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IMPACT OF PARENTING PRACTICES ON NATIONAL SECURITY IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Insecurity in Nigeria has become something of grave concern to all well-meaning citizens most of who continue to wonder how this dastardly situation came about; and worse still rather than abate, the problem is escalating and now seems to be totally out of control.

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to investigate impact of parenting practices on national security.

Methodology: The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population consisted of 363,547 married males and females in Benue State. A sample of 170 spouses was selected. Multi-stage sampling method was adopted which comprised proportionate and purposive sampling method. 'Parenting Practices and National Security Questionnaire PPNSQ' was validated and used to elicit information from the respondents. Cronbach alpha method yielded a reliability coefficient of .89. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Any mean score of 2.50 and above were accepted as having desired impact while anything contrary is rejected.

Results: The result revealed that adoption of good ethical values, proper child upbringing, proper parental monitoring are among parental practices that enhance national security while use of autocratic parenting style, poor parental guidance, lack of parental love and use of drugs and alcohol by family members escalate national insecurity. The study also found that parenting practices have both positive and negative impact on national security.

Recommendations: The study recommended that parents should endeavour to adopt parenting practices that enhance national security rather than those that escalate national insecurity.

Keywords: National, Parenting, Practices, Security



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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Findings may help parents, security agencies and counsellors among others. The findings may help parents identify and adopt parenting practices that will enhance national security and discard those that escalate insecurity. It may assist security agencies to understand their victims better, based on their family backgrounds. The study may assist counsellors in counselling parents and children on issues of security consciousness.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of Nigeria's security has been of great concern to the entire citizenry. In recent years, the nation has been bewildered with several security challenges ranging from Boko Haram insurgency, farmers-herdsmen clashes, politically motivated attacks, Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) activities, ethno-religious crisis, militancy, armed robberies among others. It is now a common scenario to state that Nigeria as a nation has been besieged by security issues. The issue of insecurity in Nigeria has become something of grave concern to all well-meaning citizens most of who continue to wonder how this dastardly situation came about and where no one is safe; and worse still rather than abate, the problem is escalating and now seems to be totally out of control.

Security as stated by Anyadike (2013) is a situation where a person or thing is not exposed to any form of danger or risk of physical or from anything that exposes one or a thing to discomfort that could disfigure. Security has various dimensions which include food security, political security, environmental security, human security, territorial security amongst others. This paper however focuses mainly on the territorial security of the nation.

National security generally has been seen in different dimensions. These include resource, boarder, demographic, disaster, energy and geostrategic security. Hence national security can be defined as the security that focuses on national defense, foreign intelligence and counter intelligence, internal and foreign relations. Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) asserts that national security is the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and social

political and economic objectives as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people. In the same vein, Jacob, Mato and Akintola (2015) affirms that national security can be seen as the protection of the ruling class from all the tendencies that could cause division among them and could threaten national cohesion through them as they tend to manipulate the values of the majority for their benefits. They further maintained that national security is ensuring internal cohesion and unity in order to protect the citizenry (both ruling and non-ruling class) from internal and external threats.

Insecurity refers to state of being exposed to real or imagined threat (to state, life and property) (Ortese, 2021). It is characterized by incidents of terrorism, kidnapping, cultism, violence, war, armed robbery that led to destruction of lives and property. Other effects include intimidation, harassment, anxiety, social displacement and mental ill health. In Nigeria, insecurity has been attributed to many causes. According to Edeh (2022) the major causes of insecurity include bad governance, poverty, terrorism/kidnapping weak judicial system, corruption, unemployment, porous borders, ethnic groups and religious differences. Simwa (2022) itemized causes of insecurity to include - unemployment, corruption, imbalance, weak judicial system, open boarders, high influx of arms, narcotics, slavery, criminal situations and terrorist threats. In his own view Zubairu (2023) attribute causes of national insecurity to include menace of unemployment, elite exploitation of ethnicity and religious differences, corruption, marginalization, inequality, bad governance and poor leadership. Oyetunji (2022) attributed it to dysfunctional or poor parenting. Jacob, Mato and Akinola (2015) asserted that parents are strategic in the move to make Nigeria more secure. They noted that

parenting is very fundamental in shaping the attitudes and behaviour of the individuals because it exposes children to various things during their formative years. Parenting practices they affirmed inculcate habits and behaviours that help build or mar the society.

