

Parenting Styles And Effortful Control As Predictors Of Mental Health Among Secondary School Adolescents In Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Adolescents who are victims of circumstances stand the risk of being exposed to experiences that could negatively affect their mental health thereby robbing them of the opportunity of a healthy mental development in childhood and a healthy mental status in adulthood. The study examined the influence of parenting styles and effortful control on mental health of secondary school adolescents in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo state. This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Two hundred adolescents were selected from four selected schools through the simple random sampling technique. Their ages ranged between 11 and 19 years with mean of 2.1. Three research questions were answered using Multiple Regression Analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical methods. A structured questionnaire consisting of demographic section, and standardized scales on parenting styles, effortful control and mental health was used to collect data. The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between parenting styles mental health ($r = 0.264, p < 0.05$) and effortful control ($r = 0.227, p < 0.05$). The two independent variables jointly accounted for 32.1% variance in predicting mental health of the secondary school adolescents. The independent variables made positive relative contribution to mental health in the following order: effortful control ($\beta = .212, t = 3.058; p < 0.05$, parenting styles ($\beta = .178, t = 2.513; p < 0.05$). It was recommended that parents should listen to their children when they are talking and also spend time with them because children need their parents on some important issue most especially those that are pertaining to their health. Also, schools should establish youth-friendly health services in regarding young people's health.

Keywords: Parenting styles, Effortful control, Adolescents, Mental health

Introduction

Adolescence has been viewed by researchers as a period of many transitions, which involves a process of confrontation with diverse tasks and demands on development. It is a time of change, exploration, exuberance and youthful researching, thus researcher calls it a stressful stage for teens or adolescent (Hetherington, 2009). Palmer (2008) noted that peer groups are among the most significant social contexts in adolescence. They help to establish norms of behaviour and normally develop a culture that manifests itself in aspects like language, dress, hairstyle, sports, and drinking habits and having a sound mental health. Mental health and health are multidimensional and complex concepts, which are regarded by researchers as dimensions or scales with varying positions. Mental health refers to as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community (World Health Organisation, 2010). Adolescents' mental health is an important component of overall health, and this is recognized worldwide (Belffer, 2004). Nigeria has shown an increasing trend of commitment to the health and development of her young people.

According to the 2006 census, adolescents (ages 10-19) comprised 23 per cent of the population, while young people (ages 10-24) constitutes about a third of the Nigerian population. Their health status is therefore of significant importance in the overall health and development of the concept. The major health challenges confronting adolescents' mental health in Nigeria include young people include depression, anxiety, drug, nutrition, substance abuse, accidents and violence (Nigeria Federal Ministry of Health, 2007). Parenting styles have been regarded as one of the basic variables that have a direct impact on adolescents' mental health. Parenting style refers to the ways or techniques parents employ in the upbringing of their children. Parenting styles or strategies that include warmth and emotional support have been shown to improve the mental health and boost educational goals and achievement among youth (Steinberg, Elmen & Mounds, 1999; Davis-Kean 2005). Parenting style, that is the behaviour and attitude of parents, have lasting effect on their children's overall wellbeing. This goes beyond the family (immediate environment) and touches every aspect of the child's life: in school, relationships among others. Thus it is believed that for a well-adjusted child, the parents need to have a balanced approach to parenting.

Another factor that could influence the mental health of adolescent is effortful control. Effortful control includes the perceptual organization of information related to the self that is acted upon unconsciously. Effortful control is the ability of adolescent to utilize attentional resources and to inhibit behavioural responses in order to regulate emotions and related behaviours. Effortful control is the characteristic phenomenon of an individual's emotional nature, including his susceptibility to emotional stimulation, his customary strength and speed of response, the quality of his prevailing mood, and all the peculiarities of fluctuation and intensity

of mood. Oni (2001) also noted that genetics, self-image, experiences in life, attitude and choices about those experiences, and friends have significant effect on effortful control which affect one's mental health.

