

Trust formation to the mother: A comparison between male and female adolescents

Abstract

Trust is important for the good functioning of interpersonal relations. It is a relational concept that provides security, harmony, and welfare for individuals, family members, and the whole community. This concept first develops in family atmosphere as a result of strong and intimate parent-child relationship, it is extended to other family members, close friends and later to the community. The purpose of this study was to examine trust elicited by male and female adolescents toward their mothers, and for developing a more contextualized understanding of the way trust in mother emerges when the factor of gender is considered. Data was collected from 993 undergraduate students (males =222, female = 771) studying in one of the higher education institution in Malaysia. The respondents were asked to complete a set of open-ended questions to elicit information on trust. Data was analyzed using the indigenous psychology approach through categorization, open coding, and axial coding. A pattern of trust formation to the mother was proposed by comparing male and female adolescents based on their trust experience towards their mothers. Analysis on pattern of trust formation towards the mother for male and female adolescents revealed four main categories: mother-adolescents relationship, mother's role and nurturing, mother's characteristic, and mother's attitude and behavior. Mother-adolescents relationship was identified as the main source why adolescents trust their mother. Results showed that there was no significant association between gender and the trust formation to the mother. The findings indicated that the pattern of trust formation towards the mother were similar between male and female adolescents. Understandings how pattern of trust develops, will provide useful information for parents, teachers, counselors, government officers, and policy makers and can help in establishing harmonious society.