

Parental Control and Problem Tendencies among Children of Basic Education in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study sought to determine the influence of parental control on problem tendencies among children of basic education in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. Ex-post facto research design was adopted. To achieve the purpose of the study, a null hypothesis was tested. Out of the population of 8,226, a sample of 612 students was chosen using stratified random sampling technique. An instrument designed by the researchers named "Student Opinion Questionnaire" (SOQ) was validated and found valid for use for data collection. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The result shows that parental control had significant influence on the overall problem tendencies of the respondents. The study found that certain trait related problem tendencies were more influenced than the other. For example, high parental control significantly influenced problem tendencies associated with intellectual and social traits but do not influence problem tendencies associated with physical and social traits. The study recommended that parents should be moderate in control over their children to reduce vulnerability to intellectual and social trait related problem tendencies. Parents and teachers should be responsive to students behaviour hence through their control help them develop desirable behaviour tendencies.

Keywords: Parental, control, problem, tendencies, children, basic, education.

Introduction

There is a growing apprehension among education stakeholders such as educational psychologists and primary school educators in Nigeria over the observed negative attitudes, dispositions and problem tendencies exhibited by basic education children in schools. A good number of children in schools are caught up in problem behaviours such as laziness, sluggishness, impatience, slow in engaging in mental activities, feeble mindedness, stubbornness, and dishonesty, among others. These tendencies keep teachers and school administrators worried to the extent that hope seems to be lost on the capacity of the affected students to complete the basic education program. Margetts

(2003) reported that students face difficulties in school adjustment when they are non-compliant, disorganized, distractible or when they are antisocial.

Basic education programme in Nigeria, which has continued to attract accolades due to its free access to all irrespective of sex, age or socioeconomic background, is designed to achieve for those who complete it the ability to read, write and handle simple mathematical operations. Expectedly on successful completion of this programme, basic education certificate holders can confidently be employed with this minimum educational qualification, they can be further trained in vocation of any choice and also they are qualified to proceed to senior secondary school after which the individual may proceed to higher institution of learning.

However, it is very disheartening to the education stakeholders that the future leaders, who are expected to drive the economy in all aspect of development, refuse to be equipped through the basic education programme because of their negative and unproductive problem tendencies which continue to cause anxiety among all concerned. This study opines that this problem tendencies could be the reason students in the basic education programme are distracted and hence their poor educational outcome. Students seem not to be intellectually and socially well adjusted. They fail their examination and earn promotion on trial, some cannot complete school hence may drop out. Unfortunately for some, they are on the streets and become a nuisance in the society (Ita, 2016). National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2016) noted that two-third of children who enrolled into the basic education programme do not complete school. Nwagwu (1990) observed that behaviour problems may be the cause of the increasing dropout rate, poor performance in examinations at various stages of the educational system. Ubom (2003) in explaining the reason for poor performance of students noted that since teachers and pupils are expected to work according to certain curricular standard, the behaviour problem of learners may endanger the timely fulfillment of set tasks. Suggestively when students exhibit problem tendencies, many factors are blamed. It is either the discipline in school is not effective or the discipline in the child's home was ineffective. Others may blame peers for instigating the negative attitude, while some others believe it to be hereditary influence. Some others believe that these problem tendencies can be both as a result of environmental or hereditary influences.

According to Isangedighi (2007), problem tendencies are tendencies to behave in ways that do not meet the acceptance of the social environment in which children find themselves. The author further classified these tendencies into four namely: physical trait related (example sluggishness, tendency to give up easily on task), intellectual trait related (example, feeble minded, easily distracted or slow in engaging in mental activities), social trait related (example, dishonesty, deviant, antisocial, unwilling to

accept authority), Affective trait related (example, impulsiveness, impatient). Those tendencies could be the dispositions of some students of the basic education in Southern Cross River State which has contributed to the anxiety experienced by parents and school administrators. The dispositions are sometimes negative, hence are antisocial and could be detrimental to success in school activities and basic education programme completion.

In response to children problem tendencies, various steps have been taken by individuals, and some education stakeholders. The Cross River State Government in particular engaged guidance counsellors in schools to help learners adjust to school. The government also retrains teachers regularly, revising and adopting innovative curriculum manifested in its reviewed state-owned text books aimed at enhancing effective teaching and learning. School administrators employ corporal punishment and other punitive measures in a bid to curb student problem tendencies. Despite these efforts, the problem tendencies exhibited by school children still persist. This is what necessitated this study which was to determine if parental control is responsible for problem tendencies among children of the basic education in Southern Cross River State. The study speculated that parents discipline in terms of parental control may be the cause of the problem observed among students.

