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Family Communication Patterns and School Dropout Intention: The Mediating Role of Academic Resilience among Cambodian High School Students

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Abstract - Family communication patterns play a critical role in shaping adolescents' educational experiences and decisions. This study examines the relationship between family communication patterns and school dropout intention, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of academic resilience among high school students in Cambodia. A quantitative survey was conducted with 243 students selected through simple random sampling, measuring conversation orientation, conformity orientation, academic resilience, and school dropout intention. The findings reveal that family communication patterns significantly influence both academic resilience and students' intention to leave school. Academic resilience mediates the relationships between both dimensions of family communication patterns and school dropout intention, highlighting its role as a key psychological mechanism linking family communication processes to educational outcomes. This study extends the application of family communication patterns theory by demonstrating its relevance in a non-Western, collectivist context and by integrating academic resilience as a mediating construct. It further underscores how culturally embedded family communication practices shape students' capacity to persist in school. The findings offer interdisciplinary insights for education, social, and communication research, while providing practical implications for educators, policymakers, and families in addressing school dropout intention through strengthened communication and resilience-building strategies.

Keywords: Family communication patterns, conversation orientation, conformity orientation, academic resilience, school dropout intention, high school students, Cambodia

1. Introduction

School dropout remains a critical global issue with significant consequences for individuals and societies. According to UNESCO (2023), approximately 64 million primary school students worldwide, particularly girls in developing countries, are out of school. In Cambodia, dropout persists among marginalized groups, including ethnic minorities, rural populations, and female students (Ravet & Mtika, 2021), with nearly 55% of adolescents leaving school before the age of 17 (Vicheka, 2021). School dropout is often preceded by dropout intention, which develops when students encounter ongoing academic, social, or familial challenges.

Family factors are widely recognized as central to adolescents' educational outcomes. Limited parental support, weak communication, and low involvement in schooling increase students' likelihood of intending to leave school (Baalman et al., 2022; Cheng et al., 2017). These dynamics are particularly salient in collectivist communities such as the Cham Muslims, where family expectations strongly shape children's educational experiences. In such contexts, social norms and domestic responsibilities may contribute to early school withdrawal, especially among girls (Imron, 2020).

Family Communication Patterns (FCP) theory provides a useful framework for understanding these dynamics. It distinguishes between conversation orientation, which encourages open dialogue, and conformity orientation, which emphasizes obedience and uniformity (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). Research indicates that conversation orientation is associated with greater academic motivation, engagement, and lower academic stress (Badamian et al., 2023; Sutedjo & Kristanto, 2024), whereas conformity orientation may increase pressure and negatively affect academic outcomes (Waruwu & Harefa, 2023; Garcia & Serra, 2019). Since academic stress is a key predictor of school dropout intention (Guo & Huh, 2023), these patterns may play an important role in shaping students' decisions to remain in or leave school. However, most studies focus on academic achievement rather than dropout intention and are largely based on Western contexts, limiting their applicability to collectivist and religious settings.

Academic resilience is another key factor influencing students' persistence in education. It refers to the ability to achieve academic success despite adversity (Rudd et al., 2021) and is consistently associated with lower dropout intention (Pertegal-Felices et al., 2022; Garcia-Martinez et al., 2022). Resilient students are better able to cope with stress, adapt to academic demands, and maintain engagement. In Southeast Asian and Muslim contexts like Indonesia, resilience is also shaped by social and spiritual dimensions. For instance, family support and religious values such as *Tawakkul* function as important coping resources, indicating that resilience is both relational and culturally embedded (Kumalasari, 2023).

Emerging research suggests that family communication patterns may influence dropout intention indirectly through academic resilience. Conversation-oriented environments foster emotional support and adaptive coping, thereby strengthening resilience and reducing academic stress (Akbari et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2019). In contrast, conformity-oriented environments may restrict autonomy and hinder coping development, leading to lower resilience and increased vulnerability to dropout-related behaviours (Qiu et al., 2022; Zarie et al., 2021). Nevertheless, these relationships have largely been examined indirectly through outcomes such as test anxiety and academic concerns, with limited direct evidence linking family communication patterns, academic resilience, and school dropout intention.

