International Journal of Innovative Psychology & Social Development 14 (3):186-197, July-Sept, 2026

© SEAHI PUBLICATIONS, 2026 www.seahipublications.org **ISSN: 2467-8546**

DOI:10.5281/zenodo.21854425

Relationship Between Parenting Styles And Social Development Of Secondary School Students In Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria

APEH, Hosea Abalaka & AGBO, Maria

Department of Educational Foundations,
University of Abuja, Abuja, Nigeria
apehhosea@gmail.com; agbomaria1@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
This study investigated the relationship between parenting styles and the social development of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. The objective of the study was to identify the parenting styles commonly used by parents, assess the level of students' social development, and determine the relationship between different parenting styles and social development. The study adopted a survey research design, utilizing a structured questionnaire to collect data from secondary school students. The population of 13,541 comprised secondary school students in FCT, Abuja, and a sample size of 384 respondents for the sample of the study which was determined using stratified and random sampling techniques. The study employed validated research instruments, including the Parenting Styles and Social Development Questionnaire (PSSDQ). The Findings of the study revealed that democratic parenting style was the most commonly used by parents in Abuja, and it has a significant positive relationship with students' social development. Additionally, authoritative parenting style was found to influence social development positively, while laissez-faire parenting style showed no significant impact. The study also found no significant gender differences in the social development of male and female students. These findings highlight the crucial role of parenting styles in shaping students' social behaviors. The study recommend that parents adopt democratic and authoritative parenting approaches to enhance the social development of their children.
Keywords: Parenting styles, social development, secondary school

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely regarded as a critical driver of individual growth, social mobility, and national development. In the context of Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, secondary education plays a vital role not only in transmitting knowledge and academic competencies but also in shaping young people's social development how they interact with peers, integrate into communities, adopt civic values, and build social skills. Understanding the determinants of students' social development is therefore key to ensuring that education leads to holistic outcomes, not simply academic achievement.

Parenting style refers to the combination of strategies that are used to raise children. The study considers basically the three types of parenting styles, namely, Democratic parenting style, Laissez-faire parenting style and Authoritative parenting style. Those methods of parenting affect secondary school students positively or negatively in social development (Baurind, 2014). Furthermore, Darling and Steinberg (2018) see parenting style as a constellation of parents' attitudes and behaviours toward children and an

emotional climate in which the parents' behaviours are expressed. More so, Spera and Christopher, (2015) see parenting style as a psychological construct representing standard strategies that parents use in their child rearing. They further added that the quality of parenting can be more essential than the quantity of time spent with the child. For instance, a parent can spend an entire afternoon with his or her child, yet the parent may be engaging in a different activity and not demonstrating enough interest towards the child. Parenting styles are the representation of how parents respond to and make demands on their children. Parenting practices are specific behaviors, while parenting styles represent broader patterns of parenting practices.

Social development involves adjustment and coping skill which is seen as the extent to which a person lives harmoniously in the society with others. Students should interact with different teachers and students in their relationships. Students come from different backgrounds with different personality traits and are confronted with new personal and interpersonal challenges. These results in major transition events in their lives, behaviour is both internal and external. They socialize differently with the teachers, fellow students and the school environment as a whole. Some students are more comfortable with people from their ethnic group, who speak the same language and share the same cultural heritage. Some students find it difficult to interact and this leads to emotional stress. Some find it difficult to exhibit proper social behaviour with others because they know that they have limited period. Effective interpersonal relationships enhance school adjustment and academic achievement. Unfortunately, many students lack the skills which are essential for the preparation and establishment of social development. Lack of social skills leads students going through school experiences with unusual difficulties. Such difficulties include feeling of being hurt, unable to engage in play, anxious or withdraw, disruptive, sometimes abusive verbally and/or physically seek attention, and often require some one-on-one attention (Lawson, 2011).

