
EFFECTS OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT ON PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Personality development of children is being influenced by many factors among which are school environment. This paper examines the effects of school environment on personality development of primary school children in Nigeria. The concept school environment was looked at, which gave us knowledge of what school is and its activities. Personality was defined as the unique and distinctive characteristic which set a person apart from one another. Also, the characteristics of personality were mentioned, out of which, personality is said to be unique and specific. The effects of school environment on personality development of primary school pupils were highlighted; head teachers, teachers and peers contribution were glaringly stated, it was stated that head teaches and teachers instilled the culture of cleanliness in children and restrictions on bad behaviour. The writer made recommendation, such as, teachers should always try to stand as a role model to children and advocate hard work, cleanliness and inhibitions of serially disapproved behaviours. Finally conclusion was 'drawn, which showed the effects of some school variables on children's personality.

Introduction

School atmosphere contributes a lot in the personality development of primary school children in Nigeria. The personality characteristics of the head teachers, teachers, classmates, the teaching methods, curriculum, opportunities for co-curricular activities, the values, and ideas maintained by the school environment and the general atmosphere of the classroom and school all influence the personally development of primary school children. This is why there is a great

demand and rush for the admission in good and reputed schools as they try to provide all that is desired for the balanced personality development of the children. Mangal (2007) stated that;

The environment of the child posses a vital Potential for shaping and determining his Personality. School environment is characterized by the mode of the living of the people, how they

eat, think, dress, feel, behave with each other, etc. cast strong influence in the behaviour of the developing children and their personality is fashioned (p. -123),

The main function of the school is to produce people who successfully live in their society and social well-being. School is a place where teachers assist in the development and perception of the acceptable natural character, that is, those attitudes, habits, ideas considered necessary and desirable for natural survival (Ukeje, 1986).

The personality of an individual is all about what a person is in his totality. It includes everything about a person: his covert as well as overt behaviour, his cognitive, affective and cognitive behaviours as well as conscious and unconscious layers of behaviours.

School environment consist of, head teachers, learners, teachers, school children and structures (buildings). This paper looks at the effects of head teachers, teachers and school children (peer group) on the personality development of primary school children in Nigeria.

School Environment

School environment is a place where children/students in schools are

trained to assure responsibilities for their behaviour and are allowed freedom of expression and sometimes involved in decision making process. The Encyclopedia of Education (1971) maintained that;

School is the cultural formal agency for transmitting important information to the child. From the age of five, the child becomes the object of a highly, structure acculturation process in a system which, depending on the child's previous experience may or may not be conducive to learning (p. 84).

Handbook of teaching and policy (1983) states that, school can make a difference and can do much to foster good behaviour. The school environment helps in producing more educated, sensitized and more enlightened children in the society. The school as a social institution exposes children to greater social diversity, complexity and thereby introducing them to the experience, evaluation and texts base on the prescribed criteria and standards of performance (Mahuta, 2007).

Schools like any other formal organizations are created to serve the society by concentrating attention and resources for that purpose. School exerts influence in the society

by demonstrating the ideals and values they stand for. Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2004) defined school as a place where children go to be educated. Encyclopedia of Education (1971) explains that, primary (elementary) school is thus, a child's first encounter with a social setting which operates on primary-group basis. School child is defined, as a child who attends school (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2004). The school as an institution is termed variously as 'Black Box' and "engine house" that somehow produce or fail to produce particular valued educational objective. The school environment can equally be viewed as a formal organization similar to factory, hospital and firms (Jefferson, 1984).

Personality defined

There appear to be a little unanimity among the psychologist about the exact meaning of personality. The term "Personality" is derived from the Latin word "persona" which means the mask worn by Roman actors. Watson (1930) the father of behaviourism, on the basis of his behavioural studies, concluded that, personality is the sum of activities that can be discovered by actual observation over a long enough period of time to give reliable information.

Cattell (1967) defined personality, as that which permits a prediction of

what a person will do in a given situation. Also Eysenck (1947) views personality as, more or less a stable and enduring organization of a person's character, temperament, intellect and physique, which determined his unique adjustment to the environment.

Mangal (2007) defined personality as, the stable set of characteristics and tendencies that determined those commonalities and difference in the psychological behaviour of people that have continuity in time and that may or may not be easily understood in terms of 'the social and biological pressures of the immediate situations alone (p. 393).

Characteristics of Personality

The result of various experimental studies and observations have led to the identification of the following characteristics of personality. Manga (2007) stated that;

Learning and acquisition of experience towards growth and development of personality. Personality is sometime subjected to disorganization and disintegration, leading to severe personality disorders. Every personality is the product of heredity and environment. The

personality of an individual can be described as well as measured. Every person's personality has one Distinguishing feature, that is aiming to an end or some specific goals (p.395).