Problem Statement

For some decades now, the issue of mental health among secondary school adolescents has become a major challenge that needs urgent attention. Researches have shown that when students are not in their good mental health, academic performance and achievement would be compromised. Mental health disorders are fairly common in adolescence with one in four or five teenagers suffering from a disorder. Low social economic status is associated with the development of poor mental health in children and adolescents. Those living in poverty are more exposed to stressful circumstances such as crime, violence, availability of drugs, and lack of safe child care, convenient transportation, quality health care, and adequate housing. Most adolescents engage in some aberrant behaviours such as risky sexual behaviour, alcohol consumption, smoking and the least of all which affect the normal functioning of adolescents. Other adverse childhood events, such as violence, abuse, neglect, parental substance use disorders, mental illness, or criminal behavior, are also associated with both mental health disorders, as well as other problematic outcomes. Mental health problems among adolescents carry high social and economic costs, as they often develop into more disabling conditions later in life. Regardless of these studies, adolescent mental health remains a concern. This gap in this study must be filled, and it will help to elucidate the relationship between parenting styles and effortful control as predictors of mental health among secondary school adolescents in Akinyele local government area, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The present study investigated the influence of parenting styles and effortful control as predictors of mental health among secondary school adolescents in Akinyele local government area, Oyo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives include to:

- examine the relationship that exists among the above independent factors (parenting styles and effortful control) and the dependent factor (mental health) of secondary school adolescents in Akinyele Local Government of Oyo State.
- investigate the joint contribution of parenting styles and effortful control on the mental health of secondary school adolescents in Akinyele Local Government of Oyo State.
- find out the relative contribution of each of parenting styles and effortful control on the mental health of secondary school adolescents in Akinyele Local Government of Oyo State

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship that exists among the above independent factors (parenting styles and effortful control) and the dependent factor (mental health) of secondary school adolescents in Akinyele Local Government of Oyo State?
2. What is the joint contribution of parenting styles and effortful control on the mental health of secondary school adolescents in Akinyele Local Government of Oyo State?
3. What is the relative contribution of each of parenting styles and effortful control on the mental health of secondary school adolescents in Akinyele Local Government of Oyo State?

Literature Review

Mental health encompasses ones emotional, psychological and social well-being. It shapes the way an adolescent think, feel, act, and also determines how they handle stress, relate to others and make life choices. An adolescents mental health can change over time, depending on different factors. When the demands placed on a person exceed their resources and coping abilities, their mental health could be impacted. For example, if an adolescent works long hours, caring for their siblings, or experience economic hardship due to parents financial status, their mental health might deteriorate. WHO famously defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO, 2001b). WHO has recently proposed that mental health is: a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (WHO, 2001b). Realizing abilities, coping with stresses, and working productivity are some behaviors and according to definition of personality, these style of behaving are determined by personality. Adolescents with serious mental health problems may be stigmatized by their peers because of odd behaviours, labeled in school as troublemakers, and become alienated from their personal support systems (particularly the family) as a consequence of expressed hostility, inability to communicate effectively, or other factors (Goldman, 2005).

Parenting has been recognized as a major agent in socializing adolescents (Utti 2006). Parenting according to (Okapko, 2004; Utti, 2006) is the act of parenthood, the child upbringing, training rearing or child education. Parenting can also be viewed as a set of behaviours involved across life in relations among organisms who are usually non-specifics, and typically members of different generations or, at the least, of different birth cohorts. Parenting interactions provide resources across the generational groups and function in regard to domains of survival, reproduction, nurturance, and socialization. Effortful control describes children's ability to choose a course of action under conditions of conflict, to plan for the future, and to detect errors. This construct emerged initially from sophisticated psychometric studies of parent reports and has also been measured in the laboratory (Rothbart & Bates,

2006). Effortful control has been linked to important developmental outcomes, including the development of conscience and of behavior problems.