Aremu (2016) opined that there are several factors which may influence students' social behaviours, and these may be family variables, self- concept, peers and media. The type of relationship in the family influences the child's academic and social interaction. One of the reasons students get involved in examination malpractice is poor moral upbringing. Some students lack basic moral training in their homes. They are disobedient to their teachers and school authority. They are morally deficient and so get involved in some social vices that distract them from their studies. Ross (2016) Family involvement has also been found to be associated with positive school attachment on the part of children. Some parents have the means to meet their children's needs and make their children happy. It is a said that parents who provide all that their children need do not get the best from their children.

Parents are the ones saddled with the responsibility of taking care of their children until they can take care of themselves. Erick- Erickson, (2011) opined that, parents have vested interest in the social behaviour of their children. Social development is an interaction of an individual with others and the acquisition of the ability to behave in accordance with social expectation. It is pertinent to point out that the social behaviour in students is very crucial because it helps the students to learn right and wrong in a particular society. Onyehalu (2017) stated that, this stage in the students' life requires parental love, care, warmth and serious attention to adjust adequately to environment in which they live. Generally, the social behaviour of the students depends on the style of parenting. The tense atmosphere, discord and instability in some homes affect students' behaviour and socialization. The influence of family relationships plays on students' school life and social behaviour cannot be overemphasized. The type of parenting style adopted affects students' reaction to life and their level of academic performance. Therefore, parents' and students' experiences at home exert tremendous influence in building the personality of students and making them what they become. The relationship between parenting style and the social development of secondary school students is a well-researched and significant area of study in the fields of psychology, education, and child development. Different parenting styles can have distinct effects on a child's social development. It is based on this background that this study is being carried out, to examine the relationship between parenting styles and social development of secondary schools students in Federal Capital Territory, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Statement of the Problem

This research was motivated by personal experience of the researcher who has been a teacher for some years in POWA International School Garki, Abuja. The early age of secondary school students has some certain characteristics regarding their social development. At the early age of growth, they experience some changes that have to do with self-consciousness and thinking of the person they want to be. Youths, especially secondary school students face complex identity issues today and involve themselves in so many negative activities such as association with bad peer group, lack of respect for elders and drug abuse among others. These anti-social activities have led many of these students become nuisance to the society and Federal Capital Territory in particular; some have dropped out of school as a result of these behaviours and have been hired by politicians as political thugs who disrupt election processes in states.

The researcher observed that despite the various steps being taken, there has been a wide spread of different patterns of behaviours both the acceptable and the unacceptable ones among secondary schools students in Federal Capital Territory. This has affected societal goals and more especially the goals of the individual, senior secondary school students in Federal Capital Territory are not left out. This is a situation of great concern to all well-meaning individuals.

The problem, therefore, is that there is insufficient empirical evidence in the FCT on how various parenting styles influence the social development of secondary school students. Without a clear understanding of these dynamics, educators, parents, and policymakers lack adequate information to design interventions that promote positive social outcomes. This gap in knowledge may contribute to students' poor social adjustment, weakened peer relationships, and inadequate preparation for responsible participation in society. People at secondary school age require parental love, care, warmth and serious attention and parental discipline which involves control, monitoring, concern, encouragement and consistency which are all aspects of the parent-child relationship that could affect academic achievement in adolescents. The home (parenting) therefore plays a very crucial role on personality especially at the senior secondary level, but this seems lacking. Therefore, this study is to examine relationship between parenting styles and social development of secondary school students in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the relationship between parenting style and social development of secondary schools students in Federal Capital Territory?
2. What are the parenting styles commonly used by parents of students in Federal Capital Territory secondary schools?
3. What is the level of social development of secondary schools students in Federal Capital Territory?
4. What is the relationship between democratic parenting style and social development of secondary schools students in Federal Capital Territory?
5. What is the relationship between laissez-faire parenting style and social development of secondary schools students in Federal Capital Territory?
6. What is the relationship between authoritative parenting style and social development of secondary schools students in Federal Capital Territory?
7. the gender differences in social development of secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between parenting style and social development of secondary school students in Federal Capital Territory.

