

Social Status, School Performance and Behavioral Nature of Children in the Foster Home: Basis for Developing Intervention Activities

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ABSTRACT: There are institutions and foster homes that offer and provide basic needs for the children but ensuring their fullest human development still needs to be given attention. Thereby, this investigation was conducted. It aimed to determine the social status, school performance and behavioral nature of children and to find out if relationship exist between and among the mentioned variables. With the result, it intends to develop intervention activities for the children.

Descriptive-survey approach was utilized. The respondents were the 35 children who could read and answer the questionnaire checklist. To further interpret the responses, 5 point Likert Scale, Mean and Pearson-r were employed. The results imply that children are not popular but live normally as other children. The school performance of children is affected by the quality of their foster home environment while the behavioral nature of children is not different to other individuals, they think, feel and act as normal beings. And with regard to relationship between and among the variables, social status affects school performance but it does not affect their way of thinking, feeling and acting, while children's school performance is affected by their behavioral nature.

Keywords: Behavioral nature, Children, Foster home, School, performance, Social Status

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Presidential Decree No. 603, The Child and Youth Welfare Code, The Child and the Youth Welfare Code, General Principles Art. 10. Phases of Development. - The child shall enjoy special protection and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to ensure and enable his fullest development physically, mentally, emotionally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity appropriate to the corresponding developmental stage.[1]

The decree clearly expressed that children must be protected, taken cared of properly in an environment that will help him/her develop his full potential as individuals. That is why, there are different institutions that are organized and built for this purpose most especially if the child has no family who will provide material, physical and psychological necessities. To address this need, PD. 603, Chapter 6-Foster Care, Article 67-Foster homes states foster homes shall be chosen and supervised by Department of Social Welfare or any duly licensed child placement agency when as the need therefore arises.[2] This is one of the common problem in the Philippines. There are so many families who could not afford to provide their children with the basic needs necessary in ensuring his fullest development. It resulted to bringing these children to foster homes.

There are estimated 1.8 million abandoned children in the Philippines as of May 2016 and more than 200 thousand street children.[3] Many of them are now living in the different institutions and foster homes (public or private). Some children are found and brought to government agencies like MSWD. There are also cases that they are brought by their own families or relatives to these institutions for they could not afford to provide their basic needs.

Foster homes offer and provide basic needs such as care, food shelter and education but despite of these provisions, there's a lot to give attention to because these children come from different families, different cultural backgrounds and are different from each other, physically, mentally and even in the psychological aspect. Ensuring their fullest human development still needs to be given attention. The development of human dignity and self-esteem must be addressed too. There were so many studies pertaining to development, academic performance and social adjustments of children but what makes this investigation differs is that the focus is on the children living in the foster home. It is a fact that future is in the hands of the young individuals. They will lead, they will build, they will develop the future. As quoted by Dr. Jose Rizal, our National Hero, "The youth is the hope of the country". [4] We cannot tell who will be the next leaders, successful business men

and women, medical doctors, nurses, engineers etc. and maybe one from the children in this institution only if they will be given proper attention and guidance. Thereby, this investigation was conducted which aimed to determine their social status, school performance and behavioral nature of children and to find out if relationship exist between and among the mentioned variables. It also intended to develop intervention activities for the children.

Examining the social status of children, the study stated that for many reasons indiscriminate friendliness is a behavior that is particularly relevant to any study of institutionalized children. References to indiscriminately friendly behavior are evident in the early literature on the social development of institutionalized children who were later fostered or adopted (Goldfarb 1955; Provence and Lipton 1962).[5]. Likewise, Tizard (1977) characterized indiscriminate friendliness as behavior that was affectionate and friendly toward all adults (including strangers) without the fear or caution characteristic of normal children. In these cases a child's behavior toward other adults could not be discriminated from his or her behavior toward caregivers. These studies proved that children who were institutionalized showed friendliness which cannot be differentiated from other children outside the institution.[6]

