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EVALUATING THE CORRELATIONAL INTERFACE AMONG SELF ESTEEM, PARENTING STYLES AND ATTITUDE TO MIGRATION TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES: THE UNDERGRADUATES' PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This study aimed to test the correlation between self-esteem and parenting style on attitude to migration among undergraduates. Two hundred and sixty three (263) participants were employed in the study. They all consist of students from the faculty of social sciences of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, who were selected using convenience sampling technique. Their age ranged from 16-35, with a mean age of 3.5616 and standard deviation of 1.03234 Three instruments were adopted for the study namely; Five Item Migration Index (FIMI), Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale and Parental Authority Questionnaire. The five item migration index (FIMI) measures an individual's attitude to migration. Rosenberg measures both positive and negative feelings about oneself and the parental authority questionnaire measures three parenting styles. The study adopted a cross sectional survey design, while Pearson correlation was used to test the relationships as stated in the hypotheses. The first hypothesis which stated that self-esteem will significantly have a relationship with attitude to migration among undergraduates was rejected, showing that it has no significant relationship with migration. (r=.054, p>.05). The second hypothesis which stated that Authoritarian parenting style will significantly have a relationship with attitude to migration among undergraduates was accepted at (r=.271, p<.05).The third hypothesis which states that

permissive parenting style will significantly have a relationship with attitude to migration among undergraduates was rejected at (r=.054, p>.05) and the fourth hypothesis states that flexible parenting style will significantly have a relationship with attitude to migration among undergraduates was accepted at (r=.223, p<.05). Based on the findings of this study, the researcher, therefore, recommends that more findings should be done relating to these variables testing the relationship between them in order to the overall availability of knowledge on this subject matter.

Keywords: *Self Esteem, Parenting Styles, Attitude to Migration, Undergraduates*

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Introduction

The debate surrounding migration and development has been ongoing globally, with Nwalutu (2016) highlighting its significance. While migration itself is not new, the increasing voluntary movement of low-skilled and high-skilled workers from rural to urban areas in search of better opportunities has gained attention (Haugen, 2012; Ikuteyijo, 2012). Rural-urban migration results from the search for perceived or real opportunities due to rural-urban inequality in wealth (Nwalutu, 2016; Brenner et al., 2018). This inequality stems from the concentration of wealth and resources in urban centers, coupled with the neglect of rural areas (Davitti & Ursu, 2018). Migration has become a survival strategy for the poor, especially rural dwellers (Goldin et al., 2011).

The effects of migration on rural areas are significant, as it acts as a catalyst for transformation in the lives of individual migrants, their families, and local communities (Ikuteyijo, 2012). Public opinion on migration is complex, with diverse attitudes towards immigration rooted in individuals' values and worldviews (Adepoju, 2010), in Nigeria, a country of net emigration, acceptance towards migrants has increased since 2014 (Nwalutu, 2016).

However, concerns around immigration and unemployment persist, with varying attitudes across locations and demographic groups. Self-esteem, defined by Stephenson et al. (2018) as an individual's sense of worth and value, is a key variable in this study. Parenting style, encompassing strategies used by parents to raise their children (Baumrind, 1990), also plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes towards migration. Wani (2016) notes that children raised in different environments can develop similar personalities, highlighting the complexity of parenting style and child development. Scholars have identified the following parenting styles:

- Authoritarian parenting styles generally lead to children who are obedient and proficient, but they rank lower in happiness, social competence and self-esteem.
- Flexible parenting styles tend to result in children who are happy, capable and successful; here there is no room for procrastination.
- Permissive parenting style often results in children who rank low in happiness and self-regulation. These children are more likely to experience problems with authority and tend to perform poorly in school which in turn has a pointer that there will be room for procrastination.

This study investigated whether self-esteem and parental style are related to attitudes towards migration, By examining the interplay between self-esteem, parental style, and migration attitudes, this study and contributes to the understanding of the complex factors shaping migration decisions and outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Migration has gained immense attention from governments and experts alike, with more people choosing to leave their native countries in pursuit of economic security and an enhanced standard of living. This growing phenomenon indicates that the conditions in the country of origin may be inadequate in providing a high quality of life. Nevertheless, people's decisions to migrate are often driven by their personal beliefs, opinions, and values about migration, which are significantly influenced by their mental health and family background.