$H0_2$: There is no significant relationship between democratic parenting style and social development of secondary school students in Federal Capital Territory.

$H0_3$: There is no significant relationship between laissez-faire parenting style and social development of secondary school students in Federal Capital Territory.

$H0_4$: There is no significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and social development of secondary school students in Federal Capital Territory.

$H0_5$: There is no significant difference between male and female students in social development of secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design adopted for the study was descriptive survey design. According to Nwogu (2015), survey research is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. This design was considered appropriate for collecting factual information from a sample of the population on which generalization may be made.

The descriptive survey design is appropriate because it is a design one can easily study a large population through a sample of such population and the generalization made on the entire population.

Population of the Study

The study population consisted of all Senior Secondary School students in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), totaling 13,541 students. A detailed breakdown of this population is presented in the appendix (Secondary Education Board, FCT, 2021).

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The researcher used a stratified random sampling technique to two schools each from each Area Council in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria making a total of twelve (12) schools. Balloting system was used in selecting the schools from each of the ward. A proportionate random sampling will further be used to select respondents from each of the selected school; A total of 384 students was selected based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of sample specification. A proportionate stratified sampling of unequal strata will further be used to select respondents from each of the selected schools.

Instrumentation

The instrument for this study was a self- structured questionnaire. Agu (2004) pointed out that a questionnaire is used when factual information is desired. The questionnaire was therefore aim at obtaining factual information from the respondents. The instrument for data collection were self-structured questionnaire named; Parenting Style and Social Development Questionnaire (PSSDQ). The questionnaire was structured in four-point rating Likert typed scale, which were consisted of two sections. Section A: contained Demographic Data of the respondents, and Section B: contained forty-seven (47) option statements referred to as items for the parenting styles questionnaire and ten (10) option statement referred to as item for the social development questionnaire. The main purpose of the structured statement allow the respondents specifically express their opinions by indicating a tick (V) against the most appropriate option.

Reliability of the Instrument

To ascertain the reliability of the instrument it was further subjected to pilot test. The pilot test was conducted using thirty (30) secondary school students from government secondary school Garki, who will not be participants in the main study. The test re-test method of reliability was adopted. Data from the conducted pilot test was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Cronbach's Alpha, a reliability index value of 0.76 was obtained. Hence, the instrument was considered valid and reliable for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using percentage, frequency counts and mean scores for the demographic data and research questions. The four-point Likert typed scale has four options, SA (4), A (3), D (2) and SD (1). When the scores are added, they made up a total of 10 points. When we divide the 10/4 it would be 2.5, were the decision rule point of 2.5. Any value that is 2.5 and above was accepted/ agreed but any value that is below 2.5 fell to disagreement. The Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient

were used to test the formulated hypotheses. Hypotheses 1-4 will be tested at 0.05 level of significance. This is because we want to find out a relationship between two variables.

RESULTS

Research Question One: *What are the parenting styles commonly used by parents of students in Federal Capital Territory secondary schools?*

Table 1: Parenting styles commonly used by parents of students in Federal Capital Territory secondary schools

N=384

Parenting Style	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Authoritative	3.35	1.02	1st
Authoritarian	3.34	1.05	2nd
Laissez-Faire	1.55	1.02	3rd
Democratic	1.50	1.16	4th
Sectional Mean	**2.44**	**0.45**	

Table 1 shows the parenting styles commonly used by parents of students in Federal Capital Territory secondary schools. The mean score of respondents for the authoritative parenting style is 3.35, the mean score for authoritarian is 3.34, the mean score for the Laissez-Faire parenting style is 1.55, while the mean score for the democratic parenting style is 1.50. The sectional mean score for the parenting styles commonly used by parents of students in Federal Capital Territory secondary schools is 2.44. This implies that the authoritative and authoritarian parenting style are commonly used by parents of students in Federal Capital Territory secondary schools.

