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## FAMILY DYNAMICS AND PARENTING PROBLEMS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN UYO METROPOLIS OF AKWA IBOM STATE

**Abstract:** This study was carried out to investigate family dynamics and parenting problems of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis of Akwa Ibom State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The survey design was adopted for the study. The population of 7412 students (2016/2017 academic session) with a sample of 200 students selected from 4 public secondary schools within the study area. A researcher – made questionnaire called “Family Dynamics and Parenting Problems of Secondary School Students Questionnaire (FDPPSSQ)” was used to elicit data from respondents. The research instrument has a 4-point rating scale. The Pearson Product Moment (PPM) Correlation Coefficient of 0.87 ascertained the reliability of instrument for use in the study. After the administration, scoring and collation of the instrument, the data obtained were subjected to Independent t-test. All the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the result of this study, it is concluded that Secondary School students’ in Uyo Metropolis Area differ significantly in terms of parenting problem based on parent-child relationship, parent level of education and family size of students. It is recommended that Seminars, workshops, and symposia on family size should be organized for parents. This will make them aware of family size as it influences secondary school students, thus parents will also control the family size through birth control mechanisms.

**Keyword:** Family dynamic, parenting problems and Students.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The family remains a strong social structure within the society. It is a social unit where people learn important life skills and beliefs (Sam, 2010). Moreover, the family is a group of people affiliated either by consanguinity or by marriage (Debra, 2013). Elkin and Handel (2008) describe family as the first unit with which children have a continuous contact and the first context in which socialization patterns develop.

Family pediatrics report (2003) explained that the development of children is significantly influenced by interpersonal relationships within the family. Affection and protection are evidently crucial for the development and growth of the child (Debra, 2013). The kind of care and attention children receive during their early years of life affect the way they handle important issues. This ability equips children for establishing later ties with people outside the family (Mahalihali, 2016).

According to Goldsmith (2000) children learn their attitudes primarily from their parents. Family plays a fundamental role in forming the values of children. The ability to cope with and adjust to life problems and demands of the society is based upon the psychological foundations of early family experiences. Elkin and Handel (2008) also noted that throughout the children's dependent years, families provide them with food, clothing shelter, a safe and clean environment, adequate supervision and access to necessary health care and education. In families, children also receive support, feel loved, valued and competent (Denton, 2002). The Family dynamics have direct Influence on the Children.

Family dynamics are the patterns of relationship or interactions between family members. Each family system and its dynamics are unique, although there are some common patterns (Denton, 2002). Becvar (2002) observed that even when there is little or no present contact with family, a young person will have been influenced by dynamics of the family in earlier years. Family dynamics often have a strong influence on the way young people see themselves, others and the world, and this influence their relationship, behaviours and well-being. An understanding of the impact of family dynamics on parenting styles would help parents to recognize the driving forces behind children's growth and development (Becvar, 2002).

Becvar (2002) also highlighted some of family dynamics which influence parenting lifestyles as include: Nature of the parent's relationship, the family size, parental education, personalities of family members, absence of parents, type of family system, family values, culture and ethnicity and dynamics of previous generations. Family dynamics may influence parenting problems of children in both positive and negative ways. Parenting or child rearing is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social financial and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood (Davis, 2000).

Parenting refers to the aspects of raising a child aside from the biological relationship (Grey, 2016). Therefore, parenting problems are issues surrounding how parents raise their children (Sara, 2010). Parenting practice is a specific behaviour that a parent uses in raising a child (Ashish, 2014). According to Sara (2010), a common practice intended to promote academic success is reading books to the child. Meanwhile, child rearing is associated with many problems. This is because; the cognitive potential, social skills and behavioural functioning a child acquires during the early years are fundamentally dependent on the quality of their interactions with their parents. According to Robert (2008), the major parenting problems center on how to maintain good parental relationship with the children, how to spend quality time with the child and problem of communication in the family. In support of these assertions, Ashish (2014) also observed that encouraging desirable behaviour, praise and encouragement, non-verbal attention, are skills most parents are yet to gain.

