Child-Rearing in Hausa Culture: A Flash into Erickson’s Psychosocial Theory of Development

Abstract: Child-rearing or development is fundamental in every society and any society that cannot inculcate the spirits of child-rearing from this generation to another generation will not be a good and developed society. It is through child-rearing that children are prepared for their adulthood activities and responsibilities in their respective societies. Erick Erickson developed a general psychosocial theory that includes the interplay between psychological and cultural forces working in child development. Given this, Erickson’s concepts had a basis of validity in analyzing some Hausa socio-cultural life in respect to child-rearing, while on the other hand, his concept has no validity. It is because of this, that this paper proposes that despite the Erickson theory of development, Hausa people have their developmental schema which goes hand in hand with that of Erickson. In fact, the concept of the developmental stage is more than a Western construct indiscriminately applied to indigenous culture. The Hausa culture has its views of development that is perceived as a progressive series of stages. In each stage of life, there is an element of “tarbiya” that will enable them to produce who will carry on the family honor and tradition. In Hausa, the concept of “tarbiya” encapsulates the highest of Hausa virtues. Therefore, this paper examined and highlights some of the important issues related to child development in Hausa culture and compares them with Ericson’s theory of development.

Keywords: Hausa, Hausa Culture, Child-Rearing, Theory of Development

INTRODUCTION

Hausa people are found in many parts of the world, particularly in the various part of West Africa. The Hausa tribe is a diverse but culturally homogeneous people based primarily in the Sahel and Sudan areas of Northern Nigeria and Southern Niger, with significant numbers also living in parts of Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Chad, Togo, Ghana, and Sudan. The greatest populations of the Hausas are found in Northern Nigeria, in an area commonly known as the Hausa Land, followed by the ones residing in the adjoining Southern Niger.

Nigeria being the giant of Africa has many ethnic groups among which Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba constitute the majority. Different patterns of child-rearing are practiced among these groups from one society to another. Each ethnic group trains its children based on their different cultural settings. Erickson developed a general psychosocial theory encompassing the interplay between psychological and cultural forces working in child development. Erickson’s concept had a basis of validity in discussing some Hausa socio-cultural life in child development while others do not. http://academia.edu/33987021. It is through this child-rearing that children are prepared for their adulthood activities in their respective societies. Looking at the current situation in Nigeria, divergence in political, economic, and social problems has its bases from the early stage of a child’s life which directly or indirectly emanated from child upbringing in our societies. Because of this, the paper examines the Erickson theory on psychosocial development and the Hausa cultural pattern of child development in Northern Nigeria.

The concept of culture refers to the total way of life of a given people Adelakun, (1990), Bunza, (2006). Thus it includes any piece or pattern of behavior, attitude, norms, values, objects, skills, belief system, and world out-look that human beings learn and adapt as members of a given human group or society. Taylor, (1958) perceived culture as a complex whole that includes morals, art, law, knowledge, belief, customs, and habits acquired by a person as a member of society. From the concept of culture, we can understand that the behaviors of human beings are influenced by the culture of every society and varied from one society to another.

Ecological theories are of the view that the interaction of cultural forces in one’s environment impacts individual development and overall well-being (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

On the other hand, Child-rearing practice is viewed as a pattern of raising children that is specific to a particular society, subculture, family, or period in cultural history. Child-rearing practices vary in such areas as methods of discipline, expression of affection, and degree of permissiveness APA (2020).
There are three methods of parenting child-rearing which include:

1. Authoritarian (a parent’s know-best approach that emphasizes obedience).
2. Permissive (which provides few behavioral guidelines because parents don’t want to upset their children).
3. Authoritative (which blends a caring tone with structure and consistency).

Among these three methods, authoritative parents have been found to have the most effective parenting style in all sorts of ways: academic, social, emotional, and behavioral. Like authoritarian parents, authoritative parents expect a lot from their children, but also they expect even more from their behavior. https://www.greatschools.org.

The authoritative parents engage with their child but they also set a limit, and also enforce consequences when the child misbehaves. Those children raised by these parents are likely to be happy and self-motivated and confident. https://howoadult.com.

Parenting practices and the quality of the home environment, therefore, have great significance in the development of children’s lives. Children should be surrounded by mentally and physically healthy adult family members who are constant, reliable and can provide them with love, support, and encouragement (Khadijah Rohoni, 2005).

Smith, (1953) has this to say about a newborn baby. You came into the world a polymorphous perverse little ape with billions of biological evolution precipitated, so to speak in your dimpled organism. You came naked, without shame, without language, food habits or manual dexterity, ideas or religious faith, without respect for law and order, without any discernible admiration… You came with no higher desires than to have your capacious belly filled with milk and your somatic and viscera itches scratched by loving hands…

Hausa Culture and Child-rearing in Erickson Theory of psychosocial

A very good and well-behaved child provides the Hausa with an important element for their social mask. “It is an essential element to their economic activities which benefit from the ability to move among and identify with a vast number of potential customers. “Tarbiya” (person with a good character) woven into the individuals’ social mask does not have one ideal manifestation but rather presents itself in a range of acceptable forms. Ultimately, the purpose is to smooth the way for a friction-free, open-door relationship”. Adeyanju, (2010:129).

