

A Comparison of Family Communication And Institutional Communication of Boarding School Students And Juveniles in Malaysia

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This paper examines the implications of family communication and institutional communication among Malaysian boarding school students and juveniles. In this study, a total of 699 respondents from boarding schools and 438 juveniles were surveyed to ascertain the differences in their family communication pattern and institutional (teacher/ward) communication experience. Family communication and institutional communication were assessed using Ritchie and Fitzpatrick's (1990) Revised Family Communication Pattern Scale (RFCP), a self report instrument designed to measure socio-oriented and concept-oriented dimensions. An assessment of family communication and institutional communication data showed that both Malaysian family and institutional members (teachers) are more concept-oriented in their communication process either with their children or their students. However, there is a significant difference between communication dimension practices by the boarding school teachers and juvenile-institution wards. The findings also indicated that family communication and institutional communication have a positive relationship with the emotional spiritual quotient (ESQ).

Communication scholars vary considerably in how they conceptualize family communication. In their published syllabus, Goldberg and Goldberg (1980) conceptualized a family communication course as providing opportunities to study childhood language acquisition, interpersonal communication, and small-group interaction in relatively permanent (rather than ad hoc) settings. In the intervening 17 years, childhood language acquisition has become part of the typical family communication course, and viewing the family as a special kind of small group has generally been abandoned. However, the relative emphasis placed on interpersonal communication in various family dyads remains an important issue.

Communication research on children or marriages generally has developed separately from scholarship on communication in family units, as evidenced by the separate chapters on communication and children (Wartella & Reeves, 1987), marital interaction (Fitzpatrick, 1987), and family process (Bochner & Eisenberg, 1987). Among the questions that arise include those concerning the extent to which family characteristics and other factors shape delinquent behaviors among adolescents. It is now well documented that family functioning affects the behavior of its members. For example, individual pathology among family members (manifested as neurotic symptoms, low self-esteem, and dissatisfaction with life circumstances) has been found to be significantly related to the level of interpersonal pathology displayed by the family (manifested as intermember conflict, low solidarity, and member dissatisfaction) (Scott & Scott, 1987). Moreover, negative evaluations of family relations by parents and offspring have been shown to be related to adverse judgments of each other.

Several family factors have been identified as being important in shaping adolescent attitudes. These include parenting styles, family communication, parental pathology, separation or divorce, family conflict, and adolescent perceptions of the family (Heaven, 1994). Delinquent behavior by adolescents is a special concern for Malaysian society. Research and theory suggest that parenting is an important determinate of delinquent behavior among adolescents in general (Baumrind, 1991; Hirsch, 1969; Jackson, Henriksen, & Foshee, 1998; Jessor & Jessor, 1977). Poor parental supervision and monitoring, harsh and/or inconsistent disciplinary practices, infrequent parent-adolescent communication, and poor parent-adolescent relations have been shown to be associated with higher levels of delinquency and aggression among adolescents in general (Clark & Shields, 1997; Mason, Cauce, Gonzales, & Hiraga, 1994; Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984). However, relatively few studies have investigated the affects of these aspects of parenting specifically among Malaysian adolescents (Mustaffa, Omar, & Nordin, 2005).

Family Communication and Delinquency

Cernkovich and Giordano (1987) compared the effects of parental control and supervision on intimate parent-adolescent communication and relations, and found parent control and supervision to be more strongly (and inversely) associated with delinquent behavior in a sample of 12 to 19 year-old African-American males. Similarly, Griffin, Botvin, Scheeier, Diaz, and Miller (1999) found parental monitoring to be more strongly (and inversely) associated with substance use and delinquent behavior than parent-adolescent communication in a sample of African-American male adolescents; parent-adolescent communication was positively associated with delinquent behavior in their sample.

In a study focusing on violent behavior by male adolescents, Paschall, Ennett, and Flewelling (1996) found no relationship between attachment to parents and violent behavior among African-American male adolescents (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987; Griffin et al., 1999; Paschall et al., 1996) and also found no evidence for protective effects of parent-adolescent relations, as reflected in measures of attachment and communication on delinquent behavior. However, due to the limited number of studies that have focused on family communication in the Malaysian context, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about which aspects of parenting are most important as deterrents of delinquent behavior among Malaysian adolescents.

