
Assessing the Effects of Child Rearing Practices on the Academic Performance of Primary School Learners: A Perspective from the Teachers, Parents and Learners

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to unearth the effects of child rearing practices on child's academic performance among learners in primary schools around Marondera. A qualitative case study method was adopted for this study. The purposive sampling method was used to select thirty participants into the study. A sample of ten children, twenty-five teachers and twenty-five parents were chosen as the subjects. The interview and observation were used to generate data. Results from the study show that the majority of the participants knew at least one child rearing style which was a disadvantage there was no variety in terms of application of the styles and the parent who knew only one style applied only one in different situations which required different child rearing styles. The results also show that most children in the communities under study were neither guided by authoritative nor by the authoritarian but by neglectful style which was the most practiced child rearing style and followed by permissive child rearing style. The authoritative and authoritarian child rearing practices were least practiced and permissive and neglectful styles were the most practiced in the communities under study. It was therefore, recommended that workshops or campaigns should be conducted to educate teachers, learners and parents on the different child rearing practices and their effects on the child's academic performance. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should ensure that every school has a qualified counselor or psychologist who is able to advice parents on the child rearing styles that promote the child's academic performance.

INTRODUCTION

Scholars have attributed academic achievement by learners to a diversity of factors. Some of these factors could either be environmental and hereditary and to a large extent, these have been attributed to the academic achievement of children. With this in mind, some studies have suggested that child rearing practices have a contributory effect on the academic performance of children in schools.

In Zimbabwe, like other growing economies, families are finding it more difficult to stay connected with their children's education (Halawah, 2006). This scenario is common among families living in farming and communal areas, where both parents work in farms or are peasants so as to earn a living. Hussain (2006) noted that pupils in public schools often come from economically poor and average income families. These families face various problems causing emotional disturbance among their children and results in poor academic performance. Added to that, parents are becoming isolated from their children and finding it difficult to keep a careful watch on what needs to be done to help them succeed in school. As such, many families are not even led by parents, but by a grandparent, guardian, or some other adult. This is despite the fact that parents need to keep in touch with the school activities and the life of their children in the school which helps in monitoring success or lack of it.

Traditionally, it was parents' habit to make sure homework was completed, assignments finished, and other school works were done (Morris, Cui and Steinberg, 2013). With the changes in family life and indeed in societal makeup, schools are now finding it increasingly difficult to keep parents informed of and actively engaged in the day-to-day progress of their children. Teachers and administrators are discovering that the support they once received in getting students to do their homework has vanished because parents are not home to insist that children complete their assignments.

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To this end, it can therefore, be noted that where there are negative child rearing practices, there is a possibility of failure and society does regard children who fail in their education as misfits. The opposite is also true.

The issue of lack of child parental care has not gone unnoticed. Government and non-governmental organisations have come into the fray to make sure that all children are in school. Further to this, some organisations fight for children`s rights where these have been infringed, for example, Justice for Children Trust. Parents found wanting have been taken to court and prosecuted over child negligence.

Despite all these attempts and efforts by various stakeholders, there exist a scenario where child rearing practices has become a major challenge in some quarters of society. This resulting in the view that the child rearing practices, through empirical-based support is scanty on children`s academic performance, hence there is need to establish how the quality child rearing practices affect the academic performance of children in the primary school in Zimbabwe.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although, scholars have identified the correlation between child rearing practices and children academic performance in the primary school, it must be noted that typical elementary-aged children react differently to direct parent involvement in their academics. The question to be answered in this study therefore is: To what extent do child rearing practices affect the child`s academic performance at primary school?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following questions which stood as sub problems:

- What are the child rearing practices of parents of children in Marondera District primary schools?
- Which are most practiced child rearing styles in the community?
- How are child rearing practices are manifested in the community and the school?
- What are the effects of the different child rearing practices on the academic performance of children in the primary school?
- Which child rearing practices are most and least preferred by teachers and parents?
- How extensive are the effects of different child rearing practices on the child`s academic performance?
- Which child rearing practices impact positively and negatively on the child`s academic performance?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Child Rearing Practices

According to Baumrind (1991), child rearing practices are meant to capture normal variations in parents` attempts to socialise with children. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1762) quoted child rearing practices as the overall emotional climate of the parent-child relationship- an affective context of sorts that sets the tone for the parents` interactions with the child. The term child rearing practices refers to the ways of upbringing children which are authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and neglectful parenting as suggested by Diana (1992). It can also be defined as a technique which parents use and apply in child nurturance according to Grobman (2003).

