



CONTEMPORARY PARENTING STYLES: ITS IMPACT ON CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN CHILD

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Abstract

The parents are without doubt the most important force behind any child's development, and that is why parents are the role models and first teachers of their child or children. They are responsible for shaping up their children's behaviour and impacting positive value in them because children listen, observe and imitate their parents. As a father or mother, a parent has to practise what he/she preaches to expect the child follow it. Parenting is one of the most difficult and demanding tasks in the world; it therefore requires continuous teaching and sacrifices to be a good parent. However, there are indications that all is not well with the family sector in today's world. That is why in our country Nigeria, it can be seen that the rate of social, moral and religious upbringing of children is depreciating. Hence, one can say or claim that some parents are already tired and are fed up of taking responsibility as parents. But could we then say or ask that, are there no responsible parents left in Nigeria or are some parents not putting effort to be responsible? Using the analytic method, the paper focuses on the parenting styles practiced by parents in Nigeria and finding out its impact on contemporary Nigerian child. The paper further recommends the parenting style best suited for contemporary Nigerian child so as to avoid juvenile delinquent behaviour during adolescent stage in the future.

Keywords: Parents, Parenting Style, Nigeria, Nigerian Child and Juvenile Delinquency.

Introduction

The term "parenting" has been defined as the state of being a parent which includes nourishing, protecting and guiding a child through the course of development (Baumrind, 1966). Parents nurture their children in different ways, that is why nobody has ever known the best way to parent or train a child or children. Even if you have four to six children; you are still learning. The questions now are: what is the best thing you can do, what standards are you going to set for your family, what atmosphere are you going to create in your home, and what kind of

character/behaviour are you exhibiting for your children to emulate? Good parenting constitutes a challenge to different parents in this contemporary era. That is why many scholars have deliberated and are still deliberating on the overall effects of parenting styles on children. Parents are very important in a child's existence, especially in their early years until they can support themselves. Discipline and control imposed by parents help in developing a healthy personality in a child. Thus, the behavioural, emotional, educational, and social characteristics of children are more significantly impacted by parenting styles. Parents play an important role in molding and building the behaviour of their children and unawareness in their parenting can lead them towards undesirable damaging (Baumrind, 1991). One can then say that parenting styles are the attitude that parents exhibit to their kids, and any parenting style can be affected by both the parents' and children's temperaments which can be mostly based on the impact of one's own parents and culture. This paper, therefore, analyses the influence of parenting on children's behaviour, especially on the contemporary Nigerian child.

History of Parenting and its Evolution

With changing times, lifestyles and needs, the way parents now choose to raise their child or children has undergone a sea change. However, a parent will always be a parent be it "then" or be it "now". Parenting is an art (Hattangadi, 2022). It is an art because it depends a lot on a parent's creative response to different challenges. These challenges include: the challenge of disciplining, the challenge of bonding which fits their child or children's personality, the challenge of making the children eat proper food, challenge of educating the child or children on sexual matter, keeping an eye on the child or children's friends, and so on. Thus, one can say that parenting is an art because it is finding new ways of inculcating positive values into the child's life. However, with change being the essence of life, nothing remains the same for long; and parenting has also evolved with time. Having more than three children among our fore-father's generations was the norm. But in current times, from having second thoughts before planning for the second child, to not having kids at all, what comes to the fore is the fact that with progress and open-mindedness, priorities are shifting too. With the use of modern day contraceptives, most contemporary parents play safe if they are not physically and psychologically ready for parenthood. Today, parenting is a joint venture with more fathers taking an active part in their child/children's upbringing (Cherry, 2015). As a result, taking care of a child is no longer considered a feminine responsibility. Instead of behaving in an autocratic manner, many new-age parents steer their children in the right direction, while giving them the freedom to learn from their mistakes. Thus, the notion of "spare the rod and spoil the child" is *passe* (not fashionable or out of date). Nowadays, parents realize that corporal punishment and criticism would not only heighten their children's aggression but also, damage their self-esteem. This makes parents to understand the fact that only children who feel loved actually learn to reciprocate the feeling.

