

Influence Of Parenting Styles And Parents' Self-Efficacy On Preschool Children's Academic Achievement

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of parenting styles and parents' self-efficacy on preschool children's academic achievement in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Four research questions guided the study. This study was a descriptive survey design. The target population was 962 teachers in the 68 public pre-primary schools in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Random sampling technique was used to select 200 pre-primary school teachers that participated in the study. Structured questionnaire, which had the reliability of 0.94 after correlating the two set of scores from pilot studies with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, was used as instrument for collection of data. The questionnaire was given to three (3) experts. The researcher and the research assistants collected necessary data from the teachers in each school. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The data presentation was done in order of research questions. The findings showed that preschool children raised by authoritative parents scored very high academically. Permissive parents do not discipline their preschool children, thus they scored very low academically. Authoritarian parents use threats on the preschool children which make them score very low academically. There is a significant relationship between parents' self-efficacy and parenting style of pre-primary school children in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Recommendations were made based on the findings that since authoritative parenting style yield good performance in preschool activities, policy makers at the Ministry of Education should develop policies that would encourage parents to adopt it as the appropriate parenting styles. The researcher suggests that further studies should be carried out on the effects of parenting styles on children's development.

Keywords: Parenting styles, parents' self-efficacy, preschool children and academic achievement.

Introduction

Parents are their children's first teacher. They influence their children's behaviour through established patterns of parental authority called parenting styles. Parenting styles is a combination of parenting behaviours that occur over a wide range of situations, creating an enduring child-rearing climate (Berk, 2016). Again, Darling and Steinberg (2013) defined parenting styles as emotional climate in which the parents' behaviour towards their children is expressed. Baumrind (2011) identified three basic parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles. Authoritative parents establish

and impose moral rules for children to follow but support parental authority with justification and explanation for why rules are imposed (Baumrind, 2011). Authoritative parenting style is the most successful approach to child-rearing. Authoritarian parents make demands on their children to follow the rules they set, yet they are relatively unresponsive (Baumrind, 2011). There is no or little room for verbal give-and-take discussion between child and parent. Baumrind (2011) describe permissive parents as those who are high on parental responsiveness but low on set standards. Tolerance, warmth, and acceptance are characteristics of these parents although they do not exert authority or great control over their

children in terms of enforcing rules. These parenting styles could have influence on preschool children's academic achievement.

Preschool is also called nursery school or early childhood education. It is a type of education given in an educational institution to children (birth-5years) prior to their primary school (National policy on education, 2014). It includes the crèche, the Nursery and the Kindergarten. It is the critical period for the development of essential cognitive skills and approaches to learning necessary for successful school transitions and later academic functioning (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), 2014). Preschool children are those children who are in nursery schools. These children mostly need the cooperation and the supervision of their parents and other relatives the most (Iffat, 2013). Preschool is the foundation of the child's formal educational development. Hence, the quality of teaching at this stage will influence the child's rate of learning and determine the quality of their academic achievements and career later in life (Mezieobi, 2016). Nevertheless, academic achievement is the outcome of education. It constitutes the extent to which a child, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. Academic achievement is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts (Douglas, 2019). Another factor that might affect academic achievement is parents' self-efficacy.

On the other hand, self-efficacy is a major driver of activity choice, task effort expenditure, and task perseverance in the face of impediments. Self-efficacy plays a significant part in people's decisions about how much effort to put in and how long to keep it up when confronted with stressful conditions (Clarke-Midura, Sun, Pantic, Poole, & Allan, 2019). Parental self-efficacy is parents' belief in their ability to influence their children in a health and success-promoting manner. This has

emerged as a key treatment target for parent and child well-being. Parental self-efficacy has remained relevant in published literature since its inception as such an important clinical emphasis (Albanese, Russo, & Geller, 2019). Parents' self-efficacy stated that one of the major processes influencing behaviour is an individual's conviction in their capacity to effectively complete a task or sequence of activities. As a result, parents' self-efficacy measures a parent's ability to mobilize the cognitive resources and actions required to exert control over life events. Moreover, Obiunu (2018) indicated that there is no significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and academic achievement of secondary school students. Secondly, that there is no significant relationship between permissive parenting style and academic achievement of secondary school students. Finally, that there is a significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and academic achievement of secondary school students. Based on the findings, it was concluded that parenting styles have some measure of influence on the academic achievement of secondary school children. In line with the forgoing assertions, the current study therefore sought to examine the influence of parenting styles and parents' self-efficacy on preschool children's academic achievement in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Obviously, improvement in the academic achievement of children is dependent on a combination of teacher, learner, and parental factors such as parenting style. The style of parenting adopted in different homes affects their children's disposition. Authoritative parenting style is the most successful approach to child-rearing. These parents are warm, attentive, and sensitive to their children's needs. Authoritative parents are warm and responsive, providing their children with affection and support in their explorations and pursuit of interests their by promoting the academic achievement of children

at school.

