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AUTHORITATIVE PARENTING, CULTURAL VALUES STYLES AND RAISING MORALLY BALANCED CHILDREN IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

This study examined authoritative parenting and cultural values styles in raising morally balanced children in Imo State. The purpose of this research is to ascertain how parental authoritative practices and cultural values orientations influence children moral identity, self-esteem, and social competence. Three research questions guided the study, to investigate the relationship between authoritative parenting style and moral development in children in Imo State. The area of the study was two public higher institutions in Imo State mainly Imo State University, Owerri and Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri. The population of the study comprised of all the parents from the three agricultural zones in Imo State. The researchers selected two hundred and sixty-one parents (respondents) using random sampling technique. A descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. Data were collected using researchers developed questionnaire 'Questionnaire on Authoritative Parenting, Cultural Values Styles and Raising Morally Balanced Children' (QAPCVSaRMBC). Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (weighted mean). Results shown that authoritative parenting characterized by warmth, responsiveness and high expectations, interacts with cultural values styles to promote morally balanced children. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended amongst others, that parents should adhere to communalism, spirituality and aspect for tradition that would help to promote children's moral identity. Also educational implications for the study included that it is important for curriculum design and moral education, teacher training and professional development and provision of guidance counselling in schools.

Introduction

The upbringing of children is a critical aspect of societal development, particularly in culturally rich environments like Imo State, Nigeria. This article explores the

interplay between authoritative parenting styles, cultural values, and the nurturing of morally balanced children. The focus is on how these elements can be harmonized to foster morally intelligence in children. Omon (2019) explains that over the years, research has consistently shown that parenting styles significantly influence children's cultural identity and balance. It is a truism that authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth, responsiveness and high expectations is particularly effective in fostering cultural balance in children in Imo State, Nigeria, where cultural diversity is totally pronounced and where the role of authoritative parenting in raising culturally balanced children is equally paramount.

Hinkson (2015) has maintained that the guest to raise culturally balanced children in today's globalized world has become a pressing concern for parents, educators and researchers alike. He went further to say that the complexities of cultural diversity have posed significant challenges to parents seeking to promote cultural balance in their children. In contemporary Nigerian society, particularly in Imo State, there is a noticeable decline in moral values among children and adolescents. This situation raises concerns about the effectiveness of parenting styles and cultural influences on moral development. The challenge lies in understanding how authoritative parenting can be effectively employed within the context of local cultural values to raise children who are not only academically successful but also morally grounded.

Against this backdrop, authoritative parenting has emerged as a pivotal factor in fostering cultural balance and promoting positive youth development. Ryan and Deci (2017) emphasized that the theoretical framework underpinning this study is the self Determination theory (SDT) which posits that human behaviour is motivated by three inert psychological needs, autonomy, competence, cultural balance is critical for Imo State children that would enable them to navigate divers cultural contexts effectively. Authoritative parenting as a matter of fact promotes cultural balance by encouraging exploration, acceptance and integration.

Ade (2002) carried out a –research on authoritative parenting and cultural values styles in encouraging cultural balanced children in Oyo State. Based on the objective of his study three research questions were formulated. The researcher employed a survey research design in carrying out the research work. The population of the study comprised of eight hundred and fifty (850) Senior citizens in the thirty-three (33) local government areas that make up Oyo State. A sample size of four hundred and twenty (420) Senior Random Sampling technique. The instrument the researcher used for data collection was the research's developed questionnaire. The researcher used a statistical tool referred to as weighted mean. The findings reveal that

authoritative parenting and cultural values styles are adequate components in encouraging cultural balanced children in Oyo State.

Huang and Lamb (2020) conducted an exhaustive systematic review of 50 studies on parenting styles and children's adjustment, culminating in a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationships between parenting practices and child outcomes. Their seminal work underscored the pivoted role of authoritative parenting in fostering an environment conducive to children's social, emotional and cognitive development. By scrutinizing the empirical evidence, Huang and lamb elucidated the mechanisms underlying authoritative parenting positive effects on children's adjustment, highlighting the significance of warmth, responsiveness and high expectations. The investigators employed a rigorous methodological approach, incorporating a broad range of studies to provide a nuanced understanding of parenting styles and children's adjustment. Their findings unequivocally demonstrated that authoritative parenting consistently predicts better outcomes across diverse cultural contexts. Huang and Lamb's research underscored the importance of cultural sensitivity in parenting styles are shaped by cultural values and norms. This groundbreaking study has far reaching implications for parenting interventions and policies aimed at promoting positive child development outcomes.
Toro (2021) has argued that authoritative parenting and cultural values styles are adequate components to mould a child in order for his/her to embrace the tenets of his/her cultural identity. He went further to say that without the input of authoritative parenting in a child's life, there is every tendency that such a child's cultural identity becomes hallucinatory. The bottom-line of Toro's submission lies on the fact that every Nigerian child needs authoritative parenting style so as to be properly socialized into a global world that is becoming very competitive. Be that as it may, every parent in Imo State in particular and Nigeria in general should cultivate the attitude of authoritatively parenting their children.

