

# Parental Styles as a Predictor of Aggressive behaviour of Teenagers in Marginalised Communities

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## Abstract

*The parenting style that balances clear expectations with warmth and support is likely the most effective in reducing teenage aggression.. The primary aim of this study was to investigate how parental style predicts aggressive behaviour among teenagers, focusing on the significant differences in age and gender of teenagers' aggressive behaviours. Three research questions and hypotheses were formulated in the study and tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey research method was employed in carrying out the study, where the researchers selected 120 teenagers as the study's sample using stratified sampling techniques in the Mainland Local Government Area of Lagos State, The data were collected using quantitative methods via a questionnaire as the research instrument. The research study made use of two adapted inventories/scales as the research instruments for the study, which included the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) shorter version and the Aggression Questionnaire shorter version with 0.71 and 0.74 reliability coefficients, respectively. Correlation analysis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Independent t-test were used to test all hypotheses one, two, and three, respectively, in the study at the 0.05 level of significance, The findings showed that parental style does not have a significant positive correlation with aggressive behaviour exhibited by teenagers. Also, there is no difference between male-aggressive and female-aggressive behaviour among teenagers based on the age difference of respondents. In conclusion, while the findings of this research provided important insights into the complex factors that contribute to aggressive behaviours in teenagers, there is still much to learn about this issue.*

**Keywords:** Parental Style, Teenage Aggressive Behaviours and Behaviours.

## Introduction

Behaviours have a variety of responses based on the stimulus, such as pleasure, pain, happiness, joy, loneliness, sadness and hatred. Therefore, behaviours that attract unpleasant responses leading to unwanted physical or psychological pain in the functionality of an individual are said to be aggressive. These aggressive behaviours include kicking, biting, slapping, hitting, threatening via SMSs, emails, and the internet, blackmail, shouting, swearing, cheating, forcing hostages, etc. Among these behaviours, the society to which an individual belongs has laid down penalties for their infliction on one another (Obikeze & Obi, 2020). When behaviour is described as acts exhibited by an individual that has been destructive to the physical wellness of others in society, this behaviour affects the physical appearance of others, which turns out to be aggressive in nature. Moffitt (2018) further examined several parental factors responsible for aggressive behaviours among teenagers in various home settings. Teenagers experience a variety of behaviours from their parents, ranging from anti-social behaviour to unacceptable behaviour in society, which every teenager tends to exhibit based on the kind of home set in such a family.

Aside from parental characteristics that can be attached to aggressive behaviour among teenagers, the way parents handle issues between their teenagers and the style in the upbringing of teenagers also predicts how aggressive teenagers can be among others. These ranges from mental disabilities from the parental or family background caused by depression or stress, or

poverty violence exhibition through media such as television, the internet, cartoons, or video games (Izuchi, Mary-Rose & Anetoh, 2020). In contemporary society, aggressive behaviour is not limited to a particular type of home because possible factors that can result in the aggressive nature of teenagers can be found in any home, ranging from religious homes of imams, priests, and pastors, affluent homes of business tycoons, politicians, and investors, to poor homes of traders and petty business owners in society (Ojukwu, Chukwuemeka & Awoke, 2020).

Estévez, Moreno, Jiménez, & Musitu (2013) and Kokkinos & Voulgaridou (2017) further assert that aggressive behaviours exhibited by some teenagers with the major aim of inflicting physical, psychological, emotional, verbal and economic pain on their fellow teenage peers have a negative effect on the well-being of teenagers. This later leads to an unhealthy lifestyle among the victims of aggressive behaviour in many ways that affect their functionality in society. From previous studies conducted by researchers and scholars, Izuchi, Mary-Rose & Anetoh (2020) and Vanderbilt & Augustyn (2010) agree that the several difficulties faced by students in schools are products of aggressive behaviours inflicted on them, which are not restricted to physical pain but also psychological harm that can disrupt their well-being in the school environment.

However, to tamper with the thoughts and behaviours of teenagers in society, the first and easily accessible way is through parenting, which is built on different styles, methods, technicalities, and complexities to make a child socialized for society. Jinan, Yusof, binti Vellasamy, Ahmad, Rahman & Motevalli (2022) posit that there are two ways to study parenting in literature: a dimensional and typological approach. Through the dimensional approach, parents can be studied based on their attitude and philosophy on a certain phenomenon that has a distinct element in children's behaviour based on their influence. In this approach, it is understood that children's behaviour is the foundation of their parental attitude and philosophy about life.

