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## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BLACK PSYCHOLOGY, GUIDANCE AND CONSELLING IN THE UPBRINGING OF AFRICAN (YORUBA) CHILDREN

**Ojetayo Gabriel Kehinde, Ph.D**

Department of Religion Studies,

Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Ondo State

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**ABSTRACT:** *Psychology is a scientific study of human and animal behaviour. It is a subject which involves studying a number of factors such as the relationship of physical development to behaviours, attitudes and abilities. On the other hand, guidance is a process of helping an individual gain self-understanding and self-direction so that the person can adjust maximally to his environment. Counselling in the other hand is a system or process of helping an individual to accept and use information and advice so that he can either solve his present problem or cope with it successfully. This paper posit that African parents, elders and the like study their wards, guide and counsel them. They use a range of approaches to solve human predicament. This paper intends to examines various ways which African guide and counsel their wards. The theoretical frame work of human needs theory is used to justify the significance of this study. The paper conclude that parents should endeavor study, guide and counsel their wards appropriately so as to gain self-understanding. Assistances can be given on a continuous basis until the individual reaches self-understanding.*

**KEYWORDS:** psychology, guidance, upbringing and African children

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### INTRODUCTION

Black psychology, also known as African America psychology and African/Black psychology, is a scientific field that focuses on how people of African descent know and experience world. (Belgrave and Allison, 2019). The field, particularly in the United State, largely emerged as a result of lack of understanding of the psychology of Black people under traditional, westernized notions of psychology. Overall, the field combines perspectives from both Black studies and traditional psychology encapsulating a range of definitions and approaches while simultaneously proposing its own framework of understanding.

In practice, Black psychology is part of African system, which they use in bringing up their ward through more accurate knowledge. One fundamental principle of black psychology is that it deals with individual thoughts, emotions, behaviors and troubles. They believe that external events are more important in causing behavior than complex inner motivation and causes. Africans employ observational method to study one's behavior. This method involves the studying of events as they

occur naturally e.g. studying or observing children behavior in a playing situation. This method may be in the form of direct observation or through the use of anecdotal records.

Yoruba people are of the opinion that parents are the first teachers of their children, instructing them on how to behave, live a godly and moral life that their society cherished. In the society or communal atmosphere of traditional Yoruba society, parents of children who believe very well are known to be god and successful; parents whose children character are bad bring shame to their parents and their extended family. (Ojetayo 2013;54).

Adewale (1986) buttress this point by saying that it is the duty of parents to train their children and inculcate morals and ethics of that the society approved. From the beginning, children are made to believe in reward and punishment and accordingly, in the potency of blessings and the efficacy of curses of elders, ancestors and spiritual beings.

Yoruba parents use to counsel their wards on what to do and how to do it. When Yoruba children fail to listen to instructions given by his/her parents, or elderly one, the child is flogged. The flogging is seen as act of correcting measure and kindness aimed at preventing the child from becoming a bellial or satanic child.

Most of the time, there are used to be serious warning, advice and counsel from parents to their wards after which mild form of punishment, such as drawing or pulling his/her ear, spanking and giving a knock and so on. In indigenus or traditional compound, the head of the compound had wide disciplinary responsibility (Fadipe, 1970;108). Disrespect to elders, theft, disturbing the peace and other punishable sins usually were punished by flogging and stern warning against recurrence or the mother will now follow.

Respect misbehavior brought severe punishment like red pepper rubbed into the flogging wounds or knife slashes on the back of hand.

Yoruba believe that a child not properly brought up will certainly become social destitute in later years when such is supposed to be productive. It is also believed that, parents who are survived by good children in the society that is characterized with good moral, love living, free from all form of social ills that are perverted by children of bellial and bastards. Owing to the fact that both parents have distinct roles to plays in the training and upbringing of their children this will, eventually lead to a corrupt free society.

### **Responsible Parenthood and Child Development**

Responsibility is the ability to discharge one's duty or being in-charge of one's duty most effectively without covering up or turning away from it. This in relation to parenthood signifies that a responsible parent is supposed to nature, care, provide for and love his children and wards throughout life. Africans parents in their own capacity discharge their duty towards their ward by bringing them up in traditional way which is their own best way or method of parenting. They are so careful, watchful and sensitive as the needs of their children from time to time in accordance

with different stages of development which are in turn influenced or controlled by heredity and environment.

