

# **Trends in Family Communication Patterns and Parent-Adolescent Relationship: Implications for Research in Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

This paper critically examines studies that have researched into parent-adolescent relationships with particular interest in the communication patterns through which such relationships are enacted. It reviews existing literature on parent-adolescent relationship research globally against the backdrop of parent-adolescent relationship research in Nigeria. It seeks to find out the research methods, sampling techniques, and the methods of data analysis adopted in studies investigating parent-adolescent relationships globally. Adopting the Systems theory and Rules theory as theoretical framework for the analysis; the study used content analysis to generate data from various scholarly articles published in recognised academic journals, E-books and doctoral theses accessed via online databases. The primary basis for the selection of any article for analysis is that such article must focus on issues and themes on family communication patterns and parent-adolescent communication in parent-adolescent relationships with exceptional interest in Nigeria. Most of the reviewed studies about (85%) were conducted in European nations while about (15%) were conducted in African nations. Majority of the studies (71.3%) adopted survey while 28.7% utilised the mixed-method design. Most of the reviewed studies adopted the convenience sampling and purposive sampling techniques but employed multi-methods in their data analysis. This study suggested that more research efforts

should be invested in communication and parent-adolescent relationship in Nigeria to fill the gap created in parent-adolescent relationship literature in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Parent-Adolescents Relationship, Communication Pattern, Family Communication, Conflicts, Parents, Children, Research

## **Introduction**

Parent-adolescent communication conflicts have become a cause of concern globally because of its contribution to the development of interactive problems in children. Conflict in this context is characterised by parents' effort at regulating and controlling their children's behaviour followed by children's struggle at resisting or complying with their parents' control. Earlier research in parent-adolescent conflicts believed that adolescence was a time of storm and stress and high levels of conflict and defiance were a normative course of adolescent development (Laursen & Collins in Vangelisti, 2004; Blos & Erikson cited in Laursen & Collins, 2009). Current research (Van Doorn, Branje, VanderValk, Goed & Meeus 2011; Osredkar, 2012; Christensen, Holiday & Heperi, 2014; Curran & Allen, 2016) however, has proven this to be largely untrue.

Conflict is a normal aspect of all close relationships especially between family members because of the numerous interactions occurring each day (Laursen & Collins, 2004) and the individuality of the persons involved in the interactions. Although turmoil characterises a minority of families, these characteristics may be linked to dysfunctional family systems rather than adolescent development itself (Chipman, 2009).

Research on parent-adolescent relationships has tried to establish links between family communication patterns and other variables in the family relationship. Findings from these studies, (Kelly, Keaten, Finch, Duarte, Hoffman, & Michels, 2002; Rueter & Koerner, 2008; Jowkar, Kohoulat, & Zakeri, 2011; Offordile, 2012; Osredkar, 2012; Zanargash, Zanargash & Zanargash, 2013; Christensen, Holiday & Heperi, 2014; Clark, 2015; Curran & Allen, 2016; Hemati, Abbasi, & Kiani, 2017) indicate that family communication patterns predict child well-being in the realms of social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development, and problem behaviour.

Much as research in parent-adolescent communication conflict is rife globally, literature in the interplay of family communication patterns in parent-adolescent communication conflict is scarce in Nigeria. Most studies in parent adolescent communication and relationship in Nigeria revolve around parenting styles and

adolescents' sexual and reproductive health related issues. Some studies have tried to examine the influence of family communication patterns on adolescents' self-esteem and academic achievement (Offordile, 2012) and the relationship between parental communication styles and adolescents' substance use (Adamu, 2016). Evidences from these studies indicate the roles that family communication patterns play in the psychosocial development of adolescents and in their development of delinquent behaviours as well.

However, studies that focus on the influence of family communication patterns on parent-adolescent communication conflicts and the roles that parents' demography play in the processes are rare in Nigeria. It is against this background that this paper examines the methodological approaches in selected empirical studies in parent-adolescent relationship globally and Nigeria particularly.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The paper hinges on two theories, Systems and Rules theories.

