MODULE 3   THE CHILD AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AMONG DIFFERENT CULTURES IN NIGERIA

UNIT 1   MEANING AND FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Every child in any society belongs to a family and each family has a set of unique ways of communicating among its members. This is in terms of a set of cognitive representations which guides individuals' perceptions, evaluations, and motivations as a benchmark to which actual family interactions are compared and contrasted. These communications patterns are usually culture specific. An attempt to fully understand the patterns and their underpinning cultural differences requires an understanding of the concept of communication and its different forms.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

•   explain the concept of communication using different scholars' views; and
•   identify and describe the different forms and types of communication.

3.0   HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT
- Read through this unit care.
- Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged.

NOTE: ALL ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENT ARE AT THE OF END THIS BOOK. THIS APPLIES TO EVERY OTHER UNIT IN THIS BOOK.

4.0   WORD STUDY

Socialization: - This is a process of learning from childhood to adulthood.

5.0   MAIN CONTENT

5.1   Meaning of Communication

Definitions of communication range widely; some recognise that animals can communicate with each other as well as with human beings, and some, more narrow, recognise that communication only include human beings within the parameters of human symbolic interaction.

A look at the etymology of the word "communication" will reveal that it contains two root words: com (for the Latin **"cum"** translating "with" or "together with") and *"unio"* (the Latin for "union") (COM 707, www.regent.edu). Hence, communication refers to "union with" for the purpose of conveying a message. This influenced a lecturer handling the course COM 7 in his definition of communication which he gave as "a process in which a person, through the use of signs (natural, universal)/symbol (by human convention), verbally and /or non- verbally, consciously or not consciously but intentionally, conveys meaning to another in order to affect change."

Communication has been described by Wikipedia (2009) as "the process of transferring information from one source to another." It involves imparting or interchanging of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing or signs. It can be perceived as a two-way process in which there is an exchange and progression of thoughts, feelings or ideas towards a mutually accepted goal or direction.

Communication simply means the science and practice of transmitting or exchanging information or ideas (Lawal, 2004). It is a process whereby information is encoded and imparted by a sender to receiver via a channel or medium. It requires the receiver to decode the message and give the sender a feedback. That is, the sender encodes and sends the message, which is then carried via the communication channel to the receiver where the receiver decodes the message, processes the information and sends an appropriate reply via the same communication channel. It is therefore what happens when the transmitter changes state of being of the recipient based on the message transmitted.

Communication is transaction that involves all social processes. It is a process by which people assign and convey meaning in an attempt to create and share information and understanding. The process requires a vast repertoire of skills in intrapersonal and interpersonal processing, listening, observing, speaking, questioning analysing and evaluating.

YourDictionary.com (2009) defines communication as the act of transmitting, giving or exchanging information, signals or messages as by talk, gestures or writing. It further defines it as the art of expressing ideas, especially in speech and writing. It involves exchange of information, thoughts, ideas and emotions.

Douglas Harper (2008) further defines communication as the articulation of sending a message through different media, be it verbal or non-verbal, as a being transmits a thought provoking idea, gesture, action etc. It is also a learnt skill. Most babies are born with the physical ability to make sounds, but must learn to speak and communicate effectively. Speaking, listening, and human ability to understand verbal and non-verbal meanings are skills we develop in various ways. These skills are acquired by observing other people, modeling behaviours based on what is seen. Human beings are also taught some communication skills directly through education, and by practicing those skills and having them evaluated.

Communication is usually described along a few major dimensions which include content- what type of things are communicated; source, emissary, sender or encoder – by whom; form – in which form; channel- through which medium; destination, receiver, target or decoder-to whom; and the purpose or pragmatic aspect. Between parties, communication includes acts that confer knowledge and experiences, give advice and commands, and ask questions. These acts may take many forms, in one of the various manners of communication.

Wikipedia (2009) further describes communication as processes of information transmission governed by three levels of semiotic rules which include:

- Syntactic (formal properties of signs and symbols)
- Pragmatic (concerned with the relations between signs/expressions and their users) and
- Semantic (study of relationships between signs and symbols and what they represent).

These rules make communication a social interaction where at least two interacting agents share a common set of signs and a common set of semiotic rules.
Communication can occur via various processes and methods and depending on the channel used and the style of communication there can be various types and forms of communication, some of which are discussed in the next few paragraphs.

5.2   Types and Forms of Communication

Effective communication can evolve through non-verbal, verbal, written, or wireless forms. Traditionally, human beings are known to have some forms of communication which include dancing, sculpture works, painting, divination, acting and festivals. However, regardless of the form, communication patterns all over the world are known to serve very useful purposes. This is because no matter how we feel and regardless how well informed we may be on any issue unless we can transmit this information to others it will remain what Anijah-Obi (2001) calls "the rich deposits of metal in the earth and the valuable timber in the forest which is of no value to anyone." The next few paragraphs will therefore explore these different forms of communication and the means of using them.

5.2.1   Verbal Communication

The basis of communication is the interaction between people. Verbal communication is one way for people to communicate face-to-face. Some of the key components of verbal communication are sound, words, speaking, and the language.

Manohar (2008) describes verbal communication as a communication type that is oral. The **oral communication** refers to the spoken words in the communication process. Oral communication can either be face-to-face communication or a conversation over the phone or on the voice chat over the Internet. Spoken conversations or dialogues are influenced by voice modulation, pitch, volume and even the speed and clarity of speaking.

Effective oral communication is not learnt from reading: it takes a lot of practice. And this takes time. It involves developing a vocabulary that allows you to express your opinions, to state your position during a dialogue relative to reaching a decision, to phrase your questions clearly and concisely, and to make your wishes known on any number of matters.

At birth, most people have vocal cords, which produce sounds. As a child grows, it learns how to form these sounds into words. Some words may be imitative of natural sounds, but others may come from expressions of emotion, such as laughter or crying. Words alone have no meaning. Only people can put meaning into words. As meaning is assigned to words, language develops, which leads to the development of speaking; a major process in oral communication.

