
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Visionary Parenting™: A Faith-Integrated, Gift-Centred Parenting Style for African Christian Parents in Western Diaspora Contexts

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| ABSTRACT

This paper formally introduces Visionary Parenting™ as a new, academically structured parenting style defined as: a faith-integrated, gift-centred approach in which parents function as strategic stewards of a child's God-given design, systematically discovering, developing, and deploying the child's unique gifts, temperament, and calling through four developmental phases and four relational postures, within an emotional climate of unconditional acceptance, structured guidance, and purposeful expectation. The term 'visionary' carries a threefold meaning: Parenting that operates through sight (seeing the child's Design), insight (understanding the child's unique gifts and temperament), and wisdom from God (discerning the child's calling through theological grounding). Anchored in the Hebrew exegesis of Proverbs 22:6, specifically the phrase *al pi darko* ('according to his way'), the framework integrates three interlocking systems: the 4Cs (Coach, Counsellor, Consultant, Champion), the 4Ds (Discover, Develop, Design, Deploy), and the 12 Laws of Parenting a Gifted Child. Drawing on a comprehensive review of over 50 named parenting styles, developmental psychology, attachment theory, strengths-based parenting research, and African diaspora scholarship, this paper identifies a critical gap in the existing literature: no current parenting style simultaneously integrates gift-centred Development, theological grounding, phased developmental sequencing from birth to adulthood, and culturally specific support for African Christian parents navigating Western diaspora contexts. Visionary Parenting is proposed as an integrative framework representing the logical next Development in parenting science: from generic developmental goals to purpose-driven, gift-centred stewardship rooted in divine Design.¹

| KEYWORDS

Visionary Parenting, parenting styles, faith-integrated Parenting, gift-centred Development, African diaspora parenting, *al pi darko*, Proverbs 22:6, strengths-based Parenting, Christian Parenting, parenting framework

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Parenting research has accumulated rigorous empirical evidence for more than 6 decades since Diana Baumrind's landmark typology at the University of California, Berkeley (Baumrind, 1966). The field has expanded to encompass more than 50 named parenting styles, thousands of studies, and multiple meta-analyses involving hundreds of thousands of families across cultural and geographic contexts (Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). However, a critical and enduring gap remains in the literature.

No existing parenting style simultaneously accomplishes three foundational objectives: (1) integrating the universally validated elements of effective Parenting identified across all major research traditions; (2) addressing the specific and documented challenges of African diaspora families navigating between communal cultural heritage and Western individualist

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contexts; and (3) providing a systematic, phased framework for identifying and deploying a child's unique gifts, strengths, and divine calling from birth through later adulthood (ages 0 to 50+). This paper argues that Visionary Parenting™ fills this gap.

The framework draws its name from three theological and practical convictions: that effective Parenting begins with sight, the capacity to see who the child is designed to be, rather than projecting parental expectations; insight, the disciplined understanding of the child's unique temperament, gifts, and developmental patterns; and wisdom from God the spiritual discernment required to steward a child's God-given Design through each developmental phase. Together, these three capacities constitute the visionary posture that distinguishes this framework from all existing approaches.

This paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 reviews the existing landscape of parenting styles and the convergent evidence for universal parenting elements. Section 3 examines the Hebrew foundation of Proverbs 22:6 and the *al pi darko* principle. Section 4 presents the full Visionary Parenting framework, including the 4Cs, 4Ds, and 12 Laws. Section 5 addresses the parenting context of the African diaspora. Section 6 presents the methodology. Section 7 reports findings. Section 8 discusses implications. Section 9 concludes with recommendations for empirical validation.

A note on developmental scope is warranted at the outset. Unlike most parenting frameworks, which conclude their developmental arc at adolescence or emerging adulthood, Visionary Parenting is articulated as a lifespan framework extending from infancy through later adulthood. The framework's developmental tasks the 4Ds concentrate within the first twenty-five years of life; the framework's relational architecture the 4Cs extends across the entire parent-child relationship from birth to fifty years and beyond. This scope is theologically warranted by the Hebrew of Proverbs 22:6 (*ki yizken 'when he is old'*), culturally consistent with African and broader non-Western traditions of lifelong parental relevance (Nsamenang, 1992), and developmentally consistent with the lifespan perspective established by Erikson (1980), Levinson (1978), and Arnett (2000).

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Evolution of Parenting Style Research

The scientific study of parenting styles begins with Baumrind's (1966) identification of three prototypical patterns: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive, based on observational studies of preschoolers at UC Berkeley. Decades of research have consistently linked authoritative Parenting, characterised by high warmth combined with high demandingness, to the best outcomes across every measurable developmental domain, including academic achievement, social competence, emotional regulation, and the lowest rates of substance abuse (Steinberg et al., 1992). Maccoby and Martin (1983) extended this typology by adding the neglectful style, creating a two-dimensional matrix of demandingness and responsiveness that has since structured the field.

In the subsequent decades, an explosion of named frameworks emerged. Attachment Parenting (Sears & Sears, 2001) was built on Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory and Ainsworth's (1978) Strange Situation research, demonstrating that secure early bonds provide an internal working model shaping all subsequent relationships. Emotion Coaching (Gottman, 1997) demonstrated that children whose parents validate and coach emotions develop superior emotional regulation, fewer behavioural problems, higher academic achievement, and better peer relationships. Positive Discipline (Nelsen, 1981), rooted in Adlerian principles, established that kindness and firmness together produce better long-term outcomes than punishment-based approaches.

