

Parenting Strategies and School Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students in Boki Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine parenting strategies and school adjustment among senior secondary school students in Boki Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, three null hypotheses were generated to direct the study. Literature review was done according to the variables under study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample of five hundred and forty (540) respondents were selected for the study. The selection was done through the stratified random sampling and purposive sampling technique. The questionnaire titled Parenting Strategies and School Adjustment Questionnaire (PSSAQ) was the main instrument used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face and construct validation by three experts in Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Calabar. The reliability estimate of the instrument was established through the Cronbach alpha reliability method. The reliability coefficient ranges from .76 to .85. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was the statistical analysis technique adopted to test the hypotheses under study. All hypotheses were subjected to testing at .05 level of significance. The results of the analysis revealed that, Autocratic parenting strategy, democratic parenting strategy and laissez-faire parenting strategy significantly influence school adjustment of senior secondary school students. It was recommended among others that, the government through its enlightenment agencies such as National Orientation Agency and Non-governmental Organizations, should from time to time organize seminars and workshops to counsel parents on the choice of a better parenting strategy which can enhance adjustment in school.

Key word: Parenting, Strategies, School Adjustment, Maladjustment, Senior Secondary School Students

Introduction

Success in school depends to a large extent on the ability of the learners to adjust to the school environment. This has to do with learners' aligning or assimilating themselves to the norms or rules of the school system. Researchers are of the opinion that school adjustment is very necessary for any learner who intends to achieve academically (Erinson 2021, Kizoto 2016 & Kubey et al 2001). Regrettably, the school system especially the secondary school level these days, is marked by a high level of students' maladjustment. A careful observation of the daily activities will portray that students in the secondary schools neither adjust to conform to the school rules and regulations nor concentrate on their studies.

School maladjustment is understood as a set of behavioural, social and emotional difficulties that prevent students from meeting the expectations of the school context (Isangedighi in Abang (2010), Erinson 2021 & Iheanacho 2017). According to Jeffrey et al (2004), a maladjusted learner always posed danger to himself unconsciously due to the non-conformity to the school norms which always result to poor academic performance. This notwithstanding, many students in school not only find it difficult but quite impossible to adjust themselves to the norms or rules of the system. This automatically made them to be described as maladjusted. Maladjustment in school by students involves activities that could inhibit the child's academic performance positively. Its incorporate such acts as averting assignments and other school activities, loitering in the school during school hours, noise making in class, littering the school compound, unwilling to comply with teachers' instruction, truancy, rejecting help, missing school willingly, lack of co-operations with other learners and so on (Erojikwe in Abang 2010, Gaglo 2010 & Erinson 2021).

Maladjustment in school by learners is not without serious negative effects on school learning and achievement. Perhaps the non-conformity to the school norms by students would have been the reason for the poor performances in their school examination which has culminated to examination malpractices in both internal and external examinations, as noted by Abang and Amalu (2018) that, there are always direct and indirect negative consequences of any act of school maladjustment by learners which includes school dropout, cultism, absenteeism, vandalism, rioting and igniting protest in school.

To address the issue, several measures have been taken by different school authorities and stakeholders ranging from corporal punishment, manual labour, suspension, expulsion, to

cautioning and withdrawal of privileges, but to no avail. In addition, researches have been carried out on related variables like socio-economic status of parents, students' personal variables, school variables and interallia. In spite of these steps so far taken, the problem of school adjustment among students in Boki Local Government Area still persist.

However, Watson and Locke in Isangedighi (2011), Kendra and Cauchan in Abang and Amalu (2018) have observed that learners' maladjustment that is manifested in school, could most time be traced from the home. Really, anytime the home is mentioned, the attention is more on the parents, who are actually the first teachers to the child (Abang 2023). In the home, parents employ different parenting strategies to enhance discipline. What a particular home may cherish, another may frown at it (Isangedighi 2011) same applies in the choice of a rearing or parenting strategy employed by parents. Dahl (2019) posits that parenting strategies are concerned with discipline which centers on habit formation. It is aimed at teaching the child that certain behaviors are expected of him, to develop self-control in the child and direction to guide his actions in life. Therefore, parents as heads of their families, have a great responsibility in shaping their children behavioral pattern through an ideal rearing strategy. Good and responsible parents therefore spare no efforts in ensuring that their children become useful to themselves and to the society in general through a promising parenting strategy.