According to Were (2006), discipline exposes children to ways of handling everyday challenges and equips them with the personal strength needed to meet the demands imposed on them by the school and later in adult responsibility. Socialization of the individual expectedly should begin from the home, then school. It is also generally assumed that parents are capable of nurturing their children to develop physically, psychologically, morally and socially. If all things are equal, and ideal, children are to receive training and counsel on how best to behave and through compliance and obedience should become disciplined. Children are also expected in the course of socialization to develop relevant social skills and develop emotionally. So competency in these desired attributes could serve as set induction for subsequent training in the school for future adjustment. In the school, every member is expected to work in line with the expectation, rules and regulations. Unfortunately, the observation is that some students are unwilling to be disciplined. This could imply that, they were lacking in learning the desired behaviour from home. The study speculates that the source of their problem tendencies may be conditions consequent upon parental control.

The study was anchored on the theory of Karen Horney's social and cultural psychoanalytic theory of personality (1952). The theory posits that everyone is special and possesses a unique set of potentials that would flourish under wise and good parental guidance. Horney posits that parental love, care and affection within one's culture and society will help in the development of normal and well-adjusted persons.

The implication of this theory to this study could be explained in relation to discipline practices of parents and those employed in school. Children are to be corrected, punished or reinforced depending on the behaviour manifested. With adequate love, care and affection, they stand to internalize the desired behaviour and model same. In controlling children's behaviour, parents should also employ cultural principles, norms and values recognized in their immediate cultural environment; like through effective modeling, orientation and apprenticeship and by so doing, children are able to learn naturally and internalize the morals or virtues intended in the discipline. This study is of the view that both innate and acquired tendencies can be conditioned through the quality of parental control employed.

Parental control encompasses child rearing practices and parenting styles employed by parents to direct their children's development. Through parental control, parents make and enforce rules, offer support, encouragement and provide guidance in their children's lives (Maccoby & Martin cited in Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2006). According to Holden (1997), consistent disciplinary practice together with the amount of pressure necessary to change the child to view compliance as self-initiated is more likely to have children cooperate with their parents, hence adopting the parents standards for desirable behaviour. However, if parents are hostile and authoritarian, children may be unwilling to internalize and manifest the standard of behaviour desired. Baumrind (1991) discovered that children's behaviours are affected by parenting styles. The author classified parents according to the degree of their control over their children. Those with high control are authoritarian; those with medium control are democratic or authoritative, while those with low control are permissive. Faw (1980) in a study discovered that children of authoritarian parents exhibited more of withdrawal syndrome, discontentment and apprehensiveness.

Dodge, Pettit and Bates (1994) in their study, found that firm but responsible parenting (authoritative) is related to the children who have fewer behavioural problems, able to adjust better socially and able to acquire more success academically. On the other hand, harsh parenting which is a characteristic of the authoritarian child rearing style is associated with children having more behavioural problems and more academic failures. Parental monitoring has been negatively linked with externalizing behaviour (Laird, Pettit, Bates & Dodge, 2003). This study perceives that since parents differ in the ways they rear their children, there is a difference in the behaviour of children raised by authoritarian, authoritative or permissive parents. This is substantiated by the finding of Kaufman and Zigter (2000). The researchers noted that different parenting styles have effect on children's competence, adjustment, adequacy and general problem tendencies. In the same vein, this study perceives that different levels of parental control (low, moderate and high) would influence the extent to which students would manifest problem tendencies. Erikson (1963) averred that through satisfying the

child's psychological needs like love, warmth, acceptance, encouragement and security, the child will develop self – confidence, good personality and acceptable behaviour.

Objective of the Study

The objective was to find out the extent to which:

1. Parental control influences problem tendencies among children of basic education in the Southern Cross River State, Nigeria

Hypothesis

Ho1: Parental control does not significantly influence problem tendencies among children of basic education in the Southern Cross River State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was ex-post facto. According to Isangedighi, Joshua, Asim and Ekuri (2004) ex-post facto research design basically studies phenomena after they have taken place. In this study parental control had already occurred and exerted influence in the students in terms of problem tendencies. Therefore, the use of this design is justified because the nature of the present problem necessitated its use. More so, data collection was through the use of questionnaire. The research area was the Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. The zone is made up of seven Local Government Areas namely; Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Biase, Calabar Municipality, Calabar South and Odukpani Local Government Areas. Based on information from the secondary education board, there are eighty-one (81) public secondary schools and one hundred and fifty-two (152) private schools.

