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Behavioral Indices Exhibited by Children of Working - Class Parents in Selected Students of Lafia Local Government, Nasarawa State

Kingsley, H.O, Audu, L.F, Anda. S.A, & Kuje. H.O

Abstract

The study investigated the behavioral indices exhibited by children, impact of this behaviors on the children and possible ways to handle these behavioral indices among some selected government secondary school in Nasarawa State. The study adopted a survey research design. The population for the study was 853 students from three (3) selected secondary school and 40 working class -parents. Simple and purposive random sampling technique was adopted to select 61 students and 40 parents for the study. A self-designed questionnaire titled 'Behavioral Indices Exhibited by Children of Working -Class Parents: A Case Study of Selected Students in Lafia Local Government Nasarawa State (BIECWCP) was used. The research questions were answered using simple frequency, mean and standard deviation. The instrument was validated, and the reliability coefficient was calculated to be 0.83 using Cronbach Alpha Coefficients. Findings of the study shows truancy ($\overline{X}$ 3.22), being reserved (3.04), bullying (2.88), drugs/crime (2.78) among others are behavioral indices exhibited by children. Again, poor academic performance (3.27), abstinence from school (3.31), aggressive behavior (3.17), lack of love (3.04), being secretive (3.58), relying on peers (3.29), arrogant at home (3.36) are effect of these behavioral on children. Findings further revealed balancing work and family (3.68), showing love and bond at home (3.65), counselling children (3.65), monitoring school activities (3.71) are possible ways to handle the behavioral indices. Conclusively, the findings highlight truancy, emotional trauma, bullying of siblings, indulging in drugs/crimes, insulting and usage of vulgar languages, stealing, loneliness. Laziness at home and early engagement to sexual activities as forms of behavior exhibited. It was recommended among others that schools should constantly organize lectures to sensitize children on the effect of behavioral indices. parents should be observant when they are back from work to see if there are any behavioral changes in their children

Keywords: **Risk taking behavior, Parental involvement, defiant behavior, adaptive behavior**

Introduction

Career plays a very fundamental and significant role in the life of the individual not only because they determine the pattern of income but also because they affect the individual's personality and concepts in life. It is the sequential set of experiences and attitudes related to work that an individual has over the span of his/her work (Abbasi & Sarwat, 2014). A Career is an occupation, work or job undertaken for a significant period of a person's life. It involves both an opportunity as well as progression (Wango, Agot, Ogolla, Ochillo,Ohaga & Thirumurthy, 2021).Work involves the task or activities to be undertaken in order to achieve a purpose or results. In the past women's lives revolved around household activities, while

men were the main bread winners, final authority in the area of discipline and decision making (Adebayo & Worth, 2022). According to Ejike and Ejike (2018) 91.6 million people in Nigeria presently live below the minimum subsistence level based on the international poverty line pegged at $ 1.90 in purchasing power parity (PPP) a day, indicating low living standards.

Parenting is the process of caring and nurturing young children from infancy to adulthood. Parents are the biological mother and father of a child; they are the one who brought the children to life (Ceka & Murati, 2016). They bear the responsibility of providing for the child physical and emotional needs in the society. It is not just the basic food, shelter, clothing that keep children alive, but also the active molding of character, personality, talents, emotional and physical well-being of the child. They are the children's source of guide, feelings, opinions, ideas (Kasapi, 2013) A research carried out by Asis and Ruiz- Marave (2013) opines that lack of emotional support from parents will eventually negatively impact the children's welfare. Parents are friends and listeners and active communicator, strongest role model and greatest influence. However, if parents are a positive influence in their children's everyday lives and most importantly in their everyday education the future will be more beautiful and more successful. Miller and Tiggemann, (2010) state that parenting skills make parents to understand what to expect from children, their capacities, interest and needs at various ages. A child physical and emotionally needs have to be met while the child is being parented. Parents forms a significant part of the child's life where they need to guide the child, without that guidance, the child becomes a blind man which has no guide but rather moves haphazardly only to fall into a dangerous pit where he gets hurts or even loses his life. When a parent steps out into the paid working world, life undoubtedly becomes busier; there will be divided attention in the act of childcare, housework, work commitment and family (Dapiton, Baking & Canias, 2023). Lack of parental involvement in child rearing negatively affect children's development in health, daily behaviors and in school performance (Zhou, Sun, Huang, Zang, Kenny, Xue, Auden & Rozelle,2018).

