



Parental Child-Rearing Practices as Correlates of Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students in Ilorin East, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study adopted a descriptive research design of a correlation type. The population comprised all secondary school students in Ilorin East. The target population comprised all secondary school students in Ilorin East Local Government Area. Simple random sampling techniques were used to select four public and two private secondary schools, of which 150 students participated in this study. A researcher-designed questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Three research questions were answered. Item-by-item mean analysis was used to answer Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 was answered using percentage analysis. Research question 3 was transformed into a hypothesis and tested using Multiple Linear Regression at a 0.05 level of significance. The finding of the study showed that more autonomous and supportive parenting styles, such as Free-Range and Attachment Parenting, are beneficial for students' academic achievement, while over-involved Helicopter Parenting does not have a significant relationship. The study recommended that schools through the parent-teacher association should develop a community outreach initiative that educates parents on the benefits of autonomous and supportive parenting styles and the dangers of Helicopter Parenting style.

Keywords: Child-rearing Practices, Academic Achievement, Parenting Styles, Helicopter parenting, Free-range Parenting, Attachment Parenting

Introduction

Sociological consensus asserts that the family's primary functions include procreation to sustain societal continuity despite mortality or disability. Families are also crucial for socialisation, where younger generations acquire cognitive, linguistic, and behavioural skills,



assimilating their society's customs, norms, and values. Parental child-rearing practices are vital, providing support and protection, fulfilling emotional needs, and supplying essential physical necessities such as sustenance and shelter, thereby laying the groundwork for optimal academic achievement (Cleaver et al., 2011). This study investigated how parental child-rearing practices correlate with academic achievements among secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Parental Child-Rearing Practices

Parental child-rearing practices have profound implications on children's development and academic achievements. Among the various styles, Rettew (2021) highlighted three main styles Helicopter Parenting, Free-Range Parenting, and Attachment Parenting, which are particularly prominent and have distinct characteristics and impacts. Helicopter Parenting is characterized by an overprotective and excessively involved approach. Parents who adopt this style tend to micromanage their children's lives, closely monitoring and controlling their activities and decisions (Macias, 2019). While the intention behind Helicopter Parenting is often to protect and support children, it can lead to several negative outcomes. Research has shown that children raised under this style may struggle with independence, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). The lack of autonomy can hinder their ability to develop resilience and coping mechanisms, which are crucial for academic and personal success. Moreover, such children might experience heightened anxiety and stress due to the constant pressure and high expectations set by their parents (Odenweller et al., 2014). Although Helicopter Parenting can ensure immediate academic success through parental guidance, it often fails to equip children with the necessary skills to navigate challenges independently in the long run.

In stark contrast, Free-Range Parenting emphasizes independence and self-reliance. Lindke and Oppenheimer (2022) stated that parents who follow this approach allow their children considerable freedom to explore, take risks, and learn from their experiences. This parenting style is rooted in the belief that children learn best through direct experiences and should be given the autonomy to make their own



decisions. Empirical studies suggest that Free-Range Parenting can foster critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and self-confidence in children (Wildenauer, 2024; Van Camp, 2022; Grolnick, 2009). By encouraging children to take responsibility for their actions and decisions, this style promotes a sense of agency and empowerment. However, critics argue that excessive freedom without adequate guidance can expose children to risks and potential harm (Stiepoek, 2016). It is essential for parents practising Free-Range Parenting to strike a balance between providing freedom and ensuring safety and support.

Attachment Parenting is centred on building a strong emotional bond between parents and children. Miller and Commons (2010) noted that this approach involves responsive and nurturing behaviours, such as physical closeness, empathetic communication, and consistent emotional support. The primary goal of Attachment Parenting is to create a secure and trusting environment where children feel loved and valued. Research indicates that children raised with Attachment Parenting tend to have better emotional regulation, social competence, and academic performance (Ekeh, 2012; Mares & McMahon, 2020; Brumariu, 2015). The secure attachment formed in early childhood provides a solid foundation for children to explore their environment and engage in learning activities with confidence. However, some critics argue that Attachment Parenting can lead to over-dependence if not practised with a balance of nurturing and fostering independence (AG et al., 2014). Parents must encourage their children to develop autonomy while maintaining a supportive and loving relationship.

