

The Social, Cultural, and Religious Impact of 21st-century Parenting in Nigeria

**Adediran Idowu Según
Samuel Olamide Adekoya
Afolorunso Olalekan Dairo**

Abstract

This study explores the socio-cultural and religious impacts of 21st-century parenting in Nigeria, focusing on how modern influences shape family dynamics and child development. While existing research has addressed parenting practices globally, there is a gap in understanding how Nigerian parents navigate the tension between traditional values and contemporary pressures. The problem lies in the increasing clash between modern societal changes and deeply rooted cultural and religious parenting norms, which affect children's development and societal cohesion. The purpose of this study is to examine how these shifts in socio-cultural and religious contexts impact parenting practices in Nigeria. Using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as a theoretical framework, the study highlights how a child is influenced by their family, culture, and religion. A mixed-method approach is employed, combining historical, theological, and phenomenological analyses to gain a comprehensive understanding of the study. The findings reveal a complex interaction between traditional and modern parenting practices. Recommendations include encouraging open communication, integrating technology wisely, celebrating cultural heritage, promoting emotional intelligence, and fostering collaboration among parents, marriage counselors, sociologists, and stakeholders to support healthy child development in modern Nigerian families.

Keywords: 21st-century parenting, Socio-cultural influences, Religious impacts, Child development, Ecological Systems Theory

Introduction

The 21st century has witnessed significant transformations in parenting practices worldwide, influenced by rapid globalisation, technological advancements, and shifting socio-cultural norms. Parenting in the 21st century is increasingly complex due to technological advancements and evolving social conditions. Today's children encounter greater challenges, prompting parenting practices to adapt to the demands of a swiftly changing environment (Salau, 2019). Moreover, the quality of parenting is essential for human development and is influenced by the socio-cultural context, which shifts over time and across different social settings (Petersen & Lesch, 2022:715-742). In Nigeria, these changes have introduced new challenges and dynamics in child-rearing, with traditional and religious values often clashing with modern parenting approaches. Understanding the implications of these shifts is essential for assessing their impact on children's development and societal cohesion.

The complexities of modern parenting in Nigeria are further compounded by the diverse cultural landscape, where varying ethnic groups hold distinct views on child-rearing. Additionally, the influence of religious beliefs plays a critical role in shaping parenting practices, often dictating moral and ethical standards within families. Moreover, parenting is a responsibility that extends throughout a child's developmental stages until they reach independent adulthood. In essence, it encompasses the duties and obligations associated with raising a child (Peterson, 2022). Conversely, parents' aim should not be to create perfect children but to equip them with the wisdom necessary for a successful life (O'Keeffe, 2019:106-115). This study examines how social, cultural, and religious factors influence 21st-century parenting in Nigeria, focusing on their effects on family

dynamics and youth development. It addresses a research gap by exploring how these elements shape parenting and impact child development and societal stability in contemporary Nigerian society.

Statement of the Problem

The evolving socio-cultural and religious dynamics in Nigeria have created a challenging environment for parenting, where traditional values often conflict with modern influences. This study aims to explore how these opposing forces shape parenting practices and affect children's development and societal cohesion.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate how socio-cultural and religious changes are shaping parenting practices in 21st-century Nigeria. It seeks to understand the impact of these shifts on family dynamics, child development, and the wider societal context.

Theoretical Framework

This study uses Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasises the interaction between a child and various environmental layers, such as family, culture, and religion. The theory consists of four levels: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem, each influencing individual development (Onwuegbuzie, Collins, & Frels, 2013:2-8). It provides a critical lens for understanding how socio-cultural and religious factors shape parenting and child development in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating historical, theological, and phenomenological analyses to explore the complexities of parenting practices in Nigeria. By blending qualitative insights, the research aims to provide a

comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural and religious factors shaping contemporary parenting.

