Communication of Parent-Child among Gen Z: A Preliminary Study

Mohd Sufiean Hassan, Siti Nur Izyandiyana Ab Hadi, Nurul Heidi Qatheja Husani, Nur Ameera Qamelia Khairil Anuar, Norshamira Saifol Baharen, Nur Nadhrah Ismail Hamdi & Wan Anis Mysara Md Yunus

Communication of Parent-Child among Gen Z: A Preliminary Study

Mohd Sufiean Hassan, Siti Nur Izyandiyana Ab Hadi, Nurul Heidi Qatheja Husani, Nur Ameera Qamelia Khairil Anuar, Norshamira Saifol Baharen, Nur Nadhrah Ismail Hamdi & Wan Anis Mysara Md Yunus

Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Melaka, Branch
Correspondent Author's Email: izyandiyana@uitm.edu.my

Abstract
Family communication patterns expose family members, especially teenagers, to various types of behavior. A good and effective communication strategy will encourage good behavior among teenagers. vice versa, if family communication is not good, it can affect their behavior. Therefore, it is important for a family to know their communication patterns in order to form a happy family. This study is done in order to find out the communication of parent-child among Generation in Malaysia. Conversation and conformity orientation and the four variables (Consensual, Pluralistic, Protective and Laissez-Faire) are included to assist in our study. This study used family communication theory as the foundation for this study. 67 out of 70 respondents were selected after a thorough check of the targeted audience. A survey has been made for Generation Z in Malaysia ages from 12 to 30 to identify the types of families they are in. Surprisingly, this study found out that respondents belong to a pluralistic family group.
Keyword: Family Communication Theory, Conversation Orientation, Conformity Orientation, Generation Z, Parent-Child Communication

Introduction
According to family communication research, rules are critical in defining and preserving the family structure (Galvin et al., 2008). What you can talk about, how you may talk about it, and with whom you can talk are the three basic interpersonal communication issues that family norms address. According to family communication theorists, standards should be adaptable to accommodate changing situations (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993).

The sociological definition of family is a group of people that are related by blood, marriage or even adoption. Many people say that the term should not be stretched since the people involved want to think of themselves as a family. Other people, according to Lamanna and Riedmann (2012), questioned the term since it does not reflect the realities of family life in modern society. This research investigates the communication patterns between parents and their children. There was a link between a child's socialization and parent-child

relationships, according to (Chaffee et al., 1971). They believe that children learn communication skills from their parents, which affect how they react to external and internal situations. Communication skills (Schrodt et al., 2009), affection (Schrodt et al., 2007), and conflict styles (Schrodt et al., 2007). Bostwick & Johnson (2018), and psychological distress have all been studied in relation to family communication patterns (Ledbetter, 2019). According to Noller and Callan, females are more likely than males to converse to their mothers and fathers (1990). They observed that daughters are more likely than sons to tell their mothers about their feelings, but sons are equally likely to tell their mothers and fathers. These discrepancies in communication behavior could be explained by different communication motives.

According to Koerner and Cvancara (2002), family communication patterns expose family members to a variety of communication strategies, which may result in expectations for communication with others. Richie and Fitzpatrick's updated research in 1990 constructed a revised version of the Family Communication Pattern Theory which is now named as Revised Family Communication Pattern Instrument (RFCP) which focuses on two aspects which is conformity orientation and conversation orientation. Conformity orientation refers to the extent of family who presses an environment of shared attitudes, values and beliefs while conversation orientation focuses on families that urge their family members to participate in unrestricted debate on a wide range of issues. For our study, we are pressing on how conversation orientation works. In families, the conversation orientation encourages open communication. In a sense, when you are talking to your parents or family nearly about any topic without restrictions, you are considered in a high conversation group. When less topics are being talked about, you are in a low conversation group.

Problem Statement
Family communication patterns expose family members especially teenagers to a variety of communication strategies, which may affect their behaviors. Teenagers who feel a sense of connection to and support from their parents and teenagers who can talk to their parents about sex and contraception are less likely to engage in certain risky sexual behaviors. However, some teenagers feel that they cannot seek advice from their parents because they would lecture them instead of giving reassurance. Parents would scold their children when they talk about sex and contraception because it is deemed inappropriate and taboo. There are also parents who ridicule their children's views as they assume their children are "too young to understand" a certain situation. From here, this research would like to find out if the Generation Z in Malaysia are able to open up with their parents and are comfortable enough to share about their daily life with their parents. Therefore, this research wants to identify the level of conversation orientation among Generation Z. It is hoping that the research outcome will be able to open up eyes on how family communication works in some families. This research needs to be conducted to provide more content on conversation orientation for future research. We are hoping that the results will be high on conversation as we believe high conversation and low conformity gives a positive outcome.

