Reflection on Nigerian Socialisation Process and Strategies: A Review

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Abstract

Societies strive for self-preserving, self-sustenance, and self-development. This is achieved through cultural preservation and transmission that make them distinct. This paper reflected on the Nigerian socialisation process and stages. The paper describes the Nigerian socialisation process and strategies using the Erik Erikson stages of development. It looked at the socialisation process in modern Nigeria, Nigerian socialisation strategies, socialisation, and the Nigerian child's life course. This enabled the author to mirror the Nigerian socialisation process and strategies and Erik Erikson's theory. The paper concluded that the agents of socialisation in Nigeria had neglected their roles in the socialisation of the Nigerian child. The family, religious groups and schools functions have been eroded, and the values and norms hitherto held dear to the people have been watered down. The Traditional Nigerian socialisation approaches and methods are deeply rooted in force or intimidating principles and theories. Nigeria socialisation processes from family to school, churches, and various social organisations show evidence of our coercive or forceful nature in compliance circumstances. Therefore, this paper laid the foundation for further study relating to developmental strategies and stages with those considering a culture's philosophy.

Keywords: 1. Socialisation 2. Socialisation Process 3. Nigerian Socialisation Process 4. Developmental Stages 5. Erik Erikson Developmental Stages.

Introduction

The general attitude and assessment of the public are grounded on values and qualities. Societal values and norms are acquired through socialisation, an intricate process that makes one conscious of his surroundings, values, norms and culture. Societies strive for self-preserving, self-sustenance, and self-development. This is achieved through cultural preservation and transmission that make them distinct (Ajayi & Owumi, 2013). In addition, the socialisation process prepares the individual to be productive and functional in society (Brown, Tanner-Smith & Lesane-Brown, 2009). It prepares man for roles and provides him with the needed behavioural foundation, values, and beliefs to make him suitable, productive and functional for societal integration. This guarantees the stability and maintenance of human society, its values and culture.

From the various description of socialisation, one will comprehend that socialisation gives the fundamental ingredients to partake in societal activities (O'Neil, 2008). By including culture, behavioural standards, principles, habits, and moral values, socialisation prepares and develops to confront societal issues and problems/challenges within his environment. Consequently, societal involvement could be religious, social, political or civic (Oko & Oguud, 2010). This paper reviewed the Nigerian socialisation process and strategies in line with Erik Erikson's eight stages of development.

Socialisation and the Life Course
Infancy

In the Nigerian setting, this stage is called infancy. It is the oral/verbal stage or period. Here, the essential accentuation is on the mother's positive and cherishing care for the child, underlining visual contact and contact or touch. This stage is primarily a family affair. The child social world is the parents/guardians, relatives/family members, individuals from the more distant or extended family and others (Abiodun, 2018). At this beginning phase, socialisation is done casually/formally under the oversight of female siblings and women. The mother of the kid and her female family members are principally responsible and accountable for socialisation. At this stage, the main socialising task is establishing a stable relationship between the child and the mother or who-so-ever that is the caretaker. Obviously, the primary relationship is with the maternal parent, or whoever is the most important, valuable and unceasing caregiver. On the event or off chance that the youngster effectively goes through this time of life, he will figure out how to trust life and have essential trust later on. Then again, if the youngster neglects to encounter trust and is continually disappointed because his requirements are not met, he might wind up with an inborn perception of immateriality and world doubt (Iwuama, 2003, Haruna, 2014). Therefore, those children who are denied basic physical needs like food, affection and care attributable to the socio-economic status of the parents develop a sense of mistrust.

Early Childhood

In the course of this period/stage, the kid figures out how to master or grasp abilities and skills for himself. Not only does the child learn to feed, talk and walk, but learning more acceptable and satisfactory motor skill improvement and when, how and where to pass out waste or ease himself, thus, the much-appreciated toilet training. The kid or child is trained to control body capacities and functions by the parents (Abiodun, 2018). At night before going to bed, the child is directed to urinate (pee) and at midnight. With this socialisation training, the child can develop his self-esteem and be independent as he gains significant control over his body, learn right (good) right from wrong (evil). According to Aliyu (2004), the child/youngster is punished if he fails to adhere to the training, putting him on sound footing.

Furthermore, during this time, one of the child's skills is utilising the powerful and incredible word "NO!" to express his selfish attitude. It may be a discomfort for guardians/parents, but the child improves and develops the critical skill of "will". The main acquaintances and connections are with parents/guardians. Likewise, during this time of socialisation, one can be entirely vulnerable or weak. A child whose parents or guardians intimidate or bully may experience low confidence accordingly.