5.2.2   Written Communication

Written communication can be either via snail mail, or e-mail. The effectiveness of written communication depends on the style of writing, vocabulary used, grammar, clarity and precision of language. Written communication takes on many different forms. It includes general correspondence, reports of different types, procedures,

record keeping, operating instructions, spreadsheet data, announcements, documentation, and presentations.

Written communication could be handwritten, typed, or machine printed messages. The practice of sending notes, names, written advertisements etc. also falls within this category of communication. This form of communication is simple to use and easy to receive by the recipients.

Parents use more of oral communication than the written communication during child rearing in most families in Nigeria. This however does not exclude the fact that the written form of communication is not used by family members in the course of bringing up a child as it shall be noted in the next Unit of this Module.

5.2.3 Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is the process of communicating through sending and receiving wordless messages (non-verbal codes) in a variety of ways. It involves those non-verbal stimuli in a communication setting that are generated by both the source (speaker) and his/her use of the environment and that have potential message value for the source or receiver (listener). It could be both intentional and unintentional.

Non-verbal communication includes the overall body language of the person who is speaking, which will include speaking, such as the body posture, the hand gestures, and overall body movements. The facial expressions also play a major role while communicating since the expressions on a person's face say a lot about his/her mood. On the other hand, gestures like a handshake, a smile or a hug can independently convey emotions (Manohar, 2008).

Non-verbal communication can also be in the form of pictorial representations, signboards, or even photographs, sketches and paintings, vocal nuance, intonation, glance and posture.

Furthermore, Wikipedia (2009) reveals that non-verbal communication can be communicated through object communication such as clothing, hairstyles or even architecture, symbols and info graphics. The quality of a message sender`s voice, his/her emotions and speaking style, as well as prosodic features such as rhythm, intonation and stress, all form part of non-verbal communication.

Elements such as physique, height, weight, hair, skin colour, gender, odors, and clothing send non-verbal messages during interaction. Research into height has generally found that taller people are perceived as being more impressive. Melamed&Bozionelos (1992) studied a sample of managers in the United Kingdom and found that height was a key factor affecting those who were promoted. Often, people try to make themselves taller; for example, standing on a platform, when they want to make more impact with their speaking.

There are two basic categories of non-verbal communication. The first one comprises those non-verbal messages produced by the body and the second being those produced by the broad setting in terms of time, space, and silence. From these two broad categories several different types of nonverbal communication can be identified. Some of these have been highlighted by Kendra Van Wagner (2009) and they include:

- **Facial Expression:** Facial expressions are responsible for a huge proportion of non-verbal communication. These could be through smiling or frowning. Smiling is a powerful cue that transmits happiness, friendliness, warmth, and liking. So, a person who smiles frequently is more likely to be perceived as more likable, friendly, warm and approachable. Smiling is often contagious and people will react favourably. They will be more comfortable around such an individual and will want to listen more.

- **Eye Contact:** This helps to regulate the flow of communication. It signals interest in others and increases the speaker's credibility. People who make eye contact open the flow of communication and convey interest, concern, warmth, and credibility. Looking, staring and blinking can also be important nonverbal behaviours. When people encounter people or things that they like, the rate of blinking increases and their pupils dilate. Again, looking at another person can indicate a range of emotions, including hostility, interest and attraction. Argyle *et.al.* (1970) remarked that eye gaze comprises the actions of looking while talking, looking while listening, amount of gaze, and frequency of glances and patterns of fixation.

- **Gestures:** These are deliberate movements and signals used for communicating messages without words. Common gestures include waving, pointing, nodding of the head, and using fingers to indicate number amounts. It is so unique as a form of non-verbal communication. For instance, if one fails to gesture while speaking, one may be perceived as boring and stiff. Gestures can come in form of **emblems**, that is, those associated with direct verbal translations e.g. a goodbye wave; **illustrators**- e.g. turning an imaginary steering wheel while talking about driving; **affect display-** a gesture that conveys emotions e.g. a smile; and **adaptor-** which facilitates the release of bodily tension, e.g. quickly moving one`s leg.

- **Body Language and Posture:** Posture and movement in terms of body orientation, arm position and bodyreadbility when talking with another person goes a long way to influence the degree of interest that can be attracted during an interpersonal relationship. For instance, an individual communicates numerous messages the way he or she talks and moves. Standing erect and leaning forward communicates to listeners that the speaker is approachable, receptive, and friendly. On the other hand, speaking with one's back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling communicates disinterest.

- **Paralinguistic:** This refers to vocal communication that is separate from actual language. It includes factors such as tone of voice, loudness, pitch and accent. It includes the voice set which is the context in which the speaker is speaking in terms of situation, gender, mood, age and a person`s culture. Voice qualities and vocalisation are also part of paralanguage which affect the meaning of the message an individual is trying to pass.

- **Proximity**: This is related to how people use and perceive the physical space around them. It is also called proxemics, that is, the role of distance and body orientation in human communication. It is premised on the principle that the space between the sender and the receiver of a message influences the way the message is interpreted. Cultural norms dictate a comfortable distance for interaction with others. The amount of distance people need and the amount of space they perceive as belonging to them is influenced by a number of factors including social norms, situational factors, personality characteristics, and level of familiarity. For example, there are signals of discomfort caused by invading the other person`s space. These signals include, rocking, leg swinging, tapping and gaze aversion.

- **Haptics:** Communicating through touch is another important non-verbal form of communication. Touches that can be can be defined as communication include handshakes, holding hands, kissing (cheek, lips, hand), back slapping, high fives, a pat on the shoulder, and brushing an arm. The meaning conveyed from touch is highly dependent upon the context of the situation, the relationship between communicators and the manner of touch.

- **Appearance-** Human beings choice of colour, clothing, hairstyles and other factors affecting appearance are also means of non- verbal communication. Colours are capable of invoking different moods and appearances can equally alter physiological reactions, judgement, and interpretations.

The foregoing is a confirmation that communication can come through many facets. It is however not limited to humans, or even to primates. Every exchange of information between living organisms- that is, transmission of signals involving a living sender and a receiver, can be considered a form of communication.