This gap is particularly evident in Cambodia, where research has primarily focused on the majority population, with limited attention to minority groups such as the Cham community (Hayashi, 2022). The expansion of Islamic boarding schools has further shaped students' educational experiences by integrating religious and secular learning (Sman, 2021), while also presenting challenges related to adjustment and separation from family (Masrifah et al., 2024).

Accordingly, this study investigates school dropout intention among students at Norol Iman Chroy Metry High School (NICHS), an Islamic boarding school in Cambodia. It examines the relationships between conversation orientation, conformity orientation, academic resilience, and school dropout intention, as well as the mediating role of academic resilience. By doing so, the study contributes to the limited literature on minority education and provides a culturally grounded understanding of how family communication shapes students' educational outcomes.

The following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Conversation orientation is negatively associated with school dropout intention.

H2: Conformity orientation is positively associated with school dropout intention.

H3: Academic resilience is negatively associated with school dropout intention.

H4: Conversation orientation is positively associated with academic resilience.

H5: Conformity orientation is negatively associated with academic resilience.

H6: Academic resilience negatively mediates the relationship between conversation orientation and school dropout intention.

H7: Academic resilience positively mediates the relationship between conformity orientation and school dropout intention.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the relationships among family communication patterns (FCP), academic resilience, and school dropout intention. Quantitative

methods are appropriate for testing hypotheses and analysing relationships between predefined variables using statistical techniques (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). This approach was selected as it enables objective measurement and supports the identification of statistically significant patterns across a larger population.

A cross-sectional survey design was utilised to collect data at a single point in time. This method is suitable for examining associations among variables efficiently and within a limited timeframe (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). It also allows for the testing of the proposed mediation model involving academic resilience in the relationship between FCP and school dropout intention.

2.2 Participants and Sampling

This study was conducted among students of Norol Iman Chroy Metry High School (NICHS) in Kandal province, Cambodia. NICHS is a female Islamic boarding school offering education from Grade 7 to Grade 12, with a total population of 491 students. The school was selected due to its relatively high dropout rate, with approximately 40% of students not completing their studies, making it a relevant context for examining school dropout intention.

A simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure that all students had an equal chance of selection (Noor et al., 2022). The minimum sample size was determined using G*Power (effect size = 0.15, α = 0.05, power = 0.80), yielding 68 participants. However, based on the Krejcie and Morgan table for a population of 491, a sample size of 217 was required. To account for potential data issues, a total of 245 students were selected and surveyed. Participants were randomly chosen using Research Randomizer based on a complete student list. Eligible respondents were female students aged between 12 and 18 years with living parents.

2.3 Measures

Data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire consisting of four sections: (A) demographic information, (B) family communication patterns (conversation and conformity orientations), (C) academic resilience, and (D) school dropout intention. All main variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale.

Conversation orientation (15 items, α = .89) and conformity orientation (11 items, α = .79) were adapted from Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002). Academic resilience was measured using six items from Martin and Marsh (2006) (α = .90), while school dropout intention was assessed using eight items adapted from Ekornes (2021) (α = .83). All scales demonstrated acceptable to high internal reliability, exceeding the recommended threshold of .70 (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014).

Prior to the main data collection, the instrument was pilot-tested with 36 students from a comparable Islamic boarding school to ensure clarity and reliability. No items were removed, as all were found to be clear and appropriate.

2.4 Validity and Reliability

The validity of the measurement instruments was ensured through multiple approaches. Content validity was established by adapting items from previous validated studies (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Martin & Marsh, 2006; Ekornes, 2021) and seeking expert feedback from a communication scholar. The questionnaire was also translated into Khmer and reviewed by a small group of students to ensure clarity and contextual appropriateness. Construct validity was confirmed through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using JAMOVI, assessing both convergent and discriminant validity. Two items from the school dropout intention scale (SDI6 and SDI8) were removed due to low factor loadings (<0.50). All remaining constructs met the recommended thresholds for composite reliability (CR > 0.70) and average variance extracted (AVE > 0.50), and the square root of AVE exceeded inter-construct correlations, indicating good discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2011; Gefen & Staub, 2005).