Cohen and Rice (1997) found that lower parental permissiveness was related to higher school grades, and higher parental permissiveness was related to increased tobacco and alcohol use in children and this affect the mental health of adolescents. Furthermore, surprisingly McBride-Chang and Chang (1998) reported that authoritative parenting hindered the development of adolescents' autonomy. Ang (2006) demonstrated that for Malay adolescents, both authoritative and authoritarian maternal parenting styles were beneficial to social adjustment and their mental health. Korn and Gannon's (2003) finding that difficult temperament did not lead to the development of behaviour problems for a sub-sample of children from Puerto Rican families in New York, unlike the main white American sample, was interpreted as support for the notion of goodness of fit. Stattin and Kerr (2000) also allude to the importance of parental responsiveness by noting that parental non-responsiveness behaviour such as negativism, hostility, aggression and cruelty would all discourage child disclosure which, as mentioned earlier, they felt was instrumental of parents gaining accurate knowledge of their child's activities and mental health.

A study by Eisenberg, Smith, Sadovsky, and Spinrad (2004) provides important additional findings relating effortful control to social and personality development. Effortful control is also an important contributor to a lower incidence of behavior problems and mental health, and this is found even when there is no overlap in content between the temperament and psychopathology measures (Rothbart & Bates, 2006).

Lambom's (2009) study, described earlier, suggested that in a home with high parental demandingness without correspondingly high parental responsiveness adolescents were overpowered into obedience at the expense of personal well-being. In the study, responsiveness was associated with higher levels of social competence and confidence, less internalized stress and higher self-esteem all of which impact adolescents decisions about risk taking. There was also some indication from this study that the deviant behaviour of adolescents from homes exhibiting a permissive parenting style (high responsiveness low demandingness) is experimental in nature, with experimentation offset in the long term by well-developed social skills and self-confidence. Prior, Sanson, Smart & Oberklaid, (2001) have found consistent correlations between infant temperament, parenting styles and later mental health. Infants with difficult temperament, that is, infants who are irritable, have strong negative emotional reactions, lack persistence, are overactive and difficult to soothe, may be at greater risk for conduct disorder and anti-social behaviour in early and middle childhood which would affect their mental health.

Stocker and Dunn (2000) investigated concurrent relationships between temperament and peer relationships as it affect their mental health (as well as children's friendships) in 5 to 10 year-old children. Children who were rated by their mothers and teachers as temperamentally more sociable were also rated as more popular with peers and higher on peer leadership. They concluded that temperament has relative effect on children's mental health.

Theoretical framework

Health Locus of Control Theory

This reflected the outcome expectations of taking a particular course of action (Rosenstock & Strecheret, 1998). This theory lies in the general assumption that those who believe they have control over their health are more likely to undertake a healthy choice. The theory also assesses health behaviour of individuals through examination of perceptions and attitudes someone may have towards disease and negative outcomes of certain actions. This theory is related to this study in the sense that adolescents should be aware that they have what it takes to have general control over their health well-being in that they should have the volition to visit the clinics or hospitals and receive treatment of different kind in order to keep themselves healthy at all time so as to reduce any risk of diseases or illness.

Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive survey design was adopted. This type of research design involves the interpretation of facts without manipulating any variable. One of the advantages of survey research and relevance to the present study is the fact that it makes evaluation of existing condition as well as collection of factual information possible.

Population

The target population for this study consisted of all in-school adolescents in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size comprised 200 secondary school students who were selected from the twenty-seven public secondary schools in Akinyele Local Government using simple random sampling technique. This technique was adopted because the target participants have homogeneous characteristics and they have equal chance of being picked for the study. This consisted of 125 (62.5%) males and 75 (37.5%) females with age ranging from 11-19 years. Out of which 146 (73%) were Christians and 54 (27%) were Muslims.