**Systems Theory:** This theory was originally propounded by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1968. General Systems Theory assumes that a system is characterised by the interaction of its interdependent elements, with each element mutually influencing every component in the system. So family Systems Theory assumes that the whole family is greater than the sum of the parts and as such one can never fully understand a family and its communication by attempting to understand its individual constituents (Le Poire, 2005). Applying this idea of system interdependence to the study of family communication, scholars (Thomas-Maddox & Blau, 2013) opine that instead of looking at a given phenomenon (person) among its own properties, emphasis should be on the arrangement of, and relationship among parts of the phenomenon that make up the whole (family). Thomas-Maddox & Blau, 2013 discuss five concepts of systems theory-**wholeness, interdependence, hierarchical units, closed and open systems.**

Wholeness suggests that in order to understand the family, one has to consider not just the individual relationships but also the context of the entire network which is the family (Schulz, 2013). This emphasises that the sum of the whole is greater than the individual parts thus a study of family system is insufficient if it looks at individual parts in isolation. The concept of interdependence expresses the intricate and necessary interrelationships of family members. Interdependence here emphasises the reliance of family members on one another for the promotion of family functioning.

Hierarchical units involve the different subsystems that exist in the family, such as parental or sibling units. However, these subsystems need to co-exist within a larger system. Boundaries are, however, determined among the different systems

which make it easier for family members to interact in these smaller subsystems without interference but also allows them to reach out to other family members when necessary (Schulz, 2013). Open systems are family systems that have permeable boundaries and freely interact with other systems in the environment while closed systems are family systems that have impermeable boundaries and are unwilling to interact with other systems in the environment (Thomas-Maddox & Blau, 2013).

Research show that verbal interactions between parents and adolescents change significantly across the adolescent period (Chipman, 2004; Laursen & Collins, 2009; Thomas-Maddox & Blau, 2013; Clark, 2015). These parents and adolescents occupy mutually regulated systems in which they work jointly to maintain their relationships from adolescence into adulthood (Gracia-Ruz *et al.*, 2012). Scholars thus attribute the alteration in the patterns of parent-child interaction to developmental changes. Accordingly, as children journey from childhood through adolescence, the frequency and content of interaction with parents change. This is initiated by individuation processes and autonomy-striving tendencies which inevitably alter patterns of self-disclosure in commonly shared experiences and increases adolescents' perceptions of privacy in parent-adolescent relationships (Vangelisti, 2004).

These individuation processes and autonomy-striving tendencies give rise to conflict in parent-adolescent relationships (Laursen & Collins, 2009). Some scholars (Chipman, 2009; Van Doorn, Branje, VanderValk, Goed & Meeus 2011) in disagreeing with the idea of 'storm and stress' during adolescence, have, however attributed parent-adolescent conflict to dysfunctional family systems rather than adolescent development. Family systems theory therefore becomes helpful in in this study in understanding the relationship between family communication patterns and parent-adolescent relationships.

## **Rules Theory**

Propounded by Donald Cushman in 1977, rules theory assumes that all relationships are governed by a set of rules. Le Poire (2005) citing Shimanoff, describes a rule as “followable prescriptions that indicate what behaviour is obligated, preferred or prohibited” (p.79). If the rules of a relationship are upheld, the relationship is more likely to endure but if the rules are broken, the relationship deteriorates and possibly terminates. Thomas-Maddox & Blau (2013) add that while it is difficult to terminate an obligatory relationship such as a family relationship, the bonds or ties among family members can deteriorate. This can cause breakdown in communication in such relationships paving way for conflicts to come in and possibly fester.

Le Poire (2005) also makes a distinction between verbal and non-verbal rules of communication. From his distinction, verbal rules of communication can either be

explicit or implicit. Explicit rules of communication are rules that are openly discussed and agreed on. They are usually clearly stated and well understood by everyone involved in the communication. Implicit rules, however, are more “subtle and understood in unstated prescriptions regarding taboo topics with adults” (Le Poire, 2005, p.80).

Arguing further, Le-Poire (2005) opines that implicit and explicit rules of communication are “most highly apparent between adolescent children and their parents” (p.80). From his argument, as adolescents strive for autonomy from parents, in response to adolescent maturational tendencies (Laursen & Collins, 2009; Mbua & Adigeb, 2015), explicit rules regarding territorial markers become more evident on both ends. Corroborating this, Hawk, Keijsers, Hale & Meeus (2009) argue that “as adolescents acquire more independence, possessions, and information to which only they have access, they construct and enforce privacy rules that may be discordant with parents' ideals” (p. 511).