On a lighter mood, Peter (2020) was of the view that cultural balanced children are numbered in Imo State as a result of the fact that many parents do not have the time to apply authoritative parenting in their children. This has metamorphosed to a stage where children aged (9-12) now operate on a world of their own, perhaps, this has caused moral decadence and psychological and emotional challenges to some parents in Imo State in particular and Nigeria in general.

In totality, there is no gain saying that the onus of raising cultural balanced children lies only on the parents who are the custodians of their children. Based on this premise, parents in Imo State in particular and Nigeria in general should wake up to

their responsibilities in ensuring that their children undergo authoritative parenting so as to become culturally balanced.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the study are to:

1. Determine the relationship between authoritative parenting style and moral development in children in Imo State.
2. Examine the impact of cultural values styles on children's moral development in Imo State.
3. To determine the interaction effects of authoritative parenting and cultural values on children's moral development in Imo State.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between authoritative parenting styles and moral development in children in Imo State?
2. How do cultural values styles impact children's moral development in Imo State?
3. Do authoritative parenting and cultural values styles interact to influence children's moral development in Imo State?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is a significant relationship between authoritative parenting styles and moral development in children in Imo State.
2. Cultural value styles have a significant impact on children's moral development in Imo State.
3. There is a significant interaction between authoritative parenting styles and cultural value styles in influencing children's moral development in Imo State.

Methods

Design and Participants

The researcher employed a survey and correlationnal research design in carrying out this research work. The population of the study comprised of all the parents in Imo State from the 27 Local Government Areas. Purposive sampling was used to select three Local Government areas i.e the three (3) agricultural zones: Owerri, Okigwe and Orlu. Two Hundred and sixty one parents were selected (261) for the study using simple random sampling technique.

Instruments

The instrument used for data collection was the researcher's developed questionnaire. A 21 item 4 Likert (agree, strongly agree, strongly disagree &

disagree), scale Questionnaire on Authoritative Parenting, Cultural Values Styles and Raising Morally Balanced Children (QAPCVSaRMBC). The questionnaire has four (4) sections which are section A: contains the demographic information, section B is authoritative parenting style, Section C is cultural values style and section D is raising morally balanced children.

Procedures (of data collection and date analysis)

A quantitative research approach was employed, utilizing surveys to collect data on parenting styles, cultural values, and moral development scores. the following statistical tools were used:

Sample Population

The sample consisted of 261parents from the three agricultural zones in Imo State, with demographics as follows:

- ***Age****: 25-60 years*
- ***Gender****: 115 males, 146 females*
- ***Years of Experience****: 3-30 years*

Individual tables for each statistical analysis conducted in the study regarding authoritative parenting styles, cultural values, and moral development among children in Imo State.

Results

Table 1: ***Research question 1*****: *Pearson Correlation Analysis of authoritative parenting style and moral development***

Variable	***Moral development***	***Authoritative parenting style***
Moral Development score	*1.00*	*0.65 ($p < 0.01$)*
Authoritative parenting style	*0.65 ($p < 0.01$)*	*1.00*

Interpretation

- *A significant positive correlation ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$) indicates that higher levels of authoritative parenting are associated with better moral development scores in children.*

Table 2*: Research Question 2: Multiple Regression Analysis for impact of Cultural Values on children's moral development.*

Model	***F-statistic***	***F-statistic***	***β (Collectivist Values)***
Cultural Values Impact on Moral Development	*15.32*	*< 0.001*	*0.45*

Interpretation

- *The regression analysis shows that cultural values significantly predict moral development scores, with collectivist values positively influencing moral reasoning (β = 0.45).*

Table 3: *Research Question* 3: *Multiple Regression Analysis for Interaction Effects*

Model	***F-statistic***	***F-statistic***	***β (Collectivist Values)***
Interaction Between Parenting and Cultural Values	*10.45*	*< 0.01*	*0.38*

Interpretation

- *The interaction effect indicates a significant relationship between authoritative parenting and collectivist cultural values in promoting moral development, with a standardized coefficient of β = 0.38.*

