

The Influence of Mothering Style on the Social Adjustment of Female Adolescents in the Central Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between mothering style and the social adjustment of female adolescents in the central education zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. 150 senior secondary school (SS2) students were used as the target population. Five null hypotheses were formulated on the basis of identified major independent variables of authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, single and married, working class and non working class respectively. A 25-items questionnaire was developed and used on the 150 female adolescents from 6 out of the 18 girls public school in the study area using the cluster, purposive and random sampling procedure to select schools and respondents for the study. data analysis by the Pearson product moment correlation and independent t-test statistical procedure revealed that authoritative and permissive mothers parenting exert averagely high influence on female adolescents social adjustment than the authoritarian mother parenting style. It was also revealed that high differences exist in the social adjustment of female adolescents raised between married and single; and between working class and non working class mothers. It was therefore concluded that mothering style significantly influence the social behaviour of female adolescents in the central education zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. It was thus recommended among others that mothers should show a high level of involvement in their female children's social adjustment. Some counselling implications were also proffered as the way forward.

Key words: Adolescents, adjustment, female, influences, mothering, social, style

Introduction

Adolescence is a period of transition between late childhood and early adulthood. It is a period characterized by emotional instabilities, hyper-activities and a crucial period for development. It is also a period where parents need to go an extra mill in rendering assistance to adolescents in order to develop wholesome behaviours and acceptable attitude which will lead them to function as good citizens in their adulthood.

Adolescents are faced with problems such as neglect from surrogate mothers, unstable homes, lack of home training, lack of love and care, etc. These problems renders adolescents (especially females), emotionally and socially imbalanced, thereby pushing them into further problems like drug abuse, prostitution, robbery, etc.

The family as a social institution is subjected to different management approaches for the effective growth of children (Ng, 2003). In the central education zone of Cross River State, Nigeria, adolescents' development is culturally determined. Fathers from this area are saddled with the responsibility of adolescents' academic and economic development. Mothers on the other hand, have the sole responsibility of bringing up adolescents in the society's norms, values, ethics, morally, socially, home making and emotional development. The development of social adjustment of the adolescents, especially female adolescents lies with mothers. When female adolescents exhibit behaviours that are not socially accepted, the blame is often with the mothers. Mothers therefore owe their female adolescents the duty of molding and shaping their behaviours, building their self-esteem, provision of physical needs, affection, love as well as behaviour guidance (Best 2001 & Kidd, 1999).

Types of mothering

Mothers relatively play very important or significant roles in female adolescents' life. Simply defined, mothering is that bond or relationship which exists between a mother (biological, step-mother or foster mother) and the female adolescent.

Mothers in their quest for acceptable social development for their female adolescents, often exhibit either of the following mothering styles:

- **Authoritarian mothers:** This category of mothers attempt to shape, control and evaluate the behaviour and attitude of their female adolescents in accordance with the set standards by the society. Such mothers are generally strict. They ensure that their female adolescents either follow the laid down rules or face the consequences of being beaten. Such mothers are always the authority figures who show no flexibility in

discipline. Their female adolescents only enjoy their warmth when they show total compliance to their honour (Baumrind, 1971, Kolo, 2010).

- **Authoritative mothers:** These are mothers who consider their female adolescents needs and point of view in an attempt to direct the adolescents' activities and behaviours. These kinds of mothers believe that they can only know their daughters activities outside the home if they show them empathy and by allowing them to be involved in taking decisions that concerns them. Such mothers also take into consideration the characteristics of the period of adolescents (always of the opinion that they are big enough to pilot their affairs). Such mothers also believe that using force on female adolescents will only drive them into living maladjusted live.

Authoritative mothers see themselves as leaders who set the rules together with their daughter. They recognize the special rights of their daughters, but at the same time take firm control where the female adolescents seem to have divergent opinion to behaviours and actions that has to do with social adjustment.

- **Permissive mothers:** Permissive mothers tend to accept their adolescents' behaviour and have no restriction towards their female adolescents. Horne (2000) and Kolo (2010) noted that permissive mothers are of two kinds; (a) permissive indifferent mothers show no interest in their female adolescents' ways of life, neither do they exert any kind of control over them. (b) permissive indulgent mothers are quite involved in their daughters' behaviour but they are tolerant and accepting in nature. Such mothers also avoid being in control and rarely punish their daughters for any offence committed.

The researcher opined that permissive mothers' indifferent attitude is sequel to the fact that they contribute little or nothing to the financial needs of their female adolescents. Such mothers rather expect the female adolescents to cater for their needs as well.

Baumrind (1971) Duropaiye (1984) and Ng (2003) also discovered from their studies that authoritative parents have adolescents who achieve better and demonstrates more positive social adjustment than adolescents whose parents adopt authoritarian or permissive parenting style.

