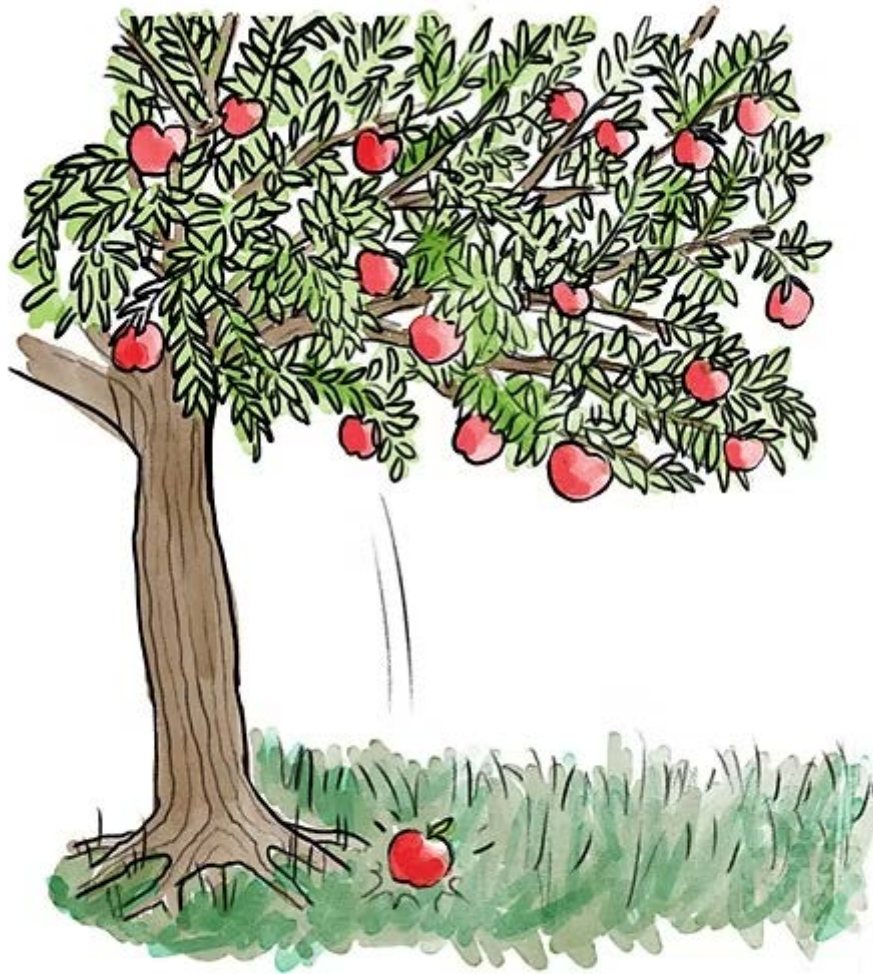


“The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree”



Shel Silverstein, *The Giving Tree*, Harper & Row, New York, 1964.

An Investigation into how Family Communication Styles  
Influence Interpersonal Relationships in Adulthood.

39188457

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# INTRODUCTION

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“You're just like your parents” is a commonly used phrase reflecting the power and influence of socialisation <sup>1</sup> during the early influential stages of childhood development. Parents play a fundamental role in shaping their children's understandings of values, behaviours and social expectations. Family communication patterns contribute significantly to the development of an individual's understanding of relationships and the way they interact with others throughout life. Consequently, the quality of communication experienced within a family has the potential to shape interpersonal relationships <sup>2</sup> in adulthood.

This Personal Interest Project (PIP) aims to investigate the extent to which parents can have an influence on their children's social development and examines how early communication patterns shape an individual's ability to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships into adulthood. It explores how different approaches to communication, including openness, emotional support or conflict, can influence children's emotional expression, communication skills and capacity to form meaningful relationships. I selected this topic as my own family has played a significant role in shaping who I am today. I recognise aspects derived from them in myself, both positive and negative, and observe these attributes in my sibling as well. Their influence is deeply embedded in my values, behaviours, and the way I interact with others. Through this research, I wanted to further examine how these influences extend beyond childhood and continue throughout individuals' lives. By exploring personal experiences and changing societal patterns of the influence of technology and parenting styles

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<sup>1</sup> **Socialisation** is the lifelong process through which individuals internalize the norms, customs, values, and ideologies of their society, enabling them to function as members.

<sup>2</sup> **Interpersonal relationships** are the connections and interactions between two or more individuals. These relationships can involve communication, trust, support, emotions, and shared experiences. E.g family, friends, coworkers and romantic partners.

<sup>3</sup>, I aim to investigate how this influences continuity and change in interpersonal relationships.

How family communication patterns shape future relationships contributes to a broader understanding of society and culture by highlighting relationships at the micro level and their effects on early development. This demonstrates the position of primary socialisation in influencing individuals' behaviour, values and interactions. This ultimately impacts emotional development, communication skills and the ability to navigate social environments effectively. This topic explores a cross-generational focus <sup>4</sup>, examining both adults and children, making comparisons between Generation Z (1995-2009) and Generation X/Y (1965-1995), as the styles of parenting significantly differ through generations, evolving considerably over time due to changing social expectations. This reflects both continuity and change and cross-cultural differences, as some communication patterns are maintained across generations, while others adapt in response to broader social transformations. Social change is an inevitable experience as societies become more modern, but micro interactions can evolve due to personal experiences as well as broader social influences, such as changing norms and technology <sup>5</sup>. This cross-cultural comparison allowed for more possible outcomes in data collection, gaining a wide range of perspectives and a deeper understanding of how different situations influence communication styles and shape interpersonal relationships within society.

I've incorporated the use of primary and secondary research methods, including interviews with family counsellors, content analysis of the television show *Parental Guidance (Nine Network Australia 2026)*, questionnaires with Generation Z (children) and Generation Y/X (parents) and research completed through the annotation and critical analysis of scholarly websites. Furthermore, these research methods were selected because they provided both

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<sup>3</sup> **Authoritative** – High warmth, high expectations; supportive while setting clear rules and boundaries.

**Authoritarian** – Low warmth, high expectations; strict, controlling, and expects obedience.

**Permissive** – High warmth, low expectations; nurturing but sets few rules or limits.

**Neglectful (Uninvolved)** – Low warmth, low expectations; provides little guidance, support, or involvement in the child's life.

<sup>4</sup> **Cross-generational focus** refers to examining or comparing different generations to understand similarities and differences in their experiences, values, attitudes, or behaviours over time.

<sup>5</sup> Sociology Institute, *Theories of Social Change: Evolutionary, Cyclical, Conflict*, Sociology Institute, viewed 2nd of April 2026, <https://sociology.institute/introduction-to-sociology/theories-social-change-evolutionary-cyclical-conflict/>

quantitative and qualitative data, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of how family communication styles influence interpersonal relationships, also allowing me to gain insight into individuals' experiences and at the same time allowing for the cross-verification of data to increase reliability.

# LOG

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From the beginning of this Personal Interest Project, I had a clear direction for my research. My idea developed through the observation of family relationships and communication within different households, including my own. I became very interested in the way parents communicate with their children, and how it can influence behaviour, identity and the formation of relationships later in life, and I wished to gain a deeper understanding. I chose this topic as family and kinship are one of the most important agents of socialisation, and I wanted to analyse the effects of the way communication styles have changed over generations.

My initial investigation focused primarily on parenting styles and their influence on children's behaviour, but after conducting secondary research, I wanted to broaden the focus to the long-term effects on children. I found my inspiration through class discussions as well as television programs, as I watched *Parental Guidance* (Nine Network Australia 2026), which I used for my content analysis. These sources were helpful as they provided many different perspectives on my topic, which thereby helped me compare my personal experience and observations as well.

I used a questionnaire, an expert interview with a school counsellor, content analysis and secondary research from academic journals. The questionnaire enabled the gathering of a large amount of information with 130 responses. There were many different perspectives from Generation X, Y, and Z. The expert interview brought professional insight into behavioural and communication patterns. The content analysis allowed me to observe communication styles, showing certain trends, demonstrating the positives and negatives, while secondary research added credibility and supported the findings from my primary research.

One challenge I had relating to my topic was ensuring that all 130 questionnaire participants felt comfortable answering the questions, as I was asking about personal family experiences. I maintained confidentiality by ensuring the questionnaire data was gathered anonymously

and ethically, reassuring the respondents that the data was only used towards my PIP. Another challenge was that I was overwhelmed with the sheer amount of information available on my topic and struggled to analyse the large amounts of data collected. Allocating certain data to each chapter helped me interpret the data based on thematic patterns. Time management was also difficult, but was made easier as I had progress submissions to help me meet the deadlines.

This experience has strengthened my research skills, improving my ability to collect, analyse and apply information from multiple sources at the same time, drawing clear conclusions. I have also gained a deeper understanding of how family communication influences individuals in the long-term and short-term, which has allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of a topic frequently discussed in my family while also recognising how these experiences reflect broader social patterns. Overall, completing this Personal Interest Project has significantly increased my confidence in conducting independent research and managing a major project from beginning to end. More importantly, it has enhanced my social literacy, enabling me to critically examine how family communication as a primary agent of socialisation influences identity, values and interpersonal relationships across generations. Through connecting personal experiences with wider social trends, I have developed an understanding of the relationship between micro and macro worlds, reconsidering how individual family interactions are shaped by broader social and cultural forces.

# CHAPTER ONE: Impact of family communication styles on children's behaviour and development

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Family communication plays a pivotal role in shaping a child's behaviour, emotional regulation and overall psychological development. Family, a primary agent of socialisation, is the first environment where children learn how to communicate and express their emotions, as well as understand social expectations. Overall, research revealed that a balance in communication styles will produce more positive developmental outcomes for a child, while inconsistency and lack of boundaries contribute to negative behavioural patterns.

Young children naturally mirror their parents' behaviours through observational learning and mirror neurons, which contribute to the development of emotional expression, empathy and social skills by observing those around them <sup>6</sup>. An example of this emerged in the expert interview with the counsellor: children raised in homes with direct and open communication may transfer this communication style into their classroom. This may appear as disrespectful when interacting with teachers, as different norms and expectations apply <sup>7</sup>. This reinforces the idea that children's behaviour is shaped through observational learning, highlighting the family's role as a key agent of socialisation. Similarly, Kong et al. found that negative early childhood family experiences, like abuse, are linked to a broad range of negative psychological outcomes through weakened family relationships; family interactions have a long-term impact on behaviour and mental health <sup>8</sup>. Collectively, these findings illustrate how early family communication contributes to continuity of social behaviours and interpersonal patterns across the life course.