Cultural Models of Parenting in Nigeria

There is significant diversity in parenting practices among families, with cultural backgrounds playing a crucial role in shaping family dynamics and child-rearing methods (Sanvictores & Mendez, 2022:2). Parenting models in Nigeria are strongly influenced by the diverse traditions and values of its various ethnic groups, shaping child-rearing practices and family dynamics. Communal upbringing is a key feature, with extended family and community members actively contributing to a child's development, highlighting shared responsibility. Cultural values like collectivism, communalism, and respect for authority shape Nigerian parenting, blending authoritarian and authoritative styles that emphasise discipline and socialisation. This approach fosters children's socio-emotional development and academic success, with family cohesion linked to better outcomes (Adeyemi & Obiakor, 2018:425). Moreover, cultural values like respect for elders and adherence to moral standards also play a major role in shaping parenting styles, influencing children's socialisation and identity development.

Parenting, or child-rearing, encompasses the responsibilities of nurturing and supporting a child's physical, emotional, social, financial, and intellectual development from infancy to adulthood, going beyond biological ties to address the complexities of raising a child (Brooks, 2012). In many Nigerian cultures, parenting is shaped by rites of passage and ceremonies that celebrate key developmental milestones, reinforcing communal values and cultural identity. Religious beliefs, particularly Islamic and Christian teachings, also play a crucial role in guiding moral conduct and family structure. Cultural values and related social attitudes regarding social initiative and self-control are likely to impact the development of specific social behaviours (Chen, Liu & Bian, 2022:241-259). In Nigerian culture, across all tribes, regardless of Christian or

Islamic faith, African traditions rooted in African Traditional Religion still play a significant role in shaping parenting practices. Also, these cultural and religious frameworks form a diverse tapestry of parenting practices, offering both opportunities and challenges in the face of modern influences and globalisation.

Religious Perspectives on Child Rearing

Religious perspectives on child-rearing in Nigeria significantly influence parenting practices, as families often integrate their faith into daily life and child development. Both Islamic and Christian traditions emphasise moral teachings, discipline, and community involvement, which shape the values imparted to children and their understanding of right and wrong. Islamic teachings emphasise parental expectations and the responsibilities children have towards their parents. Unlike certain Christian denominations that ascribe “original sin” to children, Islam considers them innocent and incapable of intentional sinful acts, meaning they cannot be judged for their actions (Acevedo, Ellison & Yilmaz, 2015:1595-1623). As a result, Islamic doctrines focus on parents regarding socialisation and behaviour, with obedience being a fundamental expectation (Canan, 1992:.19-42).

Moreover, early Christian writers, or the fathers of the church, offered insights on family and childcare that, despite differing historical contexts, remain relevant today. They framed child-rearing within Christian theology and ethics, linking procreation to human identity in relation to God and education to humanity's eschatological purpose (Harrison, 2000:481). Therefore, religious rituals and teachings from both Christianity and Islamic faith provide a framework for parents to instill spiritual beliefs, fostering a sense of identity and belonging in their children within a culturally diverse society. Christian theologians have long viewed parenting as a sacred task. Horace Bushnell, a 19th-century congregationalist pastor, described the family as a "little church," believing that the

family, rather than the church, is the primary agent of grace in children's faith development (Bendroth, 2001:350-64; Bunge, 2009:16-21).

In many households in Nigeria, religious teachings guide not only the moral upbringing of children but also their education, with religious institutions often playing a key role in their formative years. Parents are encouraged to model their faith through practices such as prayer, fasting, and participation in religious events, which serve to strengthen familial bonds and instill a sense of community. Religious and social education has always been a central part of upbringing, stressed by religious and community leaders. Families are crucial in implementing effective educational practices, which parents must model to pass down to their children. Failure to provide religious education can result in psychological, social, and spiritual challenges (Aran & Nayebkibir 2018:180-191). Moreover, the intergenerational transmission of religious beliefs ensures that children grow up with a deep-rooted understanding of their faith, influencing their behaviour and choices as they navigate the complexities of modern life. Ultimately, religious perspectives on child-rearing in Nigeria provide a foundational framework that shapes children's moral values and social identities in a rapidly changing world. By intertwining faith with parenting practices, families create a nurturing environment that fosters resilience and a sense of belonging, essential for children's development amidst contemporary challenges.

