



Communication Pattern and Family Typology of High School Adolescents in Bogor - West Java

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Abstract

Family communication does not occur randomly, but it patterns based on a particular scheme through two communication behavior: conversation and conformity orientations. The purpose of this study is to analyze communication pattern and family typology of the senior high schools' students (adolescents) in Bogor – West Java. The research was conducted by survey at six senior high schools in Bogor. Total of respondents were 372 students, consisting of 206 females and 166 males ranging aged between 15-18 years old. The result are 50.5% with high category of the orientation conversation and 49.5% in low category. In conformity orientation, most of the teenagers (73.7%) have been as high categories and 26.3% in low categories. The study has also organized in four types of families: 46.2% of consensual (high both in conversation and comformity level), 4.3% of pluralist (high in conversation but low in conformity level), 27.4% of protective (low in conversation but high in comformity level) and 22.0% of non-interventionist (*laissez faire*) (low in conversational and conformity level). Based on gender, females have often more conversations with family with a higher conformity than males.

Keywords: Family, Communication Patterns, Adolescent, Typology

Abstrak

Komunikasi keluarga tidak terjadi secara acak, tetapi sangat berpola berdasarkan skema tertentu melalui dua perilaku komunikasi: orientasi percakapan dan orientasi kesesuaian. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk menganalisis pola komunikasi dan tipologi keluarga pada remaja SMA di Kota Bogor. Penelitian dilakukan dengan metode survei di 6 SMA di Kota Bogor, Jawa Barat. Jumlah responden sebanyak 372 orang, terdiri dari 206 remaja perempuan dan 166 remaja laki-laki berusia 15-18 tahun. Hasilnya: pada orientasi percakapan sebanyak 50,5% remaja masuk kategori tinggi dan 49,5% kategori rendah. Pada orientasi kesesuaian, sebagian besar remaja (73,7%) masuk kategori tinggi dan 26,3% kategori rendah. Penelitian ini juga memetakan empat tipe keluarga, yaitu keluarga konsensual (tingkat percakapan dan kesesuaian tinggi) sebanyak 46,2%; pluralis (tingkat percakapan tinggi tetapi kesesuaian rendah) sebanyak 4,3%; protektif (tingkat percakapan rendah tetapi kesesuaian tinggi) sebanyak 27,4%; dan tidak peduli (*laissez faire*) (tingkat percakapan dan kesesuaian rendah) sebanyak 22,0%. Berdasarkan gender, remaja perempuan lebih sering melakukan percakapan dengan keluarga dan memiliki kesesuaian yang lebih tinggi dibandingkan remaja laki-laki.

Kata Kunci: Keluarga, Pola Komunikasi, Remaja, Tipologi

Introduction

Each family requires communication to discuss goals, instilling values, adhering to regulation, and the balance in the family. To meet these objectives, family members provide inputs, while the parents introduce rules and routines (Wilson, Hantz, & Hanna, 1995). Socha (2009) argues that there are two approaches in understanding the family communication. *First*, family communication plays a role in adding a positive family input (eg, increasing compassion, creativity, hope, and happiness). *Second*, family communication creates conditions that facilitate the potential development of the family, or use communication to create optimal conditions for the growth and development of human resources. Family communication is developed to educate family members to be virtuous.

Good family communication is the most effective tool in achieving healthy and close relationship. A harmonious communication between adolescents and their parents may become a filter of unavoidable external environmental influences (Puspitawati, 2008). Research by Armsden and Greenberg (1987) showed that adolescents with confidence and trust in their relationships with their parents, have a good self-control and been able to self-regulate. Instead, Cernkovich and Giordiano (1987) reported that the adolescents who have bad communication with parents become an important predictor of delinquency. The higher the communication levels between adolescents and parents, the lower the violation of norms (Stattin & Kerr, 2000) and delinquency in adolescence (Kerr & Stattin, 2000).