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<sup>6</sup> Educate Wiser, *Children Mirror Their Parents: How to Foster Positive Behaviors and Break Negative Cycles*, Educate Wiser, viewed 21st April 2026, <https://educatewiser.com/blogs/children-mirror-their-parents-how-to-foster-positive-behaviors-and-break-negative-cycles>

<sup>7</sup> **Primary research method 2:** interview with School counsellor

<sup>8</sup> Kong, J., Moorman, S.M., Martire, L.M. & Almeida, D.M., 'The Role of Current Family Relationships in Associations Between Childhood Abuse and Adult Psychological Functioning', *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, vol. 74, no. 5, 2019, pp. 858–868, viewed 28 November 2025, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29924362/>

Family communication not only influences behaviour through observation but also through the transmission of values, norms and expectations. Sanberk's research found that adolescents who experienced parental acceptance perceived family relationships more positively, whereas those exposed to high levels of control perceived family interactions negatively <sup>9</sup>. This suggests that communication styles shape how young people can interpret relationships, authority and trust, meaning that through a process, these values become internalised and contribute to identity development.

Consistency in family communication plays a significant role in shaping children's social and emotional development. Questionnaire data revealed that 34.6%, which is the largest proportion of respondents, both Generation Z (1995-2009) and Generation X/Y (1965-1995), report mixed or inconsistent communication styles within their households <sup>10</sup>. This suggests that many families adopt an eclectic parenting approach, which is where parents use different techniques from a variety of parenting styles to suit the changing needs of their household <sup>11</sup>. This can result in both positive and negative developmental outcomes. The counsellor explained that inconsistency often leads to confusion and insecurity in young individuals' ability to hold onto relationships, in turn leading to unpredictable behaviour and responses to situations <sup>12</sup>. This pattern was reinforced in the content analysis of *Parental Guidance*, where households that lacked consistent, healthy communication strategies often had more conflict and behavioural issues <sup>13</sup>. Therefore, we can conclude that these findings highlight that consistent communication within the family promotes stable social development and reinforces the family's role as a primary agent of socialisation.

Different communication styles can lead to different emotional outcomes. Authoritarian households, based on strict control and low emotional expression, lead to emotional

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<sup>9</sup> Sanberk, I., 'Reciprocity of Intra-Family Dyadic Relations from Adolescents' Perspective', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 49, no. 3, 2018, pp. 259–278, viewed 5th of November 2025, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26590127>

<sup>10</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q1- Communication style in household (n=130) 34.6%

<sup>11</sup> Home Education WA, *Home Education Approaches*, Home Education WA, viewed 10 april 2026, <https://hewa.wa.edu.au/home-ed-info/home-ed-approaches-2/>.

<sup>12</sup> **Primary research method 2:** interview with school counsellor

<sup>13</sup> **Primary research method 3:** Content analysis of *Parental Guidance*, Season 2, Episodes 1–7.

suppression<sup>14</sup>. In contrast, permissive households, which prioritise emotional expression but lack boundaries, can sometimes result in overexpression and difficulty regulating emotions. The content analysis supported this, showing that children in overly lenient environments struggled with self-control, while those in strict households often lacked confidence in expressing themselves<sup>15</sup>. These patterns demonstrate how communication directly contributes to identity formation, as children develop their sense of self through interactions with their parents. A Netherlands Study of Depression and Anxiety (NESDA) in the article by Shahab et al. found that childhood maltreatment, including emotional neglect and abuse, is strongly associated with insecure attachment styles in adulthood, including high levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance<sup>16</sup>. Individuals who experience negative dynamics in the family are more likely to struggle with emotions such as trust, emotional closeness and criticisms that others may find simpler. This highlights the need for positive and consistent communication in shaping not only childhood behaviour but also adult relationships.

Boundaries and respect are strongly influenced by communication styles and can differ depending on the communication in the family home. Families who combine emotional support with clear expectations produce the most positive behavioural outcomes<sup>17</sup>. The school counsellor provided an example of school refusal, where children from highly empathic and non-authoritative households struggle to follow rules such as attending school<sup>18</sup>. While these families demonstrated care and understanding, the strong lack of firmer boundaries made it difficult for children to develop respect for authority and expectations. Questionnaire findings revealed that 59.4% of respondents identified authoritative parenting as the communication style they experienced growing up<sup>19</sup>. This parenting style combines

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<sup>14</sup> Best Choice Counselling, *Ways Your Parenting Style Shapes Your Child's Emotional Intelligence*, Best Choice Counselling, viewed 26 April 2026, <https://bestchoicecounselling.com/ways-your-parenting-style-shapes-your-childs-emotional-intelligence/>

<sup>15</sup> **Primary research method 3:** Content analysis of Parental Guidance, Season 2, Episodes 1–7.

<sup>16</sup> Shahab, M. K., Elzinga, B. M., Spinhoven, P., Rosendaal, F. R., Penninx, B. W. J. H., et al., 'Footprints from Childhood: Intra- versus Extra-Familial Childhood Maltreatment and Attachment to Romantic Partners in Adulthood', *BMC Psychology*, vol. 13, 2025, pp. 1–12, viewed 16 June 2026, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/3227648462>

<sup>17</sup> Baumrind, D., 'Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behavior', *Child Development*, vol. 37, no. 4, 1966, pp. 887–907, viewed 6th of november 2025, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1126611>

<sup>18</sup> **Primary research method 2:** interview with school counsellor

<sup>19</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q3 - 4 main parenting styles (n=128) 59.4%

emotional warmth with boundaries and prioritises respect; it is often associated with positive developmental outcomes <sup>20</sup>. These findings conclude that authority is most effective when combined with supportive communication rather than relying solely on control and discipline, leading to healthy development and behavioural outcomes.

This is additionally supported by questionnaire findings on conflict resolution, where over half of respondents indicated that conflict was only sometimes or rarely resolved through calm discussion <sup>21</sup>. This suggests that children are not consistently exposed to effective communication strategies, limiting their ability to develop respectful behaviours. The content analysis reinforced this by showing that balanced parenting styles were the most effective in teaching children how to navigate boundaries while maintaining positive relationships <sup>22</sup>. This highlights the importance of combining structure with emotional support, leading to positive behaviour development.

Family communication styles significantly shape the development of interpersonal skills and conflict-resolution behaviours. Questionnaire responses indicated that individuals commonly adopted both positive traits, such as active listening and openness and negative traits, such as avoidance and directness, from their parents. <sup>23</sup> This duality highlights the lasting impacts of family communication styles on interpersonal skills. The content analysis reinforced this by demonstrating that children exposed to balanced communication are more likely to resolve conflict constructively, whereas those in dysfunctional environments tend to either avoid conflict or respond aggressively, reflecting their learned behaviour patterns <sup>24</sup>. This supports Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which explains that individuals learn behaviours, attitudes and emotional responses by observation, shaped by cognitive processes including attention, retention, reproduction and motivation <sup>25</sup>. Therefore, family communication styles function as

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<sup>20</sup> Baumrind, D., 'Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behavior', *Child Development*, vol. 37, no. 4, 1966, pp. 887–907, viewed 6th of november 2025, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1126611>

<sup>21</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q4 - Conflict resolution methods (n=130) 60.7%

<sup>22</sup> **Primary research method 3:** Content analysis of *Parental Guidance*, Season 2, Episodes 1–7.

<sup>23</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q5 - Communication traits adopted (n=126)

<sup>24</sup> **Primary research method 3:** Content analysis of *Parental Guidance*, Season 2, Episodes 1–7.

<sup>25</sup> McLeod, S., 'Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory', *Simply Psychology*, viewed 21st April 2026, <https://www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html>.

key mechanisms for the intergenerational transmission of social norms and behavioural expectations.

The concept of continuity and change has been evident throughout the research presented. While communication styles are often transmitted down through generations, there is also evidence of change in parenting approaches. Questionnaire respondents indicated that they are attempting to improve communication patterns compared to their own upbringing, with respondents saying, “I have avoided the communication styles of my childhood”<sup>26</sup>, reflecting intentional shifts in parenting practices. This is supported by the perception that parent-to-child communication is becoming more open in modern society<sup>27</sup>. However, despite the changes, most respondents acknowledged that their upbringing does tend to influence their current communication styles and ability to face conflict, displaying the long-term impact of early socialisation<sup>28</sup>. Overall findings illustrate that while family communication evolves over time, intergenerational patterns of socialisation continue to shape behaviour and interpersonal development.

Technology has also introduced new challenges to family communication and overall functioning. A review by Tadpatrikar, Sharma and Viswanath (2021) found that although technology has become embedded within the family system, it's also a primary mode of communication. It has contributed to a reduction in face-to-face interactions and a decline in quality time spent together<sup>29</sup>. Similarly, a majority of questionnaire respondents believe that technology has negatively impacted communication within families, leading to isolation due to minimising quality time spent together in some cases<sup>30</sup>. This highlights the introduction of

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<sup>26</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q13 - How would you describe communication in your childhood, and how do you think it has influenced the way you express emotions and communicate with your children, colleagues, and others as you've grown older?

<sup>27</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q7 - Openness of communication across generations (n=129) 83.7%

<sup>28</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q6 - Influence of upbringing on communication (n=129) 85.3%

<sup>29</sup> Tadpatrikar, A., Sharma, M. K. and Viswanath, S. S., 'Influence of Technology Usage on Family Communication Patterns and Functioning: A Systematic Review', *Australasian Psychiatry*, vol. 29, no. 5, 2021, viewed 1st of May 2026, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2021.102595>.

<sup>30</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q8 - Impact of technology on communication (n=129) 72.1%

technology leading to a shift at the macro level where social changes in the world are impacting how individuals are communicating on the micro level.

Family communication styles have a significant impact on a child's behaviour and development. Communication acts as a foundational agent of socialisation within families, shaping not only the child's behaviour but also the long-term development of interpersonal skills. The findings strongly support the idea that early communication experiences influence how individuals form relationships in adulthood, reinforcing the importance of developing consistent, supportive and structured communication within the family environment.

## CHAPTER TWO: Family communication and its influence on interpersonal relationships

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Family communication plays a crucial role in social development, as interactions within the family shape individuals' communication competence, interpersonal skills and ability to form meaningful relationships throughout their lives <sup>31</sup>. As the family is a primary agent of socialisation, communication patterns established within the home are often internalised and then reflected in friendships, relationships and workplace environments.