Instrument

Questionnaire was the instrument used in the collection of data. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A contains bio-data that sought information on personal data of the respondents. Section B contains the mental health scale which was developed Veit and Ware (1983). The scale was adopted to measure mental health of adolescents in different schools. It consisted of 38 items with a Cronach Alpha of 0.82. Section C measured parenting style which was developed by Darling and Steinberg, (1993). The scale was adopted to measure how the different type of parenting styles could influence mental health. It consisted of 15 items with a Cronach Alpha of 0.73. While measured self-esteem which was developed by Lonigan, (1998). It consisted of 13 items with a Cronbach alpha of .85.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher administered the instrument to the respondents in their respective schools with the help of a trained assistant researcher. After the copies of the questionnaire have been filled out by the respondents, they were collated for analysis. Two hundred and fifteen (215) copies of questionnaire were administered and two hundred were retrieved and were used for the study. Pearson's product moment correlation (PPMC) and regression analysis were used to analyse the three research questions at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Demographic information of the Respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	125	62.5
	Female	75	37.5
Age	11-13years	23	11.5
	14-16 years	158	97.0
	17-19 years	19	9.5
Parents marital status	Intact	172	86.0
	Separated	22	11.0
	Divorced	6	3.0

Table 1 shows that 125 (62.4%) were males and the rest 75 (37.5%) were females. This means that males participated more in the study than their female counterparts. Twenty-three (11.5%) fell between the ages of 11-13 years while 158 (79.0%) fell between 14-16 years and the rest 19 (9.5%) fell between 17-19years. This means that respondents whose age fell between 14-16 years participated more in the study Also, 172 (86.0%) of the respondents' parents were intact, 22 (11.0%) were separate while 6 (3.0%) were divorced. This means that respondents whose parents' marital statuses were intact participated more in the study.

Answering of Research Questions

Research question 1: What is the relationship that exists among the above independent factors (parenting styles and effortful control) and the dependent factor (mental health) of secondary school adolescents in Akinyele Local Government of Oyo State?

Table 2: Correlation matrix showing the relationship between study variables

Variables	Mean	Std.Dev	Mental Health	Parenting styles	Effortful control
Mental health	34.78	7.42	1		
Parenting styles	17.04	3.48	.264**	1	
Effortful control	29.79	6.08	.227**	-.020	1

**Correlation is significant at 0.01(2-tailed) *Correlation is significant at 0.05(2-tailed)

Results from Table 2 show the relationship of each independent variables (parenting styles and effortful control) with the dependent variable (mental health). Parenting styles was positive correlated with mental health ($r = 0.264$, $p < 0.05$) while effortful control positively correlated with mental health ($r = .227$, $P < 0.05$). This implies that the higher the responsiveness of parents to their children, the better their mental health, while the more adolescents can control their effortful control and/or regulate self, the good and better their mental health.

Research question 2: What is the joint contribution of parenting styles and effortful control on the mental health of secondary school adolescents in Akinyele Local Government of Oyo State?

Table 3: Joint contribution of Parenting styles and effortful control on mental health

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
.577 ^a	.333	.321	21.242			
ANOVA						
Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	5371.769	2	2685.885	15.09	.000	Sig.
Residual	35048.551	197	177.911			
Total	40420.320	198				

Result from Table 3 reveals the significant joint contribution of the independent variables (parenting styles and effortful control) to the prediction of mental health of secondary school adolescents in Akinyele Local Government. The result yielded a coefficient of multiple regressions $R = 0.577$ and multiple R-square = 0.333. This suggests that the four factors combined accounted for 32.1% (Adj.R2= .321) variance to the prediction of mental health.

Research question 3: What is the relative contribution of each of parenting styles and effortful control on the mental health of secondary school adolescents in Akinyele Local Government of Oyo State?

Table 3: Relative contribution of the independent variables to the prediction of mental health

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	117.255	9.828		11.931	.000
	Parenting styles	.892	.355	.178	2.513	.013
	Effortful control	.456	.149	.212	3.058	.000

Result from Table 3 shows that the

following independent variables have relative contribution in the following magnitude; effortful control ($\beta = .212$, $t = 3.058$; $p < 0.05$), parenting styles ($\beta = .178$, $t = 2.513$; $p < 0.05$).