Current theories tend to view development within the family environment as a renegotiation and expansion of the parent-child relationship. Within this renegotiation, the adolescent remains connected to important family members but seeks to redefine the relationship concomitant to his or her increasing sense of a unique and competent self with dreams and desires, which may be different from parental expectations (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985). Accordingly, normal adolescents and parents seek a balance between conflict and alliance.

Several studies have examined the relationship between family interaction and adolescent ego development. Powers et al. (1983) found that support from both the mother and father was positively associated with adolescent ego development. Hauser et al. (1987) investigated gender differences and communication among adolescents with their families. The study

found that both adolescent girls and boys spoke more to their fathers, engaged in more problem-solving, and were more accepting of speeches by their father.

Flint (1992) studied affinity-seeking strategies used by adolescents with their parents. Affinity seeking was defined as “the different ways young people get their parents to feel positive about them” (p. 418). The study found that with mothers as targets, older adolescents, both boys and girls, used more mutual trust behaviors which consisted of revealing and discussing problems and choosing a policy of truthfulness. With fathers as the targets, adolescents used more politeness in strategies, which consisted of conversational rule keeping and concession of control.

Grotevant and Cooper (1985) conducted a study of the family communication process and adolescent identity exploration. Types of family communication include expressions of separateness, permeability, and mutuality. The study found that communication processes had different effects on identity exploration for adolescent daughters as compared to adolescent sons. Mothers’ expressions of permeability had a negative correlation for both sons and daughters, while mothers’ expressions of separateness correlated only for daughters. Fathers’ expressions of separateness showed a positive correlation for daughters, but no correlation for sons, while fathers’ mutuality showed a positive correlation for sons and no correlation for daughters. Sons’ expressions of permeability toward their fathers had a positive correlation with identity exploration, while daughters’ expressions of mutuality directed towards their mothers showed a negative correlation.

According to theorists, concepts in family communication such as socio-oriented or concept-oriented will determine how the family members communicate with one another. These schemas consist of knowledge about (1) how intimate the family is; (2) the degree of individuality within the family; and (3) factors external to the family, such as friends, geographical distance, work, and other concerns outside the family unit.

In addition to this kind of content knowledge, a family’s schema will include a certain kind of orientation to communication, of which two kinds predominate: the first is conversation orientation, and the second, conformity orientation. These are variables, so families differ in how much conversation and conformity orientations the family schema includes. Families that have a high-conversation schema like to talk; in contrast, families with a low-conversation schema do not spend much time talking. Families with a high-conversation schema tend to go along with family authorities such as the parents, while families low in these variables may expect more individuality.

Emotional and Spiritual Quotient

The phrase “emotional intelligence” (EI) was coined by Yale psychologist Peter Salovey and the University of New Hampshire’s John Mayer (1997) to describe qualities like understanding one’s own feelings and empathy for feelings of others. Their notion is just about normally bounded into conversation and handily shortened to EQ. A book, *Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman (1995), who has a Ph.D in psychology, has brought together a decade’s worth of behavioral research into how mean processes feelings. His thesis stated that when it comes to predicting people’s success, brainpower, as measured by IQ and standardized achievement tests, may actually matter less than the qualities of Mean, once thought of as “character” before the word began to sound quaint.

EI has roots in studies of “social intelligence” in the 1920s and perhaps even earlier. It was “discovered” again by Salovey and Mayer (1990), who first called it “emotional intelligence,” and it represents two (interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences) of the seven multiple intelligences as theorized by Gardner (1993). Goleman (1998) popularized the concept in his book “*Working with Emotional Intelligence*,” as well as the notion that EI might “matter more” than IQ (which represents one of Gardner’s seven intelligences).

Currently, there are several definitions of EI in use, and they do not necessarily match well. EI is a multifaceted construct, and there simply is no clear definition of it. Because of this, it has been difficult to develop a good paper-and-pencil test to measure EI. Nonetheless, the following are two of the more widely used definitions at present. Coleman (1998, p. 317) defined EI as “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.” Martinez-Pons (1997, p. 72) referred to emotional intelligence as being “an array of non-cognitive skills, capabilities and competencies that influence a person’s ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures.”