Furthermore, studies of institutionalized children have also examined indiscriminate friendliness. In one study conducted, parents were asked five questions assessing (a) whether their child wandered without distress; (b) whether their child was willing to go home with a stranger; (c) how friendly their child was with new adults; (d) whether their child was ever shy; and (e) what their child typically did upon meeting new adults. These researchers found that orphanage children displayed significantly more indiscriminate friendliness than both early-adopted and Canadian-born children, and orphanage children were just as indiscriminate three years postadoption as they were initially (Chisholm 1998)[7]. Similarly, Behrendt and Serignomor (2008) found out that indiscriminate friendliness was associated with length of deprivation in their sample of Romanian adoptees. Though many children are living in the orphanage, they still show affection and good nature individuals as explained of the previous studies.[8]

The result of this study is supported by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu who developed theories of social stratification based on aesthetic taste in his work *Distinction*. Bourdieu claims that how one chooses to present one's social space to the world, one's aesthetic dispositions, depicts one's status and distances oneself from lower groups. Specifically, Bourdieu hypothesizes that these dispositions are internalized at an early age and guide the young towards their appropriate social positions, towards the behaviors that are suitable for them, and an aversion towards other lifestyles.[9]

II. METHOD

This study made use of descriptive-survey approach since it signifies the gathering of data regarding present condition.[10] The researcher sent a Letter of Request to conduct the study in the foster home, approved and permitted to do such. The subject of the study were the children living in the foster home utilizing their records filed in the office of the foster home. Measures have been observed regarding the confidentiality and anonymity of the children[11]. These children with a total number of 35 were chosen purposively also served as the respondents of the study with the belief that they could supply necessary information needed in the success of this endeavor.

Aside from the interviews and observations conducted by the researcher, the study constructed questionnaire-checklist as the main instrument in gathering information. This was composed of four (4) parts measuring the social status, school performance and behavioral nature of children. It was content validated by the experts on this area. The 5-point Likert Scale[12] was utilized to further interpret the gathered data. The instrument was administered, retrieved, tallied, analyzed and interpreted using the appropriate statistical tools such as Mean to determine the level of social status, school performance and extent of behavioral nature of children. Pearson-r was utilized to find out if significant relationship exists between and among the variables.

This study is based on the Goleman Theory of Social Intelligence (SI) [13] which is defined as the ability to get along well with others, and to get them to cooperate with others. Sometimes referred to simplistically as "people skills,". Since the study intended to know the school performance of the children, a theory of performance (ToP)[14] is useful in determining how these children perform in the school using the Traditional Contexts which explains that ToP informs learning in classrooms, workshops, and other venues that are traditionally associated with learning. And, to explain better the behavioral nature of children, the definition of human nature which refers to the distinguishing characteristics of individuals including ways of thinking, feeling, and acting [15] which humans tend to have naturally and has been utilized as parameters to understand the behavior of children. These theories and definition of behavioral nature significantly guided this material to be realized.

To have a better and clearer view of this endeavor, the study was able to formulate a conceptual framework that serve as light in the conduct of this research as illustrated below.