Parent-adolescent relationship is one relationship that is governed by sets of rules. These rules guide all interactions that occur in the relationship. However, as children approach adolescence, they begin to seek a renegotiation of these rules and a consequent shifting of the boundaries of parental control. The unwillingness of parents to cede this authority to the adolescent children gives rise to certain forms of conflict in the communication domain thereby altering the entire family relationship atmosphere. From the foregoing, developmental theorists do not view adolescent autonomy striving as a negative tendency but rather a cognitive maturational indicator in the adolescent which, if properly managed by parents, eventually contribute substantially to their overall emotional and social development in adulthood (Clark, 2015).

The occurrence of conflict is however indicated in parental handling of adolescent autonomy striving which usually is determined by the family's communication pattern. These explanations and definitions offer the background upon which Rules theory is considered appropriate in this study for the investigation of the factors that generate communication conflicts in parent-adolescent relationships.

### **Rationale for the Study**

Parent-adolescent relationship literature is replete with the claims that conflict is a normative feature of adolescent development (Blos, Erikson & Freud) cited in Vangelisti (2004). There are, however, divergent views from this submission. Some scholars (Chipman, 2009; Ozmete & Bayoglu, 2009; Van Doorn, Branje, VanderValk, Goed & Meeus 2011) hold the opinion that rather than isolate conflict and associate it with adolescent development, it should be seen as a normal aspect of all close

relationships, parent-adolescent relationship inclusive, with certain adaptive functions. These scholars, in putting parent-adolescent conflict at the door of dysfunctional family systems, go on to identify the crucial role which family communication patterns play in mitigating these conflicts. Regardless of these divergent views, scholars of parent-adolescent relationship unanimously agree on the role of communication in solving relationship conflict issues. This study therefore reviewed the methodological perspectives on family communication patterns (FCP) and parent-adolescent relationship conflicts (PARC) research. Doing this, the study identified the dominant research methodologies, sampling techniques used for data gathering, data analysis methods, and dominant theories used by the researchers in the materials reviewed.

This study, in reviewing existing literature on family communication patterns in parent-adolescent relationships, sought to:

1. find out the most frequently adopted research method in studies investigating communication in parent-adolescent relationships;
2. examine the sampling techniques adopted in studies investigating communication in parent-adolescent relationships; and
3. To find out the methods of data analysis adopted in studies investigating communication in parent-adolescent relationships.

## **Methodology**

The data for this study were purposively selected from various scholarly articles published in recognised academic journals and theses accessed online. The articles were collated and identified based on those that focused their issues and themes on family communication patterns and parent-adolescent communication in parent-adolescent relationships with exceptional interest in Nigeria.

Most of the reviewed studies (85%) were conducted in European and Asian nations while (15%) were conducted in African nations. The data were collected from studies conducted between 2007 and 2017 and published in 24 journal articles and 6 research theses. The articles were drawn from the following journals: *Journal of International Social Research*, *Journal of Family Psychology*, *Journal of Early Adolescence*, *European Scientific Journal*, *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *Family Processes*, *Communication Studies*, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *Journal of Family Communication*, *Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *Western Journal of Communication*, *Youth and Society*, *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, *Human Communication Research*, *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *European Journal of Educational Psychology*, *Nursing Practice Today*, *Pakistani*

*Journal of Social Sciences, International Journal of Developmental Science, Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Current Research, Journal of Youth and Adolescence.*

The journal articles and doctoral theses, which range between 2007 and 2017, were purposively selected from research databases. Not all the materials (journal articles and dissertations) reviewed for this study applied theories in their work. Whereas some of the studies were driven by some theoretical perspectives and assumptions, others were driven strictly by literature. Thirty studies, both articles and dissertations, were employed in this study. These studies were content analysed.

