

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AND THE SELF-ESTEEM OF IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EDO SOUTH SENATORIAL ZONE, EDO STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relationship between family communication patterns and Self-esteem of in-school adolescents in Edo South Senatorial Zone of Edo State. The study was guided by six research questions and three hypotheses. Correlation research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprises 1,675 senior secondary school two students. The multistage sampling technique was used in drawing the sample size. Two instruments were used to collect data for this study. These are Ritchie and Fitzpatrick's Revised Family Communication Patterns Scale (RFCP) and Roesenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (SES). For data analyses, Pearson Product Moment, linear regression were used to answer research questions while t-test for correlation analysis and multiple regression were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. Findings from the study revealed that there is a significant relationship among conversation orientation family communication pattern, conformity orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents in Edo South Senatorial Zone of Edo State. Based on the findings, it was recommended amongst others that there is the need for balance in the adoption of both communication patterns as extreme applications of these patterns could impair the self-esteem of the in-school adolescent.

Key Words: Family, Communication Patterns, Self-esteem, In-school Adolescents.

1. INTRODUCTION

Family communication is the primary means by which children learn to communicate with others, to interpret others' behaviours, to experience emotions, and to act in their relationships (Ascan & Laura, 2004). It could also be a pattern of interaction existing between members of a given family. Ascan and Laura further stressed that family communication patterns has become a useful means of describing patterns of family interactions between parents and children and predicting how consistent interaction styles impact adolescents psychosocial and emotional development. Therefore, family communication patterns can be defined as the different ways of socialization/interaction between parents and their children (Clark, 2015). Clark explained that how parents respond to their developing child's needs and how the child responds in turn are both equally important components of the developmental process as parent and child mutually influence one another and together shape the relationship they engage in.

Family communication pattern provides a model of behaviour that shapes children's communication skills and behaviours. A growing body of research examining family communication patterns has provided support for the notion that the communication environment within the family influences the communicative behaviours of the individual family members as well as perceptions of the family unit (Barbato, Graham & Perse cited in Gwen, Audrey & Jessica, 2012). Furthermore, family communication patterns as originally propounded by Mcleod and Chafee in the year 1972 include concept and socio orientations. Although these terms were used to describe the different communication patterns in earlier years, it was later renamed by Ritchie in 1991 as conversation orientation and conformity orientation family communication patterns. These two family communication patterns interact with each other to form four family types which are: Pluralistic, Protective, Consensual and Laissez-faire family types (Clark, 2015).

Pluralistic families emphasize children's free expression of ideas without fear of punishment. Communication in pluralistic families is characterized by open, unconstrained discussions that involve all family members and a wide range of topics. Pluralistic families according to Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2006) are families high in conversation orientation and low in conformity orientation. They went on to explain that, the protective families are low on conversation orientation and high on conformity orientation. Protective families stress obedience and harmonious relationships with the children and show little concern over conceptual matters. Communication in protective families is characterized by an emphasis on obedience to parental authority and by little concern for conceptual matters or for open communication within the family.

On the other hand, consensual families stress both relational harmony and free communication exchange. The consensual families are high on conformity orientation and low on conversation orientation. Their communication is characterized by a tension between pressure to agree and to preserve the existing hierarchy within the family and interest in open communication and in exploring new ideas. Laissez-faire in the context of this study is a type of family, a subset of the family communication patterns earlier discussed. In the laissez-faire type of family, children are allowed to express their ideas as long as the family's internal harmony is maintained. Also, the laissez-fair parents encourage neither open communication between parents and children nor relational harmony. In this family type, there may be very little conversation among parents and children. Communication research has provided evidence in support of the behavioural and attitudinal consequences of family communication patterns.

Several studies have been carried out on family communication patterns, these studies examine the dynamics within a conversation and across conversations over time can influence family relationships. McGuigan, Vuchinich and Tang (2014), for example, found that the hierarchical position of the family member who nominated a conflict topic can have an impact on the communication behaviours that family members use. When adolescents feel less empowered in their families they tend to be more negative and aggressive in their communication strategies potentially as a way of forcing conversations that their parents would otherwise avoid (Clark, 2015). Other studies have similarly found that supportive parenting behaviours and communication styles promote greater ego development, self-esteem, and life satisfaction

(VonderLippe & Moller, 2000). In contrast, family communication styles that are overly critical or controlling have been found to be associated with higher rates of depression, development of low self-esteem, engagement in risky behaviours such as aggression, and social withdrawal (Yeh, 2011).

