

## Psychological impact of parent-adolescent communication: A critical analysis

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### ABSTRACT

Parent-adolescent relationship is an essential part of growing up and it is the key determinant of adolescents' personality development. Their relationship with their families at this stage determines their character. Studies show there is a significant relationship between parent-adolescents' communication and adolescents' psychological well-being. However, the findings are not conclusive. The current quantitative research assessed the level of parent-adolescent communication on adolescents' self-esteem and perceived stress. Data was collected among 377 Malaysians aged 12 to 17. The 'parent-adolescent relationship questionnaire' (PARQ), 'rosenberg self-esteem scale' and 'perceived stress scale-10' (PSS) were used. The results show that there is a positive correlation between parent adolescent communication and self-esteem  $r(350) = .390, p = .000$  and a negative correlation between self-esteem and level of stress perceived among adolescents at  $r(350) = -.103, p = .054$ . The level of correlation shows a more positive relationship between parent adolescent communication, and self-esteem whereas the level of self-esteem does not immensely affect the stress level of these adolescents. Further, it was proven that female adolescents had lower self-esteem and higher stress compared to male adolescents. The study recommends that parents should cultivate good parent-adolescent communication to ensure positive psychological impact on their adolescents.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a time of vulnerability where they are uncovering the widespread superficial world. This group will go through a life stage that is depicted with elevated compassion towards societal incitements [1] and wanting to be discovered and desire the need for attentiveness from family [2] and peers [3]. Being openly borne to the adult world and enduring to subsist within the societal and environmental expectation, creates a greater number of challenges in their lives. Therefore, at this point, parental relationship with their adolescent plays an extensive part and inscribes the pathway for them. It is essential for both parent and adolescent to have a conducive amount of understanding among one another and move towards a more approachable relationship. Although at this point, more non-conformities and

dissimilarities tend to surface between parents and adolescents, it is important to keep the equation healthy, negotiate differences and bring residue in their livelihood [4].

Communication is the key factor to establish knowledge [5] and a nourishing relationship among adolescents and their parents will be beneficial to their well-being. The virtues of a parent-adolescent relationship are determined by the parenting styles adopted by the parents. Parenting style is characterized as a grouping of parental perspectives and practices toward their children and an enthusiastic environment in which the guardians' practices are communicated [6]. Baumrind's 1991 childcare typology states that parenting style has a colossal effect on children's upbringing [7]. Parenting styles are categorized into four types; Authoritative, Authoritarian, Indulgent and Neglectful [6].

Concerning, authoritarian parenting style, parents tend to heavily rely on discipline and conformity of their children and tend to use a monitoring method on them. These parents adopt the child's uniqueness and allow evolution and decision making but firmly set principles and expectations on their children while showing fondness and love [8]. This kind of children tend to become more well-adjusted and confident. They will be more available to open up their state of mind when necessary and discuss their struggles with their parents in a more passive mode [9]. Indulgent parenting style, on the other hand, does not have any expectations of their children and have less requests from them [8]. Thus, this could sometimes lead to adolescents having to make their own decision freely as there is hardly anyone to confide or the autonomous decision making is given to them [9]. Authoritarian parenting tends to be overly directive and controlling with less understanding and communication among the parents and their adolescent children. Hence, this type of parenting style does not allow an adolescent to freely open up on their feelings and thus, the emotions will be kept under wrap due to the tension of having to be perfect at all times. In reference to these differences in parenting styles, it can be concurred that an approachable parenting style will make the adolescents more comfortable to open up to their parents and share their problems and this cultivates positive communication between them.

As of late, there has been a lot of interest surrounding the parent-adolescent communication and its impact on self-esteem and stress among adolescents. This is because the types of parenting styles and adolescent communication could further impact on their self-esteem and stress. Research by Kiadarbandsari *et al.* [10] claimed that the authoritative parenting method is the most significant parenting style when it comes to adolescent positive living and better self-esteem while another literature by Park and Bauer [11] claim that in some cultures, authoritarian parenting style works more effectively. They also further argued that within the Asian context, authoritarian parenting tends to produce better academic results among the children. However, the same parenting style in a western context tend to make the children more hostile and intense. Hence, it was further clarified that children who had more strict parents such as authoritarian and uninvolved parenthood who had less time and fondness for their children showcased lower level of connection where they do not share their feelings with their family [10]. Further, research by Hong *et al.* [12] highlighted those adolescents with discomfort and problems at home, with lack of attention and love tend to showcase low self-esteem. Adding on, another literature added that low self-esteem among adolescents foresees lesser social interaction and over time accumulates and affects their stress [13]. Hence, parents attachment is a vital factor in adolescents' life as they are responsible in molding them to become a better adult, modeling their characteristics and inspire them for a better development.

