

## **FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS OF PUNJAB (INDIA)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Family communication patterns is a process in which family members exchange their verbal and nonverbal communication. Individuals learn to communicate with others, understand their behavior and experience emotions. The study focuses on two key dimensions—conversation orientation and conformity orientation. This investigation attempts to provide insights into nature and patterns of family communication patterns, with preliminary emphasis on secondary schools of Punjab. A Descriptive survey method was used. Multi stage sampling technique was used to select sample of 1200 secondary school students of Punjab. Family Communication Patterns scale (Gupta and Geetika, 2019) were used to gather data. The results of the study showed that significant gender differences were found in conversational orientation, with female students reporting higher levels, females perceived high conversation in the family in comparison to their male counterparts. Furthermore, significant differences were observed between government and private school students in both communication dimensions, with government school students perceiving higher levels of conversation and conformity orientation. The findings underscore the important role of family communication in adolescents' academic, emotional, and social development and highlight the need for educational interventions that promote positive family–school partnerships and supportive communication environments*

**Keywords:** Family communication patterns, secondary school students, Punjab.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Family communication is broadly defined as the process of exchanging emotions and information within family members. The main goal of family communication patterns is to

understand the interactions of family and the pattern of behaviors of family members in different circumstances. Family Communication Patterns idea was initially presented by Chaffe, McLeod and Wackman, 1973 as a channel for researching construction of family communication. Family communication patterns play out a significant part in the existences of individuals since communication styles, social behaviors and personality traits started in the family environment (Saphir and Chaffee, 2002; Chaffee et al., 1971). Further, family communication patterns anticipated a critical role in academic achievement among students (Emamipour et al. 2014). Family members share norms, history and beliefs among themselves and this generate family communication patterns over a long period of time (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2002; Fitzpatrick, 2004; Baxter et al. 2005).

Chaffee et al. (1973) identified four family types based on communication style:

- **Consensual Families:** High conversation and high conformity. Parents encourage discussion but retain decision-making authority. Children value communication and often adopt parents' values.
- **Pluralistic Families:** High conversation and low conformity. Open discussions and shared decision-making are encouraged. Children develop independence, confidence, and strong communication skills.
- **Protective Families:** Low conversation and high conformity. Emphasis on obedience with little discussion. Children tend to distrust their own decision-making and see little value in communication.
- **Laissez-Faire Families:** Low conversation and low conformity. Limited interaction and emotional involvement. Children make their own decisions but often lack guidance and confidence.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Hemati et al. (2020) revealed that self-efficacy had direct correlation with conversation orientation dimension and inverse correlation with conformity orientation dimension of family communication patterns. Bevan et al. (2021) found that there was a positive relation between

conversation orientation and received social support. Relationship between conversation dimension of family communication patterns and quality of care was mediated by received social support. Nikdel and Nasab (2022) found that the indirect influence of family communication patterns on internet addiction through basic psychological needs was of significance. Moreover, basic psychological needs mediated the relationship between family communication patterns and internet addiction. Miczo and Miczo (2023) revealed that both conversation and conformity orientation were positive predictors of learning orientation, while only conformity orientation was a positive predictor of grade orientation. Bakhtiari et al. (2024) conversation orientation predicting negatively and significantly depression, anxiety, stress, and positively self-esteem and inter-personal communication skills of students. Family conformity orientation predicted positively and significantly depression, anxiety, stress, and negatively acceptance, action, and students' self-esteem. Vo and Brannon (2025) found that Conversation orientation positively predicted willingness to communicate about general, sexual, and mental health topics. Conformity orientation positively predicted a willingness to communicate only about general health topics.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM**

Family communication patterns strongly influences adolescents' academic achievement, emotional adjustment, and social competence. Literature indicates that conversation-oriented family environments enhance students' self-concept, assertiveness, and academic engagement, whereas conformity-oriented or low-communication families may hinder independent decision-making and psychological well-being (Chaffee et al., 1973; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Previous studies also highlight that effective family communication reduces conflict and supports positive behavioral and educational outcomes among secondary school students (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994). Family communication patterns influence the different outcomes of family like speech act creation in families (Koerner, 1995), resolution of clashes and conflicts (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 1997), children romantic future relationships (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 1997), family customs enactment (Baxter & Clark, 1997), use of self-discipline and social withdrawal behaviour (Fitzpatrick, Marshall, Leuwiler & Krcmar, 1996), the relationship

between work place and family communication of parents (Ritchie, 1997). Family communication is a challenging phenomenon to theorize about because it simultaneously depends on intrapersonal and on interpersonal processes. In other words, the variables that explain family communication reside within each individual as well as within the family system. Thus, "a complete explication of family communication needs to consider both intersubjectivity and interactivity (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). Therefore, by building on existing literature, the present study helps bridge gaps in understanding how different family communication patterns shape students' overall development and provides evidence useful for parents, educators, and school counselors.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To evaluate family communication patterns of secondary school students.
2. To find out the significant differences among secondary school students in their family communication patterns with respect to gender.
3. To find out the significant differences among secondary school students in their family communication patterns with respect to type of school.

