



EMERGING PARENTING TRENDS IN AFRICA: CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS, ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK, AND ASSESSING DIVERSE EMERGING PARENTING TRENDS

**¹Jemimah Apidi Ogwang, ²John Bosco Rumanzi & ³Patriciah Kamau Makora
^{1,2&3}Marriage and Family Therapy, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Pan
Africa Christian University, Kenya**

***Corresponding Author's email: jemimahap@gmail.com**

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: To examine the evolving landscape of parenting across Africa in the context of globalization, urbanization, and technological advancement, and to explore how traditional cultural values interact with contemporary parenting influences and practices.

Statement of the Problem: Rapid social, economic, and technological transformations across Africa are reshaping family structures, parenting styles, and child-rearing practices. These changes create tensions between traditional cultural values and modern influences.

Methodology: The study employed a literature review to synthesize existing scholarly work on parenting practices in Africa. The review was guided by theoretical perspectives, including Ecological Systems Theory and strengths-based approaches.

Findings: The review revealed significant shifts in parenting practices across Africa, including the increasing adoption of authoritative parenting styles, greater paternal involvement, the emergence of digital parenting, and evolving gender roles. It also found that education, migration, urbanization, and socioeconomic changes have substantially influenced family dynamics and child-rearing practices. Additionally, emerging trends such as neo-colonial influences, daycare expansion, fostering practices, and the role of social fathers are shaping contemporary parenting experiences.

Conclusion: Parenting in Africa is increasingly characterized by a hybrid model that blends traditional cultural values with modern parenting practices. This demonstrates the adaptability and resilience of African families in responding to changing social and global realities.

Recommendation: Policymakers, educators, and child development practitioners should promote culturally responsive parenting programs that balance traditional values with contemporary child development principles.

Keywords: *African parenting, globalization, cultural values, digital parenting, urbanization, family systems, gender roles, child development, parenting trends, ecological systems theory*

INTRODUCTION

In a time of rapid change and globalization, parenting in Africa stands at a key crossroads between tradition and modern influences. The interplay of cultural values and technological advancements shapes the evolving approach to child-rearing across the continent (Mbugua & Njoroge, 2022). Families now have the opportunity to blend traditional wisdom with contemporary techniques, fostering resilience and community bonds (Okafor *et al.*, 2023). Exploring these diverse parenting trends offers important insights into how African families adapt to raising future generations in a connected world (Tshabalala, 2023). Ultimately, this reflects a strong commitment to establishing a foundation of growth, understanding, and love for Africa's future. This group paper will consider three parts: cultural values and parenting practices; assessment frameworks; and the assessment of diverse emerging parenting trends within the African context.

Cultural Values and Parenting Practices

Parenting in Africa is deeply influenced by cultural values and communal norms that highlight collective responsibility and respect for elders. In countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, and Ghana, child-rearing often involves not only the nuclear family but also extended kin and community members, fostering values of cooperation and social responsibility (Mbugua & Njoroge, 2022). For instance, in rural Kenya, a child's behavior is viewed as a reflection of the entire clan, which encourages collective guidance and discipline. However, rapid urbanization has disrupted these traditional systems, with migration and employment pressures leading to the rise of smaller nuclear families and a diminishing role for elders in parenting (Okafor *et al.*, 2023). Thus, navigating the balance between maintaining traditional practices and adapting to modern challenges is a significant aspect of parenting across the continent.

Impact of Globalization and Urbanization

Globalization and urbanization have significantly shaped parenting aspirations and values in cities like Nairobi, Lagos, and Johannesburg. Urban parents are increasingly prioritizing independence, self-expression, and educational achievement, as noted by Tshabalala (2023). This change represents a move away from traditional African ideals that emphasize obedience and communal harmony. Furthermore, exposure to international child rights frameworks and diverse parenting approaches has fostered a preference for authoritative styles that balance warmth with firm boundaries. Research in Kenya and South Africa

indicates that middle-class parents are leaning towards reasoning and communication rather than corporal punishment, as highlighted by Abubakar *et al.* (2024). These developments demonstrate a mix of traditional and contemporary parenting philosophies.

