PARENTAL PATTERNS IN SOCIALIZATION: A FACTOR IN MORAL BEHAVIOUR OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ABAKALIKI EDUCATION ZONE OF EBONYI STATE

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ABSTRACT: *The study is designed to investigate parental patterns in socialization a factor in moral behaviour of secondary school students in Abakaliki education zone of Ebonyi State. Two research questions were raised to guide the study. Descriptive survey design adopted to find out if parental pattern in socialization is a factor in moral behaviour of students; the area of the study is Abakaliki education zone of Ebonyi State, while the population comprised all the 52 government owned schools. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 400 students out of the 10,427 students in the area. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. Mean was used to analyze data obtained. The result revealed that parental patterns in socialization is a major factor that predisposes the children's behaviour either morally or immorally and suggested that parental choice of good training patterns will enhance the moral behaviour of their children positively. Based on the findings, recommendations were made on how to make positive impact on children's life as prescribed by Christian doctrine or precept.*

KEYWORDS: Socialization, Parenting, Moral Behaviour, Relationship, Patterns.

INTRODUCTION

In every society the family, school and peer are major agents of socialization of children. Among these agents the family exerts the greatest influence on the children because children spent much time with the parents. Parents determine the economic activities, social and spiritual growth of children. Socialization is a process of communicating values directing and modifying children's behaviour. This process may involve denial of pleasures so that the child may be indoctrinated into the society which in turn shapes the child to behave in culturally approved manners. Parental patterns of socialization as a process of inculcating in a child the ways of a group or society so that the child can function within the circle. This implies that the process of socialization starts at home. McConnell (2002) gave an earlier concept of socialization to involve the process of acquiring physical, mental and social skill required to survive and to become an individual as well as a member of the society. Moris (2004) summarized parental socialization as a process of transforming the young child into a meaningful member of the society.

Parents as strongest agent of socialization and first care giver to a child are responsible for day-to-day needs of the child. Consequently upon the above, children depend on parents as such have full confidence upon them. Subsequently parents assume control over the child as well represent the society's authority in relation to the required training and discipline. Imperatively parents are empowered with the responsibilities of weeping in sentiments and impulses that separate the human from animals. Parents as custodian of human morality and

ideas are challenged with the process of fostering in the child sense of decency and worth required for moral development.

Parents, as a result adopts different varying approaches of training children ranging from autocratic parenting, (Laissez-faire, autocratic to democratic patterns of socialization). Parents that are permissive often do not influence the decision of children; rather give excess freedom to children. In order words such parents spear the rod and spoil the child through care free attitude. This pattern could be backed up with ancient psychological theory that postulates that children are not born animals; therefore whether encouraged, advised or not they will certainly be formed according to their biological prosperity (Nwachukwu, 1995). However, Chao (2001) observed that most parents in the traditional cultural Ibo land are permissive in training children based on its liberal ideological expression of societal values. This greatly influences children's choice of attitude. In that case the responsibility level of parents is lower; interest is mainly focused on provision of basic needs. Parents most often are engaged in business and other jobs to earn out learn a living.

However, another major group of parent adopts or maintain authoritarian pattern of training which is autocratic in nature. Such parents establish a lay down rules and regulations and insist on strict compliance. This pattern of training usually instills fear of punishment while in the absence of the external figure children will not obey. This pattern according to Nwachukwu is unproductive and it is a closed way of parenting. It leaves children with no option on how to live an independent figure with strong personality.

The last minor groups of parents are those that adopt authoritative pattern of training. Baurmind (2000) observed that this pattern is very rare and mainly found among the well educated parents that devote time to children's needs. Parents of such group are democratic, that is, flexible and open-minded; and children are considered as lower in thought therefore needs encouragement, explanation and direction to enable them emerge with strong character. Arnold (2001) view democratic pattern of training as the system where parental reasoning take into consideration the views of children and also do not comprise with set standard rules rather reinforce the rules by emotional appeals or disapproval to the child. In other words parents gradually and systematically enforce their ways by appealing and explaining in concrete form reasons for conformity. The gradual and systematic appeal in democratic pattern of training sanitizes the child's initiatives.

Many factors affect parental choice of socialization. In Igbo African society with rapid changing life style and newer demands in life requirement affects parenting style or pattern of training. In the olden Igbo African society where fathers were faced with the challenges of providing family needs and mothers stayed at home cared and looked after the home as such children learned from their mother (Ike, 2002). Recently parental pattern in socialization has assumed dramatic changes with professionalization where both parents become career servants. The dilemma is that children are left in the hands of care givers. Parents nowadays are occupied with office, self and business and spend most of their time outside the home. In this way moral life of the children are jeopardized. Most of the children in such circumstance get involved into unwanted activities or indulge in unaccepted behaviours. With the current trend of development, children now learn foreign behaviours through self management and operation of computers internet and watching pornographic/horror films which in turn shapes children life different from society's need.