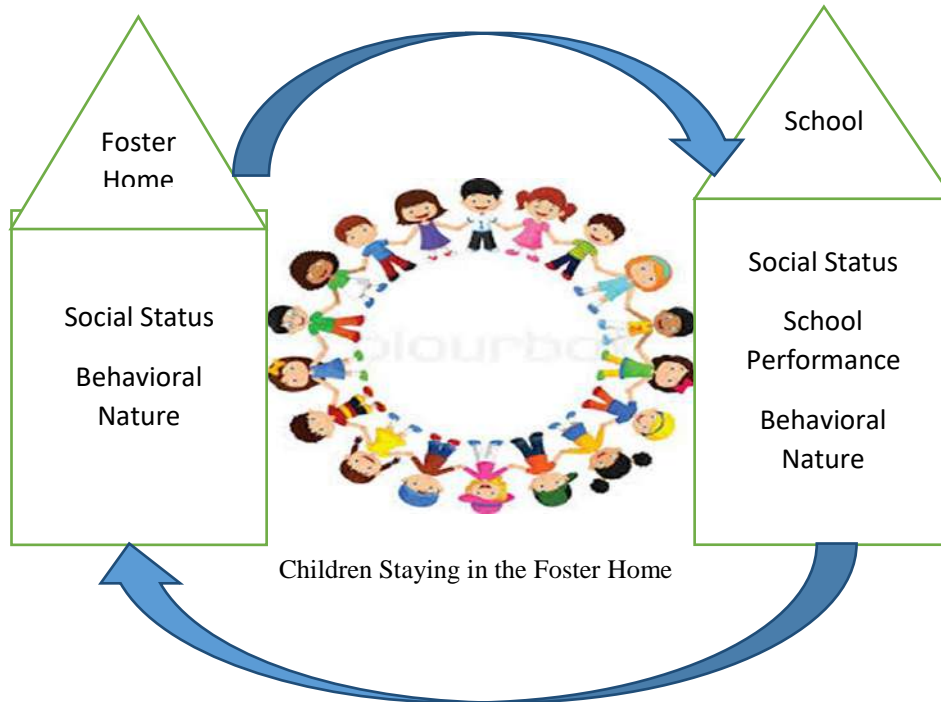


Figure 1. A Conceptual Paradigm Showing the Social Status, School Performance and Behavioral Nature of Children

The picture clearly illustrated that the figure at the center represents the children staying in the foster home. It is in the foster home, the first frame, where the social status and behavioral nature of children developed and the arrow from the foster home pointing to the next frame which is the school, is the place where social status, school performance and behavioral nature are nurtured. While, the arrow from the school pointing back to the foster home shows the continuous interrelationship of foster home and school. Generally, this is the way of life of children staying in the foster home.

III.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Social Status of Children

Table 1. The Level of Social Status of Children

Aspects	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Superior	2.50	Low
2. Average	3.42	High
3. Inferior	4.41	Very High
4. Neglected/Rejected	3.77	High
Overall Mean	3.86	High

The study measured the social status of children in terms of superior aspect, a mean of 2.50 was obtained with a verbal interpretation of “Low”. Children reveal that their abilities and capabilities are not given so much consideration since most of them are not given a chance to become leaders in the school and in the foster home but those who are older are assigned to take care and keep an eye to younger children. They do not have superior social status. This only implies that there are children who are favored or somehow given special attention.

With respect to the aspect average social status, a mean of 3.42 was obtained verbally interpreted as “High”. The fact that they are still children, they are fond of playing just as other children do outside the institution. Sometimes, according to them they are bullied by other children but they do not take this seriously but as they confided that there are times that they envied other children because they see them with their parents or their families. Generally, the result implies that children have established good relationship with their peer and classmates. The result also implies that children maintain their status in the community. They are recognized as part of the community.

With respect to inferior social status, children rated this aspect with a mean of 4.41 with verbal interpretation of “Very High” which proved that children feel inferior compared to other children due to the fact that they are placed under the supervision of the personnel and higher regard is given to other children in the school. But in the foster home, there is equal treatment given to them. It also can be noted that feeling of

inadequacy is present due to the fact that other children know that they are staying in the institution. This means that still, feeling of inferiority exists.

On the aspect of neglected/rejected status, a mean of 3.77 was shown and verbally interpreted as “High”. The result reveals that children are rejected/neglected because they said that though, they are given attention by the teachers in the school and by the personnel in the foster home, sometimes, they feel rejection because they are not with their families. They still long for the affection and moral support of their own families.

In summary, the overall mean of 3.53 was obtained and verbally interpreted as “High”. It could be noted that the children feel that they are not superior because of their situation in the foster home, not popular even few of them become leaders. Most of them think that they belong to average individuals who are just typical children, just ordinary children and normal individuals in the community. The result also shows that most of the children feel that they are inferior due to the fact that they are living in the institution. It can be noted also that some of them feel that they are neglected/rejected for the reason that they don't have family who are expected to provide love and affection more than anyone else.

