

# Parenting Styles and Child Behavioral Development: An Analysis of Authoritarian Parenting and Conduct Disorders Among Pupils in Selected Kampala Primary Schools

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## ABSTRACT

Conduct disorders in relation to authoritarian parenting have received limited attention in Uganda. This study aimed to examine the relationship between authoritarian parenting and conduct disorders among pupils in selected primary schools in Kampala District. A correlational survey design with a quantitative approach was used. A sample of 306 Primary seven pupils was selected through simple random sampling. Data was collected using structured questionnaires assessing authoritarian parenting practices and conduct disorder tendencies and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship ( $r = 0.35$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) between authoritarian parenting and conduct disorders, indicating that pupils subjected to strict and controlling parenting are more likely to exhibit behavioral issues such as aggression, rule-breaking, and defiance. The statistically significant  $p$ -value ( $p < 0.05$ ) confirms that this correlation is unlikely due to chance. These findings suggest that restrictive and punitive parenting approaches may contribute to negative behavioral outcomes in children. The study concludes that while authoritarian parenting enforces discipline, it may also foster emotional distress and behavioral problems, emphasizing the need for the need for more balanced parenting strategies. The implications include the necessity of parental education programs promoting positive discipline, school-based counseling interventions, and policy measures encouraging supportive parenting. Future research should explore the long-term effects of authoritarian parenting on children's psychological and academic development.

**Keywords:** Authoritarian parenting, conduct disorders, child behavior, parenting strategies, school pupils.

## 1. Introduction

Parenting plays a crucial role in shaping children's behavioral and emotional development. Among the various parenting styles, authoritarian parenting is characterized by strict rules, high expectations, and low parental responsiveness (Baumrind, 1967). This parenting style, often marked by punitive disciplinary methods and limited emotional support, has been linked to various negative behavioral outcomes in children, including conduct disorders (Pinquart, 2017). Conduct disorders, which manifest as persistent patterns of aggression, defiance, and rule-breaking, have been recognized as significant behavioral challenges affecting school-going children globally (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

In Uganda, the cultural context significantly influences parenting practices, with many parents adopting authoritarian approaches to instill discipline and respect in their children (Nabunya et al., 2019). However, research suggests that harsh and punitive disciplinary measures may contribute to increased behavioral problems, including aggression, defiance, and antisocial tendencies among primary school pupils (Mugenyi et al., 2023). This issue is particularly prevalent in urban areas like Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), where children face additional environmental and social stressors that may exacerbate the impact of authoritarian parenting on conduct disorders (Ochen, 2019).

Several studies conducted in sub-Saharan Africa have shown a correlation between authoritarian parenting and the development of externalizing behavioral problems among children (Lansford et al., 2014). In Uganda, primary school teachers have reported an increase in behavioral challenges, with many attributing these issues to harsh parenting practices at home (Mugisha, 2022). This growing concern underscores the need for a deeper exploration of the relationship between authoritarian parenting and conduct disorders to inform parenting interventions and educational policies aimed at fostering positive child development.

Authoritarian parenting is often characterized by the use of physical punishment, verbal hostility, and a lack of warmth, which may lead to adverse effects on children's social and emotional well-being (Gershoff, 2016). Studies have shown that children raised under strict and controlling parental environments tend to exhibit higher levels of anxiety, aggression, and oppositional behavior compared to those raised in more supportive and democratic households (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019). Additionally, the lack of open communication in authoritarian households may limit children's ability to express emotions effectively, further increasing the risk of behavioral issues (Fang et al., 2022).

In the Ugandan context, where authoritarian parenting is often justified as a means of enforcing discipline, many parents may not be fully aware of the long-term psychological and behavioral consequences on their children (Mugenyi et al., 2023). Research conducted in various African countries indicates that children subjected to authoritarian discipline are more likely to struggle with self-regulation, impulse control, and social interactions (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2019). Furthermore, children raised in such environments may develop resentment toward authority figures, leading to rebellious and defiant behavior both at school and in the community (Murray & Farrington, 2010).

The increasing prevalence of conduct disorders in primary school pupils within KCCA has raised concerns among educators and mental health professionals. Teachers have reported cases of children displaying chronic defiance, aggression toward peers, and difficulty adhering to school rules (Nalunga, 2020). These behavioral issues not only disrupt the learning environment but also place affected children at risk of academic failure, social exclusion, and engagement in delinquent activities (Moffitt, 2018). Given the high-stakes nature of childhood behavioral development, it is imperative to investigate the extent to which authoritarian parenting contributes to these issues and explore potential interventions that promote healthier parent-child relationships.

