

Influence of Authoritarian Parenting Style on Acquisition of Language Skills Among Pre-School Children in Central Division, Trans Nzoia County

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Abstract- Education has been endeared as one of the key pillars that will drive Kenya into achieving its dream, Vision 2030. Foundational learning is the very basic level of education to any successful human resource development in any successful country. This implies that for a clear take off, investment in the formative years of learning for our children is fundamental. To ensure that this early opportunity in learning is seized, language skills are key. The interaction between parenting styles and language acquisition in early childhood education settings have not adequately been addressed, especially in the local context. Understanding how these environments complement or conflict with parenting practices could enhance the findings. The study therefore sought to establish the effect of authoritative parenting style on acquisition of language skills among pre-school children in Central division, Trans Nzoia County. The study provided insights into how different parenting styles impact the development of language skills in early childhood. The study was anchored on Ecological Systems Theory. The target population was the pre-primary learners and their Pre-school two Parents and Pre-primary Children a total of 384. A sample of 195 respondents was selected through the Yamane (1967) sample determination formula. The findings revealed that authoritative parenting style was a significant positive predictor of language acquisition. The study concluded that authoritative parenting style affects language acquisition skills in Central Division, Trans Nzoia County, Kenya. The recommends that since authoritative parenting balances warmth and structure, promoting these methods can improve children's language development. The programs should focus on effective communication techniques and positive reinforcement strategies. Integrate parenting style awareness into early childhood development policies

and curricula. Teachers and caregivers should be trained to support parents in adopting authoritative practices. Schools and early education centres play a critical role in shaping children's environments. By incorporating family engagement programs that promote authoritative practices, the broader community can support optimal language acquisition outcomes.

I. INTRODUCTION

Families play a crucial role in shaping early childhood habits, skills, and behaviours (Salavera, Usán, & Quilez-Robres, 2022). The family serves as the first social environment children encounter, and parenting styles, along with the family atmosphere, subtly influence the development of children's empathy (Zhang, Yang, & Li, 2019). Research suggests that children may observe and learn from their parents' behaviour, adopting antagonistic or punitive strategies, which can lead to the use of aggressive tactics, both physical and relational, in interactions with peers (Kawabata, Alink, Tseng, Ijzendoorn, & Crick, 2011).

Parenting style encompasses the collective ideas, emotions, and behaviours exhibited by parents in the process of raising their children, forming a relatively stable behavioral pattern (Lin & Ye, 2020). American psychologist D. Baumrind studied how varying degrees of parental restrictions in different family environments influence children's socialization. She evaluated parenting behaviours based on control, maturity demands, clarity in parent-child interactions, and parenting styles, classifying them into three types: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive (Wang, 2009).

According to McKerby and Martin, Baumrind's parenting styles can be understood through two dimensions of parent-child interaction: responsiveness and demandingness. The combination of these dimensions results in four ideal types of parenting: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and dismissive (Xue & Gao, 2021). Authoritative parenting emphasizes both high responsiveness and high demands, respecting children's individuality, meeting their needs promptly, while setting certain expectations. Authoritarian parenting involves low responsiveness and high demands, where parents impose strict rules based on their own views and engage in minimal communication with the child (Guo, 2015).

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study sought to determine the effect of authoritative parenting style on acquisition of language skills among pre-school children in Central division, Trans Nzoia County.

III. ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory was revised by Morrison (2015) and received some support from Delke (2014) Process Model about things that determine how to do parenting. These two theories show the existence of a very complicated influence between the variables used in the study. Morrison (2015) proposed the system that views a child's growth from an ecological point of view. This idea is concerned with how a child develops while being influenced by the system that shapes his or her environment. Each of the five environmental layers identified by Morrison (2015) is believed to have an effect on a child's development. These environmental layers are the microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem environments. Nevertheless, the environmental layer known as the microsystem is the main focus of this study because it has a direct relationship to the research variables. The key independent variables for the current study are parental practices, sociodemographic traits, and the microsystem environment.

Duke (2016) argues that the interaction child receives from the immediate surrounding and the close social

interaction with his/her parents and the environment found at home is what forms the microsystem for the child. The most significant influence to the child is caused by this environment within the microsystem. The behavior and character of the child is greatly influenced by the parents as noted by Bronfenbrenner and the child also has the capacity to affect how their guardians behave. For instance, a child who is very a friendly and keeps attention to issues will likely evoke some good reactions from parents, but a child who easily irritates and destroys things makes the parents to be very impatient with them and will always be very strict with them and many times will punish them.