While the typological approach posits that parents are detachable from teenagers' behaviour, which means that teenagers are responsible for their behaviour with the influence of their parents (Bashir, 2020), Baumrind (1966) developed his typology of understanding parenting by developing three major parenting styles known as permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian parenting styles that are synonymous with the definition of parent-child relationship style and method employed by parents in various homes. In parenting style, two major foundations can serve as the building blocks of parenting and stand as the parental patterns, values, philosophy, beliefs, and values in handling a child. Assistance provided by parents is the first building block in the parenting process because a child feels lonely and strange in society. The method by which the behaviour of the child is influenced for better wellness in society is the second block by parents, which is the composition of supervision, caution, style, discipline, etc. (Darling, 1999; Aremu, John-Akinola & Desmennu, 2019). A link from behaviour to parenting style

In defining parenting styles, the techniques, methods, ways, and approaches utilized by parents in raising their children are referred to as parenting styles. This cuts across all settings where parents use various methods to take care of their children for better and more positive outcomes. Every parent has a goal for their children, whether negative or positive, which can be achieved through various styles of parenting. Scholars and researchers have posited various parenting styles, and in relation to this literature, four major parenting styles can be noted widely: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved parenting styles (Baumrind, 1966).

Gurjan (2010) and Moon-Seo, Sung, Moore & Koo (2021) suggested that responsiveness and demandingness among parents can be used as instruments in understanding the types and ways to which parents apply any parenting style in handling their children. Responsiveness among parents means willingly being available to exhibit care, love, and concern and provide the basic and meta needs of children, while parental demandingness implies the level of control to which the parent has been able to control their children to stay away from certain habits or phenomena.

However, the two renowned parenting styles among the proposed typology are authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles. Authoritarian parents are strict in nature and tend to give orders to their children when it comes to controlling them, while authoritative parents make reasonable demands and are responsive to the way they relate with their children. They apply fair discipline when it comes to handling the wrongs of their children, which helps them to apply wisdom in raising their children. They also recognize children's rights and individual differences, and they continually convey caring, love, and warmth.

Empirically, several factors are responsible for aggressive behaviours among children, which result from the level of anger they tend to exhibit towards their peers in society (Llorca, Richaud & Malonda, 2017; Moreno-Ruiz, Estévez, Jiménez & Murgui, 2018). Some of these factors include the type of parenting style used by parents in bringing up their child, the level of parental pressure in carrying out certain tasks, authoritarian styles in handling issues between parents and children in the home setting, poor family structure among parents, separated and isolated homes, poor level of discipline, independence without rewards, high parental expectations from children, and others. These factors result in the rudiments of aggressive behaviours such as anger, sadness, hatred, uncontrolled behaviours, rebellion, and resentment among children, which can extend to aggressive behaviours (Onukwufor, 2019; Peery, Jensen, and Adams, 2015). In the study conducted by Cummings, ZahnWaxier, & Radke-Yarrow (2014), parental rejection among teenagers increases their tendency towards aggressive behaviour through the development of anger in children. Cummings, ZahnWaxier, & Radke-Yarrow (2014) supported that anger in children extends to aggressive behaviour exhibited by teenagers, which often stems from their parents. Based on the above, this research study aims to focus on parental style as a predictor of aggressive teenage behaviour.

### **Objective of the Study**

The prime objective of this study is to conduct a critical investigation of parental style as predictor of teenage aggressive behaviour in marginalised communities in Lagos State, Nigeria. It will specifically look into the followings:

1. To examine how parental style predicts aggressive behaviour exhibited by teenagers.
2. To establish the influence of age difference on aggressive behaviour of teenagers.
3. To determine the difference between male and female teenage aggressive behaviour.

### **Research Question**

The below are the research questions for the study:

- To what extent has Parental style predicts aggressive behaviour exhibited by teenagers?
- What is influence of age difference on aggressive behaviour of teenagers?
- How do male aggressive differ from female aggressive behaviour among teenagers?

## **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide this study:

H<sub>01</sub>: Parental style will not predict aggressive behaviour exhibited by teenagers.

H<sub>02</sub>: Age difference will not influence aggressive behaviour.

H<sub>03</sub>: There will be no difference between male aggressive and female aggressive behaviour among teenagers.

## **Methodology**

The descriptive survey research method was employed in carrying out the research study, where the population comprises all teenagers in the Mainland Local Government Area of Lagos state that the researcher wants to investigate. However, the researchers selected one hundred and twenty (120) teenagers as the sample of the study using stratified sampling techniques to select thirty (30) teenagers in tutorial centers, which stand as the strata for the population in four (4) popular communities (Onike, Iwaya, Akoka, and Yaba) in the Mainland Local Government Area of Lagos state, making a total of one hundred and twenty (120) teenagers for the study. Anthony & Chinyelu (2014) adopted this type of sample analysis in their study, which focused on the relationship between parenting styles and the tendency to exhibit bullying behaviour among adolescents.