Religious Influences on Parenting and Child Behaviour

Parenting styles are closely linked to cultural values, beliefs, and practices, reflecting the distinct social, historical, and economic contexts of families. Different cultures adopt various child-rearing approaches shaped by their norms and traditions (Harwood et al., 2002:21-46). These styles significantly impact children's cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioural development. Religious beliefs significantly influence parenting practices and child behaviour, providing frameworks for moral

guidance and ethical decision-making. In many Nigerian families, teachings from religious texts shape expectations around discipline, respect for authority, and the importance of community values, which in turn impact children's social interactions and personal development. As children internalise these religious principles, they often exhibit behaviours that reflect their upbringing, including empathy, respect, and a sense of responsibility towards others within their community.

Religious doctrines play a significant role in shaping family dynamics in Nigeria, as they provide guidelines for moral conduct, roles, and responsibilities within the household. In many families, these teachings dictate parenting practices, influence decision-making processes, and reinforce expectations regarding respect, discipline, and communal support. Family is central to Muslim social organisation, with Shari'a law, based on the Qur'an, offering guidance on various family matters. It is considered the foundation of Muslim social structures (Esposito & Mogahed, 2007). Also, religion within families foster cohesion, especially in Judeo-Christian traditions, which emphasise strong family bonds and unity (Pearce & Axinn, 1998:810-828). As a result, the integration of religious values into family life fosters cohesion and stability, while also shaping children's understanding of their identity and place within both their families and society.

Religious teachings are crucial in resolving family conflicts by promoting forgiveness and harmony. Institutions like churches and mosques provide support networks that strengthen family and community bonds. Additionally, participation in religious activities fosters children's sense of belonging and cultural heritage, shaping their character through integrated religious values in parenting. Also, parenting involves raising and protecting children for healthy development, which is particularly challenging during infancy and toddlerhood when children rely entirely on caregivers (Worsham et al., 2009:25-41). Consequently, the interaction of religious doctrines and

family dynamics shapes individual behaviour and reinforces social norms within the community.

Socio-Cultural Impacts of 21st-Century Parenting

The family is the cornerstone of society, and negative family outcomes can harm the wider community. A child's early home experiences, including care, control, and emotional environment, shape their temperament and future behaviour (Igbokwe, Piate & Akpan, 2015:147-66). Socio-cultural factors significantly influence parenting in Nigeria, with economic status, education, and urbanisation shaping diverse approaches. Affluent families often embrace modern practices, while lower-income families adhere to traditional methods, resulting in a blend of parenting styles. This mix combines respect for elders and communal values with modern influences like technology and education. Additionally, peer influence and media exposure alter parental expectations as families navigate cultural traditions alongside changing societal demands. Therefore, the socio-cultural impacts of 21st-century parenting include a shift towards more individualised and technology-driven approaches, which alter traditional family roles and communication patterns. As parents increasingly integrate digital tools and global perspectives into their child-rearing practices, they must navigate the challenges of maintaining cultural heritage while adapting to modern influences. However, in this era of mass migration, migrant students navigating career paths are often exposed to unfamiliar cultural values, especially within the educational system (Zhang et al., 2014:736-754), as they plan and make career decisions amidst evolving interests, goals, and responsibilities, cultural influences shape both their actions and thought processes (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018:58). These changes have led to evolving family dynamics, with implications for children's socialization, educational experiences, and their ability to balance traditional values with contemporary societal demands.

