

Chapter 17

Primary Socialization on the Formation of Child Behaviors in Kenya: Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood socialization is particularly important in the formation of personality. Usually, through socialization, children learn to make important future choices in all spheres of life. This can be in terms of political, social, economic, and physical decision making. Recently, children have been reported to use inappropriate language on adults and their mates; fighting teachers, parents, and adults; burning schools; abusing drugs; engaging in premarital sex; even trafficking drugs; among other social vices. Moreover, children have been seen to value ethnic and religious pessimism. The pessimism has led to the retention of negative ethnicity leading to prejudice and stereotyping. Studies have pointed out poor parenting as the main cause for this disturbing trend. The study was guided by the social learning theory and cognitive development theory. The study adopted a simple analytical framework—the search, appraisal, synthesis, and analysis (SALSA)—to examine the main review types. Data were analyzed using discourse and content analysis.

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BACKGROUND

The term Socialisation is a polemic in sociology, social psychologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and educationalists (LibreTexts, 2019; Aransiola, 2016). The definition is relative and has a different meaning in social science literature (Perez-Felkner, 2013). Despite these being based on intuition or aligned with professional silos. The preponderance explains child behaviour, attitude, eccentric, upbringing and what informs a child personality (Denzin, 2010; Garry, 1982). The solid construction among socialization practices is based on the performance of adult roles to sway child behaviour (Ayiro, Mbagaya, & Othuon, 2019). However, adults do not pass on a unitary and static culture to children. The child experiences in various institutions such as a church, family, neighbourhood friends, and school partly defined their behaviour.

The institutions shape child predisposition (Bar-Tal, 1998). The researchers assume that the process is a long-life process of inheriting, disseminating norms, customs, and ideologies. The process provides an individual with the skills and habits necessary for participating within his or her society (Crisogen, 2015). For instance, parents type sex and stipulate roles for the children to adopt as they grow into adulthood (Gaskin, 2015). There is evidence that such practices influence career choice in Kenya education and industry development. A study done in Kenya shows that parents influence career choice by 40% (Gitonga, 2011). Also, female students dominate careers that are perceived by society as feminine (Macharia, 2011; Gitonga, 2011). The choice of the profession is dependent on parental beliefs and cultural background; these studies allude that parents instil behaviours and attitude that embrace gender equality. Therefore, it is obtaining social and cultural continuity and its sustenance (Oprea, 2016). In short, it is a process through which one generation sets the pattern for the next generation.

With the above explanation, the researchers do not wish to delve further into the definitions. However, there has been yet another varied understanding of the term. For instance, Sosteric (2019), understands socialization in two perspectives, “The social order and environment”. Sosteric urges that the process does not give one a choice. He explained that the social order imposes itself even before one understands what is going on. Hence, the process impacts, influences, and shapes how one express themselves and understand the world (Sosteric, 2019). In support of Sosteric view, Kilonzo (2017) observes that the physical environment influences physical activity and behaviour. Nicolao (2014), made a similar observation. In his study, the researcher observes boys’ express interest in hard work while girls on the other side express interest in soft work. The scholar believed parental behaviour and cultural belief inform such perception.

According to Denzin (2010), the behaviour is products of culture, political, and economic systems established in a specific environment. Moreover, it is antecedents of the demand of the situation which continues throughout an individual’s life. The formation takes two forms, primary and secondary behaviour formation based on the age, agents, modes of interaction and environment.

Primary and secondary forms of interactions are significant in understanding the formation of children’s behaviour (Crisogen, 2015). This review, however, focuses on early childhood experiences and adult interventions that shape child behaviour. Denzin (2010) explains that initial experiences entail interactive relationships and experiences that nurture a child into a human being. The central to this is the language which provides the child with the link to primary groups (Flanagan, 2002).

Charles Darwin investigated early childhood experience and behaviour formation. In 1887, he published, “ *Biographical Sketch of an Infant*’”. Charles described the development of his son in a period of two years, which mark the beginning of genetic psychology, which he based on the order of evolu-

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