

# The Relationship Between Friendship Quality and personalities in Adolescent Girls and Boys

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**Abstract.** Friendship is an indispensable theme in social communication. Friendship quality plays an important role in shaping adolescents' future lives. Especially, the influence on the shaping of adolescents' personalities is an important aspect. The aim of this article is to explore the association between the friendship quality and teenagers' personalities. This paper states the definition of the friendship quality and features of the adolescents. Also, it includes the effect of friendship quality on some personalities such as self-esteem, confidence and the big-five personalities. In addition, the paper presents some suggestions to schools and families in order to help adolescents to shape healthy personalities. The conclusion is that a higher quality of friendship can create a more positive personality on teenagers and effect their future careers. Understanding the relationship between friendship quality and personalities create the possibilities to help adolescents to be positive, confident and have advanced interpersonal skills, which are beneficial to their development. This paper can provide some reference for research in related fields. Future research should delve deeper into the relationship between the quality of friendship and the shaping of personalities of adolescents, taking into account gender differences.

**Keywords:** Friendship quality, personalities, adolescents.

## 1. Introduction

An important feature of friendship relationships is that their formation, maintenance, and termination are determined to a greater extent by the free will of the participants than those of family members or work colleagues [1]. It is because the society is a huge communicate network. Everyone inside the society cannot be completely isolated with other people. And the emotional feelings bring people together and form the small communicating network, the friendship.

Recent research shows an overall decline in happiness among adolescents globally over the past decade [2]. The reasons are complex. Interpersonal relationship between people like friendship is an important factor which cannot be ignored. A good friendship makes benefits on teenagers' future development. For example, the communication skills which are learned from the friendship with other people can indirectly influence the romantic relationship and working careers in future lives. In addition, the negative personalities may lead to serious problems and cause some bad effect to the society. This is related to people's daily lives. Thus, it is valuable to explore the bond between the shaping of personalities and the friendship quality. The only independent-variable is the quality of relationship. It is assumed to be the standard of whether it is a healthy interpersonal relation.

Researchers have studied many aspects that related to the shaping of adolescents' personalities. Researchers valve the relationship between adolescents' personalities and family members, as well as romantic and marital relationships, and even friendships that consist of a relatively large number of individuals at different life stages, particularly in late adolescence [3]. But these may be influenced greatly by their friendship quality in their teen ages. They may feel lack of security in their romantic relationship because they did not get enough love from friends and cannot believe other people easily, even in the romantic relationship. And this is related to the self-esteem. For example, the quality and stability of adolescents' friendships is not only related to their self-esteem but also to changes over time in specific domains of self-esteem [4]. A short close relationship, which means the unstable friendship, hurt teenagers because the lack of involvement. However, how the friendship quality make

influence on the shaping of personalities is not clear. As a result, it is meaningful to know the role of friendship quality in the personalities-shaping situation.

This paper is going to analyze the relationship of friendship quality and adolescents' personalities in order to help teens to develop a better relationship which may make them feel comfortable. The article will introduce the friendship quality and its features. And then, the relationship between the shaping of personalities and friendship quality will be discussed. Also, there are some suggestions to school and families in order to help them to create a better environment for teenagers.

## **2. Friendship Quality**

### **2.1. The Meaning of Friendship Quality**

The quality of friendships, a charactering feature of teens, is crucial [5]. Friendship relationships, the bond between people, is a means for the fulfillment of the social needs of people throughout their lives [1]. Unlike the hierarchical relationship between parents and children, friendship is a relationship of equals [6]. There is the old saying goes "A friend in need is a friend indeed". Friendship which has high qualities leads to positive consequence to adolescent boys and girls. The influence may even affect these teenagers' future lives such as opportunities in working places and romantic relations. High-quality friendships influence teenagers' shaping of personalities. For example, teenagers may become more and more confident because of the trust and encouragements from their peers. However, a low-quality friendship may result in low self-esteem and lack of confidence. What is friendship quality? Several researchers noticed and described lots of good characteristics that seem to be determined as high-quality friendships, such as prosocial behavior, loyalty, intimacy, self-esteem support, and more [4]. For example, high-quality friendships are characterized by closeness, offering and receiving help [7]. In contrast, low-quality friendships may be created by the unequal status and some negative emotion release. Thus, it is very important to clear the friendship quality definition to know how friendship quality is able to shape young people's personalities. Therefore, the friendship quality is assumed to measure whether a friendship is healthy or not.