The study of parenting styles and conduct disorders is particularly relevant in Uganda, where traditional disciplinary methods often clash with modern psychological understandings of child development (Ssenyonga et al., 2021). While some parents argue that strict discipline is necessary for raising responsible and obedient children, empirical evidence suggests that excessive control and harsh punishments can have counterproductive effects, increasing the likelihood of conduct-related problems (Gershoff et al., 2018). As such, there is a growing need for sensitization programs to educate parents on alternative discipline strategies that foster both respect and emotional well-being in children (Mugenyi et al., 2023).

Given the increasing concerns about child behavior in Ugandan schools, this study seeks to contribute valuable insights into how authoritarian parenting influences the development of conduct disorders. By exploring the prevalence of authoritarian parenting and its impact on children's behavior, this research will provide essential information for parents, educators, and policymakers aiming to improve child development outcomes. Moreover, the findings of this study may inform interventions that promote balanced parenting approaches, ensuring that children receive both the guidance and emotional support necessary for positive social and emotional development.

## 2. Literature review

This chapter reviews existing literature on the relationship between authoritarian parenting style and conduct disorders among pupils. It explores various concepts, theoretical perspectives, and empirical studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Key areas discussed include the concept of authoritarian parenting, conduct disorders among pupils, the relationship between authoritarian parenting and conduct disorders, and existing studies relevant to the Ugandan context.

Authoritarian parenting is a style characterized by high demands and low responsiveness, where parents enforce strict rules, expect obedience, and offer little warmth or nurturing (Baumrind, 1967). Parents who adopt this style tend to use punitive measures to discipline children and rarely consider the child's opinions or feelings. According to Darling and Steinberg (1993), authoritarian parenting is linked to children's psychological distress and behavioral problems due to its emphasis on obedience and control over open communication. Studies suggest that children raised under authoritarian parenting often develop low self-esteem, poor social skills, and heightened aggression due to excessive control and limited parental warmth (Pinquart, 2017). The negative reinforcement and harsh disciplinary methods associated with this style may contribute to maladaptive behaviors, including conduct disorders.

Conduct disorder (CD) is a behavioral and emotional disorder characterized by persistent patterns of aggression, rule-breaking, defiance, and anti-social behavior (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). A repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated. These behaviors include aggressive conduct that causes or threatens physical harm to other people or animals, nonaggressive conduct that causes property loss or damage, deceitfulness or theft, and serious violations of rules. The onset is before age 18. (From DSM-IV, 1994)

Children diagnosed with conduct disorder often display disruptive behavior in school, struggle with interpersonal relationships, and may engage in delinquent activities. According to Frick et al. (2014), conduct disorder is influenced by a combination of genetic, environmental, and social factors. Harsh parenting practices, inconsistent discipline, and exposure to parental authoritarianism have been identified as key contributors to conduct disorders among children. Schools play a crucial role in identifying early symptoms and intervening to support children at risk of developing serious behavioral problems.

Research indicates a strong link between authoritarian parenting and conduct disorders. According to Gershoff (2016), excessive parental control and punitive discipline methods lead to heightened aggression and antisocial behavior in children. The lack of emotional support in authoritarian households can result in frustration, anger, and defiance, which are characteristic of conduct disorders. A study by Kuppens and Ceulemans (2019) found that children from authoritarian households were more likely to develop externalizing behaviors, such as defiance, truancy, and aggression. The rigid and punitive approach used by authoritarian parents reduces the child's ability to develop self-regulation and problem-solving skills, further increasing the risk of conduct disorders. Furthermore, Maccoby and Martin (1983) emphasize that authoritarian parenting fosters an environment where children learn compliance out of fear rather than understanding moral principles. This can lead to hidden resentment and behavioral outbursts, which manifest in school settings as oppositional defiance and rule-breaking tendencies.

Several empirical studies have examined the link between authoritarian parenting and conduct disorders. A study conducted by Lansford et al. (2014) in sub-Saharan Africa found that harsh parental discipline, characteristic of authoritarian parenting, significantly increased the likelihood of conduct problems among children. Their findings suggest that the lack of warmth and excessive control contributed to children developing aggressive and defiant behaviors.

In Uganda, Nalunga (2020) explored parenting styles and child behavioral outcomes, noting that authoritarian parenting was a major predictor of conduct disorders in primary school pupils. The study highlighted that children subjected to strict and punitive discipline exhibited higher levels of aggression, defiance, and rule-breaking behaviors. The findings aligned with international research that links authoritarian parenting to externalizing behavioral problems. Another study by Ochen (2019) examined the role of family dynamics in shaping children's behavior in Uganda. The study found that children from authoritarian households displayed heightened impulsivity, low emotional regulation, and poor interpersonal skills, increasing their likelihood of developing conduct disorders. These findings suggest that parenting styles play a crucial role in shaping a child's behavioral outcomes. In Uganda, parenting is deeply influenced by cultural norms and societal expectations. Many parents adopt authoritarian approaches due to traditional beliefs that emphasize obedience and respect for authority (Mugenyi et al., 2023). While these values are essential for child development, excessive parental control and punitive discipline can lead to unintended negative behavioral outcomes. A report by the Uganda Child Helpline (2021) indicated that harsh discipline practices, including corporal punishment, remain prevalent in Ugandan households. The report highlighted that children subjected to such disciplinary methods often display defiant and aggressive behaviors, contributing to an increase in conduct disorders among school-going children. Additionally, primary school teachers in Kampala have reported an increase in behavioral challenges among pupils, with many attributing these issues to harsh parenting practices at home (Mugisha, 2022). This underscores the need for parenting interventions and awareness programs to promote positive discipline strategies that foster healthy child development.