3.2 The School Performance of Children

Table 2. The Level of School Performance of Children

Aspects	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Co-Curricular Activities	3.25	Satisfactory
2. Extra-Curricular Activities	3.51	Very Satisfactory
3. Participation/Recitation	4.08	Very Satisfactory
4. Attendance	3.90	Very Satisfactory
Overall Mean	3.69	Very Satisfactory

The results shows that with respect to involvement to co-curricularactivities, the mean of 3.25 is obtained with verbal interpretation of “Satisfactory”. This implies that children join in co-curricular activities such as different contests of their choice and if they are interested to participate.

With respect to involvement in extra-curricular activities, a mean of 1.51 is obtained with verbal interpretation of “Very Satisfactory”. This means that children often join in extra-curricular activities if they are allowed and given chances in joining in sportsfest, song and dance competition, drawing and other activities of their choice but they said that very limited that they join in tour activity of the school because it costs too much on the part of the institution.

The result shows that with respect to participation/recitation of children, it obtained a mean of 4.08 with verbal interpretation of Very Satisfactory.This implies that children always participate in the class discussion, they could answer the questions of the teacher, they always tried to be the first in recitation and submit assignments and projects on time.

Furthermore, with respect to attendance of children in the school, it obtained a mean of 3.90 with verbal interpretation of “Very Satisfactory”. The data implies that children attend school regularly and if ever they had been absent, they see to it that excuse letter was brought and was submitted to the teacher. If the school called for a Parent-Teacher Meeting, the children were accompanied by the personnel of the institution. Therefore, a very satisfactory performance was obtained with regard to their attendance.

The overall mean of 3.69 was obtained and verbally interpreted as “Very Satisfactory” on the level of school performance of children which implies that eventhough they are living in the institution, the children attend school with satisfactory school performance.

It is true that children are expected to learn essential skills in academic, co-curricular and extra-curricular from the school and therefore, they give so much importance by regularly attending and joining some school activities.

3.3 Behavioral Nature of Children

Table 3. The Extent of Behavioral Nature of Children

Aspects	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Feeling	3.53	Often
2. Acting	3.55	Often
3. Thinking	3.95	Often
	3.68	Often

With respect to feeling, an average of 3.53was obtained with verbal interpretation of “Often”. This implies that children often feel the same way with other children. They said that they are happy if they are with

other children, sad if they recall the times they are with their family. The fact that they are staying in the institution, they learn to adjust to other children so that feeling of acceptance will be felt in return, they never attempt to quarrel other children.. They never envy or feel jealous because they are equally treated in the institution.

With respect to acting, an average of 3.55 has been obtained by this aspect with verbal interpretation of “Often”. The result implies that children often act according to how others treat them. They could act because of being accepted, they are happy and free. They also could act because they feel that they are trusted by other children and also by the personnel in the institution.

With respect to thinking, an average of 3.95 was obtained and verbally interpreted as “Often”. The data implies that children often think that they need to adjust with the personnel and with the other children in the institution. This also implies that the children think that they are accepted, equally treated but sometimes they are afraid of their situation in the institution..

The result shows that children in the foster homes are but ordinary children whose nature is to think, as normal children they apt to analyze their situation of being in the institution, thinking on how they are going to pass this stage of their lives. It is also the nature of the children to feel. It is but common to all individuals to feel what they are experiencing at this moment. Although, sometimes, their feeling are being covered up with the activities given to them by the institution, by the support of the personnel in the institution, though the concern showed to them is not enough but at least, they are making ways to lessen the discomfort they have in mind. It could be noted also that children often act of what or who they are due to the fact that they are aware of their present situations and experiences. The fact that their past is still connected with their present situation and will continuously affect their future but they need to move on and fulfill their goals in life.