Literature Review
Communication is the transfer of meaning. By grasping every communication, you receive from a sender, you are able to successfully transfer the meaning. The message sent by the sender may be hampered by noise, owing to the cultural context in which it will be delivered, as well as the receiver's area of experience. The impact of your message will also be

determined by the mindset or attitude you bring to the circumstance, as well as the ethical systems that govern communication in your company, industry, and society. According to family communication research, rules are critical in defining and preserving the family structure (Galvin et al., 2008). What you can talk about, how you may talk about it, and with whom you can talk are the three basic interpersonal communication issues that family norms address. According to family communication theorists, standards should be adaptable to accommodate changing situations (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993).

The theory of family communication was first introduced by (Chaffe et al., 1973). FCPT (Family Communication Patterns Theory) is a theory of family communication in general that emphasizes parent-child communication and the establishment of a collective social reality. This theory reveals fundamental processes for reaching a common understanding that affect not just contemporaneous communication actions, but also lengthy information processing, psychological, and behavioral effects. Conversation orientation and conformity orientation are two characteristics of family communication patterns (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002).

There was a link between a child's socialization and parent-child relationships, according to (Chaffee et al., 1971). They believe that children learn communication skills from their parents, which affect how they react to external and internal situations. Communication skills (Schrodt et al., 2009), affection (Schrodt et al., 2007), and conflict styles (Schrodt et al., 2007). (Bostwick & Johnson, 2018), and psychological distress have all been studied in relation to family communication patterns (Ledbetter, 2019). According to Noller and Callan, females are more likely than males to converse to their mothers and fathers (1990). They observed that daughters are more likely than sons to tell their mothers about their feelings, but sons are equally likely to tell their mothers and fathers. These discrepancies in communication behavior could be explained by different communication motives.

An updated version of the article named Revised Family Communication Pattern Instrument (RFCP) constructed by Richie and Fitzpatrick in 1990 as mentioned above had focused on two aspects which is conformity orientation and conversation orientation. The family members' shared attitudes, values, and beliefs are highlighted by conformity orientation. Conformity orientation emphasizes that family relationships are founded on shared views and attitudes, as well as the avoidance of confrontation within the family. When teens are more compatible with family conditions, they are approved by their parents and will do what their parents want (Shojaee et al., 2018). In conclusion, family interactions are used to reinforce and enforce cognitive homogeneity, and the family makes all of the decisions. According to Koerner and Fitzpatrick, families frequently try to control family members without engaging their children (2006).

The extent to which family members enjoy an open and honest communication climate in which all members of the family "are open to participate in an unrestricted discussion over a wide range of issues" is referred to as conversation orientation (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006, p. 54). Conversation orientation has been linked to better child development and family functioning, while compliance orientation has the opposite impact. For example, when parents communicate with their children, they can better understand what their child is feeling, and their relationship can strengthen through communication because the child trusts their parents. However, with compliance orientation, children are bound to rebel against their parents when they feel that the rules that have been imposed are "too strict" and will proceed to do things behind their parents' back. Hence why studies have shown that families with high conversation orientation are happier, and parents are

more aware of their child's development throughout adolescence due to the effective communication in the household.

Fitzpatrick and Ritchie (1993) categorized the extent of conformity orientation and conversation orientation into four family categories: Consensual, Pluralistic, Protective, and Laissez-Faire. These categories, they claimed, can be used to define family communication patterns and socialization processes. Consensual family is high in both conformity and conversation. The family members in a consensual family are encouraged to convey their identities. However, the parents remain in the authoritative role of the family to make final decisions. The Pluralistic family is low in conformity and high in conversation. The children of the family are expected to make conversations in an environment where there are less restrictive guidelines and decision-making. The Protective family is high in conformity and low in conversation. In this family, children are not allowed to have a say in decision-making and the parents will dictate the rules in the household. Meanwhile, the Laissez-Faire family is low in both conformity and conversation. The family members rarely converse or receive support from one another, and all the decisions made are not influenced by the family members. This type of family does not promote open communication or relational harmony between the parents and children.

