

ASSESSMENT OF PARENTING STYLES ON IDENTITY STYLE DEVELOPMENT AMONG STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OGUN STATE

¹Jimoh, G.O. ²Eni-Olorunda, J. T. ²Adubi K. O., and ²Afolabi W. A. O.

¹Department of Home Economics,

Federal College of Education, Abeokuta. Nigeria.

²Department of Home Science and Management,

Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. Nigeria.

Correspondence author: ibikunleg2001@yahoo.co.uk

ABSTRACT

This study assessed parenting styles on the identity style development of students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Ogun State. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 396 adolescents (207 females and 189 males) from public senior secondary schools. The research instrument used was an adapted questionnaire. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Findings revealed that 39.5% of the respondents reported that their parents were authoritative, 36.8% were authoritarian and 23.7% were permissive. Also, 37% of the respondents were informative, 35.7% were normative and 27.3% were diffuse avoidant. Pearson Product Moment Correlation showed significant relationship ($P < 0.05$) between authoritative parenting style and informative identity style ($r = 0.30$), authoritarian parenting style and informative identity style. Authoritarian parenting style was significantly but inversely ($P < 0.05$) related to normative identity style ($r = -0.23$). Result also showed a significant ($P < 0.05$) relationship between permissive parenting style and diffuse avoidant identity style ($r = 0.373$). It was concluded from the study that authoritative parenting style was commonly used by parents followed by authoritarian parenting style and lastly followed by permissive parenting style and the study was able to establish a significant relationship between parenting styles and adolescents identity style development.

Keywords: *Identity styles; Parenting styles; Development, Adolescent*

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period of the life cycle between childhood and adulthood with some distinctive characteristics connected with development and marked by dramatic challenges that needs adjustment to changes in self, family and among peers (Santrock, 2010). Growing up as a teenager is usually challenging and exciting at the same time. This is because socially, the adolescents are no longer children and yet not an adults. In fact, it is considered that adolescence is a time of discovery; a time to try new things whether it is about self –identity or about choosing peers (Prinstein & Dodge, 2008).

Adolescents are unique in the sense that they must face one of the most daunting tasks one will ever experience in once lifetime. They must formulate an answer to the overwhelming question: who am I? Some willingly deal with these issues, others avoid the task all together, some develop a clear sense of who they are and what they want, whereas others remain ambivalent. Family

provides significant support to adolescents, and connectedness with the family was found to be favourable for adolescent development (Santrock, 2010).

The study assessed how parenting styles influence how adolescent adopts their unique identity. Various factors influence identity development, but one of the most promising links lie in the earliest form of socialization: the parent-child relationship. Associations have been established between aspects of child rearing and an adolescent's identity-relevant information processing style (Berzonsky, 2004; Smits et al., 2008; Soenens, Berzonsky, Dunkel, & Papini, 2011). Baumrind (in Grolnick, 2003) formulated a categorisation for parenting styles by dividing these styles into four types: authoritative (demanding and responsive), authoritarian (demanding but not responsive), permissive (more responsive than demanding) and rejecting/neglecting (neither responsive nor demanding). For the purpose of this study, only the three parenting styles was investigated: permissive, authoritarian and authoritative parenting style. The mannerism portrayed from an authoritative parent is warm and accepting (Grolnick, 2003). The parent gives information in a way that conveys the parent's understanding of the child's wish to play longer, with a rationale for why it is important to come in, without the controlling locution (Grolnick, 2003).

In authoritative parenting, also known as democratic parenting, parents' approach show willingness and preparedness to explain and discuss their ideas about behaviour and discipline with their children. These parents combine a judicious mixture of 'control with acceptance and child-centred involvement. The parents encourages verbal give and take, provides reasons for their decisions and solicit the child's opinions. With this type of parenting style, parents often discipline children by setting clear goals for them and take active interest in their progress. When children excel, they often receive positive feedback from their parents. Their approach to parenting shows warmth, nurturance and two-way communication. The emphasis is on control, encouragement and agreement rather than on punitive discipline (Gerdes, 1998; Grolnick, 2003; Gupta & Theus, 2006).