3.4 Relationship Between and Among Social Status, School Performance and Behavioral Nature

Table 4. The relationship between social status and school performance of children

		R	sig	H ₀	VI
A.Superior	a.CCA*	.264	.132	A	NSR
	b.ECA*	.160	.367	A	NSR
	c.Part/Rec*	.028	.877	A	NSR
	d.Attendance	.266	.135	A	NSR
B. Average	a.CCA*	.065	.715	A	NSR
	b.ECA*	.052	.769	A	NSR
	c.Part/Rec*	.290	.102	A	NSR
	d.Attendance	.396	.023	R	SR
C. Inferior	a.CCA*	.183	.299	A	NSR
	b.ECA*	.140	.428	A	NSR
	c.Part/Rec*	.436	.011	R	SR
	d.Attendance	.532	.001	R	SR
D.Neglected/ Rejected	a.CCA*	.411	.016	R	SR
	b.ECA*	.304	.080	A	NSR
	c.Part/Rec*	.479	.005	R	SR
	d.Attendance	.424	.014	R	SR

Legend:*CCA-Co-Curricular Activities, ECA-Extra-curricular Activities, Part-participation/rec-recitation, NSR-not significantly related; SR- significantly related

It could be noted that the relationship between social status and school performance of the children in the institution, being superior with respect to the aspects such as co-curricular, extra-curricular participation/recitation and attendance, the r-values obtain are .132, .367, .877 and .135 respectively which are all greater than .05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis is accepted and therefore found not significantly related. It can be noted that being superior or popular is not a measure of having good performance in the school.

With respect to average aspect against the aspect of school performance, it obtained r-values of .715, .769, .102 respectively and all exceed .05 level of significance, thus, the hypothesis is accepted and therefore found not significantly related. It can be deduced that being an average student does not affect their school performance. It can be deduced that being average influence the attendance of children. Attendance or absences to classes of the child matters for it is given consideration as to the diligence of the child in studying. Attendance is a proof that attending classes is a part of class standing.

On the aspect inferior with respect to school performance aspects, co-curricular and extra-activities, the r-values obtained are .299 and .428 which exceed .05 level of significance thus, the null hypothesis is accepted and therefore found not significantly related. The result implies that children's feeling of inferiority is not a hindrance in joining different activities in the school. While in the aspect of participation/recitation, the obtained r-values of .011 and .001 are both less than .05 level of significance, thus the hypothesis is rejected and therefore found significantly related. The result implies that children's feeling of inferiority affect their participation or recitation in the class due to the fact that they may not satisfy the teacher with their answers and reactions. Attendance is really affected if they do not participate during class discussion. It also implies that it is really more important to attend classes than to join in co or extra-curricular activities.

With respect to neglected/rejected aspect against co-curricular, participation/recitation and attendance, the r-values obtained are .016, .005 and .014 respectively and all are less than .05 level of significance, thus the hypothesis is rejected and therefore found significantly related while on the aspect extra-curricular activities, the obtained r-value is .080 which is greater than .05 level of significance, thus the hypothesis is accepted and therefore found not significantly related. It only means that neglect or rejection has nothing to do extra-curricular activities but it affects co-curricular activities, recitation/participation and attendance. The fact that they are in the institution, they cannot do away from the feelings that they are neglected/rejected especially in the school, so, they try their best to at least join in the extra-curricular activities, to participate in the class discussion and activities and in attending their classes regularly.

Generally, social status does not influence the school performance of every child. This is due to the fact that performance in the school is a personal obligation and responsibility of the child. School performance depends on the child's intellectual ability and not on his social status.

3.5 The relationship between social status and behavioral nature of children

Table 5. The relationship between social status and behavioral nature of children

		R	sig	H ₀	VI
A. Superior	a.Thinking	.141	.435	A	NSR
	b.Feeling	.182	.311	A	NSR
	c.Acting	.016	.931	A	NSR
B. Average	a.Thinking	.435	.011	R	SR
	b.Feeling	.609	.000	R	SR
	c.Acting	.609	.000	R	SR
C Inferior	a. Thinking.	.473	.005	R	SR
	b.Feeling	.599	.000	R	SR
	c.Acting	.574	.000	R	SR
D.Neglected/Rejected	a.Thinking	.489	.004	R	SR
	b.Feeling	.559	.001	R	SR
	c.Acting	.681	.000	R	SR

Between social status and behavioral nature of children, with respect to being superior against thinking, feeling and acting, the result shows that there is no significant relationship that exists as proven by the obtained r-values of .435, .311, and .931 respectively which are all greater than .05 level of significance. The result implies that being superior does not affect the way children's think, feel and act. It may be due to the fact that whatever is their social status, naturally, they are normal individuals who feel, think and act the way they are.

