



Research Article

Voices of Mothers: A Qualitative Interview Study of Interpersonal Communication Cues in Mother-Daughter Interactions in South-South Nigeria

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About Article

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ABSTRACT

While survey research can establish whether maternal interpersonal communication cues are statistically associated with girl-child developmental outcomes, it cannot fully capture how mothers themselves understand, enact, and reflect on their communicative practices. This paper reports the qualitative, in-depth interview component of a broader mixed-methods study of interpersonal communication cues in mother-daughter interactions in South-South Nigeria. Six mothers who were members of the Parent-Teachers Association, purposively selected from one government-owned and one private girls' secondary school in each of Delta, Edo, and Bayelsa States, were interviewed using a semi-structured guide covering verbal and non-verbal communication, empathetic listening, consistency, cultural value transmission, and communication on sensitive topics. Interviews lasted 30-45 minutes, were audio-recorded with consent, and were analysed using thematic content analysis. Nine themes emerged: the nature of the mother-daughter relationship; use of verbal and non-verbal cues; the influence of verbal communication on behaviour; non-verbal communication and emotional well-being; empathetic listening and trust; consistency of communication and self-esteem; cultural communication and moral values; communication on sensitive topics; and general reflections on mother-daughter communication. Mothers described predominantly warm, trust-based relationships in which verbal advice shaped daughters' behavioural choices and non-verbal cues such as tone, touch, and facial expression regulated daughters' emotional security. However, mothers also acknowledged a persistent gap around sensitive topics such as menstruation and relationships, where cultural taboo and adolescent shyness limited disclosure even in relationships mothers otherwise described as open and trusting. The study concludes that maternal communication operates as a rich, culturally embedded, and largely intentional practice, but one whose reach into the most sensitive domains of girl-child development remains constrained by forces beyond the dyad itself, and it offers recommendations for strengthening mothers' capacity to communicate on sensitive subjects.

INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal communication cues, encompassing verbal and non-verbal signals, are fundamental in shaping mother-child interactions. These cues, ranging from spoken language to facial expressions, gestures, and even silence, serve as foundational elements through which children interpret their environment and learn social norms (Ijeoma & Adewale, 2021). In South-South Nigeria, where cultural traditions and communal living remain prevalent, the subtleties of maternal communication play a crucial role in transmitting values, beliefs, and expectations to the girl-child, and can either reinforce or challenge prevailing societal expectations placed upon her (Salami, 2022). Quantitative survey instruments can efficiently establish the prevalence of specific communication behaviours and test their statistical association with developmental outcomes across large samples, but they are less well suited to capturing how mothers themselves interpret, justify, and adapt their communicative choices in practice, or to surfacing the tacit cultural logics that shape what is said, what is left unsaid, and why. This paper addresses that gap by reporting the qualitative, in-depth interview component of a broader mixed-methods study, giving direct voice to mothers' own accounts of how they communicate with their daughters and what they believe that communication accomplishes.

Statement of the Problem

Mother-child interactions play a crucial role in shaping children's psychological, emotional, and social development, with interpersonal communication cues serving as key channels for transmitting values, knowledge, and behavioural expectations. Existing Nigerian scholarship on this subject

has tended to rely heavily on quantitative, questionnaire-based methods that describe the frequency and perceived effect of communication behaviours but rarely allow mothers to explain, in their own words, the reasoning, cultural grounding, and lived difficulty behind their communicative choices, particularly on sensitive subjects such as sexuality and reproductive health. Without qualitative evidence of this kind, interventions designed to strengthen maternal communication risk being built on an incomplete understanding of mothers' actual experience, constraints, and intentions.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this qualitative interview study was to explore, from the perspective of mothers themselves, how interpersonal communication cues are used and understood in mother-daughter interactions in South-South Nigeria, and how mothers perceive the influence of these cues on their daughters' behavioural, emotional, and moral development. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Explore mothers' descriptions of the nature and quality of their relationships with their daughters.
2. Examine how mothers describe and justify their use of verbal and non-verbal communication cues.
3. Understand mothers' perceptions of how their communication shapes daughters' behaviour, emotional well-being, and self-esteem.
4. Explore how mothers use communication to transmit cultural and moral values to their daughters.
5. Investigate mothers' experiences and challenges in discussing sensitive topics with their daughters.

