



## PARENTAL STYLES AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN THE USE OF ENGLISH IN A TERTIARY INSTITUTION IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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### **Abstract:**

The study examined how parental styles adopted affect the performance of undergraduate students in Use of English. A descriptive survey design was employed. The population consisted of 840 undergraduate students from two faculties out of the three in the university. Four instruments were used for the study. Two research questions and one hypothesis resulted from the study. Majority of the parents at 401(47.7%) adopted permissive parental style on their undergraduate students while 59(7.0%), 320(38.1%) and 60(7.2%) of the parents utilized authoritarian, uninvolved and authoritative parental styles respectively on their undergraduate students in the study area. The study also indicated that many of the undergraduate students performed moderately in the Use of English in the study area 451(53.7%) and parental styles significantly influence undergraduate students' performance in the Use of English at ( $\chi^2 = 680.101$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that parental styles play a significant role in determining undergraduate academic performance in Use of English.

**Keywords:** parental styles, undergraduate students performance and use of English

### **1. Introduction**

Education plays a significant role in the development of any nation. The importance attached to education can be seen in the efforts of the government to put in place various strategies to eradicate ignorance. The National Policy on Education (2014) emphasizes the various goals and objectives earmarked for the different stages of education from primary to tertiary levels. The role parents play to make these goals achievable is equally of optimum importance. In actualizing these goals, students must be equipped with adequate knowledge of English for diverse purposes. According to Rafiu and Nwalo (2016), English language proficiency relates to students' ability to possess writing,

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listening, reading and speaking skills; deficiency in these skills can affect students' academic performance. This indicates that the parents to a large extent determine what the child becomes later in life. Scallingello (2002) states the relationship between the child's home and the school environments. A child that is left without guidance and discipline will bring his family to shame. Therefore, the parental styles students are exposed to in their various homes greatly impact on their performance in schools.

Chukemeka (2013) observes that environmental factors to a great extent affect both the physical and psychological potentials of an individual. This resulted to the fact that many students fail to develop their potentials due to inadequate environmental stimulation. The different environments in which learners are raised, their future educational decisions are made in relation to what they experienced at home. The home is the first learning environment where students are exposed to various activities, academically, physically, emotionally and even spiritually.

The availability of the parents at home and the needed tools for learning provide enabling avenues to assist in students' creativity and intellectual performance. It is at home that the parents provide effective upbringing, adequate societal demands and norms that would inculcate lasting values in their wards (Maryann, 2009). Parents' behaviour and conduct at home in terms of supervisory work, delegating assignment, disciplinary actions, negligence, improper use of language, strictness, inadequate monitoring, and too much freedom largely affect students' performance. According to Meece, Anderman and Anderman (2006), parents that make available a supportive environment, stimulate curiosity and learning materials accelerate their children's intellectual development. The parental styles adopted should be such that students have opportunities to interact, speak, read and write freely on areas that relate to Use of English.

Baumrind (2012) depicts the connection between the styles parents use and the behaviour their wards exhibit. This affects the development, skill acquisition and self-esteem of students. He opines that pre-school children brought up by parents with different parenting styles differ in their level of social competence. He mentions four parenting styles, these are authoritative, authoritarian, permissive-indulgent and permissive involved.

According to Maccoby and Martin (2003), the parental styles are classified into authoritarian, permissive, uninvolved and authoritative parenting. Each of the parenting styles is considered on the levels of parental demandingness (in terms of control, supervision and maturity demands) and responsiveness (that is, warmth, acceptance and involvement). An authoritarian parent is strict, demanding, dictatorial and undemocratic. Such a parent insists that the child obeys rules and regulations completely without complaining. The students under this parenting style are subjected to stricter control and they are not given opportunity to contribute or express their views. A child raised under such condition will definitely be inhibited in many ways and this affects the academic performance.

Permissive parenting is lenient to a fault so as to prevent any form of confrontation with the child. There are few rules set for the child, and those rules are sometimes not taken seriously, consequently the child takes laws into his hand. This lack of consistency in training and discipline is detrimental to the wellbeing of the child. In uninvolved parenting, the parents are not bothered; they don't create avenues for children to share their opinions, ideas and views (Tiller, Garrison, Block, Cramer, Tiller, 2003). Moreover, the welfare of the child in terms of provision, supervision, communication, love is neglected. They are deeply engrossed in their own trials and difficulties that they are oblivious of what their children are passing through.

