

PARENTING STYLES, SELF-ESTEEM AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SCIENCES IN UGANDA: A CASE OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KABALE DISTRICT.

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Abstract

Background

The root cause of this underperformance is intricately linked among other things to the influence of parenting styles on children's self-esteem, subsequently impacting their academic achievements. The study aims to assess the relationship between permissive parenting styles and academic performance in the sciences among high school students in Kabale District.

Methodology

A cross-sectional design in which a sample of 201 respondents was that consisted of both male and female students from the selected secondary schools. A simple random sampling technique was employed in both the selection of schools and participants. The study applied Pearson product-moment correlation to examine the relationship among the variables.

Results

The grand mean for all items related to permissive parenting was 2.84. A considerable proportion of respondents ($M = 2.13$, $SD = 1.37$) expressed disagreement with the notion that their parents encounter difficulties when disciplining them. A significant number of participants ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.39$) exhibited uncertainty regarding whether their parents expected them to adhere to certain expectations solely out of respect. The majority of respondents ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.05$) agreed that their parents usually provided clear instructions about what they wanted them to do and how they expected them to do it. Concerning the directiveness of their parents' desires, respondents were unsure ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.42$), yet they acknowledged that their parents allowed their opinions on family matters ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 1.18$).

Conclusion

There is a statistically significant positive relationship between Permissive Parenting and Academic Performance.

Recommendations

Parents and caregivers should focus on praising effort, progress, and personal growth rather than solely on achievements.

Keywords: *Permissive parenting styles, Academic performance, Students in Kabale District.*

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Background

Formal schooling was introduced in Kabale in the 20th century (Uzoigwe, 1975). According to the Phelps-Stokes Commission in 1924, the aims of education at that time included character development, improvement of health, acquisition of agricultural and industrial skills, and enhancement of family life (Traill, 2011). Low self-esteem can lead to a defeatist mentality, resulting in low effort and poor choices, while very high self-esteem can lead to isolation and impact energy levels (Fox & Lindwall, 2014). Self-esteem is a crucial component of students' ability to navigate different situations, including academic performance in science subjects. Data indicate an alarming annual failure rate of 40% in these subjects (UNESCO, 2017). Steinberg et al. (1992), highlight a robust connection between parenting styles and children's academic

performance; Spera's research (2005), shows that parental support links to higher self-esteem, influencing academic engagement, especially in authoritative parenting; Lamborn et al. (1991). Existing research on parenting styles and discipline suggests that an authoritative or "democratic" approach, as opposed to authoritarian or permissive styles, is more beneficial for fostering self-esteem in children (Coopersmith, 1967). This approach entails a willingness on the part of parents to engage in discussions and negotiate conflicts while still upholding fundamental standards of behavior, such as respecting the rights of others. It is important to note that it is unrealistic to expect parents to always adopt a democratic or authoritative style, as the key lies in the predominant use of such a style or being a "good enough" parent (Winnicott, 1953). Parenting styles play a crucial role in children's development and academic success.

On one end of the spectrum is the permissive parent, who is highly responsive but lacks structure and boundaries (Payne, 2013). Abdullah (2000) examined the relationship between motivation for success, self-worth, locus of control, and academic achievement among university students. Lack of success motivation and low self-esteem were found to contribute to students' disengagement and limited academic performance. The study aims to assess the relationship between permissive parenting styles and academic performance in the sciences among high school students in Kabale District.

Methodology

The methodology described here is similar to the one published by (Muhwezi and Kiyingi, 2024) about authoritative parenting styles.

Research Design

Cooper and Shinder (2014) posit that a research design encompasses a comprehensive strategy or plan for collecting data to obtain results that address research questions or objectives. It involves several key elements, such as the rationale behind conducting the research, the research site, potential sources of information, the study duration, the type of research information required, the methods for data collection and analysis, and ultimately, the reporting of the study's findings. In this study, a cross-sectional research design was employed because it allowed the gathering of data from a diverse range of participants at a single point in time (Wang & Cheng, 2020; Setia, 2016). This approach enabled the study to efficiently examine relationships and patterns without the extended time and resources. Significantly, the cross-sectional design facilitated data collection without encountering ethical difficulties. The cross-sectional research design emerged as a valuable tool for collecting data on sensitive subjects, like self-esteem, while circumventing significant ethical challenges. Its non-intrusive nature, coupled with an emphasis on ensuring participant anonymity and confidentiality, and a reduced burden on participants, contributed to creating a research environment that prioritized participant well-being. Moreover, the cross-sectional design's capacity to include a diverse range of participants enhanced the credibility and generalisability of our findings. By incorporating multiple perspectives and diverse data sources, the study aimed to achieve a comprehensive understanding, thus enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings. During the analysis stage, the data were examined thoroughly to identify patterns, convergences, divergences, and potential explanations. This meticulous examination of the data contributed to the study's rigor, enhanced the validity of the findings, and facilitated a comprehensive interpretation of the results.

