COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS AND PARENTS IN RESTRUCTURED FAMILIES

by

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DECLARATION

STUDENT NUMBER : 889-451-5

I declare that Communication between parents and adolescents in restructured families is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE
(Mrs T B Sibiya)

15 -03-2001
DATE
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the following people:

- The lovely memory of my grandparents, particularly my grandfather whom I never saw alive with my naked eye but whom I learn, valued a learned person in an inexplicable way.

- My late father-in-law who, when I got married, gave me the name “Nontuthuko” which means, “the one who brings progress” – I understand clearly what your wish was.

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- My youngest son, Bonani, my lovely gift – your arrival into our family during the time of my studies made me realize even more that determination is one of the most important ingredients for success – you didn’t request, but demanded, attention even in awkward times, I love you boy.

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TEMBISA BELLINDA SIBIYA (born SISWANA)

DEGREE : MASTER OF EDUCATION – EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
DEPARTMENT : EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
SUPERVISOR : DR M A VENTER
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The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a difference in communication between parents and adolescents in restructured and structured families.

To supplement the literature, two groups of adolescents were given questionnaires on parent-child communication. The experimental group was from restructured families while the control group was from structured families. An in-depth study through interviews and Thematic Apperception Tests was done. Furthermore, the researcher supported her study by exploring case studies, group therapy sessions and some sessions during her years of internship.

Besides the fact that there was no significant difference in communication between these groups, language as a factor in communication seemed to have a significant impact. In the eight moments (criteria) under which the questions of the questionnaire were categorized, it came out that good communication is not dependent on the structure of the family but on the interaction of individuals within any family.

KEYWORDS
Restructured, structured, experimental and control group, parent-child communication, Thematic Apperception Test, in-depth study, moments / criteria, interaction, group therapy and case study.
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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND AIM OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

Communication seems to be a worldwide concern in any form of relationship, be it in a family situation, that is, between parents and their children, in marriage between spouses or even in mere friendship relationships. When one looks at the youth today and realises the way they behave, for instance getting involved in substance abuse, running away from home, sons killing their parents and so on, one cannot help but start thinking about the kind of interaction that happens at home, at school with schoolmates and teachers as well as in interaction with friends. Parents, teachers and the community at large complain that parenting is becoming more and more difficult as today’s youth “do as they please”. Not only do they do as they please, they seem to prefer to spend more of their time with their friends with whom they tend to “experience” socialised attitudes and behaviours (Pearson 1995:185).

In the Cape Argus (4:08:1997:3), under the caption Spreading the word on dangers of drugs to teens, Scott Lindsay is reported as warning parents that at some stage in their lives, their children are going to be exposed to drugs and that children may be involved in what he calls “experimenting” (in children’s terms/language). He goes on to say that the best way to prevent the “experimentation” is to educate and talk to them about the dangers.

In view of the above discussion, it would seem that talking or spending quality time with one another in any form of relationship is of vital importance. Taking adolescents into consideration, one would assume that a healthy interaction between parents and their adolescents could contribute to the development of the adolescent in different spheres. Jaffe (1991:271) argues that parents naturally become concerned when their children’s physical and sexual maturity, for instance, precedes the development of corresponding cognitive, judgemental and emotional resources. He goes on to say that the changes that
occur in adolescents and their parents may temporarily destabilize families. The question is whether the cause for such concerns is discussed, shared or communicated well with adolescents, whether adolescents are receiving guidance and whether they are given the opportunity to share their feelings about such developmental changes.

It seems communication is a concern not only in restructured families but also in nuclear families; that however, in restructured families there seem to be more challenges.

A problem in communication between parents and adolescents might manifest itself in different ways. Below is an example of one of the researcher’s case studies, conducted in 1999.

Sitting uneasily before the researcher was Vukile, an intelligent eighteen year-old twelfth grade boy. His mother, Nelly, was telling the researcher that her relationship with her husband was being destroyed by their “problem son”, Vukile. It appeared that Vukile’s father had made it clear that Vukile should leave their home. They rarely spoke to each other and Vukile’s father would speak only when criticizing or arguing with him. Nelly and her husband expressed the following complaints:

- He thrice drove his parents’ car without their permission.
- A box of tomatoes and a case of fresh milk (which consisted of 6 litres) had to be bought twice a week.
- He was extremely unco-operative.
- He never washed during weekends, cleaned his room or sorted out his wardrobe.
- He left his schoolbooks on the study room table despite his parents’ repeated protests.
- Despite having above intelligence IQ, his academic achievement was below standard.
- He talked back to his parents or even cursed in their presence.
Because of this seemingly irresponsible behaviour, Vukile was prohibited from using the family car and the family phone. Those punishments, in turn, enraged Vukile who simply responded with greater rebelliousness and defiance. Vukile and his father had reached a point where they could barely communicate with each other.

Considering the above example, Jaffe (1991:271) argues that adolescents in the 1980’s had been increasingly questioning parental control and values. It seems that such questioning had developed into open rebellion for some adolescents.

In another case study (Siko 1998), a seventeen year-old girl in grade eleven, approached the researcher and expressed her feelings about her anger towards an uncaring father. It transpired that the father had not been emotionally supporting the family in times of need because even if he were physically present, he would be “busy” with his own things. He would, however, at times argue with Siko and her mother when he felt they did not consult with him on some issues and would do “as they wished”.

From the above examples, one would say adolescents might increasingly question, perhaps silently, parental control and values in such a way that some questioning might develop into open rebellion for some adolescents (Jaffe 1991:272).

Evaluating these case studies and the discussion, the following questions arise:

- What determines effective communication in parent-adolescent interaction?
- Could a family structure be playing a major role in effective communication within a family?
- What determines effective communication in functional family structures?

1.2 AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM

Both local and international newspapers report almost on a daily basis about teenage behaviours and problems. When one reads such reports, questions/concerns as to “where did we go wrong?” or “the youth of today is becoming more unruly day by day” arise in
one's mind. During a counseling session, while Tobela's mother was expressing her frustration about her daughter who she said that she was becoming more and more difficult, Tobela burst out laughing sinically. Tobela said: "When did you notice, have you ever given me a chance to talk about this and that except to throw me with money and then go with you friends even during weekends?" (Tobela: 1999).

During the researcher's internship (1999), a certain couple came for counseling. Seemingly the wife was so insecure in their relationship that a once happy-go-lucky type of husband had turned into an indoor, quiet person so that he could meet with women only at work. It turned out later that the wife was the product of a broken home where even the grandparents never got married. The presenting problem on the wife's side was a result of repeated criticism from her mother who unconsciously vented her anger onto her daughter, her only child, seemingly for fear that she might be like her father.

On the researcher's conducting a group therapy session (1999) with a group of five boys aged between fifteen and nineteen, their presenting problem was: "The urge to be involved in a romantic relationship which is inhibited by the possibility of getting AIDS VIRUS."

As the discussion progressed, the issue of a breakdown in communication between parents and their children, which in most cases resulted in bad behaviour, would come up now and again. There seemed to be consensus amongst them that a breakdown in communication between youth and parents had negative effects as, for example, youth ending up "doing things in the dark" whereby afterwards, or in the process, they landed in trouble. They suggested that when children were being educated about HIV/AIDS, and other issues of concern, parents should attend the same workshops with them so as to encourage open discussions where values would be shared and emotions expressed freely.

One remark from one of the boys (eighteen years old) was that because his father was always "busy and away", they rarely discussed things together, so that for advice and guidance he would go to his mother and uncle, if not his friends. The absence of his father, according to the boy, had made it difficult to respect him because he seemed not to "bother" about what was happening in his son's life. That had led to him being labelled as being a disobedient and a defiant child.
In another case, it was clear that Gugu (not her real name) who was then doing Grade 11 was having problems with her biological father. She had thought that her stepfather was her biological father because “he was so caring, we would play together, he was easy to talk to, he would give my mom and me time to be together, sometimes we would go shopping all of us, I respected them and knew the rules of the house to which I adhered without fuss as they were discussed, we were all happy, until my real father appeared..... He is a cheater and does not keep his promises. He is bossy and not to be trusted. I would rather he keeps quiet and not promise anything, why did he come back?” (Gugu:1998).

Considering these case studies, it seems that communication is a cause for concern in most families.

1.3 PROBLEM ANALYSIS

The awareness of the problem under discussion has brought the following questions to mind:

- Who and what is responsible for the communication breakdown in both structured (nuclear) and restructured families?
- Why is a breakdown in communication more common during the adolescent stage?
  1. Is it a matter of a communication breakdown developing during the adolescent stage?
  2. Could it be that at this stage pressures of life become too high and so demanding that the adolescent cannot take it anymore?
  3. Could it be the feelings of ambivalence in the adolescent whereby his/her autonomy as an area of development is being challenged?
- What is the role of family structure in communication between family members.
1.4 PROBLEM SYNTHESIS AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

When the problem under discussion is analysed and evaluated, the question arises whether there is a difference in communication between structured and restructured families.

The problem statement for this research is as follows:

Is there a significant difference in communication between structured and restructured families?

As this study focuses on communication between parents and adolescents in restructured families, it was decided to base empirical research on adolescents from both restructured and structured families. That led to the postulation of the following research hypothesis:

H1: There is no significant difference in communication between parents and adolescents in structured and restructured families.

1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

This study aims at investigating the following aspects:

- The nature of communication in restructured families in particular and families in general.
- Establishing if there is a difference between the quality of communication in structured families and restructured families.

1.6 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Although fully acknowledging the variables that could influence communication in families, the question inevitably arises about the role that divorce, death and remarriage play in communication.
1.7 **LITERATURE STUDY**

Communication in families in general was investigated. The influence of communication on the child’s physical, psychic and spiritual development was examined.

Particular attention was paid to what differentiates nuclear from restructured families, the resulting challenges and to how such challenges may affect communication.

1.8 **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The empirical research was planned in two phases, namely a phase of quantitative research and a phase of qualitative research.

1.8.1 **Quantitative research**

A questionnaire on parent-child communication was distributed to 80 adolescents. This medium consists of the following criteria:

- Rational moment in communication
- Emotional moment in communication
- Transfer of values in communication
- Conversational moment in communication
- Consensus in communication
- Power moment in communication
- Flexibility moment in communication
- Recognition of the other in communication

The meaning of these criteria will be discussed in Chapter 4. The questionnaires were given to eighty adolescents between Grades 10 and 12. There were forty respondents from restructured families and forty respondents from structured (nuclear) families. Respondents were selected from two schools.
1.8.2 **Qualitative research**

In order to add a qualitative dimension to the empirical research, the quality of a relationship in a restructured family was investigated. Here the respondents shed light on self-talk. This information was gathered through the following media: The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and an interview with the respondent.

1.9 **DEMARcation OF THE FIELD OF STUDY**

This study will focus on the following:

- Communication in a family, paying particular attention to communication patterns and family interaction.
- Influence of communication on the child’s physical, psychic and spiritual development. The discussion of psychic development will focus on intellectual, emotional and conative development and their influence on communication.
- Communication and the process of self-evaluation of the adolescent.
- Communication and the self-concept.
- Characteristics of restructured families.
- Challenges as well as pleasures in restructured families and how these may influence communication in such families.

1.10 **EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS**

Some of the concepts that are frequently used in this study are explained below.

1.10.1 **Dysfunctional unit**

According to Stratton and Hayes (1991:55), a dysfunctional unit is a unit that is working or operating in a manner that seems to be a positive handicap to individuals or an individual.
They further explain that the prefix "dys" is used to mean faulty or presenting a problem with one individual or two individuals concerned.

1.10.2 **Healthy family functioning unit**

Kelley (1995:4-5) views this unit as a family which, even though it is not free of stress or problems, can be described in terms of the qualities of the relationships, communication and exchanges. Bearing this view in mind, it would then seem that all families, structured (nuclear) and restructured (step or blended), have strengths and weaknesses. Such families (healthy families) are identified by a family spirit whereby family members identify with each other and with the family as a whole.

1.10.3 **Restructured families/stepfamilies**

Collins (1988:27) argues that stepfamilies come into being because of a series of decisions, of which a crucial one is that the potential stepparent is willing to take on a large share of the care of someone else's children. This is probably why one would say stepparents are entitled to respect rather than the sort of suspicion that they seem almost invariably to attract, for they have voluntarily entered into a commitment to children (Collins 1988:28).

In line with the above discussion, Kelley (1995:2) explains the stepfamily as a household in which there is an adult couple, at least one of whom has a child from a previous relationship.

1.10.4 **Self-concept**

Rogers (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:466) defines the self-concept as an organised consistent whole that is made up of the perceptions of the characteristics of the I or me, and of how these perceptions relate to each other. He further says that the self-concept is a fluid and changing gestalt, a process, which is an entity at any given moment.

According to Higgins (1987:316), the self-concept differs from one situation to the next, in a manner that there can be an actual, ideal and an ought-to-be-self. The actual self refers to
the individual's present and actual perceptions, whilst the ideal self refers to the self that one wishes to be. According to Markus and Nurius (1986:954) the ideal and the ought-to-be self-concepts refer to what an individual is destined to be; therefore, they are important and should be pursued.

In view of the above arguments, it stands to reason that the self-concept is the core, the pillar of personality and/or an image individuals have about themselves.


Self-esteem: According to the English Oxford Dictionary, self-esteem means the degree to which one sees himself, that is either positive (high) or negative (low).

In this research self-concept, self-image and self-esteem will refer to the same aspect.

1.10.5 Moral development

Morality is what a particular community regards as acceptable or unacceptable and constitutes the norms and values of a particular society. It should be noted though, that what is morally good in one community is not necessarily good in another. Moral development is, therefore, concerned with learning to distinguish between right or wrong, good or bad, and acceptable or unacceptable behaviours within a particular society (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1988:274).

According to the English Oxford Dictionary (1993:285), morals refer to standard of behaviour. It is connected with what is good or bad, right or wrong and accepted or unaccepted.

Moral development and spiritual development in this research will refer to the same aspect.
1.10.6 **Ambivalence**

Harriman (1983:10) argues that ambivalence means contradictory unconscious emotions toward the same situation. He further argues that in psychoanalysis it is an unconscious love-hate feeling towards the same person, a characteristic that is normal among small children but neurotic if found in adults.

Confirming this, Stratton and Hayes (1991:6) contend that ambivalence is the simultaneous existence of two opposed emotions, motivations or attitudes, for example love-hate, approach-avoidance. They further argue that each feeling has its own separate origin so the two cannot be reconciled and the person either alternates between the two attitudes or represses one of them.

1.10.7 **Effect / Influence**

Effect is explained as something brought about by a cause or agent, the result or influence (The American Heritage Dictionary 1980:415). According to the English Oxford Dictionary, effect means something that happens because of something else and influence means to have an effect on something or someone (1993:138 & 228).

1.11 **PLAN AND PROGRAMME OF STUDY**

**CHAPTER 1**

This chapter comprises the background, the goal of the study, the statement of the problem, motivation for the study, a description of the research methodology as well as the demarcation of the study.
CHAPTER 2

This chapter comprises the literature study of communication in families, paying particular attention to families with adolescents. The focus is also on various areas of development in adolescents and their effect on communication.

CHAPTER 3

This chapter comprises the literature study of restructured families. Its focus is on communication patterns in such families, the challenges and pleasures experienced by these families and how these in turn influence communication.

CHAPTER 4

This chapter covers the empirical research design and methodology. Media to be used in the research will be discussed and the selection of respondents for the nomothetic and idiographic research will be explained.

CHAPTER 5

In this chapter the results of the empirical research will be interpreted.

CHAPTER 6

In this chapter the research hypothesis will be evaluated. A summary of findings and conclusions from the previous chapters will be given and recommendations will be made.
CHAPTER 2

COMMUNICATION IN A FAMILY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide a general overview of families with adolescents, and especially of some of the patterns and/or factors that may have an influence on communication in the family, as well as a brief discussion of some styles of communicating. There will also be a focus on the educational goals of communication in the family, that is, how communication contributes to the child's physical, psychic and spiritual development. Fictional names will be used for respondents' interviews, group sessions and the case study.

2.2 THE FAMILY WITH ADOLESCENTS

Generally, an adolescent is an interesting person to observe. As a little child he/she may have experienced little problems but as a "big child" he/she may experience bigger problems. It is sometimes interesting and sometimes irritating for parents to watch their children's behavioural changes starting to manifest in their adolescent stage. As little children they have dressed up differently and welcomed the clothes their parents would buy them. They would laugh, fight over a toy or club together against the parents. When the mother would try to catch them out, they would run away laughing, such were their little problems.

For adolescents, they rather sit alone in their bedrooms or prefer to go to the movies by themselves or listen to their own music. They may still join their parents sometimes, particularly when they need the attention most children need now and again. They will ask different types of questions but will prefer to make their own choice eventually when their parents want to buy them clothes or make decisions for them. It seems that everything is
experienced more intensely during adolescence. It is also interesting to note that their physical appearance changes. Boys will sometimes let their big shirts hang loosely over very smart trousers and girls will giggle casually and loudly with their friends but will change the way they laugh when with adults. Their facial expressions will then also change.

Changes in behaviour from the junior secondary school age to the senior secondary school age become the rule. Physical and psychological changes place the adolescent in turmoil. The adolescent's behaviour seems to influence everyone else in the family. Communication patterns change during this time too. The researcher observed that when her children were still young she was the first person they would share information with, like experiences that they had at school or on the playground. Since they became adolescents there are things they choose to disclose more to their friends than to their parents, although they will still approach their parents for clarity or verification. Pearson (1995:185) notes that "the peer group emerges as an emotional anchorage, an experiential educator of socialised attitudes and behaviours."

Because adolescents are at a crucial stage of their development due to quite a number of pressures and experiences, families of adolescents need to establish qualitatively different and/or flexible boundaries from families with younger children. A relationship between an adolescent and his/her parents may diminish due to the adolescent's perception of his parents. In a group session, which was conducted with a group of grade 12 learners, the following opinions were aired:

**Therapist**: "What makes you feel that communication is a problem between yourself and your parents?"

**Tabo**: "Well, they seem not to understand me. I am not sure if they do want to understand me, I mean I also want my ideas and suggestions to be considered."

**Tebatso**: "Yha! For instance I can't just be expected to be told to do this and that, why can't we sit down and discuss what I'm expected to do at home so that I can also be given a chance to air my views as well?"
Tumi: "Sometimes I feel my father expects a lot from me, whether it's my schoolwork or household chores such that I feel like he doesn't even care how I feel his attitude is affecting me."

(Group therapy session: 1999)

On evaluating the group therapy session, the researcher realised that these adolescents experiencing very strong boundaries that were probably necessary when they were still younger. However, they now experience these boundaries as imposing upon them, which may make growth and development in other spheres of life difficult to achieve. According to Kelley (1995:63) such boundaries during the adolescent stage must be permeable. This permeability may suggest some sort of flexibility on the part of the parent. For some time parents have been looking after these children, guiding and grooming them with authority. At this stage parents can no longer maintain complete authority because these adolescents also need to have their ideas heard or considered. This however, does not necessarily mean that their ideas should be taken as correct all the time. It should be considered that these are adolescents who are still on their way to adulthood and, therefore, now and again it will still be expected of them to act responsibly (Kelley 1995:63).

In a family system in which specific expectations about one another's role or function exist, the individuation of each member may encounter strong obstacles (Andolfi, Angelo, Menghi & Nicolò-Corigliano 1993:10). That means that on the one hand, the adolescent as part of the family system is expected to act according to the rules of the system. On the other hand, the adolescent is forming his/her own system of norms and values, which may differ from those of the system he/she is supposed to adhere to. If, for example, parents force a child to constantly behave like a mature person, demanding adult-like performance, the child may end up making an effort to meet their demands. Because the child may want to maintain a relationship that is very dear to him/her, he/she might make every attempt to adhere to expectations.

Anna approached the researcher for career guidance while she was in grade 12 (Mosake 1999). The Emotions Profile Index and the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire were amongst the test media which were completed by her. On analysing the results, there were
traces of an anxiety pattern. This correlated with her high score of eight on anxiety as a second-order factor on the 16 PF. On interviewing her, she confirmed the anxiety. According to her it became worse when she had to write a test or exam, such that she ended up getting low marks even in her favourite subjects. It later came up that the anxiety emanated from the pressure that was put on her by her divorced mother. She did not want her mother to see her as a failure. She even said: “I just cannot fail, otherwise I’ll be failing my mom” (Mosake 1999).

In the subsequent sessions, it has transpired that Anna is living in a “cocoon” and her mother is guarding it. Despite her developmental stage, she is scared to come out of it for the fear of failing in the challenges she might come across, outside home. As they always argue about her academic performance, Anna admits to herself that she could easily get higher grades and make her mother happy if she were to interact freely with other children of her age and not be bound at home.

It would appear that her mother had instilled in her feelings of anxiety. Anna later admitted that she did not know what she would do if she were to be faced with a difficult situation as, according to her, she might fail to get herself out of the difficult situation and that would disappoint her mother. It seems Anna has fears of failure, which could be emanating from unrealistic demands put on her. Unfortunately, she has not communicated her feelings to her mother. According to her, her mother is always busy unless she wants to tell Anna something. It seems Anna’s mother, whether consciously or unconsciously, has failed to create an atmosphere of free communication between herself and her daughter.

In view of the above case, a child may realise it is too much for him/her and then not put up with such demands. When a child fails to answer to unrealistic expectations and starts to refuse the demands, the child may be seen by his parents as being rebellious, according to Andolfi et al (1983:7). The imbalance between the performance that is expected that has not been properly communicated, and the child’s emotional immaturity makes him/her behave in a way that may want to please the significant person, even though he/she may be hypocritical. Such a situation is aggravated by the fact that certain demands contradict the criteria of emotional maturity, for example, to expect an adolescent not to make any independent decisions.
In terms of communication, boundaries could be flexible in the sense that they allow the adolescents to be dependent at times when they cannot handle things alone, and to move out and experiment with an increasing degree of independence when they are ready. This does not necessarily mean that the parents let them do as they please, particularly if the rules or expectations of the house have been properly communicated. It is at this time that, according to Kelley (1995:185), adolescents begin to establish their own independent relationships with, for instance, even the extended family. However, where communication is concerned, this usually requires special adjustment between parents and grandparents to allow and foster these new patterns. Parents of adolescents often get stuck in attempting to get their children do what the parents want them to do, or else they let their children do whatever they want and fail to exert the needed authority.

Walsh (1991:142) argues that the family environment, especially the modes of communicating and relating, have repeatedly emerged as critical in the development of psychopathology. What then might be some of the elements of family interaction and communication that provide the high risk child and his/her family with resources or coping strategies that promote healthy functioning, and what elements serve to provide the parents with strategies that will ensure healthy functioning?

Various patterns of communication have been identified in literature. The following will now be discussed briefly: incongruent communication messages, recurring communicative patterns and family communication environments.

2.2.1 Communication patterns and family interaction

According to Brommel and Galvin (1986:9) communication may be viewed as a symbolic, transactional process, a process of creating and sharing meanings. They further explain that to say it is symbolic implies that symbols are used to transmit messages, where verbal behaviour or words are the most commonly used symbols. This, however, does not imply that non-verbal means of communication are less important or non-effective to the parties involved in communication. To say it is transactional implies that when people communicate they have a mutual impact on each other. To say it is a process implies it is continuous and changing. Communication is therefore, not static because process may
imply change, hence everyday moods, minor or major pleasures or irritation can shift the communication behaviours on a day-to-day basis (Brommel et al 1986:10).

Considering the above ideas, it stands to reason that when one shifts to the study of the family system, the field of communication is entered and the individual must be described in terms, which apply to the exchange of communication behaviours between two or more persons.

Fitzpatrick, Marshall, Leutwiler and Krcmar (1996:179) define family communication in terms of three interlocking levels of analysis. The first level, according to them, is seen as entailing transmission of information from one family member to another. This in turn involves (a) the strongly affective nature of much of the information that gets transmitted in families and (b) the amount of information family members have about each other as a result of long-term relationships and frequent contact. This level is referred to as the behaviour exchange level. The second level requires that family communication be organised to allow the creation, maintenance, and change of specialised interpersonal relationships within the family. Another such relationship is that between parent and child and between husband and wife (or other adult partners). This level is referred to as the relationship level of family communication. The third level involves integration of parent-child, marital, sibling, and other kin relations into a larger social unit, known as the family. Family communication at this level includes behaviours, rituals, events that express the identity, value and unity of the family group. Family meals, birthday parties, gift exchanges at Christmas are examples of communication at this level.

From the above discussion it seems that there an is emphasis on the importance of human interaction and communication patterns in the handling of family issues. Clements and Buchanan (1982:93) describe human interaction as a communication system wherein repetitive communication patterns appear to serve the function of handling family distress. This could suggest that there are some communication patterns in families that aim at being dysfunctional and that such patterns should be investigated.
2.2.1.1 **Incongruent messages**

According to Sater (Clements et al 1982:95), communication is like a "film camera equipped with sound". She describes it as something that works only in the present right here, right now, between you and me. She points to the importance of incongruence between verbal and non-verbal communication by citing the example of a mother who says to her child, "I love you" and then pushes the child away. To a child, particularly one who is still emotionally immature, this brings about confusion in terms of whether to associate pushing away with being loved or not, as the child may have some understanding (even if limited) or expectations derived from the words "I love you" when coming from a parent. Such a child may expect hugs for instance, but the push and words "I love you" obviously send an incongruent message to the child.

2.2.1.2 **Recurring communicative patterns**

Bullock (1993:46-49) argues that children who are securely attached to their families tend to be more responsive to their parents. This attachment impacts positively on their relationships with their peers for they display competence in dealing with peer group issues. These children in turn form secure attachments to their parents through positive reciprocal interactions over time. Positive attachments are positively correlated with more frequent, sociable and positive interaction with parents. It seems the issue of consistency in terms of ensuring interactions between parents and their children is of crucial importance.

2.2.1.3 **Family communication environment**

According to Lull (1990:49) there seems to be a need for a communicative environment where parents stimulate their children to express ideas and challenge one another's beliefs. He further argues that the style of family communication contributes to the child's "cognitive mapping" of situations encountered outside the family context. These socialising influences could persist into adulthood and become part of the individual's personality inside and outside home.
Adding to the above ideas, Fitzpatrick et al (1996:378-387) further classifies the communication environment into two dimensions.

(a) Conformity orientation: the parent will use his power as a parent and in a way force the child to agree to his own ideas, demands or imposition. It seems the child’s opinions are not respected and in fact, the child is coerced into agreeing with what the parent says.

(b) Conversation dimension: in which parental encouragement exists in terms of communication between both the parent and the child. There is also an open exchange of ideas and feelings, and in fact, the child is also listened to within the family. It seems that in this dimension, conversation between family members is encouraged, such that the child may end up communicating effectively even with his peer group, as he/she is used to healthy communication patterns at home.

According to Finch (1989:224) family life is to be explained by the quality of emotional ties built up between individuals through communication, be it verbal, non-verbal or both.

In categorizing families as either low or high on these dimensions, Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1990:531) come up with a fourfold typology.

(a) Consensual families: These types of families are strong in both dimensions, namely conformity orientation and conversation dimension. These families are characterised by the encouragement of children to discuss, talk about and express issues, ideas or opinions with parents, although ultimately they are expected to agree with their parent’s opinions. The conversation may happen in a lively, warm and caring atmosphere. However, the hierarchy of power in the family remains unchallenged.

