

Parenting Styles and Gender Differences Among Primary School Pupils with Dyslexia in Rivers State: Implications for Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated parenting styles and gender differences among dyslexia primary school pupils in Rivers State. The study adopted the ex-post-facto research design. The sample for the study was 136 dyslexic primary school pupils who were selected using purposive sampling technique. An instrument titled 'Dyslexia Scale for Primary Pupils (DSPP)' was adapted and used for this study. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.76. Two research questions as well as two corresponding hypotheses were formulated and used for the study. T-test associated with Regression analysis was used to answer the research questions while Analysis of Variance associated with regression were used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive) significantly influence dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers State, whereas gender differences did not. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that, teachers should make optimal use of meaningful learning materials in teaching as this will enhance intrinsic motivation in dyslexics and make learning more interesting. Moreso, workshops on dyslexic children needs to be held among school teachers in Rivers State to help them understand these unique learners the more and thus modify their learning needs appropriately.

Keywords: Dyslexia, Parenting Styles (Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive) and Gender

INTRODUCTION

Education encourages changes in knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. This enhances a more sustainable and just society for all (UNESCO, 2018). This made the Organization to further describe sustainable development as that which requires participatory teaching and learning methods that see learners through in changing their behaviours and taking action to achieve a sustainable development without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In order to achieve these goals, the sustainable development goals requires action not only from governments, businesses, civil societies but also from teachers, parents and their pupils in primary schools which is the bedrock of all educational system.

The primary school is an educational institution where children from 6-11 receive education in a designated environment through specialist teachers (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). In order to resolve to promote education for sustainable development and to integrate sustainable development more actively into education beyond the decade of Education for sustainable development, the primary school levels of education should boast of schooling free from learning disabilities. However, dyslexia learning disability has made many primary school pupils to face more difficult situations emotionally, socially and economically in the course of learning. These children struggle with sounding words and recognizing 'sight words'. They also experience poor reading fluency and a difficult time with spelling (Hulme & Snowling cited in Remien & Marwaha, 2023). This worrisome situation has sometimes caused so much heated arguments among educators and researchers as the need to identify the source and causes of this disability, has led many to end up explaining dyslexia from different perspectives and background.

Dyslexia has been identified as a frequent cause of reading difficulties which deter learning among children in schools especially at the primary level. Although there is no generally accepted definition of the word dyslexia, the concept has been conceptualized in different ways by different scholars. Dyslexia according to Rose 2009 Report cited in British Dyslexia Association (2010) is known as a development of reading disorder whereby a child experiences difficulty with reading, writing and spelling due to brain's decreased recognition of symbols. The National Institutes of Health-NIH (2017) refers to it as a brain-based learning disability which adversely causes one's inability to read. The International Dyslexia Association (2009) also described it as a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. The association further added that the disability is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. This made Stanley and Petscher (2017) to describe it as the most commonly diagnosed learning disability. Snowling et al (2020) noted that the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th Edition -DSM-5 classifies dyslexia as a form of neurodevelopmental disorder which are heritable, lifelong conditions with early onset. This is seen in a difficulty encountered in learning to decode (read aloud) and to spell. Remien and Marwaha (2023) described it as a condition whereby children experience difficult time learning to decode words. Notably, these difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can constrain the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge (Lagae, 2018).

Furthermore, Reid (2009) explained that dyslexia is also characterized by an unexpected difficulty in reading among children and adults who possess the intelligence, motivation and education considered necessary for accurate and fluent reading. The degree of difficulty a child with dyslexia has with reading, spelling and/or speaking varies from person to person due to inherited differences in brain development, as well as the type of teaching the person receives. The brain is normal, often very intelligent, but with strengths in areas other than the language area. This difference goes undetected until the person experiences difficulty when learning to read and write.

Although there are many forms of dyslexia, it is not everyone diagnosed with it that experiences reading this way but the case of seeing non-existent movement in words and seeing letters like 'd', 'b', 'p' and 'q' rotated is common among children with dyslexia. Other symptoms of dyslexia among at risk preschoolers according to Grizzle (2007) include rhyming difficulty, confusing words that sound similar and trouble to learn the names of letters. Other symptoms for those in the primary include inability to learn letters, poor school performance, dislike of school and somatic dysfunctions when heading to school or before work is due (DSM-5, 2004). These can affect the pupils in the primary schools because learners with dyslexia are likely to experience difficulty in finding the right word to say, pronouncing words the right way, telling the difference between words that sound similar, learning and using new words, repeating something in the right order, understanding and following directions among others. These pupils also lack fluency when you compare them to other children of their age. They reverse letters and numbers as they read out 'saw' as 'was'. This condition usually affects the child's ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds in language. Primary school pupils with dyslexia find it difficult to decode new words or break them into chunks that they would be able to sound out. Although some of them try to memorize words in order to cover up the disability, they may end up running into trouble if not being able to recognize new words or even show in retrieving words that used to be familiar to them. These children with reading disabilities are being exposed to fewer words and increase in their reading deficiency (Remien & Marwaha, 2023). Therefore, a child should be tested for dyslexia symptoms at least at 7 years but it should be noted that at 3 years, the signs could be seen on the child despite the fact that most people do not read in preschool as all children learn how to talk in their own way at their own pace.