Horne (2000) on the contrary, noted that adolescents reared by rigid mothers tend to be submissive but resentful of restrictions on their freedom as adolescents. Darey and Travers (1996) identified six parenting styles which attempted to differentiate the behaviours of mothers to female adolescents' upbringing. They are:

1. **Secure mothers:** These are mothers who are confident of technique of molding adolescents' social adjustment. They assume they can successfully cope with their task, thereby regarding mothering as an exciting challenge.

2. **Insecure mothers:** These mothers believe that anything they do, inevitably influences their daughters destiny. They attribute luck to the success of their daughters' social adjustment.

3. **Intimidated mother:** lack the ability to be firm with their daughters.

4. **Over interpretive mothers:** feel they must explore in depth the complex psychological meanings behind their female adolescents' behaviour.

5. **Victimized mothers:** believe that it is just not fair if they adolescent daughters show any sign of a problem after all they have done for their daughters.

6. **Pathological mothers:** suffer form a form of mental disorder which does not necessarily mean that their daughter will be subjected to psychological disturbances.

Besides mothers who possess either of the above behaviour patterns towards the social adjustment of their female adolescents, there exist another category of mothers who are single parents and also working class mothers. Such mothers become bread winners on account of either their husbands death or as divorcees. Such mothers often spend less time with their daughters. The female adolescents often experience problems ranging from neglect, lack of home training, lack of love and care, no guidance in their actions or behaviour. Their fundamental rights as adolescents are often violated (Ng, 2003; Collin, 1990).

However, Best (2001) added that mothers must get their priorities right. She noted that it is not the quality of time spent with female adolescents that matter much but the quality of time spent with them.

The problem

Mothering style, be it authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, working class or single mother all have affective development on female adolescents which hinders their quest for social adjustment. Some female adolescents as a result of their mothering style plunge into deviant behaviours such as prostitution, drug addicts, drug trafficking, robbery, etc. The researcher examined the various mothering styles as they relate to the social adjustment of female adolescents.

Purpose of the study

This study investigated the effect of mothering styles such as: authoritative mothering; authoritarian mothering; permissive mothering; single parenting mothers; and working class mothering styles on female adolescents' social adjustment. The study hopes to contribute to knowledge by throwing more light on the

relationship of mothers and their female adolescents. It will also generate enough data for counsellors and mothers concerned with the task of the care and welfare of female adolescents.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were test at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant influence of social adjustment of female adolescents raised by authoritative mothers.
2. There is no significant influence of social adjustment of female adolescents brought up by authoritarian mothers.
3. There is no significant influence of social adjustment of female adolescents raised under permissive mothers.
4. There is no significant difference in the social adjustment between female adolescents raised by single parent mothers and those raised by married mothers.
5. There is no significant difference in the social adjustment between female adolescents raised by working class mothers and those raised by non-working class mothers.

Methodology

Research design

The research design adopted for this study was the causal comparative design. This design is used to observe events that have already taken place and the data already in existence.

This design was adopted in view of the fact that mothering styles had already been identified as having possible influence on female adolescents' social adjustment. The information the researcher needed already existed in its natural state and was obtained through the use of questionnaire. The independent variables could not be manipulated because the influences had already taken place before the researcher embarked on the study.

Research area

The study was limited to one of the three senatorial geopolitical zones of Cross River State. Precisely, it was limited to the central senatorial geopolitical zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. This choice was as a result of the existence and practical application of the cultural use of mothering styles in the accomplishment of female adolescents' social adjustment.

Population, sample and sampling procedure

The target population of this study comprised female adolescents in senior secondary school (SS3) in the central education zone of Cross River State. 150 female senior secondary school (SS3) adolescents in the central education zone, Cross River State, Nigeria formed the sample for this study. The simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 6 secondary schools, while purposeful random sampling was used in selecting 25 female adolescents from each of the 6 schools used for the study. The research instrument used for data collection was a structural four-scale likert type questionnaire. The questionnaire had two sections. Section A was used on the relevant bio data of the respondents. Section 'B' contained 25 questions relating to female adolescents level of social adjustments. The hypotheses formulated guided the items formulated to elicit information from the respondents.

The research instrument was validated by an expert in measurement and evaluation in the Faculty of Education, Cross River University of Technology, Nigeria. Data collected after the administration of the instrument by the researcher were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and independent t-test statistical analysis.

Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant influence of social adjustment of female adolescents raised by authoritative mothers.

Ho₂: There is no significant influence of social adjustment of female adolescents brought up by authoritarian mothers.

Ho₃: There is no significant influence of social adjustment of female adolescents raised under permissive mothers.