These deviant behaviours are mostly exhibited among people during their adolescence stage, which is a developmental stage characterized by a wide range of physical, social, and emotional changes. All of these changes are believed to have an impact on an individual's identity. Based on this, self-esteem seems to be the pivot in which adolescents address their experiences during the developmental stage (Tsang, Hui & Law, 2012). The term self-esteem is used to describe a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. In other words, how much you appreciate and like yourself (Kendra, 2017). Ngwoke (2010) perceived self-esteem as how one regards or values oneself in terms of accomplishments and relationships. Ngwoke stressed further that it is actually the image one has for oneself. Self-esteem is the essence of living with positivity and responding to life's difficulties in a realistic way. Self-esteem of a person has the potential to make or break him/her in his/her personal and professional life (Aiger, 2011). An individual may have either low or high self-esteem.

The family unit thrives through communication and interactions, which is why it is important to give focus to this area of the family. By its very nature, the family, as a social unit, is the context within which children receive their earliest and most consistent socialization (Clark, 2015). In view of the prevailing unsatisfactory state of affairs whereby adolescents exhibit self-esteem which affects their well being and social participation, it becomes pertinent to trace the origin of such state of affairs. Based on this, the present study seeks to determine the relationship between family communication patterns and self-esteem of in-school adolescents in secondary schools in Edo south senatorial zone of Edo state.

Problem Statement

Adolescents in schools have been observed to exhibit a variation in self-esteem; some with high self-esteem while others have low self-esteem. The increasing rate of this diverse level of self-esteem among adolescents has been a source of concern to researchers and in turn the source of many researches. Studies have it that the family plays an integral role in the formation of the self-esteem of a child because it is the first point of communication and socialization for the child. Different patterns of communication are adopted in every family. An observation of different families in Nigeria reveals an exhibition of the two family communication patterns explained earlier. The level of self-esteem among adolescents in secondary school could be hinged on the type of communication pattern adopted in a particular family. These levels could be both high or low self-esteem, however, the relationship between family communication patterns and adolescents self-esteem has not been empirically established. In view of this, the need to establish what nature of relationship might exist between the family communication patterns and self-esteem of in-school adolescents necessitated this research.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between conversation orientation family communication patterns and self-esteem of in-school adolescents?

2. What is the relationship between conformity orientation family communication patterns and self-esteem of in-school adolescents?

3. What is the relationship among conversation and conformity orientation family communication patterns and self-esteem of in-school adolescents?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents.

2. There is no significant relationship between conformity family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents.

3. There is no significant relationship among conversation and conformity orientation family communication patterns and self-esteem of in-school adolescents.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Influence of Family Communication Patterns on Adolescent Well-Being

Much of the recent research on family communication has focused on parent and child communication behaviours, the impact of these behaviours on child and adolescent outcomes, and the ways in which these behaviours develop into salient communication patterns. Parenting behaviours and styles more broadly have been linked to a multitude of positive and negative outcomes for children and youth. Emotional responsiveness has long been established as a fundamental dimension of parent-child interactions (example; Schrodts & Ledbetter, 2007) and research has consistently found that warm, supportive parenting promotes child and adolescent health and well-being in many ways. Family communication strategies that emphasize supportiveness and openness have similarly been found to promote higher levels of adolescent self-esteem and ego strength (Von der Lippe & Moller, 2000). Similarly, having a supportive home environment and family communication patterns that encourage conversation and dialogue about family problems helps young adults maintain higher levels of emotional well-being and autonomy as they transition to adulthood and life outside of the family home (Koesten & Anderson, 2004).

