

A Psychometric Assessment of Parenting Style and Emotional Maturity of Parents in Kaduna Metropolis, Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The impacts of parenting styles on adolescent's antisocial behaviors have been established; but the emotional status of the parents and its relationship with the parenting style is yet to be exploited. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the parenting style and emotional maturity of parents. The sample consisted of two hundred and thirty two (232) participants that reside in the Kaduna metropolis of Kaduna state, Nigeria. Participants completed the validated subscale Parenting Styles and Emotional Maturity questionnaires. The scoring was done according to the scoring key in the respective manual of the questionnaire and the results were statistically analyzed and interpreted. The results indicated that there is a significant gender difference in the dimensions of emotional maturity and parenting styles. Females are more emotionally matured ($t=2.480$, $p\leq0.05^*$) and are more authoritative ($t=2.344$, $p\leq0.05^*$) and more involved ($t=2.698$, $p\leq0.01^{**}$) than male in parenting style practices. Also emotional maturity shows significant correlations with authoritarian ($p\leq0.000^{**}$), permissive ($p\leq0.000^{**}$) and uninvolved ($p\leq0.000^{**}$) not with authoritative style in this study. Certain personality and social differences have been suggested to explain why these differences may emerge. It is recommended that a well-designed counseling and rehabilitation programs be organized for couples and parents so as to

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help them gain the knowledge and emotional maturity necessary to support their parenting style. Presently, there's paucity of studies exploring these gender based differences in emotional maturity and parenting style of both parents and the degree of similarities and differences when compared with single parents in Nigeria, and Kaduna state in particular, this is an important area that deserves further investigation.

Keywords: Parenting styles; emotional maturity; Kaduna metropolis.

1. INTRODUCTION

The future of any society depends strongly on the type of upbringing we give to the children, which includes the Physical, psychological, social and emotional changes that take place as the new born grows from infancy to late adulthood. Parenting difficulties increase as the child enters adolescent stage when behavior gets highly influenced by the emotions [1,2]. Emotional maturity is not chronological and independent of age; an excellent child-rearing outcome evidently requires an outstanding level of emotional maturity. The types of relationship adolescents develop with their parents would determine their ability to mature emotionally. What therefore is the influence of parental level of emotional maturity? Psychologists have identified four distinct different types of emotional immature parents: The passive parents, who cannot be bothered to get involved; the driven parents, who never slow down; the emotional parents, who are compulsively over-involved or neglectful and the rejecting parents, who detach completely. A little emotional immaturity can be part of the mix of a good parent, but a full-blown emotionally immature nightmare can lead to toxic parenthood and inability to cope with the emotional requirements of caring for another human being [3,4,5]. A large number of children and adolescents are facing different types of faulty developmental handlings and challenges, these happen when they poorly negotiate learning about the 'real world' and trying to strive for both independence from parents and inclusion in social groups [6] which in most cases result to some sort of psychosomatic problems that commonly present as depression and/or anxiety, tension and frustration as well as emotional upsets in day to day life [7,8]. A situation like this, no doubt, requires a good environment, parenting style and knowledge of emotional maturity for proper management.

Emotional maturity is described as an ability to control emotions, reception, tension tolerance, recognition and to act accordingly as well as gradual ethic and ability to accept others and

their surrounding environment [5]. In other words, emotionally matured people use their love and kindness as tools to be positive and have the ability to keep minds free from illusions, unrealistic assumptions and irrational beliefs [9,10]. Emotional immaturity therefore could lead to helplessness to learn and unlearn some traits, especially when faced with challenges in life [11].

Developmental psychology studies and social cognitive theories have shown that antisocial behavior is an acquired one and its link with emotional immaturity, personal inclination and environmental factors has been proposed [12]. Therefore, early identification and understanding of the factors that contribute to poor emotional competence and behavioral problems will provide an opportunity for parents to implement strategies to remediate problems and help to mitigate long-term adverse.

