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PARENTING STYLES (PS) AS PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AGUATA EDUCATION ZONE OF ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated parenting styles as predictors of academic stress among students in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. The study which was guided by four null hypotheses adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study was 2,952 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students of 2023/2024 session from the 69 public secondary schools in the Aguata Education Zone. The sample size consisted of 296 SS2 students sampled using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The Parenting Styles Questionnaire (PSQ) and Students' Academic Stress Questionnaire (SASQ) with reliability indices of 0.76 and 0.80 were the instruments used for data collection. The hypotheses 1 – 3 were tested with t-test associated with linear regression while hypothesis 4 was tested with ANOVA associated with multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. The results showed that there is a significant predictive power of authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles on academic stress among secondary school students. The result also revealed a significant joint predictive power of the parenting styles on academic stress among secondary school students The study recommended among others that Parents should as much as possible avoid the parenting style that highly promote academic stress in their children.

Key words: Secondary Education, Secondary School Students, Academic Stress, Authoritarian Parenting Style, Authoritative Parenting Style, Permissive Parenting Style.

Introduction

There are many factors that could predict academic stress among secondary school students. These factors among others may include parenting styles, teachers and poor leadership style of the principals. In Nigerian education system, there are three categories of education, thus: primary, secondary and tertiary education. In the context of this study, the researchers focused on secondary education. This is because secondary education is the gateway or pivot to whatever an individual can

achieve in education. Secondary education occupies a strategic position, as it lies between the primary and tertiary levels of education in Nigeria. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) defines secondary education as the education the child receives after primary education before tertiary stage. The broad goals of secondary education, according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014:12) shall be to "prepare the individual for useful living within the society and higher education". Secondary education refers to an institution where people are admitted after the satisfactory completion of their primary school subjects and providing a course of full-time instruction based on the approved syllabus approved by the government (Udeh, 2018). Above all, the Nigeria government and society have recognized the importance of secondary school as an instruction that provided the bulk of its workers and introduces the basic technological skills within the first three years (Ncheke & Nwosu, 2023). So, the secondary education absorbs the graduates of primary level and prepares them for the tertiary education which is the manpower base of the nation (Ugwoke, 2021). These graduates of primary education absorbed for secondary education are referred to as secondary school students.

Secondary school students are children receiving secondary education in secondary schools. Secondary school students are the budding ground of future professionals as well as the foundation for the discovering and classification of the specific fields of professions (Tatbotndip, 2020). Tatbotndip also noted that prior to the independence of Nigeria through to 1982, secondary school students lasted only five years in school. Operationally, Secondary school students are children or individuals usually at adolescent age (14-17 years) who receive formal education that prepares them for higher education or entry into the workforce with a range of academic and extracurricular activities which can lessen the stress prevalent at this adolescent age.

Stress is becoming a threat in Nigerian education system. We all talk so much about stress often but it's not clear what the term really is. We are aware of some terms that are used synonymously for stress. These terms are stress, strain, conflict, burnout, depression and pressure. Stress refers to the physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioural changes that individual experiences in response to stressors or challenging situations (Rana, Gulati & Wadhwa, 2019). Stress according to Lee, Jeong and Kim (2021) is a feeling of strain and pressure. Barbayannis, Bandari, Zheng, Baquerizo, Pecor and Ming (2022) conceives stress as a non-specific response of the body, an unpleasant feeling and reaction which occurs in the body as a result of various factors like environmental, psychological, biological, academic and social factors. This could be negative or positive for an individual, depending on the intensity of the stress. Operationally, stress is the mental or emotional strain, caused by demand and challenges faced by secondary school students. The

researchers have observed that secondary school students in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State appear to be stressed up academically because the students come to school late, these students complain to their teachers that they are tired in the classroom, they complain of too much academic workload and too many assignments. This is an indication that these students are academically stressed.

Academic stress is the emotional and psychological distress associated with an individual's perception of academic workload, the perceived value of academic outcomes and the perceived ability to cope with academic demands (Bonnie, 2017). Bonnie went further to say that academic stress can lead to negative effects such as anxiety, depression, sleep disturbance, and even physical symptoms like headaches, low esteem, pressure from peer groups, lack of concentration in the classroom, fear and stomach aches and more. Lum and Su (2019) refer to academic stress as the negative psychological distress which secondary school students experience during the process of learning. Operationally, Academic stress is the emotional, psychological, behavioral and physical strains experienced by secondary school students due to pressures associated with school work, competitions and assignments. Academic stress among secondary school students cannot be overemphasized, this is because some number of students finds it difficult to cope with home and school work, leading to stress and negative effects on the mental health of the secondary school students.