The strengths-based parenting movement, advanced principally by Waters (2015; Waters et al., 2019), demonstrated that parents who identify and cultivate children's character strengths produce measurably higher life satisfaction, academic achievement (mediated through perseverance), and resilience. Bloom's (1985) landmark study of 120 extraordinarily talented individuals across six talent domains found that 100% had a parent, teacher, or coach who gave them a love of learning and a desire to work in their area of talent at a young age. This finding provides the strongest empirical warrant for making gift discovery central to the parenting enterprise.

Darling and Steinberg (1993) established a foundational conceptual distinction: parenting style, as an emotional climate, differs from parenting practices as specific goal-directed behaviours. Style provides the context within which practices operate; two parents using identical practices produce different outcomes depending on the emotional climate. This distinction creates theoretical space for Visionary Parenting, which functions simultaneously as a style creating a warm, accepting, purposeful emotional climate and as a practice system through its 4Cs, 4Ds, and 12 Laws.

2.2 Seven Universally Validated Parenting Elements

The convergence of Pinguart's meta-analyses across more than 1,435 studies (Pinguart & Kauser, 2018), Rohner and Khaleque's (2005) PARTheory spanning approximately 2,000 studies across cultures, the WHO and UNICEF Nurturing Care Framework (2018), the 2016 Lancet Series on early child development, Darling and Steinberg's (1993) integrative model, and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) yields seven universally validated parenting elements: (1) warmth and acceptance; (2)

responsive caregiving; (3) emotional coaching and validation; (4) structure and clear expectations; (5) autonomy support; (6) cognitive stimulation and learning opportunities; and (7) strengths recognition and purpose cultivation. No study in the history of parenting research has found parental warmth harmful to child development (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005). Visionary Parenting integrates all seven elements within a unified theological-developmental framework.

2.3 Faith Integration: The Empirical Evidence

Chen and VanderWeele's (2018) Harvard longitudinal study, tracking 5,681 to 7,458 youth over eight to fourteen years, found that weekly religious service attendance in adolescence predicted 18% higher happiness in young adulthood, greater life satisfaction, and a significantly lower probability of depression, substance use, and risky sexual behaviour. Mahoney (2010) identified religiousness as a 'bivocal factor' promoting parental efficacy and warmth when combined with autonomy support, but potentially augmenting control when combined with punitive approaches. These findings support the additive value of faith integration in Parenting when it is combined with warmth and autonomy support, rather than coercive control, precisely the combination Visionary Parenting proposes.

2.4 African Diaspora Parenting: Strengths and Systemic Challenges

African parenting traditions, particularly West African frameworks rooted in Ubuntu philosophy ('I am because we are'), distribute the parenting role across extended family, elders, faith communities, and communal networks (Nsamenang, 1992). The Yoruba principle of communal child-rearing, the Griot tradition of oral transmission, and structured rites of passage represent sophisticated, multigenerational systems of child development (Nsamenang & Lamb, 1995). Nsamenang's (1992) concept of 'mutual mediation and reciprocity' articulates how African children learn through integration into everyday social life rather than formal instruction.

When these traditions encounter Western diaspora contexts, the cultural scaffolding that makes them functional disappears. Onwujuba et al. (2015) found that Nigerian immigrant parents experienced profound loss of communal support, with participants reporting isolation as a central challenge. Research at Anglia Ruskin University documented Black African families in London 'Parenting in fear of being penalised by authorities due to cultural differences and institutional racial misconceptions' (Bernard & Greenfield, 2020). Canadian research found African immigrant children experiencing some of the poorest mental health outcomes among immigrant groups, driven by racial discrimination, limited mental health awareness, and changing family dynamics (Beiser & Hou, 2021).

Ruth Chao's (1994) landmark research on Chinese Parenting demonstrated that styles labelled 'authoritarian' by Western researchers may reflect culturally distinct constructs in the Chinese case, *guan* (to govern and to care for). The parallel for African Parenting is significant: authoritarian practices exist within extended family support and communal cultural scaffolding in Africa that disappear in diaspora contexts, potentially producing negative outcomes without the protective cultural context (Mesman et al., 2018).

Despite these challenges, significant strengths are documented. Nigerian immigrants in Britain demonstrate the highest educational achievement among immigrant groups (Modood et al., 2002). Awokoya (2012) documented five success factors among Nigerian parents in the United States: supervision, cultural preservation, high academic expectations, family collaboration, and strong faith community involvement. These strengths provide the cultural foundation for Visionary Parenting.

2.5 Prior Use Analysis for 'Visionary Parenting'

A comprehensive search of academic databases, including Google Scholar, PubMed, and JSTOR, alongside trademark databases, including the USPTO and UK IPO, confirms that 'Visionary Parenting' has prior commercial use as a ministry brand by Rienow (2009) but has never been formally defined as an academic parenting style or typology in any peer-reviewed journal. Database searches using the exact term 'Visionary Parenting' returned 14 results on Google Scholar (searched March 2026), 2 results on PubMed, and 3 results on JSTOR; all were screened by title and abstract, and none met the inclusion criterion of providing a formal academic definition, developmental typology, or empirically validated parenting style framework. Trademark searches of the UK IPO and USPTO databases identified one existing commercial registration in the United States (Rienow, 2009). They confirmed that there is no prior registration for the proposed academic framework in the United Kingdom. Rienow's (2009) practical guide does not define measurable parenting dimensions, propose a developmental typology, or integrate developmental psychology with theology at an academic level. The current paper constitutes the first formal academic definition of Visionary Parenting as a parenting style, consistent with established precedent for parenting terminology operating simultaneously as commercial brands and academic descriptors (cf. 'Attachment Parenting').