Moreover, the advent of different kinds of social medias like Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, etc., and the technological boom; have given rise to a situation where tech-savvy children appear more knowledgeable than their elders. At the same time, with rapid digitalization; parents are also trying to keep a check on their children's online presence, lest they fall prey to something undesirable (Patil & Vaishnav, 2021). However, while the digital revolution has proved to be a boom for children, it has also opened up new vistas for parents and broadened their perspectives. Today, several parents no longer crib over marks obtained in exams; instead they believe in the holistic development of their children. They no longer confine their children solely to academics (which was mainly seen in the nineties among some Nigerian parents) but

motivate them to pursue their passions and to innovate and think beyond the periphery of the curriculum. Parents are therefore, willing to go to any extent to help their child realize their true potential and calling. Thanks to the media, parents have become more sensitive to the physical and psychological risks faced by children from pedophiles or bullies, or others indulging in child abuse. Thus, parents are willing to provide their children access to counseling and sex education, as well as let them learn self-defense skills.

With the above evolution of parenting, one can say that parent-child relationship is more intimate and egalitarian than before. This is so because parents continue to remain supportive even after their children have attained adulthood. They have come to believe in the fact that, "To be in your children's memories tomorrow, you have to be in their lives today". However, despite being swept by the wave of progressiveness and modernity (that is, a force aimed to liberate humankind from ignorance and irrationality), parents still face the dilemma of whether to be lenient or pushy, indulgent or laid back, to prioritize academics over other accomplishments or give their children other choices. It is on this note that parents choose and practice the style of parenting that will help to model and build up their children's character and personality.

The Concept of Parenting Styles and its Roles

In a book titled *Parenting Style As Context: An Integrative Model*, Darling Nancy and Steinberg Lawrence (1993) defined parenting as a constellation of parents' attitudes and behaviours toward their child or children and an emotional climate in which the parents' behaviours are expressed. The style of parenting supports every step of a child's life because a good or positive parenting helps in encouraging and motivating a child to learn as well as cooperates a child to be mentally healthy. The proverb that an apple does not fall far from the tree can well describe the effects of parenting styles on child's growth and development. Nowadays, parents are quicker to acknowledge that they do not always have the answers or that they may not want to raise their children as they were raised. However, one can claim that the root of most mental health problems of children especially adolescents is related with parenting styles adopted in their families. It is on this note that Sharma Dinesh (2003) in her book titled *Childhood, Family and Sociological Changes in India* posited that parents should be more proactive on the different parenting styles they adopt in their different homes and the impacts on their child's development.

It is a well-known fact that good parenting prepares children to meet the demands of the specific culture in which they live. Thus, parenting styles are effective in preparing a child to live in the society and the world at large. One can therefore say that parenting style is a determinant factor in child's development and it affects psychological and social functioning of a child. In relation to this, some scholars and philosophers gave their different views on the concepts of parenting styles and their effects on children.

Literature Review on Parenting Styles

Parenting style, according to Shailaja Patil and Dr. Rajashri Vaishnav (2021), is a concept related to the rearing of children by their parents. This implies that parents have an essential role in a person's life, especially at childhood up to the time they are fully grown. Thus, parental control and discipline are essential for building the healthy personality of a child. It then gives the parents the responsibility to try and understand their children's personality and also, try their best to change the unwanted behavioural aspects of their child in a polite manner. Hence, the parental style that parents practise while taking care of their children include the warmth and control they provide to their children such that the responsiveness and demandingness of their

children are curbed to a desired level. Therefore, parents' responsiveness and demandingness will depend upon how strict the parents are and what conditions they impose or do not impose. That is why many parents are exhibiting different parenting styles.