Several authors (Gerdes, 1998; Gonzalez-Mena, 2006; Grolnick, 2003; Gupta & Theus, 2006) agree that the permissive approach refers to parents whose ideas about their children's behaviour and discipline are relaxed and liberal. These parents do not establish clear rules, guidelines and boundaries. The parent tends to be non-punitive, accepts the child's impulses and is unlikely to intervene. They also tend to avoid confrontation. This parent imposes few demands and the child therefore has few household responsibilities. Often the permissive parent does not enforce rules firmly and tends to ignore or excuse misbehaviour. The permissive style, as the name suggests, allows a wide range of behaviour on the part of the children, which would previously not have been tolerated. The children don't accept authority because the adult doesn't take any power into his own hands. He grants all the power to the children. Permissive parents fail to display self-respect, their children win conflicts with them but emerge dissatisfied. It's uncomfortable to be out of control and find few or no limits (Dobson, 2002).

The authoritarian approach is the “do-as-I-say” way of relating to children. Authoritarians see their power as inherent in their position. In conflicts, they see win lose solutions- and it’s important that they win. As this is the way they keep their authority. The strict authoritarian parent demands uncompromising obedience. Rules are established and infractions punished. Parental needs and desires come before the child’s needs and desires. Authoritarian parents may have much self-respect but often times lack respect for the child. (Gonzalez-Mena, 2006; Grolnick, 2003).

Identity-processing style is the way in which an individual digests, interprets, and utilizes identity-relevant information (Kaylin, 2013). Berzonsky identified three categories of identity-processing styles: informational, normative, and diffusive avoidant. Before making decisions, individuals with an informational processing style devotedly seek out applicable identity information as self-motivated explorers. Individuals adhering to this processing style make decisions swiftly, are conscientious, extroverted, open-minded, are less prone to panic, engage in less avoidance behaviours, rationalize less, and do less buck-passing (as cited in Kaylin 2013). Individuals with normative processing style is characterized by the tendency to be easily influenced by others, especially those of particular importance to them for example parents, teachers, counselors, peers, etc. (Berzonsky in Kaylin, 2013). That is, they tend to adopt other’s viewpoints, beliefs, and norms. The normative-processing style has been found to be negatively correlated with openness to experience and alternative beliefs; however, normative individuals are also likely to be the most conscientious, agreeable, and the least neurotic people (Dollinger, 1995). Normative style individuals will often times misconstrue new information to fit in, or shield against information that conflicts with, the beliefs that they hold (Berzonsky in Kaylin 2013). Finally, diffuse-avoidant individuals are most likely to adjourn the processing and commitment of any identity-relevant information. In other words, they attempt to avoid making definite decisions related to who they are (Kaylin, 2013).

It is no question that parents have some of the utmost influence on their child’s development. Much early socialization occurs as a result of the parent-child interface and many studies have shown that positive parental interaction and relations with children yield the development of a sound identity (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985). The relationship between parental authority, identity styles, and identity commitment was first explored by Berzonsky (2004). In a sample of university students, he found that normative processing style was most abundant in individuals who had perceived their parents as authoritative. He also found that authoritative parenting was the only style to be negatively correlated with diffusive-avoidant processing. Moreover, authoritative parenting was the only style to significantly foster the informational processing style. A significant amount of normative individuals indicated, as expected, that they had been raised in households conducted in the authoritarian manner. This finding confirmed a side note of Marcia’s (1966) study that identified foreclosed individuals as endorsing authoritarian values such as respect for authority and obedience. Further confirming Berzonsky’s hypothesis, the diffusive-avoidant style was most common among the permissive or indulgent families, but it was also observed in individuals from authoritarian homes. The fact that Berzonsky found no other significant relationships associated with indulgent parenting is intriguing.