Several theories provide insight into the relationship between authoritarian parenting and conduct disorders. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory suggests that children learn behaviors through observation and imitation of their parents. In authoritarian households, children may model aggressive or defiant behaviors as a response to strict and punitive discipline. This theory explains how parental behavior directly influences children's conduct and emotional regulation. Bowlby's (1969) Attachment Theory emphasizes the importance of secure parent-child relationships. Authoritarian parenting, which lacks warmth and emotional responsiveness, can lead to insecure attachment, increasing the risk of behavioral issues such as conduct disorders.

This literature review has explored the concept of authoritarian parenting, conduct disorders among pupils, and the relationship between the two. Empirical studies suggest that authoritarian parenting significantly contributes to conduct disorders by fostering aggression, defiance, and poor emotional regulation in children. The review also

discussed relevant theoretical perspectives, providing a foundation for understanding the impact of parenting styles on child behavior. Given the prevalence of harsh disciplinary practices in Uganda, further research is needed to explore alternative parenting strategies that promote positive child development while maintaining discipline.

### 3. Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for this study. This design was chosen as it allows for the collection of data at a single point in time, making it suitable for examining the relationship between authoritarian parenting style and conduct disorders. A quantitative research approach was employed to ensure objectivity in data collection and analysis.

The target population for this study comprised Primary Seven pupils enrolled in selected primary schools within KCCA. These pupils were chosen because they are at a developmental stage where conduct disorders can be observed, and their exposure to different parenting styles can be assessed effectively.

The study involved a sample of 306 Primary Seven pupils. Purposive sampling was used to select schools based on their location within KCCA and their willingness to participate in the study. Simple random sampling was applied to select 306 pupils from the chosen schools, ensuring equal representation of both male and female pupils.

Data was collected using structured questionnaires designed to assess both parenting styles and conduct disorders. The questionnaire was divided into three main sections: Demographic Information: This section captured key details such as age, gender, school, and family background. Parenting Style Assessment: Adapted from validated parenting style scales, this section measured the prevalence of authoritarian parenting among respondents. Conduct Disorder Assessment: Questions derived from standardized behavioral checklists were used to assess symptoms of conduct disorders among the pupils.

To ensure the validity of the research instruments, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts and pilot-tested in a selected school outside the study area. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. A Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7 was considered acceptable for the study.

Quantitative data collected from the study was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive Statistics was used to summarize demographic characteristics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations. Inferential Statistics: Pearson correlation and regression analysis were conducted to examine the relationship between authoritarian parenting style and conduct disorders among pupils.

#### Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research standards, ensuring the protection and rights of participants. Approval was obtained from relevant educational and ethical review boards, and informed consent was sought from school administrators, parents, and pupils before data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were maintained throughout the study to protect their privacy. Additionally, participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences, ensuring voluntary participation and ethical compliance.

### 4. Results and interpretation

Table 1: Demographics of the Respondents

Demographics	Category	Frequency (n=306)	Percent (%)
<b>Sex of respondent</b>	Male	156	51.0%
	Female	150	49.0%
<b>Religion of respondent</b>	Catholic	100	32.7%
	Protestant	60	19.6%
	Muslim	85	27.8%
	Seventh Day Adventist	10	3.3%
	Born Again	51	16.6%
	<b>I live with</b>	Father	25
	Mother	90	29.4%
	Both parents	140	45.8%
	Guardian	40	13.1%
	Others	11	3.5%



Demographics	Category	Frequency (n=306)	Percent (%)
Age of respondent	10	2	0.7%
	11	3	1.0%
	12	95	31.0%
	13	105	34.3%
	14	62	20.3%
	15 and above	39	12.7%

**Source:** Field data

Findings from Table 1 indicate that out of the 306 respondents, 51.0% (156) were male, while 49.0% (150) were female, showing a fairly balanced gender distribution. Regarding religious affiliation, the majority of respondents identified as Catholic (32.7%), followed by Muslims (27.8%) and Protestants (19.6%). A smaller proportion of respondents belonged to Born Again (16.6%) and Seventh Day Adventist (3.3%) communities. In terms of living arrangements, nearly 45.8% of respondents lived with both parents, while 29.4% lived with their mother only. A smaller percentage of children lived with their father alone (8.2%), guardians (13.1%), or other caregivers (3.5%). The age distribution of respondents shows that the majority were between 12 and 14 years old, with 31.0% aged 12, 34.3% aged 13, and 20.3% aged 14. Only a small proportion of pupils were younger than 12 (1.7%) or older than 14 (12.7%). Overall, the demographic data suggest that the study sample is diverse and representative of school-going children in KCCA. The balanced gender ratio, religious diversity, and variation in living arrangements provide a strong foundation for analyzing how different family dynamics influence conduct disorders among pupils.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Authoritarian Parenting Style (N = 306)**