Communication patterns that are established during childhood will frequently continue into adolescence and adulthood, and this will influence how individuals approach emotional intimacy and social interaction. Albert Bandura's social learning theory argues that behaviours are learned through observation and copying within the social environment <sup>32</sup>. From this, the conclusion can be drawn that supportive communication, empathy and openness may positively influence relationships later, whereas avoidant, inconsistent, and aggressive communication can negatively impact an individual's ability to communicate effectively with others, which can cause issues with friendships and relationships. Primary research reinforced this, showing the significance of family communication on relationships, but also a harsh reality. Questionnaire findings showed that the desired communication styles are rare, as only 31.5% of respondents identified their communication style as "open and supportive", with the majority either voting "mixed or inconsistent", "strict and controlled", or "avoidant."<sup>33</sup>. The impact of these communication styles becomes evident when participants discuss emotional expression. Only 15.4% of respondents said they felt "very

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<sup>31</sup> Schrod, P., Ledbetter, A. M., Jernberg, K. A., Larson, L., Brown, N. and Glonek, K., 'Family Communication Patterns as Mediators of Communication Competence in the Parent-Child Relationship', *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, vol. 26, nos. 6-7, 2009, pp. 853-874, viewed 5th of November 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407509345649>.

<sup>32</sup> McLeod, S., 'Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory', *Simply Psychology*, viewed 21st April 2026, <https://www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html>.

<sup>33</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q1 - communication in household growing up (n=130) 31.5.

comfortable” expressing emotions to parents <sup>34</sup>. This indicates that emotional communication in many families could possibly be restricted, which could contribute to individuals' inability to express their emotions; as a result, individuals may struggle to regulate emotions effectively.

Continuing on this, Ledbetter’s study on Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT) categorised family communication into two groups: conversation-oriented and conformity-oriented patterns <sup>35</sup>. Conversation-oriented families encourage more open communication, while conformity-oriented families have a bigger emphasis on things like obedience, hierarchy and behavioural control. This study found that individuals raised within conversation-oriented households are more likely to maintain close friendships into adulthood <sup>36</sup>. Examples of these long-term effects of FCPT are reflected through the questionnaire data as the relationship between family communication and interpersonal behaviour. Findings said that 51.6% of respondents identified “empathy” as a trait learned from parents. However, 37.3% of respondents said that they adopted a “difficulty expressing emotions”<sup>37</sup>. Concluding that people with positive relationships and open communication styles are more likely to maintain close interpersonal relationships due to their ability to express and understand emotions. Family communication plays an important role in shaping how individuals manage conflict, and children learn behavioural responses and conflict resolution strategies through observing interactions within the home environment <sup>38</sup>. Questionnaire findings revealed that only 4.6% of the 130 respondents reported that conflict within their family was “always” resolved through calm discussion <sup>39</sup>, suggesting most individuals are rarely exposed to

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<sup>34</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q2 - Comfort expressing emotions (n=130) 15.4%

<sup>35</sup> Ledbetter, A. M., ‘Family Communication Patterns and Relational Maintenance Behavior: Direct and Mediated Associations with Friendship Closeness’, “Human Communication Research”, vol. 35, no. 1, 2009, pp. 130–147 viewed 5th of November 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2008.01334.x>](<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2008.01334.x>).

<sup>36</sup> Ledbetter, A. M., ‘Family Communication Patterns and Relational Maintenance Behavior: Direct and Mediated Associations with Friendship Closeness’, “Human Communication Research”, vol. 35, no. 1, 2009, pp. 130–147, viewed 5th of November 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2008.01334.x>](<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2008.01334.x>).

<sup>37</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q5 - Communication traits adopted (n=126)

<sup>38</sup> Cherry, K., ‘Social Learning Theory: How People Learn Through Observation’, *Verywell Mind*, viewed 1st of May 2026, <https://www.verywellmind.com/social-learning-theory-2795074>.

<sup>39</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q4 - Conflict resolution methods (n=130) 4.6%

healthy communication styles within their childhood homes. Interview findings with a school counsellor further demonstrated this pattern. Individuals exposed to inconsistent communication styles frequently struggle with emotional regulation and managing peer conflict <sup>40</sup>. When communication within the home shifts unpredictably between emotional openness and disconnection, young individuals often become insecure in social situations, and over time, this results in them not knowing how to respond appropriately during conflict due to their home being very unpredictable and inconsistent <sup>41</sup>. Overall, reinforcing the impact of inconsistent socialisation from a young age.

Family communication has a significant and enduring impact on individuals' communication behaviours into adulthood. Over 85% of respondents believe their upbringing had a “strong” or “moderate” influence on the way they communicate today <sup>42</sup>. In the same question, no respondent in either generation selected “no influence”, reinforcing the idea that family communication continues to shape the way individuals communicate. These findings suggest that communication behaviours learned during childhood frequently continue influencing social interaction and relationship stability.

Balance within family communication is a major theme in influencing interpersonal relationships. Questionnaire results showed that nearly 60% of respondents identified Authoritative parenting as the most present communication style within their upbringing <sup>43</sup>. An Authoritative parenting style combines emotional support with clear expectations and boundaries, and is seen as having a healthy impact on emotional development <sup>44</sup>. In contrast, Authoritarian parenting is characterised by strict rules, high levels of parental control and emphasis on obedience <sup>45</sup>, whereas Permissive parenting is marked by warmth and

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<sup>40</sup> **Primary research method 2:** interview with school counsellor

<sup>41</sup> **Primary research method 2:** interview with school counsellor

<sup>42</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q6 - Influence of upbringing on communication (n=129) 85.3%

<sup>43</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q3 - 4 main parenting styles (n=128) 59.4%

<sup>44</sup> Baumrind, D., ‘Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behavior’, *Child Development*, vol. 37, no. 4, 1966, pp. 887–907, viewed 6th of november 2025, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1126611>

<sup>45</sup> Brusie, C., ‘Authoritarian Parenting: The Right Way To Raise My Kids?’, Healthline, 23 June 2017, viewed 1st of May 2026, <https://www.healthline.com/health/parenting/authoritarian-parenting>.

responsiveness but often lacks structure and consistency <sup>46</sup>. The school counsellor supported the importance of balance in communication styles. In the interview, it was found that highly permissive parents may reduce emotional resilience and independence <sup>47</sup>. This was frequently seen in the content analysis. Parents who are gentler, with few rules and/or boundaries and who allow children to have the choice on what the family does, tend to have children who cannot regulate their emotions and have lowered respect for their parents <sup>48</sup>. Collectively, these findings suggest that effective family communication requires a balance between emotional support and clear boundaries, as both elements are essential for healthy social and emotional development and can have a great influence on interpersonal relationships.

Continuity and change have been evident throughout the chapter; the questionnaire responses reveal that Generation X and Y parents are continuously trying to do the opposite or improve communication compared to their own upbringing <sup>49</sup>. Many respondents described themselves as prioritising emotional openness, empathy and supportive discussion within their current parenting style. This reflects broader changes today, with the changes surrounding mental health awareness and identity formation. Questionnaire responses strongly support this generational change. When asked whether parent-child communication is more open today compared to previous generations, nearly 50% selected “significantly more open”<sup>50</sup>. This suggests that communication patterns are socially influenced as well and continue to develop across generations this is an example of evolutionary change.

Overall, the findings strongly demonstrate that family communication significantly shapes interpersonal relationships throughout life. Communication patterns experienced within childhood influence emotional expression, conflict resolution and stability across both adolescence and adulthood. Individuals frequently imitate the communication behaviours

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<sup>46</sup> Brusie, C., ‘Authoritarian Parenting: The Right Way To Raise My Kids?’, Healthline, 23 June 2017, viewed 1st of May 2026, <https://www.healthline.com/health/parenting/authoritarian-parenting>.

<sup>47</sup> **Primary research method 2:** interview with school counsellor

<sup>48</sup> **Primary research method 3:** Content analysis of *Parental Guidance*, Season 2, Episodes 1–7.

<sup>49</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q13 - 13. How would you describe communication in your childhood, and how do you think it has influenced the way you express emotions and communicate with your children, colleagues, and others as you’ve grown older? “*I have tried to be the opposite of my parents*” (n=35)

<sup>50</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire Q7 - Openness of communication across generations (n=129) 47.3%

modelled within the home, carrying these patterns into wider social interactions. While these communication styles may continue to evolve across generations, the family remains one of the most consistent and strongest influences on interpersonal development.

## CHAPTER THREE: The Long-Term Impact of Family Communication on Adult Relationships

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Family communication doesn't only influence behaviour during childhood, but continues to shape individuals throughout their lives, affecting relationship patterns and attachment styles<sup>51</sup>. In early developmental stages, experiences become internalised and influence how individuals view themselves, how they communicate with others and how they maintain relationships later in their lives<sup>52</sup>. Findings show the strong pattern that family communication affects long-term identity formation, emotional intelligence and adult relationship patterns.

Family communication styles have a long-lasting significance on an individual's sense of self. 85.3% of questionnaire respondents believed their upbringing had a moderate or strong influence on the way they communicate; no respondents selected "no influence"<sup>53</sup>. Therefore, demonstrating that the impact of communication patterns established within childhood continues to shape adult behaviour. This then suggests that communication is not simply a childhood experience but is embedded into an individual's identity. The findings support the concept of socialisation as a lifelong process, where values, norms and behaviours are continued into future interactions.

This same pattern was reinforced in Sanberk's study, examining adolescent perceptions of family relationships through the dimensions of acceptance, concern and control.<sup>54</sup> Sanberk

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<sup>51</sup> Dinero, R. E., Conger, R. D., Shaver, P. R., Widaman, K. F. and Larsen-Rife, D., 'Influence of Family of Origin and Adult Romantic Partners on Romantic Attachment Security', *Journal of Family Psychology*, vol. 22, no. 4, 2008, pp. 622–632, viewed 5 November 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012506>.

<sup>52</sup> Educate Wiser, 'Children Mirror Their Parents: How to Foster Positive Behaviors and Break Negative Cycles', *Educate Wiser*, viewed 21st April 2026, <https://educatewiser.com/blogs/children-mirror-their-parents-how-to-foster-positive-behaviors-and-break-negative-cycles/>.