Bronfenbrenner's theory, postulates that child's development is affected by the experiences they have in a microsystem setting. For example, parents should increase their interaction with their children by showing them how to behave through talking to them and also assisting them to know how to read and write. Based on Morrison, (2015) argument, the primary engine for the child's development is the experiences that they receive from their parents and other people who are important to them in the microsystem settings. The standard of the microsystem formation within the child environment will always rely on the standards of supporting opposite influence that is given by the people within the system especially the parents. It is therefore imperative to conclude that the general child development is influenced by the microsystem environment which has a significant influence on the wellbeing and the performance of the child.

The new analysis has important implications for Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. This method acknowledges that kids don't grow up on their own; rather, they get help from their family, their school, and society as a whole. It recognizes that parents, who give children a lasting sense of care, should have the primary basic influence on their development, together with the school and instructors, who also have a strong and consistent substantial influence. The greatest development in a child's emotion is influenced by the family. This theory postulates that the development and character of the child is influenced by the way they interact with his/her parents and the surrounding environment. The variables under socio-demographic that are being

studied comprises the environment from which the development of the child takes place.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

A recent meta-analysis (Pinquart & Kauser, 2017) revealed that authoritative parenting, characterized by high levels of warmth and control, is linked to better youth adjustment, including fewer behavioural problems, across various cultures and ethnic groups such as White, Hispanic, Asian, and African American. In contrast, authoritarian parenting showed the opposite effect. Despite differences in socialization goals and practices across cultures, children with parents who are warm, firm, and supportive of autonomy generally experience more positive outcomes. Mexican American (MA) and Chinese American (CA) families represent two of the largest and fastest-growing ethnic minority groups in the U.S. (Pew Research Center, 2017).

Parents who are authoritative make rules and force them on their children so as to be followed and would support their authority of the parents after justification and after being explained well why the rule have been formulated (Baumrind, 2016). Baumrind went on to claim that the authoritative is most effective method of raising children. These cadres of parents are distinctively kind and sensitive to the needs of their children

Baumrind (2016) opines that authoritative parents are usually warm to their young ones, and open to challenge or questioning from them, as offer their children affection and encourage them to pursue their interests. They further state that this group of parents exhibit love and affection and equally demand results and targets from their children. Induction, explanations of their behaviours, two-way communication, and promotion of independence help them acquire these demands, nevertheless. According to Spera (2015), parents who support their children's academic success may explain their goals and decisions to their children by saying something like.

Steinberg (2014) states that authoritative parents are keen to how their young one behave and do not hastate to correct them at the space albeit, with a lot of restrain

and control. Additionally, these groups of parenting style exert rigorous yet reasonable control over their kids' behaviour. They are also aggressive, but not in a controlling or intrusive way like authoritarian parents. They use supportive rather than punitive ways of discipline.

A recent meta-analysis found that authoritative parenting (high warmth and high control) is associated with youth's better adjustment (e.g., fewer behavioral problems) across cultures and ethnic groups (i.e., White, Hispanic, Asian, and African American), whereas the opposite relations were found for authoritarian parenting (Pinquart & Kauser, 2017). Thus, despite cultural variations in socialization goals and practices, children whose parents are warm, firm, and supportive of their autonomy tend to exhibit better outcomes than their peers. Mexican American (MA) and Chinese American (CA) families are two of the largest and fastest-growing ethnic minority groups in the U.S. (Pew Research Center, 2017).

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a survey research design because it was appropriate for gathering quantitative data on people's views, beliefs, habits, or any social or educational difficulties (Orodho & Kombo, 2014). This study population comprised of parents of pre-schoolers and their children in the 18 preschools in Central Division of Trans Nzoia County a total of 256 and 128 respondents respectively. The Yamane (1967) formula was used to determine the sample size respondents hence, 195 respondents. The questionnaires were utilized as research tools focused on the study's goals. A letter of recommendation was received by the researcher from Mount Kenya University. The County Education Office then gave the researcher permission to distribute the surveys to the sampling schools. This determined the degree to which the questionnaire consistently produced the same replies. The pilot research's results showed a coefficient of 0.734, which was higher than the required 0.7, and the instrument was consequently judged dependable for the study. Additionally, it involved the collection of pertinent data from diverse sources, ensuring accuracy and comprehensiveness, and identifying and rectifying errors, inconsistencies, and missing values in the dataset to ensure data

quality. Subsequently, the quantitative data gathered underwent coding and entry into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), followed by analysis using descriptive measures such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, as well as regression analysis.

VI. RESULTS

The descriptive statistics provide an overview of how parents perceive their attentiveness and emotional engagement with their children, based on a 4-point Likert scale (assuming 1 is "strongly disagree" and 4 is "strongly agree"). Results of the questionnaire's descriptive statistics on authoritative parenting style are shown in Tables 4.1.