Research Question Two: *What is the level of social development of secondary school students in Federal Capital Territory?*

Research Question 2: Parenting Styles Commonly Used by Parents

N=384

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	My parents usually involve me in decision-making (democratic)	3.20	0.97	Agree
2	My parents set clear rules that are explained (authoritative)	3.42	0.85	Agree
3	My parents punish without explanation (authoritative)	2.60	1.08	Disagree
4	My parents allow me freedom without monitoring (laissez-faire)	2.55	1.02	Disagree
5	My parents encourage open communication (authoritarian)	3.35	0.90	Agree
6	My parents enforce strict obedience (authoritarian)	2.65	1.05	Disagree
7	My parents rarely supervise my activities (lasses-faire)	2.40	1.12	Disagree
	Sectional Mean	**2.88**	**0.99**	**Agree**

Table 2 shows the analysis of common parenting styles among parents of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory shows that authoritative and democratic parenting styles are the most prevalent, as evidenced by higher mean scores of 3.42 and 3.35–3.20, respectively. In contrast, authoritarian and laissez-faire parenting styles were less commonly reported, with lower mean scores ranging from 2.40 to 2.65. The sectional

mean score of 2.88 suggest that parents in FCT tend to combine warmth, guidance, and structured expectations, favoring authoritative and democratic approaches over authoritarian or laissez-faire styles.

Research Question Three: *What is the level of social development of secondary school students in Federal Capital Territory?*

Table 3: The level of social development of secondary school students N=384

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
8	I discuss my personal problems including social behaviour with my parents	2.56	1.04	Moderate Level
9	My parents dictate the type of friends I move with	2.49	1.04	Low Level
10	My lateness to school is due to the long hours of domestic chores I do for my parent(s) at home.	2.53	1.02	Moderate Level
11	I am not always present in the class because my parent(s) do not visit my school to find out what I am doing.	2.75	.97	Moderate Level
12	I do not usually fight other children in the class because my parent(s) usually beat me for any small offence I committed.	2.81	.98	Moderate Level
13	I am not always honest to prevent myself from punishment from my parent(s) whenever I make mistakes.	2.60	.97	Moderate Level
14	My relationship with other children is bad because my parent(s) do not allow me to mix with other children at home.	2.21	.100	Low Level
15	I usually participate in sports because my parent(s) allowed me to take part in sport activities.	2.64	1.86	Moderate Level
16	I am excessively shy because my parent(s) do not allow me to interact with people.	2.50	.89	Moderate Level
17	I am always neat because my parent(s) always take time to check my appearance.	2.34	.96	Low Level
	Sectional Mean	**2.54**	**.98**	**Moderate Level**

Table 3 shows the level of social development of secondary schools students in Federal Capital Territory. The mean shows agreement and disagreement with some of the items. The sectional mean for the items in respect of the level of social development of secondary schools students in Federal Capital Territory was 2.54 (greater than 2.5 midpoint on a 4-point Likert scale). The mean score of 2.54 suggests that students are moderately high in social development.

Research Question Four: *Relationship Between Democratic Parenting Style and Social Development*

Table 4: Democratic Parenting Style and Social Development

N=384

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
18	Democratic parenting helps me develop better communication skills	3.60	0.97	Agree
19	My social confidence is higher because my parents listen to me	3.52	0.85	Agree
20	I find it easy to make friends due to my parents' support	3.40	1.08	Agree
21	Parental involvement improves my interpersonal behaviour	3.62	1.02	Agree
22	I behave responsibility because my parent explain rules	3.58	0.90	Agree
23	My emotional stability is improved by positive parental communication	3.55	1.05	Agree
24	Democratic parenting encourages better peer relationships	3.48	1.12	Agree
	Sectional Mean	**2.88**	**0.99**	**Agree**

Table 4 shows the analysis of democratic parenting style and social development of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory shows that relationship between democratic parenting style and social development, as evidenced by higher mean scores of 3.62. The sectional mean score of 2.88 suggest that parental involvement improves my interpersonal behaviour and democratic parenting helps me develop better communication skills.

