

A Critical Review of Joyzy Pius Egunjobi's Child Response Styles to Parenting

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Abstract: Over the years, psychologists have focused more on how parents raise up children and the different styles used to achieve this. An important component of parenting also, is the ability to accurately read and interpret how the child responds to the styles of parenting. This paper critically reviewed the model of Child Response Styles to Parenting as propounded and researched by Joyzy Pius Egunjobi.

Keywords: *Child Response Styles, Adherer, Rejecter, Falser, Nonchalant, Parenting, Parenting Styles*

I. Introduction

Joyzy Pius Egunjobi in 2021 theorized and researched Child Response Styles. This study by Egunjobi is a response to the apparent attention placed on parenting styles without clear indications on how a child responds to parenting. Divided into five sections, the article makes an empirical argument on the nature and dynamics of the different ways children can respond to parenting. The background section explores the general concept of parenting styles and makes a case for child response styles based on the Yoruba cultural perspective. Egunjobi further theorized that Child response styles to parenting could be arranged into four categories. Thus, a child could be an Adherer, a Rejecter, a Falser, or Nonchalant.

To buttress this point, the study used a survey design with an infinite population consisting of children aged 11 and above. The findings of the study showed the existence of the four categories of child response styles. While the study is significant to both parents and children, and indeed the entire population, there are limitations related to the argument, methods and the generalizability of results.

II. The Study in View

In Egunjobi's article "Child Response Styles to Parenting", the author expressed the need to investigate the topic of child response. Egunjobi noticed that much attention was given to the parenting styles. The researcher made an attempt of assessing the child response styles in contrast to each parenting style which include authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and uninvolved parenting styles. The researcher adopted three research questions. He wanted to know the prevalence of child response styles to parenting; the characteristics of the different child response styles, and the prevalence of child response styles to parenting as related to parenting styles.

Egunjobi suggested four child styles, namely Adherer, Rejecter, Falser, and Nonchalant. For him, the adherer style in child response seem to imitate either of the parents. The adherer child continually has the perception of the parents and act or behaves according to the instructions given by the parents. The child may be seen as "trained". On the other hand, the rejecter child is different from the parents. According to Egunjobi, the rejecter child of an authoritative parent becomes permissive while a child of permissive parent becomes authoritative. The third child response style – the falser child could pretend to be an adherer when he/she is with the parents and a rejecter while away from the parents. This response style often is seen in children from authoritarian

home. The Nonchalant child is unpredictable because s/he seems indifferent to the parenting. S/he may appear calm and may not care about the pattern of training from the parents, yet the nonchalant child is aware of what s/he is doing. In these four child response styles, the author brings new knowledge on how children may continue to behave either in taking up attitude from their parents, deviating from the attitude of their parents, striking a new path or simply getting on with life.

The researcher used a survey research design. The study arrived at the following findings among others. About 65.5 % of the respondents were identified with characteristics of an adherer, while 4.8% were rejecters. 17.2% identified as a falser, and 12.5% identified as Nonchalant. The results also indicated that all the nonchalant children were from uninvolved parents. The author suggested that the child's behavior should be considered from the child's perspective. He called for further enquires and research in this area of child's response styles.

III. Evaluation of the Content

The purpose of the study was to scientifically prove the proposed theory on child's response style among the general population. The study presented four types of child response to parenting which include adherer, rejecter, falser and nonchalant. It is quite a significant contribution to knowledge in the field of parenting and child response to parenting. An evaluation of each of these response styles are as follows:

The Adherer Child

For Egunjobi, the adherer child continues to obey his parents when they are not there. S/he sticks to the rules and regulations laid out by the parents. This is in line with the affirmation of the UNHCR Guidelines on Determining the Best Interest of the Child (2008) that many children find it easier to speak in the presence of a friend, parent or guardian. The adherer child may have forged such a strong bond with his or her parents that the child cannot think of any prominent figure apart from his or her parents. This means that caution must be exercised in this regard, especially in raising up children as most of them take up the adherer style as seen in the results of the study by Egunjobi.

The Rejecter Child

The rejecter child according to Egunjobi, is one who totally goes against the parenting style of his or her parents. While this may not be acceptable in most African cultures, it can also be in the best interest of the child. This is because a child who is capable of forming his or her own views has the right to express those views freely, in all matters that affect him or her.

The feeling of being wanted and valued is the basis for a healthy emotional life. Such feelings are rooted in family relations (UNHCR, 2008). Thus, a rejecter child could be a response to prior rejection of the child from the parents.

The Falsar Child

The Falsar child style to parenting style can be seen as an expression of manipulative behavior as a way to satisfy the ego of the parents without bearing the consequences or even taking responsibilities. There is a possibility that a child is afraid to confront the behavioral style of the parents, and at the same time being a passive as a way to avoid any kind of punishment from his or her parents. Despite existing few literatures on the child respond style on parenting, there is a common ground to use the response on parenting style, though the roles and the rules are different.

This is why Li (2022) speaking on the four parenting styles (Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Neglectful) and their effects on the child, acknowledges that it is necessary responsiveness to the degree to which parents are accepting and sensitive to their children's emotional and developmental needs and inconsistencies can be one of the many problems.

Gill and Marcin (2019) brought new thoughts on how to deal with child response in relation to parenting styles. They concluded that awareness and attention to the present moment, intentionality and understanding of behavior helps in response of not being judgmental, compassionate, accepting.

It is necessary according to Meyer et al (2020) to have a child's learning environment that is largely shaped by their caregivers' behavior. As long as there is a health relationship despite the age experience, it is important to understand and specially to be aware of the outcomes of the responses not only on the child's side but also on the parents' maturity and responsibility.

