

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS, CLASS  
ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS  
IN BENUE AND NASARAWA STATES, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study investigated the relationship between family communication patterns, class attendance and class participation of secondary school students in Benue and Nasarawa States. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated and guided the study. The study employed a correlational design and the population of the study comprised 161,005 students, with Benue State having 62,463 students and Nasarawa having 98,543 students. These students were enrolled in 527 government-aided secondary schools located in Benue and Nasarawa States. Glenn formula was used to determine sample size. The sample size comprised 384 from 294,207 students. The instruments on family communication patterns, class attendance and class participation scale questionnaire were subjected to face and content validation as well as a reliability test using Cronbach Alpha which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.78 to 0.88 respectively. Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment*

*Correlation Coefficient was used to answer research questions, why linear regression was used to test hypotheses and determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that family communication patterns have positive relationship between, class attendance and class participation. It was concluded that family communication patterns significantly relate to the class attendance and class participation of secondary school students. It was recommended amongst others that counselors and teachers should strive to create an inclusive classroom environment where students feel valued and encouraged to attend classes regularly. Also, counselors and teachers should strive to provide a classroom environment where students feel comfortable participating in discussions.*

**Keywords: Concepts, Family, Communication Patterns, Class Attendance, Class Participation, Secondary School, Students, Benue State, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.**

## **Introduction**

Family communication patterns play a vital role in shaping the academic and social development of secondary school students in Nigeria and Benue and Nasarawa States in particularly. Effective family communication has been linked to various positive outcomes, including improved academic performance, increased self-esteem and better social skills (Ezewanne, 2017). However, the relationship between family communication patterns, class attendance and class participation among secondary school students, in Benue and Nasarawa States remains under studied. In Nigeria, secondary education is critical phase of learning and class attendance and participation are essential components of learning process (Akpabio & Akpan, 2020). Student's regular attendance and active participation in class activities, discussions and engagements significantly influence their academic performance and overall educational experience. Despite the importance of class attendance and participation, many students in Nigeria secondary schools often exhibit poor attendance and participation, which can be attributed to various factors, including family dynamics. Babalola and Adegoke (2015) state that family communication patterns including parental involvement, parental-adolescent communication and family conflict resolution, can significantly influence students willingness and ability to attend class regularly and participate actively, For instance, parents who engage in open and supportive communication with children may encourage them to attend school regularly, ask questions, share ideas and engage in discussions towards learning. Babalola Adegoke further maintain that family communication patterns may also influence student's motivation, self-esteem and academic self-efficacy, which are critical factors in determining class attendance and participation, more so, cultural and socio-economic factors may also play a role in shaping family communication patterns and their impact on students academic behavior

Class attendance refers to the practice of physically attending and being present in scheduled classes, lectures, or educational sessions and it is a fundamental aspect of traditional education system where students are required to attend classes as part of academic responsibilities. Ekeocha and Nwadike (2016) state that class attendance is typically monitored by educators, instructors, or educational institutions to ensure students are actively engaging with the learning material and participating in the learning process. Families that emphasize the value of education through supportive communication may

motivate students to prioritize class attendance. When family members discuss the importance of learning, academic achievement, and personal growth, students may recognize the significance of attending classes. Supportive conversations about the benefits of education may encourage students to take attendance seriously and view it as a means to achieve educational goals through other means and class participation.

Class participation refers to the active involvement of students in classroom activities, discussions, and learning experiences. It goes beyond simply attending classes and includes contributing to discussions, asking questions, sharing ideas, and engaging in activities that promote learning and interaction. Adekunle (2022) posits that class participation is a valuable aspect of education as it enhances the learning process, encourages critical thinking, and fosters a collaborative learning environment. Students who are not encouraged to express themselves openly at home, they may find it challenging to initiate discussions or contribute to classroom activities. This could lead to missed opportunities for active engagement in extracurricular activities (Adeleke & Akinloye, 2019).