Ho₄: There is no significant difference in the social adjustment between female adolescents raised by single parent mothers and those raised by married mothers.

Ho₅: There is no significant difference in the social adjustment between female adolescents raised by working class mothers and those raised by non working class mothers.

Data analysis and discussion of findings

Data analysis: Each of the null hypotheses formulate to guide the study was analysed individually. Foremost data for each major variable was extracted from the data bank from where they were stored after coding the retrieved instrument from respondents during field survey. The data was summarized into means (\bar{x}), standard deviation (SD), sum ($\sum x$, $\sum y$), sum of squares ($\sum x^2$, $\sum y^2$) and sum of products ($\sum xy$). The summarized Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis was used for hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 while the independent t-test statistical procedure for hypotheses 4 and 5 respectively. See table 1 to 5 for details.

Table 1(a, b & c): Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analyses for the influence of (a) authoritative mothers parenting style (table 1a) authoritarian mothers parenting style (b) and permissive mothers parenting style (table c) on the social adjustment of female adolescents (N = 150)

Variable (parenting styles)	\bar{x}	SD	$\sum y$ $\sum x$	$\sum y^2$ $\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	df	r-cal	p-val
Dependent variables:								
Social adjustment (y)	14.913	3.12	2237	2483				
(a) Authoritative mothers (x_1)	12.713	2.49	1907	9307	1665	148	0.214*	.009
(b) Authoritarian mothers (x_2)	13.260	3/19	1989	2464	1448	148	0.166*	.042
(c) Permissive mothers (x_3)	14.553	2.89	2183	2862	1921	148	0.213*	.009

* averagely significant for groups a and c, lowly significant for group b, at $p < .05$, $df = 348$, crit $r = 0.195$ (2-tailed)

Table (a & b): Independent t-test analysis for the difference in the social adjustment between (a) female adolescents raised by single parent mothers and others raised by married mothers and (b) between working class and non-working class mothers

Variable (motherhood status)	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t-cal	p-val
(a) Single parents mothers	75	12.670	2.84	148	7.670*	.000
Married parents mothers	75	14.553	3.217			
Total	150	13.612	3.055			
(b) Non-working mothers	60	13.268	2.81	148	7.670*	.000
Working mothers	90	12.087	2.07			
Total	150	12.678	2.44			

* Significant for both groups at $p < .05$, $df = 148$, crit $t = 1.968$ (2-tailed)

Results interpretation

From table 1, the calculated r-values of 0.214* for the authoritative mothers and 0.213* for permissive mothers were found to averagely higher than the critical r-value of 0.195, needed for significance at 0.05 alpha level with 148 degree of freedom. On the other hand, the calculated r-value of 0.166* for authoritarian mothers was found to be very mildly lower than the critical r-value of 0.195 at $p > .05$, with 148 degrees of freedom. The general implications so these findings are that: for the significant r-values, it means that (a) there is significant influence of authoritative mothers parenting on the social adjustment of female adolescents, particularly in the central education zone, Cross River State. (b) There is also significant influence of permissive motherhood parenting on the social adjustment of female adolescents in central education zone, Cross River State. With respect to hypothesis two, though there is no significant influence of authoritarian motherhood parenting (by the lower calculated r-value of 0.166* than the critical value of 0.195); it could be inferred that since the difference between the calculated and critical values was only .029, there is some low level of significant influence of authoritarian motherhood parenting on the social adjustment of the female adolescents in the area of study. However, the level or extent of influence of motherhood parenting styles is higher with the authoritative and permissive, and lowly with the authoritarian motherhood parenting.

With regards to perceived differences in their social adjustment by virtue of being raised by single, married, working and non-working class mothers, the significant t-values for the both groups implied that: there is significant difference in the social adjustment between female adolescents raised by single versus married mothers, in a similar way as there is significant difference in the social adjustment of female adolescents raised by working versus non-working mothers, especially in the area of study. For those that are raised by single parent mothers they find it more difficult to adjust socially than their peers from married mothers; while with the working mothers the adolescent female find it easier to adjust socially than is the case with their counterparts raised by non-working mothers.

Discussion of findings

The statistical analysis of hypothesis one of this study has exposed us to the facts that there is significant influence of authoritative mother parenting on the social adjustment of female adolescents. The more the authoritative motherhood parenting, the more difficult it becomes for the adolescents to adjust socially, but the less authoritative the mother, the better and easier the female adolescent cope with her life. These findings are in agreement with Best (2001) who posited in her study that mother play vital and significant roles of shaping, molding and building the behaviour of female adolescents. A significant influence also exists in permissive mothering parenting on female adolescents' social adjustment. This is the case with permissive indulgent mothers who show little involvement in their daughters' well-being. The little influence of the permissive indulgent mother and the over protection of the authoritative mother creates the significant avenue for their daughters social adjustment. The reports of these two hypotheses confirm those of Baumrind (1971), Durojaye (1984) and Ng (2003). Authoritative parents it was discovered caused adolescents to achieve better and demonstrate more positive social adjustment. This report on the contrary countered Horne (2000) report which noted that adolescents reared under strict or rigid mothers tend to be submissive but resentful of restriction on their freedom.