The Nonchalant Child

The term of nonchalant as an attribute of child response to parenting is an original conception of Egunjobi, and the description of the nonchalant child is supported by the finding of a study conducted by Kharbanda (2020) who stated individuals with uninvolved parents are more likely to develop emotional and behavioral problems. The study conducted by Auma (2018) showed another opinion. Auma's findings showed that the authoritative parenting style was ranked highest by 91.8 percent as the most preferred parenting style. This means that students preferred parents who set and enforced clear rules to guide their behavior. Participants were ready to adopt authoritative parenting style by being friendly and supportive to their children.

The result of Egunjobi's study on the prevalence of nonchalant child response differs with the findings of the study conducted by Auma (2018) who found 5.6% of participants belonging to this category compared to 12.5% in Egunjobi's study. The study under review showed that, despite being well trained, some of them indicated that they would not want to train their children the same way they were trained.

Evaluation of the Method

The article was written in a good style. The collected information was organized appropriately. However, in the article, Egunjobi uses parenting or parenting styles to mean the same thing. Parenting styles are the representation of how parents respond to and make demands on their children while parenting which is akin to child rearing could be seen as the general and specific behaviors of parents. For instance, a mother taking care of the baby is parenting which is not related to whether she is authoritative, authoritarian or uninvolved.

A survey research design was used in this study. It is a good method in this type of research. The sampling method used the Godden formula as the total population was unknown. However, the author highlighted that the participants were children from 11 years or older. The study was on child response styles to parenting. The inclusion of participants who are no longer children might bring elaborated information with a risk to hinder the real picture. This is because the author did not make clear the difference between the legal definition of a child otherwise known as a minor, and the biological definition. In legal settings, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child UNCRC (1989) describes a child to mean every human being below the age of eighteen years, while in the biological definition, a child is a human being between the stages of birth and puberty, or between the developmental period of infancy and puberty (Boyd et al., 2013). In the African worldview, any person remains a child to his/her parents. However, Egunjobi did not include any of these specifications in the study.

Also, Karin et al (2018) observed in their study that parenting styles identified by parents themselves are not similarly perceived by their children. In their findings from 160 fathers and 160 mothers and 160 children indicates in general, lesser number of parents felt they were authoritarian than the perception by their children. More parents felt they were democratic and permissive than what their children perceived them to be. However, Egunjobi might have included others who are no longer children in order to get a holistic view from their experiences as children.

The collection of data was possible through the use of an online application. This method might have reduced the number of children participating in this study. According to Stewart and Schultze (2019) many

countries around the world have policies prohibiting people below the age of 18 years old to access social media platforms. Countries like Russia, Vietnam and Iran all have censorship and strict laws concerning the use of social media. In terms of numerical value in quantitative research, the recruitment of a larger number of children might increase the generalizability of the results as well as its validity. The Krejcie and Morgan Table (KMT) suggests that a sample of 384 is sufficient for a population of 1,000,000 or more. For this reason, 384 has been regarded as the 'magic' number in research compared to the sample of 276 used by Egunjobi. In addition, a sample must be representative of the particular population under study (Memon et al. 2020).

On the first research question, the author suggested to assess the prevalence of child response styles to parenting. It appears that the results to this research question present the parenting styles to which participants belong to. In the second research question, the researcher proposed to look into the characteristics of the different child response styles. These characteristics were expected to derive from the participants' observation or views. The findings show the theory and characteristics of each child response style are designed by the author. This is a well-developed theory. However, a ground theory design would have helped to formulate themes from a qualitative approach which are to be used in the quantitative instruments.

The findings of this study show that the four child response styles correspond to the known four parenting styles. It indicates that the study was based on the assumption that each child response style had to correspond to any of the parenting styles. This theory expands on the sociocultural perspective of the Yoruba people. In Yoruba, there are the *omo to leko* (trained child), the *omoalaileko* (untrained child), and *akoigba* (a child who refused training).

Although there are no studies found on the exact topic of child response styles to parenting apart from that of Egunjobi, recent studies on how children respond to other variables like faith formation (Goodman & Dyer, 2020), stress (Whiting et al., 2021), sexual abuse (Egunjobi, 2022) and depression (Abela et al., 2012) abound. Studies done by Goodman and Dyer (2020), stressed that religious factors like faith transmission was most prominent in families with high levels of family religious' practices and among adolescents more physiologically sensitive to the environment. How a child responds to these factors may determine what Mazzechi et al. (2020) explained about the links between parenting style and child's problem, stating that the authoritative style was associated with less child's maladjustment, while the authoritarian one showed the opposite association.

According to the Response Styles Theory developed by Nolen-Hoeksema (1987), the choice and the combination of response styles may affect subsequent mood regulation abilities and information processing. One's preferred response style may well be a trait-like, stable characteristic arising from modeling from parents, social or problem-solving skills, sex-role expectations, genetics, physiological reactivity and so forth. Thus, the response styles outlined by Egunjobi are liable to change in a child depending on other variables like the one mentioned by Nolen-Hoeksema (1987). This means that a child may choose how to respond to a situation based on the how it presents itself.

IV. Conclusion

Overall, this was a well written article which captured a topic of interest where many researchers are more concerned with parenting styles than child response styles. This area of research is innovative. It is an original idea in the scholarly literature. The study indicated that parenting styles alone do not shape the children behaviors, rather there are interactions of nature and nurture. Thus, a child could be shaped as an adherer, a rejecter, a falser or nonchalant. While emphasizing that parenting is not a one-way process but a two-way situation whereby the parents perform their duties and the child responds based on his/her nature and nurture, Egunjobi opened a platform for further studies in this field of child response styles.

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