

Review Article

Impact of Parenting on Personality Traits of a Child

Adedotun Abiodun Adeola*

Faculty of Theological Studies, The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosh, Nigeria

***Corresponding Author**

Adedotun Abiodun Adeola

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Abstract: Parenting is the responsibility attached to the state of being a parent. It is a continual task of any parent towards physical, psychological and spiritual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. It is observed that the role of parents in the up-bringing of their children is of great value to the society. In the past, a deep thought is given to the issue of becoming a parent, but nowadays, to become a parent seems to have become a child's play. Teenagers were put into family way, and without shame they go around the street with pregnancy with no or poor consciousness of the responsibility and position they will assume the moment the child is born. Poor parenting has contributed to the moral decadence and social vices such as stealing, kidnapping, substance abuse and addiction, to mention a few in the society today. Individual personality traits are products of one's up-bringing (nurture) and genetic inheritance (nature). Personality is the sum total of an individual's behavior in social situation. Also, it is the system where by the individual characteristically organizes and processes bio-physical and environmental impulses (stimuli) to produce behavior in the larger surrounding system. Therefore, parents are saddled with the responsibility of the trustees of the future of the younger generation. Balance parenting approach for the children becomes imperative if they will grow to become a good behaved adults.

Keywords: adulthood, Poor parenting, addiction, adults.

INTRODUCTION

The rate at which children – infants and teenagers – are getting involved in all forms of immoral and criminal act such as drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, internet fraud, indecent and provocative dressing, examination malpractices, armed robbery is alarming and of great concern to the writer. The writer observed that the role of parents in the up-bringing of their children is of great value to the society. In the past, a deep thought is given to the issue of becoming a parent, but nowadays, to become a parent seems to have become a child's play. Teenagers were put into family way, without shame they go around with pregnancy and not minding the responsibility and position they will assume the moment the child is born.

Parenthood is one of the most important task known to human society, there are not criteria for qualification whatsoever, no formal training, no license, no experience, or character references. Yet parents become "trustees of the future" by virtue of their self-appointment to the job and are responsible for the physical and emotional well-being of their children. Thus parenting can be viewed as voluntary proactive responsibility, a consciousness raising on behalf of the future [1]. In today's society, many children and teenagers have become petty thieves, stubborn, rude and lazy; people who do not want to struggle or work hard, some become gangster, drunkards, cultists, rapists, armed robbers, and so on. What then can be done to raise godly children? Parents need a lot to contend with, and godly parents are scarce.

Many children have become temporarily parentless due to the harsh economic conditions of Nigeria. This is the case where both parents live in different states or towns different from where their children live. Camp [2] reveals that research over ten years have shown that the children who lived without their parents are more likely to become involved in criminal activities, have academic, behavioral and emotional problems, have low self-esteem, and may drink alcohol, smoke or take drugs, four times more than the children who have parents who are active in their lives. Also, statistics also show that children who grow up with parents who are violent or drunk, are more likely to exhibit such character traits (12).

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Individual personality traits are products of one's up-bringing (nurture) and generic inheritance (nature). Personality is the sum total of an individual behavior in social situation. Also, it is the system where by the individual characteristically organizes and processes bio-physical and environmental impulses (*stimuli*) to produce behavior in the larger surrounding system. Freud believed that personality is largely developed by the age of six. A child must journey through a number of psychosexual stages. In each stage is a specific need that must be met, based on the child's center of pleasure at that stage. If the need is not met, the child will become stuck at that stage and develop psychological difficulties. Erik Erikson later theorized psychosocial stages of development, in which a child must overcome various social crises. Each stage, once passed, aids the child's socialization in areas such as trust versus mistrust or identity versus role confusion (<http://futureofchildren.org>).

Parenting in this 21st century may be challenging and tasking, children look up into their parents in their childhood stage, therefore parents need to discipline and train their children in a godly way and examine their style of parenting to see how positively or negatively the style influence their children. This paper discusses contemporary parenting styles, necessity for parenting, and personality development theories.