With respect to the result of hypothesis 2, although there is no significant influence of authoritarian mothers on their daughter social adjustment (by the lower calculated r-value of 0.166* than the critical value of 0.195), it could be inferred that critical values was only .029, there is some low level significant influence of authoritarian mothers and parenting on the social adjustment of the female adolescents in the area of study. However, the level of the extent of influence of motherhood parenting styles is higher with the authoritative and permissive and lowly with the authoritarian motherhood parenting.

With regards to perceived difference in the social adjustment of female adolescents raised by either single versus married or working class versus non working class, a significant difference exist in both hypothesis 4 and 5. For those that are raised by single parent mothers, they find it more difficult to adjust socially than their peers form married mothers, adolescents whose mothers are working also find it easier to adjust socially than is the case with female adolescents raised by non working class mothers. The researcher discovered that the difference that existed between the social adjustment of female adolescents raised by married mothers as against single mothers lies in the fact that playing dual responsibility of parenting roles leaves single mothers with much demanding tasks that leaves no room for them to pay attention to their female wards social and psychological needs.

For the significant differences that existed between the working class and the non working class, the researcher found out from the student that though the working class mothers spend less time with their daughters and especially for those whose jobs are time-consuming, they still had high level of social adjustment than the non working class. The researcher noted that this is made possible because working class mothers meet with other women in their places of work, and exchange ideas on parenthood. The non-working class mothers on their part, sit tight at home feeling satisfied as full time house wives, struggling to be cared for by their husbands. The results of hypotheses 4 and 5 agreed with the work of Best (2001) who asserted that mothers must get their priorities right and that it is not the quality of time spent with daughters but the quality of time spend with them.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Mothers should show a high level of involvement in their female children's social adjustment. They should be made to understand that their daughters' level of adjustment reflects their mothers, behaviour. This is because when a child is bad, the society blames the mothers.
2. Mothers should start showing commitments to their female children well being right from the unset of their developmental stage (birth). The Bible confirms this when it is said that children should be brought up in ways that when they grow, they will not depart from it. This will accord the children societal acceptance.
3. Since children spent more time at school than at home, teachers should be encouraged to double as parents.
4. Parental education is also a remedy for female adolescents' social adjustment. If parents are literate, they will be well informed about children upbringing.
5. Mothers should be made to realize that when both parents are involved in time demanding jobs, little or no time within a day will be left to bring up their children.
6. Mothers should present themselves as role models to their female children. Female children can learn how to cope with the demands of the society and home from their mothers. It will also influence the daughters in their self-perception.

Counselling implications

The results of this study and the recommendations enhanced calls for counselling implications. Counselling is more preventive than curative in nature. A stitch in time it is said saves nine. If mothers are made to realize the implications of their mothering styles on their daughters social adjustment on time, it will help improve mother/daughter relationship.

The counsellor, the government, the school and the church can be of help in disseminating information in the following ways;

1. The counsellor should liaise with the school authority to present talks on mothering styles during PTA. The counsellor can also counsel teachers (especially female teachers) to double as parents to female children who live without mothers in live their lives. When female teachers play motherly roles effectively within the school system, female students will emulate them as the teachers will be seen as role models.
2. The hospitals are like other social organizations where many women can be found. During anti-natal clinic, hospital counsellors can be used to counsel mothers on the need for effective parenting. Seminars can also be organized within the hospital on issues that relates to the psychological and emotional life of adolescents and adults and parental roles towards solving such problems.
3. Government can disseminate information to mothers on the implications of parenting styles through social groups. Such talks can take place during the following meet: age grad; lady workers; female teachers association; women in academics, etc.
4. The church can also be used in this respect. leaders of church women's fellowship group can organize seminars on parenting styles and its effect on female children.

Conclusion

Over time, scholars as well as the society have asserted that mothers have a critical role to play in determining the level of their daughters' social adjustment. A good daughter brings a good name to the father, while a bad daughter brings a bad name to her mother. A child social adjustment level can be affected positively or negatively through the relationship which exist between mother and child. The level of mothers' commitment to family matters also accounts for their daughters' social adjustment. Mothers who spend more time on their jobs and less time on their daughters will be held responsible for their daughters' behaviour. Mother should present themselves as role models to their daughters.

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