
Influence of Democratic Parenting and Foster Parenting Styles on Student Conformity to School Rules in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to investigate the influence of democratic and foster parenting styles on conformity to school rules by public secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The research explored the use of survey research design. A self-developed questionnaire was used for the research. The internal consistency reliability of the instrument was determined using cronbach alpha statistical tool with a reliability coefficient of 0.83. Two research objectives and two corresponding null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance. A multi-stage sampling technique was used in selecting a sample size of 560 SS2 students for the study. The research made use of the person r-value to answer the research questions while the dependent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. All the null hypotheses were rejected. It was found out that parenting styles have significant influence in determining behaviours of the learners. To this end, recommendations were made that the home and the school should work together in refining behaviours of the learners.

Key words Democracy, Parenting Style, Foster parenting,

INTRODUCTION

The main link between the home and the school is the education of the child-his upbringing in accordance with the approved norms and values of the society concerned. In the case of Nigeria for instance and before the introduction of formal education, the social responsibility of the child's upbringing was the responsibility of the family and the wider society (Fafunwa, 2004; Ibia, 2004). With the introduction of formal school education, the responsibility became a shared one between the home and the school. Thus, both institutions are legitimate agents of socialization. The home by bringing a child into the world, giving him life, thus guiding him to adulthood. On its part, the school is a social institution set aside for the right upbringing of the child in accordance with the accumulated knowledge and value of the society concerned. Akpan

(2017) observed that the two are agents of education and their roles are complementary.

By the complementary nature of their roles, the formal education of the child cannot be complete without either of the two. For instance, it is the responsibility of the home to prepare the child for school and to provide him with the necessary tools for learning. It is only when the child is well fed and properly equipped that he can benefit from learning. Where the home fails to fulfil its own side of the social contract, the work of the school will be greatly hampered (Wayson, 2004).

Again, the home is a vital factor in matters of discipline in schools. Research findings have shown that the family background of a child greatly affects his behaviours in school

and elsewhere (Igwe, 1990; Wayson, 2004). For instance, children from broken homes often constitute disciplinary problems in schools since they lack adequate parental care and supervision and these invariably affects their behaviours in school. Observably, the parenting styles adopted by parents can be of immense impact on how the child behaves in school. Since the home is the primary agent of socialization, one needs not bother the point that parenting style has a direct effect on the conduct of students in schools. If children are not taught to respect rules in the home, they will find it difficult to keep to rules in the school. (Ekpo, 2003).

The family is a micro-society; it is the primary agent of socialization for the individual. Socialization itself is a form of education. This means that the home is an agent of education. Aside from genetically inherited traits which the children acquire from the parent, the very development in the home and the atmosphere generally, can go a long way towards influencing the behaviours of the child born into the home. The style of parenting may help to mould or spoil the child.

Interest for the research was triggered off by the researcher's sense of concern for the conduct of student of students in secondary schools today. Some of which do not fall within acceptable school rules and regulations. Believing that the home has a roles to play in all these, the researcher then desires to investigate how the styles of parenting may influence the conformity to school rules by students in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, the problem of this study posed as a question is: to what extends does democratic and foster parenting influence conformity to school rules by students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The paper intended answered the following research questions;

1. What is the influence of democratic parenting style on conformity to school rules?
2. What is the influence of foster parenting style on conformity to school rules?

NULL HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant influence of democratic parenting style on conformity to school rules.
2. There is no significant influence of foster parenting style on conformity to school rules.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Cultural Transmission Theory by Shaw and McKay (1979)

The Cultural Transmission Theory was developed by Shaw and McKay in 1979. The basic assumption of the theory is that conformity or lack of it occurs through a process of acculturation. This means that new comers into any community normally imbibes the prevalent culture of the society they come in contact with. In other words, they may change their behaviours to resemble that of the people they come in contact with.

The Cultural Transmission Theory is significant in this study because new students who find themselves in certain schools that lack discipline soon come to copy the older ones that they come to associate with. They may change their behaviours to resemble the ones they come in contact with. Most anti-social behaviours exhibited by people are as a result of the need to be like others.

Laissez-Faire parenting and Conformity to School Rules

In laissez-faire parenting, little or no influence is exerted on children. The parents only seem to be nominal in the aspect of role performance in the home. In this style of parenting, there is little or no rule in the home. Hence, the children are free to behave as they like. Children who come from laissez-faire home backgrounds always find it difficult to conform to school rules and regulations. Akpan (2007) explains that even in the school, they tend to live a carefree life that does not take into consideration the standard set by the school authorities. Since they come from backgrounds with little or no parental guidance, such children hate to be disciplined.