Low self-esteem, marked by a poor evaluation of one's own worth, could be a significant factor influencing migration decisions. People suffering from low self-esteem may perceive themselves

as undervalued in their current environment, socially or economically, prompting them to relocate in search of improved circumstances. For instance, a person facing financial struggles in Anambra State might migrate to Lagos State to pursue educational and economic opportunities, or simply to experience a different lifestyle, in the hopes of boosting their self-esteem and sense of worth.

The current study intends to investigate whether migration intentions serve as a coping mechanism for individuals with low self-esteem. Additionally, this study will delve into the role of parental style in shaping attitudes toward migration, with particular emphasis on understanding the connection between different styles of parenting—authoritarian, permissive, flexible and undergraduates' attitudes toward migration. This study aims to explore whether and how parental styles may influence the inclination toward migration as a coping strategy among individuals with low self-esteem.

Despite the increasing attention given to the topic of migration, the existing literature appears to have overlooked an important aspect of migration decisions—the interplay of self-esteem, parental style, and attitudes toward migration. This study seeks to bridge this knowledge gap and contribute valuable insights into the dynamic relationships among these factors among individuals of all ages. By exploring these relationships more comprehensively, the study aims to deepen our understanding of the drivers of migration, particularly in the context of low self-esteem and differing styles of parenting.

Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

• To what degree does self-esteem correlate with undergraduates' attitudes toward migrating to foreign countries?

• How does an authoritarian parenting style influence undergraduates' attitudes toward migration to foreign countries?

• To what extent does a permissive parenting style affect undergraduates' attitudes toward migration to foreign countries?

• How does a flexible parenting style relate to undergraduates' attitudes toward migration to foreign countries?

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the relationships among self-esteem, parental style, and attitudes toward migration among undergraduates. The following specific objectives guided the study:

• To establish whether self-esteem significantly influences attitudes toward migration among undergraduates.

• To investigate whether an authoritarian parenting style significantly affects attitudes toward migration among undergraduates.

• To determine whether a permissive parenting style significantly impacts attitudes toward migration among undergraduates.

• To assess whether a flexible parenting style significantly influences attitudes toward migration among undergraduates.

Relevance of the study

The study's relevance lies in its potential contribution to the existing literature by introducing a new model that can explain the psychological factors driving migration decisions among

Nigerians. The findings of this study may assist migration experts and policymakers in gaining a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to mass emigration, which could ultimately help to improve the living conditions in Nigeria. This study has the potential to shed light on the complex psychological dynamics underlying migration and offer insights that could inform effective policy interventions.

Theoretical Framework

Contact Theory

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored in the theoretical provisions of the Contact Theory by Allport (1954). This theory assumes that interaction between two people or two social groups is necessary to dissolve group barriers existing between them (Allport, 1954). Through contact, people start seeing each other as individuals with unique characteristics rather than as simple representatives of a uniform group (Brewer & Miller, 1984). This individualization also leads to a decrease in discrimination and stereotypes, as well as more positive attitudes towards each other and each other's groups (Brewer & Miller, 1984).

Lönnqvist et al. (2015) carried out a study to investigate the psychological adaptation of Ingrian–Finnish migrants from Russia to Finland between 2008 and 2013. Pre-migration data on a sample of 225 were collected. The pre-migration data on a sample of 225 were collected at the Finnish language courses that were part of the immigration training program. The three post-migration follow-ups were conducted half a year (N = 155), 2 years (N = 133), and 3 years (N = 85) after migration. Well-being was assessed with measures of Life Satisfaction and Self-Esteem. Results showed that Life Satisfaction increased from pre-migration to the first post-migration measurement point, after which it stabilized. Meanwhile, Self-Esteem decreased throughout the

study. The results suggest that migration can be beneficial to some but detrimental to other types of well-being.

Altinyelken (2009) did a study to examine the impact of migration experience on self-esteem of girls enrolled at primary schools in Turkey. It was based on a broader study that explored educational and coping strategies of internal migrant girls living in a suburban town in the western part of Turkey. The research was conducted in a suburban town in the western part of Turkey using a sample consisting of 72 participants. Data was collected by qualitative methods, including interviews with students, graduates, parents, teachers, and community members. Results showed that students encountered a variety of challenges in their new school environment, including adaptation, language, low socioeconomic background, peer relations, discrimination, and bullying. Furthermore, these challenges seemed to have a direct or indirect influence on the educational experiences of migrant girls, undermining their self-esteem in multiple and complex ways.