Play Age

During this phase of life, the child experiences the craving to duplicate and imitate the grown-ups around him. The child is taught the language, enabling them to initiate several activities (Lasater & Johnson, 1994). They are taught greetings of the environment and realised that in Nigeria, greetings are highly valued and neglecting to greet another is a sign of disrespect. Children at this level/stage are socialised along with gender roles. The girls are made to develop skills along with the role of mothers. They are made to tie wrappers and wear blouses. Specifically, their dresses are female, while the boys are socialised, corresponding with a father's responsibility. They are made to realise their genders (Abiodun, 2018).

Children at this socialisation stage develop and construct stories with toys and mini cars, assuming roles in a trial or preliminary world and exploring different avenues with the outline for adult roles and responsibilities. For example, they practised cooking with sand, with the girls playing the role of the women (mothers), while the boys play the man's role (father) in the house (NTI, 1994). The child uses that great word "WHY" to discover the world (social role identification). The socialisation task is to make the child realise that he must control his behaviour and that failure to do so prompts blame and guilt (Sosteric, 2019).

Additionally, some children are moved out of the home into "schools", where teachers then begin the twelve-step process of "education" (reading enforcing). Once again, the type of socialisation received depends in considerable measure on the social class. Children or kids of average parents/guardians get prepared one way, and children of tip-top or the upper class

get prepared in another way, with the training being principally intended to fit and squeeze them into the valuable roles and jobs (factory worker, middle-class manager, elite, CEO) that their "birthplace" leads them.

The child is trained on how to interface with his environmental elements and attempt to meet other people's assumptions and expectations. This is when he begins to meet people other than his family, such as kids at school. Children/kids of the middle-class or working-class are trained on the worth of extended periods and competitive greatness. The children or offsprings of the upper-class or elites are taught the worth and value of authority, power and free-thinking along with the continual ideological reinforcement of the messages of their genetic, moral, or spiritual superiority

School Age

During this period, the child or kid figures out ways to learn, create and attain various new abilities, skills and information, accordingly fostering a feeling of industry and productivity. In addition, the child is given roles in the family. For instance, he is made to do some domestic work like washing plates/dishes, sweeping the house, clothes washing, the females are made undertake the kitchen work, supervision of the food and sometimes family shopping. Subsequently, this is additionally a social phase of advancement.

As the world extends a little, the main relationship is with the school and neighbourhood. Parents and guardians are, at this point, not the total specialists they used to be, despite the fact that they are as yet significant. The child begins to make friends, choose the social group he tends to hang out with and create his identity. Naturally, there is great challenge and confusion during this stage. The whole or entire process itself continues for twelve years. At this point, the successful socialisation of the individual is evident or celebrated by a ritualised graduation ceremony where the newly minted/initiated members of society are admitted into life reality, where they are to play their productive role (for men/boys/) or reproductive (case of girls/women) role.

Interestingly, according to NTI (1994), societal values are internalised and accepted to the point where the purpose of socialisation no longer needs to be obscured. Within this school phase, the child begins to establish contact with people from diverse social backgrounds. However, a hidden curriculum also teaches children critical cultural values such as achievement and punctuality. Within the educational environment, evaluations are made of children based on universal standards on how they perform instead of who they are. Education is critical and vital for acquiring the knowledge, attitude and skills necessary for adult roles and responsibilities, but the limitations of gender schema are also reinforced (Ololube, 2011).

Adolescence

At this level/stage, the child best relationships are with peer groups or age mates. From here on, socialisation rest primarily and principally on the child actions. The child, now an adolescent, acquires the skill of answering satisfactorily and happily the question "Who am I?" Life at this period is more challenging as the child attempts to discover and carve his personality and identity, tussles with social relationships or associations, and contends with ethical or moral issues. Here, the child's socialisation task is to discover and carve a personality and identity as an individual distinct from his family and a member of wider society. A significant undertaking for the youth or child at this period stage is to build up a life philosophy, and in this cycle, he has a tendency to reason in relation to ideals, which are conflict-free as opposed to reality or the real world (Ololube, Uriahii, & Agbor, 2013). The child lacks experience and thinks that it is simple to substitute standards and morals for experience. Be that as it may, he creates solid devotion to friends, peers and causes. Lots of boys and perhaps most girls experiment with minor delinquency, such as stubbornness, truancy, disobedience, stealing, dishonesty, sex offences, drug offences, wickedness, insult, assault, rebellion, self-doubts, etc.

Young Adulthood

In this initial or early stage of adulthood, the child seeks one or more companions and love. As he tries to find mutually satisfying relationships, primarily through marriage and friends, he generally also begins to start a family, though this age has been pushed back for many couples who do not start families not until the late thirties.