3. The Hebrew Foundation: Proverbs 22:6 and Al Pi Darko

3.1 The Translational Problem and Its Consequences

The conventional King James Version rendering of Proverbs 22:6 'Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it' inserts the word 'should' where no equivalent exists in the original Hebrew text. As Stuart (2007) demonstrated, this insertion originated in the Septuagint, was perpetuated through Jerome's Vulgate, and carried into the KJV, representing an interpretive tradition rather than a translation. Phillips (2011, p. 138) states explicitly: 'There is nothing in the Hebrew text, not one word, syllable, jot or tittle that corresponds to or justifies they should go that most translations insert.'

This translational error has had profound practical consequences for Christian Parenting, particularly in African diaspora contexts where the verse has been used to justify one-size-fits-all, authoritarian approaches that contradict both the Hebrew text's meaning and the developmental science evidence base (Bernard & Greenfield, 2020). The correct reading transforms the verse from a prescriptive command to impose a single path into a sophisticated mandate for individualised, child-specific Parenting.

3.2 Chanokh: Consecrate, Not Merely Train

The Hebrew verb chanokh (Strong's H2596) appears only five times in the entire Hebrew Bible and carries the primary meaning of 'to dedicate', specifically the dedication of a building or sacred space (Keil & Delitzsch, 1866). Deuteronomy 20:5 describes dedicating a newly built house; 1 Kings 8:63 and 2 Chronicles 7:5 describe Solomon's dedication of the Temple. The Festival of Dedication (Chanukah/Hanukkah) derives from this same root. Only in Proverbs 22:6 is the verb applied to a person.

As Bird (2019) observes through the temple metaphor, to chanokh a child is to declare: 'This child belongs to God.' Keil and Delitzsch (1866) connect Chanokh to the Arabic practice of a midwife rubbing honey onto a newborn's palate to stimulate the sucking reflex. This inaugurating act awakens an instinct already present. The implication is profound: the verse is not primarily about instruction or discipline but about consecration, setting a child apart for their God-given purpose, as a temple is set apart for worship.

3.3 Al Pi Darko: According to His Way

The compound preposition al-pi (upon the mouth of) functions idiomatically throughout the Hebrew Bible as 'according to' or 'in accordance with' (Genesis 43:7; Numbers 26:56). The noun darko 'his way' refers grammatically to the child, not to a universal moral path. Keil and Delitzsch (1866) translate the phrase 'after the measure of his way,' indicating that the training must conform to the child's unique Design.

Three major scholarly camps interpret 'his way' differently. The traditional view reads it as the morally right path (Ross, 1991; Henry, 1706). The child-centred view reads it as the child's own individual nature and vocation (Barnes, 1847; Kidner, 1964; Swindoll, 2006). A minority revisionist view reads it as a warning about permissive Parenting (Stuart, 2007; Clifford, 1999). The strongest exegetical evidence and the widest scholarly consensus support the child-centred reading. Kidner (1964, p. 147) synthesises: 'The training prescribed implies respect for his individuality and vocation.' Swindoll (2006) applies this practically: the best Parenting is accomplished by discovering the child's natural desires and unique abilities and by encouraging the behaviour that will allow him or her to develop accordingly.'

3.4 Theological Convergence with Developmental Science

The al pi darko principle integrates with developmental psychology through three convergent insights. First, every child possesses a unique God-given design expressed in theology as calling and in psychology as distinctive strengths, temperament, and aptitudes (Thomas & Chess, 1977; Gardner, 1983). Second, parents are stewards whose responsive, attuned caregiving unlocks the child's Design, consistent with both the biblical concept of stewardship (Matthew 25:14-30) and attachment theory's secure base function (Bowlby, 1969). Third, the ultimate goal is purposeful adult contribution: calling in theological terms, and intrinsic motivation and flourishing in self-determination theory terms (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Supporting scriptures, including Psalm 139:13-16, Jeremiah 1:5, Ephesians 2:10, and the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), establish a consistent biblical vision of children as uniquely designed for specific purposes, with parents as accountable stewards of that Design. A further textual implication of Proverbs 22:6 warrants explicit notice: the verse's temporal horizon is established by the phrase *ki yizken* ('when he is old'), which marks the end-state of parental investment as the child's later adulthood, not merely their early independence. This Hebrew phrasing provides direct textual warrant for a lifespan parenting framework rather than a youth-truncated one a warrant the present framework adopts in extending its 4Cs relational architecture from birth to age fifty and beyond.

