

Conformity and Conversation Orientation Family Communication Patterns as Correlates of Self-Esteem of in- School Adolescents in Edo South Senatorial Zone in Edo State

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Abstract: The study investigated conformity and conversation orientation family communication patterns as correlates of Self-esteem of in-school adolescents in Edo South Senatorial Zone of Edo State. The study was guided by five research questions. Five corresponding hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study consisted of three hundred (300) Senior Secondary School II students. The multistage sampling technique was used in drawing the sample size. Two instruments were used to collect data for this study; Family Communication Patterns Scale (FCP) and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (SES). Cronbach alpha Statistic was used to establish internal consistency of the items and it yielded a coefficient of 0.79 for family communication pattern and 0.71 for self-esteem. Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and multiple regression statistics were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. 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. It was recommended that 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.

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

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by extensive physical, social, and emotional changes that profoundly influence identity formation. Among the factors associated with favourable life outcomes during this period, self-esteem is particularly important. From birth, individuals begin to form self-esteem, which is widely regarded as a central determinant of human behaviour (Sayeda, 2017). Self-esteem denotes a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value, and its effects become increasingly salient during adolescence. Empirical work indicates that adolescent self-esteem influences numerous life choices and trajectories across the lifespan (Trzesniewski et al., 2006).

Self-esteem comprises the personal value, self-respect, and sense of worth an individual places on themselves. It underpins positive adaptation to life's challenges and can determine outcomes in both personal and professional domains (Aiger, 2011). High self-esteem—characterised by feelings of competence, worthiness, and deservingness—tends to predict better life outcomes (Young, 2009). Conversely, low self-esteem has been described as a maladaptive cognitive orientation in which individuals view themselves as inadequate, unlovable, or incompetent; such negative self-appraisals foster self-defeating behaviour and increase vulnerability to

depression, suicidal ideation, and other psychosocial problems (Clark, 2015). Low self-esteem has also been implicated in poor academic achievement and other forms of maladjustment (Ngwoke, 2010).

Multiple influences contribute to the development of self-esteem, including family background, social environment, peer associations, and early socialization experiences. Laishram (2011) observed that children raised in environments lacking affection and emotional support often develop enduring feelings of insignificance, which compromise their ability to form trusting relationships and to engage socially. Such early deficits commonly manifest during adolescence as social withdrawal, poor peer relations, and reduced academic engagement. Family socialization, particularly parental communication practices, is therefore a plausible determinant of adolescents' self-esteem.

The family is the primary socialization agent and provides the earliest and most consistent context for children's social and emotional development (Canary & Canary, 2013). Family communication patterns—how parents and children exchange information, express feelings, and participate in decision-making—shape children's communicative competencies and socioemotional outcomes (Ascan & Laura, 2012). A substantive literature shows that the quality and style of family interactions influence individual behaviours and family perceptions (Barbato et al., 2013).

Ritchie and Fitzpatrick's theoretical model distinguishes two central family communication orientations: conformity and conversation. Conformity orientation reflects the extent to which families emphasise homogeneity of attitudes, obedience, and deference to parental authority; families high on this dimension stress uniformity of beliefs and values (Offordile, 2012). Conversation orientation denotes the degree to which families encourage open, frequent, and spontaneous dialogue across a wide range of topics; high conversation orientation families permit free expression of thoughts, emotions, and opinions (Osredkar, 2012; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Given that family communication establishes patterns of interaction from early life, it is reasonable to hypothesise that these orientations influence adolescents' developing self-esteem (Clark, 2015).

Although research from Western contexts suggests links between family communication patterns and adolescent self-esteem, findings are shaped by socio-cultural factors that may limit generalisability to the Nigerian setting. Therefore, this study investigates the relationship between family communication patterns and the self-esteem of in-school adolescents in secondary schools within Edo South Senatorial Zone of Edo State.

Statement of the Problem

Adolescents in schools exhibit varying levels of self-esteem: some display high confidence and academic vigour, whereas others show low self-worth, diminished motivation, and poorer school performance. High self-esteem is associated with confidence and better school outcomes; low self-esteem often correlates with withdrawal, reduced achievement, and maladaptive behaviours. Researchers (e.g., Clark, 2015) have raised questions about the antecedents of adolescent self-esteem, and the family—being the first socializing agent—remains a plausible influence. Family communication patterns differ across households, and evidence from developed countries suggests parental communication style may shape children's self-esteem. However, socio-cultural differences necessitate empirical examination in Nigeria. Hence, this study asks whether family communication patterns are associated with adolescents' self-esteem in Edo South, and which communication orientation best fosters healthy self-esteem among in-school adolescents.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship among conformity orientation, conversation orientation family communication patterns, and self-esteem of in-school adolescents?
2. What is the relationship between conformity orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school male adolescents?
3. What is the relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school male adolescents?
4. What is the relationship between conformity orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school female adolescents?
5. What is the relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school female adolescents?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship among conformity orientation, conversation orientation family communication patterns, and self-esteem of in-school adolescents.
2. There is no significant relationship between conformity orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school male adolescents.
3. There is no significant relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school male adolescents.
4. There is no significant relationship between conformity orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school female adolescents.
5. There is no significant relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and self-esteem of in-school female adolescents.

