

# Relationship between Parenting Styles, Television Viewing Habits and Academic Performance of Students in Ga-East Municipality, Ghana

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## Abstract

This study examined the relationship between parenting styles, television viewing habits, and academic performance of second year students in Ghanaian junior high schools in the Ga-East Municipality. The study was a cross-sectional correlational study using 310 samples drawn from a population of 1700 students. Using a five-point Likert's scale, Buri's Parental Authority Questionnaire ( $\alpha = .619$ ) measured parenting style in this study. Students Grade Point Average (GPA) in four subjects (English, Mathematics, Integrated Science and Social Studies) represented academic performance scores, while self-constructed TV viewing instrument ( $\alpha = .71$ ) was used to gather data on students' television viewing habit. ANOVA, t-test, and multiple regression were used to test four hypotheses. Results indicated that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles correlated negatively with academic performance while authoritative parenting style affected students' performance positively. The study also discovered that time spent watching TV significantly and negatively influenced academic performance of students. Again, time spent viewing television, did not differ significantly on the basis of age. The study concluded that authoritative parenting style is significant for a better academic grade, and that age is not a factor in regards to time students spent watching TV programmes. Based on the outcome of the study, it was recommended that the Municipal Counsellor should organise career guidance programmes for the students to encourage them to be more focused on their studies and also to reduce their TV viewing time. In addition, parents must be encouraged to regulate the TV viewing habits of their children.

**Keywords:** Parenting style, Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, Habit.

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## INTRODUCTION

Parenting is one of the most important tasks of the family, and one of the most challenging roles in our society. Parents are the key to the provision of safe, nurturing and positive learning environments for children as they grow and mature. (Rideout, Vandewater and Wartella, 2003). Psychologist Baumrind (1971) identified three major patterns of parenting styles prevalent among parents: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative. The authoritarian parent views their role as a stern trainer constantly guiding their child in the right direction through coercive authority. Their discipline is strict and consistent focusing on rules and obedience rather than acceptance and affection.

Contrary, permissive parenting is characterized by making few demands, exhibiting no controlling behaviours, and using minimal punishment. Such

parents tends to use a softer approach when dealing with their child. They cherish the liberty and independence of their child and therefore lack the strict boundaries authoritarian parents set for their children. They believe imposing authority is wrong and that children should have the freedom to express their own opinion and to follow their own direction. Authoritarian parenting on the other hand tends to fall at the other end of the continuum. Parents characterized as authoritarian exhibit highly directive behaviors, high levels of restriction, rejection and power-asserting behaviors. They believe that discipline and interest are connected and not opposed to each other and use their authoritative control to resolve the contrast between freedom and responsibility. These parents tend to have a philosophy that "it's my way or the highway." For the purpose of this study, these three parenting styles will be investigated: permissive; authoritarian and authoritative.

A lot of researchers have investigated the link between parenting styles and academic performance and have found a strong connection Jolliffe, (2004), and a major contribution to academic performance Querido *et al.*, (2002). Reitman, Rhode, Hupp and Altobello, (2002) in their study found authoritative parenting style to be superior in fostering higher academic performance. Baumrind (1991) found that children whose ages were between four and five years of parents who were characterised as authoritative were the most motivated, most competent, and the most achievement oriented, while Turner and Johnson's (2003) studies show that an authoritative parenting style in a parent-child relationship predicts a child's sense of mastery, that is, belief in controlling one's environment early in life.

Academic learning time is the time spent by a student engaged in an academically relevant task. Youth do best in school when parents provide predictable boundaries for their lives, encourage productive use of time, and provide learning experiences as a regular part of family life. According to Shumow and Miller (2001), when families set aside time each day for studying and learning, especially for adolescents, rather than asking them to study only when required to do so by teachers, they learn that studying and learning are valued by the family.

Comparable to other media, television is the most accessible media to most people, including young children, where television is their most favourite form of media (Livingstone, 2002). Its usage by young children, particularly, has raised debates and concerns of many researchers (Griffiths and Machin, 2003; Anderson and Pempek, 2005), due to the boundless access to various types of information which could affect their development, behaviour, health and learning Adeyemo, 2007).

Many researchers have looked at the effect of television on school performance and have come to different conclusions, depending on what they analysed. Most of these researches (Amare, 2001, Comstock and Scharrer, 2007), showed that, in general, there is a link between the total hours a child spends viewing TV and his or her academic performance. For example research conducted by Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger and Wright, (2001) found that normally less TV on school nights corresponds with better reading scores while there was a general downward trend in scores over time for students reporting three or more hours of TV watching per school night. This suggests that, more hours of television viewing has a negative impact on children's academic performance and vice versa. Felter (2004) also reported that achievement score in reading, mathematics and written expression were sharply lower among students who viewed more than six hours of television.