In the past two years, two studies (Emmons, 2000; Zohar & Marshall, 2001) have postulated the notion that spirituality could be intelligence. Emmons (2000), writing in the discipline of psychology of religion, argued that spirituality meets Gardner’s (1993) criteria for intelligence and should be included as intelligence. In doing so, Emmons (2000) postulated that there are at least five core abilities that define spiritual intelligence, namely: the capacity for transcendence; the ability to enter into heightened spiritual states of consciousness; the ability to invest everyday activities, events, and relationships with a sense of sacredness; the ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems in living; and the capacity to engage in virtuous behaviors or to be virtuous (to show forgiveness, to express gratitude, to be humble, to display compassion, etc.).

Zohar and Marshall (2001) propose that in addition to IQ and EQ (EI), there is another type of intelligence they call “SQ” or spiritual intelligence. Furthermore they propose that IQ and EQ are subsidiary to and supported by SQ – SQ, the highest intelligence.

“Spiritual” is used similarly, or in ways related to “emotional,” or to particular behaviors or attitudes of an individual. For example, being spiritual has been equated with being open – giving, compassionate, or what we imagine as “holy” in one’s behavior, and usually has to do with personal experiences with God, Allah, the Transcendent, the Beyond, and the Sacred. The focus is on the direct experience of something other than what is normally the focus of the daily, material, sensory, or even emotional reality. On the other hand, many of the results of having such experiences appear to be similar to the results (behaviors, feeling states, etc.) of being more emotionally mature or intelligent.

Using the competency framework, Dulewicz and Higgs (2000) studied 100 managers over a seven year period by looking at a variety of their competencies and at their career advancement in their organizations. They also measured IQ, EI, and potentially related personality traits. They used factor analysis and found six factors with Cronbach Alpha values of above 0.50. They found that competency based EI factors contributed 0.36 toward predicting organizational advancement versus IQ contributing. Combined, they could predict a 0.52 advancement.

McCormick (1994) claimed that in spite of recent studies showing that most Americans believe in a God or Universal Spirit, academic literature is void of much research in this area.

McCormick cited a number of studies that offer evidence that believing managers had claimed their relationship with God influenced their work more than any other variable. McCormick (1994) cited themes that emerged from literature on spirituality and the workplace, which included compassion, right livelihood, selfless service, meditative work, and the problem of pluralism.

As for Islam, the evaluation of humankind is not only possible but it is the main purpose and outcome of believing and practicing Islam. The approach of Islam to elevate the human self and get closer to God is realistic, comprehensive, rational, and direct. Mankind is a complex creation of God. Needless to say, it is only the Creator who could know precisely the intricacies of the human soul, and how it is elevated far and beyond. Divine messages are like the "user manual" of this creation. Islam is a comprehensive manual of life that combines basic aspects of faith and worship, and moral teachings and law, to offer the most intensive and effective means to know God and love Him, purify the soul and refine human qualities, and establish a communal feeling of love, devotion, and solidarity.

Reading, reciting, and contemplating the Qur'an provides the Muslim with a clear vision of God and His universe and creatures, as well as keys to supreme morality. The text of the Qur'an is inimitable in its meanings, structures, and rhetoric and contains rhymes that motivate both the intellectual and the uninitiated. Reciting the Qur'an or praying to God using its phraseology, as well as other supplications taught by the Prophet of Islam, is a permanent wealth of direct communication with God.

Muslim ritual prayers are preceded by physical purification through washing the face, arms, and feet, and wiping the head. This purification physically refreshes the body so that one may concentrate on the direct communication with God that ensues. Obligatory prayers are performed five times daily, and there are also other highly recommended prayers, especially late-night prayers. In Arabic, *zakat*, or obligatory charity, literally means the purification of the money of the owner as well as the purification of his heart, of both greed and selfishness, replacing them with content, thankfulness, love, and willingness to sacrifice for others. Similarly, the needy recipients' hearts are filled with satisfaction and warm wishes for the rich instead of class hatred and malicious envy. In the lunar month of Ramadan, Muslims abstain from food, drink, and sexual activities from dawn to sunset during the whole month. There are also recommended fasts on certain days and occasions on other days throughout the year. The fifth pillar of Islam, the Hajj, or pilgrimage, also presents a unique opportunity of spiritual evolution. Assembling in Makkah (Mecca) together with millions of Muslims all dressed in the simplest of garments, is an unforgettable glorification of God by mankind and a reminder of the ultimate grand assembly of all generations in the hereafter.

Purpose of the Study

The present study had two main purposes. Firstly, the study was to investigate family communication and institutional communication among Malaysian boarding school students and juveniles. Also, the study attempted to explore whether there is a significant relationship between family communication and emotional spiritual quotient among students at boarding school and juvenile's centers in Malaysia.