This study collected data using quantitative methods via a questionnaire as the research instrument. The research study made use of two (2) adapted inventories/scales as the research instruments for the study, which included the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) shorter version and the Aggression Questionnaire shorter version. The researcher adopted The Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) by Buri (1992) to measure the parenting style of respondents in their study. However, the scale was used to measure parental authority or disciplinary practices from the child's point of view (of any age). The PAQ has three subscales: permissive (P: items 1, 6, 10, 13, and 14), authoritarian (A: items 2, 3, 7, 9, and 12), and authoritative/flexible (F: items 4, 5, 8, 11, and 15). In scoring the instrument, 1 point = Strongly disagree, 2 points = Disagree, 3 points = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 points = Agree, and 5 points = Strongly Agree, which were summed up for each item to comprise the subscale scores. Scores on each subscale range from 10 to 50. The Aggression Questionnaire shorter version of the Aggression Questionnaire developed by Buss & Perry (1992) was adopted to measure the level of aggressive behaviour in an individual. The questionnaire has questions that are reverse-scored. The Aggression scale consists of 4 factors: Physical Aggression (PA), Verbal Aggression (VA), Anger (A), and Hostility (H). The total score for Aggression is the sum of the factors. In scoring the questionnaire, a 5-point scale indicates how uncharacteristic or characteristic each of the following statements is in an individual, where 1 = extremely uncharacteristic of me, 2 = somewhat uncharacteristic of me, 3 = neither uncharacteristic nor characteristic of me, 4 = somewhat characteristic of me, and 5 = extremely characteristic of me.

After the administration of the questionnaire to the participants, correlation analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and independent t-test were used to test all the hypotheses - one, two, and three, respectively - in the study at the 0.05 level of significance, with the aid of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) 25 version.

**Results**

**Hypothesis One:** Parental style will not predict aggressive behaviour exhibited by teenagers.

**Table 1: PPMC showing the prediction between parental style and aggressive behaviour exhibited by teenagers.**

Variables	Mean	SD	DF	r	p-value
Parental style	46.72	6.335	118	.106	0.275
Aggressive behaviour	41.96	10.352			

For hypothesis one, the SPSS output indicated that the correlation coefficient (r) yielded 0.106 which is not significant since it is greater than 0.05 significant level with 118 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted while alternate hypothesis was rejected since the p-value 0.275 is greater than 0.005 ( $p > 0.275$ ). This means that, Parental style does not have a significant positive correlation with aggressive behaviour exhibited by teenagers.

**Hypothesis Two:** Age difference will not influence aggressive behaviour.

**Table 7: One-way Analysis of variance showing the significant age difference of aggressive behaviour**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	72.624	2	36.312	.335	.716
Within Groups	11929.234	110	108.448		
Total	12001.858	112			

**P<0.05**

For hypothesis two, one-way analysis of variance ANOVA was run to determine the significant influence of age difference on aggressive behaviour. The result shows the calculated f-Cal of 0.335 is not significant since the p-value is greater than 0.005 level of significance ( $p > .716$ ) at 2 and 112 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that, age difference does not influence aggressive behaviour.

**Hypothesis Three:** There will be no difference between Male aggressive and female aggressive behaviour among teenagers.

**Table 6: independent t-test analysis on the significant difference between Male aggressive and female aggressive behaviour among teenagers**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	p
Male	33	42.52	11.966	118	.363	.140
Female	80	41.74	9.682			

Significance at 0.05; df = 118, p=value at 0.05

For hypothesis three, the SPSS output shows that the calculated t-cal of .363 is significant since the p-value is higher that 0.05 significant level ( $p > .140$ ). This implies that that null hypothesis was accepted and alternate hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is no difference between male aggressive and female aggressive behaviour among teenagers.

**Discussion**

The present study aimed to analyse the hypothesis regarding the association between parental style and aggressive behaviours exhibited by teenagers. To achieve this objective, data was collected through surveys to investigate the hypothesis that parental style has a positive



correlation with aggressive behaviours in teenagers. Following the analysis, it was determined that there was no significant positive correlation between parental style and aggressive behaviours in teenagers. This outcome suggests that additional factors may contribute to the observed aggressive behaviours in teenagers, including peer pressure, genetic predispositions, environmental influences, and individual personality traits. In contrast to the findings of Aremu, John-Akinola, and Desmennu (2019), who suggested that children's behaviours, including aggressive behaviours, are influenced by the techniques and strategies employed in their parenting, the present study emphasizes that children who display low levels of aggressive and antisocial behaviours tend to experience better parental involvement and monitoring, along with increased support and assistance from their parents. Moreover, the current study's findings support the notion that there are various parenting approaches that do not align with how parents respond to aggressive behaviour in society. Aggressive behaviour seems to be independent of the specific parenting styles utilized by individuals when raising their children (Evis, 2016).