According to Reitman, Rhodes, Hupp and Altobello (2002), societies in which children are independent can be referred to as the contemporary permissive ones. In such homes, parents do not intend to interfere in most of the achievement tasks and activities embarked upon by their children. The children are also free to live any style of life they choose for themselves. The teenage girls can wear whatever they like and go wherever they choose. Some bring boyfriends to their homes and the parents cannot stop them.

According to Wayson and Pinnell (2004), the father is just a nominal figure and does not seem to command much respect or regards from the children. Such homes are so permissive that the children have a great deal of latitude to do as they like. The rules or code of conduct governing behaviours in the home are very few that they just appear to be symbolic. The atmosphere in the homes basically that of noninterference. Voght (2007) points out that a home with laissez faire parenting technique is often

very chaotic. Children raised in such homes lack control, guidance and supervision. This is because of lack of effective control and supervision. Is for the same reason that both parents and children do whatever they like to the detriment of proper child upbringing which is the basic duty of every family.

Vera and Lopez (2004) equally argue that most parents who follow the permissive approach of parenting believe in focusing more on the love part of parenting, instead of setting limits as parents. In their view, parents who follow the permissive style of parenting often do so because they have a strong need for approval from their kids. Instead of just being the parents, they want to be their child's best friend who will be the first person the child will approach in case of any major decision or event. Such parents place very few limitations on the children and give them a more relaxed life.

Ibikunolu (2013) investigated the influence of parenting styles on the behavior of students in junior secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey with the sample comprising 390 Junior Secondary 3 students. Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study showed a significance difference between students from laissez faire and democratic homes. The paper established the influence of parenting styles on the behavior of students. It was then recommended that among other things, parents should make the home child friendly

Also, Ugorji and Ebinuwa-Okoh (2013) conducted a study to examine the relationship between family types, parenting process and gender on juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Delta State. A sample size of 400 students randomly selected through a stratified random sampling technique. Data were

analyzed through descriptive and regression statistical tools. Result of the study revealed that family types, parenting processes and gender have a positive correlation juvenile delinquency among secondary school students. The study advised that parents should make the home psychologically conducive for children to be able to express their needs and desires.

In a related development, Nwosu, Nwaguma and Onyebuchi (2016) conducted a study to examine the relationship between parenting styles, test anxiety and self-efficacy of Nigerian secondary school students. 240 students from four secondary schools in Owerri metropolis were used in the study. The researchers utilized a simple random sampling technique in selecting four secondary schools in the metropolis which were used for the research. Results showed that laissez faire parenting had a negative relationship with their test anxiety, academic self-efficacy and emotional self-efficacy. This showed the relationship between parenting techniques and behaviours of students in the school.

Also, Hoang (2007) conducted research to investigate the relationship between parenting styles and adolescent motivation. The study was conducted in California using students from a Northern California High School. 140 students served as participants in the study. Most of the participants ranged in age from 14 to 17 years and were 9th grade students. All participants completed a self-report survey that included 76 items. The democratic family style, the authoritarian family style and the laissez-faire parenting styles were surveyed. It was discovered that the laissez-faire parenting style was the least likely to promote obedience to school rules.

In another development, Okorodudu (2010) investigated the influence of parenting styles on adolescent delinquency. 404 samples

were used for the study. 6 research questions and 6 research hypotheses were formulated for the study. Irrespective of gender, location and age, the study discovered that laissez-faire parenting style effectively predicted adolescent delinquency, while democratic and autocratic parenting did not. Parents who were positively oriented in their styles would make their children socially competent and goal-directed. Parents who exercised control and monitored adolescent activities and promoted self-autonomy were found to have the most positive effect on adolescents' behavior while the reverse was the case with uninvolved parents.

Foster Parenting Style and Conformity to School Rules

Foster parenting involves an individual taking care of a child who is not his biological child into home and providing feeding, accommodation and other necessities for the child. Foster parenting places emphasis on building strong connection between the child and parents to help the child grow. According to Akpan (2024), it emphasizes a form of attachment that will allow the child to grow up as a smart, independent, secure and kind human being. According to him, parents who follow this style of parenting believes that it will encourage the child to grow into a loving, cheerful, happy and successful adult.

Veugelers (2000) also believes that the foster style of parenting may involve the parent disciplining the child. However, such discipline has a positive connotation to it. A foster parenting style will teach the child about obedience and discipline, without the child feeling embarrassed or hurt. Parents here try to understand the behaviours of the child and shows him why he wants them to behave in certain ways. He observes that instead of imposing rules on the child, he will explain it for him to understand the reasons behind the actions. Fafunwa (2004) states that in African communities before

now, it was very common for children to live with relatives, uncles, aunties cousins, grandparents and other individuals who have no blood ties to the family. In some cases, children are sent as house helps to individuals other than their biological parents. Some of these are informed by factors ranging from family bonds to the need for maintenance of friendship as well as socio-economic factors.