Ironically other researchers reported positive impact of TV on children's performance. For example, in a study by Roeser and Peck (2009), they reported that heavy television viewing was associated with higher mental ability in young children while Ashby, Arcari, and Edmonson, (2006) found higher mathematics grades associated with a preference for sports, family, game and cartoon shows. Gentzkow and Shapiro (2006) found that children who watch television perform marginally better in reading and in general knowledge at school.

Thus, results from studies on cognitive abilities and TV watching have been mixed; some researchers have found that high quality educational television programmes designed with the interests of children in mind are a benefit for learning (Anderson, 2000). Thus, once the content of what is viewed has the potential of enhancing academic work of children, the time spent on viewing is compensated for. The relationship between television viewing and academic achievement of children therefore, seem to be a subject of great controversy and thus need to be investigated further.

Since television is such a factor in children's life, it is important to examine the contents and time spent viewing TV and their impact on the child's development. There is no doubt that valuable learning can be gained from TV. However, it is up to parents to constructively guide their wards in this regard. This is because, as stated by Healy, (2006), too much television viewing, particularly, at ages critical for language development can impact on young minds in several different ways including their academic performance.

Over the years in Ghana, there have been television programmes that are designed with the interest of pupils and students in mind. Some of such programmes are 'Kyekyekule', 'By The Fire Side', 'children's channel', 'National Maths and Science Quiz', 'Smart Children', and 'What Do You Know'. The 'Children Channel' is an educative programme that uses plays to teach children about morals and life in general. Children act these plays and at the end of the plays, they are asked to tell the import and lessons learnt from the plays. 'By The Fire Side' and 'Smart Children' are story telling programmes. These programmes use stories acted by school children to educate children on the dos and don'ts of life. 'Kyekyekule', is a programme that allows children to put into practice and observe some of the theories about the things they have learnt in class. Finally, the 'National Maths and Science Quiz' programme is a maths and science quiz competition among senior high school (SHS) science students. All these programmes, if well patronised, have the potential of improving the academic performance of children.

### Statement of the Problem

The current educational system in Ghana seem to place a lot of demand on students' achievement hence successful preparation depends on parental assistance. It is important that parents make their children academically competent through their parenting styles and involvement in their wards education. A child's education is dependent on what he brings to the classroom (Sclafani, 2004). What children bring to the classroom is dependent on what their parents choose to provide at home. Most parents applying different parenting styles aspire for their children to achieve great accomplishments in school however not all students reach great academic success. It is therefore questionable which parenting styles have more effect and why children's' academic performance are affected by them.

The relationships between television viewing and academic achievement and other variables are complex, multidimensional, and inconclusive (Krosnick, Anand & Hartl, 2003). For the past decades there has been growing concern expressed by educationists and psychologists all over the world about the deleterious effect of television viewing on children. For example Gosline (2010) posits that too much time in front of TV reduces children's learning abilities and academic achievements since it limits children's time for vital activities such as reading as well as writing their homework. Other studies by Johnson, Cohen, Smailes, Kasen and Brooks (2002) show that even one hour to two hours of daily unsupervised television viewing by children has a significant deleterious effect on academic performance especially reading.

Whereas literature are abound in international circles on television viewing and its influence on academic performance, in the Ghanaian context there seem to be very little on the issue. Given the increase in the number of televisions in most homes in Ghana there is the need to find an antidote to the television viewing habits of students and their poor academic performance. Since there is the perception that television viewing happens mostly in our homes, parents will have a role to play in controlling the television viewing habits of their children through their parenting behaviours.

In Ghana some of the studies conducted by Addae-Boahene, and Arkoful, (2000); Nyarko, (2007) Ofosu-Brakoh, (2008) in some parts of Ghana in this area, looked at television viewing and its effects on academic performance. Also Nyarko's (2011) research focussed on parental authoritative on adolescent academic achievement. Notably, research linking parenting styles to the television viewing habits of adolescents and their performance appears limited. Indeed, literature on the issue in the Ga-East Municipality even if it were available is inaccessible. It is against this background that it becomes imperative to conduct such an investigation to shed light on the issue

and make available current research information for further inquiry. Therefore, this study sets out to determine the link between parenting styles and television viewing habits of form 2 Junior High School students and how they affect the academic performance of the students in the municipality.

The study gave an indication of how the different parenting styles affect the television viewing habits of students. Thus, parents will understand their wards academic outcomes in the light of their own parenting practices and fully realise the implications of their practices on children's future academic successes. They will then have the chance to review their choices and choose parenting styles that will help them guide their children to promote their academic performance.