6.0   ACTIVITY

1.   Identify and discuss two ways children view themselves.
2.   Describe how children view other people around their environment.

7.0   ASSIGNMENT

1.   How do children view adults and their parents as members of the family?
2.   Describe how children can view things in their unique ways with relevant examples in your local environment.

8.0   SUMMARY

Communication as a process involves having a thought which usually exists in the mind of the sender, sending a message to a receiver in words or symbols, and decoding which involves the receiver in translating the words or symbols into a concept or an information that can be understood.

Communication can either be verbal or non-verbal. When it is verbal, it could be face -to -face or through conversation over the phone or on the voice over the internet. The non-verbal communication on the other hand makes no use of words, sentences, grammar and other structures that can be associated with spoken and written language. It includes the overall body language of the person who is speaking, in terms of body posture, facial expression/gestures, the hand gestures and overall body movements. It can also be in the form pictorial representations, signboards, or even photographs, sketches and painting.

9.0   REFERENCES

Anijah-Obi, F. (2001).*Fundamental Environmental Education and Management*.Calabar: UNICAL Press.

Com 707 (2009).Definition of Communication.www.regent.edu Retrieved 14th April 2009.

Douglas, H. (2008*). Historian Online Etymology Dictionary*http://dictionary.reference.com   Retrieved on March 23rd 2009.

Lawal, M.B. (2004).*Our Environment Our Future.* Lagos: A-Triad Associates.

Manohar, U. (2008). *Types of Communication.*www.buzzle.com Retrieved 4th May 2009.

Melamed, J. &Bozionelos, N (1992)."Managerial Promotion and Height."*Psychological Reports,*71: 587-593.

Van Wagner, K. (2009). *Types of Nonverbal Communication*www.about.com Retrieved 4th May 2009.

Wikipedia (2009).Communication.*Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia.*http://en.wikipedia.org   Retrieved 22nd March 2009

Yourdictionary.com (2009).*Definition of Communication.*www.yourdictionary.com Retrieved 27th April 2009.

UNIT 2   PATTERNS OF FAMILY COMMUNICATION AMONG DIFFERENT CULTURES IN NIGERIA

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Communication within the family is extremely important because it enables members to express their needs, wants, and concerns to each other Effective communication is an important characteristic of strong, healthy families. It is an essential building block of strong marital, parent-child, and sibling relationships.

Researchers have discovered a strong link between communication patterns and satisfaction with family relationships (Noller& Fitzpatrick, 1990). In fact, one researcher discovered that the more positively couples rated their communication, the more satisfied they were with their relationship five and a half years later (Markman, 1981). The cultural differences in beliefs and practices among families in our society contribute significantly to the variations in family communication patterns and the nature of upbringing.

Standards, or beliefs about the patterns of communication among family members, affect social phenomena and the social behaviour of a growing child in various ways. Poor family communication is associated with an increased risk of divorce and marital separation and more behavioural problems in children.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain what family communication patterns entail;
- identify and describe the different types of family communication patterns found among families in Nigeria; and
- suggest ways of promoting effective family communication patterns.

3.0 HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT
- Read through this unit care.
- Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged.

NOTE: ALL ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENT ARE AT THE OF END THIS BOOK. THIS APPLIES TO EVERY OTHER UNIT IN THIS BOOK.

4.0 WORD STUDY
School: - is a term that refers to all educational institutions where one or more teachers are available to give instruction under an assigned administrator, based in one or more buildings and with enrolled or prospectively enrolled students. We have public and private schools.
Schooling: - This refers to primary with literacy and numeracy, structured curriculum and subjects to be learnt. It requires a specific space and environment and it is a major component of any progressive community.

5.0 MAIN CONTENT

5.1 Meaning of Family Communication Patterns

The family has long been regarded as among the most interesting and influential interpersonal systems and nowhere is its influence on individual behaviors more profound than in the area of communicative behaviours. Reiss (1981) has argued strongly that families are characterised by uniquely shared world views and value and belief systems. These value and belief systems have far reaching consequences for how family members perceive their social environment and their family's place in it and, as a consequence, how they communicate within it.

The concept of family communication patterns was articulated by McLeod and Chaffee (1972), who were interested in the role of family as an influence in children's use of media. According to Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1990), "the family communication environment is a set of norms governing the tradeoff between informational and relational objectives of communication."

Family communication has been described by Epstein *et al.* (1993) as the way verbal and non-verbal information is exchanged between family members. It is the primary means by which children learn to communicate with others, to interpret other`s

behaviours, to experience emotions, and to act in their relationships. It involves parent-child communication.

Family communication is premised on the fact that open and honest communication creates an atmosphere that allows family members to express their differences as well as love and admiration for one another. It is through family communication that members are able to resolve the unavoidable problems that arise in all families.

Family communication involves the ability of family members to pay attention to what members of the family are thinking and feeling. It is not just talking, but listening to what others have to say in the family. Koerner& Maki (2004) describe family communication as the primary means by which children learn to communicate with others, to interpret others' behaviours, to experience emotions, and to act in their relationships. Parents' communicative motives and preferences provide a model of behaviour that shapes their 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 behaviors of the individual family members as well as perceptions of the family unit (Barbato, Graham, &Perse, 2003; Koerner& Fitzpatrick, 2002a, 2004; Orrego& Rodriguez, 2001).

Families repeat themselves within and across generations. Members become caught up in predictable, but often unexamined, life patterns, which are created in part through their interactions with others. Some of these patterns are communication patterns and they reflect the belief that communication is "transactional," which means that interpersonal communication mutually impacts each participant.

Thus, in active communication relationships, participants affect and are affected by others. As two people interact, each creates a context for the other and relates to the other within that context. It does not matter how much more talking one person appears to do; the mutual impact remains the same. Within these views, relationships take precedence over individuals

These family communication patterns are guided by some standards. These are in terms of a set of cognitive representations regarding the ideal ways of communicating among family members (Caughlin, 2003). These standards guide individuals' perceptions, evaluations, and motivations as a benchmark to which actual family interactions are compared and contrasted.

