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PARENTING STYLES AS PREDICTORS OF SELF-ESTEEM AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AWKA EDUCATION ZONE, ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The development of self-esteem among secondary school students relies on supportive parenting and positive peer interactions, which together foster confidence, resilience, and emotional strength to handle academic and social challenges. This study investigated parenting styles as predictors of self-esteem among secondary school students in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. The study was guided by three research questions and tested three null hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level using a predictive correlational survey research design. A multi-stage sampling method was employed to draw a sample of 840 students from a population of 5,028 senior secondary two (SS2) students from public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. Two research instruments were adapted and used: Parenting Styles Questionnaire (PSQ) and Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES). A pilot test conducted with 40 SS2 students in Onitsha Education Zone produced strong internal consistency values: PSQ ($\alpha = 0.87$), PPPS ($\alpha = 0.85$), and RSES ($\alpha = 0.83$). The instruments were administered directly to the participants. Regression analysis was applied to examine the predictive relationships between the variables and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that parenting styles (authoritative $p = 0.795$ ($p > 0.05$), authoritarian, $p = 0.796$ ($p > 0.05$) and permissive, $p = 0.359$ ($p > 0.05$) were not a significant predictor of the secondary school students' self-esteem in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. Based on these findings, it was recommended that school counsellors should adopt holistic strategies that take into account a range of other factors that influence self-esteem. These may include academic performance, emotional resilience, social competence, and mental health.

Keywords: Parenting styles, Self-esteem, students, Education, Awka

INTRODUCTION

The development of self-esteem during adolescence is a critical factor influencing future success and psychological well-being of students. In the Awka Education Zone of Anambra State, as elsewhere, secondary school students are navigating complex social and familial environments that significantly impact their self-esteem. Self-esteem represents an individual's overall evaluation of their worth or value. Self-esteem is a fundamental aspect of an individual's psychological makeup, having the tendency to influence the overall mental health, academic achievement, and social interactions (Adamu & Akinbode, 2020; Okadigbo & Ugwu; Nwokocha, 2021; Unachukwu, 2022). Secondary school students who are mostly in their adolescence, a period marked by rapid developmental changes, are faced with the formation and stabilization of self-esteem. This becomes particularly important as they navigate complex social landscapes, academic pressures, and the rapidly increasing sense of identity.

Self-esteem as defined by Jordan, Zeigler-Hill, and Cameron (2017), as an individual's overall subjective evaluation of their own worth. Self-esteem encompasses a person's beliefs about themselves and their emotional responses to those beliefs, such as pride or shame. It represents the extent to which individuals feel confident, valuable, and capable. Self-esteem can be influenced by various environmental and interpersonal factors (Bongers, Koot, van der Ende & Verhulst, 2018). Nwokolo and Oguzie (2021) defined self-esteem as the belief, perception and opinion people have about themselves which influence their behaviours and consequently affects their performance and achievements in life. It is the amount of realistic respect that one has for oneself. According to Jordan, et al. (2017), self-esteem is a critical determinant of mental health, and high self-esteem is associated with positive psychological outcomes such as resilience, happiness, and life satisfaction. Self-esteem as Cameron and Granger (2016) opined, refers to the sense of value and self-respect one feels in relation to their social environment. It is influenced by interactions with others and the perception of acceptance and recognition from peers, family, and society. In the context of this study, self-esteem is conceptualised as an individual's overall subjective evaluation of their worth and their sense of belonging within their social environment.

Cameron and Granger (2016) highlighted that self-esteem is intricately linked to the sense of belonging and acceptance in social groups, impacting one’s ability to connect with others and feel valued within a community. As Jordan, Zeigler-Hill, and Cameron (2017)

pointed out, self-esteem is shaped by a multitude of factors, including family dynamics, peer relationships, academic experiences, and individual characteristics. That is to say that self-esteem as an important psychological construct can have significant implications for the overall development and academic success of students, especially among secondary school students. Mordi and Onoyase (2023) observed that self-esteem, when it is high can be associated with positive outcomes such as better academic performance, greater resilience to stress, healthier interpersonal relationships, and a lower likelihood of engaging in risky behaviours. Individuals with high self-esteem are generally more inclined to engage in positive social behaviours, form healthy relationships, and resist negative peer influences. Conversely, low self-esteem can lead to social withdrawal, increased susceptibility to adverse social influences, and difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships. Research by Chukwu, Obiageli and Ugochukwu (2021), and Nwokolo and Oguzie (2021), highlight the potential adverse outcomes of low self-esteem, including academic underachievement, vulnerability to peer pressure, and an elevated risk of mental health issues like depression and anxiety.