NECESSITY FOR PARENTING

Persons become parents for a variety of reasons, but motivation often determines the quality of parenting. Over the years, through cultural adaptation and medical advances, many persons, especially women, have been guided in their child-conceiving decisions less by biological instinct than by cultural expectations. Procreative decisions are much more deliberate. Yet the biological and psychological developmental tasks of young and middle adulthood include "generativity," or the decisions to produce and procreate. Parenting encompasses the literally many activities that parents engage in either with or for their children. Often, researchers divide parenting into categories of behavior such as nurturance, discipline, teaching, language, monitoring management, and materials (<http://futureofchildren.org>).

One of the most significant motivations for parenting is the opportunity to give love to another human being. The process of creating another human through birthing a child calls forth a profound emotional involvement. In return, parents also have the opportunity to receive love from children. The on-going giving and receiving of love throughout parenthood provides rich sources of meaning for living [3]. Hester, further posits that the charge to "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen.1:28), is the blessing from God for human beings to join in creating new life. Just as God created persons and "saw that it was good," so the divine mandate invites us to affirm life and the future by participating in the procreation of a new life. One of the motivations for devoting significant time and energy to parenting is desire and hope of enhancing the quality of life for one's own children and for all the world.

In addition to the more positive motives for parenting, there are several potentially destructive reasons why people become parents. Many become parents accidentally or because they have little motivation to do anything else. Others become parents with the unrealistic hope that parenthood will provide sufficient meaning for their lives when they have no other reason for living. Some couples in dysfunctional relationships decides to become parents with the hope that a child will become the necessary bond to hold the relationship together. Many become parents because they feel an obligation to satisfy a spouse, a parent, or cultural expectations. Such reasons for becoming parents place burdens on parents and children and lead to ineffective parenting [3].

Parents, however, need "Parent Education". They need information on various methods of increasing their knowledge and understanding of self, child, and the forces operating in family relationships. This will help in developing knowledge and parenting skills to supplement one's own childhood experience, in contrast to the belief that parenting is instinctive, innate behaviour that is best left to its natural expression. Many parents need support, information, skills, understanding, and often remedial help that intuition and experience do not adequately provide [4].

CONTEMPORARY STYLES OF PARENTING

Generally, psychologists have found that there are two main components of parenting styles. One is 'responsiveness, or how much independence you are willing to grant, while the other for lack of a better world, is demandingness-how much strict obedience you require. To what extent do parents expect their children to obey their orders, to what extent do parents grant their children freedom, and how these two behaviour scales go a long way toward defining the parents' style. Parents often wonder how they can establish an environment conducive for good relationship in their homes and with their children that will nurture their children's ability to meet the challenges they will confront as they grow and move on in life (www.parentingeducation.com). Parenting styles fall into categories which are:

Revolving Parenting Style

In the view of Foster [5], parents who over protect their children either consciously or unconsciously are found to be using this method of parenting. Foster describes such parents as helicopter parents. Some parents takes love towards their children to be revolving their lives around them. They levitate, float, and hang over in an attempt to rescue their children whenever any trouble arises.

Not a day goes by when they are not protecting their little kids from something usually from a growing experience-they need or deserve. As soon as their children send message or in need of some things, helicopter parents, who are ready hovering nearby, swoop in and shield the children from teachers, playmates, and other elements that appear holistic. While today these loving parents may feel they are easing their children's path into adulthood, but tomorrow the same children will be leaving home and wasting their useful moment of their adult life. Such children are unequipped for the challenges of life. Their significant learning opportunities were stolen from them in the name of love by their parents.

Foster [5], posits that the irony is that helicopter parents are often viewed by others as model parents. They feel uncomfortable imposing consequences. When they see their children hurting, they hurt too, so they bail them out. But the real world does not run on the bail-out principle. The challenges of life and other normal events of adult life usually do not disappear because a loving benefactor bails us out. The message of the helicopter parents is, "you are fragile and cannot make it without me." Helicopter parents fail to prepare their kids to meet that kind of world. The children of the helicopter parents are dependents. They may not reach their full potential and poor or lazy persons. They may depend on their parents and friends even in their adulthood just because they had not been given the chance to do things on their own from their childhood (68).

