

“College students’ perception of their parents’ style of parenting in Enugu and Abakiliki, South-East Nigeria.

Abstract

Background: Adolescents’ college students perception of their parents’ style of parenting has taken diverse forms in different societies/cultures and this may impact on their psychosocial development.

Methods: This is a cross sectional study which accessed adolescent college students’ perception of their parents’ styles of parenting. Using simple random sampling the students were selected in proportion with the size of the class. . This study assessed the “college students’ perception of their parents’ style of parenting in Enugu and Abakiliki, South-East Nigeria.

Data was analyzed using SPSS version 19. Chi-square was used to test significant association of categorical variables.

Results

A total of eight hundred and twenty eight adolescent college students aged 10-19 years with a mean age, 13.8 ± 1.5 years comprising four hundred and ninety (59.2%) males and 338 (40.8%) females completed the questionnaire. Three hundred and sixty one (43.6%) respondents reported having an autocratic parent while 206 (24.9%) and 227(27.4%),reported permissive, authoritarian styles respectively. Twenty four (4.1%) did not report on any parenting styles

There were no statistically significant difference in the parenting styles of the college students and their socioeconomic class and gender. $\chi^2 = 4.577$; $p = 0.101$. $\chi^2 = 1.041$; $p = 0.904$

Conclusion

This study revealed that the commonest style of parenting among adolescents college students is the autocratic style which is in-keeping with societies with strong ethnic and cultural background. We noted no association between parenting styles with gender

Key words: College students, Adolescents'; parenting styles; Nigeria

40 Background

41 Parenting is the act of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual
 42 development of a child. It refers to the aspects of raising a child aside from the biological
 43 relationship. ^[1]

44 The purpose of parenting is to protect and prepare our children and teens to survive in the kind of
 45 society in which they will live ^[2] Parenting generally is an occupation one finds themselves in,
 46 often without any formal education or preparation. Most people, therefore, fall back on past
 47 personal experiences which can be negative or positive. Parenting prepares children for
 48 responsible life and survival in the society”. Adolescents undergo a number of developmental
 49 adjustments which includes biological, cognitive, emotional and social changes ^[3] Effective
 50 parenting during adolescence therefore, requires a thorough understanding of associated
 51 normative developmental changes ^[4] and adjusting to it..

52 **Three main styles of parenting have been described. Autocratic (authoritative), Permissive**
 53 **and Active parenting styles.** ^[2] Autocratic parent is one who is domineering and tries to be
 54 **all powerful in directing the lives of their children; is dominating and has the first and last**
 55 **word on every matter in the family-limits without freedom.** ^[2] The permissive style (The
 56 **Doormat)** can be seen as the opposite of the autocratic parenting where anything goes,
 57 **allowing their teens to do their own things –freedom without limits.** ^[2] The active style or
 58 **active parenting is somehow in-between the preceding types. Here, freedom is important**
 59 **and conforms to what is seen in modern democratic society but is no democracy. The**
 60 **authority rests on the parents who should know how to use it –freedom within expanding**
 61 **limits.** ^[5-7]

Parents around the world want what they believe is the best for their children. However, parents in different cultures have different ideas of parenting styles.^[7] For example, parents in a hunter–gatherer society or surviving through subsistence agriculture are likely to promote practical survival skills from a young age.^[7]

Cross-cultural discrepancies in parenting styles and adolescents' outcomes have been noted by several authors.^[8, 9] For example, Rudy and colleagues indicated that autocratic practices, which involve a hierarchical parent-child relationship, are linked with positive cognitions in the adolescents.^[9]

Styles of parenting could have influence on the health of the adolescents.^[10] It has been shown that, authoritative parenting was found to be associated with higher self esteem and satisfaction.^[10]

Isabel^[10] et al noted that Spanish adolescents from permissive parents show highest scores in self-esteem whereas adolescents from authoritarian parents obtain the worst results. In contrast, there were no differences between the priority given by adolescents of authoritative and indulgent parents to any of the self-transcendence and conservation values.