From the studies of Erickson's theory on stages of development, when compared with that of Hausa culture stages of development, we realize that, in some areas, the theory does not march exactly with the Hausa culture of child-rearing, at the same time it does not contradict them either. In Hausa culture, a well-behaved person is considered a selfless gesture throughout the life experience. This includes the moral concept that can be explored through good behavior, and not just by emotional concept. In Hausa, this is very clear as Kohlberg and Mayer, (1972:450) term “a cognitive-development theory” as a “rational and viable educational ideology”. https://www.academia.edu/33987021.

For instance, the integral and important value in Hausa adult relationship, family members have the responsibility to internalize “tarbiya” (well-behaved person), and in Hausa, this “tarbiya” is viewed as a general responsibility of the community. Here, when the community was able to induce this “tarbiya” to the younger ones, it reduces the stress associated with the social interaction, thus diminishing the possibility of conflict. For instance, in Hausa, marketing activities are based on the personal ability to develop social ties and to maintain those ties as you move through the wider society. This is a social commodity culturally constructed which enables the Hausa to fulfill their responsibilities as prime entrepreneurs throughout Nigeria and the rest of West Africa (Adamu, 1979).

In Hausa society, in any developmental stage or concept, a well-behaved person is measured on how each person contributes to the totality of understanding the societal norms and values. The motive for the upbringing of a well-behaved person in Hausa society is to promote harmony in life logically from the belief that the good of all people is interconnected. In Hausa a proverb says “Barewa ba ta gudu janta ya yi rarrafe” or “Doka daga gida take tashi” (Charity begins at home). These proverbs remind Hausa people to always serve as a model of behavior to younger ones because younger ones are directly copying from the elders in the society.

Looking at the social context which is usually satisfied through the display of generosity particularly using Hymes, (1962) variation between competence and performance, a “tarbiya” (a well-behaved person) is viewed as a component of personality, honesty that can be assumed through over actions at the right time. This can be observed in Hausa culture using generosity as a measurement.

In Hausa culture, they would seem to have the edge over the poor Hausa’s in performance of tarbiya (Barkow,1974). In Hausa culture, they consider any poor man who intentionally gives out his wealth to beggars in a good cheer to have fulfilled the obligation of tarbiya with no less respect than they view a wealthy man who gives from his greater wealth. In Hausa
society, the child with cheerful carriage who usually assists his younger ones displayed “tarbiya” no less than the adult patron who aids his client. This is to say at this juncture that, at any level irrespective of age, in a social hierarchy, the Hausa culture allows opportunities for the smut running of sincere “tarbiya” in their societies. As such anything done in the society is being geared by the “tarbiya” of people in Hausa society. As such everyone in his life, must take care of everyone else, which will eventually lead to taking care of the entire community, this is the same as to says in Hausa culture child-rearing if any person meets his or her obligations per the societal norms and value in the society, the adult person is preparing to have competence and performance or express his “tarbiya”, and he will be exposed to wider society were sanction will be rewarded.

4.0 Erikson’s and Hausa Culture stage of development compared

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From the table above, Erickson maintains that the personality of an individual develops in a form of predetermined order, and is building up each on the previous stage that is an epigenetic principle.

1. Trust vs Mistrust: The theory observed that at this stage the infant develops a sense of trust when interactions and it provide reliability, care, and affection. Lack of this will lead to mistrust (McLeod 2018).

In Hausa Culture, there is the belief that it is nature and the will of God that brings the child to the world, but it is the responsibility of society to create the child into a social being, that is to give the child protection, feeding, and education among others, and to expose him to the wider society. At this stage, love and affection are shown to the child, which may eventually lead to the trust of an infant in their parent. However, if the infants cannot get this love from their parents, certainly they will develop a mistrust of their environment. Maybe that is why Hausa culture child-rearing emphasizes breastfeeding for two years to enable the infant to have close contact with their parent. At this stage of jarinta, the Hausa employ the use of “tawai” to their infant to express love and affection.

2. Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt: This is between 18th month -2-3 years. At this stage, the infant develops a sense of personal control over physical skills and a sense of independence. Erickson maintained that parents must allow their children to explore the limits of their abilities within an encouraging environment that is tolerant of failure. At this point, success leads to the feeling of autonomy, failure leads to a feeling of shame and doubt (McLeod, 2018).

In Hausa culture child development, this stage is what they refer to as yaranta, here they concord with Erickson’s theory at this stage, because will and training of the child are central in the development process. In Hausa culture, parents explored their children some basic skills in their environment. For instance, in Hausa culture, it is from this stage that parent incorporates their child with small skill acquisition of their craft. Just like in Erickson’s theory, autonomy and shame play a vital role in the free development of a child at this level.

