



PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF AUTHORITARIAN AND NEGLECTFUL PARENTING STYLES ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES IN SOKOTO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the perceived influence of authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles on child development outcomes in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions and one null hypothesis. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The target population comprised 885 parents and teachers of primary school children in selected public primary schools in Sokoto State. A sample of 200 respondents, consisting of 100 parents and 100 teachers, was selected using a non-proportionate quota sampling technique followed by simple random sampling. Data were collected using a researcher developed instrument titled Parenting Style and Child Development Questionnaire (PSCDQ). The instrument was validated by three experts, while its reliability was established through a pilot study using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.79. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while the independent samples *t* test was used to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that respondents perceived authoritarian parenting as having a negative influence on children's emotional, social, and psychological development, with an overall mean of 3.39. Similarly, neglectful parenting was perceived to negatively influence children's emotional security, academic performance, self-esteem, and social relationships, with an overall mean of 3.52. The hypothesis tested showed no statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of parents and teachers regarding the influence of authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles on child development outcomes ($t = 1.28, p = .20$). The study concluded that respondents perceived authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles as detrimental to healthy child development. It recommended increased parent education programmes and stronger school family collaboration to promote positive parenting practices.

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INTRODUCTION

Parenting is one of the most significant factors influencing a child's overall development. The family is the first social environment a child encounters, and the way parents interact with their children determines how they think, feel, and behave as they grow. Parenting plays a pivotal role in shaping children's physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and moral development. As the primary agent of socialization, the family provides the foundation upon which children's attitudes, values, and behaviours are formed. Parenting style refers to the emotional climate and behavioural patterns parents adopt when nurturing, disciplining, and guiding their children. These parenting practices influence children's emotional security, academic adjustment, interpersonal relationships, and

behavioural outcomes. Four major parenting styles are commonly identified: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful, each differing in the levels of responsiveness and demandingness demonstrated by parents (Bornstein, 2022).

Globally, parenting style has consistently been recognized as a major predictor of children's academic achievement, emotional regulation, self-esteem, behavioural adjustment, and peer relationships. However, the influence of parenting practices is often shaped by contextual factors such as culture, socioeconomic status, parental education, and family structure. Consequently, researchers have emphasized the need to examine parenting within specific cultural and environmental contexts to better understand its influence on child development (UNICEF, 2021). Parenting style refers to the relatively stable pattern of attitudes, behaviours, communication, warmth, and disciplinary practices that parents consistently employ in raising their children (American Psychological Association, 2023). Understanding these parenting patterns provides valuable insight into practices that promote healthy and holistic child development.

Parenting styles are generally understood through two fundamental dimensions: responsiveness and demandingness. Responsiveness refers to the extent to which parents demonstrate warmth, affection, acceptance, and sensitivity to their children's developmental needs, while demandingness refers to the degree to which parents establish expectations, monitor behaviour, enforce discipline, and encourage responsible conduct. Based on these dimensions, Baumrind (1967) classified parenting into four major styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. These parenting styles differ considerably in their influence on children's developmental outcomes.

Authoritative parenting is characterized by high responsiveness and high demandingness. Parents establish clear expectations while maintaining warmth, open communication, and emotional support. They encourage independence while providing appropriate supervision and consistent discipline. Children raised under authoritative parenting generally exhibit higher self-esteem, stronger academic performance, emotional stability, better problem solving abilities, and healthier interpersonal relationships (American Psychological Association, 2023).

Authoritarian parenting is characterized by high demandingness but low responsiveness. Parents emphasize obedience, impose strict rules, and frequently rely on punishment with limited explanation or dialogue. Although children raised under this parenting style may display obedience, they often experience anxiety, low self-esteem, emotional insecurity, reduced independence, and poor social competence because opportunities for self-expression and autonomous decision making are restricted (Pinquart, 2021).

Permissive parenting is characterized by high responsiveness but low demandingness. Parents are affectionate and accepting but establish few behavioural expectations or disciplinary boundaries. Consequently, children raised under permissive parenting often demonstrate confidence and creativity but may experience difficulties with self-discipline, responsibility, persistence, and respect

for authority. Neglectful parenting is characterized by low responsiveness and low demandingness. Parents provide minimal emotional support, supervision, and guidance, leaving children without adequate direction or security. As a result, children raised under neglectful parenting are more likely to experience poor emotional regulation, behavioural problems, weak academic achievement, and impaired social competence (Bornstein, 2022).

