6 mean that dimensional items are suitable for use and are acceptable as measurements (Cates, 1990).

Results and Discussions

The total number of respondents in this study was 101 people. Male respondents were 41 people equivalent to 40.6% while female respondents were 60 people equivalent to 59.4%. The total status of married guardian parents recorded the highest value which is the frequency of 84 people and the percentage is 83.2%. While the status of divorced guardian parents is 7 people and the percentage is 5.0%. The rest are other statuses either deceased, adoptive mother and so on which recorded 12 people with a percentage of 11.9%.

The variables were analyzed to obtain mean values and standard deviations. The model orientation shows the highest mean of mean = 4.26 and sp = 0.607, followed by conformity orientation of mean = 4.02 and sp 0.776 and conversational orientation mean = 3.55 and sp = 0.695. The mean of the psychosocial dependent variable shows the lowest mean of mean = 1.41 and sp = 0.432. According to (Ibrahim, 2010) the mean is done to estimate the level of something by referring to the mean score of the study respondents. The standard deviation, on the other hand, looks at the distribution pattern, whether large or small. Table 1, states the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation

	N	Mean	Standard deviation
meancoversation	101	3.55	0.695
meanconfirmity	101	4.02	0.776
meanexemplary	101	4.26	0.607
meanpsychosocial	101	1.41	0.432
valid N (listwise)	101		

The findings of the study indicate that there is a weak and significant negative relationship between family communication factors on adolescent psychosocial. This is evidenced by the family communication factors of conversational orientation ($r = 0.339$, sig. = 0.001), conformity orientation ($r = 0.278$, sig. = 0.005) and exemplary orientation ($r = -0.272$, sig. = 0.006) towards psychosocial teenagers. A negative relationship indicates that there is an inverse relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. So the higher the value of the independent enabler, the lower the dependent value. Thus this study shows that more family communication conversational orientation, coherence, and example will result in low psychosocial of adolescents as shown in table 2

Table 2

Correlation Between Family Communication Factors Towards Adolescent Psychosocial

	Conversatio n Orientation	Conformity Orientatio n	Exemplary Orientatio n	Adolescent Psychosocia l
Conversation Orientation	1			
Conformity Orientation	.321**	1		
Exemplary Orientatio n	.493**	.632**	1	
Adolescent Psychosocial	-.339**	-.278*	-.272**	1

Based on the linear regression test, the R^2 value obtained shows that family communication factors have an influence of 14.8% on adolescent psychosocial while another 85.2% are influenced by other factors. This analysis finds that conversational orientation family communication factor has a significant influence on adolescent psychosocial because $p < 0.05$ as shown in table 3.

Table 3

Effect of Communication Family Factor Towards Adolescent Psychosocial

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	2.486	.300		8.283	.000
	meanconversational	-.167	.067	-.269	-2.496	.014
	meanconfirmity	-.096	.067	-.173	-1.428	.156
	meanexemplary	-.022	.094	-.030	-.231	.818
Adolescent Psychosocial						
R Square=0.148						

This analysis can also be explained using the following equations:

$$Y = a + \beta X_1 + \beta X_2$$

Y = Adolescent

Psychosocial A = Constant

β = Regression Coefficient

X1 = Conversation

Orientation X2 =

Conformity Orientation

X3 = Exemplary

Orientation

Adolescent Psychosocial = 2,486 + (-0.269) Conversational Orientation + (-0.173) Conformity Orientation + (-0.030) Exemplary Orientation

This study finds that there is an effect of family communication factors for conversational orientation on adolescent psychosocial. The mean item of the highest conversational orientation family communication factor was "fun talking to parents even if sometimes we don't agree". This finding is in line with the findings of previous studies in (Santrock, 2012) who stated that the density of parents with children since childhood will provide well-being to the child and can control their social environment from all stress or anxiety (Tristanti, 2019). This finding is also supported by a study (Aziz et al., 2019), grounding that parents who communicate well with children will form trust and can resolve all children's problems at an immediate rate.

Another notable finding of this study is that parents need to play a creative role to take the hearts of children and be good listeners to them. This can help the psychosocial of adolescents by transforming a bitter experience into hope and success even when alone or socially. And it is not forgotten to the social environment of adolescents whether peers, teachers, neighborhood and so on to help improve the psychosocial adolescence.

Thus, the final model developed in this study that shows the effect of family communication factors on adolescent psychosocial is as shown in figure 2

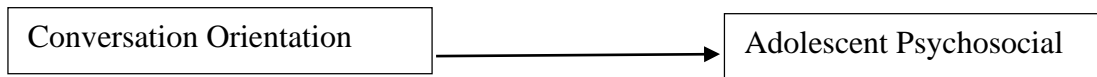


Figure 2: Model the Effect of Family Communication

Conclusion

This study proposes a research framework that examines the impact of family communication factors on adolescent psychosocial well-being to improve the achievement of mental well-being and health, particularly among adolescents. Therefore, a further study needs to be done to detail the family communication factors that can have an impact on adolescent psychosocial. The findings of the study can also help the government in realizing policies to achieve the psychological prosperity of the people in the future. Further studies are also proposed to use a larger sample covering various locations to see a more significant effect.

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