4. Visionary Parenting™: The Formal Framework

4.1 Formal Definition

Visionary Parenting™ is formally defined as: *a faith-integrated, gift-centred parenting style in which parents function as strategic stewards of a child's God-given design, systematically discovering, developing, and deploying the child's unique gifts, temperament, and calling through four developmental phases and four relational postures, within an emotional climate of unconditional acceptance, structured guidance, and purposeful expectation rooted in the conviction that effective Parenting requires sight (seeing the child's Design), insight (understanding the child's unique gifts and temperament), and wisdom from God (discerning the child's calling through theological grounding).*

This definition distinguishes Visionary Parenting from all existing parenting styles by its organising principle: the child's unique, inherent giftedness is simultaneously the starting point, the compass, and the destination of the entire parenting enterprise. Where authoritative Parenting optimises general developmental outcomes, Visionary Parenting optimises the specific outcomes the child was uniquely designed for. Where strengths-based Parenting identifies and encourages existing strengths, Visionary Parenting embeds strengths identification within a comprehensive theological-developmental framework that moves from Discovery through Deployment across a lifelong developmental arc.

4.2 The 4Cs: Four Relational Postures

The Coach posture (primary ages 0–15) positions the parent as observer, model, and instructor who identifies raw talent, creates environments for Discovery, and provides strength-affirming feedback across childhood and early adolescence. This posture draws on Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal Development and RIE's observation-before-intervention principle (Gerber, 1979). The Counsellor posture (primary ages 15–25) positions the parent as a trusted guide through the emotional, identity, and vocational complexities of adolescence and emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000), drawing on Gottman's (1997) emotion coaching framework and Hughes' (1997) PACE model. The Consultant posture (primary ages 25–50) shifts the parent to an advisory role across the established adulthood years, providing strategic guidance on vocational pivots, relational decisions, and generational stewardship while fully respecting the adult child's autonomy, consistent with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and Levinson's (1978) seasons of adult life. The Champion posture (primary ages 50 and beyond) positions the parent themselves now in late adulthood as the adult child's most enduring advocate, blessing legacy contribution, modelling graceful release, and transmitting intergenerational vision, consistent with the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14–30) and Erikson's (1980) generativity stage.

4.3 The 4Ds: Four Developmental Phases

The Discover and Develop phases (jointly spanning ages 0–15) together constitute the first developmental band. During Discover, the parent systematically identifies the child's gifts, temperament, passions, and aptitudes through broad exposure and careful observation, drawing on Gardner's (1983) multiple intelligences and Thomas and Chess's (1977) nine temperament traits. During Development, those identified gifts are progressively cultivated through focused practice and specialist mentorship within the same age window, mirroring Bloom's (1985) finding that talent development moves from playful introduction to progressive precision. The two phases operate concurrently rather than consecutively and, together, correspond to the Coach relational posture (primary ages 0–15).

The Design and Deploy phases (jointly spanning ages 15–25) together constitute the second developmental band. During Design, the young person constructs a strategic pathway from gifting to emerging vocation, integrating identity formation research demonstrating that warm parent–adolescent relationships predict mature identity formation (Meeus, 2011) and Arnett's (2000) account of emerging adulthood as the developmental window in which vocational pathways are consolidated. During Deploy, the young person releases their gifts into initial public contribution first personal, then social, then generational within the same age window. The two phases again operate concurrently and together correspond to the Counsellor relational posture (primary ages 15–25).

Visionary Parenting, therefore, integrates two distinct but coordinated systems rather than two parallel ones. The 4Ds are the child's developmental tasks of gift stewardship, completing by emerging adulthood: Discover and Develop together occupy the Coach years (ages 0–15), while Design and Deploy together occupy the Counsellor years (ages 15–25). The 4Cs, by contrast, are the parents' evolving relational postures across the full parent–child lifespan, extending past the completion of the developmental tasks: the Consultant posture (ages 25–50) and Champion posture (50 and beyond) are post-deployment relational postures in which the parent supports the adult child's continuing trajectory through established adulthood and into legacy contribution. This nested-but-asymmetric architecture bounded child-development tasks within an unbounded relational arc distinguishes Visionary Parenting from frameworks that conflate child development with parent role: the child's gifting work is bounded; the parent's stewardship is lifelong. The framework accordingly preserves both the developmental specificity of

strengths-based talent research (Bloom, 1985; Waters, 2015) and the lifelong intergenerational obligation characteristic of Ubuntu, African Christian, and broader filial piety traditions (Nsamenang, 1992).

4.4 The 12 Laws of Parenting a Gifted Child

The 12 Laws operationalise the framework's principles into daily practice. The Law of Design holds that every child is uniquely designed by God with specific gifts, temperament, and calling, correcting the documented tendency in the African diaspora to impose parental career aspirations regardless of the child's Design (Thomas & Chess, 1977; Gardner, 1983; Ogbu & Simons, 1998). The Law of Discovery positions observation before instruction (Gerber, 1979; Bloom, 1985). The Law of Environment positions the parent as architect of gift-revealing contexts (Gardner, 1983; Bloom, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978). The Law of Voice asserts that parental words shape the child's identity, directly addressing shame-based communication patterns documented among African diaspora parents (Utsey et al., 2007; Gottman, 1997). The Law of Boundaries holds that love without structure produces chaos while structure without love produces rebellion (Baumrind, 1966; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). The Law of Emotional Intelligence holds that feelings are data, not defects, and addresses African cultural tendencies to suppress emotional expression (Gottman, 1997; Mesman et al., 2018). The Law of Process recognises that gift development follows seasons across a twenty-five-year stewardship arc from playful Discovery in early childhood, through deliberate Development in middle childhood and adolescence, to strategic Design in late adolescence and Deployment in emerging adulthood within a parent-child relationship that itself extends across the full lifespan (Bloom, 1985; Waters et al., 2019; Arnett, 2000). The Law of Exposure holds that undiscovered gifts are unexposed gifts (Gardner, 1983; Bloom, 1985). The Law of Identity asserts that spiritual identity anchors psychological identity, addressing the identity confusion documented among second-generation African immigrants (Awokoya, 2012; Meeus, 2011; Chen & VanderWeele, 2018). The Law of Release holds that attachment is for launching, not holding (Bowlby, 1969; Deci & Ryan, 1985). The Law of Community formalises Ubuntu's communal principle within a structured mentoring network (Nsamenang, 1992; Onwujuba et al., 2015). The Law of Legacy calls for generational vision rooted in Deuteronomy 6:4-7 (Modood et al., 2002; Awokoya, 2012).

