

Parenting Style and Psychological Well-being of Secondary School Children

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Abstract : The quality of parent-child interaction is critical to child development. Parental communication of warmth tends to impact the development of emotional control, identity, and components of personality, which contribute to positive mental health. This cross-sectional survey aimed to determine the effects of parenting style on the psychological well-being of secondary school children. Three hundred students selected from five Secondary Schools in Amuwo-Odofin Local Area Council of Lagos State participated in the study. They ranged between 13-19 years ($X = 15.51 \pm 3.95$) in age. 201 (67%) were female, 99 (33%) were male. Participants completed the PAQ (Baumrind, 1991) and the Ryff's Psychological Well-being scales. Path analysis using the IBM AMOS 23 indicated a positive effect of permissive parenting on anxiety/depression and environmental mastery facets of psychological well-being. Authoritative parenting negatively affected social dysfunction and positively affected autonomy, personal growth, and purpose in life. The findings show that children who experienced permissive parenting are more likely to report poor psychological well-being than authoritative parenting. Community programmes aimed at providing training on parenting may improve the mental health status of children in the community.

Keywords: Parenting style, psychological well-being, mental health, school children.

I. INTRODUCTION

Many factors contribute to shaping the human person throughout life. One of these is the immediate home environment (Enefeazu-Ossai et al., 2018), which can significantly influence growth patterns and development, and lay the foundation for critical decisions about our lifestyle and decisions to make in our later years. Moreover, parenting is a crucial aspect of family that may impact a person's development. Psychological functioning in adulthood is rooted in early experiences of the child and adolescent while in the transitional stages.

Nasrollahzade et al. (2015) defined mental health as some relatively good adaptation state, a feeling of well-being and actualization of personality capacity and talents. Psychological well-being is germane to adaptiveness, which is crucial for personal survival in humans' dynamic environmental context. It is a combination of feeling good and having meaning, good relationships, and accomplishment (Seligman, 2011). Positive mental health (Wissing & Van Eeden, 2002; Macloed & Moore, 2000; Ryff, 1989) results from changes in an interplay of emotional control, identity, components of personality, and life experiences (Helson & Srivastava, 2001). Keyes (2002) pointed out that

psychological well-being was not constant but could go through different changes with age and education.

Psychological well-being consists of emotional experience as a continuum with positive and negative emotions at both ends and happiness as the middle ground (Ryff, 1989). Ryff described six components of psychological well-being viz. Autonomy- the extent to which a person is self-determined and independent; Purpose in Life, a personal sense of purpose and goal in life; and Positive Relations with Others, a persons tendency to be warm and friendly. Other components include Personal Growth, the feeling of continuous development all through life; Environmental Mastery, mastery and competence in managing the environment; and Self-Acceptance, the extent to which someone carries a positive attitude toward the self. Disturbance in psychological well-being may compromise resilience and adaptability and thus, lead to psychological disorders (Jahan & Suri, 2016).

Mental health, psychological well-being, and parenting.

Mental health is a term used to describe a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her abilities, can cope with the everyday stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and can contribute to their community, and proposed to more than just the absence of illness (Vaingankar et al., 2016). It encompasses the concept of psychological well-being, as well as disordered states. Therefore, psychological well-being and mental health have been used interchangeably in this paper.

Most adult psychopathologies begin in early adolescence and early adulthood (Jahan & Suri, 2016). his suggests that their roots are traceable downwards to the childhood periods. Expectedly then, psychosomatic symptoms and lower scores on the mental health of adolescents have been linked to parenting style in China (Xia & Quian, 2001). Similarly, studies conducted in India indicate that parenting style has a significant relationship with academic achievement, emotional intelligence, depression, and stress coping skills (Jahan & Suri, 2016).

Parenting refers to the manner or methodologies that parents use in their children's education. Baumrind (1991) delineated four parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritarian, permissive or uninvolved parenting styles. Each of these parenting styles has a distinct balance of responsiveness and demandingness (Darling, 1999). while the former is a term used to describe parents 'willingness and readiness to show their attention, care,

and care for the children. The latter defines parents' propensity to monitor the child and restrict their freedom in every way. Greenwood (2013) treats permissive parents as implicitly effective and caring, but without any constraints, even if the welfare of children is at stake. They may be more sensitive than necessary (Efobi & Nwokolo 2014; Baumrind, 1991).