<sup>53</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire, Q6: Influence of Upbringing on Current Communication (n=129) 85.3%

<sup>54</sup> Sanberk, I., 'Reciprocity of Intra-Family Dyadic Relations from Adolescents' Perspective', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 49, no. 3, 2018, pp. 259–278, viewed 5th of November 2025, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26590127>

found that adolescents who experienced support and reciprocal communication within the family generally perceived their relationships more positively, while those who received constant criticism and correction often perceived their relationships more negatively <sup>55</sup>. The study highlights how communication contributes to identity formation by shaping how individuals perceive their role within relationships. This was reinforced in the questionnaire, where over half the respondents identified empathy as a communication trait learned from their parents, 41.3% identified directness and 37% identified conflict sensitivity <sup>56</sup>. These findings suggest both positive and negative communication traits become internalised and carried into adulthood through personality formation.

Emotional expression emerged as another significant area that is influenced by family communication. Questionnaire findings revealed only 15.4% of respondents felt very comfortable expressing emotions to their parents <sup>57</sup>. This indicates that emotional communication remains difficult for many individuals and may influence their ability to communicate emotions within adult relationships. The school counsellor agreed identifying emotional regulation as one of the most common areas affected by family communication. According to the interview, children who grow up in environments where emotions are avoided or inconsistently addressed struggle to regulate and express their emotions later in life in their future relationships or in the workplace <sup>58</sup>. Overall, these findings highlight that limited emotional communication within families can significantly restrict individuals' ability to express and regulate emotions, with effects extending into later life. This can influence the ways individuals navigate emotional situations in both personal and professional contexts, demonstrating the long-term impact of early family communication patterns on emotional development and social functioning.

The effectiveness of emotional communication within families depends on the balance between emotional support and behavioural structure and may influence long-term outcomes. In *Parental Guidance* the “Gentle Family” prioritised emotional validation and encouraged children to discuss feelings openly. Parents consistently stayed calm during conflict and

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<sup>55</sup> Sanberk, I., ‘Reciprocity of Intra-Family Dyadic Relations from Adolescents’ Perspective’, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 49, no. 3, 2018, pp. 259–278, viewed 5th of November 2025, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26590127>

<sup>56</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire, Q5: Communication Traits Adopted from Parents (n=126)

<sup>57</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire, Q2: Comfort Expressing Emotions to Parents (n=130) 15.4%

<sup>58</sup> **Primary research method 2:** interview with school counsellor

attempted to build empathy by talking situations through with their children <sup>59</sup>. However, despite the strong emphasis on emotional expression, children struggled to regulate their emotions independently and frequently relied on parents to resolve conflicts <sup>60</sup>. In contrast to this, the “Honest Family” combined emotional support with firm boundaries. Parents explained decisions clearly, redirected behaviour and provided reassurance during stressful situations while maintaining expectations <sup>61</sup>. This balance appeared to promote emotional resilience and independence. These findings indicate that while emotional expression is important, it's most effective when combined with consistency and structure, as both elements are essential for developing emotional regulation and long-term interpersonal competence.

The relationship between emotional communication and adult attachment was strongly supported by secondary research. Dinero et al. found that supportive and emotionally expressive family environments during adolescence contributed to secure attachment styles and stronger romantic relationships during adulthood <sup>62</sup>. Individuals raised in families characterised by warmth, trust and effective communication were more likely to develop emotional security and relationship stability later in life <sup>63</sup>. In contrast, environments marked by conflict, avoidance or inconsistency increased the likelihood of attachment insecurity, which leads to poor attachment styles such as anxious attachment or avoidant attachment in adult relationships. This finding aligns closely with the Questionnaire responses, showing that many individuals continue to carry communication behaviours they learned in their childhood into adult relationships. When respondents were asked how their communication styles affect relationships, 43% said it “helps somewhat” and 34.3% reported it either hinders “somewhat” or “significantly” <sup>64</sup>. Overall, these findings demonstrate that early family communication patterns play a significant role in shaping adult attachment styles and relationship stability, with supportive environments fostering secure attachments, while

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<sup>59</sup> **Primary research method 3:** Content analysis of *Parental Guidance Gentle Family*, Season 2, Episodes 1–7.

<sup>60</sup> **Primary research method 3:** Content analysis of *Parental Guidance Gentle Family*, Season 2, Episodes 1–7.

<sup>61</sup> **Primary research method 3:** Content analysis of *Parental Guidance Honest Family*, Season 2, Episodes 1–7.

<sup>62</sup> Dinero, R. E., Conger, R. D., Shaver, P. R., Widaman, K. F. and Larsen-Rife, D., ‘Influence of Family of Origin and Adult Romantic Partners on Romantic Attachment Security’, *Journal of Family Psychology*, vol. 22, no. 4, 2008, pp. 622–632, viewed 5 November 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012506>.

<sup>63</sup> Dinero, R. E., Conger, R. D., Shaver, P. R., Widaman, K. F. and Larsen-Rife, D., ‘Influence of Family of Origin and Adult Romantic Partners on Romantic Attachment Security’, *Journal of Family Psychology*, vol. 22, no. 4, 2008, pp. 622–632, viewed 5 November 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012506>.

<sup>64</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire, Q9: Effect of Communication Style on Relationships (n=128)

inconsistent or conflict-driven communication increases the likelihood of negative attachment outcomes.

Trust was identified as a significant long-term outcome of family communication, developing through consistent experiences of emotional safety, reliability, and support within early relationships. Shahab et al. found that emotional neglect and intra-familial maltreatment were strongly associated with anxious attachment and avoidant attachment <sup>65</sup>. Therefore, indicating that individuals who experience disrupted or unsafe family environments often struggle with the development of secure trust in others in later relationships <sup>66</sup>. While the study focuses more on severe family dysfunction than on everyday communication patterns, it highlights how early communication patterns shape interpersonal trust over time, demonstrating the enduring influence of primary socialisation on adult relationships.

The content analysis reinforced the importance of trust through several parenting approaches. The “Outback family” promoted independence from an early age while maintaining clear expectations and support when it was required. Children demonstrated confidence, responsibility and respect towards parents <sup>67</sup>. Similarly, the “Honest family” consistently communicated expectations while remaining emotionally available during difficult situations <sup>68</sup>. In contrast, the “Lighthouse family” adopted a highly independent approach, encouraging children to learn through experience; while this did produce confident and strong-willed children, it also resulted in situations where children demonstrated less awareness of potential dangers and relied heavily on older siblings <sup>69</sup>. These findings suggest that trust is strengthened when independence is balanced with guidance rather than complete freedom or excessive control, leading to long-term impacts on adult relationships.

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<sup>65</sup> Shahab, M. K., Elzinga, B. M., Spinhoven, P., Rosendaal, F. R., Penninx, B. W. J. H., et al., ‘Footprints from Childhood: Intra- versus Extra-Familial Childhood Maltreatment and Attachment to Romantic Partners in Adulthood’, *BMC Psychology*, vol. 13, 2025, pp. 1–12, viewed 16 June 2026, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/3227648462>

<sup>66</sup> Shahab, M. K., Elzinga, B. M., Spinhoven, P., Rosendaal, F. R., Penninx, B. W. J. H., et al., ‘Footprints from Childhood: Intra- versus Extra-Familial Childhood Maltreatment and Attachment to Romantic Partners in Adulthood’, *BMC Psychology*, vol. 13, 2025, pp. 1–12, viewed 16 June 2026, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/3227648462>

<sup>67</sup> **Primary research method 3:** Content analysis of *Parental Guidance* Outback Family, Season 7, Episodes 1–6.

<sup>68</sup> **Primary research method 3:** Content analysis of *Parental Guidance* Honest Family, Season 2, Episodes 1–7.

<sup>69</sup> **Primary research method 3:** Content analysis of *Parental Guidance* Lighthouse Family, Season 2, Episodes 1–7.

Conflict resolution skills are strongly shaped by the communication patterns individuals are exposed to in childhood. Questionnaire findings revealed that only 4.6% of respondents reported that conflict was always resolved through calm discussion, 31.5% reported this occurred rarely, and 10.8% reported it never occurred <sup>70</sup>. These results suggest that many individuals are not consistently exposed to healthy conflict resolution strategies in their childhood. The school counsellor explained that communication styles observed within the family often become the model that children adopt when responding to conflict in other relationships <sup>71</sup>. Overall, early exposure to either constructive or dysfunctional conflict resolution within the family plays a key role in shaping long-term interpersonal competence and social behaviour.

Through Family Communication Patterns Theory, Ledbetter found that conversation-oriented families, where open discussion and participation are encouraged, produce adults who are more likely to maintain close friendships and engage in positive relational behaviours <sup>72</sup>. This closely aligns with the Questionnaire findings showing that empathy, active listening and direct communication were among the most common traits adopted from parents <sup>73</sup>. Overall, these findings demonstrate that open and supportive family communication fosters the development of positive interpersonal skills, enabling individuals to establish and maintain healthier, more meaningful relationships throughout adulthood.

Long-term impacts of family communication also extend to psychological well-being. Kong et al. found that negative childhood family experiences were associated with poorer psychological functioning during adulthood <sup>74</sup>. Adult family relationships characterised by low support and high strain partially explained lower life satisfaction, increased negative

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<sup>70</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire, Q4: Conflict Resolution Methods (n=130)

<sup>71</sup> **Primary research method 2:** interview with school counsellor

<sup>72</sup> Ledbetter, A. M., 'Family Communication Patterns and Relational Maintenance Behavior: Direct and Mediated Associations with Friendship Closeness', "Human Communication Research", vol. 35, no. 1, 2009, pp. 130–147, viewed 5th of November 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2008.01334.x>(<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2008.01334.x>).

<sup>73</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire, Q5: Communication Traits Adopted from Parents (n=126)

<sup>74</sup> Kong, J., Moorman, S.M., Martire, L.M. & Almeida, D.M., 'The Role of Current Family Relationships in Associations Between Childhood Abuse and Adult Psychological Functioning', *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, vol. 74, no. 5, 2019, pp. 858–868, viewed 28 November 2025, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29924362/>.

emotions and poorer family relationships later in life <sup>75</sup>. This demonstrates that communication influences not only interpersonal relationships, but also broader wellbeing outcomes. Similarly, Khodarahimi's research found that family environments characterised by cohesion, emotional support and positive communication were associated with higher self-esteem and better mental health outcomes <sup>76</sup>. Families marked by disengagement and poor communication were more likely to experience emotional difficulties and relationship problems <sup>77</sup>. These findings further highlight the long term significance of communication within the family environment.