Adolescents may lack of values and norms of the parents when the parent-adolescents relationships marked by negative behaviors (Dekovic, Wissink & Meijer, 2004). Lickona (2012) asserted that when children and teens do not have a close relationship with parents and lack of knowledge about the prevailing values in the family, the teenager will be weaker in facing peer pressures. Harmonious communication between parents and teens can establish a successful interpersonal relation and social exchange. Adolescents's communication with families may take reciprocal and alternated from parent to children or from children to parents, thus forming a pattern or a fixed structure. Communication patterns can be interpreted as a form of relationship between two or more people in sending and receiving messages in an appropriate manner, so that the message is understood

by both parties (Djamarah, 2004).

Bronfenbrenner (1994) stated that the changes in the family can affect the process of socialization and development of the children. Families often spend a lot of time together doing activities that do not involve communication, such as watching television (Wilson, Hantz, & Hanna, 1995). Physically, family members are in the same room, but there is an absence of communication. In fact, Gottman (1997) found that parents, who are involved in coaching of emotions and raising the children with problem-solving skills, tend to have children who get along better with their peers -- have fewer behavior problems -- unlikely to commit violence -- be able to restrain-- and have productive activities.

Positive relationships between teenagers and parents are marked by low conflict, high levels of support, and open communication. Adolescents, who are reported having a good relationship with at least one parent, tend to have better physical and mental health. Conversely, adolescents who are at conflict with parents, plus the lack of support from parents, most likely engage in risky behavior, such as drug abuse, alcohol addiction, and smoking, as well as to be struggling with symptoms of depression (Sacks *et al.*, 2014). Mahmud *et al.* (2011) concluded that family communication is an important element in instilling a sense of responsibility among adolescents.

Research of Kelly *et al.* (2002) showed that uncommunicative parents cannot be considered as the right models for effective communication skills. Therefore, family communication must be pursued in earnest by parents and family members. Furthermore, communication patterns will form family typologies corresponding communication behaviors reported by teens. Therefore, research on family communication patterns and typologies are considered as importance since the result can be used as a reference to see the development of today's families, and predict the future. In connection with these problems, this study aims to analyze the patterns of communication and typology of the family in adolescents from senior high school in Bogor, West Java.

Theoretical Framework

The general theory underlying the study of family communication is the theory of Family Communication Patterns or *Family Communication Patterns Theory* (FCPT) (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2004; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006).

Based on FCPT, Koerner (2014) suggested that creation of the social reality is a fundamental process in family functioning that defines family relationships and determines how families communicate. Social reality in families created through two communication behaviors, namely- - conversation and conformity orientations which altogether determine the pattern of family communication in all at once. Conversation orientation refers to openness and frequency of communication between parents and children with the goal of finding and defining the meaning of objects that create the social reality. It is associated with warmth and supportive communication, which is characterized by attention from one to another. Conformity orientation referring to more limited communication between parents and children when the parents become the authority who determine the family's social reality. Orientation conformity has been related to the more authoritarian parenting and lack of attention to the thoughts and feelings of the children.

Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2004) divide the four types of families: consensual, pluralistic, protective and *laissez-faire*, or non-interventionist. Each family has the types of parental determined by the ways they use the space, time, and energy as well as the level of expressing their feelings, using power, and sharing a common philosophy about their marriage.

The *first* family type is consensual having a high level of conversation and conformity. Consensual family type is characterized by expressing opinions easily, but the leader of the family, usually one of the parents who will make the decision. This family is under pressure to appreciate an open communication and at the same time they also want a clear parental authority. Parents are usually good listeners for their children, but take decisions and then explain it to children in an effort to help them understand the thinking behind the decision.

The *second* family type; pluralistic is characterized by high level in conversation but low in conformity. This family type has a lot of freedom in conversation, but everyone will at the end, make their own decisions about what action should be taken based on the conversation. Parents do not need to control their children; instead, the opinion assesses based on the term of feasibility to participate in the family decision making. Parents tend to be classified as a pluralistic, independent and usually flexible of look at marriage. Independence means that husbands and

wives are not too dependent on each other and tends to have children with independent-minded.