Theoretical background and literature review

Baumrind theory of parenting styles will be quite appropriate in this work due to her indept research knowledge on the subject matter. Diana Baumrind is known for her pillar theory on parenting which describes how parenting styles influence child development. Baumrind (1967) introduced a typology of three parenting styles of authoritarian, authoritative and permissive, based on the levels of demandingness and responsiveness, aiming to describe normal parenting behavior and their effect on children. Her theory posits that authoritative parenting, a balance of high demandingness and high responsiveness is associated with the most positive child's outcomes including independence, social competence and adjustments.

The three key styles Baumrind describes are – Authoritarian parenting which is characterized by high demands and strict rules with little or no warmth or responsiveness from the parents. These parents expect obedience without explanation, creating dictatorial environment. The researcher in this present work captured this as autocratic parenting strategy or parenting style. The authoritative parenting according to Baumrind, is an ideal balance of high demandingness and high responsiveness, where parents set clear expectations and rules, but also warmth, accepting and responsive to their children's needs. This approach promotes both self-control, independence and adjustment. This work addresses this as democratic

parenting approach or style. Whereas, the permissive parenting strategy involves high responsiveness and warmth, but low demandingness, with few rules or boundaries for the child. The present work considered this as laissez-faire parenting strategy or style.

Really, consciously or unconsciously, parents adopt these styles in their parenting practices. According to Dahl (2019), no particular parenting style can completely be applied without involving one or the other two. For instance, no parents can practice the authoritative style without an element of authoritarian or permissive, and that, the practice of some styles may depend on the age level of the child. From the foregoing, it is believed that parenting style could influence the child's behavior negatively or positively. This in the same way, could affect the child's adjustment in school activities.

Peretomode (1994) and Abang (2010) categorized parenting strategies into three broad categories of autocratic, where Baumrind described as authoritarian, democratic in the place of authoritative and laissez-faire for permissive. Abang (2023) Robinson (2014), Pillay et al (2013) observed that autocratic parents value obedience as a virtue and restrict the child's autonomy. These parents value the preservation of order and traditional structure as an end in itself. They further noted that these parents do not encourage the spirit of give and take. In such homes, parents just tell the children what to do and allow little or no opportunity or initiative on the part of the child. The parents tend not to give explanation of the behavior that were expected of their children and so, children from such homes are characterized by lower degree of self-confidence and independence. These characteristics no doubt can only shape a child to school maladjustment. In their view, Ebenegbu (2017), Owan and Ekpe (2018) explain that children who passed through autocratic parenting strategy live in fear and see the world as hostile, therefore, they react in further punishment because of further treats. Whereas, Ukpong (2020) in her opinion, says that the child who has low self-confidence is prone to misbehaving because it is the parents that take the lead in everything that concerns the child and so, finds confidence with his peers. It is obvious that in such environment, school adjustment cannot be promising. Supporting this view, Abang (2023) observes that such a home is characterized by disobedience and acting out as a way of conflict. Okon (2010) concludes that a particular parenting strategy being extremely strict in discipline may rather lead to conflict in the child's behaviour, which of course may cause the child to resort to anti-social behavior which no doubt, would affect the child school adjustment.

In the case of democratic parenting strategy, parents employ reasoning, explanation and discussion to help the child understand why certain behavior are rather expected of him instead of the other. The parents according to Wright (2020), seldomly apply stern punitive measures except where it is obvious that the child intentionally refused to carry out an

expected assignment meant for him/her. Kore (2012), maintain that democratic parents are firm and consistently direct and educate the child in any given task. This would enable the child to do any piece of assignment properly. By this technique therefore parents help shape the child's behaviour in a socially approved pattern which goes a long way to affect the child's adjustment in school positively. Abang (2023) in his view observes that parents who apply the democratic parenting strategy are always firm and setting limits for their children. And so, as the children get older, these parents try to reason with their children and explain why certain things are done the way they are to their children. They also get clear goals and encourage their children's independence. A child coming from this kind of environment may hardly have difficulty in school adjustment. Supporting this view, Parent, McKee and Forehand (2016) posit that although parents of this strategy give attention to their children, but do not base their decision solely on the children desires, and to achieve their objectives, such parents apply reasoning power and meaningful reinforcement for exhibiting acceptable behavior.