Forms of Child Rearing Practices

Baumrind (1971) has been credited for defining four specific child rearing practices and their consequences for children. These are authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive and neglect styles of parenting based on levels of warmth and control used by the parent in disciplining the child.

Authoritative Child Rearing Practices

Parents with an authoritative parenting style make the effort to guide their children by rationalising their actions, encourage interpersonal communication, and at the same time put their children at ease by being warm toward them. According to Park and Bauer (2002), by using reasoning and

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emotionally supportive approach, parents help their children to exhibit sound moral reasoning, empathy and self-confidence, which are closely associated with high academic performance. Authoritative parents are characterised by effectiveness and are supportive of their children, encourage their children to do well academically and explain the need for education in order to become a successful adult. Thus, the child under the authoritative style of parenting performs well in school-related activities. The authoritative parents also recognize when their child is improving or learning new material and show satisfaction when it is done through hard work. Additionally, these parents are not angered by their children’s mistakes; instead they want the children to know that mistakes are part of the learning experience (Baumrind, 1971).

Authoritarian Child Rearing Practices

In contrast, authoritarian parents are strict, do not encourage interpersonal dialogue and exercise absolute control over their children’s behavior according to a rigid set of standards. They demand complete obedience, and in the process do not show much warmth toward their children. As a result, children of authoritarian parents often show poor academic performance (Attaway and Bry, 2004). Authoritarian parents are characterised by a strict and rigid disciplinary approach and expect obedience without question. These characteristics negatively affect the child’s academic achievement. Stress and anxiety in children may experience higher if their authoritarian parents are involved in their academic activities.

Permissive Child Rearing Practices

The permissive parent is low on rules and control, but strong on love and affection. These parents tend to spoil their children by allowing them to do as they like. They are quick to forgive, even where this may not be necessary. Children tend to take advantage of the permissive parent to get away with all kinds of mischief. This is the second best type of parent, but portrays very limited discipline. We must not forget that children who are not disciplined in the family are disciplined by the world. There is order in the world as suggested by Chao (1994), there are rules and there is punishment for those who misbehave. The family discipline is enveloped in love and affection. The world’s discipline is devoid of love. Hence, there is need to avoid subjecting your children to worldly discipline at all cost. Children would rather be disciplined in the family than in the world

Parents who are permissive neither exercise control over nor make demands of their children in respect of the way they behave. Although such parents are relatively warm toward their children, their children usually end up not performing well academically as argued by (Roche, Ensminger and Cherlin, (2007). Permissive parents allow their children to regulate their own activities, exert no control and rarely use punishment in children’s upbringings. Permissiveness style negatively impact children’s academic involvement, resulting in their low academic achievement. These parents may not ever visit the school or the classrooms of their children or speak with a school adult involved with their children’s educational experience (Baumrind, 1971).

Neglectful Child Rearing Practices

The parent is neither demanding nor responsive. Neglectful parenting is also called uninvolved, detached, dismissive or hands-off. The parents are low in warmth, control and are generally not involved in their child’s life. Neglectful child rearing practices are disengaging, undemanding, low in responsiveness, and do not set limits. Neglectful parenting can also mean dismissing the children’s emotions and opinions. Parents are emotionally unsupportive of their children, but will still provide their basic needs. Provide basic needs meaning: food, housing, and toiletries or money for paying school fees. Neglectful parenting can stem from a variety of reasons, which include the parents prioritising themselves, lack of encouragement on the parents’ part, financial stresses, lack of support and addiction to harmful substances.

Children whose parents are neglectful develop the sense that other aspects of the parents’ lives are more important than they are. Many children of this parenting style often attempt to provide for themselves or halt depending on the parent to get a feeling of being independent and mature beyond their years. Parents, and thus their children, often display contradictory behavior. Children become emotionally withdrawn from social situations. This disturbed attachment also impacts relationships later on in life. In adolescence, they may show patterns of truancy and delinquency.

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The neglectful parent usually lacks honor for the children and makes them feel unwanted, angry and left out. The language of the neglectful parent includes statements like, “Leave me alone”, “I am busy”, “Can’t you see I am tired”? or “I am working for the family”?, which will leave the child confused.