Parenting styles entail behaviors, attitudes and values. The environment and interaction between parents and their children also influence the child's physical, emotional, social and intellectual development, and these are based on levels of warmth and control used by the parent in disciplining the child. These styles and their consequences have been described by [13], as (i) Authoritative style which is characterized by high expectations of compliance to parental rules and directions, the parents combine high support and responsiveness (warmth and sensitivity to the child's needs) with supervision and firm expectations for behavior. (ii) Similarly, authoritarian parenting style is characterized by high expectation of conformity and compliance to parental rules and directions but do not explain the rules at all, unlike the authoritative parent. It is about low responsiveness and support (warmth) combined with high levels of control [14,15]. (iii) On the other hand, permissive parenting is characterized as having few behavioral expectations for the child. It is an indulgent or lenient parenting with high responsiveness and low levels of control; nurturing and accepting, but non-demanding. Another parenting style, identified and described

by [16], is referred to as neglectful or uninvolved, in which the parents are undemanding and unresponsive.

There are extensive reports from research linking healthy, social and emotional development to effective parenting. Psychological distress and its consequences have been reported among different individuals worldwide and prevalence rates are varied across countries [17,18,19,20]. Adolescents thrive when parents provide not only affection, but also respectful communication and listening, consistent rules and expectations and safe opportunities that promote independence. Successful parenting fosters psychological adjustment, helps adolescents succeed in school, encourages curiosity about the world, and motivates children to achieve [7,21]. While earlier researchers that focused on the etiology of specific antisocial behaviors are informative, the general process of initiation, progression and intentions which are the functions of emotional maturity according to theory of planned behavior [22], have not been fully investigated; also, a recently published study relates parenting style to depression and found a relationship between the two [23]. There is exiguity of studies on the moderating role of the parents in Nigeria and Kaduna state in particular. This study examined the parenting style and level of emotional maturity of parents and assessed how the above mentioned variables relate with each other. Controlling for socio-demographic and background characteristics (ethnicity, age and family composition) parenting style and emotional maturity could be the primary role player as well as a moderator in marriage and parenting rehabilitation programs.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND SAMPLE

This is a cross sectional, descriptive and correlation study with a quantitative approach that adopted a simple random sampling for the selection of the wards as the study Centre. The sample consisted 232 (103 males and 129 females) respondents from the central senatorial district of Kaduna State that participated in the study.

2.1 The Instruments for the Study

The questionnaire consisting of two validated subscales were administered to the sample population. The scoring was done using the scoring key in the respective manual of the questionnaire and the results were statistically

analyzed and interpreted. Participation was voluntary, confidential and anonymous and did not involve any compensation. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: (A): This required personal information about the respondents (B): Parenting style scale [24]. This section was divided into four parts (Authoritarian, Authoritative, Permissive, Uninvolved) and consists of 32 items in total in a self-reporting 5 point Likert scale. (C): Emotional Maturity Scale [25,26]. This section was divided into six parts (Emotional Instability, Emotional Regression, Social Maladjustment, Personality Disintegration and Lack of Independence) and consists of 48 items in a self-reporting 5 point Likert scale.

2.2 The Area of the Study

The study was conducted in the Kaduna metropolis, Kaduna state. The Kaduna state occupies an area of approximately 48,473.2 sq km and has a population of more than 6 million (Census, 2006). Kaduna state is divided into 23 local government areas. The metropolis extends to about two local government areas of which are the Kaduna north and south local government areas. The researcher chose the Kaduna metropolis because of the growing reports of antisocial behaviors among the youths, despite elitist style of the residents.

2.3 Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 21) computer package. The results were expressed in frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations. Bar charts were used to show the varying opinions of respondents on the parenting styles and levels of emotional maturity. A t-test was also carried out to test differences between categories of parental and emotional maturity. A Pearson r correlation test was conducted to quantify the degree to which the two variables were related.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 shows that out of the 232 participants in this study, 103 (44.4%) are males and 129 (55.6%) are females.

