
**PARENTAL ABSENCE AND CHILD'S EMOTIONAL
DEVELOPMENT IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Parents have a role to play in contributing to the emotional development of their children, however; many parents remain emotionally absent from them. This study examined the effect of absentee parent on child's emotional development in Ogun State. The study adopted a correlation research design. 100 pupils were selected through a simple random sampling technique. A self - designed instrument titled "Questionnaire on Absentee Parents and Child's Emotional Development (QAPCED)" was used. The instrument was validated and the reliability coefficient was calculated to be 0.73. 0.05 level of significance was used to test each hypothesis for this study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation PPMCC was used to analyse the data collected. The results showed the potential strength of parental absence on child emotional development ($r = .311$; $p < 0.05$) and a positive relationship between parental care and child's emotional development ($r = .271$; $p < 0.05$). The study revealed that parental emotional experience will be enjoyed by children who have the two parents staying together than those children who have single parent. It is hereby recommended that every parent must create a kind of activity

that will made each parent experience bond with their children.

Keywords: *Parental absence, Emotional development, Children, Parenting*

Introduction

Good lifelong health and learning are formed in early experiences of every child and as well shape kind of the person every child will become. In order for any child to grow up to their different potential in life, every child needs access to good medical care, stable and very safe housing, sufficient and nutritious food, a very good and secure relationship with matured or adult care givers, nurturing, good parenting and learning opportunities that are qualitative both at school and home setting of the child. Heck man (2013) noted that the major factor that contributes to the child non-cognitive and cognitive abilities is care that child receives at childhood.

Any child can do well in a nurturing and stable environment in which child is exposed to routine and knows his or her expectation. Several changes that take place in the life of any child are sometimes anticipated and as well considered normal and many are unexpectedly sudden which can bring about effect on children security feeling. In an environment where there are adults that protect children from negatives influence on children instability, such children will have potential strength to adapt, control their emotions and as well cope with any given diversity (Dyavanoor & Jyoti, 2017). Children can receive little supports to adapt to change the change in their environment once their parents find it difficult to have control or choice over confronting change. Children mental health and cognitive functioning can be affected by uncontrolled stress that resulted to extreme levels (Shonkoff & Garner 2011).

For effective development of children psycho-social and personality presence or availability of parents around their children is very paramount (Dyavanoor & Jyoti, 2017). Dyavanoor

& Jyoti, (2017) opined that during the early period of every child, parent presence around the child has significant effect on the child. Previous studies revealed that when parents are not present during the early development of the child that will lead to some negative influences on children daily behaviours, school performance and health wise. (McLanahan, Tach & Schneider, 2013; Weaver & Schofield, 2015; Zhou et. al, 2018). Many previous studies focused on relationship that exist between school achievements (Zhou et. al, 2018), self-esteem and parental behaviour (McLanahan, Tach & Schneider, 2013), social competence (Dyavanoor & Jyoti, 2017), and critical thinking skills (Weaver & Schofield, 2015). Again, there are many previous studies that focused more on children tendency to violence and as well as factors responsible in children (Altýn, Demir, Demirel, Yalçin, & Buğdayci, 2017; Zhou et. al, 2018).

In Nigeria there are large number of children that are attending primary in which their needs and welfare can never be ignored because it can lead to some negative influences for children and the world at large. There are a lot of issues confronting primary schools in Nigeria in which there are a lot to be done by the school administrators to address these issue appropriately and reduce it to a minimal level, which are not limited to slow learning, cases of mischief and the issue of acting up in primary schools. Biu (2011) confirmed that although school managers made several efforts to curtail issues of law-breaking, aggressiveness, cases of immorality, truancy and many other issues in school that can impeded the development of the child, still all these issues are still common in our schools in Nigeria.

It is not the only schools that are responsible to bring about positive performance among students. In order to children to develop socially, emotional, physically and well behaved in the environment parents have crucial role to play and make themselves responsible for these children development. Early experiences of children on the aspect emotional and social interaction receiving from their parents or care giver and their interaction with other children have greater influence on their personal life in term of academic performance and as well affects

other aspects of children development. (Konold & Pianta, 2005; Denham, 2006). For decades, there are several previous studies that focus on the aspect of understanding and how to support child's development (Thompson & Lagattuta, 2006). Those researchers in the areas of child development know the importance of overall development of the child emotionally and socially because it can lead to totality in child well-being and this aspect of child development is a continuous public discourse (Isakson, Higgins, Davidson, & Cooper, 2009; Cooper, Masi, & Vick, 2009).

Emotional and social skills acquired by the children can enable them to have confidence and well nurtured to build up a good mutual relationships, cope with problems confronting them and able to handle their emotion properly (Parlakian, 2003). The two factors that are relating with children school readiness are gaining more attention and those two factors are emotional and social competencies. Previous studies of (Konold & Pianta, 2005; Halle, Hair, Burchinal, Anderson & Zaslow, 2012) revealed that processing skills and social skills that a child possess at the school entry stage determine the child emotional and social competencies later and lead to the development child abilities such as making social interactions, managing behaviour, and tolerating peers frustrating attitude. Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, (2004) and Denham (2006) found out that both emotional and social competencies can determine student academic performance when they are added with other factors such as child early academic performance (Herbert-Myers, Guttentag, Swank, Smith, & Landry, 2006).