However, it has been noticed as a growing phenomenon among students in Benue and Nasarawa States that they face challenges from family members regarding open and supportive communication channels. Despite the relevance of communication patterns between parents and their children in Nigeria, there are still myriads of challenges. Observations reveal that parents and children belong to two different generations; parents are often unable to keep pace with changing social and technological developments. So, they are unable to understand their children. At the same time children cannot understand the mindset of their parents who they feel have very traditional mindset and are regarded as "Old School". This is the period when most parents blame their children in Benue and Nasarawa States of not listening to parental advice. It is against this background that the researcher investigated the relationship between family communication patterns, class attendance and class participation of secondary school students in Benue and Nasarawa States.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between family communication patterns, class attendance and class participation of secondary school students in Benue and Nasarawa States. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. Examine the relationship between family communication patterns and students' class attendance of secondary schools students in Benue State and Nasarawa State.
2. Determine the relationship between family communication patterns and students' class participation of secondary school students in Benue and Nasarawa States

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the relationship between family communication patterns and students' class attendance of secondary school students in Benue and Nasarawa States?
2. What is the relationship between family communication patterns and students' class participation of secondary school students in Benue and Nasarawa States?

## **Hypotheses**

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

1. There is no significant relationship between family communication patterns and students class attendance of secondary school students in Benue and Nasarawa State.
2. There is no significant relationship between family communication patterns and students' class participation of secondary schools students in Benue State and Nasarawa State.

## **Review of Related Literature**

This review of related literature was carried out under the following sub-headings that are relevant to the study.

### **Concept of Family Communication Patterns**

Family communication patterns to Adekunle (2022), refer to the recurring ways in which information is passed or exchanged within a family, it can also refer to the distinctive ways in which families exchange information, share meaning, and interact with one another. These patterns encompass various methods, styles, and frequencies through which family *members* exchange information, express emotions, and interact with one another. Smith (2018) stated that family communication globally has a profound impact on family life and development. It serves as a vital foundation for healthy relationships, emotional well-being, and overall family functioning. It fosters emotional bonding among family members, promoting trust, understanding, and cohesion within the family (Johnson & Johnson, 2019). According to Gottman and Gottman, (2020), family members engage in a myriad of communicative acts, ranging from casual conversations to more profound discussions about significant life events. They share stories, recount experiences, and convey their thoughts and opinions, all of which contribute to a collective understanding of each other's perspectives. Emotions, too, find their expression within these patterns, allowing family members to celebrate achievements, provide comfort in times of distress, and express empathy and support. The quality of communication between parents and children significantly influences the parent-child relationship, impacting children's self-esteem, academic achievement, and social development (Jones 2021).

Vangelisti, (2017) postulates that family communication patterns constitute a comprehensive spectrum of both spoken and unspoken actions and expressions that family members employ to convey information, articulate feelings, ascertain shared understanding, and establish and nurture connections. These patterns encapsulate the multifaceted ways in which family members interact, not only through spoken words but also through gestures, facial expressions, body language, and other nonverbal cues. They form the intricate fabric of how family members communicate, creating a rich tapestry of shared experiences and exchanges. According to Galvin and Braithwaite, (2019), family communication patterns encompass the established and customary ways in which family members engage in various forms of communication within their familial unit. These patterns serve as the backbone of how information is shared, emotions are expressed, and relationships are maintained over time. They encompass not only verbal exchanges but also nonverbal cues, gestures, and even shared rituals that have become ingrained in the family dynamic.

These communicative behaviors are often deeply rooted in the family's history, culture, and shared experiences, shaping the way members interact with one another on a day-to-day basis. As a result, family communication patterns play a pivotal role in defining the unique identity and cohesion of a family, influencing how conflicts are resolved, decisions are made, and support is offered among its members. These patterns are both reflective of and contribute to the family's overall functioning and can be a key determinant in the strength and resilience of familial bonds. Oladunjoye (2019) posits that family communication patterns serve as a dynamic platform for negotiation and consensus-building. They enable family members to collaborate in decision-making processes, to allocate responsibilities, and to address conflicts or disagreements constructively. Through these exchanges, family members work together to find common ground and to establish resolutions that take into account the needs and desires of all involved. These patterns play a vital role in the cultivation and sustenance of relationships within the family unit. They foster a sense of belonging, understanding, and mutual trust among family members. By engaging in these diverse communicative behaviors, families build a strong foundation that not only weathers challenges but also enriches the bonds that tie them together. This intricate web of communication is fundamental to the fabric of family life, shaping the dynamics, memories, and enduring connections that define the family unit.