Research Questions

1. How do mothers describe the nature of their relationships with their daughters?
2. How do mothers use and justify verbal and non-verbal communication cues in interactions with their daughters?
3. How do mothers perceive the influence of their communication on daughters' behaviour, emotional well-being, and self-esteem?
4. How do mothers use communication to transmit cultural and moral values?
5. What experiences and challenges do mothers report in discussing sensitive topics with their daughters?

Significance of the Study

This study contributes an in-depth, mother-centred account that complements survey-based findings on the same population, offering richer insight into the reasoning and cultural logic behind maternal communication practices in South-South Nigeria. For practitioners designing parenting or family-life interventions, the findings clarify not only what mothers do but why, and where they themselves recognise their communication falls short, particularly around sensitive topics. Academically, the study extends Symbolic Interactionism, Gender Schema Theory, and Ecological Systems Theory into a qualitative register capable of capturing meaning-making processes that categorical survey items cannot fully represent.

Literature Review

Interpersonal Communication in Family Contexts

Interpersonal communication cues include spoken words, tone of voice, body language, facial expressions, eye contact, and physical

touch used by mothers in their interactions with their daughters (Ijeoma & Adewale, 2021). Non-verbal communication is integral to mother-child interactions in Nigeria, often conveying emotions and intentions more powerfully than words, with toddlers learning culturally accepted non-verbal behaviours from an early age (Adekunle & Adebayo, 2020). Research demonstrates that mothers' communication style relates to a range of developmental outcomes, including academic motivation (Akinyemi, 2021), self-esteem and confidence (Eze & Okonkwo, 2022), and, mediated by maternal literacy, even child health outcomes (Eze & Okafor, 2022).

Religious beliefs and practices further shape maternal communication in South-South Nigeria, where many families draw on Christian or traditional teachings emphasising obedience, modesty, and moral integrity, transmitted through storytelling, parables, and prayer (Okafor & Ibekwe, 2020). While this can add moral weight to maternal guidance, it may also constrain openness on topics considered culturally sensitive, such as sexuality (Uche & Otaigbe, 2021).

Qualitative and Mixed-Methods Evidence on Mother-Daughter Communication

A study in Ogun State examined the influence of mother-daughter interpersonal communication on the sexual behaviour of teenage girls and found that quality communication between mothers and daughters could reduce risky sexual behaviours among adolescents (Bamidele et al., 2021). A broader review of parent-child communication on sexuality and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa emphasised the importance of open, sustained

communication between parents and children in promoting healthy sexual behaviours, while also documenting the persistence of cultural taboo as a barrier to full openness (Obinna et al., 2020). In Kenya, Akinyi and Ochieng (2022) found that maternal communication about menstruation and puberty carried direct implications for girls' educational continuity, underscoring the practical stakes of the communicative gaps mothers themselves describe. Within Nigeria specifically, Chukwu (2021) examined gender socialisation in South-South Nigeria, finding that mother-daughter communication plays a central role in reinforcing or challenging traditional gender roles, while Edeh and Nwachukwu (2023) documented the role of extended family members in shaping girl-child upbringing alongside, and sometimes in tension with, maternal communication. Okafor et al. (2022) found that maternal communication style significantly affects girl-child confidence in Nigerian samples, a finding directly echoed in the present study's interview data. Collectively, this literature establishes that maternal communication in South-South Nigeria is culturally embedded, generally well-intentioned, and descriptively influential, while leaving open questions about how mothers themselves experience and explain the limits of that influence — questions this qualitative study addresses directly.