The categories for this study were research method, sampling techniques and method of data analysis. The research method indicates the various research methods employed in each of the studies reviewed here with their various sub-categories (Survey, Content Analysis, Field Observation, Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, Case studies). Secondly, the sampling techniques show the types of sampling techniques adopted in the reviewed studies. Their sub-categories were simple random, multi-stage cluster, voluntary, convenience, purposive, stratified, cluster and snowballing sampling techniques. And thirdly, the methods of data analysis show the specific methods that were used in the analysis of both the qualitative and quantitative data. Their sub-categories were descriptive statistics, pattern matching, structural equation modelling, Pearson moment correlation/correlation co-efficient. Others were hierarchy linear models, simple percentages, T-test, ANOVA, phenomenological text analysis, path analysis, latent profile analysis, grounded theory analysis, bivariate Pearson correlation, Cronbach alpha test, chi-square, standard regression, hierarchical multiple regression, confirmatory factor, bootstrap, cross-lagged panel, quantitative content, multiple regression, inferential statistics, latent cross-classification analysis.

Besides, sub-categories such as specified and unspecified were created to represent studies which discussed data analysis methods and those which did not discuss them at all. Lastly, theoretical underpinning was created as a category to investigate the reviewed studies for theoretical underpinnings. The purpose here was to discover how much of family communication research is guided by either theory or literature. It further provided information on the theories frequently employed in family communication research and the theoretical leanings of the reviewed studies. The sub-categories created for this purpose were: theory-driven and literature-driven.

## **Findings and Discussion**

Thirty studies were reviewed for this study. They include twenty-four (24) journal articles and six (6) doctoral theses. Table 1 shows that all the journal articles reviewed for this study explained the methods of data collection. The methodologies included

sampling technique, data collection, and data analysis.

**Table 1: Research Methods Adopted by Reviewed Studies**

Research Method (s)	Reviewed Studies	
	No	%
Survey	21	70
Survey, Interview & Content Analysis	2	6.7
Interview	2	6.7
Survey, Interview, FGD & Observation	1	3.33
Interview & Survey	1	3.33
Survey, FGD & Content Analysis	1	3.33
Interview & Experiment	1	3.33
FGD, Content Analysis & Observation	1	3.33
Total	30	100

Table 1 shows that 70% of the reviewed studies employed only survey as their method of data collection while 6.7% of the reviewed studies used only the interview research method. Another 6.7% combined survey, interview and content analysis as their methods of data collection; 3.33% of the reviewed studies used both the interview and survey research methods; 3.33% again combined survey, FGD & content analysis as their methods of data collection; while 3.33% of the reviewed studies utilised both interview and experiment methods for data collection.

From Table 1 we observe that the survey method ranked highest (70%) in the methods utilised by researchers in the studies reviewed thus showing scholars' preference for it as a data collection method. The preference for survey according to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007); Kothari (2004) is based on the fact that the survey method gives researchers the opportunity of eliciting data from a wider and larger audience thus making the research findings dependable and generalisation of results possible. Given that research in parent-adolescent relationship involves and investigates a large and representative sample, one understands family communication researchers' overwhelming preference for survey as a method of data collection.

Table 1 also show that researchers in the reviewed studies employed the mixed-method approach, also known as triangulation, in their research. This is defined as the use of two or more methods in a study. Researchers employ the mixed-method approach to map out or explain fully the richness as well as the intricacies of human

behaviour. Advocating for the employment of more than one method, Cohen *et al.* (2007) argue that reliance on a single method provides only a limited view of the complexity of human behaviour and of situations in which human beings interact. Parent-adolescent communication research is a field of study which deals greatly with the complexities of human behaviour and the interactions that go on among them. The application of only one method may not give a complete picture of the reality of these interactions.

### Sampling Techniques Used in the Journals

Table 2 shows the sampling techniques adopted by parent-adolescent communication researchers over the last ten years in the reviewed materials rotate around purposive, simple random, cluster, and multi-stage sampling techniques.

**Table 2: Sampling Techniques in the Reviewed Studies**

	No	Percentage (%)	No	Percentage (%)
Purposive	6	25	2	33.33
Simple random	5	20.83	1	16.67
Multi-stage and simple random	1	4.17	1	16.67
Convenience	7	29.17	1	16.67
Unspecified	2	8.33	1	16.67
Stratified random	1	4.17	-	
Cluster random	1	4.17	-	
Multi-stage and cluster random	1	4.17	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 indicates that 90% of the reviewed studies specified their sampling techniques while 10% of the studies were silent on the sampling techniques adopted. Of the sampling techniques adopted in the reviewed studies convenience sampling topped the list (7), followed by purposive (6) and simple random (5) sampling techniques respectively. Convenience sampling involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents in a study and continuing that process until the required sample size has been obtained (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Researchers in this case make use of those who happen to be available and accessible at the time of the study.