Despite the tremendous efforts of authoritative parenting style towards promoting children's academic achievements, it is believed that there are other factors that contribute to academic achievement of preschool children, like parents' level of education. Furthermore, it has been discovered that children's achievement in school could be hindered due to the level of involvement of parents in their studies, and menace of poverty. Neglecting children without proper involvement of parents in their education is a great problem which in turn may be the obstacle of the failure of some children in their academic pursuit. Again, self-efficacy is another factor because, parents who have poor self-efficacy have higher rates of depression, exhibit more defensive and controlling behaviour (Zeb, Akbar, Gul, Haider, Poulova, & Yasmin, 2021). They also have higher perceptions of child difficulties, report higher stress levels, have a passive parental coping style ([Pelletier and Brent, 2022](#)). So, there is need to know some of the factors that are behind the successful academic achievement which previous studies failed to address in other to fill the gap. It is in view of this that the current study examined the influence of parenting styles and parents' self-efficacy on preschool children's academic achievement in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of parenting styles and parents' self-efficacy on preschool children's academic achievement in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. The study specifically sought to investigate:

1. the influence of authoritative parenting style on preschool children's academic achievement in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.
2. the influence of permissive parenting style on preschool children's academic achievement in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

3. the influence of authoritarian parenting style on preschool children's academic achievement in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.
4. whether parents' self-efficacy affect the parenting styles of preschool children in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of authoritative parenting style on preschool children's academic achievement in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State?
2. What is the influence of permissive parenting style on preschool children's academic achievement in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State?
3. What is the influence of authoritarian parenting style on preschool children's academic achievement in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State?
4. How do parents' self-efficacy affect parenting styles of preschool children in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Significance of the Study

The study has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, the study is anchored on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. This theory postulates that child development is influenced by the interaction between characteristics of the child and the parents as well as the environmental context in which the child develops. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory has critical implications on the current study. This theory acknowledges that children do not develop in isolation, but in relation to the family, school, community and society at large. Practically, the study will be beneficial to the stakeholders in early childhood programmes, district centre for early childhood education, parents, national centre for early childhood education, and future

researchers.

Method

This study adopted a descriptive survey design, which is a type of design in which group of items are investigated upon by collecting and analyzing data from only a few of them considered to be representative of the entire group. This was adopted for this study because it investigated the influence of parenting styles and parents' self-efficacy on preschool children's academic achievement in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State by eliciting pieces of information from few samples that represented the whole population. Towns that make up the local government are: Abacha, Abatete, Eziowelle, Ideani, Nkpor, Obosi, Ogidi, Oraukwu, Uke, Umuoji and Nnokwa with its headquarters at Ogidi. This Local Government is a center for trade, and a home to a number of markets, including the Building materials of Ogidi. Crops like yam, cassava, cocoyam, and vegetables grow in the region. Farming is another significant occupation in Idemili North Local Government Area. The local government has a total area of about 390 square kilometers and the River Idemili flows within its territory. Their Population Density as at 2022 is 614,200. The researcher chose to study this area because many parents, teachers and schools in this area seem not to recognize the importance of parenting styles and parents' self efficacy on preschool children's academic achievement.

In this study, the target population was 962 teachers in the 68 public pre-primary schools in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. The sample comprises two hundred (200) teachers selected from 68 preschools in the area. However, simple random sampling was used as the sampling technique to select ten teachers each from the twenty selected schools. This was because each member of the population has equal and independent chance of being selected to form the sample group. A questionnaire instrument titled "Parenting Style and Self-efficacy Scale (PSSES)" was used for