The Value of Mothers' Own Accounts

A recurring limitation across the quantitative literature reviewed above is that it typically measures outcomes as reported by daughters, or by researchers observing coded behaviour, rather than eliciting mothers' own understanding of their communicative intentions and constraints. Yet mothers are not passive transmitters of communicative

stimuli; as the interview data presented in Section 5 demonstrate, they actively select, calibrate, and justify specific verbal and non-verbal strategies according to their own theories of what will be effective for a given purpose — correction, reassurance, or moral instruction. Eze and Okonkwo (2022) similarly argue that understanding the communicative intentions behind maternal behaviour, and not merely its measurable frequency, is necessary for a complete account of how interpersonal communication shapes adolescent girls' self-esteem. This gap in the literature — between behaviour as measured and intention as experienced — is precisely what the in-depth interview method employed in this study is designed to address.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws primarily on Symbolic Interactionism, associated with Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969), which holds that meaning is created and negotiated through symbols exchanged in social interaction. This framework is particularly well suited to qualitative interview data because it treats mothers' own accounts of what their words and gestures mean, and how they believe their daughters interpret them, as substantively important data rather than as an imperfect proxy for objectively measurable behaviour. Cooley's (1902) concept of the looking-glass self and Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical perspective further inform the analysis of how mothers describe shaping their daughters' emerging self-concept through repeated interaction. The study also draws on Gender Schema Theory (Bem, 1981), which helps interpret mothers' accounts of the specific values and behaviours they consciously reinforce through communication, and Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which helps situate mothers' own

descriptions of the constraints — extended family expectations, cultural taboo, school environment — that shape what they can and cannot communicate within the dyad alone. Together, these three theories provide complementary lenses for interpreting the nine themes that emerged from the interview data, presented in Section 5.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This paper reports the qualitative component of a broader mixed-methods study. In-depth interviews were adopted because they allowed the researcher to explore open-ended questions and afford mothers the opportunity to share detailed, reflective perspectives on interpersonal dynamics that a closed-ended questionnaire could not adequately capture. This approach was intended to surface the more complex and nuanced dimensions of mother-daughter communication, complementing the statistical patterns identified through the study's parallel survey.

Area of Study and Participants

The study focused on the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, specifically Delta, Edo, and Bayelsa States, a region whose ethnic diversity — including the Urhobo,

Isoko, Itsekiri, Bini, and Ijaw peoples — blends traditional and modern values that significantly shape family communication patterns. Participants were mothers of senior secondary school girls who were members of the Parent-Teachers Association in selected schools, chosen for their unique position within family settings and their capacity to reflect in depth on mother-daughter communication.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The qualitative sample comprised six mothers, purposively selected to represent one government-owned and one private girls' secondary school in each of the three states (Delta, Edo, and Bayelsa), yielding two participants per state and six interviews in total. Purposive sampling was used because mothers who were active Parent-Teachers Association members were considered the most knowledgeable informants on family communication patterns within the study's scope. Six interviews were deemed adequate for thematic saturation given the participants were strategically selected across diverse school types (government and private) and geographic contexts. Table 1 summarises the composition of the interview sample.

Table 1

Profile of In-Depth Interview Participants (N = 6)

Participant	State	School Type	Role
P1	Delta	Government-owned school	Mother, PTA member
P2	Delta	Private school	Mother, PTA member
P3	Edo	Government-owned school	Mother, PTA member
P4	Edo	Private school	Mother, PTA member
P5	Bayelsa	Government-owned school	Mother, PTA member
P6	Bayelsa	Private school	Mother, PTA member

Instrument and Data Collection

Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide covering background information, use of interpersonal communication cues, verbal communication and behavioural development, non-verbal cues and emotional well-being, empathetic listening and trust, consistency of communication and self-esteem, cultural communication practices and moral values, communication on sensitive topics, and general reflections. The open-ended format allowed flexibility and detailed responses. Each interview lasted 30-45 minutes and was held at a convenient, private location. With participants' consent, sessions were audio-recorded and supported with detailed notes to capture both verbal content and non-verbal cues for subsequent transcription and analysis.