Several studies have shown that parental child-rearing practices significantly influence the developmental outcomes of children, including their academic achievements. For instance, Research indicates Helicopter Parenting often leads to limited autonomy for the children (Odenweller et al., 2014). Free-range parenting, on the other hand, emphasises independence and encourages children to explore and learn from their environment with minimal parental intervention (Skenazy, 2009). Attachment Parenting focuses on nurturing and building a strong emotional bond between parents and children, fostering a sense of security and support (Sears & Sears, 2001).

Conceptual Framework

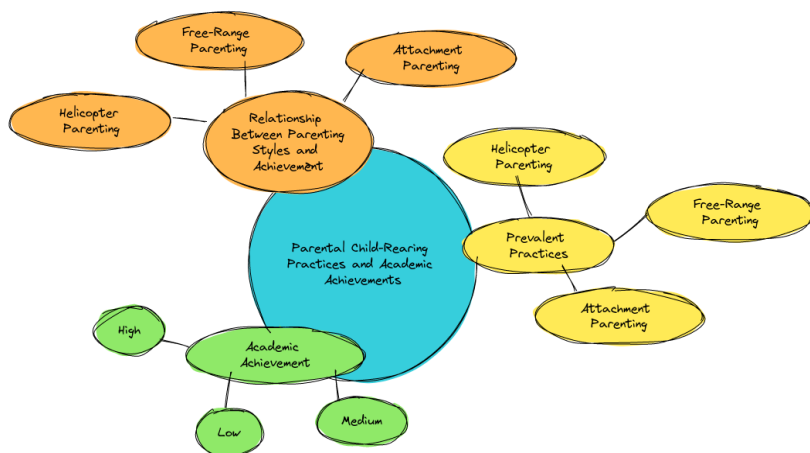


Figure 1: Parental Child-Rearing Practices and Academic Achievements
(Sources Authors' Framework)

The above conceptual framework shows the parental child-rearing practices and academic achievement as the major variables of interest. Different parenting evolves in the cause of child-rearing, irrespective of this, the major parenting style adopted by parents was characterised to be the child-rearing. This adopted child-rearing has significant influence on the academic achievement of a child. The conceptual framework give insight on the child-rearing practice that has significant influence on the academic achievement of a child.

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is a crucial measure of educational outcomes and student performance. In Ilorin East, the academic achievement of secondary school students varies widely, influenced by numerous factors including socioeconomic status, school resources, teacher quality, and parental involvement. Empirical studies have documented that students' academic performance often faces challenges such as inadequate educational infrastructure, high student-to-teacher ratios, and varying levels of parental support (Adebayo, 2019; Ayeni &



Adelabu, 2012). Despite these challenges, there are instances of high academic achievers, suggesting that other factors, possibly including effective parental child-rearing practices, play a significant role in determining student success. By systematically assessing the academic performance of students, this research aims to quantify achievement levels and identify patterns that may correlate with different parenting styles (Ogunlade & Adebayo, 2014).

Parental Child-Rearing Practices and Academic Achievement

Empirical evidence suggests a strong relationship between parenting styles and academic outcomes. Helicopter Parenting, which involves intense parental oversight and involvement, has been found to sometimes stifle children's independence and problem-solving skills, potentially leading to lower academic performance due to reduced self-motivation and resilience (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). Conversely, Free-Range Parenting, which promotes autonomy and self-directed learning, may enhance academic achievement by fostering critical thinking and independence (Grolnick, 2009). Attachment Parenting, with its focus on emotional security and parental support, is often associated with positive academic outcomes as it provides a stable and nurturing environment conducive to learning (Bretherton, 1992). In the specific context of Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria, this research seeks to empirically investigate how these parenting styles correlate with academic achievement among secondary school students. Previous studies in different cultural settings have shown varying results, making it essential to conduct localized research (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Grolnick, 2009; Ogunlade & Adebayo, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Academic achievement is a critical determinant of a student's future opportunities and successes, making it a significant area of interest for educators, policymakers, and researchers. Understanding the factors that contribute to or hinder academic performance is crucial for developing strategies that can enhance educational outcomes. Parental child-rearing practices are one such factor that potentially plays a significant role in shaping a student's academic performance. These practices include various aspects of parenting such as discipline, communication, involvement in school activities, and the provision of



