

Parenting Style, Emotional Intelligence And Psychological Health Of Nigerian Children

ABSTRACT

Aim: Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been defined as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and connect emotions to oneself and in relation to others. Research findings show that parenting style could potentially contribute to or hinder the lifetime success of a child well into adulthood including leadership roles. The influence of parenting style on the emotional intelligence and psychological health of the Nigerian child has not been given adequate research attention.

Study design: Exploratory /Descriptive survey design.

Methodology: Purposive sampling technique was used to select 332 (*mean age* = 14) in-school adolescents who responded to Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), Parenting Style Instrument (PSI) and General Health Questionnaire -12 (GHQ-12). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis.

Results: Observed patterns for low, high and very high levels respectively are: authoritative parenting style (45.5%, 41.6%, and 12.9%), authoritarian parenting style (53%, 30.7% and 16.3%); permissive parenting style (64.2%, 20.7% and 15.1%). Parenting style had a significant predictive influence on emotional intelligence ($R^2 = .070$, $p = .000$). Observed significant predictive influence include: Authoritative parenting style ($R^2 = .093$, $p = .000$), and Authoritarian parenting style ($R^2 = .038$, $p = .000$). Permissive parenting style failed to significantly predict Emotional Intelligence ($R^2 = .005$, $p = .198$). Authoritative parenting style failed to significantly predict psychological distress ($R^2 = .00$, $p = .874$) while authoritarian ($R^2 = .010$, $p = .075$) as well as permissive parenting styles ($R^2 = .015$, $p = .025$) were significant predictors of psychological distress.

Conclusion: Authors conclude that a child's emotional intelligence and psychological health status are products of parenting style.

Keywords: Parenting style, emotional intelligence, psychological health, children.

1. INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others. It is generally said to include three skills: emotional awareness; the ability to harness emotions and apply them to tasks like thinking and problem solving; and the ability to manage emotions, which includes regulating your own emotions. Parents' emotional expressiveness and the emotional climate that they create through their parenting styles provide guidelines to children regarding the use of emotion in the regular everyday social interactions. The family play pivotal and specific role of parenting in the development of a child's emotional intelligence. Noticeably, parents want to help their children to move through different developmental stages successfully. Research has shown that the influence of parents on children does not decline as they grow into adolescents [1, 2].

Parenting style is a psychological construct that is defined as standard strategies used by parents to bring up their children. Baumrind's parenting styles focus on two main elements of parenting: it reflects that parents are responsive and demanding. The responsiveness of parents is also referred to as parental supportiveness and warmth. This is, "the extent in which parents intentionally foster individuality, self-regulatory behaviour and self-assertiveness by being attentive, supportive, and compliant to children's needs and demands" [2]. When parents are demanding, this refers to behavioural control, "the claims, parents make on children to become integrated into the family whole, by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys" [2]. Baumrind [3, 4, 2] in a series of studies identified three parenting styles namely authoritative, authoritarian and permissive.

49 These three styles vary according to the degree of warmth and control exercised and is useful in
50 understanding its contribution to emotional wellbeing of children. Each parenting style creates a different
51 emotional climate thereby contributing to the development of emotional intelligence.

52
53 During the socialization process parents provide the first context for recognition and communication of
54 affective messages. These affective messages are communicated to children with the expectation that
55 they will be able to interpret and respond to them. The four major parenting styles are authoritarian,
56 authoritative, indulgent or permissive and uninvolved. Authoritarian parents are highly controlling in the
57 use of authority and rely on punishment but are not responsive. They value obedience and do not tolerate
58 give and take relationships with their children. Authoritarian parents do not expect their children to
59 express disagreement with their decisions and rules and do expect them to obey without explanation [5].

60 Authoritative parents are warm and communicate well with their children; they are both demanding and
61 responsive. Parents of this style are able to stay in authority and expect maturity from their children. They
62 respect their children's opinions and independence while also maintaining their own positions. This
63 parenting style permits children enough freedom of expression so that they can develop a sense of
64 independence but know the boundaries of rules and obey them. Both authoritative and authoritarian
65 parents have high expectations of their children but use control in different ways [5]. Indulgent parents
66 are warm and accepting but their main concern is not to interfere with their children's creativity and
67 independence; these parents are more responsive than demanding. They demand little in terms of
68 obedience and respect for authority. They are nontraditional and lenient, they do not require mature
69 behaviour, they allow considerable self-regulation, and avoid confrontations [5].

