
PARENTAL SUPERVISION: A VERITABLE TOOL FOR BUILDING GOOD MORALS IN CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT: *Most parents have derelicted in their duties of parenting especially in the area of supervision. They fail to realize that as parents, they have certain rights and responsibilities in the upbringing of their children. These behavioural patterns among some parents have affected most children and youths adversely as they tend to be 'wild' and morally bankrupt. This paper thus addresses the issue of proper parental supervision on their children and wards so as to train their children and build up good morals in them. It posited also that a morally sound person is the pride of his or her family, nation and by extension helps in the sustenance and development of the nation. Literatures reviewed amidst guided observations threw more light to the work. Suggestions were rendered on how parents, the government should help is seeing that children and youths are well supervised.*

KEY WORDS: *Parents, supervision, veritable, morality*

INTRODUCTION

Every child born or brought into a family deserves parental care. The seeds of thought which parents sow in the minds of their children and wards will go a long way to defining their course of lives. Thus, Kalu (2007) opines that parenting is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. It is therefore observed that in the process of parenting, supervision is inevitable. Where supervision is lacking in the course of raising a child, the child may go the wrong way thereby imbibing the wrong social norms that will jeopardize his or her life and bring problem to the society.

Talking about societal vices experienced today, Adewale (2018) said that a family's failure is the nation's failure. Addressing the issue of lack of parental supervision he narrated how Lagos State Government cleared the Oshodi market and took into custody two hundred (200) 'area' children (children and teenagers who slept under the bridge). These children were taken for rehabilitation at the social welfare department where it was discovered that one hundred and ninety-eight (198) of the children came from broken families while two (2) were there due to peer pressure.

The incident narrated above is a clear indication of poor parental upbringing and supervision. The researchers have observed in many ways the negative behavioural patterns of many children and youths in schools and in society whose parents neglected in one way or the other and are worried about the situation since not only the children are affected but the society. To continue in this work, a look at the meaning of some key words is necessary.

Conceptual Clarifications:

Parents: Hornby (1979) defines a parent as: “father, mother; ancestor. (p. 619). Also according to Wikipedia (2018) A parent is a caregiver of the offspring in their own species. In humans, a parent is the caretaker of a child (where “child” refers to offspring, not necessarily age). A biological parent is a person whose gamete resulted in a child. Some parents may be adoptive parents, who nurture and raise an offspring but are not biologically related to the child. Suffice it to say that parents are those who are supposed to take proper care of children under them whether biological or adoptive.

Supervision: The New International Webster’s Comprehensive Dictionary of the English language (2004), sees supervision as “the act of supervising, superintendence” (p. 12610).

Also, the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary and Thesaurus (2018) explains supervision as the act of watching a person or activity and making certain that everything is done correctly and safely. Thus, supervision is an act or process of directing a person or a group of people.

Veritable: Hornby (2000) explain veritable as “a word used to emphasize that somebody or something can be compared to somebody or something else that is more exciting, more impressive” (p. 1328).

Morality: Macmillian School Dictionary (2009) defines morality as “principles of right or wrong behaviour, the degree to which something is thought to be right or wrong” (p. 476).

Having explained the meaning of some key words found in this work, a look at parental supervision is apt at this juncture as this is the matrix of this paper.

Parental Supervision: Wiles and Lovell (1975), hold that supervision has many different meanings. Each person who reads or hears the word interprets it in terms of his past experiences, his needs, and his purposes. They submit that a supervisor is one who expedites, establishes communication and serves as a liaison between people who have problem and people who can help. He is one who listens, stimulates, supports and encourages workers to try new things. He helps people accept each other and grow through their interaction by supporting, assisting, and sharing rather than directing.

Thus, there are about four types of supervision – Autocratic or Authoritarian, laissez-faire,

Democratic and Bureaucratic supervision: Autocratic Supervision: Under this type of supervision, the supervisor wields absolute power and wants complete obedience from his subordinate. He wants everything to be done strictly according to instructions and never likes any intervention from his subordinate. This type of supervision is resorted to tackle indiscipline subordinates.

Laissez-faire supervision: This is also known as independent supervision. Under this type of supervision, maximum freedom is allowed to the subordinates. The supervisor never interferes in the work of the subordinates. In other words, full freedom is given to worker to do their jobs. Subordinates are encouraged to solve their problems themselves.

Democratic supervision: Under this type, the supervisor acts according to the mutual consent and discussion or in other word he consults subordinates in the process of decision making. This is also known as participate and consultative supervision. Subordinates are encouraged to give

suggestions, take initiative and exercise free judgement. This results in job satisfaction and improved morale of employees.