### **Relationship between Family Communication Patterns and Class Attendance**

Class attendance refers to the act of physically or virtually being present in a scheduled educational session, such as a lecture, seminar, workshop, or any instructional setting where learning and instruction take place. It is a fundamental aspect of formal education that reflects a student's commitment to participating in the learning process and engaging with the subject matter being taught (Tinto, 2016). Attendance is often used as an indicator of a student's level of engagement, participation, and involvement in their academic studies (Robbins, 2014). It signifies not only the physical presence of the student in the classroom but also their readiness to learn, interact with peers, and benefit from the educational opportunities presented. With the advent of technology, class attendance can also extend to virtual or online learning environments. In these cases, students are expected to log in to digital platforms, attend virtual lectures, participate in online discussions, and complete assignments as part of their engagement with the course material (Boling, 2012).

Epstein and Sheldon, (2012) posit that family communication patterns can have a significant impact on a student's class attendance behavior, both in traditional physical classroom settings and in virtual or online learning environments. The way families communicate, express expectations, and provide support can influence a student's motivation, sense of responsibility, and overall engagement with their education. When families foster open communication, students feel comfortable discussing their educational experiences, challenges, and aspirations. This open dialogue allows students to share any attendance-related difficulties they might be facing. Family members can provide encouragement, suggestions, and solutions to help students overcome obstacles that might hinder regular attendance (Kurdek, 2012). Moreover, a supportive environment ensures that students don't feel judged or criticized for discussing attendance concerns, thus encouraging them to seek help when needed.

Clear communication about the importance of attending classes and participating actively sets clear expectations for students. When family members convey the significance of attendance and its correlation to educational success, students are more likely to internalize these expectations. This can create a sense of accountability where students feel responsible for meeting these standards and view attendance as a personal commitment to their education (Epstein & Sheldon, 2012). Actively involved parents are more likely to monitor their child's attendance and academic progress. Regular discussions about classes, assignments, and overall school experience provide students with a platform to share their achievements and concerns. This involvement signals to students that their education matters to their family, motivating them to attend classes consistently to achieve positive outcomes (Henderson & Mapp, 2012).

Family members, who prioritize their own commitments work on personal growth, serve as role models for students. When students observe their family members demonstrating dedication to their responsibilities, they are more likely to internalize the importance of commitment and attendance (Bachman, 2015). This modeling encourages students to approach their own education with a similar level of responsibility. In virtual or online learning environments, families play a pivotal role in facilitating a student's participation. Effective communication around technology usage ensures that students have the necessary tools to attend virtual classes and complete assignments. Families that troubleshoot technical issues and provide guidance on using digital platforms create a seamless learning experience for students, encouraging their continued engagement (Boling et al., 2012).

According to Doe (2018), when families engage in clear and direct communication about the significance of education and the importance of attending classes, it establishes a strong foundation for academic commitment. The emphasis on education as a priority sends a powerful message to students. He suggested that supportive communication from family members acts as a powerful motivator for students to maintain regular class attendance. When students feel a sense of encouragement and support from their families, they experience a heightened sense of motivation. This positive reinforcement communicates that their efforts are not only recognized but also valued. It creates a sense of purpose and belonging, knowing that their educational endeavors are backed by a strong support system. This, in turn, fuels their determination to attend classes consistently.

### **Relationship between Family Communication Patterns and Class Participation**

Class participation refers to a student's active involvement in classroom activities, such as asking and answering questions, sharing ideas, and contributing to discussions. According to Guerra and Williams (2017) families that have a high level of communication openness and support tend to have children who participate actively in class. Families that are high in communication openness tend to provide children with opportunities to practice communication skills, such as active listening and expressing themselves clearly. These skills can translate into increased confidence in classroom communication, leading to more active class participation. Additionally, families that provide emotional and practical support to children can help build self-esteem and confidence, which can also lead to more active participation in class. Family communication may contribute to building students' confidence and self-esteem; when students receive support, validation, and positive feedback from family members, they are more likely to feel secure in expressing opinions, asking questions, and

actively participating in class discussions. This can lead to increased engagement and participation in the classroom. According to Reschly, and Wylie (2015), family members engage in open, respectful, and meaningful conversations with students, which may provide them with a model for effective communication. Students who have experienced positive communication patterns at home may be likely to feel comfortable expressing themselves, articulating thoughts, and engaging in discussions with peers and teachers.