Validity and Trustworthiness

Face and content validity of the interview guide were established through expert review: the initial draft was presented to experts in Communication Studies, Educational Psychology, and Health Education, who assessed each item for clarity, ambiguity, and relevance to the study's objectives, with feedback informing revisions that improved the guide's overall comprehensibility. The guide was also pre-tested in a pilot exercise in a socio-culturally similar but geographically distinct area prior to full-scale data collection, allowing necessary adjustments to be made in advance.

Method of Data Analysis

Interview responses were transcribed verbatim and analysed using thematic content analysis. The researcher read through the transcripts multiple times to gain a deep

understanding of the content, then assigned codes to recurring themes, patterns, and categories relating to interpersonal communication styles, communication barriers, and observed effects on daughters' behaviour and development. Emerging themes were used to contextualise and interpret the findings, and were subsequently triangulated with the quantitative survey strand of the broader study to identify areas of convergence and divergence between mothers' self-reports and daughters' own survey responses.

Trustworthiness and Reflexivity

Several measures were taken to strengthen the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings. Credibility was supported through the use of a piloted, expert-reviewed interview guide and through triangulation with the study's parallel survey data, allowing convergence and divergence between mothers' and daughters' accounts to be identified rather than assumed. Confirmability was supported by maintaining detailed interview notes alongside audio recordings, allowing the researcher to cross-check interpretive coding decisions against the original transcripts. Transferability, rather than statistical generalisability, was the qualitative standard applied to the findings: the deliberate selection of mothers across government and private schools and across three culturally distinct states was intended to maximise the range of perspectives captured, though the six-participant sample means findings should be read as illustrative of the range of maternal communicative experience in this context rather than as representative of all mothers in South-South Nigeria. The researcher maintained a neutral, non-judgmental stance throughout data collection, particularly given the sensitivity of some

topics discussed, to minimise social-desirability pressure on participants' responses.

Findings: Thematic Analysis of In-Depth Interviews

Nine themes emerged from the thematic analysis of the six interviews, summarised in

Table 2 and discussed in turn below. Figure 1 maps these nine themes onto the three theoretical lenses guiding the study, illustrating how the interview data speak to symbolic meaning-making, cultural and gender-schema reinforcement, and the broader relational and ecological context of mother-daughter communication.

Table 2

Summary of Interview Themes with Illustrative Quotes

#	Theme	Illustrative Quote	Participant(s)
1	Nature of the mother-daughter relationship	<i>"She is my only daughter, so we share a very friendly, open bond."</i>	P2
2	Use of verbal and non-verbal cues	<i>"I talk to her directly most times because I believe clarity is important."</i>	P1
3	Influence of verbal communication on behaviour	<i>"My advice about friends really helped her choose better company."</i>	P1
4	Non-verbal communication and emotional well-being	<i>"My tone of voice makes a big difference — if I am calm, she is calm too."</i>	P2
5	Empathetic listening and trust	<i>"I always listen when she has a problem, and she trusts me with her secrets."</i>	P1
6	Consistency of communication and self-esteem	<i>"Daily heart-to-heart talks make her proud and confident."</i>	P3
7	Cultural communication and moral values	<i>"I use Igbo proverbs and stories to warn my daughter about life's challenges. She learns values through them."</i>	P6
8	Communication on sensitive topics	<i>"Talking about relationships is still hard because of cultural taboos."</i>	P5
9	General reflections on mother-daughter communication	<i>"It is the foundation of raising responsible children."</i>	P1

Figure 1: Thematic Map of the Nine Interview Themes Clustered by Theoretical Lens