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. All constructs demonstrated high internal consistency in both the pilot (N = 36) and actual study (N = 243), with α values ranging from 0.79 to 0.90 for the pilot and 0.88 to 0.94 for the actual study. These results confirm that the instruments are both valid and reliable for measuring conversation orientation, conformity orientation, academic resilience, and school dropout intention.

2.5 Data Collection

The data collection was conducted physically at NICH, after pre-testing the questionnaire. A total of 245 students participated, with 243 valid responses retained after data cleaning. Since students are

not allowed to use smartphones, printed questionnaires were distributed class by class, and completing them took approximately 20-30 minutes.

Ethical standards were strictly followed: ethical approval was obtained locally, and formal consent outlining the study’s objectives, voluntary participation, and data confidentiality was secured from the school principal, students’ parents or guardians, and teachers. Students were informed that participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw at any time without repercussions, and that all data would remain confidential and reported in aggregate form only.

2.6 Data Analysis

The collected data were entered into SPSS version 29 and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, summarized the respondents’ demographics and study variables. Zero-order correlation analysis was conducted to examine relationships among variables, while multiple linear regression determined the unique contribution of predictors. To test mediation effects, Hayes’ Process Macro Model 4 was used, allowing for reliable estimation of direct and indirect effects through bootstrapping, consistent with standard practices in behavioural and social sciences (Hayes, 2018).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic and Family Background of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic and family background characteristics of the 243 respondents. The majority of students were aged 12–15 years (58%) and most were enrolled in lower secondary grades (61.7%). A large proportion resided in rural areas (80.2%), and the vast majority communicated with their parents one to three times per week (89.7%).

Regarding family background, nearly all households reported a monthly income of USD 2,000 or less (96.3%). Fathers were primarily educated to the primary or lower secondary level (47.4%), while mothers mostly had primary or Islamic education (57.2% and 21.8%, respectively). Fathers’ main occupation was farming (50.6%), whereas mothers were predominantly housewives (41.6%), with others engaged in farming, business, civil service, or other occupations.

Table 1: Demographic and Family Background of Respondents (N = 243)

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	12-15 years old	141	58.0
	16-19 years old	102	42.0
Grade	Lower secondary (Grades 7-9)	150	61.7
	Upper secondary (Grades 10-12)	93	38.3
Place of Residence	Rural	195	80.2
	Urban	19.8	19.8
Frequency of Communicating with Parents	1-3 times/week	218	89.7
	4+ times/week	25	10.3
Household Income	≤2,000	234	96.3
	>2,000	9	3.7
Father’s Educational Level	Never attended school	40	16.5
	Primary school/lower secondary	109	47.4
	High school	47	19.3
	Bachelor or higher	17	7.0
	Islamic education	30	12.3
Mother’s Educational Level	Never attended school	40	16.5
	Primary school/lower secondary	139	57.2
	High school	9	3.7
	Bachelor or higher	2	0.8
	Islamic education	53	21.8
Father’s Occupation	Farmer	123	50.6
	Civil servant	50	20.6
	Businessman	58	23.9
	Fisherman and others	12	4.9
	Farmer	65	26.7

2

Mother's Occupation	Businesswoman	45	18.5
	Housewife	101	41.6
	Civil servant and others	32	13.1

3.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the key variables. Among the variables, conformity orientation recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.56$), followed by academic resilience ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.73$) and conversation orientation ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.65$), indicating generally moderate to relatively high levels among respondents. In contrast, school dropout intention had a comparatively lower mean score ($M = 2.14$, $SD = 0.73$), suggesting a lower tendency among students to consider leaving school.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables (N = 243)

Variable	Mean	SD
Conversation Orientation	3.09	0.65
Conformity Orientation	3.42	0.56
Academic Resilience	3.23	0.73
School Dropout Intention	2.14	0.73

3.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 3 presents the zero-order correlations among the study variables. Conversation orientation was positively and significantly associated with academic resilience ($r = .78$, $p < .01$) and negatively related to school dropout intention ($r = -.65$, $p < .01$). In contrast, conformity orientation was negatively associated with academic resilience ($r = -.56$, $p < .01$) and positively related to school dropout intention ($r = .60$, $p < .01$). Academic resilience was also negatively correlated with school dropout intention ($r = -.62$, $p < .01$). Overall, the results show significant relationships among all variables.