However, dyslexia as a learning disability does not mean an individual with the disability cannot read or write but only with the assistance of evidence based explicit instruction. It does not otherwise impact the brain structure or the intellectual imaginative or emotional functioning of self. Therefore, dyslexia relates to

brain-based phonological impairments not visual problems. Common characteristics of dyslexia as seen in DSM-5 include but not limited to the following: often gifted and creative, difficulty rhyming words and sounds, poor sequencing of numbers for example, (12 for 21) and words (was for saw), poor spelling, avoids reading aloud, difficulty organizing ideas to speak or write, avoids writing tasks, left/right confusion, slow to memorize alphabet and math facts, reading comprehension difficulties, trouble following oral instructions and appearing restless or easily distracted (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Research suggests that some demographic factors may influence dyslexia among primary school pupils. Therein, this study will consider parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting), and gender as factors influencing dyslexia among primary school pupils.

Parenting styles is the general patterns of childrearing that illustrate the typical techniques and responses of parents (Coplan, 2002). Eriega (2010) described parenting styles as the constellation of strategies that parents adopt in rearing their children. These parenting styles have been presented as having a three-category structure which includes authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles (Dornbush et al. cited in Akogun & Subairu, 2022). These different approaches parents adopt in bringing up their children have been explained to have serious effect (positive or negative) across various ages of their children's development. Baumrind cited in Aunola et al. (2000) described three different parenting styles as follows: (1) Authoritative parenting, characterized by high levels of both parental responsiveness (e.g., warmth, support, and affection) and demandingness (e.g., limit setting, maturity demands). In short, the authoritative parents enforces rules and standards using commands and sanctions when necessary (Baumrind cited in Akogun & Subairu, 2022) They provide independence, autonomy and freedom, while encouraging children to think about their lives and the consequences of their behaviour. (2) Authoritarian parenting is characterized by high demandingness (e.g., harsh and punitive control) and low responsiveness. Parents who adopt this type of parenting style have a strict set of rules and regulations and required strict compliance or obedience. These parents try to shape, regulate and appraise the actions and behaviours of their children (Onyekuru & Oladayi cited in Isiguzo & Brown, 2020). (3) Permissive parenting is characterized by high responsiveness but low demandingness. In this type of parenting style, little attempts are made to control children's behaviour and less guidelines on what behaviour is considered appropriate. Nwankwo (2010) asserted that permissive parents permit their children to act as they please.

Barber (1996) explained that the authoritative parent attempts to direct the dyslexic child's activities in a self-oriented and rational manner, shares with the child's reasoning and encourages in a verbal way. The authoritative parent affirms the child's present qualities, but sets the standards and limits for future activities. He/she uses power, reason, and shaping by reinforcement and regime to achieve desired objectives and does not base decisions on group consensus or the individual child's hopes (Hart et al., 2003). The authoritarian parenting style attempts to control, shape, and evaluate the behaviour and attitudes of a child in accordance with a standard of conduct (Hart et al., 2003). Barber et al. (2005) observed that authoritarian parents usually display low affection, use physical coercion, verbal hostility, and other disciplinary strategies in raising their children. This type of parenting style may pose serious challenge to dyslexic children (Goldman & Barclay 1994). However, Fletcher et al. (2008) reported that positive academic achievements may be linked to authoritarian parenting style among dyslexic children. Kiuru (2012) maintained that permissive parenting style allows children to regulate their own activities as much as possible, avoiding the exercise of control and standards of parenting limits. Permissive parenting style encourages children's autonomy and strengthens their academic and social functioning (Landry et al., 2006).

Another variable that may be liked to dyslexia is gender. The World Health Organisation (2017) explained that gender is the state of being male or female, and a range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between masculinity and femininity. Akinboye cited in Chukwuma et al (2021) further referred to gender as the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of men and women. Studies suggest that dyslexia may be related to individual's sex (Michael, 2012; Shaywitz et al., 1992). However, Sheldon (2012) stressed that boys are not necessarily more likely to have reading problems. Instead, he suggested girls' reading problems may be more likely to go unnoticed by teachers, hence the conclusion that dyslexia is

common in boys than in girls. Sheldon (2012) further explained that the reason why it is said that dyslexia is common in males than in females is because females are more likely to sit quietly and may have verbal skills that make it appear as though they are understanding when they are not, whereas males may react in more conspicuous manner.