Parenting styles significantly influence various aspects of child development. Cognitive development is enhanced when parents provide encouragement, intellectual stimulation, and supportive learning environments that promote curiosity and critical thinking (UNESCO, 2021). Emotional development is strengthened when parents demonstrate warmth, responsiveness, and consistent support, enabling children to develop resilience, empathy, confidence, and emotional regulation. In contrast, harsh or neglectful parenting practices increase children's vulnerability to anxiety, emotional insecurity, and other psychological difficulties (World Health Organization, 2022). Parenting practices also influence children's social development by shaping communication skills, empathy, cooperation, and interpersonal relationships. Children who experience supportive parenting generally establish healthier peer relationships than those raised in hostile or neglectful home environments (UNICEF, 2021). Parents equally contribute to children's moral and behavioural development by serving as the earliest role models for acceptable conduct. Positive parenting encourages responsible behaviour, moral reasoning, and self-discipline, whereas harsh or neglectful parenting increases the likelihood of behavioural problems and antisocial tendencies (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2022).

This study is anchored on Baumrind's Parenting Style Theory (Baumrind, 1967). The theory explains that parenting behaviour is determined by the dimensions of responsiveness and demandingness. According to the theory, authoritative parenting promotes healthy emotional, cognitive, social, and behavioural development because it combines warmth with appropriate parental control. Conversely, authoritarian parenting, characterized by excessive control and limited emotional warmth, often results in fear, anxiety, low self-esteem, and poor social adjustment among children. Neglectful parenting, characterized by low responsiveness and limited parental involvement, is associated with emotional insecurity, behavioural problems, poor academic performance, and weak social competence. The theory therefore provides an appropriate framework for explaining the relationship between parenting styles and child development and serves as the theoretical basis for this study.

Although Baumrind identified four parenting styles, this study is delimited to authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles because these parenting patterns have consistently been associated with adverse developmental outcomes among children. Specifically, the study examines how authoritarian parenting, characterized by excessive control and limited emotional warmth, and neglectful parenting, characterized by inadequate supervision and emotional disengagement, influence children's cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioural development in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The authoritative and permissive parenting styles are therefore excluded from the scope of this study to provide a more focused investigation of the parenting practices most relevant to the identified research problem.

Perceived Influence of Authoritarian and Neglectful Parenting Styles on Child Development Outcomes in Sokoto State, Nigeria

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Sokoto State, concerns have continued to emerge regarding increasing cases of poor academic performance, indiscipline, aggression, low self-esteem, truancy, poor emotional regulation, and other behavioural challenges among primary school children. These developmental concerns are frequently observed both at home and in schools and have become issues of concern to parents, teachers, counsellors, and educational stakeholders. Although these problems may be influenced by several environmental and socioeconomic factors, parenting practices remain one of the most important determinants of children's developmental outcomes because parents constitute children's earliest source of socialization, supervision, and emotional support (Federal Ministry of Education, 2022).

Previous empirical studies have established that parenting styles influence children's emotional, cognitive, social, and behavioural development. However, most available studies have focused on foreign populations or examined all parenting styles without paying adequate attention to the perceptions of key stakeholders within the Nigerian sociocultural context. In addition, few studies have compared the views of both parents and teachers regarding how specific parenting styles influence child development in Sokoto State. This creates a contextual and empirical gap because parenting practices and child developmental outcomes are often shaped by cultural, religious, and socioeconomic realities that differ across societies (Pinquart, 2021).

Furthermore, although authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles have consistently been associated with negative developmental outcomes, there is limited empirical evidence on how parents and teachers in Sokoto State perceive their influence on children's development. Understanding these perceptions is important because both groups interact closely with children and are directly involved in promoting their overall well-being. It is against this background that this study examines the perceived influence of authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles on child development outcomes among primary school children in Sokoto State, Nigeria, while also comparing the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding these parenting practices.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to examine the influence of parenting styles on child development outcomes in Sokoto State. Specifically, the study worked on the following objectives:

1. To examine the perceived influence of authoritative parenting style on child development outcomes in Sokoto State;
2. To examine the perceived influence of neglectful parenting style on child development outcomes in Sokoto State; and
3. To compare the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding the influence of authoritative and neglectful parenting styles on child development outcomes in Sokoto State.

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were answered in the study

1. What is the perceived influence of authoritative parenting style on child development outcomes in Sokoto State?
2. What is the perceived influence of neglectful parenting style on child development outcomes in Sokoto State?
3. Is there any difference between parents and teachers on the influence of authoritative and neglectful parenting styles on child development outcomes in Sokoto State?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no significant difference between parents and teachers on the perceived influence of authoritative and neglectful parenting style on child development outcomes in Sokoto State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect data on respondents' perceptions regarding the influence of parenting styles on child development without manipulating any variables. The study was conducted in selected public primary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The target population consisted of 885 respondents comprising parents and teachers of primary school children in selected public primary schools in Sokoto State.

