

PARENTING STYLES AS CORRELATES OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES IN OBIO/AKPOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

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ABSTRACT: *Parenting styles refers to practices adopted by parents in rearing their children. A good parenting style is needed to develop in a child interpersonal relationship, capacity to take initiatives, self-reliance, motivation and to conform to societal acceptable code of conduct. Bad parenting style is counterproductive and may as well get children involved in antisocial behaviours including examination malpractices. This work is a correlational study intended to determine the relationship between parenting styles and students' attitude towards examination malpractices. Three research questions and three hypotheses were designed to guide the study. The instruments for data collection were Students' Attitude to Examination Malpractices Scale and Parenting Style Scale. These instruments were vetted by three experts in Educational Psychology. The reliability coefficient of Attitude to Examination Malpractices Scale measured through test-retest method and Pearson product moment correlation technique was 0.86. The reliability indices of sections of Parenting Style Scale established through Cronbach Alpha technique were 0.68, 0.81, 0.73 and 0.84 for sections A, B, C and D respectively. It was found that though, majority of the students showed negative attitude towards examination malpractices, a sizeable percentage of them showed positive attitude towards the malaise. Authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles had a significant joint relationship with students' attitude towards examination malpractices. Authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles each had individual negative relationship with students' attitude towards examination malpractices while neglectful parenting style had a positive relationship with students' attitude towards examination malpractices. Based on these findings, it is imperative for the counsellors to assist prospective couples through premarital counselling or marital counselling to adopt good parenting styles especially authoritative parenting style in nurturing their children. Appreciable number of counsellors should be employed by the government of Rivers State and sent to secondary schools to help maladjusted students acquire good value re-orientation that will enable them distinguish what is good from what is bad with a view to avoiding negative tendencies including examination malpractices.*

KEYWORDS: Examination, Test, Malpractices, Fraud, Cheating, Corruption, Antisocial Behaviour, Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, Neglectful Parenting Styles.

INTRODUCTION

Education was defined by Achuonye and Ajoku (2003) as the leading out of the in-born powers and potentialities of the individuals in the society and the acquisition of skills, aptitudes and competencies necessary for self-realization and coping with life problems. Scientific, technological, economic, social and political development of a nation is guaranteed through education. Education produces individuals of worthwhile personality with

relevant skills and aptitudes needed for national development. At the centre of education, are students and teachers. For education to fulfill its perceived objectives, the teachers must perform their duties conscientiously and the students must be prepared to learn and demonstrate their learning through examinations. When examinations are administered to students, they are expected to conform their conducts before, during and after the examinations to established examination rules. Students who flout examination rules engage in examination malpractices.

Examination malpractice, according to Muhney, Gutmann and Schniedeman (2008) is academic dishonesty involving any act of omission or commission which compromises the reliability of any assessment or evaluation system. Ikupa (1997) defined it as an illegal or unethical behaviour by somebody in the process of testing the ability or knowledge of an examinee by means of questions. According to Benedette, Corneliu, Ndifon, and Obinna (2012), cheating is a pervasive problem in education and the extent to which student engage in the act has greatly increased. Of course, when student learn in an environment replete with stress, corruption and unhealthy rivalry, some might begin to see examination fraud as a means of survival in such context. Ikupa (1997) also noted that examination malpractices can take the form of crib notes, looking over someone's shoulder during exams. More recently many elaborate methods of cheating have been developed over the years. For instance, students now store information on graphing calculators, pages, cell phones and other electronic devices. This is as a result of the breakthrough in information technology. Some also go as far as paying certain amount demanded by the teachers for them to pass such subjects. Olakolade (2002) also notes that female students sometimes trade their bodies in exchange for higher grade. Although the students have the largest contribution to the issue of examination malpractices, factors like parenting styles may also contribute to it.