Drill Sergeant Parents

Foster [5], stresses further that other parents are like drill sergeants. These, too, love their children. They feel that the more they bark and the more they control, the better their kids will be in the long-run. "These kids will be disciplined," is the principle of the drill sergeant parents. "They will know how to act right." Indeed, they are constantly told what to do when drill sergeant parents talk to children, their words are often filled with put-downs and I-told-you-so." These parents are into power! If children don't do what they are told, drill sergeant parents are going to-doggone it all-make them do it (70)

Children of the drill sergeant parents, when given the chance to think for themselves, often make extremely awful decisions-to the complete consternation (amazement) and disappointment of their parents. These kids are rookies (novice) in the world of decision making because they have never had to think, the drill sergeant took care of that. They have been ordered around all their lives. They are as dependent on their parents as the kids of helicopter parents (71)

In addition, when the children of drill sergeant parents reach their teen years, they are more susceptible to peer pressure than most other teens. This is because, as children, when the costs of mistakes were low, they were never allowed to make their own decisions but were trained to listen to a voice outside of their heads-that of their parents. When, however, they reach their teen years and no longer want to listen to their parents, they still follow that same pattern, only this time the voice outside of their heads no longer belongs to their parents; it belongs to their friends. Drill sergeant parents tend to create kids who are followers because they have never learned how to make decisions for themselves.

Parents send messages to their children about what they think their kids are capable of. The drill sergeant's message is, "you cannot think for yourself, so I will do it for you." While these parental types may successfully control their children in the early years, they will have done their kids a disservice once puberty is reached [5].

Authoritarian Parenting Style

Authoritarian parents are very strict and controlling. They have a strong sense of justice and of the need for obedience. They are big believers in clearly stated rules. If their kids do not "see the light" (behave as ordered), then those teens will "feel the heat" (be punished). Such parents take a dim view of being challenged. Give-and take with their children is discouraged. Thus, these parents are highly demanding but not very responsive. Researcher believe children of authoritarian parents tend to be timid, have lower self-esteem, lack spontaneity, and rely to an unusual degree on the voice of authority. Children of Authoritarian parents, for example, may do well in school and not engage in problem behavior, but they tend to have poorer social skills, lower self-esteem, and higher level of depression. They may grow up to be highly anxious people who don't realize their full potential because, figuratively speaking, they are always looking for over their shoulder for that overly-demanding parents (<http://theattachedfamily.com>).

Authoritative Parenting Style

While retaining authority and control, these parents are warmer and more communicative than Authoritarian parents. Authoritative parents seek a balance between teen's desire for independence and their parents' desire to be listened to. These parents are demanding and responsive. They are assertive but not intrusive or restrictive. They want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible and self – regulated as well as cooperative.

The best – adjusted children, researchers have found, often have parents with Authoritative style. Children of the Authoritative parents are develop a sense of independence, they grow to become a competent adults than children brought up in the other style. They have good social skills and avoid problem behaviours (www.theattachedfamily.com).

Permissive Parenting Style

Permissive parents, while often warm and accepting, make few demands on their children. They are lenient, avoid confrontation, and allow considerable self-regulation. They may worry about thwarting the child's creativity and sense of self. They are much more responsive than they are demanding. Sometimes the Permissive style is based on confusion. The parents are so out of touch with the pre-adolescent and adolescent world that the best they can do is to try to be a pal to their child. So they tend to give their kids what they ask for and hope that they are loved for their accommodating style. Other Permissive parents want to compensate for what they themselves lacked as children. Perhaps they grew up in poverty and/or had parents who were overly strict. So as a result, seeing themselves as an ally to their child both the freedom and material goods they lacked.

The children of Permissive parents may come to feel entitled to privileges and material goods. If the parents try to regain control, the older child probably will perceive that effort to be a power struggle. He or she may fight back in dangerous ways, including sexual rebellion, unsavory associates, or substance abuse. Thus, they are more likely to be involved in problem behaviour and perform less well in school, though they have higher self-esteem, better social skills, and lower levels of depression than Authoritarian children.