Table 2 shows that 16 males (15.5% of 103) and 12 females (9.3% of 129) are Authoritarian; 61 males (59.2% of 103) and 106 females (82.1% of 129) are Authoritative; 12 males (11.7% of 103) and 6 females (4.7% of 129) are Permissive and

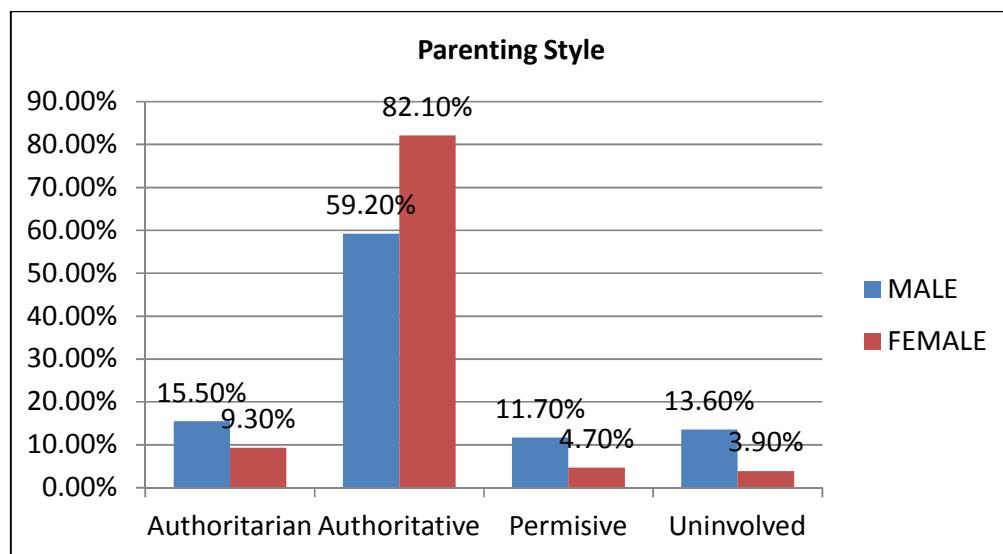
14 males (13.6% of 103) and 5 females (3.9% of 129) are uninvolvement. The diagrammatic representation is shown in Fig. 1. Females are more Authoritative and more involved while males are more authoritarian and more permissive in parenting style.

Table 1. Gender distribution of the study population

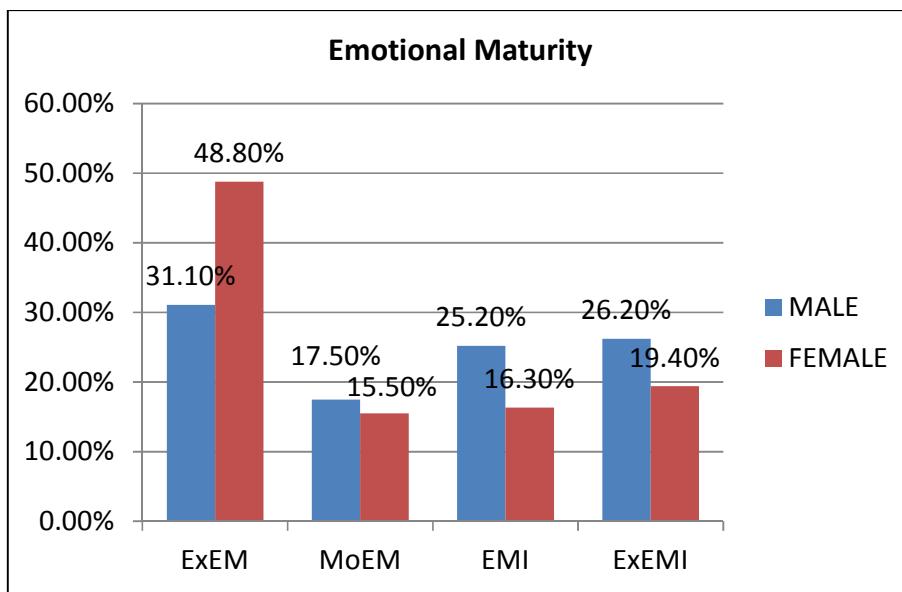
Status	Number	%
Male	103	44.4%
Female	129	55.6%
Total	232	100%