Table 4:*Statistical analysis Summary Table for the research questions*

Research method	***Statistical Analysis method***	***Results***	***Interpretation***
Relationship between authoritative parenting styles and moral development	*Pearson Correlation*	*r = 0.65, p < 0.01*	*Significant positive correlation; higher authoritative parenting associated with better moral development.*
Impact of cultural values on moral development	*Multiple Regression Analysis*	*F(1,118) = 15.32, p < 0.001; β = 0.45 (collectivist values)*	*Cultural values significantly predict moral development; collectivist values enhance moral reasoning.*

Interaction between authoritative parenting and cultural values on moral development.	*Multiple Regression with Interaction Term*	*F(2,117) = 10.45, p < 0.01; β = 0.38 (interaction effect)*	*Significant interaction effect; authoritative parenting combined with collectivist values maximizes moral development scores.*

Key

- ***r**: Pearson correlation coefficient.*
- ***F**: F-statistic from the regression analysis.*
- ***β**: Standardized regression coefficient.*

This table effectively summarizes the statistical analyses and findings related to the research questions, providing a clear overview of the relationships studied in the context of Imo State.

Research Hypotheses were done using Pearson correlation, simple regression, and two-way ANOVA.

Table 5: Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results (n = 261)

Hypothesis	***Test Used***	***Variable involved***	***Test Statistic***	***P – Value***	***Decision***	***Interpretation***
H_1	*Pearson Correlation*	*Authoritative Parenting & Moral Development*	*r = 0.58*	*0.000*	*Reject H_0*	*Moderate-to-strong positive relationship exists*
H_3	*Simple Linear Regression*	*Cultural Values – Moral Development*	*F(1, 259) = 12.34*	*0.001*	*Reject H_0*	*Cultural values significantly predict moral development*
H_3	*Two Way ANOVA*	*Parenting Style × Cultural Values → Moral Development*	*F(1, 257) = 4.97*	*0.027*	*Reject H_0*	*Significant interaction between parenting style and cultural values*

1. **Hypothesis 1 (H_1):** The correlation coefficient (r = 0.58, p < 0.001) suggests a statistically significant, moderately strong positive correlation between authoritative parenting style and moral development in children. This indicates that children whose parents adopt an authoritative style are more likely to show higher moral reasoning and behavior.
2. **Hypothesis 2 (H_2):** The regression analysis reveals that cultural values significantly predict children's moral development (F(1, 259) = 12.34, p = 0.001).

This means cultural values such as respect for elders, honesty, and communal support positively influence moral growth.
3. **Hypothesis 3 (H_3):** The two-way ANOVA shows a **significant interaction** between parenting styles and cultural values ($F(1, 257) = 4.97$, $p = 0.027$). This implies that the impact of authoritative parenting on moral development is influenced by the cultural environment. For example, in communities where cultural values are strong, the positive effects of authoritative parenting may be amplified.

Findings

1. Relationship Between Authoritative Parenting and Moral Development: Authoritative parenting is characterized by a balance of responsiveness and demandingness. This style has been shown to promote higher levels of moral reasoning and ethical behavior among children. The findings indicate that children raised under authoritative parents exhibit greater moral intelligence compared to those raised under authoritarian or permissive styles. Parents who engage in open discussions about values and ethics tend to raise children who are more capable of navigating moral dilemmas effectively.
2. Influence of Cultural Values on Parenting Styles: Cultural values play a significant role in shaping parenting practices in Imo State. Traditional beliefs often emphasize respect for elders, communal living, and collective responsibility. These values can complement authoritative parenting by providing a framework within which parents can discuss moral issues with their children. However, there is a tension between modernity and tradition; many parents struggle to adapt authoritative methods while adhering to cultural expectations that may be more rigid.
3. Strategies for Instilling Moral Values: To effectively raise morally balanced children while respecting cultural traditions, parents can adopt several strategies:

- **Modeling Behavior**: Parents should exemplify the moral behaviors they wish to instill in their children, as children learn significantly through observation.
- **Open Communication**: Encouraging discussions about moral dilemmas allows children to articulate their thoughts and develop critical thinking skills.
- **Cultural Integration**: Parents can incorporate local proverbs and stories that reflect moral teachings into daily conversations.
- **Community Involvement**: Engaging with community leaders and participating in communal activities can reinforce shared values and provide additional support for children's moral education.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the influence of authoritative cultural and values styles on raising morally balanced children in Imo State. Firstly, the findings indicate that there is a relationship between authoritative parenting style and moral development in children in Imo State. This finding disagrees with Olatunji and Afolabi (2011) in Ekiti who found that there is a weak relationship between parenting styles and moral development of students, and also agrees with Ebute, et. al. (2020), who reported in their study that there is a significant relationship between the three parenting styles – (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive) and moral development of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory. This may not also be surprising because secondary schools in FCT always advocate moral development of students in respective of their backgrounds.