According to Ortese, Yawe and Akume (2014), a child is socialized into appropriate positive values such as good health, feeding habits, language, appropriate dressing and general social behavior pattern of the society through proper training by the parents. Behavior is a human conduct relative to social norms. lack of good child upbringing will lead to behavioral disorder among children. Behavioral problem according to Kembe and Atser (2018) is a maladaptive, antisocial or violent behavior exhibited by individuals in appropriate times. It refers to as age -inappropriate behaviors characterized by the violation of family expectations, society's norms and the personal or property right of others (Santrock 2007). It is characterized by social disapproved aggressive and destructive behavior (Kembe & Atser, 2018). UNICEF (2008) states that behavior says a lot about how a child is feeling at a particular time or phase of life, behavioral changes according to UNICEF (2008) aims to lower structural barriers that hinder people from adopting positive practices and hinder societies from becoming more equitable, cohesive and peaceful. According to Nkiru (2019), behavioral disorders affect the way a child act. When things start to get out of hand, it may be a clue that something in the child's life needs attention. These behaviors are not only harmful to them and their peers but also a source of concern to parents and teachers. It must be pointed out here that it is a normal behavior for children to act out from time to time as a result of stresses in lives.

Behavioral indications are used to assess behavior or action undertaken over a period of time. The indicator monitors the evolution of individual's adaptive behavior at some stages in life and also the consequences of their action. it combines hyperactivity, aggression and typical depression behavior, (Goupil & Koulder, 2016). Behavioral indices according to United Nations

Children Education Fund (UNICEF, 2008) includes the following: aggression, substance abuse, alcoholism, delinquency, prostitution, moral decadence, defiance, mistreatment of others and vulgarity, disobedience, physical assault, damage to property, verbal abuse to minors and seniors, indecent dressing, lack of empathy, misperception of others intent, lack of guilt or remorse, low self-esteem and suicidal ideas. Denga (2009) also stated some attitude such as truancy, feeling easily hurt, inattentiveness, restlessness and impulsive behavior. Kembe and Atser, (2018) observed that behavioral indices are usually exhibited by adolescents in a variety of setting such as home, school and social situation and there is a need to teach the importance of good conduct and character. A child well brought up will remain a source of joy and peace to the family. It is worrisome when children that are supposed to imbibe good moral upbringing or culture even when parents struggle to fend for the family are displaying some behavior that will not give parents joy when on return from workplace. These causes significant social, academic and family functioning impairment to the child (Attia, 2022). It has become pertinent to investigate the opinion of parents and children of SS2-3 of some selected government secondary school at Lafia Local Government, Nasarawa State on the behavioral indices exhibited by children of working-class parents. This study is delimited to children between age 14-19 years.

Statement of the problem

Parents are currently compelled to take up employment outside the home due to demanding financial requirement of running the home. Prolong absence of parents from the home may expose children to loneliness or emotional trauma. This may be detrimental to the children. Such children may have behavioral challenges which could also affect their performance at school. Lack of parental presence to attend to children needs may result in poor behavioral lifestyles and poor upbringing of the children. These behavioral lifestyles of children lead to stress to their parents, reducing their work out put, low productivity, lack of concentration at work and also mental health is affected. It has therefore become very expedient to carry out this research on behavioral indices of children in some selected secondary government secondary school of class S.S.S 2-3 between age 14-16 in Lafia Local Government. This is the period of mid adolescents where there is heightened concern about the behavior of young people.

Objectives of the Study

The Objective of this study was to examine Behavioral Indices exhibited by children of working-class parents in some selected secondary school of class S.S.S.2-3 between ages 14-16 at Lafia local government. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify some behavioral indices observed by parents in children
2. Examine the influence of negative behavior on children of working-class parents
3. Determine possible ways parents of mitigating negative behavioral among children of working- class parents

Methodology

Research Design: The study adopted a survey research design in which a group of people is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only few people considered to be representative of the entire group (Nworgu, 2015). It can be generalizable, and it is also appropriate for this study.