Driscoll et al., (2008) carried out a study to examine generational patterns of parenting styles, the relationships between parenting styles and adolescent well-being among youth of Mexican origin and the role of generational parenting style patterns in explaining generational patterns in youth behavior (delinquency and alcohol problems) and psychological well-being (depression and self-esteem). This study uses two waves of data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. The study findings revealed that the proportion of teens with permissive parents increased with generation while other parenting styles declined.

Glick et al., (2012) carried out a study on migration timing and parenting practices: Contributions to social development in preschoolers with foreign-born and native-born mothers. The goal of the study was to assess the role of mothers' age at migration on children's social development in the

United States (sociability and problem behaviors). Data was obtained from approximately 6,400 children from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort. Results indicated that parents who migrated to the United States as young children exhibited smaller differences in parenting practices when compared to mothers born in the United States. Mothers who arrived after these ages exhibited lower levels of emotional supportiveness and responsiveness than those who were born in the United States. However, the latter may partly reflect the failure of immigrant mothers to display forms of responsiveness that are more characteristically American (i.e., praising the child and being attentive to child interruptions when guest adults are present). In other words, immigrant mothers respond more like American mothers if they spent their own childhoods in the United States.

Cheah et al., (2009) conducted a study to assess levels of flexible parenting among immigrant Chinese mothers of preschoolers. The study goals were to examine flexible parenting style among Chinese immigrant mothers of young children, to test the mediational mechanism between flexible parenting style and children's outcomes, and to evaluate 3 predictors of flexible parenting style (psychological well-being, perceived support in the parenting role, parenting stress). Participants included 85 Chinese immigrant mothers and their preschool children. Mothers reported measures on parenting style, psychological well-being, perceived parenting support, stress, and children's hyperactivity/attention. Teacher ratings of child adjustment were also obtained. Results revealed that Chinese immigrant mothers of preschoolers strongly endorsed the flexible parenting style. Moreover, flexible parenting predicted increased children's behavioral/attention regulation

abilities (lower hyperactivity/inattention), which then predicted decreased teacher-rated child difficulties. Also, mothers with greater psychological well-being or parenting support engaged in more flexible parenting, but only under conditions of low parenting stress.

Hypotheses:

1. Self-esteem will significantly be related to attitude toward migration among undergraduates.

2. Authoritarian parenting style will significantly be related to attitude toward migration among undergraduates.

3. The permissive parenting style will significantly have a relationship with attitude towards migration among undergraduates.

4. The flexible parenting style will significantly have a relationship with attitude towards migration among undergraduates.

Method

Participants

The study selected a total of 263 students drawn from the population of undergraduates of Nnamdi AZikiwe University, Awka. Particularly from the Department of Sociology, Department of Political science, Department of Psychology, and Department of Economics. The convenience sampling technique was used to select the participants from the departments. The gender distribution is males 121 and females 142. The mean age is 3.5616 and the standard deviation is 1.03234. Consequently, the study is made up of (75%) urban residents and (25%) rural residents. Also, (77%) of the participants are single, and (23%) of them are married.

Instruments

Five Item Migration Index (FIMI)

The Five Item Migration Index (FIMI) is a 5-item questionnaire developed by Umeaku et al., (2022) to measure the attitude of undergraduates towards migration to foreign countries. The principal component analysis of factor analysis was used in generating the number of factors obtainable in the scale. The use of factor analysis was used to establish validity and factor loading of the instrument. The KMO and Barlett's test show significant positive value at P<0.000. The FMI has 5-point likert response pattern ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree. Questionnaire items are direct scored. Samples of the questions include: (1) I think life is better outside this country, (2) I think I prefer travelling abroad to staying here, (3) I think I can't continue in this country, (4) I feel that greener pastures are outside there, (5) I think I can't stay here any longer. The current study carried out a pilot test and reported an alpha coefficient of .834 which indicates a strong reliability. The General Population Norm Value (GPNV) is 3.6, while the males and females Norm Values are; 3.7 and 3.5 respectively, scores above the NV shows high tendency/attitude to migrate to foreign countries and vice versa.

