PARENTING STYLE AS PREDICTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS OF NIGERIAN DEFENCE ACADEMY STAFF SCHOOL KADUNA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the predictive relationship between parenting styles and the psychological well-being of students attending the Nigerian Defence Academy Staff School in Kaduna. Drawing on a sample of 200 participants, data were collected using a cross-sectional survey design, with measures including the Parenting Care Scale (PCS) and the Brief Psychological Wellbeing Scale. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were employed to examine the influence of parenting styles on psychological well-being. Findings reveal that permissive parenting style (β=-0.278, t=-3.913, P<0.001) positively correlates with psychological well-being, while authoritative parenting style ($r_{(198)}$ =-0.235; p<0.05) exhibits a negative correlation. Conversely, authoritarian parenting style ($r_{(198)}$ =-0.005; p>0.05) does not significantly predict psychological well-being. The study underscores the importance of age and parenting style in shaping students' psychological well-being, advocating for interventions that promote nurturing and supportive parenting practices, parent education workshops, and mental health support services within educational institutions. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between family dynamics and student outcomes, the study in line with other psychological researches has further strengthened the fact that parenting style predicts psychological wellbeing. The study offers implications for policy, practice, and future research in educational and mental health domains within military-affiliated schools.

Introduction

Parenting styles have long been recognized as influential factors in shaping the psychological well-being and development of children and adolescents across diverse cultural contexts. In the context of educational institutions such as the Nigerian Defence Academy Staff School in Kaduna, understanding the role of parenting styles in predicting the psychological well-being of students becomes imperative. The Nigerian Defence Academy Staff School, situated within the military environment, represents a unique setting where the dynamics of parenting styles may intersect with the demands and challenges of military life, potentially impacting the psychological adjustment and overall well-being of its students. Research on parenting styles has identified distinct approaches, namely authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful, each characterized by varying levels of parental control, warmth, and responsiveness. These parenting styles have been associated with different outcomes in children's psychological development, including their emotional regulation, self-esteem, academic achievement, and social competence. However, limited research has specifically examined the influence of parenting styles on the psychological well-being of students within military-affiliated educational institutions like the Nigerian Defence Academy Staff School.

Understanding the role of parenting styles in predicting the psychological well-being of students in this unique educational setting holds significant implications for both academic and military communities. It can provide valuable insights into the factors contributing to students' resilience, adaptability, and overall psychological adjustment, thereby informing the development of targeted interventions and support programs to promote their well-being. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the predictive relationship between parenting styles and the psychological well-being of students attending the Nigerian Defence Academy Staff School in Kaduna. By exploring how different parenting styles adopted by parents within the military context impact students' psychological well-being, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between family dynamics, military lifestyle, and student outcomes within educational settings associated with the Nigerian Armed Forces. Ultimately, the findings of this study may inform interventions and support strategies aimed at enhancing the psychological well-being and academic success of students in military-affiliated schools like the Nigerian Defence Academy Staff School.

Permissive parenting is characterized by high levels of warmth and responsiveness but low levels of control and structure (Baumrind, 1966), which are likely correct in most cases. Parents who exhibit this style are often lenient and indulgent, avoiding strict rules and discipline while prioritizing their children's happiness and autonomy (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Research suggests that permissive parenting can influence the psychological well-being of children. According to Darling and Steinberg (1993), children raised in permissive households may experience improved psychological well-being due to the nurturing and supportive atmosphere created by their parents, this support is more likely to allow them express themselves so well and enjoy the love of parenting better. The lack of strict rules and the emphasis on autonomy may foster feelings of self-confidence and independence in children too (Baumrind, 1966). Furthermore, the openness and warmth exhibited by permissive parents may facilitate healthy parent-child communication, enabling children to discuss their emotions and concerns freely (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Authoritative parenting style authoritative parenting is characterized by a combination of warmth, responsiveness, and clear expectations for behavior, where parents provide guidance and support while also setting appropriate boundaries (Steinberg, 2001). Recent studies have consistently shown that children raised by authoritative parents exhibit higher levels of psychological well-being compared to those raised under other parenting styles (Pinquart, 2017). This positive relationship is attributed to several factors, including the secure attachment formed between parent and child, which promotes emotional security and resilience (Pinquart, 2017). Additionally, the consistent and fair discipline practices of authoritative parents help children develop self-regulation skills and a sense of autonomy, contributing to their overall psychological adjustment (Steinberg, 2001). Overall, authoritative parenting fosters an environment where children feel supported, respected, and capable, leading to better mental health outcomes in the long term.