Table 1: Visionary Parenting™ Compared with Existing Parenting Styles

Parenting Style	Core Focus	Key Strength	Gap Addressed by Visionary Parenting™
Authoritative (Baumrind, 1966)	Warmth + structure	Best overall developmental outcomes	Adds gift-centred direction and theological purpose
Attachment Parenting (Sears, 2001)	Secure bonding	Strong early attachment	Uses bond as a launchpad for gift discovery, not as an end goal
Strengths-Based (Waters, 2015)	Identifying child strengths	Life satisfaction and resilience	Embeds strengths in a phased theological-developmental framework
Emotion Coaching (Gottman, 1997)	Emotional validation	Emotional intelligence and regulation	Integrates EQ as an essential tool for navigating calling
Grace-Based (Kimmel, 2004)	Unconditional acceptance	Faith-integrated warmth	Adds systematic gift discovery as a mission within Grace
Ubuntu/African Communal (Nsamenang, 1992)	The community raises a child	Relational and communal support	Formalises communal parenting within structured 4Cs and mentoring networks
Visionary Parenting™ (Oshiobugie, 2026)	Gift-centred, faith-integrated stewardship	Integrates all six dimensions: theological, psychological, developmental, cultural, strengths-based, and phased	First parenting style to simultaneously integrate all six dimensions within a unified framework

Source: Author's synthesis from reviewed literature (Baumrind, 1966; Sears & Sears, 2001; Gottman, 1997; Waters, 2015; Kimmel, 2004; Nsamenang, 1992; Oshiobugie, 2026)

Table 2: The 4Cs and 4Ds Integrated Developmental Framework of Visionary Parenting™

Phase Posture /	Age Range	Framework	Parental Role and Expected Outcomes
DISCOVER	Ages 0–15	4Ds Phase 1	Expose the child to diverse environments; document patterns of engagement, joy, and flow. Expected outcome: Child articulates 3–5 natural strengths by age 15.
DEVELOP	Ages 0–15	4Ds Phase 2	Focused cultivation of identified gifts through mentorship and deliberate practice within the same age window as Discover. Expected outcome: Measurable competence in primary gift areas by age 15.
DESIGN	Ages 15–25	4Ds Phase 3	Map gifts to emerging vocation; build identity and early professional networks. Expected outcome: Clear vocational direction aligned with gifts and faith by age 25.
DEPLOY	Ages 15–25	4Ds Phase 4	Initial release into the purpose arena — personal, social, and generational dimensions activated. Expected outcome: Young adult operating in gifting within a defined contribution context by age 25.
COACH	Primary: 0–15	4Cs Posture 1	Observe, model, instruct, and identify raw talent, cultivating it through responsive scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978; Bloom, 1985).
COUNSELLOR	Primary: 15–25	4Cs Posture 2	Deep listening and powerful questions guide identity formation, vocational mapping, and the transition into emerging adulthood (Gottman, 1997; Arnett, 2000).
CONSULTANT	Primary: 25–50	4Cs Posture 3	Advisory role across established adulthood; strategic guidance on vocational pivots, relational decisions, and generational stewardship while respecting full adult autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Levinson, 1978).
CHAMPION	Primary: 50+	4Cs Posture 4	Greatest advocate; bless legacy contribution, model graceful release, and transmit intergenerational vision (Erikson, 1980; Deuteronomy 6:4–7).

Source: Oshiobugie (2026); informed by Arnett (2000), Bloom (1985), Deci & Ryan (1985), Erikson (1980), Gottman (1997), Levinson (1978), Meeus (2011), Vygotsky (1978)

5. The Visionary Parenting™ Integrative Framework: Conceptual Diagram

Figure 1 presents the integrative architecture of Visionary Parenting. The framework is organised around three concentric layers. The outermost layer represents the theological foundation: the al pi darko principle (Proverbs 22:6), the conviction that each child carries a God-given design (Psalm 139:13-16; Ephesians 2:10), and the biblical mandate for parental stewardship (Matthew 25:14-30). The middle layer represents the emotional climate: the authoritative combination of unconditional acceptance, structured guidance, and purposeful expectation within which all practices operate (Baumrind, 1966; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). The innermost layer represents the operational systems: the 4Cs relational postures and 4Ds developmental phases through which gift discovery, Development, Design, and Deployment are systematically pursued. The 12 Laws of Parenting a Gifted Child serve as the connective tissue between all three layers, translating theological conviction and developmental research into daily parenting practice. The output of the entire system is adults who know who they are, know what they carry, and know where they are going.