Statement of the Problem

Parenting is a complex activity that include many specific behaviours that works individually and together to influence children's outcomes. Parenting style or pattern differs. It is assumed that the primary role of parents is to train, correct, control and influence children. In order words parents could intentionally foster individuality, self regulation and self assertion by being attuned, supportive and acquisition of children's needs and demands.

In recent time, stories all over the place are about teenage crime of various types. Children wreak havoc in school, rendering insult, attack teachers and classmates are most common among students in the secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Involvement in vicious acts, secrete cults, feral gangs, teenage rapes, vandalism, examination malpractice and so on become the order of the day. And looking at the rate at which the ugly trend is spreading on one begin to wonder whether parents are still doing the job of training children the way they should go so that when they are grown they will not depart from it. Baumrind (1991) noted that some parents influence children through demands they place on them, supervision and support, and disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobey. It is against this background that the research is geared to find out if parental patterns in socialization have impact on the moral behaviour of their children. The problem of the study put in a question. What is the view of Christian religion on parental patterns of socialization as a factor in moral behaviour of secondary school students in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State?

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study.

(1)   How do parents treat you at home?

(2)   How do parents' patterns in socialization affect their children's moral behaviour?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a survey research design aimed at find out Christian religious view on parental patterns in socialization as a factor in moral behaviour of secondary school students in Ebonyi Local Government Area. The populations of the study consist of all the students and teachers in Ebonyi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State which is estimated at 1087 students (Ibiam, SEB, and Ebonyi State). Three hundred (300) students and one hundred (100) teachers were randomly selected from the nine (9) schools using simple random sampling technique. The choice of government owned schools is to ensure that the schools possess almost similar learning environment. Two sets of questionnaire were used for data collection. The first instrument was answered by the students while the second one was answered by teachers. The instrument was face validated by experts in measurement and evaluation so as to ensure clarity of items, appropriateness of choice of words and expression to respondents and relevance to the purpose of the research. The questionnaire was distributed to all the selected students and collected immediately after completion to ensure instrument immortality. Mean was used to analyze data obtained. Meanwhile, mean of 2.50 was raised to guide the decision, and was raised by adding the assigned values of responses

and dividing with the total number of responses options. That is 4+3+2+1 = 10/4 = 2.50, thus 2.50 became a cut off point for acceptance while below 2.5 was rejected.

Table 1: Mean Response Scores of Student on How the Parents treat Children at Home

S/N	Items	$\bar{x}$	Remark
	My Parents Behave in these ways:		
1.	Shout and often quarrel	3.5	Accept
2.	Decide on what should be done in the house	3.1	Accept
3.	Maintain firm stand on every issue	2.8	Accept
4.	Over critical and react to every issue	2.9	Accept
5.	Use of threat and harsh tone	3.4	Accept
6.	Bullying and spanking on every sightless provocation	3.7	Accept
7.	Denial of needs	3.5	Accept
8.	Withdrawal of love once angry	3.4	Accept
9.	Easily get discouraged and loss confident	3.4	Accept
10.	Insist on obedience with consideration	3.4	Accept
11.	Always serious	3.1	Accept
12.	Restrict us from relating with other	3.2	Accept
13.	Very strict and do not receive our friends	3.1	Accept
14.	Use abusive words and give names when misbehave.	3.1	Accept
15.	I am always afraid of my parents.	3.9	Accept
16.	Care and curdle me	3.6	Accept
17.	Accept my view with explanation	3.9	Accept
18.	Very corrective and kind hearted	3.2	Accept
19.	Reward and appraise every effort.	3.4	Accept
20.	Punish, quarrel with explanation.	3.8	Accept
21.	Teach with example	3.8	Accept
22.	Neglect common mistake	3.0	Accept
23.	Demonstrate sound moral judgment	2.6	Accept
24.	Very strict and patient	3.4	Accept
25.	Give listening ear to needs and questioning	3.1	Accept
26.	Assist me in doing home work	3.4	Accept
27.	Assist me in preparing for school and church	3.6	Accept
28.	Insist on going through my school work	2.9	Accept
29.	Polite in discussion and correction	3.5	Accept
30.	Appreciate good performance with material goods.	3.5	Accept
31.	Allow participation in family affairs	3.6	Accept
32.	Pray, read and explain bible passage to me	2.6	Accept
33.	Share stories of life experiences	2.8	Accept
34.	Moderating my outings to places	3.1	Accept
35.	Play and crack jokes	2.8	Accept
36.	Join me while watching films with restrictions/explanations	3.2	Accept
37.	Allow me do any thing I want	2.8	Accept
38.	I watch films I like alone	3.8	Accept
39.	I read magazines of choice	2.9	Accept
40.	Call me pet names	3.4	Accept
41.	I visit neighbours or friends as I wish	3.5	Accept