Bureaucratic supervision: Under this type of supervision, certain working rules and regulations are laid down by the supervisor and all the subordinates are required to follow these rules and regulations very strictly. A serious note of the violation of these rules and regulations is taken by the supervisor. This brings about stability and uniformity in the organization. In actual practice, it has been observed that there are delays and inefficiency in work due to bureaucratic supervision (www.yourarticlelibrary.com)

Having explained the meaning and types of supervision, the writers opined therefore that parental supervision has to do with applying some of these types of supervision in the homes by parents wherein childrens activities and behaviours are monitored with a view to guiding and guarding them well to becoming good citizens of the nation.

Too well we know that young children are generally incapable of looking after themselves and incompetent in making informed decisions for their own well being. It therefore behoves their parents to supervise them well.

This could be done physically by parents not allowing the children to hurt themselves and others. Also, to keep them away from dangerous objects and situations. It is pertinent to note that every small child require continual supervision and care as well as the adolescents. Hence guidance is needed in making decisions that affect life and death.

Also, considering the media-television, video films, internet connectivities where uncensored access to information are made available to children, youths and homes, parents should step up their supervisory roles to guard their children and wards from being morally bankrupt. To these, parents should choose the time that their children spend accessing the internet and watching television. They could also use software content – control software or educate their children on how to use the internet responsively without the need of censorship. For parents to effectively supervise their children, a dose of moral education is needed.

The Place of Moral Education in Supervision

Looking at the place of morality and education as regards supervision of children and youths, one is forced to go through the isles of Nigerian history.

History made us to understand that Nigeria is an amalgam of many ethnic groups with various cultures. When the colonial masters ‘left’, there was the issue of unhealthy rivalry among the major ethnic groups which generated into what is known today as tribalism. This left a lot of cracks on the superstructure as the people’s morality got weaken. Earlier, leaders were concerned more about the survival of the nation and its subjects, building up strong moral standards as missionaries manned many schools and hospitals. Things later fell apart after, the civil war when the cracks on the walls of the nation finally brought down the structures (Chinwuba 2009).

To this effect morality was brought to its lowest ebb as the nation opened up to external change agents. As Nduka (2005) succinctly put it,

“The fundamental ethical problem facing this nation is that Nigerians, right from the beginning of the colonial epoch, have been in varying degrees children of at least two or more worlds: the world of the indigenous social structures and their associated ethical systems and the world of the imported western social structures and institutions together with their associated ethical system”. (p. xxix).

To these worlds according to Nebo (2008), are the ethical influences emanating from the two world religions – Christianity and Islam. Malome (1986) in support of these views submitted that the immediate source of influence to our moral standard was the western world whose vectors include: the mass media-example print (dallies, magazines, novels etc), Broadcast (ration, television, films). He pointed also immigrants in either direction (directly and indirectly) and our education system.

Education according to Ukeje (1980) is a process, a product and a discipline. This means that the process of educating a child positively can culminate into being a wonderful product to the society. Thus, moral Education is the development of the whole man and embraces the individual’s physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual development. This is done with the view to shaping the character of a person and aiding him or her to attain the purpose of his or her existence. Thus, parents in a bid to supervise their children and wards are encouraged to engage the facets of moral education.

Lack of Parental Supervision

It is apparent that lack of parental supervision can bring about a lot of severe consequences on the child (children). It can lead to the child participating in criminal activities, violence, prostitution, examination malpractices, cultism to mention but a few. When this is the case, the said child becomes emotionally unbalanced as his or her behaviour negates the societal norms. This in turn will affect the child or children negatively, the family and the society at large.

CONCLUSION

Parental supervision is a veritable tool that needs to be used by every parent for proper upbringing of the children. History has it that no child starts out as a cruel, violent person. It is only when the children is abused in horrific ways or have to witness the ongoing abuse of others that the child learns to act on the contrary. Thus, the purpose of the supervision process is to provide a safe, supportive opportunity for individuals to engage in critical reflection in order to raise issues, explore problems and discover new ways of handling both situation and oneself.

Recommendations

1. Parents in a bid to supervise their children should make out time to stay with them, chat with them and answer some of their questions.
2. Parents should not be in a hurry to live the house early and to return late thinking all is well. They should know when to delegate duties to their house helps and when not.
3. Every child needs the love, care, affection and attention of parents for proper growth and development. Therefore parents should avail these virtues to children under their care.
4. There are many supervision styles. Parents should be able to know the ones to apply to their children to get good result.

5. Learning we know is a continuous process. Parents should endeavour to learn every day ways to cope with family matters as well as avail their children of proper education for where knowledge is lacking, abuse is inevitable.
6. Dereliction of duty by parents would amount to having morally lax children in the society which in other words would negate the proper advancement of those children as well as the society.
7. The government should help in this supervisory roles by deducing ways of punishing parents who derelict in their roles of proper parenting and supervision.

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