

# **Parental Expectation and Positive Peer Influence as Predictors of Violent Ambition among University Students in Enugu State**

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## **Abstracts**

This focused on parental expectation and positive peer influence as predictors of violent ambition among university students In Enugu State. A total of 350 populated students, while 200 students were randomly selected for the study (males and females) were drawn from Psychology departments from renaissance university and the department of psychology in Enugu State University of Science and Technology. They had a mean age of 21.56 years and standard deviation of 5.43. Parental expectation scale developed by (Li-Fei Wang & P. Paul Heppner, 2002) the higher the tendency to engage in violent ambition. Indicating that the lower the parental expectation (academic achievement Positive peer influence scale was developed by (Saini., 2016) positive peer influence questionnaire was measured using a 25 item scales, meant to measure such as the pressure to conform, the readiness to take risks, and the resistance towards peer pressure, consisting of four subscales of four five items each. Violent Ambition Questionnaire was developed by (Buss Perry, 1992) this questionnaire includes 29 items; 5 items respond to aggression factor, eight items to invasion and the other eight items to malice. Non experimental design was used and regression analysis was used to analyze the data collected.

**Keywords: Parental Expectation, Positive Peer Influence, Violent Ambition, Violent Ambition**

## **Introduction**

In recent times, parental expectation on adolescents and positive peer influence have genre a lot of research interest on adolescents especially with regards to violence. Community of researchers, church authorities, policymakers and the international community pay much attention on the adolescents who are at the forefront of this episode considering the level of violence and insecurity in recent times. There have been challenges on the security of lives and properties in recently (Achumba, Igbomereho & Akpor-Robaro, 2020) orchestrated mostly by adolescents/youths which some scholars attributed to violent ambitions. However, parents and peers generally play the most significant roles in influencing the individuals especially adolescents. More so, family background affects adolescents' behavior, either positively or negatively. In families therefore, parents play the lead role, so the need to know what parenting, parental roles and expectation should look like. Parenting is the act of providing for a child, encouraging, supporting and accessing the activities that will enable the child to master key developmental task. Some scholars looked into parenting practices which they defined as directly observable specific behaviors that parents use to socialize their children (Darling & Steinberg 2022). They were of the view that parenting practices are designed to achieve positive reinforcement, discipline and problem solving for the children. Maria Rodrigo, (2021) was of the opinion that in child rearing the most important things parents are expected to teach their children are Pro-social behaviors, self-direction, and autonomy instead of expecting things beyond their reach. Parental role is enjoyable when it is associated with the sense of fulfillment and achievement parents obtain in return as a result of the healthy and successful development of their children. Invariably, this study tries to consider parental expectations and how they predict violent ambition.

However, parents who strengthen the bond with their children educate their children about peer pressure, promote their children self-esteem and set a good example for their children will have less negative attitudes from children. In recent times, many scholars have opined that parental expectations are more likely to affect their children when

parent-child relationships are characterized by closeness and warmth (Moore, Whitney, & Kinukawa, 2020). When parental expectations are expressed positively amongst the youths, they will stay focused when in doubt and target all visible facts that will assist them in their growth.

Parental expectation however, is a complex concept with many scholars trying to give their different opinions yet it lacks a consensual definition. This study looked at parental expectation from the point of view of such scholars like (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010) who defined parental expectation as realistic beliefs that parents have about their children's future achievement. In another development, (Neuenschwander, Vida, Garrett, & Eccles, 2019) Randall, Bohnert, and Travers (2019) demonstrated how perceived parental pressure affected affluent adolescents and how they cope and deal with high expectations. They were of the view that adolescents with more perfectionist parents experienced more parental pressure and have poorer adjustment. In another development, affluent adolescents who experienced high parental pressure were mostly involved in organized activities which resulted to better adjustment. They came to a conclusion that students who are more pressured seek every possible means to join more extracurricular activities basically for extrinsic rather than for intrinsic reasons mainly to fill-in their parents high expectations.