A sample of 200 respondents, comprising 100 parents and 100 teachers, was selected for the study using a non-proportionate quota sampling technique and simple random sampling. The population was first divided into two categories, namely parents and teachers. Thereafter, an equal quota of 100 respondents was allocated to each category irrespective of the differences in their population sizes to ensure adequate representation and facilitate meaningful comparison between the two groups. Following the quota allocation, simple random sampling using the balloting method without replacement was employed to select the required respondents from each category.

Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Parenting Style and Child Development Questionnaire (PSCDQ). The instrument consisted of two sections. Section A elicited respondents' demographic information, while Section B contained items measuring authoritarian parenting style, neglectful parenting style, and child development outcomes using a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts, comprising two specialists in Educational Psychology and one specialist in Guidance and Counselling. Their observations and recommendations regarding the clarity, relevance, and adequacy of the items were incorporated into

the final version of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot study conducted among respondents outside the study area who possessed characteristics similar to those of the study participants. Data obtained from the pilot study were analysed using Cronbach's alpha to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.79, indicating that it possessed satisfactory internal consistency and was suitable for the study. The researcher, with the assistance of trained research assistants, personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents, and confidentiality of the information provided was assured. The completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately after completion, resulting in a high response rate.

Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. A benchmark mean of 2.50 served as the decision criterion, whereby mean scores of 2.50 and above were regarded as accepted, while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as rejected. The hypothesis was tested using the independent samples t-test at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the perceived influence of authoritative parenting style on child development outcomes in Sokoto State?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Perceived Influence of Authoritarian Parenting Style on Child Development Outcomes in Sokoto State

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	Children raised under authoritarian parenting often experience fear and anxiety.	3.41	0.71	Accepted
2	Excessive parental control reduces children's confidence.	3.36	0.76	Accepted
3	Harsh discipline negatively affects children's emotional development.	3.45	0.69	Accepted
4	Children under authoritarian parenting have limited freedom to express themselves.	3.38	0.73	Accepted
5	Authoritarian parenting reduces children's social interaction with peers.	3.27	0.82	Accepted
6	Children raised under authoritarian parenting may experience poor emotional adjustment.	3.44	0.68	Accepted
Overall Mean		3.39		Accepted

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that respondents agreed that authoritarian parenting style negatively influences child development in Sokoto State. All the items recorded mean scores above the benchmark mean of 2.50, with values ranging from 3.27 to 3.45. The overall mean of 3.39 indicates high agreement that excessive parental control, harsh discipline, limited freedom of expression, and poor emotional support associated with authoritarian parenting adversely affect children's emotional, social, and psychological development. The relatively low standard deviation values also suggest that respondents' opinions were fairly homogeneous.

Research Question Two: What is the perceived influence of neglectful parenting style on child development outcomes in Sokoto State?

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Perceived Influence of Neglectful Parenting Style on Child Development Outcomes in Sokoto State

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	SD	DECISION
7	Neglectful parenting reduces children's emotional security.	3.58	0.60	Accepted
8	Children from neglectful homes often experience behavioural problems.	3.54	0.63	Accepted
9	Neglectful parenting negatively affects academic performance.	3.46	0.67	Accepted
10	Lack of parental supervision exposes children to risky behaviours.	3.61	0.56	Accepted
11	Neglectful parenting weakens children's social relationships.	3.39	0.71	Accepted
12	Children raised under neglectful parenting often develop low self-esteem.	3.52	0.61	Accepted
Overall Mean		3.52		Accepted

Table 2 reveals that respondents agreed that neglectful parenting style has a significant negative influence on child development in Sokoto State. All the items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, ranging from 3.39 to 3.61, with an overall mean of 3.52. This implies that neglectful parenting contributes to poor emotional security, behavioural problems, weak academic performance, low self-esteem, and poor social relationships among children. The low standard deviation values indicate a high consensus among respondents regarding the detrimental effects of neglectful parenting on child development.

Hypothesis Testing

The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between parents and teachers on perceived influence of authoritative and neglectful parenting style on child development outcomes in Sokoto State.