Parenting or parenting styles can be defined as a way parents bring up their children to adhere by their rules and social norms. A parent and adolescents' relationship is heavily based on each other's understanding and communication build throughout their growing period. The type of parenting styles a child experiences also expresses the kind of warmth and relationship they share with their parents. Research by Baumrind defines the types of parenting styles that distress the performance of youngsters [14]. He categorises the parenting styles as authoritarian style, the authoritative style and permissive style. Authoritarian parents tend to have high demands and expectations of their offsprings and follow a strict regime with rules at home in their upbringing. It is more of a one-way communication where children are expected to obey the rules and be respectful. Also, punishment will be imposed on the children if they do not act by the rules. Often in this case, children will tend to develop into more submissive, rebellious, attention seeking and persons with low independency [15].

Authoritative parenting style is a more balanced way of child upbringing. Parents tend to have demand and expectations but also respond and cater to the child's needs while showing warmth and love. This is an encouraging parenting type that inspires their children to set goals and achieve them while being supportive of their undertakings. They continuously instill confidence and independency in their children but anticipate respect and limitation within boundaries. Children of this household are more open about their feelings and do communicate healthily with their parents, displaying their likes and struggles. If in case of a need, they will negotiate their circumstances and try and reach a middle ground. The guardians are warm and supporting towards the youngsters, showing joy, love and backing accordingly towards the kids' conduct and

simultaneously with characterized rules [15]. Adolescents of this rearing tend to be more confident, matured, contented and goal oriented plus have high self-esteem.

On the other hand, parents who adopt permissive parenting style tend to have less expectations on their children. They nurture and respond more towards their children and more freedom of choice is postulated and all their needs are accommodated. This type of parenting will provide more independency towards their children and allow them to make autonomous decision making. Thus, this might seem as a healthy way of child rearing as it gives abundance of freedom in the children's hands to make adequate choices with less regulation. However, too much of freedom and less communication tend to create a sense of detachment among the children and parents which could lead to inability to manage their children's conduct and in the long run prompt low confidence [16].

In reference to self-esteem, a study by Hooks [17] claims that self-esteem and confidence is the individual assessment of oneself in the zones of trust in one's capacity to think, adapt to life difficulties, and feel fruitful, glad and esteemed which prompts positive or negative confidence. Self-esteem assumes a significant part in a person's sound improvement of life. Another study has also discovered that one of the most essential capacities of an adolescent's confidence is the amount of parental support they obtain besides the ones they receive from their friends and others [18]. The advancement of self-esteem has been viewed as a significant marker in mental change like passionate, psychological and conduct factors [19]. Therefore, if a person is deemed to have low self-esteem, they are extremely de-motivated and find it difficult to overcome challenges and achieve success. People who have high self-esteem tend to portray high self-confidence and are typically satisfied with themselves, are tough and are able to unravel issues while people with low self-esteem are largely more weak, worried and unhappy [20]. Self-esteem is also related to the stress one experiences as people with low self-esteem tend to experience more stress.

An examination by Craike *et al.* [21] confirmed that psychological stress or pressure could be portrayed as a mental pressing factor or strain that is difficult to supervise or endure through. Tough low situational stress impacts a couple of parts of an individual's whole joy, as it may all things considered end up being fundamentally dangerous and may result to diminishing of both mental and academic process. As we draw upon from past research [22]–[24] most studies have pre-dominantly revolved around the effects of drastic and postponed weight on individual's form and prosperity status.

The segments of the physiological response to stress could derive from consequences of outrageous factors such as physical disturbance, poor mental state, parenting styles and expectations and scholarly ramifications. McEwen [25] said delayed impulsion or dreadful persistent factor is negative to an individual's prosperity. Thus, here we could further add on that self-esteem do heavily impact the stress level of an individual. The higher a person's self-esteem is, the lower their level of stress will be as they will perceive higher level of coping skills [26]. As such, higher amount of stress could further lead adolescents into depression if they are not treated with care [27].

