RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE POWER OF OPEN COMMUNICATION: EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT-ADOLESCENT COMMUNICATION AND PROBLEM EXTENT AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF SIBLING INFLUENCE

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Manuscript Info

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Abstract

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Adolescence is the period of extensive physical, emotional, and social transformation. This article focuses on the primary role of effective communication within the family, especially parents and siblings' influence, in shaping adolescence development. It considers how open, supportive, and sincere interactions help in identity formation, peer relationships, cognitive development, and affect regulation during this critical stage. The article draws both on Eastern and Western psychological paradigms, showing how academic psychology has evolved over the years and the main theoretical frameworks which inform our understanding of adolescent development. It is in this regard that the current study will explore the importance of effective family communication in developing a positive identity, building self-esteem, and supplying a sense of belonging. Emphasized herein is the role of parents in guiding adolescents through open discussions that will help them think critically, solve problems, and make independent decisions. Attention falls onto sibling influence in that they are in a special position to offer emotional support, companionship, and modeling behaviors. It draws from quantitative studies how family dynamics impact adolescent results. Construction and standardization processes of psychological measures are described to explain why reliable and valid instruments are needed when studying adolescent behavior and family interaction. This article concludes with the practical recommendations to enhance family communication strategies in supporting adolescent development. This integration of theoretical perspectives and empirical findings thus provides critical insights for educators, practitioners, and families seeking to promote healthy developmental trajectories among adolescents through effective communication and supportive sibling relationships.

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Introduction:-

The age bracket from 10-19 years is referred to as adolescence, a time characterized by massive physical, emotional, and social changes. During this phase, adolescents are passing through a multitude of problems related to the formation of identity, peer relationships, cognitive development, and emotional regulation. Effective communication with parents and siblings is very important to negotiate such challenges effectively.

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Recent Theories on Adolescence:
1. **Neurodevelopmental Theories:**
o   Two dual systems model: There is an imbalance between the rapidly maturing socioemotional system and the gradually developing cognitive control system. In this context, typical adolescent patterns are risk-taking and emotional ups and downs.
2. **Identity Formation Theories:**
o   Narrative Identity Theory: Identity is centrally defined by the personal narrative, and thus adolescents turn to autobiographical reasoning for a meaning in life.
3. **Social Relationship Theories:**
o   Attachment Reorganization Theory: It suggests that the adolescent years are those of reorganization of attachment, from parents to peers. Secure attachments stimulate open communication.
o   Social Brain Hypothesis: This would describe the changes in the adolescent brain, which will help to improve social cognition, therefore equipping the adolescents with the skills to handle complicated social interactions.
4. **Technology Influence:**
o   Digital Natives Theory: This explains how experiences in childhood with technology shape adolescent thinking, learning, and communication, thereby influencing their social relationships and cognitive processing.

Birth Order and Sibling Influences:
1. **Birth Order Theories:**
o   Birth Order Theory by Alfred Adler: Specifies the individual roles and personality traits that firstborn, middle, youngest, and only children possess. For example, eldest born children are responsible and achievement-oriented, while middle children are adaptable and peacemakers.
2. **Theories regarding Sibling Influences:**
o   Social Learning Theory: Siblings learn behaviors as a result of observation and imitation.
o   Sibling Deidentification Theory: Siblings de-identify themselves to create separate identities and avoid competition**.**

Empirical Findings:
1. **Academic Achievement:** Sibling relationships significantly impact academic performance, with older siblings often mentoring younger ones.
2. **Social Behaviors:** Positive sibling interactions enhance social competence and communication skills.
3. **Mental Health:** Sibling support acts as a protective factor against stress and mental health issues, while sibling conflict can lead to behavioral problems.

Methodology:-
The study uses the Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale, which measures patterns of communication between the adolescents and their parents. Openness or problems in family communication are assessed by the PACS through self-report questionnaires.

Study Design:
This will be a quantitative study design. The PACS, developed by Barnes and Olson in 1982, has two subscales: one for the degree of openness in family communication and another for the extent of problems in it. Each subscale has ten items rated on a 1-5 Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Population and Sample:
A sample of 67 individuals was recruited in the research participants aged between 11-22 years, their adolescents, and their parents. This is an age bracket that spans early to late adolescence, a time that becomes very crucial in shaping the pattern of communication with parents. Participants were also solicited directly from schools, community centers, and online platforms, to ensure a variable representative sample.