70
71 Uninvolved parents are low in demand and responsive behaviour. In extreme cases, this parenting style
72 might include both rejecting-neglecting and neglecting parents. This parenting style is viewed as the worst
73 of the four. Parents in this style do not establish rules nor do they even care in which direction the child's
74 behaviour is headed [5]. In order to fully understand the difference in parenting styles, an example from
75 Maccoby and Martin [5] indicates how each parent demonstrates how they would react to a situation.
76 Baumrind's parenting styles have been found to predict child wellbeing in terms of social competence,
77 academic performance, psychosocial development, and problem behaviour. Research using parent
78 interviews, teacher interviews, and child report consistently finds these characteristics associated with
79 each parenting style [2].

80
81 Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity for recognizing one's own feelings and those of others, for
82 motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and our relationships. Unlike
83 intelligence quotient (IQ) which changes little after adolescent years, emotional intelligence (EI) is largely
84 learnt, is not fixed genetically or develops in early childhood but continues to develop and is
85 predominantly environmentally determined [6]. Emotionally intelligent person is skilled in four areas such
86 as identifying, using, understanding and regulating emotions [7]. Gardener (1983) was of the opinion that
87 those with higher emotional intelligence (EI) perform better academically as they have developed
88 empathy and social skills. Though there is no direct link between a student's retention capacity and
89 Emotional Intelligence (EI), students equipped with a proper level of Emotional intelligence (EI) are more
90 likely to succeed academically than those who have relatively high Intelligence quotient (IQ) and yet lack
91 emotional intelligence. Be it an ability or personality trait, emotional intelligence follows a predictable
92 pattern of development from infancy to adolescence.

93
94 During adolescence from 13 to 20 years there is an increased awareness of complex emotional cycles.
95 Adolescents use complex strategies to independently regulate emotions and slowly become aware of the
96 need for mutual and reciprocal emotional self-disclosure in making and maintaining relationships. In the
97 present study, identifying, using, understanding and regulating emotions [7] or abilities to motivate oneself
98 and persist in the face of frustration; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods
99 and keep distress from hindering the ability to think to empathize and to hope [6] is conceptualized as
100 interpersonal awareness, intrapersonal awareness, interpersonal management, and intrapersonal.
101 Several studies have shown the positive outcome of parenting style on emotional intelligence but the
102 focus has been on only one parent that is the mother [8, 9, 10]. As children grow into adolescence they
103 are more vulnerable to emotional problems and how they deal with their emotions and the emotions of
104 others could be dependent on the parenting style engaged in by their parents. Many researchers have

105 noted that it is not the specific discipline practices that are important in predicting child welfare but rather
106 the overall pattern of parenting [11].
107

108 The purpose of this study is to determine the patterns of parenting style and emotional intelligence and
109 prevalence of psychological distress, find out the extent to which parenting style predicts emotional
110 intelligences, ascertain the degrees to which each of the domains of parenting style (authoritative,
111 authoritarian and permissive) predict emotional intelligence and severity of psychological distress among
112 in school children in Osun state southwestern Nigeria.
113

114 **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

115 **2.1 Participants:** A cross sectional survey design was employed in the study. The population
116 comprised of secondary school children selected from five schools in Ede Osun state, Nigeria. A
117 purposive sampling technique was adopted to select three hundred and thirty two respondents, who
118 participated in the study.

119 **2.2 Measures**

120 Three research instruments were used in data collection.

121 Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale [WLEIS] [12] designed to rate the emotional intelligence of
122 self and others. It is a 16 item scale with 4 dimensions. The first is the self-emotion appraisal dimension
123 which assesses individuals' ability to understand and express their own emotions. The second is the
124 Others' Emotion Appraisal dimension which measures peoples' ability to perceive and understand the
125 emotions of others. The third is the Use of Emotion dimension denotes individuals' ability to use their
126 emotions effectively by directing them toward constructive activities and personal performance, the fourth
127 is the Regulation of Emotion dimension which refers to individuals' ability to manage their own emotions.
128 The WLEIS was measured with a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally
129 agree). Previous research has found support for the underlying four-factor structure, reliability, and
130 convergent and discriminant validity of the WLEIS scores [12, 13].

131 Parenting Style Questionnaire (PSQ) by Robinson, Mandlco, Olsen, and Hart, [14] is a 30 item
132 instrument, measured on a 6 points likert scale ranging from never – always. PSQ has three sub scales
133 (authoritarian parenting style, authoritative parenting style and permissive parenting style). It has
134 acceptable psychometric properties for Nigerian samples.