educational resources at home. Each of these parenting styles has its unique strengths and potential drawbacks. Helicopter Parenting ensures close supervision and immediate academic support but can impede the development of independence and self-efficacy. Free-range parenting promotes autonomy and self-directed learning but requires careful balancing to avoid exposure to undue risks. Attachment Parenting fosters a secure emotional foundation, essential for overall development and academic success, but must be practised with an emphasis on nurturing independence.

In the context of secondary school students, understanding the nuanced impacts of these parenting styles is critical. The socio-economic and cultural environment plays a significant role in shaping the effectiveness of these practices. For instance, in resource-constrained settings, the protective nature of Helicopter Parenting might ensure immediate academic success, while the autonomy promoted by Free-Range Parenting might empower students to overcome systemic challenges. Similarly, the emotional support of Attachment Parenting could be vital in communities where educational stress and socio-economic pressures are prevalent.

In Ilorin East, Kwara State, the educational system faces numerous challenges, including limited resources, large class sizes, and varying levels of parental involvement. These challenges necessitate an understanding of how different child-rearing practices influence students' academic achievements to develop targeted interventions. This study aims to fill the gap in the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the correlation between parental child-rearing practices and academic performance among secondary school students in this region. By investigating this relationship, the research seeks to identify specific parental behaviours and attitudes that are most conducive to academic success.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine parental child-rearing practices as correlates of academic achievements among secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated:



1. The prevalent parental child-rearing practices among secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria
2. The level of academic achievement among secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria.
3. The relationship between parental child-rearing practices (Helicopter Parenting, Free-Range Parenting and Attachment Parenting) and academic achievement among secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What are the prevalent parental child-rearing practices among secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of academic achievement among secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria?
3. Is there a significant relationship between parental child-rearing practices (Helicopter Parenting, Free-Range Parenting and Attachment Parenting) and academic achievement among secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

H0₁: *There is no significant relationship between parental child-rearing practices (Helicopter Parenting, Free-Range Parenting and Attachment Parenting) and academic achievement among secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria.*

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design of a correlation type. The population of the study comprise all secondary school students in Ilorin East, Nigeria. The target population comprises all secondary school students 1 in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria. This is because they have sat for their J.S.S. III examination, which serves as a completion of their first stage of secondary school. There are ten (10) public schools and five (5) private secondary schools. Simple random sampling technique was used to select four public and two private secondary schools, of which 150 senior secondary school students participated in this study.

A researcher-designed questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire has two sections A and B. Section A elicit



the responses on child-rearing practices students have been exposed to from their parents or guardians. A four-point Likert type rating scale was used. A proformal was also used to collect the average academic performance of the respondents in the 2nd term examinations in 2024. The face validity was carried out by two experts in the field of Test and Measurement in the University of Ilorin. The reliability of the instrument used was ascertained using the Cronbach alpha method and 0.70 reliability coefficient was ascertained, which means the instrument was reliable according to reliability indices presented in George and Mallery (2018) reliability analysis article.

Item-by-item mean analysis was used to answer Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 was used to answer Research Question 2. Research Question 3 was transformed into hypothesis and tested using Multiple Linear Regression at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

To answer the research question, students' responses prevalent parental child-rearing practices among secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria. The decision as to the prevalence was based on the benchmark of 2.50; this was obtained by finding the average of the scale of measurement $(4+3+2+1)/4$. child-rearing practices with a weighted mean of 1.00 – 2.49 were considered not prevalent and those with a 2.50-4.00 weighted mean were considered as prevalent. The result was as shown in Table 1:

Research Question 1: *What are the prevalent parental child-rearing practices among secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria?*



Table 1: Prevalent Parental Child-Rearing Practices among Secondary School Students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria

S/N	Parental Child-Rearing Practices	Weighted Mean	Remark
1	Helicopter Parenting	2.56	Prevalent
2	Free-Range Parenting	3.02	Prevalent
3	Attachment Parenting	3.28	Most Prevalent