Child development is a complex process shaped by various factors, including genetics, environment, socio-economic status, and cultural practices. It involves physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes from infancy to adolescence, influencing individuals' life paths and outcomes (Smith & Chen, 2018). Only children tend to have poorer mental health than those with siblings, facing higher risks of suicidal thoughts, self-harm, and drug dependence (Wang et al., 2019:68–78). The absence of siblings makes them more vulnerable to the emotional impact of parental conflicts (Hao and Feng, 2002:109–112.. Unfortunately, authoritarian parenting can worsen their development, leading to negative peer interactions characterised by competitiveness and aggression, ultimately harming relationship quality (Tippett and Wolke, 2015:14–24). Therefore, the influence of authoritarian parenting on peer relationships varies by age, gender, and family structure, emphasising the need for further research in family education and children's social development. Apparently, the socio-cultural impacts of 21st-century parenting illustrate the complex interplay between tradition and modernity, requiring parents to adapt their approaches to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world. As families strive to balance these influences, they foster resilience and critical thinking in children, preparing them to thrive in an interconnected society while preserving their cultural heritage.

The Evolution of Parenting in the 21st Century

Parenting in the 21st century has evolved due to rapid technological advancements and changing societal norms, altering traditional child-rearing practices. Parenting behaviour and parent-child relationships are shaped by familial, social, psychological, and cultural factors (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006:793–828). The "father vulnerability hypothesis" suggests that father-child relationships are more negatively affected by interparental conflict than mother-child relationships (Cummings et al., 2010:154–176), as fatherhood is less clearly defined than motherhood (Marsiglio et al., 2005). While

evidence for this hypothesis is mixed, recent studies highlight the need to view fatherhood within the broader context of family dynamics (Stevenson et al., 2019:573–586). Parents now face the challenge of balancing modern influences, such as digital media and globalisation, with cultural and familial values. This shift requires adaptive strategies to help children navigate a complex world while maintaining strong family connections.

This research cautions against the idea of "father uniqueness" or the "essential father" in parenting. Pleck (2010:58–93, 2012:243–253) argues that "while fathers are important for children's development, they are not essential, as many children thrive without a father figure". Additionally, Fagan et al. (2014:1415–1439) found that "no evidence that fathering and mothering are distinct constructs". However, claims that fathers uniquely contribute to children's development persist (Jeynes, 2016:665–688), along with theories suggesting that fathers and mothers serve different parental roles, often linked to evolved gender differences (Paquette, 2004:193–219). Meanwhile, substantial evidence is needed to support claims of father uniqueness, but current research does not provide it. Therefore, scholars are encouraged to rely on evidence when discussing fathers' roles in children's development. Modern parenting emphasises education, holistic development, and mental well-being, with a focus on nurturing, communication, and emotional intelligence. As a result, contemporary parenting blends tradition and innovation, preparing children for today's diverse and interconnected society while preserving cultural heritage.

Changes in Family Structure and Their Effects on Child Development

Changes in family structure, like single-parent households, step-parenting, and blended families, affect child development in Nigeria by influencing emotional security, socialisation, and academic performance. While fostering resilience, these changes can also create stress, emphasising the need for

supportive environments to ensure emotional well-being and healthy relationships. Polygamy, a traditional African practice, presents challenges in contemporary step-parenting, such as managing complex family dynamics, sibling rivalries, and inheritance disputes. Polygamous marriage differs from cohabitation or remarriage after divorce or a spouse's death, as it is a formal union recognised by secular and religious authorities especially in Islamic, Judaism and African Traditional religions, that involves a contract between a husband and multiple wives (Ariyani, 2017:136). Invariably, polygamy is practiced in various regions worldwide, including Africa, Asia, the Middle East, North America, and Oceania (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2006:5-17). Consequently, step-parenting may arise, involving siblings who share a father but not a mother, which can lead to unhealthy rivalries and imbalances in mental and moral development. This creates challenges such as managing loyalty conflicts, where children may feel torn between their biological and stepparents. Obviously, gaining trust and establishing authority can be difficult due to potential resistance or emotional barriers from the children.