While communication styles are often passed between generations, evidence suggests that individuals actively attempt to change negative communication patterns. Open-ended questionnaire responses revealed that many parents intentionally sought to break unhealthy communication cycles from their own childhoods, and prioritised openness, empathy and emotional discussion with their children <sup>78</sup>. This reflects the ability of individuals to change learned behaviours and create new patterns of communication. This finding was then reinforced by the parent-only section of the questionnaire. Almost half of the respondents believed that communication patterns do not remain consistent across generations, while many others acknowledged the partial consistency <sup>79</sup>. Additionally, 83.7% of respondents believed parent-child communication is either slightly or significantly more open today compared to previous generations <sup>80</sup>. These findings suggest that broader social changes surrounding mental health awareness, parenting practices and emotional wellbeing have contributed to changing communication patterns within families.

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<sup>75</sup> Kong, J., Moorman, S.M., Martire, L.M. & Almeida, D.M., 'The Role of Current Family Relationships in Associations Between Childhood Abuse and Adult Psychological Functioning', *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, vol. 74, no. 5, 2019, pp. 858–868, viewed 28 November 2025, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29924362/>.

<sup>76</sup> Khodarahimi, S., 'The Role of Family Typology on Mental Health, Positive and Negative Emotions, Self-Esteem, and Wife Physical Abuse in an Iranian Sample', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2013, pp. 41–66, viewed 5th November 2025, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23597064>

<sup>77</sup> Khodarahimi, S., 'The Role of Family Typology on Mental Health, Positive and Negative Emotions, Self-Esteem, and Wife Physical Abuse in an Iranian Sample', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2013, pp. 41–66, viewed 5th November 2025, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23597064>

<sup>78</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire, Q12-13: Open ended parent questions

<sup>79</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire, Q17: Do Communication Patterns Stay Consistent Across Generations? (n=34)

<sup>80</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire, Q7: Is Parent–Child Communication More Open Today? (n=129)

The content analysis provided further evidence of this shift, where several parents openly discussed their own childhood experiences. The “Influencer family” specifically described being raised by strict parents and internationally choosing a more open and communicative style with their children <sup>81</sup>. Similarly, many parents in the questionnaire described consciously avoiding communication styles they experienced growing up; in the questionnaire, a respondent stated: “I attempted to not pass on the negative traits that I got from my parents, but it is really hard not to pass them on” <sup>82</sup>. This demonstrates the interaction between continuity and change, where individuals remain influenced by family socialisation to the point where they will choose to parent their own children the same or differently, and can sometimes struggle with making the change.

The findings also contribute to the debate of nature vs nurture, which is the extent to which human behaviour and development are influenced by genetics and environment <sup>83</sup>. While biological factors may influence personality, the majority of evidence points to the significance of nurture in shaping communication behaviours. Across the primary and secondary research, communication skills were consistently shown to develop through observation, interaction and social learning. This supports the argument that interpersonal behaviour is largely learned through socialisation rather than inherited biologically <sup>84</sup>.

Overall, family communication has a profound and lasting influence on adult identity, emotional expression and relationship patterns. Early communication experiences shape trust, attachment styles, emotional intelligence and approaches to conflict resolution. While communication patterns can be modified over time, they remain deeply influenced by childhood socialisation. The findings suggest that balanced communication styles characterised by emotional support, openness, consistency and clear boundaries provide the strongest foundation for healthy adult relationships. Therefore, family communication continues to play a significant role in shaping interpersonal relationships long after childhood has ended.

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<sup>81</sup> **Primary research method 3:** Content analysis of *Parental Guidance* Influencer Family, season 2 Episodes 1–7.

<sup>82</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire, Q12-13: Open ended parent questions

<sup>83</sup> McLeod, S., ‘Nature vs Nurture Debate in Psychology’, *Simply Psychology*, viewed 23rd of April 2026, <https://www.simplypsychology.org/naturevsnurture.html>.

<sup>84</sup> **Primary research method 2:** interview with school counsellor

# Conclusion

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This Personal Interest Project set out to investigate how family communication influences children's social development and shapes their ability to build and maintain interpersonal relationships into adulthood. Throughout this research, it became evident that the communication patterns established within the family have a significant, long-lasting influence on emotional development, identity formation, conflict resolution, trust and relationship stability. While broader social changes have influenced parenting practices over time, the family continues to play a fundamental role in shaping the behaviours, values and communication styles individuals carry with them through their lives.

The primary research methods used, including questionnaires, an expert interview and content analysis, strongly supported the original hypothesis that family communication has a lasting impact on the way individuals communicate with others later in life. Questionnaire findings revealed that over 85% of respondents believed their upbringing had either a strong or moderate influence on the way they communicate today, while no respondents believed their family had no influence at all <sup>85</sup>. An interview with the school counsellor reinforced these findings by demonstrating that inconsistent communication often contributes to difficulties with emotional regulation, conflict resolution and relationship security <sup>86</sup>. Similarly, the content analysis illustrated that balanced communication, combining emotional support with clear expectations and boundaries, produced more positive developmental outcomes than either overly permissive or highly controlling parenting approaches <sup>87</sup>.

The secondary research further strengthened these conclusions. Research by Kong et al., Dinero et al., Sanberk, Shahab et al. and Ledbetter consistently demonstrated that family communication patterns established during childhood continue to influence emotional wellbeing, attachment styles, trust, communication skills and relationship quality throughout

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<sup>85</sup> **Primary research method 1:** Questionnaire, Q6: Influence of Upbringing on Current Communication (n=129) 85.3%

<sup>86</sup> **Primary research method 2:** interview with school counsellor

<sup>87</sup> **Primary research method 3:** Content analysis of *Parental Guidance*, Season 2, Episodes 1–7.

adulthood. Bandura's Social Learning Theory <sup>88</sup>also provided a theoretical framework explaining how children acquire behaviours, values and emotional responses through observation and imitation of their parents, reinforcing the family's role in transmitting social norms across generations.

Several society and culture concepts were central throughout this investigation. Socialisation was the foundation of the project, highlighting the family's role as the primary agent responsible for transmitting values, behaviours and expectations. The social influences demonstrated how individual experiences both shape and are shaped by society. The concept of continuity and change was consistently evident throughout, as communication patterns were often passed between generations while many participants consciously attempted to adopt healthier parenting practices than those experienced during their own childhoods. This illustrates that although socialisation creates continuity, changing social trends and increased awareness surrounding mental health in children continue to reshape parenting practices.

The cross-cultural component further showed this understanding by demonstrating that although family communication differs across generations due to varying values, traditions and parenting expectations, the significance of supportive, consistent communication was maintained. While different societies may emphasise obedience, independence or collective responsibility to varying degrees, positive communication consistently contributes to strong interpersonal relationships and healthier emotional development.

Completing this PIP has significantly strengthened my social and cultural literacy by allowing me to critically examine how personal family experiences reflect broader social patterns. It has enhanced my ability to ethically collect, analyse and synthesise both qualitative and quantitative data while applying key sociological concepts to real-world issues. Most importantly, this investigation has demonstrated that family communication extends far beyond childhood, shaping not only individuals but also influencing the relationships, values and social interactions that contribute to continuity and change within society itself.

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<sup>88</sup> McLeod, S., 'Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory', *Simply Psychology*, viewed 21st April 2026, <https://www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html>.

## PRIMARY ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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# QUESTIONNAIRE

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*Published 6th of January 2026*

Before release, the questionnaire included 18 questions overall (10 for everyone and 8 for only parents). These questions were sent out to five other society and culture students and the supervising teacher. These respondents gave helpful feedback and assisted in editing the questionnaire, making sure it was aligned with the PIP's hypothesis. Their suggestions assisted me in identifying unclear terminology, which improved the questions and made sure that the data collected directly correlated to my question. This process increased the validity of the questionnaire by ensuring respondents would successfully interpret the questions. After following the recommended changes, the questionnaire was distributed publicly through emailing it out to friends and family as well as the school teachers and other social pages, overall obtaining 130 responses.

The questionnaire's purpose was to investigate how family communication patterns influence individuals' communication styles and relationships later in life, while also examining if these patterns are changing across different generations such as Generations X, Y and Z. It was designed to gather both childhood experiences and, where applicable, parenting perspectives to compare continuity and change in family communication patterns. The questionnaire was successful as it provided a broad overview of societal experiences that informed the direction of further primary research in the PIP.

The findings revealed that communication within families varies, although several clear patterns were seen. The largest proportion of respondents (34.6%) described their childhood communication as mixed or inconsistent, while 31.5% experienced open and supportive communication. Additionally, almost 85% of respondents believed their upbringing had either a moderate or strong influence on the way they communicate today, reinforcing the significance of family as a primary agent of socialisation. The questionnaire also found that most respondents perceived communication between parents and children to be becoming increasingly more open across generations, with over 80% believing communication is either significantly or slightly more open than in other generations. These findings were supported by the hypothesis that family communication patterns have long-term effects while also

demonstrating that changing social values encouraged more emotionally open communication within contemporary families.

The questionnaire contained a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions, including Likert-scale, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions. These open-ended questions included *How would you describe the communication style in your household while growing up?*", *"To what extent has your upbringing influenced the way you communicate today?"*, and *"Do you believe parent-child communication is more open today than in previous generations?"* directed towards parents explored how they intentionally shaped communication within their own families and whether they attempted to break negative communication cycles experienced during childhood.

Although the questionnaire was anonymous, some degree of bias may have influenced the responses, mainly when participants evaluated their family relationships and parenting practices. Parents may have been more likely to describe their communication as supportive or emotionally open, while younger respondents may have unintentionally downplayed negative family experiences. However, the fact that the questionnaire was anonymous reduced the respondents' possible fear of judgement, as no identifying information was collected beyond whether the respondent was a parent or a child.

Despite this limitation, the questionnaire proved to be one of the most valuable primary research methods used throughout the PIP. It identified clear trends regarding the influence of family communication on emotional expression, interpersonal relationships and parenting approaches across generations. If repeated, the Questionnaire could be strengthened to possibly obtain a more diverse sample across different cultural backgrounds and socioeconomic groups, which would improve overall reliability and validity of the findings.

# INTERVIEW

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*Conducted on the 22nd of April 2026*

To find a suitable interviewee, I researched the background of my school counsellors as they have experience working with children and families. One counsellor was selected because of their broad experience working with young individuals across a wide range of age groups and their good understanding of how communication within the family can affect behaviour in educational and social settings. This made the interviewee highly relevant to the focus of the PIP.

The interview was conducted during school hours at a mutually convenient time. Before the interview took place, the participant was sent 12 questions and a brief explanation of the research topic. This gave the interviewee time to consider their responses. The interview lasted 40 minutes and was recorded with permission, so a transcript could be made. This made it easier to stay focused during the interview without the worry of forgetting information or having to write everything down, also reducing the chance of misinterpreting important information.