Technology and Digital Parenting

Technology has become a defining feature of modern African parenting. The spread of smartphones, social media, and online education has expanded access to information while also presenting new challenges around monitoring, privacy, and exposure to global cultures. Parents in Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa must decide how much digital freedom to allow while safeguarding moral development (Achieng & Kilonzo, 2022). At the same time, technology offers new ways for parental support. Online parenting groups, webinars, and digital counseling services connect African parents across regions, sharing strategies for managing academic pressure, mental health, and discipline (Chigangaidze *et al.*, 2023). This evolution reflects a hybrid model combining traditional wisdom with digital literacy.

Socioeconomic Changes and Gender Roles

Economic and social shifts are redefining parental roles. Women's participation in the workforce continues to grow across Kenya, Ghana, and South Africa, leading to dual-income households and more egalitarian parenting roles (Adebayo & Oladipo, 2023). Fathers are becoming more involved in caregiving, and mothers are pursuing professional advancement, challenging longstanding gender norms. However, inequalities still exist. Low-income families often face economic stress, which limits parental involvement and access to resources such as quality childcare and technology. Social policies and family support programs are therefore essential to bridge this gap and promote equitable opportunities for parenting.

Assessment Framework

This framework delves into the myriad parenting trends across Africa, exploring the interplay between traditional practices, modern influences, and emerging challenges. Each section is designed to reflect the dynamic nature of parenting across diverse African contexts, enriched with relevant citations.

The Ecological Systems framework

Breastfeeding is a prevalent parenting trend in Africa, but Hallam *et al.* (2025) note ongoing debates about its ideal duration and significant global variations in breastfeeding

practices beyond infancy. The Ecological Systems framework effectively illustrates how behaviors are influenced by five layers of the social environment: Microsystems, Mesosystems, Exosystems, Macrosystems, and Chronosystems. An and Libertus (2025) further emphasize the critical interaction between parents and children, highlighting the need to align parental beliefs with targeted interventions to promote motor development. This paper offers a comprehensive theoretical framework and practical insights to foster infant growth through culturally sensitive approaches.

Strengths-Based Approach

This framework emphasizes the importance of identifying and leveraging family strengths rather than focusing solely on weaknesses. Ghanem *et al.* (2025) highlight the value of strengths-based approaches, intersectionality, and trauma-informed care to support the positive development of Black youth and their families within child protective services and the juvenile justice system. By adopting this perspective, practitioners can better appreciate the positive contributions parents make to their children's well-being. Furthermore, Van Bavel (2025) highlights the strengths of the Tsuut'ina Nation and demonstrates how Indigenous communities can create culturally relevant, community-driven programs for youth. These initiatives are vital in fostering resilience and promoting collaborative family involvement in effective parenting. Ultimately, through these approaches, families can be empowered to thrive.

Traditional Parenting Practices

Traditional parenting methods in Africa emphasize community-based child-rearing practices that focus on collective responsibility. According to Sarnowska and Pustulka (2025), parenting expertise is shaped by cultural contexts and systemic changes that affect local knowledge systems. Extended family involvement is crucial in these practices, as noted by Bauer *et al.* (2025), who highlight that children with engaged fathers are more likely to adhere to nutritional guidelines regarding fruits, vegetables, and overall diet quality. Additionally, parenting practices and beliefs are influenced by broader sociocultural factors that extend beyond race and ethnicity, particularly in relation to dietary disparities. Tribal customs and cultural traditions significantly shape parenting philosophies, reinforcing that child-rearing is a shared effort involving the entire community.