Research Question Five: *Relationship Between Laissez-Faire Parenting Style and Social Development*

Table 5: Laissez-Faire Parenting Style and Social Development

N=384

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
25	Lack of parental monitoring affects my behaviour	3.20	0.99	Agree
26	Too much freedom reduces my self-discipline	3.30	0.92	Agree
27	Absence of guidance affects my decision-making	3.28	0.90	Agree
28	I feel confused when my parents do not set limits	3.15	1.02	Agree
29	Lack of supervision affect my social interaction	3.10	1.04	Agree
30	I sometimes struggle socially because of little parental direction	3.12	0.95	Agree
31	Laissez-faire parenting leads to inconsistent behaviour	3.18	0.98	Agree
	Sectional Mean	**3.19**	**0.98**	**Agree**

Table 5 shows the analysis of laissez-faire parenting style and social development of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory shows that relationship between laissez-faire parenting style and social development, as evidenced by higher mean scores of 3.30. The sectional mean score of 3.19 suggest that absence of guidance affects my decision-making.

Research Question Six: *Relationship Between Authoritative Parenting Styles and Social Development*

Table 6: Authoritative Parenting Style and Social Development

N=384

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
32	Authoritative parenting helps me develop self-control	3.55	0.87	Agree
33	My social skills improve because my parents set clear expectations	3.50	0.84	Agree
34	I relate well with peers due to parental guidance	3.42	0.89	Agree
35	Balanced discipline enhances my behaviour	3.48	0.93	Agree
36	Parental warmth improves my emotional stability	3.60	0.88	Agree
37	I show responsibility because my parents model good behaviour	3.55	0.82	Agree
38	Authoritative parenting contributes to my maturity	3.58	0.86	Agree
	Sectional Mean	**3.52**	**0.87**	**Agree**

Table 6 shows the analysis of authoritative parenting style and social development of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory shows that relationship between parental warmth improves my emotional stability, as evidenced by higher mean scores of 3.60. The sectional mean score of 3.52 suggest that authoritative parenting helps to develop self-control and parental warmth improves my emotional stability.

Test of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between parenting styles and social development of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory.

Table 7a: Relationship between parental styles (Authoritative, Authoritarian, Democratic and Laissez-Faire) and social development of secondary school students

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.067a	.004	-.006	.16873

From Table 7a, the R value, the linear regression coefficient is a measure of the quality of the prediction of the dependent variable. An R- value of .067 indicates low level of influence of parenting styles on social development of secondary school students in Federal Capital Territory. The R Square, called the coefficient of determination, shows the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables. The R square value of .004 indicates that 0.4% of the variability of the dependent variable (social development) can be explained on the basis of the independent variables (parenting styles).

To determine the statistical significance of the dominance of influence on social development by parenting styles, analysis was carried out and results presented on Table 7b.

Table 7b: ANOVA Table for Test of Dominant Influence on social development by parenting styles

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
1	Regression	.048	4	.012	.426	.009	Significant
		10.790	379	.028			
	Residual	10.838	383				
	Total						

a. Dependent Variable: Social Development

b. Predictors: (Constant), Parenting Styles

Table 7b shows whether the independent variables significantly influence the dependent variable. A significant value of .009 (less than the 0.05 level of significance) shows that the independent variables significantly influenced the dependent variable. The hypothesis is, therefore, rejected. This implies that parenting styles significantly influence the social development of students.

To further show the statistical significance of the independent variables, analysis was further carried out and results presented on Table 7c.