(b) Pluralistic families: There is emphasis on communication, expressing ideas, and there is none, or little, pressure applied by parents to make the children conform to their viewpoints. This leads to feelings of encouragement in the children to develop their own interests, to express needs and desires openly and to strive to attain personal goals.
(c) Protective families: The parents of these families emphasize conformity and also downplay interaction. They do this in order to prohibit dissent as they, in their own way, maintain peace and harmony within the family.

(d) Laissez-faire families: There is also a downplaying of interaction as well as exerting little pressure on children’s conformity.

If one considers the two last types of families, the tendency could be that of family members pursuing individual goals and having few or no concerns for the needs or desires of other family members. The apparent lack of openness in regard to communication might in the long run result in rebellious teenagers or adolescents and in fact, dysfunctional families with adolescents resorting to substance abuse (Kafka & London 1991:315).

Research by Barber and Rollins (1990:122) has shown that some behaviours on the part of parents are related to personality and social behaviour outcomes, which could be deviant behaviour due to, among other things, substance abuse.

Peterson and Rollins (Barber & Rollins 1990:122) have argued that parents and children have the ability to create and share common meanings and to take one another’s roles. It seems that supportive behaviours such as praise, physical affection and encouragement are gestures that convey that the child’s “self” and actions are valued by parents. It seems as if the children take the roles of the parental others who behave in a supportive manner, and as they see themselves through the eyes of these significant others, their self-images are enhanced. It would seem that as they become more dependent upon their parents to maintain their self-esteem, the bonds between parents and children are strengthened. In conclusion, one would then say that the more adolescents perceive parents as sources of supportive behaviour, the more likely they are to comply with parental expectations, and the less likely they will be to engage in socially deviant behaviour.

In their research, Kafka and London (1991:319) focused on the openness of communication in adolescents’ relationships with parental figures and closest friends, and its correlation with the teenager’s use of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana and other drugs. The findings were
that openness of communication with a friend was unrelated to the extent of substance use, while open communication with a parental figure was negatively correlated with all adolescent substance use. The more open the communication with a parental figure, the lower the level of substance use.

In addition to being influenced by parents, it seems adolescent behaviours and attitudes may also be influenced by peers. To the extent that the adolescents’ self-concept becomes anchored in peer group norms, the more likely they become to increase drinking behaviour and deviant acts. However, the strength of the peer group as a referent group may be influenced by the degree to which parents have built and maintained ties as significant others to their children (Barber & Rollins 1990:120-125).

Considering the above argument, it stands to reason that the more parents may be perceived as a source of support and inductive control, the less peers may be seen as a significant referent group for important decisions by adolescents. Furthermore, the less peers may be seen as significant others, the less likely it is that the adolescent may engage in substance abuse and other socially deviant acts.

In terms of inductive control, one would think of such behaviour as openness, explanation of limits, attempts to make children aware of consequences of their acts for themselves and others. It seems, therefore, that communication based on support and inductive control by the parent may positively impact on healthy family functioning.

Considering the above study, it may seem that a breakdown or lack of communication between parents and their children can lead to the latter having behaviour or emotional disorders. These questions can be asked: “What does it mean to talk openly to someone? What purpose does it serve? How is it explained and are there any measures to be considered to facilitate open communication between the parent and the child?”

2.2.2 Brief overview of five styles of communication

Virginia Slater (Davis 1996:42) highlights five styles of communication that occur between individuals when one of them is under stress. She argues that:
(a) The placater always agrees, tries to please and apologise.
(b) The blamer dominates, accuses and finds faults.
(c) The super-reasonable person is detached, cool, calm and not emotionally involved.
(d) The irrelevant person distrusts others and seems unable to relate to what is going on.
(e) The communicator seems real and genuinely expressive and sends straight messages.

Davis (1996:42) believes that all of these styles, except that of communicator, prevent people or members in a family from exposing their true feelings. On looking at these styles of communication, one needs to ponder and realise the impact of these communications styles on a person, and in turn how his/her state of emotions can affect the entire family and his/her peers.

Noller (Fitzpatrick and Vangelisti 1995:77) contends that the quality of family relationships affects the success with which young people negotiate the major tasks of adolescents. Seemingly, it also influences the extent to which they become involved in the problem behaviours generally associated with this stage of their lives, as well as their ability to establish meaningful close relationships that are likely to last.

It appears then that parental communication may have an effect on an adolescent’s peer interaction apart from any influence it has on the adolescents’ social skills.

Considering the discussion above, it also stands to reason that effective communication in the family may provide the adolescent with models of social competence as well as training in skills such as self-disclosure and problem solving.

Fitzpatrick et al (1995:100) further argues that where there is positive communication between parents and adolescents, adolescents are more likely to develop a strong sense of independence, and positive bonds of affection and closeness with parents.
It seems important that parents provide an environment in which their children and adolescents are able to learn appropriate negotiation and problem-solving skills.

2.3 THE INFLUENCE OF COMMUNICATION ON THE CHILD’S PHYSICAL, PSYCHIC AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Each child who comes into this world is a unique being and immediately starts communicating with its world by using its senses. The various areas of development, such as the physical, the psychic and the spiritual, are like numerous threads that are interwoven and that exist simultaneously. No one facet of development occurs independently from others. For instance, a child's ability to make friends is considered a social skill, but is also affected by other developmental processes like cognition, memory, physical prowess and self-esteem. These developmental processes influence how children adapt to social situations, and how they feel about the encounters they experience (Kostelnik 1988:3). Children must always be seen in totality.

The way in which the developmental level of the adolescent influences communication in the family will now be addressed by referring to the various areas of development of the adolescent.

2.3.1 Physical development in adolescents

This discussion will focus on how the physical changes in adolescence affect social development, how the physical (bodily) changes contribute to the self-concept and how all the above may influence communication.

According to Hurlock (1973:19), the first recorded reports of puberty changes go back to the days of Aristotle. He argues that it is at this stage that hair begins to appear on the pubes. The voice of boys starts to alter, becoming harsher, more uneven and somewhat shrill, while nocturnal emissions or wet dreams begin. Girls may experience their first menstrual flow, their breasts begin to swell and their voices become deeper. It is also during this stage that behavioural changes accompany these changed physiological states.
Among the behavioural changes are tendencies of being irritable, or passionate. In the young female adolescent, shoulders broaden, while there is an increase in width and roundness of hips, and a different appearance of the waistline, giving the trunk a hourglass shape, is noticed. There is also shaping of arms and legs, which could be due mainly to fat. As indicated earlier, breasts start to develop as well as pubic hair, there is facial hair on the upper lip, upper cheek and border of chin in some girls, hair can also be noticed on limbs and there is also a change in the colour and texture of the skin.

In the young male adolescents, broadening of shoulders due to heavy muscles, giving the trunk a triangular shape, can be noticed. Arms and legs begin to shape due to muscle development. Breast knots or slight knobs around male mammary glands can be felt. Pubic hairs extend to thighs. One can also notice appearance of facial hair on the upper lip, on the side of cheeks, on the chin as well as changes in the colour and texture of the skin. The radical body changes described above have psychological as well as physical repercussions. The physical changes determine not only what he wants to do. What he wants to do is largely determined by the physical needs brought about by such developments. The psychological changes come mainly from social expectations for mature attitudes and behaviour when the adolescent’s body has achieved adult size and shape.

It is also not surprising that in most families, girls at this stage find themselves under constant surveillance by the parents, because of their sexual development. Parental sexual attitudes are typically more conservative than those of teenagers. Due to physical changes and development, the adolescents may be influenced by peers to engage in what the adolescents’ peer group term as the experimental phase where they experience drugs, cigarettes, alcohol and sexual relations. Because of particularly liberal or conservative belief of parents who may have taught them that sex was natural and healthy or on the other hand wrong before marriage, they may experience feelings of confusion. As they may derive a lot of pressure from the changes they are going through, adolescents may feel conflict, inner stress and turmoil. They may end up withdrawing into their own selves and this could lead to communication problems between them and their parents (Sarafino & Armstrong 1980:498).
2.3.1.1 The effect of physical changes on social development in adolescents

Young adolescents who may be psychologically matured persons, can adjust to these physical upheavals. They may become more energetic and their interest in societal issues tends to fluctuate. They may become “bored” sometimes, withdraw from social contact with their peers and may spend much more of their time in solitude or daydreaming. This change could be due in part to the general state of fatigue that accompanies rapid growth and glandular changes (Kostelnik 1988:6).

At first with males, as they are shooting up in height for a year or two, they may be very self-conscious about their size and this may result in withdrawal from social contacts. However, as they become accustomed to their larger body they may show a marked decrease in shyness and an increase in self-importance.

Spencer, Blades and Morsley (1989:57) highlight the issue of a sequence of frames of reference. Their argument is that in a healthy situation one would expect that adolescents know and understand their physical self before they can be able to, or are expected to, relate well to the physical and social world around them.

In view of this, one would say it seems the adolescent would be expected to have an integrated image of his or her changed body layout. Other spheres of maturity mentioned earlier, like voice or sexual maturity, extend this frame of reference to the immediate world and then proceed to the outward world. Even though, according to Pick and Lockman (Spencer et al 1989:57) it is not necessarily so, it is interesting to note that as the child develops and as young adolescents notice physical changes in themselves, this sparks the development of the way they carry themselves, the way they relate to themselves and then to the outside world. However, to Pick and Lockman (Spencer et al 1989:57) a child does not have to completely master the first frame of reference before working on the next.

As young adolescents start to become aware of new developments in their bodies, the tendency is to explore themselves more and more. As they get to understand the implications thereof either by asking questions of parents or by reading, or from communicating with friends, they start to communicate or interact in a certain way.
(different from childhood) with the outside world. Children who are deprived of this valuable information and proper response from significant others of their immediate world (family), who cannot freely get explanations from parents about their physical developmental changes, may have a problem in relating to the outside world as they do not understand themselves either. This is probably the reason why Spencer et al (1989:59) talk about a frame of reference, with the implication that if for example, children lack a fully integrated body concept, they may find it difficult in relating objects to self, objects to one another and in relating to other people around themselves, that is significant others.

2.3.1.2 Influence of physical development on the self-concept in adolescents

Self-concept is generally defined as the idea a person has of him- or herself. Looking at the bodily changes that occur in boys as they mature, Rice (1992:171) argues that a boy within the same age range as other boys may notice that he has little pubic hair, no noticeable beard and an underdeveloped penis (as compared to his age group). This could result to feelings of low self-confidence, low self-esteem and in fact, a low self-concept. To these boys even little things become a source of embarrassment. They become overwhelmed with the desire to avoid critical comments and this may lead to some (boys) becoming excessively modest, withdrawn or even retreating from the world through daydreaming. The same feeling could, however, apply to some boys who have developed faster. They may become too self-conscious of their new sexual image, such that involuntary erection in front of others may be especially embarrassing. Considering the above views, some boys can easily become hostile and defensive, others may become daring show-offs, exhibiting bravado to hide their anxieties and their lack of self-confidence. Inside themselves are deep-seated feelings of “I cannot do this or that”.

Girls on the other hand are mostly concerned about the size and shape of their breasts. Some girls who are flat-chested feel self-conscious because they are probably influenced by a certain notion in their society, which emphasises fullness of breast as a mark of beauty and sexuality. However, girls who have unusually large breasts are also self-conscious when they get unkind remarks and stares that make them uneasy (Rice 1992:173). Below is an extract from a group session with four girls between grade 10 and 12:
Therapist : It seems there are more concerns about our bodies as we develop. Can you tell me more?

Toneka : Yes, apart from the body structure or profile that I have mentioned, most of us girls get concerned about our breasts, such that we end up debating whether it is better to have small or large breasts.

Tuli : As for myself, I feel sometimes very embarrassed when I find somebody looking at my chest. I know my breasts are big, but when I find somebody staring at me I feel like they pity me... I don't know why in my family I am the only one who took after my mother.

Sandy : But, I had always thought small breasts are the cause for feeling embarrassed when somebody looks at you. I remember when we were on tour last year and I had to put on my nightdress, I couldn't do that in front of others, I quickly dashed to the bathroom. As I was quickly putting on my nightdress, I heard my friend's voice: "never mind Sandy, small breasts are not a problem, when you are married you will have big breasts". In as much as she was trying to console me, I felt so embarrassed and I just thought: "well, I can never get married, no man would marry a girl like myself and I have lived with that even up to this very day".

Thoko : You know in the rural area where I go to during holidays which is where my grandparents are, each time I pass by a group of young men they will always pass a remark that you won't understand its meaning like: "Dudlu mntanam uyaphila" and they say it with such pride! What that means (after I consulted with my grandma), is they are actually expressing their appreciation at my full-grown body, they look at your breast, your whole profile including your hip area. But, you know my breasts are big and here at school I get embarrassed as well when I find somebody staring at me, let alone passing a remark.

(Group session: 1999)
Considering the above session, it seems that certain stereotypes are a cause of some adolescents' low or high self-concept, depending on whether the experience that the adolescent went through was positive or negative. It is however, a fact that physical attractiveness and body image have an important relationship to the adolescent's positive self-evaluation, popularity and peer acceptance. Most boys and girls who are in leadership positions in their schools are usually physically attractive and confident (Koff in Rice 1992:181).

2.3.1.3 The influence of physical changes on communication in adolescents

In terms of physical development, the body changes that occur in young adolescents, as has been said, seem to have psychological repercussions, which may come mainly from social expectations of mature attitudes and behaviour. It is because of these expectations that the young adolescent may either willingly try his/her best to relate "maturely" to people around him/her or pretend to be willingly relating because of the pressure of expectations from the significant others or outside world. Because he/she is not yet an adult, he/she may get confused and end up being rebellious.

The confusion could be due on the one hand to a rise in conflict within him- or herself of what the real self wants and feels like doing and on the other hand to the pressure exerted by the expectations of the outside world. This may easily lead to frustration, and being rebellious would be his/her reaction to frustration. Earlier on, a reference was made to Spencer et al (1989:57) where it was argued by the authors that it was of importance that adolescents understood, or were given answers when inquiring about, the changes that were happening to them, particularly by their families. The reason for this was that they need to explore themselves before they can be able to understand and relate to the outside world. Giving a child a "guided" space to do or explore, or ask questions about him- or herself, enables him/her to interact easily, particularly with his peer group; however, the converse might occur with negative results of withdrawing from peer discussions, shyness and/or just asocial behaviour.

Fitzpatrick and Vangelisti (1995:65) argue that there seems to be growing support for the notion that parental communication not only affects the child's behaviour, but does so
through influencing how the child thinks about the social world. They further argue that perhaps there can be no social relationships that are as important to the child's development as those with peers. Friendships and other relationships with peers seem to be serving numerous constructive functions during childhood, including facilitating the development of cognitive and intellectual abilities. In addition, they may foster emotional and moral maturation and help in the development of key social and communicative competencies (Fitzpatrick and Vangelisti 1995:67).

Generally a child with low self-confidence, low self-esteem and low self-concept finds problems in socialising, and thus in communicating with, people and even with his peer group. He/she may often be overwhelmed with feelings of inadequacy, withdrawal, worthlessness, and may avoid social contact. He/she may even have suicidal tendencies (Case study : 1998). However, the opposite is usually detected in a child who has a realistically positive self-concept. This child does not show any problems in expressing him- or herself or communicating with other people, he/she relates well with his/her peer group and usually has average to high self-confidence.

2.3.2 Psychic development in adolescents

Under this heading, intellectual, emotional and conative development will be briefly considered.

2.3.2.1 Intellectual development in adolescents

According to Piaget (Rice 1992:209), "adolescence is that age at which the individual starts to assume adult roles". This stage is characterised by the fact that the adolescents start moving away from subordination to adults and childhood inferiority as they start to see themselves as being equal to adults, and judge or perceive themselves on the same level as adults judge or perceive themselves.

As they want to be considered as adults, adolescents find themselves taking their places in the adult framework. This is done in the form of participating in either the ideas, ideals or ideologies of adult society. As their reflective thinking develops, they start to evaluate
what they learn. They now have developed the ability to “distinguish not only what the adult world is but what it might be like, especially under ideal circumstances” (Rice 1992:209). As they interact in the outside world, they seem themselves to be part of a big and important effort to reform the things that happen in people’s daily lives, usually in verbal discussions or in group movements. Adolescents also often get caught up in political idealism.

Shapiro (Rice 1992:213) argues that it is the adolescent’s own inner turmoil that accounts for his/her capacity to empathise with the suffering of others. He further argues that because of their own insecure psychological position, adolescents can easily identify with the weak, the poor and the oppressed victims of the society. It seems then that these social injustices that they perceive reflect their own internal, individual struggles. The young adolescent has the ability now to formulate general principles, for example “Thou shall not trespass”, but he/she lacks the experience to see the application of these general rules to specific practice. For instance, a young adolescent may reprimand his young brother if the young brother simply gets to his room and plays with his basketball. However, the same adolescent sees nothing wrong in getting into his father’s bedroom and playing with his computer during his absence. This, Rice (1992:210) argues, is due to intellectual immaturity rather than defect of character.

Adolescents’ social development is also affected in the sense that their ability to think about themselves, their own thoughts and society leads to another manifestation of hypocrisy, pretending to be what they are not. People around them and in fact in general expect them to like school even though they may rarely do, and they are expected to conform to parental viewpoints and beliefs even though they disagree with them. The society expects them not to be hurt or angry even when they really are. Their family expects them not to engage in behaviour that may disappoint the family members and they end up not talking to their family about things that are affecting their emotional being. The same family may pressurize them in such a way that they end up not being the persons they would like to be. This is denial of self and so they behave the way parents want or expect them to behave (Rice 1992:210).
In the light of unrealistic expectations and because they want to stay in an accepting relationship with their parents, they may feel that they are communicating and behaving dishonestly because they cannot communicate and behave the way they really are.

- **The influence of intellectual development on social development in adolescents**

During adolescence, young people may have the opportunity to develop hypothetical reasoning skills, increased use of logic, and abstract thinking. They may also show the capability of reasoning from the point of view of someone with whom they disagree, that is using contrary-to-fact propositions, imagining ideal future and also show an understanding of the subtleties of metaphor and political cartoons (Fuhrmann in Rice 1992:260). The adolescent’s ability to formulate hypotheses may make it possible for him/her to respond to parental demands with a list of possible alternatives. For example, the researcher overheard a parent arguing with her son about his sleeping while attending a meeting. The parent, who was carrying her baby, proposed to her son that he take down notes on a piece of paper. However, the son came up with a counter proposition, holding the baby instead of taking notes, which would make him stay awake. It later transpired that the son was not interested in those fortnightly meetings that his mother made him attend.

The rebelliousness of adolescents may be due, in part, then to an awareness of the difference between the possible and the real. Because the adolescent may perceive a gap between the ideal and the real world, he/she may come to feel parents are hypocrites, since in his/her own analysis they may be professing one set of ideas and living by another.

In most instances, adolescents may criticise existing situations. They may take action to change them. The ideals resulting from the application of new thought processes to real problems reflect the newness of the thought processes and their lack of integration with existing socio-political systems. In criticising the existing order, they may see it as insensitivity on the part of adults (Dusek 1987:96). It is at this stage that conflicts between them and their parents in particular, and then adults in general, erupt. However, it should be noted that the adolescent’s ability to come up with possible alternatives, even though the adolescent may be viewed by the parent as being rebellious, marks an aspect of cognitive development, which to the adolescent is a relatively pure approach.
According to Fuhrman (Rice 1992:262), in coming up with possibilities adolescents may conceive of ideal families, ideal schools, ideal societies, et cetera and may rebel against experiences they view as imperfect. At the same time, they may be hypercritical and impatient. However, “as they enter the job market and join the adult world with its various roles and responsibilities, the relatively pure cognitive approach to understanding society is replaced by a more realistic perspective”. This, according to Dusek (1987:100) may be classified as the stage of Mutual Role Taking. An adolescent may take a holistic perspective of a social situation, that is may co-ordinate his/her own perspective, that of others and an interaction between the two. It is at this stage that an adolescent may understand the mutual nature of social relationships.

Dusek (1987:392) argues that if one considers what other researchers like Damon & Harts 1982; Brim 1973 and Epstein 1973 have said regarding the self-concept, that it is a theory of self and/or understanding self, then maybe one is inclined to say that the development of a self-concept is related to development of cognitive processes. For instance, adolescents in describing themselves may use more abstract terms than children, because they are capable of using formal operational skills.

Adolescents tend to use personality trait descriptions in elaborating conceptions of self. Because of this tendency, one may say that increasing cognitive competence could be an underlying factor in self-concept development. Furthermore, it is well documented that there is a positive correlation between self-concept and performance in school (Rice 1992:183). Students who usually do better are those with a higher self-concept. Successful students feel more sense of personal worth and somewhat better about themselves. Mboya (Rice 1992:186) argues that such students have a high self-concept in relation to their academic abilities. Thus the higher the grade average, the higher the probability that the student has a high level of self-acceptance, and as such self-confidence. This could be due to the fact that students who have confidence in themselves may have courage to try even harder and may be motivated to live up to what they believe about themselves. On the other hand students who have negative attitudes about themselves may impose limitations on their own achievement by such negative self-talk as: “I can’t do it, I am inefficient, worthless, I’m just not smart enough”. Unfortunately, unfavourable views of self may have been established in some children before they even enter first grade. They may start school
with a feeling that they are not doing well and having internalised that, they end up not doing well.

In most (if not all) cases the attitudes of significant others like parents, older siblings and relatives may have an impact on an adolescent’s academic self-concept (Dusek 1987:393). Unfortunately, whether the academic self-concept is high or low, it impacts on the child’s communication with the outside world.

• The influence of intellectual development on the self-concept in adolescents

As adolescents, children are growing intellectually and as a result needs to exercise the sheer capability to think, reason, judge or apply logic. They therefore need to be given a space and opportunities to do so. However, poor communication at home in terms of being told what to do by authoritative parents could lead to a resentful adolescent. Such an adolescent, even when he/she is with his/her peer group, may not be good in discussions, may explode with anger if things do not go his/her way. Emotionally, such a child could still be immature due to the fact that at home he/she feels not free to express his/her feelings about things. As he/she often has to hide his/her feelings, this could lead to poor self-confidence and hence a low self-concept.

The capability to think about themselves may be also necessary in the process of developing a self-concept. A developed self-concept may help them in positively formulating a number of postulates about themselves, for example, “I am physically attractive or I’m popular in my class”. Such postulates may be based on a number of specifics such as “I am physically attractive because I am tall, slender, have long hair”. Because of their developed self-concept, they freely communicate their ideas with other people. Even more so, because of formal operational thinking they are able to entertain a number of ideas and communicate those with friends like “What do you think of my dress?” It is because of their sound ability to think, that they begin to gradually sort out what they feel is truth from error about themselves and to formulate a total concept of self (Dusek 1987:395).
Rice (1992:218) points out that adolescents are capable of being creative, but because of pressure put on them to conform, they become less creative. In family situations where communication in terms of sharing and respecting one another's ideas is recognised, conformity or pressure to conform to the demands or ideas of the adult is non-existent. In their communication these adolescents may sometimes demonstrate "pseudo stupidity" which Rice (1992:218) describes as the tendency to approach problems at too complex levels. This may also be due to the pressure put on them. Because they feel this pressure, they may want to prove they are even smarter than some adults. This of course does not bode well for healthy communication.

It seems that parents' coercive tendencies in interacting with their children, particularly adolescents, tend to have negative effects. This is probably because parents may be interpreted as undermining the adolescents' integrity or ability to think logically. In addition to this argument, Fitzpatrick et al (1995:90) claim that when parents coerce their adolescent children, the effects on the adolescent's self-esteem are likely to be negative. They further argue that parental use of coercive techniques tends to imply that their adolescent children are incompetent, untrustworthy and poorly motivated, and in fact the message is that the adolescent cannot cope without the parent.

In contrast, Fitzpatrick et al (1995:91) argue that a parent's use of supportive and inductive techniques (mentioned earlier on) tends to imply that adolescents are competent, can be trusted to make good, logical decisions and behave appropriately.

Considering the above argument, it therefore seems that adolescents' self-esteem is a response to the treatment received from parents rather than the result of adolescents modelling their parents' self-esteem related behaviour. Supporting the above idea, Gecas and Schwalbe (Fitzpatrick et al 1995:91-93) argue that adolescent self-esteem is more closely related to the actual support adolescents receive from their parents than to the adolescents' perceptions of that support.

Adding to the above argument, Harris and Howard (Fitzpatrick et al 1995:91) argue that adolescents whose parents are accepting and not very critical have the most positive self-images, whereas adolescents whose parents are highly critical and not very accepting have
the most negative self-images. Unfortunately, where parent-adolescent communication consists mainly of criticism, the adolescent may develop a negative self-image, which might lead to more negative behaviours and more criticism and rejection from the parents. Seemingly, also high levels of punishment as well as perceived control by parents may lower self-esteem and generate hostility in adolescents.

Such hostility expressed by the adolescent in the context of punishment and control is likely to lead to the parent’s trusting the adolescent less and to increasing monitoring by the parent. The implications of such monitoring could be perceived by the adolescent as incompetence or untrustworthiness on his/her part. Considering this argument, it seems a vicious cycle is likely to set up and it is a cycle that may be very hard to break.

Adolescents from various cultures show variability in abstract reasoning ability. Social institutions such as the family and school may accelerate or retard the development of formal operational skills (Rice 1992:217-219). It is important for adults, especially parents and teachers, to realise that not all adolescents of the same age are at the same stage of intellectual development. Comparing one adolescent’s cognitive behaviour to another adolescent and expecting him/her to behave or communicate like the other may lead to a breakdown in communication as some of them may have not yet reached the formal operational stage of intellectual development.

In conclusion, it seems that in families where support is high, conflict is low, and control is relatively democratic, adolescents are more likely to develop positive concepts of themselves that may better enable them to face the world and deal with its challenges and problems.

Below are some extracts from young celebrities about the parenting roles of their parents.

(a) Sihle is a sports editor and presenter at a certain radio station.

Interviewer : “How do you feel about your dad’s parenting role?”
Sihle: "He has done a lot of good things, and while like everyone else, he has made mistakes, together with my mom, he has played an important role in making me the person I am today."

(b) Dr Anna Ikaneng is an executive chairperson of an investment company.

Interviewer: "How does your family cope with your job?"

Dr Anna: "My children come first and no matter how busy I am, I always make time for them. When you communicate with them adequately, then they appreciate why you are not at home."

(c) Bouza is a television presenter and film director.

Interviewer: "How do you feel about your dad’s parenting role?"

Bouza: "I think that together with my mom, they have done a pretty good job."

(True Love Magazine – June 2000: 76, 79, 100 respectively)

2.3.2.2 Emotional development in adolescents

Under this heading, the discussion will be based on how emotional development influences or contributes to the development of the self-concept as well as to social development. Furthermore, the effect of these developments on communication will also be discussed.

- The influence of self-concept development on social development in adolescents

Self-concept, self-esteem and identity are the aspects of adolescent psychology that seem to have received more attention than other subjects. The self is that part of one’s personality of which one is aware. Self-concept may be defined as the conscious cognitive perception and evaluation by individuals of themselves. This includes their thoughts and opinions
about themselves (Rice 1992:121). This may also imply a developing awareness of who
and what one is.