3. Initiative vs Guilt: At this stage from 3-5 years, is when the children begin to assert control and power over their environment by planning a lot of activities and accomplishing tasks and are ready to face challenges. At this stage, success gave way to the sense of purpose, and if dismissed through critics or control, the children will develop a sense of guilt in society (McLeod 2018).
In Hausa culture, this is the stage of *kuruciyar*, and it is equally the playing stage as Erickson pointed out. This is when the child will begin to interact with his peer group, playing games like “wausa da ‘yartsana” and playing under the moonlight. It is at this point that the Hausa child starts to intermingle with his peer groups which may lead to exposure to the wider society. In this playing ground, success and failure of the child are observed by the peer group, if a child failed any activity he will feel shame, but if he succeeds in any activity, it will lead him to autonomy.

4. **Industry vs Inferiority:*** This is the age between 5-12 years. At this stage, children’s peer group plays a vital role in child-rearing, and it will become the major source of child esteem. At this level, children are coping with the new learning and social demand. Success at this stage leads to a sense of competence, while failure results in a feeling of inferiority (McLeod 2018).

In Hausa child development, this stage is very crucial because peer group has much influence on the development of the child, that is why at this stage, Hausa parents pay much attention to the movement of their children particularly observing their friends. In a Hausa traditional setting, this is also the period of *samaritaka* where children are trained in craft and industries and other norms and values of the community. This can be found in Hausa society wherein a communal traditional family, guardians or parents of a child who performs well in accordance to the norms of the people will be rewarded as successful, and those who misbehave are shamed, and they will be advised to rectify things in order of the culture.

5. **Identity vs Role Confusion:** This is the age between 12-18 years. At this stage, teenagers explore who they are in their community, seek to establish a sense of self, and may experiment with different roles, activities, and behaviors. This is very vital to the process of forming a strong identity and developing a sense of direction in life (McLeod 2018).

At this stage of *samaritaka*, Hausa parents are regarded as an agent of socialization to their children. They try to enforce rules at home and make the children to understand the rules. At this point, children are expected to abide in conformity with the rules. They are also punished appropriately if they violated the rules. In Hausa culture child development, at this stage also parents train their children necessary home training which includes religious and moral values like honesty, truthfulness, respect for elders, and self-discipline.

6. **Intimacy vs Isolation.** This is the age between 19-40 years. These are the major conflict centers of performing intimate, loving relationships with others. Success leads to strong relationships, while failure leads to loneliness and isolation. (McLeod 2018).

In Hausa culture, this stage is what they refer to as *anganci/amanci*. As the child grows into adulthood, parents emphasize on him the need to adjust to new socio-psychological conditions through proper guidance and counseling. Inappropriate counseling could lead to the total destruction of a child’s life that could not be corrected again. It is because of this, that the Hausa community at this stage encourages their youth to be friendly with others in the community. This is the stage where community work is encouraged like “autin gayya” and the host of others.

7. **Generative vs Stagnation:** This is the age between 40-65 years. At this point, people experience a need to create or nurture things that will outlast them often having mentees or creating positive changes that will benefit other people. Success leads to the feeling of usefulness and accomplishment, while failure results in shallow involvement in the world. This theory does not march exactly with the Hausa culture child-rearing, at the same time it did not contradict it either.

8. **Ego Integrity vs Despair:** This is the age between 65-death. This stage involves reflecting on one’s life and either moving into feeling satisfied and happy with one’s life or feeling a deep sense of regret. Success leads to the feeling of wisdom, while failure results in regret, bitterness, and despair. https://www.simplypsychology.org/saul-mcleod.html

At this stage when we compare Erickson’s theory with that of the Hausa stages of development, we can conclude by saying that it is almost the same. Because in Hausa, it is during this stage of *tsufantaka* that we contemplate our accomplishments which could lead to our integrity as successful in life. On the other hand, if we view our life as unproductive, we do not accomplish our objective in life, we will develop despair which will lead to depression and hopelessness in society.

**Conclusion**

From the studies above, one can assess that, well-articulated child-rearing practices are a panacea to rapid and efficient development activities of any modern and civilized society because development itself is all about people in any society. The concept of *tarbiya* encapsulates the highest of Hausa virtues. The paper contends that, despite Erickson’s Theory of development, Hausa people have their schema on development which they perceive as a progressive series of stages which include *jarinta, yarinta, kuriciya, samaritaka, anganci, manyaci* and *tsufantaka*. In Hausa society, each stage of development is aimed at guiding the child toward the perfection and progress of his value as an adult. Efficient child-rearing will leads to conformity to societal norms and values which will give way to a well-organized, morally upright, orderly, and well-integrated society. At this juncture, therefore,
Parents are advised to create ample time to be with their children so much so that they can give them training and nurture required of them to equip the children for future roles they are expected to play in the overall development of the society (Olesegun, 2013:249).

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