The interview consisted of 12 open-ended questions designed to encourage detailed responses rather than closed questions. Questions included *"How can family communication styles influence a child's behaviour at school?"* and *"How does family communication impact a child's ability to resolve conflict with peers?"* These questions focused on gaining qualitative data about how communication patterns within the home shape children's emotional regulation, confidence, peer relationships and academic engagement.

The interview proved to be a valuable research method as it provided detailed explanations that could not be gained through the Questionnaire alone. The counsellor explained that children often model the communication they experience at home, particularly during early childhood when they haven't yet developed the ability to adjust their behaviour for different environments. The interview also highlighted that inconsistent communication contributes to poor emotional regulation, difficulties maintaining friendships and lower engagement at

school. Consistent and assertive communication can encourage confidence and stronger relationships.

Although the interview produced rich qualitative data, there were some limitations. The findings reflected the experiences and professional opinions of one counsellor, meaning the results cannot be generalised to every family or community. In addition, because the interview relied on the interviewee's observations rather than measurable statistics, some information was subjective. These limitations were reduced by comparing the interview with findings from secondary research and the results collected from the questionnaire, increasing the overall reliability and validity of the PIP.

Overall, the interview was one of the most valuable primary research methods used throughout this investigation. It provided detailed professional insight into how family communication influences children's emotional, behavioural and social development while supporting the trends identified through both primary and secondary research. The interview strengthened the credibility of the PIP by providing an informed perspective that complemented the experiences shared by participants in the Questionnaire and reinforced the importance of positive and consistent family communication.

# CONTENT ANALYSIS

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*Completed 5th of March 2026*

*Nine Network Australia, Parental Guidance, season 2, 9Now, accessed 1st March 2026, <https://www.9now.com.au/parental-guidance/season-2>*

The content analysis was conducted using season two of the Australian TV series Parental Guidance, which was aired on June 5th 2023. This method was chosen to investigate how different parental communication styles influence children's behaviour, emotional development and interpersonal relationships. The purpose of analysing the program was to observe real-life parenting approaches in a structured environment and compare how communication patterns affected children's behaviour across a range of situations. This is directly related to the focus of the PIP, which explores how family communication styles shape interpersonal relationships later in life.

*Parental Guidance (Nine Network Australia 2026)* was selected because it features families with a variety of parenting and communication styles, including gentle, honest, lighthouse, influencer, stage, american, roadschool, slow and team parenting. The program was considered appropriate because it placed children and parents into the same activities, allowing comparisons to be made between families. While the popular culture program is designed for entertainment as it is a reality show, it also provides practical examples of communication styles and parenting approaches that could be analysed alongside sociological research.

Approximately 15 hours of footage across multiple episodes were viewed. Throughout the analysis, notes were recorded on the positives and negatives of each family's communication style, the interactions between parents and children and the behaviours displayed by children during different challenges. Attention was given to recurring themes such as emotional regulation, conflict resolution, independence, respect for authority, teamwork, boundary setting and online safety. These observations were then compared to patterns identified in the questionnaire, interview and secondary research.

The content analysis produced qualitative data that allowed behavioural patterns to be identified across different parenting styles. For example, families that combine emotional support with clear expectations often demonstrate respectful communication, independence and stronger emotional regulation. In contrast, families with inconsistent boundaries or limited parental authority were more likely to display conflict between siblings, emotional outbursts and difficulties following instructions. Across almost every parenting style, children's behaviour reflected the communication patterns modelled within their home family, reinforcing the idea that communication acts as a significant agent of socialisation.

Although this research method provided valuable insight, there were several limitations. As Parental Guidance is a reality television program, editing techniques, producer influence and selective footage may have affected how families were represented. The participants were also aware they were being filmed, meaning their behaviour may not have reflected their everyday family life. Additionally, families represented only a small sample and may not reflect all the experiences of all Australian families or households.

These limitations were reduced by using the content analysis alongside other primary and secondary research methods. The behavioural patterns observed throughout the television series were compared with findings from the interviews, questionnaires and secondary research. This increased the reliability of the research by identifying themes that were consistently supported across multiple sources rather than solely on one television program.

Overall, the content analysis was a highly valuable research method because it allowed family communication styles to be observed in realistic social situations rather than relying only on participants' self-reported experiences. It strengthens the PIP by providing practical examples of how communication influences children's emotional regulation, behaviour and relationships, while supporting the broader conclusion that balanced communication, clear boundaries and emotional support contribute to healthier interpersonal relationships throughout childhood and into adulthood.

## SECONDARY ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

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### **A. M. Ledbetter, Family Communication Patterns and Relational Maintenance Behaviour: Direct and Mediated Associations with Friendship Closeness**

A. M. Ledbetter, 'Family Communication Patterns and Relational Maintenance Behaviour: Direct and Mediated Associations with Friendship Closeness', *Human Communication Research*, 35.1 (2009), pp. 130–147[accessed 5 November 2025].

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2008.01341>

A. M. Ledbetter's journal article, *Family Communication Patterns and Relational Maintenance Behaviour: Direct and Mediated Associations with Friendship Closeness*, investigates how communication patterns established within the family influence the way individuals develop and maintain friendships during adulthood. Drawing on Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT), the study categorises families as either conversation-oriented, where open discussions and the sharing of opinions are encouraged, or conformity-oriented, where obedience and agreement are prioritised. Research found that individuals raised in conversation-oriented families are more likely to communicate openly and resolve conflicts effectively. In contrast, conformity-oriented families were less likely to engage in open communication and often experienced low levels of friendship closeness. These findings directly supported my PIP by demonstrating that communication learned within the family extends beyond childhood and influences interpersonal relationships into adulthood.

The validity of the research is high because it directly investigates the relationship between family communication and adult interpersonal relationships, making it highly relevant to the focus of my PIP. However, the study focused primarily on university students in the United States, meaning that the participants represented a relatively narrow age group and educational background. This limits the ability to generalise the findings to individuals from different backgrounds.

Potential bias exists because the research was based on self-reported survey responses, meaning participants may have described their family communication or friendships differently from reality. Cultural bias is also present, as the research reflects Western communication norms that may differ from family dynamics in other societies. Despite these limitations, the use of recognised theories and rigorous statistical analysis reduces the overall impact of researcher bias.

Overall, this source was useful throughout the PIP as it directly examines the relationships between family communication styles and adult interpersonal relationships. Unlike some other sources that focus primarily on abuse or family conflict, this article specifically investigates everyday communication patterns, which aligns with the PIP topic. The findings strongly supported the trends identified in my primary research by demonstrating that individuals raised in open, conversation-oriented families are generally better at forming healthy relationships throughout adulthood.

### **Diana Baumrind, Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behaviour**

Baumrind, D., 'Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behavior', *Child Development*, vol. 37, no. 4, 1966, pp. 887–907, viewed 6th of november 2025, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1126611>

Diana Baumrind's journal article, *Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behaviour*, examines how different parenting styles influence children's behaviour and development. The study compares authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting, finding that children raised in authoritative households, where warmth is balanced with clear expectations and boundaries, were generally more independent, emotionally mature and socially competent. These findings were highly relevant to the PIP as they support the idea that family communication is a key agent of socialisation, shaping children's values, behaviours and the way they develop interpersonal relationships later in life.

The study is reliable because Baumrind used structured observations of parent-child interactions rather than relying only on self-reported data. Although it was published in 1966,

it is still one of the most widely recognised studies on parenting styles and continues to influence contemporary research into family relationships and child development. The research also has good validity because it directly observed how parenting behaviours influenced children's social and emotional development. However, parenting practices have changed over time due to factors such as technology, changing family structures and shifting social norms, meaning some findings may not fully reflect modern Australian families.

One limitation is that the sample mainly consisted of middle-class American families, making it difficult to generalise the findings across different cultures and social groups. Some researchers have also argued that parenting styles are more complex than Baumrind's three categories suggest. Despite this, the study has remained influential because many later studies have supported its key findings, as the study is 60 years old.

Overall, this source was valuable because it provided the theoretical foundation for understanding how parenting styles influence children's identity, behaviour and relationships. It linked closely with my content analysis of Parental Guidance, as well as the expert interview and questionnaire, all of which showed that a balance of support, communication and clear boundaries contributes to healthier interpersonal relationships in adulthood.

**R. E. Dinero, R. D. Conger, P. R. Shaver, K. F. Widaman and D. Larsen-Rife, Influence of Family of Origin and Adult Romantic Partners on Romantic Attachment Security**

Dinero, R. E., Conger, R. D., Shaver, P. R., Widaman, K. F. and Larsen-Rife, D., 'Influence of Family of Origin and Adult Romantic Partners on Romantic Attachment Security', *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22.4 (2008), pp. 622-632 [accessed 5 November 2025].

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2689376/>

R. E. Dinero, R. D. Conger, P. R. Shaver, K. F. Widaman and D. Larsen-Rife's journal article, *Influence of Family of Origin and Adult Romantic Partners on Romantic Attachment Security*, explores how communication within the family during adolescence can influence attachment and romantic relationships later in adulthood. The researchers followed participants from their teenage years into their late twenties to investigate whether family

relationships experienced while growing up affected later relationship outcomes. The study found that young individuals who experienced supportive, open and emotionally secure communication at home were more likely to develop secure attachment styles and healthy romantic relationships as adults. In comparison, participants who grew up in families with conflict, emotional distance or inconsistent communication were more likely to experience insecurity and instability in their adult relationships. These findings were very useful for the PIP because they support the idea that communication patterns developed in childhood continue to influence interpersonal relationships later in life.

The article is reliable because it used a longitudinal study, meaning the same participants were followed over more than ten years. This allowed the researchers to observe changes over time instead of relying on one set of results. The study also used several research methods, including interviews, behavioural observations and recognised attachment scales, which helped strengthen the overall findings. As it was published in the *Journal of Family Psychology*, a peer-reviewed academic journal, the information has also been reviewed by other experts before publication.

The research has good validity because it measured family communication and attachment over a long period rather than asking adults to simply remember everything about their childhood. This reduces the impact of memory errors and provides stronger evidence that family relationships can influence attachment later in life. However, the article mainly focuses on romantic relationships rather than friendships or other interpersonal relationships, making it slightly narrower than the focus of the PIP.

One limitation of the study is that most participants were from rural communities in the United States and were from similar cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. This means the findings may not apply to all families, particularly those in Australia or from different cultural backgrounds. Some of the information was also collected through self-report questionnaires, so participants may not have answered every question completely honestly. Despite this, the researchers also included observations of behaviour, which helped to reduce the impact of participant bias.

