

MORAL BEHAVIOR OF SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN AS CATEGORIZED BY TEACHERS: A MICRO STUDY BASED ON A SELECTED SAMPLE OF CLASSROOMS DRAWN FROM A NATIONAL SCHOOL IN THE KANDY DISTRICT

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Introduction

The task of social protection and development has been assigned to education. Therefore education is responsible for the formation of the student generation, to suit society. Thus, the teacher bears the responsibility to humanize the students. When the teacher acts as a moral agent to the student, the teacher thereby formulates methods as to how he or she could direct the student to achieve acceptable moral standards.

The teacher reaches various modes of perceptions regarding the manner in which the student reaches these moral standards. The perceptions arrived at would have a positive or a negative effect on the student-teacher interaction and relationships.

Methodology

This research study makes an attempt to identify the modes of perceptions arrived at by the teachers regarding the moral patterns of the students. The study was conducted within a social scientific framework. Ethnographic research methods were adopted for the collection of data. Data collected from participant observations, interviews and discourse analysis facilitated the triangulation of data at the same time increasing the reliability of the collected data. The research site was a national school and the research sample comprised 12 teachers and 136 students.

Findings

According to the analysis, teachers categorized students as “followers” and “distracters” based on morality. This categorization was made based on several

moral factors which they identified. These were cleanliness, non aggression, ambition and work, relationship between the peer groups respect for elders and moderate behavior.

The teachers classified the category of “followers” mentioned earlier, into six different groups are as follows:

- Students who were “neat and tidy”
- Students who were “peace loving”
- Students who showed positive features towards ambition and work
- Students who showed positive relationships towards the persons of various age groups
- Students who respected adults
- Students who had moderate behavioral patterns.

Students have been categorized by 66.66% of the teachers of the sample under the theme “neat and tidy”. For this purpose they utilized ten forms of criteria. From the sample of teachers, 25% of them categorized students under the theme “peace loving”. In this case, the teachers laid much emphasis on the criterion of the students who demonstrated *peaceful co-existence* with each and everybody. The students who showed positive features towards ambition and work have been categorized by 91.66% of the teachers of the sample and they utilized six criteria (The main criterion used was the *alertness to study*). Out of the teacher sample, 83.33% categorized students under the theme “the students who showed positive relationships towards persons of various age groups”. In this instance they utilized five categories, the

main criterion being *exhibiting a mode of friendliness* with others. Students who respected adults have been categorized by 83.33% of the teachers of the sample; for this purpose they utilized only one criterion, and that is *loyalty towards the teachers*. The theme under the “students who had moderate behavior”, was identified by 83.33% of the teachers of the sample, where they had used three criteria: the main criteria being *politeness*.

Teachers divided the category of “distracters” mentioned previously into seven sub-categories, which are as follows:

- Those who did not reach the required standards in neatness and tidiness
- Those who were aggressive to others
- Those who demonstrated negative features towards ambition and work
- Those who showed negative relationships towards persons of various age groups
- Those who did not show respect towards adults
- Those who embarked on romances with the opposite sex
- Those who did not demonstrate moderate behavior

Out of the sample, 66.66% of the teachers categorized students under the theme “untidiness”. In this case they utilized eight criteria to describe the aforementioned behavioral pattern. 83.33% of the teachers from the sample categorized students under the theme “aggressive”, and here students who *initiated fights with others* was the main criteria.

Students who demonstrated “negative features” towards ambition and work were categorized by 83.33% of the teachers. From the sample, 33.33% and 58.33% of the teachers categorized students under the themes ‘those who embarked on romances’ and ‘those who showed negative relationships

towards the persons of various age groups’ respectively. The criterion for this was *weak social skills*.

Out of the sample, 8.35% of the teachers categorized students under the topic ‘those who did not respect adults’, while, 50% of the teachers from the sample classified students under the topic ‘those who did not demonstrate moderate behavior’.

Discussion

The teachers unanimously agreed that in relation to the moral standards, two categories of students exist, i.e. “followers” and “distracters”. It was observed that the categorization of students in relation to this subject as made by the teacher sample, had similarities with the categorization adopted by Becker in 1952. Further the students set by each teacher in the categorization of “distracters” or “followers” differed from teacher to teacher.

Conclusion

The main role of a teacher is to facilitate learning in a student. If the teachers evaluated the moral behavior of each of their students it could be observed that the teachers’ profession is very complicated. Even though the teachers are in the habit of categorizing some students as those who have low moral standards, they do not take the required pains to develop the moral behavior of such students.

References

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