Moreover, differing parenting styles between the biological parent and stepparent can cause tension, necessitating clear communication and compromise. Nonetheless, navigating complex emotions like resentment or loyalty conflicts requires patience, open communication, and a supportive environment to foster healthy relationships in blended families. Tor-Anyim and Bark (2006:1-10) emphasise that "single parenthood often results in problems such as aggression, violence, and drug abuse", likewise, Woldkind and Reuther (1995) observe that "children in single-parent families face lower living standards due to diminished resources". Additionally, the academic performance of these children tends to suffer, as socioeconomic factors heavily influence their educational outcomes (Said (2006). Although stepparents may face challenges in establishing authority and trust, leading to emotional distance and divided parental attention, raising a spouse's child from a previous relationship can create unique family dynamics.

Therefore, building trust and strong relationships while respecting the child's bond with their biological parents is essential for success.

A Comparative Analysis of Parenting Styles Across Nigerian Cultures

Comparative analysis of parenting styles across different cultures reveals significant variations influenced by social norms, values, and environmental factors. Cultural values significantly impact child outcomes, as each culture establishes distinct goals and expectations for its members. A parenting style that is effective in one culture may not be as successful in another. In Nigeria's collectivistic and patriarchal society, key values include obedience, cooperation, communal living, and robust interpersonal relationships (Akinsola, 2013). For instance, Western cultures often emphasise individualism, promoting autonomy and self-expression in children, whereas collectivist societies, such as those in Nigeria, prioritise communal values and interdependence within families. Significantly, parenting attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours play a crucial role in shaping children's moral character and stability, hence, each parenting style significantly influences a child's identity and development, though these behaviours are often affected by cultural, ethnic, and economic factors (Shahsavari, 2012:139-142).

In Nigeria, parenting strategies incorporate authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive styles (Baumrind, 1971), with a strong emphasis on obedience and compliance with parental authority. Also, Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups shape varied parenting styles. The Yoruba emphasise respect for authority, discipline, and family dignity, balanced with warmth explanations for their actions. Efik prioritize community cohesion, with punishments for non-compliance, often viewed as authoritarian. Ibo parenting highlights respect, communal responsibility, and extended family involvement, while Fulani and Hausa focus on discipline, authority, and Islamic values,

with early socialisation and defined gender roles. These differences in parenting styles not only shape children's behaviour and identity but also reflect broader cultural priorities and societal expectations regarding child development.

Additionally, variations in parenting styles can be seen in disciplinary approaches, with some cultures favouring authoritative techniques that encourage dialogue and reasoning, while others may rely on more authoritarian methods emphasising obedience and respect for authority. Nigerian children tend to view their parents as both authoritative and authoritarian, given the mix of obedience expectations and responsiveness. Studies show that Nigerian parents frequently use authoritative, authoritarian, and blended parenting styles (Akinsola, 2010:2771-2788, 2011:246-267), unfortunately, many parents are unaware that their treatment of children significantly impacts their development (McNelis et al., 2007:195–202; Breinholst et al., 2012:416–424), and this lack of awareness is evident in the prevalence of violence against children within families (Butler & Bauld, 2005:35-45). However, if parents recognise the detrimental effects of their actions, such incidents would likely decrease (Eccles & Harold, 1993:568-587). Moreover, the impact of socioeconomic factors also plays a crucial role; affluent families may adopt more progressive parenting styles that encourage exploration and creativity, whereas families in lower socioeconomic contexts may prioritise survival and stability, shaping their parenting practices accordingly. Ultimately, understanding these cultural distinctions is essential for recognising how diverse parenting approaches contribute to children's socialisation and development in varying global contexts.