From the foregoing, democratic parenting strategy seemingly breeds independent thinking initiative in action, a healthy and positive self-concept and making the child to be active, outspoken and spontaneous in his behavior and adjustment in school activities.

Another parenting strategy is the laissez-faire. Parents employing this strategy are lax, inconsistent and demanding, yet warm toward their children (Abang & Amalu 2018) Laissez-faire parenting strategy is always in acceptance, benignant and affirmative in their characteristics reaction to their children impulses, and as such, the parent is not willing and never ready to offer the child any amount of freedom for his physical survival. The above authorities furthermore observe that the laissez-faire parents do not always guide his children towards the acquisition of social approved ways of behavior, neither does he employ any punitive measure, but always allow the child to grope in ignorance through situations that are in most cases too difficult for the child's coping mechanism.

Isangedighi (2007) asserts that when the laissez-faire parenting is extremely applied, the children become confused and full of false ideas of their expectations in life outside the home. Consequently, the child becomes resentful because of his feelings that the parents do not care much about him and so would not bother to guide him toward avoiding mistakes, Mendinaus and Johnson (2010) further state that such laissez-faire parents neither realize that children need help nor do they know of what is necessarily good for their children in order to avoid unnecessary mistakes. It is in their opinion that laissez-

faire strategy lacks confidence in the rearing ability which is on the other hand, harmful to the child and negatively affects children adjustment in school.

Empirically, Okon, (2010) in his study on the relationship between home behavior control and school adjustment among secondary school students in Oron Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, sampled 420 senior secondary three (SS3) from 8 secondary schools. The researcher employed the survey research design and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to analyze the data. Among other findings, he discovered that home behavior control significantly influences an individual school adjustment. The findings further revealed that students from stern home behavior control exhibited significantly poor school adjustment than those from lax and firm. The researcher advised that parents should be conscious in their choice of behavior control style because some styles can affect the learners' school adjustment positively and others negatively.

Kore (2012) studied on parent-child relationship among 34 ethnic groups in northern Nigeria. The researcher made use of children ranging 10 – 12 years old where both parents and the children were interviewed. He discovered that if a child, turns away from the normal or proper behavior after growing up, it may be due to the following reasons: Firstly, that, parents might have been too strict and legalistic in the course of their parenting behavior strategy. Secondly, that, parents might have imposed their beliefs on the child without first explaining the reason to the child. Thirdly, that the behavior control must have lacked encouragement and love to the child and fourthly, that, parents might have used wrong principles. He advised that parents should personally evaluate their home behavior control to avoid children maladjustment in school and other infringement.

Another study by Adegbeyega, et al (2018) on influence of parenting styles on social adjustment and academic achievement of adolescent students in selected secondary schools in Ogun Waterside Local Government Area of Ogun state. 240 secondary school students participated in the study. 8 secondary schools were selected from the LGA while descriptive survey design were used for the study. Data collected through questionnaire and achievement test. The data were analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA). The study showed that there was significant difference in social adjustment of adolescents from autocratic democratic and permissive parenting homes. It revealed furthermore that adolescents from democratic homes adjust better in social situations than their counterparts from autocratic and permissive homes. It revealed that the democratic styles of parenting, influence academic performance more positive than others.

Cabanation and Ahmad(2022) examined Laissez-faire(permissive) parenting style and maladaptive behavior tendencies among Grade 10 students at Notre Dame of Takurong College , Mindanao, Philippines. Using a descriptive-correlational design with a convenience sample of 100 students, data were collected through an online structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and pearson product-moment were employed for the analysis. The results revealed no significant relationship between laissez-faire parenting and maladaptive tendencies, though permissive parenting was associated with behaviors such as smoking and alcohol consumption. The researcher concluded that laissez-faire parenting style did not significantly predict maladaptive behavior tendencies and recommended that strengthening school counselling services and encouraging balanced parenting practices are quite necessary.

Other similar works by Puma and Puma (2017) on effect of family climate on adjustment of children with special needs in school and that of Kumar and Kamala (2022) on the problem of adjustment among secondary school students in Visakhapatnam have similar findings where children from democratic rearing strategy adjusted faster and better than laissez-faire and autocratic.