Research Methodology
This research paper explains the communication of parent-child among Generation Z. We came out with quantitative research, where we distributed an online survey using the platform Google Forms. Our sample consisted of males and females ages 12-30 years old and only 7 (10%) of the respondents are married, while the others 60 (90%) are still single. The respondents' family income is divided into three categories, which is B40 (48.6%), M40 (37.1%) and T40 (14.3%). Our target participants are Generation Z (ages 12 to 30) because we want to know how their communication between their parents including how open they are with their family, how often they talk about each other and how likely they share their problems and how they settle the problems together. Out of 70 respondents, we only accepted 67 respondents because another 3 respondents were over our targeted age.

The online survey consists of 4 sections, which is section 1 questions regarding their demographic, section 2 questions about how their relationship with their family was, section 3 questions related to conversation orientation and lastly section 4 questions related to conformity orientation. The online survey was made up of 3 multiple-choice questions on section 2 and 25 questions to be rated using a 5-point Likert scale on section 3 and section 4, which every item assessed on 5 points (Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). 56 (82.9%) of the respondents are close and talk with their family every day, meanwhile the 11 (17.1%) of the respondents rarely talk and feel awkward around their family. Most of them also often hang out with their family on the weekend and only a few of them rarely hang out with their family. Their relationships with their family are mostly open for current issue topics, and they don't feel like asking their family for relationship advice.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics (N = 67)

Variable	Frequency (n=67)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	15	22.9
Female	52	77.1
Age		
12-18	8	11.4
19-24	50	74.3
25-30	9	12.9
Status		
Single	60	90
Married	7	10
Race		
Malay	57	85.7
Chinese	2	2.9
Indian	3	4.3
Others	5	7.1
Family Income		
B40	31	47.1
M40	26	38.6
T20	10	14.3
Family Relationship		
Close, talks everyday	56	82.9
Rarely talks, feels awkward around family	11	17.1
How often do you hang out with your family?	23	34.3
Every day (during lunch or freetime)	11	17.1
Every night (during dinner or before bed)	24	35.7
On the weekends	9	12.9
Rarely		
How open are you with your family?		
Open to ask your family for relationship advice	28	41.4
Open to talk about your hardships and stress	29	42.9
Open to talk about your day	43	64.3
Open to have conversation on current issue	45	67.1
Not open at all	11	15.7

Findings and Discussions

From what we have gathered from our survey, as in Table 2 and Table 3 we found that the total mean of conversation is higher (3.58) is than conformity (3.16). Therefore, from the research finding we also identify that respondent are from pluralistic families. Pluralistic families as mentioned above is where the family allowed open debate of ideas and decision making from the Generation Z themselves. This type of family happens when high conversation and low conformity meets. The Family Communication Pattern Theory (FCPT) by Koerner & Fitzpatrick in 2002 has continuously emphasized the positive effects of conservation-oriented family interactions and the negative effects of conformity-oriented family communication on child social skills and mental well-being. They also mentioned that these two orientations frequently interact to predict individual actions and familial results.

High conversation and low conformity allow the children to understand the viewpoint better. Some parents, for example, make all their child's decisions. When this occurs when they are young, they do not have much exposure to what is good and bad. These children may believe that all their parents' decisions are the greatest options, whilst parents may occasionally make decisions based only on their own desires, without considering their child's ideas or feelings. So, if the Generation Z s are free to make their own decisions, they will be able to understand or know if the things they determine are good or bad.

One of the benefits of having high conversation and low conformity as a type of family is that the elderly can encourage the children to be brave and confident with their choice. This will enable the Generation Z to learn from their own mistakes and be upfront about it. By making their own decisions, they can trust themselves in situations they are involved in, especially about their future. As an example, the decision of choosing what they want to be or pursue for their career. The decisions they make must be acknowledged by them as they are deciding their future and if they regret it halfway through the course, they must be held responsible for their decision. This will help them mature up and not look into the faults of others.