Parent-child relationship is a type of relationship that promotes the wellbeing of the child. According to Grey (2016), parent-child relationship involves emotional, physical, social financial, and spiritually to the child. The nature of parent-child relationship contributes to the Child's physical, emotional status, social and cognitive development. Grey (2006) noted that the rising incidence of behavioural problems among children could result from poor parents-children relationship. Parents-children relationship enhances sound emotional, cognitive and social development of the children. Poor parent-children relationship has led to inability of parents to train their children to become social adjusted to life demands and the demands of the society.

Educated parents are more likely to read their children's book than their less-educated counter parents, and enhance their children's development and human capacity by drawing on their own advanced language skills in communicating with their children. They are more likely to expose their children to those things they need to know in life (Sara, 2005). Well-educated parents help in socializing their children in order to enable them attend high level of academic success. According to Egalite (2016), most parents who are less-educated lack the basic parenting skills and this has contributed to poor parenting styles which influence students academic achievements in schools.

Melissa (2013) observed that the number of children in the family and their ages have implications on parenting. In fact the greater the number of children, the greater the responsibilities expected of the parents (Melissa, 2013). Large family size is typically associated with the constellation of undesirable family conditions involving poor role models (examples, poor parental relationship, parental criminality and indiscipline) (Fischer, 2004). According to Fischer (2015), large family size leads to inability of parents to supervise their children.

Parents have problems of managing misbehavior of their ward, anticipating and planning for their children, self-regulation skills, parental support skills and many others (Sara, 2010). This is why Davies (2000) noted that the home determines the emotional, physical, social, and spiritual well being the individual. Consequently, the type of ideas, values and norms exposed to the child by the parents contribute to the well being of the child. Having a close-knit and supportive family provides emotional support, economic wellbeing and increases overall health of the child. A family's social support is one of the main ways that family positively impacts on children rearing. Thus, family dynamics may contribute to preventing problems of secondary school students. Therefore, this study examines the influence of parent-child relationship, parental level of education and family size as indices of family dynamics and parenting problems of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

It has been observed that many parents seem to be having problems in bringing up their children. Parents are often observed to be complaining about their children's behavior as well as seeking for help from teachers and significant others. The problems parents have in parenting seem to be different from one family to another. Family dynamics which are the patterns of relationship or interactions between family members may sometimes influence every aspect of children's growth and development. These include family size, parent-child relationship, parents' education, family values among others.

Hence, the problem of this study is to investigate how parent-child relationship, level of education of parents and family size may influence the parenting problems of the secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis.

## **3. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate family dynamics and parenting problems of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis. The specific objectives include:

1. To determine the influence of parent-child relationship on parenting problems of secondary school students
2. To determine the influence of parental level of education on parenting problems of secondary school students.
3. To determine the influence of family size on parenting problems of secondary school students.

#### **4. Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. How does parents-children relationship influence parenting problems of secondary school students?
2. How does parental level of education influence parenting problems of secondary school students?
3. How does family size influence parenting problems of secondary school students?

#### **5. Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant influence of parent-child relationship on parenting problems of secondary school students.
2. There is no significant influence of parental level of education on parenting problems of secondary school students.
3. There is no significant influence of family size on parenting problems of secondary school students.

#### **6. Significance of the Study**

The result of this study would be beneficial to students, teachers, parents, Government and members of the public. The findings of this study would help to call the attention of students to the influence of family dynamics such as parents-children relationship, parental education and family size on parenting problems. This will create an awareness in this area which may assist in developing coping strategies.

The result of this study would enable teachers to understand that every child is unique, thereby exposing the teachers to the family dynamics that could affect the growing child. The study would help the teachers to understand and appreciate the influence of family dynamics on the students and provide them with the ideas needed to guide the students to actualize their potentials.

Parents would be enlightened in building self-esteem in their children. The result of the findings would assist parents to understand that children need love, affection, care and attention which are necessary for social, emotional, physical and mental development and adjustment.

The Government would be sensitized on the need for them to initiate programmes in the community that would foster proper child upbringing such as community based counselling programmes, family life enhancement programmes among others.

Finally, the results of these findings would help to create awareness to the members of the general public on the influence of family dynamics on parenting problems of secondary school students and social well-being. Thus, the study would provide the members of the community with enough information on how to support growth and development of the children in the society.