Baumrind Diana (1966) in her book titled *Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behaviour*, identified primarily three basic parenting styles based on parents' control and education background which include: authoritarian parenting style, authoritative parenting style and permissive parenting style. With advanced research, however, another parenting style known as uninvolved parenting style is added to the list making it four. The classification of four parenting styles is based on behaviour, values, and standards transmitted from parents to their children. Parenting style in the life and time of Baumrind was defined as a reflection of two underlying process which are – the number and type of demands made by the parents' demandingness and the contingency of the parenting reinforcements that is responsiveness. One may ask, what does Baumrind mean by parent's demandingness and responsiveness? The term demandingness refers to claims in which parents are supposed to be integrated into community and family by their maturity expectations, disciplinary efforts, supervision and willingness to confront a disruptive child (Baumrind 1966). In the same way, in a book titled *Families, Delinquency and Crime: Linking Society's Most Basic Institution to Antisocial Behaviour* written by Simons et al., (2004); argued that demandingness parenting can be judged through the level of well-defined monitoring techniques, involving direct confrontation and discipline patterns utilized by parents in their different homes. Therefore, it would be justified to state that parents with higher level of discipline patterns, confrontation and monitoring are demanding, whereas parents with lower level of confrontation, inconsistent discipline and monitoring are characterized as not demanding. Also, the term responsiveness is defined by Baumrind (1966) as the ratio of fostering self-assertion and individuality by parents being attuned, acquiescent and supportive to the demands and needs of their children. In addition, she argues that the level of responsiveness can be measured through the level of communication, reciprocity and warmth displayed by parents while dealing with adolescents. From this perspective, parents emphasizing on higher level of reciprocal behaviour, warmth and communication are considered to be highly responsive, whereas low levels of delineated factors represent low responsiveness. Maccoby & Martin (1983) argued that higher level of responsiveness can be found in permissive and/or authoritative parenting style. On the other hand, Simons et al., (2004) maintained that low level of responsiveness is reflected through neglecting and/or authoritarian parenting style.

Dwelling on the types of parenting styles adopted by parents in their various homes, Baumrind posits that authoritative parents are supportive and show interest in their children's activities but are not overbearing and allow their children to make constructive mistakes. Children whose parents use the authoritative style are generally happy, capable and successful. However, some African parents, especially Nigerian parents, do confuse themselves using authoritarian approach, thinking that they are using authoritative approach. In order to correct or solve this confusion some Nigerian parents have, Baumrind postulated that parents using the authoritarian parenting style expect and demand obedience because they are in charge and they do not provide any explanations for their orders. Children raised in such environments are more likely to be obedient and proficient, but score lower in happiness, social competence and self-esteem.

Coming over to permissive parenting style, parents using this approach are lenient and do not expect their children to adhere to boundaries or rules, and avoid confrontation. One may say or claim that children reared with permissive approach score low in happiness and self-regulation, and they are more likely to exhibit disobedient attitudes or character because they

have problems with authority. In the relation to the parenting styles postulated by Baumrind, Maccoby & Martin (1983) formulated the fourth parenting approach known as uninvolved parenting style. This fourth approach is oftentimes rare to notice or observe in the world. That is why it seems like the uninvolved parenting style is sometimes dropped out when parenting styles are being discussed either in seminars, workshops and other related academic training. Going further, parents using the uninvolved parenting approach are neglectful or rejecting of their children and do not provide most, if any, necessary parenting responsibilities. Children brought up with uninvolved parenting approach tend to rank lowest across all life domains because they lack self-control, have low self-esteem and are less competent than their peers.

Hoskins (2014), stressed that the environment in the family provides the basic ecology that manifests a child's behaviour and prepares the child for independent life in adulthood. He therefore, discusses the influence of parental behaviour on children's behavioural and emotional outcomes. For him, the parental influence slowly reduces by the time adolescence approaches, and peers and friends mold a child's behaviour. Findings of the study revealed that girls do have positive interactions with their peers more than boys do, and the boys (though not all) have negative interactions with their peers more than the girls do. However, the scores of negative interactions with peers of the children depends on the parenting style adopted by their parents in their various homes. This means that the social life of children starts from the family. Hence, parents and other family members influence the behaviour of children through several experiences.

Parenting Styles in Nigerian Homes and its Effects on Contemporary Nigerian Child

Living a good desired life and having a fulfilled marital life can be seen as a difficult task in our contemporary Nigeria. Things are not as it was before. Bad government, poor economy, hatred, greediness, and so on; have deprived many parents the opportunity of living good desired life and long lasting fulfilled marital life. As a result of these challenges, many parents were unable to carry out their effective roles and duties (responsibilities); both within the family and in the society. With these challenges however, many conscientious Nigerian parents have started feeling more concern towards giving moral and ethical formation to their child or children.