As a person continues to do an evaluation of self according to certain experiences that he
goes through, he ends up projecting his emotional state. This in turn might determine
whether a person has either a negative or positive self-concept. For instance an adolescent
may, due to certain experiences in his/her development, experience feelings of rejection and
worthlessness. Such a person is inclined to have a poor self-concept. On the other hand,
acceptance of self is positively and significantly correlated with acceptance by others. If
individuals experience acceptance from significant others they may accept themselves to a
greater extent. Thus, there is a close relationship between self-acceptance and social
adjustment. Adolescents with poor self-concept and negative or low self-esteem tend to be
socially invisible, they go unnoticed and are rarely selected as leaders. These adolescents
often develop feelings of isolation and loneliness.

A number of factors contribute to the development of a positive self-concept. Most
important is the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship. It would not be expected that
a child who has been raised by parents who are critical in nature would be appreciated as
they grow. With such parents their words of praise are usually blended with overtones of
demanding more from the child. This unfortunately, does not bring about a positive self-
image, as the child will always evaluate him- or herself as falling short of his/her parents’
expectations.

Adolescents need to be given the praise they deserve for the job they have done, they need
to be motivated or encouraged for being creative, for taking initiative or even for trying.
They need to be listened to and they need their feelings to be taken into consideration. If
this were the rule, society would have a minimal number of rebellious adolescents. The
foundation for negative self-esteem is usually built at home and unfortunately, a negative
self-esteem and lack of self-confidence usually lead to a poor self-concept.

Confirming this, Peterson and Rollins (Barber & Rollins 1990:122) argue that supportive
behaviours such as praise, physical affection and encouragement are gestures that convey
that the child’s “self” and actions are valued by parents.
Adolescent girls who feel close to their mothers see themselves as confident, wise, reasonable and self-controlled, but those who feel distant perceive themselves in negative terms: rebellious, impulsive, touchy and tactless (Rice 1992:251). This is the indication that a degree of maternal identification influences the self-concept. Fathers are also important in a girl's development. A warm, rewarding father-daughter relationship plays a very important role in helping the girl to value her femininity and positively accept herself as a woman. This may enable her to adjust easier and satisfactorily in heterosexual relationships (Rice 1992:252). The same is true for the adolescent boy.

In view of the above ideas, one is inclined to say that a warm, caring and friendly home environment with positive communication tends to be the domain of a healthy emotionally developed child, as this influences his/her self-concept.

- The influence of emotional development on social development in adolescents

It seems that one of the signs of possible disturbance during adolescence may be an inability to establish friendships or to meet new people. One may conclude that this is poor adjustment, which could be related to a low self-concept that may now be manifesting itself in various ways (Hurlock 1973:200-201). Adolescent emotionality may be attributed to the fact that the individual comes under social pressure and now faces new conditions for which he/she might have received little or no preparation during childhood. During this stage, the adolescent may experience emotional instability from time to time, as may be expected, because he/she is making adjustments to new patterns of behaviour as well as to new social expectations. A healthy home environment where the child may have had no problems in expressing his/her emotions could find that the storms and stress periods of adolescence are approached with emotional maturity. Such emotional maturity may help him/her in regards to social adjustment. Social adjustment on the other hand is also related to self-acceptance. Rice (1992:248) argues that acceptance of self positively and significantly correlates with acceptance of, and by others. Shy people for instance may have problems with feeling awkward and tense in social situations. Unfortunately, this makes it more difficult for them to communicate with others. However, accepting their shyness and talking about it may result in effective communication.
Kreppner and Ulrich (Hofer, Youniss & Noack 1998:83) describe a family as “an institution wherein children can learn to acquire social strategies to solve problems, to express emotions, and to perceive and evaluate others as well as the relationships between them”. They further argue that through a long and enduring process, parents and children learn to adapt to one another. In other words, through effective communication they learn to understand one another’s feelings and respect one another’s views. Their daily encounters within the family seem to constitute the basis of the child’s first impression of how a family interacts. This, in turn, may create recurring patterns of social behaviour and methods of communication.

Considering the argument above, it stands to reason that such experiences within the family may be taken as a basic framework for an adolescent’s expanding concepts of social relationships. The adolescent may further have a belief in the possibility that he/she can affect things and persons, which in turn may contribute to the growing sense of self.

It seems that healthy communication and expression of feelings at home prepare the ground for healthy communication in the outside world. Criticism and poor expression of feelings and poor social adjustment may lead to defective communication with other people and negative self-image (Fitzpatrick et al 1995:91; Rice 1993:249). A father of three admits, “I was doing matric when I felt this strong desire to approach this girl in my class who apparently had been telling her friends how handsome I was, hoping that I would make a move. For me it was not easy. That time I was 21 and it was going to be the first time to have a relationship of that kind. Words cannot express how desperately lonely I was in my first varsity years, even though I had reasonably good marks, as that was my only source of comfort. My parents never seemed to be satisfied, particularly my father. Those were the most difficult years in my life, thanks to my foster family in Canada, where I did my other degrees, who taught me how to believe in and accept myself and maybe that is why I got married very late in life” (Siko: 1999).

Because Siko was always criticised at home, brought up in an environment where hugs, praises or even handshakes or pats on the shoulder were unimportant, belief in him was something he never knew until he met a certain family who understood the importance of emotional expression in one’s life. Such families as this man’s tend to have children who
are shy and/or withdrawn, and this unfortunately leads to poor social development and communication. If adolescents have a fundamental contempt for themselves, they may hate and despise others, but if they trust and respect themselves they also may trust and respect others and communicate well with them as members of the human race. Confirming this, Bowlby (Melton 1995:59) emphasizes the importance for social interactions later in life, of having a strong and affectionate emotional bond between parents and their adolescents. He further argues that the nature of social interactions within families has been recognised by psychologists to be the key antecedent of social motivations.

In conclusion, it seems that recognising the importance of emotional bonds with others in the family and community would highlight the potential harm that could be brought about by weakened social networks.

- The influence of emotional development on communication in adolescents

One of the most frequent complaints of adolescents is that their parents seem not to have time to listen to them, to consider their ideas or opinions or point of view, and to at least try to understand their feelings (Rice 1992; Personal Interview 1999). Communication seems to be the key to a harmonious parent-child relationship. Such a complaint says a lot about dysfunctional communication between parents and their adolescents.

Adolescents need to know that they are accepted, valued and most of all liked by their parents. Showing that a parent loves and accepts them as they are, means a lot to adolescents. They in turn learn to accept others in the wider society as they are. Such children may have a high self-concept as they also learn to accept themselves; this normally results in healthy communication between themselves and other people. In other words, the quality of adolescent-adult interaction is related to peer group involvement as well as adult interaction. The degree of emotional closeness between parents and their children, that is, the affect relationship usually opens or closes ground for emotional expression. Such children or adolescents may be people-orientated rather than being selfish or selfcentred.
Becker (Barber & Rollins 1990:2) found that parental warmth promoted children's acceptance of themselves and the development of self-control. In contrast, it seems that hostility and rejection have been found to interfere with development of conscience and to enhance aggressiveness and resistance to authority. Further, restrictive parenting seems to foster dependency and interferes with the positive effects of independence training (Barber & Rollins 1990:3).

Supporting the above idea, Rollins and Thomas (Barber & Rollins 1990:3) argue that highly supportive interaction is viewed as facilitative and non-supportive interaction as inhibiting in the development of social competence in adolescents. They further argue that the greater the inductive control attempts (mentioned earlier) of parents, the greater the adolescent's social competence. On the contrary, the greater the coercive control attempts of parents, the less the social competence of the child.

In view of the above discussion, there seems to be a strong feeling that a homely supportive environment precipitates effective social skills and competence. In addition to that, Powers et al (Barber & Rollins 1990:5) have indicated that "cognitively stimulating family interactions are not sufficient for ego development, they must be accompanied by an atmosphere of positive affect and support". In addition, to that though, the strongest impact of the family on the development of self seems to come through a family interaction that encourages family members to understand one another's viewpoints.

Most adolescents who get along with their parents and siblings may participate more in discussions outside their families, such as school or other social gatherings. This could be due to the fact that even at home they have learnt to respect other people's ideas or opinions such that even if other people don't agree with their ideas, their self-concepts are not threatened. Sarafino and Armstrong (1980:501) argue that middle class parents are likely to encourage independent thinking, personal responsibility and a positive atmosphere for communication. He further contends that adolescents whose parents accept their opinions and discuss family issues are more likely to perceive their parents as being fair. In such cases the family life is usually a happy one.
Emphasizing what is argued above, Farmer (1982:7) contends that the family as an agent of social control teaches the child limits of tolerated behaviour so that the child may know what is expected of him/her by the society. He further argues, “it introduces the adolescent child to the acceptable ideas of right and wrong. He absorbs moral standards of his family, their attitudes to honesty, violence and other social values” (Farmer 1982:7). In doing this, one could say the family is representing wider society particularly because these may be some of the norms and values of that particular society that the family is part of.

Considering what has been said above the grounds for healthy social interaction are being prepared. As the adolescents move away from their families, they may rely more on themselves and sometimes also on their peers.

Bosma and Jackson (1990:139) argue that friends are no longer seen as just playmates. With them, adolescents share ideas and talk about issues. They do so probably to validate ideas and to figure out some confusions. In some cases parents may object to a lot of time spent with peers, fearing peer pressures.

Studies have proved that the importance of peer relationships is shown in the fact that children lacking peer relationships are at increased risk for a host of social, behavioural and emotional problems. It seems poor performance in and dropping out from school, delinquency and substance abuse may be other problems that such an adolescent child who lacks peer interaction, may be faced with (Dodge 1990; Ladd & Asher 1985; Fitzpatrick 1995 in Fitzpatrick et al 1995:96).

It seems inevitable, though, that parent-adolescent conflicts may arise. This inevitability could be due to different values and attitudes as the adolescent may now find him-or herself in a position to question parental and other rules, ideas, attitudes and values. It is, however, through questioning that they may get a better understanding of themselves and their relationship to the world around them. The conflicts may, at some stage, be necessary so that independence and a clear formulation of the self can develop (Sarafino et al 1980:502). A clear formulation and acceptance of self, as it has been said, contribute positively to healthy communication with the outside world. Studies of social interactions and
adjustments of adolescents show the importance of the social foundations laid at home during childhood years (Hurlock 1973:180-183).

Bosma and Jackson (1990:142) argue that in order for adolescents to experience themselves as individuals who are not wholly dependent on their parent’s views, they have to risk expressing ideas of which their parents might not approve. There appears to be an experience of individuality, which opens the adolescent to the process of explaining him- or herself. It is during this process that parents and adolescents’ interactions get characterised by conflict at times, as well as closeness since they still seek validation and advice from their parents. It is usually at this stage of transformation that parents’ control attempts tends to surface as adolescents take the risk of expressing their ideas, whether defending or discussing them.

In conclusion, parental supportive behaviour appears to communicate acceptance by the parent, who attributes value and worth to the adolescent. This in turn contributes to the development of a positive self that is able to appreciate and respect other people’s ideas in the outer world.

2.3.2.3 Conative development in adolescents

Conative development is concerned with the basic driving forces which give rise to a person’s behaviour. The conative aspect of development includes needs, tendencies, impulses, aspirations, motives, aims, drives, wishes and the will. This conative aspect implies a goal to be pursued and a will to achieve the goal. The will is seen as an active striving towards the realisation of a goal. In an act of the will the aspirations form a point of departure, which is the basis for the initiation of action. Thus an aspiration, that is, the motive should exist before the will can be moved into action. It becomes apparent then that aspiration and will form an integrated whole. To put it into simpler terms, one could say the will “acts as a coachman with a particular course in mind and it is along this course that this coachman (the will) steers his aspirations” (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1993:93).
As has been discussed, adolescence appears to be, among other things, a time of idealism, romanticism and fanciful ideas about future and life in general. Aspirational (conative) development is a longing for that which is beyond, which at present seems to be out of reach. The implication of this is that of a goal set by the individual which has personal significance. Usually, the greatest aspiration of a child is to be grown up, which is characterized by such statements as "when I'm old". That of adolescents, amongst others, is to be emancipated totally from teachers and parents (adults) as educators. As the adolescent continues to be successful in his/her endeavours, high aspirations develop and he/she continues to be intrinsically motivated to do even more (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1993:94). On the contrary, when adolescents meet with constant failures and disappointments about their efforts, their aspirational level may decrease or may even disappear. They may become unrealistic regarding their goals.

- **The influence of conative development on the self-concept in adolescents**

According to Maslow (Kolbe 1990:39) man "seeks to be true to his own nature, to trust himself, to be authentic, spontaneous, honestly expressive, to look for the sources of his action in his own deep inner nature". In view of the above statement, one can say it seems important for one to maximize one's capabilities by recognizing the power of one's will. As the adolescent grows, his/her capability to think logically also develops. This may go along with his/her creativity, which may also appear. Thus, the adolescent may understand how and why his creative urges can generate productive efforts.

As the creative urge continues to develop, if the aspiration is not allowed to generate by significant others, an adolescents' self-concept may be negatively affected. The same could be expected of an adolescent who is pressurized to follow somebody else's example in order to do well. Such feelings of pressure could be due to the fact that people are born with unique ways of approaching things and that even two people brought up in the same environment take on the world in different ways. Kolbe (1990:4) argues that, this is a common-sense reality which has been lost in the notion that a person can be anything he/she wants to be, if for example, he/she has the right schooling. On the contrary, the conative is the source of all striving, longing, ambition and self-expression. It is through conation that adolescents strive towards goals or self-actualisation (Kolbe 1990:40).
Considering the above ideas, an adolescent who is blocked from using that natural creative urge, the will, the desire to realise his/her ambition, may be faced with problems in regard to self-concept development. Such an adolescent may have a negative self-concept and thus see him- or herself as worthless. On the other hand, a positive self-concept may enable the adolescent to understand and accept his/her limitations and then know his/her interest, skills and abilities (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1993:93-95).

• The influence of conative development on social development in adolescents

In regard to the aspirations that have been mentioned earlier on, adolescents are focused on the fulfillment of some needs and if these needs, desires or motives are not satisfied, they may be frustrated or conflict may result. Adolescents’ aspirations are considerably influenced by what others expect of them. It seems that the stronger the desire to be accepted by a group, the higher will their level of aspiration be (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1993:95). In their early stage they may have been competing with neighbouring youth; the competition may have been initiated in their home. If that were to be the case, their conative development would be affected because on the one hand they may act so as to satisfy their parents’ competitive nature or teachings while on the other hand the natural urge is to do as they wish.

The society in which adolescents grow up has an important influence on their development, relationships, adjustments and problems. The expectations of the society may mould their personalities, influence their roles, and guide their futures. This may mean that to an extent the adolescent may have to conform to societal structures even though the urge to do according to his/her will may be strong. The structure and functions of this society may help them fulfill their needs and aspirations, or create new problems by stimulating further tension and frustration.

Considering these societal influences, Rice (1992:12) argues that there seems to have been a decline in the importance of intrinsic values, in the adolescents of the nineties such as the desire for self-expression or the need to be creative, and that the extrinsic values have taken over. This could be due to family expectations and expectations from the wider society. Adolescents do need to have their desires and aspirations recognised. Rice (1992:514)
argues that as members of society they may take on a vocational identity, as they want to be seen as “somebodies”. They may do this because there is a desire to find selfhood, self-realisation and self-fulfillment. However, if their desires and aspirations are not met, they may see themselves as being worthless in a society that does not recognise them, and may be critical towards the societal values that will not allow for individual self-expression, thus their social development may be negatively affected. Confirming this idea, Pekrun (Maehr & Pintrich 1993:111) argue that the intrinsic values of action or behaviour appear to have been neglected by expectancy-value theories, which have favoured perceived functions of actions in the production of outcomes (extrinsic motivation).

• The influence of conative development on communication in adolescents

All people have certain basic physiological needs or urges such as the urge to live, to appease hunger or to quench thirst. If these needs are not met, this may lead to malnutrition. In an educational situation as well as at home, a malnourished child is always tired and sleepy, which at school may result in underachievement. Such a child may have communication problems in regard to his/her siblings, his/her peers, and teachers as he/she may end up being withdrawn, shy and extremely quiet.

There are other secondary aspirations, for example aspiring to succeed not only in regard to school work but also socially, striving for self respect, aspiring towards being independent, to recognition and approval, striving for knowledge, insight and understanding. If these aspirations are blocked such that adolescents feel they are not given the opportunity to realise their aspirations, they may be seen as being rebellious as they press on for their aspirations, or withdraw as they may perceive the whole exercise as being futile and hopeless. Unfortunately, in both cases such an adolescents’ communication is reflected in their self-concept as well as in their social development. In terms of their self-concept it may be so poor that they may withdraw to themselves or their own world, or be rebellious so that socially, in regard to their family/parents, there is no, or poor, communication. This poor communication may drive them to join “gangs or groups” that may open doors for them to realise their urges. Because they are critical towards societal values, adolescents may end up being negative towards adults whom they may see as being the pioneers of such a “wicked” society.
Parents do set goals for their children and they sometimes praise them for the successes they have had and may reprove them for failure. This is learnt by the children as they grow, as this exercise normally happens even from the early years of schooling. Indirectly, these children are taught to strive and aspire. But when an adolescent's aspirations are realised or felt by an adolescent, the parent may want to intervene and channel the aspirations. In such case the adolescent may be frustrated. In some cases, because parents were never able to excel or achieve anything outstanding or may even be competing with other families, they may put pressure on the adolescent to follow certain careers, which are their own dreams. Out of loyalty and obedience, adolescents may decide to do what their parents are asking them to do. Such adolescents may fail owing to pressure or anxiety as well as to the fact that they are made to do something they may not want to. Repeated failure may lead to low self-concept, withdrawal and feelings of worthlessness and inefficiency. Any adolescent child with the feelings described above usually has communication problems inside and outside his family. On the other hand, a home that is satisfied with the status quo and where no encouragement or vision is present may thwart adolescents in their aspirations. They may end up being short sighted even when dealing with their problems in the wider society. Hurlock (1973:280) confirms that when a person fails to reach a goal or is having their aspirations thwarted, they may develop feelings of inferiority and inadequacy that may result in a failure complex. He further says that an individual who develops such a complex approaches everything he undertakes with a defeatist attitude (Pekrun in Maehr et al 1993:118). This could result in any achievements falling even below their aspirations.

2.3.3 Spiritual development in adolescents

The focus in this discussion will be to give a brief overview of spiritual development, the influence moral development has on social development and self-concept formation. Moral dilemmas that usually face adolescents as they communicate with significant others, as well as the outside world, will also be discussed.
• Brief overview of spiritual development in adolescents

Quite a number of theories based on sound research findings agree on how important it is to understand the process by which children and youth develop moral judgement (Rice 1992:465; Hughes 1993; Ihinger-Tallman/Pasley 1987). Piaget (Rice 1992:64-65) emphasised on the development of moral judgement as a gradual cognitive process, which is stimulated by the increasing, changing social relationships of children as they get older. It seems that moral development and social interaction are intertwined, rightfully so because the child who is becoming an adolescent is expected to live by the norms and values exercised by his or her society.

The same adolescent, however, is expected to exercise his moral judgement in different situations. Other theories have put emphasis on the importance of personality and superego development and their relationship to the development of moral character and behaviour (Rice 1992:465). Moral judgement moves from the heteronymous to the autonomous stage as the child realises that “rules are no longer external laws to be considered sacred because they are laid down by adults but social creations arrived through a process of free decision and thus deserving of mutual respect and consent based on Piaget’s conclusions” (Rice 1992:466). Rice argues that children move from objective to subjective responsibility, from a morality of constraint (or obedience) to a morality of co-operation or reciprocity. However, it must be realised that there are adolescents or even adults who, after having broken certain rules, feel remorse only at being caught but otherwise not for breaking the rules. Take for instance, a high school child staying at a girl’s hostel who knows the rules that for example she is not allowed to go to a nearby café during weekends. She might argue that she has to go because she is hungry. The girl knows that she will be breaking the rules by going, yet she does go. Once she is caught, she pleads for forgiveness having stated that she was hungry. This girl is constrained by authority and not by an inner conscience. Rice (1992:476) therefore argues that it is unreasonable to always attach age categories to the stage of moral development.
Influence of moral development on social development in adolescents

According to Rice (1992:478), acquiring knowledge and respect for the existing values and rules of one's social milieu is one of the major ingredients of moral development. He goes on to argue that, once known, these values and rules must be internalised. Psychoanalysts claim that parents who are nurturant and responsive to children encourage identification and conscience development (Rice 1992:479). Social learning theorists emphasize the acquisition of values through a process of identification, internalisation and reinforcement. In terms of reinforcement, it would seem therefore that social influences that parallel the parental influence tend to be accepted as the particular values, but if the opposite happens, there is bound to be a conflict or moral confusion. Adolescents who are surrounded by deviant moral values and norms may, according to Rice (1992:479) become delinquent because of the environment. Moral behaviour is commonly defined as a set of beliefs or values, which a social group defines as good or bad. Cognisance is given to cultural variations as well as moral imperatives found in most cultures. What is most important is that in a psychological sense moral development has an effect on one's self, the "I" as it gets moulded also by adolescents' social interaction, starting within the family and then in the outside world.

Earlier on, the issue of autonomy as the child matures was highlighted. It should, however, be taken into consideration that before the emergence of autonomy, there is an intermediate stage for internalising rules without evaluating them. However, as this adolescent continues to mature, co-operative morality, which is autonomy, emerges. This is based on reciprocity among peers as the adolescents socialise. They begin to understand, among other things, the roles of motives, empathy for others and social consequences of behaviour. Some of the social consequences serve as guidelines for orderly social conduct. Take for instance the social rule of the prohibition of stealing and its consequences. Because the adolescent knows and understands the social consequences and may not enjoy the prospect of years or months in prison, adolescents may learn to respect other people's property and belongings. They may end up internalising the fact that respect is a virtue and it then becomes their principle. Despite all this, these rules of morality are not permanent in some adolescents, they may be altered as the group or the individuals' interests grow or may be conditional in various situations that adolescents may find themselves in.
The sketch below serves to clarify stages of moral development as formulated by Kohlberg (Rice 1992:469).

**Diagram 1**  
*Stages of moral development*

| Phase 1 | A moral dilemma can produce the following:  
As I continue to put on my radio in my dormitory after studies I always get punished severely, so disregarding hostel rules does not pay if it gets me into trouble. |
<table>
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<td>Pre-conventional Level</td>
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In phase 1 a person’s attitude towards something is based on punishment and obedience. Whether an action was good or bad, that is determined by the physical consequence, which in some cases could be punishment. However, at this stage obeying authority and thus avoiding punishment has nothing to do with understanding moral order. |
| Phase 2 | Moral dilemma |
| | If the reward is negative and since there seems to be reciprocity in this phase, a person’s first thought would be to reciprocate the action like “if he hits me, I hit him too”. |

There seems to be a concern for other people’s feelings sometimes. Actions that are taken as correct are those that satisfy the person’s needs and sometimes other people’s needs. The expectation of a positive reward either by gesture or word of mouth seems to be the driving force behind doing the right thing.
### Phase 3

**Conventional Level 3**

In phase 3, behaviour is seen as being good as long as it satisfies people’s expectations or stereotypes. These stereotypes tend to direct people’s behaviour. This phase is referred to as “good boy/nice girl”. Intention of action is considered here, as a person’s behaviour is often judged according to it.

**Moral dilemma**

“If men in this area molest our children, we shall cut off their arms one by one”, protested women of all ages. “Nobody will say that we are cruel, for our intention is good”.

### Phase 4

This is the phase of law and order. Authority, fixed rules, and maintenance of social order are the domain in this phase. A person does his duty, shows respect, and behaves well so as to maintain social order.

**Moral dilemma**

Even though I have caught him stealing or breaking into my house, I cannot apply physical force because that is against the law.

### Phase 5

**Post-conventional or autonomous level**

Phases 5 and 6. In phase 5 what is democratically seen as being right or wrong is what guides a person’s behaviour. However, even though a person may support and abide by the democratically determined aspects of right and wrong, in some cases he/she may be faced with rational considerations.

**Moral dilemma**

Seeing a man stealing gives us the right to physical action by law. A person will not use physical action just because the law allows him/her to. He/she will look for other options first.
Phase 6

That which is right is that which appeals to self-chosen ethical principles of justice, of the reciprocity and equality, respect of the dignity of the human as individual person.

Moral dilemma

Using physical force undermines not only the human dignity of the recipient but also my own as the applier, no matter what. Therefore, I would be acting against my ethical principles if I were to use it.

Once again a family that serves as a model for respect, co-operation and other values becomes a starting point or springboard for the adolescent to build on his/her values and principles. Whether later in his/her adolescent years he/she will need his/her space for autonomy, the fact of the matter is that for his/her socialisation process, with the outside world in particular, he/she has had his/her family to reflect on. Thus a family that is grounded on healthy norms and values and communicates reasons for its behaviour is important for the maturing adolescent.

- **Influence of spiritual development on the self-concept in adolescents**

It seems one major developmental stage of adolescence is to formulate a moral code, which will allow the individual to cope with the challenges and problems of adult living. Philosophers claim that virtually all aspects of adult living require moral viewpoints. Adolescents, therefore, need to formulate moral viewpoints which allow them to meet the expectations of their social group, their family units and most importantly themselves. Because different individuals have different priorities, the order of expectations will vary. To some it will be the family while to others self is of most concern. Adolescents learn to realise that moral standards change; they are not inflexible. As they grow, they flounder until they reach a moral philosophy, which does justice to themselves (Rice 1992:466-468). Even though these adolescents should formulate their own personal moral codes, they are able to do so on the basis of what they know. In this case family interaction becomes important.
As adolescents develop from concrete to abstract reasoning, they become faced with numerous challenges, among others the burden of thinking through acceptable codes and accepting the responsibility that their own behaviour may fall short of the ideal. This of course, when they realise it, will definitely lead to moral anxiety, which seems to be affecting most adolescents in our society today. In terms of concern for justice this becomes central to moral outlook and judgement (Mitchell in Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman 1994:102). According to Mitchell (Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman 1994:103), "Justice is the dominant moral of the adolescent years". Adolescents’ moral judgement is aroused once they see injustice done, particularly to a fellow adolescent.

It has been indicated that adolescents formulate their own moral viewpoints. However, it must also be considered that parent’s viewpoints are taken into consideration, but will not be accepted unquestioningly even though, in the end, they may be similar. What is important to adolescents at this stage for their self-concept is the space for self-inspection and a certain amount of trial and error. It is at this stage that parents can only hope that errors are not too damaging and trials are not too lengthy. For the development of self-concept, adolescents’ moral judgement as well becomes increasingly cognitive. The individual begins to develop an intellectual awareness of the reasons behind social standards, customs and manners (Mitchell in Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman 1994:104).

- **Influence of moral development on communication in adolescents**

As adolescents’ self-concepts are being shaped, they may end up resisting those cultural teachings which offend their present moral posture, and accept those that harmonize with it. The urge for independence now grows more as it impels adolescents to be their own masters in coping with moral matters. In most cases for the development of their self-concepts they do things to prove, particularly to the adult, that they can get things right. They can do this or that without being coerced by the adult. They will however, accept assistance where it may be found, but on condition that it fits them and not vice versa. Thus as age increases they become less dependent on family ties even though adolescents’ independence is exercised primarily within the framework of family expectation and family morality (Rice 1992:474).
Regarding their lesser dependency on their parents, Fitzpatrick et al (1995:101) further argues that adolescents tend to regard more areas of their lives as appropriately controlled by themselves alone. They tend to be less accepting of parent’s attempts to influence them in regard to, for example, social events, dress styles and even choice of friends. Unfortunately, such a stand tends to cause conflict with parents who tend to see issues as more under their authority than do children.