Parental authority scale (PAS)

The parental authority scale developed by Buri (1991) was used to measure three parenting styles: flexible, authoritarian, and permissive. This questionnaire consisted of two forms: one each to assess the parental authority of the father and the mother on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Each form consisted of 10 items per parenting style. The subscales include permissive (P: items 1, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24 and 28),

authoritarian (A: items 2, 3, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18, 25, 26 and 29), and flexible/flexible (F: items 4, 5, 8, 11, 15, 20, 22, 23, 27, and 30). Mother and father forms of the assessment are identical except for references to gender. However, scores on each subscale range from 10 to 50. Aihie (2016) carried out reliability of the instrument in Nigeria using the test-retest method with an interval of four weeks and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient calculated was r = 0.79.

Rosenberg Self- Esteem Scale (RSE)

Rosenberg Self-Esteem 10-item scale was developed by Rosenberg, measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The minimum total score is 0 and the maximum is 30, with higher scores representing higher self-esteem. Oladipo et al., (2014) carried out reliability analysis on the scale and it yielded an σ co efficient of .24 and a split-half reliability co-efficient of .29.

Procedure

A total of 270 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the participants in their class rooms and work settings. The students consented to being participants in my study. They were instructed to follow the instructions contained in each section of the questionnaire form. The participants took about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaires. Participation was strictly voluntary and the students were assured that the responses would be confidential and anonymous since there was no form of identification that was required on the questionnaires. At the end of the survey, 268 questionnaires were retrieved back after they were all filled by the students, for the study, 263 valid questionnaires from the 268 responses were used.

Inclusion criteria

Undergraduate students

Exclusion criteria

Pre and Post graduate students

Design and Statistics

The current study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Pearson was used to test the correlation between self-esteem and parenting styles on attitude towards migration. The SPSS version 22 was used to analyze the data.

Results

The results of the Pearson moment correlation analysis for the study variables: The correlation/relationship among parental styles, self-esteem, and attitude towards migration among undergraduates are presented in table 2, while the gender distribution is presented in table 1 below:

Table 1: Gender Distribution on Migration

Gender	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Male	3.66611	211	.05242
Female	3.47251	421	.01010
Total	3.56162	631	.03234

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Table showing relationship among study variables

		SEP	PAA	PAF	PAF	IMI
S	**E**	1				

PPA			-.032	1		
APA			.030	-.216**	1	
FPA			.009	.288**	.066	1
FIMI			.103	.054	.271**	.223**	1

FIMI =five item migration index, PPA = permissive parenting style, APA = authoritarian parenting style, FPA = flexible parenting style, SE= self esteem

From the table above, the results shows that self-esteem has no significant relationship with permissive parenting (r= -.032, p>.05), authoritarian parenting (r = .030, p>.05), flexible parenting (r= .009, p>.05), and attitude towards migration (r= .103, p>.05). Permissive parenting showed no significant relationship with attitude towards migration (r= .054, p>.05). Authoritarian parenting showed a positive significant relationship with attitude towards migration (r= .271, p<.05), meanwhile flexible parenting showed a positive significant relationship with attitude towards migration (r= .223, p<.0.5). This indicates that as levels of perceived authoritarian and flexible parenting increases, attitude towards migration increases as well.

Summary of Findings

Only two dimensions of the parenting styles positively correlated with the attitude towards migration which is; perceived authoritarian and flexible parenting. Self-esteem did not significantly correlate with any variable in the current study (authoritarian parenting, flexible parenting, permissive parenting, and attitude towards migration).

Discussion

Migration has become an important focus among researchers because it describes not just when a migrant moves to another region, but also the circumstances that the migrant may encounter while

leaving the previous region, arriving, and settling in the new region. The current study investigated the relationship of self-esteem and parental styles dimensions (permissive, flexible, and authoritarian) with attitude towards migration among undergraduates. The first hypothesis stated that self-esteem will significantly have a relationship with attitude to migration among undergraduates. Analysis indicated that self-esteem did not have a significantly relationship with attitude to migration among undergraduates. Thus, the hypothesis 1 was not accepted in the current study. This is not in agreement with the study of Lönnqvist et al., (2015) who investigated the psychological adaptation of Ingrian–Finnish migrants from Russia to Finland between 2008 and 2013 and found out that self-esteem decreased as they migrated to Finland over the period of 5 years. This entails that the migrant possesses low levels of subjective well-being when they settled in the new region and it became worse as time passed annually. This may be attributed to the living conditions of the new region considering that the migrant pre-migration had a higher level of self-worth across different areas. This is also supported by the Terror management theory of self-esteem which posits that self-esteem is made possible by the development of cultural worldviews, which provide a stable and meaningful conception of the universe, social roles with specific prescriptions for behaviors that are deemed valuable, and the promise of safety and immortality to those who satisfy those prescriptions (Solomon et al., 1991). This study does not also supports the finding of Altinyelken (2009) who indicated that migrant students encountered variety of challenges in their new school environment including adaptation, language, low socioeconomic background, peer relations, discrimination, and bullying etc. which impacted their self-esteem. This describes the influences of early migration experiences on the well-being of young people in school settings. Applied to the current study, an individual who has low self-worth and has

