APPLICATION OF THE BLOOMS TAXONOMY MODEL OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN CHARACTER EDUCATION FOR DESIGNING EFFECTIVE PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

Character Education is an age-old concept, but the lack of appropriate research in the area has only led it to become less effective over the years. Mostly the concepts are theoretical without much scientific explanation. This article is an attempt to introduce a scientific perspective on character education. The expected outcome of the paper is to offer a research base for deriving the general principles leading to effective practices in character education. The application of Bloom's taxonomy in Character education for ensuring the effectiveness of its delivery is the central idea of the paper. The paper attempts to provide a certain set of Policy suggestions to educationists, practitioners, and policymakers for the improvement of character education at the school level.

Keywords: Bloom's taxonomy, Character education, Best Practices, School Education, Effective Education.

INTRODUCTION

Character education is one of the most primary educations that a child receives but is hardly ever known as being formally given. We have known the concept of character education since forever, but it has never been supported by any scientific theories. The lack of appropriate research in the effective delivery of character education has slowed down the growth of Character education. Addressing this research gap, this paper suggests the application of Bloom's taxonomy in designing the programs for ensuring effectivity of the same. The concept of character education may be dated back to the evolution of civilization. In fact, the word civilization also conveys the essence of character education, but if we try to establish any relevance to a particular field of study, there is no evidence of the same. The existence of mankind is based on character education; still, there is a dearth of supporting scientific evidence. The availability of books and content related to character education gives the impression that much work has been done in creating an environment conducive to the dissemination of character education, but the significant contribution in this area can only be traced since last forty to thirty-five years when various studies have been conducted in the area.

Bloom's taxonomy is the most widely used tool as a framework to support teaching and learning. Benjamin Bloom, originally an American educational psychologist, created Bloom's taxonomy in 1956. The taxonomy provides a hierarchical ordering of cognitive skills to help

design successful teaching practice.

The fact that Bloom's taxonomy can be applied to any (cognitive) content intended for students to learn is what makes this framework so powerful. The quality of providing an excellent foundation for lessons can be used as a framework in which to deliver appropriate activities, assessments, objectives, and outcomes in Character Education. In this paper, we will apply the different levels of the taxonomy in designing an effective Character education program. The taxonomy is designed as a 6-level theory where the levels start from the stage of Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating and go till the stage of Creating by gradually increasing the difficulty level.

To understand the application of Taxonomy, it's important to first understand the concept of character. A character can be defined as the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual. Earlier conceptions of character were very descriptive. They involved references of psychological development and morality to serve the understanding of the concept of character education. The basic thought revolved around self-building of character, and the process would continue life-long. Gill referred to character formation as an act done through reasoned reflection and decision (RB., 1983). The Aristotelian context considers the ability to properly perform human functions rationally as the criterion for character education.

The concept of character has undergone massive change in the recent past and is now substituted by personality (E.E., 1980) And exploring the reasons for this shift, we find is the lack of appropriate exploration in the efficient ways of character formation methods. The ease of building personality has sidelined the importance of Character formation, but the strength of character formation still supersedes the glory of personality.

The basic purpose of character education is the creation of character in students. Character and its development, therefore, should be addressed first, and then a discussion into effective research in character formation should be taken up. A character many times is used to express the way a certain person behaves or acts; however, the same is very vast in meaning and concept. Character is also interpreted as good or bad based on the outcomes of certain behaviors displayed by the person. Few people are said to have multiple characters based on inconsistency in their behavior. But the character that is the central idea of proposed education is supposedly good and consistent. The competence to hold moral values evident in one's conduct as a human being is the basic format of the character. It is a combination of morals and psychology. Moral action, moral values, moral personality, moral emotions, moral reasoning, moral identity are identified as foundational psychological characteristics in the Berk author's moral anatomy (Berkowitz, Marvin, Grych, & John, 2000).

According to a study, the character is psychological and multifaceted and essentially reflects the moral fabric of the person. These qualities are not instant; rather, they keep developing over the years, most particularly in childhood and adolescence (Damon, 2002). Family impacts the character of the person to a large extent (Berkowitz & Oser, 1985), but the role of schools cannot be ignored as a developmental force (Berkowitz, Marvin, Grych, & John, 2000). The impact that families and educational institutions have on character development is huge, and that is why it is more important to have a detailed understanding of the complexity of the nature of the character. The understanding will help the application of principle effectively and impact the moral development of the person.

There are many scalable and unscalable outcomes of character education, and that is supposed to be favorable in the event of the application of effective principles of character education in character building.