Furthermore, the study's findings reveal that the age difference among participants does not have a significant impact on aggressive behaviours within the sampled population. This conclusion was reached by accepting null hypothesis two, which proposed that there would be no noteworthy difference in aggressive behaviours between individuals of different age groups. Put simply, the analysis did not provide any indication that younger or older participants were more prone to displaying aggressive behaviours compared to their counterparts in the study. This implies that factors other than age may hold greater importance in explaining why certain individuals engage in aggressive behaviours, such as their personal temperament, environmental influences, or social interactions. These findings align with the results obtained by Obaze (2022), who found that the perception of parental factors, including parental discipline, parental role models, and parental substance abuse, as potential triggers of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students did not differ significantly across age groups in the Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. They also support the research conducted by Onukwufor (2019), which revealed that 20.8% of secondary school students displayed physical aggression, while the prevalence of verbal aggression among students was 48.3%. Notably, the prevalence of physical and verbal aggression was higher among older students compared to younger ones.

Lastly, the analysis conducted in this study indicates that there is no notable distinction between the aggressive behaviours displayed by male and female teenagers. Both genders exhibit similar patterns of aggression, and any differences observed are not statistically significant. These findings suggest that adolescent boys and girls may express their aggression in comparable ways, with similar frequency, intensity, and duration. These results challenge the traditional stereotypes surrounding gender roles, which have long posited that males are more prone to aggression compared to females. In contrast to these findings, Singh and Pareek (2016) conducted a specific study that concluded male participants demonstrated a higher degree of aggressive behaviours than female participants. This study employed various assessment methods, including self-reports, behavioural observations, and physiological measures, to evaluate aggression. The researchers also investigated potential factors contributing to gender differences in aggression, such as cultural and environmental influences, hormonal factors, and personality traits. Moreover, further studies conducted by Obaze (2022) supported the existence of a significant disparity in the perception of parental factors, including parental discipline, parental role models, and parental substance abuse, as predisposing factors for aggressive behaviour among secondary

school students in Edo State. These studies shed light on the significant role that sex differences may play in understanding aggression among adolescents.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings indicating the lack of significant positive correlations between parental style, age difference, and gender differences with aggressive behaviours exhibited by teenagers, it is evident that additional factors play a role in the observed aggressive behaviours in this population. Further research is necessary to comprehensively grasp the intricate interplay between these factors and aggressive behaviours among teenagers. Furthermore, interventions aimed at reducing aggression in teenagers should adopt a comprehensive approach that addresses a broad spectrum of potential risk factors, including parental style, age differences, and beyond. These interventions should encompass targeted social and emotional learning programs implemented within schools, community-based initiatives focused on fostering positive relationships and mitigating social isolation, as well as family-centred interventions designed to enhance communication and conflict-resolution skills.

In conclusion, while the findings of this research provide valuable insights into the complex factors contributing to aggressive behaviours in teenagers, there remains a considerable amount to be discovered about this issue. Additional research and intervention efforts are imperative to better comprehend and address the underlying causes of aggressive behaviours in teenagers and to foster healthier and more positive social and emotional development within society.

### **Recommendations**

Several recommendations can be made to enhance understanding further and address the issue of aggressive behaviours of teenagers in marginalised communities to parents, communities, schools, governmental and non-governmental agencies, and researchers.

There is a need to create and implement interventions to reduce aggression in teenagers in marginalised communities adopting a multifaceted approach. These interventions should include targeted social and emotional learning programs within schools to promote healthy emotional regulation and conflict resolution skills. Additionally, community-based programs should focus on building positive relationships, reducing social isolation, and fostering a supportive environment for teenagers. Although the parental style may not directly correlate with aggressive behaviours in teenagers, providing support and education to parents can still have a positive impact. Parenting programs should emphasise effective communication, positive discipline strategies, and building strong parent-child relationships in marginalised communities.

Also, given that other factors beyond parental style, age difference, and gender differences contribute to the aggressive behaviours of teenagers in marginalised communities, it is essential to conduct additional research. Future studies should explore these factors in greater depth, including peer pressure, genetic predispositions, environmental influences, and individual personality traits. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics underlying aggressive behaviours in teenagers.

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