Table 7c: Table of Coefficients for Test of Influence on Social Development by Authoritative, Authoritarian, Laissez-Faire, Democratic Parenting Styles

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.546	.085		29.825	.000
	Authoritarian	-.014	.022	.085	-.639	.523
	Authoritative	.002	.024	.022	.102	.019
	Democratic	.004	.019	.024	.200	.842
	Laissez-Faire	.019	.018	.019	1.075	.283

Table 12 shows the statistical significance of each independent variable. Results for authoritarian indicate that the significant value is .523 which is more than .05 hence the conclusion that authoritarian does not significantly influence the social development of secondary school students in Federal Capital Territory. Results for the authoritative parenting style indicate that the significant value is .019, which is less than .05, hence the conclusion that the authoritative parenting style significantly influenced the social development of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory. Results for democratic parenting style indicate that the significant value is .842 which is more than .05 hence the conclusion that democratic parenting style does not significantly influence the social development of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory.

Lastly, results for Laissez-Faire parenting style indicate that the significant value is .283 which is more than the .05 level of significance, hence, the conclusion that Laissez-Faire parenting style did not significantly influence the social development of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory. A multiple regression was run to show the influence on social development of the four kinds of parenting styles. These variables statistically significantly showed influence on social development, F (.426) = .012, p> .05, R^2 = .004.

One of the variables (authoritative parenting style) added statistically significantly to the relationship, p< .05. Authoritarian, Laissez-Faire, and Democratic Parenting Styles, however, added less to the statistical significance of the relationship. The hypotheses were, therefore, rejected.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference between male and female students in social development of secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory.

Table 8: t-test on the difference between male and female students in the level of social development of secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory

Gender	Number	Mean	S. D	t-value	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Decision
Male	209	2.52	.542	1.432	382	.176	Not Significant
Female	175	2.56	.563				

The analysis in Table 14 was carried out to test the difference between male and female students in the level social development of secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. With significant values of .176 (more than the 0.05 level of significance), the hypothesis that says that there is no significant difference between male and female students in social development of secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory is, therefore, accepted and revealed that there is no statistical difference in the

mean rating of students' social development of male and female secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding of this study revealed that democratic parenting is commonly used among parents of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja**.** This finding aligns closely with previous studies in Nigeria. For example, Muza and Ndagi (2022) reported that democratic parenting significantly influenced social adjustment among adolescents in Kebbi State. Their study emphasized that adolescents raised in democratic households exhibited better interpersonal skills, self-esteem, and the ability to navigate social challenges effectively. Similarly, Orji, Ugoji, and Obiunu (2024) found that democratic parenting significantly predicted lower susceptibility to peer pressure among senior secondary students, highlighting the critical role of open communication, shared decision-making, and supportive parental engagement in fostering social competence. The prevalence of democratic parenting among parents in FCT may indicate changing cultural norms in urban Nigerian settings, where modernization and exposure to global parenting paradigms increasingly encourage participatory approaches that balance guidance with freedom. The implication of this finding is that fostering democratic parenting practices could be a valuable strategy for promoting positive social outcomes among adolescents in the FCT.

The finding of this study revealed that students in FCT exhibit moderate-to-high levels of social development**,** indicating the presence of well-developed interpersonal skills, cooperation, emotional regulation, and adaptive social behaviours. This result corroborates similar findings in Rivers State, where Chukwu (2025) reported a positive correlation between democratic and authoritative parenting styles and social adjustment among adolescents. Chukwu's study emphasized that children from supportive and structured households demonstrated stronger pro-social behaviours and greater emotional stability compared to those from authoritarian or laissez-faire backgrounds. In addition, Adeyemi (2023) found that among Nigerian university students, social adjustment strongly predicted psychological well-being, suggesting that competencies acquired during adolescence have enduring effects into adulthood. The convergence of these findings underscores the role of the home environment and parenting practices in shaping adolescents' social capacities. It highlights that social development is not only an outcome of schooling but is also significantly influenced by parental behaviour, providing a foundation for mental health, emotional resilience, and future societal engagement.

