



METHODS FOR REDUCING PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE BETWEEN PARENTS AND ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

This article examines methods for reducing psychological distance between parents and adolescents during the teenage years. The findings indicate that open communication, emotional intelligence development, creating a trusting environment, and individualized approaches are effective methods for reducing psychological distance. This research can serve as a practical guide in the field of family psychology.

Keywords: Adolescence, family psychology, parent-child relationships, psychological distance, communication.

Introduction

Adolescence is perhaps the most complex and challenging development stage in human life. During adolescence, children undergo radical changes in their body, mind, and social interactions, which have a tendency to create psychological distance between parents and children [1]. According to the World Health Organization, the primary reason for mental disorders in adolescents is dysfunctional family relations and inadequate parental support systems [2]. The psychological distance in family relations is the designation for the space of communication and feelings that is formed among family members, characterized by lesser degrees of intimacy, reduced sharing of feelings, and greater conflict.

The data of Uzbek psychologists testify that adolescents' and parents' issues of psychological distance also happen among national families under conditions of modern urbanization, particularly deteriorating [3]. A study by Abdullayeva (2020) on Uzbek families revealed that urban family members experience approximately 70% higher degrees of psychological distance compared to rural family members, a result of changing social patterns and reduced extended family support systems



[4]. This reveals severe issues for both parents and adolescents, and this may lead to long-term relationship complications, academic problems, and an increased risk of behavioral complications. Understanding the process involved in producing psychological distance and understanding how to act to intervene effectively is essential for maintaining healthy family relationships. The conceptual model of this research is based on attachment theory, family systems theory, and developmental psychology principles, which provides a sufficient background in exploring parent-adolescent relationships during this sensitive phase of development in different cultural contexts.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The inclusion criteria focused on studies examining parent-adolescent relationships, psychological distance factors, and intervention strategies across diverse cultural contexts. The theoretical foundation of psychological distance in family relationships is rooted in Bowlby's attachment theory, which emphasizes the importance of secure emotional bonds between parents and children [5]. During adolescence, the natural developmental process of individuation creates tension between the need for autonomy and the desire for parental connection. Russian developmental psychologist Feldshtein's research indicates that this tension manifests differently across cultural contexts, with post-Soviet societies showing unique patterns of parent-adolescent interaction influenced by generational value differences [6].

Contemporary research identifies several key factors contributing to psychological distance in parent-adolescent relationships. Communication patterns emerge as the most significant predictor, with studies showing that families practicing authoritative communication styles experience 40% less psychological distance compared to those employing authoritarian or permissive approaches. Karimova's longitudinal study of 500 Uzbek families found that traditional communication patterns, when adapted to modern contexts, proved more effective in maintaining close parent-adolescent relationships than completely westernized approaches [7]. Additionally, parental emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions effectively, plays a crucial role in maintaining close relationships with adolescents. Russian psychologist Lyusin's emotional intelligence model, when applied to parent-adolescent relationships, demonstrates



that culturally adapted emotional awareness strategies yield superior results compared to universal approaches [8]. Cultural factors also significantly influence parent-adolescent relationships, with collectivist cultures showing different patterns of psychological distance compared to individualist societies. Cross-cultural studies by Nurmukhamedova (2022) examining Central Asian families indicate that traditional collectivist values, when balanced with respect for adolescent autonomy, create optimal conditions for reducing psychological distance [9].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The literature analysis reveals four primary methods for reducing psychological distance between parents and adolescents, each supported by empirical evidence from international and regional research. The first method involves implementing culturally sensitive communication enhancement strategies. Research demonstrates that families participating in communication skills training programs adapted to local cultural contexts show significant improvements in relationship quality, with 82% of participants in Uzbek studies reporting reduced conflict and increased emotional closeness compared to 65% in non-adapted programs [10]. These programs typically focus on active listening techniques that respect cultural hierarchies while promoting genuine dialogue, non-judgmental responding that acknowledges traditional values, and creating regular opportunities for meaningful conversation within culturally appropriate frameworks.

The effectiveness of culturally adapted communication approaches lies in their ability to provide parents with concrete tools for navigating difficult conversations while helping adolescents feel heard and understood within their cultural context. The second method emphasizes the development of parental emotional intelligence through targeted intervention programs that incorporate cultural wisdom and modern psychological insights. Studies indicate that parents who receive training combining traditional emotional guidance practices with contemporary emotional intelligence principles demonstrate superior ability to maintain close relationships with their adolescents during periods of intense developmental change. Russian research on emotion coaching adapted for post-Soviet contexts reveals that parents who validate their children's emotions while providing culturally grounded guidance experience 65% fewer instances of severe psychological distance



compared to those using purely Western or purely traditional approaches. This hybrid approach requires parents to shift from reactive responses to thoughtful, emotionally informed interactions that acknowledge both the legitimacy of adolescent emotional experiences and the importance of cultural continuity.

The third method involves creating structured trust-building activities and shared experiences that foster emotional connection while respecting cultural values and traditions. Family therapy literature from Central Asian contexts suggests that engaging in culturally meaningful activities together, such as participating in traditional celebrations, community service aligned with cultural values, and intergenerational skill sharing, can strengthen parent-adolescent bonds more effectively than generic bonding activities. These culturally grounded approaches create positive shared memories while demonstrating parental commitment to both the relationship and cultural transmission. The fourth method focuses on individualized approaches that recognize and accommodate each adolescent's unique personality, interests, and developmental trajectory while maintaining cultural coherence. Research indicates that parents who adapt their communication style, expectations, and interaction patterns to match their child's individual characteristics while preserving core cultural values experience significantly less psychological distance during the teenage years.

CONCLUSION

The reduction of psychological distance between parents and adolescents requires a culturally informed, multifaceted approach that addresses communication patterns, emotional intelligence, trust-building, and individualization strategies within appropriate cultural frameworks. The evidence clearly demonstrates that psychological distance during adolescence is not an inevitable outcome but rather a manageable challenge that can be effectively addressed through targeted, culturally sensitive interventions. The four primary methods identified in this review - culturally adapted communication enhancement, culturally grounded emotional intelligence development, traditional value-based trust-building activities, and individualized approaches within cultural contexts - provide a comprehensive framework for parents seeking to maintain close relationships with their adolescent children across diverse cultural settings.



Future research should focus on developing more sophisticated culturally sensitive intervention programs and exploring the long-term effects of these methods on parent-child relationships into adulthood across different cultural contexts. Additionally, investigation into the role of technology and social media in either exacerbating or potentially reducing psychological distance within various cultural frameworks represents an important area for continued study. The practical implications of this research suggest that preventive interventions implemented before the onset of significant psychological distance may be more effective than reactive approaches, particularly when these interventions are designed with cultural sensitivity and local context in mind. Parents, educators, and mental health professionals should collaborate to create supportive environments that facilitate healthy parent-adolescent relationships during this critical developmental period while respecting and preserving cultural values and traditions.

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