Impacts of Globalisation on Nigerian Parenting Practices

Globalisation has significantly impacted Nigerian parenting practices by introducing new ideas, technologies, and cultural

influences that challenge traditional child-rearing methods. The proliferation of digital media and access to global information has led to shifts in parental expectations and children's behaviour, as youth increasingly adopt Western norms and values. Parenting practices are shaped by cultural factors such as collectivism, individualism, and religiosity, with immigrant parents adapting as they acculturate. Culturally sensitive interventions are essential for fostering better parent-child relationships and enhancing child well-being (Massaba, 2024:2), while, parenting and parent-child relationships are shaped by the historical context, with shifts in gender roles, healthcare, technology, and globalisation influencing values and expectations. Advances in smartphones, social media, and other 21st-century developments have notably impacted family dynamics (Buchanan & Glatz, 2022:2022:484). Undoubtedly, parents globally face common challenges, including a culture of disrespect towards authority. As parental control diminishes, children often lack the skills to navigate adolescence and adulthood, contributing to moral decline and weakening traditional religious values (Komolafe, 2016). As a result, parents must navigate the complexities of blending traditional practices with modern influences, striving to maintain cultural identity while preparing their children for a globalised world.

Furthermore, globalisation has facilitated increased mobility and migration, prompting many Nigerian families to adapt their parenting styles to accommodate diverse cultural experiences and environments. Gay men can become parents through adoption, surrogacy, divorce, or cohabitation with a heterosexual partner (Schoppe-Sullivan & Fagan, 2020:175-197). Goldberg's (2012) study of 70 gay fathers reveals "how they adjusted their roles as partners and workers after becoming parents, managed relationships with friends and family, and navigated their minority status within their communities". Moreover, kin terms can extend beyond genealogical relationships to include individuals like adopted children or same-sex couples, where one partner may be referred to as "wife" and the other as "husband." These terms

are shaped by cultural consensus rather than strictly by genealogical structures (Dousset, 2013:6). This exposure to different cultural practices often leads to hybrid parenting approaches that incorporate elements from both local traditions and global trends, fostering a unique child-rearing experience. Parents play a crucial role in shaping a child's morals, which must be developed from an early age (Turiel, 2008:473-514), and instilling strong moral values in teenagers is essential to ensure they exhibit positive behaviour within their social environments. Consequently, the evolving landscape of parenting in Nigeria reflects a delicate balance between preserving cultural heritage and embracing the benefits and challenges of an interconnected world.

The Role of Technology in Modern Parenting

Technology plays a pivotal role in modern parenting by providing tools that facilitate communication, education, and access to resources for both parents and children. With the proliferation of smartphones and the internet, parents can easily share information, monitor their children's activities, and access educational content that enhances learning experiences. Scaffolding is the support offered by adults or knowledgeable peers to aid a child's learning. Similar to construction scaffolding, which is adjusted and removed as needed, educators provide tailored assistance to meet developmental needs. This approach is most effective in the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD), where support helps children master skills slightly beyond their current abilities (Vygotsky, 1978). However, the reliance on technology also presents challenges, such as managing screen time and ensuring healthy boundaries, as parents navigate the balance between leveraging technological benefits and maintaining meaningful family interactions.

Moreover, technology has transformed the way parents engage with their children, offering opportunities for virtual family activities and educational games that can strengthen bonds

and promote collaborative learning. Social media platforms also allow parents to connect with other caregivers, providing support networks that share advice, experiences, and resources. However, this increased connectivity can also lead to challenges such as exposure to inappropriate content and the pressure to maintain a curated online presence, highlighting the need for parents to foster digital literacy and critical thinking skills in their children. Negative parenting patterns can adversely affect children's development (Tan & Yasin, 2020; Boyle et al., 2004:1457-1476). Moreover, parents significantly influence the formation of their child's personality (Ge et al., 1996:574). Thus, it is vital to offer clear guidance and address children's attitudes and behaviours appropriately (Ernst Kossek & Ozeki, 1998:139).