While personality is set mainly by this time, inevitable dislocations, like unemployment, divorce, or a severe illness, can lead to significant changes to self. This period is dominated by meeting day-to-day responsibilities and achieving goals set earlier in life. The juggling of conflicting priorities also characterises this period, especially for women who work but are expected to maintain the functions of mother and housewife (Ogbebor, 2012). The young adult substantial relationship is with marital friends and partners (Okam, 2004). Thus,, the young adult begins to feel secure in his identity. On the very positive side, he begins to develop intimate relationships with other individuals and is committed to a meaningful line of work. Thus, the young adults begin to struggle with intimate relationships and experience the feeling of falling in love.

Middle Adulthood

Middle-aged adults deal with trying to make a difference in other peoples lives. Getting involved or participating in the community is just one example. The adult tends to engage in creative, meaningful work and with challenges/issues surrounding his family. Also, a child and one who is now an adult is expected to be in charge. The adult is expected to take over from the parents in the matters of the family's welfare. He is expected to provide for immediate and extended family members, including parents, siblings, grandparents, relatives, etc. The major undertaking and responsibility are to maintain or sustain and transmit culture

and values through the institution of the family (kids taming) and function to create a stable and sustainable environment (Aibangbe, 2003). Here, strength comes by caring for others and producing meaningful things that contribute to society's development and betterment. Significant relationships or associations are in workplaces, the family and the community.

Late Adulthood

This is the stage or period an old adult often reflects on his life. This is the period of stock-taking. It is an examination to ascertain if one's life is fulfilled or not. The stage of life when the older adult looks back to see his accomplishments in life and tries to see if he made a difference in other peoples lives, not just his own. His strength here comes from the understanding and that the universe is vast, and he now has a separate or detached disquiet for his entire life, accepting that death is the end or completion of life.

Nigeria Socialisation Strategies

It should be noted that the socialisation process at the aforementioned stages (from infancy to adolescence), the strategies used are based on sanction or force (ingratiation, debt, promise, esteem, allurement, guilt, threat); need (altruism, etc.); explanation (hinting, direct request); through reward and-punishment strategies and on avoidance (Onyekwere, 1989). Traditional Nigerian socialisation approaches and methods are deeply rooted in force or intimidating principles and theories. Nigeria socialisation processes from family to school, churches, and various social organisations show evidence of our coercive or forceful nature in compliance circumstances. Traditionally, Nigeria uses age grades and folktales as socialisation agents. Through folk tales and age-grades, our youths learn to associate punishments and rewards with compliance and non-compliance, respectively. Mary (2007) hinted at this, stating that 'age grades mobilise our youths. Every level of development in the child's life is related or linked with specific indoctrination on society's expectations from the individual, and failure or inability to comply with indoctrinating messages are met with sanctions.

The fear appeal strategy is also used in the Nigerian socialisation process. Our ancestors exploit this to their advantage with high compliance success. They probably realised that, sometimes, it is more effective not to give facts but to scare the receiver into compliance. There is no distinction between those mentioned earlier and the modern Nigerian socialisation process. All types and forms of compulsion in modern-day Nigeria can be observed and seen. An examination of the dominant Nigerian institutions of socialisation, our family system, the school system, the church, and other agents of socialisation, teach rewards and punishments as motivational stimuli for compliance. For instance, the statements: 'Do your homework, or I will suspend your allowance', 'Go and fetch water, or I will spank you, deal with compliance through punishment and reward strategies. The threats of allowance withdrawal and smacking by teachers or parents are the several forms of intimidation used daily in schools and homes (Onyekwere, 1989).

The average Nigerian teacher and parent spend more time issuing threats, commands, and punishments than in explanation to get obedience or submission. A popular phrase 'Obey before complain', used by authority figures in most Nigerian institutions, attests to this assertion. In a society where the significance of persuasive appeals of punishment and rewards has been extended to sanctions and assistance of the dead in solving physical, economic, and social calamities, it will be an error not to explore this area (Aliyu, 2004).

Socialisation and the Life Course of the Nigerian Child

It should be noted that Nigeria socialisation process has undergone a lot. The agents of socialisation have neglected the roles in the socialisation of the Nigerian child. The family functions have been eroded, and the values and norms hitherto held dear to the people have been watered down. Most parents seem to hand over their child-parenting functions to the schools virtually. The ideal family setting, where the father was the breadwinner and the mother the home keeper, taking complete control of the growing children, is fast gone. Today parents chose between making a good living and taking adequate care of their children. Both of them often choose the former, and they now lean rather heavily on the school to take over their parental responsibilities. Many mothers have abandoned their roles as effective teachers of their wards/children to daycare centres and kindergartens (Olaleye & Oladeji, 2010). Therefore, the once predictable family conducive climate has changed. The period parents have for the socialisation of their children has greatly limited. There is no place for integrity and hard work any longer. People are no longer judge by their level of honesty, integrity, hard work, patriotism, loyalty, etc. but by wealth. The ends now justify the means.

