

Original Paper

Perception of Learners on Parenting System and ITS Influence
on Academic Performance among Secondary Schools Students
of Bukonzo Country, Uganda

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Abstract

The study examined perception of learners on parenting styles and its influence on academic performance among secondary school students in Bukonzo County, Kasese District in Uganda. A correlational study design was adopted. Data was collected from 562 students selected using proportionate stratified and systematic random sampling. A structured questionnaire was administered. Findings indicated that the most prevalent parenting style was democratic style and the least was laissez-faire even as much as parents' perception may assume that children tend to want freedom. Furthermore, Spearman Rank correlation coefficient indicated that statistically significant positive correlations exist between democratic, authoritarian parenting styles and academic performance. It therefore implied that children would wish to have parents who are in control of them as opposed to those who leaves them to do what they want. High level preference for parents who guide and mentor them. Therefore, democratic and authoritarian parenting styles proved to enhance students' academic performance as opposed to leisure fair parenting style.

Keywords

perception, parenting style, academic performance and secondary students

1. Introduction

Parenting styles refer to behaviors and attitudes that set the emotional climate of parent-child interactions such as parental responsiveness and demandingness. Parents today are constantly faced with parenting styles challenges as a result of the digital world platform which influences what children are exposed to, diversification of different cultures integration and pathological behaviors some of which may go undetected among other children for so long. This is coupled with challenges parents also face as individuals today. Many face separation and divorce, death of very loved ones, terminal illnesses, loneliness and depression, pressure from jobs and retirement problems among others. Coping with such challenges in bringing up children appropriately to perform and excel in school is such a milestone. Baumrind (2007) contends that there are four major recognized parenting styles: authoritative, neglectful, permissive, and authoritarian. Each one carries different characteristics and brings about different reactions in the children which they are used on. It is important to keep in mind that every parent child relationship is different, so there is not one sure way to go about parenting. This is a simple guide to help decode your parenting style and provide general suggestions on how to raise a happy, responsible, productive member of society. Since this paper would wish to re-examine influence of parenting styles on academic performance, Dzever (2015) defines academic performance in two ways—the grades earned in school and score achieved on standardized tests. Hence, parents often feel pressurized, confused and full of anxiety in molding children to become good responsible mature citizen of their nations amidst problems they equally face as parents.

Several studies have been done to examine the relationship between parenting styles and academic performance across various cultures. For instance, among the Asian communities, Besharat, Azizi, and Poursharifi (2011); Borak, Kawser, Haque, and Sharmin (2016); Dehyadegary, Yaacob, Juhari, and Talib (2012); Parsasirat Montazeri, Yusoooff, Subhi, and Nen (2013); and Zahed, Rezaee, Yazdani, Bagheri, and Nabeiei (2016) found that most adolescents raised under democratic parenting style have higher academic success than those from authoritarian and laissez-faire parenting styles while Ishak, Low, and Lau (2012), Kang and Moore (2011), and Pong, Johnston, and Chen (2010) stated that both democratic and authoritarian parenting styles influence students' academic performance. In Europe, Garcia and Gracia (2009) found significant differences in academic performance among Spaniard children from laissez-faire homes. In Africa, Ariko (2009), Munyi (2013), Nyarko (2011), and Odongo, Aloka, and raburu (2016) found out that democratic parenting style leads to better grades among kenyan, Ghanaian, Ugandan parents. However, there is scanty empirical evidences on parenting styles influence on learner's academic performance in Bukonzo County in Uganda. Therefore, there was need to carry out investigation on the relationship between democratic, leisure faire and authoritarian parenting styles and find out to what extent parenting styles affects learning outcome among the secondary school students of Bukonzo County in Uganda.

1.1 Problem Identification

Considering the fact that today's economy is competitive, parents are becoming increasingly busy with their daily diverse occupations at the expense of being responsive caregivers to their children (Zervides & Knowles, 2007). As a result, children tend to fend for themselves. Some children go to school without scholastic materials (pens, pencils, books, etc.). They lack parental guidance and emotional touch with their parents. Studies reveal increasing truancy and lack of school attendance (Shobola, Omoregbe, & Olufemi, 2012), and low academic achievement in Bukonzo County in Uganda with a mean grade of F9 (0-34%) as compared to the national mean grade expectations since 60% of the candidates were unable to be graded (Uganda National Examination Board, 2016). The question is, does style of parenting affect learners academic performance in Bukonzo County, Kasese District in Uganda?