Intergenerational Perspectives on Parenting

Intergenerational perspectives on parenting reflect the transmission of values, beliefs, and practices from one generation to the next, shaping how families approach child-rearing. Intergenerational transmission of parenting refers to how parents' childhood experiences influence their own parenting practices and attitudes. It also involves the socialisation of the "socialiser" and may also include genetic factors that shape predispositions towards parenting behaviours (Feldman & Goldsmith, 1986:7-85; Van Ijzendoorn, 1992:76-99). Intergenerational transmission, unlike genetically determined continuity, involves the psychological influence of one generation on the next, whether intentional or not. It excludes contextual continuity, where similar parenting behaviours arise from shared environments, without direct psychological impact from the previous generation (Quinton & Rutter, 1984:231-250). Older generations often draw from their experiences and cultural heritage, which can influence their expectations and parenting styles, while younger generations may incorporate modern ideas and practices that align with contemporary societal norms. Consequently, children raised by authoritarian parents generally display good behaviour due to

strict consequences for disobedience and excel at following instructions. However, this style can lead to aggression, shyness, and difficulties with independent decision-making (Masud et al., 2019:1015-1030). In contrast, authoritative parenting fosters confident, responsible children skilled in self-regulation, who effectively manage negative emotions and achieve higher academic success (Morris et al., 2007:361-388; Pong et al., 2010:62-72). Meanwhile, children of uninvolved parents often develop resilience and self-sufficiency out of necessity, but may struggle with emotional regulation, coping strategies, academic performance, and social relationships (Nijhof & Engels, 2007:709-20; Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019:168-181). This interplay creates a dynamic dialogue between tradition and innovation, as families negotiate the best approaches to nurture and support children's development in an ever-evolving world.

Furthermore, intergenerational perspectives can foster resilience and adaptability in parenting, as families learn to balance traditional practices with new insights from research and societal changes. Parents literally have the ability to cultivate a culture of either violence or peace. The challenges facing parents all over the world today are identical, irrespective of race, young children often display aggression to achieve their goals and navigate concepts of ownership. Early childhood educators, as per the Code of Ethical Conduct, are committed to supporting children's development, including teaching them to cooperate (Kearn, 2000). However, the care and love provided during a child's early years significantly influence their relationship with society and their self-identity, while a child who lacks nurturing cannot adequately care for or nurture others. Thus, the roots of violence in Nigeria can be linked to the socialisation processes that children undergo in their formative years (Wendorf, 2004:4). The exchange of knowledge and experiences can enhance parenting strategies, promoting a more holistic approach to child development that incorporates emotional, social, and academic growth. However, it can also lead to conflicts between generations, as differing values and

expectations may challenge familial relationships and require open communication to navigate successfully.

Conclusion

This paper highlights the complex interplay of socio-cultural, religious, and technological influences on parenting practices in Nigeria, revealing significant shifts in family dynamics and child development in the 21st century. The findings highlight the need for policies that provide families with resources to improve parenting skills and child development. This will guide parents, educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals in creating culturally relevant interventions and programs. By contributing to the academic discourse on parenting within diverse cultural contexts, this study underscores the importance of understanding local practices while recognising the global influences that shape contemporary parenting.

Recommendations for Parents and Educators

I. Promote Open Communication: Parents and educators should encourage open dialogue between children and adults to foster trust and understanding, allowing children to express their thoughts and feelings freely.

II. Integrate Technology Wisely: Families should utilize technology as a tool for learning and connection while setting boundaries on screen time to ensure a healthy balance between digital engagement and real-world interactions.

III. Emphasise Cultural Heritage: Parents and educators should actively teach and celebrate cultural values and traditions, helping children develop a strong sense of identity and belonging within their community.

IV. Encourage Emotional Intelligence: Programs and practices that focus on emotional intelligence should be implemented, equipping children with the skills to manage their emotions and develop empathy toward others.

V. Foster Collaboration: Parents and educators should work together to create supportive environments that share resources, strategies, and knowledge, promoting a balanced approach to child development that addresses both academic and emotional needs.

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