Area of the Study: The study was conducted in Lafia local government of Nasarawa State. The area is located between 8^0-9^0 East of the Greenwich meridian and latitude 8^0-9^0 north of the equator. (statistical data of National Population Commission, 2006), indicated that the council has a total population of 478,809 people consist mainly of the following tribes Alago, Hausa, Migili, Koro, Eggon, Gwandara, Kanuri, Fulani, the council is made up of thirteen districts among which are Lafia Central, Lafia East, Lafia West, Lafia North, Agyaragu, Akunza, Assakio, Shabu, Kwandare. The area is more populated with private and government schools including three tertiary institutions in the local government area.

Population for the Study: The Population of the study was gotten from three (3) government school located within Lafia local government area (G.S.S Shabu 373), (G.S.S Kwandare180), (G.S.S Bukan Sidi 300) SS2-3 students totaling 853. Students' information was gotten from the school register in February 2024.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: Purposive sampling techniques was used for the selection of 40 students from two school and 21 students from the third school and 40 working- class parents were randomly selected for the study. Children that have a working-class parent were selected. Total number of respondents are 101.

Instrument for Data Collection: The research instrument for the collection of data was a self -structured questionnaire titled: 'Behavioral Indices exhibited by children of working-class parents (BIECWCP). The questionnaire contains three (3) sections, all sections was made up of items presented in a four scale of preference, strongly agree (4), agree (3), strongly disagree (2) and disagree (1). The Instrument was face validated by three experts from Home and Rural Economics Department, College of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Lafia. The instrument was presented to the validators for face and content validation. The expert's comments were used to strengthen the instrument.

Method of Data Collection: A total of 101 copies of the questionnaire were distributed by hand to the students by the help of the class teacher. Parents were contacted during closing hours when they came to pick up their wards at school, data was collected by the researcher with the collaboration of a research assistant. The questionnaire was filled on the spot and all the copies were retrieved.

Data analysis and Techniques: The data collected were analyzed using percentage, mean. standard deviation. Mean rating from 2.50 and above were accepted as agreed while below was considered disagreed.

Result

Table 1 shows the mean ratings on behavioral indices exhibited by children when parent is at work, total grand mean is 2.87. The results indicate that respondents agree to all the items on behavioral indices. This means that when parents are out to work, children display these behaviors.

Table 1: **Behavioral Indices of Children Observed by Parents**

S/N	Behavioral Indices	Mean ($\overline{X}$)	St.d	Remarks
1	Truancy at school	3.2295	.69266	Agree
2	Being reserved	3.0492	.80470	Agree
3	Emotional trauma	2.7213	.1.00218	Agree
4	Bullying	2.8852	.83862	Agree
5	Drugs/crimes	2.7869	1.06638	Agree
6	Insulting/vulgar languages	2.6885	1.02536	Agree
7	Stealing	2.8361	.79959	Agree
8	Early engagement to sexual activities	2.9508	.88367	Agree
9	Laziness at home	2.7869	.96807	Agree
10	Loneliness	2.7869	.96807	Agree
	Grand mean	2.87	0.904	

Table 2 presents the results of the respondents on effect of these behaviors on children. All the items were agreed upon by the respondents the total grand mean is 3.21 this implies that behavioral attitudes displayed by children has effects on their personality and in the academics.

Table 2: **Influence of these Behavior on Children**

S/N	Effects of Behavior on Children	Mean ($\overline{X}$)	St.d	Remarks
1	Poor academic performance	3.2772	.73646	Agree
2	Abstinence from school	3.3171	.68699	Agree
3	Psychological problem	3.2195	.75869	Agree
4	Homosexuality/prostitution	2.9512	.77302	Agree
5	Drug abuse/crime	3.2500	.74248	Agree
6	Resentment	3.2195	.68964	Agree
7	Aggressive behavior	3.1707	.73832	Agree
8	Death	2.9024	.99511	Agree
9	Lack of love	3.0488	.92063	Agree
10	Children being secretive	3.5854	.49878	Agree
11	Children being reserved/keeping to themselves	3.3659	.62274	Agree
12	Children relying on peers	3.2927	.74980	Agree
13	Displaying egocentric attitude	3.2927	.74980	Agree
14	Low academic performance at school	3.0000	.80623	Agree
15	Arrogant at home	3.3659	.62274	Agree
	Grand mean	3.12	0.73	

Table 3 shows that all the items had mean scores above the cut off mean point of 2.50 and the grand mean is 3.637 which means that all the items are accepted ways parents can handle these behaviors in children.