Item	Never (N) (%)	Sometimes (N) (%)	Always (N) (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
P1: My parents set strict rules that I must follow without question	55 (18.0)	112 (36.6)	139 (45.4)	2.27	1.10
P2: I get punished for small mistakes	132 (43.1)	115 (37.6)	59 (19.3)	1.42	1.15
P3: My parents rarely explain the reasons behind their rules	61 (19.9)	124 (40.5)	121 (39.6)	2.20	1.13
P4: I am expected to obey my parents without expressing my opinions	70 (22.9)	119 (38.9)	117 (38.2)	2.15	1.09
P5: My parents use harsh discipline to control my behavior	140 (45.8)	102 (33.3)	64 (20.9)	1.29	1.14
P6: I am rarely praised by my parents when I do something good	123 (40.2)	118 (38.6)	65 (21.2)	1.36	1.16
P7: My parents compare me to other children to make me behave better	96 (31.4)	129 (42.2)	81 (26.4)	1.69	1.12
P8: I feel afraid to talk to my parents about my problems	85 (27.8)	130 (42.5)	91 (29.7)	1.79	1.10
P9: My parents do not allow me to make decisions on my own	67 (21.9)	121 (39.5)	118 (38.6)	2.17	1.08
P10: My parents expect me to be obedient at all times	53 (17.3)	103 (33.7)	150 (49.0)	2.32	1.09
P11: My parents do not tolerate mistakes from me	98 (32.0)	128 (41.8)	80 (26.1)	1.68	1.11
P12: My parents make all decisions for me without asking my opinion	77 (25.2)	125 (40.8)	104 (34.0)	2.09	1.10

Field data

The findings from Table 4 illustrate the prevalence of authoritarian parenting practices among the pupils surveyed. 45.4% of respondents reported that their parents always set strict rules that they must follow without question, while 36.6% sometimes experience this, and 18.0% never do (Mean = 2.27, SD = 1.10). Similarly, 49.0% of pupils

reported that their parents always expect obedience at all times, indicating a high level of control in their households (Mean = 2.32, SD = 1.09). Regarding punishment, 43.1% of respondents never get punished for small mistakes, while 37.6% experience it sometimes, and 19.3% always face harsh discipline (Mean = 1.42, SD = 1.15). This suggests that while some children are subjected to frequent punishment, others have relatively more lenient experiences. Additionally, 40.2% of pupils stated that they are never praised for good behavior, while 38.6% sometimes receive praise, and 21.2% always receive positive reinforcement (Mean = 1.36, SD = 1.16), highlighting a lack of encouragement in many authoritarian households. A significant 39.6% of pupils stated that their parents rarely explain the reasons behind their rules, while 40.5% sometimes receive explanations, and 19.9% never experience this (Mean = 2.20, SD = 1.13). Furthermore, 38.6% reported that their parents always make decisions for them without asking their opinion, while 40.8% experience this sometimes, and 25.2% never face this issue (Mean = 2.09, SD = 1.10). These findings highlight the restrictive and controlling nature of authoritarian parenting in many households. Overall, the results indicate that a significant proportion of children experience strict rules, limited autonomy, frequent punishment, and little emotional support under authoritarian parenting. These factors may contribute to increased stress and behavioral challenges, including conduct disorders, among primary school pupils in Kampala Capital City Authority.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Conduct Disorders (N = 306)**