Students with robust self-esteem are more likely to actively engage in classroom activities, undertake challenging tasks and persist despite difficulties. They often display greater confidence in their abilities and are more willing to assume leadership roles and participate in collaborative projects. In contrast, students with low self-esteem may experience self-doubt, fear of failure, and social withdrawal, which can impact not only their academic performance but also their social development (MacDonald & Leary, 2021). Moreover, the secondary school environment itself can play a pivotal role in shaping self-esteem. Supportive relationships with teachers, a positive school climate, and opportunities for recognition of student achievements can all be significant contributors to the development of healthy self-esteem.

Given the profound impact of self-esteem on students' overall well-being and future prospects, it is imperative to identify and understand the key predictors of self-esteem among secondary school students. Factors such as parenting styles, peer pressure, academic experiences, and socio-cultural influences as observed by Fukasawa, Watanabe, Nishi and Kawakami (2020) tend to play key roles in developing effective strategies for fostering positive self-esteem among secondary school students, For instance, in regions like Awka Education Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria, insights from these factors when understood can bring about interventions and policies to support students' holistic development.

Parenting styles refer to the psychological constructs that encompass the consistent strategies parents employ in raising their children, which significantly influence children's development, behaviour, and emotional well-being (Baumrind, cited in Azuji & Anagbogu, 2016). According to Oguzie, Chigbu, Mokwelu and Okpala (2025), parenting style is a psychological construct representing usual approaches that parents use in their child rearing. Givertz (2016) described parenting style as a cluster of parental practices that lead to relatively stable and recognizable patterns in child adjustment outcomes. Within the context of this study, parenting style is viewed as a multidimensional construct involving various aspects of parent-child interaction, such as emotional support, disciplinary approaches, and communication. These dimensions collectively shape the overall environment in which children are raised and play a crucial role in influencing their behaviour and mental health outcomes.

Parenting styles and peer pressure have been identified as potential factors that are likely to influence the self-esteem of secondary school students. Baumrind's framework, as discussed by Azuji and Anagbogu (2016), categorises parenting styles into four main types: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. These styles reflect the different approaches parents take in raising their children, each characterised by distinct levels of responsiveness and demandingness. Authoritative parenting, which combines high responsiveness with high demandingness, is often associated with positive self-esteem in children. This style is characterized by parents who provide clear guidelines and expectations while also offering warmth, support, and encouragement. Authoritative parents engage in open communication, set reasonable boundaries, and encourage autonomy, helping children develop a sense of competence and self-worth (Eze, Okafor & Nwosu, 2022; Olusakin & Ngbor, 2019). These researches indicate that children raised in authoritative households tend to exhibit higher levels of self-esteem due to the balance of support and structure they receive.

On the other hand, authoritarian parenting, characterized by low responsiveness and high demandingness, can negatively impact self-esteem. Authoritarian parents are often strict, with rigid rules and high expectations, but offer little emotional support or open communication. This style can lead to children feeling undervalued and insecure, as their self-worth is primarily based on compliance and achievement rather than intrinsic value (Akunne, Etele & Akuezuilo, 2023). The lack of warmth and autonomy in authoritarian households can result in lower self-esteem among adolescents, as they may internalize feelings of inadequacy and fear of failure.

Moreover, permissive parenting, marked by high responsiveness and low demandingness, also has distinct impacts on self-esteem. Permissive parents are nurturing and communicative but set few boundaries and rules. While children may feel loved and accepted, the lack of structure and guidance can lead to issues with self-discipline and self-regulation, ultimately affecting their self-esteem. Students from permissive households might struggle with authority and face challenges in environments that require discipline and accountability, impacting their self-perception and confidence.

Neglectful parenting, characterized by both low responsiveness and low demandingness, could be the most detrimental to self-esteem. Neglectful parents are uninvolved and indifferent to their children's needs, providing neither emotional support nor guidance. This lack of engagement can lead to feelings of abandonment and low self-worth in adolescents, as they may perceive themselves as unimportant and unvalued. The absence of a supportive and nurturing environment can critically undermine the development of a healthy self-esteem, leaving adolescents more vulnerable to negative influences such as peer pressure (Akunne et al., 2023). Without a strong foundation of self-worth provided by their family, students are more likely to seek validation and acceptance from their peers, which can lead to increased susceptibility to a lot of potential negative consequences.