Steinberg and Silverberg (Fitzpatrick et al 1995:80-81) suggest that adolescents’ becoming autonomous involves learning to deal with both their emotional attachment to their parents and pressure from their peers. It would seem therefore, that to become truly autonomous the adolescent would have to resist pressure from peers to engage in undesirable behaviours.

In regard to parental influence, Hofer et al (1998:109) contend that parent-adolescent relations are transformed during adolescence, from patterns in which adults are in authority to patterns of mutuality. What this means then is that a parent and adolescent need to come to a mutual agreement about ideas or concerns. It seems therefore that both adolescents and parents face the task of changing their relationship in ways that reflect the increasing symmetry of their contributions to it. Adolescents may need to gain autonomy from the thoughts, feelings and actions of their parents, who may be struggling to accept the need for the transformation and may be authoritarian in their style of parenting.

Studies have shown that parents who have adopted an authoritarian style of parenting tend to depress the relation between effort and school grades in every ethnic group (Barber & Rollins 1990:89). They further argue that authoritarian parenting may be reducing the internal motivation of young adolescents with respect to school behaviours. This is due to the fact that they may be carrying over to the school arena their vision of regimes at home that prescribe behaviour and allow little latitude for personal choice and efficacy.

Considering the above facts, it seems again that the family as an institution should provide its children with healthy and proper guidelines as they grow. These may enable the child to develop a sound self-concept, for a family is usually influential in the formulation of the adolescent’s self-concept. It has been indicated in the previous paragraphs that in terms of
the development of healthy communication in adolescence (and in fact in children) a sound parent-child interaction is of paramount importance. In terms of discipline, Rice (1992:477) argues that a very permissive family situation usually brings about negative results for the adolescent in terms of the socialisation process and moral development. This is due to the fact that children are not given any guidance in terms of exercising inner control. Adolescents who lack inner control may end up being impulsive in terms of behaviour, or talking to other people or their peer group. Such impulsivity may in most cases affect other people's emotions negatively. Unfortunately, such adolescents may be shunned by their peer group, as the group may not tolerate their way of communicating with it. This may lead to the adolescents seeing themselves as social misfits, and ultimately the adolescent may resort to or get involved with substance abuse. It seems the family should always consider itself as a small society in the macrocosm wherein interaction of family members should be reflective of what the wider society would expect from individuals in terms of how they relate to others.

2.3.4 Communication and the process of self-evaluation of the adolescent

All learning and experience take place in the context of relationships and lead to self-evaluation. According to Galbo (Rice 1992:497), the significance of teachers in the lives of adolescents cannot be overemphasized. He contends, “teachers represent a cumulative wisdom of our culture and are trained to transmit that wisdom”. The way the teachers are perceived by adolescents influences the attitudes youths hold towards the basic tenets of our society. Teachers exert a considerable influence if adolescents find them knowledgeable and caring. If the relationship between teacher and the student is personal and if communication is deep and extensive, there is strong evidence that teachers as significant others are important role models and can influence the formation of adolescents' identity, self-concept, goals and aspirations. In view of the above comment, it seems that the positive and constructive involvement of teachers in the school life of the adolescent can lead to the latter developing identity, self-esteem and ultimately a healthy self-concept. In order to support the adolescents to such an extent that they realise their potentials, so that they develop healthy realistic positive self-concepts and ultimately manage to actualize themselves adequately, the educator has to take note of the whole process of self-actualisation. Adolescents' involvement in school activities is also of great importance.
because each new situation of relationship starts with involvement. It is out of that involvement that the adolescent eventually comes up with either a positive or a negative evaluation of the self.

Below is a diagram of the process of self-actualisation, which will be discussed in detail in the next paragraph.

**Diagram 2**

*Process of self-actualisation*

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2.3.4.1  **The process of self-actualisation**

Adolescents often find themselves in a new situation. The example of a life skills period at school will be used. The teacher encourages the learners to be involved by asking an interesting question like, "What would you do if when walking on foot in the evening you feel you are being followed?". This arouses interest, and because of their involvement, their active participation, adolescents attribute meaning to what they are learning. As they attribute meaning and start to understand what the teacher is explaining, they could either feel good or bad about what they have learnt, depending on how they have experienced it. If they were positively involved and understood everything, they may experience positive feelings. As they feel good and have attributed significant meaning to the learning matter, these adolescents end up looking at themselves and saying, "I can understand this, I can
contribute significantly as well, I can..... I can.....”. The way they behave as a result of this “I can.....” attitude makes them confident and not only proud about themselves but also able to like this subject. In this way relationships and learning experiences influence the way persons see themselves. The positive feedback they get from their teacher as regards their work makes them more confident and they end up looking forward to learning new material.

A positive cycle may result in positive self-evaluation. At this point a new cycle starts where the quality of involvement will once more have an effect on the quality of understanding. In the case of negative involvement, adolescents may not pay attention and may therefore, not understand the learning material, which may result in negative feelings about the self and subsequently in negative behaviour. When their behaviour is negative, the teacher may react negatively, which may lead to a breakdown in communication. Unfortunately they may not look forward to a new situation and may start acting according to their negative self-concepts. This may lead to behavioural problems such as initially bunking classes and ultimately rejecting school as a whole. At this stage adolescents have developed an inadequate cycle of self-evaluation, which may lead to more serious problems such as depression, drug abuse and eventually suicidal tendencies.

In the following paragraph a brief but detailed discussion of the self-concept and its dynamics will be given.

2.3.5 SELF-CONCEPT IN ADOLESCENTS

According to Jacobs and Raath (1993:12) a person’s self-concept is the image that they have of themselves and it is made up of the many conceptions that they have to form about themselves. Felker (Jacobs & Raath 1993:12) agrees that the self-concept is a unique set of observations, ideas and attitudes that individuals have about themselves. The self is comprised of the following components:

(a) The physical or material self which includes the physical self, material possessions et cetera.
The social self of the individual is the recognition, which they get from their peers.

The spiritual self is man's inner or subjective being, his psychic faculties or dispositions (Jacobs & Raath 1993:13). The definition of the self-concept seems to be in line with that of Shavelson (Bracken 1996:58) who further argues that it is the combination of one's experiences with one's environment and the interpretation thereof that ultimately leads to the formation of a person's self-concept.

The concept of self is therefore the all-inclusive image that individuals have of themselves. The self-concept is complex and consists of several smaller concepts that are integrated into the person's self-concept, for example the physical self, family self, normative self, etcetera. The self-concept of each person is unique and represents the core of the self. It is an organised configuration of conceptions, which is dynamic and stays subjective to change (Jacobs & Raath 1993:15). Rice (1992:246) similarly contends that the first step in the development of a self-concept is one's recognition or realisation that one is a "distinct and separate individual". He further argues that the "self-concept implies a developing awareness of who and what one is". It describes what individuals see when they look at themselves, in terms of their self-perceived physical characteristics, personality skills, traits, roles and social status (Rice 1992:246).

In terms of what Rice is saying, a girl for instance who has gone through some bad experiences in life might say, "I am a worthless and an ineffective person, I will never make it in life". Such a statement reflects her perception and one may say her self-concept is low. Another example is that of physically disabled persons who see their physical disabilities as stumbling blocks in achieving most things in life, even though their excellent public speaking skills, for instance, may elevate them from level B to level A. However, they look at themselves and see worthless persons. Whether individuals have an accurate self-concept or not is obviously significant. People tend to be six different selves:

(a) The people they are
(b) The people they think they are
(c) The people they think others think they are
(d) The people they want to become
(e) The people they think others want them to become
Shavelson et al (Bracken 1996:58) confirming the above perspective distinguishes "between self-concepts based on a person's own self-perceptions and inferred self-concepts that are based on inferences by another person".

These perceptions may be due to the experiences surrounding that particular person. From the above points, one is inclined to say that the self-concept cannot, therefore, be seen as an isolated component of the individual's life but as integrated with, and influenced by, everything a person does or experiences in his/her life.

2.3.5.1 The dynamic nature of the self-concept

Four stages of the self-concept will be discussed. They are realistically positive, realistically negative, unrealistically positive and unrealistically negative. The self-concept of a person will never always be the same. It moves between the two poles of being the positive and the negative. Children who perform academically well can have positive self-concepts. When the same children fail a subject, it may be found that they suddenly evaluate themselves as worthless, indicating a negative self-concept. This change and move between poles is due to the experiences persons go through and their evaluation of the situation and of themselves.
Diagram 3  Movement of the self-concept between the positive and the negative poles
(Adopted from Jacobs & Raath 1993)

The self-concept moves to and fro between the two poles.

Is self-evaluation realistic?

People generally go through positive and negative experiences in their daily lives. It is quite rare to find people who can testify that all through their lives they have never had any bad experiences. What seems to be important is how people react to the bad experiences. For instance, when something negative happens, do they think they are the only ones who go through such experiences or do they view them as passing phases and believe that they must grow out of them? People whose self-concepts are realistic need not be successful in everything they attempt. They will not have problems if they are, for instance, unable to do well in music. They have accepted the fact that they cannot do well in everything. These people are able to accept and realise both their positive and negative characteristics.
**A realistic positive self-concept**

People are said to have realistic positive self-concepts if they acknowledge that they have, for instance, above average talents in drawing. They accept in a realistic way that they are talented, they agree that they have talents and they are right.

**Realistic negative self-concept**

People perceive themselves as bad losers and that it makes them furious to lose. This is a negative characteristic. They know it is negative but they realistically accept this flaw in their personalities. They are also realistic.

**Unrealistic positive self-concept**

People may think they are the smartest and most attractive ones among their peers, but this is not really the case. They are wrong in seeing themselves more positively than they really are.

**Unrealistic negative self-concept**

John fails a grade and believes he is the dumbest person ever born. While being so overly critical and negative, he is unrealistic because it is not really true. He is wrong.

Generally, people as they grow, have this ideal person in mind that they may aspire to be. As they strive and work harder, they talk to themselves as if they have created this image of the ideal self. They have set themselves a goal that they want to reach. Everybody has a real and an ideal self. However, in some cases children may have unrealistic dreams, totally removed from reality. The danger is that the bigger the difference between the true image, the real self, and the ideal image, the more trouble individuals may have in realising the dream and thus accepting themselves as they are. If children understand themselves and their abilities and create the ideal image accordingly, then such children will be motivated to emulate the image that they have created for themselves (Jacobs & Raath 1993:29).
2.3.5.2 The influence of the changing self-concept on communication in adolescents

One's self-concept generally helps one to develop a view of life. Therefore a person's concept of self may influence their view about life, objects, people and ideas. According to Jacobs and Vrey (Jacobs & Raath 1993:29), persons with negative self-concepts are in a constant process of evaluating themselves as they talk about themselves. They may see themselves as worthless and as failures, they believe they are no good and are just nuisances to everybody. The unfortunate result of such negative evaluation is that such persons may end up with behavioural problems. This kind of constant or continuous evaluation of self is referred to as self-talk, and in this case it is negative self-talk.

Regarding an unrealistic negative self-concept, children who experience many such negative situations may be hampered in communication. As they begin to underachieve, they may see themselves as inferior, as compared to their peers, and may withdraw from their company. They may also show signs of personality problems like suspiciousness and unreliability. In some cases when confronted by their peers, instead of withdrawing, they may surprisingly show aggressive behaviour as silent aggression may be their only defense mechanism. Such children are afraid to participate or talk in class, they are afraid to ask questions because they think they may be scolded. Their confidence in themselves is so low that they may constantly isolate themselves. Isolating oneself and not taking part may lead to the situation where the child does not have the chance to learn and practice social skills. This may in turn lead to impeded social development.

Unfortunately, all these issues are manifestations of poor communication. On the other hand, a person with positive self-talk may not show any signs of communication problems. If they are there, they are minimal. Such children are confident in themselves and are not afraid to share their ideas with other people. In most cases they see problems as challenges and out of their bad experiences, they are likely to learn something as they look for solutions.

Confirming the above idea, Purkey (Barber & Rollins 1990:96) further argues that if children perceive themselves to be able, confident, adequate and persons of worth, worthy
of respect rather than condemnation, they will have more energy available to spend on academic work. On the other hand, if they perceive themselves as worthless, unable to cope with life’s problems, they may not find it convenient or possible to identify with academic achievement. They may even fail in spite of being intellectually capable of achieving more.

It has been found that self-concept is related to academic achievement, and that parental behaviours which have been found to predict academic achievement are also strong predictors of self-concept. It may well be that the self-concept serves as an intervening variable in the parental behaviour about academic achievement (Barber & Rollins 1990:97; Jacob & Raath 1993:30). Unfortunately, children who fail continuously may end up withdrawing from social contacts as they see themselves as failures.

Barber and Rollins (1990:101) have argued that supportive behaviours on the part of parents may be interpreted as confirmations of worth, while coercive behaviour may communicate disregard for the child’s worth. A model for these ideas is shown in the figure below.

Figure 1  Relationship between adolescent self-esteem/self-concept, parental support and parental control, and academic achievement, self-confidence, independence and social competence.
According to Barber and Rollins (1990:103) sixteen factors can be identified as either parental support or parental coercive control attempts. These controls contribute to an adolescent's self-concept. Below are statements by adolescents, which are then categorised under support or coercive control.

**Support**

1. I experienced a feeling of security in my relationship with this parent.
2. This parent made me feel he/she was there if I needed him/her.
3. This parent felt affection for me and I was certain of it.
4. This parent seemed to trust me in my role as a family member.
5. Whenever I had any kind of problem, I could count on this parent to help me out.
6. This parent has shown positive interest in, and support of me in my daily affairs as part of the family.
7. This parent seemed to have approved of the things I did.
8. This parent taught me things I wanted to learn.
9. This parent said some nice things about me.

**Coercive control attempts**

1. This parent is always getting after me.
2. This parent is always finding fault with me.
3. This parent is not very patient with me.
4. This parent often complains about what I do.
5. This parent gets cross and angry about little things I do.
6. This parent always tries to change me.
7. This parent seems to see my faults more than good points.
8. This parent does not give me any peace until I do what he/she says.

It should be noted though that a person's self-concept will consist of both negative and positive aspects and that it may be more positive than at other times. However, problems may develop if it loses its dynamism, that is becoming predominantly or unrealistically positive or negative (Jacobs & Raath 1993:44).

**How can changed communication influence relations?**

Children will look forward to a new situation where they have had positive experiences in class. For instance if their self-concepts are positive, they look forward to new challenges. Because of these experiences, they relate well to their teacher, schoolmates and schoolwork. However, the opposite is true for children with negative self-talk. Because they believe they are stupid, worthless or failures, they may view life in general as being unfair to themselves. Since they believe they are stupid, they start to behave accordingly. They do not relate well to people, their peer group, teachers or sometimes even to their families. They may not relate well to objects or animals around them. One girl admitted during a therapy session that at one stage, she and her friend they would catch snakes and cats and place them in a bag and tie it. The same girl had put a cat in a microwave but a friend came in just in time and the cat was saved. The girl had been repeatedly raped from the age of nine years until she was twelve years old (Therapy session: 1999).

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From to the above discussion it is clear that negative self-concept (negative self-talk) correlates with poor communication, as well as relations, with objects/animals and people.

2.4 **SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the communication of adolescents with their families, the adolescent’s developmental level and its influences on communication, and the process of self-evaluation of adolescents have been discussed.

In the next chapter the discussion will focus on restructured families – what characterises them, the problems that are common in such families that is, the dynamics thereof, and the challenges that are usually experienced in such families?
CHAPTER 3

RESTRUCTURED FAMILIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter communication in the family was discussed. The goals of communication in the family and the contribution of communication to the child's physical, psychic and spiritual development were investigated. In this chapter, characteristics of the restructured family, and some problems encountered in these families, as well as how such problems may affect communication in such families, will be discussed. Fictional names will be given to respondents.

3.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESTRUCTURED FAMILY

The discussion here will be based on what differentiates restructured families from the "normal" family. The term "stepfamily" or "restructured family" in this chapter is used to
include all family systems in which at least one of the couple has a child by a previous relationship or marriage.

The stepfamily may live together all the time, during some of the time or not at all. For example, some children may visit the parent they don't live with at weekends or during holidays. In “normal” families, both parents may have not had children from previous relationships or marriages; this may be their first marriage. As a result the children they have are their biological children and they are biological parents. The following diagram illustrates a restructured family:

**Diagram 4  Model of a restructured family**

A = husband and wife  
B = children of husband  
C = children of wife  
D = children of husband and wife  
E = previous wife  
F = previous husband

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From this diagram it can be seen that as represented by D, there is a nuclear family in terms of the biological parents and biological children; however, children from previous relationships make this family a restructured one.

3.2.1 **How are restructured families formed?**

Restructured families can be formed in several different ways. Some couples, who do not get along, separate and the relationship may ultimately end in a divorce. After the divorce they may decide to form new relationships and marry, taking along their children, or are married to partners who already have their own children. Death of a partner may force another to remarry. Also, a mother who has always been a single parent may decide to live with or marry a person who then becomes her children's parent.

Papernow (Booth & Dunn 1994:3) concludes by saying that a stepfamily is a family in which at least one member of the adult couple is a stepparent.

It is also worth noting that according to Franks (1988:64-68) a stepfamily is also formed through some kind of loss. In most cases both partners may try their best to disguise the pain and sense of loss.

Beer (1989:175) confirms the above and contends that, formerly stepfamilies resulted mainly from bereavement or remarriage following a divorce, or from the marriage of a single mother to a man who is not the father of the child/children. The same man may have his own child/children from previous relationships.

He further argues that getting involved in a new relationship has usually been the choice of adults and children normally have no say. They are, therefore, in a sense “forced” to form a part of the restructured family.

Collins (1988:28) argues that stepfamilies are based on a decision to care for someone else’s children. That, according to him, is a decision that has strong moral overtones, because it embodies assumptions about one’s obligations to other people.
Taking the above facts into consideration, it is not surprising to realise that there are some problems in such families – between stepparents and their children, and between the children themselves.

3.3 PROBLEMS IN RESTRUCTURED FAMILIES

The following discussion will serve to highlight the phenomena of stepfamilies with regard to the following:

- statistics on step/restructured families
- background on stepfamilies and nuclear families
- general problems/challenges of restructured families

It seems that stepfamilies are one of the fastest growing family types in industrial nations. In The Star (10-04-1999:7) under the caption “Marriage remains popular according to statistics”, it is clear that the number of children born out of wedlock, whose parents subsequently married, was escalating at an alarming rate. It was stated that a total of 47,906 children had their births re-registered while 3,592 adoptions were recorded. This figure includes children of all races.

The increase in stepfamilies is not confined to South Africa. According to Booth and Dunn (1994:ix) it would appear that one third of all Americans are now a stepparent, stepchild, stepsibling or some other member of a stepfamily.

One would expect that South Africa, as with Africa, may follow the tendency of a 70-75% ratio of remarriage, which subsequently would mean a high number of stepfamilies.

The Citizen (18-12-1998:5) under the caption “White South Africans divorce sooner” recorded the rate of marriage to be 362 per 100 000 in 1996 and the divorce rate to be 81 per 100 000. It was further stated that most South Africans divorced within the first four years of marriage, while most divorces among other population groups occurred after five
to nine years of marriage. The table below indicates the divorce rate of various population groups according to the survey.

**Table 1**  
Statistics on the divorce rate of populations in South Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION GROUP</th>
<th>STATISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White South Africans</td>
<td>440 per 100 000 population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloureds</td>
<td>240 per 100 000 population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians and Asians</td>
<td>80 per 100 000 population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black South Africans</td>
<td>23 per 100 000 population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In *The Citizen* (30-06-1998:4) it was stated that divorce courts sat throughout the year, with only a brief break between the Christmas and New Year holidays.

The above statistics confirm the expectation cited earlier that South Africa, as with America, may follow the tendency of 70-75% remarriages, which subsequently will mean a high number of stepfamilies and the associated implications.

But are the implications or logistics unique only to restructured families? It may not be denied that restructured family life could be difficult, at least in the beginning. This could be due to the fact that the stepfamily may face a major task in integrating the offspring into a new, workable, family structure (Visher & Visher 1988:63). This is probably why Collins (1988:28) argues “stepparents are entitled to respect rather than the sort of suspicion that they seem almost invariably to attract, for they have voluntarily entered into a commitment to children, which is a commitment of supreme moral stature.”

Anderson and White (1986:407-408) argue that from a structural family theory perspective, no family style is inherently normal or abnormal, functional or dysfunctional. The determining factor then, could be dependent on how each family establishes itself as a
"healthy" family. Difficult as the process of integration in the restructured family may be, however, the same difficulty in interaction may be experienced in some nuclear families, which may end in divorce.

In *You* magazine (10-08-2000:18-19) there is a report of different incidents where parents are reported to have been allegedly killed by their sons. It is interesting to note that out of the four incidents that have been reported, only one is a restructured family. It appears that all these are well-to-do families that seem (to the public eye) to be "normal" or "healthy". Most of these parents seem not to know what went wrong as they claim that they had been supporting their sons financially. Others put the blame on peer pressure and others on drugs. It is ironic to realise though, that they confess to the idea that drugs may have been bought from the generous allowance they have been giving their sons.

Considering what Anderson et al (1986:407) and *You* magazine say, it seems that establishing a healthy family does not depend primarily on how wealthy the parents are but is dependent on healthy communication within the family. One of South Africa’s leading actors in a popular soapie has this to say about his stepfather: "I had an amazing stepfather. He wanted me to come right and wanted the best for me. He encouraged me when I chose acting as my career" (*Saturday Star* 27-05-2000:11). He further emphasises on making meaningful moments with his children, which he attributes to his stepfather’s effective parenting.

In *The Sunday Express* (30-07-2000:52), which is a British newspaper, a certain man who lives with his wife and their daughter, stresses that for any parent-child relationship in any family, talking is vital. It seems clear then that healthy parent-child interaction is the core in any functional family unit, whether the family is restructured or not.

According to Papernow (1993:50) the major task of the new family is to develop some feeling of wholeness. This could be difficult to achieve, but not impossible, because of certain characteristics underlying restructured families. One such characteristic could be the parent-child relationship, which seems to be a problem even in "nuclear" families. In restructured families this could need extra effort to build.
He further argues that the areas of difficulty could be around loyalty conflicts as the child may be faced with confusion as to “choose” between being loyal to the stepparent, thus feeling as if he is betraying his biological parent, and being loyal to his biological parent. But this does not necessarily mean that “nuclear” families automatically have feelings of wholeness.

Visher and Visher (1988:49) inferred that there seems to be no reason why children in restructured families could not experience a range of positive and negative relationships similar to those of children in “nuclear” families. It seems the phenomena of entering new relationships with children and the consequent role of caring for stepchildren influences the nature and complexity of life in the restructured family. It also seems these phenomena determine the nature and quality of relationships between stepparents and their stepchildren. All the above elements mark the complex nature of stepfamilies. It will therefore, be worthwhile to look briefly at some of the challenges experienced in restructured families.

3.4 CHALLENGES TO RESTRUCTURED FAMILIES

According to Booth and Dunn (1994:57) the implications of the uniqueness of stepfamilies are such that they have to cope with stresses and strains that may override any potential advantages of marriage as the case would have been in some unclear families. From this point of view, it seems that stresses and conflicts are bound to exist in stepfamilies. The concern is how to deal with such stresses and/or how to avoid them if possible.

They further argue that these families will differ from “nuclear” families in regard to their patterns of functioning, organisation and relationships. This is possible considering the fact that there are new roles to be defined, developed and accepted (Everett 1993:34).

It seems though, according to Keshet (1987:2), that even though some of these parents have been married before, they discover that their previous experiences are not enough to guide them through the “maze of stepfamily life”. He however, acknowledges that step parenting is not all tears and heartache. What then could be the route to functional step parenting?
Kelley (1995:5) is quick to acknowledge that families that are functioning well are not free of stress or problems as “these are considered to be part of life”.

There are many questions regarding stepfamily or/and step parenting, such as: could anyone as an adult have admitted that they were sometimes jealous of those stepchildren, that they were not all sure they wanted them living in their home rather than staying with grandparents or in-laws, or cousins?

Keshet (1987:1) discusses the role played by some teachers in making stepparents feel the strain, of being stepparents, that otherwise could have been avoided. He says that it is rare to get invitations from some teachers to join in one’s stepchild’s school activities (they usually call or prefer biological parents). What if one is a remarried parent, and is, therefore, now a part of the child’s life? Has anyone ever told the remarried parent the secret of dividing himself into a sufficient number of pieces in order to satisfy his new partner? This seems to be very doubtful considering the fact that stepfamilies have shown the potential of breaking up (Beer 1992:13).

Taking the above questions into consideration, it seems the stepparent meets the expectation of catastrophe round many corners, even though one may approach step parenting with a positive mind. Keshet (1987:13) argues that this emanates from the attitudes of one’s friends and/or his/her relatives who usually have the tendency to asking whether stepparents get on well with their stepchildren. They would, however, not dream of asking such a question about one’s “natural” children.

As indicated earlier, it is important to note though that in any case stepfamilies are different, and have to work out solutions to their unique problems in their individual ways (Visher & Visher 1988:9-15). Collins (1988:1) indicates that there are countless successful stepfamilies in which children are able to develop to maturity in a secure and caring environment. He further argues that there is evidence to show that many grown-up stepchildren look back with affection and gratitude to what their stepparents did.

The above point of view is also confirmed by Everett (1993:5) who argues that some investigators have seriously questioned the nature of some evidence that stepfamily life in
general is less healthy than first family life. He also claims that some professionals and lay
people alike, who have viewed stepchildren as emotionally "poorer" than children in intact
"nuclear" families, have not come up with conclusive evidence. The same people, he
contends, infer that stepchildren are at greater risk of physical and psychological abuse and
that they perform psychosocially or behaviourally less competently than the offspring of
intact biological unions. He dismisses this as inference without conclusive evidence
(Everett 1993:5-8).

In regards to the above ideas, it stands to reason that families, whether "nuclear" or step,
are unique. People by their nature, at some point in time go through emotional stresses in
their lives, which may manifest themselves in their family interaction. The question then is
how to deal with such problems or conflicts when they arise, or how to avoid them.

It seems worth noting that even though some challenges have been highlighted, some
pleasures can be derived too from step-parenting as they exist hand in hand with the
challenges.

Consistent with the above arguments, Collins (1988:15) argues that with some stepfamilies
being successful, stepparents can expect two distinct pleasures over and above those
associated with natural parenting. He sees the first form of pleasure as a deep satisfaction
caused by earning the love and trust of a stepchild or young adolescent stepchild, who may
have begun by treating the stepparent with resentment and suspicion and who finally has
become satisfied about the stepparent's worth. The second pleasure derives from step
parenting offering a chance to get to know the children much more intimately than usually
seems possible with natural children. For example, meeting one's stepchildren when their
personalities are at least partially formed could make a firmer basis for getting to know and
understanding them. This of course, is in contrast to having to watch a smiling baby slip
imperceptibly into adolescence, and never having had a reason to stop and ask what exactly
it is that makes the child tick at a particular time (Collins 1988:15-18). This is a question
that is almost inevitably forced upon an incoming stepparent. The same question could
presuppose that there might be a better chance (however partial it may be) of real intimacy
based on mutual understanding between stepparents and their children. This is probably
due to the fact that both might engage in a more formal and thorough process of getting to know each other than the case might be in nuclear families.