Family members discussing current events, share ideas, and engage in debates or intellectual pursuits; students may be exposed to a rich intellectual environment that encourages active participation (Jeynes, 2017). This can foster a love for learning, enhance knowledge base, and motivate them to contribute actively in the classroom. When family members express high expectations, believe in abilities, and provide support and guidance, students are more likely to internalize those expectations and strive to meet them. This can result in increased motivation to actively participate in class, contribute ideas, and seek opportunities for engagement. In class participation, students actively immerse themselves in classroom discussions, activities, and assignments. Willingness to contribute, ask questions, and share thoughts reflects a proactive approach to learning (Smith & Tindal, 20218). Similarly, within family communication patterns, active engagement involves family members willingly participating in conversations, expressing viewpoints, and demonstrating a genuine interest in each other's experiences (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 20213). This active involvement enhances family relationships by fostering a sense of connection and understanding. Class participation and family communication patterns rely on open communication channels. In the classroom, students must communicate ideas clearly to facilitate meaningful discussions and contribute constructively (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996). Within families, open communication encourages honesty, transparency, and the free exchange of thoughts and emotions. This openness cultivates an environment of trust, where family members feel comfortable sharing thoughts without fear of judgment (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 2013).

In class participation, students' express ideas and opinions on academic topics, contributing to a diverse range of perspectives (Tobin, 1998). Similarly, family communication patterns encourage the expression of ideas, allowing each family member to share unique viewpoints, life experiences, and emotions (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994). This diversity of expressions enriches family interactions, promotes empathy, and helps family members better understand each other. Active listening allows students to understand peers' arguments, build upon them, and engage in meaningful discussions. In families, active listening is essential for understanding each member's feelings, concerns, and perspectives. It demonstrates respect and empathy, fostering stronger connections among family members (Afifi & Guerrero, 2006).

Class participation stimulates critical thinking as students evaluate information, analyze concepts, and engage in debates (Eriksen, 2006). Similarly, family communication patterns promote critical thinking as family members discuss important decisions, evaluate options, and solve problems collaboratively (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 2013). These discussions encourage individuals to think critically about the consequences of choices and consider various viewpoints (Afifi & Guerrero, 2006). Class participation and effective family communication are grounded in mutual respect. In class, students respect peers' viewpoints and ideas, even when they disagree. Within families, mutual respect ensures that each family member's

thoughts and emotions are acknowledged and valued. This respect creates an atmosphere of inclusivity and acceptance.

## Result and Findings

### Research Question One

What is the relationship between family communication patterns and students' class attendance of secondary schools students in Benue State and Nasarawa?

**Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Scores on Relationship between Family Communication Patterns and Class Attendance among Secondary School Students**

|                               |                     | Family communication patterns | Class attendance |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Family communication patterns | Pearson Correlation | 1                             | 0.716**          |
|                               | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                               | .000             |
|                               | N                   | 384                           |                  |
| Class attendance              | Pearson Correlation | 0.716**                       | 1                |
|                               | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000                          |                  |
|                               | N                   | 384                           | 384              |

Table 1, showed correlation coefficient is 0.716. It indicates that there was positive relationship between self-efficacy and class attendance among secondary school students in Benue and Nasarawa States. This implies that students who discussed individual strengths and weaknesses, attend their classes and feel guilty when missed classes

### Research Question Two

What is the relationship between family communication patterns and students' class participation of secondary schools students in Benue and Nasarawa State?

**Table: 2. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Scores on Relationship between Family Communication Patterns and Class participation among Secondary School Students**

|                               |                     | Family Communication Patterns | Class participation |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Family communication patterns | Pearson Correlation | 1                             | 0.681**             |
|                               | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                               | 0.000               |
|                               | N                   | 384                           |                     |
| Class participation           | Pearson Correlation | 0.681**                       | 1                   |
|                               | Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0.000                         |                     |
|                               | N                   | 384                           | 384                 |



Table 2, showed correlation coefficient is 0.681. It indicates that there is positive relationship between family communication patterns and class participation among secondary school students in Benue and Nasarawa States. This implies that students who communicated expectations and needs, actively participate in class discussions and asked questions as well as often contributed to group activities in the classroom