To overcome these challenges, Nigerian parents are now adopting some parental approaches or styles at their various homes with the aim of inculcating positive and moral values in their children. One might ask, what are the parenting styles used in different Nigerian homes and what impact does it make in a contemporary Nigerian child?

The parenting styles or approaches used in different Nigerian homes include: authoritarian parenting style, authoritative parenting style, uninvolved parenting style and permissive parenting style.

Authoritarian Parenting Styles

"You will do whatever we tell you due to the fact that we are your parents, and we have gotten to this world before you and therefore; we have more experience than you". This is an example of the tone that fall under this category. The authoritarian parents attempt to evaluate, shape and control the attitudes as well as behaviour of their children in line with set standards and conduct, known as absolute standard. In the light of this absolute standard, children are supposed to follow very strict rules defined by their parents. In case the children fail to comply with such rules, they are punished. This style of parenting is mostly found in Nigeria. Authoritarian parents are cold and rejecting towards their children, and they do make their children follow certain principles with force and not reasons. Becoming over-protective, they tend to take all decisions for their children. They often over-burden their children with high

expectations thereby leading to formation of negative aspect of their children's personality (like depression, indecisiveness, anti-socialism, and so on.) when they grow. Also, authoritarian parents impose everything on their children and their children's opinion does not count. Longevity is the only factor that determines who is wiser. At times, the parents no doubt know better, but their children tend to be rebellious because of the fact that they are living according to the principles which may be boring on them. There is a popular saying that goes, "people will forget what you said, they will forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel". Thus, many Nigerian parents make their children feel less of their dream and therefore, put little zeal in those things they are forced to do. This is so because parents under this category provide well-ordered and structured environments with clearly stated rules.

Using Nigeria as a case study, authoritarian parenting style seems helpful in promoting the academic life of a Nigerian child. This is so because, some Nigerian parents are not happy when their child or children performed poorly in school. Thus, instead of making excuses or defending why their child or children performed poorly in school; many Nigerian parents who are using authoritarian parenting style do draft a study time table for their child or children which they follow strictly. This will make a child to study outside school hours with the intention that it will help him or her perform well in school. Adults who are trained with this parenting style towards improving their knowledge and academic capabilities are grateful for the way their parents handled them. They say so with the reason that, when they were of school age, they did not know that it will help them to know how to read and make good grades in the future. On the contrary, children who are trained with authoritarian parenting style, do excel in academics but their character and behaviour is not good or appealing. That is why we do notice or observe some Nigerian children who are brilliant or intelligent but their character is awkward in their association with people.

Authoritative Parenting Styles

Baumrind (1966) first introduced the concept of authoritative parenting style. For Baumrind, the authoritative parents provide guidance to their children on oriented issue and rational manner. Here, since the level of demandingness is higher, parents usually welcome effective communication as well as effective relationship between their children, (Piko & Balazs, 2012). Hoskins (2014) pointed out that authoritative parents display more demandingness and responsiveness by being more supportive towards dialogue behaviour. With the use power and reasoning, these category of parents do encourage verbal give-and-take and also, express reasoning behind the rules adopted in the house. This is to say that this style of parenting is more associated with positive adolescent outcomes. As a result, it is found as most beneficial and effective style of parenting among most of Nigerian families. In other words, authoritative parenting style fosters positive well-being of adolescents.

This approach is somehow common in some Nigerian homes. Here, parents make their intentions known to their child or children, and their children are also given the chance to reason and give their opinion on the subject matter. The child or children can object but with a reliable reason(s). The fact that the children have say in their life decision at times is enough for the children to take responsibility for their action and the zeal to succeed are always high. Thus, authoritative parents exchange thoughts and ideas with their children, grant them freedom and also make sure to be strict when required. Parents under this category are both demanding and responsive because they monitor and impart clear standards for their children's conduct. Their disciplinary methods are supportive rather than punitive. They are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. This is so because they want their children to be assertive as well as socially

responsible, and self-regulated as well as cooperative. Parents who use this parenting style guide their children in a positive manner and they do so by justifying to their children why they should adopt the taught principles in their life. Children under such parents are usually matured and manage a well-organized life. Nijhof & Engels (2007) have a firm belief that authoritative parenting style plays an influential role in the development of healthy adolescent psychologically and socially. This is particularly so because authoritative parenting style help their children to develop higher level of self-reliance, self-esteem and ability to employ effective coping strategies, while developing positive self-image. (Parker & Benson 2004).