Table 1:- Descriptive Statistics for demographic details.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	67	1	3	2.54	.703
Sex	67	1	2	1.42	.497
Valid N	67				

(listwise)					

Data Collection Procedures:
Participants were enrolled through various channels, and informed consent was obtained from the adolescents and their parents. Data was collected by the administration of the PACS between the adolescent and parent separately in order to reduce biased responses. The administration of the questionnaire occurred either personally or via an online survey platform with appropriate security measures.

Data Analysis Procedures:
- **Descriptive Statistics:** Calculated for all variables to provide an overview of the sample characteristics and the distribution of scores on the PACS subscales.
- **Reliability Analysis:** Assessed using Cronbach's alpha to ensure the internal consistency of the PACS subscales.
- **Inferential Statistics:** ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in communication patterns between adolescents and parents, and to explore the impact of sibling presence on communication openness.

Ethical Considerations:
The study adhered to stringent ethical standards, with informed consent obtained from all participants. The confidentiality of responses was ensured, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Results:-
1. Descriptive Statistics:
Extent of Problems in Communication: The instrument measured parent-adolescent communication problems. Results revealed that there is a significant difference in the perception of these problems by parents and adolescents.
- **Adolescents:** The extent of problems as perceived by adolescents had a mean of 1.06 with a standard deviation of 0.519. Scores ranged from 0 to 3, thereby indicating that while some adolescents reported no minimum issues in communication, others had medium difficulties. Skewness was positive—0.761—which indicates that most of the adolescents reported few problems. However, the kurtosis was at 3.273, indicating a peaked distribution where all the scores were clustered around the mean.
- **Parents:** In contrast, parents reported a higher mean extent of problems 3.67 with a standard deviation of 1.079. The scores ranged from 1-5, suggesting minor problems as perceived by some parents and others who perceived severe communication problems. Skewness -0.722 is negative, indicating that more parents reported a higher level of problems. Kurtosis value of 0.309 indicates a relatively normal distribution. This disparity might be explained either by increased sensitivity of parents to communication barriers or even greater awareness of deeper problems.

Table 2:-Descriptive Statistics for Extent of Problems in Communication.

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Children	67	1.06	0.519	0	3	0.761	3.273
Parents	67	3.67	1.079	1	5	-0.722	0.309

Degree of Openness in Communication:
The degree of openness in communication was assessed, with higher scores indicating better communication.
- **Adolescents:** The mean reported degree of openness amongst adolescents was 1.42, the standard deviation being 0.497. The scores ranged from 1 to 2, thus showing that most adolescents would characterize communication with parents as fairly open. A slight positive skew of 0.341 shows that most were reporting lower levels of openness, and the negative kurtosis was -1.943, indicating a relatively flat distribution and variability in perceptions amongst adolescents.
- **Parents:** The average rating of the parents for the degree of openness in communication is 1.66, with a standard deviation of 0.686. The scores ranged from 1 to 3, suggesting that a wider range of openness was perceived. Skewness = 0.567--a positive number, indicating that more parents perceive their communication as open. Kurtosis = -0.735--a negative number; the curve is flat. This generally means that parents view their communication with adolescents as more open compared with the way adolescents perceive it.

Table 3:-Descriptive Statistics for Degree of Openness in Communication.

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Children	67	1.42	0.497	1	2	0.341	-1.943
Parents	67	1.66	0.686	1	3	0.567	-0.735

ANOVA Analysis:

An ANOVA was conducted to test whether there are differences in the degree of openness scores regarding parents' communication. The results showed an F-value 4.168 with a p-value of 0.005, indicating that there was a significant difference in degrees of openness among different groups of parents. This may be because of various causes pertaining to socio-economic status, educational background, cultural norms, and parenting styles.

Table 4:-ANOVA Results for Degree of Openness in Parents' Communication.

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.592	4	1.648	4.168	0.005
Within Groups	24.513	62	0.395		
Total	31.104	66			

Impact of Sibling Presence on Communication:

The study also examined the impact of sibling presence on communication openness.
- Adolescents with one sibling reported the highest mean degree of openness (2.86) with a standard deviation of 0.363.
- Those with multiple siblings reported a mean of 2.50 with a standard deviation of 0.730.
- Adolescents with no siblings had a mean degree of openness of 2.45 with a standard deviation of 0.826.
- The overall mean for all groups combined was 2.54 with a standard deviation of 0.703.

Table 5:-Descriptive Statistics for Degree of Openness Based on Sibling Presence.

