Perception of Parents towards Their Roles in the Character Development of the Child in Enugu Metropolis of Nigeria

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Abstract- **The purpose of this study was to find out the perception of parents towards their roles in character development of their children in Enugu Metropolis. These children who are expected to be tomorrow's leaders especially now that Nigeria has achieved or attained more than 50 years of age. The researchers used two hypotheses to guide the comparism development of the child by means of a T-test. There was no significant difference found between parents in their perception of their roles in the character development of the child on the basis of religion. There was significant difference in perception of parents towards their roles in the character development of their children on the basis of family structure. Based on this, the researcher recommended that counsellors should organize martial counseling for intending couples and parents. Religious and moral principles should be transmitted from generation to generation.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The family is considered by psychologist as a major factor in the development of a child's personality. Ezeh (2001) stipulates that the family is primary institution that socializes the young and provides surveillance over their behaviours.

The family prescribes rules and regulations in conformity with the norms of the community. This implies that the patterns of family management dictate the behavioral disposition of children in such family. Onyebarre 2014 noted that the avenue for the development of inherited characteristics are affected not only by experience unique to individuals, but by all aspects of general cultural background and social economic position of the family.

Children come from as many homes as the number of children present in the school. These homes deal with children differently. Some homes are happy, while others may not be. Some homes have both parents living together while some parents may be living separately or divorced. A few children might have even lost their parents. No two homes can treat children alike.

According to Lewis (1997) character is the distinctive quality or qualities and habits of a person's mental and moral being. To develop means to pass through the process of natural evolution. Development is therefore the act or process of developing. According to Egbo (2013) character development is the process of inculcating desirable traits and habits in an individual or group of persons.

Therefore, if character is not set right it becomes a problem to the nation especially at this stage where unwanted behaviours are seen among children. Hake (2000) stipulates that, the labels that the child ascribes to each parents will influence his or her relationship to them as well as his or her behaviour with parent's substitutes i.e. teachers' relatives, employers etc. Eze (2011) noted that the parents have the greatest influence on the child's character development since he spends the greater part of his life at home. He noted that first impression last longer than subsequent impressions.

The system of upbringing in the home affects the child's personality and character development now and in later life. At home, parents socialize the child, transmit adult roles to children, some base on gender. That is girl growing to be girl and boy growing to be boy. Parents' role change as children grow older. Odebanmi (2000) noted that if we must have a sustainable democracy in Nigeria, parents must lay a solid, strong foundation for the character development of the child. He noted that this will go a long way in achieving the dream of having children as leaders of tomorrow. Parents must not shy away from their responsibilities no matter the circumstance since these children spend greater time at home with them, meaning more positive influence would be exerted on them. The home being the first point of contact of the child in the world, the earlier experience of the child would affect him greatly.

The term moral means "the generally accepted code of conduct in a society." The term 'moral' is the realm of decision making. It is the conception of what is right and just ethical. It is the ability to discriminate between rights and wrong, it deals with virtuous conduct. (Bull, 2008) character training will also emphasize those practices that recognize and respect the humanness and dignity of people.

Therefore, character training must conform to the moral standard of the group in different situations and at different times (Olashinde, 2005). These moral standards in turn sustain democratic living. He noted that the moral atmosphere in conspicuous places in the society is polluted or stinking because parents or adults who are the role models have abandoned their responsibilities to money yielding businesses. He also noted that to move the nation forward parents must teach the children what constitute right choices and action. Because ones earliest and closest ties are usually parents, siblings and sometimes other Kin folk, family experiences and expectations carry a special emotional weight and are therefore of particular importance in shaping character and transmitting cultural values .

The foundation laid by parents at home no doubt influence later attitude and behaviours of the children (Onyebanre, 2014). At infancy, some children start to resist parents' instructions

and may likely resist the parents' suggestions in the choice of dress, food and play (Agu, 2014).