5.2   Different Types of Family Communication Patterns

Caughlin (2003) found that individuals differ substantially in their beliefs about the ideal family interactions. Hence, he identified distinct dimensions that specifically focus on family interaction as principal family communication standards.

These include; openness, respecting privacy, providing support, expression of affection, maintaining structural stability, emotional/instrumental support, politeness, mindreading, discipline, humour/sarcasm, regular routine interaction, and avoidance.

Family environments can be classified according to whether the child is encouraged to develop and express autonomous opinions and ideas or to pursue relational objectives by conforming to parental authority.

These two distinct family environments have gone a long way to influence the dimensions of family communication patterns which are: conversation orientation and conformity orientation, both of which define characteristics of family interactions (Koerner& Fitzpatrick, 2002a, 2002b, 2004).

5.2.1   Conversation Orientation

This refers to the extent to which family members engage in frequent, spontaneous interactions with each other, unconstrained by topics discussed or time spent in discussion. All members of the family are encouraged to participate, and the family environment emphasises open communication and the exploration of new ideas. It does not support a communication environment where children are better seen than heard.

Families in this case emphasise the development of strong and varied concept-relations in an environment comparatively free of social restraints. Children enjoying this kind of orientation are usually encouraged to examine different ideas and to even reach a different conclusion from their parents on certain issues.

5.2.2   Conformity Orientation

This is characterised by a uniformity of beliefs and attitudes within the family. Interactions focus on maintaining harmonious relationships that reflect obedience to the parents, often manifest in the pressure to agree and to maintain the existing hierarchy (Koerner& Fitzpatrick, 1997, 2002a, 2002b).

Conformity orientation in families results from children focusing on their parents to learn appropriate attitudes and behaviours, including expectations for how one should behave in a given social situation.

Although conversation orientation and conformity orientation are distinct concepts, these two dimensions are not entirely independent of one another. For example, researchers consistently have found small to moderate negative correlations between conformity orientation and conversation orientation (Koerner& Fitzpatrick, 1997; 2002b). In addition, these two dimensions often interact with each another with respect to the effects they have on various outcomes. For example, in research on family communication patterns and conflict behaviors of adult children, Koerner and

Fitzpatrick (2002c) found that conversation orientation in the family of origin amplified the effects conformity orientation had on conflict behaviors.

Whichever dimension the communication pattern in a family takes it is important to remark that the style of communication within such family equally goes a long way to influence its pattern(s). Epstein *et.al.* (1993) identified the following styles of communication as capable of playing key roles in family communication patterns. These are:

- **Clear and direct communication**

Clear and direct communication is the healthiest form of communication and occurs when the message is stated plainly and directly to the appropriate family member. An example of this style of communication is when a mother, disappointed about his son failing to complete his chore, states, "Son, I'm disappointed that you forgot to wash the dishes today without my having to remind you."

- **Clear and indirect communication**

In this second style of communication, the message is clear, but it is not directed to the person for whom it is intended. Using the previous example, the mother might say, "It's disappointing when people forget to complete their chores." In this message the son may not know that his mother is referring to him.

- **Masked and direct communication**

Masked and direct communication occurs when the content of the message is unclear, but directed to the appropriate family member. The mother in our example may say something like, "Son, people just don't work as hard as they used to."

- **Masked and indirect communication**

Masked and indirect communication occurs when both the message and intended recipient is unclear. In unhealthy family relationships, communication tends to be very masked and indirect. An example of this type of communication might be the mother stating, "The youth of today are very lazy."

Marriage and family therapists often report that poor communication is a common complaint of families who are having difficulties. Poor communication is unclear and indirect. It can lead to numerous family problems, including excessive family conflict, ineffective problem solving, lack of intimacy, and weak emotional bonding. It is therefore expected that family members must always aspire to become more effective communicators in order to improve the quality of their relationships.

5.3 Ways of Promoting Effective Family Communication Patterns

Families can improve their communication skills and patterns by following some suggestions made by Peterson & Green (1999) for building effective family communication. These include:

- **Frequent communicating**

One of the most difficult challenges facing families today is finding time to spend together. With our busy schedules, it is difficult to find sufficient time to spend with one another in meaningful conversation. It is extremely important for families to make time to communicate. These could include, talking in the car; turning the TV off and eating dinner together; scheduling informal or formal family meetings to talk about important issues that affect ones family; and talking to our children at bedtime.

- **Communicating clearly and directly**

Healthy families communicate their thoughts and feelings in a clear and direct manner. This is especially important when attempting to resolve problems that arise between family members (e.g., spouse, parent-child). Indirect and vague communication will not only fail to resolve problems, but will also contribute to a lack of intimacy and emotional bonding between family members.

- **Be an active listener**

An essential aspect of effective communication is listening to what others are saying. Being an active listener involves trying your best to understand the point of view of the other person. Family members need to learn to always listen and pay close attention to verbal and non-verbal messages being passed by any of them. As an active listener, members must learn to acknowledge and respect the other person's perspective and point of view. For example, when listening to a spouse or child, you should nod your head or say, "I understand," which conveys to the other person that you care about what he or she has to say. Another aspect of active listening is seeking clarification if you do not understand the other family member. This can be done by simply asking, "What did you mean when you said?" or "Did I understand you correctly?"

- **Be open and honest**

In order for effective communication to take place within families, individual family members must be open and honest with one another. This openness and honesty will set the stage for trusting relationships. Without trust, families cannot build strong relationships. Parents, especially, are responsible for providing a safe environment that allows family members to openly express their thoughts and feelings.

- **Think about the person with whom you are communicating**

Not all family members communicate in the same manner or at the same level. This is especially true of young children. When communicating with young children, it is important for adults to listen carefully to what the children are saying without making unwarranted assumptions. It is also important to take into consideration the ages and maturity levels of children. Parents cannot communicate with children in the same way that they communicate with their spouse because the child may not be old enough to understand.

- **Pay attention to non-verbal messages**

In addition to carefully listening to what is being said, effective communicators also pay close attention to the non-verbal behaviors of other family members. For example, a spouse or child may say something verbally, but their facial expressions or body language may be telling you something completely different. In cases such as these, it is important to find out how the person is really feeling.