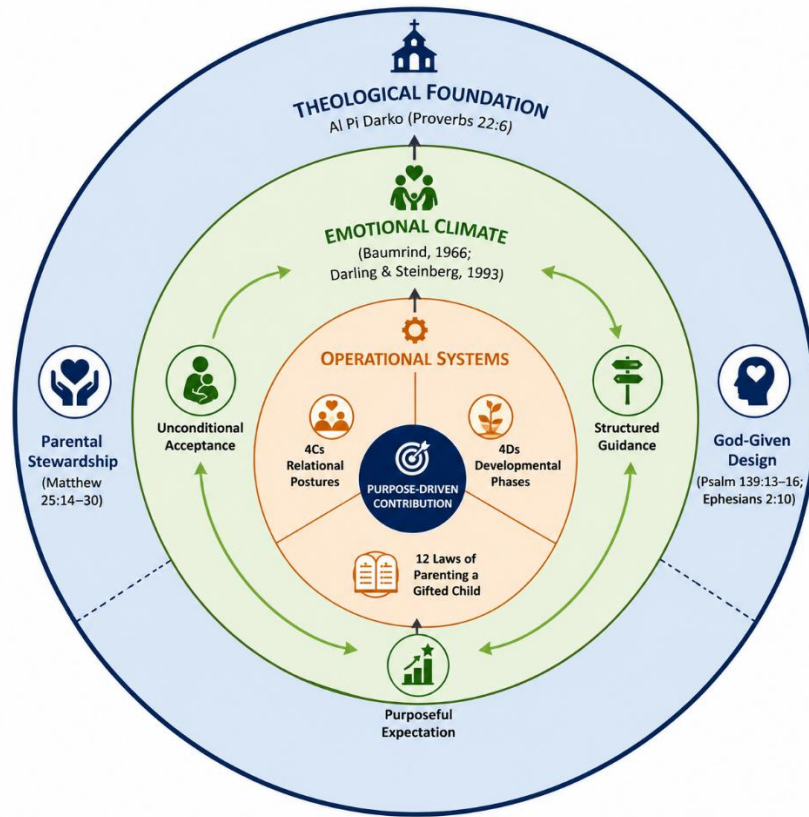


Figure 1: The Visionary Parenting™ Integrative Framework

Source: Oshiobugie (2026)

6. Methodology

This paper employs a conceptual framework development methodology, a well-established approach in parenting science for introducing new theoretical constructs prior to empirical validation (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Waters, 2015). The methodology proceeds through four sequential stages.

Stage 1 involved a comprehensive review of over 50 named parenting styles and frameworks published between 1966 and 2026, drawn from PubMed, Google Scholar, PsycINFO, and JSTOR. Search terms included 'parenting styles,' 'parenting typology,' 'faith-based parenting,' 'African diaspora parenting,' 'strengths-based parenting,' and 'gift-centred development.' Inclusion criteria required a peer-reviewed publication or a recognised academic contribution to the parenting styles literature.

Stage 2 involved systematic gap identification across five dimensions: theoretical (which constructs are absent), cultural (which populations are underserved), developmental (which life-phase structures exist), theological (how faith integration is handled), and practical (what operational guidance is available). This analysis confirmed the gift-centred, diaspora-bridging, faith-integrated gap that Visionary Parenting addresses.

Stage 3 involved framework synthesis drawing on seven validated research traditions: authoritative parenting theory (Baumrind, 1966), attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth, 1978), emotion coaching (Gottman, 1997), strengths-based Parenting (Waters, 2015), talent development research (Bloom, 1985), Ubuntu philosophy and African child development (Nsamenang, 1992), and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Theological grounding drew on Hebrew lexicography, major biblical commentaries (Keil & Delitzsch, 1866; Kidner, 1964; Barnes, 1847), and empirical research on faith and youth outcomes (Chen & VanderWeele, 2018).

Stage 4 involved operationalising into measurable constructs the 4Cs, 4Ds, and 12 Laws with specific outcome predictions at age 15 (end of Coach phase/completion of Discover and Develop), age 25 (end of Counsellor phase/completion of Design and Deploy), age 50 (end of Consultant phase/generativity markers), and beyond 50 (Champion phase/legacy markers), enabling future empirical validation through scale development, cross-sectional cohort comparison, and a multi-decade longitudinal research design.

7. Results and Findings

7.1 The Gap Confirmed

The systematic review confirmed that no existing parenting style simultaneously occupies all four dimensions: gift-centred developmental focus, faith integration grounded in Hebrew exegesis, phased developmental sequencing from birth to adulthood, and cultural specificity for African Christian diaspora families. Table 1 illustrates the comparative positioning of Visionary Parenting against seven major existing frameworks, demonstrating its unique integrative contribution across all six dimensions.

7.2 The Al Pi Darko Principle as Academic Foundation

The Hebrew analysis of Proverbs 22:6 establishes a rigorous lexicographic foundation for the gift-centred approach. The mistranslation of *al pi darko* as 'the way he should go' has been used for centuries to justify one-size-fits-all Parenting that the Hebrew text explicitly contradicts. The correct reading confirmed by Barnes (1847), Kidner (1964), Keil and Delitzsch (1866), Phillips (2011), and Swindoll (2006) mandates individualised, child-specific Parenting based on each child's unique God-given design. This provides independent theological warrant for what developmental psychology has confirmed: child-centred, temperament-informed, strengths-focused Parenting produces superior outcomes (Thomas & Chess, 1977; Waters, 2015; Bloom, 1985).

