

Educating the parent on Styles that build resilience in Children as a panacea for Cultism in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: This paper is proposing a paradigm shift from the usual approach of campaign against cultism to educating parents on parenting styles that build resilience in children. In the cause of literature review the writers discovered that, though there are several parenting styles but the most suitable for building confident adults and have better social skills, higher grades, low rates of substance abuse and less depression than children from either permissive or authoritarian household. The paper concludes that a major difference between the youth who easily confused to join antisocial groups like cults, and the recommends counseling and training sessions on parenting styles in dealing with their children at worship centers and some special social gatherings.

Key Words: Educating, parent, styles, resilience in children, cultism

Introduction

It has become clear that “picking up the pieces” is not the right approach to solving the social ills facing the society now. Rather, the solution has to be in raising children prepared to thrive and equipped to make wise decision in life. Recognizing this, the focus of this study is a paradigm shift from the common approach of campaigns against cultism, highlighting its destructive tendencies using seminars, workshop, symposia, handbills, posters, billboards, jingles on radio and television and public lectures, to help parents become supporting parents that can shield their children from societal ills by building resilience in them.

Ginsburg (2006) translates research and practice into practical approaches that parents, professionals and communities can use to build resilience in children. He talked about two core principles guiding his approach: first, it is the healthy connection that promotes the unwavering strong relationship between parent and child which is the essential element that prepares a young person to thrive. Second, most behaviors we fear in adolescents (like cultism) are misguided attempt to cope with stress. Therefore, if we are to reduce the risks in our children’s lives, we need to equip them, starting in early childhood, to address life’s challenges in healthy ways.

The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Sociology (1996) gives the sociology definition of cult as a small group or religious activities whose beliefs are typically secret, esoteric and individualistic. Lexicon website’s dictionary defines secret cult as a group of people who share common cause and whose mode of meeting and agenda are unknown to the public and where initiation into rank and file is usually done in secret. Oxford Advance Learners’ Dictionary defines cultism as a system of religious worship especially one that is expressed in rituals. In summary, cultism can be defined as a ritual practice by group of people whose membership, admission, policy and initiation formalities as well as their mode of operations are kept secret with their activities having negative effect on both members and non-members alike.

The concept of resilience was developed to “describe relative resistance to psychosocial risk experiences”. Richardson (2002) define resilience as the process of coping with adversity that contributes to the development and enrichment of positive factors. Traditionally, resilience has been conceptualized as an individual trait that helps a child achieve desirable emotional and social functioning despite exposure to negative life events.

According to Wikipedia (2013) a parenting style is a psychological construct representing standard strategies that parents use in their child rearing. There are many differing theories and opinions on the best ways to rear children, as well as differing levels of time effort that parents are willing to invest. Parental investment started before birth. Many parents create their own style from combination of factors, and these may evolve over time as the children develops their own personalities and move through life stages. Parenting style is affected by both the parents and the children’s temperaments, and is largely based on the influence of one’s own parents and culture. Most parents learn parenting practices from their own parents- some they accept, some they discard.

Why students join cults

People join cults for various reasons some of these reasons, according to Muhammed (2010) are:

- i. Some young students in cults have experienced very unstable or non-existent family relationship, but they do not constitute the norm.
- ii. Many students have experienced varying degrees of communication problems with their parents.
- iii. A number of students have known the pains and deprivation of a single parents home and perhaps for this reason, some have strongly identified with older students who provide a parental image but mislead them into participating in anti-social vices like cultism.
- iv. Some young who have problematic backgrounds and have experienced varying degrees of failure for example, those people that come from broken homes or have a history of emotional problems and unresolved personal conflicts.
- v. More than anything else, the young people pursuing cults today involved in search for identity and a quest for spiritual reality that provides clear-cut answers to questions parents might have failed to answer.
- vi. The chief target of the cults are the children of affluence, these ones may be suffering from identity confusion or identity crisis and they want to be identified with renowned group and so, they easily carried away by the activities of the cults.