Table 1 presents the findings on the prevalent parental child-rearing practices among secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria. The data, which include weighted mean scores for three types of parenting practices, indicate that Attachment Parenting is the most prevalent with a mean score of 3.28, followed by Free-Range Parenting with a mean score of 3.02, and Helicopter Parenting with lowest mean score of 2.56. This suggests that among the parents of secondary school students in this region, there was a stronger tendency to adopt Attachment Parenting practices, characterized by nurturing and building strong emotional bonds, compared to the more controlling nature of Helicopter Parenting or the independence-promoting approach of Free-Range Parenting.

Research Question 2: *What is the level of academic achievement among secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria?*

Table 2: Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria

Levels	Cutoff Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	0-39	43	28.7
Average	40-69	85	56.6
High	70-100	22	14.7
Total		150	100.0

Table 2 illustrates the level of academic achievement among secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria, based on a fieldwork survey. The academic achievements are categorized into



three levels: Low, Average, and High, with respective cutoff scores of 0-39, 40-69, and 70-100. The data show that the majority of students fell within the Average category, comprising 56.6% (85 students) of the total sample. Meanwhile, 28.7% (43 students) are in the Low achievement category, and 14.7% (22 students) achieve High scores. This distribution indicates that while a significant proportion of students performed at an average level, a noteworthy percentage still struggled academically, and only a small fraction attained high academic success.

Hypothesis Testing

H0₁: *There is no significant relationship between parental child-rearing practices (Helicopter Parenting, Free-Range Parenting and Attachment Parenting) and academic achievement among secondary school students*

In order to test this hypothesis, responses of students' responses that addressed each parental child-rearing practice (Helicopter Parenting, Free-Range Parenting and Attachment Parenting) and academic achievement were collated on statistical coding sheets separately. The set of data was subjected to Multiple Linear Regression Analysis. The result is depicted below:

Table 3: Regression Analysis Showing the Parental Child-rearing Practices (Helicopter Parenting, Free-Range Parenting and Attachment Parenting) and Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1413.525	3	235.587	16.471	0.01
Residual	2760.555	146	14.303		
Total	4174.080	149			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Achievement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Helicopter Parenting, Free-Range Parenting and Attachment Parenting

*P<0.05

Table 3 presents the relationship between parental child-rearing practices (Helicopter Parenting, Free-Range Parenting, and Attachment Parenting) and academic achievement among secondary school students



in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria. The model shows a significant F-value of 16.471 and a p-value of 0.01, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that the combined effect of the three parenting styles significantly predicted academic achievement. These results imply that parental child-rearing practices accounted for a significant portion of the variance in students' academic achievement. The significant F-ratio indicates that the model fits the data well and that the predictors (Helicopter Parenting, Free-Range Parenting, and Attachment Parenting) are useful in explaining the variations in academic achievement among the students studied.

Table 4: Model Summary Showing Parental Child-rearing Practices (Helicopter Parenting, Free-Range Parenting and Attachment Parenting) and Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.58	0.33	0.32	3.78

The result in Table 4 reveals that parental child-rearing practices accounted for 0.33 representing 33% of the variation in academic achievement of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. The relative contribution of each domain to the model is presented in Table 5:



Table 5: Relative Contributions of Parental Child-rearing Practices (Helicopter Parenting, Free-Range Parenting and Attachment Parenting) and Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria

Model	(B)	Std. Error	(Beta)	(t)	Sig.
(Constant)	20.490	2.326		8.808	0.000
Helicopter Parenting	-0.153	0.105	-0.094	-1.462	0.145
Free-Range Parenting	0.216	0.067	0.200	3.223	0.001
Attachment Parenting	0.606	0.115	0.326	5.251	0.000

Table 5 presents the results of a regression analysis examining the relative contributions of different parental child-rearing practices-Helicopter Parenting, Free-Range Parenting, and Attachment Parenting-on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria. The constant term had a significant positive coefficient ($B = 20.490$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a baseline level of academic achievement. Among the parenting styles, Free-Range Parenting ($B = 0.216$, $\beta = 0.200$, $p = 0.001$) and Attachment Parenting ($B = 0.606$, $\beta = 0.326$, $p < 0.001$) were both positively and significantly associated with academic achievement, with Attachment Parenting having the strongest effect. Conversely, Helicopter Parenting showed a negative but non-significant association ($B = -0.153$, $\beta = -0.094$, $p = 0.145$) with academic achievement. The results suggest that more autonomous and supportive parenting styles (Free-Range and Attachment) were beneficial for students' academic performance, whereas over-involved parenting (Helicopter) did not have a significant impact.