However, Umoren (2001) argues that foster parenting is characterized by deprivation. A child raised in such parenting background is bound to suffer set back in many aspects. Firstly, the child is denied the natural bond that exists between biological parents and the offspring. Secondly, and in his views, the level of care and attention he receives from where he lives may not match what he could have received from his biological parents. Shaw (2008) also argues that the adverse effect of this on the conduct of the child in school are enormous. A child who is raised in a deprived home background may find it difficult to conform readily laid down rules and regulations in the school. He may be bound to suffer depression in school sometimes as a result of recollections of experiences he was subjected to at home.

Mensah and Alfred (2013) conducted a study to ascertain the influence of parenting styles on the social development of the adolescent child Kumasi Region of Ghana. The study utilized a sample of 480 secondary school students who were in their adolescent age. A structured interview schedule and a questionnaire instrument were used for data collection. The instruments were tested to establish its reliability. The results revealed that parenting styles have influence on the social development of the child. The study recommended that among other things, parents should endeavor to promote

socially-accepted behaviours in their children.

Fakeye (2014) conducted research to investigate the impact of parenting styles on primary school students reading achievement in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study involved 2400 secondary school children randomly selected from 20 public secondary schools in the study area. The research adopted two research questions and two corresponding null hypotheses to guide the study. Two instruments namely, parenting styles questionnaire and reading achievement test were used in data collection. The result revealed no significant difference in the reading achievement of students from different parenting styles. There was variation in the reading achievement of male and female students from different parenting styles, but the variation was not significant.

In a related development, Fuentes, Salas, Bernedo, and Garia-Martins (2016) examined the effect of foster-parenting style on children's behavior problems. The study made use of 104 foster children (56 boys and 46 girls) and their respective foster families selected from families in Milan, Spain. These served as participants in the study. The result showed that criticisms/rejections on the part of foster parents, as well as the use of inappropriate parenting styles (authoritarian and permissive), had an important effect in relation to the behavior problems of foster children. The researcher recommended that preparation for fostering should focus especially on ways of helping foster both to acquire positive parenting strategies to avoid authoritarian and permissive parenting.

In a related development, Hickman, Suzanne, and McCrery (2000) examined the relationship between parenting styles and adjustment to school rules by college

students. They used 'Parental Authority Questionnaire' (PAQ) to assess respondents' perception of parenting styles while self-report 'College Grade Point' (CGP) was used to assess students' conformity to rules. The study revealed that foster parenting style was negatively correlated with students' conformity to rules in the school.

Finally, Fuentes (2015) carried out research to analyze the effects of parenting style of foster parents on the behavior problems of foster children. The study examined the roles played by the kind of discipline they use as regards internalizing and externalizing problems among foster children. The participants were 104 foster children (56 boys and 48 girls) and their respective foster children. Series of linear regression analysis were performed using the step-wise method. The result indicated different behaviours exhibited by children raised by foster parents. It recommended that parents should be adequately prepared to acquire proper parenting skills.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

The study used the descriptive survey design in its investigation. The descriptive survey is most appropriate in investigating events that has already occurred with the aim of identifying possible causes and relationships with the variables under investigation. According to Ndem, Udoh and Joseph (2003) the ex-post facto design is suitable when the researcher is seeking for information on a variable already in existence and which cannot be easily manipulated by the researcher. Ndiyo (2005) agreed that the descriptive survey research design is the most suitable design to adopt when gathering information on the effect or influence of the independent variable over a dependent one.

Population of the Study

The study was conducted in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. There are 243 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Population of the study comprised all secondary school students in the 243 public secondary schools in the state amounting to 50,914 senior secondary 2 chosen for the study.

Sample

The sample size for the study was made up of 560 SS2 students selected from the 50,914 SS2 students in the study area. The number was considered appropriate for the study since it is up to 10% of the population (Nachmias and Nachmias, 2009)

Sampling Technique

A proportionate stratified sampling technique was used in selecting the sample for the study. At the first stage, a proportion of 20% of the Local Government Areas was selected from the 31 Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State, which gives a total of 6 Local Government Areas. At the second stage, a proportion of 20% of the secondary schools in each of the selected Local Government Area were randomly sampled for the study. A total of 13 schools were realized. Finally, a proportion of 30% of the students in each of the selected schools were sampled for the study, which gives a total of 570 students.

Data Collection Instrument

A self-developed instrument tagged: parenting styles and conformity to school rules questionnaire: (PSCSRQ) was used for the study. The instrument comprised of two parts: Part "A" contained the bio data while Part "B" contained the items. The internal consistency reliability co-efficient of the instrument was determined using cronbach alpha statistical tool to be 0.83. Each variable contained 10 items each the section

measuring conformity to school rules contained 25 items.