It has been concurred that there is a relationship between self-esteem, parenting styles, communication with adolescent and stress. A previous study examined the effect of parental help towards young adult's confidence [28]. The outcome from this study indicated that Chinese youngsters were responsive towards guardians who oversee, are objective and strong just as maternal checking predicts the confidence of the teenagers. Previous literatures [29]–[32] have stipulated that parent adolescent relationship and self-esteem is correlated. However, the findings from these studies are not justified as some showcase positive correlation between parents and adolescent relationship and self-esteem while the others do not.

It was further argued that adolescents with authoritarian parenting styles will imbibe lower self-esteem compared to their peers who had an authoritative upbringing [32]. It has also been claimed that children from permissive parenting styles tend to have higher self-esteem compared to children of authoritarian parenting style. An investigation on Spanish youths by Martinez and Garcia [33] showed that offspring of tolerant guardians had higher confidence compared with legitimate nurturing style. In an ensuing report based on a gathering of Brazilian teenagers, Martinez and Garcia [34] also found that Brazilian's definitive nurturing style delivered young people with high confidence compared with lenient nurturing style. However, another study from India proved that there is a huge distinction among tolerant and legitimate nurturing style on teenagers' confidence. Notwithstanding, these two nurturing styles produce a more elevated level of confidence in contrast with the tyrant nurturing style [35].

Another research by Keshavarz and Baharudin [36] further explored the parenting styles and parent-adolescent relationship within a cultural context. They concluded that Asian parenting may be different from that of western way of bringing up their children but things have been evolving over time and not every household utilises the authoritarian parenting concept now. As a result, currently this change could ease up things for adolescents and they will be able to share a closer bond with their parents. Furthermore, another study by Chang [37] uncovered that dictator nurturing style has negative impacts on confidence and most

Asian American guardians apply the tyrant nurturing style, with the guardians attempting to force their qualities and rules on their youngsters.

This section explained the noteworthy connection between parent and adolescents' relationship and how their involvement could further impact the livelihood of the adolescents based on their self-esteem and stress level. According to previous studies, there is a significant correlation between parents' behavior towards adolescents' self-esteem. Besides, it has been found that parents' positive approach and understanding towards their adolescents are deemed to present a positive aftermath and improved well-being in several facets.

Since, most of the literature is from the western context, it is essential to examine the adolescents' relationships with their parents in Malaysia. This is to understand whether self-esteem of adolescents is affected by parenting style and to further identify the impact on their mental health. The government of Malaysia for a while now has tried to bring awareness on issue's being faced by the adolescents in the country. The adolescents' mental health issues related to stress and self-esteem has been quite prevalent as of late and needs comprehensive attention within the Malaysian context. Several literature has been curated about adolescents' mental health issue relating to parental styles and communication [38]–[40]. Previous research within the international and national manifesto has addressed this topic extensively and claimed that parent-adolescent communication does affect adolescent self-esteem [38], [39], [41] and this could relate to stress [42], [43].

There is extensive literature from various countries on parenting styles and parent-adolescent communication. However, within the Malaysian context, the literature that focuses on these variables are inadequate. Another major gap in previous literature shows that many studies has been conducted in Malaysia regarding parenting styles and self-esteem [44] but few literature discusses about parent-adolescent communication and its effect on adolescents' self-esteem and stress [45].

Thus, this study analyses parent-adolescent communication to identify the effect of the different types of parenting styles on adolescents and its impact on their self-esteem and stress. The current study is designed to observe the relationship between parent-adolescent relationship, self-esteem and stress of adolescents in Malaysia. The findings from this research contributes to the dearth literature within the focus in Malaysia and tackle this issue more in depth to stipulate greater awareness to the readers, government and society to be more accountable of this issue. In view of this, this research aimed to answer three research questions, namely: i) "Is there a significant relationship among adolescents' parent-adolescent communication, self-esteem and stress?"; ii) "Do the adolescents of the high self-esteem group perceive communication with their parents as more positive and functional than adolescents of the low self-esteem group?"; and iii) "Is there a relationship between the gender of the adolescents and family communication upon self-esteem and stress of adolescents?".