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of parenting style dimensions

	Mean scores	fq	%	Interpretation
Male (N=103)	22.6 ±6.1	16	15.5%	Authoritarian
	29.0 ±4.7	61	59.2%	Authoritative
	23.3 ±5.5	12	11.7%	Permissive
	16.5 ±6.9	14	13.6%	Uninvolved
Female (N=129)	22.2 ±2.6	12	9.3%	Authoritarian
	29.7 ±4.2	106	82.1%	Authoritative
	22.7 ±5.3	6	4.7%	Permissive
	15.2 ±6.4	5	3.9%	Uninvolved

**Fig. 1. Bar chart showing gender distribution of parenting style****Table 3. Descriptive statistics of emotional maturity dimensions**

Statistics	Limit scores	fq	%	Interpretation
Male (N=103) M=94.1 SD=28.1	52-80	32	31.1%	Extreme Emotional Maturity
	81-88	18	17.5%	Moderate Emotional Maturity
	89-106	26	25.2%	Emotional Immaturity
	107-240	27	26.2%	Extreme Emotional Immaturity
Female (N=129) M=86.2 SD=20.7	52-80	63	48.8%	Extreme Emotional Maturity
	81-88	20	15.5%	Moderate Emotional Maturity
	89-106	21	16.3%	Emotional Immaturity
	107-240	25	19.4%	Extreme Emotional Immaturity

**Fig. 2. Bar chart showing gender distribution of emotional maturity**

*ExEM = Extreme Emotional Maturity; MoEM = Moderate Emotional Maturity; EMI = Emotional Immaturity;
ExEMI = Extreme Emotional Immaturity

Table 4. The t-value obtained for males and females in the dimensions of emotional maturity and parenting styles (Authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and uninvolved)

Variables	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-Value	Sigf-level
Emotional maturity	Male	103	94.1	±28.1	2.480	0.014*
	Female	129	86.2	±20.6		
Authoritarian	Male	103	22.6	±6.1	0.438	0.662
	Female	129	22.2	±5.6		
Authoritative	Male	103	29.01	±4.7	2.344	0.020*
	Female	129	30.31	±3.7		
Permissive	Male	103	23.3	±5.5	1.711	0.088
	Female	129	22.2	±5.1		
Uninvolved	Male	103	16.5	±6.9	2.698	0.007**
	Female	129	14.2	±5.7		

(*Significant, $P \leq .05$; **Significant, $P \leq .01$; Critical value: 0.1946; Df: 231)

Table 5. Relationships of dimensions of parenting style with emotional maturity

	Gender	N	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Permissive	Uninvolved
Emotional maturity	Male	103	0.000**	0.712	0.000**	0.000**
	Female	129	0.000**	0.342	0.000**	0.000**

(*Significant, $P \leq .05$; **Significant, $P \leq .01$; Critical value: 0.1946; Df: 231)

Table 3 shows that 32 males (31.1% of 103) and 63 females (48.8% of 129) exhibited extreme emotional maturity; 18 male (17.5% of 103) and 20 females (15.5% of 129) exhibited moderate emotional maturity; 26 males (25.2% of 103) and 21 females (16.3% of 129) exhibited emotional immaturity while 27 males (26.2% of 103) and 25 females (19.4% of 129) exhibited extreme emotional immaturity. The diagrammatic

representation is shown in Fig. 2. The females are more emotionally matured than males.