Problem of the study

School adjustment is required of every learner who has intention to succeed academically. This has to do with learners aligning themselves to the norms of the school. Sadly, there has been a decline of adjustment among learners especially those in the secondary school level which has given way to maladjustment. A careful observation of the daily activities of the secondary school students in recent times will reveal that the students do not bother to conform or adhere to the school rules and regulations nor show concern in their studies. Rather, they engage themselves in maladjusted activities such as averting assignments and other school activities, loitering in the school during school hours, noise making in class, littering the compound, unwillingness to comply with the teachers' instructions, truancy, rejecting help, missing school willingly and lack of cooperation with other learners.

The students' non-conformity to the school norms, would have been responsible for the poor performance in their school examinations which has always culminated to examination malpractice in their internal and external examinations. Other such related issues like dropping out of school, cultism, absenteeism, bullying are not left out as a result of their maladjusted behavior. Several measures taken by different school authorities and stakeholders to curb school maladjustment among learners like corporal punishment, manual labour suspension from school, expulsion, counselling, cautioning and withdrawal of privileges, have not been fruitful. Researchers have also shown concern by carrying out

researches in related variables to see how the problem of school maladjustment can be addressed but to no avail.

This study therefore seeks to investigate if the prevalence of school maladjustment among senior secondary school students in Boki Local Government Area, Cross River State could be achieved by attending to the parenting strategies adopted by parents. The question is, could parenting strategies be responsible for the students' maladjustments in school activities?

Purpose of the study

Specifically, the study investigated the influence of:

1. Autocratic parenting strategy and school adjustment among senior secondary school students.
2. Democratic parenting strategy and school adjustment among senior secondary school students.
3. Laissez-faire parenting strategy and school adjustment among senior secondary school students

Research Hypotheses

1. Autocratic parenting strategy does not significantly influence school adjustment of senior secondary school students.
2. Democratic parenting strategy does not significantly influence school adjustment of senior secondary school students
3. Laissez-faire parenting strategy does not significantly influence school adjustment of senior secondary school students

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study was the survey research design. The research area for this study was Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The population of the study was made up of 5402 students both males and females, from senior secondary 1-3. The stratified random sampling technique was first adopted to stratify schools based on the 11 wards in the Local Government Area. Thereafter, the researcher purposively selected one school each from the 11 wards making a total of 11 schools with 540 students (298 girls and 242 boys), this number automatically constituted the sample of the study. The researcher decided to use the entire (540) students (census) as sample for the study because of the manageable size of the population involved. Parenting Strategies and School Adjustment Among Senior Secondary School Students Questionnaire (PSSAQ) was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was sub-divided into three sections of A,

B and C. Section A of the instrument measured the demographic data of the students such as sex, age and class of the students. Section B of the instrument with 9 items elicited information from the learners on their different parenting strategies of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. To ascertain information from the learners on the autocratic parenting style, the following statements were raised – “My parents are extremely strict”, “My parents give orders”, “my parents take decisions for me”. Respondents indicated their level of agreement or disagreements in a four point linkert scale of Strongly Agree with a score of 4, Agree 3, Disagree 2 and Strongly disagree with a score of 1. In the case of democratic parenting style, statements like - “In taking decisions in any family matter, my parents consider everybody’s opinion so far as it is good”, “I discuss freely with my parents”. The researcher equally applied 4 point linkert scale in rating the items. Whereas, in the laissez-faire parenting strategy, statements like – “Nobody gives me directive on what to do at home”, “My parents feel that whatever I do is right”, “My movement is not regulated by my parents”. The same rating was equally applied here. Section C with 10 items, measured school adjustment among senior secondary school students with 4 point linkert type scale as well as statements like – “I actively join in class activities”, “I complete my school assignment on time”, “I feel comfortable participating in school activities”. “I have good relationship with my classmates”. The respondents were equally expected to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. . The instrument was validated by measurement experts and psychologists from the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Calabar, with the reliability coefficient ranging from .76- .85. The data collected was analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). In all, democratic rearing strategy was revealed to have a more positive influence on the children than any other. However, it is not granted that every child from the democratic home is excellent. Some parents intentionally applied some styles due to the age level of the child and some styles are culturally influenced.

Presentation of result

In this section, each hypothesis is re-stated, and the result of data analysis carried out to test for its acceptance or rejection as presented below. Each hypothesis of the study was tested at .05 level of significance.