Study Population and Sample Selection

According to the records obtained from the Kabale District Education office, there are a total of 36 senior secondary schools in the area. Among these schools, 27 offer Advanced Level education. Out of the 36 schools, 23 are privately owned, while the remaining 13 are government-aided. The total student population in all 36 schools amounted to 24,422 individuals, with 420 students in the Advanced level that formed the foundation for selecting a sample in the research study. To determine the appropriate sample size, the researchers employed the methodology supported by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Based on their guidelines, a sample of 201 respondents was determined suitable. This sample consisted of both male and female students from the selected secondary schools. To ensure a representative sample, a simple random sampling technique was employed in both the selection of schools and participants. Specifically, five schools were selected for inclusion in the study through simple random sampling. From these five schools, a total of 201 participants were selected from advanced-level science classes using a table of random numbers. This approach ensured fairness and unbiased representation in the sampling process, enhancing the validity of the study's findings. The central objective of the research study was to investigate the correlation between self-esteem, parenting style, and academic performance specifically in science subjects. Therefore, the chosen participants provided relevant information that would contribute to the analysis of these variables. The likelihood of making a type 1 error was assumed to be less than 5%, or $P=0.05$, for the Krejcie and Morgan sample size calculation. Since the population was finite, the formula below was applicable:

$S =$

Where:

S = Required Sample Size

X = Z Value (1.96 for 95% Confidence Level)

N = Population Size 24422.

P =Population proportion (expressed in decimal) assumed to be 0.5(50%)

d = Degree of Accuracy (5%), expressed as a proportion (.05); it is a margin of error

Therefore

$S =$

$S =$

$S = 201$

Sampling Techniques

The Sampling technique used was simple random in which 5 schools were selected using a lottery method. The schools selected are: Kigezi High School, Trinity College School, Janan Luwum Secondary School Kamuganguzi, Rock High School, and Kabale Secondary School.

Sample Size and Sample Distribution

Five secondary schools, both public and private, served as the population from which the sample for this study was drawn. The choice of Kabale was based on the fact that very

few students have been choosing to study sciences and a handful of them passed them at High School in the district in the recent past. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed. At the district level, a list of all schools has been obtained from the District Education Officer's (DEO) office. Five schools were selected from that list using simple random. From the selected schools, lists of senior 5 and senior 6 science students were obtained from which a sample selected from each school using simple random sampling was obtained.

Sample Size

The target population of the study was male and female students of science from the 14 selected in Kabale District whose number was 2027 (Appendix iv) of whom 420 were doing sciences. The selection approach was proportional to the size of the population in the school doing sciences at an advanced level. The total number of students in each chosen school was therefore used to determine the number of students to be included in the study. Class lists of students in senior 5 and 6 were purposively selected from the chosen schools to serve as the research respondents.

Study Area

The study was carried out in secondary schools of Kabale District situated within a latitude of $-1^{\circ} 14' 54.85''$ S and a longitude of $29^{\circ} 59' 23.75''$ E.

Data collection methods

Instruments

The research questionnaire was designed to gather data on the relationship among the three concepts of parenting style, self-esteem, and student academic performance in science subjects in Kabale district Secondary Schools. The questionnaire begins with a consent form where participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of their responses. Participants were asked to indicate their consent by ticking either "Yes" or "No" and signing against their decision. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, the self-esteem scale and the parenting practices instrument underwent prior validation and reliability testing through:

Content validation: The parenting practices instrument was carefully reviewed by two experts in the field of psychology or education. Their expertise ensured that the instrument's items were relevant, comprehensive, and aligned with the research objectives.

Pilot testing: Before the main data collection, a small sample of participants from a neighboring district of Rukiga completed the parenting practices instrument. This pilot test aimed to evaluate the instrument's clarity, readability, and appropriateness for the target population. The participants' feedback from the pilot test was invaluable in refining the instrument, if necessary, to enhance its quality and effectiveness.

To evaluate academic performance, the study obtained students' perceptions of their performance in the respective science subjects they were studying. This methodology

enabled an examination of their perceived achievements in the specific areas of study. The questionnaires were self-administered, with the respondents given the tool to complete independently in their respective classrooms. This ensured that each participant could provide their responses comfortably and privately.

Ethical considerations were considered throughout the data collection process, including obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, and addressing any potential risks or concerns related to the study.