Discussion

Firstly, the finding that parents of secondary school students in Ilorin East tended to adopt Attachment Parenting practices, which emphasize nurturing and building strong emotional bonds, rather than



the controlling nature of Helicopter Parenting or the independence-promoting approach of Free-Range Parenting, reflects a preference for close, emotionally supportive relationships with their children. This aligns with a study by Schiffrin et al. (2014), which found that college students with parents practising Attachment Parenting reported higher life satisfaction and lower levels of depression and anxiety compared to those with Helicopter Parents. However, this contrasts with the findings of Skenazy and Haidt (2010), who advocate for Free-Range Parenting, suggesting that granting children more autonomy and independence fosters resilience and problem-solving skills, potentially leading to greater long-term well-being.

Furthermore, the finding that 56.6% of students performed at an average level of academic achievement, 28.7% struggled academically, and only 14.7% attained high academic success, highlights the significant variation in academic performance among students in Ilorin East. This aligns with the study by Sakız et al. (2021), which found that students' socioeconomic status, entrance exam performance, perceived instructional behaviour, and psychosocial climate at the beginning of university life are positively associated with their academic achievement throughout college, indicating that various factors contribute to different levels of student performance. However, this finding contrasts with the research by Reynoso and Méndez (2018), which emphasizes the importance of executive functions as predictors of academic achievement, suggesting that behavioural regulation plays a crucial role in students' success, potentially leading to different distributions of academic performance.

Finally, the finding that more autonomous and supportive parenting styles, such as Free-Range and Attachment Parenting, are beneficial for students' academic performance, while over-involved Helicopter Parenting does not have a significant relationship, aligns with the study by Brown and Iyengar (2008). They found that behavioural control and psychological control by parents directly influenced student achievement, with adolescents' perceived level of independence positively correlating with academic success. Conversely, this finding contrasts with the study by Lamichhane et al. (2023), which concluded that parenting style does not significantly influence academic



performance among adolescents, suggesting other contributing factors might play a more pivotal role.

Conclusion

The study has empirically showcased a significant link between parenting styles and students' academic performance. It has highlighted that supportive and involved parenting practices, such as monitoring homework, engaging in school activities, and maintaining open communication, positively influence students' academic achievements. Conversely, less involved or overly controlling parenting styles do not contribute significantly to academic success. These underscore the importance of balanced and supportive parental involvement in fostering an environment conducive to academic excellence, suggesting that educational policies and interventions should encourage parents to adopt practices that support their children's educational endeavours while promoting autonomy and resilience.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forward based on the findings:

1. State government should encourage schools and community centres to offer parenting workshops that emphasize the benefits of Attachment Parenting practices. These workshops should provide strategies for building strong emotional bonds with children, such as active listening, empathy, and consistent support, while also highlighting the importance of allowing children to develop independence within a supportive framework.
2. School management should implement targeted academic support programmes within schools to address the diverse needs of students. These programs could include after-school tutoring for struggling students, enrichment activities for high achievers, and peer mentoring systems where average-performing students can receive guidance from their peers. Additionally, regular assessments and personalized learning plans can help ensure that each student receives the appropriate level of support and challenge.
3. Through the parent-teacher association, school should develop a community outreach initiative that educates parents on the benefits of autonomous and supportive parenting styles, such as Free-Range



and Attachment Parenting. This initiative could include seminars, informational pamphlets, and online resources that provide practical tips for fostering independence in children, such as giving them age-appropriate responsibilities, encouraging problem-solving, and supporting their interests and hobbies. Additionally, creating support groups for parents to share experiences and strategies can reinforce these positive parenting practices.

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