Not only that, by having these types of variables inside their family, Generation Z s are able to remove any restrictions on their ability to express themselves. This will help them to voice out their opinion. We can see from the incident that shook up the world of Ain, a schoolgirl who had claimed on her social media that her male Physical Education teacher had made dirty jokes over girls in the class and made her and some of her female classmates feel uncomfortable (Noorshahrizam, 2021). She used her voice she had and with her parents being open and letting their daughter speak up about the situation strongly shows that her family falls on to this type of variable of family. The Generation Z now would feel more comfortable seeing the actions taken after one's voice was heard as it got the attention of many and raised awareness especially towards the younger generations who could relate to the issue. In a way, Ain had helped the Generation Z to feel powered up and not feel like they were being stepped on by the elderly. Here, we can see that as generation changes, the higher the conversation orientation would be and lower the conformity orientation would be.

Table 2
Distribution of Percentage (%) and mean of Conversation Orientation Pattern

Bil	Conversation Orientation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1.	My parents often say that their decisions are always right and I should not challenge them.	11.4	18.6	38.6	20	11.4	3.01
2.	My parents encourage me to challenge their opinions on any platform.	8.6	17.1	45.7	22.9	5.7	3.00
3.	My parents hear my opinion even when they don't like it.	2.9	4.3	21.4	42.9	28.6	3.90
4.	I discuss everything with my parents without hesitation.	11.4	12.9	18.6	31.4	25.7	3.47
5.	In our family, we often talk about our plans and hopes for the future.	7.1	11.4	24.3	30	27.1	3.59
6.	My parents often get annoyed with me in front of others.	27.1	41.4	21.4	7.1	2.9	2.17
7.	In our family, we often support each other.	1.4	2.9	17.1	34.3	44.3	4.17
8.	My parents usually say that you should always review both sides of a matter.	0	8.6	18.6	34.3	38.6	4.03
9.	Disagreements are openly expressed in our family.	2.9	10	35.7	30	21.4	3.57
10.	My family members strongly motivate each other to hold up for their rights.	2.9	5.7	30	31.4	30	3.80
11.	In our family, we often discuss current issues at home.	2.9	14.3	17.1	34.3	31.4	3.77
12.	My parents feel good when I ask various questions.	1.4	4.3	27.1	37.1	30	3.90
13.	My parents always motivate me to be independent	2.9	4.3	1.	32.9	50	4.35
14.	My parents inspire me to share my feelings with them.	14.3	11.4	28.6	20	25.7	3.31
15.	My parents praise me in front of others.	8.6	15.7	18.6	40	17.1	3.41
16.	My parents have rigid thinking about what is right and wrong	0	11.4	40	27.1	21.4	3.59
17.	My parents and I often discuss the activities that we have done during the day.	14.3	8.6	28.6	27.1	21.4	3.33
18.	In my family, every member has an equal right to take the decision.	4.3	7.1	22.9	28.6	37.1	3.87
19.	My parents think that it is essential to be a leader.	1.4	5.7	30	37.1	25.7	3.80

Total Mean							**3.58**

Table 3

Distribution of Percentage (%), mean and of Conformity Orientation Pattern

Bil	Conformity Orientation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1.	My parents often say that I will understand better when I grow up.	1.4	7.1	15.7	32.9	42.9	4.09
2.	In our family, we usually find faults in each other.	7.1	30	21.4	21.4	20	3.17
3.	My parents make the final decision.	10	10	34.3	25.7	20	3.36
4.	There is more emphasis on obeying rules in our family.	4.3	12.9	40	25.7	17.1	3.38
5.	My parents get irritated when I ask questions.	27.1	34.3	25.7	10	2.9	2.27
6.	My parents often criticize my views.	15.7	31.4	25.7	24.3	2.9	2.67
	Total Mean						**3.16**

Conclusion

This study examines the communication of parent-child among Generation Z. The advantage that can be gathered from the study is that we are able to add more into the facts of conversation orientation for future researchers. They are able to use this research to develop more into the theory and find out more on the four variables of the revised FCPT, conformity orientation and conversation orientation. In collecting data for the research, we had done an online survey through the Google Forms platform. A total of 70 respondents came in and answered all of the questions but unfortunately only 67 of the respondents' answers were accepted. This is because the other three respondents were not in our targeted audience of age. From what we can gather, the respondents were all coming from a pluralistic type of family where it is common for the new generation or Generation Z to be a part of these days. The quantitative analysis that we have made has shown us that in this upcoming era, pluralistic types of families will increase as the generation nowadays are more open minded and accepting. For example, the case of Ain, who had made a report on her male teachers who had allegedly made a dirty joke during class and left her and her few classmates uncomfortable. Though many of the new generations supported her statement, we can also see the high conformity and low conversation family, which is a protective family, bashed her for not accepting the said joke as a learning topic. This research has done a lot into figuring out how the generation is now slowly changing the world to be a place where they do not tolerate any hate.