- **Be Positive**

While it is often necessary to address problems between family members, or to deal with negative situations, effective communication is primarily positive. Couples who are very dissatisfied with their relationships typically engage in more negative interactions than positive. It is very important for family members to verbally compliment and encourage one another.

6.0   ACTIVITY

1.   Define the following concepts, school, schooling and community.
2.   Identify the types of community you have studied.
3.   Discuss two roles of the school in the rearing of a child.

7.0   ASSIGNMENT

1.   State two ways through which the community participates in the rearing of the child.
2.   Compare and contrast the effect of the private and public socialization of the child.

8.0   SUMMARY

Family communication pattern is a communication perspective that focuses on the interaction between two or more persons and the patterns which emerge as they interact over time. It demands that each person within a family system communicates within an interpersonal context and each communication act reflects the nature of those relationships. These account for the variations in the communication patterns

found among families. Just as effective communication is almost found in strong and healthy families, poor communication is usually found in unhealthy family relationships. Communication patterns that promote responsiveness to members` needs and serve the function of comfort, encouragement, reassurance of caring and readiness for tangible assistance are those patterns that should be emphasised by family members.

9.0   REFERENCES

Epstein, N. B.; Bishop, D.; Ryan, C.; Miller, &Keitner, G. (1993)."The McMaster Model View of Healthy Family Functioning." In: Froma Walsh (Eds.). *Normal Family Processes.* (pp. 138- 160).New York: The Guilford Press.

Fitzpatrick, M. A. & Ritchie, L. D. (1994). "Communication Schemata within the Family: Multiple Perspectives on Family Interaction." *Human Communication Research*, 20: 275-301.

Koerner, A. F. & Fitzpatrick, M. A. (1997a). Family Type and Conflict: The Impact of Conversation Orientation and Conformity Orientation on Conflict in the Family. *Communication Studies*. 48, 59-78.

Koerner, A. F. & Maki, L. (2004)."Family Communication Patterns and Social Support in Families of Origin and Adult Children's Subsequent Intimate Relationships." www.comm.umn.edu Retrieved 12th May 2009.

Koerner, A. F. & Kristen, M. E. (2005)."The Influence of Conformity Orientation on Communication Patterns in Family Conversation."www.comm.umn.edu Retrieved 12th May 2009.

Markman, H. J. (1981). "Prediction of Marital Distress: A 5-Year Follow-Up." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 49:760-762.

Matsunaga, M. &Imahori, T. T. (2009)."Profiling Family Communication Standards: A USA-Japan Comparison."*Communication Research,* Feb. 36 (1):3-3.

Noller, P. & Fitzpatrick, M. A. (1990)."Marital Communication in the Eighties."*Journal of   Marriage and the Family,* 52: 832-843.

McLeod, J. M. & Chaffee, S. H. (1972)."The Construction of Social Reality."In J. Tedeschi (Ed.).The Social Influence Process. (pp. 50-59). Chicago, IL: Aldine-Atherton.

Peterson, R.&Green, S. (1999).*Families First-Keys to Successful Family Functioning: Communication.* USA: Virginia Tech Pub.

Reiss, D. (1981). *The Family's Construction of Reality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

UNIT 3 EFFECTS OF FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS ON CHILD SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Family communication patterns and styles influence children's attitudes and behaviours in a number of areas. Some recent research, in fact, has begun to demonstrate a connection between family communication patterns and communication problems such as communication apprehension (Elwood & Schrader, 1998; Hsu, 1998), shyness (Huang, 1999) and unwillingness to communicate (Avtgis, 1999).

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- recall the two categories of family communication patterns;
- identify the various types of families that are derivable from these two categories of family communication patterns;
- describe the effects of these patterns and the characteristics of the family types on the social behaviour characteristics of their children; and
- identifykeys to building effective family communication and positive social behaviours in children.

3.0   HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT
- Read through this unit care.
- Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged.

NOTE: ALL ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENT ARE AT THE OF END THIS BOOK. THIS APPLIES TO EVERY OTHER UNIT IN THIS BOOK

4.0   WORD STUDY
Modernity: - As a concept, modernity can be described as the quality of being up to date. It breaks breaking away old ways of doing things. It also involves changing something in order to make it conform to modern (new) ways of doing things. Sometime it regarded as westernization and civilization.

5.0   MAIN CONTENT

5.1   Typical Family Communication Patterns and Their Effects on Children's Social Behaviour

Parents typically serve as their children's first communicative role models; thus the interactions with parents may have the great impact on a child's communicative development and social behavior. However, not all families socialise children to communicate in the same ways. Hence, a family`s pattern of communication can be so peculiar and resultantly influential on the child as a member of such family. You will recall the two major family communication patterns earlier discussed in one of the preceding units -conservation-orientation pattern and the conformity-orientation one. These are both capable of influencing the child`s social behaviours. This categorisation of family communication patterns yields four family types, the characteristics of which affect the way a child is brought up to relate among his/her peers and within any social system he or she finds him/herself.

Let us look at each of these family types in relation with their communication patterns and the resultant effects on children`s social behaviours.

5.1.1 Pluralistic Families

Pluralistic families encourage free and open conversation among members in a supportive, communicative environment with few topical limitations. Family members openly express opinions and ideas that may differ with other family members. They are high in conversation-orientation, that is, the extent to which family members engage in frequent, spontaneous interactions with one another. And all members of the family are encouraged to participate in open communication exploration of new ideas. They are however low in conformity-orientation

A child brought up in this type of environment is likely to socially develop towards becoming an energetic-friendly child. The social behaviour characteristics of such child will likely include: self-reliance, self-controlled; cheerfulness; friendly relations with peers; copes well with stress; cooperative with adults; tractable; purposive, interest and curiosity in novel situations.

5.1.2 Protective Families

They stress obedience and harmony in the family, parents tend to prefer that children 'be seen and not heard". Open communication is discouraged and typically family members only discuss topics about which they agree.

