

THE EFFECTS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN POSITIVE PARENTING ON SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Submitted by: Dr. Arletta Frazier-Tucker

Abstract

The problem studied was that the effect of parenting styles on the success of children (socially and academically) has been examined in the literature, but such examination has not been separated by ethnicity or culture. This situation exists even though different cultures and ethnicities have different and distinct approaches to parenting. Accordingly, this qualitative ethnographic study was performed with the purpose of examining how African American parents of kindergarten-age children employ two particular parenting strategies: supportive parenting and parental involvement. Open-ended interviews were conducted with 10 such parents, to determine if and how they used each strategy and how they used the two strategies in combination. Findings were that in the opinions of those interviewed, supportive parenting had a significantly greater impact on the success of their children; however, all participants reported using parental involvement to some degree. The participants reported that supportive parenting was their primary parenting strategy.

Background

- While parenting styles and their effects on the academic and behavioral success of their children have been well examined in the literature, studies have not considered ethnicity and culture as factors
- African American parents have not been studied in this regard, though there is evidence that their parenting styles are culturally distinctive
- This study addressed a flaw in past research: that conclusions about parenting styles applied equally to all ethnicities and cultures
- In particular, the constructs of supportive parenting (SP) and parental involvement (PI) have not been studied as factors in children's academic success
- These issues in particular have not been examined for preschool-age children

Objectives of the Study

- To determine the role that supportive parenting plays in the parenting approach and strategy of African American parents of 4-year-old kindergarten-enrolled children
- To determine the role that parental involvement plays in the parenting approach and strategy of African American parents of 4-year-old kindergarten-enrolled children
- To determine the extent to which each of these strategies is used, and the effects thereof on children
- To determine the extent to which these strategies are combined

Methods and Analysis Used

- A qualitative ethnographic approach was employed
- Open-ended interviews of 14 parents (10 families) in Racine, Wisconsin
- Researcher-constructed protocol
- 45 minutes allowed for interviews
- School archival data on students' (the children of the parents interviewed) academic and behavioral performance were gathered
- Interviews were recorded and then transcribed for thematic analysis
- Miles and Huberman (1994) served as the basis for that analysis

Findings

Four aspects of supportive parenting (SP) were identified and referred to in the interview questions: having a routine for home learning activities (6 of 10 reported “yes”), making the parent’s expectations for the child clear to the child (10/10), using praise for good performance (7/10), and rewarding good performance (9/10). Four aspects of parental involvement (PI) were identified and referred to in the interview questions: (the parent) uses educational resources (8 out of 10 reported “yes”), volunteers at school (8/10), uses authoritarian discipline (4/10), and monitors homework (5/10).

- A majority of parents used SP
- A majority of parents used PI
- More parents used SP than PI
- Academic goals (number/letter recognition; name writing): only two children met more than one goal, most met none
- Overall behavior goals were met: 7 of 10 had no reported behavioral issues
- There was some indication that the use of SP encouraged academic performance: the only two children who met two of three goals had parents who used all four aspects of SP
- There was no indication that the use of PI had an effect on academic performance
- There was generally no indication that either SP or PI had any effect on behavior; however, one child who had 11 reported behavioral issues had parents who reported a distinctive pattern of the use of corporal punishment and a lack of supportive parenting

- Findings suggest that corporal punishment may result in behavioral problems and that PI may reduce their incidence
- Findings suggest that SP may have a positive effect on academic performance, in particular when combined with PI

References

- Anton, M. T., Jones, D. J., & Youngstrom, E. A. (2015). Socioeconomic status, parenting, and externalizing problems in African American single-mother homes: A person-oriented approach. *Journal of Family Psychology, 29*(3), 405. doi:10.1037/fam0000086
- Dawson-McClure, S., Calzada, E., Huang, K. Y., Kamboukos, D., Rhule, D., Kolawole, B., ... & Brotman, L. M. (2015). A population-level approach to promoting healthy child development and school success in low-income, urban neighborhoods: Impact on parenting and child conduct problems. *Prevention Science, 16*(2), 279-290. doi:10.1007/s11121-014-0473-3
- Dexter, C. A., Wong, K., Stacks, A. M., Beeghly, M., & Barnett, D. (2013). Parenting and attachment among low-income African American and Caucasian preschoolers. *Journal of Family Psychology, 27*(4), 629. doi:10.1037/a0033341
- Elmore, C. A., & Gaylord-Harden, N. K. (2013). The influence of supportive parenting and racial socialization messages on African American youth behavioral outcomes. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 22*(1), 63-75. doi:10.1007/s10826-012-9653-6
- Fearon, D. D., Copeland, D., & Saxon, T. F. (2013). The relationship between parenting styles and creativity in a sample of Jamaican children. *Creativity Research Journal, 25*(1), 119-128.
- Hill, N. E., & Wang, M. T. (2015). From middle school to college: Developing aspirations, promoting engagement, and indirect pathways from parenting to post high school enrollment. *Developmental Psychology, 51*(2), 224.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Richman, S. B., & Mandara, J. (2013). Do socialization goals explain differences in parental control between Black and White parents? *Family Relations, 62*(4), 625-636.
- Wang, M. T., Hill, N. E., & Hofkens, T. (2014). Parental involvement and African American and European American adolescents' academic, behavioral, and emotional development in secondary school. *Child Development, 85*(6), 2151-2168.
- Wang, Y., & Benner, A. D. (2016). Cultural Socialization across contexts: Family-peer congruence and adolescent well-being. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 45*(3), 594-611.