According to Latif and Maunganidze (2001), the dominant parent is probably the worst type of parenting. This is the parent who easily qualifies as generally and non-verbally hostile to children and majors in controlling them. He or she is fond of lecturing the family and is very high on rules. He or she enjoys making the children feel small and therefore lowers their self-esteem. He or she is usually low in experiencing and expressing love and affection. He or she tends to have a negative effect on the child in later life. This type of parent makes such statements as, I said no, and that is it, or do it because I say so. I do not have to tell you the reasons. The neglectful parent is usually low on both rules and love and affection as cited by Maunganidze and Latif (2001). They leave children alone as much as possible, and will not be bothered, unless there is a crisis. This type of parent usually makes promises but does not keep them. This makes the children distrust them, which is a serious failure on the part of a parent. Combined with the attributes of the dominant parent, this parent can be more damaging to children.

The balanced parent is the one who knows and clearly defines the rules and the limits as well as informs the children of all of these. He or she loves and honours the children, demonstrates love and affection, while at the same time insisting on good behavior without compromise. They do not trade rules for love, or vice versa, but treat children with respect as human beings with likes and dislikes of their own. Their language sends a very clear message such as, I care, or I love you, I am concerned about you. According to Greenspan and Brazelton (2000), parents should not be filling the babies brain with information to fuel brain power but rather concentrate on building a nurturing relationship between the two (parent and child). It is important for all of us parents to deliberately seek to move out of the first two child rearing practices into the last two discussed above. We should encourage children to do the right thing, rather than seek to control them. Warmth, support and love are the most important ingredients of discipline in the family. It is in the context of parent-child relationship that early-childhood learning occurs from social skills and emotions. These are found to develop hence it is the ‘quality time’ spent with the children that bring out the best in them as suggested by Sunita Mahtani-Stewart (1993).

Some studies have concluded that various types parenting style will influence academic achievement of children differently. In light of this, the Baumrind’s, (1971) parenting style theory supports the relationship between parenting style and academic performance in the present study. Parents’ educational involvement is a factor that plays a significant role in children’s academic performance (Ogbu and Davis, 2003; Stewart, 2007). Such engagement can be described as the level of commitment and involvement or the amount of time, energy and effort that is put into their educational learning activities (Stewart, 2007).

PREVIOUS RESEARCH STUDIES

Research studies of Carbonaro (2005) show that child rearing practices have a significant effect on the child’s academic performance and to what extent are children influenced by the way the parent raises them? In other previous researches, they continue to ask if we inherit personality. A parenting style is a major factor that affects personality development and not genes. The way a parent treats his/her child highly influences the drives the child develops which later on become responsible for his entire behaviour and personality trait.

Indeed, parents are increasingly parenting their children in neighborhood environments and socio-political situations with social obstacles to achieving successful and productive adulthood. In this new role, parents must not only provide for the basic needs of their children but also prepare them to avoid the pitfalls of gang involvement, premature sexual activity, illegal drug use, negative interactions with law enforcement officers, and problems in the school system (Ridley, 1998). As a result, child rearing practices are one of the most influential of social roles because it is the foundation that society depends upon for proper behaviours. Although there is a lack of conceptualisation about whether this role is cumulative or additive, the child rearing practices of children is different from one family to another.

Also, Baltisella and Conaco (1998) carried out a study on the impact of child rearing practices on children from lower families in primary school children in the Philippines. The major findings of this study was that children from lower class families tend to have more challenges and difficulties on their academic performance as compared from children who are coming up from better family backgrounds. This was resulted in the investigative research on the child rearing practices which different parents practice in grooming up their children. The study reported that Filipino children from low class backgrounds fared worse academically in relation to those from upper class backgrounds. Hence, the study have similar findings relating to the effects of child rearing practices on academic performance of both the children from lower and upper classes backgrounds. That is, children from lower background had a tendency to lag behind children of the other groups in fear of being stigmatised and discriminated.

The issue of academic performance among Iran continues to be a matter of great concern for many scholars, researchers, and educators. Many researchers focus on what has been called the achievement gap by Fathi (2006), with the general focus on understanding the various factors that contribute to different academic outcomes. In recent years, countries such as Canada, has noted an increase in children with risk factors that may compromise their present achievement and future success, and approximately 27.6% or 1 in 4 students is considered to be at risk for school failure (Jordan, 2006).