Protective families are high on conformity-orientation and low on conversation-orientation. That is, interactions within the family focus on maintaining harmonious relationships that reflects both obedience to the parents, which often manifest in the pressure to agree and the maintenance of the existing hierarchy (Koerner, Fitzpatrick, 1997, 2002a and 2002b).

Because of their lack of experience in expressing their own opinions and because conformity to others' wishes is stressed, children from protective families are easily influenced by people outside of the family, especially those in authoritative positions (Koerner& Fitzpatrick, 1997).

Such children tend to be shy. They are more likely to exhibit reticent behaviours, that is, a behaviour, which occurs when, "people avoid communication because they believe it is better to remain silent than to risk appearing foolish" (Keaten& Kelly, 2000). Children exhibiting these social behavioural characteristics are referred to as reticent as they "engage in chronic silence out of fear of foolishness" (Keaten& Kelly, 2000).

The children who were brought up using this family communication orientation are more likely to develop social behaviours that are characterized by low self-reliance, aggressiveness, low in achievement orientation, quick to anger but fast to recover cheerful mood and quite impulsive.

5.1.3 Consensual Families

Communication in consensual families reflects a tension between exploring ideas through open communicative exchanges and a pressure to agree in support of the existing family hierarchy. They are high on both conversation and conformity-orientation. Consensual families encourage open communication in conversations when families express unanimity. Children in consensual families attempt to meet two dialectical goals: (a) conforming to their parents' views, and thus preserving family harmony, while (b) attempting to communicate openly, opinions may differ.

The social behavioural characteristics of children in this group is a combination of those found in both pluralistic and protective families depending on the situation the child finds him/herself.

Thus, children in consensual families may perceive conflicting communication signals from their parents: speak openly, but only express opinions in agreement with parents' views. Children's adoption of the parents' ideas results in less tension in the family. However, children and parents rarely agree on every topic. If children disagree with their parents, they can exercise three options:

a. Remain silent on the issue
b. Verbally agree with the parents, even when they hold different views (i.e., lie) or
c. Express their opinions and risk disrupting family harmony.

5.1.4 Laissez-Faire Families

Laissez-faire families are low in both conservation orientation and conformity orientation. Here members are free to hold similar or differing opinions and little communication occurs among family members.

These families develop little cohesion. In this type of families, the communication patterns do not support situations where members regularly engage each other in conversation. Members place little value on communication or the maintenance of a family unit.

Apart from all these, scholars (Miller *et al* 2001) have also observed that the perception of parental approval/disapproval of teen sexual activity is considered a parental communication variable in mediated conceptual model of family relationships and adolescent pregnancy risk. They conclude that parental attitudes and values disapproving of adolescent sexual intercourse are related to lower adolescent pregnancy risk.

In addition to perception of parental disapproval, quality of communication with parents and closeness of the relationship with parents appear to be among the other important aspects of parent-child communication that are related to lower levels of adolescent pregnancy. Many researchers conclude that parent/teen closeness combined with open, positive, and frequent parent/child communication about sex are associated with adolescents' abstinence, postponing sexual debut, being sexually faithful to partners and using contraceptives.

(Barnett, Papini, &Gbur, 1991; Gupta, Weiss, &Mane, 1996; Karofsky, Zeng, &Kosovok, 2000; Miller *et al*., 2001; Romer*et al*., 1999).

5.2   Keys to Building Effective Family Communication and Positive Social Behaviours in Children

There are many things that families can do to become more effective communicators so as to help improve the quality of their relationships as well as their children`s social behaviours . Peterson and Green (1999), believe that families can improve their communication skills by the following suggestions for building effective family communication.

These include:

- **Communicating frequently**

One of the most difficult challenges facing families today is finding time to spend together. According to a recent Wall Street Journal survey, 40% of the respondents stated that lack of time was a greater problem for them than lack of money (Graham &Crossan, 1996).

With our busy schedules, it is difficult to find sufficient time to spend with one another in meaningful conversation. It is extremely important for families to make time to communicate. This could be through, talking in the car; turning the TV off and eating dinner together; scheduling informal or formal family meetings to talk about important issues that affect one`s family; and talking to one's children at bedtime.

- **Communicating clearly and directly**

Healthy families communicate their thoughts and feelings in a clear and direct manner. This is especially important when attempting to resolve problems that arise between family members (e.g., spouse, parent-child). Indirect and vague communication will not only fail to resolve problems, but will also contribute to a lack of intimacy and emotional bonding between family members.

- **Becoming a more active listener**

An essential aspect of effective communication is listening to what others are saying. Being an active listener involves trying your best to understand the point of view of the other person. Whether you are listening to a spouse or a child, it is important to pay close attention to their verbal and non-verbal messages. As an active listener, you must acknowledge and respect the other person's perspective. For example, when listening to a spouse or child, you should nod your head or say, "I understand," which conveys to the other person that you care about what he or she has to say. Another aspect of active listening is seeking clarification if you do not understand the other family member. This can be done by simply asking, "What did you mean when you said?" or "Did I understand you correctly?"

Active listening involves acknowledging and respecting the other person's point of view.

- **Being open and honest**

In order for effective communication to take place within families, individual family members must be open and honest with one another. This openness and honesty will set the stage for trusting relationships. Without trust, families cannot build strong relationships. Parents, especially, are responsible for providing a safe environment that allows family members to openly express their thoughts and feelings.

- **Thinking about the person with whom you are communicating**

Not all family members communicate in the same manner or at the same level. This is especially true of young children. When communicating with young children, it is important for adults to listen carefully to what the children are saying without making unwarranted assumptions. It is also important to take into consideration the ages and maturity levels of children. Parents cannot communicate with children in the same way that they communicate with their spouse because the child may not be old enough to understand.

- **Paying attention to non-verbal messages**

In addition to carefully listening to what is being said, effective communicators also pay close attention to the non-verbal behaviors of other family members. For example, a spouse or child may say something verbally, but their facial expressions or body language may be telling you something completely different. In cases such as these, it is important to find out how the person is really feeling.