In the primary schools, dyslexic children who find the acquisition of literacy skills difficult suffer a lot of anguish and trauma especially when they are abused by their peers in the school, because they have a learning difficulty. This leads to their development of aggressive behaviour. Class teachers are particularly confused by students whose consistent poor achievements seem like what may be viewed as carelessness or lack of effort. Dyslexics sometimes feel very different from their peers because they are unable to follow simple instructions, which for others seem easy. Time and again, dyslexics and their parents hear, “he is such a bright child, if only he would try harder”. Ironically, no one knows exactly how hard the dyslexic is trying. Parents of dyslexics are bemused and frustrated by their children who orally seem intelligent but find it difficult to cope at school. Therefore, this study examined the parenting styles and gender differences among dyslexia primary school pupils.

The following research questions guided the study;

1. How do parenting styles influence dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers State?
2. To what extent do gender differences influence dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers State?

The following null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study;

1. What is the influence of parenting styles on dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers State?
2. What is the influence of gender differences on dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers state?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study;

1. There is no significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the influence of gender differences on dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers state.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the ex-post-facto research design. The sample for the study was 136 dyslexic primary school pupils who were selected using purposive sampling technique. An instrument titled “Dyslexia Scale for Primary Pupils” (DSPP) was adapted and used for this study. It was designed on a 4 point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) =4, Agree (A) =3, Disagree (D) =2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1. The instrument has two sections. Section A and B. Section A is designed to collect bio-data information from the respondents. These contain the parenting styles adopted by the parents as well the gender of the respondents. Section B of the instrument contained 20 items that measured the Dyslexia level of the pupils. The instrument is weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 for positively keyed items and 1, 2, 3 and 4 for negatively keyed items. The validity of the instrument was determined using factors analysis. Few copies of the instruments were administered to a sample of 20 pupils who were not part of the original sample. After their response, the instrument were analyzed and subjected to factor analysis. Only items with weighing values of 0.45 were retained. There were 31 items out of a total of 47 items generated. However, the researcher selected the best twenty (20) which were used in the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha method with an index of 0.76. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test and one way analysis of variance were used to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: How do parenting styles influence dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of parenting styles on dyslexia

Parenting styles	N	Mean	SD
Authoritative	78	49.63	13.49
Authoritarian	36	50.83	10.65
Permissive	23	59.43	11.97
Total	137	51.89	12.97

Table 1 shows that the mean scores of primary school pupils reared mostly with authoritative. Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles are 49.63, 50.83 and 59.43 respectively. The standard deviation of their scores are; 13.49, 10.65 and 11.97 respectively for authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting. Considering their mean scores it is deduced that primary school pupils from permissive rearing parenting had the highest mean score followed by authoritarian and then authoritative.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers State.

Table 2: Summary of one-way analysis of variance on influence of parenting styles on dyslexia

Sources of variance	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	f-value	p-value
Between groups	1736.24	2	868.120	5.500	0.005
Within groups	21148.87	134	157.83		
Total	22885.11	136			

In Table 2, it is shown that a calculated f-value of 5.500 was obtained at df of 2 and 134 at 0.005 level, which is lower than 0.05, the chosen level of probability. Thus, there is a significant difference on how authoritative, authoritarian and permissive influence dyslexia among primary school pupils. Furthermore, due to the significant difference that was observed in the different parenting styles on dyslexia, there is need to employ post hoc multiple comparison to determine the significant different on this basis scheffe test was employed. The results obtained are present in table 3.

Table 3: Post Hoc multiple comparison via scheffe test to determine the direction of significant difference.

Compared groups	Mean diff	P-value
Authoritative vs authoritarian	1.21	0.893
Authoritative vs permissive	9.80	0.005
Authoritarian vs permissive	8.60	0.040

A critical look at table 3, it is observed that when the group mean scores of the adolescents from authoritative and authoritarian parenting were compared, a non-significant mean difference of 121 was obtained at 0.893 level $P > 0.05$. On the contrary, when the group mean scores of adolescents from authoritative and permissive, authoritarian and permissive were compared, the means difference scores obtained were significant at levels, 0.005 and 0.040 lower than 0.05. Thus the significant difference emanated from the permissive parenting styles.

Research Question 2: To what extent do gender differences influence dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers State?

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the influence of gender on dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers state.