Aggarwal (2007) said that, "personality is what one is, personality of each individual is unique, it is dynamic and not static, it functions as a unified whole and it is self-conscious (P. 337)". Personality as stated by Allport (1937), is not only assumed, the external and the non essential but also the vital, the internal and essential.

Effects of school environment on personality development of primary school children

Oladele (2005) is of the view that, school plays an important role in providing solid bases for which children can find their bearings and assess their potentials for growth. The school provides identifying figures by establishing good teacher relationships, maintaining a healthy school atmosphere, avoiding unpleasant and frustrating experiences. The head teachers, teachers and peer groups are the three variables in the school environment this paper will look at and see how they influence the

personality of primary school children in Nigeria.

Head teachers

Head teachers are civil servants just like teachers, their authority, duties and responsibilities are laid down in the general education ordinance and Edits. Head teachers influence pupil's behaviours through verbal appeals, instructions, re-enforcements, verbal feedback and direct reference to casualty. Headmasters are endowed with the authority to influence the actions, behaviour, beliefs and feelings of staff and pupils and to expect their willing co-operation.

Ukeje (1986) stated that, head teachers always inculcate the right type of values and attitudes, they train the mind in building valuable concepts, general libration and understanding of the world as well as the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence. They can change all the unethical and unhealthy practices within the school in order to produce good citizenships. This will help in the production of self-reliant, free and responsible citizen and the development of morally upright children.

As leaders of primary school, the headmasters are respected for their general scholarship and competence. They are the paragon of all virtues, also qualities such as fames,

patience, buoyancy, flexibility, sympathy, persistence and natural ability must in some degree belong to all successful teachers which in many cases, are being emulated by school children.

Teachers

Teachers stand as spiritual preceptors and communicators as well as providers of knowledge, which are being tailored towards making children functioned members of their societies. Teachers facilitate learning and stand as managers of learning activity in a pragmatic philosophy of education. They foster good behaviour to the children, sensitized them and mould their overt and covert behaviours. They serve as a role model to their pupils by exhibiting all the society acceptable positive value while at the same time shunning off the negative tendencies within and outside the school.

According to Robinson (1980), pupils the world over respect the teacher who show respectable knowledge of what the teacher teaches and sufficient concern over the way he passes on his knowledge. Teachers stand as agents of socialization, harbingers of social change, and transmitters of cultural heritage and always spearhead change in their school environments.

The personality of children in primary school is being formed by teachers, by showing democratic

attitudes towards them, by being friendly, considerate, impartial, and showing good manner in the school environment (Oladele, 2005). Teachers Always try to demonstrate concern for the happiness of children in school, by acknowledging and respecting their accomplishment, and by allowing children to choose some of the own activities.

The teacher's behaviour, associated with positive responses by children showed a remarkable similarity to those parental behaviours which have a positive effect on personality development. School environment is an atmosphere where teachers set reasonable restrictions for children and enforce these restrictions in a warm and sensitive manner.

Peer groups

This is a set of individuals; who share certain common characteristics such as age, Social position or class, and ethnicity. Hence, perceived them and are recognized by others as a direct group of people. The peer group is seen to have its own cultures, symbols and sanctuary in to which the new member must be socialized and according to which those who fail to comply with the norms of the group may be hated.

The activities of peer groups are important for the child's development, as they influence his or her in character training, speech development and the acquisition of

many skills. The peer groups acts as a socialization agent is basically the same ways as do parents, the group sets standard of behaviour and induces conformity to these standards through reinforcement and modeling. The child's responsiveness to his peer group depends on his independence from his parents, and his flexibility and adaptive in new situation and relationships. When a child enters school, his exposure to and interaction with children forces him to change his behaviour, attitudes, perception of the world and motivation. Most children tend to imitate the behaviour of the peers and their behaviour may be desirable or otherwise

Conclusion

In conclusion, school environment was found to have significant effect on the personality development of primary school children in Nigeria. Head teachers, teachers and peers mould personality of children, just as in the family, parents are ideals before the child, so are teachers and peers in the school. The paper discussed the concept of school environment, stating the variables in the school environment. The text defined personality and stated the characteristics of personality. It then focused on the effect of school environment on the personality development of children, where head teachers, teachers and peers as variables in the schools contribute in

that respect. Finally, recommendations were made.

Recommendations

As mater of recommendations, this paper submits that:

1. Teachers should try to stand as model by shunning all acts of indiscipline such as breaking school rules, wearing indecent clothes, being rude, telling lies etc.
2. Teachers should advocate achievement, hard work towards long term goals, cleanliness and inhibitions of socially disapproved behaviours
3. School administrators should select, organize, direct and restructure the forces in the light of present social needs, local circumstances and future demands. Also try to achieve cultural stability, cultural solidarity and integration.
4. The activities of the peers should be controlled to always imitate good characters and manners.
5. School administrators should monitor the relationships of pupils in primary schools to make sure that they did not spread immoral acts, aggressiveness, selfishness, etc among themselves.

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