- **Being Positive**

While it is often necessary to address problems between family members, or to deal with negative situations, effective communication is primarily positive. Marital and family researchers have discovered that unhappy family relationships are often the result of negative communication patterns (e.g., criticism, contempt, defensiveness). In fact, John Gottman and his colleagues have found that satisfied married couples had five positive interactions to everyone negative interaction (Gottman, 1994). Couples who are very dissatisfied with their relationships typically engage in more negative interactions than positive. It is very important for family members to verbally compliment and encourage one another.

6.0   ACTIVITY
1.   Identify the two major categories of family communication patterns.
2.   Identify the four family types associated with these communication patterns.

3.   What are the likely effects of the four types of families on the social behaviour of their children?

7.0   ASSIGNMENT

1.   Discuss the impact of family communication patterns on the child's social behaviours.

2.   Compare and contrast the different family communication models you practice in your local environments.

8.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been able to interact with the different family interpersonal communication patterns and the family types derivable from them. The differences revealed in these family communication patterns and their links with the development of children's social behaviour characteristics have discussed. Pluralistic families seem to possess communication patterns that can best facilitate the development of more positive social behaviours in children. This is followed by the consensual type. The protective and the laissez-faire types are however as good as the other two in the area of facilitating positive social behaviour development in the children. Suggestions with regards to how best these behaviours can be better promoted are provided.

9.0   REFERENCES

Avtgis, T. A. (1999). "The Relationship between Unwillingness to Communicate and Family Communication Patterns.**"***Communication Research Reports,* 16*:* 333–338.

Barnett, J.K; Papini, D.R. &Gbur, E. (1991)."Familial Correlates of Sexually Active Pregnant and Non-Pregnant Adolescents".*Adolescence, 26* (102).457-472.

Elwood, T. D. & Schrader, D. C. (1998)."Family Communication Patterns and Communication apprehension."*Journal of Social Behavior & Personality*.13*:* 493–502.

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence.*New York: Bantam.

Gottman, J. (1997). *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child.*New York: Simon and Schuster.

Gupta, G.R.; Weiss, E., & Mane, P. (1996)."Talking about Sex: A Prerequisite for AIDS Prevention."In L.D. Long, & E.M. Ankrah (Eds.).*Women's Experiences: An International Perspective.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Hsu, C. F. (1998). "Relationships between Family Characteristics and Communication Apprehension."*Communication Research Reports. 15:* 91–98.

Huang, L. N. (1999). "Family Communication Patterns and Personality Characteristics."*Communication Quarterly.*47*:* 230–243.

Karofsky, P.; Zeng, L. &Kosovok, M. (2000)."Relationship between Adolescent-Parental Communication and Initiation of First Intercourse by Adolescents."*Journal of Adolescent Health,* 2849-45.

Keaten, J. A. & Kelly, L. (2000). "Reticence: An Affirmation and Revision." *Communication Education.*49:165–177.
Kelly, L.; *et.al*.(2002). "Family Communication Patterns and the Development of Reticence." *CommunicationEducation,* 51(2): April 202–209.

Koerner, A. F. & Fitzpatrick, M. A. (1997). "Family Type and Conflict: The Impact of Conversation Orientation and Conformity Orientation on Conflict in the Family." *Communication Studies*, 48:59-78.

Miller, B.C.; Benson, B. & Galbraith, K.A. (2001). "Family Relationships and Adolescent Pregnancy Risk: A Research Synthesis." *Developmental Review*, 39:1-38.

Peterson, R.&Green, S. (1999).*Families First-Keys to Successful Family Functioning: Communication.* USA: Virginia Tech Pub.

Romer, D.; Stanton, B. Galbraith, J.; Feigelman, S.; Black, M.S. & Li, X. (1999)."Parental Influence on Adolescent Sexual Behavior in High-Poverty Settings."*Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine.*53: 1055-1062.

UNIT 4   CHILDREN AND THEIR VIEWS OF SELF AND OTHERS IN THE FAMILY

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

The family is the basic unit of socialisation in every society. It is comprised of key members of whom the child is one. A family without a child is regarded as one that is not yet fully formed. Hence, children have become accepted as very important in every family. As members of the family, children have very unique way of perceiving themselves in terms of likes, dislikes, preferences, what they think about themselves and how they look at other people in the family. These varying perceptions contribute significantly to how they want to be related with by the different members of their family, as mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters (younger or elder), uncles, aunts, nephews, cousins or other relations.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

•   describe the various ways by which children view themselves; and
•   describe how they view other people in the family.

3.0   HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT
•   Read through this unit care.
•   Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged.

NOTE: ALL ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENT ARE AT THE OF END THIS BOOK. THIS APPLIES TO EVERY OTHER UNIT IN THIS BOOK.

4.0   WORD STUDY

Socialization: - This is a process of learning from childhood to adulthood.

5.0   MAIN CONTENT

5.1   Children and Their View of Self

Children are born small, knowing the world in limited ways, with little or no understanding of other people as separate from themselves in body or mind, and no understanding of social relations or morality. They grow larger, learn about the physical and social worlds, join different cooperative social groups, and cultivate a more and more complex sense of right and wrong.

Children are at once thinking, acting, and feeling beings. Their thoughts and actions always involve feelings. They may like some subjects and be excited about them and interested in certain media or dislike doing routine drills, be angry with a certain teacher or be intensely involved with a project.

Children at early ages of their lives are very good at human group affiliation, but they do this cautiously as they can. Hence, their views of self at this stage of their life are partially reflected in the exhibition of signs of preferential attraction to others like them. Brooks & Lewis (1976) confirmed with a remark that year-old infants are interested in and attracted to other infants-including those they have never met before at an age when they are wary of strange adults.

During early childhood, children are known to develop the attributes, abilities, attitudes and values that help define their own "self-concept". Hence, as early as age 3, (between 18 and 30 months), Oswatt (2007) observes that children have developed their "categorical self." This is the concrete way of viewing themselves in "this or that" labels.

Specifically, they view themselves in terms of age as "child or adult". They use gender and physical characteristics to label and view themselves as "boy or girl", and "short or tall." They are proud to say "I am a boy or I am a girl" or "I am short or I am tall."