The *third* family type is protective. The characteristics of protective family are likely to be low in the conversation, but high in conformity. There might be a lot of compliances but little communication. Parents in this kind of family type do not see the need to spend a lot of time to talk about everything. They also do not give any explanation to children about what they may decide. For this reason, parents tend to separate. Fitzpatrick (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011) called the parents as "emotionally divorced". They have their own opinion and often quarreled, but their fight might not take long because they immediately recover from conflict. In some cases, there is little conflict, simply because they do not harmonize their actions long enough and cannot prolong the conflict.

The *fourth* family type, *laissez-faire*, or non-interventionist. Families like this are not nosy and have a low involvement. No matter what things are done by family members they are unlikely to waste their time talking about it. Parents in this family type tend to have mixed orientations, which do not have the same scheme. They may be a combination of parents who are independent and separate, or some other combinations.

Research on family communication is also associated with cultural factors and parenting style (Littlejohn & Domenici, 2007). One mentioned by Littlejohn and Domenici (2007) is the authoritative parenting style. Three-dimensional of authoritative parenting, namely connections, regulation and autonomy is a standard that is very important for parents to communicate with their children. Connections involve pattern acceptance, care, maintenance, patience and sensitivity, so the atmosphere of the communication will take place friendly and fun. Regulation involves instruction, improving, teaching and disciplining, setting limits, provides an explanation, a set of consequences and positive reinforcing. The principle is that prevention is better than fixing. Autonomy means that parents let their children make their own decisions and choices (Littlejohn & Domenici, 2007).

Collaborative problem solving is substantially better than adherence to rules arbitrarily. Children are not encouraged to do whatever they want but involve themselves in the discussion, as well as establish guidelines and principles of a good decision. Authoritative parenting style combines and makes the three values (connections, regulation and autonomy)

balanced. It is easily to be aligned because it involves children in discussions and decision-making about their situation. Parenting also encourages a collaborative approach to conflict and to teach children on the skills they need to move away from the conflict form that potentially endanger themselves and lead them towards a form that realize the values of diversity and obtain productive results (Littlejohn & Domenici, 2007) ,

An understanding of the development and characteristics of the individual (the difference between male and female), is a provision for the establishment of a seamless interaction between members of the family. According to Setiono (2011) each member of the family needs to master the correct way to communicate, so they can possibly avoid miscommunication. Communication errors among family can occur if from the messenger does not deliver the message in a clear, precise manner of delivery, less expensive time to deliver something, and not taking full account of the condition of the other party. Instead, the recipient of the message can also cause communication errors. It may occur when the receiver is refusing to accept the other's ideas rather than a particular view and not to consider the condition or situation of the messenger.

Material and Methodology

The six-month study (February-July 2014), has been at four State and two Private Senior High Schools in Bogor, West Java. The study used a survey method with *cross-sectional study* design. The total number is derived from a class 2nd high school students enrolled in Bogor City Department of Education in the academic year of 2013-2014 academic year numbering 4915 students. Of that number -- some 372 samples were taken with the selected errors tolerance of 5 percent. The age of respondents ranged 15-18 years old. Respondents from two classes of each school consisting of class with science and social majors. One class was selected at random by teacher, then all of the students in the class, both male and female respondents have to fill out questionnaires prepared.

Questions about family communication patterns are developed based on instruments of *Revised Family Communication Pattern* (RFCP) (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick 1990) and has been conducted through the test of reliability and validity. This instrument uses a Likert response scale ranging from 1 (never), 2 (occasionally), 3 (often), and 4 (always).

The data is processed and analyzed using SPSS *software* version 19.0. *First*, the data conversation orientation and conformity orientation are grouped into two categories, namely low and high. *Second*, a different test analysis with *independent-sample t test*; and *third*, mapping family typology.

Statistical analysis procedure is carried out as follows:—score the conversation orientation and conformity orientation summed and then to be transformed into a scale of 0 to 100. To categorize the conversation orientation and conformity orientation, which has been used as an index score (transformed) are grouped into two categories, namely: (1) Low (score ≤ 50.0), and (2) High (score > 50.0 to 100.0).

For mapping the typology, the index of each respondent at the variable of conversation orientation and conformity orientation has been codified. Low categories were coded as 0 and higher categories (were coded) as 1. Data that has been codified were then tabulated into the X and Y axis, resulting in four typologies. The X-axis represents the orientation of the conversation, while the Y axis is the orientation of conformity. Fourth typology is generated as follows: Type 1, consensual family; Type 2, pluralistic family; Type 3, protective family; and Type 4, *laissez faire* (non-interventionist) family.