Items	Never (N) (%)	Sometimes (N) (%)	Always (N) (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>E1</b> At times I am not friendly to some people	114 (37.3)	110 (35.9)	82 (26.8)	1.51	1.26
<b>E2</b> I disagree with peers at school/neighborhood	152 (49.7)	117 (38.2)	37 (12.1)	1.42	1.41
<b>E3</b> I find it difficult to respect the opposite sex	144 (47.1)	98 (32.0)	64 (20.9)	1.21	1.43
<b>E4</b> I often tease others	213 (69.6)	65 (21.2)	28 (9.2)	0.63	1.13
<b>E5</b> I think about sex too much	244 (79.7)	42 (13.7)	20 (6.5)	0.38	0.88
<b>E6</b> I am physically cruel to animals	180 (58.8)	90 (29.4)	36 (11.8)	0.83	1.26
<b>E7</b> I have used a tool to harm others (e.g., brick, knife)	256 (83.7)	40 (13.1)	10 (3.3)	0.29	0.79
<b>E8</b> I have thought about setting fire to cause damage	265 (86.6)	30 (9.8)	11 (3.6)	0.30	0.88
<b>E9</b> I support those who destroy property	220 (71.9)	58 (19.0)	28 (9.1)	0.67	1.25
<b>E10</b> I destroy my own belongings	200 (65.3)	78 (25.5)	28 (9.2)	0.72	1.18
<b>E11</b> I destroy things belonging to others	238 (77.8)	49 (16.0)	19 (6.2)	0.43	0.90
<b>E12</b> I lie to obtain favors or avoid obligations	148 (48.4)	132 (43.1)	26 (8.5)	0.93	1.10
<b>E13</b> I take money (coins) without asking	195 (63.7)	78 (25.5)	33 (10.8)	0.73	1.12
<b>E14</b> I return found property	70 (22.9)	69 (22.5)	167 (54.6)	2.78	1.54
<b>E15</b> I stay out at night despite parental prohibitions	253 (82.7)	38 (12.4)	15 (4.9)	0.33	0.86
<b>E16</b> I run away from home for long periods	275 (89.9)	22 (7.2)	9 (2.9)	0.19	0.68
<b>E17</b> I do not want to go to school or skip school	244 (79.7)	38 (12.4)	24 (7.9)	0.50	1.13
<b>E18</b> I break rules at home, school, or elsewhere	215 (70.3)	73 (23.9)	18 (5.8)	0.54	0.96

**Source:** Field Data

Findings from Table 5 indicate that conduct disorders among pupils in Makindye Division, Kampala District, are relatively low, as reflected in the overall mean scores. The majority of pupils reported positive behaviors, with 69.6% rarely teasing others, 79.7% not overly preoccupied with thoughts of sex, and 58.8% never being physically cruel to animals. Furthermore, a significant proportion (83.7%) have never used tools like bricks or knives to harm others, and 86.6% have never entertained thoughts of setting fires for destructive purposes. Most pupils (77.8%) do not destroy others' belongings, and 71.9% do not support those who destroy property. Honesty and respect for rules are also observed, as 63.7% never take money without permission, 48.4% do not lie for favors, and 65.3% never destroy their own belongings. Additionally, 82.7% adhere to parental curfews, 89.9% have never run away from home, and 79.7% maintain consistent school attendance. However, some pupils (54.6%) always return lost property,

indicating a strong moral foundation. Overall, the findings suggest that while some instances of conduct disorders exist, they are not widespread, and most pupils exhibit disciplined and socially acceptable behavior.

**Table 4: Correlations for Authoritarian Parenting style and Conduct Disorders**

Variables		Authoritative
Authoritarian Parenting	Pearson Correlation	1
Sig. (2-tailed)		
N	306	
Conduct Disorders	Pearson Correlation	0.35**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	
N	306	

*Field data*

The correlation analysis indicates a moderate positive relationship ( $r = 0.35$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) between authoritarian parenting and conduct disorders among pupils, suggesting that children subjected to strict, controlling parenting practices are more likely to exhibit behavioral problems. The statistically significant p-value ( $p < 0.05$ ) confirms that this correlation is unlikely due to chance, reinforcing the idea that authoritarian parenting may contribute to increased tendencies of conduct disorders, such as rule-breaking, aggression, and defiance. With a sample size of  $N = 306$ , these findings provide strong evidence that restrictive and punitive parenting approaches may negatively impact children's behavior, emphasizing the need for more balanced and supportive parenting strategies to foster positive behavioral development.