Parents play a huge role in their child's life. However, what parents do and say greatly impacts on a child's development from the day the child is born. Parents who taught their children good qualities like hard work, persistence, integrity, honesty etc and live as good examples to their children will likely bring forth children of sort. On the other hand, parents who help their children to cheat like registering them in so called "Miracle centers" paying for someone to assist their children in writing exams, buying question papers and even paying WAEC or JAMB personnel to have good results are not good models. Even if they are preaching all these aforementioned qualities, the children will not listen as children are more fascinated to the action than preaching.

Parenting refers to the aspects of raising, promoting, supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from the time the child is born until adulthood. Parenting style has to do with upbringing of the child. It refers to the manner in which parents raise their children. It can also refer to the parents' level of expectations, performance demands, attentiveness to rules, etc as well as the style of discipline that the parents utilize to enforce their expectations (Maccoby & Martin, 2003). Baumrind (1997) saw it as a psychological construct representing standard strategies parents use in raising their children. Baumrind (1997) also gave the description of parenting styles including authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles.

Authoritative parenting style: According to Baumrind (1997), parents who use this method raise children who are successful, articulate, happy with themselves and generous to others. They are less likely to report depression and low self-esteem, and less likely to engage in antisocial behaviour. These children are usually liked by teachers and peers especially in

cultures where individual initiative is valued. This is the most commonly used parenting style in the world today. Authoritative parenting style is characterized by high expectations of compliance to parental rules and directions, an open dialogue about those rules and behaviours and a child centered approach. They are not usually controlling but allow the child to explore freely. Authoritative parents set limits, but demand maturity, and when punishing a child, they will always explain their reasons for punishing, if the child falls short. Children who are subject to this kind of parenting style may debate with parents on issues affecting them. Research suggests that having at least one authoritative parent can make a huge difference (Fletcher et al., 1999).

Authoritarian parenting style: This parenting style is characterized by high expectation of conformity and adherence to parental rules and directions. These parents expect much from their children but do not explain the reasons for the rules, unlike the authoritative parent. Authoritarian parents are most likely to hit a child as a form of punishment instead of correcting the child by using other corrective measures. Children nurtured with this type of parenting style lack social competence as authoritarian parents will generally predict what the child should do instead of allowing the child to take initiatives. These children rarely think on their own, are socially withdrawn and look up to others to decide what is right. They lack spontaneity and curiosity. They are most vulnerable to enter into relationship with or marry equally abusive and controlling partners or develop mental illness in adulthood. On the opposite side of the spectrum, some children might also rebel by openly defying the parents by leaving home at a tender age than some of their peers as well as dating and/ or marrying a partner whom they know their parents would disapprove of, and often might be estranged from their parents during adulthood. Many people who grow up with this type of parents have sometimes mentioned that they have feeling of sense of relief whenever one (or both) of their parents dies.

Permissive parenting style: Permissive parenting style is characterized as having few behavioural expectations for the child and is also characterized by warm affect. These parents are nurturing and accepting, but not demanding. This type of parent simply wants the child to love him or her at the end of the day and will do anything the child requests of him. Sometimes, permissive parents might do this out of fear that their children will rebel in negative ways if they are to control their impulses. Bribery in form of gifts and toys are therefore used as a means to control their kids.

Neglectful parenting style: This is also known as non-conformist parenting and is one of the most harmful types of parenting style. They are generally not involved in their child's life, but will provide basic needs of the child. Many times, children raised with this style will grow up feeling lonely and having a feeling of resentment against their parents for being neglectful and often might be estranged from them. The level of this estrangement might even be determined by the gender of the child.

Nurturing children with a bad parenting style can be counterproductive. Bad parenting style can give rise to maladjusted children who have wrong value system and show no remorse in indulging in corrupt practices including examination malpractices.

Statement of the problem

Educational system of a nation is supposed to be a wheel that spins the development of the nation. Under normal educational system, examination remains the best test of true

knowledge. In Nigerian system of education, this assertion is not entirely true as students and teachers pride themselves in indulging in examination malpractices. The quest for possession of certificates has made examination malpractice the order of the day. Many graduates are no longer found worthy in learning and character to possess the certificates they parade due to “acquire certificate at all costs syndrome”.