All these hinge on home upbringing, therefore the need for parents to be enlightened on their role in what becomes of their children's decisions in life. Other reasons why students join cult groups according to Oyewole (2012) includes:

- i. Responsibility-to fight perceived injustice on their campuses against their members
- ii. Satisfaction of aspirations and needs-cult groups that ensure the success of their members in academic examinations or getting girl
- iii. Security-many students of tertiary institutions, especially the female students, join cult groups in order to protect themselves (from students and lecturers), while some male students join to protect their girlfriends, and
- iv. Social identity- there are students that join cult groups for popularity. They want to be regarded as powerful people, a way of achieving prestige and greatness with this they believe they can influence decisions on campus and dictates what happens during union and students representatives election(p.1)

Some students join campus cults to gain respect and acquire protection against sanction from members of the community. Students also join cult groups for reasons based on past negative experience at the family level. There are others who join because they want to create avenues to exhibit and diffuse frustration from the family, school and society.

There are students who join cults group for financial assistance, while others join to hide their weakness (inferiority complex)-academic or social. Some are forced to join, while others feel that the objectives of the cult are laudable and worthwhile.

For some their parents are members of secret cults and see nothing wrong with their children's involvement in cult activities. Some students see cult activities as a way of getting back at the society that has caused them so much pain and emotional distress. Some students are lured into cultism by friends (peer pressure) who are members. Others join because they want favour from lecture and administrative staff that are members.

Building Resilience in children

Building resilience is important because it enables children to master current and future challenges. Increasing number of children are exposed to serious threats to their physical and emotional wellbeing that are inherent in many contemporary societies. Parents play a fundamental role in building the capacity for resilience, by providing supportive family environment.

According to the American psychological association (APA) (2013) we all can develop resilience, and we can help our children develop it as well. It involves behaviors, thoughts and action that can be learned over time. One of the tips to building resilience according to APA is to teach your child how to make friends, including the skill of empathy, or feeling another's pain. A child with these characteristics cannot willingly hurt others as cultists do. Encourage your child to be a friend in order to get friends. Build a strong family network to support your child through his or her inevitable disappointments and hurts so that hurting others is not seen as a means of paying back for what they perceive as undeserved hurts.

Early ideas about building resilience through proper parenting are evident in the authoritative education style concept. There is a large body of literature on the relationships between parenting and child

well being. The researchers found that parents of mature preschoolers differed from other by using a set of authoritative child-rearing practices. They were controlling and demanding, had high expectations for mature behavior, and firmly reinforced them by using commands and punishment. At the same time, they were warm and encouraging, listened patiently and sensitively to their youngsters' points of view, and encouraged children's input in family decision making. Baumrind (1996) has emphasized that the rational and reasonable use of firm control makes authoritative child rearing effective in producing positive consequences for children's development have a tendency to internalize such fair parental control strategies.

Nurturing, non-permissive parents who are secure in the standards that they hold for their youngsters provide children with models of caring and concern for others, adolescents with a role model (family or teacher) were more likely to engage in positive healthy behaviors, in comprising with those without a role model (Yancey, Grant, Kurosky, Kravitz-Wirthz, & Mistry 2011). Warm family relationships and positive home environments were associated with both emotional and behaviors resilience (Bowes, Maughan, Caspi, Moffit, & Arseneault 2010).

Zakeri, Bahram, & Maryam (2010) also investigated the relationship between the parenting styles and resilience. The result of their study showed that there was a positive and significant association between acceptance-involvement parenting style and resilience. More specifically, warmth, supporting, and child-centre parenting style were associative with the development of resilience. Better parenting practices and better maternal mental health are significant predictors of children's resilience (Howell, Graham-Bermann, Czzc & Lilly 2010). Graham-Bermann, Gurber, Howell, and differentiate children with poor adjustment from those with resilience. They found that effective parenting behaviors such as using appropriate discipline and setting limits may protect children by providing positive role models. Children who do not share problems with parents and who have feelings of being overly controlled by parents had higher levels of delinquency (Mukhopadhyay, 2010).

Parenting Styles

The family is known to play an important role in building children's resilience and in the prevention of risky behavior (Veselska, Geckova, Orosova, Gajdosova, Van Dijk, Rijneveld, 2008). According to Muhammad (2010) family influence plays an undeniable role in shaping the characters of youths. The quality of their family is reflected in their behaviors, children living in violent homes are themselves more likely to become gent of violence as they grow up an naturally see violence as an instrument of inter-group relation.

Family plays a very significant role in the child's life during the development stages, family dynamics include leadership, decision making, communication, flexibility, cohesion and support system. This means that family is the best resource available for children whenever there is a problem or a need to make a vital decision. This according to Howell, Graham-Bermann, Czyz & Lilly (2010) is the reason why one of the most well studied protective factors for children exposed to stress and trauma is effective parenting.