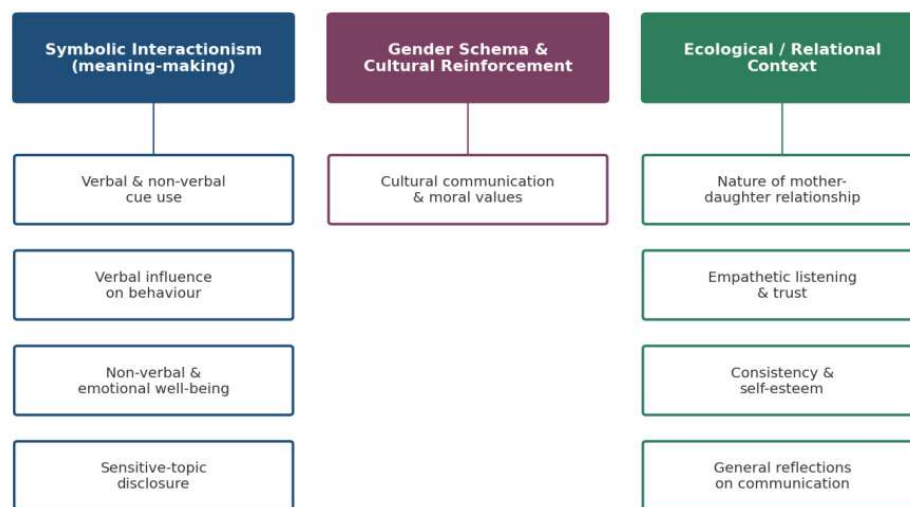


Figure 1. Thematic map of the nine interview themes clustered by theoretical lens.

Theme 1: Nature of the Mother-Daughter Relationship

Participants described their relationships with their daughters as generally warm, close, and supportive, with several emphasising friendship-like bonds. One mother explained, “She is my only daughter, so we share a very friendly, open bond” (P2), while another highlighted closeness alongside growing independence: “My daughter is in SS3, she is quite independent, but she still trusts me a lot” (P6). Overall, mothers portrayed their daughters as receptive and respectful, a relational foundation they saw as enabling effective communication.

Theme 2: Use of Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication Cues

Mothers reported employing both verbal and non-verbal cues, though in varying proportions and for different purposes. Some emphasised direct verbal communication: “I talk to her directly most times because I believe clarity is important” (P1). Others leaned more heavily on non-verbal cues: “For me, I use non-verbal more, like hugging or smiling, because it shows emotions better”

(P2). A balanced approach was also described: “It depends. I use verbal when I correct her, but non-verbal like eye contact when I want to reassure her” (P4), suggesting that mothers deliberately select cue types to match communicative purpose — correction versus reassurance.

Theme 3: Influence of Verbal Communication on Behaviour

Verbal advice was consistently described as shaping daughters' behavioural outcomes. One participant reflected, “My advice about friends really helped her choose better company” (P1), while another noted, “When I encouraged her to focus on studies, she actually improved her grades” (P3). Moral lessons were similarly reinforced verbally: “I keep reminding her about respect, and I have noticed she shows that more at school” (P2). These accounts underline mothers' perception that spoken words carry direct, traceable behavioural consequences.

Theme 4: Non-Verbal Communication and Emotional Well-Being

Non-verbal signals were described as strongly

shaping daughters' emotional states, with positive cues promoting security and negative cues provoking distress. One mother explained, "When I smile or hug her, she feels pleased and secure" (P1), while another highlighted the role of vocal tone: "My tone of voice makes a big difference — if I am calm, she is calm too" (P2). Notably, the absence of communication was itself described as emotionally significant: "Silence sometimes makes her worried; she keeps asking what's wrong" (P3), indicating that daughters actively monitor and interpret even the withholding of non-verbal engagement.

Theme 5: Empathetic Listening and Trust

Empathetic listening was identified as central to trust-building. Mothers described specific listening behaviours intended to demonstrate attentiveness: "I nod, make eye contact, and respond calmly so she knows I am listening" (P3). Trust was described as an outcome of this practice: "I always listen when she has a problem, and she trusts me with her secrets" (P1). However, mothers also acknowledged limits: "She talks to me sometimes, but fear can stop her from opening up fully" (P5), suggesting that listening, while necessary, did not always guarantee complete disclosure.