42.	My parents travel a lot and leave us with my aunty	3.5	Accept
43.	My parents are carefree	3.8	Accept
44.	Ignore my mistakes	2.7	Accept
45.	My patients always throw parties for me.	2.5	Accept
46.	My parents rarely get angry with me.	3.8	Accept
47.	My parents over loved me.	2.5	Accept
48.	My parents share my view	3.1	Accept
49.	My parents do not take decisions serious	3.8	Accept
50.	My parents are always busy	3.0	Accept
51.	My needs are always provided.	3.2	Accept
52.	My parents have confident in me.	2.8	Accept
53.	My parents rarely flog me.	2.6	Accept
54.	Even when I offend them they forgive me easily without punishment	2.5	Accept
55.	Often fight and quarrel with my siblings	3.4	Accept
	Grand Mean	**3.5**	Accept

Table 1 above revealed that respondents agreed with all the items in Table 1 as approaches parents treat children at home. The grand mean of 3.5 shows high level of acceptance of the above items as ways parents treat children.

Table 2: Mean Response Scores of Parental Patterns in Socialization as a Factor in Moral Behavior of School Children

S/N	Items	$\bar{x}$	Remark
56.	Kind hearted words of parents build strong personality in children.	3.6	Accept
57.	Training pattern of parents can create fear in a child and makes the child withdrawn.	3.7	Accept
58.	Power-assertive techniques adopts by parents could create aggressive tendency in a child.	3.5	Accept
59.	Use of abusive works and nicknames could make a child hostile.	3.6	Accept
60.	Use of threat and high restriction could children opportunity to explore their environment.	2.8	Accept
61.	Over pampering of children could lead to excessive freedom	3.1	Accept
62.	Permissive parentings create room for unpleasant coercive demands by children.	4.0	Accept
63.	Some parenting patterns contribute to parents' inability to direct children's behaviours.	3.8	Accept
64.	Non-challant attitude of parent contribute to lack of self control and internationalization of social standard.	3.8	Accept
65.	Parental attitude may lead to divergent development in children.	3.5	Accept
66.	Training approach could contribute to high level of depression and low self esteem.	3.9	Accept
67.	Training pattern could lead to poorly developed social skills and behavioural problem.	3.0	Accept
68.	Parents who are flexible achieve greater conformity.	3.0	Accept
69.	Gradual and systematic approach in enforcing rules compels children to develop better initiatives	3.8	Accept
70.	Use of explanation and concrete reasons for action will help children to have self control and respect.	3.0	Accept
71.	Encouragements with vivid explanation equip child's readiness or willingness to accept thereby internalizes values.	3.5	Accept
72.	Failure in parental warmth and nurture exposes children to insecurity that in turn results to imbalance person.	3.5	Accept
73.	Emotional relationship of parent helps children to develop fully well in both spiritual, social and moral level as children learn by practical example	3.0	Accept
	Grand mean	**3.4**	Accept

Table 2 above with a grand mean of 3.4 showed that respondents agreed that parental patterns in socialization affect children moral behaviour. The study revealed that a parental pattern of training is major factor in shaping child's moral behaviour.

Summary of the Findings

The findings of the study summarized as follows:

(1)   That parental training style contributes greatly to the personality of children especially in terms of moral behaviour.

(2)   Parents patterns of socialization is a major factor in the moral dispositions of children and that parents should train children according to Christian percept which is evidence in Christ Jesus.

DISCUSSIONS

Results of the study in Table 1 revealed that the items listed in Table 1 were how parents treat children at home. The finding was evident from the grand mean of 3.50 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. The finding was understandable in that the way parents treat children influence the children's behaviour. This is in line with Baurmind (1991) that parents through Nurturance and provision of warmth builds trust, confidence and other values required to nourish the child to a well grown individual. This means that moral behaviour of a child is shaped through parental training style. For instance parents who use power-assertive technique in nurturing children may end up being autocratic. And, thus build in the child aggressive tendency. The type of training children is exposed to influence the type of behaviour one would likely exhibit. This advocate that parents should be conscious of the approach like withdrawal of love, use of punishment, abusive words and hostility because it may affect the child's moral disposition. Moris (2004) emphasized that parents that adopt democratic pattern of socialization use gradual and systematic approach in enforcing their ways in their children by appealing or use of concrete explanation/example to encourage children to conformity. Moris intones that the gradual process tend to sensitize the child's initiatives which in turn develop in the child self control even in the absence of external authority; while those parents that uses force/punishment end up in instilling fear in the child and lack of self control. Disciplinary techniques imposed by parents and the consistency goes along way in shaping the behaviour if properly given and reasons for the punishment well explained.