Some authors^[11,12] have highlighted the burden of several parenting styles on the mental health of the adolescents. Dwairy et al noted that in Arab societies, **active parenting** does not harm the adolescents' mental health as it does in Western societies.^[11,12] Furthermore, other researchers have found no differences between indulgent and authoritative parenting in the offspring's outcomes in certain contexts and cultures.^[11,12]

82 **Styles of parenting** had been noted to impact on school performance. ^[13] For example, among
 83 African and Asian-American adolescents, no complete evidence has been found of the positive
 84 influence of authoritative parenting on school performance. ^[13] However, Chao et al has shown
 85 that Asian-American adolescents raised in authoritarian households do not do worse at school
 86 than adolescents raised in authoritative homes. ^[13]

87 This study is aimed at determining the predominant style of parenting as seen among adolescents
 88 attending secondary schools in south east Nigeria, and their associated factors. **This is because**
 89 **a number of adolescents' patients have been demonstrating abnormal behaviors consistent**
 90 **with particular parenting style. These abnormal behaviors reverted to normal once the**
 91 **'stressors' were removed. An association was therefore sought with predominant parenting**
 92 **style(s) in the area in this study.**

93 In Nigeria, there are little or very few current works on this topic. This study, therefore, is among
 94 the few to be done in this part of the world; the result will complement earlier studies ^[11-13] and
 95 will also serve as information base for future research. It will also provide relevant information
 96 for clinical practice on adolescents in this area.

97 **Subjects and methods**

98 **Study design**

99 This is a cross-sectional study that assesses the different **styles of parenting** as seen among
 100 adolescents attending secondary schools in south east Nigeria.

101 **Study location and population**

The study was carried out among adolescents in seven secondary schools in Enugu and Abakiliki metropolis of Enugu State of Nigeria.

Enugu and Abakiliki metropolis, the capital cities of Enugu and Ebonyi states were chosen for this study because they have many secondary schools with large adolescent population besides they are made up of three local government areas each. Enugu metropolis comprises of Enugu East, Enugu North and Enugu South local government areas while Abakiliki metropolis comprises of Ebonyi, Abakiliki and Ohaukwu local government area. These schools were stratified into boys, girls, and mixed schools in order to get a representative sample.

Study instrument

A pretested self-administered Questionnaire was culled from a book on Parenting Styles was used for this study. ^[1]The questionnaire included 9 items on styles of parenting -3 for each style. However this was not disclosed to the subjects to avoid bias.

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Sampling technique:

Seven secondary schools were selected in both metropolises. Secondary schools in the two metropolises were stratified into boys only school, girls only school and mixed schools. In Enugu, one boys only school, one girls only school and two mixed schools were selected by simple random sampling using balloting. In Ebonyi, one boys only school, one girls only school and one mixed school by simple random sampling using balloting. The schools were

stratified into classes 1 to 6. Using simple random sampling the students were selected in proportion with the size of the class.

The questionnaire was completed by the students during class hours after explanation of the purpose of the study.

Subjects who did not give ascent and who did not completely fill the questionnaire were excluded. The families were assigned socioeconomic classes using the recommended method (modified) by Oyedeji. ^[14]

Data collection and analysis

The questionnaires were completed by the students during class hours after explanation of the purpose of the study. Subjects who did not give ascent and who did not completely fill the questionnaire were excluded. Subjects were asked to tick the most appropriate options that their parents fitted in. The questions werescored from 1 to 3 for each type of parenting styles. The mean score was taken as a cut off point for each category and used for analysis. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 19. The families were assigned socioeconomic classes using the recommended method (modified) by Oyedeji. ^[14] Chi-square was used to test significant association between socio-demographic characteristics and type of parenting.

Ethics and Consent to Participate statement

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethical Committee of the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Enugu. Consent was specifically approved by their Principals and

parents, and ascent by the students themselves. Confidentiality was assured by informing the respondents not to write their names on the questionnaire.

Data Analysis: The data were analyzed using SPSS version 19. Chi-square was used to test significant association of categorical variables.