### **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

1. There exists no significant difference among secondary school students in their family communication patterns with respect to gender.
2. There exists no significant difference among secondary school students in their family communication patterns with respect to type of school.

### **DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

1. Keeping in mind paucity of time and resources present study was delimited three regions of Punjab i.e. Majha, Malwa and Doaba.
2. Study was delimited to secondary school students of Government and Private secondary school students.

3. The study was delimited to six districts viz. Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala, TaranTarn, Gurdaspur, Mohali and Mansa.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Sampling:** In order to achieve appropriate sample, multistage sampling technique was used. Multistage sampling indicates sampling plans where the sampling takes place in stages using smaller and smaller sampling units at each stage.

**Sample Description:** For the present study questionnaires were given to 1200 respondents from various government and private secondary schools of Punjab. Questionnaires were scanned in order to analyze the kind of responses and it was decided to discard 93 questionnaires due to the pattern responses made by respondents or incomplete information provided by the sample as it may give rise to serious measurements errors in the results. So, finally investigator was left with 1107 questionnaires which were scored. Furthering the process of data cleaning investigator used SPSS 23.0 to detect outliers and missing values in data containing all these variables under study. So, 34 cases with outliers or missing values in different variables of study were detected from that data. Hence a final sample of present research study is 1073 secondary school students.

**Tools Used:** In the present study investigator used Family Communication Patterns Scale (Gupta and Geetika, 2019). Family communication patterns scale have 5-point Likert format, each statement is rated on five sequential points, (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and strongly Disagree). Value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was .893. Moreover, the Barlett Sphericity test was applied for evaluating either the data obtained from multi-variant normal distribution or not. Barlett Sphericity test was used as well as significant value was obtained (Chi-square=3494.618,  $p < .01$ ).). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of the questionnaire was Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.926, CMIN/DF= 2.362, Chi-square= 531. 468 ( $p > 0.01$ ), Adjusted Goodness Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.828, Root Mean Square of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.067 and Goodness Fit Index (GFI) ==0.918. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability of family communication patterns scale was .869. For conversational orientation, composite reliability is 0.767, average variance extracted 0.573, maximum shared variance 0.043, average shared

variance 0.021. For conformity orientation composite reliability is 0.921, average variance extracted 0.615, maximum shared variance 0.060, average shared variance 0.021. In this way both convergent and discriminant validity established.

## RESULTS

### Evaluation of the family communication patterns of secondary school students.

**Table 1**  
**Descriptive statistics for Family Communication Patterns**

Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Range (max.-min.)
68.19	68.03	16.15	27	114	87

The table of descriptive statistics (table 1) indicates that mean percentage score obtained by the respondents is 68.62 percent with median lying at 68.67. The maximum percentage obtained by the respondents is 93 and minimum is 46 with deviation of data from mean to a value of 7.75σ units.

**Table 2**  
**Distribution of Sample according to dimensions of Family Communication Patterns**

Pattern of Family Communication	Range of Scores	Level of Orientation	Frequency of Students	Percentage of Students
<b>Conformity Orientation</b>	21 & Above	High	409	38.12
	20 & Below	Low	664	61.88
<b>Conversational Orientation</b>	59 & above	High	342	31.87
	58 & Below	Low	731	68.13

Further, from table 2, it is observed that 38% respondents perceive high level of conformity orientation and 31% of the sample perceives high level of conversational orientation. On the other hand, approx. 62% of the sample perceives low level of conformity orientation in their family while 68% of sample perceives 68% of conversational orientation in family.

