

Gender differences between keeping secrets from parents



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1. Title of the study

Gender differences between keeping secrets from parents among university students

2. Background of the study

University is viewed as a new stage for children to learn independent and autonomy. Youths start to withhold information from their parents, for instance about what they do during unsupervised leisure time. Keeping secret is a part of normal development in one's life (Peskin, 1992). As children get older, they start to set a boundary with parents and choose to withhold the private information (Petronio, 2002; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). It is useful to investigate the secrecy disclosure behavior when the students separate with their parents. Few significant datas showed the reasons for children to keep secrets within themselves. There are to date no survey method has been used to investigate the secrecy disclosure behaviors with parents. The purpose of this study is to determine the gender differences to the behaviors of keeping from parents among university students by using the questionnaire.

3. Aims and Objectives of the Study

The literature lack of attention towards the gender differences related to the secrecy discourse among the early adult. The present study examines the phenomenon about keeping secrets among males and females. Research on secrecy has been limited by just focusing on the western countries. Keeping secrets is viewed as the way to maintain family harmony in Chinese

traditional thinking so as to protect parents from additional burden (Rosaleen & Dafna, 1999). The current study highlights the importance of differentiating the secrecy disclosure behaviors in Chinese societies.

4. Literature Review

Early study showed that girls who are 14 years old from Sweden disclosed more secrets than boys to parents (Stattin & Kerr, 2000). However, other study found that the extent of keeping secrets from parents is the same among boys and girls who are 10-14 years old in the Netherlands (Tom, Catrin, As and Rutger, 2015). This study was designed to found out the phenomenon of keeping secrets from parents in Chinese societies. When adolescents become older and more autonomous, they would more likely to keep secrets among themselves (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). As the previous literature just focus on analyzing teenagers on secrecy disclosure, the present study aims to target on the university students. Early studies showed that children usually keep their secrets from parents (Catrin, Rutger & Wim, 2002; Loes, Susa & Tom, 2010). However, the evidence of keeping secrets to father or mother is lacked. This paper aims to find out if there is any gender difference when the university students disclose secrets to a specific parent. Besides, little attention has been paid to different areas of secrets that the children keep. Secrets can be separated in different category, such as personal work, leisure or romantic relationship. Children may choose to keep part of the secrets and disclose the other parts to their parents. The current study advanced our understanding by examining the difference between different domains of secrets that the children would like to disclose. Some studies found that keeping secret from parents were <https://assignbuster.com/gender-differences-between-keeping-secrets-from-parents/>

negatively related to the parent-child relationship (Finkenauer et al., 2008; Vangelisti, 1994). This paper provides a detailed picture to see if there is any correlation between the parent-child relationship and the degree of secret disclosure.

5. Proposed Methodology

i. Research design

There is an online survey that investigated gender differences between keeping secrets from parents and a child-parent relationship scale which is used to analyze the correlation between the child-parent relationship and the degree of secrecy disclosure.

ii. Participants

Around 120 university students in Hong Kong were participated in the study. The sampling was tried to select the participants made up of half males and half females, with ages ranging from 18 to 24 years.

iii. Instrument

Data was collected using an online questionnaire with two sections. Section A included the demographic information of the participants and the degree of the secrets they kept from their parents. Section B is parent-child relationship scale, a 10-item scale about father and mother respectively in the Likert format and 5 points response options ranging from false (0), to true (1) and Cronbach alpha of . 86 and . 83 for father and mother items respectively (Johan, Kim & Krista, 2006).

iv. Procedure

Approval was sought before the questionnaire begins and an informed consent is distributed with explanation of the purpose of the study and assurance of strict adherence to keep the participants' information confidentiality (Illinois State University, 2012). Besides, the participants would be informed that participants are voluntary and they can freely to withdraw from the study whenever they want.

v. Statistical Analysis

The t-test of independent means was used for the data analysis to determine gender difference about secrecy disclosure. Pearson r is used in finding out if there is any correlation between the child-parent relationship and the degree of keeping secrets from parents.

6. Expected results

Asian societies less likely to disclose their secrets to others as face-work is an important culture among Chinese (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The present study is target at the university students in Hong Kong. Therefore, it is expected the result is different with the western culture which means that there is gender difference between keeping secrets from parents among university students. Females are more dependent and need more emotional support from their parents (Geuzaine, C; Debry, M., & Liesens, V., 2000). As a result, it is expected female would explore more secrets to parents when compared with male. This study is a solid first attempt to direct attention to the gender difference about keeping secrets from parents among Chinese

and investigate the contents of secrets. However, some limitations related to practice are resulted. As the time is limited, the number of participants is limited. Therefore, the content validity is unknown as the number of participants in this study may not represent the domain sample. According to Kelly and McKillop(1996), different behaviors occur as the target of keeping and sharing the secrets is different. Hence, peers, teachers and other significant others can further be investigated about the secrecy disclosure behaviors.

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Appendixes

1. Informed Consent Form

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to examine the gender differences between keeping secrets from parents among university students.

What will be done:

You will complete a survey, which will take 5-15 minutes to complete. The survey includes questions about your personal relationship with your parents. Other survey questions will address your personal views about keeping secrets. The survey also includes some demographic information (e. g., age, gender, education level).