On the other hand, authoritarian parenting is

characterized by high levels of control, discipline, and strict adherence to rules, with little room for negotiation or flexibility (García & Gracia, 2009). Recent research has consistently shown that children raised under authoritarian parenting styles often exhibit lower levels of psychological well-being compared to those raised under other parenting styles (García & Gracia, 2009). This negative association is attributed to several factors, including the lack of warmth and emotional support in authoritarian households, which can lead to feelings of rejection and low self-esteem in children (García & Gracia, 2009). Additionally, the emphasis on obedience and punishment rather than open communication and problem-solving may hinder children's social and emotional development, contributing to poorer mental health outcomes in the long term. Overall, authoritarian parenting creates an environment characterized by rigidity and control, which can have detrimental effects on children's psychological well-being.

According to Lavasani et al., (2011) This parenting approach may create an environment where children feel free to express themselves and explore their interests without fear of harsh punishment or judgment, they added that it is more likely to have a negative correlation with psychological wellbeing among high school female students. Although, resent finding by Francis, et al., (2021) reveals that permissive parenting style is negatively associated with children psychological wellbeing as well as many other studies (Abidin et al., 2022; Loke, & Low, 2021). Agoha et al., (2021) noted that authoritarian parenting style was negatively related to psychological wellbeing among Nigerian secondary school, though no study has investigated this among primary Nigerian students. Authoritative parenting style has been found to have positive correlation with psychological wellbeing, (Rodrigo et al., 2014; Yadav et al., 2021). In Kaduna, presently, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study has actually established the relationship between parenting style and psychological wellbeing among military students. To this end, this study hopes to investigate the relationship of different parenting styles on the psychological wellbeing of NDA staff school students.

Statement of Problem

Despite the crucial role of parenting styles in shaping the psychological well-being of adolescents, there remains a gap in understanding how specific parenting styles within the unique context of Nigerian Defence Academy Staff School Kaduna influence the psychological well-being of its students. This study aims to investigate the relationship between various parenting styles employed by parents of students at the Nigerian Defence Academy Staff School Kaduna and the psychological well-being outcomes experienced by these students. By exploring this relationship, the research seeks to address the lack of empirical evidence regarding the impact of parenting styles on the psychological well-being of students within this particular educational institution, thereby contributing to a better understanding of factors influencing adolescent development in military school environments.

Conceptual Clarification

1. **Parenting Style:** Refers to the strategies and approaches that parents use to raise their children, including disciplinary methods, levels of warmth and support, and expectations for behavior.

2. **Psychological Well-Being**: Describes an individual's overall mental state, encompassing aspects such as life satisfaction, positive emotions, self-esteem, resilience, and the absence of mental health issues

3. **Authoritative Parenting:** Characterized by high levels of warmth, support, and responsiveness from parents, coupled with clear and consistent expectations and rules. Authoritative parents encourage independence while also providing guidance and discipline in a nurturing manner.

4. **Authoritarian Parenting:** Marked by high levels of control and demand, with little warmth or responsiveness. Authoritarian parents enforce strict rules and discipline, often without explanation, and may prioritize obedience over autonomy.

5. **Permissive Parenting:** Involves high levels of warmth and responsiveness but low levels of control and discipline. Permissive parents are lenient and indulgent, allowing their children

considerable freedom with few demands or expectations.

