

## Influence of Parenting Styles on In-School Adolescents' Delinquent Behaviours In Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15082536>

### To cite:

Ajokpaniovo, M., Durosaro, I. A., & Anyanwu, F. (2025). Influence of parenting styles on in-school adolescents' delinquent behaviours in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria. *Kontagora International Journal of Educational Research (KIJER)*, 2(2), 54-71

### Abstract

Adolescent delinquency in Nigerian secondary schools has become an increasing concern, prompting the need for research on its contributing factors. This study examined the influence of parenting styles on in-school adolescents' delinquent behaviours in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, while also exploring the moderating effects of gender, school location, and class level. A descriptive survey design was employed, with 396 adolescents selected using purposive, stratified, and simple random sampling techniques. Data were gathered using the Parenting Styles and Delinquent Behaviour Questionnaire (PSDBQ), which had a reliability coefficient of 0.82. Hypotheses were tested using the *t*-test statistical tool. Findings indicated that parenting styles significantly influenced adolescents' delinquent behaviours, with notable variations based on gender, school location, and class level. The study emphasizes the need for parental education programs, including workshops and counselling sessions, to promote effective parenting strategies. Additionally, intervention programs should be designed to address behavioural challenges specific to urban and rural settings. Schools should strengthen counselling services in order to provide psychological and social support across different class levels. These recommendations aim to foster responsible parenting, improve adolescent behaviour, and minimize delinquency in Nigerian secondary schools.

**Keywords:** Influence, Parenting Styles, In-School, Adolescents and Delinquent Behaviours

## Introduction

Adolescents' participation in delinquent behaviour has been rising, drawing attention and concern in many parts of Nigeria. Such delinquent behaviours range from absenteeism from school, gambling, lateness to school, theft, cheating, destruction of property, disobedience, underage drinking, examination malpractice, vandalism, smoking, street fighting, cultism, rape, rioting and others. In this situation, one may attribute the increase in delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents to a lack of adequate parenting which could be a result of the economic crisis confronting many homes in Africa and Nigeria in particular. Parenting remains the fundamental duty of parents worldwide. However, many parents today struggle to fulfil their primary role of socialising their adolescent children, as economic challenges demand that both parents dedicate significant time to earning a livelihood. According to Adeyemo and Olatunji (2019), financial pressures have led to a decline in parental supervision, which in turn affects the social and moral development of adolescents. Similarly, Okafor and Bello (2021) observed that the increasing economic hardship in Nigeria has shifted parental priorities, often leaving children to seek guidance from external influences, including peers and the media.

### *Concept of Parenting and Parenting Styles*

Parenting, also known as child-rearing, refers to the process of nurturing and supporting a child's physical, emotional, social, financial, and intellectual development from infancy to adulthood. It goes beyond biological ties, encompassing the various roles parents play in shaping their children's lives (Brown & Johnson, 2017). Parenting practices involve specific behaviours and strategies that parents use to guide their children's growth and development (Williams, Carter, & Blake, 2018). Researchers have identified four major parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved. These styles are based on the extent of parental responsiveness and control.

*Authoritative parenting style:* This parenting style, often called the "just right" approach; balances moderate demands on the child with a high degree of parental responsiveness. According to Darling and Steinberg (2017), this style is characterised by warmth, acceptance, and nurturing behaviour from parents while maintaining firm expectations and accountability for children's actions. Smetana (2018) emphasized that authoritative parents set clear limits and expect maturity from their children while

providing consistent positive reinforcement to guide behaviour. When disciplinary measures are necessary, these parents explain the reasons behind the punishment, which helps children perceive the consequences as fair and reasonable. As a result, children raised under this parenting style are more likely to develop strong social skills, self-determination, and a sense of generosity, ultimately contributing to their success and positive relationships with others.

*Authoritarian parenting styles:* This parenting is a restrictive, punishment-heavy parenting style in which parents make their children follow their directions with little to no explanation or feedback and focus on the child's and family's perception and status (Santrock, 2007). The parent is demanding but not responsive. Corporal punishment and shouting are forms of discipline frequently preferred by authoritarian parents. In addition, advocates of this style often believe that the shock of aggression from someone from the outside world will be less for a child accustomed to enduring both acute and chronic stress imposed by his/her parents (Alizadeh, Abu, Abdullah, & Mansor, 2011). Authoritarian parents place high demands on the child, but are not responsive to the child's well-being. Parents who practice authoritarian parenting style have a rigid set of rules and expectations that are strictly enforced and require rigid obedience. When the rules are not followed, punishment is most often used to promote future obedience (Bolin & Inge, 2006). Children with authoritarian parents may be well-behaved, but they are also likely to be moody and anxious; they tend to be followers rather than leaders.