Result and Discussion

Table 1 shows the categories of low and high on the orientation of the conversation and the conformity of senior high school students in the city of Bogor in total (female and male). More than half (50.5%) of respondents are at high category for conversation orientation. Similar to the orientation of conformity, the majority of respondents (73.7%) were high. This means that adolescents communication with families at six senior high school studied, had been well established. The topic of conversation teen with her parents is quite diverse and mostly done in a pleasant atmosphere.

The results of the analysis of *independent-sample t test* on the conversation orientation showed that in general there were no significant differences between young women and men with their family (Table 2). This shows that the openness and the topic of parents do not distinguish the sex of the child. The topics of conversation which were discussed with female adolescents, were also discussed with the male ones. However, more than half of male ado-

Table 1
Low and High Categories of The Orientation of
Conversation and Conformity in Total
(Female and Male Students)

Cate- gories	Conver- sation	Orien- tation	Confor- mity	Orien- tation
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Low	184	49.5	98	26.3
High	188	50.5	274	73.7
Total	372	100, 0	372	100, 0

Table 2
Low and High Categories of Conversation
Orientation Based on Gender

Cate- gories	Female Students		Male Students	
	N	(%)	n	(%)
Low	81	39.3	103	62, 0
High	125	60.7	63	38, 0
Total	206	100	166	100, 0
Different test (p)	0.411			

Table 3
Low and High Categories of Conformity
Orientation Based on Gender

Cate- gories	Female Students		Male Students	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Low	52	25.2	46	27.7
High	154	74.8	120	72.3
Total	206	100, 0	166	100, 0
Different test (p)	0,032*			

Description: * significantly different at $p < 0.05$

lescents have a low level of conversation orientation (62.0%). Instead, the conversation orientation of female adolescents are in high category (60.7%).

In conformity orientation, there are significant differences between female and male adolescents with their family (Table 3). It can be said that parents (mother and father) treat females and males

differently when communicating. Thus, the topics discussed can be the same, but the way of discussing and responding to conversations between females and males are different. Koerner (2014) stated that the orientation of conformity are related to, more authoritarian parenting and lack of parental supervision of children's thoughts and feelings.

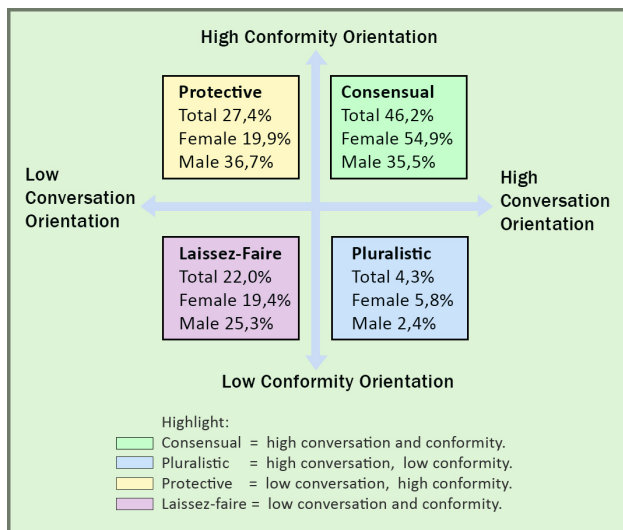
The above data are grouped into 4 typologies of family as follows: 1) Consensual Family, 2) Pluralist Family, 3) Protective Family, and 4) *Laissez-faire* (non-interventionist) Family. Based on the typology, the largest percentage of family type Consensual is (46.2%) in total, followed by Protective (27.4%), *Laissez-faire*(22.0%), and Pluralist (4.3%). Viewed from gender, female adolescents predominate in the Consensual family type (54.9%), while males are more in the family type of Protective (36.7%)

This study proves that family communication does not occur randomly, but it is patterned by specific schemes that determine how family members communicate with each other. Family scheme covers certain forms of orientation or communication. Based on the theory of Family Communication Patterns, there are two types of orientation, the orientation of conversation (*conversation orientation*) and conformity (*conformity orientation*) (Koerner, 2014). The results of this study indicate that the conversation and conformity orientations are at the high category. Based on family communication patterns' theory, the family that has a high conversation orientation means happy and talking a lot. In addition, the orientation of the conversation is associated with warmth and supportive communication, which is characterized by attention from one to another. Families with high conformity orientation shows that family members tend to be able to run side by side with the parents.