They are also known to describe their self-concept in simple emotional and attitude terms. Here, they are found to express their preferences and emotional attachments to people, animals and things in very concrete and observable terms. For example, you find children describing themselves saying "I'm shorter than Mummy", "I love Musa", "Today, I'm happy."

In addition, young children develop an inner self, private thoughts, feelings, and desires that nobody else knows about unless a child chooses to share this information.

Early self-concepts are based on easily defined and observed variables. Because many young children are given lots of encouragement, pre-operational children often have relatively high self-esteem (judgment about one's worth). Young children are also generally optimistic that they have the ability to learn a new skill, succeed, and finish a task if they keep trying. This belief is called "Achievement-Related Attribution", or sometimes "self-efficacy". Self-esteem comes from several sources, such as school ability, athletic ability, friendships, and relationships with peers.

The temperament of a child is one factor that is capable of affecting his or her self-concept. For example, a child's temperament can affect how they view themselves and their ability to successfully complete tasks. Children with easy temperaments are typically willing to try things repeatedly and are better able to handle frustrations and challenges. In contrast, children with more difficult temperaments may become more easily frustrated and discouraged by challenges or changes in the situation.

Children who can better cope with frustrations and challenges are more likely to think of themselves as successful, valuable, and good, which will lead to a higher self-esteem. In contrast, children who become easily frustrated and discouraged often quit or need extra assistance to complete a task. These children may have lower self-esteem if they start to believe that they cannot be successful and are not valuable.

Also young children with parents and teachers providing them with positive feedback about their abilities and attempts to succeed (even if they are not successful the first time) usually have higher self-esteem. On the contrary, when parents or teachers are regularly negative or punitive towards children's attempts to succeed, or regularly ignore or downplay those achievements, young children will have a poor self-image and a lower self-esteem.

Peers also have an impact on young children's self-concept. Young children who have playmates and classmates that are usually nice and apt to include the child in activities will develop a positive self-image. However, a young child who is regularly left out, teased, or bullied by same-age or older peers can develop low self-esteem.

We have to note the fact that each child is unique, and he or she may respond to different environments in different ways. This uniqueness influences the way a child views himself or herself. Some young children are naturally emotionally "resilient" in certain situations. Resilient children experience or witness something seemingly negative or harmful, without experiencing damage to their self-esteem or emotional development.

The cultural identity of a child equally affects his or her view of self. In a situation where children are taught about their cultural and religious traditions it goes a long way to enrich their self-concept. Consequently, it makes them to view themselves as important members of a cultural setting.

5.2   Children and Their Views of Others in the Family

Other people in the family would normally include older children, father, mother, and in some cases stewards, and extended family members. Each and every member of a child's family relates with the child in one form or the other and the child reciprocates based on his or her perception of each of these members.

Malaguzzi (1993) visualises the child as an individual that is rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent and, most of all, connected to adults and other children. This description and connection has significant effect on the ways children view other people in the family, especially as they live toddlerhood. As young children leave toddlerhood behind, they also begin to mature in their ability to interact with others socially and commence the creation of other social relationships.

The need to create new social relationships demands that, children must acquire some social skills such as learning to take turns and follow simple group rules and norms. This makes them to view others in the family as individuals or groups that should be connected with, listened to, and get directives or directions from.

The fact that families typically give young children the opportunity to interact with a variety of people in a range of roles makes them to view members of the family (older children, adults and parents) as authority figures that they must follow absolutely. They see them as people giving rules that are real with unchangeable guidelines. But as they grow older these change, and they develop more abstract thinking, and become less self-focused.

Children become more capable of forming more flexible rules and applying them selectively for the sake of shared objectives and a desire to co-operate with other people within and outside the family.

They view elders as individuals who can help facilitate the development of necessary positive attitudes, values, and proper social behaviours of the culture into which they were born. Children perceive other people in the family as individuals that should help develop in them those tools needed for success in their native culture and as active participants in the preservation of such culture from generation to generation.

Children are equally known to be keen at viewing other people in the family such as their mother, father, older siblings and other adults as individuals who can be imitated or modelled, especially where they find them interesting and attractive. However, the danger associated with this is that where the role model is exhibiting traits that are negative and quite anti-social but ,ignorantly, found interesting by the children, it might create an unnecessarily influence on the growth of the children.

They also see other people in the family as "reservoir of love and affection" which these people must share with them as children. Hence, children tend to rely so much on these people when they are in need.

Children also view the adults, their parents and older siblings in the family as agents of authority with the approval of right and wrong. Hence, they are usually very conscious of what any of these people in the family will say any time they are trying to exhibit a right or wrong act.

In situations where any of this other people in the family presents him or herself in a manner that is contrary to the ways they have been perceived or viewed by the children it could strain their relationship and create distrust in the minds of the affected children.

6.0   ACTIVITY

1.   Identify and discuss two ways children view themselves.
2.   Describe how children view other people around their environment.

7.0   ASSIGNMENT

1.   How do children view adults and their parents as members of the family?
2.   Describe how children can view things in their unique ways with relevant examples in your local environment.

8.0   SUMMARY

This unit has availed you an opportunity to better understand how children view themselves as well as other people in the family. The likely negative effects of getting children to have a wrong view of any other member of the family have also been highlighted. It is therefore important for adults, parents and other older children in the family to provide avenues that will enhance brighter chances of developing positive views of self and other people in the family in children. Through this, positive emotional and psychological development will be enhanced in the growing child.

9.0   REFERENCES

Fagot, B. I.&Haggan, R. (1991). **"**Observations of Parents Reactions to Sex-Stereotyped Behaviours: Age and Sex Effects." *Child Development*, 62: 617-628.

Malaguzzi, L. (1993). "For an Education Based on Relationships."*Young Children*. 49 (1) :9-12.

Mental Help Net www.CentreSite.com Retrieved on the 20th June 2009.

Oswatt, A. (2007).*Early Childhood Emotional and Social Development*: *Identity and Self-Esteem*.