Literature Review

Psychological wellbeing of a child is affected by varying factors, which includes parenting style, for example, a longitudinal study that examined the early childhood factors contributing to mental health problems noted that permissive parenting styles during early childhood can impact psychological well-being later in life. It was found that children raised in permissive environments may be at increased risk for certain mental health issues (Bayer et al., 2008). Study further suggests that permissive parenting may be associated with higher rates of delinquency and poorer mental health outcomes in children (Hoeve et al., 2009), this can be explained from the excessive freedom they tend to enjoy. Also Pinquart's (2017) while exploring the associations between various parenting dimensions and externalizing problems in children and adolescents. Found that permissive parenting may contribute to externalizing problems and emotional difficulties in children. Other studies have linked permissive parenting style to increased antisocial behavior and emotional problems in children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Piotrowska et al., 2015) as well as lower levels of adolescent competence and higher levels of emotional distress across different cultural backgrounds (Wissink et al., 2010) and poorer mental health outcomes through its influence on children's self-esteem (Wu et al., 2021), all this findings are pointing to the fact that parenting style predicts mental health of children, which this study hopes to unveils the fact behind this among school children in NDA.

Although Steinberg (2001) noted that authoritative parenting style, characterized by warmth and clear expectations, helps in promoting positive outcomes for adolescents' mental health. While another study has it that it has a positive impact of on children's self-esteem and emotional well-being (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). According to Grolnick et al., (1993) they found that authoritative parenting fosters a sense of competence and autonomy, which positively influences children's psychological well-being and academic success, and in turn gives them self confidence. Other studies have linked authoritative parenting style to high self esteem, positive self image, lower rates of substance abuse among adolescents, and lower levels of depression and anxiety and its protective role in promoting children's psychological well-being (Lamborn et al., 1991; Baumrind; 1991; McLeod et al., 2007). The fact that authoritative parenting style gives the children the ability to express themselves under good guidance is more likely to explain why they are going to be mentally stable than other children.

Meanwhile, Piotrowska et al., (2015) in a study suggests that authoritarian parenting may contribute to increased levels of emotional problems and antisocial behavior, ultimately affecting psychological well-being. This fact is understandable from the fact that the children may bottle their emotions the more and less likely to relate well with their parents. Findings further suggest that authoritarian parenting may be associated with lower levels of psychological well-being and higher rates of internalizing and externalizing problems among adolescents (García & Gracia, 2009). More so, authoritarian parenting may lead to decreased communication and trust between adolescents and parents, thereby promoting secrecy which can negatively impact psychological well-being (Smetana, et al., 2016). The poor communication with parents is often accompanied by communicating with peers and other people who are likely to teach them bad habits that can make them susceptible to mental health challenges. Other studies have linked it with low disclosure, higher levels of emotional distress in adolescents and negative influence on children's self-esteem (Wissink et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2021). The lack of confidence in them may also emanate from the aspect of not being appreciated by their parents, making them feel less likely to be good, therefore affecting their egos and self love. Studies further suggest that adolescents raised in authoritarian families may exhibit lower levels of psychological well-being compared to those raised in authoritative or indulgent families (Lamborn, et al., 1991). McLeod et al., (2017) found that authoritarian parenting is positively associated with childhood depression, associated with higher levels of externalizing problems and emotional difficulties, indicating its potential negative impact on psychological well-being (Pinquart, 2017). All the above fact are still directed to the fact that parenting style affects psychological wellbeing, however, to the best of the researchers` knowledge no study has investigated this phenomenon in Kaduna; hence this study hopes to fill this gap in literature.

Theory

One theory that could suit the study is Attachment Theory, developed by Bowlby (1958) and expanded upon by Ainsworth et al., (1978). Attachment Theory posits that early experiences with caregivers, particularly the quality of attachment formed between parent and child, influence individuals' social, emotional, and psychological development throughout their lives (Bowlby, 1969). According to this theory, the nature of the parent-child attachment relationship shapes individuals' internal working models of themselves and others, which in turn influences their relationships and psychological well-being in later life.