*Permissive parenting:* This parenting, also known as indulgent or lenient parenting, is characterized by a lack of strict behavioural expectations and minimal enforcement of rules. According to Kuppens and Ceulemans (2019), permissive parents are highly involved in their children's lives and are nurturing and accepting, yet they place few demands or controls on their children. These parents are responsive to their children's needs and wishes but do not require them to regulate their behaviour or adhere to established norms. This parenting style often involves treating children more like peers than dependents, allowing them to make their own decisions while providing advice as a friend might. Permissive parents typically avoid imposing discipline, enforce few rules, and are less likely to punish misbehaviour. They often indulge their children's desires, providing both freedom and material resources, which may stem from a desire to compensate for their own unmet needs during

childhood. However, this accommodating approach can lead to challenges in fostering self-regulation and accountability in children (Pinquart, 2017).

*Uninvolved parenting style:* This parenting is also called neglectful, detached, dismissive or hands-off parenting style (Santröck, 2007). The parent is neither demanding nor responsive. The parents are low in warmth and control, are generally not involved in their child's life, are disengaged, undemanding, low in responsiveness, and do not set limits. Neglectful parenting can also mean dismissing the children's emotions and opinions. Children whose parents are neglectful develop the sense that other aspects of the parents' lives are more important than they are (Spera, 2005). Adolescents with uninvolved parents are likely to have low levels of functioning in many areas such as poor performance in school, exhibit delinquent behaviour and sometimes depression.

### **Problem Statement**

Delinquent behaviour among adolescents has become a growing concern in Nigeria, with national dailies and various media platforms consistently reporting cases of crime and deviant acts involving young individuals both within and outside the school system. These incidents range from truancy, substance abuse, and vandalism to more serious offences such as theft and violent behaviour. The increasing prevalence of delinquency among in-school adolescents raises critical questions about the underlying factors contributing to this societal problem. One major factor that has been identified in previous research is the role of parenting styles in shaping adolescent behaviour (Baumrind, 2019; Olowokere & Ojo, 2021). Parenting styles, which encompass authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved approaches, significantly influence adolescents' social, emotional, and behavioural development. Studies have shown that authoritative parenting, characterised by warmth and discipline, tends to produce well-adjusted adolescents, whereas permissive and uninvolved parenting styles have been linked to increased delinquent tendencies (Adeoye & Fatima, 2020; Okafor & Uche, 2018). With many parents engaged in full-time work to cope with economic hardships, there has been a gradual shift in parental attention and supervision, potentially exposing adolescents to deviant influences. In urban areas, for instance, indulgent and permissive parenting styles may be more prevalent due to parents' busy schedules, while in rural settings, authoritarian and neglectful parenting may be more dominant due to traditional and economic constraints (Bello & Abubakar, 2019). However, despite extensive research on adolescent delinquency, there is still a gap in understanding

how specific parenting styles contribute to delinquent behaviours among in-school adolescents. This study seeks to bridge the knowledge gap by examining how different parenting styles influence delinquent behaviours among in-school adolescents based on key demographic factors such as gender, school location, and class level.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions was raised to guide the conduct of this study:

1. What is the influence level of parenting styles on in-school adolescents' delinquent behaviour in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on in-school adolescents' delinquent behaviours in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria based on gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on in-school adolescents' delinquent behaviours in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria based on school location.
3. There is no significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on in-school adolescents' delinquent behaviours in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria based on class level.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate the influence of parenting styles on adolescent delinquent behaviours among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria. This design was deemed appropriate as it allows for the systematic collection of data from a large population without manipulating any variables. A descriptive survey provides a clear understanding of existing conditions by gathering responses from participants in their natural settings,

making it particularly useful for studies that aim to describe and analyse patterns of behaviour (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study targeted in-school adolescents in public secondary schools within Ilorin metropolis, who were considered appropriate participants due to their exposure to different parenting styles and their susceptibility to delinquent behaviours. To determine the required sample size, the formula prescribed by Research Advisor (2006) was used, ensuring a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Based on this calculation, a total of 403 respondents were selected for participation. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation. Purposive sampling was first used to select public secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis based on accessibility and population size. Following this, stratified sampling was applied to categorise students based on gender, school location (urban or rural), and class level (junior or senior secondary school students). Within each stratum, simple random sampling was used to select participants, ensuring that every student had an equal chance of being included in the study. The Parenting Styles and Delinquent Behaviour Questionnaire (PSDBQ), a self-developed instrument, was used to collect data. The questionnaire comprised two sections: Section A gathered demographic information such as gender, school location, and class level, while Section B consisted of 16 items assessing different aspects of parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved) and delinquent behaviours (such as truancy, substance use, defiance, and aggression).