Theme 6: Consistency of Communication and Self-Esteem

Frequent, regular conversation was closely tied by mothers to their daughters' self-esteem. One mother observed, "Daily heart-to-heart talks make her proud and confident" (P3), while another noted, "Whenever I listen to her consistently, she feels valued" (P4). The converse pattern was also reported: "When communication drops, she becomes more insecure" (P6), underscoring consistency, rather than any single conversation, as the

variable mothers perceived as most consequential for their daughters' self-perception.

Theme 7: Cultural Communication and Moral Values

Cultural and moral teachings were described as intentionally embedded within everyday interaction. Mothers reported emphasising honesty, respect, and modesty: "I emphasise honesty and modesty in our talks" (P1); "Respect for elders is what I stress most" (P2). Others focused on protective moral guidance: "I teach her to avoid bad friends and stay sexually pure" (P5). One mother summarised the cultural mechanism directly: "I use Igbo proverbs and stories to warn my daughter about life's challenges. She learns values through them" (P6), illustrating storytelling and proverb as a deliberate, culturally rooted communicative strategy for intergenerational value transfer.

Theme 8: Communication on Sensitive Topics

Mothers' comfort discussing sensitive issues varied considerably. Some described relative ease: "I am comfortable discussing menstruation with her" (P1). Others reported clear barriers: "Sometimes she feels shy, so it is not easy" (P2); "Talking about relationships is still hard because of cultural taboos" (P5). Despite these challenges, mothers described active efforts to signal openness: "I always tell her she can talk to me, even about private matters" (P6). This theme surfaced the clearest tension in the data, between mothers' stated intention to be approachable and the persistent cultural and developmental barriers that constrained their daughters' willingness to initiate such conversations.

Theme 9: General Reflections on Mother-Daughter Communication

All participants emphasised the overarching significance of communication in raising a responsible girl-child. One mother summarised, “It is the foundation of raising responsible children” (P1), while another stressed its role in moral formation: “Without communication, you can't guide their values” (P2). Practical advice offered across the group converged on a shared principle: “Be patient, listen, and combine words with actions” (All), suggesting a broadly shared philosophy of communication as an integrated verbal-behavioural practice rather than words alone.

Discussion of Findings

Read through Symbolic Interactionism (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969), the interview data illustrate with unusual clarity how mothers understand their own communicative acts as meaning-laden symbols rather than neutral information transfer: a hug is chosen specifically because 'it shows emotions better' (P2), and calm tone is deployed deliberately because daughters are perceived to mirror it (P2). This is consistent with Cooley's (1902) looking-glass self, in which mothers appear to intuitively understand that their reactions become the mirror through which daughters develop self-concept — captured directly in P4's account of daily conversation making a daughter 'feel valued.'

Read through Gender Schema Theory (Bem, 1981), Theme 7 is particularly revealing: mothers describe deliberately using proverbs and storytelling to transmit specific, culturally sanctioned values — honesty, respect, modesty, and, in one case, explicit guidance toward 'sexual purity' (P5) — indicating conscious, intentional schema-shaping rather than incidental socialisation. This

corroborates the quantitative finding, reported in the companion survey paper from this study, that honesty and respect for elders were the two most emphasised values transmitted through maternal communication, and it adds interpretive depth by showing precisely which communicative vehicles (proverb, story, direct instruction) mothers use to accomplish this transmission.

Read through Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), Theme 8 offers the most theoretically consequential finding of the study. Even mothers who described themselves elsewhere in the interview as attentive, empathetic listeners acknowledged that sensitive topics remained difficult to discuss, attributing this not to their own communicative failure but to their daughters' shyness and to broader 'cultural taboos' (P5) operating beyond the immediate mother-daughter dyad. This qualitative finding directly illuminates the companion survey study's counterintuitive result that empathetic listening did not statistically predict willingness to discuss sensitive topics: the interview data suggest this is not because listening is ineffective, but because disclosure on these specific topics is additionally gated by macrosystem-level cultural norms that operate largely independently of any individual mother's listening skill (Uche & Otaigbe, 2021; Okafor & Ibekwe, 2020).