Benefits of this Study:

You will be contributing to knowledge about gender differences between keeping secrets from parents among university students. After we have

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finished data collection, we also will provide you with more detailed information about the research results.

Risks or discomforts:

No risks or discomforts are anticipated from taking part in this study. If you feel uncomfortable with a question, you can skip that question or withdraw from the study altogether. If you decide to quit at any time before you have finished the questionnaire, your answers will NOT be recorded.

Confidentiality:

Your responses will be kept completely confidential. Your IP address will not be recorded when you respond to the Internet survey. Instead, you will be assigned a participant number, and only the participant number will appear with your survey responses. Only the researchers will see your individual survey responses.

Decision to quit at any time:

Your participation is voluntary; you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time. If you do not want to continue, you can simply leave this website. If you do not click on the "submit" button at the end of the survey, your answers and participation will not be recorded. You also may choose to skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

How the findings will be used:

The results of the study will be used for scholarly purposes only. The results from the study will be presented in an academic paper in the field of psychology.

Contact information:

If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact Joanna Lai at

lcy1012@hotmail. com.

By beginning the survey, you acknowledge that you have read this information and agree to participate in this research, with the knowledge that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

2. Questionnaire

I am a social science student from the School of Professional Education and Executive Development, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Thank you for participating in this questionnaire. This questionnaire aims to analyze the gender differences between keeping secrets from parents among university students. All the information required is for research purpose only and will not be disclosed. The data will be disposed after analyze.

Part A:

Please answer all the questions and write your responses in the appropriate blank or tick the correct boxes.

1. What is your age?

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18 19 20 21 22 23 24

Others (please specify): _____

2 . What is your gender?

Male Female

3. What is your year of study?

Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4

4. What is your nationality?

Asian American Black Others (Please specify)

4. What is the current marital status of parents?

Married Cohabitation Separated Divorced Remarried

Widowed

5. What is your father's current occupation?

Professional White collar Blue collar Unemployed

Out of workforce Self-employed

6. What is your mother's current occupation?

Professional White collar Blue collar Unemployed

Out of workforce Self-employed

7. Will you keep secrets from parents?

â-;Yes â-;No (Please skip from here to question 12)

8. Which parent would you explore secrets to him/her?

â-;Mother ((Please skip from here to question 10)

â-;Father (Please skip from here to question 10)

â-;Both parents

9. Which parents would you explore more secrets to him/her?

â-;Mother â-;Father â-;No difference

10. What types of secrets would you keep with parent? (You can choose more than one answer)

â-;Leisure time â-;Study â-;Peer â-;Romantic relationship â-;Personal Work â-;Others (please specify): _____

11. Which option can best describe the reason for you to keep the secret from parents? (You can choose more than one answer) (This is the last question for part A)

â-;Relationship with parent â-;Traditional culture â-;Self-esteem

â-;Others (please specify): _____

12. Why you choose to explore all the secrets to parents? (You can choose more than one answer)

• Trust parents • Hard to keep secrets in your own

• Want others to share the secret • Others (please specify): _____

13. Why you would like to tell your secrets to parents rather than other people? (You can choose more than one answer)

• Trust my parents only • The closest person

• Find no one can shared rather than parents

• Others (please specify): _____

Part B

Below are a number of statements that people often use to describe their relationship with their parents. Read each statement and then tick the appropriate number next to that statement.

0= FALSE 1= MOSTLY FALSE 2= NEUTRAL 3= MOSTLY TRUE 4= TRUE

Father 0 1 2 3 4

1. I was very closed towards my father
 • • • • •

2. I kept my troubles to myself
 • • • • •

(towards
father)

I wished my
father

3. would â- â- â- â- â-
worry less i i i i i
about me

My father

4. often made â- â- â- â- â-
me feel i i i i i
insecure

My father

anxiety that
something

5. might â- â- â- â- â-
happen to i i i i i
me was
exaggerate

d

6. My father â- â- â- â- â-
worried i i i i i
that I
couldn't

take care of

my self

My father

7. often made â- â- â- â- â-

me feel i i i i i

guilty

I often felt

that my

8. father did â- â- â- â- â-

not i i i i i

understand

me

My father

sheltered

9. me too â- â- â- â- â-

much from i i i i i

difficulties

My father

1 was â- â- â- â- â-

0. overprotect ; i i i i i

ive.

Mother

I was very
closed â- â- â- â- â-
1. towards my i i i i i
mother

I kept my
troubles to
2. myself â- â- â- â- â-
(towards i i i i i
mother)

I wished my
mother
3. would â- â- â- â- â-
worry less i i i i i
about me

My mother
often made
4. me feel â- â- â- â- â-
insecure i i i i i

5. My mother â- â- â- â- â-
anxiety that i i i i i
something
might
happen to

me was
exaggerate
d

6. My mother
worried
that I â- â- â- â- â-
couldn't i i i i i
take care of
my self

7. My mother
often made â- â- â- â- â-
me feel i i i i i
guilty

8. I often felt
that my
mother did â- â- â- â- â-
not i i i i i
understand
me

9. My mother â- â- â- â- â-
sheltered i i i i i
me too
much from

difficulties

My mother

1 was â- â- â- â- â-

0. overprotect ; ; ; ; ;

ive.

The End! Thank You!