Violence has gained multiple research attention from various scientific backgrounds, psychology, sociology, forensic and community/organizational setting. World Health Organisation (2018), defined violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation. On the other hand, Shindi (2021) was of the view that violence entails unjustified use of force. Violence is any form of behavior involving physical force with the intention to kill, hurt and damage at the same time inflicting pain, emotional and psychological trauma on the victim. According to Okafor and Ugwu, (2017), violent ambition is the desire to acquire wealth and become powerful and respected through means that injure, deprive, and harm one or others. Okeshola (2014) opined that at the heart of violence is acquisition of wealth in the form of money, land, access to resources and control over distribution of benefits. Often time's youths have difficulties feeling the pains of others in their dealings with individuals (Henry, Sager, & Plunkett, 2020) on the bid to possess wealth, become powerful and command respect.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A plethora of research has been on parental expectations on their kids' academic achievements; little has been done on parental expectation and peer influence on violent ambition among the adolescents in our colleges and higher institutions of learning which of course has led to this research work. In recent time however, the rate of violence globally is alarming, with more emphasis in Nigeria where high number of adolescents engage in all manner of violence in order to be influential, make quick money, become powerful and respected persons. It is quite unfortunate that even the government has little or no control over this situation. Violence is detrimental physically, psychologically and economically to the victims and the economy and it leaves lasting scars in the minds of the affected individuals. Parents often times expect unrealistic and unimaginable things from the wards and when these are not satisfied, however, parents will definitely react critically to their children's failures, leading to violent behavior, induced stress and depression amongst the youths (DiBartolo & Rendon, 2019). That notwithstanding, it has been observed that peers can influence each other's behavior positively or negatively. Also violent ambition can be promoted through negative peer influence and it can also be avoided through positive peer influence (Karakos, 2020). The knowledge that parental expectations and peer influence can control the person's own aspirations and expectations; contributing to behaviors like passion for quick money, for respect and power, affluence, drug use, harm to self and others. There is need for parents, peers and government to guide the youngsters accordingly to curb the menace and evil effects of violence, hence the basis of this research work. The researcher seeks to know if parental expectation and positive peer influence will lead to violent ambition among university students.

### **Research Questions**

Will parental expectation as predictors of violent ambition among university students in Enugu state?

Will positive peer influence as predictors of violent ambition among university students in Enugu state?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The major purpose of the study is to determine whether parental expectation and positive peer influence will predict violent ambition among university students.

Therefore, the specific objectives are:

1. To examine parental expectation as predictors of violent ambition among university students in Enugu state.
2. To examine positive peer influence as predictors of violent ambition among university students in Enugu state.

### **Hypothesis**

There will be no significant difference of parental expectation as predictors of violent ambition among university students in Enugu state.

There will be no significant difference of positive peer influence as predictors of violent ambition among university students in Enugu state.

### **Participant**

A total of two hundred (200) students (males and females) were drawn from various departments from renaissance university and the department of psychology in Enugu state university of science and technology. They had a mean age of 21.56 years. Were single and were married.

### **Instrument**

#### **Parental Expectation Questionnaire**

Parental Expectation Questionnaire (PEQ) which was Developed by Robinson, Mandelco, Olsen and Hart (1995) it includes 12 questions.. It includes 12 sentences which identify the expectations of the parents on their adolescents, academic achievement. Each phrase headed 5 columns given the title of strongly agree, agree, disagree, almost disagree and strongly disagree. 5-point Likert scale, which is graded from 1 to 5, used to scaling responses. The total value of the phrases of each style yields three separate scores. By using test- retest method, Buri (1991) reported reliability among parents at .85 for parental expectation. Its diagnostic validity.

#### **Positive Peer Influence Scale**

Positive peer influence scale (Saini., 2016) positive peer influence questionnaire was measured using a 25 item scales, meant to measure such as the pressure to conform, the reainess to take risks, and the resistance towards peer pressure, consisting of four subscales of four five items each. Items were scored on a Likert scale on degree of agreement, ranging in value from 1 to 5. Strongly agree (5) Agree (4) Undecided (3) Disagree (2) Strongly disagree (1) It had internal consistency reliability of .091. This resilience scale correlated positive 84. in an effort to adopt the instruments for use with Nigerian samples, the researcher subjected the instruments to a pilot study using 45 participants, between the age of 15 to 25 years with mean age of 6.34 and standard deviation of 1.53, the researcher established split half reliability coefficient of 89.

#### **Violent Ambition Questionnaire**

Violent Ambition Questionnaire (Buss Perry, 1992) this questionnaire includes 29 items; 4 items respond to aggression factor, eight items to invasion and the other eight items to malice. VAQ scale is a self-report paper-and-pencil scale in which a subject responds to one of the four options of never, rarely, sometimes and always. Values 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 are respectively allocated to each of the 5 options except for item 18 which is a negative loaded

factor and scored in the reverse direction. Total score from 1 to 90 are obtained by adding the scores of the questions. People, who scores below the average, have little aggression. Developed by Buss & Perry, (1992). And validated in Nigeria by Obiora (2019) with the reliability coefficient of .72. in an effort to adopt the instruments for use with Nigerian samples, the researcher subjected the instruments to a pilot study using 48 participants, between the age of 18 to 45 years with mean age of 8.25 and standard deviation of 2.65, the researcher established split half reliability coefficient of .87

**Procedure**

The researcher was accompanied by the Head of department (H.O.D) of psychology from Renaissance University to Enugu state university of science and technology to administer questionnaires to psychology students resident in that area, the researcher also administered questionnaires to residents of Renaissance University within the school premises. A convenient sampling technique was adopted as some students declined to fill the questionnaire. A total 350 populated students, while 200 students were randomly selected for the study. All participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and their data would remain confidential.