Parents should take up their responsibility as nurturers, they are to be around their children emotionally and they are expected to show to their children in their own personal characters that is not to recompense harmful deeds. Many parents are confronting with several challenges when it comes to child upbringing. Biu (2011) revealed that proper children growing up development in primary is being determined by their parents. Theorists have confirmed that emotional presence of parents around their children has greater influences on children character

development. Smith et al, (2014) opined that the negative psychological effects of unavailability of fathers' presence in the development of children are poor academic performance, negative self-perception and insecurity in relationships especially with the opposite sex

Absence of parents in the child development makes children lack things that can gear them towards maturity and psychological development (Bowlby, 2009). It came to limelight that is very important that every child must enjoy and as well find satisfaction experience of intimate, warm and persistence relations with their parents and the absence of these will have adverse or negative effect on the children mental health. The result of parental emotional presence at the early stage of children in life will form secured development in the children that will make them display disciplined behaviour at their adolescent stage. Meanwhile when children lack parental emotional presence at the infancy stage, there is high tendency that such children will display undisciplined behaviour at their adolescent stage (Engler, 2010). Parental presence at the early stage of children is very crucial for the proper growth of the children in such a way that they able to develop trust in themselves, in other people around them, confidence and as well view the world from positive angles. Many parents are struggling to meet up with socio-economic challenges and this has made different children experience emotional absence from their parents. Lines (2012) explained that there are two main effects of parental emotional absence for their children. Firstly, children will not be stable and secure emotionally and secondly, children at the adolescent stage will not be stable and predictable due to parental emotional absence at their infancy stage. According to Lines, children at the primary schools find it difficult to provide solutions to the problem confronting them due to the fact that they do not have required knowledge to solve problems as they come up because they lack it as a result of their parental emotional absence at the infancy stage. Notwithstanding, children behaviour development is in the hand of their parents. However, there are few previous studies that investigated

relationship that exists between parents and adolescents; the aspect of understanding and how to supports child's development; indiscipline and parental emotionally absence of the adolescents not much study has laid emphasis on children emotional development and parental absence, especially the primary school children in Ogun state.

Objectives of the Study

Therefore, this study investigated the effects of parental absence on the emotional development of children in Ogun state, Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

- i. determine the relationship between parental absence and child emotional development;
- ii. ascertain the significance of parental care on child emotional development; and
- iii. determine the rate at which parental absence contributes to child emotional development.

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this study are:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between parental absence and child emotional development

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between parental care on child emotional development

Methods

This study made use of correlational research design. Simple random sampling technique was used to select an intact class of primary4 pupils from 5 schools, 100 pupils participated in the study. The instrument titled: Questionnaire on Absentee Parents and Child's Emotional Development (QAPCED) was used. The instrument Contained 20 items with a Yes/No rating keys. The instrument underwent experts validation from the lecturers of Guidance and Counselling of Olabisi Onabanjo University. Meanwhile, Kuder- Richard 21 Formular was used to estimate its reliability which gave a coefficient of 0.73 at 0.05 level of

significance was used to test each of hypothesis for this study. A total of 100 questionnaires were administered and 96 were retrieved from the respondents. PPMC as used to analyse the data collected.

Testing the null hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between parental absence and child emotional development

Table 1: Relationship between parental absence and child emotional development

Variable	Mean	std	R	P value	Remarks
Parental Absence	18.33	11.14	0.311	0.005	Significant
Child Emotional Development		15.08	9.38		

Table 1 showed that a positive relationship between parental absence and child emotional development ($r = .311$; $p < 0.05$); this implied that there was a significant relationship between parental absence and child emotional development. Hence, the null hypothesis was hereby rejected. The table showed that the relationship that exists between parental absence and child emotional development ($r = .311$; $p < 0.05$) is positive; this means that parental emotional presence has potential strength to influence child emotional development. Based on this, null hypothesis was not accepted.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between parental care on child emotional development

Table 2: Relationship between parental care and child emotional development

Variable	Mean	std	R	P value	Remarks
Parental Care	18.04	10.64	0.271	0.005	Significant
Children Emotional Development		17.72	10.08		

Table 2 revealed a positive influence of parental care on child's emotional development ($r = .271$; $p < 0.05$); this implied that there was a significant influence of parental care on child emotional development. Hence, the null hypothesis was hereby rejected. It also revealed the potential strength of parental care on child's emotional development ($r = .271$; $p < 0.05$); this means that there is potential strength for parental care to influence child emotional development. Based on this, null hypothesis was not accepted.

Discussions

The result brought to limelight that there is a positive relationship between parental absence and child emotional development; this means that there is potential strength of parental absence on child emotional development. This finding is in line with Dyavanoor and Jyoti, (2017), who states that parents' presence has a great influence on child's psycho-social development and personality. Engler, (2010) supports this claim, noting that when parents are not emotionally present for their children at their infancy stage, there is high tendency for the children to be undisciplined at their adolescence stage.

The study also revealed that, revealed the potential strength of parental care on child's emotional development; this implied that there was a significant influence of parental care on child emotional development. This is in line with Smith et al, (2014) that opined that the negative psychological effects of unavailable of fathers' presence in the development of children are poor academic performance, negative self-perception and insecurity in relationships especially with the opposite sex. This claim is also supported by Bowlby, (2009) who stated that; parental absence does not allow the children to experience warmth that can bring about psychological and emotional maturity in the children.

Conclusion

This study investigated what could be the influence of parental emotional absence on the emotional development of children in Ogun state, Nigeria. The results have revealed that there is a

strong positive correlation between parental emotional absence and the emotional development of children. The result has also established that; there is potential strength for parental care to influence child's emotional development in Ogun State.

Recommendations

Parents need to do things that will enable them to have bond and to develop good interaction with their children. Also employers need to allow parents to go on annual leave of 10 days for the purpose of parental bond with the children. And the government must ensure strict punishment on any parents whose child suffers emotionally due to parents neglect.

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