135 General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) is a 12 item instrument by Goldberg and Williams [15] used to
136 identify psychological distress. It has five response categories of 1 "Better than usual", to Worse than
137 usual". Overall high scores consistently indicate high level of psychological distress. GHQ-12 has a
138 Guttman Split-Half reliability coefficient of 0.75 reliability coefficient, and a Cronbach's α value of 0.73.
139 The scale also has a Spearman-Brown coefficient of 0.88. The GHQ scales have been validated with
140 clinical [16] and non-clinical samples [17]. The GHQ-12 was shown to be measurement invariant (i.e., to
141 measure the same construct) across gender [18] and between adults and adolescents [19]. GHQ-12 has
142 been used by many Nigerian investigators [20].
143

144 **2.3 Data Analysis**

145 Collected data was analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive
146 statistic (frequency count and percentages) were used to organize, summarize and describe the
147 demographic characteristics of respondents, while inferential statistic (linear regression analysis) was
148 employed to test the hypotheses.
149

150 **2.4 Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

151 A total of 332 children were selected for this study. They were made up of 140 males and 192 females.
152 The age distributions were between ages 9 to 19 years with mean age of 14 years. The distribution by
153 father's occupation showed that 38% (126) were civil servant, 50.3% (167) were self-employed while
154 11.7% (39), artisan. Distributions by mothers' occupation returned the 31% (103) were civil servant;

155 64.8% (215) were self-employed while 4.2% (14) were artisan. 94.6% (314) of the respondents have
 156 mother in a marriage relationship, while, 5.4% (16) had mother as single parent. 74.4% (247) of the
 157 participants were from Monogamous family while 25.6% (84) were from polygamous homes. Participants
 158 caregivers was 81.% (268) stayed with both parents, 1.8% (6) lived with their fathers alone, 9.9% (33)
 159 have mother as only caregiver, 3.9% (13) were in custody of some close relations who were not their
 160 parents and finally 3% (10) had guardians as caregivers.

161
 162 **3. RESULTS**

163 Patterns of observed parenting style as summarized in table 1 are authoritative parenting style (45.5%,
 164 41.6%, and 12.9%), authoritarian parenting style (53%, 30.7% and 16.3%); permissive parenting style
 165 (64.2%, 20.7% and 15.1%) for low, high and very high levels respectively.

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 167 **Table 1: Patterns of perceived parenting style among the sample**

N= 332			
Patterns %			
Parenting style	Low	High	Very high
Authoritative	45.5	41.6	12.9
Authoritarian	53.0	30.7	16.3
Permissive	64.2	20.7	15.5

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 169 Patterns of perceived EI as summarized in table 2 revealed that 27.7% of the participants manifest very
 170 low EI, 56% had average EI while 16.3% had very high EI.

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 173 **Table 2: Patterns of perceived emotional intelligence among the Nigerian in-school adolescents**

N = 332			
Patterns (%)			
Emotional	Very low	Average	Very high
Intelligence	27.7	56.0	16.3

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 175 A linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether parenting style independently and
 176 significantly predicted Emotional Intelligence (EI) among the participants. The result summarized in table
 177 3 revealed that parenting style independently and significantly predicted EI among the participants [$F(1,$
 178 $332) = 24.79, p= 000$]. The analysis further reveals an R^2 of .070 indicating that 7% variance of EI among
 179 the in-school children in Osun state Nigeria is influenced by parenting style.

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 181 **Table 3: Regression Analysis of Parenting Style on EI**

N=332						
B	β	T	sig	R^2	F	P

(constant)	58.77	9.79	.000			
Parenting Style	.28	.26	4.98	.000	.070	24.79 000

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A linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether authoritative parenting style independently and significantly predicted EI among the participants. The result summarized in table 4 revealed that authoritative parenting style independently and significantly predicted EI among the participants [$F(1, 332) = 33.69, p = 000$]. The analysis further reveals an R^2 of .093 indicating that 9.3% variance of EI among the in-school children in Osun state Nigeria is influenced by authoritative parenting style.