Table 3: **Parental Responses on Ways to Handle Negative Behavioral**

S/N	Ways to handle these behavioral indices	Mean ($\overline{X}$)	St.d	Remarks
1	Balance work and family	3.6829	.47112	Agree
2	Show love and bond while at home	3.6585	.48009	Agree
3	Counselling children	3.6500	.48305	Agree
4	Constant routine check/calls on children	3.6500	.48305	Agree
5	Discipline where necessary	3.4750	.75064	Agree
6	Monitoring school activities	3.7105	.45961	Agree
	Grand mean	3.637	0.521	

Discussion of findings

Findings on table 1 revealed that the respondents all agreed on behavioral attitudes displayed when parents are at work. it's obvious that when children get to the adolescent stage, they often have an attitudinal change in the character, some may be positive, while others may be negative. Hinshaw and Lee (2010) states that behavioral disorders are mostly found among children of adolescent age, Nkiru (2019) also stated that behaviorally disturbed children are known to exhibit a number of characteristics such as truancy, phobias, aggressiveness, pains, bullying, inability to learn and being moody. Children with truant behavior leave home for school but does not reach the school and returns home after school hour, if not corrected it turns to habitual behavior which may later lead to absenteeism from school. Nkiru (2019)

observed that some of these children display aggressiveness towards teachers, parents and peer group. Most of their defiant behavior is directed at authority figures, but they also sometimes behave the same way towards their siblings, playmates, or classmates. Attia (2022) also noted that children behavior may increase vulnerabilities to drug addiction and underage sex. Okoye (2014); Razaq, Rahman, Amiera and Hanis, (2019) also state that drug taking is a very serious risk-taking behavior among children of adolescents age and young adults.

Findings in Table 2 revealed the influence of these behavior on children. Being secretive with a mean of ($\overline{X}$ 3.58) rated high, displaying arrogance and egocentric behavior are observed among the children, therefore, parents need to bond and be open to children. Azeez (2020) observed that peer groups have a lot of influence on children behavior, pressure from others to participate in certain activities and peer conformity is a source of concern. Smith, Khunoi and Nathane-Taulele (2014) further revealed that negative psychological influence of unavailability of parents in the development of children causes poor academic performance, self-perception and defiant behavior.

Findings on table 3 indicate possible ways parent can handle the behavioral attitudes observed, parenting is a demanding task, it requires time, dedication and sacrifice. According to Mwai (2018) listening and giving attention to children and also being engaged in the conversation with children enables strong family communication and connectedness. Parents should take up responsibility of parenting. Jimoh (2023) confirms that parental bonding is an important predictor that gives a lot of insight into parent -child relationship. Spending time with children after work brings openness, understanding, confidence and a sense of responsibility (Kingsley, 2018). Mother-child bond is established if there is a greater attention towards the child. As a parent, one has to ensure that the child gets this holistic upbringing. Failure of parents to meet these specific needs can have a wide-ranging and long-lasting negative effect. Devanath, (2023) opines that the most important way to handle children with behavioral problem is to approach the process with a flexible and open mind.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusively, the findings highlight truancy, emotional trauma, bullying of siblings, indulging in drugs/crimes, insulting and usage of vulgar languages, stealing, loneliness, laziness at home and early engagement to sexual activities as forms of behavior exhibited. The effects of these behaviors are aggressive behaviors, resentment, lack of love, death, being secretive, relying on peers, arrogance and displaying egocentric attitude. Ways that these behaviors can be handled is balancing work and family life, constant routine check, counselling and monitoring school activities and showing love and bonding. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that

1. Parents should be observant to notice any behavioral changes in children and should open up communication that will identify any troubling challenge
2. Schools should constantly organize sensitization lectures for children.
3. Counseling is needed where children have serious behavioral challenge
4. Professional Home Scientists should devise means of keeping children engaged in school to avoid free time for truant behavior

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