There is an evident association between Character education with self-control, social skills, self-esteem, academic motivation, academic achievement, bonding with school, prosocial behavior, prosocial and democratic values, conflict—resolution skills, self-efficacy, respect, moral—reasoning, maturity, responsibility and aspirations, and trust in and respect for teachers.

The successful outcome of character is also traceable to discipline referrals, school Failure, substance use, school anxiety, suspensions, absenteeism, etc. The outcomes are, however, based on the effectiveness of the efforts and practices being taken up in this direction. This presents the need for a clear plan of action or initiative strategy for contributing to making character effective.

Many studies have been conducted in identifying the important things that work for character education development and dissemination, but only a few can be considered conclusive. The application of Bloom's taxonomy is an attempt to ensure the effective designing of character education programs and is subjected to modifications based on the reviews and suggestions. Few insights from the study can be discussed here for better deliberation of the subject matter.

DISCUSSION

Remembering that Character Education Should Be Comprehensive and All-Encompassing

The effectiveness of character education initiatives depends upon their scope also. The programs covering major areas like curricular, classroom management, parent involvement, social and school reform, etc., are likely to be more successful due to their root-level approach. When initiatives are designed in a way to address the root issue gradually moving upwards, bringing change simultaneously has an evident success rate. However, the idea is not to discourage monolithic initiatives, but comprehensive initiatives have a smooth way towards effectivity and work best with clearly defined objectives. Programs like Child Development Project, Resolving Conflict Creatively are few examples of multicomponent programs that include a bottom-up approach resulting in more sustainable character education. For instance, if a university has a conflict resolution cell and students are given sessions regularly about the right way to address the conflicts instead of just resolving them through violence. Such initiates have proved to be efficient. Also, there are lower levels of conflicts in comparison to such universities not having such cells. In the light of these developments, it is now mandatory to have student grievance cells at all levels in the education sector.

Understanding that Character Education Depends Primarily on the Quality of Implementation

The implementation of character education is primarily considered to be the responsibility of the family and the teachers due to the relatively higher degree of authenticity required for its effective delivery. The degree of authenticity and Genuity strongly impacts the result as character education is a stream of education delivered better by conduct and lesser through lectures. However, consistent reiteration about the right conduct and correct direction of thought

have proved their results, but most of the responsibility still falls on teachers and family because of the close access with the person. Now the question here is, are they ready to disseminate the kind of education it takes to build character. Family members and teachers typically lack the training to implement character education. Studies have proved that for character education to work, it must be accurately and fully delivered (L., E, B, Speicher-Dubin, & Lieberman, 1977). But, as simple as it might sound in practice, it is difficult to monitor the degree, level, and quality of implementation, resulting in the failure of such programs. The inaccurate estimation of time required for the successful implementation of such programs is also the reason for the ineffectiveness of these programs.

Another important component of effective character education is fidelity in implementation, which is most difficult to measure the optimized levels. Lack of exposure to such learnings is also a major cause of unsatisfactory results of such programs. The effectiveness of character education programs largely depends on the contact hours that students spend in the program. Usually, the student attendance is very less in such initiatives, and the rational conclusion is that students with less attendance will be benefitted less as compared to the students who are more regular as they are more exposed to the learning and resultantly higher outcome, but the relationship is not direct as per studies (P., Philliber, & Hodgson, 1990).

Understanding the Importance of the Involvement of Staff in the Process

Hinde proposes in his study that there is little to no result obtained from the character education programs where the staff was not involved in the effective implementation of character education programs. The non-involvement further led to a lack of commitment on their part, which is important for efficient implementation exactly as it is for every educational reform to work (E, 2003). An interrogation into PATHS suggests successful implementation of character education programs depends hugely on the commitment of the staff or teacher (Kam et al., 2003).

Staff involvement in such reforms results in their development and training, which in turn accelerates the entire process of growth, but unfortunately, this component is generally the most underutilized component of quality character education. The usual explanation of this comes from the fact that staff involvement requires a lot of expense in terms of time and money to train them appropriately, and there has always been a lack of appropriate implementation mechanisms. There are many examples confirming the said hypothesis like Child Development Project, Community of Caring, Responsive Classroom, etc.

Another important point is the comprehension level of the staff and teachers, as it critically impacts the success of the implementation of the character education program. Suppose the staff could not understand the initiative or the methods to implement it properly, then most likely they will implement it inefficiently or reject it altogether. There may be another possibility of they not having faith in the purpose of the program, which will again lead to ineffective implementation. Therefore, considering the above facts, it is the responsibility of the leader of the school to involve, train, and motivate their staff to ensure successful implementation.