Cultural Elements That Affected Communication Style among Malaysians

Varma and Zain (1996) and Pedersen (1983) reported that religion is an important socio-cultural value in Malaysia. Each of the four major ethnic subdivisions of Malaysian society has its own distinct major religion or philosophical orientation; i.e. Malays and Islam, Chinese and Buddhism, Indians and Hinduism, and the Aboriginal people and Animism. The emphases vary by groups and individuals, but the religious/philosophical values are always a part of the life of the individual. For the Malays, Islam is very important and guides all of the decisions made throughout their lives. Malaysian families have traditionally placed importance and status on professional occupations, and these positions are therefore more valued than others. As countries move from an agrarian economy to an industrial one, a broader spectrum of professional occupations is created (Watts, 1996). As reported by Singaravelu (1998), the list of acceptable occupations is expanding as more and more Asians are now selecting non-traditional professional fields in liberal arts and communications.

General Influence of Islam on Malay Culture

Among Malays, Islam constitutes a key element in ethnic identity and therefore has a critical impact on the development of Malay culture. Almost all Malays are Muslim, and a Malay who rejects Islam is no longer legally considered a Malay. Since independence in 1957, Islam has been adopted as “the religion of the Federation.” This establishes Islam as the official religion of the country, and the main emphasis of such status is to maintain harmony and cooperation between Malays and the other ethnic groups in the country. Esposito and Voll (1996) regarded Islam in Malaysia as a moderate version of the religion because Muslims in Malaysia have lived in harmony and peace with the non-Muslims in the community for more than five centuries. Not only does Islam influence Malay culture, it is also constituted in the following basic policies of the Malaysian national culture:

1. National culture must be based on the indigenous culture of the region (i.e. Malay).
2. Suitable elements from other cultures can be accepted as part of the national culture.
3. Islam is an important component in the molding of the national culture.

Generally speaking, Islam permeates every facet of life for the Malays, especially in the realm of values and behavior. In the realm of values, the Malays rely heavily on religious sources. As Islam teaches that the divine law is immutable and absolute, it is very rare to see Malays oppose the absoluteness of values written in the Qur'an and the sayings of the prophet Muhammad. Thus, some values are already specified and unchangeable. For example, Malays may not easily change their views on the unlawfulness of alcoholic drinks and premarital sexual relationships. Alternatively, there are also values that are not specifically mentioned in the religious divine sources, such as recent developments in genetic engineering and other new phenomena. Whether they are right or wrong is determined through a delicate discussion by the concerned authorities and religious scholars. The final say, nevertheless, must be in congruence with the basic guidelines set in the Qur'an.

Islamic teaching also has a deep influence on aspects of behavior. For example, Malays are accustomed to greet other Malays with a *Salam*, a special greeting taught by religious

teaching. *Salam* is normally followed by a handshake, and both parties lightly touch their own chests with the fingers of both hands. Guided by Islamic values, this handshake is only performed between members of the same gender. Malays are also taught not to say anything that may hurt the feelings of others and are thus prone not to criticize others openly in public, which is also part of Islamic ethical teaching.

Other Influences on Malay Personality and Culture

Although religion plays a role in molding the cultural and behavioral aspects of the Malay people, there are other factors that have influenced the culture and, subsequently, the personality of the Malays. Economy is one of them. Malay and non-Malay communities have been affected differently by the modern economy. Before 1970, Malays were mainly engaged in agriculture and fishing, whereas non-Malays were involved in business and entrepreneurial activities (Crouch, 1996). Thus, the Malays were far less mobilized socially and politically than non-Malays. A large majority remained attached to their rural way of life. However, after the implementation of the National Economic Plan in 1970, gradual changes in the pattern of life were observed. The government provided more opportunities for Malays to become involved in business and to further their professional studies at local and foreign universities, and has encouraged Malays to become involved in the stock market. The new economic policy thus has changed the attitude of Malays and stimulated their need to work hard for a better quality of life.

The second factor is the customary tradition of the Malay people themselves. Malays have a strong sense of community spirit, and they place great emphasis on manners or politeness. Being helpful, polite, considerate, and courteous are among the characteristics of typical traditional Malays.