Overall, this source was valuable because it clearly shows that communication within the family can have long-term effects on adult relationships. The longitudinal design made the findings more convincing, as it tracked participants across different stages of their lives

instead of looking at one point in time. Although the sample was not very culturally diverse and focused mainly on romantic relationships, the study strongly supported the findings from my expert interview, questionnaire and content analysis by showing that supportive and consistent family communication helps build healthier interpersonal relationships in adulthood.

**Jooyoung Kong, Suzanne M. Moorman, Lynn M. Martire and David M. Almeida, The Role of Current Family Relationships in Associations Between Childhood Abuse and Adult Psychological Functioning**

J. Kong, S. M. Moorman, L. M. Martire and D. M. Almeida, 'The Role of Current Family Relationships in Associations Between Childhood Abuse and Adult Psychological Functioning', *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, 74.5 (2019), 858–868 [accessed 28th November 2025]. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29924362/>

Jooyoung Kong, Suzanne M. Moorman, Lynn M. Martire and David M. Almeida's journal article, *The Role of Current Family Relationships in Associations Between Childhood Abuse and Adult Psychological Functioning*, investigates how negative childhood family experiences continue to influence psychological well-being and family relationships throughout adulthood. The study specifically examines whether current family relationships help explain the connection between childhood abuse and adult mental health outcomes. Using a sample of 3487 adults, the researchers measured childhood experiences of verbal and physical abuse alongside participants' perceptions of family support and strain on their psychological well-being later in life. The findings suggest that individuals who experienced negative family environments during childhood were more likely to report lower life satisfaction, increased negative emotions and poorer family relationships in adulthood. These findings were very highly relevant to the PIP topic as they support the argument that family interactions in childhood have lasting impacts on interpersonal relationships.

The study demonstrates a high level of reliability due to its large sample size and the use of data collected through the Midlife in the United States (MIDUS) study, which is a well-established longitudinal research project. As the article was published in the

peer-reviewed Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences, the research has undergone extensive academic review, further strengthening its credibility.

The validity of the study is high because it directly measures the relationship between childhood family experiences and adult psychological outcomes using statistical analysis. By investigating both childhood experiences and present-day family relationships, the researchers were able to identify patterns that support the long-term influence of family dynamics. However, the study relies on participants recalling childhood experiences, meaning some responses may have been affected by memory inaccuracies or recall bias. In addition, because the research focuses specifically on childhood abuse rather than everyday communication styles, some findings are more extreme than the situations explored within the PIP.

Overall, this source made a significant contribution to the PIP by providing strong evidence that early family experiences continue to shape interpersonal relationships and psychological wellbeing throughout adulthood. Although the article focuses on childhood abuse rather than general communication styles, it reinforces the broader idea that the quality of family relationships during childhood influences emotional development and later social interactions. The large sample size, peer-reviewed publication and rigorous methodology make this a highly reliable and valid source, supporting the findings gathered through my expert interview, questionnaire and content analysis while strengthening my argument that family communication has long-term effects on adult interpersonal relationships.

**Siamak Khodarahimi, The Role of Family Typology on Mental Health, Positive and Negative Emotions, Self-esteem, and Wife Physical Abuse in an Iranian Sample**

Khodarahimi, S., 'The Role of Family Typology on Mental Health, Positive and Negative Emotions, Self-esteem, and Wife Physical Abuse in an Iranian Sample', Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 44.1 (2013), pp. 41-66 [accessed 5 November 2025].

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43613074>

Siamak Khodarahimi's journal article, *The Role of Family Typology on Mental Health, Positive and Negative Emotions, Self-esteem, and Wife Physical Abuse in an Iranian Sample*, examines how different family structures and patterns of communication influence psychological well-being, emotional regulation and family relationships. The study explores how cohesive, adaptable and supportive family environments contribute to positive mental health, while disengaged or dysfunctional family structures are associated with poorer emotional well-being, lower self-esteem and higher levels of conflict. The article also considers the influence of Iranian cultural values on family communication, particularly the concepts of *qahr* (emotional withdrawal or conflict) and *ashti* (reconciliation), demonstrating how communication styles shape relationships within the family. These findings were highly relevant to the PIP as they reinforce the idea that quality of communication within the home has a long-term effect on individuals' emotional development and interpersonal relationships.

The study demonstrates a high level of reliability through its use of recognised psychological theories and established family systems models. Standardised questionnaires were used to measure family functioning, emotional well-being and self-esteem, allowing participants to be assessed using consistent criteria. The article was published in the *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, up here reviewed academic journal, increasing the credibility of both research methods and conclusions. The researchers also supported their findings using previous literature, strengthening the overall reliability of the study.

The validity of the research is also relatively high because it investigates multiple aspects of family life rather than focusing on one isolated factor. By examining communication, emotional expression and family cohesion together, the study provides a broad understanding of how family functioning influences psychological outcomes. However, the research relied heavily on self-reported questionnaires, meaning participants may have underreported due to social challenges. This could have influenced the accuracy of some findings.

A limitation of the article is its cultural focus. The research was conducted using participants from Shiraz, Iran, meaning the findings reflect Iranian family values and cultural expectations surrounding communication, gender roles and family authority. As a result, the conclusions cannot be fully generalised to Australian families where parenting styles and communication patterns differ significantly. Despite this, many of the broader concepts surrounding supportive communication, emotional regulation, and family cohesion remain applicable across cultures.

Overall, this source was highly useful in supporting the PIP because it demonstrates that healthy family communication contributes to stronger emotional wellbeing, higher self-esteem, and more positive interpersonal relationships, while poor communication and dysfunctional family structures can negatively affect psychological development. Although the cultural setting limits the direct application of the findings to Australian society, the article provides credible evidence that communication is a key factor in shaping emotional regulation and relationship outcomes. Its findings supported the primary research, reinforcing the importance of consistent and supportive communication within families and its influence on interpersonal relationships into adulthood.

**M. K. Shahab, B. M. Elzinga, P. Spinhoven, F. R. Rosendaal, B. W. J. H. Penninx et al.,  
Footprints from Childhood: Intra- versus Extra-Familial Childhood Maltreatment and  
Attachment to Romantic Partners in Adulthood**

M. K. Shahab, B. M. Elzinga, P. Spinhoven, F. R. Rosendaal, B. W. J. H. Penninx et al.,  
'Footprints from Childhood: Intra- versus Extra-Familial Childhood Maltreatment and  
Attachment to Romantic Partners in Adulthood', BMC Psychology, 13 (2025), pp. 1–12,  
[accessed 5 November 2025]

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/3227648462/7D962071DCBC4145PQ/67?sourcetype=Scholarly%20Journals>

M. K. Shahab, B. M. Elzinga, P. Spinhoven, F. R. Rosendaal, B. W. J. H. Penninx and colleagues' journal article, Footprints from Childhood: Intra- versus Extra-Familial Childhood Maltreatment and Attachment to Romantic Partners in Adulthood, investigates how childhood maltreatment influences attachment styles and romantic relationships later in life. The study compares long-term effects of abuse and neglect occurring within the family to maltreatment experienced outside the family, which then examines how these experiences shape adult attachment styles such as anxious and avoidant attachment. Using data from the 1850 participants in the Netherlands Study of Depression and Anxiety (NESDA), the researchers found that emotional neglect and abuse occurring within the family were more strongly associated with insecure attachment and difficulties forming trusting romantic relationships. These findings were particularly relevant to the PIP as they reinforce the

importance of early family experiences in shaping adult interpersonal relationships and emotional development.

The study demonstrates a high level of reliability due to its large sample size and longitudinal research design. Childhood experiences were measured using the Structured Childhood Trauma Interview (CTI), while adult attachment was assessed approximately nine years later using the Experiences in Close Relationships–Short Version (ECR-S), both are valid psychological tools.

Potential bias exists as participants were required to recall childhood experiences, meaning self-reporting may have introduced a recall bias. Additionally, the sample consisted of adults from the Netherlands, where family practices and cultural expectations could differ from those in Australia. Despite these limitations, the use of valid psychological measures and a large sample size assists in minimising bias.

Overall, the source is a valuable contribution to the PIP by providing strong evidence that negative family experiences during childhood have a lasting effect on attachment, trust and relationship stability in adulthood. Although research focuses on childhood maltreatment rather than everyday communication style, it supports the broader argument that family environment plays a critical role in shaping future interpersonal relationships. Its findings complemented the primary research by reinforcing the significance of early family interactions in influencing relationship outcomes throughout adulthood.

### **Ismail Sanberk, Reciprocity of Intra-Family Dyadic Relations from Adolescents' Perspective**

Sanberk, I., 'Reciprocity of Intra-Family Dyadic Relations from Adolescents' Perspective', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 49.3 (2018), 259–78 [accessed 5 November 2025]  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26590127>

Ismail Sanberk's journal article, *Reciprocity of Intra-Family Dyadic Relations from Adolescents' Perspective*, investigates how adolescents perceive communication and relationships within their families. The study focuses on how parenting styles, particularly

acceptance and concern, are compared with tight parental control, which influences adolescents' emotional closeness, communication and perceptions of family relationships. The article argues that the quality of communication between parents and children plays a significant role in identity development, emotional wellbeing and the formation of family relationships. These findings were particularly useful throughout the PIP as they support the argument that communication patterns established within the family influence interpersonal relationships well into adulthood.

The research uses psychological mapping techniques based on Slater's interpersonal methodology, allowing adolescents to evaluate the quality of relationships they have with different family members. The use of established psychological theories and structured data collection methods increases the reliability of the study as participants responded using consistent measures rather than open-ended opinions. The article was published in the *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, which is a peer-reviewed journal, further strengthening its credibility.

The validity of the research is relatively high because it investigates adolescents' direct experiences rather than relying on assumptions made by parents or researchers. However, as the study relies on self-reported perceptions, responses may have been influenced by participants' emotions or personal experiences at the time of data collection. In addition, the research was conducted within a Turkish cultural context, where family structures, parental authority and expectations differ from those commonly found in Australia. Limiting the extent to which findings can be generalised across different cultures.

Potential bias exists due to the cultural context of the research, as parenting practices in Turkey often place greater emphasis on things like parental authority and family obligation than those in Western societies. Adolescents' perceptions are also inherently subjective, meaning two participants may interpret similar family interactions differently.

Overall, this source proved to be highly valuable as it demonstrates that family relationships are reciprocal rather than one-sided, highlighting how both parents and adolescents influence communication within the household. Although there may be some bias, the study provides credible evidence that consistent, supportive communication strengthens emotional closeness and identity development. These findings directly support the investigation into how family

communication styles influence interpersonal relationships into adulthood and reinforce patterns identified through the primary research.