Also, across the 21.9 million adults in California, 2.19 million males and 1.96 million females (20% of the pupils) were drop outs Belfield, (2007). In Iran, a study by Ghasemi (2010) found that 22% of the students in Iran suffer from low academic performance due to family problems and personal factors. Halawah (2006) argues that academic achievement has been linked to several factors related to the home environment, such as child rearing practices among them. Generally, it is agreed that child rearing practices are thankless tasks from which parental responsibility begins from the day the child is born. Parenting is made even harder by the fact that all parents would like to succeed in bringing up their child. The task of child rearing practices is one of the important variables widely investigated in the field of human development Baldwin, McIntyre, and Hardaway (2007). It has been shown that there is a relationship between the ways parents bring up their children and academic performance. A study done by Maccoby and Martin (1983) analysed adolescents, aged 14–18 in four areas: psychosocial development, academic performance, internalised distress, and problem behaviour. The study found that those with neglectful parents scored the lowest on these tests, while those with authoritative parents scored the highest marks.

Another study by Kuhn (2006) investigated the effects of parents and siblings ‘poor background on children’s pace of schooling in rural Bangladesh. This study concluded that the socio-economic status of parents in rural areas have substantial and predominantly have both positive and negative impacts on the pace of schooling for both boys and girls in Matlab rural area. However, older sister and brothers would help their siblings’ education while others would totally forget to warrant further study of their siblings and only consider themselves with their little earnings.

Studies have been conducted in the United States and in other countries like Canada, Bermuda and Sweden to examine the issues around the effects of child rearing practices on children’s academic performance. These studies included both in primary and secondary schools. The studies reported below have examined the effects of child rearing practices after adjusting for family selection factors in order to disentangle relationships of child rearing practices on the children’s academic performance.

Although, they are relatively few longitudinal studies, several researchers have found that child rearing practices have associations with children’s academic performance in recognition of the cognitive and social development. These studies revealed that, some child rearing practices promotes the academic performance of children while some of them do not after accounting different families. A few studies have addressed this issue longitudinally on the effects of child rearing practices on children’s academic performance. While some studies has found models and positive associations between child rearing practices and academic performance. Some studies have found modest positive associations between child rearing practices on the academic performance of children. Fewer long term associations have been found for social development on children’s academic performance, although some have raised some better quality child rearing practices which is more related to positive

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behaviour. Most studies have found that child rearing practices have different influences on the children’s academic performance. The absence of effective child rearing practices in early children’s development proved to be accounted in children’s future academic life.

Another issue of interest is whether the effects of child rearing practices are stronger among children who will be at greater risk for optimal cognitive and social development. In contrast, other studies have found no differential effects of child rearing practices on children’s academic performance according to Johnson, Crosnoe and Elder (2001). Given the likelihood that children can be born and be survivors from any parental style but can sail through thick and thin conditions. This issue merits further considerations of child rearing practices on children’s academic performance.

Whilst focusing on studies that may not be close to home, as these studies have been conducted in countries that are not generally regarded as the first world, the lessons learnt from these studies can be discussed in relation to our local situation and we can extrapolate without much imagination as to similarities that can be drawn to growing up in Zimbabwe. There is need to be mindful as parents, as growing children and issues that concern parenting.

Some child rearing styles have resulted in children having to go it alone. For example, the coping strategies of children are well documented in German’s (2005) case study of Bulawayo urban in Zimbabwe where some children were able to cope with economic strain through begging and engaging in part- time employment in butcheries, shops and in domestic work due to neglect. In a study in Uganda, Luzze (2002) observed that some children especially girls were engaged in casual commercial sex to earn a living due to poverty and neglect child rearing practices. Another study in Mutare urban, Zimbabwe, find out that some children could utilise part of the left by parents who would have gone to diaspora or have divorced or died as a result of HIV/AIDS pandemic to earn a living. That is, child rearing practices which was used was more of authoritarian which was used as a coping strategy for the children’s social welfare and their educational bills.