Maladjusted children nurtured using different parenting styles are actively involved in examination malpractices. These children have poor understanding and application of our value system. They imbibed jaundiced social norms and develop into adults whose behaviours are rooted in dishonesty and corruption. They probably have absolute disregard for self-esteem. Hence, this study explored the relationship between parenting styles and attitude towards examination malpractices among secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Governemnt Area of Rives State.

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between parenting styles and students’ attitude towards examination malpractices. The specific objectives of the study are to investigate

1. The percentage of students with positive and negative attitude towards examination malpractices.
2. The extent to which authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles jointly relate to students’ attitude towards examination malpractices.
3. The extent to which authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles independently relate to students attitude towards examination malpractices.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this research.

1. What is the percentage of students with positive and negative attitude towards examination malpractices?
2. To what extent do authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles jointly relate to students’ attitude towards examination malpractices?
3. To what extent do authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles independently relate to students’ attitude towards examination malpractices?

Hypotheses

In this study, the following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. The percentage of students with positive and negative attitude towards examination malpractices does not differ significantly.
2. There is no significant relationship between authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles taken jointly and students’ attitude towards examination malpractices.

3. There is no significant relationship between authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles taken independently and students' attitude towards examination malpractices.

METHOD

From a total of 20 public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, 10 schools were selected using simple random sampling technique. Then from a population of 16522 senior secondary school students in the 20 schools, 775 students were selected using stratified random sampling technique. The instruments for data collection were Students' Attitude to Examination Malpractices Scale and Parenting Style Scale. Students' Attitude to Examination Malpractices Scale has two sections, sections A and B. Section A was used to obtain demographic information from the respondents while section B has 20 items which measured the attitude of students towards examination malpractices. Similarly, Parenting Style Scale has four sections, sections A, B, C and D. Section A measured students' authoritative parenting style background, section B measured students' authoritarian parenting style background, section C measured students' permissive parenting style background and section D measured students' neglectful parenting style background. Each section of Parenting Style Scale has 5 items. All the items in Students' Attitude to Examination Malpractices Scale and Parenting Style Scale were of 4 -point response options of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The instruments were vetted by three experts in Educational Psychology. The reliability coefficient of Attitude to Examination Malpractices Scale measured through test-retest method and Pearson product moment correlation technique was 0.86. The reliability indices of sections of Parenting Style Scale established through Cronbach Alpha technique were 0.68, 0.81, 0.73 and 0.84 for sections A, B, C and D respectively. Data obtained following the administration of these instruments were analyzed using SPSS (version 21).

RESULTS

R_{Q1}: What is the percentage of students with positive and negative attitude towards examination malpractices?

This research questions were answered using percentage. The results obtained are shown in table 1.

Table 1: Percentage students with positive and negative attitude towards exam malpractices.

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Percentage
Negative attitude	452	42.34	20.09	58.32
Positive attitude	323	55.62	11.81	41.68

Table 1 reveals that students identified as having negative attitude were 452 while those with positive attitude to examination malpractices were 323. The mean and standard deviation values for those with negative attitude were 42.34 and 20.09 respectively. On the other hand,

those with positive attitude towards examination malpractices had mean and standard deviation values of 55.62 and 11.81 respectively. From the percentage calculations, 58.32 percent of the sample had negative attitude towards examination malpractices while 41.68 percent of the sampled respondents had positive attitude to examination malpractices. Hence, since 58.32% is greater than 41.68%, it can be deduced that majority of the students have negative attitude towards examination malpractices.

H₀₁: The number of students with positive and negative attitude towards examination malpractices does not differ significantly.

Hypothesis 1 was tested with chi-square (χ^2) and the results are as presented in table 2.

Table 2: Showing chi-square analysis of students with positive and negative attitude towards examination malpractices.

Attitude	O	E	Cal χ^2	Critical χ^2	df	Alpha	Result
Positive	323	387.5	21.5	3.84	1	0.05	Significant (Reject H ₀)
Negative	452	387.5					

From the analysis in table 2, the calculated chi-square is 21.5 while the critical χ^2 is 3.84. As the calculated χ^2 is greater than the critical χ^2 , the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. This implies that there is a significant difference in the number of subjects with positive and negative attitude towards examination malpractices.