Results:

This is a prospective study which involved eight hundred and twenty eight adolescents aged 10-19 years old. Their mean age was 13.8 ± 1.5 years. They comprised of 490 (59.2%) males and 338 (40.8%) females with a male to female ratio of 1:1.4. When we compared styles of parenting and their socioeconomic class, we noted no statistically significant difference in the parenting styles of the adolescents and their socioeconomic class ($\chi^2 = 1.041$; $p = 0.904$) as well as gender ($\chi^2 = 4.577$; $p = 0.101$).

Socio-demographics

Three hundred and three respondents (36.6%) were from the upper socioeconomic class, while 368 (44.4%) and 157 (19%) were from the middle and lower socioeconomic class respectively. Table 1

Styles of parenting

Three hundred and sixty one (43.6%) respondents reported having an autocratic parent while 206 (24.9%) and 227 (27.4%) reported permissive and active styles respectively.

Twenty four (4.1%) adolescents did not report any parenting styles. Table II

Two hundred and seventy-nine (35.5%) perceived their mothers as permissive while 222 (28.4%) perceived their fathers and 77 both parents as permissive. Regarding active parenting style, 317 (38.4%), 206 (25.0%) and 215 (26.1%) perceived their mothers, fathers and both parents as active respectively as shown in Table III.

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182 Associations between socio-demographics and style of parenting

183 Table IV shows that there was higher proportion (about 45%) of autocratic parents in both
184 sexes. The difference was not significant statistically ($\chi^2 = 4.577$; $p = 0.101$). Equally all the
185 social class has over 43% of autocratic parents. The difference was not also significant
186 statistically ($\chi^2 = 1.041$; $p = 0.904$)

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202 **Discussion**

203 The commonest parenting style noted in this study is the autocratic (authoritative) parenting
 204 style, followed by active and permissive styles with relative frequencies of 43.6%, 24.9% and
 205 27.4% respectively. This frequency is similar to the findings in Idukki India where a frequency
 206 of 51%, 25% , 24% as autocratic, active and permissive styles respectively were obtained. ^[16]
 207 The reason for these similar findings could be due to similarity in etno-cultural and geographical
 208 construct. This study is quite different from that obtained from Christine et al where different
 209 parenting styles among different races were obtained. He noted permissive parenting style as the
 210 commonest among the white, and very uncommon among the blacks. ^[17]

211 It is not gain saying the fact that **styles of parenting** are usually influenced by culture. For
 212 instance, Francis et al [18] noted that parents from western cultural background tend to highlight
 213 permissive style of parenting where self expression and resiliency are paramount while the
 214 parents from Asia usually adopt the authoritative style where decisions that will reinforce
 215 cultural values are maintained. [18] The fact that Asian Children often outperform their
 216 counterparts might lead some to believe that the authoritative style may be the best for academic
 217 purposes. ^[18]

218 The greater population (43%) of autocratic parenting style obtained in this study may have an
 219 impact on the adolescent. Depending on the mentality of the parents and the point of conflict, the
 220 young adolescent may tend to be engaged in the autocratic clench of the parent(s). As an escape
 221 mechanism, they tend to present with some dramatic, often medical way, seeking for objective
 222 intervention. The sum total of this is that autocratic style of parenting produces stress on their
 223 children, some so unbearable that they may beg for external intervention, some may even bolt

away from the family, if courageous enough. However a study to correlate styles of parenting and psychosocial impact on adolescents will make this assertion clearer.

We noted no association between parenting styles and social class of the students. Though, it is noted, by Hoff, Laurse and Tardiff, writing in the USA that higher socio-economic status has been linked with permissive parental style, while low socio-economic status has been linked with autocratic parenting style.^[19] More adolescents from this study perceive their mothers to be more permissive than their fathers while more females perceive their mothers as being authoritarian compared to their male counterparts.