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This section discusses method adopted in this study to understand the factors that drive adolescents' responsiveness towards their communication with their parents, and its correlation with their self-esteem and the impact it has on their stress level. This study involves adolescents between the ages of 12 to 17 in Malaysia who have experienced parent-adolescent communication within the open or closed sharing relationship which determines the impact it has on their self-esteem and how this could affect their stress level. This study used a quantitative correlational research method which was conducted through a random sampling technique using a cross-sectional survey to define the variables being examined in this study. Simple random sampling is a type of probability sampling in which the researcher randomly selects a subset of participants from a population [46]. Creswell [47] vouched that correlational research method using the quantitative design includes correlational statistical test to quantify the degree of association between factors of at least two or more. The data collected was analysed using SPSS. The study was carried out through an online self-report questionnaire through google form and was administered through official school emails and social media websites.

The key objective of this study was to investigate the parent-adolescent communication and how it impacts the adolescent's self-esteem and promotes stress. Drawing upon this, the chosen target population of this study was adolescents between the ages of 12-17 currently enrolled in any secondary schools in Malaysia. The study included both male and female adolescents currently living in Malaysia having met the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria for the participants are that they should be adolescents within the ages of 12-17, and who besides being currently enrolled in any secondary schools in Malaysia, is either a local or an international citizen who must be mentally stable to partake in this online survey and have been granted permission by their parents or guardians through a signed consent form. Nevertheless, the exclusion measures in this study are students below the age of 12 and above the age of 17, as according to Cheah *et al.* [48], they are deemed too young or considered as adults. The sampling method adopted is the

non-probability sampling, using the voluntary response sampling as it's a self-report questionnaire. The study was conducted using three scholarly questionnaires to gauge the variables of the study.

The questionnaires were administered from May 2021 to June 2021 to adolescents attending high schools in Malaysia through online school portals, school emails, and via social media as this is a self-administered questionnaire. This method of data collection was used because Malaysia was under a lockdown period due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The questionnaires were based on parent adolescent communication, self-esteem and stress. Moreover, the most pertinent number of participants required for data collection of this study was calculated based on Rao soft sample size calculator and the adequate number was set at 377 participants and above (Raosoft.com). The Raosoft sample calculator is basically a software that primarily calculates or generates the sample size of a research or survey [49]. It is believed when more data collection is done, the more significant the results of the study will be. Since the study adopted a quantitative research by way of an online survey, three hypotheses have been designed: i) H1: There is a significant relationship among adolescents' parent-adolescent communication, self-esteem and stress; ii) H2: The adolescents of the high self-esteem group do significantly perceive communication with their parents as more positive and functional than adolescents of the low self-esteem group, and iii) H3: There is a significant relationship between the gender of the adolescents, family communication and stress of adolescents.

This study was piloted among 30 adolescents from an international school (The British International School of Kuala Lumpur) in Selangor, Malaysia. The questionnaire was then further revised based on their feedback and adequate alteration were made to make it more consistent and measurable. The final amended questionnaire includes three sets of instruments, based on three variables which are parent adolescent-communication, self-esteem and stress. Therefore, the instruments used to develop the questionnaire consists of three different instruments such as the Parent-adolescent communication questionnaire (PARQ) [50], the Rosenberg self-esteem scale and the Perceived stress scale by Cohen *et al.* [51] plus a demographic profile in the beginning (age, gender, nationality, student type) to gather information on the participants background.

In regard to measuring parent and adolescents' communication, the parent-adolescent communication questionnaire [50] estimating the nature of correspondence among adolescent and parent was distributed to fellow participants to be filled out according to the benchmark. This questionnaire was developed based on the attachment theory and aimed to investigate the adolescent and parent relationship and how certain they are in their relationship and level of comfortability to interact and share their frame of mind. The scale were rated based on a 5-point Likert scale at a rating point of 1 to 5 with 1 being "strongly disagree" to 5 "being strongly agree" to create a complete score from two subscale scores.

The open family communication (OFC) subscale reflects sensations of free articulation and comprehension in parent-adolescent connection ("When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my mother/father"). The problems in Family Communication (PFC) subscale measures negative connection patterns and aversion to uncover concerns ("My mother/father has a tendency to say things to me that would be better left unsaid"). Higher scores from the overall scale address better parent-adolescent communication. It consist of 20 items and has a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.86 which proves a high internal reliability [52].