To ensure the validity of the instrument, content and face validity were established through expert review. Five professionals in educational psychology and counselling examined the questionnaire, confirming that the items were clear, relevant, and capable of accurately measuring the intended variables. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using the test-retest method, where the questionnaire was administered to 40 respondents on two separate occasions within a two-week interval. The correlation between the two sets of responses was calculated using Pearson's correlation coefficient, yielding a reliability score of 0.82, which indicates strong internal consistency. For data analysis, descriptive statistics such as percentages were used to summarise demographic information. The t-test was employed to test the study's hypotheses, as it is an appropriate statistical tool for comparing differences between two groups. Specifically, the t-test was used to examine variations in the influence of parenting styles on delinquent behaviours based on gender, school location, and class level, with a 0.05 level of significance serving as the threshold for determining statistical significance.

## Results

The results are hereby presented in tabular forms.

**Table 1:** Distribution of Respondents by Personal Data

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	204	51.5
Female	192	48.5
Total	396	100.0
School Location	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	241	60.8
Rural	155	39.2
Total	396	100.0
Class Level	Frequency	Percentage
J.S.S. 1 – 3	224	56.5
S.S.S. 1 – 3	172	43.5
Total	396	100.0

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 396 in-school adolescents who participated in the study. Of the total respondents, 204 (51.5%) were male, while 192 (48.5%) were female, indicating a higher representation of males than females. Regarding school location, 241 (60.8%) of the respondents attended schools located in urban areas, while 155 (39.2%) attended schools in rural areas. This suggests a greater proportion of respondents from urban schools compared to those from rural schools. In terms of class level, 224 (56.5%) of the respondents were in junior classes (JSS 1-3), while 172 (43.5%) were in senior classes (SSS 1-3). This shows that more respondents from senior classes participated in the study than those from the junior classes.

**Research Question One:** *What is the influence level of parenting styles on in-school adolescents' delinquent behaviours in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria?*

**Table 2:** Mean and Rank Order of the Influence Level of Parenting Styles on In-School Adolescents Delinquent Behaviours in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria

Parenting Styles	Item No	Statement of Items	Mean Score	Avg. Mean Score	Rank
Permissive	2	I may drink alcohol because my parents never asked me not to drink it	3.25		
	4	I can destroy school property since my parents did not caution me against such act	3.20		
	3	I cannot respect teachers in my school hence my parents did not teach me how to respect people.	2.71	2.83	1 <sup>st</sup>
	1	I may react aggressively whenever am challenged by someone for violating any rules in my school since my parents did not ask me not to do so	2.15		
Uninvolved	4	I can belong to a cult group since my parents do not care for me	3.22		
	1	I may steal people's belongings if my needs are unmet	3.09		
	2	I may not heed to my parent's advice because they do not care for me	2.78	2.81	2 <sup>nd</sup>
	3	I can drink alcohol hence my parents neither care about my well-being nor support me in any way	2.13		
Authoritative	4	My parents exert rigid supervision	2.92		
	2	I dare not fight with people because my parents will punish me for that	2.69	2.48	3 <sup>rd</sup>
	3	My parent do not tolerate me doing anything	2.22		

		I like		
	1	I cannot smoke because my parents will not tolerate it	2.10	
Authoritarian	3	my parents are liberal so I take people the way they are	2.82	
	1	my parents do not impose the friends I go out with so I can choose any group as friends not minding their behaviour	2.68	
			2.47	4 <sup>th</sup>
	4	My parents seldom teach me how to relate with people	2.26	
	2	I receive no challenge for joining any peer group because my parents do not care	2.12	