In the words of Williams (1967), responsibility is the ability to fulfill one's needs and to do so in a way that does not deprive others from fulfilling their own needs. Such needs may include the need to love and beloved and the need to feel worthwhile both to oneself and others. Parents are supposed to fulfill certain responsibilities as children enter into different stages in life, they are therefore expected not to shy or runaway from these responsibilities as the needs arises, otherwise their children's full development may be hampered in one way or the other.

### **The Needs for Family Psychology and Counselling**

The family is the basic unity of the society. Several individuals make up the family and several families make up the society or community (Kattey, 1995:13) several problems and episodes characterize the family e.g. child beating, quarrels between husband and wife over issues etc. The word 'psychology' is coined from two Greek words 'psyche' meaning mind and 'Logos' meaning study. From these two Greek words psychology means 'the study of the mind'. Today however, psychology has a more explicit definition as the "scientific study of behavior"

Through this scientific approach to knowledge Psychology seeks to understand, explain, manipulate, control and predict behavior. In essence, psychology studies behavior for the purpose of understanding, prediction, manipulation and control (Alao, 1997). African parents as psychologists they seek to understand the situation which confront their wards and have explanations for such challenges. Durojaiye (198) defined counselling as involving the development of interaction through the relationships between a counselor and a troubled person in a perceived temporary state of indecisions, confusion, malfunction, habit disorder, distress or despair.

Thompson and Poppen (1972) also described counselling as a person to person relationship in which one person helps another to resolve area of conflict that has hither to been unresolved. The relationship here is between the trained (Counsellors) and the troubled individual needed assistance in one-on-one relationship for the purpose removing barrier that hinders growth.

### **Psychology, Guidance and Counselling in African Indigenous Society**

Psychology, Guidance and Counseling is a process which Africans employ to bring up their wards. Psychology seeks to understand, explain, manipulate, control and predict behavior. African society, there had always been a ways of helping the individual to sail through life when they are confronted with one challenges or the other. African parents understand their wards psychologically when they are happy or sad or when they are not well physically, emotionally and the like, this is where method of counseling now comes into action.

In African society, counseling features prominently in their daily activities through guidance provided by parents, siblings and people in the communal traditional setting. Oyinloye & Dada (2019:35) is the opinion that the problem of an individual is regarded as the problem of all because

parents, elders, peers in the neighborhood are always there to assist younger ones to overcome their challenges through counseling.

Apart from elders, parents and sibling, Africans also engaged to seek counsel from African votaries like herbalist, priests, priestesses, divinities and ancestors. The traditional guidance and counsel are still relevant today in handling any challenges be it spiritually, economically, academically, physically and emotionally that confront individual, since the goal of counseling is to assist individuals to live a fulfilled life and be able to explore the possibilities around him for optimum benefit. Africans believe that guidance and counseling is a lifelong process and so has to encompass all aspect of living.

To this end, Africans seek help and guidance through deities who is capable to direct them on what to do for example Yoruba people engaged the guidance of ifa oracle in everything they do, they consult ifa oracle on whom to marry, the type of work they need to do, where to farm, what the future hold for their children and so on.

Africans do not joke with their anything that concern their children and progress in life they believe that the period of adolescence is a time of role confusion when the young seeks his/her most comfortable style behavior that is acceptable to the family and society which he or she belongs.

According to Erikson (1968). The period of adolescence is described as a period of storm and stress; Some people call it a period of problems, disobedience, crime and juvenile delinquencies .During adolescence period ,a number of problem use to happened because young adult seeks to happened because young things in their own way contrary to the parental and societal dictates. In the aphasia of adolescent adjustment, one com classify the problems adolescent into four categories. Oyinloye & Dada (2019:42) pointed out the four of the most various difficulties that the young adult and adolescent faces. These are: adjustment to the opposite sex (heterosexual), finagling his place in the world of work (vocational), emancipation form parental control and formulating a satisfying philosophy of life (religion). Each of these cells four a series of decisions and hundreds of adjustment.

On this note, African parents deem it fit to counsel and admonish their challenges of life. Solution to adolescent's problem are best provided first by parents since Africans believe that "charity" is said to begin at home, that is more reason why African parents, elders in the society and siblings offer guidance and adolescent Guidance and counseling is preventive and remedial in nature and it is a process of assisting human development at home and through the school years. The youths are faced with development, academic and psychological and social problems. To this end, guidance and counseling has to be provided.