Based on gender, more than half of male adolescents have a low conversation orientation (62.0%). Instead, the orientation of teenage conversation having more females are at high category (60.7%). This shows that female adolescents communicate more frequently with their families. Findings done by Barbato, Graham, and Perse (2009) also reveals that parents talk more to girls than boys for some reasons—namely relieve loneliness and share of feelings.

Conversations and conformity between family members is necessary so that communication can take place properly. Wilson, Hantz, and Hanna (1995) suggested that family communication is necessary

Figure 1
Family Typology



for negotiating purposes, instilling values, adhering to regulation, and the balance in the family. To meet these objectives, family members provide inputs, while the parents introduce rules and routines. On the other hand, family communication is also developed to educate family members being of character.

The different test results showed that there is no difference in the orientation of conversations between young women and men meaning that parents do not discriminate gender of the child in terms of freedom of speech. This differs from the orientation of conformity which shows significant differences between females and males. According to Koerner (2014) it is related to more authoritarian parenting and lack of parental supervision of children's thoughts and feelings. It can be assumed that parents treat girls and boys differently. Forms of authority of parents of girls and boys are different.

The relationship between teenagers and parents is positively marked by low conflict, high levels of support and open communication (Sacks *et al.*, 2014). Findings done by Sacks *et al.* (2014) revealed that adolescents who report it to have a good relationship with at least one parent, have better physical and mental health. Conversely, adolescents who are at conflict with parents, plus the lack of support from parents are most likely engaged in risky behavior, such as drug abuse, drinking alcohol, and smoking, as well as fighting with depression symptoms.

Based on the typology of the family, the largest family type found in this study is 46.2% of the Consensual Family type. According to Koerner and

Fitzpatrick (2004), Consensual family type is characterized by expressing the opinions easily, but the leader of the family, usually one of the parents, will make the decision. This family is under pressure to appreciate an open communication, while they also want a clear parental authority. Parents are usually good listeners for their children, but take decisions and further explain to children in an effort of helping them to understand the thinking behind the decision. This finding is consistent with research of Charoenthaweesub and Hale (2011) on the pattern of family communication in Thailand which revealed that the majority of adolescents reported had no communication gap and more than half were satisfied with family communication that took place in a particular time.

Based on gender, the female adolescents predominate in the Consensual family type (54.9%), while male adolescents are more in the Protective family type (36.7%). It can be assumed that parents tend to worry on males than females. Male adolescents tend to be easily influenced by negative behaviors such as smoking and fighting, so unconsciously parents are more protective for boys than girls.

Conclusion

Family communication at six senior high schools who participated in this study has been built quite well. Topics for discussion between adolescents with their parents are quite varied and mostly done in a pleasant atmosphere. In conversation orientation there were no significant differences between female and male adolescents with their family, while the conformity orientation has significant differences between female and male adolescents with their family. Openness and topics discussed by the parent does not distinguish the sex of the child. However, parents treat female and male adolescents in different ways. Topics discussed may be the same, but the way of discussing and responding to conversations between female and male adolescents might be different.

Results in family typology showed that the most common type of family is the Consensual (46.2%), followed by the Protective (27.4%), *Laissez-faire* (22.0%), and Pluralist (4.3%). By gender, female adolescents are more dominating on Consensual family type (54.9%), while male adolescents are more in the Protective family type (36.7%).

The tendency of parents who are more protective

to the male adolescents than the female ones need to be reduced and offset by an authoritative parenting style, involving three approaches, namely connections, regulation and autonomy. For future research, it is suggested to add more variables of parenting style and see its effect on the pattern of family communication.

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