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

Behaviour problems among children are universal. In Nigeria, evidences abound of the prevalence of behaviour problems among children and adolescents. Such behaviours include disobedience, bombing, truancy, examination malpractice, aggression, drug abuse, sexual harassment, withdrawal from school, fighting or bullying, secret cults, sex abuse even when Nigeria has celebrated her over 50 years of independence. These problems require the effort of parents to handle especially during the formative years to have a bright future for Nigeria. These problems have far reaching consequences for the individual and national lives, hence the study.

Purpose of the Study
Specifically, the researcher hopes to find the following;
1. Determine the perception of parents towards their roles in the character development of the child
2. Determine whether the perceived roles vary by virtue of parents religion or family structure

Research Question
1. What is the perception of parents towards their roles in the character development of the child ?
2. Would the perceived roles vary by virtue of parents religion and family structure ?

Hypotheses
1. There is no significant difference between Christian and Muslim parents in their perception of the child.
2. There is no significant difference between monogamous and polygamous parents in their perception of parental roles in the character development of the child.

III. METHODOLOGY

It is a descriptive study utilizing survey method to elicit responses from the sample. This design was found to be appropriate because opinions of a sample of a population was bought and analyzed. According to Osuala (1982) a survey studies both large and small group by selecting samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables,

Sample and Sample Procedure
The researcher used educated literate parents in Enugu metropolis as the target group drawing the sample from different strata. Purposeful and stratified sampling techniques were employed to select sample in Enugu Metropolis. The researchers made use of teachers, nurses, bankers, doctors in selecting the samples. The selection was done on the basis of religion i.e. Muslim and Christian and family structures polygamous or monogamous family. A total of 200 respondents were selected. This comprised of 136 Christians representing (68%) and 64 Muslims representing (32%), 70 monogamous representing (85%) and 30 polygamous representing (15%) of the sample

Instrument of Data Collection
The instrument was a questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instrument was titled Child's Character Development Questionnaire (CCDQ). The questionnaire had

two sections A and B, section A request for the personal data of respondents such as religion and structure of family, section B required the respondents to respond to questionnaire items by indicating their extent of agreement.

Strongly Agree   SA
Agree   A
Disagree   D
Strongly Disagree   SD

Validation of Instrument
The instrument was faced validated by experts in the areas of measurement and evaluation, Guidance and counseling depaetment in the Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu State. Their advices were used in terms of the appropriateness, suitability and adequacy of instrument.

Reliability of Instrument
To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, the questionnaire was given to 20 parents in Ebonyi Metropolis. The same questionnaire was given to the same subjects after two weeks interval, which is test-retest method. The score of both administrations were obtained and correlated using Pearson product co-efficient showing a correlation co-efficient of 88.

Administration of Instrument
The researcher administered the 200 questionnaires to the respondents on their own using two trained research assistants and 100% return was recorded.

IV. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher analyzed the data using t-test statistics for the two hypotheses to find out whether significant differences existed. The level of significance for decision taking was at 0.05.

The 20 items of the questionnaires were scored first by grouping items into four sections A, B, C, D Punihsment, caring, Modeling and Teaching). They were subjected to frequency counts and percentages, scored on a 4 point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA)= 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree =(D) = 2 and strongly disagree (SD) = 1 for the purpose of analysis. The outcomes of these counts were subjected to t-test statistics to compare respondents' responses on the basis of religious and family structure.

V. RESULTS

The data from respondents were analyzed as shown in the tables below:

Table 1: distribution of Respondents responses in term of their role perception

Perceived roles	F	%	Rank
Carrying	631	63.1	2nd
Punishments role	597	59.7	3rd
Modeling role	791	79.1	1st
Teaching role	597	5.97	4th

Results in table 1: presents the distribution of respondent's perceived roles of parents in the character development of the child. From table 1, it is clear that modeling ranked highest.

This was followed by caring, punishment and teaching in that order ranked last.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviation and t-test result comparing respondents responses by religious affiliation.