In this regard, child rearing practices contributed negatively for the children’s low academic performance. These researches tend to focus on children living in urban settings, leaving out the entire population in rural areas. It seems there is very little research on the effects of child rearing practices on children’s academic performance in the rural background. Hence, there is need to assess the effects of child rearing practices on academic performance of the children in rural areas.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative case study method was used to carry out this study. This study is interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 2009). In this regard, the study is concerned with the views and perceptions of parents, teachers and learners on how they perceive different child rearing styles and their effects on the academic performance of learners. The study adopts the interpretive perspective based on the idea that qualitative research efforts should be concerned with revealing multiple realities as opposed to searching for one objective reality (Denzin, 2010), hence the use of several sources of data. Data obtained from the respondents was presented qualitatively with the actual words from the participants being recorded and presented and thereafter analysed.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The purposive sampling method was used to select thirty participants into the study. A sample of ten children, twenty-five teachers and Twenty-five parents were chosen as the subjects. The interview and observation were used to generate data. The population of interest to the present study was drawn from five primary schools and study focused on the perceptions of a sample drawn from teachers, parents and primary school learners.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION FINDINGS

Child Rearing Practices Known to the Teachers and Parents

When asked about child rearing practices known to the teachers and parents the majority of respondents knew only one parenting style, some knew of two parenting style and a few all the four child rearing practices. However, the disadvantage of having acquainted with only one parenting style could be that there was no variety in terms of application of the style and the parent who knew only

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one style applied on one in different situations which required different child rearing practices. However, the information obtained from learners' interview shows that the majority of pupils knew two child rearing practices which were practiced at home. Most learners knew of the neglectful and permissive child rearing practices. There could be this contradiction between data obtained from parents and that from the learners may be because some parents could not be seen to practicing some of the styles, but their children were on hand to pick and pin point these styles as they were being practised at home. Kennedy and Kennedy (2004) postulate that attachment is an affection bond between the child and primary care-giver and the child is better placed to reveal this affection. By this therefore, the responses provided by the learners could be more truthful than those by the care givers.

Responses by Teachers and Parents on the Most Practiced Child Rearing Styles in the Community

Participants were asked the most practiced parenting style in the community. The teachers indicated that the most preferred child rearing practices was the authoritative and authoritarian, with a few parents indicating that the authoritative style was being adopted. Another minority of parents stated that the authoritarian style was the most practiced. However, the majority seem to agree that the permissive and neglectful were the most practiced child rearing practices in the communities. The teachers indicated that the permissive and neglectful child rearing styles were mostly practiced while the neglectful child rearing style was practised as shown by a small group of parents. Also the permissive was said to be one of the most practiced child rearing practices some parent's views, suggested that authoritarian and authoritative were least practiced by parents. The data obtained from learners views that the most practiced parenting style was neglectful style. This was in agreement as most of the pupils who stated that neglectful was the most practiced child rearing practices by their parents. These responses agree with the findings in the data obtained from learners through the interviews. The results show that children neither guided by authoritative nor by the authoritarian but by neglectful style which was the most practiced child rearing style and followed by permissive child rearing practices. In this case, it would mean that the learners were set free to do whatever they liked at their own time and pace. This would then have a negative impact on the performance at school especially where they could be concentrating on other issues which are not academic.

The findings concur with those by Kuhn (2006), when he investigated the effects of parents and siblings' poor background on children's pace of schooling in rural Bangladesh. The study established that at times the parents adopted a neglectful and permissive style owing to inadequate resources in the family. They would then permit children to go wherever they wanted and to do whatever they wanted in an attempt to source for resources for the whole family. In turn the children would go wayward to the extent of neglecting school work hence such children tended to perform badly in school. However, according to the same study, older sisters and brothers would help their siblings on education while the others siblings and their parents adopted a wait and see attitude (Kuhn, 2006).

Responses by Teachers and Parents on the Least Practiced Child Rearing Styles in the Community

From the teachers' responses, authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles were least practiced and permissive and neglectful child rearing practices were practiced'. Parents responses show that only a few were practicing authoritative and authoritarian child rearing practices. Also, a significant group of parents were practicing permissive and responses shows that neglectful parenting style was used most. The data obtained from most learners showed that authoritarian was the least practiced child rearing style in the community. This entails that both teachers' and parents' responses were in congruency on that the community used neglectful child rearing style for some reason or the other. However, a study by Johnson, Crosnoe and Elder (2001), found no differential effects of child rearing practices on children's academic performance. In contrast, their studies have given the likelihood that children can be born and be survivors from any child rearing style but can sail through thick and thin conditions towards their academic performance. This then goes to show that any style adopted by parents does not have any effect on the academic achievement of their children. That being the case therefore, the results from the study goes against the findings by Johnson et al (2001) who acknowledge that the styles have no bearing on the achievement of the learner. It is the learner's on initiative to pass or perform badly.