1.2 Study Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives

- 1) To establish perceptions of learners on parenting styles;
- 2) To establish the extent perceived parenting styles influence learner's academic performance;
- 3) To determine the extent gender parity influence parenting styles and academic performance.

2. Methodology

2.1 Study Design, Target Population and Sampling Methodology

The study employed quantitative research methods using cross sectional research design incorporating descriptive and correlational approaches. The target population of the six schools was 4420 students and accessible populations were 80; 973; 1,589; 910; 455; and 413 respectively. Basing on Gay's (1996) emphasis on representativeness, the researcher obtained a sample size of 562 respondents. Students were selected first by using proportionate and systematic random sampling technique in which case every k^{th} member who formed the study sample was selected to participate. Six of 15 schools participated in the study. The study used probability sampling techniques where by Schools were stratified according to school type. Six schools were sampled out of the 15 schools which were considered as a good representative sample. Kothari (2004) contends that, if at least 33.3% of the targeted population is studied, there is a maximum likelihood of the study capturing all relevant and targeted characteristics of that population.

2.2 Study Instruments, Data Collection Procedure and Data Analysis Method

The study used a structured questionnaire composed of three sections including demographic data, Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) developed by Buri (1991), and Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ) adopted from Marsh (1993). The questionnaire was administered in English and each student was given 30 minutes. Data analysis included both descriptive and inferential statistics.

3. Results

The results from this study indicated that adolescence children in secondary schools do not prefer leisure faire kind of parenting style. As much as there seems to be a wind of change towards adaptation of high freelance parenting and guidance and counseling approach as opposed to African traditional authoritative parenting style, this study revealed that children prefer parents who monitor their progress in school, tend to be strict on their behaviors and mentor them appropriately. Table 1 shows learners level of responds to type of parenting styles most preferred as used by their fathers and mothers.

Table 1. Perceptions of Learners on Parenting Styles in Bukonzo County

Category	Parents		Fathers		Mothers	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Democratic	508	45	243	43	265	47
Authoritarian	379	34	202	36	177	32
Laissez-faire	237	21	117	21	120	21
Total	1124	100	562	100	562	100

Students in the study generally perceived their parents to be democratic (45.30%), authoritarian (33.70%), and laissez-faire (21.00%) respectively. Specifically, majority of the students perceived their mothers (47.20%) and fathers (43.40%) to be democratic while the least perceived their mothers (21.30%) and fathers (20.70%) to be laissez-faire (see Table 1 above). This means that democratic parenting style was most commonly practiced in the study area.

Table 2, shows a Spearman Rank correlation coefficient which was run to test Perceived Parenting Styles and Academic Performance. The results indicated that statistically significant positive correlations exist between democratic, authoritarian parenting styles and academic performance. The results tested scores on democratic parenting styles specifically for the mother's reveals scores in the following scores as follows; mathematical skills ($r = .162, p < .001$), verbal skills ($r = .158, p < .001$), problem solving skills ($r = .207, p < .001$) and general academic skills ($r = .266, p < .001$). This implies that democratic mothers who have warm and supportive relationships with their children enhance their academic performance.

The democratic parenting style for the fathers in various skills shows the test results as follows; mathematical skills ($r = .227, p < .001$), verbal skills ($r = .157, p < .001$), problem solving skills ($r = .220, p < .001$) and general academic skills ($r = .253, p < .001$) skills. This results implies that fathers who practice warmth and are responsive to their children positively influence their academic performance.

The authoritarian parenting styles for the mother's test scores equally yielded; mathematical skills ($r = .171, p < .001$), problem solving skills ($r = .160, p < .001$) and general academic skills ($r = .191, p$

< .001) while authoritarian fathers parenting style revealed the scores in skills as mathematical skills ($r = .124, p < .003$), problem solving skills ($r = .126, p < .003$) and general academic skills ($r = .147, p < .001$); general academic skills ($r = .188, p < .001$). This results equally shows that parents who show high demandingness and low responsiveness tend to enhance the academic performance of their children.