Based on the methodology proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample size of 201 respondents consisting of both males and females was determined to be appropriate for the study. This sample size allows for sufficient representation and statistical analysis, aligning with the objectives of the research.

By including these details, the research study ensured a rigorous data collection process, considering ethical standards, employing validated instruments, and gathering multiple perspectives to investigate the relationship among parenting style, self-esteem, and academic performance in science subjects.

Data Collection Procedure

The University of Kisubi was consulted for approval before the study could be carried out. Upon obtaining the letter of approval, a pilot study was conducted to identify any errors or inconsistencies in the questionnaires. The pilot study was necessary to ensure errors and inconsistencies were cleared. According to Bryman (2012), pilot research is an essential technique to reduce any ambiguities, because there were to be no field interviewers present throughout data collecting for students. Target respondents did not participate in the pilot study to avoid interfering with the representativeness of the target sample size. The pre-test helped to address ambiguities in the questionnaire for it to suit its purpose. The outcomes of the pilot study were checked for inconsistencies and completeness, coded and the data analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25 to conduct preliminary analysis and further check the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Any inconsistencies in the questionnaire were harmonized before the tool was finally employed for data collection.

Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

Validity

The questionnaire was administered to two expert PhD holders in Psychology who employed the Content Validity Index (CVI) to grade each item's relevance to the objectives on a scale of extremely relevant (VR) to relevant (R). Validity is determined by whether an indicator or collection of indicators created to measure it does so (Bryman, 2007). Face validity, predictive validity, concurrent validity, concept validity, and convergent validity constitute the diverse types of validity. It is recommended that researchers should get the views of other researchers on how to measure concepts accurately while ensuring face validity.

Content validity Index (CVI) = Number of Items agreed on as relevant Total number of items in the tool

Table 1. Shows the Content Validity Index of the questionnaires

Questionnaire	No. of items	Relevant items	CVI	Percentage (%)
APSQ	9	8	0.89	89
ARPQ	7	6	0.86	86
PPSQ	9	7	0.78	78
NPSQ	10	9	0.90	90
RSEQ	10	8	0.80	80
ACPQ	4	3	0.75	75

Source: Field research, 2022.

According to Balk, et al, (2018), a CVI of 0.7 and above shows good validity for the tools. Therefore, since the CVI of all the questionnaires was 0.70 and above, the tool was valid and good enough to collect dependable data.

Reliability

The reliability of the research tool was also tested. Reliability describes the consistency of a measure of a concept (Bryman, 2007). Stability, internal reliability, and

inter-observer consistency are three crucial concepts to consider when measuring reliability. Data collection methods used in this study were pretested on a sample of students from a different district who shared the same characteristics as the study group to verify validity and reliability. Data were collected from a school in Rukiga District. This was aimed at preventing the possibility of copying responses from their classmates. The Cronbach Alpha reliability test was employed to guarantee the tool's internal reliability.

Table 2. Shows the Reliability of the questionnaires

Questionnaire	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Percentage (%)
APSQ	9	0.85	85
ARPQ	7	0.81	81
PPSQ	9	0.72	72
NPSQ	10	0.89	89
RSEQ	10	0.77	77
ACPQ	4	0.71	71

Source: Field data 2022

According to Balk, et al, (2018) and Marcoulides (2018), an Alpha value of 0.7 and above shows good reliability of the tool. Hence, since all the questionnaires were above 0.7, the tool qualified to be reliable.

Data Processing and Analysis

The study applied Pearson product-moment correlation to examine the relationship among the variables, specifically for objectives 1 to 4. This statistical method was chosen for its ability to accurately determine the presence and magnitude of the relationship between two variables. It allowed for the exploration of correlations between the variables and provided insights into the precise level of correlation. Additionally, regression analysis was employed to identify the factors influencing the chosen phenomenon. This analysis helped determine which elements were significant and how they interacted. The data were analyzed using SPSS V25 software after appropriate adjustments, and both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the statistical analysis of the data.

Ethical considerations

The researcher followed fundamental research standards outlined by Sarantakos (2005: 16) throughout the study. These standards included: Before going to the field for research, the researcher sought a letter of approval from the University of Kisubi (UniK). While in the field, the researcher had to act responsibly by properly identifying themselves, avoiding any misrepresentation of research outcomes, and providing clear information about the questions when needed. The questionnaire design prioritized anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy. Additionally, the researcher took measures to safeguard the well-being of the respondents, considering their mental and physical health, safety, as well as potential emotional discomfort or risks.