### **2.2. Features of Adolescents' Friendship**

Teens often suggests that best friends can tell each other everything or release their thoughts and feelings which are personal and seemed to be secrets. These personal self-disclosures are the sign of close friendships. The teens said friends would protect and support each other during fights to show their loyalty too [4]. It is common for adolescents to think that it is important to show their trust and loyalty to friends. As a result, their friendships often seem to be a kind of belt which connect the secrets of the friends. Equality is an obvious feature too. In competitive situations, early teens are more prosocial toward friends than younger children because they more often try to achieve equal outcomes that are satisfactory to both parties [8]. Most adolescents are willing to create the equal status with peers in order to ensure a harmonious environment and close relationship. Another feature is the similarity between peers. Similarity is due to choosing friends who are similar to oneself, and on the other hand, it is due to the influence among friends [8]. In adolescent ages, teens who are able to become friends often have the similar living environment like schools and homes. Thus, similarity plays an important role in the friendship.

Another feature is that the friendship influence teenagers' behaviors and thoughts greatly, which means the change may be apparently because the teenagers are willing to get the feeling of involvement. Friend-relationship is very important in children's healthy development and social adaptation and adolescents' social abilities, cognition, emotion, self-concept and personality, and bad peer relationship can cause adolescent behavior problems [9]. A good relationship makes teens better themselves while negative relationship led to unhealthy mental. Friendships are important to a person's well-being. Not only in childhood, but also in adulthood, the shortage of friends can result to academic problems, substance problems, abuse, antisocial behavior, anxiety, and depression [10].

For instance, bad friendship may lead to lack of confidence, lack of self-esteem and so on. The bad consequence may be that the teen is too unconfident to achieve their own goals and lose many opportunities. Thus, it can be seen that it is important to create a high-quality friendship.

### **3. The Relationship between Friendship and the Shaping of Adolescents' Personalities**

#### **3.1. Self-esteem**

Self-esteem often relates to the feeling of involvement in a special group of people. Adolescents are more likely to tend to join the environment around them. If they are admitted being a member of the group, they will have more motivation and higher self-esteem to do most of things in their daily lives. Chatting with friends closely can boost teens' self-esteem, or, in some researchers' words, validation of self-worth by showing teens that other people respect their ideas and wants their advice [6]. The respect from other people improves adolescents' self-esteem personality. These adolescents have better understandings of the value of their own than teenagers who are ignored by other teens. Men and women with low levels of intimacy often report feeling bored and lonely as children. Their reports suggested that they may have been socially isolated or not accepted by their friends, though they claimed to be friends [6]. The lack of encouragement and respect lead to the consequence of low self-esteem just as these men and women. Thus, a high-quality friendship with lots of inspiration and the feeling of involvement improve the shaping of self-esteem.

#### **3.2. Confidence**

As individuals studying to make decisions, they add particular feedback about their abilities and build confidence in those abilities, these beliefs are called self-confidence [11]. Believe in oneself is a necessary capacity in the society. Confidence can reflect whether a person receive enough trust and love from other people. If adolescents are often laughed by somebody else by saying some negative words about their abilities and appearances, they may become unconfident and doubt at their own. The reason is that their friendship quality is low. This kind of friendship is not beneficial to them to develop a healthy personality like confidence. In contrast, teenagers who are confident often encouraged by their friends too. Self-confident people are usually easy to influence others, clearly understand their own limitations, and know how to manage their emotions and behaviors appropriately [11]. This personality influences their friends indirectly. And this style of high-quality friendship is good enough to help each other to develop positive attitude about adolescents themselves in a healthy relationship of friends. Therefore, a high-quality friendship can affect one person to be more and more confident and improve their capacities without too many barriers.

#### **3.3. The Big-five Personalities**

What is the big-five personalities? The five-factor model is composed by openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. High level of openness can describe people who are full of imagination, emotional and good at creating. People who get high score on conscientiousness are organized, careful, rectitude and reliable. Extravertive people who often have positive attitude are out-going, energetic and love to take adventures. And the features of agreeable people are modest, altruistic. Also, neuroticism means that people may be depressed, anxious, sensitive. Their emotions are not stable.

These five standards relate to people's behavior greatly. For example, two people with different level of neuroticism may think differently when facing the trouble. People with high level of neuroticism may think it is very embarrassing and do not want to face the problem, or they want to cry. However, people who are unneurotic may think more positive and try to solve these problems. The different personalities can affect people's ability to solve the problems.