From the point of view discussed above, it seems that children, therefore, who have always had their parents around do not impose such a kind of "probation" on their biological parents, and they do not need it anyway. They may then not usually experience the deeply moving and proud moment when a parent realises that he/she has at last been trusted by the children. It is a pity that those stepparents may have to undergo such a "probation" period; however, when positive results are achieved a positive mind may tend to forget those past experiences and move on. Collins (1988:16) contends, "intimate knowledge of another human being is one of the supreme pleasures of life, and the long acquaintances and shared experiences between stepparents and children offer a promising basis for such intimacy".

The following discussion will focus on some specific problems encountered in stepfamilies such as unclear role definition, establishing unity in the new family, discipline, the socio-economic state, position of the child and societal influences.

3.4.1 **Unclear role definition**
According to Papernow (1993:45) there is an agreement by most people that families work best when individuals in the family have fairly firm, though not rigid, personal boundaries. One would then expect a strong family unit but with permeable intergenerational boundaries, so that if a joke is cracked by one member of the family in the presence of everybody, it is enjoyed and laughed at by everyone present irrespective of the generation gap. Also, in such a unit, one would expect roles to be clearly defined so that each member knows exactly what is expected of him and therefore, which boundaries he is expected not to cross.

Prinsloo (1989:56) argues that role definitions are more clearly distinguishable in nuclear families than in restructured families. This could be due to the fact that people do not talk about restructured families with such openness, and there is no television programme or advertisement about "how to get stains out of my stepson's shirts". Yet, more children in our societies seem to live in restructured families than in any other kind of family setup (Grunsell 1990:5).

Could reluctance to talk about stepfamilies be due to societal stereotypes and prejudices associated with step parenting? Booth and Dunn (1994:20) argue that the reason why unrelated stepparents find their parenting roles more stressful and less satisfying sometimes than biological parents, is probably due less to social stigma than to the uncertainty of their obligations.

In regards to the social stigma, Keshet (1987:67) though, has a different view. He argues that what makes step parenting harder lies with the fact that already a stepparent is viewed as an outsider "because he is not a member of the parent-child 'nuclear' family".

In the end, one would imagine that both societal stereotypes (hence societal influences as one of the specific problems) and undefined roles play a part in step parenting.

Bearing in mind that a stepfamily structure is a complex one that may begin its life with a weak couple subsystem, it could become problematic to have roles defined from the onset, for fear of rigidity amongst other things, that in turn might cause conflict. In this regard Papernow (1993:45) argues that the new couple may begin their lives with a tightly
bounded biological parent-child alliance and what he calls "interference" in family functioning from a variety of people outside the nuclear subsystem. This means that a biological ex-parent or ex-in-laws may still want to maintain contact with the child.

Cherlin (Larson & Lowe 1990:101-104) argues that "there is a lack of conventional wisdom in society regarding stepfamily life, because of this, stepparents face role ambiguity with no socially approved norms to guide them in establishing and maintaining their home lives". To elaborate on this view, Keshet (1987:67) argues that stepparents may then end acting in many roles, such as being a good partner by helping the divorced parent, to be a good parent offering feedback on the partner's behaviour as a parent and sometimes sharing observations of the children. However, it should be noted that there are functional stepfamilies, while some do not seem to be better or worse off than "nuclear" families (Visher & Visher 1988:19-20).

It seems though, that Cherlin (Larson & Lowe 1990:46) has considered possible differences in role perceptions as well as approaches that could be used by stepparents in attempting to establish functional family systems. Because these roles are not clearly defined, there might be confusion with regard to the following concerns:

- if the biological parent is still alive, who should attend the parents' meetings at school
- how far concern for the stepchild should go when, for instance, the stepchild is the one who is misbehaving in the new family
- whose orders should the stepchild obey, particularly if the biological parent is still alive?

On the other hand, stepparents may have unrealistic expectations of themselves and of their stepchildren, due to this apparent lack of clarity that surrounds a restructured family system. In confirming this, Booth and Dunn (1994:21) argue that because they have been parents before, stepparents may end up anticipating that they will fit into the stepparent role easily. However, as Rice (1992:131) notes, they usually find themselves bewildered if their stepchildren do not accept them immediately and show them due respect. Unfortunately
this could lead to feelings of self-blame in the stepparent, who may end up doubting his/her parenting skills.

Such feelings of self-blame and doubt often lead to withdrawal. If one of the partners withdraws, it becomes difficult to have the type of interaction that will ultimately bring about a functional family system. This in turn could result in feelings of inefficiency, which could give rise to an inferiority complex and self-pity. Unfortunately, in any relationship where one partner has feelings of either superiority or inferiority, the relationship and interaction get strained and become unbearable, thus causing problems in terms of healthy communication (Rice 1992:131).

It is a fact that stepparents are neither biological parents nor friends. In view of this, in the early efforts to take over the parental role they may be rejected by older stepchildren. On the other hand, stepparents cannot readily be friends, since they are confronted with parental responsibilities and hope to make a contribution to the lives of these children. Because they also feel the need to assume many of the responsibilities of parents, their attempts to effect those responsibilities may be met with a negative response by the stepchildren, particularly adolescents who are looking for autonomy.

Daily and Wilson (Booth & Dunn 1994:20) argue, however, that the conception of parenthood itself as a "role" could be misleading. They claim that a role is something that any competent actor who has studied the part can step into. They further claim that parenting should be precipitated by love and therefore, that nobody can establish parental love at will.

Whatever Daily et al's (Booth & Dunn 1994:20) claims are, they do not seem to dispute the fact that step parenthood as opposed to parenthood is not something that one can take for granted. In addition it seems one's love as a parent will be the basis or driving force behind any effective step parenting.
3.4.2 Establishing unity in the new family

Family relationships in remarriage may become quite complicated. Children may have biological parents and siblings, stepparents, stepsiblings, grandparents, step grandparents and other relatives. The implication is obvious, that the family becomes huge. Because people are generally unique, this will probably pose a problem in terms of values and needs. Visher and Visher (1979:31-32) confirm this by saying, “as with the merger of two corporations”, two (groups of) people with different personalities and interests come together and need to establish a working relationship. Their interaction may be affected by some fears of more loss, particularly if there is a child/children. Children could sometimes fear that their stepparent might also leave them. At the same time they may be angry that this new parent has taken their biological parent’s place. In this instance, there could be displacement of anger in which a parent, too, could be angry towards the stepchild, as he/she feels threatened by the tight bond between his or her spouse and the child. These feelings or fear may be on the conscious or unconscious level. The figure below illustrates the expression of anger in restructured families.
The above diagram implies that there will be feelings of insecurity. The more the parent and the child feel insecure in a family situation the more it becomes difficult for such a family to communicate in a functional way.

In view of the above discussion, it is obvious that two groups of people with diverse histories and backgrounds and probably different views of life in terms of norms, values, discipline and mutual expectations may need to work hard in making their relationship functional. According to Rice (1992:131) some stepparents may still be faced with unresolved emotional issues from their prior marriage or relationships or divorce. They may then still be influenced by what happened in their previous relationships, may still be experiencing anger, resentment or hurt. Unfortunately that could pose a threat in unifying the new family. Their accustomed lifestyle as well could bring about conflict instead of
their mate or partner. Consistent with this idea, Lutz (Visher & Visher 1988:19) contends that they may also feel their primary loyalty is towards their own parents and that the stepparent is simply intruding (Lutz in Visher & Visher 1988:19). An apparent rejection of the stepparent by the stepchild may be hard for the stepparent to take.

On the other hand, Keshet (1987:68) argues that many adults who are dating someone with children are usually embarrassed to admit that they are sometimes jealous of the children. In some cases there is envy of a partner’s closeness with the children. He contends that this usually leads to the other partner resenting their importance in their partners’ lives and then forcefully demanding more attention for themselves or developing feelings of rejection that may cause them to withdraw or fight for their place. It is usually at this stage that conflict and feelings of ambivalence come up. This situation may further lead to dysfunctional communication that manifests itself in the obviously strained relationship and interaction.

Developing a family towards establishing unity is never an easy process for both “nuclear” and restructured families; however, restructured families may need to go the extra mile in establishing such unity (Keshet 1987:125). Below is a figure that shows differences between “nuclear-” and stepfamilies in terms of family development.

**Figure 3**  
*Family development (Adopted from Keshet 1987)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURED FAMILY</th>
<th>RESTRUCTURED FAMILY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance may be automatic.</td>
<td>Acceptance may take time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love and affection may be immediate.</td>
<td>Love may never be strong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority comes from parental role.</td>
<td>Affection grows with time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family becomes less unified as the children grow older.</td>
<td>Authority must be earned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family moves toward unification.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discipline generally refers to the establishment and enforcement of family rules. Problems with discipline are common in all types of families. Basically, discipline works in most cases when persons who are disciplined care about the reaction and relationship with those who discipline them. It would be a futile exercise for instance, if children/stepchildren were reprimanded by adults they did not care about. Visher and Visher (1979:138) argue that restructured family couples often find it helpful to realise that many of their problems are also encountered by biological parents in nuclear families.

According to Keshet (1987:106) there is usually a power struggle when a stepparent introduces new rules that the absent biological parent does not seem to mind about. For instance, there is bound to be conflict if one asks one's stepchild to do dishes before watching television and yet the biological parent does not mind even if they are done only just before bedtime.
He further argues that stepparents enter the stepfamily life with a sense of having little authority over the stepchildren. This could lead to stepparents holding back initially; however, they may need to move eventually to the role of parental authority. It should be noted, though, that biological parents often find it hard to discipline their own children and, despite their years of experience, may find it harder yet to deal with stepchildren. A biological parent's authority is based on mutual love between the parent and the child, so that even if parents yell at their own children, they may not decrease the love they have from their children (Keshet 1987:103; Collins 1988:43-45). On the other hand, stepparents may still be faced with the task of establishing mutual love and understanding before they may discipline the child. Taking this into consideration, a stepparent may develop feelings of ambivalence in terms of disciplining the child.

According to Atkinson (1986:50-52) a stepparent's protectiveness towards his children may cause confusion and uneasiness in the other partner when it comes to disciplining every child in the new family. Because children are very sensitive and sometimes quick to find discrepancies in parents' ways of exercising discipline, they can use this type of incompatibility, in terms of discipline, to their advantage. He also notes that in some cases where the new spouse basically agrees concerning fundamental principles of discipline, the biological parent may be more lenient than the stepparent who may view the problem more objectively. This may again give rise to feelings of ambivalence in the biological parent.

Unfortunately such a state of emotions complicates the restructured family life further. For instance, a wife may seek help from her new husband in terms of disciplining her son. However, she may not be sure of the extent to which she will allow the husband to discipline her son. Because the stepfather is also sensitive to these issues, he may get ambiguous messages. Being unsure now of what to do, in terms of risking his marriage for instance, he may rather withdraw from the process of disciplining the children even though he feels it is his responsibility.

Atkinson (1986:65-69) argues that stepchildren's reactions could be due to the fact that they feel they might be "betraying" their biological parents by "transferring" their affections to the new parent. They might feel being pulled in many different directions at once when the family reconstructs itself. They might then find themselves confronted with the question of where to place their loyalties. Such a situation in the new family may need
a solid understanding, about the feelings of children, in the parents and stepparents. Once such an understanding is achieved by the communication of such feelings, it might necessitate some adjustments in terms of discipline by the parents.

On the other hand stepparents may feel frustrated if they don’t get things done their own way by stepchildren. They may feel inadequate and frustrated by the lack of respect. Frustration usually causes tempers to rise and a nasty situation may develop, consisting of enraged impotence. This could spill over to violence on one side and sullen resentment on the other. In summary, when a situation is like this, one talks about communication that is dysfunctional.

3.4.4 Socio-economic state

A number of research studies have inferred that higher socioeconomic status is related to better stepfamily functioning (Cherlin 1992; Franks 1988; Visher & Visher 1988). This could be due to the fact that, with more money, there may be one less source of tension for the adults. For instance a remarried couple whose financial status is fairly sound may find themselves having time alone for instance once in a week, and having somebody to take care of the household chores and child care, and also being able to have fun together as a family. On the other hand Collins (1988:73) argues that when stepparents are working to support their partner’s children, there is the likelihood of an occasional sense of resentment
with substantial independent wealth, experiencing feelings of inferiority, and perhaps feeling slightly ridiculous. This is due to the fact that some new partners are viewed as gold diggers, particularly if the other partner is wealthy. Thomson (Booth & Dunn 1988:90) argues that financial obligations to non-resident children might also put stepfamilies at an even greater economic disadvantage than is suggested by their income and assets.

A third aspect of financial intrusion is the writing of a will. Stepparents may want to secure some financial coverage for their own children, since if they die their children may not enjoy as significant rights as the biological children. Drawing up such a will by both parents could bring about uncomfortable feelings, particularly to the parent who does not have children (Collins 1988:76). Such feelings might also lead to tension and jealousy.

Generally speaking, when they increase due to remarriage, financial resources need to be shared. For many, this could lead to a lowering of living standards, which could result in conflict. In some cases, children who have for years been accustomed to the privacy of their own bedroom may find it difficult to have to share with the stepsiblings. According to Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman (1987:109) adolescents in particular may develop intensely negative attitudes towards relationships in a newly formed family unit, when they have to relinquish more than they have gained.

Unfortunately such a situation may affect communication negatively. Feelings of jealousy may start to develop among siblings, resulting in poor interaction. Interaction could be so poor that even when they communicate they may tend to use words that could hurt one another's feelings. On the other hand a member who is on the receiving end of such malicious talk may prefer to isolate himself/herself so as to avoid such interaction. It is at this stage that poor communication may result in a dysfunctional family unit.

3.4.5 Position of the child

It is common knowledge that children become accustomed to their position of status and power in the sibling hierarchy of the family. Privileges as well as responsibilities, are often coupled with the child's position in the family. The positions of children may have
significance to both child and parent. This is so even in nuclear families where the birth of another child may threaten the last born's position, who has for instance been receiving a lot of attention. Unfortunately the situation may become even worse when the new sibling is from another family (Visher & Visher 1988:35).

According to Beer (1989:51) grownups or adults do not seem to care that much about age differences; however, differences in age seem to have great significance for youngsters, particularly those in the same family. He further argues that stepfamilies where children are combined from one or more previous relationships or marriages of both spouses, present some unusual problems of adjustment in the sibling pecking order.

The above statement implies that in stepfamilies, the age order is not determined by birth order, and the age interval in the stepsibling hierarchy is not determined by birth interval. In other words the fact that a child was the first born in a nuclear family, does not necessarily mean that that child will still be the first born in the restructured family. This is because in the restructured family there may be other children who are older than this child. These children who are now “siblings” may realise that the age difference amongst them might be years, months or even days.

Beer (1989:55) further indicates the patterns of change that may occur in stepfamilies, which are:

- an only child becomes the oldest
- an only child becomes the youngest
- an only child becomes the middle child
- an oldest child becomes a middle child
- a youngest child becomes a middle child.

In the first three patterns, he argues that a child goes from having been the centre of parental attention to sharing the role of son or daughter with others who are not his/her blood relatives; he/she has gone from a solo act to one where he/she is on stage with a company of players.
In the fourth pattern he argues, a child who was the youngest, and in many ways the centre of attention, becomes one of a crowd, like a prince or princess who has lost a throne.

In the last case, the eldest child, who may have had the greatest responsibilities as well as the greatest power, also becomes one of the crowd, this child is like a policeman who has lost his beat.

In further considering the implications of the patterns of change, going from an only child to being the oldest seems to be the easiest as both can be seen as the positions of most privilege. On the other hand, it seems that going from the only child to a middle child could be the hardest in the sense that the child may feel lost in the crowd or sandwiched in, when for some years his/her experience has been that of being the “prince or princess in town”.

Becoming a middle child when one was previously a youngest child seems to have its advantages and disadvantages. A disadvantage could be that one is no longer the centre of everyone’s attention and able to get away with more as a result of being the youngest. An advantage could be having a smaller person or persons to dominate or being looked up to by the younger ones.

Losing the position of being the oldest to another child or children seems the hardest of the three changes. There could, however, be mitigating factors. If, for instance, one is the only member of one’s particular sex, one is still special in that way. It is also hard to be a policeman always on the beat. Sometimes it is a relief to become a middle child, because it could mean that the pressure is off (Beer 1989:60).

Because of the change in position, intense feelings of loss, anger and jealousy may result and these may not be easily resolved as the children may see the change as unnecessary and unfair “shifting divisions of space, parental time, responsibilities and privileges” (Beer 1989:62). These are feelings that could lead to conflict and ultimately some forms of violence as a way of venting anger.
Taking into consideration the patterns of change in the family structure, what then could be aspects of change and conflict between the adolescents and their stepparents?

3.4.5.1 The effect of developmental issues of adolescence in stepfamilies

Parent–adolescent conflict is considered to be a developmental phenomenon. Adolescence is a period of life in which several significant developmental transitions are experienced (Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman 1994:88). Physically, the children become adults, cognitively they can now think and reason abstractly. On the affective level, self-identity develops and autonomy-seeking behaviour increases (Pasley 1988:57). These changes seem to alter interaction patterns within the family, thereby requiring adjustments by parents and adolescents alike. It should be noted that these adjustments might be accompanied by conflict and tension between adolescents and parents.

Pasley et al (1994:88) argue that adolescents in stepfamilies are not developmentally different from other adolescents, but that these changes may be manifested and interpreted differently for stepchildren. They further claim that the change in manifestations of such developments may threaten stepfamily equilibrium as children “withdraw” and/or engage in new behaviour as part of trying out different roles.

Such behaviour in first-marriage families may not be appreciated, but nonetheless, there could be a great deal of goodwill built up through a long history of shared beliefs, hopes and experiences. Such feelings may enable the family to go through such a developmental stage (Visher & Visher 1988:74). However, stepfamilies lack a shared history, so that normal adolescent behaviours may be seen by remarried parents and stepparents as a rejection of the life style that adults worked so hard to build (Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman 1994:84).

On the other hand, such an experience may be looked at as an opportunity where stepchildren are presented with more choices of parenting models and interpersonal relationships, as well as husband-wife interpersonal relationship models.
Regarding the psychological part of development, the autonomy-seeking adolescent stepchild may be at odds with a newly remarried parent’s desire to create a sense of family cohesion and family identity (Visher & Visher 1988:76). It is at this stage that most adolescent stepchildren leave home sooner, and this is also because they seem to attain some markers of adulthood sooner (Mitchell in Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman 1994:89).

Looking at cognitive changes, with their implications of formal-operational thought, adolescent stepchildren may start to hypothesize about how different their life would have been, had their biological parents stayed together. This may cause conflicts within the adolescent stepchild and may affect his/her attitude towards the stepparent and biological parent alike. On the other hand, Pasley (1988:59) argues that adolescents who are moving from concrete to formal-operational thought may be better able to understand the multiple contributors of divorce, the motives their parents might have had for remarrying or engaging in another relationship and their feelings in regards to forming new relationships or marrying themselves.

On the whole it can be deduced that if stepparents hold less positive views of their stepchildren’s behaviour, and are more likely to perceive negative stepchild behaviours as intentional, family stress may escalate. This is confirmed by Brand and Clingempeal (Stinson 1991:18) who argue that a more positive marital relationship is associated with more positive perceptions of the stepchildren, thus enhancing a healthy relationship based on functional communication.
There are many myths and beliefs surrounding restructured families. These seemingly mistaken beliefs, according to Robinson and Smith (1993:76), contribute to the problems and complexities of creating a satisfactory stepfamily life. Even though restructured families are now a family form, they seem to be tainted probably because they cannot fulfill the cultural dream of having two adults married for the first and only time, with their own children, and getting support from a strong and loving family network. In most communities there seems to be a deep suspicion that a stepfamily/restructured family exists because of wrongdoing and that the children in such a family inevitably will be harmed. The implication of such suspicions, which unfortunately may be known to the stepparent, may cause a lot of anxiety and over-carefulness in the stepparent, so much so that his/her uneasiness and feelings of being watched may result in much conflict at home (Robinson et al 1993:76).

Marriage as an institution is highly valued and thus receives huge social approval. Divorce on the other hand is tolerated, partly because it may have been the only rescue from an unhappy marriage and in some cases the suffering of children. From the point of view of
Robinson et al (1993:78), it seems to be socially accepted therefore that people should not be condemned to suffer for a lifetime in a miserable relationship. However, it seems that there is great uneasiness and ambivalence about the restructured families that follow as a result of separation or divorce. Unfortunately all these feelings put a stepparent into confusion. Having acknowledged the fact that it is the society's values, norms and beliefs that may hustle people into marriage or remarriage, they still may be embarrassed by divorce or completely ignore the consequences or implications of the second marriage. Because of these cultural ideals in a society the restructured family life in some communities tends to begin without social approval.

Unfortunately a newly formed family unit, which at the very beginning is looked at by the community with suspicious eyes, may be shunned by the community. If that is the case, the restructured family could be like an island which no one else in the community bothers to communicate or socialise with. Such a family may live in isolation, having no communication with people they stay with in that particular area. This in turn could result in negative feelings within the family, with members starting to have doubts about themselves, their efficiency or capability in dealing with societal issues. Because of the negative experience they may be going through, they may end up evaluating themselves negatively and thus their perception of themselves and the world around them may end up being negative. Because of these negative feelings, their communication amongst themselves may end up starting from the negative pole, thus communication becomes poor.

It is also interesting to note that the idea of a perfect family seems to be a myth in itself and that all types of families face difficult adjustments due to a number of factors like financial stress, death, et cetera. Robinson et al (1993:100) suggest that to come out of those difficulties may require a thorough exploration of various healthy ways to deal with them.

Considering the above-mentioned problems in restructured families, it seems such families go through a cycle of emotional stages. Franks (1988:66-68) believes that it takes four to five years before the family can reach a resolution – which seems to be the final stage. The diagram below illustrates the stages of emotional development (Franks 1988:66-68 and Visher & Visher 1988:65).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>Adults expect instant love and adjustment. Children still fantasize about their biological parent and hope that he/she is coming back and as a result they tend to ignore the stepparent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo-assimilation</td>
<td>Attempts to realise fantasies and the sense that things are not going well. There is an interest in negative feelings and the stepparents may feel there is something wrong with them. There could be splits along biological lines, such that a parent may take sides with his/her biological child and consciously or unconsciously accuse the new parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>There is growing awareness of family pressures. The stepparent may start to perceive what changes are needed. A parent may feel torn between the needs of the children and of the new spouse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilization</td>
<td>There could be arguments as strong emotions are expressed. A stepparent may be clear about the need for change. There could be a sharp division between biological groups. A parent without children may feel isolated and not supported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>The couple may begin to work together in an attempt to find a solution. The family structure starts to change. Boundaries are classified. However, children may resist change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>The couple is working well. Step relations may start to be strong. The stepparent may have a definite role towards the stepchildren. The boundaries are clear. There is closer bonding between stepparent-stepchild relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>There is stepfamily identity security. There could be regression to earlier stages in times of difficulties; however, the tendency at this stage is to move ahead quickly when such difficulties arise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In summary then, the following factors concern the role of the stepparent.

- Roles are mainly unclear to stepparents.
- Uncertainties about self-expectations exist.
- Uncertainties with regard to the upbringing of the children exist.
- Uncertainties as to societal expectations exist.
- The handling of the stepchild who misbehaves.
- The giving of orders.
- The pressures of expectations.
- Confusion as to the different roles.
- Stepparents having unrealistic expectations of themselves.
- Bewilderment may arise if stepchildren do not accept them immediately.
- Feelings of self-blame and anger.
- Confusion between being a parent and being a friend.
- Assuming many responsibilities of biological parent, which may be met with negative response.

3.5 CHALLENGES REGARDING ROLE, UNITY, DISCIPLINE, SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATE, POSITION OF THE CHILD, SOCIETAL INFLUENCES AND COMMUNICATION IN THE FAMILY

According to Visher and Visher (Fitzpatrick & Vangelisti 1995:299), stepfamily integration is a process that may take up to four or five years to complete, or it may never fully occur. There seems to be a general consensus that stepfamilies experience unique stresses due to their complex nature. It is these stresses that affect interaction or communication in such families. Confirming this view, McGoldrick and Carter (Fitzpatrick et al 1995:299) argue that there are certain predictable emotional issues in restructured families that usually impact negatively on interaction. These family issues are discussed below in terms of their effect on stepfamily communication.
3.5.1 Communication and unclear role definition

Atkinson (1986:72) argues that at some stage new parents might experience feelings of being strangers in their new surroundings. The fact that the roles they play are not clearly defined by self and others in terms of parenting might result in feelings of anxiety. Unfortunately such negative feelings usually hinder effective and positive communication at home, as the new parent might end up having low self-esteem and little confidence.

Persons with low self-esteem and low self-confidence usually prefer to shy away from social contacts. If it is a home situation, such persons may prefer to stay in their rooms or just keep quiet. Such a situation affects communication negatively as they may decide not to talk or share ideas, maybe fearing to be criticized.

Family roles have been defined by Epstein, Bishop and Baldwain (Kelley 1995:39) as "the repetitive patterns of behaviour by which family members fulfill family functions". A problem in defining roles within a family system, however, is that these roles have been prescribed by the larger community system, and ingrained in the persons entering the family. Roles basically are what people do by virtue of their positions in the family or society, for instance, one's role as a parent. Most family theoreticians agree that stepfamilies/restructured families exhibit some differences in this regard (Kelley 1995:41-46). There have been traditional family gender roles, like a man being expected to provide resources while the woman's role was for nurturing and support. However, such roles have no chance at all in a family system where children are strangers to the wife, and where finances include sources of income and expenditure that are not in the husband's power to generate or control. Because of such a shift and lack of clarity in roles, this has had a negative effect on communication within the households of restructured families.

As noted earlier, communication strains usually increase in most families as role definitions become less clear and as both parents take on more responsibilities. Visher and Visher (Atkinson 1986:83-86) argue that the strain is increased in restructured families because the role of the stepparent is characterised by loss and gain of roles. There is also a lack of clarity regarding parenting roles and boundaries, and a lack of congruence between how stepparents think, what they should feel and how they should act, and how they in fact do...
things. The result of all this might be a lack of self-role congruence, so much so what they feel and think of their roles as parents, does not connect with roles the society might expect of them probably because of prejudices and myths by the society against them. Unfortunately this lack of self-role congruence might lead to feelings of low self-esteem. Low self-esteem in either one or in both partners does not auger well for effective communication and a healthy family system.

3.5.2 Communication and the process of establishing unity in the new family

It cannot be stressed strongly enough how important it is to work towards family unity within the stepfamily group. It is interesting, though, to realise that even first-time families may founder and fall apart unnecessarily because they simply did not realise the value of family harmony. One 17-year-old girl, sobbing, said: "Sometimes I ask myself why did my parents not give me up for adoption whilst I was still young, we never do things together, even during weekends everyone do their own things, I really admire my friend's family" (Cheryll : Therapy session 1999). Society is based on the family unit, everything else spreads out from it and without it the structure of society breaks down (Atkinson 1986:83-86). With regard to Cheryll's family, it is apparent that it was malfunctioning, hence the emotional and behavioural problems Cheryll was going through.

It is sometimes difficult for the members to work towards family unity, and hence effective communication amongst them becomes a dream rather than a reality. Cheryll's family (Cheryll : Therapy session 1999) was characterised by swearing, fighting, resentment amongst each one of them. Seemingly no one was doing anything to establish a spirit of togetherness.