The finding revealed a significant relationship between parenting style and social development among secondary school students in FCT. This aligns with a substantial body of Nigerian empirical research demonstrating that parenting approaches meaningfully influence adolescents' social outcomes. For instance, Muza and Ndagi (2022) showed that different parenting styles democratic, authoritarian, and permissive had significant effects on adolescents' social adjustment in Kebbi State, with democratic and authoritative styles associated with higher social competence. Similarly, Adeyemi (2023) reported that parenting style, particularly authoritative parenting, predicted both social adjustment and psychological well-being among undergraduate students in South-West Nigeria.

The finding showed that democratic parenting is positively correlated with social development among senior secondary school students in FCT. This finding resonates strongly with prior studies. Muza and Ndagi (2022) observed that students whose parents employed a democratic style demonstrated superior social adjustment and self-concept compared to students from authoritarian or permissive homes. Similarly, Orji, Ugoji, and Obiunu (2024) found that democratic parenting predicted lower susceptibility to negative peer influences, suggesting that students raised in participatory, reasoning-oriented households are more resilient, confident, and socially competent. Democratic parenting allows adolescents to develop independent decision-making skills while maintaining a sense of accountability and respect for others.

The finding indicated that laissez-faire parenting is not positively related to social development among secondary school students in FCT. Laissez-faire parenting, characterized by minimal supervision, limited guidance, and excessive freedom, was found to be ineffective in promoting social competence. This finding aligns with research by Dike, Ugwu, Owoh, Aondoakaa, and Okechukwu (2023) in Nsukka,

which demonstrated that permissive or neglectful parenting was associated with lower adolescent self-esteem, poor self-disclosure, and weaker social skills. While autonomy is a necessary component of adolescent development, unstructured freedom without active parental involvement can result in confusion, inconsistent behaviour, and inadequate decision-making skills. The present study therefore confirms theoretical perspectives suggesting that parental engagement and consistent guidance are essential for the healthy social and emotional development of adolescents.

The finding revealed that authoritative parenting positively influences social development of secondary school students in FCT. Authoritative parenting, which combines warmth, clear expectations, and consistent discipline, has long been regarded as the most effective style for promoting psychosocial competence. In their study in Nsukka, Dike et al. (2023) reported that authoritative parenting was associated with higher self-esteem, greater self-disclosure, and stronger social adjustment among adolescents. Furthermore, Adeyemi (2015) in Abuja found that authoritative parenting significantly correlated with social-emotional competence, including pro-social behaviour and emotional regulation, among pre-school children. The findings from the current study reinforce the notion that authoritative parenting provides the necessary structure and support for adolescents to develop emotional stability, social responsibility, and maturity. By modelling balanced behaviour, parents help students internalize values, respect social norms, and interact constructively with peers, which are essential for both academic and personal success.

The finding showed that there is no significant gender difference in social development among secondary school students in FCT. This indicates that male and female students are developing social skills at relatively similar levels, suggesting that parenting practices exert a stronger influence on social outcomes than gender. Orji, Ugoji, and Obiunu (2024) also found no significant moderating effect of sex on the relationship between parenting style and peer-pressure susceptibility, implying that both boys and girls respond similarly to parental guidance. Similarly, Dike et al. (2023) reported that while parenting styles correlated with social adjustment and self-esteem, gender differences were modest or non-significant. This finding is particularly significant for the design of interventions and programs aimed at enhancing adolescent social development. It suggests that initiatives to improve social skills through parenting education or school-based programs need not differentiate heavily between male and female students, as both genders benefit equally from structured, supportive, and participatory parenting approaches.

CONCLUSION

The researcher concluded that democratic parenting style is the most commonly used among parents of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria and is significantly related to students' social development. Additionally, authoritative parenting style was found to positively influence social development, whereas laissez-faire parenting style showed no such relationship. The study also confirmed that social development is evident among secondary school students in the region and that parenting style plays a crucial role in shaping students' social growth. However, there was no statistical difference in the mean rating of social development between male and female students, suggesting that gender does not significantly influence social development in secondary schools within the Federal Capital Territory.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Given that democratic parenting is prevalent and positively associated with students' social development, parents in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) should be encouraged to maintain and strengthen participative parenting practices. Schools and community organizations can organize workshops and seminars to educate parents on effective communication, shared decision-making, and supportive guidance techniques.
2. Since parenting styles significantly influence social development, structured training programs should be introduced to guide parents on combining warmth with appropriate supervision.