Purposive sampling on the other hand is a process that involves the conscious selection of certain participants for a study. Researchers here recruit participants who have qualities they are attempting to understand. The third preferred sampling

technique in the reviewed studies is the simple random sampling. In this technique, each member of the population under study has an equal chance of being selected and the probability of a member of the population being selected is unaffected by the selection of other members of the population. The employment of this method makes it easy for the generalisation of study findings to other populations because of its representative nature.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Majority of the reviewed studies employed more than one method of data analysis. Four (4) of the reviewed studies employed at least one method of data analysis. This is because they employed one research method. Tables 3 and 4 capture the methods of data analysis of the reviewed studies.

**Table 3: Data Analysis Methods in Journal Articles**

<b>Methods of Data Analysis</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Bivariate Pearson Correlation Analysis+ Multiple Regression Analysis + Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis	1	4.17
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)	1	4.17
Descriptive Statistics + ANOVA + MANOVA (Multiple Analysis of Variance) + Simple Percentages	1	4.17
Pearson Correlation Analysis + Standard Regression Analysis + Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis	1	4.17
Descriptive Statistics + Simple Percentages	1	4.17
Descriptive Statistics + Structural Equation Modelling + Confirmatory Factor Analysis + Correlation Analysis + Bootstrap Analysis	1	4.17
Simple Percentages + T-test + ANOVA + Pearson Correlation Analysis	1	4.17
Descriptive Statistics + T-test + ANOVA	1	4.17
Descriptive Statistics + ANOVA + Correlation Analysis	1	4.17
Cross-lagged Panel Analysis + Multi-group Analysis + Correlation Analysis + Chi-Square	1	4.17
ANOVA + Descriptive Statistics + Regression Analysis	1	4.17

Confirmatory Factor Analysis + Correlation Analysis + Regression Analysis	1	4.17
Qualitative Content Analysis	1	4.17
Descriptive Statistics + ANOVA + Regression Analysis	1	4.17
Descriptive + Inferential Statistics + Pearson Correlation Analysis + T-test	1	4.17
Pearson Correlation Coefficient + Regression Analysis	1	4.17
Latent Class Analysis	1	4.17
Structural Equation Modelling + Descriptive Statistics + ANOVA	1	4.17
Descriptive Statistics + Chi-Square + T-test	1	4.17
Regression Analysis + Correlation Analysis	1	4.17
ANOVA + Descriptive Statistics + MANOVA	1	4.17
T-test + Correlation Analysis	1	4.17
Multiple Regression Analysis + ANOVA	1	4.17
Multiple Regression Analysis + Correlation + Correlation Analysis + T-test	1	4.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4: Data Analysis Methods in Theses**

Dissertation	No	Percentage (%)
Descriptive Statistics + Correlation Analysis + Regression Analysis	1	3.33
Latent Profile Analysis + ANOVA + Descriptive Statistics + Latent Cross Classification	1	3.33
Phenomenological Text Analysis	1	3.33
Grounded Theory + Quantitative Analysis	1	3.33
Descriptive Statistics + T-test	1	3.33
Descriptive Statistics + T-test + Path Analysis + Regression Analysis	1	3.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>

From the tables above (3 & 4) we can deduce that most of the reviewed studies employed sophisticated statistical tools in analysing their data. There was, however, one with the qualitative study (Table 4) which adopted the qualitative textual analysis method in analysing its data. This study was a phenomenological study and thus necessitated the use of the phenomenological text analysis method in analysing its data. Keele (2012) describes phenomenology as a research approach that explores people's everyday life experiences. Thus the researchers in this area investigate “subjective phenomena” (p.46). Participant observation and interview are often utilized as methods of data collection.

### **Theoretical Leanings of the Reviewed Studies**

Just 30% of the reviewed studies engaged theories in their research while the remaining 70% were driven by literature. This implies that whereas some of the studies were driven by some theoretical perspectives and assumptions, others were driven strictly by literature. The findings are represented in Table 4.