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level:

- i. Parenting styles will significantly influence time spent watching television.
- ii. Parenting styles will significantly influence academic performance of students.
- iii. Time spent watching television programmes will significantly differ according to age of students
- iv. Time spent watching television programmes will significantly influence academic performance of students.

### METHODOLOGY

The study used a cross-sectional correlational design. There were two dependent variables (academic performance and television viewing) and one independent variable (parenting styles).

The population consisted of 1740 JHS 2 Students comprising 807 boys and 933 girls. A multistage technique involving a combination of stratified, proportional and random sampling methods were used to sample 313 students for the study. Buri's (1991) Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) designed to measure Baumrind's (1971) permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles was adopted. This was complemented by an author's own questionnaire which solicited data on demographic variables (age and gender) of students, and time spent watching television. Both questionnaire were constructed on a five point Likert scale with strongly agree and strongly disagree as anchors. The average of students' academic performances in four core subjects Mathematics, English, Science and Social Studies were used to generate data on their performance.

A pre-test of the questionnaires was conducted at a School in the Ga West Municipality with 32 JHS 2 students. This school has students who share similar characteristics (age, cultural background) as those who participated in the study. This procedure is strongly recommended by Bryman (2012). The results of the

pre-test was analysed to ascertain the construct validity and reliability of the instruments using Cronbach alpha techniques which yielded an overall alpha coefficient of 0.77 which is deemed appropriate Dörnyei & Taguchi (2010). Data collection yielded a retention rate of 100%, and were analysed by means of inferential statistical tools such as ANOVA, correlation analysis and multiple regression to test hypotheses generated at 0.05 significant level.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic results indicated that 4.47% of the students were 11 years of age or younger, 57.51%

were between the ages of 12 and 14 years while 36.1% were found within the age range of 15 to 17 years old. Only 1.92% of the students claimed to be 18 years. The majority of the students (57.51%) thus, fell within the age bracket of 12 and 14 years.

### Hypothesis 1: Influence of Parenting Styles on Time Students Spend Watching TV

The first hypothesis aimed to investigate whether the various parenting styles significantly influence time watching television by students. Tables 1 and 2 below present the results of one-way ANOVA and regression analysis that tested for this relationship.

**Table 1: Summary of ANOVA Test of Parenting Styles on Time Spent Watching TV**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.413	3	.471	1.466	<b>0.224</b>
	Residual	98.308	306	.321		
	Total	99.721	309			
a. Dependent Variable: TVTIME						
b. Predictors: (Constant), UTIVE (Authoritative), URIA (Authoritative), PERM (Permissive)						

**Table 2: Coefficient of Correlations between Parenting Styles and Time Spent Watching TV**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.223	.316		3.871	.000
	PERM	.070	.061	.067	1.156	.248
	URIAN	.032	.048	.038	.658	.511
	UTIVE	.076	.050	.088	1.520	.130
a. Dependent Variable: TVTIME						

Table 1 indicate that the ANOVA statistics' F value of 1.466 and Significance level  $p = 0.224$  show no statistically significant relationship. This means that parenting styles had no relationship with time students used in watching TV.

The coefficient of correlations in Table 2 shows the relationship of the various parenting styles and time students spent watching TV. All three parenting styles had significance levels above  $p = .05$ . That is, Permissive ( $t = 1.16, p > .05$ ), Authoritarian ( $t = .66, p > .05$ ), and Authoritative ( $t = 1.52, p > .05$ ) showed levels of Significance of 0.248, 0.511 and 0.130

respectively. This means that there was no strong correlations between any of the parenting styles and time spent watching TV. Hence the alternate hypothesis is rejected.

### Hypothesis 2: Influence of Parenting Styles on Academic Performance

Hypotheses 2: tested the hypothesis which states that parenting styles will have statistically significant influence on academic performance. In Tables 2 and 3, a regression analysis was ran to test the relationship between parenting styles and academic performance of students

**Table 3: Summary of ANOVA Test of Parenting Styles on Academic Performance**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	14.985	3	4.995	9.371	<b>.001</b>
Residual	163.109	306	0.533		
1 Total	178.094	309			

**Table 4: Coefficient of Correlation between Parenting Styles and Academic Performance**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.748	0.407		9.206	0
PERM	-0.178	0.078	-0.127	<b>-2.273</b>	<b>0.024</b>
URIAN	-0.264	0.062	-0.235	<b>-4.235</b>	<b>0.000</b>
UTIVE	0.148	0.065	0.128	<b>2.291</b>	<b>0.023</b>

In Table 3, the F-value of 9.371 and significance level  $p = 0.001$  indicate a statistically significant relationship between parenting styles and academic performance of students. In other words, parenting style affects the academic performance of students. The beta values in Table 4 show the correlations and directions of relationships between the various parenting styles and academic performance of students. A positive Beta means a positive relationship and vice versa for a negative Beta. The table shows a positive Beta of 0.128 for authoritative parenting style. This means there was positive relationship between authoritative parenting style ( $t = 2.29, p < .05$ ; beta = 0.13) and the academic performance of students. That is, a percentage increase in the level of authoritative parenting style results in 12.8% increase in students' academic performance.