7.3 The Trajectory of Parenting Science: Toward Gift-Centred Development

A chronological analysis reveals eight major paradigm shifts in parenting science: from Behaviourism to Responsiveness (Watson, 1928 to Spock, 1946); from Instinct to Typology (Baumrind, 1966); from Typology to Attachment (Bowlby and Ainsworth, 1969–1973); from Individual to Systemic (1980s–1990s); from Behavioural to Neuroscientific (2000s–2010s); from Deficit-Based to Strengths-Based (Greene, 1998; Waters, 2015); from Expert-Driven to Collaborative (2010s–2020s); and from Trauma-Ignorant to Trauma-Informed (Felitti & Anda, 1998). Visionary Parenting represents a proposed integrative advance in parenting science: from optimising general developmental outcomes to optimising the specific outcomes each child was uniquely designed for. If empirically validated, this shift would represent a significant disciplinary development consistent with the field's progressive trajectory from behaviourism toward purpose-driven, gift-centred stewardship.

7.4 Twelve Laws, Twelve Documented Failures Addressed

The 12 Laws directly correspond to twelve specific, research-documented challenges in African diaspora parenting identified in the systematic review: career imposition (Law of Design), observation deficits (Law of Discovery), narrow exposure (Law of Environment), shame-based communication (Law of Voice), false disciplinary dichotomies (Law of Boundaries), emotional suppression (Law of Emotional Intelligence), achievement impatience (Law of Process), limited exposure (Law of Exposure), identity confusion (Law of Identity), parental enmeshment (Law of Release), diaspora isolation (Law of Community), and short-term survival focus (Law of Legacy). Visionary Parenting preserves the strengths of Ubuntu, Christian conviction, and cultural pride while integrating evidence-based practices from Western developmental science.

8. Discussion

The findings of this paper converge on a single point of theoretical significance: the child is not raw material to be shaped into the parent's image, but a unique creation to be consecrated to God's purposes. This principle, grounded simultaneously in Hebrew lexicography and developmental science, provides the theoretical foundation for a proposed integrative advance in parenting research.

Visionary Parenting makes four distinct contributions to the existing literature. First, it introduces gift-centred stewardship as the organising principle of a comprehensive parenting style and advances beyond strengths-based Parenting (Waters, 2015) by embedding strengths identification within a theological framework, a phased developmental sequence, and a specific cultural context. Second, it provides the first academically structured parenting framework specifically designed for African Christian diaspora families, integrating Ubuntu communal values, Christian theological conviction, and Western developmental science into a single, integrated system. Third, it operationalises the *al pi darko* principle of Proverbs 22:6 into measurable parenting constructs, providing rigorous theological grounding for child-centred, individualised Parenting that converges independently with developmental psychology (Thomas & Chess, 1977; Gardner, 1983). Fourth, it proposes a complete developmental arc from birth to age fifty and beyond, addressing the gap in most parenting frameworks that focus on childhood and early adolescence and do not extend to vocational contribution, established adulthood, or the intergenerational legacy stage of the parent-child relationship.

The framework's tripartite foundation of sight, insight, and wisdom from God provides a theologically coherent account of how visionary Parenting is achieved: sight enables parents to see the child's current reality and emerging Design rather than projecting expectations; insight enables understanding of the unique pattern of gifts and temperament; and wisdom from God enables discernment of how to steward that Design through each developmental phase. This triad corresponds structurally to the three components of Darling and Steinberg's (1993) integrative model: the emotional climate (sight), the goal-directed practices (insight), and the cultural context (wisdom), though integrated within a theological rather than a secular framework.

Important limitations must be acknowledged. As a conceptual framework, Visionary Parenting has not yet been empirically validated. The predicted outcomes at ages 15, 25, 50, and beyond fifty are theoretically derived rather than empirically confirmed, and validation across the full lifespan arc will require multi-decade longitudinal designs supplemented by cross-sectional and retrospective cohort methods. The cross-cultural applicability of the framework beyond African Christian diaspora communities requires investigation. The integration of theological and psychological elements raises legitimate methodological questions about operationalising faith-based constructs for secular measurement, a challenge shared by all faith-integrated parenting frameworks (Mahoney, 2010).

A further limitation concerns the extended developmental arc proposed here: by positioning the Consultant posture across ages 25–50 and the Champion posture from age fifty onward, the framework necessarily extends parenting research into life-course scholarship more typically associated with adult development, gerontology, and intergenerational studies (Erikson, 1980; Levinson, 1978; Baltes, 1987). Empirical validation of the full arc will require interdisciplinary collaboration across developmental psychology, adult development, family science, and lifespan theology. It will benefit from accelerated cross-sectional designs at each age boundary in advance of multi-decade longitudinal completion.