Nigeria, with its diverse cultural landscape, presents a mixture of traditional and modern parenting practices that impact adolescent development in multifaceted ways (Olusanya and Olusanya, 2019). Therefore, the educational environment in Awka, the capital of Anambra State, offers a representative microcosm of the broader Nigerian society, where secondary school students navigate complex social expectations and pressures. Recent studies in Nigeria have highlighted the importance of understanding these dynamics. For instance, Ekechukwu and Oluwalogbon (2020) highlighted the significant influence of authoritative parenting on the self-esteem. Similarly, Ugwu and Nwokocha (2021) found that peer pressure significantly affected the self-esteem of secondary school students. Moreover, Nwankwo and Ursula's (2023) study focused on the relationship between parent-child interactions and self-esteem, and how these factors predict psychosocial adjustment in adolescents attending school in Anambra State. However, while there have been studies conducted in Nigeria and other parts of the world; there seem to be shortage of empirical research examining parenting styles and peer pressure as predictors of self-esteem among secondary school students in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. In view of the above discourse, there is need to fill the gap in

knowledge by determining examining parenting styles and peer pressure as predictors of self-esteem among secondary school students in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The development of self-esteem among secondary school students is a vital component of their psychological and social well-being. Ideally, students at this stage of development should benefit from supportive environments, both at home and among peers, which nurture positive self-concept, confidence, and emotional resilience. Parenting styles play a central role in this process, as parents are expected to provide emotional support, consistent guidance, and appropriate discipline that foster a healthy sense of self-worth. Similarly, peer relationships should offer encouragement, acceptance, and motivation, further reinforcing positive self-esteem.

However, this ideal scenario appears to be lacking in the Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. Recent observations and concerns from educators, parents, and stakeholders indicate a troubling trend of low self-esteem among many secondary school students in the area. These students often exhibit signs of self-doubt, low self-confidence, and increased vulnerability to negative peer influence. Such psychological challenges are not only affecting their academic performance but also straining their social relationships and decision-making abilities.

In this context, variations in parenting styles, ranging from excessively authoritarian to overly permissive, may be contributing to students' diminished sense of self-worth. Additionally, the prevalence of negative peer pressure within school environments has been linked to risk-taking behaviour, low self-regard, and conformity issues. These challenges have raised significant concern among parents, teachers, and policymakers in the Awka Education Zone, as they seek ways to address the root causes of students' declining self-esteem.

Despite the critical role that parenting styles may play in shaping self-esteem, there is a noticeable lack of empirical research exploring these factors within the specific cultural and educational context of Awka Education zone of Anambra State. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating parenting styles as predictors of self-esteem among secondary school students in the Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate parenting styles a as predictors of self-esteem among secondary school students in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. authoritative parenting style as a predictor of self-esteem of secondary school students in the Awka Education Zone, Anambra State
2. authoritarian parenting style as a predictor of self-esteem of secondary school students in the Awka Education Zone, Anambra State
3. permissive, parenting style as a predictor of self-esteem of secondary school students in the Awka Education Zone, Anambra State

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the predictive value of authoritative parenting style on self-esteem of secondary school students in the Awka Education Zone, Anambra State?
2. What is the predictive value of authoritarian parenting style on self-esteem of secondary school students in the Awka Education Zone, Anambra State?
3. What is the predictive value of permissive parenting style on self-esteem of secondary school students in the Awka Education Zone, Anambra State?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. The predictive value of authoritative parenting style on self-esteem of secondary school students in the Awka Education Zone, Anambra State is not significant.
2. The predictive value of authoritarian parenting style on self-esteem of secondary school students in the Awka Education Zone, Anambra State is not significant.
3. The predictive value of permissive parenting style on self-esteem of secondary school students in the Awka Education Zone, Anambra State is not significant.

METHOD

This study adopted a predictive correlational survey design to examine the relationship between parenting styles and their predictive power on self-esteem among secondary school students.

The research was conducted in the Awka Education Zone of Anambra State, a region with a diverse socio-economic student population across urban and semi-urban settings. The population consisted of 5,028 SS2 students in public secondary schools. A sample of 840 students (416 males, 424 females) was drawn using a multistage sampling technique, with proportional allocation across 15 randomly selected schools from 3 Local Government Areas. Data were collected using two validated instruments: the Parenting Styles Questionnaire (PSQ) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). Experts in Guidance and Counselling and Measurement and Evaluation reviewed and validated the instruments.

A pilot test conducted with 40 SS2 students in Onitsha Education Zone produced strong internal consistency values: PSQ ($\alpha = 0.87$), PPPS ($\alpha = 0.85$), and RSES ($\alpha = 0.83$). Data collection involved direct administration and on-the-spot retrieval of questionnaires with the assistance of trained research assistants. Analysis was performed using SPSS, with regression analysis applied to answer research questions and test hypotheses. A p-value ≤ 0.05 was the threshold for statistical significance.

RESULTS

Data collected from the field of study were analysed and the summaries presented in tables to highlight the findings as follows:

Research Question 1, 2 and 3

What are the predictive values of parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive) on secondary school students' self-esteem in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?