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of male and female dyslexia pupils

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Mean diff	Df	t-	P-value
Male	113	51.93	13.13			0.871	
Female	24	50.00	12.35	1.93	135	0.660	0.570

Table 4 shows that the male primary school pupils had the mean scores of 52.24 SD = (13.15) while the female pupils had the mean scores of 50.16 (SD = 12.60). The mean scores of the male and female yielded a mean difference of 2.08 and a calculated t-value of 0.871 at df of 135 at 0.385 level of significance ($P > 0.05$). Thus, it was seen that there is no significant difference in the influence of gender on dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers state.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Parenting Styles and Dyslexia

The findings of the result showed that there is a significant difference on how authoritative, authoritarian and permissive influence dyslexia among primary school pupils. The study rejected the null hypothesis. The findings of the study agrees with an earlier by Shabila and Najma Najam (2017) who maintained that there is a significant influence of parenting styles on dyslexia. They further explained that permissive parenting style influence dyslexia more than authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles. Goldman and Barclay (1994) observed that authoritarian parents usually display low affection, use physical coercion, verbal hostility, and other disciplinary strategies in raising their children. They thus explained that this type of parenting style pose serious challenge to dyslexic children. Fletcher et al. (2008) also reported that positive academic achievements are linked to authoritarian parenting style among dyslexic primary school pupils. The reason why this is so, may be because the type of parenting style a family adopts can either exacerbate or lessen negative behaviour in primary school pupils. It can also help primary school pupils grapple successfully with whatever challenge they experience.

Gender Differences and Dyslexia

The findings of the study also revealed that there is no significant difference in the influence of gender on dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers state. Based on the finding, the null hypothesis was accepted. The result of this study therefore implied that there is no gender difference in the influence of dyslexia among students. However, the results by their mean values showed that male students are more prone to dyslexia than female students. This difference could not be enough to cause significant changes in the level of these differences. It therefore means that both genders have equal chance of suffering from dyslexia and equal chance of not being victims. It also implies that gender should not be a factor to be considered in relation to dyslexia among primary school pupils. The finding of this study however disagrees with the study by Michael (2012) which revealed that gender is a predictor of dyslexia among students with male students showing more symptoms of dyslexia than females. Again, he explained that boys are at least twice likely to have dyslexia than females. In support of this, Shaywitz et al. (1992) found out that gender significantly influenced dyslexia among adolescents. He further explained that school boys are more likely to develop dyslexia than girls. Vellutino et al. (2004) also stressed that dyslexia occur in approximately 10% to 15% of school age boys than girls, and this tend to be accompanied by specific deficits in cognitive abilities related to reading and other literacy skills, hence gender is a predictor of dyslexia among primary school pupils.

Implications of Dyslexia to Sustainable Development

Based on the findings of this study, dyslexia learning disability among primary school pupils is seen to have great implications on sustainable development. Dyslexia affects a child's ability to decode words. This may make these pupils physically and socially immature in comparison to their peers. It can lead to poor self-image and less acceptance. Dyslexia can cause developmental delays not only on speech development but also the affected children may have problems fighting off normal childhood ailments which indicate inefficient immune system development or exhibited delayed fine motor or gross motor control in childhood. Arnold et al (2005) noted that these developmental implications are associated with depression, anxiety, low self esteem, aggression, attention deficits and often behavioural problems. These can prevent children from reaching their potential as they grow.

It can also affect academic performance as results showed that children with dyslexia typically display a lower achievement in academics and have a higher school dropout rate. The impairment of self esteem also leads to decrease in confidence, further resulting in failures in academic achievements. All these can affect the quality of life going contrary to the attainment of quality education and sustainable development for all and the larger society even in the future.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was gathered that dyslexia is a serious problem among primary school pupils. Dyslexic pupils who find the acquisition of literacy skills difficult suffer a lot of anguish and trauma especially when they are abused by their peers in the school, because they have a learning difficulty. Dyslexia promotes poor oral language functioning, poor self-image, peer rejection and loneliness. It also leads to underachievement among students. This study has shown that parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive) significantly influence dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers State. However, further analysis of result showed that permissive parenting style tends to influence dyslexia more among primary school pupils. The study has also shown that gender differences do not significantly influence dyslexia among primary school pupils in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended;

1. Teachers should make optimal use of meaningful learning materials in teaching as this will enhance intrinsic motivation in dyslexics and make learning more interesting.
2. School counselling programmes should be strengthened and fully implemented to assist students with learning difficulties cope successfully with challenge they experience.
3. Workshops on dyslexic children need to be held among primary school teachers in Rivers State to help them understand these unique learners the more, thus modifying their learning needs appropriately.
4. Teachers should use multisensory techniques and activities to support the pupils and stimulate their brains in a variety of ways to enhance learning. For example, teachers can make use of flash cards, puppets, etc during teaching-learning process.
5. Teachers should use predictable texts at an appropriate level to encourage independent reading. The pupil should be encouraged to point to words in the text he or she reads.

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