Table 2. Perceived Parenting Styles and Academic Performance

AP	Parenting Style					
	Democratic		Authoritarian		Laissez-Faire	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Mathematical skills	.162**	.227**	.171**	.124**	.062	.067
Verbal skills	.158**	.157**	.108*	.083	.050	.105
Problem solving skills	.207**	.220**	.160**	.162**	.029	.093
Academic skills	.266**	.266**	.191**	.147**	.034	.076

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above data therefore implies that these parenting styles have an effect on students' academic performance. Parents should be oriented to adapt democratic and authoritarian parenting styles to enhance students' academic performance.

The results from Table 3 on gender parity in perceived paternal parenting styles on academic performance revealed that fathers' authoritarian style favors girls' academic performance while democratic style favors boys' academic performance compared to maternal parenting seen in Table 4 below. This implies that high demandingness and low responsiveness among fathers promotes girls' academic performance while high responsiveness and support typical of democratic parenting style enhances boy's academic performance. Therefore, academic performance among boys and girls varies in relation to differences in parenting styles.

Table 3. Gender Parity in Perceived Paternal Parenting Styles and Academic Performance

Gender	Academic Performance	Father's Parenting Style					
		Democratic		Authoritarian		Laissez-Faire	
		<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	n	%
Male	Low	8	3	4	1	5	2
	High	120	43	79	29	61	23
	Total	128	46	83	30	66	24
Female							
	Low	5	2	5	2	1	0.4
	High	110	38	114	40	50	18
	Total	115	40	119	42	51	18

The study further revealed that democratic mothers who are supportive and warm promote academic performance of boys compared to their female counterparts (54% Vs. 35%)

Like fathers in Table 3 above, authoritarian mothers with high demandingness and low responsiveness enhance academic performance of girls compared to their male counterparts (33% Vs. 28%). This implies that democratic mothers promote academic performance of their sons while authoritarian parenting style promotes academic performance of their daughters.

Table 4. Gender Parity, Perceived Maternal Parenting Styles and Academic Performance

Gender	Academic Performance	Mother's Parenting Style					
		Democratic		Authoritarian		Laissez-Faire	
		<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	n	%
Male	Low	11	4	2	1	4	1
	High	148	54	78	28	34	13
	Total	159	57	80	29	38	14
Female							
	Low	5	2	3	1	3	1
	High	101	35	94	33	79	28
	Total	106	37	97	34	82	29

4. Discussions

The study results confirm Baumrind (2007) school of that where he contends that there are four major recognized parenting styles: authoritative, neglectful, permissive, and authoritarian. Each one carries different characteristics and brings about different reactions in the children which they are used on. It is important to keep in mind that every parent child relationship is different, so there is not one sure way

to go about parenting. Hence these categorized parenting styles are just but simple guide to help decode ones parenting style and provide general suggestions on how to raise a happy, responsible, productive member of society. It is therefore surprising that most students identified their parents as democratic and very few identified them as laissez-faire. This implies that even though parents today adopt freelance style of parenting where they leave children to decide what is best for them, this study reveals that children perceive this as totally wrong (see results from Tables 2, 3 and 4). Children wish to have parents who are in control in guiding them, supervising, mentoring them as they turn to adults.

This is in line with results obtained in Sirjan, Iran and Tirana, Albania and Dehyadegary et al. (2012), Kashahu, Dibra, Osmanaga, and Bushati (2015) respectively but in contrast with Hong et al. (2015), Garcia and Gracia (2009), and Zervides and Knowles (2008) who showed that laissez-faire parenting style was dominant in Malaysia, Greece, Australia and Spain respectively as the most preferred style of bringing up children.

In addition, Yarahmadi (2015) found out that authoritarian and laissez-faire parenting styles were dominantly practiced by Indian than Iranian parents while Baker et al. (2012) found out that majority of the parents were practicing authoritarian parenting style in Malaysia, a style which this study outcome seems to be in agreement with. However, Littlewood (2009), Van Campen and Russell (2010) and Waylen and Stewart-Brown (2008) argued that parenting styles keep on changing depending on the situation, age and sex of the child, and culture and yet different parenting styles share similar characteristics. This could therefore explain the differences in literature about parenting styles across the world including the current study.