Applying the Leadership Attributes In Creating Desired Learning Outcomes

Character Education observes the conduct of the leader of the school as a strong impact on the personality and character of the student as students relate to them, and a lot of invisible learning takes place from the leadership traits of these people. Therefore, it is important to note that there are three aspects of character in every leader that flow downwards and create the overall environment of the school. These aspects can be listed as comprehension, acceptance, and application. A leader must comprehend the importance of his own role and accept the responsibility and finally perform his duties keeping in mind the environment conducive to character development in school. The innate characteristics of The Principal of the school are followed by the entire school or family. An effective leader must first comprehend the concept of quality character education and then must embrace the vision to create the desired environment under his supervision. Finally, the leader must have the required skills to ensure his own conduct in accordance with the principle of character education. Many schools that fail to deliver such effective leadership ultimately fail to deliver character education effectively to their students.

It will not be an exaggeration to call leaders to be the most important factors for creating a character development environment as if they don't support the same, the entire school will not be benefitted but only a handful of students whose teachers follow the importance of character education. Only an isolated development of a few can be ensured within a class in a school if the entire school does not follow the principles of character education (Hartijasti, Yanki, Afzal, & Safia, 2016).

The role of the leader of the school and the head of the family is essential to impact the character education effectivity of the entire school or family (Vargas, Laura, González-Torres, & Carmen, 2009). Research by Greenberg and Kam, and Walls identify the commitment of the leader as one of the two important factors for effective implementation of character education (Kam et al., 2003). But others believe that interest and commitment are only one part of the impact, whereas the role of leader goes much deeper as "A change Agent" Jackson & Davis, 2000). According to a few, leader competency is highly decisive of the success of the character education programs (J, Trimble, & Whitaker, 1997). The leader whose emphasis lies on meaningful governance and staff empowerment certainly leads to student flourishing amid school improvement.

There is an evidentiary need identified for leader's training for enabling them to meet the challenges posed by character education (Benninga & S., 1991). Leaders running these environments need to understand the rationale behind these programs and then effectively plan the mechanism to implement the decisions. And most importantly, they must be invested in the entire process to ensure the desired results.

Applying the Learnings of Character Education for Success In the World

The present era is education based on outcomes. These outcomes are scalable. The scalability of the outcomes is usually based on very tangible parameters like knowledge about a certain field of expertise and domain. Usually, in this kind of environment the education delivering non-scalable outcome or outcomes that are scalable bot not quantifiable, take a back seat. In present time schools and universities, such courses that don't add to the employability of the students as per contemporary norms are scraped. Students also follow the pattern of polishing only their employability skills and not their life skills and sustainability skills. The trend is only leading to more and more students getting caught in the flow and totally neglecting the character

education side, which is most important for surviving in the world of cut-throat competition. Schools and universities are only teaching such curriculum in the classroom that can be evaluated conveniently, saving a lot of time, effort, and money. The pressure is on the rise and learning, and character development is only for the name's sake.

This duly highlights the importance of character education in present times as it revolves around the principles of quality education. In a recent study conducted by access on three academically excelling schools, the characteristics of success have been identified as leadership based on staff empowerment, mutual respect, caring relationships, ample growth opportunities for both staff and students, and shared governance (J A., 2003). Another study conducted by The Hope Foundation suggests distinct characteristics of successful schools to be collaboration, shared goal and development, and empowerment of leadership at all levels. It is evident from the study that for being successful in the real world, only tangible outcomes are not relevant, but high moral education and other intangible attributes are also important. The characteristics identified by both studies have a strong alliance with effective character education. Character education is comprehensive learning encompassing vital points like opportunities for student reflection, constructivist principles, student empowerment, collaborative learning, analysis of the depth and gravity of human experience, and applications of learnings to real-life situations and learnings.

The discussion about the basic principles of character education and the real purpose of education to transform students into better human beings help us reach the conclusion that quality character education is the need of the hour, and without its successful assimilation in the regular curriculum, nothing of value can be obtained from the education. Educational reforms like service learning and comprehensive education are found to promote academic achievement and foster student character development. Likewise, quality character education results in academic gains for students, something that has been demonstrated repeatedly in research (Aber, Brown, & Henrich, 1999). These studies capture the essence of character education, their impact on the effectiveness of character education programs and prove their direct relation with standardized test scores (Benninga & S., 1991).