**Paul Schrodtt, Amanda M. Ledbetter, K. A. Jernberg, L. Larson, N. Brown and K. Glonek, Family Communication Patterns as Mediators of Communication Competence in the Parent–Child Relationship**

Schrodtt, P., Ledbetter, A. M., Jernberg, K. A., Larson, L., Brown, N. and Glonek, K., ‘Family Communication Patterns as Mediators of Communication Competence in the Parent–Child Relationship’, *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, vol. 26, nos. 6–7, 2009, pp. 853–874, viewed 5th of November 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407509345649>.

Paul Schrodtt, Amanda M. Ledbetter, K. A. Jernberg, L. Larson, N. Brown and K. Glonek's journal article, *Family Communication Patterns as Mediators of Communication Competence in the Parent–Child Relationship*, explores how communication within families influences children's communication skills and the quality of parent-child relationships. Using Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT), the study compares conversation-oriented families, where open discussion is encouraged, with conformity-oriented families, where obedience is emphasised. The researchers found that children raised in conversation-oriented households were more confident communicators and developed healthier relationships with their parents. These findings were valuable to the PIP as they support the idea that communication styles developed during childhood continue to shape interpersonal relationships in adulthood.

The article is reliable because it uses recognised communication theories and validated survey instruments to collect data. Participants completed structured questionnaires that measured communication competence and family communication patterns, creating comparable results. As the study was published in the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, a peer-reviewed academic journal, its research methods and findings are credible and supported by previous studies in the field.

The study also has good validity because it directly examines the relationship between family communication and communication competence. However, the findings are based on

self-reported surveys, meaning participants' perceptions may not always reflect their actual family experiences. The sample also consisted mainly of American university students, limiting how well the results can be applied to different age groups and cultures.

Some bias may be present due to self-reporting and volunteer participation, as those interested in communication research may have different experiences from the wider population. The American sample also limits its relevance to Australian families. Despite these limitations, the researchers used established theoretical frameworks, strengthening the credibility of the study.

Overall, this article was a valuable source for the PIP because it provides clear evidence that communication skills are developed within the family environment. It supports the argument that children raised in open and supportive households are more likely to build healthy interpersonal relationships later in life. Although the sample was limited, the findings closely aligned with the questionnaire, expert interview and content analysis, making it a useful and credible source.

**Tadpatrikar, A., Sharma, M. K., & Viswanath, S. S. Influence of technology usage on family communication patterns and functioning: A systematic review.**

Tadpatrikar, A., Sharma, M. K., & Viswanath, S. S. (2021). *Influence of technology usage on family communication patterns and functioning: A systematic review*. *The Australian Journal of Psychiatry*, 102595. Viewed 1st of May 2026 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajp.2021.102595>

Tadpatrikar, A., Sharma, M. K., & Viswanath's peer-reviewed journal article examines the influence of technology on the use of family communication and family functioning. The authors reviewed a range of studies on screentime, smartphones and digital communication, which makes findings more reliable than just a single study. I found this source useful as it shows that increased technology reduces face-to-face communication and changes the way family members interact. This is relevant to my PIP as it supports my investigation into factors that influence family relationships and communication styles. The source also helped me understand how technology is changing family life in contemporary society.

## WEBSITES

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### **Best Choice Counselling, Ways Your Parenting Style Shapes Your Child's Emotional Intelligence**

Best Choice Counselling, 'Ways Your Parenting Style Shapes Your Child's Emotional Intelligence', *Best Choice Counselling*, viewed 26th of April 2026, <https://bestchoicecounselling.com/ways-your-parenting-style-shapes-your-childs-emotional-intelligence/>.

The Best Choice Counselling article explains how parenting styles influence children's emotional intelligence, including their ability to recognise emotions, regulate behaviour and develop healthy relationships. It argues that supportive communication and emotional validation encourage stronger emotional development, while inconsistent or overly harsh parenting may have negative long-term effects. This closely supported the findings from the interview and questionnaire.

As the article was published by a counselling service, it reflects professional experience rather than peer-reviewed academic research. It aligns with recognised psychological theories and provided practical examples that reinforced the primary research findings.

### **Chaunie Brusie, Authoritarian Parenting: The Right Way to Raise My Kids?**

C. Brusie, 'Authoritarian Parenting: The Right Way To Raise My Kids?', *Healthline*, 23 June 2017, viewed 1st of May 2026, <https://www.healthline.com/health/parenting/authoritarian-parenting>

Chaunie Brusie's article discusses the characteristics of authoritarian parenting and its possible effects on children's emotional and social development. The article explains that while strict rules may encourage obedience, they can also reduce confidence, independence and open communication. This was useful in comparing different parenting styles throughout the PIP and supported the analysis of the authoritarian families shown in Parental Guidance.

Published by Healthline, the article references advice from health professionals and existing psychological research, increasing its credibility. However, as it is aimed at parents rather than researchers, some information is simplified. Overall, it provided useful examples that supported the broader findings of the academic sources.

### **Educate Wiser, Children Mirror Their Parents: How to Foster Positive Behaviours and Break Negative Cycles**

Educate Wiser, 'Children Mirror Their Parents: How to Foster Positive Behaviours and Break Negative Cycles', *Educate Wiser*, viewed 21st April 2026, <https://educatewiser.com/blogs/children-mirror-their-parents-how-to-foster-positive-behaviours-and-break-negative-cycles>

The Educate Wiser article, Children Mirror Their Parents: How to Foster Positive Behaviours and Break Negative Cycles, discusses how children imitate the behaviours and communication styles they observe from their parents. The article argues that respectful communication, emotional regulation and positive role modelling encourage children to develop similar behaviours, while negative communication patterns can also be learned and repeated. This directly supported the PIP, particularly my content analysis and interview, which both showed that children often reflect the communication styles present within the home.

As the article is written for parents rather than researchers, it is less academic than the journal sources. However, it is supported by recognised psychological concepts, including observational learning, making it a useful practical resource. While the article may contain some bias towards promoting positive parenting strategies, it provided simple examples that complemented the more detailed academic research used throughout the investigation.

## **HEWA, Elastic Parenting**

Home Education WA, 'Home Education Approaches', *Home Education WA*, viewed 10th of April 2026, <https://hewa.wa.edu.au/home-ed-info/home-ed-approaches-2/>

The Home Education WA article on Elastic Parenting explains a flexible parenting approach that encourages children to develop independence while still receiving guidance and emotional support from their parents. The article suggests that adapting parenting strategies to suit individual children helps build resilience, confidence and stronger family relationships. This source was useful when comparing different parenting styles in the content analysis of Parental Guidance.

The website is produced by Home Education WA and is intended for parents and families interested in alternative parenting approaches. As it is not a peer-reviewed source, its reliability is lower than my academic journal articles, and many ideas are based on practical experience rather than formal research. Despite this, the article provided useful examples of modern parenting styles that could be compared with both the expert interview and questionnaire findings.

## **Kendra Cherry, Social Learning Theory: How People Learn Through Observation**

Cherry, K., 'Social Learning Theory: How People Learn Through Observation', *Verywell Mind*, viewed 1st of May 2026, <https://www.verywellmind.com/social-learning-theory-2795074>

Kendra Cherry's article explains Bandura's Social Learning Theory by outlining how people learn behaviours through observing others. It highlights the importance of role models, reinforcement and imitation, particularly during childhood. This source supported the PIP by

providing further evidence that children develop communication styles and behaviours by observing their parents and caregivers.

Published by Verywell Mind, the article is designed for a general audience and simplifies complex psychological concepts. It is not a peer-reviewed journal article; it references established psychological theories, making it a reliable supporting source. It complemented my academic research by explaining psychological concepts in a practical and accessible way.

### **Saul McLeod, Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory**

McLeod, S., 'Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory', *Simply Psychology*, 2025, viewed 21 April 2026, <https://www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html>

McLeod's article, Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, explains how children learn behaviours through observation and imitation of others, particularly parents and caregivers, as they are usually the child's first agent of socialisation. The article highlights Bandura's theory of observational learning, arguing that behaviours, attitudes and communication styles are often modelled within the family before being replicated in wider society. This source was particularly useful throughout the PIP as it helped explain why family communication has such a significant influence on children's interpersonal relationships and social development.

Published by Simply Psychology, the article draws on Bandura's original psychological research and presents it in an easy-to-understand format. While it's not a peer-reviewed journal article, the information is based on an established psychological theory, making it reliable, and some ideas may be simplified. Overall, this source provided a clear theoretical framework that supports the primary research by explaining how children mirror the communication style they observe in the home.

### **Saul McLeod, Nature vs Nurture Debate in Psychology**

McLeod, S., 'Nature vs Nurture Debate in Psychology', *Simply Psychology*, 2025, viewed 23rd of April 2026, <https://www.simplypsychology.org/naturevsnurture.html>

McLeod's article, Nature vs Nurture Debate in Psychology, delves into the ongoing debate about whether behaviour is shaped more by genetics or environmental influences. The article explains that while biological factors play a role in development, family environments, communication and social experiences also significantly influence behaviour and identity. This was useful to the PIP as it reinforced the importance of family communication as an environmental influence on children's social development and later interpersonal relationships.

The article is published by Simply Psychology and summarises recognised, well-known research in an accessible, easy-to-understand way. Although it's not peer-reviewed, it references established theories and gives balanced explanations of both sides of the debate. Overall, this source strengthened the theoretical foundation of the PIP by supporting the argument that communication within the family is a major environmental factor influencing interpersonal development.

### **Sociology Institute, Theories of Social Change**

Sociology Institute, 'Theories of Social Change: Evolutionary, Cyclical, Conflict', *Sociology Institute*, viewed 2 April 2026, <https://sociology.institute/introduction-to-sociology/theories-social-change-evolutionary-cyclical-conflict/>

The Sociology Institute article, Theories of Social Change: Evolutionary, Cyclical, Conflict, explains several sociological theories that describe how societies change over time. The article explores how values, norms and institutions evolve through changing social conditions and cultural influences. This was useful to the PIP because it helped explain how parenting styles and family communication have changed across generations, which then linked directly to the Society and Culture concepts of continuity and change.

Although the article is educational rather than peer-reviewed, it draws on well-known sociological theories and presents them in a clear and accessible way. Some ideas are simplified for students, which was helpful, but the information remained useful in providing sociological context for the investigation into changing family communication patterns.