Malay Language

Another factor is the language. The Malay language (Bahasa Melayu) is the official language of the Malays. It is one of the branches of the Malayo-Polynesian languages of the Austronesian language family spoken widely in Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and other nearby areas. To Malays, *bahasa jiwa bangsa*, is an important phrase which in essence means that language is the soul of the nation. Through the efforts of national education and cultural assimilation, the Malaysian Chinese and Indians are also able to communicate fluently in the Malay language (Ozog, 1993). The Malay language is now written using the 26-letter Roman alphabet due to the influence of British colonization over the Malay Peninsula since 1795. Thus, modern Malay is easy to acquire. Some of the modern Malay words have been adopted from the English vocabulary for words or vocabulary that are difficult to translate into Malay, such as *hobi* (hobby), *manipulasi* (manipulation), *kriteria* (criteria), and so on.

However, for translating psychological instruments, problems are also posed by differences in preferred discourse styles. The Malay language is characterized by no straightforwardness of verbal expression of the language (Goddard, 1997). Assessing the verbal response of a Malay person requires delicate interpretation. Their verbal expressions may not necessarily reflect their real feelings or opinions and may be direct or indirect, depending on the situation and the person. For example, to claim oneself to be more competent than others

is seldom uttered in Malay culture, although the speaker may really be so. In accepting a marriage proposal, a sweet smile is a “Yes, I do” answer without uttering a word in Malay custom. Thus, cultures differ on what one should be “indirect about, on how to be indirect and most importantly perhaps, on why to be indirect” (Goddard, 1997, p. 184). This may present problems for a questionnaire measure asking for direct self-descriptions.

Stereotypical Traits of the Malays

A number of sociological, language, and anthropological studies on Malay people and their culture have been reported (Hussin, 1975; Husin, 1990). Those studies revealed some of the personality and cultural aspects of the Malays. For example, Crouch (1996) noted that a Malay is “usually portrayed as polite and self-effacing, avoiding open conflict wherever possible” (p. 165). It is “typical of the Malay to stand aside and let someone else pass” (Mohamad, 1970, p. 116). Chinese people, on the other hand, are seen as being more energetic, aggressive, self-confident, and entrepreneurial.

In his analysis of verbal linkage to the Malay culture, Goddard (1997) found that Malays were concerned about others’ feelings. They were also concerned about the coherence of their words and actions with social and religious norms in that they should not oppose the norms. Thus, the idea that one should think before one speaks so as not to hurt others’ feelings. Malay speakers therefore tend to be very careful about commenting on or opposing others’ views. Malays who speak loudly are considered impolite, and such behavior is considered a sign of negative emotion.

Another basic concept of Malay culture is the social emotion of *malu* (shame, propriety). Malays regard a sense of *malu* as an element of basic goodness in society. Swift (1985) equated *malu* with “hypersensitiveness to what other people are thinking about oneself” (p. 110). Malays, belonging to one of the Asian cultures, accept shame or *malu* as virtuous, although this does not mean that being shameful at all times is recommended. For example, for a young lady to feel shame when being introduced to her future husband is virtuous. But shame is no longer virtuous if one is shamed into doing the right thing. This cultural difference in the concept of shame or *malu* may have an impact on the analysis of the personality traits related to that concept.

Previous Studies on Malay People

There have also been some empirical studies on other psychological aspects of the Malays. A few studies, however, equate Malays to Malaysians as a whole. This is not necessarily true, because Malaysians could be Chinese or Indians as well. For example, Malaysians (Malays, Chinese, and Indians combined) were indexed as a collectivist society on Hofstede’s country individualism index of 20 (Bochner, 1994). The index for Malays as a separate culture is unknown, but logically, as the majority of Malaysians, they are presumably collectivist rather than individualist. Malays tend to be rated as internally controlled. Wan Rafaei (1972) administered Rotter’s locus of control instrument to Malay and Australian secondary school students. He found that Malay subjects were more internally controlled than their Australian counterparts. Boucher and Brandt (1981) found evidence of the universality of facial expression among Malay and American subjects. Both groups were able to recognize

different kinds of emotions expressed between them. Ball, Moselle, and Mustafa (1992) conducted a study on stress phenomena and coping behavior among Malay college students. They found that two thirds of the students reported a high level of chronic stress with various types of external and internal stress sources. The inner sources stem from conflict between traditional and modern or idiosyncratic religious and cultural alignment for values and self-expression. This conflict shows the importance of religion in directing the students' life. Ball, Moselle, and Mustafa (1992) further studied the cultural and religious influences in help-seeking behavior. Overall results supported the earlier findings that Islam and Malay cultural values shape how they seek help and manage their stress.