H₀₁

There is no significant influence of autocratic parenting strategy on school adjustment among senior secondary students. The independent variable in this hypothesis is autocratic parenting strategy which is categorized into three (low, moderate and high); while the dependent variable is school adjustment among senior secondary students. To test this hypothesis, school adjustment among senior secondary students from autocratic parenting strategy (low,

moderate and high) were compared using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary data and one-way ANOVA of the influence of autocratic parenting strategy on school adjustment among senior secondary students (N=540)

Autocratic parenting strategy	N	\bar{x}	SD		
Low- 1	180	35.4000	2.73524		
moderate- 2	288	35.6250	3.00261		
High – 3	72	38.0000	1.00702		
Total	540	35.8667	2.85142		
Source of variation	SS	Df	Ms	F	Sig of F
Between group	383.700	2	191.850	25.764*	.000
Within group	3998.700	537	7.446		
Total	4382.400	539			

* Significant at p <.05 level, df= 2, 537.

The result on Table 1 revealed that the F-value of 25.764 at p=.000. Since the p (.000) is less than p (.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. This result therefore implied that, autocratic parenting strategy significantly influenced school adjustment among senior secondary students. Since autocratic parenting strategy had a significant influence on school adjustment among senior secondary students, a post hoc analysis was employed using Fishers' Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

The result of the analysis in Table 2 showed that students' whose autocratic parenting strategy was low were significantly different in their school adjustment from those whose autocratic parenting strategy was either moderate or high. Also students' whose autocratic parenting strategy was moderate were significantly different from those who were high in their school adjustment.

Table 2: Fishers' Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis of the influence of Autocratic parenting strategy on school adjustment among senior secondary school students LSD

(I) Autocratic parenting strategy	Autocratic parenting strategy	(J)		
		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
moderate	Moderate	-.22500	.25928	.386
	High	-2.60000(*)	.38051	.000
	Low	.22500	.25928	.386
	High	-2.37500(*)	.35955	.000
High	Low	2.60000(*)	.38051	.000
	Moderate	2.37500(*)	.35955	.000

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

H₀₂

There is no significant influence of democratic parenting strategy on school adjustment among senior secondary school students. The independent variable in this hypothesis is democratic parenting strategy which is categorized into three (low, moderate and high); while the dependent variable is school adjustment among senior secondary students. To test this hypothesis, school adjustment among senior secondary students from democratic parenting strategy (low, moderate and high) were compared using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary data and one-way ANOVA of the influence of democratic parenting strategy on school adjustment among senior secondary students (N=540)

Democratic parenting strategy	N	\bar{x}	SD
Low- 1	72	34.500	2.51754
moderate- 2	288	35.625	3.32004
High - 3	180	36.800	1.60446

Total	540	35.866 7	2.85142		
Source of variance	SS	Df	Ms	F	Sig of F
Between group	308.100	2	154.05 0	20.304 *	.00 0
Within group	4074.30 0	537	7.587		
Total	4382.40 0	539			

* Significant at $p < .05$ level, $df = 2, 537$

The result on Table 3 revealed that the F-value of 20.304 at $p = .000$. Since the $p (.000)$ is less than $p (.05)$, the null hypothesis is rejected. This result therefore implied that, democratic parenting strategy significantly influenced school adjustment among senior secondary students. Since democratic parenting strategy had a significant influence on school adjustment among senior secondary students, a post hoc analysis was employed using Fishers' Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Fishers' Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis of the influence of democratic parenting strategy on school adjustment among senior secondary students LSD

(I) Democratic parenting strategy	(J) Democratic parenting strategy	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Low	Moderate	- 1.12500(*)	.36293	.002
	High	- 2.30000(*)	.38409	.000
moderate	Low	1.12500(*)	.36293	.002
	High	- 1.17500(*)	.26172	.000
High	Low	2.30000(*)	.38409	.000
	Moderate	1.17500(*)	.26172	.000

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The result of the analysis in Table 4 showed that students' whose democratic parenting strategy was low were significantly different in their school adjustment from those whose democratic parenting strategy was either moderate or high. Also students' whose democratic parenting strategy was moderate were significantly different from those who were high in their school adjustment.