The population of the study comprised all the children in the basic education programme (primary school to junior secondary school students) in the 2011/2012 academic session totaling 8,226. To control for level of education and comprehension of the questionnaire items, the study chose JSS 1 and JSS II students. To ensure equal representation of local government and students in the study area, the researchers employed the stratified random sampling technique 50% of the Local Government Areas (that is 4 LGAs) were randomly selected for the study. The four LGAs selected were Akamkpa, Calabar Municipality, Calabar South and Odukpani. So in each study LGA, 10% of public school and 10% of private school running the junior secondary school programme were randomly selected for the study. This amounted to 12 schools (6 public and 6 private). This is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of public and private secondary schools across the selected four Local Government Areas in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria

S/N	LGA	Public schools		Private school		Total no. of schools	No. selected
		No. of schools	No. selected	No. of school	No. selected		
1	Akamkpa	16	2	6	1	22	3
2	Calabar Municipality	15	2	16	2	31	4
3	Calabar South	7	1	19	2	26	3
4	Odukpani	8	1	2	1	10	2
	Total	46	6	43	6	89	12

In each of the twelve sampled schools, 20% of the JSS I and JSS II students were selected for the study. This amounted to a total of 638 respondents used for the study. However, 612 respondents made up of 305 males and 307 females were administered in the study as the sample. Out of the 305 males in the study, 101 were from JSS I classes while 204 were from JSS II classes. Out of the 307 females 106 and 201 were from JSS I and JSS II classes respectively. This is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of sample by sex and class

Sex	JSS I	JSS II	Total
Males	101	204	305
Females	106	201	307
Total	207	405	612

The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire titled: “Students Opinion Questionnaire (SOQ)”. The questionnaire had two parts. Part 1 elicited information on students’ sex, class and school. Part 2 was a 20 item measured on a modified four-point Likert scale of Very Often (VO), Often (O), Sometimes (S) and Never (N). The scoring was in decreasing order from 4 points to one point for items that are positively worded and in increasing order from 1 point to 4 points for items negatively worded.

The instrument was face and content validated. This was done through scrutiny by two experts in the discipline of psychology and Primary education and one expert in Test and Measurement all in the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Calabar, Calabar. The test retest reliability method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. The first and second administrations were done two weeks apart.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient statistics was used to establish the correlation between scores obtained. The correlation result of 0.67 was considered adequate, indicating that the instrument was reliable. After obtaining the permission from the principals of each of the selected schools, the researchers assisted by class teachers administered copies of the questionnaire on the respondents used for the study. Data collected were screened, coded and analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics. The dependent variable was examined in terms of physical, intellectual, social, affective and overall problem tendencies. The independent variable was categorized so that subjects were compared based on high, moderate or low parental control they received.

Presentation and discussion of results

Hypothesis one: Parental control does not significantly influence problem tendencies among children of basic education in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria.

Table 3 shows the result of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of parental control on problem tendencies. The results in Table 3 show that the calculated F-value for the overall problem tendencies (8.084) was greater than the critical F-value of 3.00 at .05 level of significance with 2 and 609 degrees of freedom. This implies that parental control has a significant influence on the overall problem tendencies among children of basic education in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria.

Further examination of table 3 shows that the calculated F-value for intellectual trait related problem tendencies (8.372) and social trait related problem tendencies (9.084) are also each greater than the critical F-value of 3.00 at 0.05 level of significance showing a significant influence on problem tendencies associated with intellectual and social traits among students sampled in the study. On the other hand, the calculated F-value for physical trait (1.192) and affective trait (2.318) were each less than the critical f-value of 3 which implies that parental control do not significantly influence problem tendencies associated with physical and affective trait.