Research Question 2: To what extent do authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles jointly relate to students' attitude towards examination malpractices?

Research question 2 was answered using coefficient of regression (r) and the results are shown in table 3.

Table 3: Multiple regression of the joint relationship between parenting style and students' attitude towards examination malpractices

Variable	\bar{X}	S.D	N	R	R ²	Adj R ²	Std. Error
Students attitude	55.36	11.556	775				
Authoritative	39.45	18.505	775				
Authoritarian	26.41	9.719	775	0.147	0.022	0.017	11.460
Permissive	30.59	18.056	775				
Neglectful	34.30	18.539	775				

Table 3 revealed a multiple regression coefficient of 0.147, having a squared coefficient (R^2) of 0.022, adjusted R^2 value of 0.017 and a standard error of 11.460. From the r-value, it can be deduced that authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles had low positive joint relationship with students' attitude towards examination malpractices. Based on the adjusted r-squared coefficient of 0.017, it was deduced that only 1.7% of the variations of students' attitude towards examination malpractices is explainable by the joint contribution of the parenting styles. However the remaining 98.3% of the variations are unexplained by the joint contribution of the parenting styles but by factors outside the scope of the study.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting style taken jointly and students' attitude towards examination malpractices.

Data for hypothesis 2 were analyzed using ANOVA associated with multiple regression analysis and the results are shown in table 4

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA associated with multiple regressions on the joint relationship of the four parenting styles and students attitude towards cheating in examination.

Variables	Sum of squares	d.f	Mean squares	F.	Sig.
Regression	2243.068	4	560.767		
Residual	1101120.641	770	131.326	4.270	0.02
Total	103363.708	774			

From table 4, it is can be seen that the calculated f-value of 4.270 obtained was significant at 0.02 alpha level ($p < 0.05$) which was lower than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 at degrees of freedom of 4 and 770. Therefore, since the p-value was less than the chosen alpha, the null hypothesis was rejected indicating that authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles have a significant joint relationship with students' attitude towards examination malpractices.

Research Question 3; To what extent do authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting style independently relate with students attitude towards examination malpractices?

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles taken independently and students' attitude towards examination malpractices.

Table 5: Multiple regression of the independent relationship between authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles and students' attitude towards cheating in examination.

Variance	Unstandardise coefficient		Standardized		
	B	StdError	Beta	t.	Sig.
Constant	56.879	1.222	-	46.546	0.000
Authoritative	-0.020	0.036	-0.032	-0.553	0.580
Authoritarian	-0.012	0.057	-0.011	-0.219	0.827
Permissive	-0.109	0.030	-0.171	-3.611	0.000
Neglectful	0.085	0.032	0.137	2.631	0.009

Table 5 shows that beta values are -0.032, -0.011, -0.171 and 0.0137 for authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles respectively and t-values of -0.553, -0.219, -3.611 and 2.631 respectively. From the beta values, it can be inferred that neglectful parenting style has a positive relationship with students' attitude towards examination malpractices while other parenting styles each has a negative relationship with students' attitude towards examination malpractices. From probability levels, only permissive parenting style and neglectful parenting style have probability levels less than 0.05 while authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles have probability levels above 0.05. This implies that permissive and neglectful parenting styles have significant individual relationships with students' attitude towards examination malpractices. Authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles have no significant individual relationships with students' attitude towards examination malpractices.

