



Influence of Parenting Styles and Media Exposure on Children's Learning and Emotional Needs in Okpokwu Local Government Area, Benue State

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of parenting styles and media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs in Okpokwu Local Government Area, Benue State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 750 parents living within Okpokwu Local Government Area, Benue State. Convenient sampling technique was utilized to get the sample size from all 750 parents within the study area using the researcher-designed Influence of Parenting Styles and Media Exposure on Children's Learning and Emotional Needs Questionnaire (IPSMECLENQ). The data for the study were collected from all 750 involved parents. Cronbach's Alpha was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.85. The descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to analyse and answer the research questions, while the null hypotheses were tested using independent sample t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed negative influence of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles and media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs. The way parents consume social media is against the whole well-being of their children's academic performance and emotional support. However, authoritative parenting styles which balances warmth and responsiveness with clear boundaries and expectations should be adopted and practiced for the good of the children's psychological well-being. Also, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) should organize frequent meetings encouraging all parents to belong to the association where they can always be informed about their children's academic progress.

Keywords: Parenting styles, Media exposure, Children's learning, Emotional needs

Introduction

Parenting styles and media exposure significantly impact children's behavioural development. However, this study investigated the influence of parenting styles and media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs in Okpokwu Local Government Area, Benue State. Parenting styles play a crucial role in shaping children's behaviour, emotional development, and overall well-being. Rabbi (2018) opined that the way parents interact with their children, enforce rules, and respond to their needs, create a framework for how children perceive themselves and relate to the world around them. Psychologists have identified various parenting styles, such as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful, each

of which has distinct impacts on children's behaviour.

Authoritative parenting, characterized by high responsiveness and high expectations, is often associated with positive outcomes, such as self-discipline, social competence, and emotional resilience. In contrast, Turkle (2022) stressed that authoritarian parenting style, which emphasizes strict rules and low emotional warmth, can lead to compliance in the short term but may result in lower self-esteem and social difficulties in the long run.

Permissive parenting, marked by high responsiveness but low demands, often fosters creativity and self-expression, but can also lead to a lack of self-regulation and accountability. Neglectful or uninvolved parenting style, which is low in both responsiveness and demands, is associated with negative outcomes such as emotional insecurity, academic struggles, and behavioural issues. Tyrrel (2019) stated that understanding the influence of these parenting styles can help parents and caregivers make informed decisions about their approach, ultimately fostering healthier and more adaptive behaviours in their children.

Inadequate control of media exposure of parents significantly influences their children's learning and emotional needs, attitudes, and development, as children are highly impressionable and often model what they observe. With the wide-spread availability of television, video games, internet, and phones, Akinleke (2020) posited that understanding the impact of media on children's learning and emotional needs has become more critical than ever.

Roy and Giraldo-Garcia (2021) stressed that media exposure are of two different categories which are positive and negative respectively. The educational content thereof exposes children to educational programmes, documentaries, and age-appropriate content can enhance cognitive development, language skills, and knowledge acquisition. However, social awareness of media can introduce children to diverse cultures, social issues, and values, promoting empathy and inclusivity. There can be skills development on social media, such as educational apps and games, can improve problem-solving skills, creativity, and technical literacy. On the contrary, when parents are engrossed with the use of social media and not available for their children's learning and emotional support leads to poor academic performance of their children. Khajehpour and Ghazvni (2019) in their study on the role of parenting styles that repeated exposure to violent content, especially in video games and movies, can desensitize children to aggression and increase the likelihood of aggressive behaviour towards learning. Social media and advertisements often portray idealized lifestyles, leading to body image issues, low self-esteem, and materialistic attitudes. Excessive screen time can contribute to sedentary behaviour, not paying attention to children's needs, increasing the risk of obesity and related health issues. The use of electronic devices, especially before bedtime, can interfere with sleep quality and duration, impacting overall health and behaviour.

