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**PARENTAL BEHAVIOUR AS CORRELATES OF ANXIETY RELATED  
EMOTIONAL DISORDERS AMONG NORMAL CHILDREN:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH**

**Abstract:**

In the family set up, parents continue to be the caregivers and playmates during the childhood and pre-adolescent stages. During these stages, parents also become more concerned with teaching children how to behave (or how not to behave) in various situations. At these stages, the need for parents to manage the children's budding autonomy in the hope of instilling a sense of social propriety and self-control while taking care not to undermine his curiosity, initiative and feeling of personal competence becomes very critical. Achieving emotional competence is very crucial to children's social competence, their ability to achieve personal goals in social interaction while continuing to maintain positive relationship with others.

This study employed a descriptive research design to investigate parental child rearing behaviours as correlates of anxiety related emotional disorder among normal children. The sample consists of 780 school children with the age range of 7 - 10 years who were randomly selected from twenty primary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire consisting of three sections A, B and C. Section A contained items on the children's bio-data (Age, School, Sex and caregiver). However, only children living with their biological parents were used for the study. Section B dealt with the parental child rearing behaviours with a 40 item likert type scale. The response formats range from Never=1, Rarely=2, Sometimes=3, Often=4, and Almost always=5. This section was designed to provide profile of parent's behaviours toward their children with important domains of their involvement, being positive, monitoring, consistency in discipline and corporal punishment. Section C contain 20 items bothering on the perceived anxiety by the children based on the domain of: separation anxiety, social and specific phobia, panic anxiety and generalized anxiety. Scoring ranged from never=1, sometimes=2, often=3, and always=4.

The findings revealed among others that there is a significant relationship between parental inconsistent discipline ( $F_{cal}=8.488 > F_{tab}=3.86$ ), corporal punishment ( $F_{cal}=11.771 > F_{tab}=3.86$ ) and child anxiety. However there was no significant relationship between parental involvement ( $F_{cal}=0.126 > F_{tab}=3.86$ ), positive parenting ( $F_{cal}=2.050 > F_{tab}=3.86$ ), poor parental monitoring ( $F_{cal}=2.101 > F_{tab}=3.86$ ) and children anxiety disorder.

Parents were thereafter counselled on appropriate child rearing practices for positive parent-child relationship and positive mental health.

**Keywords:**

Parental behaviours, mental health, children anxiety, emotional disorder and normal children.

**JEL Classification:** I20, I29, I00