Baumrind (2012) indicates that authoritative parents make rules and standards and enforce them by using command and sanctions. This type of style enables learners to imbibe long lasting values that assist them in future endeavours. The sanctions attached to the violation of set rules prevent the children from contravening them. The children of parents who adopt the authoritative style tend to have positive emotional outcomes and display parental warmth. According to Steinberg (2001), the authoritative parenting style is mostly associated with superior outcomes.

The impact of parental styles on the performance of students in Use of English cannot be overemphasized. Children who have parents who are involved in their academic performance particularly in Use of English do well. Such parents set standards which the children must maintain and they can go to any length to support them. On the other hand, students who are not guarded but left on their own often perform abysmally.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Parents use different styles in administering discipline and training their wards. Since students come from different backgrounds, the parenting styles they are exposed to will either mar or assist them in their academic performance and life generally. Most academic endeavours and international communications require the Use of English skills and students who are not adequately exposed to these skills at home may find many academic tasks difficult. This study therefore examines the impact of parenting styles on undergraduate students' performance in Use of English.

### **2.1 Objectives of the Study**

This study examines the impact of parental styles on undergraduate students' performance in Use of English. The objectives of the study are:

- 1) identify the parental styles adopted by the parents of undergraduate students;
- 2) determine the performance level of undergraduate students in the Use of English in the study area; and
- 3) examine the impact of parental styles on students' achievement in Use of English.

### **2.2 Research Questions**

- 1) What are the parental styles adopted by the parents of undergraduate students?

- 2) What is the performance level of undergraduate students in the Use of English in the study area?

### 2.3 Hypothesis

There is no significant influence of parental styles on undergraduate students' performance in the Use of English.

### 3. Methodology

The study employed survey research design. The population of the study comprised of undergraduate students of Ondo State University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa. Out of three faculties (Sciences; Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources as well as Engineering) in the university, two were selected using simple random sampling technique. An intact sampling technique was employed in selecting 840 undergraduate students across seven Departments in the faculties of Sciences programmes and Engineering; which are Chemical Sciences, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering and Electrical Electronics Engineering as at 2017/2018 academic session.

Two instruments were used: (i) A Record of GST 101 Results and (ii) Parental Style Questionnaire (PSQ). A record of GST 101 results revealed the undergraduate students' performance in the Use of English in 2017/2018 Harmattan Semester. PSQ contained four major parental styles i.e Authoritarian, Permissive, Uninvolved and Authoritative in which undergraduate students are expected to indicate the most utilized one by their parents. PSQ with its constructs identification was used to elicit response from the students on the style of parenting adopted by their parents. PSQ has 15 items where items 2, 3, 4 and 6 are indicators of Authoritarian; items 1, 9, 13 and 15 are predictors of Permissive; items 8, 11 and 12 are predictors of Uninvolved while items 5, 7, 10 and 14 predict Authoritative parenting style. PSQ was trial-tested and subjected to a reliability test which yielded the co-efficient of stability of 0.81. (i.e.  $r=0.81$ ). The data were analyzed using frequency count, simple percentage and Chi-square statistics.

### 4. Results

**Research Question One:** What are the parental styles adopted by the parents of undergraduate students?

In order to answer this research question, data collected on the parental styles adopted by the parents of undergraduate students in the study area were subjected to descriptive analysis and the results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Descriptive analysis of the parental styles adopted by the parents of undergraduate students

S/N	Parental Styles	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1.	Authoritarian	059	7.0
2.	Permissive	401	47.7
3.	Uninvolved	320	38.1
4.	Authoritative	060	7.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>840</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Results in Table 1 showed the descriptive analysis of parental styles adopted by the parents of undergraduate students in the study area. It can be deduced from the table that majority of the parents at 401(47.7%) adopted permissive parental style on their undergraduate students. However, 59(7.0%), 320(38.1%) and 60(7.2%) of the parents actually employed authoritarian, uninvolved and authoritative parental styles respectively on their undergraduates students in the study area.

**Research Question Two:** What is the performance level of undergraduate students in the Use of English in the study area?

In order to answer this research question, data collected on the performance of undergraduate students in the Use of English in the study area were subjected to descriptive analysis and the results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Descriptive analysis of the performance level of undergraduate students in the Use of English

S/N	Level of Performance	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1.	High	169	20.1
2.	Moderate	451	53.7
3.	Low	220	26.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>840</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Data presented in Table 2 showed the descriptive analysis of performance level of undergraduate students in the Use of English in the study area. It can be observed from the table that the performance level of undergraduate students in the Use of English is moderate at 451(53.7%).