How Child Rearing Practices are Manifested in the Community

Some participants indicated that parenting styles were manifested through attending school events in support of their children. Some thought child rearing practices were seen through providing children with school material. Providing children with assistance on school work at home accounted for by some participants. On the use of punishment, respondents indicated that parents were using it whenever the children were not performing well at school. This was supported by beating up children for misdemeanors. Responses also show that only a few parents were strict with rules and at the same time some respondents stated that parents were allowing children free way to do their own things, hence concurring with previous findings on the adoption of the neglectful and permissive styles of parenting discussed earlier on. Furthermore, parents were not bothered by their children's behaviour towards school work as they suggested that children only needed to be able to carry out household and farming chores to earn a living in the future. As a result, parents were unable to make decisions for the children and showed no concern about an educational future. In a way, parents showed that their neglectful and permissive child rearing practices made them not to be able to mould their children towards academic performance since children needs great guidance, direction and support on their education. This is in line with Chao (1994)'s findings that children tend to take advantage of the neglectful and permissive child rearing practices used by their parents and become mischievous, hence they are not able to perform well in school work.

The data obtained from learners through interviews were supporting the responses from parents and teachers as follows: Only a few indicated that parents were providing children with assistance on school work at home Some stated that parents adopted the use of punishment to discipline their children. Beating up children for misdemeanours also accounted for a few of the learner respondents the same as being strict with rules. Allowing children free way to do their own things accounted for the majority learner respondents, the same for parents not being bothered by children's behaviour, and thus unable to make decisions for the child. All the respondents indicated that parents were unconcerned about the child. Indications from these findings are that parents were generally neglectful and permissive to the detriment of their children's learning.

The Most Preferred Child Rearing Practices by Teachers and Parents

All teachers preferred authoritative parenting style when the other three child rearing practices scored zero on responses. A few parents preferred permissive and neglectful child rearing practices but none preferred authoritative and authoritarian parenting. The data obtained from learners shows that some preferred authoritative parenting style among the others and this was in agreement with teachers responses. This shows that parents were not informed on the dangers of their preferred ways of child rearing practices on their children's academic performance; hence do not appreciate the pros and cons. As such, teachers knew of the benefits of using the authoritative child rearing style towards the children's academic performance and were well conversant to it towards the children's academic performance and outcomes. However, when asked the reason why they preferred an authoritative parenting style, most of the learners gave the reason that they wished to pursue further their education with parental support as the key for their success. However, some indicated that with whatever parenting style being practiced or preferred by parents, they were managing to sail through thick and thin because they knew that their education was determinant for their successes. The responses of some of the learner respondents were as follows:

Participant1: If my parents do not bother to buy school materials, I would engage on a part-time basis on any farming duties so as to make sure I bought my ball point pen over the weekend. Therefore, whether neglectful or what, I don't care.

Participant2: My role model is my friend who always walks a long distance to school but will make sure he is at school before it starts, so as not to miss lessons. So I am no worried about which parental style is adopted by my parents.

It is in the context of parent-child relationship that Mahtani-Stewart (1993), suggested that it is the “quality time”, spent with the children that bring out the best in their academic performance but where parents adopt the neglect and prefer this type of parenting, problems do arise as the children need some monitoring in all they do, more so in academic work. The quality time as suggested by Mahtani-Stewart (1993) cannot be attained where parents prefer the neglectful style.

Teachers` and Parents` Views on Whether they Think Parents Practicing Authoritarian Child Rearing Practice are Assisting their Children Get Higher Grades in School

All teachers view that parents practicing authoritarian parenting styles are assisting their children in getting higher grades in school. However, some of parents supported teachers` views. On the other hand, some of parents were still not sure on whether parents practicing authoritarian parenting style assist their children in their academic performance. Data from learners shows that the authoritarian child rearing practice went a long way in the promotion of academic performance of children. For example, most of the responses seem to suggest that the authoritarian style allows parents to get information on the other side of learners as to what these children ought to think as best for their education and when such information is provided, parents do their best to make provisions for the school requirements hence the children tend to do better in class. This, therefore, is in line with the arguments by Halawah, (2006), who argues that academic achievement has been linked to several influences distinctive from the home environment such as child rearing practices and parental involvement. He further postulated that parenting is a thankless task and responsibility that begins from the day the child is born. As such, all parents would like to succeed in bringing up their children.