Taken together, the nine themes suggest a coherent, if imperfect, model of maternal communicative practice: mothers deliberately deploy verbal and non-verbal cues as meaningful symbols (Theme 2), which they perceive as shaping behaviour (Theme 3) and emotional security (Theme 4) most effectively when delivered consistently (Theme 6) within a trusting relational foundation (Theme 1) built partly through empathetic listening

(Theme 5). This communicative practice is further used as a vehicle for intentional cultural and moral transmission (Theme 7). However, its reach is bounded at the frontier of culturally sensitive topics (Theme 8), a boundary that mothers themselves recognise and describe, even as they affirm communication's foundational importance to responsible girl-child upbringing overall (Theme 9).

Implications for Theory

Beyond its empirical contribution, this study's findings carry implications for how Symbolic Interactionism, Gender Schema Theory, and Ecological Systems Theory are applied to family communication research in Nigerian contexts. The interview data suggest that these three theories are not merely convenient post-hoc interpretive lenses but map onto distinctions mothers themselves appear to draw intuitively in their own accounts: mothers distinguish, without prompting, between communication intended to convey immediate meaning (Theme 2, aligning with Symbolic Interactionism), communication intended to transmit durable values (Theme 7, aligning with Gender Schema Theory), and communication whose effectiveness they perceive as bounded by forces outside the dyad (Theme 8, aligning with Ecological Systems Theory). This alignment between researcher-imposed theoretical categories and participants' own implicit distinctions lends a measure of ecological validity to the theoretical framework adopted in this broader study, suggesting that these three theories, taken together, may capture dimensions of maternal communicative experience that are meaningful to Nigerian mothers themselves rather than being externally imposed academic categories with limited resonance

in the lived context under study.

Conclusion

This qualitative interview study explored, through the accounts of six mothers across Delta, Edo, and Bayelsa States, how interpersonal communication cues are used and understood within mother-daughter relationships in South-South Nigeria. The nine themes that emerged depict maternal communication as an intentional, symbolically rich, and culturally embedded practice: mothers consciously select verbal and non-verbal cues to correct, reassure, and morally instruct their daughters, and they perceive consistency and empathetic listening as central to building the trust that underpins effective communication. At the same time, mothers themselves identify a clear limit to this practice: communication on sensitive topics such as menstruation and relationships remains difficult, constrained by cultural taboo and adolescent shyness rather than by any single deficiency in maternal listening or intention. The study concludes that maternal communication in this context should be understood not as a simple, uniformly effective transmission channel, but as a practice that succeeds robustly in some developmental domains while facing structurally rooted limits in others — a nuance that complements and helps explain the statistical patterns identified in the study's parallel survey component.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Family-life and parenting programmes should build on mothers' existing strengths — intentional verbal guidance, consistent engagement, and culturally rooted storytelling — rather

than treating maternal communication as a deficit to be corrected from scratch.

2. Given that mothers themselves identify cultural taboo, rather than their own listening capacity, as the primary barrier to discussing sensitive topics, interventions should explicitly address community-level cultural norms alongside individual maternal communication skills.
3. Mothers should be supported in developing explicit, repeated verbal assurances of non-judgment specifically around sensitive topics, since the interview data suggest that general empathetic listening does not automatically transfer to daughters' willingness to initiate such conversations.
4. Schools and Parent-Teachers Associations, already a source of engaged, articulate mothers as demonstrated by this study's sample, represent a natural platform for peer-to-peer sharing of successful communicative strategies, such as the use of proverb and storytelling for values transmission.
5. Future qualitative research should extend this interview approach to daughters themselves, allowing direct comparison between mothers' self-reported communicative intentions and daughters' own interpretation and reception of the same communicative acts.

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