Secondly, those cultural values have impact on children's moral development in Imo State. This finding agrees with Uzoka & Njoku (2015), who investigated the environmental factors influencing the moral behaviour of secondary school students in Owerri Municipal Area, Imo State Nigeria found that the home, school and culture are some of the environmental factors that strongly influence the moral behaviour of secondary school students.

Thirdly, the study reveals that authoritative parenting and cultural value styles interact to influence children's moral development. This finding is in line with Huang &Lamb (2020), who underscored the pivoted role of authoritative parenting in fostering an environment conducive to children's social, emotional and cognitive development. By scrutinizing the empirical evidence, Huang and lamb elucidated the mechanisms underlying authoritative parenting positive effects on children's adjustment, highlighting the significance of warmth, responsiveness and high expectations. Their findings unequivocally demonstrated that authoritative parenting consistently predicts better outcomes across diverse cultural contexts. Huang and Lamb's research underscored the importance of cultural sensitivity in parenting styles are shaped by cultural values and norms. By fostering open communication and empathetic interactions, authoritative parenting lays a strong foundation for the development of moral behavior and ethical decision making skills essential for successful integration into society (Goering, et. al. 2021).

Overall, the findings suggested that authoritative parenting and cultural value styles are adequate components in raising cultural balanced children in Imo State. These insights have important implications for parents, school administrators and researchers seeking to promote cultural balanced children in Imo State of Nigeria.

Educational Implications of the findings of the Study

The findings from this study carry significant implications for education stakeholders, including teachers, parents, curriculum developers, school administrators, and policymakers. These implications are critical for designing holistic educational programs that support the moral and social development of children in Imo State and similar socio-cultural settings.

1. Curriculum Design and Moral Education

One of the major implications is the need for the Nigerian educational curriculum—especially at the basic and secondary school levels—to emphasize character education. Schools should integrate moral instruction that reflects both universal ethical standards and culturally-relevant values, such as respect for elders, communal responsibility, and integrity. Incorporating stories, proverbs, and real-life scenarios that mirror the authoritative parenting approach can reinforce what children learn at home.

2. Teacher Training and Professional Development

Educators need to be trained not only in instructional delivery but also in child psychology, classroom management, and culturally responsive teaching. Understanding the role of authoritative parenting can help teachers build respectful, structured, yet supportive classroom environments. This can be particularly beneficial for managing students from diverse family backgrounds with varying exposure to discipline and moral guidance.

3. Parent-Teacher Collaboration

The study underscores the value of effective communication between parents and educators. Schools should organize parenting workshops, cultural values forums and moral development seminars to bridge the gap between home training and school behavior management. Teachers can also learn how different parenting styles influence a child's behavior and moral reasoning, enabling better student engagement strategies.

4. Promotion of Culturally-Informed Pedagogy

Since cultural values play a significant role in shaping a child’s moral compass, teachers should incorporate local customs, languages, and beliefs into their instruction in appropriate and inclusive ways. This fosters identity formation, emotional intelligence, and a sense of belonging among students, particularly those from rural and traditional households.

5. Guidance and Counselling Services

The study reveals the need for robust guidance and counselling programs in schools. Counselors should be trained to understand family dynamics, especially the effects

of parenting styles on a child's academic performance, behavior, and ethical development. They can provide targeted interventions for children exhibiting signs of moral confusion, indiscipline, or emotional distress.

6. Policy Formulation

Education policymakers in Imo State and beyond can leverage the findings of this study to advocate for family life education, civic education, and value reorientation in schools. Policies should promote community-based education models that involve parents, elders, and traditional institutions in the moral training of children.

7. Support for Moral Role Models in School

Teachers, school heads, and even older students can serve as moral role models, reinforcing lessons from home. Schools should consciously promote leadership, accountability, and moral decision-making among students, encouraging them to reflect on their values and choices.

Conclusion

The study highlights the importance of integrating authoritative parenting with cultural values to foster morally balanced children in Imo State, Nigeria. By understanding the dynamics between these elements, parents can create an environment conducive to moral development while honoring their cultural heritage. This study investigated authoritative parenting and cultural values styles in raising actually balanced children in Nigeria with a specific focus on Imo State. The findings reveal that authoritative parenting and cultural values styles have positive impact in raising cultural balanced children in Imo State. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from the study are as follows:

- Authoritative parenting is essential for raising morally balanced children
- Cultural values have impact on children's moral development in Imo State. This is essential for policy makers, parents, school administrators, and regulatory reforms.
- Authoritative parenting and cultural values styles often interact to influence children's moral development in Imo State. This is open for further studies.

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