As stipulated by Mental Health America (2000), every child needs unconditional love from family, self-confidence and high self-esteem, the opportunity to play with other children, encouraging friends and supportive caretakers, safe and secure surrounding, appropriate guidance and discipline to thrive emotionally and for good mental health. Parental care in children's life would ensure that social media control becomes easier. When children's personal needs are met appropriately, then they are less likely to get aggressive, they are more likely to calm down quicker and be easier to deal with. However, several factors seem to have negatively influenced media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs, such as age, which younger children are more impressionable and less capable of distinguishing between reality and fiction, parental mediation which active genuine care by parents, such as discussing content or setting limits, can mitigate negative effects and



enhance positive outcomes and content quality. This type of social media consumption plays a critical role in determining its impact. Age-appropriate and well-curated content tends to have more positive effects. Menheere and Hooge (2018) stated that to foster healthy media consumption, parents and caregivers should encourage a balanced approach by setting screen-time limits, promoting active engagement with content, and encouraging offline activities that support holistic development.

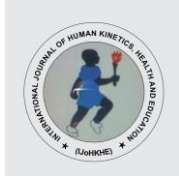
Existing literature acknowledged there is a positive role for social media, such as developing relationships with people who share similar interests, enhancement of creative self-expression, educational benefits (online tools that promote collaboration and learning) and social justice initiatives, such as fundraising (O'Keefe & Clark-Pearson, 2017). Access to social media is arguably a powerful educational and organizational tool that has been adopted by schools and workplaces to enhance learning and productivity. Conversely, there is a growing body of literature that suggests access to excessive information and peer networks is linked to maladaptive social and psychological development as well as physical disturbances (O'Keefe & Clark-Pearson, 2017). In addition (Alicia 2016) stated that frequent social media use in the family negatively impact on family-shared affections.

The growing dimension of the use of the social media today cannot be overemphasized as many are so carried away that they even chat as they walk or drive. Social media users have become increasingly fixated on digital device-mediated identity construction to maintain their 'image' online (Alicia, 2016) and become 'struck' in the exploration process. Social media is used for pleasure seeking or to escape; hence, parents resort to social media which has negative influence on parents. Most times, parents stay up until midnight chatting and commenting on Facebook, X(Former Twitter), Instagram, WhatsApp and phones. Attention has been shifted from visible to invisible acquaintances, while immediate children's learning and emotional needs are neglected. Ventures, such as monitoring, discussions, playing together and even cooking are probably affected in the process.

In addition, Steiner-Adair (2015) expressed that being online all the time creates hazardous conditions with distracted parents putting children at risk for harm by not monitoring them appropriately while they are absorbed by activities, such as texting or emailing.

Social media-centered parents may be perceived by their children as having emotionally absent or neglectful parents. Turkle (2022) maintained that good relationship between parents and children should be harmonized. Humility has been profoundly impacted by the social media revolution, especially the central feature of society and the family. This trend has caught families, schools and the society by surprise. Parents through their parenting styles have crucial influence of the social media exposure on their children's learning and emotional needs. Permissive or indulgent style is child-centered, but non-demanding pattern. Smoother organization and control of the home is possible when parents take time to connect with their children's academic performance and emotional needs.

Murthy (2020) refers to social media as an internet communication which shares the characteristics of participation, openness, conversation, community, and connectedness. Lusk (2015) further claimed that social media can also be seen as the use of Facebook, Blogs, X, My Space and LinkedIn for the purpose of communication, sharing photos as well as videos. Other social networking sites include WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, Yahoo Messenger, Facebook Messenger, Blackberry Messenger (BBM), Google talk and Google Messenger. These websites and social forum are ways of communicating directly with other people socially and in media. These sites are used by most people to exchange ideas, feelings, personal information, pictures and videos at really amazing rate. These interactions bring



both old and new friends, physical or virtual friends together (Asemah & Edegoh, 2019). Social media is an avenue of presenting oneself and pronouncing an identity. Murthy (2020) asserting from a sociological perspective, posited that when someone posts a photo, a status update is a unique phrase and suggests that people can share what they are experiencing. It is also an update which implies that one would often or regularly do this.

Permissive parents are tolerant and accepting toward child's impulses, desires and actions allow considerable self-regulation and make few demands for mature behaviour. Permissive parent tends to be non-punitive and avoid confrontation or over pamper to accomplish their mean (Baumrind, 2013). According to Moore (2014), there is an extensive amount of parent-child communication, but very low levels of maturity and demands required of the child. Children raised by indulgent parents have higher self-esteem, better social skills and lower levels of depression, which aids in positive reading attitudes and social development. More so, permissive parents focus more on being their child's friend than a disciplinary figure. Permissive parents tend to let their children to become disrespectful to their parents. Hence, parents who adopt permissive style of parenting are more responsive than demanding as they are non-traditional, lenient toward their children's request and ultimately would avoid confrontation with their children (Aziz & Ali, 2020).