Conclusion

It is noted therefore that in cultures that have positive outcome following autocratic style of parenting are essentially closed societies, those that have little or no external/western influence. Incidentally the Ibos (predominant group in the area of study) have imbibed the western culture such that trying to enforce limits without freedom, autocracy, simply leave the young ones confused and with problems. This study revealed that the commonest style of parenting among adolescents in this area is the autocratic style. This finding tends to explain the clinical observation among these adolescents. We noted no association between parenting styles with gender and non with socioeconomic class.

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended, at least for this people, should practice the Active parenting style where both parent and child can reason together even though the parent still has the last word – freedom with expanding limit.

245 **Consent Disclaimer:**

246 As per international standard or university standard, patient's written consent has been collected
247 and preserved by the authors.

248 **Authors' contribution:** JMC, ARN, PMC, AU, VO, EA contributed to the conception, writing
249 and proof reading of this manuscript. JMC contributed to writing of the manuscript.

250 **Acknowledgements:** We acknowledge all the teachers, school heads and ministry of education
251 for interpreting and explaining the study procedures to our subjects .

252 **Competing Interest statement:** The authors hereby declare that we have no competing
253 interests.

254 **Funding:** No current external funding sources for this study

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325 **Tables**326 **Table I: Socio-demographics of respondents**

Variable	n=828	
	Frequency	Percent
Age(years)		
Mean(SD)	12.80(1.52)	
Sex		
Male	338	40.8
Female	490	59.2
Social class		
Upper	303	36.6
Middle	368	44.4
Lower	157	19.0

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341 **Table II: Types of parenting**

Variable	n=828	
	Frequency	Percent
Autocratic*	361	43.6
Permissive*	206	24.9
Authoritarian*	227	27.4
None	24	4.1

342 NB:* includes either Father alone, mother alone or both

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362 **Table III: Adolescents' perception of parenting styles of their parents**

Parenting style	Likely to be said by:			
	Father (%)	Mother (%)	Both parents	None
Autocratic	219 (26.5)	267 (32.3)	211 (25.5)	129 (15.6)
Permissive	222 (28.4)	279 (35.6)	77 (9.8)	205 (26.2)
Authoritarian	206 (25.0)	317 (38.4)	215 (26.1)	87 (10.5)

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378 **Table IV: Associations between socio-demographics and type of parenting**

	n=794		
Variable	Autocratic	Permissive	Authoritarian
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)
Sex			
Male	148(45.0)	97(29.5)	84(25.5)
Female	213(45.8)	109(23.4)	143(30.8)
	$\chi^2 = 4.577; \quad p = 0.101.$		
Social Class			
Upper	139(47.3)	71(24.1)	84(28.6)
Middle	156(44.8)	94(27.0)	98(28.2)
Lower	66(43.4)	41(27.0)	45(29.6)
	$\chi^2 = 1.041; \quad p = 0.904.$		

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393 **TEEN PARENTING QUESTIONNAIRE**

394 **Please underline the appropriate option.**

395 **Please be honest in your response as this will not be used against you**

396 **Don't write your name**

397 1. Age.....

398 2. Live with a, Father.....b Mother

399 c, Others(specify).....

400 3. Highest education for mother a, primary b, secondary c, University d, others.....

401 4. Highest education for Father a, primary b, secondary c, University d, e, None f,
402 others.....

403 5. Occupation of mother a, none b, trader c, teacher, d, civil servant e, don't know

404 6. Occupation of father a, none b, teacher, Business man(specify) d,civil servant e, don't know

405 E, any other

406 **Please tick M for mother and F for father, B for both and NB for nobody from number 7 to15**

407 7. Family who says things like "because I am the parent and I say so"

408 8.I know you are disappointed but you can't go, here is why.....

409 9. I don't think that's a good idea....., but, well..... okay, if you really want to"

410 10. Do you really need this? Oh, all right. Here's money.....

411 11. As long as you live under my roof, you will obey my rules"

412 12. When you are the parent, you can decide what to do.....

413 13. I sure wish you did help out around here.....

414 14. Sure you can talk about it. What's your idea?.....

415 15."I know you can handle it but if you need some help, just let me know"

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