The RSES was created by Rosenberg [53] and adjusted to Turkish examples by Cuhadaroglu in 1986 as cited in Arslan [54]. A 10-thing brief RSES alludes to the worldwide self-esteem of people, rating on a 4-point Likert type scale (1=strongly agree to 4=strongly disagree). Higher scores on the scale things demonstrate more elevated levels of confidence. Cuhadaroglu announced test-retest unwavering quality coefficients of .71 during a 4-week time frame on the Turkish adaptation.

The Perceived Stress Scale 10-item (PSS) is the most regularly utilized mental system for estimating the perception of stress among adolescents and adults. The test measures have 10 arrangements of inquiries with an answer size of 0 to 4 that can be replied by revolving around how frequently one felt or thought a specific way with 0 being never and 4 being frequently. The PSS test is viewed as dependable and has high legitimacy [51]. The palatable Cronbach's alpha worth is 0.86 for PSS-10 [55].

Reliability of the information collected was determined utilizing Cronbach alpha coefficient while legitimacy concerns "the issue of whether a marker or set of pointers that is formulated to check an idea truly gauges that idea was also be confirmed" [56]. Thus, it has been proposed that the base suggested level ought to be 0.5 or more for fundamental or exploratory examination [57]. Nunnally [58] accordingly proposes that the base edge ought to be 0.7 or more for any exploratory/fundamental examination.

Subsequently, the response of the effects of parent adolescent communication on adolescents' self-esteem and stress were tested using the SPSS V22 software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Additionally, descriptive statistics were run to further test the data such as frequency, crosstabs, percentages, mean, mode, and median. Then, inferential statistics were performed to test the hypothesis of the study. A Pearson's correlation test was executed to analyze the relationship between parent-adolescent communication, self-esteem and stress while a paired t-test was performed to determine the differences

between two different self-esteem groups. Then a two-way ANOVA was implemented to establish the effect of adolescent's gender, self-esteem and stress. Concurrently, the level for statistical importance was set at  $\alpha=0.05$ . Except if in any case demonstrated otherwise, all-important doubts were sustained for all highly measurable investigations.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As indicated, data was collected using a self-administered survey questionnaire comprising three psychological variables; Parent Adolescent Communication Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale and Perceived Stress Scale and personal variables; demographic information. The three sets of instruments used in this questionnaire were acquired from parent-adolescent communication scale (PACQ) [50] with a cronbach's alpha value at .86 [52], and rosenberg self-esteem scale [53] with a cronbach's alpha value at .92 and perceived stress scale 10-item with a cronbach alpha value at .86 [55]. Before discussing the findings of the study, the demographic details of the study sample are given. The demographic variables consist of adolescents gender, age, nationality, and student type. The findings of the demographic characteristics of the participants are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequencies and percentages of participants' demographic characteristics

Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Gender				
Male	91	16.0	26.0	26.0
Female	259	45.5	74.0	100.0
Age				
12-14	104	18.3	29.7	29.7
15-17	246	43.2	70.3	100.0
Nationality				
Malaysian	287	50.4	82.0	100.0
Others	63	11.1	18.0	18.0
Student type				
Local	252	44.3	72.0	72.0
International	98	17.2	28.0	100.0

Table 1 shows the participants' demographic characteristics. In total, 350 adolescents were engaged in this explorative study. In terms of the participants' gender, 74.0 % of the adolescents were females while the males only made up of 26.0 %. In terms of the adolescents' ages, Table 1 shows that a majority of the adolescents are aged between 15 to 17 years (N=246, 70.3%) compared to adolescents aged between 12 to 14 years (N=104, 29.7 %). Thus, it can be concluded that more mature aged adolescents had taken part in this study compared to early adolescent age. Table 1 shows the largest tested group of participants were of Malaysian nationality (N=287, 82.0%) whereas the Others consisted of 63 people with a percentage of 18 percent. Most of the participants in the study were local students (N=252, 72%) whereas international students consist of around 98 people with a percentage of 28 %.

The data collected was also screened to ensure internal consistency. The most generally utilized markers of inner consistency is Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Preferably, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of a scale ought to be over .7 for normal scale and .5 for short scales with less items [59]. The Cronbach's Alpha value for the three different instruments used in this study was calculated. The Cronbach value for the Parent adolescent communication questionnaire is .904, for Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale, the value is at .872 and the value for Perceived Stress Scale is .726. According to Tavakol and Dennick [60], a scope of alpha standards between .70 to .95 are the suggested scale for investigation analyses. Thus, the Cronbach's Alpha acquired for the apparatus used in this investigation is reliable and within the proposed range.