Methodology

A correlational research design was adopted to examine the relationships between family communication patterns and adolescent self-esteem. The study was conducted in Edo South Senatorial Zone of Edo State, Nigeria, which comprises seven local government areas. The population comprised 12,854 Senior Secondary School II (SS II) students enrolled across public secondary schools in the zone. Using a multistage sampling procedure to ensure representativeness across schools and localities, a sample of 300 SS II students was drawn for participation. Two standardized instruments were employed. Family communication patterns were measured with Ritchie and Fitzpatrick's Revised Family Communication Patterns (RFCP) scale, a 26-item questionnaire composed of two subscales: conversation orientation (15 items) and conformity orientation (11 items). Self-esteem was assessed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), a widely used 10-item measure of global self-worth. Both instruments were reviewed for content and face validity by a panel of three experts, two in counselling psychology and one in measurement and evaluation, who evaluated item clarity, cultural appropriateness, and construct relevance.

Reliability analyses yielded satisfactory internal consistency for both measures: Cronbach's alpha was 0.79 for the RFCP and 0.71 for the RSES, indicating acceptable reliability for research purposes. Data collection proceeded following institutional permissions and informed assent/consent procedures; questionnaires were administered to the selected students under standardized conditions. Data analysis involved Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and regression analysis to address the research questions, enabling assessment of the strength

and direction of associations between family communication orientations and self-esteem. To test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level, t-tests for correlation and multiple regression analyses were employed where appropriate, allowing for examination of predictive relationships while controlling for relevant covariates.

Results

Table 1

Multiple Regression Estimate of the Relationship among Conformity, Conversation Orientation family communication patterns and Self- esteem of in-school Adolescents

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5.010	2	2.505	15.907	.000
Residual	46.766	297	.157		
Total	51.775	299			

The data analysis presented in Table 1 reveals that the ANOVA summary of the relationship among conformity, conversation orientation family communication patterns and self-esteem of in-school adolescents is statistically significant ($F(2, 297) = 15.907, p = .000 < .05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship among conformity, conversation orientation family communication patterns and self-esteem of in-school adolescents.

Table 2

Multiple Regression Coefficients on Relationship among Conformity, Conversation Orientation Family Communication Patterns and Self-esteem of In-school Adolescents

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.882	.162		11.592	.000
Conformity Orientation	.171	.044	.216	3.911	.006
Conversation Orientation	.142	.036	.216	3.910	.000

$R = .311$; $R\text{-square} = .097$; $Adjusted\ R\text{-square} = -.091$; $p < .05$

The data presented in Table 2 indicate that conformity and conversation orientation family communication patterns are significantly correlated with the self-esteem of in-school adolescents, with conformity ($p = .000$) and conversation orientation ($p = .000$) showing meaningful associations. The adjusted R^2 value of .091 suggests that approximately 9.1% of the variance in adolescents' self-esteem can be attributed to these family communication patterns. Although both predictors were significant, conversation orientation demonstrated a stronger relationship with self-esteem among in-school adolescents. Based on the overall model analysis, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Table 3

Pearson r showing the Relationship between Conformity Orientation Family Communication Pattern and Self-esteem of in-school male Adolescents

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Conformity Orientation	144	0.105	0.209	Not significant

Self Esteem 144

Table 3 presents the relationship between conformity orientation family communication pattern and the self-esteem of in-school male adolescents. The table reveals a Pearson r correlation coefficient 0.105, indicates a positive but weak relationship between the two variables. However, since the p -value (.209) exceeds the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is retained. This implies that there is no statistically significant relationship between conformity orientation family communication pattern and the self-esteem of in-school male adolescents.

Table 4: Pearson r showing the Relationship between Conversation Orientation Family Communication Pattern and Self-esteem of In-school Male Adolescents

Variables	N	r	p -value	Decision
Conformity Orientation	144	0.246	0.003	Significant
Self Esteem	144			

The analysis presented in Table 4 examines the relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and the self-esteem of in-school male adolescents. The correlation coefficient ($r = .246$) is positive, indicating a moderate relationship between the two variables. Since the p -value (.003) is less than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding implies that there is a significant relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and the self-esteem of in-school male adolescents.