In the context of the study, Attachment Theory can provide valuable insights into how different parenting styles impact students' psychological well-being. For example, Adolescents who have experienced consistent and supportive parenting characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and clear communication are more likely to develop secure attachments. These individuals are expected to exhibit higher levels of psychological well-being, including greater self-esteem, emotional regulation, and social competence.

While, adolescents who have experienced inconsistent or harsh parenting characterized by authoritarian or neglectful parenting styles may develop insecure attachment patterns, such as anxiety or avoidant attachment. These individuals may exhibit lower levels of psychological well-being, including higher levels of anxiety, depression, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships. By examining how different parenting styles at the Nigerian Defence Academy Staff School Kaduna relate to students' attachment patterns and subsequent psychological well-being, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which parenting influences adolescent development. This knowledge can inform interventions and support strategies aimed at promoting positive parenting practices and enhancing students' well-being within the school context.

Method

Design

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design to examine the impact of parenting styles on the psychological well-being of students attending NDA Staff School in Kaduna. This design was chosen to facilitate data collection from participants at a specific point in time utilizing Google form.

Participants

The total population of the school as at the time of the research were 1150 pupils, to arrive at the number of participants, power analysis was done using an online calculator, which gave a total score of 150-200 participant. This study comprised 200 participants, with 103 (51.5%) males and 97 (48.5%) females. Their ages ranged from 10 to 19 years, with a mean age of 15.78 (Standard Deviation = 1.793). Regarding age distribution, 16 (8.0%) students fell between the ages of 10 and 13, 112 (56.0%) were between 14 and 16 years old, and 72 (36.0%) were aged 17 to 19. Class distribution indicated that 3 (1.5%) participants were in JSS1, 9 (4.5%) in JSS2, 4 (2.0%) in JSS3, 55 (27.5%) in SS1, 55 (27.5%) in SS2, and 74 (37.0%) in SS3.

Instrument

The study employed a questionnaire that was fixed in goggle form to assess the impact of parenting styles on the psychological well-being of students at NDA Staff School, Kaduna, consisting of three sections: A, B, and C. Section A gathered demographic information, while sections B and C focused on parenting styles and psychological well-being.

The Parenting Care Scale (PCS), developed by Baumring (1993), was utilized, consisting of 20 items aimed at gauging children's perceptions of their parents' dominant caregiving styles. Baumring identified three principal styles: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative. Authoritarian parenting involves absolute standards with unquestionable obedience expected, permissive parenting is characterized by minimal control and discipline, while authoritative parenting sets clear standards while considering children's opinions and feelings. The PCS scoring involves awarding points for responses indicating each parenting style category. Psychometric properties were established by Baumring (1971) for American samples and by Takahiro & Haroshima (2012) for African samples, with reported reliability (α = .86) and validity coefficients (.73).

The Brief Psychological Wellbeing Scale, developed by Ryff (1995), comprises an 8-item brief version with response options ranging from 7 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree).

All items are positively phrased, allowing scores to range from 8 (indicating Strong Disagreement with all items) to 56 (reflecting Strong Agreement with all items). Higher scores indicate a positive self-view across various areas of functioning. Gupta & Mehtani (2015) categorized factors related to emotional and informational social support, resulting in a scale with four factors. Internal consistency, evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, ranged from .76 to .95, while Corey (2009) established content-related validity, with internal consistency ranging from .92 to .83. In the current study, the analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .93.

Analysis

The data collected in this study underwent analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequency, simple percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were employed to analyze demographic characteristics of the participants. Additionally, inferential statistics, such as Standard Multiple Regression and intercorrelation, were utilized to test hypothesis one and two, respectively, assessing the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Ethical Considerations

Adherence to ethical guidelines governing research conduct is crucial, as tradition dictates. The participants were fully briefed on the research objectives to ensure informed consent and voluntary participation. No coercion or deception was involved, and all individuals were treated with dignity, with their anonymity and confidentiality guaranteed. The Google form had a consent form for the parents to consenting participants, emphasizing ethical principles such as voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study without consequences. The study also prioritized beneficence, discussing potential benefits with participants and addressing any misconceptions.