In contrast, families that emphasize conformity and obedience to authority parents tend to be more demanding and confrontational when dealing with family conflicts, patterns that have generally been associated with lower adolescent life satisfaction and higher rates of stress and depression (Milevsky, Schlechter, Netter & Keehn, 2007; Schrodts et al., 2007), lower self-esteem and poorer dietary choices. In general, family communication pattern has been found to have a consistent effect on child and adolescent social and emotional outcomes (Schrodts, Witt & Messersmith, 2008). While significant effects have also been found for the influence of family

communication pattern on behavioral outcomes, these effects have tended to be much smaller than for social and emotional outcomes.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Family Communication Patterns Theory

Family communication patterns theory (FCP) was propounded by Mcleod and Chaffee in the year 1972. The theory explains that, how individuals are socialized to communicate within their families as children will have some effect on their interpersonal interactions for the rest of their lives. FCP describes communication patterns within a family and predicts child outcomes based on these patterns. FCP suggests that family communication can be categorized along two dimensions, conversation (concept) orientation and conformity (socio) orientation. The conversation (concept) orientation and conformity (socio) orientation dimensions and the known instruments referred to influenced family study for a long time in the 1970s and 1980s. Obedience, it should be named conformity orientation. The first dimension, conversation orientation, refers to the degree in which a family allows all members to participate in communication across a variety of topics. Family members in high conversation orientation families feel free to share their thoughts and feelings with one another. The second dimension, conformity orientation, refers to the degree that a family expects compliance with familial beliefs and attitudes. Children of high conformity families are expected to adhere to their parents' views.

All families fall somewhere on a continuum on each dimension. Crossing the two dimensions result in four different types of family communication environments, with varying degrees of conversation (concept) and conformity (socio) orientations. These family typologies are consensual, pluralistic, protective and laissez-faire family type. First, consensual families are high in both conversation and conformity orientation, meaning that these families' value open and frequent conversation but decisions are ultimately made by the parents. Pluralistic families, high in conversation but low in conformity orientation, value open and frequent communication along with group decision making that involves parents and children alike. Third, protective families are marked by low conversation orientation and high conformity orientation. Children in protective families are expected to follow their parents' rules without discussion or questioning their authority. Finally, laissez faire families are low in both conversation and conformity orientation. Communication in this type of family is infrequent and hierarchy in decision making is not highly valued. This theory is relevant to the present study as it aligns with the title which contains family communication patterns as an independent variable. Furthermore, the theory describes explicitly conversation (concept) orientation and conformity (socio) orientation which are the key components of this study.

3. METHODS

A correlation research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Edo South Senatorial Zone of Edo State. The population of the study comprises 20,884 senior secondary school II (SS II) students in the seven local government areas that make up Edo South Senatorial Zone. The sample size for the study comprises 1,675 senior secondary school two students. The

multistage sampling technique was used in drawing the sample size. The two instruments used in this study were adopted; Ritchie and Fitzpatrick’s Revised Family Communication Patterns scale (RFCP) is a 26- item questionnaire with two clusters of 15 and 11 items. The first cluster of 15 items was to determine the Conversation family communication pattern while the second cluster of 11 items was to determine the Conformity family communication pattern. The second instrument is Roesenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale (SES) which has just one cluster consisting of 10 items which was to ascertain the self-esteem of the students. Since the instruments were standardized, no validation and reliability reports conducted. Pearson Product Moment and regression analysis were used to answer the research questions while t-test for correlation analysis and multiple regression was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

4. RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between conversation orientation family communication patterns and self-esteem of in-school adolescents?

Table 1: Relationship between conversation orientation family communication patterns and self-esteem of in-school adolescents (N=1690)

N	Correlation coefficient (r)	Remark
1690	.664	High positive relationship

Table 1 reveals that a Pearson product-moment correlation was computed to determine the relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and self- esteem of in-school adolescents. The result shows a high positive correlation between conversation orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents (r = .664, n = 1690).

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between conformity orientation family communication patterns and self-esteem of in-school adolescents?

Table 2: Relationship between conformity family communication patterns and self-esteem of in-school adolescents (N=1690)

N	Correlation coefficient (r)	Remark
1690	.702	High positive relationship

Table 2 reveals that a Pearson product-moment correlation was computed to determine the relationship between conformity orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents. The result shows a high positive correlation between conformity orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents (r = .702, n

= 1690).

Research Question 3: What is the relationship among conversation orientation family communication pattern, conformity orientation family communication patterns and self-esteem of in-school adolescents?