Sibling Presence	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Minimum	Maximum
One Sibling	14	2.86	0.363	0.097	2.65 - 3.07	2	3
Multiple Siblings	16	2.5	0.73	0.183	2.11 - 2.89	1	3
No Siblings	20	2.45	0.826	0.185	2.06 - 2.84	1	3
Total	67	2.54	0.703	0.086	2.37 - 2.71	1	3

These results indicate that individuals with at least one sibling typically communicate with their parents in a more open way than only children do. For those teenagers with no siblings, the standard deviation was higher, which may indicate more variability among individual persons without siblings concerning open communication with their parents.

Discussion:-

1. Discrepancy in Perceptions: What this study shows is the existence of a major gap between parental and adolescent perceptions with respect to problems in communication and openness. Generally, parents reported more problems in communication and consider themselves to be more open with their adolescents compared to the adolescents' assessment. The disparities may be because parents are more aware of the underlying problems or sensitive to barriers in communication that the adolescents did not perceive or acknowledge as easily.

2. Degree of Openness: Parents and adolescents show moderate levels of openness in communication, with slightly higher openness levels reported by parents. This implies that the parents think they are more open and available for their adolescent than the latter perceives them to be. Intervention into family communication could, especially by putting this incongruence right, improve mutual understanding and openness in communication.

3. Factors Influencing Communication Openness: In light of the high significance of the ANOVA results, there are several factors that jointly determine the level of openness in communication among various groups of parents.

Understanding these factors may provide a baseline for developing targeted strategies in an attempt to enhance communication openness among diverse groups of parents.

4. Sibling Influence: Those adolescents who have at least a sibling communicate with their parents more openly. The finding underlines the positive role of siblings in developing communication skills and in keeping emotional support. Siblings may provide an environment that would allow explicit and supportive communication, which benefits the general ambiance of the family.

Enhancing Open Communication Between Adolescents and Parents: To enhance open communication between adolescents and parents, several strategies can be implemented:

- **Active Listening:** Active listening involves the parent's full concentration, understanding, responding, and remembering what the young adolescent has said. It shows that the parent values and respects the feelings and opinions of the young adolescent, hence making him or her feel heard and understood.
- **Empathy and Validation:** Parents can show empathy and validation of the feelings and experiences voiced by adolescents in such a way that they feel understood and supported, not isolated or misunderstood.
- **Consistent and Open Dialogue:** Keeping lines of communication constant and open about everyday routines, ideas, and feelings can make communication routine and part of the daily family routine. This will reduce any stigma or embarrassment of having to talk about personal matters.
- **Setting Aside Quality Time:** Parents should ensure they allocate time to spend individually with their adolescents. This quality time makes the parent-adolescent relationship more intimate and creates room for more meaningful connections.
- **Encouraging Self-Expression:** Adolescents should be encouraged to express their feelings and thoughts freely, without threat of judgment or reprimand. In this way, one promotes emotional intelligence in adolescents and thus develops healthy habits of communication.
- **Role Modeling:** Parents have to model the behaviors for positive communication in honesty, respect, and active listening. Since adolescents often learn by observing, parents can do much by example in showing effective communication.
- **Conflict Resolution Skills:** Teaching adolescents how to resolve conflicts effectively will help them negotiate the point of disagreement constructively by keeping calm, discussing, compromising, and finding mutually agreeable solutions.

Recommendations for Future Research:-

Future studies should explore the following areas to build on the findings of this study:

- **Longitudinal Studies:** Longitudinal studies will give insight into how parent-adolescent communication changes over time and its long-term impact on adolescent development.
- **Cultural Variations:** A deeper understanding of these dynamics across different populations could be gauged by examining how cultural differences influence the patterns and outcomes of parent-adolescent communication.
- **Intervention Studies:** Intervention development for improving communication between parents and adolescents may include the testing of the strategies and how they impact the outcomes within an adolescent's life.
- **Sibling Relationships:** Further examination of how sibling relationships moderate both parent-adolescent communication and adolescent development will provide an in-depth insight into family dynamics.
- **Parental Mental Health:** Furthermore, one could make a case for the importance of addressing parental well-being in family interventions by assessing how parental mental health at this stage relates to youth communication and outcomes.

Conclusion:-

This study emphasizes the communication gaps between parents and adolescents, the important role siblings play in fostering open communication, and that interventions are tailor-made to enhance family communication dynamics. An intervention strategy informed by the subtle dynamics of family communication can thus create a setting conducive to healthier relations and better developmental outcomes for adolescents. Through strategies to strengthen open communication, families help support the development of youth during this critical stage of life by encouraging overall well-being and success.

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