Table 3: Zero-Order Correlations Among Variables (N = 243)

Variables	1	2	3	4
Conversation orientation	-			
Conformity orientation	-.56**	-		
Academic resilience	.78**	-.56**	-	
School dropout intention	-.65**	.60**	-.62**	-

Note. $p < .01$

3.4 Regression Analysis

Table 4 summarizes the regression analyses. Conversation orientation significantly and negatively predicted school dropout intention ($\beta = -.73$, $p < .001$), whereas conformity orientation showed a significant positive effect ($\beta = .77$, $p < .001$). Academic resilience also negatively predicted school dropout intention ($\beta = -.62$, $p < .001$).

In addition, conversation orientation was a strong positive predictor of academic resilience ($\beta = .78$, $p < .001$), while conformity orientation negatively predicted academic resilience ($\beta = -.73$, $p < .001$). Overall, the findings indicate that conversation orientation enhances academic resilience and reduces dropout intention, whereas conformity orientation shows the opposite.

Table 4: Regression Analyses Predicting School Dropout Intention and Academic Resilience (N = 243)

Panel A: Predicting School Dropout Intention

Predictor	β	R ²	R	t	p
Conversation orientation	-.73	.42	174.03	-13.19	<. 001
Conformity orientation	.77	.36	134.72	11.61	<. 001
Academic resilience	-.62	.39	152.37	-12.34	<. 001

Panel B: Predicting Academic Resilience

Predictor	β	R ²	R	t	p
Conversation orientation	.78	.60	362.87	19.05	<. 001
Conformity orientation	-.73	.32	111.54	-10.56	<. 001

Note. β = standardized beta coefficient.

3.5 Mediation Analysis

Table 5 presents the mediation analysis results. Academic resilience was found to significantly mediate the relationship between conversation orientation and school dropout intention. Specifically, conversation orientation had a significant negative total effect on school dropout intention ($\beta = -0.73$), which remained significant after including the mediator ($\beta = -0.47$), indicating partial mediation. The indirect effect was also significant ($\beta = -0.26$), with a 95% confidence interval that did not include zero [-0.42, -0.12].

Similarly, academic resilience significantly mediated the relationship between conformity orientation and school dropout intention. Conformity orientation showed a significant positive total effect on school dropout intention ($\beta = 0.77$), which decreased but remained significant in the direct effect ($\beta = 0.47$), suggesting partial mediation. The indirect effect was significant ($\beta = 0.30$), with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero [0.21, 0.41].

Table 5: Mediation Effects of Academic Resilience on the Relationships Between Family Communication Patterns and School Dropout Intention (N = 243)

Path	Total Effect (c)	Direct Effect (c')	Indirect Effect (ab)	95% CI
CVO → AR → SDI	-0.73	-0.47	-0.26	[-0.42, -0.12]
CFO → AR → SDI	0.77	0.47	0.30	[0.21, 0.41]

4. Discussion

This study found that family communication patterns significantly influence school dropout intention, with conversation orientation and conformity orientation exerting contrasting effects. Specifically, conversation orientation was negatively associated with dropout intention, while conformity orientation showed a positive relationship. These findings support Family Communication Patterns (FCP) theory and highlight the critical role of family communication in shaping students' educational persistence.

Conversation orientation, characterized by open and supportive communication, appears to reduce students' likelihood of leaving school. Students raised in such environments are encouraged to express concerns, receive emotional support, and develop effective coping strategies, which enhance their academic engagement and commitment. This finding is consistent with prior research demonstrating that parental guidance and open communication foster motivation, academic engagement, and long-term educational aspirations (Badamian et al., 2023; Rokhmaniyah et al., 2021). Beyond academic motivation, this relationship can be further understood through Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory (Petronio, 2002). In conversation-oriented families, more permeable privacy boundaries allow children to disclose academic and personal concerns, facilitating emotional support and problem-solving. Such supportive disclosure acts as a protective factor against school dropout intention. However, in collectivist contexts, children may still engage in selective disclosure to balance emotional expression with family expectations.