From the beta values, 3.3%, 1.1%, 17.1% and 13.7% of variations in students' attitude towards examination malpractices is explained by authoritative parenting style, authoritarian parenting style, permissive parenting style and neglectful parenting style respectively.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the findings of the study, majority of the students had negative attitude towards examination malpractices. This implies that majority of the students would not love to engage in examination malpractices. It might also imply that the students who showed positive attitude towards examination malpractices engage in examination malpractices due to personal reasons or peer group influence. This finding to some extent is expected because the researcher suspected that some students were positively disposed to examination malpractices while others were not based on personal observations and interaction with some students. Some of the students revealed that if they had the ability to comprehend what they read, they would have no reason to engage in examination malpractices. This finding is in agreement with that reported by Okoro (2001) which noted that 68.2 percent of students sampled had disdain for examination malpractices. This result however may not be unconnected with the self as well as public image individual students may want to have in the eyes of people. This might be explained along the line that they may not want to be seen as cheats by people or teachers but who might secretly engage in such act away from the watchful eyes of people.

It was found that authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles had a positive significant joint relationship with students' attitude towards examination malpractices. This result shows that though significant, their influences are to a low extent. This finding is expected because research like that of Titus (2011) has shown that parenting styles have a positive significant relationship with students' attitude towards examination malpractices.

It was found that neglectful parenting style with beta value of 0.137 had the highest significant relationship with students' attitude towards examination malpractices. This result implies that students who come from uninvolved homes where they were not properly cared for and offered little emotional support are more prone to developing positive attitude towards examination malpractices. The result is however expected because the researcher suspected that parental care and control is a major factor in child rearing and parents who are not good in parenting or committed to what they profess, cannot have positive influence on their children's attitude. When the life style of parents negates what they are teaching, their children will take more from their character than from their words. As Esuman (2008) noted, students from neglectful homes engage more in deviant behaviors than those from other homes.

Furthermore, permissive parenting style was revealed as the second highest factor influencing students' attitude towards examination malpractices. The result implies that students whose parents place few demands and control over probably tend to develop positive attitude to cheating. This finding is expected because the researcher also suspected that over permissiveness or indulgence could make a child get involved in inappropriate behaviour. The finding of Esuman (2008) also supported the present finding. Authoritative parenting style was found to have an insignificant independent relationship with students' attitude towards examination malpractices. This means that children from authoritative homes might not likely develop positive attitude towards cheating because these parents establish and enforce behavioral standards and stay in control by encouraging their children to follow the standard. The study also revealed that an authoritarian parenting style does not have any significant independent relationship with students' attitude towards examination malpractices. It implies that children from homes whose parents are strict and demanding may not develop positive attitude towards examination malpractices.

Implications for counselling

Though, majority of the students had negative attitude towards examination malpractices, an appreciable percentage of them exhibited positive attitude towards examination malpractices. The students with positive attitude towards examination malpractices do not think it is wrong to engage in examination malpractices. A wrong value system imbibed by these students is an indication that they maladjusted during their childhood and adolescent periods. This implies that beside peer group influence, these children must have been nurtured through some unpalatable parenting styles. This is the reason why it is necessary for the counsellors to assist prospective couples through premarital counselling or marital counselling to adopt good parenting styles especially authoritative parenting style in nurturing their children. The children nurtured in this way will be empowered to exhibit good behaviours even in the midst of peers with conduct disorder.

Besides, counsellors must be recruited in appreciable number to work in primary and secondary schools. The counsellors must help the developing population in the formative

period to adopt good codes of conduct. By this, the youths will be able to sieve the right behaviours from the wrong ones and adopt the right behaviours that will make them exhibit negative attitude towards examination malpractices and other social vices that plague our society in recent times. This is absolutely necessary as the youths are leaders of tomorrow. A large population of youths with antisocial behaviours will obviously impact negatively to the economic, social, political and technological development of our nation. No group of people other than the counsellors is in a position to effect positive change in the behaviour of the youths.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that though, majority of the students showed negative attitude towards examination malpractices, a sizeable percentage of them showed positive attitude towards examination malpractices. Those who show positive attitude to examination malpractices give support to this malady and may never show remorse for indulging in it.

While some parenting styles adopted for nurturing the students positively influenced their attitude towards examination malpractices, others negatively influenced their attitude towards examination malpractices. This may help to explain the reasons why some students showed positive attitude towards examination malpractices, while others showed negative attitude towards it.

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