Table 4 shows the t-value obtained for males and females in the dimensions of Emotional maturity and Parenting styles. There is a significant gender difference in the dimensions of emotional maturity ($t=2.480$, $p\leq 0.05^*$) and parenting styles: Authoritative ($t = 2.344$, $p\leq 0.05^*$) and Uninvolved

styles ($t=2.698$, $p\leq 0.01^{**}$), no significant gender difference in Authoritarian ($t=0.438$, $p\geq 0.05$) and Permissive styles ($t=1.711$, $p\geq 0.05$). Females are more emotionally matured and are more authoritative and more involved than male in parenting style while the males are more permissive in parenting style practices.

Table 5 shows that significant correlation exists between emotional maturity and parenting style: Authoritarian ($p\leq 0.01$), Permissive ($p\leq 0.01$) and Uninvolved ($p\leq 0.01$), no correlation was found between emotional maturity and authoritative style ($p\geq 0.05$) in male and female participants.

4. DISCUSSION

The study of parent-child relations has grown tremendously in recent years coupled with its implication on the emotional maturity and antisocial behaviors among the young adults. Also, the impacts of parenting styles on the development and growth of a child have been well documented. Parents' emotional expressivity is perhaps the best barometer of the effectiveness and functionality of the parent-child relationship. Parent's emotions not only reflect the quality of the parent-child relationship, but also teach children about the experience and expression of emotion and predict positive and/or negative developmental outcomes [27]. Parenting style has been found by various studies to predict child well-being in the domains of social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development and become adaptive, well-functioning members of the society [17,28]. Comparative studies on different parenting styles have also shown that authoritative style is the best and most common and children from authoritative parents have a better social skill, better work ethic and academic performance and less involved in substance abuse than those whose parents are non-authoritative [29,30,31]. Also, imposing a particular rule is the parenting practice, but how the rule is implemented and communicated to the child is influenced by the parenting style. It is possible then that a mother and a father with the same parenting goals and practices may not have the same effect on the child if they employ different parenting styles [32]. However, combinations of mixed parenting style between parents have been reported, some research also illustrated that ethnic, upbringing, changes in family structure, parental socialization goals, more women joining the workforce and cultural differences in adaptability of some

parenting styles, result to these demonstrated different outcomes [33,34,13].

In this study, parenting styles are classified into four categories: Authoritarian or Power asserting disciplinarians, Authoritative or Warm giving protectors, Permissive or Lenient freedom givers, Uninvolved or Selfish autonomy givers. This study shows that females are more authoritative and more involved than the males. This, in agreement with other studies [35,36] supports the assertion that parental responsiveness predicts social competence and psychosocial functioning. Whilst research into parenting styles generally distinguishes between the more empathic, encouraging approach and the more authoritative, punitive approach, it seems that many women have found a way to strike a balance among the studied parenting styles. This also suggests that women are more likely to be nurturing in their parenting style, showing understanding and an ability to appreciate the perspectives of their children, whilst still maintaining a high level of authority [37]. Reports from various studies have revealed that the time mothers spend with their children is a significant influence in their emotional development. Mother's parenting practices have an impact on children's emotional intelligence [38]. Mothers who spent more time with their children and developed more educational activities have more emotionally intelligent children [39,40]. Children of authoritative parents have been found to score better than children of non-authoritative parents in terms of measures of adjustment [41]. This result also shows that males are more authoritarian, more permissive and uninvolved, the implication of which has been attributed to cause of depression, increase antisocial behaviors and emotional problems among young adults [36].