In contrast, conformity orientation is associated with an increased likelihood of school dropout intention. Emphasis on obedience, authority, and strict adherence to family rules may generate psychological pressure, limiting students' autonomy and weakening their academic engagement. This finding aligns with previous studies showing that high parental control is linked to increased stress, depression, and burnout, all of which elevate dropout risk (Alves et al., 2022; Waruwu & Harefa, 2023). In addition, conformity-oriented environments often restrict open communication, making it difficult for students to seek support or express concerns, thereby increasing vulnerability to psychological distress (Berryhill & Smith, 2020; Bekefi et al., 2024). However, the influence of conformity orientation is not entirely uniform. While some degree of parental structure may support adolescents' development, excessive conformity, particularly when it suppresses autonomy and

emotional expression, can become detrimental. This distinction is especially relevant in the context of Cambodian Muslim students in boarding schools, who may experience overlapping pressures from family expectations, academic demands, and cultural or religious obligations. In such contexts, high conformity orientation may intensify internal stress, particularly in the absence of supportive communication environments.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while conversation orientation promotes school retention through emotional support and open communication, conformity orientation may increase dropout risk by constraining autonomy and elevating psychological pressure. Importantly, the effectiveness of these communication patterns is shaped by broader cultural and contextual factors, highlighting the need to consider family dynamics within specific socio-cultural settings.

The findings indicate a significant negative relationship between academic resilience and school dropout intention, indicating that higher resilience reduces students' likelihood of leaving school. This finding highlights the importance of resilience in promoting educational persistence, as resilient students are better able to cope with academic challenges and remain engaged in their studies.

This result is consistent with prior research identifying academic resilience as a negative predictor of dropout intention (Muller et al., 2024). Extending this literature, the present study situates resilience within a socio-cultural and religious context, where it involves not only managing academic demands but also sustaining motivation, emotional regulation, and spiritual grounding. Students with higher resilience demonstrated greater adaptability to setbacks and a stronger commitment to continue their education, consistent with previous findings (Andersen et al., 2021). Moreover, academically resilient students tend to interpret academic stressors more constructively, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth. This reflects the cognitive reappraisal component of resilience, which supports sustained engagement despite difficulties (Komarudin, 2024).

However, resilience is not equally developed among students. Those from less supportive environments, particularly high conformity-oriented families, may have limited access to guidance and emotional support. In addition to family influence, school factors such as peer support, teacher encouragement, and an inclusive climate also play a crucial role in fostering resilience. When academic stress and emotional difficulties are not addressed, the risk of dropout intention increases (Mulaudzi, 2023). Overall, academic resilience emerges as both an individual capacity and a socially shaped process, influenced by family communication, school environment, and cultural context.

Family communication patterns is found to significantly influence academic resilience, with conversation orientation and conformity orientation exerting contrasting effects. Conversation orientation was positively associated with academic resilience, whereas conformity orientation showed a negative relationship.

Conversation orientation, characterized by open and supportive communication, appears to strengthen students' ability to cope with academic challenges. Students raised in such environments are more likely to develop self-efficacy, problem-solving skills, and emotional regulation, enabling them to manage stressors such as poor grades and negative feedback. This finding is supported by prior studies suggesting that open family communication fosters adaptive coping and resilience (McKinley & Lilly, 2022). In addition, involving children in decision-making and encouraging the exchange of ideas promotes autonomy and confidence, which are essential components of resilience (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017; Yang & Wang, 2022). Importantly, this relationship is further shaped by context. For NICHS students, who navigate the demands of a boarding school environment alongside religious and minority identity pressures, conversation orientation functions not only as emotional support but also as a mechanism for cultural adaptation. Open communication allows students to process challenges more effectively, thereby strengthening their resilience.

Conversely, conformity orientation is associated with lower academic resilience. Emphasis on obedience and restricted autonomy may limit the development of independent thinking and problem-solving skills (Akbari et al., 2014; Fard, 2020). Students from such environments often rely on parental direction, which can hinder their ability to cope with academic difficulties independently. This pattern is further reinforced by limited opportunities for emotional expression, as conformity-oriented families tend to restrict open communication. As a result, students may experience higher levels of psychological distress, including depression and low self-esteem, which undermine resilience (Zhan &

You, 2024). These effects may be intensified in boarding school contexts, where students are physically separated from their parents while facing both academic and religious expectations. In the absence of supportive communication, students may struggle to develop key competencies such as emotional regulation, decision-making, and stress management, all of which are essential for academic resilience.