Therefore the purpose of the study were to

- Assess adolescents perception on the kind of parenting style used by their parents
- Investigate which of the types best describes the adolescents identity style

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between parenting styles and adolescent identity styles development

METHODOLOGY

Design

The study employed the cross sectional and descriptive survey design so as to assess parenting styles impact on adolescent's identity style development. The study was carried out in Ogun state

Population and Sampling

The population of the study consisted of 170,685. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 396 adolescents (207 females and 189 males) from the four geo-political zones in Ogun state which include Remo, Ijebu, Yewa and Egba.

Instrument for Data Collection

Questionnaire was used to collect data and was adapted from Parenting Style Questionnaire (PSQ) developed by Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen and Hart, (1995) and Identity Style Inventory-3 (ISI-3; Berzonsky, 1992). In order to make the instrument to suit the local situation, it was modified by reducing the number of items in the instrument and reframing some of the statements. It was measured at interval level on a 4 point Likert rating scale as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) respectively.

Validation of Instrument

The research instrument was subjected to face and content validity by experienced researchers who were lecturers. Test re-test method was employed in determining the reliability of the questions used in the questionnaire. Pearson Product Moment Correlation the Parenting Style Questionnaire (PSQ) was found to be 0.75 and Pearson Product Moment Correlation of Identity Style Inventory (ISI) was found to be 0.86.

RESULTS

Table I: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	%
Sex		
Male	189	47.7
Female	207	52.3
Total	396	100.0
Age (yrs.)		
12-14	22	5.6
15-17	297	75
18-20	77	19.4
Total	396	100.0

Tribe		
Yoruba	358	90.4
Ibo	19	4.8
Hausa	2	0.5
Others	17	4.3
Total	396	100.0
Family structure		
Monogamy	283	71.5
Polygamy	113	28.5
Total	396	100.0
Religion		
Islam	173	43.7
Christianity	223	56.3
Total	396	100.0
Prominent Caregiver		
Mother and father	277	69.9
Mother	71	17.9
Father	11	2.8
Mother and Step Father	11	2.8
Father and Step Mother	7	1.8
Grandparent	9	2.3
Aunt/uncle	8	2.0
Sibling	2	0.5
Total	396	100.0

In Table I, 47.7% of the respondents were males while 52.3% were females. Majority of the respondents (75%) were between the ages of 15 and 17. Also, for the prominent caregiver, 69.9% of the respondents stayed with the mother and father, 17.9% stayed with the mother only, 2.8% stayed with the father only, 2.8% stayed with their mother and step father, 1.8% stayed with their father and step mother, 2.3% stayed with their grandparents, 2.0% stayed with their uncle/aunts, and 0.5% of them stayed with their elder siblings.

Table II: Distribution of the Respondents based on the Parenting Styles Employed by Parents

Parenting styles	Mean Score	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Authoritative	19.47	156	39.5%
Authoritarian	18.12	146	36.8%
Permissive	11.68	94	23.7%

Table II showed the distribution of respondents based on the parenting styles employed by parents. It was found that 39.5% of the respondents reported having an authoritative parents (n = 156), 36.8% of the respondents reported information consistent with having an authoritarian parents (n = 146) and finally, 23.7% of the respondents identified their parents as adhering to permissive parenting style (n = 94)

Table III: Distribution of Respondents According to the Type of Identity Styles

Identity styles	Mean scores	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Informative	19.41	147	37
Normative	18.78	141	35.7
Diffuse avoidant	14.36	108	27.3

Table III shows the distribution of respondents according to the types of identity style. The table revealed that 37% of the respondents were informative (n = 147), 35.7% of the respondents were normative (n = 141) and finally, 27.3% of the respondents identified their parents as adhering to permissive parenting style (n = 108).