However, authoritative parenting style does not seem helpful in promoting the academic life of a child. Also, using Nigeria as a case study some Nigerian parents under this category do not blame or criticize their child or children when they perform poorly in school. That is why some Nigerian parents using this parenting style try to understand their children by claiming that they are not intelligent like their fellow kids, that is why their children perform poorly in school. They might try to employ the use of study time table for their children which they will follow with less strictness. This will go a long way in making their children not to take their academic career serious. Children who are trained with this parenting style towards improving their knowledge and academic careers, sometimes engaged in examination malpractice which could lead to expulsion from the school. Impressively, findings of the study revealed that some children who are trained with authoritative parenting style, do not perform well in academics but their character and behaviour are good and worthy of emulation. That is why we do notice and observed that some Nigerian children who are not brilliant but their character and behaviour are cherished in the society in which they live in.

Uninvolved or I Don't Care Parenting Styles

Uninvolved parents really do not care about what their children do with their life. The only thing they owe to their children is to give birth to them and the children are left to live their life the way they want. This set of parents are of the claim that, "God who created a child, knows how the child will grow". Most children in this category find it difficult to cope with life challenges due to the fact that they have not learned the required skills that will shape their reasoning which will guide them through life. Thus, the decision on what a child will become rests solely in the hands of the child. Children in this category are prone to make mistakes. I don't care or uninvolved parents are usually so overpowered with their life's stress, that they find it difficult to spend time with their children. They think their children are capable enough to take care of themselves. Children raised with this parental guidance, tend to suffer from insecurity and poor self-confidence.

Permissive Parenting Style

Permissive parents are warm and agreeable, who hardly restrict the freedom of their children. Parents under this category are more responsive than they are demanding. Baumrind (1991), maintained that permissive parents are nontraditional and lenient, do not require mature behaviour, allow considerable self-regulation and avoid confrontation. This type of parenting usually leads to over-demanding, disobedient and undisciplined children. For Baumrind (1966), permissive parents attempt to behave in acceptance, affirmative and non-punitive manner towards their children's impulses, actions and desires. Considering the definition proposed by Baumrind that this parenting style tends to have a higher level of responsiveness, implies that a responsive parent is not more likely to define and determine rules associated with family, while encouraging the adolescents to consider it as a resource (Johnson & Kelly, 2011). According to Hoskins (2014), permissive parents can be characterized as exhibiting low level of

demandingness and high level of responsiveness. This is so because they behave in a manner that is more affirmative towards the impulses, actions and desires of adolescent while consulting with them about family decisions. In addition, they tend to avoid engaging in behavioural control; do not set rules and set a small number of behavioural control, do not set rules and set a small number of behavioural expectations for their adolescents. From this perspective, one can say that permissive parents actually allow the adolescents to actively participate without being concerned about their actions.

This kind of parenting style is often seen among the rich parents in Nigeria. Reason for this claim is, due to their business schedules and activities, some rich parents in Nigeria do not have time for their kids because their life style is all about going from one place to another attending to the demands of their businesses. They are good in sending money to their child or children whenever they want and they do lavish money on parties such as: birthday party or graduation party of any of their children. Children growing up with this parenting style do have the things they need at their beck and call, and are sometimes arrogant, insulting and intolerant. Nonetheless, the academic life style of children under this parenting style is not good and favourable. This shows that their parents are wasting their money in the name that their children are going to school. However, using Nigeria as a case study, some Nigerian parents under this category do change their children schools from time to time with the intention that they are doing the right thing for them. The idea of changing schools here, do make some Nigerian children under this category to loose interest in going to school, and as a result, do not care if they pass their examinations. Parents under this category do not bother to confront their children on their failures in school, thereby making their child or children not to feel ashamed that they failed their examinations. Unfortunately, some children that grew with this parenting style do have lots of carry-overs during their studies in the tertiary institutions with the pre-intention that they will sort out their carry-overs with their parents' money.