### **African (Yoruba) Parental Attachment or Relationship as a Paradigm for Counseling**

Adolescence as defined by Makinde (2007) is the period in every individual's life which lies between the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood. Most adolescents comes out of the

identity crisis in adulthood which is regulated by their biological time-clock. Some are disturbed and confused to have a lot of problems in their early adult life. Base on this fact, Africans especially Yoruba people deem it fit to give proper counsel to their adolescent children regards the world, society and their community. The relation between Yoruba parents and their wards revolves around attachment. To understand this attachment better, we shall look at the word through attachment theory. Enid Pitsoane and Velisiwe Gasa (2018) quoaded Bowlby (1979) says that attachment is a close emotional relationship between two persons, characterized by mutual affections and a desire to maintain proximity mallon (2011) defines attachment as a deep and enduring connection established between a child and his parents. Attachment influences every component of human mind, body, emotions, relationship and values. Attachment is a relationship that is created between parents and their children. The core of an attachment is a relationship or affectional bound that attract one individual to another. The two individual of affectional bonds is that the two tend remain in close proximity to one another and it parted, they will seek each other out and renew proximity (pg107-49).

Pitsoane and Gassa (20218) are of the opinion that fathers are perceived as the primary sources of explaining basic societal rules to their parents influences their children indirectly or directly by contributing positively to the complex social system in which the child grows.

African parents counsel and guide their children on how to face life challenges.

The lack of warm and positive relationship with the parents, couples with insecure attachment, inadequate supervision and lack of proper guidance are mostly associated with increased risk of behavioural or emotional problems. This shows that parental involvement in life of their wards plays a major role in his emotional functioning.

African (Yoruba) parents are viewed as a role models that provide youths, adolescent boys and girls with values, rules and norms on how to behave and control themselves. Yoruba parents shows love, care and concern to their children that is more reason while their children that is more guide and studied. Orbot (2005) is of the view that a family that skill to manage a youth can create a force that makes adolescent function in appropriately. Youth with poor family management style does not have the structure or any discipline within his own life to rely on, and without this guidance he may decide to establish his own lifestyle and external affectional bonds.

Yoruba parents make counselling services available in their homes, this make effective communication thrive and it promote cordial relationship between them and their children. The Yoruba people values good character. Good character in Yoruba understanding includes respect for old age, loyalty to one's parents, honesty in all dealings, devotion to duty, readiness to assist the needy and the inform, sympathy, sociability, courage and many other desirable qualities (Awoniyi, 1975). Fayemi and Adeyelure (2009) added such attribute as Oro Siso (intelligent and expert use of language/utterance), Otito (truth) Opolopipe (intelligence) and Iwa Pele (gentle character/ self-restraint) as parts of the other desirable qualities of an omoluabi in Yoruba culture.

The Yoruba people live together in compounds and this aids the development of the spirit of oneness especially in monitoring the affairs of their children. They also ensure a proper and effective mode of socialization for their young ones through the use of literature. So much essential information meant to ensure a continuity of traditions and customs was inculcated to their children's literature information about life, plants, animals, insightful knowledge about the nature of the language and a lot of moral instructions were woven into memorable poems and stories for children (Ishola, 2010). Tongue twisters, folktales, myths, proverbs and various indigenous plays were of valuable importance to all round development of the Yoruba method of guidance and counseling.

In counseling process, Yoruba people use effective communication process to pass on important adequate knowledge to their children. Effective communication process in counseling seeks to facilitate the best means of communicating those counsellor orientations which help the client to discover insight into his problem and accept them. The good rapport of parents/children is good because it will facilitate good communication. The counsellor may know the specific cause of what will solve the problem, but if there is no effective communication and oneness on the part of the client, there may be no much success. Essentially, in the words of Ipaye (1983), "Communication is concerned with the operation of human minds as reflected in its interaction with self, with others and within objects and actions in the outside world". The important message is that the counselor holds the obligation to society and to clients to help them understand the values being communicated. Communication is the bedrock on which African (Yoruba) counselling interaction is established. Effective counseling involves encouraging communication with verbal and non-verbal invitations and communicating empathy appropriate to the client's levels of readiness.

## CONCLUSION

This paper examines the significance of Black psychology, guidance and counseling in the upbringing of African children. African parents understand that there is a need to study, guide and counsel their wards so that they could be fixed into the social strata with the society. Guidance is a process, development in nature, which an individual is helped to understand, accept and use his/her aptitudes, abilities and interest to his/her aspirations.

Guidance is a generic term which encompasses different services designed to assist individuals to achieve his/her personal goal. Some of the services African parents offer include: Advice, orientation, counseling, placement and so on. Guidance is a process of helping individuals to understand themselves and their worlds. Right from the time immemorial, African parents have been studying and providing services rendered to individuals based upon the need of each individual, and the need to understand his/her immediate environment.

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