## 7. Methodology

The survey design was adopted to determine the influence of family dynamics and parenting problems of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis Area of Akwa Ibom State. The survey design allowed for selection of sample that would represent a large population such as in this study. The sample of this study consisted of 200 Senior Secondary School students were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. In each sampled school, 50 students were selected to take part as respondents from 4 secondary schools within the study area.

## 8. Instrumentation

The researcher – made questionnaire entitled “Family Dynamics and Parenting Problems of Secondary School Students Questionnaire (FDPPSSQ)” was used to elicit responses from the subjects. Experts in Test and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundation, Guidance and Counseling, Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, critically scrutinized the contents of the questionnaire. The validators effected necessary corrections on the draft copy before accepting it suitable for further procedures. The instrument has two sections. Section A collects respondents’ demographic data, while section B has 18 items which measures the relationship between family dynamics and parenting problems of Secondary School Students. The instrument had a 4–point rating scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).

## 9. RESULT PRESENTATION

### Hypothesis 1 (Ho):

There is no significant influence of parent-child relationship on parenting problems of secondary school students.

**Table 1:** Independent t-test Analysis of the Responses of the Influence of Parent-Child relationship on Parenting Problems of Secondary School Students.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-crit	df
Parent-child relationship	100	5.01	4.80	2.12	1.96	198
Parenting Problems	100	4.45	3.69			

Field Work: 2018. Significant  $P < 0.05$  alpha level,  $t\text{-cal} = 2.12$ ,  $t\text{-crit} = 1.96$ ,  $df = 198$ .

Table 1 indicates that the calculated value of the independent t-test of 2.12 is greater than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and at 198 degree of freedom. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant influence of parent-child relationship on parenting problems of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis.

**Hypothesis 2 (HO<sub>2</sub>):**

There is no significant influence of parental level of education on parenting problems of secondary school students.

**Table 2:** Independent t-test Analysis of the Responses of the Influence of Parental level of Education on parenting problems of Secondary School Students.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-crit	Df
Parent-child relationship	100	5.50	4.90	2.20	1.96	198
Parenting Problems	100	4.87	3.70			

Field Work 2018. Significant at P<0.05 alpha level, t-cal=2.20, t-crit= 1.96, df=198

Table 2 shows that the calculated value of the independent t-test of 2.20 exceed the critical table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and at 198 degree of freedom. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant influence of parental level of Education on parenting problems of secondary school students in secondary schools in Uyo Metropolis.

**Hypothesis 3 (Ho<sub>3</sub>)**

There is no significant influence of family size on parenting problems of secondary school students.

**Table 3:** Independent t-test Analysis of the Responses of the Influence of Family size on Parenting Problems of Secondary Students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-crit	df
Family size	100	12.7	10.59	3.10	1.96	198
Parenting Problems	100	4.42	3.40			

Field Work 2018. Significant P< 0.05 alpha level, t-cal =3.10, t- crit = 1.96, df=198.

Table 3 indicates that the calculated independent t-test value of 3.10 is greater than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and with 198 degree of freedom. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant influence of family size on parenting problems of secondary school students in secondary school in Uyo Metropolis.

**10. Discussion of Findings**

The results of findings in this study were discussed in this section based on the hypotheses used in guiding the study.

**Parent-Child Relationship on Parenting Problems**

The result in of findings revealed that there is a significant influence of parent- child relationship on parenting problems of secondary school students in secondary schools in Uyo Metropolis. This result is in line with the view of Grey (2006) who opined that parent-child relationship promotes the well-being of the child. The nature of parent-child relationship contributes to the child’s physical, emotional status, social and development. Sara (2010) also supported this result by observing that good relationship between parents and children promote sound moral development and good academic performance among secondary

school students. Therefore, from the above discussions, it is deduced that, there is a significant influence of parent-child relationship on parenting problems of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis of Akwa Ibom State.