4.1 Perceived Parenting Styles and Academic Performance

In Perceived Parenting Styles and Academic Performance, the results indicate a significant difference in academic performance among students whose parents used different parenting styles (see Table 2 on p. 44). This study supports Borak et al. (2016), Dehyadegary et al. (2012), Kashahu et al. (2015), and Parsasirat et al. (2013) studies who found out that democratic parents strongly predicted academic performance of their children in Albania, Bangladesh and Iran. However, Turner, Chandler, and Heffer (2009) revealed positive difference in academic performance among students of democratic parents and a negative difference among those of laissez-faire, and authoritarian parents. Moreover, Garcia and Gracia (2009) found out that adolescent students in Spain who characterized their parents as laissez-faire had significantly higher academic performance with less probability of high risk activities. In other studies, Dzever (2015) also revealed that positive and significant relationship between laissez-faire parenting style and academic performance among adolescents in Nigeria had no significant association among Iranian high school students. On the other hand, Elias and Yee (2009) reported that there was no relation between parenting style and academic achievement among high school students in Malaysia.

So the implication and contrasting results as revealed in these studies shows that achievement gap could as well be attributed to array of factors including, individual differences, relationships between

parents themselves, relationship between parents and their children, the mix of economic and social advantages afforded by parents and intelligence of the child rather than the parenting style (Bornstein et al., 2012; Chau, Baumann, Kabuth, & Chau, 2012; Gohain, 2012).

4.2 Gender Parity, Perceived Parenting Styles and Academic Performance

A larger proportion of male students with democratic parents than female students had high academic performance. On the other hand, more female students with authoritarian parents than male students had high academic performance (see Tables 3 and 4 on p. 47). In contrast with these findings, Yarahmadi (2015) revealed that authoritarian parenting style had significant negative correlation with academic achievement in boys and girls of Iranian sample while in the Indian sample; authoritarian parenting style had insignificant correlation with academic achievement in girls and boy's samples. These differences in academic performance among students whose parents adopt different parenting styles suggest that parenting practices have different meanings and implications for children depending on the socio-cultural context in which these practices occur (Bornstein & Lansford, 2010). Furthermore, these differences in students' academic performance occur as a function of observing the parenting styles in either a dyad (mother or father, and child) or triad (mother, father, and child) nature: the quality of interaction with the child varies as a function of whether the other parent is present or not (Johnson, 2007). Mothers are generally rated as being more sensitive, responsive and involved than fathers to their sons and daughters (Borak et al., 2016) and evidence shows that mothers use the same amount of parenting style with both sons and daughters (Cox, Mezulis, & Hyde, 2010) while father—child relationships are less enduring and more strongly influenced by context (Van Campen & Russell, 2010).

5. Conclusions, Recommendations and Areas of Further Researches

From the sampled group, learners perceived their parents as democratic more than laissez-faire and they also felt that mothers were more democratic than fathers. Democratic and authoritarian parenting styles significantly influence academic performance while laissez-faire parenting style does not significantly influence academic performance. Democratic mothers influence academic performance of boys more than democratic fathers while authoritarian fathers influence academic performance of their daughters more than authoritarian mothers.

Parents should embrace parenting styles that enhance academic performance of their children. Fathers should embrace democratic style with their sons but both parents should embrace democratic and authoritarian styles for girls. The study has revealed that girls whose parents are authoritarian help them to perform well than when their parents are democratic and laissez-faire. When parents embrace a better parenting style, then children perform well in school which enhances their mental health.

5.1 Areas for Further Research

Further research is needed to explore the problem on a large sample from more scattered geographical regions and including other variables like student factors, family factors, school factors and peer factors.

Further research is necessary to clarify and present the possible factors that could account for the differences in the findings across the different parenting styles. This study adopted a purely quantitative methodology. It is therefore recommended to use mixed methods in further studies to corroborate the findings in the current study because a qualitative approach could as well provide useful information. A comparative study should be conducted to establish the relationship between parenting styles and academic performance of students at various levels including primary school pupils, college students and university students. A combined study on both parents and students could be conducted to further elaborate and support the present findings. Finally, a longitudinal study should be carried out to identify the flexibility of parenting styles and academic performance across time.

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