### Testing Research Hypothesis

In testing the two hypotheses of the this study, the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant and the result are presented on table 3-4

### Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between family communication patterns and students' class attendance of secondary schools students in Benue State and Nasarawa State

**Table 3: Linear Regression Showing Relationship between Family Communication Patterns and Class Attendance among Secondary School Students'**

| Variable         | R     | R <sup>2</sup> | F       | B | t | Sig   |
|------------------|-------|----------------|---------|---|---|-------|
| (Constant)       | 0.681 | 0.464          | 331.133 |   |   | 0.000 |
| Class attendance |       |                |         |   |   | 0.000 |

**F (1, 384) = 331.133 P < 05**

Table 3 result: F (1, 384) = 331.133, R= 0.618, R<sup>2</sup>= 0.464, B 44.447, P < 0.05 since p0.000 is less than P.0.05, the null hypothesis which states that family communication patterns have no significant relationship with class attendance among secondary school students in Benue and Nasarawa States is rejected. This implies that there is a significant positive relationship between family communication patterns and class attendance among secondary school students in Benue and Nasarawa States.

### Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between family communication patterns and students class participation

**Table 4: Linear Regression Showing Relationship between Family Communication Patterns and Students Class Participation**

| Variable            | R     | R <sup>2</sup> | F        | B | T | Sig   |
|---------------------|-------|----------------|----------|---|---|-------|
| (Constant)          | 0.900 | 0.809          | 1624.406 |   |   | 0.000 |
| Class Participation |       |                |          |   |   | 0.000 |

**F (1, 384) = 1624.406, P < 05**

Table 4, result: F (1, 384) = 1624.406, R, 0.900, R<sup>2</sup>= 0.809, B 13.961, P < 0.05 since p000 is less than P.0.05, the null hypothesis which states that family communication patterns have no significant relationship with class participation among secondary school students in Benue and Nasarawa States is rejected. This implies that there is a significant positive relationship

between family communication patterns and class participation among secondary school students in Benue and Nasarawa States.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The discussion of the findings is organized around the research questions and hypotheses for ease of understanding and comprehension.

Hypothesis four revealed that family communication patterns have a significant positive relationship with class participation. This implies that students, who communicate their expectations and needs, actively participate in class discussions, ask questions, contribute to group activities in the classroom, seek feedback from teachers and peers, and engage in debates and arguments with classmates. This finding is consistent with Ubani's (2016) study, which showed a significant relationship between family communication patterns and class participation among secondary school students. Students who reported having more positive family communication patterns also reported higher levels of class participation. Similarly, Ojo (2017) demonstrated a positive impact of family conversation orientation on class participation, indicating that students with higher family conversation orientation are more likely to participate in class. The implication of this finding is that students who communicate their expectations and needs within their families are more likely to actively engage in various classroom activities, such as discussions, asking questions, contributing to group activities, seeking feedback from teachers and peers, and participating in debates and arguments with classmates. Therefore, counselors, teachers and parents should strive to provide environment where students feel comfortable participating in discussions, asking questions, and engaging in group activities.

Hypothesis five, revealed a significant positive relationship between family communication patterns and class attendance. This implies that students who engage in discussions about their individual strengths and weaknesses, attend their classes regularly, and feel guilty when they miss classes; also perceive class attendance as crucial for academic success. This finding is consistent with Ibrahim's (2015) suggested that students with a higher family conformity orientation are more likely to attend classes regularly. Similarly, this finding aligns with Lubem's (2014), indicated that students with a higher family conversation orientation tend to attend classes regularly. The implication of this study is that students who engage in open discussions about their strengths and weaknesses, perceive class attendance as important for academic success, and feel a sense of guilt when missing classes are more likely to attend their classes regularly. Therefore, parents, counselors and teachers should strive to create environment where students feel valued and encouraged to attend classes regularly.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that relationship between family communication patterns significantly as a correlate of class attendance and class participation of secondary school students in Benue and Nasarawa States. Specifically, positive family communication patterns were found to enhance class attendance and class participation in secondary schools.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendation were made

1. Counselors and teachers should strive to create an inclusive classroom environment where students feel valued and encouraged to attend classes regularly.
2. Counselors and teachers should strive to provide a classroom environment where students feel comfortable participating in discussions, asking questions, and engaging in group activities.

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