Authoritative parents are responsive to their children's needs and ideas and will often seek their children's views in family deliberations and decisions. Baumrind (1991) averred that, "unlike any other pattern". They are warmer, more accepting, and more helpful style of parenting. Authoritative parenting has been profound to be an essential factor in an adolescent's life in comparison with the other parenting styles. It has been seen as the most effective in enhancing personal and social responsibilities in adolescents, without constraining their newly formed autonomy and individually.

Authoritarian parents are very strict and they make their offspring to obey each and every demand placed on them without any relaxation, no matter what the circumstances are presently. A lot of rigid demands are placed on the children by such harsh parents, strict rules are taught and compliance is claimed without any relaxation according to the children's feasibility. According to Baumrind (1991), the authoritarian parents shape, control and evaluate the behaviour and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set standard of conduct, usually an absolute standard, theologically motivated and formulated by a higher authority. The parent value obedience as a virtue and favours punitive, forceful measures to curb self-conduct. Authoritarian parents believe in keeping the child in his place, in restricting his autonomy, and in assigning household responsibilities in order to inculcate respect for work. Parents do not encourage verbal give and take, believing that the child should accept her word for what is right. Very harsh policies are implemented on the children without any emotional involvement with them, thus compelling them to obey in each circumstance. Raul and Ahmed (2018) carried out a study in Pakistan strictly focusing on the impact that authoritarian parenting style was associated with lower academic performance. Also, Myers and Scott (2020) discovered the dominating nature of authoritarian parenting practices, demand children to strictly follow rules and regulations as the basis of their decisions. In the study, authoritarian parenting contributed significantly to the students' academic performance, but in a negative way.

The researchers observed that children in Okpokwu Community exhibit persistent anxiety, low self-esteem, loneliness, isolation, poor academic performance, physical complaints and increased conflicts with parents which could be attributed to media exposure and poor parenting styles. It was against this background that the researchers decided to investigate the influence of parenting styles and media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs

in Okpokwu Local Government Area, Benue State. In carrying out the study, two research questions and two hypotheses were raised to guide the study.

The speedy advancement of media technology has had a great influence on the way people communicate on a daily basis. The home and a sense of family are changing with easy access to social media. The researchers' interactions with children revealed that they are displeased over their parents' addiction to the social media neglecting their roles as parents. It is evident that social media has immensely impacted real world interaction, yet there is minimal discussion and empirical research investigating the phenomenon. Existing literature exposes the gap in knowledge as to the influence of parenting styles and media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs.

The Purpose of this study was to examine the influence of parenting styles and media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs in Okpokwu Local Government Area. The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the influence of authoritarian parenting style and media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs?
2. What is the influence of permissive parenting style and media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs?

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. Authoritarian parenting style and media exposure would not significantly influence children's learning in Okpokwu Local Government Area, Benue State.
2. Permissive parenting style and media exposure would not significantly influence children's emotional needs in Okpokwu Local Government Area, Benue State

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to determine the influence of parenting styles and media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs in Okpokwu Local Government Area, Benue State. The population of the study comprised 750 parents located within Okpokwu Metropolis in Benue State, who were active on social media, and voluntarily gave their consent and also participated in the study. The 750 parents were all utilized as the sample for the study. However, at every point, so many parents declined to participate in the study as the whole processes seemed evasive to them as they could not understand the justification for the study. It is on this premise that the researchers adopted a non-probability sampling method (convenience) which is a method of selecting units from a population using a subjective (i.e. non-random) method. The researchers informed the participants of the confidentiality of all responses and added that participants can refrain from filling the questionnaires or withdraw from the research at any time without any obligation to maintain attachment.