The Effects of the Different Child Rearing Practices on the Academic Performance of Children in Marondera Rural District Primary Schools

Responses From Teachers And Parents Whether They Think There Are Any Effects Of Different Child Rearing Practices On The Child`s Academic Performance

The teachers thought that there were some effects of different parenting styles on the child`s academic performance. Parents also thought that there were effects of different child rearing practices on the child`s academic performance. At the same time parents thought that there were no effects of different child rearing practices on the child`s academic performance. Asked to about their opinions, most of the learners indicated that it was true that these child rearing practices had effects on child`s academic performance in many different ways. For example some of the responses are as follows:

Participant1: Some parenting styles do not allow children to go for educational trips and some children ended up getting nine units in General paper due to lack of exposure.

Participant2: Some of the practised child rearing styles do not allow my parents to mould me towards a brighter future and this results in myself becoming a farm worker like what my other elder siblings are doing.

Participant3: Child rearing practices need to guide and support us in various walks of life and I cannot see my progression to secondary school where quite a lot of material support is needed from parents when instantly they are denying to buy very little materials for my primary education.

From the above views, it is obvious that some parents are still not aware of different effects which can be caused by some child rearing practices which some parents practice towards their children`s academic performance. In concurrence, German`s, (2005) established that some children were able to cope with economic strain through begging and engaging in part-time employment in butcheries, shops and in domestic work. This was as a result of the neglectful style and students ended up failing dismally in their studies. Also, Luzze (2002) concurs that some children especially girls, were engaged in casual commercial sex to earn a living due to poverty and use of neglectful parenting styles by their parents and this had an adverse effect on their studies.

Responses on How Extensive the Effects of Different Child Rearing Practices are on the Child`s Academic Performance

Teachers and parents agreed that different child rearing practices can be extensive to a large extent on the child`s academic performance if implemented. Some parents showed that different parenting styles can be extensive to a limited extent. While other parents still disagreed that different parenting style are not at all extensive on the child`s academic performance. When asked to explain their responses, those who indicated that they were extensive stated that from experience those neglected could be seen loitering in the farms doing nothing after school because of their dismal performance in school. However, those who countered the opinion indicated that even if some failed there was no

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difference because the majority could not proceed to find better jobs after school especially in the current economic environment.

Learners` responses on the effects of child rearing practices also seem to suggest that these are extensive in terms of affecting their academic achievement. For example, some responses got from learners are as follows:

Participant1: Lack of exposure to leisure time with my friends makes me feel isolated all the time when these colleagues will be sharing school work. This is a problem with the parent who does not allow me time out with friends and one who does not provide me with all the material I need.

Participant2: These other child rearing practices unlike authoritarian are so stiff to the extent of affecting my future life. This is supported by Sigmund Freud (1997) who has argued that the past affects the future according to the psychodynamic theories.

These findings seem to pointing to the view that all teachers, learners and some parents were convinced that different parenting style had effects on the child`s academic performance while others are still yet to be convinced from their thoughts of not extensive at all and another percentage still find different child rearing practices being extensive to a limited extent.

Child Rearing Practices Impacting Positively on the Child`s Academic Performance

Teachers and parents agreed that authoritative parenting styles impacted positively on the child`s academic performance and only a few of parents argued that authoritarian parenting style impacted positively on the child`s academic performance. Unfortunately, permissive and neglectful child rearing practices were not regarded by both teachers and parents as impacting positively on the child`s academic performance. This shows that parents were now able to distinguish the different effects which each parenting styles has towards the academic performance of children. The results of this concur with those in a study by Maccoby and Martin (1983), who analysed children in four areas: psychosocial development, school achievement, internalised distress and problem behaviour. The study found that those with neglectful parents scored the lowest on these tests, while those children with authoritative parenting style scored the highest marks.

Child Rearing Practices Impacting Negatively on the Child`s Academic Performance

None of the participants regarded authoritative child rearing practices as impacting negatively on the child`s academic performance. However, a few teachers regarded the authoritarian child rearing practices as impacting negatively on the child`s academic performance and no parents supported. Some teachers went on to suggest that both permissive and neglectful parenting styles impacted negatively on the child`s academic performance. At the same time, some parents supported that permissive parenting style impacted negatively on the child`s academic performance while a majority of parents supported that neglectful child rearing style impacted negatively on the child`s academic performance. Asked to explain to why, the parents indicated that those upon whom the neglectful style was adopted, were free to do whatever they wanted at h expense of their school work. Those whose parents adopted the authoritarian and authoritative were under the watchful eyes of their parents and were offered guidance when needed.