Parenting practices are those specific things and skills that parents do or use while raising their children. It is the process of raising and caring for children with the aim of providing them with healthy lifestyles and development. According to Shamita and Reibanya (2016) parenting or rearing a child is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, financial and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Okoroafor and Njoku (2012) affirmed that parenting is a social act, a responsibility, a process and a role that is essential for society to ensure social stability, harmony and progress.

According to Shirani, Hanwood and Cottart (2012), parenting has become a source of risk and anxiety because most often the outcome is seen as the responsibility of parents. In other words, parents have always been held responsible for the behaviour and development of their children. Oshie (2022) asserted that parenting is the process of raising and educating a child from birth until adulthood. Synonymously, she affirmed that parenting refers to carrying out the responsibilities of raising and relating to children in such a manner that the child is well prepared to realize his or her full potential as a human being. Steinberg (2005) opines that generally, good parenting practices help foster empathy, honesty, self-reliance, self-control, kindness, cooperation and cheerfulness. It therefore, entails that parenting practices may have some impact on producing citizens that may either promote security of the nation or pose as agents of insecurity within and outside the shores of the nation. It is against this background that this study investigated impact of parenting practices on national security in Nigeria.

The study was anchored on Uric Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory. Ecological Systems theory was developed by Uric Bronfenbrenner in

1992. The framework anchors on community psychologists examining individuals' relationships within communities and the wider society. The theory asserts that children typically find themselves enmeshed in various ecosystems, from the most intimate home ecological system to the larger school system and then to the most expansive system which includes society and culture. Each of these ecological systems inevitably interacts with and influences each other in all aspects of children's lives. This study believes that parenting practices adopted by parents within the wider society may have some impact on the behaviour of some children leading to insecurity in their immediate and wider society.

2.0 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:

Nigeria is beguiled with a lot of security challenges ranging from kidnappings, boko haram attacks, unknown gun men attacks, armed robberies, IPOB sit-at-home orders, sexual molestations, banditries, cultism, among others. In Benue State, the issue of herdsmen/farmers clashes are common scenarios in most of the Local Government Areas. Oshie (2022) identified parenting as a tool that can help to inculcate good moral and ethical values to family members. Scholars like Ede (2022) enumerated causes of insecurity in Nigeria excluding family and parental angles. The researchers therefore, investigated the impact of parenting practices on national security.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. Ascertain parenting practices that can enhance national security in Nigeria.
2. Identify parenting practices that can escalate insecurity in Nigeria.
3. Determine impact of parenting practices on national security in Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the parenting practices that can enhance national security in Nigeria?

2. What are the parenting practices that can escalate insecurity in Nigeria?
3. What impact has parenting practices on national security in Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

Designs

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. This design allows the study of a sample of the population from which generalization can be made to the larger population. The design fits into the study since it requires collection of data from a representative sample of parents in the study area for the purposes of determining the impact of parenting practices on national security in Benue State, Nigeria.

Population and Sample

The population consisted of 363,547 married males and females in Benue State (National Population Commission 2006). A sample of 170 spouses made up of 85 males and 85 females was selected. Multi-stage sampling method was adopted which comprised stratified, proportionate and purposive sampling method. First, the State was stratified into three Senatorial Zones Benue North East; Benue North West and Benue South out of which Benue North West with seven Local Government Areas was selected. Proportionate sampling was used to a lot the number of participants to each Local Government while purposive sampling was used to select the actual participants based on their availability.

Instrument for Data Collection

Researchers constructed instrument titled 'Parenting Practices and National Security Questionnaire PPNSQ' was used to elicit information from the respondents. PPNSQ was a 24-item instrument with a four-point response format of Strongly Agree (4) – Strongly Disagree – (1). The instrument was divided into three sections, A-C which sought information on parenting practices that enhance national security, parenting practices that escalate national insecurity and impact of parenting practices on national security. PPNSQ was validated by an expert in Counselling psychology from Benue State University, Makurdi. The instrument was pilot tested and Cronbach Alpha of .90 was obtained which was ascertained reliable.

Procedure of Data Analysis

The procedure for analysis was basically done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Descriptive statistics of mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. A cut off point of 2.50 was used for decision making. Any mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted as having desired impact while contrary is rejected.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the parenting practices that can enhance national security?

Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations on Impact of Parenting Practices that can Enhance National Security in Nigeria

No	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	\bar{x}	Std	Decision
1	Adoption of good ethical values and norms in the family	150	41	3	6	3.68	0.66	Agree
2	Parents encouraging folk stories that stress tolerance, peaceful co-existence, justice	123	57	5	15	3.44	0.87	Agree
3	Teaching family members genuine word of God	138	57	3	2	3.66	0.56	Agree
4	Inculcating social responsibilities and community development in family members	127	69	2	2	3.61	0.57	Agree
5	Proper child upbringing	145	51	2	2	3.70	0.54	Agree
6	Teaching family members effective communication styles	123	71	3	3	3.57	0.61	Agree
7	Proper parental monitoring and guidance of the children	106	56	16	22	3.23	1.00	Agree
8	Parents playing good role models in the homes and society	99	50	33	18	3.15	1.00	Agree
Cluster Mean						3.51		Agree

Table 1 reveals the mean scores of items 1-8 as 3.68, 3.44, 3.66, 3.61, 3.70, 3.57, 3.23 and 3.15 with corresponding standard deviations of 0.66, 0.87, 0.56, 0.57, 0.54, 0.61, 1.00 and 1.00 respectively. All the items are above the criterion mean of 2.50. The cluster mean

of 3.51 is high above the criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that parenting practices can enhance national security in Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What are the parenting practices that can escalate insecurity in Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Impact of Parenting Practices that can Escalate Insecurity in Nigeria

No	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	\bar{x}	Std	Decision
1.	Use of autocratic parenting style in the families	68	35	54	33	2.64	1.16	Agree
2.	Engaging in family conflicts and violence	55	37	74	34	2.57	1.07	Agree
3.	Exhibiting attitude of intolerance among family members	53	49	68	30	2.63	1.03	Agree
4.	Use of drugs and alcohols by family members	55	36	85	24	2.61	1.02	Agree
5.	Lack of trust among family members	56	49	69	26	2.68	1.02	Agree
6.	Poor parental care and guidance	56	46	75	23	2.67	1.01	Agree
7.	Lack of love among parents and siblings	87	42	47	24	2.96	1.07	Agree
8.	Embracing dishonesty as family virtues	86	49	41	24	2.99	1.06	Agree
Cluster Mean						2.72		Agree

Table 2 shows the mean scores of item 9-16 as 2.64, 2.57, 2.63, 2.61, 2.68, 2.67, 2.96 and 2.99 with corresponding

standard deviations of 1.16, 1.07, 1.03, 1.02, 1.02, 1.01, 1.07 and 1.06 respectively. All the items are above the

criterion mean of 2.50. The cluster mean of 2.72 is high above the criterion mean of 2.50. This means that parenting practices can escalate insecurity in Nigeria.

Research Question 3: What impact has parenting practices on national security in Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations on Impact of Parenting Practices on National Security in Nigeria

No	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	\bar{x}	Std	Decision
1.	Good parenting practices encourages love and unity among citizens	123	50	15	12	3.42	0.87	Agree
2.	Good parenting practices builds trust among citizens	118	72	5	5	3.52	0.67	Agree
3.	Good parenting practices eschews violence in the society	115	56	21	8	3.39	0.83	Agree
4.	Good parenting practices inculcates rule of law among citizens	116	67	8	9	3.46	0.76	Agree
5.	Bad parenting practices inculcates immoral values in citizens	122	50	19	9	3.43	0.84	Agree
6.	Bad parenting practices introduces corruption and greed	120	60	8	12	3.44	0.83	Agree
7.	Bad parenting practices discourages mutual respect for lives and properties	111	54	23	12	3.32	0.90	Agree
8.	Bad parenting practices discourage independence and personal development of family members.	105	69	15	11	3.35	0.84	Agree
Cluster Mean & Std						3.42		Agree

Table 3 indicates the mean scores of items 17-24 as 3.42, 3.52, 3.39, 3.46, 3.43, 3.44, 3.32 and 3.35 with corresponding standard deviations of 0.87, 0.67, 0.83, 0.76, 0.84, 0.83, 0.90 and 0.84 respectively. All the items are above the criterion mean of 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.42 is high above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that parenting practices have impact on national security in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed eight parenting practices that enhance national security. They include; proper child upbringing, teaching family members genuine word of God, adoption of good ethical values and norms in the family, proper parental guidance and monitoring of children, parents being good role models, teaching family members effective communication styles, inculcating social responsibilities and community development in family members and encouraging folk stories that stress tolerance, peaceful coexistence

and justice. The finding agrees with Yinusa, Oluyemi, Bashiru, Abudulateef and Adejoke (2018) that investigated the factors responsible for the Boko-Haram insurgency activities in North Central Nigeria and how the family could help to forestall future occurrence of insurgent activities. The study was conducted on 20 participants selected through purposive sampling in Illorin, Kwara State. Their findings identified proper child upbringing, parents as good child role models, proper parental monitoring and guidance as parenting practices that enhance national security. The finding also agrees with Steinberg (2005) in his many decades of research on good parenting, found that parenting practices that foster empathy, honesty, kindness, cooperation and cheerfulness encourage national security. In the same vein, Dag and Cinar (2015) in a qualitative study on various perspectives in values education by elementary school teachers composed of 6 males and 4 females selected through random sampling in Province of Osmaniye,