The instrument for data collection was a researcher-designed Influence of Parenting Styles and Media Exposure on Children's Learning and Emotional Needs Questionnaire (IPSMECLNQ), which has two sections (A and B). Section A obtained personal data of respondents, while section B comprised two cluster: Part A and Part B. Part A contained 10 items on influence of authoritarian parenting styles and media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs, while part B contained 10 items that elicited responses from the respondents on Influence of permissive parenting styles and media exposure on

children’s learning and emotional needs with response options: Strongly Agreed (SA) 4 points, Agreed (A) 3 points, Strongly Disagreed (SD) 2 points, and Disagreed (D)1 point. With a maximum score of 40 and minimum score of 0, the instrument had ranked scores as follows; 0 - 20 indicated positive influence and 21-40 implied negative influence of parenting styles and media exposure on children’s learning and emotional needs. Three experts validated the instruments in the department of educational foundations, faculty of education, Nasarawa State University, Keffi. The experts scored the instruments in terms of comprehensiveness, appropriateness and clarity to ascertain the face and construct validity. A pilot test was conducted on a group of 40 parents within Okpokwu Metropolis in Benue State. Cronbach’s Alpha was used to determine internal consistency of the instrument and reliability coefficient value of 0.85 was realized which was considered reliable. The researchers administered 750 copies of the questionnaire to the participating parents and they were collected as soon as they were answered. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while the inferential statistics of independent sample t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Data analysis was primed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Reponses on authoritarian parenting styles and media Exposure on Children’s Learning and Emotional Needs

Items	x	SD
1. I seldom discuss my children’s emotional needs because of the social media addiction.	2.60	0.728
2. I have difficulties in concentration due to excess time spent on social media and as a result it prevents me from meeting up demand for my children’s learning and emotional needs.	2.70	0.923
3. Sometimes, I pay more attention to Facebook, X (formal Twitter) and WhatsApp than I would love to pay attention to my children’s learning.	2.70	0.965
4. Daily, my online interactions get me impatient with my children’s school assignments.	2.72	0.972
5. Sometimes I experience fatigue from lack of sleep because of using social media which affects my commitment in my children’s reading and writing.	2.36	0.773
6. My children’s academic achievements in school will tremendously improve if I reduce time I spent online and paying close attention to their learning.	2.76	0.928
7. The pleasure of social media prevents me from supervising my children’s emotional needs.	2.55	1.070
8. My frequent interactions online limit the time I need to assist my children in their learning.	2.86	1.004

9. Frequent chatting on social media makes me to forget to discuss academic challenges with my children.	3.19	0.999
10. Anytime I am on social media I find it difficult to solve my children’s emotional issues	2.74	1.029
Grand Mean	27.18	9.391

$\bar{x} = 2.5$

Table 1 represents the influence of authoritarian parenting style and media exposure on children’s learning and emotional needs. Results revealed that authoritarian parents admitted that they pay more attention to Facebook, X (Twitter) and WhatsApp than they would pay attention to their children’s learning and emotional needs. They find it difficult to pay attention to their children’s learning when they are online operating on social media. Their children’s academic achievement will tremendously improve if they reduce time spent on social media. Majority of the responses had mean above 2.5 ($\bar{x} > 2.5$). The Table further shows that the total mean score is 27.18 which falls within the ranking of 20-40. This signifies that there is negative influence of Authoritarian Parenting style and media exposure on children’s learning and emotional needs.

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of Responses on influence of Permissive Parenting Styles and Media Exposure on Children’s Learning and Emotional Needs

Items	\bar{x}	SD
1. I find it hard to balance time spent online chatting with friends and time spent with my two children	2.98	1.077
2. I hate interruption by my children when I am on social media	2.88	1.142
3. Constant interactions online affect my relationship with my children	2.95	1.253
4. Sometimes I choose to be alone when I am engrossed with the social media	3.01	1.198
5. I distaste it when my children disturb me while operating Online	2.95	1.244
6. I usually spend quality time chatting with business associates and it deprives me of not having quality time to interact with my children	3.15	1.124
7. It gives me much concern as social media has made me to neglect my children’s emotional needs	2.50	1.114
8. I find it difficult to applaud my children when they do things right due to the distraction of phones and computers	2.32	0.994
9. My children complain a lot about my social media lifestyle because I hardly create time for their immediate needs	2.43	0.978
10. I don’t laugh together with my children because I am always engaged at one point on the other online	2.30	0.977
Grand Mean	27.47	11.101

– $x = 2.5$

Table 2 presents influence of Permissive Parenting Styles and Media Exposure on Children’s Learning and Emotional Needs. Majority of parents reported that they spend so much time online that they can hardly interact with their children. They like to be alone in a very quiet place when surfing the internet; and that their frequent interactions online affect their relationship with their children as their children complain that they are always online. Parents also reported that they find it difficult to balance time spent on social media with time spent with their children ($X > 2.5$). Table 2 further presents that the grand mean score is 27.55 which falls within the ranking of 20 - 40. This implies that there is a negative influence of permissive parenting style and media exposure on children’s learning and emotional needs.