**Design/statistics** on experimental design was used and regression analysis was used to analyze the data collected

**Results**

**Table 1: the Mean and Standard Deviation of the variables**

V a r i a b l e s	M	S D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1 0	1 1
G e n d e r	1.63	. 4	1	-.27**	.05	.08**	.01	.19**	-.03	.08*	.12**	.10**	-.24**
A g e	21.56	2.77		1	.09**	-.26**	-.22**	-.05	-.15**	-.06*	.18**	.11**	.03
Marital status					1	-.17**	-.02	.04	.07*	.03	.02	.02	-.06
Father’s EL						1	.63**	.07*	.15**	.19**	.03	.05	-.01
Mother’s EL							1	.10**	.25**	.21**	-.01	-.02	.07*
Personal maturity	82.76	16.36						1	.38**	.12**	.18**	.15**	-.90**
Academic achievement	37.16	9.70							1	.45**	-.02	.06	.03
Dating concerns	25.05	9.46								1	.01	.06*	.20**
Relationship quality	37.07	6.72									1	.75**	-.10**
I n f l u e n c e	19.90	4.14										1	-.03
Violent ambition	25.34	6.97											1

Table: 1 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations for the study variables. Among the Demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, Father’s educational level and mother’s educational level) gender (males) was significantly related to violent ambition than the females ( $r = -.24, p < .01$ ). mother’s educational level was positively related to violent ambition ( $r = .07, p < .05$ ). Parental expectation (personal maturity) was negatively related to violent ambition ( $r = -.90, P < .01$ ), Parental expectation (dating concerns) was positively related to violent ambition ( $r = .20, [ < .01$ ). Positive peer influence (relationship quality) was negatively associated with violent

**Table 2: Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting violent ambition**

Variables	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	B	SE	T	B	SE	T	B	SE	T
Gender	-.24	.46	-7.42**						
Age	-.03	.08	-.86						
Marital status	-.05	1.43	-1.67						
Father's EL	-.08	.29	-2.05*						
Mother's EL	.11	.28	2.88**						
Personal maturity				-.06	.01	-1.70			
Academic achievement				-.08	.03	-2.05*			
Dating concerns				.26	.03	7.66**			
Relationship quality							-.12	.05	-2.64**
Influence							.09	.08	2.01*
R	.257			.349			.358		
R <sup>2</sup>	.066			.122			.128		
Δ R <sup>2</sup>	.066			.056			.006		
F	14.427**			21.520**			3.493*		

Note: \* $p > .05$ , \*\* $p > .01$ ; Gender (dummy coded '0' for male and '1' for female); marital status (dummy coded '0' for and '1' for married); Father's EL = Father's Educational Level (1-First School Leaving Certificate, 2-WAEC, 3- OND/NCE/BSc, 4-Postgraduate); Mother's MEL = Mother's Educational Level (1-First School Leaving Certificate, 2-WAEC, 3- OND/NCE/BSc, 4-Postgraduate)

Results of the hierarchical multiple regression for the test of violent ambition as shown in Table 2. The variables were entered in stepwise models. The demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, father's educational level and mother's educational level) in the Step 1 of the regression analysis. Gender (males) was a significant predictor of violent ambition ( $\beta = -.24, t = -7.42, p < .01$ ). Father's educational level was negatively related to violent ambition ( $\beta = -.08, t = -2.05, p < .05$ ) indicating the lower the educational level of the father, the higher the tendency of the child to engage in violent ambition. Mother's educational level was positively related to violent ambition ( $\beta = .11, t = 2.88, p < .01$ ) indicating the higher the educational level of the mother, the higher the tendency of the child to engage in violent ambition. The demographic variables accounted for 6.6% of variance in violent ambition. Parental expectation (Academic achievement) was negatively related to violent ambition ( $\beta = -.08, t = -2.05, p < .05$ ). Parental expectation (dating concern) was positively related to violent ambition ( $\beta = .26, t = 7.66, p < .01$ ) indicating that the higher the parental expectation (dating concerns) the higher the tendency to engage in violent ambition. Indicating that the lower the parental expectation (academic achievement) the higher the tendency to engage in violent ambition. The parental expectation accounted for 5.6% of variance in violent ambition. Positive peer influence (relationship quality) was a negative predictor of violent ambition ( $\beta = -.12, t = -2.64, p < .01$ ), this showed the lower the relationship quality the higher the tendency of engaging in violent ambition. Positive peer influence (influence) was a positive predictor of violent ambition ( $\beta = .09, t = 2.01, p < .05$ ), this showed the higher the influence the higher the tendency of engaging in violent ambition. The positive peer influence accounted for 0.6% of variance in violent ambition.