A test for normality was also conducted. The p-value of the normality test from Kolmogorov-Smirnov shows p-value at .200. The significance level is kept at ( $p>.05$ ). As this is a one tailed test and the sample size is more than 50, thence the p-value of Kolmogorov-Smirnov is obtained at .200. As the p-value is greater than .05, thus the data is normally distributed. The skewness of the normality is at-.097 while the kurtosis is -.493 which is between the applicable range of -2 and 2 [61]. As data is normally distributed, thus a parametric test analysis was used to analyze the hypothesis of this study. In addition, a Pearson's correlation coefficient test was conducted to explore the analysis of the first hypotheses (H1: There is a significant relationship among parent-adolescent communication, self-esteem and stress). The findings are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2. Parametric correlations

		PA comm level	Esteem level	Stress level
Total PA category	Pearson correlation	1	.390**	-.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.242
	N	350	350	350
Total esteem category	Pearson correlation	.390**	1	-.103
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.054
	N	350	350	350
Total stress category	Pearson correlation	-.063	-.103	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.242	.054	
	N	350	350	350

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The findings display that there is a significant relationship and positive correlation between parent adolescent communication and self-esteem among adolescents,  $r(350) = .390$ ,  $p = .000$ . The p-value at .000 concludes that the value is less than .05 and that there is a statistically significant correlations between level of parent adolescent communication and adolescents' self-esteem. Table 2 also illustrates that there is negative relationship between adolescents' self-esteem level and stress level,  $r(350) = -.103$ ,  $p = .054$ . The p-value at .054 concludes that the value is equal to .05 and that there is a statistically significant correlation between the self-esteem level and stress level of adolescents. The table also illustrates that there is a negative correlation between parent adolescent communication level and stress level,  $r(350) = -.063$ ,  $p = .242$ . The p-value at .242 concludes that the value is greater than .05 and that there is no statistically significant correlation between the parent adolescent communication level and stress level of adolescents.

Further, an independent t-test was carried out to establish the second hypotheses of the study, H2: The adolescents of the high self-esteem group do significantly perceive communication with their parents as more positive and functional than adolescents of the low self-esteem group. The findings are indicated in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3. Parametric t-test

	Total PA cat	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total esteem	Low	90	11.96	4.623	.487
	High	91	17.77	3.464	.363

Table 4. Parametric t-test

		Levene's test for equality of variances			T-test for equality of means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	95% Confidence interval of the difference Lower Upper
Total Esteem	Equal variances assumed	9.587	.002	-9.581	179	.000	-5.814	.607	-7.011 -4.616
	Equal variances not assumed			-9.566	164.993	.000	-5.814	.608	-7.014 -4.614

The results show that there is a statistically significant difference in the scores for low self-esteem group  $M = 11.96$ ,  $SD = 4.623$  and high self-esteem group  $M = 17.77$ ,  $SD = 3.464$  in receiving positive parental communication;  $t(179) = -9.581$ ,  $p = .000$ . The Sig. (2-Tailed) value is .00 which is less than .05. Therefore, we can conclude that these results suggest that high self-esteem does have an effect on the group of adolescents who perceive more positive parental communication. Significantly, the results suggest that the mean for high self-esteem group was higher than the mean for low self-esteem group, thus we can conclude that adolescents of the high self-esteem condition tend to have more positive and functional communication with their parents compared to adolescents of the low self-esteem condition. In addition to the Pearson's correlation coefficient test and independent t-test, a two-way ANOVA was conducted that examined the effects of gender and parent-adolescent communication on adolescents' level of stress. Table 5 illustrates the test to analyse the third hypotheses (H3: There is a significant interaction effect between the gender of the adolescents and family communication on stress of adolescents).