knowledge of the prevalence of these school environment vices may never want to migrate to the intended destination region.

The second hypothesis states that authoritarian parenting style will significantly have a relationship with attitude to migration among undergraduates. Result showed that authoritarian parenting style showed a positive significant relationship with attitude towards migration among undergraduates. Thus, hypothesis 2 was accepted in the current study. This supports the study of Driscoll et al., (2008) who indicated that the proportion of Mexican migrant teens with authoritarian parents declined with generation. This entails that authoritarian parents start losing its significance in the lives of children who have migrated to other region or country. This may be attributed to the acculturation effect and child custody laws in the host country which may regulate how the migrant parent exerts total influence over their children's affairs in the household.

Hypothesis 3 states that permissive parenting style will significantly have a relationship with attitude to migration among undergraduates. Result showed that permissive parenting showed no significant relationship with attitude towards migration. Thus, the hypothesis was not accepted. This is not in line with the findings of Driscoll et al., (2008) who revealed that the proportion of Mexican migrant teens with permissive parents increased with generation while other parenting styles declined. This indicates that permissive parents may play a role in younger generation's attitude to migration and its circumstances.

Hypothesis 4 states that flexible parenting style will significantly have a relationship with attitude to migration among undergraduates. Result showed flexible parenting style will significantly have a relationship with attitude to migration among undergraduates. This supports that findings of Cheah et al., (2009) who found out that Chinese immigrant mothers of preschoolers strongly

endorsed the flexible parenting style. Moreover, flexible parenting may increase children's behavioral/attention regulation abilities (lower hyperactivity/inattention) and share the same views, beliefs, and opinions about migration with their flexible parents.

Implications of the Study

The study's implications suggest that it will help the government understand the underlying motives behind citizens' migration and inform decisions on building positive attitudes towards migration.

Limitations of the Study

The study's findings may be limited for generalization due to the specific sample of undergraduate students that were involved; findings from one region may not be representative of the larger population of undergraduate students, both within and across different cultural and geographical contexts.

Recommendations

Recommendations include assessing migrants' psychological and emotional well-being and enlightening younger generations about the potential risks and pressures associated with migration.

Conclusion

The current study investigated the relationship between parental styles and self-esteem with attitude towards migration. Hypothesis one which that self-esteem will significantly have a relationship with attitude to migration among undergraduates was rejected. Hypothesis 2 which states that authoritarian parenting style will significantly have a relationship with attitude to migration among undergraduates was accepted. Hypothesis 3 which stated that permissive parenting style will significantly have a relationship with attitude to migration among undergraduates was rejected. Hypothesis 4 which stated that flexible parenting style will significantly have a relationship with attitude to migration among undergraduates was accepted.

However, the study has presented that migration remains an important problem in Nigeria and the government should accept more responsibilities of regulating the vices that come with moving in or out of the country, thus, making it safer for Nigerian migrants' physical and mental wellbeing fit as they move or consider moving to another region.

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Author (s) contributions

Umeaku Ndubuisi Nkem: Formal Analysis, Methodology, Supervision, Corrections and Reviews; ***Buchi Chinonso Gloria:*** Introduction, conceptual and theoretical review, supervision, and corrections; ***Nnadozie Anulika Onyinyechukwu:*** introduction, conceptual reviews and corrections; ***Ezendu Anastasia Nnenna:*** introduction, conceptualization, composing assignments, reviews and supervision; ***Okoye Bisiola Ekelechi:*** Introduction, Conceptual reviews, Supervisions and Corrections; ***Uzoma Chinelo Nkechi:*** Introduction, conceptual review,

mentorship supervision and corrections and ***Okondu Ogechukwu Emmanuel:*** Editorial, reviews and corrections

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