A further methodological consideration concerns the epistemological status of the framework's theological premises. The convictions that children carry a God-given design and a divine calling are not proposed as empirically testable claims in the conventional scientific sense. Rather, they function as motivating convictions within a specific cultural and faith community that orient parents toward observational attentiveness, gift-identifying practices, and purposeful stewardship behaviours. These behaviours are empirically observable and measurable regardless of the theological convictions motivating them, consistent with the established approach in faith-integrated parenting research (Chen & VanderWeele, 2018; Mahoney, 2010). This distinction between motivating conviction and observable behaviour parallels the treatment of Ubuntu philosophy in African parenting research (Nsamenang, 1992): the philosophical premise is culturally grounded and not universally held, but the parenting practices it motivates are empirically tractable. Future empirical work on the Visionary Parenting Inventory (VPI) will operationalise the framework's constructs in terms of behaviours that are measurable across faith and secular contexts.

9. Conclusion

This paper has formally introduced Visionary Parenting™ as a proposed integrative advance in parenting science: from generic developmental goals to purpose-driven, gift-centred stewardship rooted in divine Design. The framework addresses a documented and previously unfilled gap in the literature: the simultaneous integration of gift-centred Development, theological grounding in the Hebrew exegesis of Proverbs 22:6, phased developmental sequencing from birth to adulthood, and culturally specific support for African Christian parents navigating Western diaspora contexts.

Three insights from this comprehensive review have not been previously synthesised. First, gift-centred Parenting is the logical next paradigm: the field has progressively moved from behaviourism to responsiveness to typology to attachment to neuroscience to strengths, and the next frontier is purpose. Bloom's (1985) finding that 100% of extraordinarily talented individuals had someone who ignited their passion early provides the strongest empirical warrant for making gift discovery the organising principle of Parenting. Second, the African diaspora requires a framework that honours both cultural roots and the evidence base, simultaneously preserving the strengths of Ubuntu, Christian conviction, and respect while integrating emotional attunement, individual recognition, and adaptive practices. Third, faith integration, when combined with warmth, autonomy support, and systematic gift discovery rather than with punitive control, is measurably additive to child and youth outcomes (Chen & VanderWeele, 2018).

The framework is proposed for empirical testing through three sequential research phases. Phase One involves the Development of a Visionary Parenting Inventory (VPI): a proposed 48-item self-report measure with four subscales corresponding to the 4Cs relational postures (Coach, Counsellor, Consultant, Champion), each containing 12 items assessing frequency of role-appropriate behaviours, emotional climate markers, and gift-identification practices, rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses would establish the VPI's factor structure, reliability, and convergent validity with established parenting measures, including the Authoritative Parenting Inventory (Robinson et al., 1995) and the Parent-Child Relationship Scale (Furman & Giberson, 1995). Items within the Coach subscale are calibrated for parents of children aged 0–15; the Counsellor subscale for parents of young people aged 15–25; the Consultant subscale for parents of adult children aged 25–50; and the Champion subscale for parents of adult children aged 50 and beyond. Practitioners administering the VPI should note that a parent with multiple children spanning different age bands will respond simultaneously to multiple subscales, reflecting the developmental diversity within many family systems. Phase Two involves a Gift Discovery Protocol for the Discover and Develop phases (ages 0–15): a structured observational instrument enabling parents to systematically document emerging gift indicators across Gardner's (1983) multiple intelligence domains and Thomas and Chess's (1977) nine temperament traits, with progressive depth markers calibrated for the early-childhood discovery sub-window and the middle-childhood-to-adolescence developmental sub-window. Phase Three involves longitudinal tracking of outcome predictions at age 15 (child can articulate 3–5 natural strengths and demonstrates measurable competence in primary gift areas, marking the end of the Coach / Discover-Develop phase), age 25 (clear vocational direction aligned with gifts and faith, and active operation in gifting within an initial contribution context, marking the end of the Counsellor / Design-Deploy phase), age 50 (adult fully operating in gifting professionally and spiritually, with the parental posture transitioned to Consultant), and beyond age 50 (Champion posture active; adult child operating in established calling with parental advocacy maintained), using validated measures of academic achievement, identity development, vocational clarity, generativity (Erikson, 1980), and lifespan wellbeing. The compression of Discover/Develop outcomes into a single age-15 checkpoint and Design/Deploy outcomes into a single age-25 checkpoint reflects the paired operation of these phases within shared developmental bands and produces two robust, measurable developmental thresholds rather than four narrower ones, without reducing empirical testability. Given the duration of the full longitudinal Design, interim validation through cross-sectional cohort comparison and retrospective sampling at each age boundary is proposed as a feasible accelerated pathway. Future research should additionally examine the framework's applicability across cultural contexts beyond the African Christian diaspora, investigate the mechanisms through which integrating theological conviction and developmental practice affects child outcomes, and develop culturally adapted versions of the framework for African families in diverse Western diaspora contexts, including North America, continental Europe, and Australia.

Statements and Declarations

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Data Availability: No datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

Ethical Approval: This paper is a theoretical and conceptual contribution and did not involve human subjects, human material, or human data collection.

Author Note: Visionary Parenting™ is the author's original practitioner-research framework, developed over 15 years of direct frontline work with more than 7,000 young people and families, individually, and over 40,000 through structured programmes, in the United Kingdom. This paper constitutes the first formal academic definition and peer-reviewed presentation of the framework. The author is the founder of Youth Visionaries CIC (Company No. 16355763) and Future Path Mentoring Ltd, both based in Milton Keynes, United Kingdom. The commercial application of the framework by these organisations represents a potential conflict of interest, which the author discloses in accordance with journal policy. The author affirms that the academic

contribution of this paper, the formal definition, theoretical grounding, and gap analysis, stands independently of its commercial application.

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