Method

Sample

Data were collected via questionnaire. A total of 699 respondents from boarding schools and a total of 438 juveniles from juvenile's centers took part in this study.

Data Collection

The surveys were administered in the schools as well as juvenile's centers where the participants were informed that the researcher was interested in family communication. The questionnaires were administered to students during class hours in the presence of their teachers or wards. The data were analyzed by the use of quantitative procedures, including the use of the Pearson coefficient of correlation, cross tabulation, and t-test.

Measures

The Revised Family Communication Pattern (RFCP) (Ritchie and Fitzpatrick, 1990) was used to measure family communication and institutional communication. The RFCP is a 26-item, Likert-type measure where 15 items assess a family's perceived conversation-orientation (e.g. "My parents/wards often ask my opinion when the family/institutional is talking about something" ; "My parents/wards often say something like 'A child should not argue with adults' " ; and "When I am at home, I am expected to obey my parents' rules"). On a scale of "1" ("Strongly Disagree") to "5" ("Strongly Agree"), participants were asked to think of how their family typically behaved during the period of time when they were growing up; i.e. between 11 and 18 years of age. For the current sample, the Cronbach Alpha values by the conversation-orientation and conformity-orientation subscales were .86 and .89, respectively. This is consistent with the reliabilities observed in previous research employing the instrument.

The emotional-spiritual quotient was measured using the questionnaire proposed by Augustian (2000). The questionnaire was based on 99 characteristics of God believed by Muslims. The reliability for the instrument was .88.

Translations And Back-Translation

In the first stage, the researcher translated all the items of the RFCP instrument from English into the Malay language. Then, a bilingual individual who was unfamiliar with the psychological constructs back-translated the first draft of the translation into English. The author reviewed the back-translated version and identified items having potential problems in the translation. A new translation of the revised items was made, back-translated again, and then reviewed. Some items were still identified as ambiguous and unclear. Again, these items were reworked by a third back-translator. At this point, the translated version was approved for use in the pilot studies.

Results

Demographic Results

The survey found that out of 438 juveniles involved in this study, 59% were male and 41% were female. As for the boarding school students, 53% (369) were male and 47% (330) were female. All participants were Malays and Muslims.

In term of siblings, out of 438 juveniles, 16% have 1-2 siblings, a total of 26% have 3-4 siblings, 30% have 5-6 siblings, 6% have 7-8 siblings, and the rest have more than 8 siblings. For the students at boarding schools, a total of 8.0% have 1-2 siblings, 48% have 3-4 siblings, 32% have 5-6 siblings, 9% have 7-8 siblings, and the rest (2%) have more than 8 siblings.

The survey also indicates that a total of 30% (or 129) of the juveniles were less than 16 years old, 48% were between 17 and 18 years old, and 21% were between 19 and 21 years. As for students at boarding schools, 99% were 16 years old or less.

In term of father's occupation, a total of 30% (or 133) of the juveniles' fathers were self-employed or made a living as a businessman or contractor, 20% (or 88) were government servants, 11% were private sector employees, 31% of fathers were jobless, and 5% of fathers had passed away. For boarding school students a total of 340 respondents (or 49%) indicated that their fathers were government servants, 146 (or 21%) were self-employed, and 111 (or 16%) were private sector employees.

Regarding the occupations of the respondents' mothers, as for juveniles, a total of 31% stated that their mothers were housewives, 30% responded that their mothers were businesswomen and contractors, 20% indicated that their mothers were government servants, and 11% stated that their mothers were private sector employees.

As for respondents in boarding schools, a total of 53% (or 371) of the respondents indicated that their mothers were housewives, 35% (or 247) of the respondents indicated that their mothers were government servants, and 5% (or 33) of the respondents' mothers worked as private sector employees.

The respondents were also asked about their parents' marital status. A total of 145 juvenile respondents, or 33%, stated that their parents were divorced. For the respondents from boarding schools, a total of 21 respondents, or 3%, indicated that their parents were divorced.

Descriptive Analysis

The data was analyzed by using cross tabulation. The data was grouped into two categories: high and low levels, based on the score. The discussion was based on gender factors.