Having seen the various parenting styles being used by many parents in Nigeria, one can say that parenting styles in the Nigerian context involve a blend of authoritarian, authoritative, and to a lesser extent, permissive approaches. This can be seen in the emphasis on respect for elders, discipline, and the teaching of cultural values, with a focus on developing responsible and well-rounded individuals. It then involves a blend of traditional cultural values, religious beliefs and modern perspectives. Thus, with physical discipline, parents often prioritize instilling discipline, responsibility and a strong sense of self-control in their children.

The Idea of Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency is one of the emerging concerns across the entire world. It is directly linked to the behaviour of parents which they adopt to treat their children (Coste, 2015). Parents play an influential role in molding and shaping the behaviour of adolescents. However, et al., (2009) point out that parents especially young parents are more frequently blamed for the criminal or delinquent behaviour displayed by their children. It is on this note that some of the law courts even penalize parents for the inconsiderate or antisocial conduct of their children. Juvenile is a time in which the youth look for self-identity and autonomy. Some of them engage in activities that are illicit in nature, and thus their parents become worried about their well-being. This paper takes into account the relationship between the delineated parenting styles and delinquent behaviour. One might ask, how does parenting styles lead children to be juvenile delinquent?

Delinquent behaviour is one of the most distressful problems during the period when people are considered adolescent, that is, between the ages of 13 and 18. Griffin et al., (2000)

and Elliot et al., (2012), identified the list of delinquent activities as follows: refusal to adhere to the parental demands, alcohol use and drug addiction, stealing, property destruction, theft and rape. It is a fact that opinion regarding the causes of delinquent behaviour vary. Generally, it is agreed that delinquent behaviour in adolescent years is more common than in the group of people of other ages. Furthermore, it is also argued that males are more likely to commit offences than females (Griffin et al, 2000). Nonetheless, Moitra & Mukherjee (2012) argue that there is a noteworthy role of parents in shaping the delinquent behaviour of adolescents. They pointed out that home is the place where a normal and healthy development of any child starts and the family constitutes the backbone of an individual. From this perspective, one can say that the family is considered to be a basic ecology in which the behaviour of children is manifested in their childhood by way of positive or negative reinforcement. Talib et al., (2011) argued that the family is a socio-cultural-economic arrangement that has a significant influence on not only the behaviour of the children, but also on the development of their characters. Therefore, ignorance in their parenting can lead them towards unwanted damaging effects that ultimately create behavioural problems in children.

Baumrind (1966) believes that parenting is a compound activity of many particular behaviours working individually or together that affects on the behaviour of children. It would not be wrong to state that adolescent delinquency is more concerned with parenting styles. With this in mind, the term “juvenile delinquency” can be defined as a law-breaking act committed by a minor, below the age of 18. This law-breaking act can result in incarceration in detention centers, rather than prisons or correctional centers (Berger, 2000). Tompsett and Toro (2010) point out that the risk of adolescent’s development of delinquent behaviour is often influenced by parenting style. Authoritarian parental style particularly plays an influential role in developing the delinquent behaviour among adolescents that eventually results in negative outcomes (Kerr et al., 2012). It can be deduced that parents do not want their children to be involved in criminal activities. However, one of the aims of authoritarian parenting style is to mold and shape the behaviour of children. But when done without love and care, it makes children to exhibit delinquent behaviours both in the family and society at large. Thus, if a child does something wrong and his/her parent shows a very strong reaction, this behaviour of parent can lead the child to be rebellious and he or she may become delinquent. Therefore, it is accurate to state that authoritarian parenting style negatively affects the children in terms of psychological and behavioural context. Hence, Hoskins (2014) finds that authoritarian parenting has deep connection with more negative behavioural outcomes.

Nevertheless, it is widely believed that the delinquent behaviour in most of the juveniles is the result of parenting styles. For example, Poduthase (2012) argues that adolescents can be led towards delinquent behaviour when they are exposed to lack of intimacy, lack of guidance, lack of parental involvement, lack of parental attachment, anger and blaming. It would therefore not be wrong to state that there is a significant link between parental styles and individual’s tendency to engage in delinquent or violent behaviour. In other words, lack of parental involvement and interaction results in increased risk of violence, primarily in make juveniles (Brook et al, 2014).