Null Hypothesis 1, 2 and 3

Parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive) do not significantly predict secondary school students' self-esteem in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State

Table 1: Regression analysis on the predictive value of parenting styles on secondary school students' self-esteem in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State

Variable	R	R^2	R^2adjusted	B	BETA	Fcal	Cal. t	df	Pvalue	Remark
Parenting styles	0.036	0.001	0.002			0.35		820	.791	NS
Authoritative					0.009		0.260	821	.795	NS
Authoritarian					0.009		0.258	821	.796	NS
Permissive					0.032		0.917	821	.359	NS

In table 1, it was observed that students with authoritative parenting style had Beta of 0.009. This indicates that authoritative parenting style had contributed to 0.9 percent for the students' self-esteem.

Also at 821df and 0.05 level of significant, the calculated t 0.260 with Pvalue 0.795 which is greater than the 0.05, the first null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, authoritative parenting style is not a significant predictor of the secondary school students' self-esteem in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

Again table 1 showed that students with authoritarian parenting style had Beta of 0.009. This indicates that authoritarian parenting style had contributed to 0.9 percent for the students' self-esteem.

Also at 821df and 0.05 level of significant, the calculated t .258 with Pvalue 0.796 which is greater than the 0.05, the second null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, authoritarian parenting style is not a significant predictor of the students' self-esteem in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

Table 1 further revealed that permissive parenting style had Beta of 0.032. This indicates that permissive parenting style had contributed to 3.2 percent for the students' self-esteem in Awla Education Zone of Anambra State.

Also at 821df and 0.05 level of significant, the calculated t 0.917 with Pvalue 0.359 which is greater than the 0.05, the third null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, permissive parenting style is not a significant predictor of the students' self-esteem in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that that authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles do not significantly predict self-esteem among secondary school students in the Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. This result challenges the common belief that parenting styles play a key role in shaping adolescents' self-esteem, suggesting instead that other factors may have a stronger influence. These findings are consistent with some previous studies that also found no significant relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem. For example, Adamu and Akinbode (2020) reported that parenting style had little or no impact on students' self-esteem in Lagos State. They concluded that school-related factors and peer interactions played a more important role. Similarly, Akunne, Etele, and Akuezuilo (2023) found no significant link between parenting styles and self-esteem in Anambra State. Their

study highlighted the influence of peer pressure and personal experiences as more dominant factors. In another study, Faisal and Rahma (2020) found no direct relationship between parenting styles and adolescent self-esteem in Pakistan, and they emphasised the role of cultural and social dynamics. Likewise, Ekechukwu and Oluwalogbon (2020) observed that although authoritative parenting is often associated with positive outcomes, its direct effect on self-esteem was not significant among Nigerian adolescents. Taken together, these studies suggest that factors beyond parenting styles may play a more important role in shaping the self-esteem of secondary school students.

However, while this study found no significant predictive relationship, other studies have reported a strong link between parenting styles and self-esteem. For instance, Chukwu, Obiageli, and Ugochukwu (2021) found that authoritative parenting had a positive impact on adolescent self-esteem in South-East Nigeria. They argued that the combination of warmth and structure in parenting helps to build confidence and self-worth in young people. Similarly, Bongers, Koot, van der Ende, and Verhulst (2018) found that children raised in authoritative households showed higher levels of self-esteem over time, compared to those raised in authoritarian or permissive households. In another study, Eze, Okafor, and Nwosu (2022) reported that parenting styles significantly influenced adolescent self-esteem in Enugu State, with authoritative parenting associated with higher self-esteem, and authoritarian parenting linked to lower self-esteem. These contrasting findings suggest that the influence of parenting styles on self-esteem may vary depending on cultural, environmental, and individual factors.

Conclusion

The study found that none of the parenting styles significantly predicted self-esteem. Although permissive parenting showed a slightly higher predictive value, all effects were minimal and statistically insignificant. These findings suggest that other, more influential factors may contribute to self-esteem development, underscoring the need for future research to explore broader personal and environmental influences.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. As parenting styles and peer pressure were not found to significantly predict self-esteem, school counsellors should adopt holistic strategies that take into account a range of other factors that influence self-esteem. These may include academic performance,

emotional resilience, social competence, and mental health. A broader approach will help in designing more effective support systems for students.

2. Counsellors should design and implement self-esteem enhancement programmes that focus on building self-awareness, personal growth, and emotional regulation. These programmes should include individual counselling to help students identify their strengths, and group sessions that create a supportive peer environment.

3. Given that parenting styles do not predict self-esteem, parenting education programmes should be developed to promote emotional support, effective communication, and positive reinforcement in the home. This approach may be more beneficial than focusing on any specific parenting style.

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