Clues that a parent is using the Permissive style of parenting include: evading discipline issue, begging for cooperation, acting flustered, being unclear or indirect in their request, worrying about being "liked" by their child, fearing that he or she may upset the child, blaming himself/herself and taking all the responsibilities when problems arise and being inconsistent with expectations (www.parentingeducation.com).

Uninvolved Parenting Style

The uninvolved parent demands almost nothing and gives almost nothing in return, except near-absolute freedom. This style is low in both demandingness and responsiveness. At its worst, it can verge into neglect. Parenting style has been found to predict child well-being in a number of areas, including social skills, academic performance, and the degree of problem behaviour. Uninvolved parents can, of course, sow a lifetime of havoc by their indifference or inability to deal with their children. The Authoritarian, Permissive, and Uninvolved style can carry a high cost.

Often parents wonder how they can create an environment in their homes and in their relationships with their children that will nurture their children's ability to meet the challenges will confront as they grow and move out into the world. The kind of discipline parents use can have a big influence on their children (www.parentingeducation.com).

Burns [6] opines that many parents do not have clear parenting goals or a plan in place. They are not looking out for what might be ahead. If our goal is to raise responsible adults – not simply make our kids happy- it is very important we develop a plan and purpose to follow. Parent should start thinking about what they want their children to be like when they grow up (25). This is not about what careers they'll have, who they will marry and so on, but about a parenting plan that will help develop character, integrity, faith, responsibility, discipline, moral, discernment and so many of the other most important inner qualities of a healthy soul (25). Uninvolved parents are guilty of this.

Aggressive Parenting Style

This parent relies most heavily on the structure role, while not including enough caring and nurture. A parent using this style refuses to listen to the child's point of view at all and is typically harsh, angry, and cold. Clues that a parent is using the Aggressive style of parenting include: having many power struggles, accusing their child of having bad intentions, tricking, teasing, humiliating their child, doling out harsh punishment and having a litany of strict rules. When parent constantly use an Aggressive style of parenting, the self-esteem of the child is damaged because he does not feel understood or supported. The parent-child relationship is weakened as the child would not feel that their parents are someone he could turn to if he had a problem. Children from these families often become either overly submissive or rebellious (www.parentingeducation.com).

Assertive Parenting Style

Parents using this approach are willing to listen and yet still hold firm so that the parent's and the child's needs are both basically met. When setting limits, the parent does not get sidetracked, can provide choices, and allows the child an opportunity to participate in finding a solution. Clues that one is using the Assertive Style of parenting include: persisting until your requests are followed, listening to the child's point of view, giving brief reasons, politely refusing, empathizing, not blaming the child, and having rules that are flexible (www.parentingeducation.com).

This style is most successful because it uses a healthy balance of both nurture and structure. It raises the child's self-esteem because the parent communicate that the child is lovable and loved and worthy of respect. At the same time parents also communicate that the child is capable of meeting the demands that life places on him-he can tolerate some frustration and he can contribute to solving the problems he encounters. It builds a strong parent-child relationship, as the child realizes that he can depend on the parents to both understand his struggles and provide guidance and support. When parents use an Assertive of parenting, the child is more likely to come to them for direction in the future as issues arise in his life (www.parentingeducation.com).

STRATEGIES FOR POSITIVE PARENTING

There are some strategies for positive parenting, some of which the paper discusses under this heading. Fleming [7] is of the opinion that to get beyond the platitudes and the truth about parenting people need to consult the one who wrote "the Book." God, after all, is the ultimate parenting expert. Among all the books on the subject, it's the writer's opinion the Bible is the definitive text on how to raise children. Even the language in which it was written offers insight (19). The word for parent in Hebrew is *horeh*. The word for teacher is *moreh* and the word for God's teaching or instruction is *Torah*. These three words are derived from the verb *yarah*, which means "to throw, to cast, to shoot as an arrow." Our task, as parent, is revealed in the etymology of these words: parents (*horeh*) are teachers (*moreh*) who train their children the word of God (*Torah*) to fly like arrow (*yarah*) to a strategic and predetermined target. The purpose of parenting is to train our kids in the Word and then send them to fulfill a specific kingdom purpose (20). In Beers' view, everything but God seems to change, sometimes as dramatically as an erupting volcano, and sometimes as quietly and imperceptibly as the most remote star. But of all change, there is one more remarkable than any other-growth through nurture. It is quiet change, but nonetheless powerful, dynamic, with lasting consequences.