Synchrony of perceived friendship quality among friends may be related greatly with five types of characteristics. Conscientiousness, Extraversion, emotional stability, agreeableness, intelligence/ imagination (openness), and synchrony of conservative versus openness to change [12]. Relationships are likely to work well when people perceive each other clearly [13]. Points on extraversion and agreeableness have been illustrated to be positively related with friend acceptance and number of friends among the five dimensions of personality traits [14]. This means that higher extraversion and agreeableness are more likely to have good effect on creating a high-quality friendship because these adolescents are willing to accept other people and different opinions. Children who are high in agreeableness tend to give their friends more emotional support or instrumental help, leading to higher quality friendships [12]. They can understand other people, which is positive to have a harmonious relationship and equal status between each other. These personalities are connected. Openness can also represent the quality of friendship. It can be argued that the higher the score of "openness" in a friendship pair, the more quickly they can adapt to changes in the friendship context and the more likely to have diverse interesting shared memories. However, higher the "conservatism" score will result to more rigidity and inflexibility. Some friendships which are weak in the bond can reduce the quality of friendships [12]. Thus, the high-quality friendship is able to lead people to be a better themselves, which is a win-win situation.

## **4. Suggestions**

### **4.1. Schools**

In order to ensure a healthy growing environment for adolescents, schools should take action to provide the insurance and resources for students. First, school should pay more attention to the bully behaviors. Though somebody think the comments about each other are just jokes between friends, they are not. In fact, critical comments and laughing often have side effects on the shaping of teenagers' personalities. Many people who similar experiences feel upset about no one could help them at that time. As a result, schools should reduce the possibility of the happening of these bad things. For example, schools can emphasize the importance of being friendly with each other and encourage students to tell teachers about their happiness and unhappiness. Also, ask teachers to attach importance to the similar situation and help students to solve the problems in communication with each other. Thus, students may be influenced by the environment gradually and no longer hurt other people.

### **4.2. Families**

Positive parenting can provide family nourishment, help children form a healthy personality, and help children maintain good interpersonal relationships [15]. Parents are children's first teachers. In other word, parents have duty to teach children how to communicate with other people and how to protect themselves from the bad environments. First, parents should be the models of teens. Adolescents think they are growing to be adults. Therefore, they like imitate the behaviors that adults often do. As a result, it is important improve parents' own positive opinions about relationship in order not to mislead children. Parents should be sympathy with other people and be self-esteem and confident. Thus, teenagers will imitate their parents and older people. Second, as the members of the families, parents encourage teenagers more. For example, parents should encourage students to be kind and helpful when staying with other people. Also, it is a good idea to tell them to be confident about themselves. Due to the changing both mentally and physically, teenagers are more likely to be sensitive and hurt by surrounding environments. Parents should teach their boys and girls to be confident about themselves and respect other people just as how they respect them. Be friendly and be kind to friends. Then, parents should also teach teenagers how to definite whether this style of interaction is fit for themselves, instead of shrinking back. Thus, parents should pay more attention to their children's growth and give them some suggestion about the ways which fit them to develop their talents and personalities.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, it can be seen that there are strong bonds between personalities shaping and friendship qualities. This paper found that high-quality friendships are more likely to create positive personalities, while low-quality friendship may lead to negative consequence. Higher quality of friendship can affect adolescents to have more benefit to gain the opportunities because of the braveness from encouragement and inspiration. They are more likely to become people who are healthy mentally. This paper can provide some reference for research in related fields.

This paper shows some useful measure standards like the big-five personalities and explain the roles they played in shaping the teens personalities. Researchers can use it to measure adolescents' mental health caused by the relationship. In addition, people in the society need to take attention to this problem, especially people who related to education works such as teachers and parents.

Nevertheless, there are still some limitations in the study of this field. As human's personalities are complicated, many aspects of personalities have not been noticed by the researchers to study for the relationship with friendship quality. It is encouraged to have deeper research about the relationship between the quality of friendship and the shaping of personalities of adolescents in the future. Moreover, girls and boys are influenced by the friendship quality differently, it is also a good topic to talk to. Future studies should examine the point and overcome this limitation. The author hopes that the development of the research of friendship quality and the relation with personalities can not only be used in academic research program, but also in real lives to help teenagers to create better future careers.

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