Atkinson (1986:85) asserts that the adoption of a team spirit by family members might result in effective communication. The following diagram depicts a dysfunctional family system where communication does not seem to exist.
Diagram 6

Dysfunctional communication in a family

(This family never creates time to be together. Each member does his/her own thing.)

The father spends most of his time drinking.

The mother spends her time in the garden.

The daughter spends her time in the swimming pool. She likes staying under water all the time.
In this section, discipline is used to describe the manner in which family rules are enforced, and the style of leadership exerted by parents. Discipline has been noted as a major source of tension for stepfamilies or the restructured family (Visher & Visher 1988:69). It seems that societal and familial expectations might increase the difficulties in the area of child discipline, in the sense that the society or the husband or the in-laws might have unrealistic expectations about the new wife who is going to be the mother of the man’s children. This unrealistic expectation, as noted by Carter (Atkinson 1986:27) has led to the wicked stepmother image, which has prevailed over a long time.

Generally, children often resent a new woman as replacement for their mother (as said earlier). As children may not act lovably or accept discipline, the new woman may be viewed as a bad mother because of her apparent failure, even though she may have tried her best to be nurturing and loving. The stepmother’s self-esteem may drop (Atkinson 1986:28). Feelings of guilt and loss of self-esteem reduce one’s ability to be a good parent. Unfortunately this loss of self-esteem and esteem by others can lead to the stepparent trying harder, and failing more. Her efforts may be seen as being wicked if she tries to control children who refuse to be controlled and ineffectual if she does not. As the woman comes to realise that though she tries harder yet she fails, she may ultimately see herself as a failure, which could give rise to feelings of insecurity, inefficiency and despair. A person
with such feelings, who perceives herself negatively, not only relates to herself negatively but to other people and objects around her. Because she has such negative feelings and negative self-talk, she may end up interacting/relating negatively to other people, even her family members.

In view of the above situation, the result is that there could be a breakdown in communication, leading to dysfunctional communication patterns. According to Atkinson (1986:30) it seems that most stepchildren have difficulty in accepting the new parent as having the authority to discipline them, particularly the adolescent child. Such an authority in some cases may be undermined by the biological parent, who has remarried or is staying somewhere else, either alone or with a reconstituted family. This could result in defective communication between stepparents and stepchildren, who may still maintain that their biological parents are the only ones to discipline them. Effective communication could be non-existent, which could lead to a cycle of violence. The stepparent attempts to discipline a child, the child rebels, the stepparent tries harder, and the child rebels more, so physical punishment may be used with increasing physical force as the child resists. In other words, where communication fails, family members may resort to violence. Van der Hoven (You magazine 10-08-2000:24) argues that if children come from violent families, they could end up releasing their frustrations through aggression.

3.5.4 Communication and socio-economic state

As noted earlier, in restructured families, issues like who earns money, who manages household finances, who allocates resources and makes decisions (if a decision is the sole responsibility of one person), become more complicated by the involvement of more people and by different sources of income. There may sometimes be more questions as to who is entitled to what. Money is often cited in the popular literature and advice columns as a major source of family conflict in any family type.

It has been noted by McGoldrick and Carter (Kelley 1995:49) that the idea that men should earn and manage the money may no longer be effective in the sense that in society today, women are capable of being the breadwinners in their families. In this situation a man can no longer control the economic situation at home, as he may not be working. This is
usually when some sources of income and expenditure are not in a man’s power to generate and control. Because of the divided loyalties in restructured family situations, tension that is usually the result of jealousy (that a partner has still links with their ex-spouse) often arises, or feelings of low self-esteem emerge, as one partner may feel out of control and hence powerless in the existing situation. Such feelings often result in poor communication in the sense that a man’s ego may be harmed as he realises that he is “powerless”. He may develop feelings of inferiority and resort to violence so as to “claim” his portion as head of the family or the one who is in charge and must therefore, take care of finances. Again, where communication fails because of these feelings relationships may suffer.

Divided loyalties might also give rise to competitiveness amongst stepchildren. Jealousy, fights or conflicts might crop up so that relations are strained, unless a plan is devised to handle the financial situation (Kelley 1995:52).

3.5.5 Communication and position of the child

Visher and Visher (1988:94) argue that children feel displaced when their parents remarry. This is probably due to the fact that the parent may have become the child’s confidant after divorce or when still a single parent. Sometimes the proud parents lavish so much attention on a new baby that the stepchildren may begin to feel a coldness in their direction. They may feel somewhat slighted or second best and this might result in jealousy of the baby whose arrival has produced this change. The parents may have unconsciously gone overboard a little in their attention and this is all it needs for the other children to feel twinges of envy, especially if they have already suffered rejection or loss during the period prior to remarriage or to the new relationship.

Zola (Bhele 1999) is seventeen years old and is a stepchild. She remembers being excited when a new baby arrived in the restructured family. As she had a little sister, they had been looking forward to being little mothers in helping take care of the baby. Despite Zola already having had a rough relationship with her stepfather, she could not wait for the baby to arrive. As she was good at sewing, she had already sewn two nightdresses for the baby. However, when the baby finally arrived, her stepfather would not allow the girls to handle the baby girl and discouraged them from going near her. More friction as a result existed,
and eventually jealousy and resentment followed. Their stepfather would first go to the "nursery" to play with the baby after work at home before he would even ask his stepdaughters about the day’s events.

From the above case study it is obvious that communication was gradually diminishing; the baby that the stepdaughters had been looking forward to has apparently made them shift their position. From a child’s point of view, the child, whether an adolescent or not, has to adapt and cope just as much as the adult (parent) but is nowhere near as mature and experienced (Atkinson 1986:75). They have to struggle with their own personal problems of growing up as well as with the extra conditions imposed on them by a parent remarrying or forming a new relationship. Atkinson further argues that it is natural that the two sets of offspring will be quick to perceive any differences, real or imagined, in the way in which they are treated. The tiniest thing can be enlarged in the mind of the insecure child.

3.5.6 Communication and societal influences

Outside the immediate stepfamily group, there remains a host of other people including relatives, neighbours and friends. They represent the wider society with its societal norms, values and expectations. Firstly, they probably have the wicked stepparent myth firmly imprinted in their minds, especially if they are of the older generation. Secondly, they may remember the family and its ways of life before the arrival of the new partner in the family (Atkinson 1986:76).

In view of what Atkinson (1986:76) says, the stepparent may be prejudiced against by society and may be aware of such prejudices. The stepparent may try hard to beat those prejudices and myths. However, if such myths are firmly imprinted on the minds of the “observers”, no matter how hard a stepmother, for instance, may try she may still be seen as the wicked stepparent. In trying harder she may become overcautious. Anxiety might build up so much that even simple things may be dealt only with great caution. This could easily lead to communication problems such as withdrawal, outbursts of anger and irritability as the new partner may be overly sensitive not only to her partner but to the whole new family. To adolescents who are having their own problems, such a situation may become unbearable. The adolescents might even decide to leave home rather than stay
with a stepparent who is seemingly rigid, even though the stepparent may not be aware that this is what she has become, for example being over cautious to speak freely or to discipline the children (Kelley 1995:62). Once this happens, it reflects a breakdown in communication.

3.6 **SUMMARY**

Stepfamilies are different from intact families in that in an intact family, members are all related to each other. This is not so in step- or restructured families. Some members of the restructured family have close ties outside the new family.

Because of the complex nature of the restructured family, some problems in such a family have been noted:

- Unclear role definition - this usually brings confusion to the stepparent who may end up being overwhelmed with feelings of anxiety.
- Establishing unity in the new family – establishing unity in a restructured family could be a difficult task due to:
  * the shadow of the first relationship that could still be present
  * cautiousness in transferring lifestyles from the previous relationship
- Discipline – with children, particularly adolescents, refusing to be disciplined by the new parent.
- Socio-economic state – siblings having to share with a new sibling what they used to enjoy alone and a parent realising that he/she may not be the one who generates and is in control of resources.
- Position of the children – realising that he/she has to shift positions for instance, from being last to second last.
- Societal influences – the stepparent being looked at as being “wicked” and not capable of taking care of the children they have not known for very long.
Three stepparents tell their stories.

1. **Koleka**

Koleka (33) got married to Zolile (48), a divorcée and a father of three children, two boys aged twenty and twenty-two and a girl aged eighteen. Both parents have children of their own – two lovely girls aged seven and nine.

Koleka has this to say:

“When I married Zolile he had divorced two years ago and had custody of his children. We stayed with them for a while so (as we thought) that I could try and get along with and understand them. Before we got married, I had met and talk with them two times over dinner at a restaurant in Port Elizabeth where I grew up.

We then moved to Johannesburg seven years ago and we bought them a flat, which were a few streets away from our house. I now think it was a big mistake to let them stay close to us and also for staying in the same house my husband shared with his ex-wife.

These are the problems I am faced with:

- My stepchildren refuse to be independent, they come to the house anytime and won’t even ask for things they need but will just take them, they take groceries, demand that I buy them underwear despite the fact that they are given monthly allowance.
- They won’t accept any form of discipline from me such that the room they use when they visit is always in chaos, the wardrobe is never neatly packed.
- They will address or talk to me via my husband (their father) if they have anything to complain about or say.
- My youngest daughter is scared of her twenty year-old stepbrother and when I took her to a psychologist it came out that she was sexually abused.
- My eldest daughter has lost her virginity, does not want to see her stepbrother (20).
- My husband is overprotective of his children, has for a period of time regarded me as a perfectionist, strict and sometimes a spoilt girl. I stopped studying towards a B.Com
degree long time ago as he insisted I do, now I regret having listened to him. I have had terrible headaches and now I am looking for a house, we have agreed to sell the one that we have.”

2. **Nico**

Nico stays with her husband who is a divorcée, her stepdaughter (12) and their two children aged seven and five.

“We got along well with my stepdaughter until her mother insisted that since she is a teenager now, she needs her (biological) mother’s advice. Her interference and apparent lack of trust in what I can do has caused her daughter to be disobedient rebellious. With my husband, I sat down and talked to this girl and asked her to choose between staying with her biological mother or us. We made her understand what staying with us meant. Two weeks later she told us that she would go and stay with her mother. She also wanted to know if we would welcome her should she decide to come back and to that we said we would talk about that when it happens, but that she is free to call us.”

3. **Zuko**

Zuko got married to a single parent of two children – a girl and a boy aged fourteen (twins). Theirs is a big happy family. They have a girl aged eleven and twins (boys) aged nine.

This is what Zuko says about his family:

“The way I get along well with my stepchildren is incredible. Before we had children of our own, we would go visit friends and their maternal grandparents, my in-laws. I had agreed before we got married that I would see to the welfare of my stepchildren. When our little girl was born, she was the joy of us all. We had sat down and explained to my stepchildren that we were going to have three more children, it was not taken kindly at first but we tried to make them understand. We are now a big happy family. There are challenges like my wife’s ex-boyfriend visiting my stepchildren’s school unannounced having been out of their picture for twelve years. For other challenges, I simply sit down
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with my wife and talk, one would sometimes shout with anger but we normally agree on something and then talk with the kids.”

In the next chapter the research design and methodology of this study will be discussed.
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter two, the focus was on understanding communication in families. Special attention was spent on parent-adolescent relationships or interaction with regard to parent supportive behaviours as well as to parent coercive behaviours. An in-depth investigation was carried out into how communication contributed to various areas of the adolescent's development. The areas of development that were looked into were the physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects. In chapter three, characteristics of restructured families were looked into. In the investigation it was also realised that there were problems in and common challenges to restructured families. It was further investigated how such problems affect communication in such families.

This chapter outlines the empirical design which examines how certain variables, which will be discussed later, influence the relationship between parents and their adolescents, thereby reflecting either functional or dysfunctional communication.

In the pre-scientific research, it became clear that communication in restructured families is not necessarily dysfunctional because of the restructuring aspect (Collins 1988:15). Such a finding led to this research question: What is the quality of communication in restructured families?

In conducting the literature study, it was found that:

- **Poor** communication manifests itself in various ways in dysfunctional families, whether structured or restructured.
- Communication plays a vital role in the adolescent's development.
• Adolescents may find themselves in a state of confusion as expectations of being an adult at one stage and a child at another may give rise to breakdowns in communication.
• By virtue of their structure, stepfamilies may need to go the extra mile in attempting to establish a healthy and functional family system.

In the light of the information that was obtained from the literature review, the following hypothesis is stated:

• Research hypothesis: There is no significant difference in communication between parents and adolescents in structured and restructured families.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research will be twofold. Firstly, nomothetic research will be conducted on an experimental and control group. Secondly, idiographic research will be conducted in the form of an in-depth study on one of the respondents from the experimental group and the control group.

4.2.1 Selection of media

The following media will be used:

➢ Questionnaire – on parent/child communication
➢ Thematic Apperception Test – TAT
➢ Interview

4.2.2 Selection of respondents

For this study, eighty respondents from grades ten to twelve were randomly selected. In order to eliminate variables of age and gender, a fifty-fifty ratio of boys and girls was considered. Two schools were used for this purpose and the random selection was across culture and race, therefore, both black and white students were included in the research.
The eighty respondents were selected as follows:

- 40 from restructured families, comprising the experimental group.
- 40 from structured families, comprising the control group.

4.2.3 **The questionnaire**

According to Bester and Olivier (1992:40), the arrangements of items in a questionnaire are partly determined by the nature of the items. If contentious issues or delicate items appear at the beginning, respondents tend to be put off. It is, therefore, preferable to ask general questions first, then move on to specific ones. Bailey (1994:132) further argues that sensitive questions and open-ended questions need to be put in the questionnaire. The same applies to easy-to-answer type of questions. Therefore, the questionnaire in this research focused first on non-threatening questions of a particular category.

Questionnaires are survey methods of research that help to come up with a lot of information about a lot of people in a short time (Bailey 1994:135). Bailey states that questionnaires require information about one's self. Like projective techniques, he contends that their measurement usually reflects primarily on a person's non-intellectual systems of behaviour, for example emotions, traits, attitudes, interests and fantasies.

Bailey (1994:138) contends that the questionnaire is a "standard set of questions about some aspects of the individual's life history, feelings, preferences or actions presented in a standard way and scored with a standard scoring key". If it is not a standard scoring key, the researcher involved explains how his/her interview response will be scored.

The positive effect of the questionnaire seems to be that respondents do not experience any fear of being victimised or embarrassed due to their responses to the questions asked, as they are not pressurised to disclose their identity. It is a matter that wholly relies upon their true feelings about the items asked. Large numbers of subjects can be approached and most of the questionnaires are objective in that the person scoring them does not have to make subjective judgements. White and Speisman (1982:117) argue, "when totally anonymous,
questionnaires can elicit a far greater degree of honesty and frankness. Moreover... they can be administered rather easily to a large number of respondents”.

In view of the above ideas, there is a likelihood that questionnaires will continue to be popular despite some limitations in that they (like any other self-report inventory) contain biases, for example respondents representing themselves in socially desirable ways.

4.2.3.1 The measuring instrument and the research goals

The measuring instrument, the questionnaire, was first used by a doctorate student, Dr. L J de Villiers, in the investigation of parent-child communication with learners in a secondary school. The questionnaire was tested and approved for its credibility and validity. It is because of its validity and credibility that the researcher decided to adopt it. The components of the questionnaire focus on the crucial factors of communication. This indicates that such a questionnaire can be applied generally to any child / adolescent – parent communication irrespective of any type of family the child / adolescent comes from, as well as of his or her age. The present study focuses on adolescents and as a result the questionnaire was distributed to them.

4.2.3.2 The structure of the questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study as said above, was drawn up by De Villiers (1993:235) for her research in parent-child communication. It consists of ninety questions. Questions 1 to 11 require the biographical details of the respondents while questions 12 to 90 explore communication between a parent and an adolescent. The exploratory questions will be grouped into eight criteria or moments and such questions will be randomly distributed throughout the questionnaire. The eight criteria covered by the exploratory questions are the Emotional criterion, Rational criterion, Power criterion, Flexibility criterion, Recognition of other criterion, Consensus criterion, Conversational criterion and Transfer of values criterion. The criteria are also referred to as moments (De Villiers 1993).

Below is a brief explanation of each criterion.
• *Emotional criterion*

This looks into the extent to which the adolescent is able or given an opportunity to communicate his/her feelings to his/her parents, and in fact whether the atmosphere at home is such that an adolescent can freely express his/her emotions, traits, attitudes, interests, fantasies, et cetera. This criterion is measured by questions 12; 20; 28; 36; 44; 52; 60; 68; 76 and 84.

• *Rational criterion*

The extent to which the adolescent is recognised as a rational being who can also think logically and rationally, is looked into. This criterion is measured by questions 21; 29; 13; 37; 45; 53; 61; 69; 77 and 85.

• *Power criterion*

This criterion focuses on how far the adolescent realises and recognises the figure of authority in the family, for example his/her attitude towards those in power. This criterion is measured by questions 14; 33; 30; 38; 46; 54; 62; 70; 78 and 86.

• *Flexibility criterion*

The score in this criterion will reflect whether there is some kind of flexibility in how the parent relates to the adolescent; whether there is a lot of rigidity and imposition by the parent in terms of set rules and expectations in the house. This criterion is measured by questions 15; 23; 31; 39; 47; 55; 63; 71; 79 and 87.

• *Recognition of the other*

The score will give an indication of the extent to which adolescents are recognised by adults or themselves as persons or as human beings and, therefore, to what degree their ideas are valued. This criterion is measured by questions 16; 24; 32; 40; 48; 56; 64; 72; 80 and 88.
• **Consensus criterion**

The extent to which the adolescent together with his/her parent/s are able to come to an agreement about issues that they discussed will be looked into. This criterion is measured by questions 17; 25; 33; 41; 49; 57; 65; 73; 81 and 89.

• **Conversational criterion**

The extent to which parents and their adolescent children can engage in a conversation, talk, share ideas or concerns, is considered. This criterion is measured by questions 18; 26; 34; 42; 50; 58; 66; 74; 82 and 90.

• **Transfer of values**

This criterion examines the extent to which the parent, whether consciously, or unconsciously transfers his/her own values. This could be done by implied expectations in the form of parent's own behaviour, dictating or setting examples (being exemplary) or simply taking for granted that the adolescents should know what is expected of them. This criterion is measured by questions 19; 27; 35; 43; 51; 59; 67; 75 and 83.

The following table shows the criteria and the items or questions that fall under such a criterion.
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion/Moment</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Items and Question Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Emotional criterion</td>
<td>12; 20; 28; 36; 44; 52; 60; 68; 76 and 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rational criterion</td>
<td>21; 29; 13; 37; 45; 53; 61; 69; 77 and 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Power criterion</td>
<td>14; 22; 30; 38; 46; 54; 62; 70; 78 and 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Flexibility criterion</td>
<td>15; 23; 31; 39; 47; 55; 63; 71; 79 and 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Recognition of the other</td>
<td>16; 24; 32; 40; 48; 56; 64; 72; 80 and 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Consensus criterion</td>
<td>17; 25; 33; 41; 49; 57; 65; 73; 81 and 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Conversational criterion</td>
<td>18; 26; 34; 42; 50; 58; 66; 74; 82 and 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Transfer of values</td>
<td>19; 27; 35; 43; 51; 59; 67; 75 and 83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3.3 Statistical techniques used: ANOVA

In the formula that Miller (1997:69) uses in analysing the variance, he confirms the basic assumptions of ANOVA (analysis of variance) that

a. the distribution of the independent variable in the population from which the samples are drawn is normal;
b. the variances in the population from which the samples are drawn are equal.

ANOVA seems to provide a composite test of the significance of the difference between a set of means. Simply speaking, it seems to be a method for dividing the variation observed in experimental data into different parts, each part assignable to a known source, cause or factor. Partitioning of variance is a common occurrence in statistics (Miller 1997:70).

Freund and Littell (1981:52) maintained that analysis of variance partitions the variation among observations into portions associated with certain factors, defined by the classification scheme of the data, called sources of variation. For example, variations in
hen hatching can be partitioned into portions associated with feed differences, temperature differences, breed differences and other differences.

Freund et al (1981:53) further argue that partitioning is done in terms of sums of squares (SS) with a corresponding partitioning of the associated degrees of freedom (df). For three sources of variation, for instance A,B,C we then have SS (total) = SS(A) + SS(B) + SS(C) + SS (residual). The term SS (total) is normally the sum of the squared deviation of each data value from the overall mean, \(Z(y-y)^2\). The term SS(residual) is simply what is left after subtracting SS(A), SS(B) and SS(C) from SS(total) (Collyer & Enns 1986:16-17). The total degrees of freedom are partitioned into degrees of freedom associated with each factor and the residual, are : df (total) = df(A) + df(B) + df(C) + df(residual). These statisticians (Collyer 1986; Freund et al 1981; and Miller 1997) seem to agree that mean squares (Ms) are compiled by dividing each SS by its corresponding df. Ratios of mean squares, called F ratios after a famous statistician, R A Fisher, are then used to compare the amount of variability associated with each source of variation. Tests of hypotheses about group means can then be based on F ratios. Below is the tabular form of the computation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>ss</th>
<th>Ms</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>df(A)</td>
<td>SS(A)</td>
<td>Ms(A)</td>
<td>F(A)</td>
<td>p for F(A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>df(B)</td>
<td>SS(B)</td>
<td>Ms(B)</td>
<td>F(B)</td>
<td>p for F(B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>df(C)</td>
<td>SS(C)</td>
<td>Ms(C)</td>
<td>F(C)</td>
<td>p for F(C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>df residual</td>
<td>SS residual</td>
<td>Ms residual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>df total</td>
<td>SS total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, Collyer et al (1986:3) contend that ANOVA is a way of comparing means as it tells one whether the means or average scores from different conditions are themselves different. They further argue that it is an inferential, rather than a descriptive procedure, as it leads to conclusions about a larger population of scores and not just the scores that were
analyzed. It is a statistical procedure which tests the adequacy of a theoretical model, proposed in a standard form to explain a pattern of data. That is, ANOVA shows which factors of the model are really important and which ones are not. It is a way of discovering what factors make one score differ significantly from another and whether an independent variable has an effect. Fisher (Collyer et al 1986:3) concludes that "ANOVA and experimental design are only two different aspects of the same whole, and that whole is the process of adding to natural knowledge by experimentation."

4.2.4 **Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)**

The following discussion focuses on why many researchers use the TAT as a projective technique.

Projective techniques can be used with both children and adults. They are generally regarded as indirect data-gathering processes, probably because they seem to avoid direct questions about the topic of interest (Bailey 1994:195). A researcher for instance might use a projective technique to study a respondent’s attitude towards substance abuse if he/she knows that direct questioning would make the respondent nervous and, therefore, affect the quality of the data being collected.

Projective techniques seem to induce the individual to reveal his/her way of organising experience if or when he/she is given a field, that is objects and/or materials with relatively little structure and cultural patterning, so that the person can project upon that field his/her way of seeing life, his/her meanings, significance, patterns and especially his/her feelings (Knoff 1986:175-202). In view of what Knoff says, one may say that projection media bring to the fore an individual personality’s private world, because he/she has to organise the field, interpret the material and react effectively to it. In any projection method, a stimulus situation is presented to an individual. Such a stimulus is chosen (as with the TAT) with the idea that it will mean something to the respondent.

These techniques seem to help to obtain from the respondent what he/she cannot say. They bring to consciousness the covert and unconscious tendencies of normal persons (Bailey 1994:196).
According to Rabin (1981:9) the term projection, introduced by Freund, involved psychopathological connotations, the consideration being that it was the main mechanism underlying paranoia and paranoid disorders. It seems that to date it is widely viewed as a defense mechanism the purpose of which is to avoid the experience of guilt and anxiety. Freund (Rabin 1981:9) also argues that projection is not solely for the purpose of defence. It sometimes comes into being even if there are no conflicts experienced. He argues that one may project his/her inner perceptions onto the outside world and thereby may influence his/her shaping of the outside world, his/her interpretation of the outside world. Considering what Freund says, the implication could be that people continually project as they perceive and respond to the environment with personal needs, unique tendencies and motivations. In summary, it seems that the essential feature of a projective technique seems to be that it evokes from a subject what is in various ways expressive of his/her private world and personality process.

Coming to the TAT as a projective technique, Rabin (1981:97) argues that “an idea, memory or impulse of which the individual might be or has been clearly conscious but which does no longer exist in the consciousness, is expressed in TAT’s”. He contends that what the individual client sees in the card is intended to produce fantasies which concern most areas that are important in the individual’s life, and which are sufficiently structured that the individual may find it easy to tell stories about them, but also adequately half-structured so that stories will have a personal connotation.

Knoff (1986:175) argues that “the most central assumption of thematic techniques is that an individual will project his or her needs, desires and/or conflicts when asked to impose meaning or order on an ambiguous or Restructured stimulus.”

A second assumption according to Knoff (1986:175) “suggests that the strength of individual’s psychological needs are positively related to thematic responses”.

Considering the above assumptions, it appears that the TAT is able to reveal some of the individual’s dominant drives, emotions and conflicts. Rabin (1981:197) concludes by saying that the TAT has proved to be the prime instrument in clinical literature and research laboratory.
Motivation for the choice of cards for this research is discussed below.

**Card 1:** *A boy and a violin*

This card seems to be useful for two reasons.

i) It is very easy for most clients to tell a story about it without being threatened, and hence makes a good beginning.

ii) It reveals childhood as it actually was experienced. Even when parents are not mentioned, it is usually possible to infer what the nature of the relationship of the child to the parent was from the nature of the story.

This card represents the demands made by living, learning and work. The way this card is approached may give information of how a person will handle a job/career or, if a child, the academic world. The way the card ends is indicative of the prognosis: Is he/she going to give up; is he/she going to practice very hard to get to the top; does he/she want to succeed; is there need for guidance and assistance? How does the child communicate with his/her world? If a child says he/she is forced to practice/play it may indicate that his/her parents do not consider his/her needs and they may want to impose their own needs on him/her (Bellak 1997:61 and Du Toit and Piek 1987:14).

**Card 2:** *Interpersonal relationships, family situations*

Amongst other things this card looks at, whether there are communication and emotional contact between the persons and whether the client identifies with the figure in the foreground. If the client views the card in the context of historical events, it may indicate distancing (Du Toit & Pick 1987:14). If the foreground is rejected by the other two figures, it may mean that the person experiences interpersonal relationships as rejecting.
Card 3BM: *A figure huddled against a couch*

This is regarded as one of the most useful cards in the TAT. It tends to elicit the most pressing present problem of the client. It seems to work equally well with both sexes and the huddled figure is normally seen about equally often as being male or female. As a reflecting being, a typical reaction to frustration, the subject may talk about or perceive an implication of withdrawal, crying, sadness, tension, aggression, depression or despondency. The card may elicit the feelings mentioned above in such a manner that the therapist/researcher may see the feeling (aggression) directed at self (client) or others. In this card, it is also necessary to know what will the person do in the end. Is he/she going to act aggressively or just sit there and do nothing?

Card 6GF: *Father/daughter relationship*

The researcher may find out if the subject recognises the father/daughter relationship, whether there is communication between the two of them, if so what the nature of this communication is, whether the father is experienced as threatening or overbearing, and whether there are any ambivalent feelings towards the father.

This card is sometimes not very successful with regards to father/daughter relationships and many women and/or girls tend to view the figure as two adults, brother and sister or a scene from a film (Du Toit & Piek 1987:15). It is normally necessary to verify the response to the card through an interview.