The child's first arrival on the earth is in the family which is basically constituted the child and the child's father and mother (parent). In Nigeria, parents, be it biological or adopted or guardian forms, are charged with the responsibilities of providing all home necessities for proper upbringing of their children within and outside the homes (Akinnawo, Akpunne & Olajide, 2019). This means that the vital roles of parents are only achieved through parenting. Parenting is the intricacies of raising a child and not exclusively for a biological relationship. Parenting refers to the method, techniques or other activities that are used or required in the rearing of children (Lekavicienea & Antinieneb, 2016). The author went further to explain that the practices and behaviours that parents engage in to foster physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of their children may include, setting academic rules and expectations, offering guidance and support, modelling appropriate behaviour, teaching skills and values. Moreover, parenting practices are behavioural strategies that parents employ to socialize their children. So, parenting entails the act of bringing up, caring, training or educating a child which start from birth to adulthood. Parenting plays a vital role for adopting the best behaviour towards self and others depending on the parenting style employed by the parents (Caldelanza,

Bout & Merin, 2021). Operationally, parenting is the methods and strategies employed by parents while rearing their children in secondary school.

Parenting style is a set or system of behaviours that describes the parent and child's relationship over a wide range of situations and creates a positive atmosphere through communication (Ashley, 2014). Lekavicienea and Antinieneb (2016) refers to Parenting styles as the different ways in which parents interact with their children, including their degree of warmth and responsiveness, expectations for obedience and discipline, and the amount of control excreted over their child's behaviour; this includes how parent react, discipline, communicate and respond to their child or children. Akinnawo, Akpunne and Olajide (2019) identified three parenting styles namely authoritarian, authoritative and permissive and parenting styles empirically has been found to be vital in raising children and it is used in this study based on the empirical evidence of its role in children rearing. These are 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.

Parenting style is a psychological trait or construct that expresses standard strategies used by parents to bring up their children (Field, Ngala & Mango, 2021). Some parents can be highly involved in the student's education by attending parent-teacher conferences, helping with homework, interacting with the students on their academic challenges, emphasizing the importance of learning and setting educational goals in a supportive manner (O'Brien, 2021). Operationally, parenting styles refer to the way in which parents interact, discipline and raise their children in secondary school. This can either be authoritarian, authoritative or permissive parenting style.

Authoritarian parenting style is very rigid and strict. Authoritarian parenting style is a parenting style involving setting of strict rules and expectations for the children and the children are required to give strict obedience (Aniobi, 2014). Authoritarian parenting style is the type of parenting style where children are fearful, apprehensive, unfriendly, easily get stressed, easily annoyed, cannot interact actively, have weak communication skills and perform poor in school (Lekavicienea and Antinieneb, 2016). Authoritarian parenting is the type where parents are highly controlling in the use of authority and rely on punishment but are not responsive, they value obedience and do not tolerate give and take relationships with their children (Morin, 2018). Authoritarian parenting style is a style where parents have high control, low level of warmth, strict discipline and value conformity to conventional standards of behaviour (Olu, 2020). In authoritarian parenting, parents do not expect their children to express disagreement with their decisions and rules. Children are expected to obey without explanation and parents often rely on forceful

tracts to gain compliance from the children. The parents are not sensitive to the child's conflicting view point but rather expect the child to accept words as law and respect their authority (O'Brien, 2021). Operationally, Authoritarian parenting style is a style where parents are often seen as commanders and secondary school children are seen as compliers. That is, their children (secondary school students) are considered as passive while parents are very active in anything concerning their children.

Authoritative parenting style is a parenting style where parents are highly demanding and are often punitive and forceful in order to adhere to an absolute standard for behaviour (Ashley, 2014). This is a parenting style that involves using warm and accepting style in child rearing. The main concern of this type of parenting style is not to interfere with their children's creativity and independence; but to be more responsive than demanding (Morin, 2018). Authoritative parenting style is a warm and communicating style, parents here communicate warmly with their children; they are both demanding and responsive and parents of this style are able to stay in authority and expect maturity from their children (Akinnawo, Akpunne & Olajide, 2019). Parents exhibiting authoritative parenting style respect their children's opinions and independence while also maintaining their own positions. This parenting style permits children enough freedom of expression so that they can develop a sense of independence. Here, children know the boundaries of rules and obey them. Parents are more accepting and responsive to the children's point of view and often seek their children's participation in family decision making. The parents exercise control in a rational authoritative way, recognize and respect their children's perspectives and demand little in terms of obedience and respect for authority (Akinnawo et al, 2019). Authoritative parenting style is a style that helps parents to employ positive reinforcement and adequate use of punishment in child's upbringing (O'Brien, 2021). Operationally, Authoritative parenting style is the one in which the children in secondary school are self-reliant, self-controlled, cheerful, friendly and cooperative but it is far different from the permissive parenting style.