Ethical approval

Before going to the field for research, a letter of approval from the University of Kisubi (UniK) was sought. While in the field, the researcher had to act responsibly by properly identifying themselves, avoiding any misrepresentation of research outcomes, and providing clear information about the questions when needed. The questionnaire design prioritized anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy. Additionally, the researcher took measures to safeguard the well-being of the respondents, considering their mental and physical health, safety, as well as potential emotional discomfort or risks.

Informed consent

The purpose and nature of the study were well explained to the participants and informed consent sought from the participants before collecting data.

Confidentiality issues

The study's confidentiality question was meant to satisfy the requirement for voluntary and intelligent consent as guided by Ethicist, (2015). Consequently, the researcher had to desist from applying pressure to the respondents. Instead, he informed them of their right to privacy about their personal information, sensitive topics, or answering questions they would possibly find unsettling. The assurance of confidentiality was achieved by eliminating the requirement to disclose the identity of the respondent, thereby upholding the right to privacy. This practice effectively ensured respondent anonymity, safeguarding their confidentiality.

Results

Demographics

Respondents were asked to indicate their bio-data and results.

Table 2: Sex of the Respondents

<i>Sex of the Respondents</i>		
Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	141	70.1
Female	60	29.9
Total	201	100.0

Field data (2022)

Table 2, indicates that the majority of the respondents, 141 (70.1%) were males while 60 (29.9%) were females. It is noted from the table that in terms of gender, female participants were fewer than male ones. In fact, in terms of percentage, they constituted about 29.9%. These findings

shed light on the fact that there may be no parity in accessing science education, especially by girls. Educators, policymakers, and stakeholders must address the issue of parity. Empowering all students, regardless of their gender, to excel in the sciences is a priority.

Table 3: Age of the Respondents

Age of the Respondents			
Ages		Frequency	Percent
	17.00	5	2.5
	18.00	66	32.8
	19.00	37	18.4
	20.00	47	23.4
	21.00	24	11.9
	22.00	16	8.0
	23.00	4	2.0
	25.00	1	.5
	29.00	1	.5
	Total	201	100.0

Field data (2022)

Table 4, Majority of the respondents 66 (32.8%) were 18 years old, followed by those who were 20 years old 47(23.4%), and 37(18.4%) of the respondents were aged 19 years. While 5(2.5%) of the respondents were aged 17 years old, the rest of the respondents 46 (22.9%) were above the age of 20.

Based on the findings, it is noteworthy that the majority of respondents were male, and a significant proportion of them were above 18 years old. The age factor is considered influential in shaping an individual's knowledge and

experience on a particular topic or subject, making these findings reliable.

Permissive Parenting Style

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement on a scale of 1 to 5, with statements concerning permissive parenting style. The mean, grand mean, and standard deviation (*SD*) were used to analyze and interpret the responses.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Permissive Parenting Style

Items	N	Mean	SD
My parents find it difficult to discipline me	201	2.13	1.37
My parents want me to follow their expectations simply out of respect	201	3.36	1.39
My parents usually tell me exactly what they want me to do and how they expect me to do it	201	4.04	1.05
My parents do not direct my desires	201	3.01	1.42
My parents allow my opinions regarding family matters	201	3.59	1.18
It is not the responsibility of my parents to direct my desires and behavior	201	2.42	1.41
My parents always do what I ask them to do	201	2.93	1.38
My parents do not give me specific expectations and guidelines for my behavior	201	2.43	1.30
I do not feel that children need to obey rules at home	201	1.64	1.16
Grand mean		2.84	

Field data (2022)

Table 5 revealed interesting findings regarding the perception of respondents about permissive parenting. The grand mean for all items related to permissive parenting was 2.84, indicating that respondents were uncertain about whether their parents practiced a permissive parenting style. Initially, it is worth noting that a considerable proportion of respondents ($M = 2.13$, $SD = 1.37$) expressed disagreement with the notion that their parents encounter difficulties when disciplining them. Likewise, a significant number of participants ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.39$) exhibited uncertainty regarding whether their parents expected them to adhere to

certain expectations solely out of respect. These findings emphasize the need for further exploration and understanding of the complex dynamics within parent-child relationships and the perceptions of disciplinary measures and expectations.

Furthermore, in light of these outcomes, it becomes increasingly apparent that a comprehensive exploration is warranted not only to grasp the complexities of such interactions but also to comprehend their potential implications on the mental and emotional well-being of the learners. Recognizing that these perceptions can

significantly impact the students' psychological state and overall welfare, future investigations could delve into how these dynamics intertwine with the broader landscape of students' mental and emotional wellness, ultimately contributing to a more holistic understanding of their educational journey.