Turkey; identified sympathy, affections, courage, friendship, cooperation, respect, honesty, courtesy, hygiene as social and ethical values that develop in families and corresponds to the areas of security. They affirmed that values encompass development of ethical, cultural, spiritual and social sensitivity and internalization of the values.

The study found the following parenting practices that escalate national insecurity. They include poor parental care and guidance, use of drugs and alcohol by family members; lack of love among parents and siblings, use of autocratic parenting style, engaging in family conflicts and violence, lack of trust among family members, embracing dishonesty as family virtues and exhibiting attitudes of intolerance among family members. This finding agrees with that of Yinusa et al (2018) that identified family practices that escalate insecurity in Nigeria to include poor home training, poor parental values, poor parental care and poor parental monitoring and guidance.

The study also found that parenting practices can either have positive or negative impact on national security. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Jacob, Mato and Akinlola (2015) in their study on the role of educators, parents and students, in the face of security challenges in Nigeria affirmed that parenting practices inculcate habits and behaviours that help build or mar the society. They found that parents are in the position to teach their children what could be termed "first aid security measures" and that parents should be good observers of their children in order to observe when they are manifesting strange behaviours that could lead to security risks not only to themselves but to the society at large. This is also in line with Oyetunji (2022) who found that crime in the society is as a result of poor parenting. He observed that many miscreant individuals in the society that pose security risk lack parental control. He concluded that security lapses in the society is in consonance with poor parenting roles. In the same vein, Yinusa et al (2018) found that family practices have contributed to the insurgency activities of the Boko Haram sect in

Nigeria which has become a serious security risk in Nigeria. The finding also agrees with Steinberg (2005) who found that good parenting practices promote ethical values of tolerance that gives room for good neighbourhood thus enhancing national security and teaching citizens to be security conscious. Filipek (2020) in his study on family as a fundamental social unit shaping security culture: Polish realities found that the role of the family in shaping security culture among children is indisputable and very significant and it should not be overestimated. To him, security culture consists of elements such as; values, norms, attitudes, actions, cooperation and activity, reasonable openness, wise trust and risk. The findings affirmed that the basic outline of security culture is shaped during childhood as school years.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the impact of parenting practices on national security in Benue State, Nigeria with the objectives of identifying parenting practices that enhance security and those that escalate insecurity. The study concludes that although the nation Nigeria is beguiled by a lot of insecurity issues, these can still be salvaged by parents adopting parenting practices such as proper child upbringing, teaching family members genuine word of God, adoption of good ethical values and norms in the family, proper parental guidance and monitoring, parents playing good role models, teaching family members good communication styles, inculcating social responsibilities and community development in family members and encouraging folk stories that stress tolerance and peaceful co-existence that can enhance national security.

However, poor parental guidance, use of drugs and alcohols by family members, lack of love among parents and siblings, use of autocratic parenting style, engaging in family conflicts and violence, embracing dishonesty as family virtues and exhibiting attitudes of intolerance among family members escalate insecurity in the society. The study concluded that good ethical and moral values when imbibed in the children at the

young age will go a long way in introducing them to virtues of love, tolerance, good neighbourliness and respect for human life that will enhance security in the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Counsellors should through advocacy, seminars and workshops enlighten parents on types of parenting practices that can produce morally and socially balanced individuals that can enhance security in the nation.
2. Parents will also be made to understand the dangers of not being good role models to their children hence they should desist from engaging in practices that will escalate national insecurity.
3. Counsellors should embark on enlightenment campaigns against acts of insecurity among children, youths and adults. Members of the public and parents in particular should be aware of negative impacts of parenting practices on national security.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Disclaimer Statement: This research is the original work of the researchers.

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Authorship and Level of Contribution

Happiness Ihuoma Igbo is the principal author of the research work.

Nancy Ngunan Agbe made input in the introduction, methodology, discussion and recommendation sections and edited the work.

Peter Terfa Ortese made input in the introduction, discussion and recommendation sections and edited the work.

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