Tables 3: One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of parental control on problem tendencies

Variation	Source of variation	SS	df	Ms	F
Physical trait	Between Group	28.03	2	14.02	1.192
	Within Group	7186.998			
	Total	7186.998	611		
Intellectual trait	Between Group	118.918	2		
	Within Group	5018.644	609	8.372	
	Total	5217.562	611		
Social trait	Between Group	129.405	2	64.702	9.074
	Within Group	4888.097	609	7.131	
	Total	4472.070	611		
Affective trait	Between Group	37.215	2	18.698	2.318
	Within Group	4888.097	609	8.025	
	Total	4825.312	611		
Overall problem tendencies	Between Group	807.108	2	403.954	8.084
	Within Group	3042.422	609	49.922	
	Total	312209.529	611		

Significant .05, critical F=3.00

Key: SS=Sum of Square; df=Degree of Freedom; MS=Mean Square; F=Calculated F

Based on the results on table 3, post-hoc comparison test among group means was carried out using the Fisher's Least Significance Difference (LSD), in respect of the overall problem tendencies and those associated with intellectual and social traits. As presented in table 4, the LSD analysis shows a pair wise means differences among the groups (respondents who received either high, moderate or low parental control). In summary, the pair wise differences among the groups on intellectual trait related problem tendencies shows that respondents who received high parental control were little more vulnerable to intellectual trait related problem tendencies than their counterpart who received moderate parental control, and those who received moderate parental control were more vulnerable than those who received low parental control.

Table 4: Fisher’s Least Significance Difference (LSD) of the influence of parental control on problem tendencies

Variables	Group levels	Low (n=219)	Moderate (n=167)	High (n=226)
Intellectual trait	Low	17.79	0.91	0.92
	Moderate	5.06*	18.70	0.01
	High	3.36	3.39*	18.71
(MSW=8.37)				
Social trait	Low	16.30	0.04	0.93
	Moderate	0.15	16.26	0.93
	High	3.68	3.56*	17.23
(MSW=8.37)				
Overall problem tendencies	Low	72.55	1.25	2.69
	Moderate	1.72	73.80	1.44
	High	4.02	1.99*	75.24*
(MSW 49.92)				

*Significant at .05, critical t=1.96

- a) Group means are along the principal diagonals
- b) Mean differences are above the principal diagonals
- c) t-values are below the principal diagonals

On social trait related problems tendencies, the respondents who received high parental control were more vulnerable to social trait related problem tendencies than their counterparts who received moderate and low parental control respectively. However, results show that those who received moderate parental control were less vulnerable to problem tendencies than those who received low parental control.

On overall problem tendencies, respondents who receive high parental control were more vulnerable to overall problem tendencies than their counterparts who received moderate and low parental control. However, there was no significant pair wise difference in the overall problem tendencies between respondents who received moderate and low parental control.

The finding of this study is that parental control has significant influence on overall problem tendencies while intellectual and social trait related problem tendencies were influence by high parental control. This corroborates the findings of Dodge, Pettit and

Bates (1994), that harsh parenting treatment which is a characteristic of the authoritarian child rearing style triggers more behavioural problem (dispositions like social trait related problem tendencies) and more academic failures (dispositions like intellectual trait related problem tendencies) among children.

Also in line with this finding, Faw (1980) in a study discovered that children of authoritarian parents (that is high parental control) exhibited more of withdrawal syndrome, (dispositions like intellectual trait related problem), discontentment and apprehensiveness (dispositions like social trait related problem tendencies). In the same vein, Kaufman and Zigter (2000) in their study found that different parenting styles has effect on children competence, adjustment, adequacy and general problem tendencies. This finds support in Erikson (1963) that a child whose psychological needs are adequately satisfied will develop self-confidence, good personality and acceptable behaviour.

Conclusion

This study was undertaken to find out the extent to which parental control influences problem tendencies among children of basic education in the Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the influence of high, moderate and low parental control on problem tendencies among the respondents. From the findings of the study, it was concluded that parental control has a significant influence on problem tendencies among children of basic education in the Southern Cross River State, Nigeria.

The study also discovered that parental control has significant influence on problem tendencies associated with intellectual and social traits and not on problem tendencies associated with physical and affective traits among the students sampled in the study. The study further discovered that high parental control influenced more vulnerability to intellectual and social trait related problem tendencies while moderate parental control influenced less vulnerability to problem tendencies than either high or low parental control.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should be moderate in control over their children to reduce vulnerability to intellectual or social trait related problem tendencies and enhance their social adjustment and school performance.
2. Parents and teachers should be responsive to students' behavioural disposition hence through their control help them develop desirable intellectual and social tendencies.

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