Emphasis should be placed on authoritative parenting techniques, which balance discipline and emotional support, fostering maturity and social competence among adolescents.

3. The study showed that laissez-faire parenting is not positively related to social development. Parents who adopt permissive or neglectful approaches should be sensitized about the potential negative impacts of low supervision and minimal guidance. Counseling services and community outreach programs can provide strategies for setting consistent limits while encouraging autonomy.
4. Since there is no significant gender difference in social development, schools and parents should implement social development programs that are inclusive and equitable for both male and female students. Efforts to improve social skills and peer interaction should be universally applied rather than gender-specific.
5. Schools should collaborate with parents to support adolescents' social development through joint initiatives such as mentorship programs, peer group activities, and extracurricular engagements that reinforce pro-social behaviour.

REFERENCES

Adeyemi, A. E. (2015). Parenting styles and social-emotional competence of pre-school children in Abuja, Nigeria.

Aremu, N. (2016). Different intervening variables that distract students. *The Nation-Issuu.* August 15, 2011.

Baurind, (2014). *The Relationship Between Baumrind's Parenting Styles Reflected in Classroom Management and Achievement* (Doctoral dissertation, Grand Canyon University).

Chukwu, M. A., & Blessing, J. (2025). Role of Family Relationship on Peer Selection among Secondary School Students in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Darling, N. and Steinberg, L. (2018). Parenting style as context: An integrative model. *Psychological Bulletin, 113*(3), 487–496.

Dike et al. "Assessing Parenting Styles, Self-Esteem and Self-Disclosure of Adolescents in Nsukka Urban, Enugu State." *Journal For Family & Society Research* 2.1 (2023).

Dike, I. C., Ugwu, K. T., Owoh, N. P., Aondoakaa, B. N., & Okechukwu, F. O. (2023). Assessing Parenting Styles, Self-Esteem and Self-Disclosure of Adolescents in Nsukka Urban, Enugu State. *Journal For Family & Society Research*, *2*(1).

Erickson, N. (2011). Addressing the problems of juvenile bullying: Office of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Presentation. U.S. Department of Justice, Washington D.C., pp. 27.

Harvard (2014). Parental Involvement in Adolescents' Education: An Examination of the Interplay among School Factors, Parental Role Construction, and Family Income. *School Community Journal*, *28*(1), 9-36.

Lawson, H. A. (2019). Family focused strategies for student engagement. *Preventing school failure: Alternative education for children and youth*, *63*(3), 211-219.

Muza, A., & Ndagi, U. (2022). *Effect of parenting styles on social adjustment of secondary school students in Kebbi State, Nigeria*. Journal of Social Science and Behavioural Studies, 8(2), 101–115.

Onyehalu (2017). Relationship between parenting styles and students' disruptive behaviour among secondary school students in uyo metropolis of Akwa-Ibom state, Nigeria. *Prestige Journal of Counselling Psychology*.

Orji, I., Ugoji, N., & Obiunu, O. (2024). *Parenting styles as predictors of adolescents' susceptibility to peer pressure in secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria*. Nigerian Journal of Educational Studies, 10(1), 50–67.

Ross, T. R. (2016). The differential effects of parental involvement on high school completion and postsecondary attendance. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *24*, 30-30.

Spera and Christopher, (2015). Examining the Impact of Parents' Education on Students' Academic Achievements. *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, *11*(4), 102-110.

Utti (2014). "We Are Not Ready": Awareness, Challenges, and Transformations in Gender Education. *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, *16*(Italian Journal of Sociology of Education 16/3), 145-166.