### **Parental Level of Education on Parenting Problems**

The result of finding also indicated that there is a significant influence of parental level of education on parenting problems of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis. This result corroborates with the earlier study conducted by Egalites (2016) who posited that educated parents are more likely to read their children's books than less- educated parents, and this enhance their children's development and human capacity by drawing on their own advanced language skills in commenting with their children. Sara (2010) also opined that well-educated parents help in socializing their children in order to enable them attend high level of academic success. Thus, most parents who are less-educated lack the basic parenting skills and this may contribute to poor parenting styles which influence students academic achievement in schools. Therefore, it is deduced that there is a significant influence of parental level of education on parenting problems of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis of Akwa Ibom State.

### **Family Size on Parenting Problems**

The result of findings further revealed that there is a significant influence of family size on parenting problems of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis. This result agrees with the view of Melissa (2013) who opined that the number of children in the family and their ages have implications on parenting. The greater the member of children, the greater the responsibilities expected of the parents. Fischer (2015) also observed that large family size leads to inability of parents to supervise their children and this has tremendous effects on the children. Therefore, from the above discussion it is deduced that there is a significant influence of large family size on parenting problems of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis of Akwa IBom State.

## **11. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should set-up an understanding environment for their children at home so as to develop a positive parent-child relationship. This in the long-run will help to streamline parenting problems as it may influence their children.
2. Seminars, workshops, and symposia on family size should be organized for parents. This will make them aware of family size as it influences secondary school students, thus parents will also control the family size through birth control mechanism.

The government and other relevant agencies should create opportunities for parents to be properly educated. Knowledge gained from these educational processes will assist them in resolving parenting problems of secondary school students.

## 12. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that parent-child relationship, parental level of education and family size influence the parenting problems of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis of Akwa Ibom State.

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## FAMILY DYNAMICS AND PARENTING PROBLEMS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN UYO METROPOLIS QUESTIONNAIRE (FDPSSSQ).

### Section A

#### Student's Personal Data

**Instruction:** Please tick (✓) in the boxes provided as it applies to you.

1. Name of the School .....
2. Age: (A) 13-15years  (B) 16-18years  (C) 19years and Above
3. Class:.....
4. Parents' Level Education: (a) First school Leaving Certificate   
(b) WASC/GCE  (c) NCE/OND  (d) First Degree and above



**Section B**

**Instruction:** Please tick (✓) as appropriate to suit your choice of option/level of agreement or disagreement with the statements.

- Strongly Agree - SA  
 Agree - A  
 Disagree - D  
 Strongly Disagree - SD

S/N	Parent-Child Relationship	SA	A	D	SD
1	I have cordial relationship with my parents				
2	I Often felt relief because when I communicate my problems to my parents they proffer solution to them.				
3	My parents always spend quality time asking me questions about my education.				
4	My parents always encourage me to work hard; this is why I develop positive relationship with others.				
<b>B</b>	<b>Family Size</b>				
1	I am a member of a large family.				
2	My parents cannot take care of us because our family is large.				
3	I am a member of a small family.				
4	Most of my siblings are not educated because of the size our family.				

**SECTION C**

**Instruction:** This section is to be completed by parents.

S/N	Parenting Problems	SA	A	D	SD
1	I don't spend quality time with my child, due to the my nature of my work.				
2	I have difficulty setting up achievable goals for my child.				
3	I don't seem to have time to give necessary attention to my child whenever he/she needs me.				
4	I find it difficult to limit or stop my child's negative behavior				
5	I don't have the patience to give proper guidance to my child to overcome his emotional problems .				
6	I'm not always available to meet up with my child's spiritual obligation.				
7	I have difficulty acting as a role model to my child in the larger society.				
8	I rarely have time to teach my child how to perform household chores.				

9	I get too tired at the end of the day that I cannot check the academic works of my child at home.				
10	My schedule of work does not permit me to participate child's P.T. A Meeting in the school.				

**Biographical notes:**

**Abisola Oladeni Sakirudeen** was a graduate from University of Uyo where he had his Bachelor's Degree and Master Degree in Guidance and Counselling, in the Department of Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education. University of Uyo, Uyo Akwa Ibom State. His primary and Secondary schools are all from Lagos. He is from Ikire, Irewole Local Government of Osun State Nigeria.