Gender and ESQ (Juveniles)

For ESQ, the results showed that the majority of juveniles scored high in terms of their ESQ levels (97.8%). This indicates that the levels of ESQ among respondents are positive (Table 1).

Gender and Family Communication (Juveniles)

As for family communication variables, the results indicated that the majority of the respondents scored highly in terms of their family communication patterns. This indicates that they practice a positive family communication situation with respect toward each other and others even though they are involved in delinquent activities (Table 2).

Gender and Institutional Communication

As for institutional communication, the results showed that the majority of respondents scored highly in terms of their communication with wards. A total of 16.3% of females indicated low scores in terms of their institutional communication. This indicates that institutional communication plays a significant role in helping juveniles (Table 3).

Gender (Boarding School)

Further analysis was done to descriptively investigate the level of ESQ, family communication, and institutional communication among students from boarding schools.

Gender and ESQ

For ESQ and gender among boarding school students, the results indicated that a total of 340 (92.1%) male respondents scored highly in terms of their ESQ, and a total of 311 (94.2%) female respondents scored highly in terms of their ESQ, as shown in Table 4.

Gender and Family Communication

For family communication and gender, the results showed that the majority (88.3% or 326) of male respondents scored highly in terms of their family communication, and a total of 289 (87.6%) female respondents also had high scores in terms of their family communication, as shown in Table 5.

Table 1: Gender and ESQ

Variables			Level ESQ		Total
			Low	High	
Gender	Male	Percent (%)	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Female	Percent (%)	2.5%	97.5%	100.0%
Total		Percent (%)	2.2%	97.8%	100.0%

Table 2: Gender and Family Communication

Variables			Family Communication		Total
			High	Low	
Gender	Male	Percent (%)	91.1%	8.9%	100.0%
	Female	Percent (%)	89.7%	10.3%	100.0%
Total		Percent (%)	89.9%	10.1%	100.0%

Table 3: Gender and Institutional Communication

Variables			Institutional Communication		Total
			High	Low	
Gender	Male	Percent (%)	82.2%	17.8%	100.0%
	Female	Percent (%)	83.7%	16.3%	100.0%
Total		Percent (%)	83.5%	16.5%	100.0%

Table 4: Gender and ESQ

Variables			Level ESQ		Total
			Low	High	
Gender	Male	Percent (%)	7.9%	92.1%	100.0%
	Female	Percent (%)	5.8%	94.2%	100.0%
Total		Percent (%)	6.9%	93.1%	100.0%

Table 5: Gender and Family Communication

Variables			Family Communication		Total
			Low	High	
Gender	Male	Percent (%)	11.7%	88.3%	100.0%
	Female	Percent (%)	12.4%	87.6%	100.0%
Total		Percent (%)	12.0%	88.0%	100.0%

Gender and Institutional Communication

Table 6 indicates that most (69.1%) of the male respondents scored highly in terms of their institutional communication, while 114 (30.9%) scored low in the same aspects. As for the females, a total of 231 (70%) scored highly and 99 (or 30%) scored low.

Hypothesis Testing for Gender Differences

We hypothesized that there would be significant differences in terms of family communication, institutional communication, and ESQ among males and females for each category of respondents. The analysis showed that, for the students at boarding schools, there is a significant difference in terms of ESQ between males and females. The female scores were higher than the male scores, which indicates that the ESQ level among the female is higher than the male (Table 7).

For juvenile respondents, the results indicated that there is no significant difference in terms of ESQ level, family communication, and institutional communication between male and female respondents (Table 8).

Correlation between ESQ and Family Communication

We also predicted that family communication and institutional communication are positively and significantly related to ESQ for both categories of respondents. In terms of the relationship between ESQ and family communication the results indicated that there is a significant relationship between both variables in both categories of respondents, thereby offering strong support for this hypothesis (Table 9).

Correlation between ESQ and Institutional Communication

In terms of the relationship between ESQ and institutional communication, the results indicated that there is a significant and positive relationship between both variables. As for students from boarding schools, the r value is .22 ($p < 0.05$) and for juveniles, the r value is .32 ($p < 0.05$), which also further indicates the positive relationship, thus confirming the correlation hypothesis (Table 10).

