

Abstract

Background: This research paper looked into adolescent and their mother's views on implicit theory and whether or not their views effected how close they were. We tested this hypothesis by determining if adolescent and their mothers had a difference in implicit beliefs. We also wanted to determine if mothers and their adolescents were talking more about dating because their beliefs were the same; we also tested whether or not there was a relationship between the adolescent and their mothers' different implicit views and their attachment style. To test this hypothesis, we had sixty complete pairs of mothers and their daughters and had them complete a questionnaire form. The questionnaire measured their implicit theory of romantic relationship using Knee (1998), eight question scale; the questionnaire also used Fraley et al., (2000) twelve item experiences in close relationships scale to determine the participants attachment style. We measured the amount of communication about dating by using the Luerssen (2018) twelve question scale. There was no significant difference between mothers and adolescents' implicit theory; this meant that mothers and their daughters had similar views on their implicit theory beliefs. Overall, our results suggested that mother and daughters have similar views on implicit theory beliefs and that in households where the adolescents has a higher growth beliefs than their mother, we found the participants talk more about dating than in a household were, destiny was higher. Our results also suggested that adolescents had higher levels of anxious and avoidance attachment styles than their mothers.

Introduction

For the most part adolescents and parents are scared to talk about romantic relationships, because they involve the topic of sex. However, these conversations are important for adolescent development.

For example, it is important to talk about how to maintain your individual identity in a romantic partnership (Babarskiene and Gaiduk, 2018). It is also important to talk about what to look for in a partner and sharing coping/communication strategies (Dovala et. al, 2018).

Another thing important to teach adolescents is how to think about what makes a successful relationship. This is referred to as one's implicit theory of relationship, or one's beliefs about what makes some relationships last. In our study, we wanted to see if mothers and their teenage daughters have similar implicit beliefs about relationships, because they talk about it.

There are two types of implicit theories of relationships:

- Having a growth belief means you are determined to work on the relationship, work through the hard stuff such as conflict, and grow the relationship.

- Destiny belief falls more of a love at first sight connection and focus less on working on the relationship.

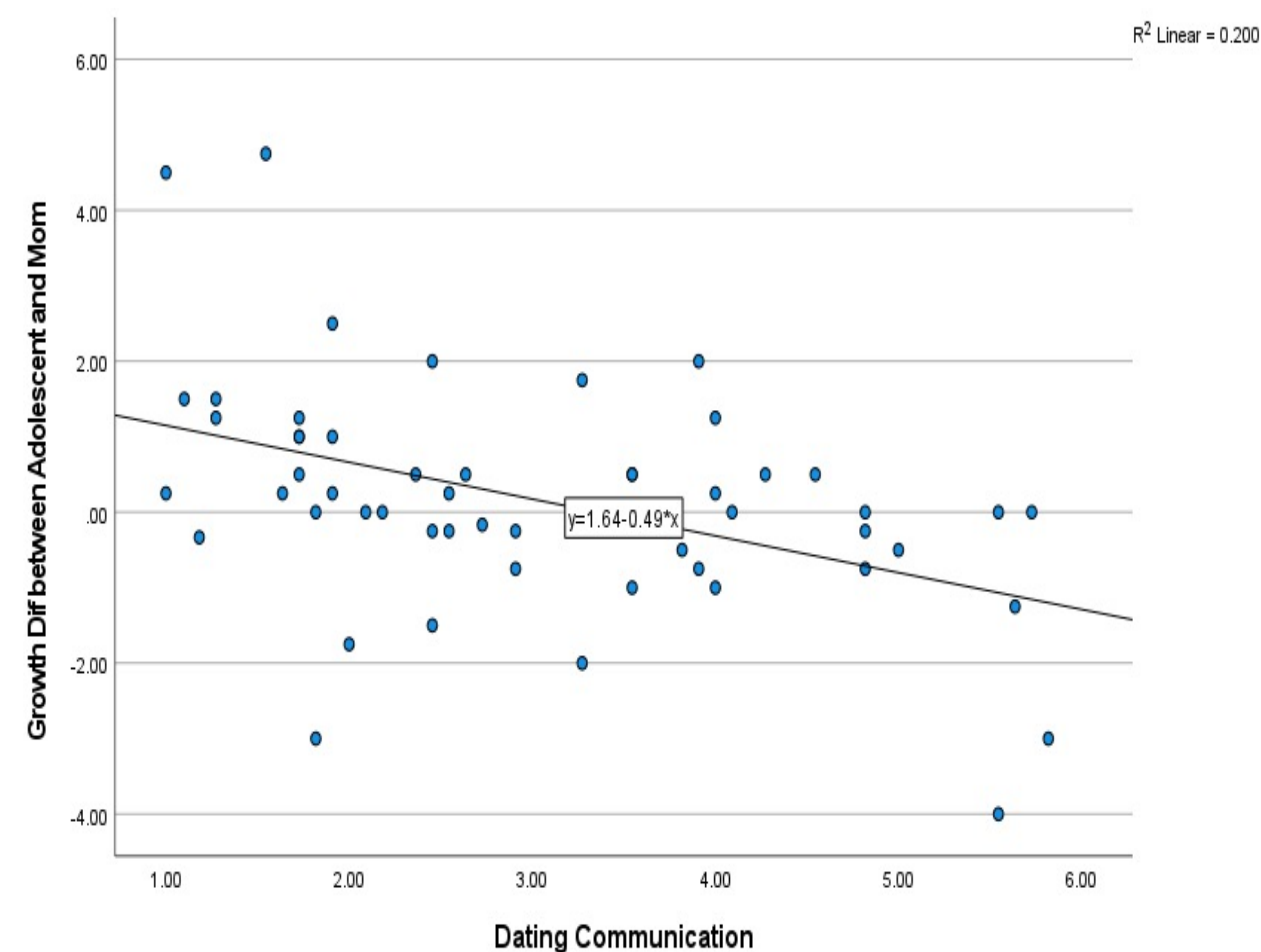
Research shows that it is better to have a growth mindset when it comes to relationships, because it means you have better communication skills and know how to resolve conflict, and you have some self-awareness of the areas you need to work on.