Table 4.1 Authoritative parenting and language acquisition skills

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
I pay attention to my child's needs and feelings:	2.75	.893
Before asking my child to do something, I think what she or he would like to do.	2.81	.953
I describe to my child how I feel about his or her positive or negative behaviour:	2.76	.944
I urge my child to discuss his or her issues and feelings:	3.02	.919
Even if my child disagrees with me, I encourage her to freely "speak her mind":	3.03	.983
I provide the justifications for my hopes:	3.07	.973
I offer my child support and compassion when they're upset:	2.91	.914

Table 4.1 paying attention to the child's needs and feelings (Mean = 2.75, SD = .893) on average, parents tend to agree with the statement that they are mindful of their child's needs and emotions, but the score is closer to "neutral." The moderate standard deviation (.893) suggests some variation, with parents differing in their attentiveness to their children's feelings. Considering the child's preferences before asking them to do something (Mean = 2.81, SD = .953) parents generally indicate they consider their child's desires, with a mean slightly above the midpoint. The standard deviation (.953) suggests slightly higher variability, indicating that while some parents may always

consider their child's perspective, others do so less consistently.

Describing feelings about the child's behavior (Mean = 2.76, SD = .944) parents somewhat agreed that they express their feelings regarding their child's behavior, whether positive or negative. The mean is similar to other items, suggesting that parents often communicate their emotions, but there is variability (SD = .944) in how often or consistently this occurs. Urging the child to discuss issues and feelings (Mean = 3.02, SD = .919) with a mean of 3.02, parents tend to agree that they encourage their children to discuss their issues and feelings, indicating a stronger tendency to foster open communication. The standard deviation (.919) shows some variability, but less than in previous statements.

Encouraging the child to "speak her mind" even if they disagree (Mean = 3.03, SD = .983) Parents generally agree (Mean = 3.03) with allowing their children to freely express their opinions, even when they differ. The relatively higher standard deviation (.983) shows greater diversity in responses, with some parents being more permissive than others. Providing justifications for their expectations (Mean = 3.07, SD = .973) this item has the highest mean (3.07), suggesting that most parents explain the reasoning behind their expectations. However, the standard deviation (.973) again reflects variability, indicating that some parents may not always provide such justifications.

Offering support and compassion when the child is upset (Mean = 2.91, SD = .914) Parents tend to agree that they offer emotional support when their child is upset, with a mean closer to 3. The standard deviation (.914) is moderate, suggesting that while most parents show compassion, there are differences in the degree or consistency of this support. Across these statements, the mean scores range from 2.75 to 3.07, showing a general trend towards agreement but often near the neutral midpoint. The variability, as reflected by standard deviations, indicates that parental behaviours and attitudes towards emotional engagement and communication with their children are not uniform. Some parents are more consistently attentive and supportive, while others may be less so.

VII. REGRESSION

This study adopted a linear regression technique to help to estimate the influence of parenting styles on language acquisition skills in Trans Nzoia West Sub County, Kenya. Table 4.2 illustrates the outcome

Table 4.2: Regression Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Intercept	2.091	.592		3.534	.001
Authoritative	.602	.122	.383	4.925	.000

Table 4.2 revealed that the constant represents the predicted value of the dependent variable when the independent variable (Authoritative) is equal to zero. In this case, the intercept is 2.091, which is statistically significant since the p-value is 0.001 (less than the typical alpha level of 0.05). This indicates that the intercept is different from zero.

The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.602 indicates that for every one-unit increase in the "Authoritative" variable, the dependent variable increases by 0.602 units, holding all else constant. This relationship is statistically significant because the p-value is less than 0.05 (p = 0.000). The standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.383) shows the relative strength of this variable's contribution to the model. A Beta of 0.383 suggests a moderately strong, positive relationship between the "Authoritative" variable and the dependent variable. Standardized coefficients allow for comparison across variables on a standardized scale, meaning the "Authoritative" variable contributes about 38.3% to the variance in the dependent variable relative to the other variables in the model (if there were more variables).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide evidence to support the hypothesis that authoritative parenting has a significant positive influence on language skill

acquisition among children in Trans Nzoia West Sub County. Statistical analysis revealed a strong correlation between authoritative parenting practices—characterized by high responsiveness, warmth, and clear communication—and enhanced language skills in children.

RECOMMENDATION

Children raised in authoritative environments demonstrated better vocabulary, comprehension, and overall language proficiency, which could be attributed to the supportive, structured, and stimulating nature of such parenting. In light of these findings, it is recommended that efforts to promote effective parenting practices in the region emphasize the benefits of authoritative approaches for fostering children's language development. Further research could explore the long-term impacts of authoritative parenting on other areas of child development, such as social and academic success.

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