Permissive parenting is another style of parenting in which adults or parents make relatively low demand, permit their children to freely express their feeling and impulses (Cleendra, 2013). The author further noted that children of permissive parents are generally happy but sparingly show level of self-control and self-reliance because they lack structure of home, they cannot obey rules, they have low self-reliance and self-control, they act without thinking, they are aggressive, aimless and act low in achievement and the parents are characterized by low demands with high responsiveness. Permissive parenting style is the type of parenting that tends to be very loving, yet provide less guidelines and rules (Ogunleye, Omirin & Balogun,

2013; Pauker, Perlman, Prime & Jenkins, 2017). The authors opined that this is a type of parenting style where the parents do not expect mature behaviour from their children and often seem more like a friend than a parental figure. Permissive parenting is a style of parenting which is characterized by high levels of warmth and responsiveness but low levels of control and discipline (Obeke, 2022). The author went further to note that permissive parenting style tends to be lenient and parents in this category avoid conflict with their children. That is, they may have rules or boundaries but they may not consistently enforce the rules that they have. Permissive parenting style is a type of parenting styles where parents adapt nurturing, accepting and supportive to their children's want, but they may be less likely to set firm boundaries or enforce rules. The author went further to note that permissive parents may believe that their children will learn best through their own experiences rather than through rules (Ekeoha, 2022). Operationally, permissive parenting style is a parenting style that permits the children in secondary school to live his or her life as it pleases him or her with little or no parents' regulation. Research using parent interviews, teacher interviews, and child report consistently finds these characteristics associated with each parenting style. Parenting styles have been found to predict child wellbeing in terms of social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development and problem behaviour (Morin (2018).

Statement of the problem

Stress is becoming a threat in Nigerian education system and could manifest in a range of ways such as academic stress. Academic stress may cause students to withdraw and isolate themselves from academic activities. This can also affect their interpersonal relationship with other students and could be traced to the parenting style of the student's parents at the family level. Secondary school students in Aguata Education Zone appears to been exposed to academic stress. Many of the students find it difficult to adjust to the academic environment; some of these students show kind of nervousness to learning, some of them absent themselves from school, some of them at every slight provocation tend to fight their teachers' and fellow students; some of them bully the students. Furthermore, students in the study area complain bitterly about work overload, assignments that they cannot cope with. These are indicators that these students are academically stressed. Literature reveals that parenting styles have influenced children academic stress. The researchers are thinking that the reason for this academic stress is as a result of parenting styles of parents. Could this academic stress have risen due to poor parenting style? It is against this backdrop that the researchers investigated the parenting styles as predictors of academic stress among secondary school students in Aguata education Zone of Anambra State. Therefore, the broad question to answer

in this study is: are parenting styles predictors of academic stress among secondary school students in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State?

Purposes of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate parenting styles (PS) as predictors of academic stress among secondary school students in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the predictive power of authoritarian parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students.
2. Determine the predictive power of authoritative parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students.
3. Ascertain the predictive power of permissive parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students.
4. Find the joint predictive powers of authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles on academic stress among secondary school students.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H_{01}. There is no significant predictive power of authoritarian parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students.

H_{02}. There is no significant predictive power of authoritative parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students.

H_{03}. There is no significant predictive power of permissive parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students.

Ho_4. There are no significant joint predictive powers of authoritarian, authoritative permissive parenting styles on academic stress among secondary school students.

Methods

Design and Participants

The study employed a correlational research design. The population of the study was 2,175 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students of 2023/2024 session from the 52 public secondary schools in the Aguata Education Zone. The sample size consisted of 218 SS2 students sampled using proportionate and stratified random sampling techniques. The sample proportion was used to draw samples of 98, 44 and76 students from the 21 public secondary schools in Aguata LGA, 16 public secondary schools in Orumba North LGA and 15 public secondary schools in Orumba South LGA respectively.

Instruments

The Parenting Styles Questionnaire (PSQ) and Students' Academic Stress Questionnaire (SASQ) were the instruments used for data collection. The researchers' made instruments were subjected to face validation. The instruments were trial tested and reliability indices of 0.76 and 0.81 were obtained for Parenting Styles Questionnaire (PSQ) and Students' Academic Stress Questionnaire (SASQ) respectively. The PSQ is made up 30 items of three clusters to elicit information from the respondents (SS 2 students) on the parenting style of their parents. SASQ has 14 items to elicit information from the respondents (SS 2 students) on their academic stress. The PSQ has response/scoring options of Very High Extent (4 points), High Extent (3 points), Low Extent (2) and Very Low Extent (1 point) measuring the students' perception of their parents' parenting styles whereas the SASQ has response/scoring options of Often (4 points), Occasionally (3 points), Rarely (2 points) and Never (1 point) measuring the student's level of academic stress

Procedures

Direct delivery and retrieval method was applied to administer the instruments to the respondents and 321 copies of the instrument were distributed and all were retrieved from the students. The hypotheses 1 – 3 were tested with t-test associated with linear regression while hypothesis 4 was tested with ANOVA associated with multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. The interpretation of the prediction is based on Nworgu (2015) decision rule as presented below: 0.80 and above (very high), 0.60-0.80 (high), 0.40-0.60 (medium), 0.20-0.40 (low) and 0.00-0.20 (very low. The r-values were tested for significance by comparing the r^2 with the p-value at 0.05 alpha level of significance. When the associated probability value was less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected but when it was otherwise, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Results

The data collected from the field for this study were analyzed and the summaries were presented in tables to highlight the findings. The presentation was sequentially done starting with testing of hypotheses and followed by the discussion of results based on basic issues or variables in the study.