Table 3

Authoritarian Parenting Style and media exposure on male and female parents in their children’s learning and emotional needs.

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	T	p
Male	349	27.01	8.980	748	2.567	0.002
Female	401	26.39	6.781			

($p \leq 0.05$)

Results in Table 3 show that Authoritarian Parenting style and media exposure had significant influence on male and female parents on their children’s learning and emotional needs. Therefore, null hypothesis which stated that media exposure would not significantly influence male and female parents on their children’s learning and emotional needs was rejected.

Table 4

Influence of permissive parenting style and media exposure on children’s learning and emotional needs.

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	T	p
Male	349	26.26	9.987	748	-1.983	0.001
Female	401	28.51	8.616			

($p \leq 0.05$)



Results in table 4 show that Permissive parenting style and media exposure had significant influence ($p < 0.05$) on male and female parents on their children's learning and emotional needs. Female parents had higher mean than male parents. This implies that null hypothesis which stated that permissive parenting style and media exposure would not significantly influence male and female parents in their children's learning and emotional needs was rejected.

Discussion

Results of the study revealed that there is negative influence of Authoritarian parenting style and media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs. Most parents reported that they seldom give attention to their children's academic performance and emotional needs whenever they are on social media especially Facebook, X (Former Twitter), WhatsApp and phones. The findings are consistent with Turkle (2022) who disclosed that emotional and social consequences of authoritarian parenting style lead to increased aggression and behavioural problems making children to develop aggressive behaviours due to strict rules and punishment. Children raised under authoritarian parenting style are prone to decreased self-esteem and confidence. Authoritarian parenting can lead to children who lack self-confidence and self-worth. Children may experience decreased motivation and interest in learning due to authoritarian parenting making them to constantly maintain poor academic performance.

Results further established negative influence of permissive parenting style and media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs. Many parents reported that they usually spend much time on social media than they spent so much time with their children to attend to their pressing academic learning and emotional needs. Parents reported they find it difficult to balance the time spent online with time spent with their children. The findings are consistent with Mayfield (2022) who revealed that permissive parenting style breeds academic and cognitive consequences such as poor academic performance of their children because they lack motivation and discipline to succeed academically. Their children may miss out on opportunities for cognitive development due to lack of challenging and structured activities and problem-solving skills of their children is limited due to lack of guidance and support.

Results also showed that authoritarian parenting style and media exposure had significant influence on male and female parents on their children's learning and emotional needs. This implies that male parents are more likely to neglect their children's learning. Results further showed that permissive parenting style and media exposure had significant influence on male and female parents on their children's learning and emotional needs. This implies that female parents are more likely to neglect their children's emotional needs. Parents are expected to create a conducive learning environment for their children to study, set clear expectations and goals for them, encourage curiosity and exploration, provide resources and support and also celebrate achievements. Parents need to praise their children for their effort and achievement no matter how small. John Bowlby (1990) emphasises the need for parents and children's relationship.



Conclusion

The findings have shown that there is negative influence of authoritarian parenting style and media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs. Also, there is negative influence of permissive parenting style and media exposure on children's learning and emotional needs. This implies that both authoritarian parenting style and permissive parenting style and media exposure distract so many parents from adequately attending to their children's learning and emotional needs.

Recommendations

The study therefore recommends the following:

1. Authoritative parenting styles which balances warmth and responsiveness with clear boundaries and expectations should be adopted and practiced for the good of the children's psychological well-being.
2. Ministry of education in Benue state should organize conferences, workshop or seminars to sensitize parents on the need to prioritize time in other to balance the time spent on social media and the quality time spent with their children, engaging in activities that promote bonding and shared experiences.
3. Parent Teacher Association (PTA) should organize frequent meetings encouraging all parents to belong to the association where they can always be informed about their children's academic progress. The association can as well orientate parents on how to set limits and boundaries, monitor and co-view, promote media literacy, encourage physical activities and outdoor play to balance media consumption and support overall psychological well-being. With the support of the association, parents would know how to offer alternative activities, such as reading, drawing, puzzles, and reduce reliance on screens.

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