Studies have found that parents are biased in their parenting styles depending on the child's gender. Mothers, rather than fathers, are perceived to be more likely to use one style or the other when considering the extent to which parents differentiated between their sons and daughters [42,32], physical punishment is mostly used for boys while girls are given more reasoning and are raised to be more affectionate and sensitive, possibly affecting their empathy levels in future life. In terms of discipline, girls are more likely to receive paternal psychological controlling such as being ignored rather than direct physical punishment which is more common between fathers and sons [43]. Mothers

are stricter raising their daughters and conversely fathers seek to control their sons more, thus children will incline favorably towards the more lenient, opposite gender parent. This context-dependent result introduces the idea that an interaction of variables, e.g. temperament, empathy, emotions and parenting style may be at work during childhood development [37,43]. Despite certain equalities in aptitude and ability, it is widely acknowledged that there are also certain personality differences between men and women which influence our working styles and relationships. In general, Men possess the authoritarian trait of ethnocentrism to a greater degree than women and therefore exhibit and find approval for more authoritarian behavior than women, especially in using power and assertiveness to keep individual members in conformity with family norms [44]. Gender socialization, responsibilities and expectations, or one's parenting style influencing the style adopted by the other parent have also been suggested and could explain why differences in parenting between mothers and fathers may emerge [45].

Going by various definitions of emotions and emotional maturity stated earlier, the exhibited significant gender difference in emotional maturity in this study could be an indication that males have less capacity to withstand delay in satisfaction of needs, not able to tolerate frustration, have difficulty to control their emotions, more judgmental and reactive than females. The higher scores of males in the emotional maturity dimension suggest that they lack social adaptability compared to females hence react to environment through aggressiveness and sometimes distorted sense of reality [46]. Women from their childhood are taught to be more caring, calm and silent and handle their emotions; women are the face of society and are taught to face any situation with confidence rather than running away from it. Whereas men are taught to be independent and they get annoyed easily and find difficulty in adjustment [1]. Research on gender differences in emotional recognition have shown that women are superior in decoding emotions than men, other explanations pointed to different social roles and accompanying status positions of men and women, or the biological competence of women to read others' emotions. A more proximate tested explanation has related this to different modes of emotional processing in the female's brain [47]. Other studies have explained the significant gender difference in emotional

maturity to be a patriarchal system, family climate, traditions, and confounding factors, suggesting an innate female superiority in affective empathy [1].

Though early years of emotional coaching by parents help the child in the later stage of development but it is of more important that the parents themselves are emotionally stable and matured, it is believed that you can't give what you don't have. It is also possible that the parents may not be certain about what form and to what extent they need to involve themselves. In this research, emotional maturity is not significantly correlated neither with male nor female authoritative style, but significant correlation was found with other parenting styles. This is an evidence of reported mixed results of researches on emotional maturity relationship with parenting style [40]. This may be attributed to the transition phase of modernity, traditionalism and adopted mixed approach of parenting. With which the society is moving wherein parents provided certain freedom as per the requirement of the needs of their children without considering the future implication [48,49,50].

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study has contributed to the research literature by exploring the parenting styles and emotional maturity and how they relate and affect each other. The finding of this study shows that there is a significant gender difference in the dimensions of emotional maturity and parenting styles. Females are more emotionally matured and are more authoritative and more involved than male in parenting style practices while the males are more permissive in parenting style practices. Certain personality differences, trait of ethnocentrism, gender of the child, gender socialization, responsibilities and expectations, or one's parenting style influencing the style adopted by the other parent have all been suggested and could explain why differences in parenting between mothers and fathers may emerge and this could explain why emotional maturity correlates with other parenting styles except authoritative style in this study. If parents fail to provide an emotional support, then the child becomes anxious, hostile, defective and confused. It is recommended that marriage counseling, parents' discussion group and other educating programs be designed for couples so as to help parents gain the knowledge and emotional maturity necessary to support their

parenting style and fulfill their psychological needs. This could also be the primary role player as well as a moderator in marriage and parenting rehabilitation programs. Presently, there's paucity of studies exploring these gender based differences in emotional maturity and parenting style of both parents and the degree of similarities and differences when compared with single parents in Nigeria and Kaduna state in particular which is an important area that deserves further investigation.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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