Table 3: Difference Between Parents' and Teachers' on Perceived Influence of Authoritarian and Neglectful Parenting Styles on Child Dev. Outcomes in Sokoto State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	T	P-value	Decision
Parent	100	3.46	0.42	198	1.28	0.20	H0 Accepted
Teacher	100	3.38	0.45				

Table 3 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of teachers ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.42$) and parents ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.45$) on the influence of parenting styles on child development in Sokoto State, $t(198) = 1.284$, $p = 0.201$. Since the p-value (0.201) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that both

teachers and parents held similar views regarding the influence of authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles on child development.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that respondents agreed that authoritarian parenting style exerts a significant negative influence on child development in Sokoto State. The overall mean score of 3.39 indicates that excessive parental control, harsh disciplinary practices, restricted freedom of expression, and inadequate emotional support adversely affect children's emotional, social, and psychological development. This finding is consistent with Baumrind's Parenting Style Theory, which posits that high parental control combined with low responsiveness is associated with unfavourable developmental outcomes. The finding also agrees with the meta-analysis conducted by Pinquart (2021), which reported that harsh parenting is significantly associated with higher levels of children's internalizing and externalizing problems across different cultural settings.

Similarly, Wong et al. (2021), in a meta-analysis involving 124 studies, found that authoritarian parenting was negatively associated with children's prosocial behaviour, whereas authoritative parenting was positively associated with prosocial development across both individualistic and collectivist cultures. However, Pinquart (2021) also observed that the strength of the relationship between harsh parenting and child maladjustment differed across cultures, with weaker associations in societies where strict parenting is considered more culturally normative. This partly contrasts with the present study, where respondents uniformly perceived authoritarian parenting as detrimental. The discrepancy may be attributed to differences in cultural norms, respondents' characteristics, and the fact that the present study measured perceptions rather than directly assessing children's developmental outcomes.

The findings further revealed that neglectful parenting style significantly influences child development negatively, with an overall mean score of 3.52. Respondents agreed that neglectful parenting reduces children's emotional security, contributes to behavioural problems, weakens academic performance, lowers self-esteem, and impairs social relationships. These findings support John Bowlby's Attachment Theory, which emphasizes that consistent parental warmth, responsiveness, and emotional availability are essential for healthy child development. The findings also agree with Jeong et al. (2021), whose global systematic review and meta-analysis demonstrated that parenting interventions promoting responsive caregiving significantly improve children's cognitive, language, motor, and socio-emotional development, thereby underscoring the importance of active parental involvement. Furthermore, the findings align with Britto and colleagues' evidence synthesized in the same review, which concluded that responsive parenting constitutes one of the strongest protective factors for healthy early childhood development across diverse settings. However, the review also reported considerable variability in intervention effects across countries and programmes, suggesting that family characteristics, socioeconomic conditions, and implementation contexts influence child developmental outcomes. This partly contrasts with the

present findings, which indicate a consistently strong negative perception of neglectful parenting. The difference may be explained by the rural socioeconomic realities of Sokoto State, where limited social support systems may intensify the developmental consequences of parental neglect.

The hypothesis tested further indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of parents and teachers regarding the influence of authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles on child development in Sokoto State, $t(198) = 1.28$, $p = .20$. This implies that both respondent groups shared similar perceptions concerning the effects of parenting styles on children's development. The finding is supported by evidence synthesized by Jeong et al. (2021), which emphasized that successful parenting interventions require consistent understanding and collaboration among parents, educators, and other caregivers because children's development is influenced by multiple interacting environments. Nevertheless, Wong et al. (2021) found that the strength of associations between parenting styles and child outcomes varied according to study design, informants, and contextual characteristics, indicating that perceptions of parenting may differ depending on who provides the information. This observation differs from the present study, where parents and teachers expressed similar views. The similarity in perceptions may be attributed to the fact that both groups interacted regularly with the same children within the same sociocultural environment, resulting in comparable observations of children's behavioural, emotional, and social development.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles negatively influence child development in Sokoto State. Both parenting styles were found to adversely affect children's emotional, social, behavioural, and academic development. The study also establishes that parents and teachers share similar perceptions regarding these negative effects. Thus, the findings emphasize the importance of positive parenting practices characterized by warmth, support, and appropriate guidance in promoting healthy child development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Government and NGOs should organize seminars and workshops to educate parents on effective parenting practices.
2. Schools should strengthen partnerships with parents to align home and school discipline strategies.
3. Family and child development counselors should help parents understand how their parenting style affects children's growth.



4. Child welfare policies should promote family stability and positive parenting through community support systems.
5. Future studies should investigate cultural variations in parenting and their influence on adolescents' mental health and educational outcomes.

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