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RESEARCH ARTICLE

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION AS A WAY OF PROMOTING EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS IN CROSS RIVER STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

Behavior modification is an important technique in shaping behavior of every child in the school. This paper examined behavior and behavior problems, its characteristics and types of behavior problems as it relate to a child with special needs. This paper further discussed who the children with special needs are, the behaviors exhibited by children that deviates from normal. Different types of behavior modification techniques and therapies were discussed in relation to management of behavior problems and misconduct in the classroom by the classroom teachers. The roles of classroom teacher in the modification of behavior of children with special needs were highlighted. Conclusion was made as to how behavior modification will help in the management of classroom and education of children with special need by the teachers.

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Introduction:-

Behavior is all human acts that are observable and measurable. Behavior in a person is portrayed by his or her action, revealing the quality and attribute of the individual. According to Okwudire (2003), behavior is a way of conduct or manner which can be good or bad. It is the picture of one's identity in terms of his conduct and manner. Some behavior are acquired or learnt while some are innate.

Behavior Modification:

Behavior modification is a technique used to increase or decrease a particular behavior. It is a connection of psychotherapeutic techniques aimed at altering maladaptive or unwanted behavior pattern especially through application of principle of conditioning. Adah, (2012) Behavior modification involves the application of learning theory and scientific investigation to the process of changing undesirable behavior to the one that is desirable. It is a technique that be applied in the treatment of behavior for both persons with and without disability.

Special Needs Children:

These are exceptional children who are in need of special educational needs services in order to live a useful life in the society. Exceptionality is generally used to describe the significant departure of an individual from normal trend in human development. Examples of children with special needs are children with multiple disabilities, visual impairment, hearing impairments, learning disability, communication disorders, emotional instability, social and behavior problems among others. Children with special need sometimes deviate from normal group in behavior

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hence a unique and special approach is needed to educate them. Elemukan & umeh (2015). Special education is therefore designed to meet the various needs of individual with different exceptionalities.

Behavior Problems:

A behavior is considered to be a problem when it is undesirable, unaccepted, frequent and persistent and affect the individual that exhibits the behavior as well as others around them. A child is said to have a problem when there is a marked deviation from the behavior appropriate for the child’s age and significantly affect or interfere with normal learning process as well as other learner. A child with behavior problem therefore has repeated conflict with his parents, siblings, teachers, classmate and other children and other children around him.(Ozaji, Babudoh & Dala. 2015).

Behavior problem as defined by Nanjwan, Ikwen, and Egaga (2019) as problems that are define by their frequency, intensity and duration. It is a negative effect of a behavior on the person that exhibits it and others around him. The effect of such behavior problem on the child attracts all manner of criticisms, utterance and names. The parent may call the child a bad boy or girl, psychologist and psychiatrists may call the child an emotionally disturbed child, teachers may called them dullard, while this same child may be referred to as a delinquent child in the court of law. All these different labels point out to the conflicts and hindrances the child encounters in his interaction with other people due to his behavior.

Behavior problem may be seen as compromising all instances in which the child’s behavior includes either of the ways. The behavior is socially different and unaccepted by other children, the behavior includes acting against people and property. The behavior persists and fails to respond to normal and acceptable way of life. A behavior becomes a problem in the educational settings when it interferes with productive and learning processes of an individual and others in the educational environment. This attitude in the academic parlance is referred to as school refusal syndrome. (Ewa and Nanjwan, (2019).

Types of behaviour problems:

According to Nantok (2002), Hewitts and Jenkins classified behavior problems in to three major categories as follows;

1. **Conduct disorder:** This includes lying, stealing, fighting, cursing truancy, drug abuse and bullying and any other misconduct exhibited by a child.
2. **Emotional disorder:** This includes fear, excessive anxiety, phobia, aggression, depression, and inability to adjust within the environment.
3. **Psychotic disorder:** This is mostly due to mental imbalance and mental illness which makes an individual to exhibits self-injurious act, disruptiveness and hyperactivity.

Characteristics Of Children With Behaviour Problem:

Okwudire (2003) and Vaughn, and Bos, (2012) highlighted the following characteristics as general behavior problems of children in an educational environment.

Negative reactions such as bullying classmates and others playmates, Lack of self-control in terms of want and interest. Showing temper tantrum in and out of school environment, Dislike for school and school activities,

Destroying and stealing home materials and school equipment, lying to avoid punishments, may refuse to accept or never agree if caught red-handed in unwanted act, withdrawing socially and may never make friends, play with peers and work well with any group, Acting without or before thinking and always makes mistakes, Arguing out of order and never following logical way of reasoning ability. Causing disciplinary problem to school, they never comply with school rules and regulation, playing truancy and lack of interest in school activities and becoming school dropouts.