According to Darling (1999), parents are low in responsiveness and demandingness while the Authoritative parent is both demanding and responsive (Baumrind, 1991). The authoritative parent set reasonable goals and high standards (Greenwood, 2013). They control children's actions, using logical instructions, allowing them to know and learn about their mistakes. Conversely, the authoritarian parent is invasive and over-controlling in their approach. They are highly demanding and maybe harsh and overly critical of their children.

II. THE LITERATURE

Psychodynamic Perspective

Early /psychodynamic Theorists dwelt much on the role of the psychosocial environment on personality development and psychopathology. Contrary to Freud, they arrogated more importance to the psychosocial milieu above intrapsychic conflicts. The caregiver who may or may not be a biological parent presents the earliest opportunity for psychological attachment (Klein, 1987). The quality of attachment is vital to the future development of the individual.

One way the parent can shape the psychological future of the child is through affective mirroring in which the mother or caregiver communicate empathy through smiles, cooing, play, eye contact, and facial and vocal expression. The infant internalizes these affective signals, learns to trust, and self-regulates emotion. The essential trust developed from the primary object-relation becomes the foundation for ego-identity, object constancy and self-esteem (Erikson, 1963).

Family Systems Theory

This theory suggests that the family is a system or complex whole in which no person can be seen independently. Family members can be observed only in his or her relationships with other people within the system (Becvar & Becvar, 1982). From this perspective, a change in the relationship between a parent and a child could also influence the other children in the family. How parents manage this complex system is crucial to the psychological development of the child. Importantly, siblings compete for parental attention, and some of them may perceive rejection when less attention is paid to them, resulting in ambivalence towards the parent.

Alika, Akanni, and Akanni (2016) obtained data that showed a significant inverse relationship between authoritarian parenting and psychological distress and a direct relationship between authoritative parenting and psychological distress in high school students. The relationship between permissive parenting and psychological distress was not significant.

Similarly, Nadorollahzade, Mahmoudfakhe, and Rahmani (2015) assessed the parenting style and mental health stability of 340 school children. They found that parents who practised permissive parenting raised children who lacked confidence and evinced poorer mental health than those who practised authoritative parenting—the later raised children with lower scores on measures of mental health problems.

A study of 762 Spanish school children (León-del-Barco, Mendo-Lázaro, Polo-Del-Río, & López-Ramos, 2019) found that participants who perceived high psychological control were six times more likely to suffer from internalizing disorders and 4.8 times more likely to develop externalizing disorders than control. Furthermore, the probability of suffering externalizing disorders was higher among males who perceived a high degree of psychological control. Another research carried out by Rezvan and D'Souza (2017) compared early adolescents (aged 10-14) late adolescents (aged 15-19 years) on their scores on measures of perceived parenting and the GHQ. Their study showed a significant effect of developmental stage on mental health, but the effects of parenting style were not significant. This study represents a minority opinion on parenting and mental health as most other studies support the agreement on the effects of parenting on mental health (see Sahithya, Manohari, & Vijaya, 2019). It is essential to point out that most studies are correlational and that the data collection instrument varies from study to study.

Statement of the Problem

Most studies on parenting and mental health operationalize mental distress like depression and anxiety, i.e., the higher end of the mental distress spectrum. These studies imply the categorical approach to psychopathology. However, to understand how parenting brings about psychopathology, there is a need to study the lower spectrum of the mental health construct. Furthermore, the concept of psychological well-being serves this purpose well.

Purpose of the Study

The study was conducted to research the effect of parenting style on psychological well-being. It is crucial because poor psychological well-being may lead to further deterioration in mental function under stressful conditions.

Operational definition of terms

Parenting Style consists of the three-dimensional construct of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissiveness styles represented in Baumrind's perceived parenting style scale (Baumrind, 1991). These are the strategies used by parents to influence their children's behaviour. Psychological Well-being refers to scores on the six dimensions of Ryff's Psychological well-being scale (Clarke, Marshall, Ryff, & Wheaton, 2001). These include autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

Participants

The participants for this study comprised 300 secondary school students in Amuwo-Odofin in Lagos state. Participants ranged between 10-19 years ($X = 15.51 + 3.95$) in age. 210 (67%) respondents were females, and 99 (33%) were males.