Acknowledgement

Corresponding Author
Dr. Siti Nur Izyandiyana Ab Hadi is a Senior lecturer at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Melaka Branch.
Email: izyandiyana@uitm.edu.my.

References
Braithwaite, D. O., Suter, E. A., & Floyd, K. (2017). Engaging Theories in Family Communication. Taylor & Francis. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315204321

Gupta, Savita. (2019). Family Communication Patterns Questionnaire: Development and Validation. 8. 542-550.

Jiao, J. (2021). Family communication patterns and emerging adults' attachment with parents and romantic partners. Communication Research Reports, 38(4), 229–240. https://doi.org/10.1080/08824096.2021.1922373

Keating, D. M. (2016). Conversation Orientation and Conformity Orientation Are Inversely Related: A Meta-Analysis. Communication Research Reports, 33(3), 195–206. https://doi.org/10.1080/08824096.2016.1186622

Libretexts. (2021). 11.1: Family Relationships. Social Sci LibreTexts. Retrieved January 27, 2022, from https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Communication/Introduction_to_Communication/Communicating_to_Connect_-Interpersonal_Communication_for_Today_(Usera)/11%3A_Issues_in_Relationships/11.01%3A_Family_Relationships

Mustaffa, N., Sannusi, S. N., & Markom, R. (2021). Family Communication and the Choice of a Life Partner Among Youths in Malaysia. Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication, 37(1), 28–41. https://doi.org/10.17576/jkmjc-2021-3701-02

Online, T. S. (2021). Teen who exposed teacher's rape jokes hits back at cyberbullies, bodyshamers. The Star. Retrieved January 27, 2022, from https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/04/28/teen-who-exposed-teacher039s-rape-jokes-hits-back-at-cyberbullies-bodyshamers

Punyanunt-Carter, N. M., LaFreniere, J. R., Norman, M. S., & Colwell, M. J. (2019). Analyzing College Students from Divorced and Intact Families and Their Family Communication Patterns and Interpersonal Communication Motives. Southern Communication Journal, 84(4), 219–232. https://doi.org/10.1080/1041794x.2019.1641544

Schrodt, P., & Phillips, K. E. (2016). Self-disclosure and relational uncertainty as mediators of family communication patterns and relational outcomes in sibling relationships. Communication Monographs, 83(4), 486–504. https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2016.1146406

Schrodt, P., & Shimkowski, J. R. (2015). Family Communication Patterns and Perceptions of Coparental Communication. Communication Reports, 30(1), 39–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/08934215.2015.1111400

Noorshahrizam, S. A. (2021). Former physical education teacher accused of rape jokes sues student Ain for alleged defamation. *Malay Mail.* *https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/11/30/former-physical-education-teacher-accused-of-rape-jokes-sues-student-ain-fo/2024878*

Shojaee, S., Khakhaninejad, M. S., & Najafi, M. (2018). Family communication patterns of individuals with and without disabilities. Health Psychology Research, 6(1). https://doi.org/10.4081/hpr.2018.7080

Soleimanof, S., Morris, M. H., & Jang, Y. (2021). Following the footsteps that inspire: Parental passion, family communication, and children's entrepreneurial attitudes. Journal of Business Research, 128, 450–461. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.02.018

Thomas, S. N., & Hovick, S. R. (2021). The Indirect Effect of Family Communication Patterns on Young Adults' Health Self-disclosure: Understanding the Role of Descriptive and Injunctive Norms in a Test of the Integrative Model of Behavioral Prediction. Communication Reports, 34(3), 121–136.
https://doi.org/10.1080/08934215.2021.1924213

Watts, J., & Hovick, S. R. (2021). The Influence of Family Communication Patterns and Identity Frames on Perceived Collective Psychological Ownership and Intentions to Share Health Information. Health Communication, 1–9.
https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2021.1999573