Table IV: Correlation between Parenting Styles and Identity Styles

Variables	Informative			Normative			Diffusive Avoidant		
	r	P value	decision	r	P value	decision	r	P value	decision
Authoritative	0.300	0.000	Sig	0.204	0.000	Sig	-0.078	0.061	Not Sig.
Authoritarian	0.226	0.000	Sig.	0.146	0.000	Sig	0.067	0.099	Not Sig.
Permissive	-0.105	0.019	Sig.	-0.007	0.044	Sig.	0.373	0.000	Sig

n= 396, P< 0.05

Results in Table IV showed the coefficient between authoritative parenting styles and informative identity style. It showed a correlation coefficient value $r=0.300$; $df = 394$ $P<0.05$. This means there is a significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and informative identity style. The table also showed the coefficient between authoritative parenting styles and normative identity style. It showed a correlation coefficient value $r=0.204$; $df = 394$ $P<0.05$. This means there is a significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and normative identity style. Also, the table showed the interaction coefficient between authoritative parenting styles and diffuse avoidant identity style. The table equally showed the interaction coefficient between permissive parenting styles and normative identity style. It showed a correlation coefficient value $r=0.007$; $df = 394$ $P<0.05$. This means there is a significant relationship between permissive parenting style and normative identity style. Furthermore, the table showed the interaction coefficient between permissive parenting styles and diffuse avoidant identity style. It showed a correlation coefficient value $r=0.373$; $df = 394$ $P < 0.05$. This means there is a significant relationship between permissive parenting style and diffuse avoidant identity style.

DISCUSSION

The result showed that parenting styles used by parents as perceived by the respondents, authoritative parenting style was commonly used by parents followed by authoritarian and lastly permissive parenting style. This tallies with the study of Kaylin (2013) whose participants reported having an authoritative mother while very few reported their mother as being authoritarian. It is a known fact that authoritative approach differs from other parenting styles because authoritative parents listen to children's justifications and requests and make decisions with consideration to the

needs of the child. The distribution of respondents according to their identity style revealed that the respondents were more informative (37%) followed by normative (35.7%) and lastly followed by diffuse avoidant (27.3%). This result conforms to the result of a study by Reshvanlou (2012) which showed that although all three styles of identity; informational, normative and diffuse avoidant identity style, decrease at the end of adolescence than its primary years, informational and normative identity ranks higher than diffuse avoidant style. This may be due to the fact that adolescents are in formal operational stage where the adolescents can deal mentally with concepts, idea, thinks more logically and intelligently.

Also from this study, it was revealed that authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles foster informative and normative identity styles but not diffuse avoidant identity style while permissive parenting style fosters all the three identity styles. The result of this study confirmed to the findings of Adams, Dyk and Bennion (1990) who found that parents who encourage self-expression, the acceptance of unique viewpoints and respect for others' perspectives positively impact informative and normative identity. This claim was indirectly investigated by Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling and Mounts (1991) who found that "compared with their counterparts from non-authoritative homes, authoritatively reared adolescents earn higher grades in school, are more self-reliant, report less psychological distress, and are less involved in delinquent activity".

Berzonsky (2004) in a sample of university students, found that normative processing style was most abundant in individuals who had perceived their parents as authoritative. He also found that authoritative parenting was the only style to be negatively correlated with diffusive-avoidant processing. Moreover, authoritative parenting was the only style to significantly foster the informational processing style. A significant amount of normative individuals indicated, as expected, that they had been raised in households conducted in the authoritarian manner. This finding confirmed a side note of Marcia's (1966) study that identified normative individuals as endorsing authoritarian values such as respect for authority and obedience. Further confirming Berzonsky's hypothesis, the diffusive-avoidant style was most common among the permissive and indulgent families, but it was also found in individuals from authoritarian homes. Unlike Berzonsky (2004), the present study found out that only permissive parenting style fosters diffuse identity in adolescents.