On the other hand, a majority of respondents ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.05$) agreed that their parents usually provided clear instructions about what they wanted them to do and how they expected them to do it. However, when it came to the directiveness of their parents' desires, respondents were unsure ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.42$), yet they acknowledged that their parents allowed their opinions on family matters ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 1.18$).

Furthermore, the majority of respondents ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.41$) disagreed with the notion that their parents were not

responsible for directing their desires and behavior. Additionally, respondents were unsure ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.38$) whether their parents always complied with their requests. Most respondents disagreed ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.30$) with the statement that their parents did not provide specific expectations and guidelines for their behavior. Moreover, they strongly disagreed ($M = 1.64$, $SD = 1.16$) that their parents did not believe in the necessity of obeying rules at home.

Correlations for Permissive Parenting Style and Academic Performance

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between Permissive parenting style and academic performance in sciences.

Table 6. Correlations for Permissive Parenting Style and Academic Performance

Variables		1	2
Permissive Parenting	Pearson Correlation	1	.129*
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.034
	N	201	201
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.129*	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.034	
	N	201	201

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Field data (2022)

Table 6, indicates that there is a weak but positive statistically significant relationship between the permissive parenting style and academic performance ($r(199) = .129$, $p = .034$). This positive correlation coefficient of 0.129 suggests a weak association between Permissive Parenting and Academic Performance in the context of academic performance in sciences in the Kabale district. The significance level (p) of 0.034 indicates that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (one-tailed). The significance level (Sig.) indicates the probability of obtaining a correlation coefficient as large as 0.129 or larger if there is no true correlation in the population. In this case, the Sig. The value is 0.034 (one-tailed). Since this value is less than 0.05, the correlation is considered statistically significant at the 0.05 level (one-tailed). Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between Permissive Parenting and Academic Performance. However, it is important to note that the correlation coefficient of 0.129 indicates a relatively weak association between these variables.

Discussion

These findings suggest that further research and exploration are needed to gain deeper insights into the reasons behind the respondents' uncertainty about their parent's parenting style and the prevalence of permissive parenting. Understanding these findings is crucial for comprehending parenting practices in the studied population. One of the

hypotheses in this study, hypothesis number three, aimed to establish a statistically significant relationship between permissive parenting style and academic performance in the sciences. The results, with $r(199) = .129$ and $p = .034$, indicated a weak but statistically significant relationship between permissive parenting and academic performance.

The findings of this study align with the research conducted by Barton and Hirsch (2016), who discovered a positive association between permissive parenting and increased academic entitlement. Additionally, Lamborn et al. (1991) reported that adolescents raised in permissive households exhibited higher levels of self-confidence. This sense of confidence, as identified by Norman and Hyland (2003), plays a significant role in students' engagement and academic progress. These findings are consistent with the assertions made by Kanza (2016), who emphasized the essentiality of self-confidence for students to take risks, participate in learning activities, and ultimately achieve success. Students who possess self-confidence are more likely to set goals, work diligently, and persevere in their pursuits.

Taking these results into account, it is crucial to acknowledge that despite the findings, there exists a limitation in terms of its potential to sufficiently bolster critical aspects such as self-esteem and mental wellness. To quote Nathaniel Branden, "The greatest tragedy that can befall a person is to feel trapped and helpless." Given this context, the outcomes bring to the forefront the importance

of fostering self-esteem and overall well-being within the educational journey of students.

Conclusion

There is a statistically significant positive relationship between Permissive Parenting and Academic Performance.

Recommendations

Parents and caregivers should focus on praising effort, progress, and personal growth rather than solely on achievements. They should celebrate each step towards improvement, bolstering children's self-esteem and motivation.

Ministry of Education and Sports should encourage collaborative learning initiatives, such as group projects and discussions, to create a sense of community and peer support among students.

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List of abbreviations/acronyms

UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
GPA	Grade Point Average
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
RSES	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale
PSS	Perceived Stress Scale
APSQ	Authoritative Parenting style questionnaire
ARPQ	Authoritarian Parenting style questionnaire
PPSQ	Permissive Parenting questionnaire
NPSQ	Neglectful Parenting Questionnaire
RSEQ	Self-esteem questionnaire
ACPQ	Academic Performance Questionnaire
SPSS	Statistical package for social sciences

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Conflict of interest

The author did not declare any conflict of interest

Author contributions

Maurice Alex Muhwezi-Murari collected data and drafted the manuscript of the study.

Dr. Frank Pio Kiyingi supervised all the stages of the study including the drafting of the manuscript.

Data availability

Reuse of this work may be granted with written authorization from the School of Graduate Studies and research of the University of Kisubi.

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