Measures

The 42-item Ryff's dimensions of psychological Well-Being (PWB) was used to measure psychological Well-Being. Reliability studies yielded Split-half reliability, $r =$ of .69, and Cronbach $\alpha =$.63. Thus, we found the instrument suitable for the study. The parental authority questionnaire (Baumrind, 1971) was used to measure parenting style. The instrument is a 30-item designed to measure the four approaches to parenting vis-à-vis permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles. The original author found a two-week test-retest reliability ($r =$.81 for mother's permissiveness, .86 for mother's authoritarianism, .78 for mother's authoritative parenting, .77 for father's permissiveness, .85 for father's authoritarianism, and .92 for father's authoritative parenting).

Design / Statistics

The data collected from this cross-sectional survey research was analyzed using IBM AMOS-23 statistical package.

IV. RESULT

The study set out to determine the effects of parenting style on the psychological well-being of adolescents in Senior Secondary school. The results of the findings are presented below, beginning with the description of the demographic variables and followed by the test of hypotheses.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex and Age

Variables		Freq	Percentage
GENDER	Male	99	33.0
	Female	201	67.0
	Total	300	100
AGE	10-13	31	10.3
	14-17	237	79.0
	18-21	32	10.7
	TOTAL	300	100

Table 1 indicates that 99 respondents accounted for 33.0%, while the remaining 201 respondents were females making up 67.0% of the sample size. The age group of 10-13 years; 79.0% of them were within the age group of 14-17 years; 10.7% were 18-21. Therefore, many of the respondents were in the 14-17 age group, accounting for 79.0%, after which is 18-21, which accounts for 10.7%. The minority were the respondents within the age group of 10-13, representing 10.3% of the sample size.

Table 2: Effect of Parenting Style on Psychological Well-being

Personal Well-Being	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Permissive
Anxiety Depression			.21***
Social Dysfunction		-.15*	
Autonomy			-.16**
Environmental Mastery			.17**
Personal Growth		.22***	-.24***
Purpose in Life		.22***	-.25***
Self-Acceptance		.14*	

***P < .001, **P < .01, *P < .05.

Table 2 shows the effect of parenting style on psychological well-being. Permissive parenting was positively associated with anxiety-depression and environmental mastery. However, it is inversely correlated with autonomy, personal growth, and purpose in life. Authoritative parenting correlated inversely with social dysfunction and positively with personal growth, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The authoritarian style was not significantly associated with any of the psychological well-being facets.

IV. DISCUSSION

The study set out to determine whether parenting style affects school children's psychological well-being/mental health. The study outcome supports the position that parenting style is associated with psychological well-being. Authoritative and permissive styles predicted psychological well-being. Authoritative style showed positive effects, while the effects of permissive parenting were generally inverse.

The findings have implications for public health. Community-based training programmes aimed at teaching parenting may offer some protection against harmful parenting and lead to the improved mental health of children in the community.

Our data was sufficient to answer the research question on whether parenting style affects on psychological well-being. The authoritative parenting style is associated with better psychological well-being by being negatively correlated with social dysfunction and positively with personal growth, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Table 2). On the other hand, permissive parenting was directly associated with poor psychological well-being.

People tend to construct their map of the world early in life (Adler, 1927). During this period, they learn to regulate their own emotions and behaviour by observing their care giver mirror emotions to them. Responsiveness and demandingness (Darling, 1999) are two vehicles through which mirroring occurs. Responsiveness and demandingness enable parents communicate love and warmth to their children. The responsive parent is ready to show attention and care to their children. The demanding parent monitors the child and restrict their freedom. A balance of both will communicate the feeling of love, warmth, and security to the child. And this would

result in the child developing healthy emotion. The authoritative parent is both responsive and demanding (Bumrind, 1991), whereas the permissive parent may lack in both (Darling, 1999) or one of them (Greenwood, 2013). Children raised under permissive parenting not as likely to achieve adequate self-regulation, self-confidence, as those raised by authoritative parents. This explains the different effects of parenting on psychological well-being.

Two of the study outcomes are unexpected. First, only permissive parenting predicted environmental mastery. The second one is that authoritarian personality did not enter the equation at any point. We are unable to explain these outcomes based on the present data. Further study would be required to understand the nature of authoritarian parenting, as well as environmental mastery.

V. CONCLUSION

The study set out to determine whether parenting style affects school children's psychological well-being/mental health. The study outcome supports the position that parenting style is associated with psychological well-being. Authoritative and permissive styles predicted psychological well-being. Authoritative style showed positive effects, while the effects of permissive parenting were generally negative.

The findings have implication for public health. Community-based training programmes aimed at teaching parenting may offer some protection against harmful parenting and lead to improved mental health of children in the community.

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