**Discussion**

The main objective of this study was to determine if parental expectation and positive peer influence will predict violent ambition among university students. The findings made in this work showed that some studies were in line with the findings made and very few were contrary to the findings.

The first hypothesis of the study was that parental expectation would predict violent ambition. The result of the study shows that youths with low parental expectation on academic achievement are more likely to engage in violent ambitious behaviours. Also, those with higher parental expectations on dating/marriage are more likely to engage in violent behaviors. This is in contrast with the findings made in psychology and sociology which demonstrated that high parental expectations positively impact the child's well-being (Lippman Moore & McIntosh, 2021), but when the child perceives the expectations from the negative point of view definitely his/her reactions will be negative, (Ang, Klassen, Chong, Huan Wong & Yeo, 2022).

The second hypothesis of the study was that positive peer influence would predict violent ambition. The result of the study shows that those with higher peer positive influence are more likely to engage in violent ambitious behaviours. While those with good peer positive relationships were less likely to engage in violent behaviors. This is in sharp opposition with the findings made by Rodriguez (2021) who discovered that adolescents who are violent have passionate desire for social recognition; their interest lies more on the need to be regarded as powerful, to be seen as socially accepted, different, and rebellious by their peers. In another development, other scholars discovered that zeal for popularity, desire for leadership, and passion for power brings about youths engagement in disruptive behaviors amongst many youths; giving them the opportunity for social recognition, (Buelga, Ravenna, Musitu, & Lila, 2020),

The study also found that males are more likely to engage in violent ambitious behaviors than females. This is in line with the findings made by Okafor and Ugwu, (2017) who studied influence of gender socialization on violent ambition and came up the conclusion that males are more prone to violent ambition possibly because of the exaggerated gender role expectations imposed upon the male folks by the society in which they grow.

### **Implications of the Study**

The findings of the study have far reaching implications to the society, parents, educational system, the adolescents/youths, researchers, NGOs and government will benefit from the study. Parents will benefit from this study because it will help them adopt the practice of moderate expectations on their children. Government will also benefit from this study because it will help them in formulating policies that will consider the plight of the youths, create jobs, entrepreneurial and skill acquisition programs that will engage the youths and make provisions for the necessary facilities needed to assist them. The society will also benefit because when there is improvement in the intervention modalities, societal values and norms, there will be reduced number of violence, little passion for wealth acquisition and power in the society.

Educational system should be looked into; our youths should be encouraged to study hard and eschew violence. Schools should organize periodic seminars/workshops, sporting activities, conferences, entrepreneurial and skill acquisition programs to help engage the youths and talk to their consciences to avoid violence. Youths will also benefit from this study because it will serve as eye opener to those who want to maintain integrity, high moral status and acquisition of wealth and power in the right direction.

However, NGOs will through this research study learn different techniques to adopt in helping the youths who are at the heart of violence in our current dispensation. Students and researchers will on the other hand benefit from this study because the findings will help further research.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings made in this study, the researcher therefore made the following recommendations:

1. It is recommended that parents especially mothers should not be hard and harsh on their children while encouraging them to pursue their future dreams. There is need for high educational status of both parents. Also, parents should reduce the level of their expectations on dating/marriage which is a breeding ground

for violent behaviors, since this will make their children look for every possible means to acquire riches and measure up with the responsibilities of marriage and family life.

2. Since it has been discovered that youths with good peer positive relationships were less likely to engage in violent behaviors, it is recommended that youths should embrace good peer positive relationships and eschew violence which may lead to imprisonment and untimely death.
3. It is also recommended that youths should encourage each other to imbibe high morals and maintain the high standard of morality and integrity observed by our forefathers.

### Suggestions for Further Study

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher hereby suggests that additional studies will be valuable to replicate and expand this work. In further studies also there is need to increase the sample size, universities outside Enugu and secondary schools should be included in the study, this will bring about more conclusive and generalizable inferences and will also help to reduce bias. More so, efforts should be made to accommodate cross-cultural studies for wider ecological validity. There is need also to involve parents in a research of this kind to open their eyes on the side effects of their expectations on their children.

### Conclusion

This study examined parental expectations and positive peer influence on violent ambition among university students. The participants for this study were 200 university students in Enugu State. Parental expectation scale (Li-Fei Wang & P. Paul Heppner, 2002) and Positive peer influence scale (James McConchie, Brittany J. Hite, M. BestyBlackard & Ryan Cheuk Ming Cheung, 2019) were used to evaluate the hypotheses. Two hypotheses were postulated for this study, both of them were accepted. Based on the findings, the study recommended high educational status of both parents and good peer positive relationships amongst youths. Also, based on the limitations discovered, several ideas were suggested for future research outside Enugu and amongst secondary school students.

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