Table 4: Linear Regression Analysis of Authoritative Parenting Style on EI

N=332							
	B	β	T	sig	R^2	F	P
(constant)	53.69		8.90	.000			
Authoritative Parenting Style	.61	.31	5.80	.000	.093	33.69	000

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A linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether authoritarian parenting style independently and significantly predicted EI among the participants. The result reveals that Authoritarian parenting style independently and significantly predicted EI among the participants [$F(1, 332) = 13.05, p = 000$]. The analysis summarized in table 5 further returned an R^2 of .038 indicating that 3.8% variance of EI among the in-school children in Osun state Nigeria is influenced by authoritarian parenting style.

Table 5: Linear Regression Analysis of Authoritarian Parenting Style on EI

N=332							
	B	β	T	sig	R^2	F	p
(constant)	74.92		19.59	.000			
Authoritarian Parenting Style	.31	.20	3.61	.000	.038	13.05	000

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A linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether permissive parenting independently and significantly predicted Emotional Intelligence (EI) among the in-school children in Osun state Nigeria. The result summarized in table 6 revealed that permissive parenting style did not independently and significantly predict EI among the participants [$F(1, 332) = 1.66, p = .198$]. The analysis further reveals an R^2 of .005 indicating that 0.5% variance of EI among the participants is influenced by permissive parenting style.

Table 6: Linear Regression Analysis of Permissive Parenting Style on EI

N= 332							
	B	β	T	sig	R ²	F	p
(constant)	90.79		41.55	.000			
Permissive Parenting Style	-.29	-.07	-1.29	.198	.005	1.66	.198

208
 209 A linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the degree to which authoritative parenting
 210 independently and significantly predicted PD among the in-school children in Osun state Nigeria. The
 211 result summarized in table 7 returned that authoritative parenting style failed to significantly predict PD
 212 among the participants ($R^2 = .00$, $p = .874$). The analysis in table 8 further reveals that 0% variance in
 213 severity of PD is explained by the authoritative parenting style.

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 215 **Table 7: Linear Regression Analysis of authoritative parenting style on PD**

N =332							
	B	β	T	sig	R ²	F	p
(constant)	33.06		9.12	.000			
Authoritative Parenting Style	-.01	-.01	-.16	.874	.000	.025	.874

216
 217 A linear regression analysis was carried out to ascertain the extent to which authoritarian parenting
 218 independently and significantly predicted PD the participants. The result summarized in table 8 reported
 219 that that authoritarian parenting style significantly predict severity of PD among the participants ($R^2 = .01$,
 220 $p = .075$). The analysis in table 8 shows that 1% variance in severity of PD is explained by the
 221 authoritative parenting style.

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 224 **Table 8: Linear Regression Analysis of authoritarian parenting style on PD**

N = 332							
	B	β	T	sig	R ²	F	P
(constant)	28.66		12.91	.000			
Authoritarian Parenting Style	.09	.10	1.78	.075	.010	3.18	.075

225
 226 A linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether permissive parenting independently
 227 and significantly predicted severity of psychological distress among the in-school children in Osun state
 228 Nigeria. The result summarized in table 9 showed that permissive parenting style independently and
 229 significantly predicted psychological distress among the participants ($R^2 = .015$, $p = .025$). The analysis

230 further reveals 1.5% variance of psychological distress among the participants is influenced by permissive
 231 parenting style.

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233 **Table 9: Linear Regression Analysis of Permissive Parenting Style on PD**

N= 332							
	B	β	T	sig	R ²	F	p
(constant)	29.99		24.12	.000			
Permissive Parenting Style	.29	.12	2.25	.025	.015	5.05	.025

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236 **4. DISCUSSIONS**

237 Majority of the participants fall within low and average emotional intelligence. This is similar to finding on
 238 adolescent in rural Indian community [21] who reported that students in rural communities had low EI in
 239 the domain of self-awareness, motivation, and social skills. The result of this study revealed that
 240 composite parenting style is a strong independent predictor of Emotional Intelligence among the
 241 participants. Previous studies consistently returned strong relationships between parenting style and
 242 children and adolescents behavior [22, 23, 24]. Wang, and Sheikh-Khalil [25] found that parental
 243 involvement helped to boost emotional functioning among children and mental health both directly and
 244 indirectly through behavioral and emotional engagement. Stack, Serbin, Enns, Ruttle, and Barrieau's [26]
 245 in a longitudinal study established parenting style significantly influenced either the development of
 246 competent emotional functioning or problematic emotional functioning in children as they grow older and
 247 across generations.