Card 7GM: *Mother/daughter relationship*

The researcher may be able to find out if the person recognises the relationship and if she does, what is the nature of the relationship, whether the mother is rejected by being seen as a servant. He/she may also find out how the mother treats the daughter and how the daughter reacts to this treatment, whether the person (client) sees the doll and what she makes of it. If, for instance, the doll is rejected and she says she is tired of the doll, it could indicate rejection of or rebelliousness against her gender role.
Card 16:  *Blank card*

This is the most self-revealing card. It may say something about the person's creativity, whether he/she is willing to venture and his/her reaction to things in his/her environment. It is often necessary and important to verify the hypothesis found in the cards by an interview (Bellak 1997:71 and Du Toit & Pick 1987:16).

### 4.2.5 Interview

According to Knoff (1986:110) an interview is a verbal communication between two people in which the interviewer listens to what the client says and how he/she says it while he/she also notices the client's intonation, rate of speech, changes in volume and also notices the client's non-verbal communication. Confirming this, Keats (1993:61) argues that the interviewer has to listen carefully both to what is being said and to how it is said.

Considering the above statements, it seems that listening is the most important role that is played by the interviewer, particularly in the initial interview. That is probably the reason why Keats (1993:59) argues that as his/her skill, the interviewer must make listening an active behaviour and not a passive state.

It is a deliberately initiated conversation and in this case a therapeutic interviewer's goal will be to uncover what is troubling the client. Burger (1996:15) contends that "the interview is a critical technique in the therapeutic process. The effective use thereof determines to a great extent the outcome of the therapeutic process. Keats (1993:60) advises that the interviewer listens with a view to detecting the "sequencing, ordering and structuring in what is said" while at the same time he/she listens carefully to both the verbal and the non-verbal messages. In order to perceive such messages, Gordon (1996:92) argues that an interviewer must listen for clues as he/she evaluates the client by asking him- or herself the following questions:

- Am I going too fast for the respondent?
- Is it too soon to answer that question?
- Does the respondent need encouragement, praise or support?
• Does the respondent feel insecure in long silent periods?

In view of the above discussion, one can summarise by saying that the interviewer is evaluating the emotional state of the respondent, which forms a crucial part in the objectives of listening in any interview.

One of the most popular effective and widely used types of interviews is the Rogerian interview. Roger’s therapeutic approach is generally known as the “client-centred” approach, the primary theoretical construct of which is the self. Rogers (Knoff 1986:110-112) asserts that the self develops out of an organism’s interaction with the environment. The self strives for consistency and as a result is threatened by inconsistency. The person is the best source of information about him- or herself. Therefore, the person’s internal or own frame of reference is the best form to understand his/her behaviour. An interview is seen as the best and most complete form of self-report.

The Rogerian interviewing approach has distinctive features that the interviewer always bears in mind and follows, such as recognition and clarification of feelings expressed by the client, the non-judgmental acceptance of his/her statements and the delivery of structuring statements where the interviewer explains the client’s and the interviewer’s role. A competent interviewer can probe more deeply and widely, proceed quickly or slowly while listening carefully and attentively to what the client is saying, whether about his/her subjective experiences and/or his/her perception of people and environment (objects) (Knoff 1986:111-112). The following figure illustrates the interviewer’s point of departure, exploring with the client his/her present state of emotions and how his/her perception of and relation to his/her environment is.
According to the sketch above, a diagnostic interview conducted competently should explore and bring out facts about the self. A therapeutic interview should also identify inconsistencies in a client’s life, assisting the client to help him- or herself to get his/her construct of (self) back.

The first interview is as important as, and in fact, more crucial and critical than, the other interviews. According to Fine et al (Burger 1996:9) the continuation and success of the therapeutic process depends on the building of rapport, which is the main purpose of the
first interview. In view of this statement, the first interview itself is not considered as a separate entity in the therapeutic process.

4.3 **SUMMARY**

In summary, the interviews used in this study belong to the most flexible interview type, that allows many variations in style and approach. Such interviews are clinical interviews and they tend to be problem-orientated rather than data-orientated.

The TAT as a projective technique evokes from a subject that which is in various ways expressive of his/her private world and personality process.

Questionnaires are survey methods of research that help to come up with a lot of information about many people in a short time. As a survey method they are effective in the sense that a subject does not experience any fear of being victimised or embarrassed because subjects may choose to reveal their identity but only if they so wish.

In the next chapter, an analysis of data collected will be done.
CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter research design and methodology were discussed. The discussion focused on the planning of empirical research. Media to be used in the investigation were highlighted. The media discussed comprised interviews, The Thematic Apperception Test and the Parent-child questionnaire. Certain relevant statistical techniques to be used were also looked into.

Both quantitative and qualitative research have been done. The research aimed at establishing:

- the role that structured/restructured families play in communication between parents and adolescent children
- quantitative information about how one adolescent from a restructured family views his life/world and especially communicates in his family.

Research hypothesis:

$H_1$: There is no difference in communication between parents and adolescents in structured and restructured families.
5.2 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

5.2.1 Interpretation of results of the Parent-child communication questionnaire developed by De Villiers (1993:235)

To test for differences between structured and restructured family communication, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was done. The following two assumptions were tested and verified:

- Homogeneity of the variances
- Normality of the residuals.

The scores will be represented in two tables, namely Table 4 and 5.

**TABLE 4**

Table 4 contains the following information and represents the 8 moments/criteria.

- Criteria / Moment
- Degree of freedom (df)
- F-value
- P-value (probability)
- Significance. It should be noted that when a score in this column is significant, it will be represented by one star * and if it is highly significant it will have two stars ** next to it. A significant score is one with a P-value smaller than 0.05 while a highly significant one is a score with a P-value smaller than 0.01.
A multiple comparison test, namely Scheffe's test, was used between structured and Restructured families and no significant differences were found at the 5% level of confidence. Non-parametric methods were also used to confirm this finding.

5.2.1.1 Secondary findings from empirical research

A regression analysis was conducted to test biographical variables against the eight moments or criteria. Stepwise multiple regressions were done and language came out as the only factor that has an influence on seven out of eight moments or criteria.

Table 4

ANOVA table of 8 moments / criteria in structured and restructured families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION/MOMENT</th>
<th>DEGREE OF FREEDOM</th>
<th>F-VALUE</th>
<th>P-VALUE</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1,8)</td>
<td>0,58</td>
<td>0,4481</td>
<td>no significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>(1,79)</td>
<td>0,40</td>
<td>0,5298</td>
<td>no significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>(1,77)</td>
<td>0,11</td>
<td>0,7376</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>(1,77)</td>
<td>0,40</td>
<td>0,5265</td>
<td>no significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>(1,78)</td>
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<td>0,6540</td>
<td>no significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>(1,8)</td>
<td>0,06</td>
<td>0,8067</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>(1,78)</td>
<td>0,39</td>
<td>0,5355</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>(1,83)</td>
<td>0,02</td>
<td>0,8795</td>
<td>no significance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 contains the following information:

- The eight criteria (moments)
- Degrees of freedom (df)
- F-value
- P-value
- Significance.
Analysis of variance were done and Scheffe's test was used to test for significant
differences between the Language groups at a 5% level of confidence.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA MOMENT</th>
<th>DEGREE OF FREEDOM</th>
<th>F-VALUE</th>
<th>P-VALUE</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANCE</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>(1,8)</td>
<td>7,92</td>
<td>0,0062</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>(1,78)</td>
<td>8,21</td>
<td>0,0054</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>(1,83)</td>
<td>0,75</td>
<td>0,3904</td>
<td>not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Except for criterion (or moment) eight, all the other moments (criteria) show that they are
either significant or highly significant.

Language was significant in seven criteria (moments) out of eight probably because of
cultural background factors. A child staying with grandparents who have had a very
minimal educational background may find some difficulty in communicating with them,
probably because the child has been fortunate enough to go to multicultural preschools and
Model C or private schools. In such cases, this could reflect on the laxity of parents or
grandparents in maintaining and instilling their culture, which seems not to be impossible
even when children go to Model C or private schools. Children from such families might
be easily influenced by their schoolmates particularly when they experience peer pressure
and, therefore, conform to the culture of the group.
5.2.1.2 Frequencies

* The responses for each question of a moment were summed. Frequencies have been used to determine how good or poor the communication was. The responses 1,2,3,4 as set out in the questionnaire will be ** multiplied by 10 (moments consisting of 10 questions each). Moment 8 will be multiplied by 9 (only 9 questions) converted to percentages such that 1 becomes 10; 2 becomes 20; 3 becomes 30 and 4 becomes 40. Thus scores between 10 and 20 will reflect poor/dysfunctional communication, those between 20 and 30 will reflect fair communication and between 30 and 40 will reflect good/functional communication. For example in Moment 1, 13,5% reflects poor communication, 59,5% reflects fair or acceptable communication while 27% reflects functional or good communication.

Below is an example of a frequency table in moment/criterion 1 of a structured family.
Table 6  
Frequency of moment 1 in a structured family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOM 1</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>CUM. FREQUENCY</th>
<th>CUMULATIVE PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>never-occasionally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occasionally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>83.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>89.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>always</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>94.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>97.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = 10 Responses to the questions in the questionnaire. Poor communication is reflected by 10-20, 20-30 reflects fair communication while 30-40 reflects good communication.

129
A pie-chart for each moment/criterion in both families is used. This serves to summarise the quality of communication for each moment in both families. Dysfunctional is shaded red, good/functional is shaded yellow and fair is shaded blue.

**Moment or Criterion 1**

**Structured**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Dysfunctional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39,3%</td>
<td>24,5%</td>
<td>13,5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Restructured**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Dysfunctional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48,9%</td>
<td>31,1%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Moment or Criterion 2**

**Structured**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Dysfunctional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32,6%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22,2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Restructured**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Dysfunctional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57,8%</td>
<td>28,9%</td>
<td>13,2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moment or criterion 5

**Structured**

- Fair: 60.5%
- Good: 39.5%

**Restructured**

- Fair: 57.1%
- Good: 42.9%

Moment or Criterion 6

**Structured**

- Fair: 72.3%
- Dysfunctional: 19.4%
- Good: 8.3%

**Restructured**

- Fair: 71.7%
- Dysfunctional: 19.6%
- Good: 8.7%
Moment or Criterion 7

Structured

- Dysfunctional: 21.6%
- Good: 2.7%
- Fair: 75.7%

Restructured

- Dysfunctional: 18.6%
- Good: 18.6%
- Fair: 62.8%

Moment or Criterion 8

Structured

- Dysfunctional: 30%
- Good: 15%
- Fair: 55%

Restructured

- Dysfunctional: 13.1%
- Good: 13.3%
- Fair: 55.6%

Looking at the score in the pie-charts, it seems that good communication is a problem in both families, which presupposes a need to develop healthy communication in families generally.
5.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The interview conducted with an adolescent from a restructured family will be interpreted below.

5.3.1 Interview: Restructured family

Respondent from restructured family.

5.3.1.1 Personal information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Neo Ramobola</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of birth</td>
<td>13-04-1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Gr. 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of school</td>
<td>C.R. Swart Hoërskool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.1.2 Reasons for referral

Easily provoked and is easily irritated.

5.3.1.3 Family background

Neo is the first child in a family of two children. He was born out of wedlock and he lives with his mother, stepfather and his half-brother who is seven years old. His mother and stepfather were married eight years ago. He seldom sees his biological father whom he feels he would rather not see as he knows his father was never there for him even when he was still young. Neo is tired of his empty promises; in fact his biological father does not visit, nor does he (Neo) visit him. There was never any arrangement about visiting, he only sees his father by chance. His mother pays for his school fees and buys him clothes as she did before she got married. Neo enjoyed being with his girlfriend before they broke up.
5.3.1.4 Developmental background

He never suffered any major illness during childhood. He is generally a healthy child who grew up with his grandmother until his mother was married.

5.3.1.5 Functional image

Neo is in Grade 11. He told the researcher that even though he likes going out with his friends, he has become aware of the fact that he gets irritated easily. This came to his awareness when one of his friends asked why he seems to overreact sometimes, as his girlfriend has long been complaining about his strictness and rigidity.

5.3.1.6 Relation image

• Relations with parents

Neo’s is a very supportive family. He seems to relate well to his stepfather whom he feels is caring and easy to talk to. Even though his mother shouts sometimes when she talks to him, her shouting does not seem to bother him. There seems to be a close brotherly relationship between himself and his brother whom he feels enjoys being with him at home, even though at times he (Neo) would prefer to be “just alone”.

• Relations with peers

He relates well to his friends but agrees that he has become aware of overreacting towards trivial issues or jokes; he does this even with his girlfriend. He is reported by his teachers as somebody who is a hard worker and always offers to help in class. He likes going out with friends or inviting them over to his place.

• Relations with self and psychosexual development

His seeming rejection by his father may have aroused feelings of self-doubt in him which could also lead to being suspicious even with jokes.
Because he is now an adolescent, he notices pimples on his face and other bodily developments. About his pimples and deep voice, he says he felt embarrassed as he thought he was getting ugly and as a result he might find himself without friends.

He experienced feelings of ambivalence as he was not sure whether or not to approach his stepfather about these changes in him; he agrees that the mere thought of talking about these developments irritated him. However, his stepfather came to his rescue by initiating the discussion.

5.3.1.7 Person image

Neo sees himself as caring towards his younger brother and he feels “children should be taken care of”. He sees himself as supportive and loving of his mother who has always been there for him, and as loving towards his stepfather who has been caring toward them as a family. He sees himself as somebody who would not like to hurt other people, “particularly children”.

5.3.1.8 Traumatic experiences

Neo does not recall having any major traumatic experiences during his development except:

- being ambivalent about talking to his stepfather about his bodily changes – the idea irritated him. He even said, “my father is supposed to just tell me about these things, but where is he!”
- when he was looking forward to his father’s visit after he had seen him by chance in a taxi rank and he never turned up.

5.3.1.9 Future plans

He indicated in the interview that he is fond of children. He would like to finish school and then have a family of his own when he has a job (he mentioned to his mother his desire to have a child. She told him that if that happened now, he would then have to forget about school and start working.)
5.3.1.10 Conclusions based on interview

Neo’s irritability and anger in his relationships particularly with his girlfriend could be due to the following reasons:

The way he communicates with his girlfriend is such that he might be overcautious in interacting with her, for he does not want his relationship to fail. In so “doing” this might lead to feelings of anxiety on his part. Unfortunately the other partner might interpret such feelings of anxiety as either feelings of insecurity or as being a perfectionist. The other partner (girlfriend in this case) might feel pressurised, and with both of them experiencing these negative feelings, the way they communicate or relate to each other might be affected negatively.

Neo’s initial feelings of embarrassment and fear due to the pimples on his face would be due to feelings of being rejected by one of the significant people in his life. He already has feelings of rejection by his biological father.

Neo seems to be in denial where his biological father is concerned. He initially told the researcher that it did not matter whether his father was alive or dead, he does not care. Yet, when the researcher mentions his father he gets irritated. In fact, when he said his father is not there to tell him about the changes in his development, he seems to be very angry. He seems to be suppressing his feelings about his father but the anger seems to be coming out sometimes in his interaction with friends. Neo might be missing him.

Neo’s feelings of ambivalence could also be due to the subconscious conflict about his biological father, whether to totally keep him out of his mind (which could be difficult to do as he is his father) or to talk to him and resolve issues.

In summary, Neo seems to be denying that he misses his father, but this has come out in the projection test. It seems there are unsolved emotional problems.

Below is an interpretation of the TAT.
### 5.4 TAT (Thematic Apperception Test): RESTRUCTURED FAMILY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CARD NO</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot;...2&quot; The boy is worried about something or angry. Maybe he had a fight with his girlfriend or parents or even friends.</td>
<td>Recognition of feelings of anger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;maybe&quot;</td>
<td>Usage of the word &quot;maybe&quot; could reflect uncertainty about relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;worried&quot;</td>
<td>The word &quot;worried&quot; could reflect intra-personal conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Later he might kill himself – or his girlfriend, then himself. That’s all.</td>
<td>This could be reflecting anger or silent aggression or inability to come up with rational ways of dealing with conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;that’s all&quot;</td>
<td>This expresses finality. It could be a kind of, or resignation to, satisfaction with his fate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUMMARY**

There seem to be feelings of anger as well as of hopelessness. His seeming inability to apply logic in dealing with his problems or pressures of the day could be compensated by physical violence or by committing suicide. On the other hand the reference to physical violence as a solution could be due to what he observes in his environment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CARD NO</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3BM</td>
<td>&quot;...3&quot; She is crying and is upset about something. If she is old enough, maybe she had a fight with her husband or maybe she was raped or she just lost someone that she truly loves.</td>
<td>Usage of the word &quot;crying&quot; could reflect frustration and emotional pain. &quot;something&quot; – may reflect uncertainty about interpersonal relationships. &quot;maybe&quot; – could be indicating uncertainty about aspects of his life. &quot;...she was raped...&quot; - could be projection of experiences or observations from his environment into the card. &quot;...This could also be indicative of someone who can't apply logic in solving his problems and does not have hope for the future. She could ultimately kill herself too.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUMMARY**

Neo has ignored the revolver. This may indicate a repression of emotions such as aggression caused by anger, that sometimes comes out in his interaction with his peer group.
CARD NO | RESPONSES | INTERPRETATION
---|---|---
4 | "...2" The lady looks demanding but the man looks angry though. Or maybe the lady told the man about someone trying to destroy their relationship. The man could go to that person and maybe fight that person. | Neo recognises the usage of communication when handling interpersonal problems. "...but the man looks angry" – this could be reflecting his reaction to the pressures he gets faced with in his heterosexual relationships. "maybe" – Is again a reflection of uncertainty about aspects of his life. "maybe fight" – this could be indicative of some anger and also an inability to solve problems in a non-violent way.

**SUMMARY**

There seems to be an underlying aggression, could be silent aggression that is experienced by Neo. There is an indication of heterosexual conflicts and the feelings of anger could be his need not to be caught in these pressures or demands in his heterosexual relationships. Neo could be projecting trust probably in his stepfather as the one who physically and emotionally protects the family. He seems to be projecting an inability to solve problems in a non-violent way.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CARD NO</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7BF</td>
<td>&quot;...2&quot; It looks more like the boy is asking for some advices from the man who could be his dad. ... the boy though could have asked someone else but is not there. He has a fight with his girlfriend but his dad is now providing him with some guidance. In the end, the boy instead of fighting with his girlfriend or friends might be able to solve his problems because this man is helping him.</td>
<td>He expresses his need for a male identification figure. He acknowledges the absence of his biological father. Because his &quot;dad&quot; gives him advice and guidance, he may end up being able to solve his problems. His ability to talk to his stepfather makes him to be optimistic sometimes about the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUMMARY**

This card is a clear projection of his need for a father figure, he has expressed his frustration that his biological father is not there for him, but also there is acknowledgement that his stepfather can be trusted.

There seem also to be feelings of optimism about his ability to communicate and solve problems.
5.4.1 **Conclusions based on the TAT cards used**

1. Neo is angry towards his biological father; he feels rejected by him as his father has never even visited him (interview).

2. However, Neo has repressed those feelings, is in a state of denial in terms of missing his father whom he feels ought to have been there for him as he was approaching the adolescent stage.

3. Neo seems to be ambivalent towards him, he realises he is being irresponsible and that he should forget him; however, Neo realises also that this is his father.

4. As he is going through this experience, he is having problems in interacting with his friends or girlfriends. He seems to be experiencing unresolved emotional problems which at this moment have affected his communication with his girlfriend (in particular); says they have just broken up.

5. On the positive side, he has projected trust in his stepfather as the one who protects the family physically and emotionally. This probably is the reason why in the end he seems to be somewhat optimistic in regards to solving his problems.

From the in-depth study of Neo, the findings are as follows:

- The stepchild / adolescent and the stepfather interact well and the stepson seems to cherish his stepfather's presence in his life, particularly at this stage of his development.
- His stepfather's friendly attitude towards him before he married Neo's mother seems to have helped the stepson to talk to and freely express, or approach him about some issues or experiences in Neo's adolescent stage.
- Although he seems to be protective towards his mother, Neo is comfortable about his parents going out and leaving him behind to enjoy his privacy as well as looking after their home.
- His anger towards his biological father still exists and is not unfounded since his perception about his biological father is that his biological father rejected him and is, therefore, irresponsible.
In the Thematic Apperception Test, Neo clearly expresses the need to belong, to be accepted and trusted. He projects an inability to solve problems in a non-violent way, but also makes use of socially acceptable ways, for example communicating his feelings to his stepfather.

Below is an interview conducted with an adolescent from a “normal family”. A discussion of a TAT conducted on this child follows the interpretation of the interview.

5.5 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH (continued)

5.5.1 Interview: Structured family

Respondent from the “normal” family.

5.5.1.1 Personal information

Name: Roxanne White
Date of birth: 12-24-1982
Grade: Gr. 11
Name of school: C.R. Swart Hoërskool

5.5.1.2 Reasons for referral

Poor academic performance.

5.5.1.3 Other tests conducted

SAT, HSPQ, EPI, KFD & DAP, Incomplete Sentences and TAT.
5.5.1.4 Family background

Roxanne is the sixth child in a family of eight children. She lives with both her parents. Her father is the breadwinner of the family; however, two of her sisters also work, one in a clothing factory as a secretary and another a receptionist. Two of her younger brothers are in grades nine and seven. Only two of her sisters passed matric; the others dropped out in grade ten. Her mother takes care of her working sisters’ children, a boy (3 years old) and a girl (1 year old). Her eldest sister and her husband live with them because, according to her mother, this sister is not ready yet to move out and be on her own. Her mother is, therefore, a housewife.

5.5.1.5 Developmental background

Roxanne is a healthy girl. She never suffered any major illnesses and had never fallen behind the “normal” child developmental stages.

5.5.1.6 School

She has never failed any class and her reports show that she is a hard worker. She is a deputy head girl and her teachers were satisfied with her schoolwork until they started noticing her drop in subject grades during the second term. Her father became concerned as well.

5.5.1.7 Functional image

Roxanne’s father approached the researcher and explained his concern about her school grades. He acknowledged the fact that they were a big family staying in a four-bedroomed house.
5.5.1.8 Relation image

- Relations with peers

She interacts well with her friends and when she is not in class, she is always seen in the company of another girl who is also a prefect at school.

- Relations with parents

Roxanne adores her father and according to her she wouldn’t like to disappoint him. She likes her mother even though she has complained about her habit of shouting at them, especially the girls. She also feels that her mother likes to pick on her for a number of things.

- Relations with self

The fact that she is always shouted at by her mother and the seeming lack of functional communication at home has made her compare her family with that of her friends. This may have led to her feelings of frustration, because she sees herself as being helpless and inefficient.

As she has noticed physical changes in her development, she feels she needs some privacy at home; however, it seems this is not possible because of crowding at home.

5.5.1.9 Person image

Roxanne sees herself as caring; however, the way they interact (at home) as a family causes her, most of the time, to feel indifferent about a lot of things at home. As she considers herself as a person with ambitions, she strives to succeed, and does not want to be seen as a failure. However, she strongly emphasises the need to be herself.
5.5.1.10 Traumatic experience

There have not been any major traumatic experiences except for the fact that the pretence to the neighbourhood “that things are okay at our home” affects her negatively.

5.5.1.11 Future plan

She plans to work hard on her studies and is happy that she is seeing the researcher for counselling. She seems determined to pass at the end of the year and also matric despite the conditions at home. Once she starts to work she would like to extend her family’s house before she is married.

5.5.1.12 Conclusions based on the interview

Roxanne has expressed feelings of frustration, hopelessness, anger and resentment due to the following reasons.

- No matter how hard she tries, she feels that at home she is made to be somebody else; she has said number of times that she wants to be herself.
- She feels that because her sisters seemingly disappointed their parents, her mother in particular has lost hope in all of them (including herself) as if Roxanne also won’t go beyond grade twelve. Having such pessimistic ideas about her may have led to Roxanne’s feelings of anxiety and a “supposedly neurotic” need to succeed. This could be her expression of a need to be accepted.
- The fact that she feels they are pretending to the neighbourhood as if all is well at home oppresses her, as she wants to be herself. However, her father’s protectiveness of his family particularly her mother (as Roxanne sees it), compels her to tow the line and pretend as well because she does not want to disappoint her father whom she adores so much.
- She wishes for calmness and peace at home as she told the researcher, and so wishes that her family could spend more time together talking and laughing. However, she also feels that this is difficult to achieve, as they are never together. So, it would even be difficult to suggest this.
• She feels affected by the fact that at school she is a responsible person and trusted sufficiently by teachers and students to be elected as a deputy head girl. Yet, at home she has problems, hence she said that when the last bell rings at school, the thought that she would soon be going home causes her headaches.

In summary, Roxanne seems to be in a state of confusion about the father she does not want to disappoint, the fear of failure and the looming failure if things do not change at home.

5.6 TAT (Thematic Apperception Test): STRUCTURED FAMILY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CARD NO</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>This boy had a dream and passion to play the violin. Now he has violin classes but can’t seem to do it right and he thinks and feels he is hopeless. In future he may stop thinking negatively and may become the best violin player.</td>
<td>She recognises her need to excel and the demands she places on herself. She projects her inability to tackle challenges in her life, which reflects negatively on her self-concept. A crucial breakthrough is reached here, as she realises that negative thoughts may be her biggest obstacle and that the responsibility to change lies with her.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUMMARY**

There seems to be feelings of anxiety and frustration due to the following reasons:

• Need to excel; uncertainty about challenges; realisation that she has the autonomy to bring about change.

• She is realising that her negative self-talk may be her biggest obstacle.
II  "...3" The wife fell pregnant and this man's girlfriend found out he was married.

... and he wanted to divorce his wife but the young lady said no, because he betrayed her trust and that his wife does not deserve him either.

In future the young lady says goodbye and the husband and wife stay married.

She projects her feminine and sexual identity as well as the realisation of future woman – and motherhood.

Normative reasoning about heterosexual relationships takes place.

The projected separation could be the realisation that she may leave the parental home. She sees no changes in her future, any changes as well to incomplete or dysfunctional relationships.

SUMMARY

She seems at this moment, to be realistic about relationships that seem to be dysfunctional. There also seems to be a recognition of values or morals, as she would not like to be the reason for people's separation.
**CARD NO.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3BM “...2” This girl was neglected from everybody because she did things differently.</td>
<td>She acknowledges herself as different. She knows she may have to pay the price for choosing not to act according to expectations of tradition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She was also very shy.</td>
<td>Her mention of shyness could be an indication of social withdrawal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is now crying because of loneliness and because people can’t accept her for whom she is.</td>
<td>She is not readily crying – this seems to be her reaction to frustration. Loneliness – this could be the result of seeing herself as different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In future she may decide not to kill herself and she seeks help.</td>
<td>The emotional balance is coming back.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUMMARY**

Although experiencing rejection as a reality, Roxanne chooses to solve her problems in socially acceptable ways, for example by seeking help. Roxanne seems to be also experiencing feelings of frustration and rejection because:

- as she feels a strong desire to be herself, she may also be realising that it may not be possible as she realises the implications of her choice, that is alienation from the family. However, the desire to change and be herself is there, but there is fear of being rejected once she does things differently, and she wants to be accepted.
### CARD NO | RESPONSES
---|---
7GM | ...Daughter got pregnant at a teenage stage. Daughter regrets having a baby. Her mother is telling her that regretting what happened won’t make anything better. Mother takes care of the baby and daughter goes back to school. | She is projecting a problematic mother/daughter relationship. There seems to be a need to put things into order, however, the skill to do that seems to be lacking. What happened won’t make anything better – she knows not to expect empathy from her mother’s side for her mistakes. She sees herself as being alone but mother is still there for her physiological needs, although not for emotional needs. |

### SUMMARY
Roxanne seems to be going through feelings of loneliness as she also sees herself as being different. There are also feelings of regret as she regrets the mistakes she made a long time ago. She has projected a problematic mother/daughter relationship.