Modern Influences on Parenting

The impact of globalization on parenting methods in Africa is profound, as traditional practices evolve with increased exposure to global cultural norms through media and technology. Chirca (2019) highlights notable shifts in parents' motivations and communication styles influenced by modern life dynamics. Shambare (2021) emphasizes Ubuntu as a key value in African communities, fostering communal bonds and aiding child development. Research by Ekundayo and Adigun (2022) indicates a shift in Nigerian parenting from communal models to a nuclear-family orientation, often influenced by Western ideals. This cultural transformation has led to the emergence of new family structures, such as single-parent households, challenging traditional norms. To preserve Nigerian values, parents must connect with extended relatives, and the government must promote African heritage through education and online platforms.

Gender Roles and Parenting

Traditional gender roles significantly influence the division of parenting responsibilities, often perpetuating inequities that limit opportunities for children, especially girls. Nelly *et al.* (2025) address the interconnected challenges of adolescent pregnancy, cultural norms, poverty, and systemic flaws in the education system that collectively undermine girls' education. Their research emphasizes that cultural expectations around gender roles often place the majority of child-rearing and educational support on mothers. To address these entrenched inequities, foundational strategies such as educational reform, community participation, infrastructure improvement, and targeted policy updates are essential. These approaches should prioritize equitable gender roles in parenting, ensuring that all children, regardless of gender, have the chance to thrive.

Education and Parenting

The intersection of education and parenting is vital in shaping children's futures across various African cultures. Cultural factors heavily influence the value placed on education and, in turn, shape parenting styles. Nelly *et al.* (2025) identify numerous barriers to girls' educational attainment, including adolescent pregnancy, cultural practices, and socio-economic constraints. Improving educational outcomes requires multi-sectoral and gender-sensitive strategies, such as educational reforms to expand access and initiatives to boost community involvement. Active parental involvement in education has been proven to enhance children's academic success, highlighting the importance of engagement in their educational journeys. Additionally, providing families with resources and support is

essential for navigating educational challenges and fostering a culture that prioritizes education for all children.

Cultural Identity and Parenting

Cultural identity significantly impacts parenting, especially in multicultural settings. Miljof (2020) stresses the crucial link between parents and children for healthy growth and social development, noting that cultural values and languages are often transmitted through parenting styles. According to Gottlieb and DeLoache (2016), as cited by Miljof, cultural contexts influence parental expectations and behaviors, which, in turn, shape parenting methods. Moreover, Nwobodo (2025) points out that socio-cultural and technological factors shape an individual's parenting approach during their upbringing. Additionally, migration and urbanization alter traditional cultural engagement, prompting parents to adapt while still aiming to preserve their cultural beliefs and practices for future generations.

Health and Parenting

Health beliefs and practices significantly influence parenting methods, especially regarding child health and nutrition. Acquah (2025) highlights the challenges faced by the health and parenting sectors in sub-Saharan Africa, despite policies aimed at improving adolescent health. In Ghana, conflicts between stakeholder interests and power dynamics often hinder the development and implementation of essential health policies, resulting in inadequate progress. Parents are vital in enhancing their children's physical and mental health, and effective parenting practices that emphasize health can mitigate the negative impacts of resource limitations and outdated beliefs. Education on nutrition, mental well-being, and health practices is critical for creating a supportive environment that promotes children's overall wellness.

Child Discipline and Guidance

Perspectives on child discipline differ widely, ranging from traditional to modern approaches. Nwobodo (2025) highlights that conventional African proverbs, such as “it takes a village to raise a child,” emphasize a communal approach that instills societal norms and expectations in children early on. However, the rise of Generation Z has ushered in noticeable shifts in disciplinary methods, complicating the enforcement of traditional discipline due to their digital literacy and assertiveness. Additionally, legal and societal views on child discipline have shifted considerably, necessitating a reevaluation of

parenting practices to align with modern values and foster respectful relationships between parents and children. In summary, parenting in Africa encompasses a complex interplay of traditional wisdom, modern influences, and evolving social norms, revealing specific challenges and opportunities families face across the continent. Expanding on this framework through further research and case studies can enhance our understanding of diverse parenting styles in contemporary Africa.