Table 2 shows the responses of in-school adolescents with respect to the influence level of parenting styles on their involvement in delinquent behaviours. The finding showed that the items most of the respondents attested to was Items in the permissive parenting styles which thus ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with an average mean score of 2.70. Ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> with an average mean score of 2.65 is the uninvolved parenting styles which thus ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>. The result also showed that the items the respondents attested to which ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> were Items is the authoritative parenting styles with an average mean score of 2.48. The authoritarian parenting style ranked 4<sup>th</sup> with an average mean score of 2.47. Since 10 out of the 16 items have mean scores that are above 2.50, it implies that the influence level of the permissive and uninvolved parenting styles on in-school adolescents' delinquent behaviours in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria is high. Permissive parenting is characterised by a high level of warmth and responsiveness but with minimal rules, discipline, or structure. While such parents tend to be nurturing and supportive, they often fail to set firm boundaries or enforce consequences for misbehaviour. As a result, adolescents raised in permissive households may struggle with self-regulation, leading to impulsive decision-making and a disregard for authority (Gómez-Ortiz, Del Rey & Ortega-Ruiz, 2019). The freedom granted by permissive parents may also encourage peer pressure susceptibility, as these adolescents may lack the discipline to resist negative influences. Parents who adopt the uninvolved parenting style provide minimal emotional support, supervision, or guidance, often due to work demands, financial struggles, or personal challenges. Adolescents from

such backgrounds may feel abandoned or neglected, prompting them to seek validation and companionship outside the home, sometimes from deviant peer groups (Llorca, Malonda & Samper, 2017). Without parental monitoring, these adolescents may engage in delinquent behaviours such as theft, violence, or vandalism, as they lack the structure needed to develop moral reasoning and responsibility.

### Hypotheses Testing

Three null hypotheses were generated and as well tested for this study. The hypotheses were tested using t-test statistical method at 0.05 level of significance.

**Hypothesis One:** *There is no significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on in-school adolescents' delinquent behaviours in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria based on gender*

**Table 3:** t-test showing the Influence of Parenting Styles on In-School Adolescents' Delinquent Behaviours in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Male	204	76.27	8.21	394	2.38*	1.96	0.02
Female	192	54.31	4.63				

Table 3 shows a calculated t-value of 2.38, a critical t-value of 1.96, and a p-value of 0.02, which is less than the 0.05 alpha level, leading to the rejection of the hypothesis. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on in-school adolescents' delinquent behaviours in Ilorin metropolis based on gender.

**Hypothesis Two:** *There is no significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on in-school adolescents' delinquent behaviours in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria based on school location*

**Table 4:** t-test showing the Influence of Parenting Styles on In-School Adolescents’ Delinquent Behaviours in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Based on School Location

School Location	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Urban	241	73.29	9.30	394	2.11*	1.96	0.04
Rural	155	51.77	4.95				

Table 4 shows a calculated t-value of 2.11, a critical t-value of 1.96, and a p-value of 0.04, which is less than the 0.05 alpha level, leading to the rejection of the hypothesis. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on adolescents’ delinquent behaviours based on school location.

**Hypothesis Three:** *There is no significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on in-school adolescents’ delinquent behaviours in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria based on class level*

**Table 5:** t-test showing the Influence of Parenting Styles on In-School Adolescents’ Delinquent Behaviours in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Based on Class Level

Class Level	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
JSS 1 – 3	224	62.92	8.25	394	2.03*	1.96	0.03
SSS 1 – 3	172	54.70	4.97				

Table 5 shows a calculated t-value of 2.03, a critical t-value of 1.96, and a p-value of 0.03, which is less than the 0.05 alpha level, leading to the rejection of the hypothesis. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on adolescents' delinquent behaviours based on class level.

## Discussion

A significant difference was identified in the influence of parenting styles on adolescents’ delinquent behaviours based on gender. This finding is consistent with the study by Oladipo and Balogun (2017), which found that male adolescents exposed to authoritarian parenting were more likely to exhibit externalizing behaviours such as aggression and defiance, whereas female adolescents tended to