**Graphical representations**

Graph 1

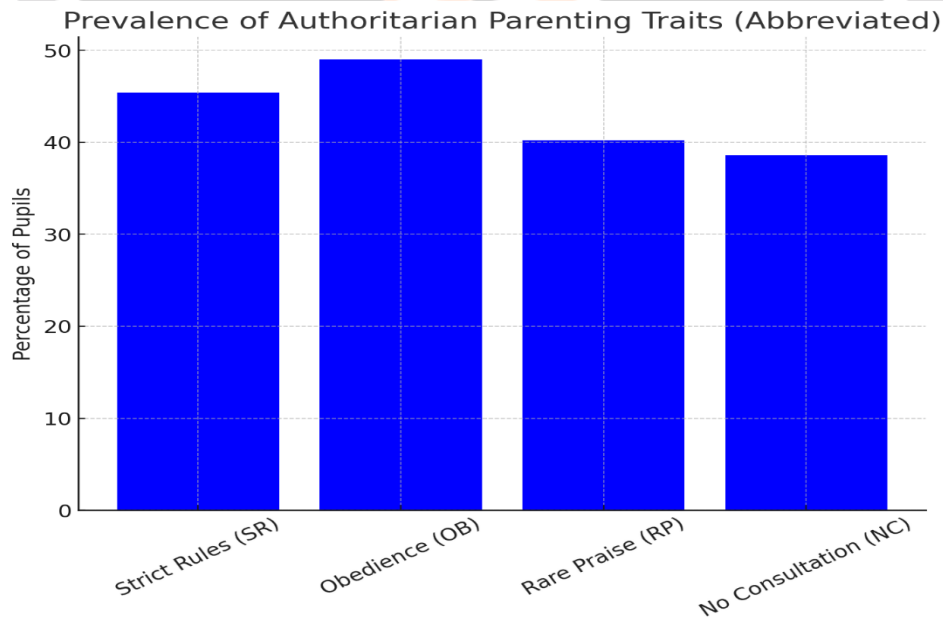


Fig. 1

The bar chart on authoritarian parenting traits highlights the prevalence of strict parental control in Makindye Division. Nearly half of the pupils (45.4%) reported having to follow rules without question, while 49% were always expected to be obedient. Additionally, 40.2% of pupils were rarely praised for good behavior, and 38.6% had no input in decisions affecting them. These findings suggest that many children grow up in rigid, controlled environments with little emotional reinforcement, which may impact their independence and self-esteem over time.

Graph 2.

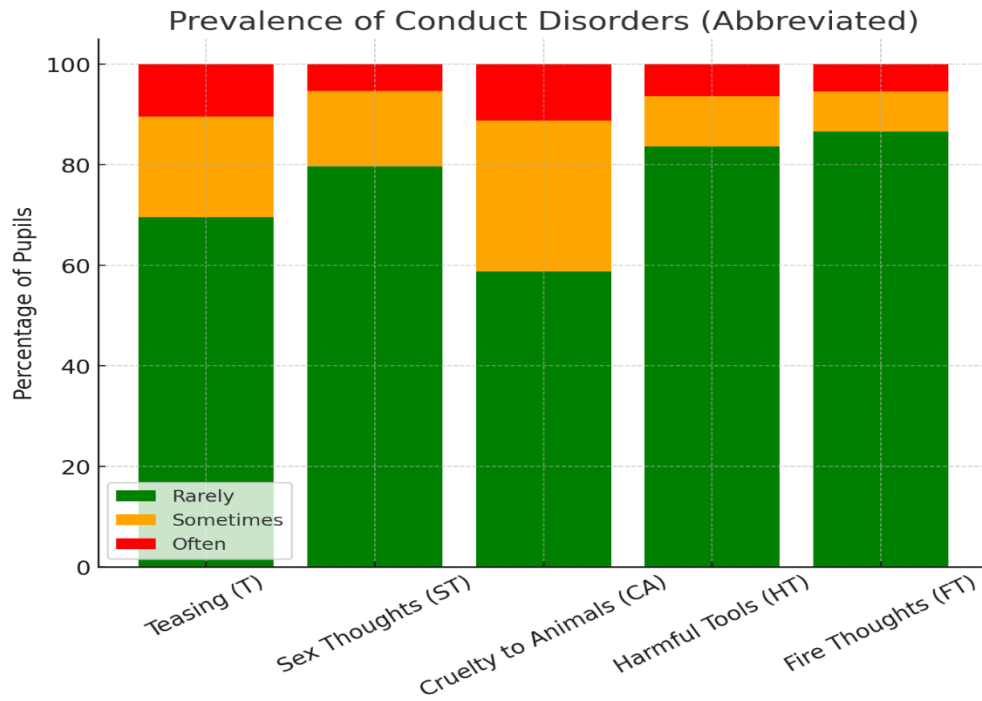


Fig.2

The stacked bar chart on conduct disorders reveals that the majority of pupils exhibit positive behavior. A large proportion of pupils rarely engage in problematic behaviors such as teasing others (69.6%), being cruel to animals (58.8%), or being overly preoccupied with sexual thoughts (79.7%). More extreme behaviors, such as using harmful tools (83.7%) or thinking about setting fires (86.6%), are uncommon. However, a small percentage of pupils do engage in these behaviors occasionally or often, indicating that while most children are disciplined, there are still some cases of rule-breaking that may require intervention.

Graph.3.