On the aspect average, all the obtained r-values of .011, .000, and .000 for thinking feeling and acting are all less than .05 level of significance, thus the hypothesis is rejected and therefore found significantly related. It implies that having average status affects their behavioral nature due to the fact that most of other children have the same social status. They feel the acceptance of other children.

With respect to neglected/rejected, the r-values obtained for thinking, feeling, and acting are, .004, .001, .000 respectively and all exceed .05 level of significance thus, the hypothesis is rejected and therefore found significantly related. It means that children think that they are neglected/rejected and this feeling affects their thinking, feeling and acting. This feeling really matters because even children are aware of their condition and situation and behave as other children do.

3.5 The relationship between school performance and behavioral nature of children

Table 6. the Relationship between school performance and behavioral nature of children

		R	sig	H ₀	VI
A.CCA	a.Thinking	.329	.062	A	NS
	b.Feeling	.272	.126	A	NS
	c.Acting	.305	.084	A	NS
B.ECA	a.thinking	.187	.298	A	NS
	b.Feeling	.236	.187	A	NS
	c.Acting	.428	.013	R	S
C.Part/Rec	a.Thinking	.408	.018	R	S
	b.Feeling	.428	.013	R	S
	c.Acting	.520	.002	R	S
D.Attendance	a.Thinking	.523	.002	R	S
	b.Feeling	.605	.000	R	S
	c.Acting	.400	.021	R	S

With respect to co-curricular activities in terms of thinking, feeling and acting, the r-values obtained are, .062, .126, .084 respectively, which are all greater than .05 level of significance, thus the hypothesis is accepted and therefore found no significant relationship. It may be due to the fact that co-curricular activities are not as important as other aspects in the school performance. Joining co-curricular activities is not compulsory. It depends on the interest of the child.

On the aspect of extra-curricular activities with respect to thinking and feeling, the r-values of .298 and .187, both exceed .05 level of significance, therefore no significant relation exist. While in acting, the obtained r-value of .002 is less than the level of significance, therefore, a significant relationship has been found. It implies that joining extra-curricular activities need to show behavior of the child especially if it requires acting ability.

For participation/recitation aspect, the r-values obtained for thinking, feeling and acting are .018, .013, .002 respectively are all less than level of significance, therefore, a significant relationship exists. This implies that participation or recitation in class requires thinking. It also shows that a feeling that they can do the task satisfactorily.

For the aspect attendance, the r-values obtained for thinking, feeling and acting are .002, .000, .021 respectively and all do not exceed level of significance, and therefore found significantly related. It implies that if children think and feel that they are able to perform the task, they are not hesitant to join and participate in the school activities. It is also in the school that they are given chances to act the way they are. It can be deduced that school performance depends upon on how they think, feel and act as individuals.

IV. CONCLUSION

The social status of children in the foster home is on the average level because of the acceptance they feel from other people especially from the staff of the foster home and in the school. A satisfactory school performance is evident due to fact that children could attend and participate in different school activities. And children are also human being and like other people, they tend to think, feel and act the way they are. The social status of children does not affect their school performance. Behavioral nature of children is affected by their social status and likewise, school performance is affected by their behavioral nature. As mentioned in PD No. 603, Art. 1 [16], The child is one of the most important assets of the nation. Every effort should be exerted to promote his welfare and enhance his opportunities for useful and happy life. With this, the study recommends that intervention activities be crafted to further enhance the personal, social and psychological capabilities of children.

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