internalize their struggles, leading to anxiety and social withdrawal. This suggests that the rigid and controlling nature of authoritarian parenting may provoke resistance and misconduct in boys, while girls, due to societal expectations and emotional tendencies, may suppress their frustrations rather than act out. Akpan and Idongesit (2019) highlighted that gender plays a crucial role in delinquency, noting that permissive parenting was linked to higher rates of delinquent behaviour among male adolescents, whereas neglectful parenting had a more profound impact on females, often resulting in engagement in risky behaviours and poor academic performance. The lack of structure in permissive parenting may encourage boys to engage in rebellious and risk-taking behaviours, while neglectful parenting deprives girls of the emotional support they need, making them more susceptible to negative peer influence and low self-esteem. These findings highlighted the need for gender-sensitive parenting approaches. While discipline is essential, it should be combined with warmth and guidance to reduce delinquent tendencies in boys. Likewise, girls require emotional support and encouragement to build self-confidence and resilience rather than internalising emotional distress. This study contributes to existing knowledge by reinforcing the argument that parenting strategies should be tailored to account for gender differences in adolescent development. The findings of this study reveal a significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on adolescents' delinquent behaviours based on school location. This aligns with existing research suggesting that the impact of parenting styles on delinquency varies between urban and rural settings due to differences in social structures, environmental exposure, and parental supervision. Okafor and Uche (2018) found that urban adolescents were more susceptible to the effects of permissive parenting, as the relatively less restrictive environment in cities, coupled with greater exposure to diverse influences, often leads to increased risk-taking behaviours. In contrast, rural adolescents were more affected by authoritarian parenting, likely due to the traditional and conservative nature of rural communities, where strict parental control is more common. This suggested that while urban adolescents may struggle with excessive freedom, rural adolescents may experience behavioural issues as a response to rigid discipline. Adeoye and Fatima (2020) observed that neglectful parenting was linked to higher delinquency among rural adolescents, largely due to the limited availability of structured social activities, which can lead young people to seek validation from delinquent peer groups. Conversely, urban adolescents exhibited more delinquent tendencies under indulgent parenting, as the fast-paced and socially complex urban environment provides numerous opportunities for unsupervised activities

and external influences. These findings underscore the importance of considering school location when addressing adolescent delinquency. Parents in urban areas need to establish firm but supportive boundaries to mitigate the risks associated with excessive freedom, while rural parents should balance discipline with emotional support to prevent rebellion and social withdrawal. Schools and policymakers must also recognise these contextual differences when designing intervention programmes, ensuring that strategies are tailored to the specific challenges faced by adolescents in both urban and rural settings.

The findings of this study indicate a significant difference in the influence of parenting styles on adolescents' delinquent behaviours based on class level. This suggested that as students' progress through secondary school, the impact of parental influence shifts, likely due to developmental changes, increasing independence, and evolving social interactions. Eze and Anene (2016) found that senior secondary students were more affected by permissive parenting, which often led to higher delinquency rates. This may be attributed to the increased autonomy that older adolescents experience, coupled with the absence of firm boundaries, which can encourage risk-taking behaviours. On the other hand, junior secondary students were more susceptible to neglectful parenting, given their greater dependence on parental guidance for emotional and behavioural regulation. When this support is lacking, younger adolescents may struggle with insecurity, leading to deviant behaviours as a means of seeking attention or validation. Bello and Abubakar (2019) reported that neglectful parenting had a more pronounced effect on junior students, reinforcing the notion that younger adolescents require consistent supervision and emotional support to develop self-discipline. In contrast, senior students exhibited more delinquent tendencies under indulgent parenting, likely due to reduced parental monitoring and increased peer influence. As older students gain more freedom, excessive leniency may inadvertently encourage engagement in delinquent activities, as they feel less accountable for their actions.

These findings highlight the need for class-level-specific parenting interventions. Parents of junior secondary students should be encouraged to provide structured guidance and emotional support to foster responsible behaviour. Meanwhile, parents of senior students should balance autonomy with appropriate levels of supervision, ensuring that their children develop self-regulation skills without feeling either excessively controlled or completely unchecked. Schools should also tailor their

counselling and behavioural intervention programmes to address the distinct needs of students at different academic levels, helping to mitigate the influence of ineffective parenting styles on adolescent delinquency.

## **Conclusion**

The findings revealed significant differences in how parenting styles impact adolescents' delinquency across these variables. Specifically, the study highlighted that gender plays a pivotal role, with male and female adolescents responding differently to various parenting styles. Similarly, school location emerged as a critical factor, as urban and rural adolescents exhibited distinct behavioural patterns influenced by the parenting approaches they experienced. Class level was also found to significantly moderate the relationship between parenting styles and delinquent behaviours, reflecting the developmental and cognitive differences associated with educational progression.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that parents should be educated on effective parenting styles through community-based workshops, school seminars, and counselling programs to foster positive behavioural development in adolescents. Education stakeholders should design intervention programs tailored to address delinquent behaviours in urban and rural schools, considering the influence of environmental and socio-economic factors on parenting. Schools should strengthen counseling units to provide guidance and psycho-social support to students at different class levels, addressing behavioral issues influenced by parenting styles.

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