The differences between this study's results and prior research could perhaps be explained by the age differences in the population assessed. Smits et al. (2008), and Berzonsky (2004) all relied on retrospective accounts of parenting from university students. In this study, a younger population was used, where parental influence was happening in real-time. The retrospective accounts observed in prior literature could have been slightly inaccurate, as they may be influenced by confabulations or other degenerative effects that occur to memories with the passage of time. Moreover, the relationship between parent and child could change in perspective and attitude once the child leaves home. These after effects could have carried over and contaminated the data collected by the previous research on this topic conducted with university students. Many factors could have played into why some results of this study agreed with the prior research whereas others

did not. Among these factors, the age gap between the samples, the living situations, and perhaps even some maturity differences could have impacted the results and help explain some of the differences between the results of this study and the results of prior literature.

CONCLUSION

Authoritative parenting style was commonly used by parents followed by authoritarian parenting style followed by permissive parenting style. Adolescents were found to be informative followed by normative and lastly diffusive avoidant. The study established a significant relationship between parenting styles and adolescents identity style development

RECOMMENDATIONS

Authoritative parenting style should be used by parents as this approach allows a two-way communication and emphasises control, encouragement and agreement. It provides adolescents with somewhere to come back to for reassurance, support and unconditional love in tough times. Adolescents who adopt normative identity style and diffusive avoidant style should be encouraged to explore before making decision and commitment. Programs should be developed which will aim at promoting their assertiveness skills, communication skills and decision making skills.

REFERENCES

- Adams, G. R., Dyk, P., & Bennion, L. D. (1990). Parent-adolescent relationships and identity formation. In B. K. Barber & B. C. Rollins (Eds.), *Parent-adolescent relationships* (pp.1-16). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Berzonsky, M. D. (1992). Identity Style Inventory (ISI-3): Revised version. Unpublished measure, Department of Psychology, State University of New York, Cortland, NY.
- Berzonsky, M. D. (2004). Identity style, parental authority, and identity commitment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 33(3), 213-220.
- Dobson, J. (2002). *Parents' Answer Book*. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
- Dollinger, S. (1995). Identity styles and the five-factor model of personality. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 29(4), 475-479.
- Gerdes, L. (1998). *Bringing Up Parents and Children*. Pretoria: University of South Africa
- Gonzalez-Mena, J. (2006). *The Young Child in The Family And The Community*. Fourth Edition. New Jersey: Pearson, Merrill Prentice Hall
- Grolnick, W. S. (2003). *The Psychology of Parental Control. How well-meant parenting backfires*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Grotevant, H. D., & Cooper, C. R. (1985). Patterns of interaction in family relationships and the development of identity exploration in adolescence. *Child Development*, 56(2), 415-428.
- Gupta, R. M. & Theus, F. C. (2006). *Pointers For Parenting For Mental Health Service Professionals*. England: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd
- Kaylin, R. (2013). *The role of parenting and attachment in identity style development*. A thesis in the University of Central Florida Orlando, Florida.
- Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 3(5), 551-558.

- Prinstein, M. & Dodge, K (2008). *Understanding Peer Influence in Children and Adolescents*. The Guilford Press, New York.
- Reshvanlou, T. (2012). Optimism and self-esteem in female teenagers: The role of identity style. *Journal of applied psychology*, 6, (22)2
- Robinson, C., Mandleco, B., Olsen, S.F., and Hart, C.H. (1995). Authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting practices: Development of a new measure. *Psychology Reports*, 77, 819-830.
- Santrock, J.W. (2010). *Educational Psychology* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Smits, I., Soenens, B., Luyckx, K., Duriez, B., Berzonsky, M., & Goossens, L. (2008). Perceived parenting dimensions and identity styles: Exploring the socialization of adolescents' processing of identity-relevant information. *Journal of Adolescence*, 31(2), 151-164.
- Soenens, B., Berzonsky, M. D., Dunkel, C. S., & Papini, D. R. (2011). The role of perceived parental dimensions and identification in late adolescents' identity processing styles. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 11(3), 189-210.
- Steinberg, L., Lamborn, S. D., Darling, N., & Mounts, N. S. (1991). Over-time changes in adjustment and competence among adolescents from authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful families. *Child Development*, 65(3), 754-770.