Discussion

This study was concerned with family communication and its implications on juveniles in centers and students in boarding schools in Malaysia. It was hypothesized that “good” communication would be significantly associated with ESQ among different categories of respondents. In general, the hypothesis was supported. The results of this study suggest that those who had higher scores on both the family communication and institutional communication scales also reported higher levels of ESQ.

Interesting differences in terms of gender were found in the level of ESQ among male and female respondents in boarding schools. The female respondent scores were slightly higher than the male respondent scores, which indicates that the female level of ESQ is higher

Table 6: Gender and Institutional Communication

Variables			Institutional Communication		Total
			Low	High	
Gender	Male	Percent (%)	30.9%	69.1%	100.0%
	Female	Percent (%)	30.0%	70.0%	100.0%
Total		Percent (%)	30.5%	69.5%	100.0%

Table 7: T-test for Boarding School Respondents

Variables	Gender	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	t.	Sig.
ESQ	Male	369	343.06	32.85	-3.023	.003
	Female	330	350.85	35.27		
Family Communication	Male	369	83.75	10.33	-1.159	.247
	Female	330	84.69	11.12		
Institutional Communication	Male	369	76.95	13.38	-.445	.656
	Female	330	77.43	14.93		

Table 8: T-test for Juveniles Center Respondents

Variables	Gender	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	t.	Sig.
ESQ	Male	259	337.89	38.36	.581	.562
	Female	179	335.75	37.27		
Family Communication	Male	259	81.76	15.00	1.354	.177
	Female	179	79.66	17.17		
Institutional Communication	Male	259	82.66	13.38	1.656	.098
	Female	179	79.97	20.56		

than that of the male students. This finding suggests that girls will probably out-perform boys in academic achievement. This finding is in accordance with other studies which show that girls' academic achievement tends to be higher than that of boys (Johnson & Gormly, 1972).

The results of this study are similar to those of Western studies in several respects, such as studies by Grotevant and Cooper (1985) which found that the communication process had different effects on identity exploration for adolescents. Also, family communication on particular schemas determines how family members communicate with one another. These

Table 9: Correlation Between ESQ and Family Communication

Variables	Respondents category		ESQ
Family Communication	Boarding School	r	.420 (**)
		p	.000
		n	699
	Juveniles	r	.379(**)
		p	.000
		n	438

**p<0.01

Table 10: Correlation between ESQ and Institutional Communication

Variables	Respondents category		ESQ
Institutional Communication	Boarding School	r	.242(**)
		p	.000
		n	699
	Juveniles	r	.315(**)
		p	.000
		n	438

**p<0.01

family schemas do influence the level of emotional and spiritual quotient among the respondents in this study.

The findings in this study also indicate that the Islamic approach to the Muslim's daily life is also being practiced during the family communication process which further enhances the relationships among family members.

Our findings should be considered with some of the limitations of the study. While this study has some implications for the design of family-oriented programs pertinent to the prevention of delinquent behavior among Malaysian adolescents, these should be considered with caution, given the modest explanatory power of parenting variables and the non-representative sample. It is clearly important to emphasize the importance of parents for both the supervision and control of their children's behavior. Open communication and close parent-adolescent relations may be inherently valuable but are less likely to mitigate their children's delinquent behavior once these behaviors have been established. However, the results of this study serve as a reminder to prevention specialists of the importance of parenting behavior pertinent to the exercise of control, especially among Malaysian adolescents.

Because of the exploratory nature of this study, its results should be viewed with care. It is important to note, for instance, that other aspects of Malaysian culture might help limit problem behaviors. Further, subsequent studies would benefit from a multi-method approach. In this sense, surveys should be supplemented with observational data. A broader range of

coping strategies needs to be sampled to discern their connections to various cultural orientations and to related concerns like the influence of peer group, media, and other factors.

Insights are needed into the cultural acquisition processes. The development course of Malaysian youth orientations should be charted for various segments of the Malaysian community. It seems reasonable to assume that family factors like demographic attitudes toward acculturation and cultural predilections would figure prominently in the cultural repertoire of children and youth. The influences of friends are also important, particularly during their childhood and late adolescence stages.

Implication for further research

The results of this study show that the variables considered here do not provide a thorough explanation of family communication among Malaysians which involves cultural and Islamic values. Previous writers have considered a wide array of factors including genetics, parental criminality, and family size. Low income or socio-economic status, separation from family, the child's academic and social skills, peer influences, and personality characteristics can be predicted as variables that influence the relation between family communication and ESQ.

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