The learners indicated that the neglectful parental style affected negatively the child`s academic achievement and the following were some of the reasons:

Participant1: The neglectful parent does not allow me to have educational tours saying it is a waste of resources.

Participant2: The neglectful parent is not bothered if I abscond from school saying after a typical day`s work my parents will arrive home tired and would have find me done with some household chores.

Participant3: My parents just do not get worried to take me to the clinic if ever I am sick so that I will have quick recovery but would rather ignore up until I am much better off to school where my teacher would find me some treatment from the school health master.

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This entails that learners viewed the consequences caused by neglectful and permissive child rearing practices towards their children's academic performance as being negative. Finkelhor (1984) has argued that a child's fear of losing a parent's guidance to neglect risks negative outcomes in terms of academic achievement and clearly this has an impact on them. It is in this vain that the neglectful and permissive styles of parenting need to be avoided. This is why some studies have indicated that parents' educational involvement is a factor that plays a significant role in children's academic performance (Ogbu and Davis, 2003; Stewart, 2007) rather than being neglectful.

The research sought to find out the effects of child rearing practices on child's academic performance on Marondera Rural Primary School children. The study was a descriptive survey which employed the use of questionnaires and interview to solicit data from the respondents. The population of interest to the present study was drawn from five primary schools which are Inyagui, Helm, Grand chase, Cotter and Bernard Mizeki. The study focused on the perceptions of 42 teachers, 3500 parents and 2000 pupils. All these respondents are key informants as they hold information needed to answer the research question at hand. For the purpose of this study, a sample of 25 children, at the rate of 5 children per school, is going to be selected from all the five schools which are under study. The sample also comprised 10 teachers of which 2 from each school, and 25 parents, five being drawn from each school. The sample was drawn through simple random sampling. Data obtained from the participants was presented both quantitatively and qualitatively.

CONCLUSIONS

From the above major findings, it can be concluded that:

- The majority of the participants are exposed to a limited number of child rearing style which means they apply the only one style in different situations which require different parenting styles to the disadvantage of the children's academic achievement.
- Most children in the communities under study are guided by neglectful and permissive child rearing styles which are the most practiced parenting style, hence their dismal performance in school.
- Child rearing styles are manifested through attending school events in support of their children, through providing children with school material, providing children with assistance on school work at home accounted for through the use of punishment, such as beating up children for misdemeanours.
- Parents' use of neglectful and permissive child rearing styles make them not to be able to mould their children towards academic performance since children needs great guidance, direction and support on their education.
- Most learners and their teachers prefer authoritative parenting style because the style provides for them to pursue further their education with parental support as the key for their success.
- Most parents practicing authoritarian child rearing styles are assisting their children in getting higher grades in school.
- Different child rearing styles impact either positively or negatively on the child's academic performance.
- The effects of different child rearing styles are extensive to a large extent on the child's academic performance.
- Child rearing practices that most parents are practicing do not promote the child's academic performance due to either its rigidity or freeness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

- Workshops or campaigns should be conducted to educate teachers, learners and parents on the different child rearing practices and their effects on the child's academic performance.
- The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should ensure that every school has a qualified counselor or psychologist who is able to advice parents on the parenting styles that promote the child's academic performance.

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- Also, the counsellor will be able to assist pupils towards the psychological effects which some child rearing practices can have on to the child in future.
- Although, the circumstances surrounding each parenting styles may vary, there is need to report some negative child rearing practices to the local protection agency by teachers and other school personnel. In some extreme cases, contacting the police department may also be necessary.
- The Ministry of Justice Legal and Parliamentary Affairs should ensure that there is an act which protects the interest of children. The act should be written in vernacular language to enhance the understanding of the beneficiary, which all parents around Zimbabwe understand. In addition, there is need for stiffer penalties for those parents which will be found guilty.
- There is need to educate religious groups on the parenting styles and be advised that if parents are not obliging to certain standard expected to the upbringing of his or her child will be found wanting.
- There is need to introduce programmes which promote behaviour change and knowledge that it will be illegal and unacceptable to apply some of the child rearing practices to the extremes.
- Parents need to adopt different parenting styles for different situations so that the child is supported academically as they grow since too much of each parenting style results in poor academic performance of the child.

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