Most of these characteristics listed above are essential in identifying a child with behavior problems in the classroom, although all these characteristics may not be present in a single individual. If any of these behaviors is present in a child, he may be classified as a child with special need. The behavior of children with special needs is therefore individually needed to be modified for them to benefit maximally from education and learning process Nanjwan and Shwamut (2018).

Behavior Modification Of Children With Special Need:

Effective management of children with special needs require the knowledge of behavior modification. According to Okeke (2001) and Olchowski, and Webster (2007) behavior modification is the application of learning theory and scientific investigation to the process of changing undesirable behavior to one that is desirable. Behavior modification is a technique or therapy that can be applied in the treatment of both people with and without disability. According to Iheanacho (1992) and Adah, (2012), the following techniques and therapies are applied in the modification of behavior of children with behavior problems.

Transitional Analysis Therapy:

Transitional analysis is a cognitive counselling therapy that suggests procedures for examining and understanding of the self and interaction with others. Transitional analysis techniques provide the child with a way to express personal feelings. It places the responsibility of change on the child and provides the child with an approach that can be used in the adult world for successful inclusion Nanjwan, Ikwen & Aderibgbe (2019)..

Modeling therapy:

Modeling therapy involves learning through observation and imitation. It corrects undesirable behavior through observing and imitating desire behavior. It involves observation of life symbolic modeling. The child with special need is made to observe a role model and copy the correct behavior. The child may be required to observe and practice the behavior and label the behavior verbally.

Operant Conditioning Therapy

Behavioral scientists have clearly shown that our behavior is controlled by its immediate consequence. For example when a child touches a hot object he immediately experiences a painful consequence which decreases the likelihood that he will touch a hot object in the future. Operant conditioning therapy involves the active manipulation of the environmental event to produce change in the child behavior. Teacher can use this therapy to increase, decrease, initiate or extinguish behavior of a special need child trough the manipulation of consequence following a response to a reinforcement which may be positive or negative reinforcement. It is positive when it involves presentation of pleasant event after desirable behavior is exhibited and negative when the pleasant event is removed as a result of specific response. The basic principle underlying operant conditioning as a therapy is that behavior is learnt and it is constantly being shaped by environmental consequence. If the consequence is positive the response will occur again, if the consequence is unpleasant the response will undoubtedly not occur again unless by mistake. The behavior will be repeated only if it was pleasant, approved and accepted by people in the environment.

Praise therapy:

Praise as therapy is founded on the premise that it is important for teachers to know what the child can do and what the child cannot do, so as to avoid too high or low expectation from the child. This will help the teachers to maximize every opportunity at their disposal to the child's advantage. Praise can take the following forms in the classroom.

Verbal compliment on the individual concern, hand and facial gesture, a note of good commendation to the child's parent, making the child to show or read his work to other children to promote happiness.

Time Out Therapy:

This refers to a time when reinforcement is not available. It involves removing the child from a positively reinforcing situation for some time, such as simply turning away from the child and avoiding eye contact with the child for a specific period of time until the child stop his misbehavior. When using time out therapy, the rules of this therapy are established and made known to all other children in the class to help enforce the rules. It is a procedure that combines the features of both punishment and reward together.

Ignore And Reward Therapy:

Ignore means intentionally refusing to notice or to be careless about the cause of a negative or unpleasant behavior. According to Ihenacho (1992), a workable technique for reducing the rate of misbehavior in the class is to ignore it. Reward on the other hand is the prize giving for putting a desirable behavior. This may be positive or negative. Reward is positive when a child is offered a gift or praised for exhibiting a good behavior. It is negative when there is application of punishment or withdrawal of a gift given earlier to the child due to unpleasant behavior. Ignoring misbehavior completely can be an effective extinction procedure. This will be more effective if appropriate behavior

is strengthened. For example the child may not be ignored whenever he is out of his seat without permission bit may be reinforced and rewarded for sitting on his chair. Other therapy used in behavior modification of children with special needs in the classroom includes: satiation therapy, reality therapy, self-management therapy, vicarious extinction therapy, aversion therapy, systematic desensitization.

Roles Of Teachers In Behavior Modification And Class Room Management:

According to Pearson, Doyle and Jones (2006) the way and manner a teacher treats student in the classroom tends to reduce, manage and modify behavior and behavioral problems. Teachers therefore has some roles to play in modifying behavior of a child with special needs and behavioral problems by first of all, discuss and write necessary rules which should be adopted, acceptable and respected by all students in the class room (Ewa, and Nanjwan, (2019). The teacher should however ensure that students abide by all these rules and regulation.

Conclusion:-

Modifying the behavior of children with special need in the class room is a great task that requires patience, dedication to work and vast knowledge in different technique in managing the misbehavior of these categories of children in an educational environment. It is therefore necessary for teachers and special educators to employ various therapies and techniques to handle different children with behavior problem individually so that they can benefit maximally from education.

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