Results

Table 1: Inter correlation among studied variables

SN		M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Age	15.79	1.79	1							
2	Gender	-	-	-.353**	1						
3	Class	-	-	.592**	-.202**	1					
4	Authoritarian Style	3.75	1.64	-.070	-.033	-.048	1				
5	Permissive Style	3.83	1.22	.089	.193**	-.013	-.271**	1			
6	Authoritative Style	3.66	1.77	-.193**	.175*	-.205**	-.300**	.156*	1		
7	Overall Parenting Style	10.88	2.27	-.153*	.216**	-.202**	.343**	.462**	.647**	1	
8	Psychological wellbeing	60.33	15.02	.222**	.036	.098	-.005	.185**	-.235**	-.087	1

Note: **= Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; *= Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; M= mean, SD= Standard deviation

Source Field Data

Table 1 shows inter-correlation among study variables. The result shows that gender ($r_{(198)}$=0.036; p>0.05), Class ($r_{(198)}$=0.098; p>0.05), Authoritarian style ($r_{(198)}$=-0.005; p>0.05), and overall parenting style did not correlate with psychological wellbeing ($r_{(198)}$=-0.087; p>0.05) did not correlate with psychological wellbeing. Age ($r_{(198)}$=0.222; p<0.01), and Permissive parenting style($r_{(198)}$=185; p<0.05) positively correlate psychological wellbeing. Authoritative style ($r_{(198)}$=-0.235; p<0.05) negatively correlate with psychological wellbeing significantly.

Table 2: Standard Multiple Regression showing the independent and Joint influence of parenting style on psychological wellbeing

Variable	R	R^2	F	p-value	β	t-test	p-value
Psychological wellbeing	0.326	0.106	7.77	0.000			
(Constant)						11.43	0.000
Authoritarian style					-0.028	-0.387	0.699
Permissive style					0.221	3.142	0.002
Authoritative style					-0.278	-3.913	0.000

Source Field Data

Standard multiple regression was conducted to test the joint and independent influence of parenting style on psychological wellbeing. The results shows the three dimension of parenting styles jointly predicted psychological wellbeing significantly ($F_{(3,196)}$=7.77; P<0.001) with R=0.326 and R^2=0.106. Thus, the three predictor variables jointly accounted for 10.6% of the variance in psychological wellbeing. Independently, authoritarian style (β=-0.028, t=-0.387, P>0.05) did not significantly influence psychological wellbeing. Authoritarian has negative contribution by accounting for 2.8% of the variance in psychological wellbeing. On the other hand, permissive style (β=0.221, t=3.142, P<0.001) significantly predicted psychological wellbeing. Permissive style has positive contribution by accounting for 22.1% of the variance in psychological wellbeing. Also, authoritative style (β=-0.278, t=-3.913, P<0.001) significantly predicted psychological wellbeing. Authoritative style has a negative contribution by accounting for 27.8% of the variance in psychological wellbeing. Therefore, parenting styles independently and joint influenced psychological wellbeing of students of NDA staff school.

Discussion

The findings suggest that there is a positive correlation between age, permissive parenting style on one hand and psychological wellbeing, indicating that as children grow older, their psychological well-being tends to improve. This relationship underscores the idea that as individuals mature, they become more self-aware and better equipped to understand and care for their mental health. Consequently, parents who exhibit high levels of warmth and responsiveness while maintaining low levels of control and structure are more likely to foster an environment conducive to their children's psychological well-being. By being lenient and avoiding stringent rules, these parents create a supportive atmosphere that encourages open communication and emotional expression, thereby contributing to their children's overall mental wellness. This leniency fosters confidence in children, making it easier for them to approach their parents with concerns or issues, thus reinforcing the positive correlation observed.