Table 5. Parametric anova

Descriptive statistics				
Dependent variable: Total stress				
Gender	Total PA cat	Mean	Std. deviation	N
Male	Low	21.71	10.735	7
	Medium	23.24	6.016	49
	High	18.51	4.147	35
	Total	21.31	6.211	91
Female	Low	21.07	5.245	83
	Medium	22.16	6.205	120
	High	21.14	5.043	56
	Total	21.59	5.675	259
Total	Low	21.12	5.757	90
	Medium	22.47	6.153	169
	High	20.13	4.868	91
	Total	21.52	5.811	350

The table demonstrates that male adolescents with low perception of parental communication indicated a total effect of 21.31 on their stress level. Meanwhile the female adolescents with low perceived parental communication showed a total effect of 21.59 on their stress level. This is the indication of the effect of adolescents' genders due to the differences in the stress level attributes of the genders in perceiving parental communication. Therefore, we can conclude that there is a fairly significant main effect for parental communication level with means running from 21.1 to 20.1. This shows that the gender which receives lower parental communication tends to perceive a higher stress level.

Table 6 shows that there is a significant interaction between the effect of gender and parental communication on adolescents' stress level,  $F(2, 344) = 2.89$ ,  $p = .057$ . As  $p$ -value was equal to .05, hence an interaction can be demonstrated. Thus, the third hypothesis is accepted claiming that there is a statistically significant interaction between the gender of the adolescents and family communication. This indicates that there is an interaction effect in gender when it comes to perceiving high and low parental communication. The adjusted  $r$  squared simplifies that 3.2 % of the variance in stress level attributes to the gender and parent-adolescent communication. This variance indicates a mild relationship between gender and parental communication on stress level. Table 7 shows the comparison between "gender and parental communication level", "parental communication level and stress level", and "gender and stress level".

The differences in stress level between female and male is .30. Therefore, there is a 74.3 percent probability of finding this among the participants. The results demonstrate there is no effect on male participants compared to female participants when it comes to perceived parental communication on their stress level. The difference between low and high parental communication level is 1.57 and  $p$ -value is at .67. Thus, the  $p$ -value shows that the difference is not statistically significant. The difference between medium and low parental communication is a 1.31 and  $p$ -value is at .86. Thus, the  $p$ -value shows that the difference is not statistically significant. The difference between medium and high parental communication level is 2.87 and  $p$ -value is at .00. Thus, the  $p$ -value shows that the difference is statistically significant. Overall, it shows that female adolescents between those who have medium and high parental communication show a significant difference in their stress level.

The first hypothesis was constructed to measure if there was a significant relationship between parent adolescent communication, and adolescents' self-esteem and the level of stress perceived by them. The results shows that there is a positive correlation between parent-adolescent communication and self-esteem. The finding in this study is supported by White [62] who claimed that adolescents who perceived "open" and "problem free" communication with their parents tend to become more tougher in character and have better decision-making skills. This establishes that those who have a better perception of their communication with their parents develop better self-esteem, become more sociable and also develop a better well-being and mental state [63]–[65]. Adolescents tend to feel left out or neglected when they do not get enough attention from their parents. Thus, it is important for parents to have positive communication with their teens and create a progressive and supportive surrounding for discussion to enable them to feel comfortable to open-up [66]. Another article by Fiorilli *et al.* [27] claim that self-esteem and stress level play a huge role in adolescents' life. One of the key forecasters of undesirable well-being is self-esteem. Adolescents with low self-esteem tend to feel more hopeless and unskilled. As such, lack of self-esteem leads adolescent to make decision based on their imbalanced emotional condition and results in more depressing indicators. In reference to the H2, the outcome suggest that high self-esteem does have an effect on the group of adolescents who perceive more positive parental communication. Accordingly, this result is supported by another aforementioned study where parenting style was considered as a huge factor in determining good parent adolescent communication and hence provides a better self-esteem among this adolescent group [67].



Thus, adolescents who had authoritative and indulgent parenting tend to be more open in sharing and communicating with their parents and had higher self-esteem comparatively while adolescents belonging to the authoritarian and neglectful parenting kinfolks with low parent-adolescent communication demonstrated the poorest self-esteem [68].

In terms of H3, the scale of the correlation shows significant differences in medium and high parental communication among adolescents and therefore, this signifies that female adolescent with medium and high parental communication tend to experience less effect on their stress level. This finding is supported by Bireda and Pillay [63] who said that there is a gender difference effect when it comes to communication with parents. They asserted that female adolescents tend to have a better rapport with their parents in communication. A recent article also supported that female adolescents tend to demonstrate lower level of self-esteem as paralleled to boys and tend to have higher expectations over themselves [69]. Furthermore, low level of communication with their parents tend to make them more helpless and exposed [70].