H_{01}: There is no significant predictive power of authoritarian parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students.

Table 1: t-test associated with linear regression of the predictive power of authoritarian parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	5.773	0.862		5.825	0.000
	Authoritarian	0.744	0.026	0.774	35.750	0.001

Table 1 showed that the t-test value associated with simple regression is 35.750. The hypothesis is rejected because the significant value of 0.00 is less than 0.05. Therefore, there is a significant predictive power of authoritarian parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students.

H_{02}: There is no significant predictive power of authoritative parenting style and academic stress among secondary school students.

Table 2: t-test associated with linear regression of the predictive power of authoritative parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	25.349	1.266		18.622	0.000
	authoritative	0.462	0.034	0.486	12.179	0.010

Table 2 showed that the t-test value associated with simple regression is 12.179. The hypothesis is rejected because the significant value of 0.01 is less than 0.05. Therefore, there is a significant predictive power of authoritative parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students.

H_{03}: There is no significant predictive power of permissive parenting style and academic stress among secondary school students.

Table 3: t-test associated with linear regression of the predictive power of permissive parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	17.629	1.201		16.743	0.000
	Permissive	0.466	0.032	0.627	15.311	0.000

Data on table 3 showed that the t-test value associated with simple regression is 15.311. The hypothesis is rejected because the significant value of 0.00 is less than 0.05. Therefore, there is a significant predictive power of permissive parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students.

H_{04}: There is no significant joint predictive power of parenting styles on academic stress among secondary school students.

Table 4: ANOVA associated with multiple regression of the predictive power of joint predictive power of parenting styles on academic stress among secondary school students

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7715.22	7	1102.17	67.74	.00[b]
	Residual	5221.80	321	16.27		
	Total	12937.02	328			

Data on table 4 shows that the ANOVA value (F) is 67.74 ($F_{.7,\ 321}$= 67.74, p=0.00<0.05). With a degree of freedom of 7 and 321, the hypothesis is rejected because the significant value of 0.00 is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, there is a significant joint predictive power of parenting styles on academic stress among secondary school students.

Discussion

The study from **table 1** showed that there is a significant predictive power of authoritarian parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students. The finding is in agreement with that of Thakre and Shet (2020) who carried out a study on the impact of parenting styles and coping with stress among adolescents in Mumbai of Indian State of Maharashtra and found among others that there is a significant difference between parenting styles in coping with stress.

The study from **table 2** showed that there is a significant predictive power of authoritative parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students. The finding is contrary to Chen and Wang (2020) findings who carried out a study on authoritative parenting and academic stress in Chinese adolescents and found among others that authoritative parenting style was negatively related to academic stress and that adolescents with authoritative parents reported lower levels of academic stress.

The study from **table 3** showed that there is a significant predictive power of authoritative parenting style on academic stress among secondary school students. The finding is in consonance with Lamborn and Nguyen (2017) and Lee and Kim (2019) who studied relationship between permissive parenting and adolescent

academic stress and revealed that permissive parenting style was positively related to academic stress and that permissive parenting style predicted higher levels of academic stress.

The study from table 4 revealed that there is a significant joint predictive power of parenting styles on academic stress among secondary school students. From the result, the respondents agreed that parenting styles to a high extent jointly have predictive power on academic stress among students. The indication is that parenting styles contribute very high to academic stress. This finding is contrary to studies such as Hill and Tyson (2019) which revealed that authoritative parenting style was negatively related to academic stress and showed that students with authoritative parents reported lower levels of academic stress compared to those with non-authoritative parents.

This study reinforces the need for considering a joint application of different parenting styles by parents for a better academic stress among the children rather than focusing solely one aspect of the variables.

Conclusion

There is a significant predictive power of authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles on academic stress among secondary school students. There is a significant joint predictive power of authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles on academic stress among secondary school students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Parents should as much as possible avoid the parenting style that highly promote academic stress in their children and wards.
2. School administrators and managers should engage the services of experts in school and academic counseling to detect proactively stress among students.
3. Teachers and parents should always be conscious of the emotional state of the students/children before subjecting them to stressful tasks or assignments.

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