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant influence of parental styles on undergraduate students' performance in the Use of English.

In order to test this hypothesis, data collected on parental styles adopted by parents and undergraduate students' academic performance in the study area were subjected to Chi-square analysis and the result is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Chi-square analysis of the influence of parental styles on undergraduate students' performance in the Use of English

Parental Styles	Performance			Total	$\chi^2$	Df	p-value
	High	Moderate	Low				
Authoritarian	59(7.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	59(7.0)	680.101 <sup>a</sup>	6	.000  p<0.05 Significant
Permissive	110(13.1)	291(34.6)	0(0.0)	401(47.7)			
Uninvolved	0(0.0)	160(19.0)	160(19.0)	320(38.0)			
Authoritative	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	60(7.1)	60(7.1)			
<b>Total</b>	<b>169(20.1)</b>	<b>451(53.7)</b>	<b>220(26.2)</b>	<b>840(100.0)</b>			

( $\chi^2 = 680.101$ , df = 6, p < 0.05)

Without inference, it can be deduced from Table 3 that majority of the undergraduate students performed moderately in the Use of English in the study area 451(53.7%). Inferentially, the Chi-square analysis of the hypothesis indicated that there is significant influence of parental styles on undergraduate students' performance in the Use of English at ( $\chi^2 = 680.101$ , df = 6, p < 0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that their parental styles have significant influence on undergraduate students' performance in the Use of English in the study area.

## 5. Discussion

The results indicated that majority of the parents at 401(47.7%) adopted permissive parental styles on their undergraduate students. This implied that most of the parents believe that once their children gained admission into the university, they don't have much control over them. The complacent attitude was to prevent confrontation with them. This is in consonance with the study of Barber (1996) that parents who used the permissive parental styles always indulge their children and this affects their academic performance.

The study revealed that the performance level of undergraduate students in the Use of English is moderate at 451(53.7%). English language contributes significantly to the academic performance of students; as it is the means of communication in almost all spheres of academic pursuits. Akowuah, Patnaik and Kyei (2018) collaborate this as they indicate that quality education is the basic of all-contemporary societies; however this largely depends on English language usage; since the use of English is globally recognized. The performance of students who performed low is at 220(26.2). This underachievement may be as a result of the parental styles used where students are not opportune to express their views freely.

There is significant influence of parental styles on undergraduate students' performance in the Use of English at ( $\chi^2 = 680.101$ , df = 6, p < 0.05). This finding demonstrates that in Authoritative parenting styles, students are guided through rules and regulations. Sometimes, the students are reminded severally by the parents to be careful of harmful peer groups that may jeopardize their academic focus. Such students' performances in school are constantly monitored. In fact, students who are having

difficulties in any aspects of Use of English are coached for better performance. However, the uninvolved parents are less concerned about their wards academic performance. Mize and Pritt (2007) indicated that adolescents who have authoritative parents had higher grades in school performance than others. Roberts and Fraleigh (2007) stated that students from neglectful parenting are less discipline and this invariably affects their performance level.

This significantly depicted the roles parents play in their children academic attainment. Parenting therefore becomes a task that must be taken seriously. The overall well-being of the student must be taken into cognizance in the process of promoting his academic career and other areas.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

From this study, it can be concluded that it is of great value for parents to adopt the authoritative style of parenting. They must play their part in ensuring that students do the needful at all times. The students must not be left on their own on the basis that they are now adults. Whatever needed to be done to improve their skills and performance in Use of English should be considered and provided for. Nothing strives in a neglectful condition, nor can any student survive well under the uninvolved parenting. The parents should not abdicate their responsibilities and leave their wards at the mercy of the schools. They should be involved in their wards academic endeavours.

Based on the findings from this study, the following are the recommendations:

- The parents should enforce rules and standards couple with appropriate sanctions where necessary in their Use of English courses whenever they exhibit lackadaisical attitude. This is to help them develop positive attitude towards English courses.
- The parents should provide enabling environment where students have access to different English language resources that can boost their proficiency.
- The level of interactions and participation of students who are groomed and skilled in Use of English cannot be quantified. The onus is on the parents to adopt the parental styles that will assist in their academic attainment.

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