Evaluation

Human character and behaviour (whether good or bad) are one of the basic things that make people to associate and socialize with any individual person. That is to say, man is judged based on his actions, character and behaviour. It is through this character and behaviour that an individual is considered as a good or bad person. One may ask, what are the basic factors that

help to shape the human character and behaviour? In responding to this question, one of the basic factors is the parents, because they help in inculcating moral and ethical values in an individual person. Through the parents, an individual nurtures some certain bad or unethical values or behaviours. This individual in question is regarded as a child. However, for parents to carry out this parental role or responsibility, they must establish a family. This is why Aristotle claimed that families are the fundamental social units of the society because they have a transformative effect on individuals and on the larger body politic. A major reason for this, he (Aristotle) explained, was that families teach “responsibility” – a virtue necessary for a just and good society. This falls in line with the Igbo adage that states – *“ana esi n’ulo amaru mma wee puta ezi”*. This literally means that – “one should be good at home before coming to the public” or, “one’s beauty starts from his or her home before coming to the public”. Thus, the beauty here is not mainly the facial beauty or body complexion, but the character or behaviour of an individual which the family as a community helps to shape and develop. However, from Aristotelian perspective, one can say that the family is a moral institution where the fundamental matters of rights or wrong, responsibility and human virtues are addressed and put to practice. This cannot be achieved without adopting or using a good parenting style.

Having expanded the parenting styles used by parents in their various homes, one can claim that the authoritarian parenting style causes the adolescents to be delinquent, as the extraordinary strictness displayed by their parents makes them rebellious. Authoritarian parents tend to control and exercise more than enough power for the future development of their children, but juveniles perceive it negatively as their actions are restricted. From this perspective, the good parenting style is authoritative in which parents keep an eye on their children and try to understand the mindset of their children. Authoritative parents provide guidance to their children in issue oriented and rational manner. This is so because, since the level of demandingness is higher in this parenting style, parents usually welcome effective communication as well as effective relationship between them. It is clear that authoritative is the right type of parenting, yet it seems that fathers are more authoritarian in nature. This style of fathers’ parenting has forced some fathers to rethink and change their attitude due to the negative consequences and reaction of their children. Even though this parenting style encourages open-minded personality, parents can use power and exert firm control on the child without any hesitation. In other words, the exertion of control and use of power is to set standards for the child’s future behaviour and to assure that the child would not rely on delinquent behaviour.

Conclusion

What is most important in helping a child grow maturely, is the ability to help the child grow in freedom, maturity and overall discipline. Only in these ways will a child come to possess the means needed to look after his or her self and act intelligently and prudently when faced with challenges in the future. This cannot be achieved without proper guidance by the parents who act as a force responsible for shaping and molding the characters and personalities of their children. Parents carry out these responsibilities by adopting parenting styles in their various homes with the aim of giving moral and ethical formations to their children. Using Nigeria as a case study, the paper highlighted authoritative parenting style as the best parenting approach to be adopted or used in Nigerian homes. This is so because it creates an atmosphere where the voice or opinion of a child is heard but must be guided with love and parental authority.

Recommendations

The paper therefore recommends that parents should opt for authoritative parenting style rather than authoritarian parenting style. Parents should also spend more time with their children because it can reduce the probability of developing delinquent behaviour. Given to what is being experienced in the world, this study recommends that, there ought to be a radical sensitization of the public on parenting styles through seminars, workshops and the media. This will help free the minds of people especially couples from ignorance and make them live a healthy and responsible lives. It is in relation to this that every parents should consider their child or children as a gift, and children are multiple gifts that need to be taken care of with utmost carefulness and love. When this gift is neglected or is not being fancied, it becomes worthless. This claim follows from the fact that the owners of this gift or gifts (which are the parents precisely) should carry and look after their children with utmost caution and diligence. But when this gift is tampered or destroyed, the parents have it as a responsibility not to discard this gift, but to bring the pieces and put it back together with care and love. However, the biblical passage (Proverbs 13:24) which states - "those who spare the rod hate their children, but those who love them are diligent in disciplining them", should not be neglected. That is to say, irrespective of raising a child or children with care and love, parental authority and restrictions should also be involved. This gives a child the idea that for every action, there are consequences and one should be responsible for any action.

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