Table 6. Parametric anova

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Dependent variable: Total stress						
Source	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Partial eta squared
Corrected model	535.749 <sup>a</sup>	5	107.150	3.277	.007	.045
Intercept	71041.242	1	71041.242	2172.351	.000	.863
Gender	3.521	1	3.521	.108	.743	.000
Total PA cat	440.258	2	220.129	6.731	.001	.038
Gender * Total PA cat	189.130	2	94.565	2.892	.057	.017
Error	11249.648	344	32.702			
Total	173831.000	350				
Corrected total	11785.397	349				

R Squared=.045 (Adjusted r squared=.032)

Table 7. Parametric anova

Pairwise Comparisons						
Dependent variable: Total stress						
(I) Gender	(J) Gender	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. error	Sig. <sup>a</sup>	95% Confidence interval for difference <sup>a</sup>	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Male	Female	-.300	.914	.743	-2.098	1.498
Female	Male	.300	.914	.743	-1.498	2.098
(I) Total PA cat	(J) Total PA cat					
	Medium					
Low		-1.308	1.225	.859	-4.256	1.639
	High	1.565	1.283	.670	-1.522	4.651
	Low	1.308	1.225	.859	-1.639	4.256
Medium		2.873 <sup>*</sup>	.784	.001	.987	4.759
	High	-1.565	1.283	.670	-4.651	1.522
High		-2.873 <sup>*</sup>	.784	.001	-4.759	-.987

Based on estimated marginal means

a. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level; b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research has a significant impact for it sheds light on the significant role played by parent-adolescent communication on students' mental health. The findings from this research proves that parent-adolescent communication is a key factor for the development and well-being of adolescents. The better the communication they have with their parents, the better they develop a wholesome self-esteem. Stress does play a major part in adolescents' livelihood but does not directly affect their self-esteem as done by parental communication. Therefore, it is important to provide appropriate parenting to adolescents and have more open and problem free communication with them, allowing them to become more approachable. Great support and attention from parents do cultivate more positive well-being among adolescents and enables them to face their emotional struggle and insecurities more efficiently. Predominantly, the result from this study also establishes that adolescents belonging to the high self-esteem group tend to perceive parental communication more positively compared to the low self-esteem group. Adolescents with secured attachment and virtuous parenting tend to open up to their parents more confidently whereas adolescents belonging to the low self-esteem group tend to feel neglected and lack self-assurance. Thus, it is vital for adolescents to be

nurtured instead of instructed to obey a definite condition. Communication is essential in this context and therefore it should be given primacy in every household for the betterment of their children's well-being.

Furthermore, the research has proven that it is undisputable to input that parent play a huge role in their children's life and nurturing and bringing up a child and an adolescent varies greatly. As adolescents are in the transitioning stage between childhood and adulthood, it is important to nurture them with extensive attention and understanding. Despite the significant discoveries achieved in the research, it must be concurred that there are prevalent limitations in the collection of data in the midst of the pandemic where the whole country was in lockdown. Due to the restriction to move around in Malaysia, schools being closed, and teaching moved to online learning, the data was collected via an online survey questionnaire by forwarding the link to students' emails and social media sites. The information was gathered distinctly from controlled Malaysian schools due to school closure, which limits the idea of the outcomes to all adolescents in Malaysia. Thus, future studies ought to obtain a larger sample from various schools all around the country to achieve more precise data.

In addition, as the data was collected through an online survey self-report technique, there could have been some bias due to respondent's lack of understanding, lack of interest in answering them or the respondents might have been hesitant in disclosing their real feelings to the researchers. As such, focus group and individual interview would be more appropriate methods to overcome these limits in future studies. Future studies ought to likewise workout a longitudinal report to identify if there is any distinction throughout the years in the members' insight on whether the level of parent-adolescent communication changes over time and if there is a growth in their self-esteem over the years and changes in its effect on their stress level. Lastly, it is important to adopt more demographic variables in the questionnaire column to gather more information about the respondents such as socio-economic status, parents' occupation and etc. Although the current study does not examine these demographic details of the of the respondents, it is essential to include this information to determine whether these variables contribute to adolescent's livelihood and further effects their self-esteem and stress level.

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