data collection. It was designed by the researcher to illicit information from the respondents. The instrument used in this study has two sections, A and B. Section A comprised of the personal information of the respondents: While the section B comprised of twenty (20) items with response options: Strongly Agree (SA)-4, Agree (A)-3, Disagree (D)-2 and Strongly Disagree(SD)-1. The questionnaire used in this study was given to two experts in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education Department and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation from the department of Educational Psychology/Guidance and Counselling, all in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe for validation. They ensured that the questions in the questionnaire are framed to answer the research questions. Corrections were made before the final draft. Twenty copies of the questionnaire were administered to twenty respondents from Community Primary school, Neni who were not part of the study. After two weeks, the instruments was reshuffled and re-administered to that same set of subjects. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was done on the scores from both testing periods to determine the coefficient of reliability and a correlation coefficient of 0.94 was ascertained and adopted for the study. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher and a research assistant in each school. Two hundred (200) copies of the questionnaire were administered and collected. Instantly, the entire two hundred questionnaires were later returned and worked with. Data collected were presented in a table and analyzed using arithmetical mean (\bar{x}) A benchmark of 2.50 and above was established so that mean ratings of 2.50 and above indicated agreement; whereas the mean below 2.50 indicated disagreement.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the influence of authoritative parenting style on preschool children's academic achievement in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Table I
Mean and Standard Deviation rating the influences of Authoritative Parenting Style on Preschool Children's Academic Achievement

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Total	ΣX	SD	Decision
1	Authoritative parents provide a high level of emotional security that provides their children with a sense of independence which make them score very high academically	139	34	26	1	200	790	3.95	0.51 Agreed
2	Authoritative parents are being sensitive to the children's educational needs which make them score very high academically	180	10	5	5	200	730	3.65	0.41 Agreed
3	Children raised by authoritative parents scored very high academically because of their parents' attention	120	20	53	7	200	633	3.16	0.37 Agreed
4	They encourage their children to talk about their academic problems which make them score very high academically	110	50	32	8	200	776	3.88	0.45 Agreed
5	Authoritative parents communicate with their children, this nurtures skills in interpersonal relations that make them to excel academically in school	120	49	23	8	200	700	3.50	0.43 Agreed

means and standard deviations of (3.95 & 0.51), (3.65 & 0.41), (3.16 & 0.37), (3.88 & 0.45), and (3.50 & 0.43) respectively were all agreed. This was because, they were up to and above the agreed mean level of 2.5 respectively. Therefore, the results showed that preschool children raised by authoritative parents scored very high academically.

Research Question II: What is the influence of permissive parenting style on preschool children's academic achievement in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Table 2
Mean and Standard Deviation Rating the influences of Permissive Parenting Style on Preschool Children's Academic Achievement

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Total	ΣFX	x	SD	Decision
6	They are not caring whether the children get a good or bad grade in school which make them score very low academically	110	82	4	4	200	698	3.49	0.58	Agreed
7	Permissive parents do not discipline their children even when they misbehave which make them score very low academically	110	79	6	5	200	700	3.50	0.60	Agreed
8	They ignore the children's bad behaviour which make them score very low academically	106	85	6	3	200	692	3.46	0.56	Agreed
9	They allow the children to do whatever they want e.g. watching TV which make them score very low academically	111	80	5	4	200	696	3.48	0.57	Agreed
10	They are not setting rules for children to follow especially when to study which make them score very low academically	105	88	5	2	200	698	3.49	0.58	Agreed

In the table 2, items 6-10 with the responding mean and standard deviation of (3.49 & 0.58), (3.50 & 0.60), (3.46 & 0.56), (3.48 & 0.57), and (3.49 & 0.58) were all agreed. This was because, they were up to and above the agreed mean level of 2.5 respectively. Therefore, the results showed that permissive parents are not disciplining the preschool children which make them score very low academically.

Research Question III: What is the influence of authoritarian parenting style on preschool children's academic achievement in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Table 3
Mean and Standard Deviation rating the influences of Authoritarian Parenting Style on Preschool Children's Academic Achievement

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Total	ΣX	x	SD	Decision
11	They use criticism to make children improve in their academics which make them score very low academically	101	89	8	2	200	702	3.51	0.58	Agreed
12	The authoritarian parents are using threats on the children as a form of punishment while reading with them which make them score very low academically	112	83	2	3	200	704	3.52	0.64	Agreed
13	They openly criticize the children when they do not meet the expectations resulting in very low academically scores	100	91	7	2	200	698	3.49	0.59	Agreed
14	They use punishment when children disobey which result to very low academically score	110	77	7	6	200	704	3.52	0.64	Agreed
15	They hit children when disapproving their behaviour while teaching them which make them score very low academically	117	70	9	4	200	710	3.55	0.62	Agreed

In the table 3, items 11-15 with the responding mean and standard deviation of (3.51 & 0.58), (3.52 & 0.64), (3.49 & 0.59), (3.52 & 0.64), and (3.55 & 0.62) were all agreed. This was because, they were up to and above the agreed mean level of 2.5 respectively. Therefore, the results showed that authoritarian parents are using threats on the preschool children which make them score very low academically.