### Family Communication Patterns with respect to Gender

**Table 3**

**Group Statistics for Family Communication Patterns of Male and Female Respondents**

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<b>Conformity Orientation</b>	Male	456	17.63	7.181	.336
	Female	617	17.79	7.340	.296
<b>Conversational Orientation</b>	Male	456	47.92	17.060	.799
	Female	617	52.29	15.202	.612

**Table 4**

**Independent samples t-test showing significance of difference between means of male and female respondents**

Variable	Levene's test of Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error of Diff.
<b>Conformity Orientation</b>	.675	.412	-.354	1071	.724	-.159	.449
<b>Conversational Orientation</b>	.132	.801	-4.423	1071	.000	-4.375	.989

Further, it is observed that the data holds the assumption of homogeneity of variances different Family Communication Patterns with  $p > 0.05$  at 95% confidence interval. So, it is observed from the t-test for equality of means that difference between the means of two samples is significant with  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$  ( $t=4.23$ ;  $df = 1071$ ) at 95% confidence interval for conversational communication in the family while for conformity pattern of communication the difference is found to be insignificant between males and females. Hence, the null hypothesis indicating that there is no significant difference in the Family Communication Patterns of male and a female student is not accepted in case of conversational family communication pattern while it is accepted in case of conformity pattern.

#### Family Communication Patterns with respect to type of school

**Table 5**  
**Group Statistics for Family Communication Patterns of Government and Private School Students**

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<b>Conformity Orientation</b>	Govt.	601	18.13	7.287	.297
	Private	472	17.21	7.223	.332
<b>Conversational Orientation</b>	Govt.	601	57.38	14.695	.599
	Private	472	41.59	13.381	.616

**Table 6**  
**Independent samples t-test showing significance of difference between means of government and private school students**

Variable	Levene's test of Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means

	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Sig. (2- tailed)</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>Std. Error of Diff.</b>
<b>Conformity Orientation</b>	.030	.863	2.061	1071	.040	.920	.446
<b>Conversational Orientation</b>	2.848	.092	18.165	1071	.000	15.789	.869

Further, it observed that the data holds the assumption of homogeneity of variances for both Family Communication Patterns with  $p < 0.05$  at 95% confidence interval. So, it is observed from the t-test for equality of means that difference between the means of two samples is significant with  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$  ( $t=2.06$  &  $18.16$  respectively;  $df=1071$ ) for both conformity and conversational communication pattern at 95% confidence interval. Hence, the null hypothesis indicating that there is no significant difference in the Family Communication Patterns of government and private secondary school students is not accepted indicating thereby that students studying in different types of school vary in perceptions regarding Family Communication Patterns.

## DISCUSSION ON RESULTS

Results revealed that 38% respondents perceived high level of conformity orientation and 31% of the sample perceived high level of conversational orientation. On the other hand, approximately 62% of the sample perceived low level of conformity orientation in their family while 68% of sample perceived low level of conversational orientation in family. It was found that there exists significant difference in the Family Communication Patterns of male and female student. Also it was accepted in case of conversational family communication pattern while it was rejected in case of conformity pattern. Females perceived high conversation in the family in comparison to their male counterparts. Results are consistent with the results of other researchers like Mcnaughton, 2000; Adams et al., 2004; Wang et al. 2007; Bakir et al. 2006, which also found significant difference between male and female on their family communication patterns.

Further, Pakdaman and Sepehri (2011) supported that on conformity orientation, there was no significant difference between male and female. Moreover, results showed significant difference in the Family Communication Patterns of government and private secondary school students. Government school students feel more conformity although with little difference as well as more conversation in their family communication patterns. Government school students perceived family communication patterns high in both conversational and conformity orientation. Some researches like Priyanka, 2015; Barerah, 2018; Shanoji and Wani, 2018 are consistent with findings.

### **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

The findings of this study have important educational implications. Understanding family communication patterns can help teachers and school counselors identify factors influencing students' academic performance, behavior, and emotional adjustment. Students from conversation-oriented families may show higher participation, confidence, and problem-solving skills, while those from low-communication or highly controlling family environments may require additional academic and emotional support. The study highlights the need for schools to strengthen parent–teacher collaboration, promote positive family communication through parent education programs, and design counseling and guidance interventions that support students' social and emotional development. By recognizing the role of family communication, educators can create more inclusive and supportive learning environments that enhance students' overall educational outcomes.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

- The variable family communication patterns could be studied in relation to other variables such as academic anxiety, procrastination, perfectionism and self-concept.
- A similar study can be expanded to other categories like rural/urban, streams and different levels in Punjab.

- It will also be advisable to conduct some comparative, follow-up, longitudinal and/or experimental studies as it is likely to go a long way to evaluate the family communication patterns on different age groups at different levels e.g. school level, college level and university level.
- The study could be replicated by taking the sample from other states of India so that quality of generalized results may be enhanced.

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