Overall, these findings suggest that while conversation orientation enhances resilience by fostering autonomy, emotional support, and adaptive coping, conformity orientation may hinder resilience by restricting these developmental processes. This highlights the critical role of family communication in shaping students' capacity to cope with academic challenges, particularly within complex socio-cultural environments.

The results suggest that academic resilience mediates the relationship between family communication patterns and school dropout intention, with distinct pathways for conversation orientation and conformity orientation. Specifically, academic resilience negatively mediated the relationship between conversation orientation and dropout intention, while it positively mediated the relationship between conformity orientation and dropout intention.

The findings suggest that students raised in conversation-oriented families develop stronger academic resilience, which in turn reduces their likelihood of leaving school. This finding reinforces the results reported by Akbari et al. (2014) and Hall et al. (2019), who found that conversation orientation enhances coping strategies and emotional support, thereby indirectly reducing academic stress and related outcomes such as test anxiety and academic concerns. In the present study, this pathway is further influenced by contextual factors. For students in boarding school environments, early exposure to open communication equips them with the emotional and cognitive resources needed to navigate academic and social challenges independently. As a result, resilience functions as a protective mechanism, enabling students to maintain engagement despite adversity.

A different pattern emerges for conformity orientation, which operates through an opposing pathway. Students raised in highly conformity-oriented families tend to exhibit lower academic resilience, thereby increasing their vulnerability to school dropout intention. Echoing earlier findings, strict parental control may limit the development of autonomy, problem-solving skills, and adaptive coping (Qiu et al., 2022). As a result, reduced resilience weakens students' capacity to manage academic stress, making them more susceptible to disengagement and withdrawal from school. However, these relationships must be interpreted within their cultural context. Among Muslim students in Cambodian boarding schools, conformity orientation is closely intertwined with values such as *Bir al-Walidain* (obedience to parents). While such values promote discipline and respect, they may also limit emotional expression and autonomy, which are essential for developing resilience. Importantly, this suggests that conformity orientation is not inherently detrimental but context-dependent.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings both support and extend Family Communication Patterns (FCP) theory. While the results are consistent with the theory's assumption that conversation orientation fosters positive developmental outcomes and conformity orientation may constrain them, they also highlight its cultural limitations. In Muslim minority contexts, communication patterns are shaped by religious and cultural values such as *Shura* (consultation), *Izzah* (family honour), and *Bir al-Walidain*. These values suggest that conversation and conformity orientations may function not as opposing dimensions but as complementary approaches to socialization.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that academic resilience serves as a key explanatory mechanism linking family communication patterns to school dropout intention. At the same time, they underscore the importance of contextualizing FCP theory within culturally embedded frameworks, where the meanings and effects of communication patterns may differ from those observed in Western settings.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the relationships between family communication patterns, academic resilience, and school dropout intention among NICHS students. The findings indicate that conversation

orientation is negatively associated with school dropout intention, whereas conformity orientation shows a positive relationship. Academic resilience also emerged as a significant negative predictor of dropout intention, highlighting its role in promoting students' persistence in education. In addition, conversation orientation was found to enhance academic resilience, while conformity orientation was associated with lower levels of resilience. Academic resilience further mediated the relationships between family communication patterns and school dropout intention, indicating that family communication influences students' educational outcomes through their capacity to cope with academic challenges.

Overall, these findings support the core assumptions of Family Communication Patterns (FCP) theory, demonstrating that parent-child communication plays a critical role in shaping both students' resilience and their intention to remain in school. However, the results also underscore the importance of contextualizing FCP theory within collectivist and religious settings. In the Cambodian Muslim context, conversation and conformity orientations may coexist and function interdependently, influenced by cultural and Islamic values.

These findings have important implications for practice. Parents should strive to balance authority with emotional openness, fostering a supportive communication environment that encourages children to express their concerns and aspirations. Schools, particularly boarding institutions, should strengthen teacher-student support systems by promoting mentorship, emotional guidance, and inclusive learning environments. At the policy level, efforts to reduce school dropout should incorporate family engagement strategies that are culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of minority communities.

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