248

249 We also found in this study that authoritative domain of parenting style is a strong independent predictor
 250 of EI among the participants. This research finding is in agreement with most previous studies which
 251 found authoritative parenting as being associated with positive behavioural outcomes such as increased
 252 competence, autonomy, and self-esteem as well as better problem solving skills, better academic
 253 performance, more self-reliance, less deviance, and better peer relations [27, 28, 29, 30, 2]. A hallmark of
 254 emotional intelligence is the capacity to recognize one's own feelings and those of others, for motivating
 255 ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and our relationships. Emotional intelligence (EI)
 256 is largely learnt, and continues to develop and is predominantly environmentally determined [6]. Children
 257 nurtured in environments that values and instills responsiveness and accountability as is found in the
 258 authoritative parenting will, all things being equal, manifest high emotional intelligence.

259

260 Contrary to some previous studies which linked the authoritarian parenting style with negative behavioural
 261 outcomes including aggressive behaviour, decreased emotional functioning, depression and lower levels
 262 of self-confidence [31, 32, 33, 34] our research finding showed that authoritarian domain of parenting
 263 style is a strong independent predictor of EI of Nigerian children, indicating that as authoritarian parenting
 264 style increases, Emotional Intelligence also increases. The plausible explanation to this difference in our
 265 research finding is the social cultural difference in the child rearing practices prevalent in the population of
 266 study.

267 Our research finding which revealed that permissive parenting style is a weak predictor of EI is in
 268 agreement with previous studies [35, 36]. The permissive parent indulges the child placing little or no
 269 demand on obedience to authorities, respect for self and others and shy away from confrontation with
 270 child on negative and maladaptive behaviours [5]. The permissive parent has been positively correlates
 271 with delinquent and aggressive behaviour. Poor supervision, neglect, and indifference are all indulgent
 272 parental practices that play a crucial role in engaging in future delinquency. Children from indulgent
 273 homes report a higher frequency of involvement in deviant behaviours, such as drug use and alcohol use,

274 school misconduct and emotional, impulsive, nonconforming behaviours [35, 36], difficulty in various
275 areas of emotional development and have feelings if insecurity [32].
276

277 Authoritative parenting style failed to significantly predict PD among the participants while authoritarian
278 parenting style was found to significantly predict PD among the participants. This implies that authoritative
279 parenting style enhances psychological health while authoritarian style of parenting promotes
280 psychological distress. This is in agreement with previous research findings [37, 38, 39, 40, 41].

281 Finally, our research finding reveals that permissive parenting style independently and significantly
282 predicted psychological distress among the participants. This supports previous researches which
283 suggest that a lack of involvement, as well as poor monitoring and supervision of children's activities,
284 strongly predicts antisocial behavior [42]. Parents of children with antisocial behaviour are likely to be less
285 positive, more permissive and inconsistent, and use more violent and critical discipline [43]. Among the
286 various parenting styles, permissive parenting style is reported as the most positively associated with
287 antisocial behavior and psychological distress including drug use [44, 28], inconsiderate and
288 disrespectful treatment of parents, struggle with the interpersonal aspects of their emotional development,
289 are emotionally dependent on others [32], poor self-esteem and depressive symptoms, [45], criminal
290 behavior [44, 46], behavioral problems in school [44] and bullying [29, 30] in adolescents.
291

292 5. CONCLUSIONS

293 The finding of this present study shows that majority of the participants fall within low and average
294 emotional intelligence level. Also this study revealed that parenting style is a strong independent predictor
295 of Emotional Intelligence among in-school children in Ede Province of Osun state southwestern Nigeria.
296 Furthermore, authoritative parenting style as well as authoritarian parenting style is independent strong
297 predictors of EI among the children. Permissive parenting style is returned as a weak predictor of EI, but
298 on the other hand, as a strong predictor of psychological distress among the participants. Hence, the
299 emotional intelligence of the Nigerian child is a product of parenting style.
300

301 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

302 Further studies that using the same methodology on a larger sample focused on preschool and in school
303 children from other social cultural setting within Nigeria is recommended.
304

305 ETHICAL APPROVAL

306 This study carried out investigations that involved human elements, thus ethics of research for human
307 subjects were observed. The researcher reviewed online regulatory and informational documents on
308 human-subject protection and passed the examination on responsible conduct of human studies and was
309 issued a Certificate for Bioethics and Research by the Nigerian National Code of Health Research Ethics.
310

311 COMPETING INTERESTS

312 Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.
313

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