**Table 5: Theoretical Leanings of Reviewed Studies**

Theoretical Leanings of Studies	Journal Articles		Theses	
	No	(%)	No	(%)
Theory -driven	7	29.16	2	33.33
Literature -driven	17	70.83	4	66.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 5 above we can deduce that while some of the reviewed materials applied theories in their study, some others did not. Some of the theories applied in these studies include: Attitude Change Theory, Communication Privacy Management Theory, Expectancy Violation Realignment Theory, Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCP), Acculturation and Enculturation Models, Persuasion Model, Theory of Resilience, Family Systems Theory, Social Domain Theory, Bio-ecological Theory, Sociocultural Theory, Need Achievement Theory,

and Social Learning Theory. We also observe from Table 4 that a great majority of the reviewed studies were driven more by literature than theory. This is reflected in the disparity in the number of studies driven by literature (70%) against the number driven by theory (30%). Does this have any significance?

Scholars (Fischbein & Cappella, 2006; Frenete, 2013; Thomas-Maddox & Blau, 2013) have unanimously pointed out the usefulness of theory in human communication research one of which is to predict, explain and understand phenomena. Frenete, (2013) further posit that theories are useful because they allow us to “go beyond our intuition and personal experience to build a broader and more explicit understanding of human behaviour” (p.35). This understanding gives the researcher a handle to a variety of behaviour change approaches. (Fischbein & Cappella, 2006) support this with the view that “theories are useful because they provide a framework to help identify the determinants of any given behaviour, an essential first step in the development of successful interventions to change that behaviour” (p.1).

Extending this view to family communication research, theories are useful in that they help the researcher to identify the determinants of family communication behaviour that lead to relationship problems, one of which is parent-adolescent communication conflict. This is done with the aim of developing successful interventions to solving these relationship problems.

Having established the usefulness of theory in family communication research, why then is there its obvious omission in family communication inquiry, as exemplified in the reviewed studies? The researcher, however, observed from the review that certain theoretical underpinnings in the discoveries and conclusions made in the studies did not apply specific theories in their work. This suggests that even though these studies were driven by literature, these literatures may have been derived from empirical works driven, over time, by certain theoretical propositions or assumptions whose specific nomenclature may have been lost in research transit. This further suggests that even though these studies did not specifically utilise any theory in their research endeavour, certain theoretical perspectives were implied in them.

### **Emerging Trends in Family Communication Research**

The study shows that the survey method has assumed a predominant position among the methods of data collection employed in family communication research. Over 70% of the journal articles reviewed for this study adopted the survey method while over 60% of the reviewed theses also adopted the survey method. A few of the

reviewed studies however adopted the mixed method approach in collecting data.

The preponderant sampling technique adopted by researchers in the reviewed studies was the convenience sampling. This was followed hard by the purposive sampling and the simple random sampling techniques respectively. This makes it difficult for one to make any categorical assumptions on the preferred sampling techniques in family communication research. It only suggests that the nature of a study and the goal it seeks to accomplish determines the sampling technique it will adopt.

On data analysis methods, most of the journal articles and dissertations reviewed for this study employed multiple methods in analysing data with the exception of a few that employed just one method. Terrell (2012) opines that the mixed method approach to data collection and data analysis is useful for the “confirmation, corroboration and cross-validation” (p.268) of research findings. Also on theoretical underpinnings, result from the review showed that just a handful of the reviewed studies applied specific theories in their research while majority of the studies were strictly driven by literature. It was however observed that the studies which were driven only by literature implied the assumptions of certain theoretical perspectives in their discoveries and conclusions.

## **Conclusion**

This study attempted to examine the research methodologies employed in family communication research over the last ten years. Doing this, it discussed the methods of data collection, sampling techniques, methods of data analysis and the theoretical underpinnings in family communication research. Almost all the studies reviewed for this study adopted the mixed-method approach. This is the combination of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to any research endeavour. This method is gaining popularity among scholars for its usefulness in “data integration” (Terrell, 2012, p. 260). Much as family communication research is not new in Nigeria, it was observed from the review that research endeavours in family communication here have focused more on the communication of sexual and reproductive health issues, and parenting styles as major causes of conflict in parent-adolescent relationships. The study therefore recommends the extension of the research lens on family communication and parent-adolescent relations to other variables beyond this scope.

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