Data Collection and Analyses

The instruments were personally administered on the respondents by the researcher. They were able to respond to the

items accurately through the assistance of the researcher. Pearson product moment correlation R-value was used to answer the research questions while the dependent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. Information obtained were then arranged in tables for easy analyses and interpretation.

RESULTS

Research Question 1:

Is there any significant influence of Democratic Parenting on conformity of school rule?

Table 1 Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the influence of democratic parenting style of conformity to school rules.

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	S. D	Remark
Democratic Parenting	285	3.93	0.51	GI
Students' Conformity	285	3.57	0.29	

As shown in Table 1:1 the mean and standard deviation for democratic parenting style were 3.93 and 0.51 respectively. Whereas, the mean and standard deviation

for students' conformity were 3.57 and 0.29 respectively. This implies that there is a moderate influence of democratic parenting style on conformity to school rules and regulation by students.

Research Question 2:

Is there any significant influence of Foster-Parenting Style on conformity to school rules?

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the influence of Foster-Parenting Style on conformity to school rules

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	S. D	Remark
Foster Parenting	285	3.78	3.60	GI
Students' Conformity	285	2.26	2.84	

As shown in Table 1:2, the mean and standard deviation for foster-parenting style were 3.78 and 3.60 respectively; whereas, the mean and standard deviation for students' conformity were 2.26 and 2.84

respectively. This means that foster parenting style has moderate influence on conformity to school rules and regulations by students in public secondary schools.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

Democratic Parenting Style has no significant influence on students; conformity to school rules.

Table 3 Summary of Democratic Parenting Style of the influence of Democratic Parenting Style on students' conformity to rules

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	S. D	Remark	df	t-cal	t-crit
Democratic Parenting	285	3.89	0.13	GI			
					283	4.87	1.96
Conformity to Rules	285	2.83	0.62				

As shown in Table 2:1, since the computed t-values of 4.87 exceeded the critical value of 1.96 at the degree of 283 and 0.05 significant level, the null hypothesis is

rejected and the alternate accepted. This implies that there is a significant influence of democratic parenting style on conformity to school rules and regulations by students.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant influence of foster-parenting style on conformity to school rules.

Table 4 Summary of Dependent t-test Analysis of Foster-Parenting style on students' conformity to school rules

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	S. D	Remark	df	t-cal	t-crit
Foster Parenting	285	3.78	3.40	GI			
					283	4.11	1.96
Conformity to Rules	285	2.60	0.68				

As shown in Table 2:2, since the computed t-value of 4.11 exceeds the critical value of 1.96 at 283 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate accepted. This implies that students' conformity to school rules and regulations was significantly influenced by foster-parenting style.

DISCUSSION

The result on Table 2:1 shows a moderate negative influence of democratic parenting style on conformity to school rules. The

calculated t-value as shown on the table indicates the relationship between laissez-fair parenting style is a negative one (-0.27). Children raised in democratic parenting homes are used to doing things their own ways with little or no influence by parents and that makes it difficult for them to conform to rules specified in the school. The findings of this study are supported by that of Ibikanolu (2013) who saw a relationship between parental involvement and the conduct of students. The findings are also supported by that of Layout (2008) who

explored the relationship between style of parenting and the social behaviour of secondary school students. He found out that parenting style influences behaviour significantly.

The result in Table 2:2 also shows a significant influence of foster parenting style on students' conformity to school rules. As indicated in the table, the t-value obtained between parenting style and students' conformity to school rules is 4.11. This implies that students from foster parenting background significantly conform to school rules at home and in the school. This could be due to deprivation of affection by biological parent which may cause them to submit both at home and in the school. The findings are in agreement with that of Hickman, Suzanne and Mc Creve (2002) who examined the relationship between parenting style and adjustment to school rules by college students. He discovered that foster parenting style was positively correlated to students' conformity to rules in the school.

CONCLUSION

With formally established rules, the school prepares students to work with people from other family backgrounds to achieve the objectives of the school. This is why the school is a miniature society and a model of the school system. In the school, the child is made to interact with other members of the school community in terms of fixed set of rules. These experiences prepare him for interaction with members of the outside world. Conformity to rules in the school will help him in life later. He now learns the habit of self-control and restraint.

Parenting style, as discussed in the study, has enormous role to play in all these. For instance, worthwhile virtue is taught in the home from infancy. It is further to be noted that the home gives special recognition to the school for the upbringing of the children.

However, parenting style should also be held responsible for certain behaviours of the child in school. This is because the society cannot get any more than its general investment in education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn from the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents should be more democratic in the upbringing of their children.
2. Interest of the children should be paramount in the minds of the parents.
3. The home should partner the school in the discipline of the children.

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