DIVERSE EMERGING PARENTING TRENDS IN AFRICA

In this section, we will explore emerging parenting trends in Africa, critically analyzing how they are being adopted and received, and their level of acceptance. Additionally, this section will examine the roles of globalization, social media, and the internet in influencing parenting norms in Africa.

Emerging Parenting Trends:

Neo-Colonial Influences in Parenting Norms

Web *et al.* (2021), in their article "Africa is not a museum: the ethics of encouraging new parenting practices in rural communities in low- and middle-income countries," report that the practices introduced in African contexts are sometimes unethical and originate in high-income countries. They note that many practices applied in the African context have a neo-colonial touch, rooted in the cultures of high-income countries. However, these practices are applied in rural, subsistence family contexts.

Rise of Digital Parenting

Apart from these imposed parenting norms, other trends are emerging worldwide, including, according to Pratiwi *et al.* (2022), a rise in digital parenting, particularly involving phones, TV, and other electronic devices. This trend became particularly prominent during COVID-19, mainly because most schooling was conducted online. Digital parenting involves allowing children to use digital devices and electronics for entertainment and learning purposes. This trend has both positive and negative effects on children's development. According to Browne, Thompson, and Madigan (2020), McArthur *et al.* (2022), and Rukmana *et al.* (2021), as reported in Pratiwi *et al.* (2022), adverse effects include cyberbullying and exposure to violent and explicit content. However, the positive effects can be strengthened through parental supervision and mediation of digital use.

Increasing Fathers' Involvement in Child Rearing

Another new parenting trend is fathers' involvement in child raising. Osborn *et al.* (2024) reported that fathers are becoming more involved in child rearing, which is improving their emotional, social, and cognitive well-being. Additionally, increased fathers' involvement has led to improved children's behavior, self-esteem, and resilience. However, despite the importance of fathers' involvement across different areas of children's development, many challenges remain, including cultural norms, financial constraints, and societal movements.

Social Fathers and Their Role

The African Health Research Institute reports a trend in which children are often raised not by their biological fathers but by other men in their lives, referred to as "social fathers." This trend is likely to persist, as research indicates that more children are cared for by social fathers than by their biological fathers.

The Rise of Daycare Services

Another clear parenting trend, especially in urban centers, is the rise of daycare involvement in child raising. Hughes *et al.* (2021) report that although much emphasis is placed on parental roles in child rearing in Africa, unregulated paid daycare for children is increasing. This trend is primarily due to the increasingly urban nature of parts of Africa, leading to smaller family sizes and a shift towards a nuclear-family system. The increased need for financial stability has led many individuals, especially mothers, to be away from their families for extended periods, making paid childcare more necessary.

Fostering Children as a Trend

Lastly, Lanneli *et al.* (2024) discuss the emerging trend of fostering in Africa. This practice is increasing due to the need for better educational opportunities for children, as parents often place their children with relatives in areas with better schools. Additionally, the outbreak of wars, violence, and internal displacements has further fueled this trend, resulting in more children being fostered across Africa.

Conclusion

The evolving landscape of parenting in Africa illustrates a remarkable blending of traditional values and modern influences, forming a rich tapestry of child-rearing practices. As families navigate the challenges posed by globalization and urbanization, they remain steadfast in their commitment to fostering resilience, community bonds, and a nurturing environment (Mbugua & Njoroge, 2022; Okafor *et al.*, 2023). The shift towards

authoritative parenting styles emphasizes the importance of warm, respectful communication, empowering children to express themselves while maintaining a sense of cultural identity (Abubakar *et al.*, 2024; Tshabalala, 2023). Furthermore, the strategic use of technology presents both opportunities and challenges that require careful consideration by parents striving to safeguard moral development while embracing change (Achieng & Kilonzo, 2022). Ultimately, the integration of diverse emerging trends signifies not only adaptability but also a profound dedication to shaping a brighter future for Africa's children, fostering growth, understanding, and love in an increasingly interconnected world,

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