The elders who are supposed to teach or transmit society's values, norms, and ethics to the younger generation are unworthy. Their actions and activities portray the opposite. The child is left at the mercy of his peers and the mass media for socialisation, which results in negative tendencies or deviant behaviours that are detrimental to society. Most of the problems which the Nigerian society faces today, manifesting themselves in various forms of delinquencies and vices like drug addiction among youth, examination malpractices, initiation into various types of anti-social cults and societies, crimes such as robbery, kidnapping, banditry, etc. can be traced in significant part to the apparent neglect these children are suffering or have suffered from the hands of their parents. Some parents no longer emulate excellent attitudes and help in aiding and abetting evil tendencies.

It is common to see parents pay for their children to gain admission. They enrol them in miracle centres from secondary school, where they pass WASCE without stress, get somebody to sit for their UTME examination, and want to continue that way when they get to the university. Gone are the days when hard work was encouraged by parents. Because some parents want their child to study a particular course, they will pay any amount for it, limiting the chances of deserving students (David, 2009). Parents are supposed to teach their children virtues that will enable them to live a morally good life, but they throw all that to the gutters.

The school as an agent of socialisation to some extent has failed in its socialisation function. The school is the second agent of socialisation, where students are taught morals, refined, cultured, and exposed to the etiquette of life. At present, the reverse is the case. There is a higher level of moral decadence in our schools. Some female students in tertiary institutions indulge in prostitution, while their male counterparts indulge in cybercrime (yahoo yahoo). The main reason for this laxity is traceable to the type and kind of tutelage or socialisation. Another valid reason is the love of materialism/money. The craze for materialism accounts mainly for several irresponsible attitudes. These things are viable because nobody hankers after excellence and due process anymore. Everybody wants to get rich quick, wants success, but how successful is success when it is gotten through a questionable means? Students want to become rich while they are still students.

Furthermore, the level of infrastructural decay overlaps the underfunding of the school sector. From classrooms to laboratories, they are nothing but enclosed spaces containing either obsolete or dysfunctional equipment. The structures are dilapidated and rickety. Computer science students are taught how to manipulate the computer keyboard imaginarily. There are no computers to aid the teaching of the subject. In the end, the students will be certified with certificates that they cannot defend (Caine, 2000). Teachers that are to be role models to the students, under them consciously or unconsciously aggravate this problem. Most teachers/lecturers live below expectation. They do not adequately teach students, but they expect students to excel in examinations. They collect bribes, popularly known as 'sorting' or 'blocking', to pass students. Most teachers make advances to female students, sponsor cult activities, come to class a few days before exams, and have favourite students based on their loyalty, not because they are academically inclined. Our supposed citadel of learning now harbours men of little or no integrity.

Religious organisations that are to teach morality, integrity, justice, fairness, honesty, loyalty, and sanction evil-doers have abandoned their functions. Instead, those who steal, cheat, oppress, covet are applauded, given front seats, and come forward for thanksgiving because they are rich and can offer huge sums of money to build and maintain religious houses and clergy.

In addition, environmental factors also affect or influence the socialisation process. For example, environmental factors of hunger, frustration and depression can affect an individual's receptivity to socialisation in isolation or combination. These altered physiological states upset the central nervous system, thereby influencing socialisation effectiveness in interpersonal situations. To a large extent, the environment determines the degree of hunger, frustration, and depression existing within a given society, which affects socialisation influences. A society experiencing relatively high levels of hunger, frustration and depression may also be high in the 'DDD. Syndrome'. This is the acronym that Faber, Harlow and West (1957) refer to the factors of debility, dependence, and dread that can interact to influence socialisation. The interaction of these factors operates to make up the socialisation of the child.

Conclusion and Suggestions

We possess, at best rudimentary and tentative knowledge of just what sort of environment will result. Helping the child through the various stages and the positive learning accompanying them is a complicated and challenging task. Search for the best ways of accomplishing this task accounts for much of the research in child development. Socialisation is a learning-teaching method or procedure that, when fruitful and positive, leads the individual to move or develop from infancy to a state of helplessness but very selfish to its ideal adult of sensible conformism and independent ingenuity or creativity. To keep perambulating in the wilderness of retrogression will do us no good. Beginning from the family to everybody involved, we have to desist from acts that are inimical to the socialisation of the Nigerian child. Our standards should be improved upon to enable talented minds to contribute to the development of their fatherland.

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