In building resilience in children and teens, there are three general types of parenting when it comes to discipline techniques which are authoritarian, permissive or disengaged, and authoritative (Ginsburg, 2006). While the permissive and disengaged parent rarely set limits. Those limits are set and enforced much differently between the authoritarian and the authoritative parent. One particular style as shown in multiple studies to raise kids who less often "engage in worrisome behavior and are more likely to be resilient," and that is the authoritative parenting style, reports Ginsburg.

Types of Parenting Styles

- i. **Authoritarian Parenting:** In this style of parenting, children are expected to follow the strict rules established by the parents. Failure to follow such rules usually results in punishment. Authoritarian parents fail to explain the reasoning behind these rules. If asked to explain, the parent might simply reply, "because I said so". These parents have high demands, ut are not responsive to their children. According to Baumrind (1991 these parents are obedience-and status-oriented, and expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation. Authoritarian parenting styles generally lead to children who are obedient and proficient, but they rank lower in happiness, social competence and self-esteem.
- ii. **Authoritarian Parenting:** Like authoritarian parents, those with an authoritative parenting style establish rules and guidelines that their children are expected to follow. However, this parenting style is much more democratic. Authoritative parents are responsive to their children and willing to listen to questions. When children fail to meet the expectations, these parents are more nurturing

an forgiving rather than punishing. Baumrind (1991) suggests that these parents monitor and impact clear standards for their children's conduct. They are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive, rather than punitive. They want their children to be assertive as well as cooperative. Authoritative parenting style tends to result in children who are happy, capable and successful (Maccoby, 1992).

- iii. **Permissive parenting:** permissive parents sometimes referred to as indulgent parents have very few demands to make of their children. These parents rarely discipline their children because they have relatively low expectations of maturity and self-control. According to Baumrind (1991) permissive parents are more responsive than they are demanding. They are more nontraditional and lenient, do not require mature behavior, allow considerable self-regulation, and avoid confrontation. Permissive parents are generally nurturing and communicative with their children, often taking on the status of a friend more than that of a parent. Permissive parenting often results in children who rank low in happiness and self-regulation. These children are more likely to experience problems with authority and tend perform poorly in school.
- iv. **Uninvolved Parenting:** An uninvolved parenting style is characterized by few demands, low responsiveness and little communication. While these parents fulfill the child's basic needs, they are generally detached from their child's life. In extreme cases, these parents may even reject or neglect the needs of their children. Uninvolved parenting styles rank lowest across all life domains. These children tend to lack self-control, have low self-esteem and are less competent than their peers.

Reasons why authoritative parenting provides such advantages over other styles are: first, when children perceive their parent's requests as fair and reasonable, they are more likely to comply with the request. Second the children are more likely to internalize (or accept as their own) the reasons for behaving in a certain way and thus to achieve greater self control.

Of course, the parenting styles of individual parents also combine to create a unique blend in each and every family. For example, the mother may display an authoritative style while the father favors a more permissive approach. In order to create a cohesive approach to parenting, it is essential that parent learns to cooperate as they combine various elements of their unique parenting styles.

Conclusion

This paper focuses on the role of parents in inculcating characters that will enable children resist participation in social vices like cultism and agrees with the views of Levine (2008) in her book titled "Teach Your Children Well". Madeline Levine is a psychologist who brings together cutting-edge research and 30 years of clinical experience to explode once and for all the Myth that good grades, high test scores, and college acceptances should not determine the parenting endgame. Until we are more clear about our core values and the parenting choices that are most likely to lead to authentic, and not superficial, success, we will continue to raise exhausted, externally driven, and emotionally impaired children who believe they are only as good as their last performance and who can easily be influenced by peers and lured into anti-social behaviors.

Of course, most parents do not fall neatly into one category, but fall somewhere in the middle, showing characteristics of more than one style. There is no universally "best" style of parenting. The bottom line being that parenting styles are associated with different child outcomes and authoritative style is generally linked to positive behaviors such as strong self-esteem and self-competence. However, other important factors including culture, children's perception or parental treatment, and social influences also play an important role in children's behavior.

Recommendations

- i. Parenting should themselves not belong to secret cult so that they can have the moral justification to educate their children on the ills of cultism.
- ii. Parents should be more available at home so they can monitor the movement of their children.
- iii. Parents should make it a point of duty to know the associations their children make
- iv. Counseling and training sessions on parenting styles in worship centre and all conductive gatherings should be encouraged in our society.

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