Table 5

Pearson r showing the Relationship between Conformity Orientation Family Communication Pattern and Self-esteem of In-school Female Adolescents

Variables	N	r	p -value	Decision
Conformity Orientation	156	0.343	0.000	Significant
Self Esteem	156			

The data presented in Table 5 reveal a significant relationship between conformity orientation family communication pattern and the self-esteem of in-school female adolescents. The correlation coefficient ($r = .343$) is positive, indicating a moderate relationship between the two variables. The mean scores of 2.85 and 2.80, with standard deviations of 0.55 and 0.39 for conformity orientation and self-esteem respectively, further describe the data distribution. Since the p -value (.000) is less than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that conformity orientation family communication pattern has a significant positive relationship with the self-esteem of in-school female adolescents.

Table 6

Pearson r showing the relationship between Conversation Orientation Family Communication pattern and Self-esteem of In-school Female Adolescents

Variables	N	r	p -value	Decision
Conformity Orientation	156	0.190	0.018	Significant
Self Esteem	156			

The data presented in Table 6 indicate a significant relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and the self-esteem of in-school female adolescents. The table shows mean scores of 3.09

and 2.80, with standard deviations of 0.55 and 0.39 for conversation orientation and self-esteem, respectively. The correlation coefficient ($r = .190$) is positive, suggesting a weak but meaningful relationship between the two variables. Since the p -value (.018) is less than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and the self-esteem of in-school female adolescents.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from Hypothesis One revealed a significant relationship among conformity and conversation orientation family communication patterns and the self-esteem of in-school adolescents. This suggests that both communication orientations interact and contribute to adolescents' self-esteem development. The result highlights the importance of achieving balance and discretion in applying family communication patterns. An excessively permissive conversation orientation may create an environment that fosters low self-esteem due to a lack of structure, while an extreme conformity orientation characterized by rigid rules and authoritarian control can also negatively affect self-esteem. However, when parents strike a balance—combining warmth and care with appropriate guidance and correction—adolescents are more likely to develop healthy self-esteem. This finding aligns with Offordile (2012), who found a significant relationship between family communication patterns and adolescents' self-esteem in Nigeria.

Findings from Hypothesis Two indicated no significant relationship between conformity orientation family communication pattern and the self-esteem of in-school male adolescents. This implies that conformity-oriented family communication does not have a notable influence on male adolescents' self-esteem. In other words, the degree to which families emphasize obedience and compliance in communication with male adolescents does not significantly affect their self-esteem. This finding supports Clark (2015), who reported that while authoritarian or conformity-oriented styles provide structure and stress-adaptation skills, they do not necessarily determine self-esteem levels among boys.

Results from Hypothesis Three revealed a significant relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and the self-esteem of in-school male adolescents. This implies that open and supportive family communication positively influences boys' self-esteem. Families that encourage dialogue, emotional expression, and mutual respect tend to foster higher self-esteem among male adolescents. This finding corroborates Adams and Berzonsky (2009), who observed that boys with high self-esteem perceived their parents as warm, understanding, and forgiving, while those with low self-esteem were often raised in permissive or authoritarian environments.

The analysis of Hypothesis Four showed a significant relationship between conformity orientation family communication pattern and the self-esteem of in-school female adolescents. This suggests that how families promote conformity or compliance in communication with their daughters can significantly influence their self-esteem. The result aligns with Farahanti (2011), who examined family communication patterns in Tehran and found that conformity orientation had a significant relationship with self-esteem, locus of control, and communication behavior among adolescents.

Findings from Hypothesis Five indicated a significant relationship between conversation orientation family communication pattern and the self-esteem of in-school female adolescents. This implies that open and participatory family communication contributes to higher self-esteem among female adolescents. The study further revealed that many of the respondents perceived their families as moderately conversation-oriented. This

is consistent with Farahanti (2011), who found that family conversation orientation was positively related to self-esteem and communication competence. However, in the Nigerian context, many parents still prioritize conformity over conversation due to cultural beliefs that place authority and obedience above dialogue and negotiation.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between family communication patterns and the self-esteem of in-school adolescents in secondary schools in Edo South Senatorial Zone, Edo State. Family communication patterns play an essential role in shaping adolescents' self-esteem, as the family serves as the primary agent of socialization. Because self-esteem develops early in life, it is important that parents adopt communication styles that foster both emotional security and constructive discipline. A balanced application of conversation and conformity orientations is vital, as extreme authoritarian or overly permissive approaches can impair adolescents' self-worth.

Recommendations

1. Parents should be conscious of the communication patterns they employ at home to avoid negatively influencing the self-esteem of their adolescent children.
2. School counsellors and teachers should identify adolescents exhibiting signs of low self-esteem and collaborate with parents through counselling and intervention programs.
3. Counsellors and educational stakeholders should design practical training and guidance programmes for parents and teachers to promote effective communication strategies that enhance adolescents' self-esteem.

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