Methods and Materials

Methods: we collected data from 63 pairs of mothers and daughters, who were all seniors in high school. To gather more information we collected data on their implicit theories of romantic relationship using Knee (1998) which gave us participants' growth and destiny scores. We also collected data on the dating conversation adolescents and their mothers were having. This was measured using 12 questions created by Luerssen (2018).

Results

- We wanted to know if there were differences in implicit beliefs between mothers and their adolescents and found no significant difference between mothers and adolescents ($t(53) = 1.47, p = .148$) for destiny. For growth beliefs, there was also no significant difference between mothers and adolescents ($t(53) = -.78, p = .437$).
- A positive correlation as between mother's growth and destiny beliefs ($r = .43, p < .01$). We found a significant positive correlation between adolescent growth and destiny beliefs ($r = .46, p < .001$),
- As for the relationship between implicit beliefs and frequency of communications, we found that in households where the teenager had *more* growth beliefs than their mom, they communicated *more* about romantic relationships ($r = -.45, p = .001$). Households where the mother had more growth beliefs than her daughter talked less about dating.
- There was no correlation between the difference scores in destiny beliefs and dating communication ($r = -.19, p = .171$).
- between implicit beliefs and dating communication and found a significant negative correlation between mom's growth beliefs and dating communication ($r = -.35, p = .009$).



Discussion

- When looking at the mothers and daughter's implicit beliefs we found that they had similar levels of growth and destiny beliefs; meaning that both mother and daughter had roughly the same views for romantic relationships.
- We also found that in household were the mother had higher levels of a growth belief than their daughter, conversations about dating was reported less. With limited research on this topic, we were unable to explain why this is the case.
- However, we did find that in households were the adolescent daughter has a higher growth belief than their mother dating conversations happened more than when the mother has higher growth belief.
- Again, we are unable to explain why this is the case, but I believe it is because the adolescent wants a better understanding and to hear real life experience; and is comfortable approaching their mother

limitations

- A handful of the participants' first language was not English; causing a potential language barrier.
- Some of the participants were not born in the US; which could have affected their responses, because of cultural differences
- Many of the adolescents were not in a romantic relationship during the study
- Study is cross-sectional; therefore, we do not know which variable is causing what.

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