Research Question 4: What are the ways parents' self-efficacy affect parenting styles of preschool children in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Table 4
Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings the ways Parents' Self-Efficacy Affect Parenting Styles of Preschool Children

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Total	ΣFX	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
16	Parents with low self-efficacy feel helpless in the role of parent thereby using punitive disciplinary strategies	129	36	27	8	200	798	3.99	0.53	Agreed
17	Parents with high self-efficacy believe they can effectively influence their children's development and education	149	18	26	8	200	706	3.53	0.39	Agreed
18	Parents with low self-efficacy have higher rates of depression which makes them to exhibit more defensive behaviour	148	20	26	6	200	710	3.55	0.40	Agreed
19	Parents with low self-efficacy have higher perceptions of child difficulties	118	42	29	11	200	667	3.33	0.34	Agreed
20	Parents with low self-efficacy report higher stress levels which exposes them to have a passive parental coping style	136	23	33	8	200	785	3.92	0.49	Agreed

In the table 4, items 16-20 with the responding means and standard deviations of (3.99 & 0.53), (3.53 & 0.39), (3.55 & 0.40), (3.33 & 0.34), and (3.92 & 0.49) respectively were all agreed. This was because, they are above the agreed mean level of 2.50. Therefore, the results showed that there are relationships between parents' self-efficacy and parenting style of preschool children.

Discussion of the Findings

The discussions of the results were done based on the research questions. Findings for research question I revealed that children raised by authoritative parents scored very high academically. Authoritative parents are sensitive to the children's educational needs and feelings, encourage the children to talk about their feelings and academic problems, and communicate with their children which nurture skills in interpersonal relations that make them to excel academically in school. These findings were in agreement with the findings of Baumrind (2017) who revealed that children of authoritative parents were more mature, independent, friendly, active and achievement oriented than those under other parents.

Findings for research question II revealed that permissive parents do not discipline the children even when they misbehave. They ignore

the children's bad behaviour, allowing the children to do whatever they want e.g. watching TV, not setting rules for children to follow especially when to study and are also not caring whether the children get a good or bad grade in school which make them score very low academically. This finding is inconsistent with the findings of Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, and Robert (2017) who posited that permissive parenting style negatively associated with adolescents poor school grades.

Findings for research question III revealed that authoritarian parents use threats on the children as a form of punishment while reading with them, openly criticizing the children when they do not meet the parent's expectations academically. They force and punishment when children disobey, hit the children when disapproving their behaviour while teaching them, and use criticism to make children improve in their academics which result in very low academic scores. The findings of the current study were in agreement with the findings of Baumrind (2017) who found that preschool children of authoritarian parents were less achievement – oriented than those of authoritative parents.

Findings for research question IV revealed that there is a significant relationship between parents' self-efficacy and parenting style of preschool children. This is because parents with high self-efficacy believe they can effectively influence their children's development and education. While parents with low self-efficacy have higher rates of depression, higher perceptions of child difficulties, report higher stress levels, and feel helpless in the role of parenting thereby using punitive disciplinary strategies. The findings were in agreement with [Coleman and Karraker \(2010\)](#) who reported that parents with high self-efficacy believe they can effectively and positively influence their children's development and education. On the other hand, parents with low self-efficacy have higher rates of depression, and exhibit more defensive and controlling behaviour ([Zeb et al., 2021](#)).

Conclusion

It was concluded that:

- Preschool children raised by authoritative parents scored very high academically in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.
- Permissive parents do not discipline their preschool children which make them score very low academically in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.
- Authoritarian parents use threats on the preschool children which make them score very low academically in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.
- There is a significant relationship between parents' self-efficacy and parenting style of preschool children in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- Findings from this study revealed that authoritative parenting style yield good performance in preschool activities while authoritarian and permissive styles yield poor performance. In the light of these findings, the policy makers at the Ministry of Education should develop policies that would encourage parents to adopt appropriate parenting styles.
- There is need for the National Centre for Early Childhood Education to develop a curriculum and a training manual aimed at educating parents and communities on parenting styles and their implications on children's achievement in school.
- Findings from this study revealed that parents' self-efficacy significantly influence their parenting styles.

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