Discussion

Research question one showed that there was significant relationship between parenting styles and effortful control on mental health of secondary school adolescents. The finding corroborates that of Cohen and Rice (1997) who reported that lower parental permissiveness was related to higher school grades, and higher parental permissiveness was related to increased tobacco and alcohol use in children and this affects the mental health of adolescents. The finding also goes in line with that of Ang (2006) who reported that for Malay adolescents authoritarian maternal parenting styles were beneficial to social adjustment and their mental health. On the relationship between effortful control and mental health the finding validates that of Ane, (2004) who reported that impulsivity emerged as a multidimensional construct, but its components were related to other effortful controls in different ways. Earlier finding of Korn and Gannon’s (2003) also corroborate this finding by concluding that difficult effortful control did not lead to the development of behaviour problems for a sub-sample of children from Puerto Rican families in New York.

Research question two showed that the two independent variables jointly contributed to the prediction of mental health. The finding supports that of Stattin and Kerr (2000) who also allude to the importance of parental responsiveness by noting that parental non-responsiveness behaviour such as negativism, hostility, aggression and cruelty would all discourage child disclosure which, as mentioned earlier, they felt was instrumental of parents’ gaining accurate knowledge of their child’s activities and mental health. The finding also lends credence with that of Eisenberg, Smith, Sadovsky, and Spinrad (2004) who provides important additional findings relating effortful control to social and personality development. They concluded that effortful control also contributed to prediction of adolescents’ mental health.

Research question three revealed that the three independent variables relatively contributed to the prediction of mental health. On the relative contribution of parenting styles to the prediction of mental health, the finding corroborates Lambom’s (2009) finding who reported that home with high parental demandingness without correspondingly high parental responsiveness adolescents’ were overpowered into obedience at the expense of personal well-being and mental health. He concluded that responsiveness was associated with higher levels of social competence and confidence, less internalized stress and higher self-esteem all of which impact adolescents’ decisions about risk taking and good mental health. The finding is in line with the finding of Prior,

Sanson, Smart & Oberklaid, (2001) who found consistent effect between infant effortful control, parenting styles and later mental health. Infants with difficult effortful control, that is, infants who are irritable, have strong negative emotional reactions, lack persistence, are overactive and difficult to soothe, may be at greater risk for conduct disorder and anti-social behaviour in early and middle childhood which would affect their mental health.

Conclusion

Adolescence period is a stage of transition biologically, physiologically, socially and economically from childhood to adulthood. This is a period when every child looks forward to and has the belief that he is no longer a child. They are free to probe into many things because of their physique. It was also shown that effortful control (effortful control) had significant relationship with mental health of adolescents. This means that the way at which adolescents are able to control their effortful control and/or their self-regulation on some issues could impede on their mental health. It could be concluded that to have a stable mental health over time, adolescents should be able to control their effortful control and to throw tantrums on some issues that could be resolved amicably.

Recommendations

In a bid to improve the mental health of in-school adolescents, the following recommendations were highlighted below:

- Parents should ensure that they listen to their children when they are talking to them and also spend time with them because children might need their parents on some important issue most especially those that are pertaining to their health.
- Parents should adopt a responsive parenting style as this would make their children and wards to approach them on some pertinent issues that are relevant to their future aspiration most especially health issues and school work.
- Adolescents should try as much as possible to have control over their emotion as this would make them not to be weighed down about irrelevant issues that do not worth being worried about as this could make them to be in a good and/or mental health.
- Adolescents should not be nervous, nervous and intense about school work as this would affect their mental health and the consequence is poor academic performance.
- Schools should establish youth-friendly health services in regarding young people's health.
- In order to be in a right state of good health always, adolescents should ensure that they talk to health practitioners if they notice any change in their normal body functioning.

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