Table 3: Regression analysis of the relationship among conversation orientation family communication pattern, conformity orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents (N =1690)

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
1	.665 ^a	.442	.441	2.50620

Table 3 shows the simple regression analysis of the correlation among conversation orientation family communication pattern, conformity orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents. The result revealed that there is a high positive relationship among conversation orientation family communication pattern, conformity orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents (n=1690, R= .665).

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents.

Table 4: t-test of significance of relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents (N = 1690).

Correlation coefficient (r)	N	Df	α	t-calculated	t-critical	Decision
.66	1690	1688	.05	36.09	1.960	Reject

Data presented in table 4 indicates that the t-calculated value of 36.09 is greater than the t-critical value of 1.960 at 0.05 alpha level (36.09 > 1.960). Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected, hence there is a significant relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between conformity family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents.

Table 5: t-test of significance of relationship between conformity orientation communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents (N = 1690).

Correlation coefficient (r)	N	Df	A	t-calculated	t-critical	Decision
.70	1690	1688	.05	44.25	1.960	Reject

Data presented in table 5 indicates that the t-calculated value of 44.25 is greater than the t-critical value of 1.960 at 0.05 alpha level ($44.25 > 1.960$). Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected, hence there is a significant relationship between conformity orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship among conversation orientation family communication pattern, conformity orientation family communication patterns and self-esteem of in-school adolescents.

Table 6: Multiple regression analysis on the relationship among conversation orientation family communication pattern, conformity orientation family communication patterns and self-esteem on in-school adolescents (N = 1690).

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6444.227	2	3222.133	12.989	.000 ^a
	Residual	8146.526	1688	6.291		
	Total	14590.753	1690			

Data presented in table 6 shows a multiple regression analysis computed to test the null hypothesis on the relationship among conversation orientation family communication pattern, conformity orientation family communication pattern and self – esteem of in-school adolescents. At 0.05 level of significance, these variables (conversation and conformity orientation family communication patterns) statistically correlate with the self-esteem of in-school adolescents, $F(2, 1688) = 12.989, p > 0.000$. Therefore, there exists significant relationship among conversation orientation family communication pattern, conformity orientation family communication family pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents.

5. DISCUSSIONS

The result in research question one revealed that there was a high positive correlation between conversation orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents. What this means is that in the opinion of the in-school adolescents, their parents only exhibit conversation orientation to an extent. Findings from this study further revealed that the

relationship between conversation orientation family communication and self-esteem is significant. What this implies is that there is a high positive relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents. This is in agreement with Farahati (2011), who discovered in his study that family conversation orientation has a positive and significant relationship with self-esteem.

The result in research question two revealed that there is a high positive correlation between conformity orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents. This is in agreement with Offordile (2012) who conducted a study in Nigeria and found that the most adopted family communication pattern is the conformity family communication pattern. The findings of the study also revealed that there is a significant relationship between conformity family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents. This means that the conformity orientation has a high effect on the self-esteem of the in-school adolescent either positively or negatively. It is positive as it boosts the self-esteem of the adolescent and negative in bringing down the self-esteem of the adolescent.

The result in research question three revealed that there is a moderate positive correlation among conversation orientation family communication pattern, conformity orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem. This also reveals a significant relationship among conversation orientation family communication pattern, conformity orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents. This goes on to further encourage balance and discretion in the use of the family communication patterns. Balance between the two family communication patterns is in agreement with Adams & Berzonsky (2009) who in their study noticed that boys with high self-esteem perceived their parents as warm, helpful, loving and forgiving.

6. CONCLUSION

From the findings, it can be concluded that one major factor which is associated with the self-esteem of in-school adolescents is Family Communication Pattern. Since the family is the earliest point of socialization of any adolescent and self-esteem is developed during the early stages of one's life, it becomes important for parents to be careful as to the communication pattern which is adopted in the home as this could affect the self-esteem of the adolescent either positively or negatively.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since there is a positive relationship between family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school adolescents, parents should take precaution as to the communication pattern employed in the family so that they do not affect the self-esteem of the adolescent negatively.

2. Parents should also seek to create a balance in the application of the two family communication patterns.

3. Parents should become more involved in the lives of the adolescents, so that they can spot on time, low self-esteem exhibited by their adolescent and quickly relate it to the family

communication pattern which they exhibit. This could help them trace the cause of the low self-esteem and make adequate adjustments.

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