Variable	N	X	SD	DF	T-cal	T-Crit
Christians	136	141.10	15.80			
Muslims	64	143.10	15.1	198	1.14	1.96

Table 2: shows that the calculated t-value of 1.14 was less than the critical t-test value of 1.96 at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that 'there is no significant difference between Christian and Muslim parents in their perception of parental roles in the character development of the child was accepted.

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviation and t-test results comparing respondents' responses by family structures.

Variable	N	X	SD	DF	T-	T-Crit
Monogamous	170	14.08	15.4			
Polygamous	30	14.76	15.4	19.8	2.22	1.96

Table 3: shows that the calculated t-value of 2.22 was greater than the critical t-value of 1-96 at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Therefore, the null hypotheses which states that "there is no significant difference between monogamous and polygamous parents in their perception of parental roles in the character development of the child 'was rejected. The difference was significant. t(198df) 2.22, p<0.5

VI. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to find out the perception of parents in Enugu Metropolis towards their roles in the character development of their children. The investigation sought to know what the parents perceived to be their roles in the character development of their children and to know whether these perceptions were varied on the basis of their religion and family structure. The study revealed that modeling role of parents ranked highest this was followed by caring, punishment and teaching role. Modeling represents the most acceptable role in rank order with 79%. This shows that respondents were positive in their children by being role models, to them. This finding is in line with the findings, of Eze (2011) that children copy the behaviour of parents without concerted efforts.

He therefore, advised parents to be watchful of what they do and say before their children since they are role models to them.

Caring role ranked second with 63%. This shows positive response in parent's perception of their roles in the character development of their children in terms of caring for their welfare, Agu (2014) noted that children who receive adequate care are likely to be of good behaviour unlike those left uncared for. Buhari (2015), in the same vane advised mothers to care for their children and bring them up in the fear of God.

Punishment role and teaching received average score responses 59% respectively as perceived roles of parents. Thompson (2012) noted that children's behaviour problems begin with parental handlings of children and their parents. He noted that at infancy, some children start to resist parents' instructions and may likely resist the teaching and punishment meted against their bad behaviours. He noted also that some parents leave their children to fate, with little or no guide, thereby nurturing those misbehaviours through indirect means.

The researcher based the result of this study on the two hypotheses. Table 2 revealed that both Christian and Muslim parents are alike in their role perception. This goes to show that every religion is geared towards inculcating good morals to the members. According to Bull (2008) religion and morality are inseparable. He believes that when man forsakes religion, moral confusion and decay follows. This he said translates to mean that moral laws and expectations are unchanging. Both religions believe that religious and moral principles are to be transmitted from generation to generation through the combined efforts of parents, teachers and the society at large.

Table 3: revealed that family structure (Monogamous and Polygamous are different in their perception of their roles. This is in consonance and affirmation to the findings of Anagbogbu (2010) parents from monogamous homes are closer and committed to their responsibilities towards their children in comparison to their counterparts who think of bearing children as their only responsibility while training is God's. she noted that such parents will tell you that it is God and not man that trains, thereby producing children without minding.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the discussions above, it is very clear that parents have positive perception of their roles towards their children.

The researchers therefore recommend these:

Family members should endeavour to inculcate in their children what is considered to be the right and acceptance behaviours.

Family counseling should be regularly carried out and the implication of problems associated with bad behaviour constantly highlighted. Parents should understand that they better spoil the rod and spare the child by using the rod of correction to drive away wickedness in children.

The school authorities should also help parents to check the behaviours of students entrusted to their care.

Moral instructions should be regularly emphasized right from nursery to tertiary institutions. Moral attitudes and values learnt during the child's upbringing may lead him cope with his environment in respect of meeting people with different attitudes and values.

The government should encourage the counselors by sponsoring and organizing workshops for them so that they can give marriage counselling to intending couples so as to minimize the possible cause of involvement in monogamous family.

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