Ho₃

There is no significant influence of laissez-faire parenting strategy on school adjustment among senior secondary students. The independent variable in this hypothesis is laissez-faire parenting strategy which is categorized into three (low, moderate and high); while the dependent variable is school adjustment among senior secondary students. To test this hypothesis, school adjustment among senior secondary students from laissez-faire parenting strategy (low, moderate and high) were compared using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The result of the analysis is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary data and one-way ANOVA of the influence of laissez-faire parenting strategy on school adjustment among senior secondary students (N=540)

Laissez-faire parenting strategy	N	\bar{x}	SD		
Low- 1	71	34.4648	2.51754		
moderate- 2	285	35.6632	3.31645		
High - 3	184	36.7228	1.69999		
Total	540	35.8667	2.85142		
Source of variance	SS	Df	Ms	F	Sig of F
Between group	286.211	2	143.105	18.761*	.000
Within group	4096.189	537	7.628		
Total	4382.400	539			

* Significant at p <.05 level, df= 2, 37

The result on Table 5 revealed that the F-value of 18.761 at p=.000. Since the p (.000) is less than p (.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. This result therefore implied that, laissez-faire parenting strategy significantly influenced school adjustment among senior secondary

students. Since laissez-faire parenting strategy had a significant influence on school adjustment among senior secondary students, a post hoc analysis was employed using Fishers' Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Fishers' Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis of the influence of Laissez-faire parenting strategy on school adjustment among senior secondary students LSD

(I) Laissez-faire parenting strategy	(J) Laissez-faire parenting strategy	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
moderate	Moderate	-1.19837(*)	.36633	.001
	High	-2.25804(*)	.38586	.000
	Low	1.19837(*)	.36633	.001
	High	-1.05967(*)	.26119	.000
High	Low	2.25804(*)	.38586	.000
	Moderate	1.05967(*)	.26119	.000

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The result of the analysis in Table 6 showed that students' whose Laissez-faire parenting strategy was low were significantly different in their school adjustment from those whose laissez-faire parenting strategy was either moderate or high. Also students' whose Laissez-faire parenting strategy was moderate were significantly different from those who were high in their school adjustment.

Discussion of findings

The result of the study revealed that autocratic parenting strategy, democratic parenting strategy and laissez-faire parenting strategy significantly influence school adjustment of senior secondary school students in Boki Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings is in line with the view of Abang.(2023) who posited that parenting strategies are concerned with discipline which centers on habit formation. It is aimed at teaching the child that, certain behaviors are expected of him, to develop in the child self-control and direction to guide his actions in life. Therefore, parents as heads of their families, have a leading position in shaping their children behavioral pattern through an ideal rearing strategy, good and responsible parents spare no efforts in ensuring that children become useful to themselves and to the society in general. Abang (2023) Robinson (2014), Pillay, et al (2013) also observed that autocratic parents value obedience as a virtue and restrict the

child's autonomy. These parents value the preservation of order and traditional structure as an end in itself. They further noted that these parents do no encourage the spirit of give and take. In such homes, parents just tell the children what to do and allow little or no opportunity or initiative on the part of the child. The parents tend not to give explanation of the behavior that were expected of their children and so, children from such homes are characterized by lower degree of self-confidence and independence.

Isangedighi (2007) also explained that children who passed through autocratic parenting strategy live in fear and see the world as hostile, therefore, they react in further punishment because of further treats. In the case of democratic parenting strategy, parents employ reasoning, explanation and discussion, to help the child understand why certain behavior are rather expected of him instead of the other. Democratic parents are firm and consistently direct and educate the child in any given task. This would enable the child to do any piece of assignment properly. By this technique therefore parents help shape the child's behaviour in a socially approved pattern which goes a long way to affect the child's adjustment in school positively.

Conclusion/ Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study it was concluded that autocratic parenting strategy, democratic parenting strategy and laissez-faire parenting strategy significantly influence school adjustment of senior secondary school students in Boki Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government through its enlightenment agencies such as National Orientation Agency (NOA) and Non-governmental Organization should from time to time organize seminars and workshops to counsel parents on the choice of a better parenting strategy which can enhance adjustment in school activities.
2. The government should set up effective counselling office and facilities in every school to enable these professionals carryout behaviour modification on the learners who are maladjusted in school activities.
3. Teacher and parents should not give-up on the children. They should be patient with them as their behaviours sometime is influenced by age.

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