### CARD NO | RESPONSES
---|---
16 | “…3” It’s white, representing purity, cleanliness and peace. Everything is clean and calm. | It seems she is projecting her needs for emotional balance and peace of mind. |
5.6.1 **Conclusions based on interpretation**

Roxanne seems to be going through feelings of frustration, helplessness, anxiety and loneliness due to the following reasons.

- She feels she cannot yet do anything at home to change the situation. She can only wish for a calm, relaxed home environment, and even though she might have the skills of communication, the family structure is such that if she approaches them with her ideas she could risk rejection.
- Because she cannot do anything yet, she might feel helpless and might perceive herself as a failure. This perception about her self-image may frustrate her because she does not want to fail her father and indeed her family.
- She wants to be accepted as she is and seems tired of pretending to be what she is not.
- Because she sees herself as being different, she may end up being a loner.

Considering the type of home environment that is portrayed by this girl and the feelings that she is going through, the lack of communication skills that has been projected in some cards could be the result of the situation mentioned above.

In conclusion, the comparison between the two families is not scientifically valid, but still it seems that the variable of a structured or restructured family is not necessarily a cause for dysfunctional communication in the family.

5.7 **SUMMARY**

In this chapter scoring of results in both structured and restructured families was done and the comparison between the two was discussed. Briefly: - it was found that good communication is a problem in any family and therefore, not necessarily the variable of a structured or restructured family type. It was also found that the variable of a structured or restructured family is not necessarily a cause for dysfunctional communication in the family.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter an interpretation and analysis of the data collected during the empirical research was carried out.

In this chapter, conclusions based on the previous chapters will be provided. Important points will be highlighted and the implications thereof will be discussed. Educational recommendations will then be listed.

6.2 CHAPTER 1 - PROBLEM STATEMENT AND AIM OF STUDY

The problem was stated as to whether there is a significant difference in communication between parents and adolescents in structured and restructured families. The study was, therefore, aiming at investigating the nature of communication in restructured families in particular and families in general. It also aimed at finding out if there is a difference between the quality of communication in restructured and in structured families.

6.2.1 Research methodology and demarcation of the field of study

The study focused on communication between adolescents and parents, on how communication is influenced by the adolescent's developmental stage and also on what characterizes restructured families.
6.3 **CHAPTER 2 – COMMUNICATION IN FAMILIES**

In this chapter, a literature study of communication in families was performed. The focus was on various areas of development in adolescents and their effect on communication.

6.4 **CHAPTER 3 – RESTRUCTURED FAMILIES**

A literature study on restructured families was carried out. The focus was on communication patterns in such families, the challenges and pleasures experienced by these families, and how these in turn influence communication.

6.5 **CHAPTER 4 – EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

This chapter covered the empirical design and methodology of the project. The media that were used in the research, were discussed and an explanation of how the respondents were selected was given.

The planning of the research was explained. It involved both quantitative and qualitative research. In regard to the quantitative research, a questionnaire on parent-child communication was distributed to randomly selected adolescents between grade 10 and grade 12. In regard to the qualitative research, an in-depth study conducted on two respondents, one from a restructured and one from a structured family, was further carried out in the form of an interview and Thematic Apperception Test. Conclusions were then drawn from the in-depth study of the respondents from the restructured family.

6.6 **CHAPTER 5 – INTERPRETATION**

The research hypothesis was evaluated and limitations and recommendations are discussed towards the end of the chapter.
6.6.1 Findings on quantitative research

Primary findings comparing the two groups were such that statistically there seemed to be no significant difference in communication between parents and adolescents in restructured or in structured families. These findings were in line (or in accordance) with the research hypothesis of the study. Thus: other factors (or variables) could have a greater impact on communication in the family than the factor of the restructuring of families.

In view of the above, limitations and recommendations for future study will be made later on in the chapter.

Secondary findings revealed that in both groups language had an impact on communication. This could be the result of the different cultural backgrounds of the respondents.

6.6.2 Evaluating the research hypothesis

The research hypothesis, namely:

H₁: There is no significant difference in communication between parents and adolescents in restructured and structured families, was stated. The implications of the findings are such that the research hypothesis can be accepted.

6.7 FINDINGS OF AND CONCLUSION TO THE IN-DEPTH STUDY

The findings of the in-depth study are as follows:

In regard to Neo and his stepfather,

1. the effective interaction between the stepchild/adolescent and the stepfather seems to be cherished by the adolescent especially at this stage of his development
2. The stepfather's friendly attitude towards the stepson before he became his stepfather helped the stepson to talk freely and approach him with some issues in his developmental stage.

3. The stepson has expressed a need to belong and be trusted.

In regard to Roxanne and her family,

1. There are intense feelings of frustration, helplessness, loneliness and anxiety as she realises that she cannot share her ideas and suggestions with her parents for fear of being rejected.

2. There is a strong need to be accepted and loved as she is, without being pressurised to change to be somebody else.

6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below emanate mostly from the research and secondly from other experiences during the period of internship. There will be recommendations for parents and their stepadolescents and parents and stepparents.

6.8.1 Parents and stepadolescents

- An atmosphere for good or effective communication needs to be created by parents, otherwise adolescents turn to their peer groups for solutions to or clarifications of the problems they may be faced with.

- Even though they are in healthy functioning homes, adolescents may at times discuss some issues with friends; parents should therefore open up to be approached by their children.

- It seems that a good relationship between partners or parents serves as a solid foundation from where healthy communication among family members can be built.
• It also emerged from the case studies that adolescents need to be listened to.

• Adolescents also need to be involved in some of the decisions that are made at home for the whole family. This gives them a sense of self-worth, which is important at this stage of their development.

6.8.2 Parents and stepparents

• Family times need to be planned well in advance: for instance, in some families it is an accepted thing that the evening meal time is when the family sits together and share ideas as they enjoy their meal. This quality time is important for children, and if it is handled well children small and old always look forward to it.

• Stepparents need time away from the family to focus on themselves as well as to reflect on how they are doing as a family.

• Conflict is normal in any family but it seems many stepparents like to prevent the children from openly discussing or expressing their grievances with each other.

• Parents and stepparents alike need to try and understand the way adolescents see or perceive the world. It should be kept in mind that they are entitled to their own perceptions.

• Adolescents who seemed to have coped well with their parents' separation, divorce and remarriage sometimes relapse into anger and may then want to reopen issues thought to have been long resolved. This is normal; however, if this reaction persists, professional help may be needed.

• Adolescents (and all children) should be able to count on their parents for emotional support and clarity about some issues. Adolescents complain about busy parents / stepparents who are there physically but not emotionally. Physical and emotional absence seems to be even worse.
Adolescents, as mentioned in the literature review, are often idealistic. They seem to be interested in social justice issues like the environment, unemployment, human rights violations and many other trends in a society. A stepparent could be involved in some of the issues and genuinely listen to the stepchild’s side of the argument. Stepchildren and children alike need to be listened to. Stepparents should try to be active listeners who constantly paraphrase and reflect on their children’s statements and feelings.

It is imperative to adolescents to receive more supportive and encouraging words from stepparents than criticism. Constant criticism can lead to feelings of low self-esteem, low self-worth and failure. Unfortunately such feelings lead to depression and ultimately may cause suicidal tendencies.

Stepchildren’s argumentative skills should be appreciated by stepparents, as they may initiate discussions.

In conclusion, a stepparent may seek professional help once it is realised that he or she is not getting anywhere. Otherwise, it may be helpful to keep a sense of humour, especially if the stepparent feels despondent and may wish the next few years could rush by so that the adolescent would be grown up and be independent. When such feelings emerge it might be worth remembering what the stepparent was like as an adolescent: for example at some stage feeling as if no one in the family understood, or worrying whether he or she was liked or not. These resources can be tapped with the full support of the biological parent.

6.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is possible that there may be certain limitations in this research because of the following reasons:

(a) Even though the study aimed at investigating the quality and/or nature of communication between adolescents and parents, in restructured families in particular, parents of such families in the in-depth study were never interviewed, neither were they given the questionnaire. In view of this, the information from the
in-depth study in the form of the TAT and the interview, as well as the questionnaire, may be seen as being biased.

(b) Cultural factors play an important role in black families so that there still exists much distrust and/or suspicion in regard to giving information, which is regarded as being personal, to a “stranger”.

c) This study only investigated and eliminated one factor which could influence communication.

d) The group used was a small one and, therefore, could not be generalised to the larger population.

6.10 **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Other factors that impact on communication in families could be investigated. It is the opinion of the researcher that more interviews between parents and adolescents in restructured families should be conducted. The researcher would have to identify restructured families that may be dysfunctional, and other restructured families that may be relatively functional.

6.11 **CONCLUSION**

The researcher hopes that as soon as stepparents take into cognisance the effects of adolescents’ developmental stages on communication and understand them, the easier it may be to find ways in dealing with their stepchildren. Moreover, it is imperative for any parent to be observant and be sensitive to the changes that occur as the adolescent develops, because they are normal.
ANNEXURE 1

PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION QUESTIONNAIRE
(adopted from: Mrs Leonora de Villiers)

Name of researcher : Tembisa Sibiya
Specialization : Guidance & Counselling
Degree : M.Ed
University : University of South Africa
Date of research : 1999
Topic of research : Parent-child communication

Dear pupil,

Please complete the following questions honestly and to the best of your ability. The questions focus on the communication relationship between you and your parents. All information will be handled in the strictest confidence and your anonymity will be ensured. Some of you may feel that you always experience certain things, and others may feel that they never experience certain things. It is essential that you answer each question honestly, and according to your own feelings. Write the number of your answer in the open block opposite the question on the answer sheet.

Thank you for your co-operation!

Example

69. Does it appear that your parents understand teenage problems?

Always - 4
Often - 3
Occasionally - 2
Never - 1
Be honest with yourself, do your parents always understand your problems as a teenager, or often, or sometimes, or never?

If they always understand, write the number (4) in the corresponding block next to number 69.

No. 69 4

SECTION A : GENERAL INFORMATION

Answer the questions by writing the correct number next to the corresponding questions.

5.  Sex?

   Male    =  1
   Female  =  2

6.  Where do you currently reside?

   Both parents            =  1
   Mother                  =  2
   Father                  =  3
   One biological parent and a stepparent =  4
   Grandparents            =  5

7.  Position in family :

   Oldest child           =  1
   Middle                 =  2
   Youngest               =  3
   Other                  =  4
   If "other", explain.
8. Home language:

Afrikaans = 1
English = 2
Other = 3

9. Economic situation:

Both parents work full day = 1
Father works full day, mother half day = 2
Only one parent works = 3
Both parents without work = 4

10. With whom do you talk most frequently?

Father = 1
Mother = 2
No significant difference between the above = 3

11. With whom do you feel most at ease, when discussing your problems?

Father = 1
Mother = 2
No significant difference between the above = 3
SECTION B : EXPLORATORY QUESTIONNAIRE ON PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION

Write the number of your answer in the block next to the corresponding question.

Always - 4
Often - 3
Occasionally - 2
Never - 1

12. Are your parents loving when they speak to you?

13. Do your parents encourage you to make friends with people that you are fond of?

14. Are you aware of all the rules in your house that you are obliged to obey?

15. Are your parents willing to listen to your side of the story before laying down the law?

16. Do you find it easy to introduce your friends to your parents?

17. Can you really be yourself when you are with your parents?

18. Do your parents ever discuss their positive/negative feelings with you?

19. Do your parents explain the rules of the house in an easily understandable way?

20. Does your mother express her love for you openly?

21. Do your parents support you when you feel down?

22. Do your parents tell you what time to be home in the evening?
Always  -  4
Often    -  3
Occasionally -  2
Never    -  1

23. When planning a holiday, do your parents take your preferences and needs into consideration?

24. Do your parents respect your privacy? (For example, would they knock before entering your room?)

25. Are you able to talk to your mother, as you would talk to a close friend?

26. Do your parents lecture you?

27. Are you aware of the exact rules of importance in your house?

28. Do your parents express their love for you via physical gestures such as hugs, kisses, handshakes or patting on the shoulder?

29. Do your parents address topics such as your participation in school- and extramural activities?

30. Do you struggle to honour your parents’ decisions if they should decide something in opposition to your feelings?

31. Do you sometimes feel your parents are unreasonable and don’t take your feelings into consideration?

32. Do you feel that at times your parents treat your brother/s and/or sister/s better than they treat you during conversations?
Always  -  4
Often   -  3
Occasionally -  2
Never   -  1

33. Are there enjoyable family evenings during which a variety of topics are discussed in a relaxed manner?

34. Do you get adequate opportunity to voice your opinion in situations where there are problems to be solved?

35. Do you and your parents attend church together regularly?

36. Can you easily discuss test results with your mother?

37. Do your parents discuss subjects at school that interest you, with you?

38. Do you get the opportunity to discuss any problematic rules?

39. Do you ever experience feelings of hopelessness and frustration in your interaction with your parents?

40. Do your parents compare you to your siblings?

41. Are your parents too busy to also give time to your problems?

42. Are your parents willing to listen patiently to your needs with regards to pocket money?

43. Do your parents discuss issues such as honesty and integrity with you?

44. Do you discuss problems at school with your father?
45. Do you discuss your interests that lie outside the school arena with your parents?

46. Do your parents restrict you, resulting in feelings of being trapped?

47. Do you feel your parents sometimes have unreasonably high expectations with regards to your school work?

48. Do your parents praise you, when you have tried your best?

49. Do your parents allocate special times during the day, during which to talk to you?

50. Do your parents react in such a way to your opinions and ideas, that it appears as if they respect what you have said?

51. Is it important to you that your parents too are honest and maintain their integrity?

52. Are your parents aggressive or antagonistic towards you in conversations?

53. Do your parents appear to be listening patiently and intently when you tell them something of interest?

54. Are you expected to carry out any task set by your parents without any resistance?

55. Do your parents attempt to dampen your enthusiasm about trying something new?

56. Do you feel inferior or self-conscious when you invite a friend to your home?
Always  -  4
Often    -  3
Occasionally -  2
Never    -  1

57. Is there a strained atmosphere in your house?
58. Do your parents dominate your conversations?
59. Are you and your parents able to discuss the importance of church attendance and prayer, in an open and friendly manner?
60. Are you honest with your parents with regards to your going out to social events?
61. Are you easily annoyed by your parents' desire to talk to you?
62. Do you understand the reason for some of the rules enforced on you?
63. Do your parents allow you to express your opinions about certain issues?
64. Does your parents' behaviour warrant respect?
65. Do you know in advance that your parents will empathise with a certain problem?
66. Do you react with aggression if your parents pick you out for an untidy room?
67. Are you able to discuss boyfriends/girlfriends in an open fashion with your parents?
68. Do you think your parents trust you when you are alone with your girlfriend/boyfriend?
69. Would it appear that your parents understand teenage problems?
Always - 4
Often - 3
Occasionally - 2
Never - 1

70. Would it appear that your parents live according to the rules which govern adult behaviour?

71. Is the relationship between you and your parents tense?

72. Do your parents treat you as though they don’t accept your for yourself, and would like to change you?

73. Do you talk to your parents because you enjoy doing so, or is it a result of potential rewards?

74. Do your parents often use pet names when addressing you?

75. Do you and your parents study the bible/pray together?

76. Do you think your parents understand your problems when you discuss them with them?

77. Does it appear that your parents have an old-fashioned view of raising a child?

78. Do your parents disagree on certain issues of discipline that you are required to obey, in your presence?

79. Do you and your parents discuss whether or not you should attend a certain party, and are you able to reach a mutually acceptable decision?

80. Is it important to you that your parents acknowledge your achievements at school?
81. Would you like to take your parents into your confidence more often?

82. Do your parents often discuss their interests without establishing first if you share their interest?

83. Do your parents discuss both the positive and the negative aspects of television programmes with you?

84. Do you feel unsure of yourself when your parents reprimand you?

85. Do your parents succeed in making you feel positive about yourself in your conversations?

86. Do you take the initiative and personally go to your parents to discuss issues which are important to you?

87. Do your parents ever amend their opinions after discussion with you?

88. Do your parents offer untimely criticism about your behaviour?

89. Do you often feel alienated from your parents?

90. Do you and your parents discuss your goals and dreams for the future?
Beste leerling,

Sal jy asseblief die volgende vrae eerlik en na die beste van jou vermoë beantwoord. Die vrae handel oor kommunikasie tussen jou en jou ouers. Onthou die inligting is anoniem en sal ook streng vertroulik hanteer word. Hierdie is 'n vraelys en nie 'n toets nie. Sommige van julle mag voel dat julle sekere dinge altyd ervaar en ander mag weer voel dat hulle dit nog nooit ervaar het nie. Dit is noodsaaklik dat jy elke vraag eerlik volgens jou eie gevoel beantwoord. Skryf die syfer van jou antwoordkeuse indie oop blokkie teenoor die vraagnommer op die aparte antwoordblad.

Baie dankie vir jou hulp.

---

**Voorbeeld**

69. Toon jou ouers dat hulle tienerprobleme verstaan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antwoord</th>
<th>Syfer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altyd</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dikwels</td>
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<td>Soms</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nooit</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Jy moet volgens jou eie oordeel besluit of jou ouers altyd jou tienerprobleme verstaan, of dikwels, soms of nooit. Indien hulle altyd verstaan, skryf 4 in die oop blokjie teenoor die vraagnommer.

Nr. 69 4

AFDELING A : ALGEMENE INLIGTING

Beantwoord asseblief die vrag deur die ooreenstemmende syfer van jou antwoord op die antwoordblad in die oop blokjie teenoor die vraagnommer in te skryf.

5. Geslag?

Manlik = 1
Vroulik = 2

6. By wie woon jy tans?

Albei jou ouers = 1
Net moeder = 2
Net vader = 3
Een biologiese ouer en stiefouer = 4
Grootouers = 5

7. Hoeveelste kind is jy?

Die oudste = 1
Die middelste = 2
Die jongste = 3
Ander = 4
Meld indien “ander”

XII
8. Watter taal praat julle tuis?

Afrikaans = 1
Engels = 2
Ander = 3

9. Ekonomiese bedrywigheid?

Albei ouers werk voldag = 1
Vader werk voldag en moeder halfdag = 2
Slegs een ouer werk = 3
Geen ouers werk = 4

10. Met wie gesels jy die meeste?

Pa = 1
Ma = 2
Geen onderskeid = 3

11. Met wie het jy die grootse vrymoedigheid om jou probleme mee te bespreek?

Pa = 1
Ma = 2
Geen onderskeid = 3
Afdeling B: Verkenningsvraelys Vir OuER-Kindkomunikasie

Skryf die syfer van jou antwoordkeuse in die oop blokkie teenoor die ooreenstemmende nommer.

Altyd = 4
Dikwels = 3
Soms = 2
Nooit = 1

12. Is jou ouers liefdevol wanneer hulle met jou praat?

13. Moedig jou ouers jou aan om maats te maak met diegene waarvan jy hou?

14. Weet jy presies watte reëls in julle huis bestaan waaraan jy moet voldoen?

15. Luister jou ouers ook na jou kant van 'n saak voordat hulle 'n reël neerlé?

16. Is dit vir jou maklik om jou maats aan jou ouers voor te stel?

17. Kan jy net jou natuurlike self in die teenwoordigheid van jou ouers wees?

18. Bespreek jou ouers ook hulle positiewe en negatiewe gevoelens met jou?

19. Verduidelik jou ouers die reëls in julle huis aan jou sodat jy dit kan verstaan?

20. Sê jou moeder vir jou dat sy vir jou lief is?

21. Ondersteun jou ouers jou wanneer jy teneergedruk voel?

22. Sê jou ouers vir jou hoe laat jy saans tuis moet wees?

XIV
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23. Gee jou ouers jou, tydens die beplanning van 'n vakansie, ook inspraak ten opsigte van jou voorkeure en behoeftes?

24. Respekseer jou ouers jou privaatheid? (Klop hulle byvoorbeeld eers aan jou kamerdeur voordat hulle dit oopmaak?)

25. Gesels jy met jou ma soos wat jy met 'n vriend(in) sal gesels?

26. Preek jou ouers vir jou?

27. Weet jy presies watter reëls belangrik is om in julle huis na te volg?

28. Toon jou ouer(s) hulle liefde aan jou deur fisieke kontak (soen en drukkies)?

29. Gesels jou ouers met jou oor skoolaktiwiteite waaraan jy deelneem of in belangstel?

30. Vind jy dit moeilik om gehoor te gee aan jou ouers se opdragte indien hulle jou sou teëgaan?

31. Voel jy soms jou ouers is onredelik en neem nie jou gevoelens in ag nie?

32. Voel jy da jou ouers jou broer(s) en/of suster(s) beter in gesprekke behandel as vir jou?

33. Is daar "lekker" gesinsaande waartydens julle rustig oor 'n verskeidenheid onderwerpe kan gesels?

XV
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<td>Soms</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nooit</td>
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</table>

34. Kry jy genoeg geleentheid om self te praat indien daar oor sake uitsluitel verkry moet word?

35. Gaan jou ouers gereels saam met jou kerk toe?

36. Bespreek jy jou toetspunte met jou moeder?

37. Praat jou ouers met jou oor vakke op skool waarin jou belangstel?

38. Kry jy geleentheid om oor reëls wat hinderlik is, te praat?

39. Ervaar jy gevoelens van moedeloosheid in jou interaksie met jou ouers?

40. Vergelyk jou ouers jou met jou broer(s) en/of suster(s)?

41. Is jou ouers te besig om nog na jou probleme ook te luister?

42. Luister jou ouers geduldig na jou behoefes ten opsigte van sakgeld?

43. Gesels jou ouers met jou oor sake soos eerlikheid en pligsetrouheid?

44. Bespreek jy probleme by die skool met jou pa?

45. Gesels jou ouers met jou oor jou belangstellings? (nie dit wat in die skool gebeur nie)

46. Stel jou ouers perke aan jou sodat jy ingehok voel?
Altyd = 4
Dikwels = 3
Soms = 2
Nooit = 1

47. Voel jy dat jou ouers te hoë eise ten opsigte van jou skoolwerk aan jou stel?

48. Prys jou ouers jou indien jy jou beste presteer?

49. Ruim jou ouers spesiaal tyd deur die dag in om met jou te gesels?

50. Reageer jou ouers so dat jy kan sien dat hulle jou standpunte en idees as belangrik ag?

51. Is dit vir jou belangrik dat jou ouers self eerlik en pligsgetrou is?

52. Tree jou ouers vyandig teenoor jou op in hul gesprekke?

53. Luister jou ouers geduldig indien jy interessante gebeurtenisse aan hulle vertel?

54. Verwag jou ouers dat jy hul opdragte sonder enige teenspraak sal uitvoer?

55. Demp jou ouers jou entoesiasme om nuwe dinge aan te pak?

56. Voel jy ontoereikend/minderwaardig indien jy 'n vriend of vriendin na jou ouerhuis nooi?

57. Is die gevoelsklimaat in julle huis gespanne?

58. Oorheers jou ouers jul gesprekvoering?

59. Gesels jy en jou ouers spontaan en gemaklik oor die belangrikheid van Kerkbesoek en gebed?

XVII
Vertel jy die waarheid aan jou ouers indien jy per geleentheid sou uitgaan?

Raak jy geïrriteerd indien jou ouers met jou gesels?

Verstaan jy die redes waarom jou ouers sekere reëls aan jou voorhou?

Laat jou ouers jou toe om by sekere tye jou mening oor 'n aangeleentheid te gee?

Dwing jou ouers se optede jou respek af?

Weet jy voor die tyd reeds dat jou ouers begrip sal hê vir 'n probleem wanneer jy na hulle sou gaan?

Voel jy aggressief indien jou ouers jou daarop wys dat jou kamer nie netjies is nie?

Het jy die vrymoedigheid om met jou ouers oor jou verhouding met meisies/seuns te gesels?

Dink jy jou ouers vertrou jou alleen by jou meisie of kërel?

Toon jou ouers dat hulle tienerprobleme verstaan?

Toon jou ouers dat hulle volgens die reëls wat vir volwassenes geld, lewe?

Is die verhouding tussen jou en jou ouers gespanne?

Behandel jou ouers jou asof hulle jou nie aanvaar soos jy is nie, en wil hulle jou verander?
73. Gesels jy met jou ouers omdat jy daarvan hou en nie vanweë ander redes (vir geld of ander gunste) nie?

74. Gebruik jou ouers troetelname wanneer hulle met jou praat?

75. Hou jou ouers saam huisgodsiens?

76. Dink jy jou ouers verstaan jou probleme wanneer jy dit met hulle bespreek?

77. Toon jou ouers dat hulle outyds in hul siening van opvoeding is?

78. Verskil jou ouers van mekaar wanneer jy teenwoordig is, oor die reëls wat deur jou gehoorsaam moet word?

79. Bespreek jy en jou ouers dit of dit vir jou goed is om 'n bepaalde partytjie by te woon en kom julle dan saam tot 'n besluit?

80. Is dit vir jou belangrik dat jou ouers jou erkenning sal gee vir jou prestasies in die skool?

81. Sou jy jou ouers graag meer dikwels in jou vertroue wil neem?

82. Praat jou ouers baie oor hul eie belangstelling sonder om vas te stel of jy ook daarin belangstel?

83. Bespreek jou ouers die positiewe sowel as negatiewe aspekte van televisieprogramme met jou?
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<td>Altyd</td>
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<td>2</td>
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84. Voel jy baie onseker indien jou ouers jou teregwys?

85. Slaag jou ouers daarin om in hul gesprekke jou positief oor jouself te laat dink?

86. Neem jy die inisiatief om self met jou ouers te gaan gesels oor dinge wat vir jou belangrik is?

87. Wysig jou ouers hulle opinie na gesprekvoering met jou?

88. Spreek jou ouers ontydig kritiek teenoor jou optrede uit?

89. Belewe jy dikwels gevoelens van afsydigheid teenoor jou ouers?

90. Bespreek jy en jou ouers jou toekomstige toekomsideale met mekaar?
The above pie-chart shows that there were more female respondents than male respondents.

Of the respondents that were randomly selected, 51.8% stayed with both parents, 28.2% with their mothers, 9.4% with grandparents, 9.4% with one biological parent and one stepparent and 1.2% stayed with fathers only.
In regards to working parents and parents who are not working, only 37.2% of families (structured and restructured) had both parents working and 12.8% of the families of respondents had both parents out of work.

It seems in most families, mothers are spoken to most frequently.
It seems most respondents of the parent-child communication questionnaire preferred to speak to their mothers about their concerns. Fathers appear to be the least spoken to.

Of the respondents to the parent-child communication questionnaire, 34.5% were the first born children in their families, 31.0% were the youngest while 28.7% fell in the middle in terms of position in their families; 58% of the respondents were neither eldest, youngest nor in the middle.
The above pie-chart reflects that in the parent-child communication questionnaire, in regard to language used at home, 44.8% of the respondent's families were Afrikaans speaking, 3.5% were English speaking while 51.7% were using various African languages like isiXhosa, isiZulu, Setswana etc.


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