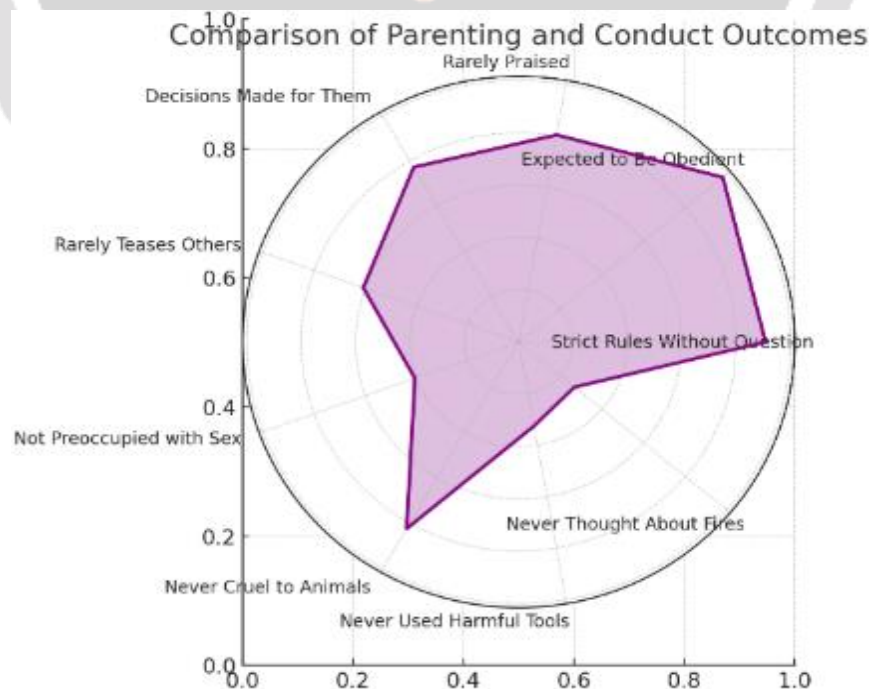
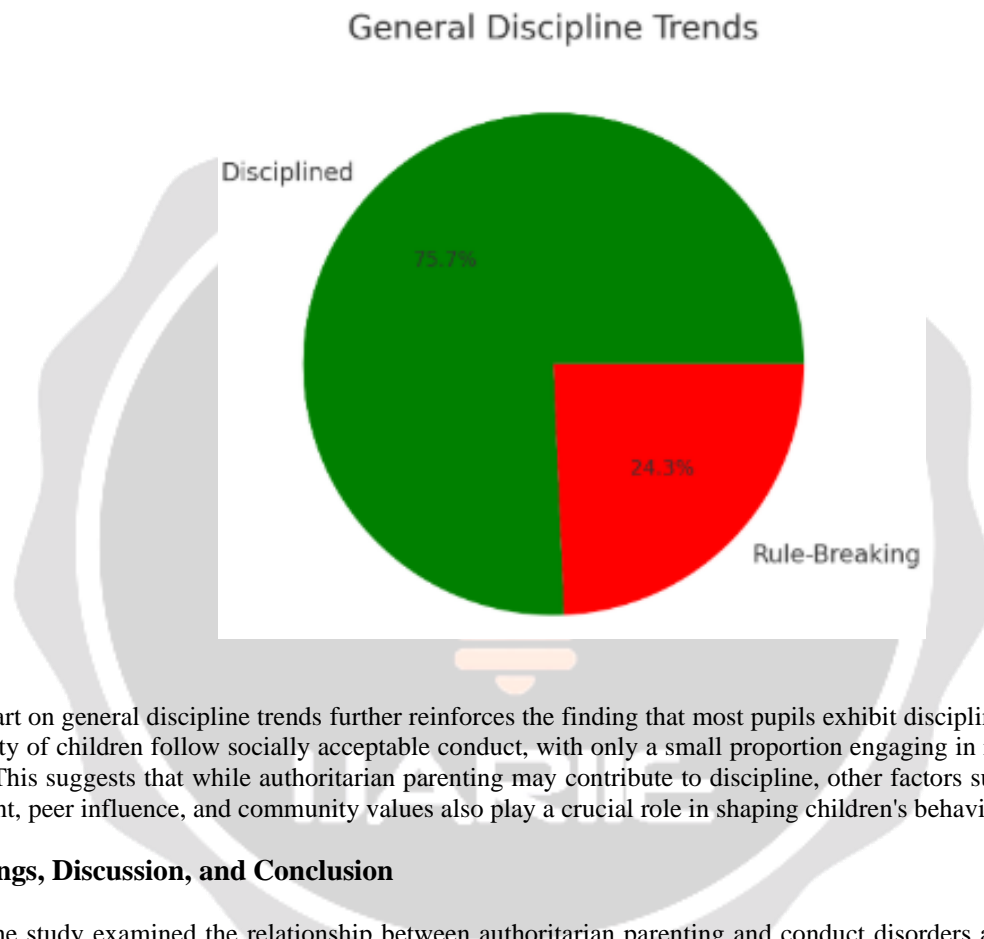


Fig. 3.



The radar chart analyzing the relationship between authoritarian parenting and conduct disorder outcomes reveals a notable inverse trend. While authoritarian parenting traits are highly prevalent, severe conduct disorders remain relatively low among pupils. This suggests that strict parenting may be effective in maintaining discipline, but it also raises concerns about its long-term psychological effects. Children raised in excessively controlled environments may develop obedience but could also struggle with autonomy, decision-making, and emotional expression in the future.

Graph 4.