Conversely, authoritative parenting style was found to have a negative correlation with psychological well-being. The clear and consistent rules and expectations associated

with authoritative parenting may inadvertently create stress and anxiety in children, leading to overthinking and overreacting to minor issues. The emphasis on discipline and high expectations may also contribute to feelings of discomfort and pressure, potentially compromising the mental health of children raised in such environments. While authoritative parenting style did not directly predict psychological well-being, its structure and expectations may serve as a moderating factor, providing a framework within which children can navigate their behavior and decisions, albeit with added stressors. This finding further strengthens the attachment theory as discussed in the paper.

In summary, the study highlights the nuanced relationship between parenting styles and children's psychological well-being. While permissive parenting may foster improved mental health outcomes as children age due to its nurturing and lenient approach, authoritative parenting, despite its potential stressors, may offer a balance between structure and freedom that aids in children's behavioral regulation and development. However, further research is warranted to fully understand the complexities of these dynamics and their long-term implications on children's mental health.

Conclusion

In this study, we examined the pivotal role of parenting styles in predicting the psychological well-being of students at the Nigerian Defence Academy Staff School in Kaduna. Through an exploration of the distinct parenting approaches—authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative—we aimed to illuminate their varying impacts on the psychological adjustment and overall mental health of students within the unique context of a military-affiliated educational institution. Our findings revealed intriguing insights into how different parenting styles shape students' psychological well-being. Permissive parenting, characterized by warmth and leniency, was associated with improved psychological well-being as children matured. This nurturing environment fostered open communication and emotional expression, contributing to the overall mental wellness of the students.

Conversely, authoritative parenting, with its structured approach and clear expectations, presented a more complex picture. While offering a balance between freedom and discipline, authoritative parenting also introduced stressors that influenced children's psychological adjustment. However, it did not directly predict psychological well-being, suggesting that its structure may serve as a moderating factor in children's behavioral regulation and development. On the other hand, authoritarian parenting, marked by strict control and discipline, exhibited a negative correlation with psychological well-being. The emphasis on obedience and punishment, coupled with the lack of warmth and emotional support, contributed to lower levels of psychological well-being among students. Our study underscores the importance of recognizing the nuanced influences of various parenting styles in military educational settings. By understanding how these parenting approaches intersect with the unique challenges of a military environment, educators, policymakers, and parents can develop targeted interventions and support programs to promote the mental health and academic success of students.

In conclusion, our research contributes to a deeper understanding of the intricate relationship between parenting styles and students' psychological well-being. Further exploration in this area is essential to elucidate the complexities of these dynamics and their long-term implications for children's well-being. Through collaborative efforts, we can continue to enhance the support systems available to students, fostering their holistic development and resilience in military-affiliated educational institutions like the Nigerian Defence Academy Staff School in Kaduna.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to support the psychological well-being of students at the Nigerian Defence Academy Staff School in Kaduna. Firstly, educational programs should be implemented to raise awareness among parents, teachers, and students about the impact of different parenting styles on psychological health, emphasizing the benefits of nurturing and supportive approaches like authoritative parenting. Secondly, parent education workshops and support groups can be organized to provide parents with practical strategies for fostering positive parent-child relationships, effective communication, and emotional support. Thirdly, school counselors

and mental health professionals should be readily available to offer support and intervention for students experiencing psychological distress, providing a safe space for them to express their feelings and seek guidance. Fourthly, collaborative efforts between parents, educators, and mental health professionals are essential to create a supportive and inclusive school environment that prioritizes students' mental health and well-being. Fifthly, ongoing research and evaluation of intervention programs are crucial to assess their effectiveness and make necessary adjustments to meet the evolving needs of students and families. Lastly, policymakers should prioritize the integration of mental health education and support services within the school curriculum and allocate resources to ensure their sustainability, ultimately fostering a culture of well-being and resilience within the school community.

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