However, the table shows negative Beta values for permissive and authoritarian parenting styles of -0.127 and -0.235 respectively. This means that permissive ( $t = 2.27, p < .05$ ; beta = -0.13) and

authoritarian ( $t = 4.24, p < .05$ ; beta = -0.24) parenting styles had negative relationship on academic performance of students. That is, a percentage increase in the level of permissive parenting style leads to 12.7 percent reduction in academic performance of students. Similarly, a percentage increase in the level of authoritarian parenting style leads to 23.5 percent reduction in academic performance of students. Hence the alternate hypothesis that, parenting style will significantly influence academic performance is accepted. This finding is consistent with studies conducted by Birhanu (1996), Demo and Cox (2000) which established that authoritative parenting are beneficial to children's academic success as opposed to the negative outcome produced by authoritarian and permissive parenting.

### Hypothesis 3: Analysis of Age Difference on Time Students Spent Watching TV

Table 5 below presents One-Way ANOVA of Age Difference on Time Students Spent Watching TV.

**Table 5: Summary of One-Way ANOVA of Age Difference on Time Students Spent Watching TV**

Groups	N	Mean Time	F	Df	Sig(2-tail)
11 years and Below	14	1.67			
12 – 14 years	174	1.87			
15 – 17 years	110	1.78			
18 years and above	6	1.78	1.08	3	0.358

In Table 5, the means of time spent watching TV by students for the age categories were compared using one-way ANOVA. As shown in the Table, the F value (1.08) and significance value  $p=0.358$  was not statistically significant. This implies that there are no significant differences in the time the students spent watching TV by the different age categories. Therefore, in the population of students studied, the alternate hypothesis that, time spent watching television programmes will significantly differ according to age of students is rejected. This is in contrast with a study by Friedman and Hammar (2002), which maintained that viewing habits typically increases throughout

elementary school years and decreases during high school years. This means that the older the child in the elementary school, the more TV that she or he watched. This pattern reverses for high school children (adolescents) Franklin *et al.*, (2010). This view of Franklin *et al.*, is supported by studies indicating that younger children watched more television than adolescents do (Anderson *et al.*, 2001).

**Hypothesis 4:** Time spent watching television programmes will significantly influence academic performance of students.

**Table 6: Correlation between Television Viewing, and Academic Performance**

Variable	1	2
Television Viewing	1	--
Academic Performance	-0.621**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results presented in Table 6, show that there was a strong significant negative correlation between television viewing and academic performance ( $r = -0.621, p = 0.01$ ). This relationship indicates that as students frequently watch television, their performance declines. Thus, the study demonstrated that television viewing was inversely correlated with academic performance. This finding is consistent with Gosline (2010), Johnson *et al.*, (2002) who also established in

their studies that too much hours spent watching TV have grave impact on children's academic performance.

## CONCLUSION

It became clear in this study that in the Ga East Municipality, all the three parenting styles postulated by Baumrind (1971) were in existence. The study established that, parenting styles had a significant effect on students' academic performance. Authoritative

parenting style was found to influence academic performance positively while authoritarian and permissive parenting styles affected academic performance negatively. The study thus, suggested that in the Ga –East Municipality, the more parents apply authoritarian and permissive styles of parenting, the more the students’ academic performance will suffer. Authoritative parenting style was found to have the best impact on students’ academic performance. Furthermore, parenting styles had no influence on students’ habit of watching TV. It also became evident that age was not a factor with regards to the amount of time students spent watching TV programmes which meant that whether a student was young or old did not change how much TV she or he watched.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the outcome of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. School counsellors should encourage parents to adopt more authoritative parenting styles at home as that seem to enhance positive academic results of their wards in school.
2. The Municipal Education Directorate should appeal for funding from the Ga East Municipal Assembly to put up libraries in various communities to engage students after school. This will reduce the time they spend watching TV.
3. In similar vein, the Municipal Counsellor should liaise with the National Commission on Civic Education (N.C.C.E.) to educate parents on the effects of TV viewing on the students in the community.
4. Lastly, Parents must also be encouraged to regulate the TV watching habits of their children and rather encourage them to focus more on their studies.

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