Having put God first, it is to be noted that there is no parenting style without implication on the children, be it positively or negatively. What distinguishes one from the other is the amount and kind of structure that the family has in place and the kind of discipline it imposes. These different approaches exist on the arc of a pendulum from the loosest organization to the most rigid. Research has shown that it is the overall style of parenting or pattern of action that most affect a child's behaviour not a specific pattern. Most families are blends of three to four strategies, usually with one approach being dominant. (www.parentingeducation.com).

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

Sigmund Freud emphasized the effects of environmental variables on development, particularly stressed the importance of parental behaviour during infancy. Watson also stressed the role of the environment in shaping children's development and behaviour. His views were consistent with those of behaviourism, an approach to psychology that had a great impact in the 1950s on research about children. Psychoanalytic theory posits that human behavior is determined, largely, by the unconscious and instinctual drives. Freud spoke of libido, which he later expanded to life instincts, and death instincts. He also originated the concepts of the id, the ego, and the superego. The id is the part of the psyche consisting of biological instincts and ruled by pleasure. It is often thought of as demanding, selfish, and needy (www.boundless.com).

The ego is the psychological portion of a personality that is ruled by reality. It is charged with controlling the id and provides rationality and intelligence to the personality. The superego is the moral aspect of personality, akin to the conscience. Freud proposed that the moral code of the superego is an internalization of the values of parents and society. The superego strives for perfection and houses the emotions of pride and guilt. Freud spoke of psychic energy being shared among the three aspects of personality; human behavior is a result of how this energy is shared [8]. Although behaviourists emphasize environment, they almost totally deny the influence of biological variables on development. Their basic assumptions are that the mind of a newborn child is a blank slate, or *tabula rasa*; all behaviours are determined by environmental events; and differences among children are the result of those environmental variables. Both believed that "nurture" was more important than "nature" in development [9].

The other responder that said "psychosexual stages" is incorrect. Freud believed in psychosexual stages, but Watson did not. Watson was a strict Behaviorist. Watson was interested in observable behaviour, he was a Behaviourist. He was interested in showing that fears and reactions were learned. Watson was a behaviorist while Freud was a psychoanalyst. Their approaches therefore would be radically different, with the exception of the one point in this question. It is "emotional detachment." Watson's advice to treat children with respect, but with relative emotional detachment, that has been strongly criticized. But this perspective was not unique to Watson. It is also associated with psychoanalytic thinkers who worried that too much emotional attachment in childhood would lead to overly dependent adults ([www.Question.com/child development](http://www.Question.com/child%20development)).

Sigmund Freud is said to be the founder of psychoanalytic theory. Psychoanalytic theory is a method of investigating and treating personality disorders and is used in psychotherapy. Included in this theory is the idea that things that happen to people during childhood can contribute to the way they later function as adults. Freud believed that the mind is made of two parts - the conscious mind and the unconscious mind – and that the unconscious mind often prompts people to make certain decisions even if they don't recognize it on a conscious level (The New Encyclopedia Britannica).

Freud believed that personality is largely developed by the age of six. A child must journey through a number of psychosexual stages. In each stage is a specific need that must be met, based on the child's center of pleasure at that stage. If the need is not met, the child will become stuck at that stage and develop psychological difficulties. Erikson later theorized psychosocial stages of development, in which a child must overcome various social crises. Each stage, once passed, aids the child's socialization in areas such as trust versus mistrust or identity versus role confusion. Erikson's stages allow for lifelong development. Freud suggested that therapy should be aimed at making the unconscious, conscious. Psychoanalysis also attempts to strengthen the ego so that the personality can be more reality-based, giving the client more freedom to live well. The therapist is expected to be a blank slate on

which the client can project previous developmental disruptions. Client insight is considered necessary for change (www.boundless.com).