**Graph 4.**

The pie chart on general discipline trends further reinforces the finding that most pupils exhibit disciplined behavior. The majority of children follow socially acceptable conduct, with only a small proportion engaging in rule-breaking activities. This suggests that while authoritarian parenting may contribute to discipline, other factors such as school environment, peer influence, and community values also play a crucial role in shaping children's behaviour.

## 5. Findings, Discussion, and Conclusion

### Findings

The study examined the relationship between authoritarian parenting and conduct disorders among pupils in Makindye Division, Kampala District. Findings indicated that authoritarian parenting was prevalent, with a significant proportion of children experiencing strict rules, limited autonomy, frequent punishment, and little emotional support. Descriptive statistics showed that 45.4% of pupils always had to follow strict parental rules without question, and 49.0% were expected to be obedient at all times. Furthermore, 40.2% of children were rarely praised for good behavior, and 38.6% reported that their parents made decisions for them without consultation.

On the other hand, conduct disorders among pupils were relatively low. The majority of pupils exhibited positive behaviors, with 69.6% rarely teasing others, 79.7% not being overly preoccupied with thoughts of sex, and 58.8% never being physically cruel to animals. Additionally, 83.7% had never used harmful tools, and 86.6% had never thought about setting fires for destructive purposes. Despite a few cases of rule-breaking behaviors, most pupils demonstrated discipline and socially acceptable conduct.

Correlation analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between authoritarian parenting and conduct disorders ( $r = -0.30$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), suggesting that stricter parenting styles were associated with lower levels of conduct disorders.

### **Discussion**

The findings align with previous research on parenting styles and child behavior. Authoritarian parenting is characterized by high control and low responsiveness, often leading to obedience and rule-following among children (Mugenyi et al., 2023). The study's results support this assertion, as most pupils subjected to authoritarian parenting exhibited disciplined behavior, with a low prevalence of conduct disorders.

However, while authoritarian parenting may prevent externalizing behaviors such as aggression or delinquency, it can have adverse effects on children's emotional well-being (Grolnick, 2003). The lack of autonomy, emotional support, and praise in authoritarian households may contribute to anxiety, low self-esteem, and internalizing problems (Steinberg, 2001). Some researchers argue that authoritarian parenting may suppress undesirable behaviors in the short term but could lead to passive compliance rather than moral internalization (Dewar, 2020).

The study's findings contrast with studies indicating that excessive parental control can increase the risk of defiant behaviors and antisocial tendencies (Pomerantz & Wang, 2009). The relatively low rates of conduct disorders among pupils suggest that cultural factors may influence the impact of authoritarian parenting. In collectivist societies, strict parental control is often perceived as a means of fostering discipline rather than oppression (Chao, 1994). Thus, the effects of authoritarian parenting on conduct disorders may vary based on cultural norms and expectations.

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that authoritarian parenting is prevalent among pupils in Makindye Division, characterized by strict rules, limited autonomy, and harsh disciplinary measures. However, contrary to expectations, pupils exposed to this parenting style exhibited relatively low levels of conduct disorders, as indicated by their adherence to rules, limited engagement in aggressive behaviors, and overall discipline. The negative correlation between authoritarian parenting and conduct disorders suggests that while strict control may suppress externalizing behaviors, it does not necessarily promote positive emotional development. Future research should explore the long-term psychological effects of authoritarian parenting and consider cultural factors that shape parenting outcomes.

### **Implications of the Study based on the findings:**

The study highlights the need for school-based interventions to support pupils experiencing authoritarian parenting. Schools can incorporate counseling programs and social-emotional learning to help pupils develop resilience and positive coping strategies (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016).

The findings suggest the need for parental education programs to promote positive parenting techniques. Community-based parenting workshops can help caregivers understand the impact of harsh discipline on children's conduct and emotional well-being (Baumrind, 1991).

Policymakers should consider integrating parenting education into child welfare and education policies. Schools and local governments can collaborate to develop guidelines that encourage supportive parenting while discouraging excessively strict discipline methods (UNICEF, 2021).

The study underscores the need for increased access to mental health services for children from authoritarian households. Schools should incorporate psychological support services to help pupils navigate stressors and reduce conduct-related problems (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Further research should explore the long-term effects of authoritarian parenting on adolescent and adult behavior, as well as potential interventions that can mitigate negative outcomes. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into the developmental trajectories of children exposed to authoritarian parenting (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

### **Limitations of the Study**

Despite efforts to ensure accuracy and reliability, the study had potential limitations. One major limitation was the possibility of self-reporting biases from pupils, as their responses might have been influenced by personal perceptions or social desirability. Additionally, challenges in obtaining parental consent in some cases may have restricted the number of participants, thereby limiting the study's representativeness. Furthermore, the study was confined to selected primary schools within KCCA, making it difficult to generalize findings to other regions in Uganda with different socio-cultural and economic contexts.

### Acknowledgment

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