

Causal factors of emotional and behavioral disorders



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Emotional and behavioral disorders are some of the most common disorders among adolescents and children. Although many adolescents and children suffer from emotional and behavioral disorders, few cases are correctly diagnosed (Epstein, 1998). This is because most symptoms of these disorders appear similar to normal behavior of children in the growth and development stages. Unless parents and teachers are very keen in observing their child's behavior, they may fail to notice the development of these disorders. There are various factors which are attributed to the development of emotional and behavioral disorders. These factors can be categorized into family, biological, culture and school factors. This paper will analyze these factors in more detail. The criteria for identification of these factors as well as their impacts on children with emotional and behavioral disorders will be analyzed. Finally, suggestions on how to mitigate the problems will be given and issues discussed summarized at the end.

Causal factors of emotional and behavioral disorders

Biological factors

There are different biological causes of emotional and behavioral disorders. The first is the genetic makeup and children who are born in families where parents or relatives have a history of these disorders have higher chances of developing these disorders than those born in families without a history of the disorders. Chemical imbalance is another causal factor of emotional and behavioral disorders and this is caused by an imbalance in dopamine, serotonin, acetylcholine and norepinephrine neurotransmitters or low levels of minerals such as Zinc, Magnesium or Potassium in the body.

Family factors

One factor which influences the development of emotional and behavioral disorders is the familial relationships at an early age. Children who are raised in families where parents do not offer them emotional and psychological support may develop emotional and behavioral disorders. Children who are raised in families which experience abuse or violence are also likely to develop emotional and behavioral disorders (Council for Exceptional Children, 2007). Finally, children who undergo trauma at early ages, such as involvement in accidents or loss of parents are also likely to develop these disorders than those who do not experience traumatic events.

School factors

Various factors in the school environment may cause the development of emotional and behavioral disorders. One factor is bullying, and this has been associated with development of behavioral disorders especially in cases where schools do not take actions to discourage the vice. Victims may develop such disorders due to the adverse effects to their self confidence and esteem as a consequence of bullying. In instances where children with emotional and behavioral disorders do not have access to materials, personnel and educational systems conducive towards catering for their needs, such disorders are likely to be more serious and will have worse effects than children exposed to education systems which cater for their needs.

Culture factors

Different cultures have different expectations from children who are growing up. Whenever cultures expect too much from children and exert too much pressure on them, they may develop emotional and behavioral disorders. Another instance where culture may lead to emotional and behavioral disorders is in the case of culture shock. When children are exposed to a culture which is significantly different from their own, and they do not receive assistance when adjusting, they may develop behavioral and emotional disorders. This may occur due to the perception that they are different from the people in the culture which they are not accustomed to.

Criteria to use in order to identify these factors as causalities of EBD

In order to evaluate the causality of emotional and behavioral disorders, there are various criteria which are used. The first involves medical tests and this criterion is used to detect disorders caused by biological factors such as genes or lack of minerals in the body (Kauffman & Landrum, 2008). This form of evaluation involves laboratory tests and other medical tests. The other criterion involves therapeutic tests and in this case, various forms of therapy are used to detect weaknesses in the mental development or behavior of young children. This form of evaluation is used when detecting disorders caused by family, school and cultural factors.

Impact of these factors on students with EBD

There are various impacts which factors discussed above have on children with emotional and behavioral disorders. Family and school factors such as abuse, bullying and lack of involvement in development of children have an

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adverse effect on children with emotional and behavioral disorders. These factors worsen the effects of the disorder amongst children with it, since they weaken the resolve for the child to fight it or seek treatment for it. Children who are bullied or abused have little faith in adults and are therefore less likely to seek help whenever they develop behavioral disorders (Rutherford & Quinn, 2004). Disorders caused by biological factors may eventually lead to the development of more complex mental disorders if not diagnosed and treated early. Students with emotional and behavioral disorders are also likely to abuse substances, develop depression or attempt suicide especially if they do not seek medical interventions.

How they can be mitigated

There are various ways in which causal factors of emotional and behavioral disorders can be mitigated. The first is regular medical check ups for young children. Medical practitioners are trained to diagnose and treat behavioral and emotional disorders. These disorders are difficult to diagnose since they resemble normal childhood behavior but trained health care personnel are able to detect and treat the disorders (National Association of School Psychologists, 2005). Early treatment will enable children to experience normal growth and development patterns expected of healthy children.

The second is ensuring that a child enjoys security, love and care during his or her development stages. This reinforces confidence in children and helps in mental development, thereby reducing cases of developing emotional and behavioral disorders. Teachers and parents have a responsibility of protecting children from abuse, bullying and any other factors which may adversely affect their physical and mental development. The third

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intervention which may mitigate the effects of emotional and behavioral disorders is development of education systems and special schools to cater for children with special needs. This will enable children with mental disorders to receive normal education which will empower them in adult lives.

Summary and conclusion

Emotional and behavioral disorders have been seen to be very common amongst children. Many children suffer in silence due to the failure to correctly diagnose the disorders at an early age, and this adversely affects their development into adulthood. There are various factors which have been seen to cause these disorders and these include family, biological, culture and school factors. These factors affect the normal development of children and limit their potential. However, with certain interventions, adverse effects of emotional and behavioral disorders can be mitigated. These interventions include medical treatment of the disorders at an early age, development of schools and education systems to cater for victims of these disorders and proper childhood development within the family and school setting. Parents and teachers should recognize the seriousness of emotional and behavioral disorders and take steps to ensure that children with these disorders are diagnosed and treated during early stages.