Psychosexual Stages of Development

Freud worked mainly with troubled adults, and delved deeply into their childhood memories during his experiments and examinations. Based on their accounts of experiences and dreams in youth, Freud defined five basic stages of development that he believed to be crucial in the formation of adult personality. He called his idea the psychosexual theory of development, with each stage directly related to a different physical center of pleasure. At each stage, the child is presented with a conflict between biological drives and social expectations. His/her ability to resolve these internal conflicts determined future coping and functioning ability as a fully-mature adult (Calvin, 67).

Defense Mechanism

Defense mechanism are invented by the Ego in an attempt to resolve the conflict between Id and Superego – so that personality can operate in a healthy manner. It deny/distort reality while operating in unconscious level. If it is used once a while, the purpose of using it is to reduce stress, but if it is used frequently, it means the individual are trying to avoid facing reality (www.gotquestions.org). Defense mechanism is a tactic developed by the ego to protect against anxiety. Defense mechanisms are thought to safeguard the mind against feelings and thoughts that are too difficult for the conscious mind to cope with. In some instances, defense mechanisms are thought to keep inappropriate or unwanted thoughts and impulses from entering the conscious mind (www.pschoanalysis-and-therapy.com).

Ego - The ego is the part of personality that mediates the demands of the id, the superego and reality. The ego prevents us from acting on our basic urges (created by the id), but also works to achieve a balance with our moral and idealistic standards (created by the superego). **Id** - The personality component made up of unconscious psychic energy that works to satisfy basic urges, needs and desires. **Superego** - The component of personality composed of our internalized ideals that we have acquired from our parents and from society. The superego works to suppress the urges of the id and tries to make the ego behave morally rather than realistically. **Unconscious** - A reservoir of feelings, thoughts, urges and memories that outside of our conscious awareness. Most of the contents of the unconscious are unacceptable or unpleasant, such as feelings of pain, anxiety or conflict. According to Freud, the unconscious continues to influence our behavior and experiences even though we are unaware of these underlying influences [10].

Freud's Structure of the Human Mind

According to Freud, the human personality was structured into three separate parts: *the id, ego, and superego*. The *id* was the most primitive structure, functioned unconsciously, operated on the pleasure principle, and sought instant gratification. The *ego* was less primitive, functioned in partial consciousness, operated with reason on the reality principle, and regulated the id by satisfying urges only when appropriate. The *superego* was the most modern structure, functioned consciously, operated on the moral principle, and regulated the id based on social learning and issues of morality. Freud believed that these three basic structures were in constant conflict. The results of these internal struggles throughout childhood were thought to influence the development of adult personality and behavior [11].

There are some parenting styles that are most commonly used. What distinguishes one from the other is the amount and kind of structure that the family has in place and the kind of discipline it imposes. These different approaches exist on the arc of a pendulum from the loosest organization to the most rigid. Research has shown that it is the overall style of parenting or pattern of action that most affect a child's behaviour not a specific pattern. Most families are blends of all three strategies, usually with one approach being dominant. These three styles are called the Permissive style, the Aggressive style, and the Assertive style (www.parentingeducation.com).

CONCLUSION

There are different kinds of attachment relationships that can be put into different categories. These categories can describe children's relationships with both parents and childcare providers. The writer has been able to bring out some contemporary parenting style in relation with the impact of each style on children. From the findings, it is observed that to affect a child positively, a combination of parenting styles are to be used. The pendulum of parenting style should swing from one end to the other end (harsh and soft), and as it moves to both ends it also touches another style (s) in between the two extremes to positively and effectively affect the children. Many people are concerned when they see a child with disorganized attachment or bad character. It is to be noted that something is actually the cause of it. First, one should try to find out what is happening in the child's home. Sometimes when a family is going through a major change such as a divorce, a death in the family, or a move, a parent-child relationship can look disorganized for a short time. It usually lasts only as long as the situation does. When the situation goes for a long time, however, one may help the family in finding support through pastoral counselling. A child's character is actually influenced by the way he or she is treated at home.

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