The study also revealed that some parents adopt laissez-faire pattern where parents are less concern about what children do. Children in a laissez-faire home seem to exercise excessive freedom, and over-pampered to the extent that their ideas are considered by parent. Baurmind observed that permissive parents most often yield to unpleasant coercive demands by children. Parental inconsistency in discipline, excessive lax in control, unable to direct children' behaviour and less demand for appropriate maturity or independent behaviour could led to growing children with personality problems, that is children who are unable to develop well and function independently. No wonder Chao (2001) emphasized that for moral training to be achieve, the emotional relationship between parents and children must flow in both directions. Parental pattern in socializing a child affects the moral, psychological, physical, social and emotional development of the child; hence good parental style demands adequate democratic training.

In line with the findings of table 2, parental socialization patterns have influence in the moral behaviour of children. This agrees with Chao (2001) that parents' attitude is a looking glass for children. The paramount factor in learning behaviour is imitation and observation from available models. Children therefore learn and acquire behaviour through close observation and relationship with parents, whereby these are not available children could source from external care givers or peer group. Parental personality and attitude goes along way in strengthening or weaken the existing behaviour or cause re-appearance of forgotten behaviour. Positive reinforcement and rewards play an important role in establishment of strong personality. The finding is interesting in that the act of parental socialization aimed at four major goals in life which are self-control, values, skills and role behaviour. These goals however, could only be achieved through proper parenting style. Good parenting style includes love oriented and things oriented and exclude hostility and power assertive control. The love oriented involve inflecting physical punishment on children when they misbehave with accurate explanation while things oriented involve managing the child through demonstrating to him that intangible (like attention) is important, thereby cultivate self control in him to be afraid of tangible like brutal punishment from others or shame when failed to conform.

The finding is in agreement with the biblical says in proverb chapter 22 verse 15 which says that foolishness is bound in the mind of a child only rod of correction can drive it far from him (KJV). Children learn by imitating parent, from corrections, and taking roles assigned by parents, and this explains why parents are central in training and shaping children's behaviour. Parental correction, advice, affection, helps in shaping children's personality because values are inculcated into the young based on class parents belong. Parents who are unable to correct adequately children's actions may find it difficult to shape their behaviour. No wonder, the bible advocates parental use of rod of correction to prone the child. In other words, spear the rod and spoil the child is popular saying that is backing the use of punishment and adequate explanation as a punitive measure of correction.   Thus, parental patterns in socialization have greater impact on the behaviour of school children both physically, socially, emotionally and morally. This calls for parental caution on the style of training and its implication on the child's all round development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made:

1. There is need for parents to be firm in administering punishment and continues on their choice of words. In order words avoidance of abusive words and use of encouraging words that could soothe their children's feelings will help build strong personality in children.

2. Withdrawal of love and want by parents as a means of enforcing their ways/rules on their children should be discouraged as this makes them to be high handed and lack interest in parents and as such become frustrated.

3.   Parents and society should regulate the type of films that are shown in the TV which children are exposed to as a means of achieving foreign influence, on the children.

4.   Discipline should always be accompanied with goods explanations on reason for the disciplinary actions. Mild and moderate punishment with adequate explanation on why the action could enhance better understanding and appreciation thereby allow for proper internalization of the corrective measures.

5.   Parent are advised to give a listening ears to the needs of the children and share in their views with proper reasoning and never to be autocratic in view and actions as such would give children sense of belonging.

6.   Parents should also as a mother of sinuousness be less permissive rather more authoritative in making decision in areas where children are not capable of making reasonable judgment. This will help in directing and controlling the child to be rational.

7.   Parents when addressing children should avoid anxiety and tension which is associated with hostility, bullying and physical punishment because most often it interferes with the child's learning the rules of socialization game.

8.   Government should through media houses control films that are shown in media houses as a means of eschewing undesirable features and programmes capable of jeopardizing efforts of parents in training children.

9.   Parents and even other care givers should imbibe the idea of studying the bible and praying together in the house as a means of pasting Christ-like behaviours in children.

CONCLUSIONS

The study identified parents as a major stake-holder in the training of children and as such should be very wholesome, careful on decision taking and attitude they exhibit to children. Every pattern in socialization has influence on the personality of the child. That means that the overall emotional and psychological growths of children are influenced by parents. In addition, parental support or attitude go a long way in shaping children ego which in turn affects their behaviour and personality, hence parents are encouraged to advise and use biblical examples to train and nurture children for better future.

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