Analyzing the Benefits of Training of Interpersonal, Moral, and Emotional Skill

Traditionally, the training of effective emotional, interpersonal and moral skills is inevitable for successful character education as it is indicated in many studies that character formation is a result of habit formation and behavioral attributes which gradually become part of one's virtue or character (Benninga & S., 1991) the age-old learning of socio-emotional behavior is based on the behavioral models of learning and development which outline the importance of directly taught social and emotional skills in the classroom either in the form of theory or by practicing the same through class activities (J.P., T, A., & T., 1995). The concept is followed in the prevention literature also that is followed by many schools as reference study (Tappe, Galer, A., & C., 1995). The success rate of including direct skill-building in character education initiatives and models is very high. Many schools introduce direct skill training in their regular curriculum and classroom activities as modules in a comprehensive way, realizing the benefits of the same in character education (J.P., R.P., & JA, 1989). This model is particularly useful in the training of the skillset upon which the comprehensive approach relies, for example, training of

the listening skills so that the cooperative learning can be effectively taught, or peer conflict management skills are taught, and resultantly class meetings can be effective.

Analyzing the Feedback Received from Parents as Important Stakeholders in the Education Process

Parent's involvement in the child's learning process is gaining much acceptance, and popularity and schools are recognizing that there is a need for them to be proactive about it. Character Education Partnership's 11 Principles by Lickona, Schaps and Lewis identify the tenth principle as a parent to be an important stakeholder in a child's education and learning. They assert the recruitment of parents and community members in the character-building efforts (Schaps et al., 1996). These findings have encouraged the explicit involvement of parents in the character development planning and implementation process. The process so designed is very comprehensive, and together with all the stakeholders like school, community representatives, parents, and teachers jointly identify and define the roadmap for character education. The attributes, skills, and patterns that need to be emphasized in character education are meticulously incorporated. There are many studies identifying that the involvement of parents in the children's academic achievement and character development brings phenomenal results (Patrikakou & Eva, 2011).

Also, these education programs plan activities that mandate parental participation. These activities give enough opportunities to parents to engage their children at home in educational activities. Teachers perform the follow up on these activities in the classroom and strengthen the harmony and connection between school and home (e.g., the Child Development Project and Positive Action). There are many benefits of involving parents as the feedback provided by them gives an opportunity to continuously modify the learning, keeping in mind the response of the child towards the designed program. The overall harmony resulting due to such coordinated effort brings an additional sense of belongingness in the child resulting in wonderful outcomes in terms of character education.

Developing Evaluation Competence Reflecting in Primary Prevention through Character Education

There is a general mindset regarding primary prevention programs and character education programs to be different from each other. However, what we miss here is the impact of character education on the strong willpower and moral value of the students, which, once formed, help them imbibe and sustain a higher degree of prevention in terms of substance use and violence, and abusive tendencies. Effective character education equips the student with the basic characteristic of judging what is right and what is wrong. Consistent reference to good behavior and bad behavior during character education programs helps students strengthen these judgment abilities. According to Berkowitz, character education lays down (Aber, Brown, & Henrich, 1999) the foundation for primary prevention programs. First, both the programs have many common features, and second, character education has been found to be a very effective form of prevention, especially primary prevention (Berkowitz, Marvin, Grych, & John, 2000). Child Development Project has reported a successful reduction in substance use and child violence and

abusive behavior because of character education programs (Solomon et al., 2000). If we refer to the Life-skills Training like Effective prevention programs or All-Stars program, we observe inclusion of character education elements in all these programs (Allen, Poteet, Burroughs, & Susan, 1997) and (Allen, Poteet, Burroughs, & Susan, 1997). Many types of research have been conducted on prevention programs to demonstrate the reduced risky behaviors and promotion of positive character development (Allen, Poteet, Burroughs, & Susan, 1997). So, we conclude that both prevention and character education must not be distinguished from each other rather must be collaborated for ensuring the best outcome at both fronts.

Evaluation of Behavioral Conduct of Adults as Role Models and Developing Judgment of Right and Wrong

Students develop best characters when they observe their adults following a moral code of the character. Students learn from the behavior of adults. Observing the behaviors of valued others is a powerful impact on one's own development, as evident from social psychology (A, 1977). The professionals training the soon-to-be-professional have the strongest impact on those whom they are training. Their ethical or unethical conduct can create an ethical code of conduct replica (E.D., 1989). Parental role modeling is observed to be the strongest such force impacting the children's character, as suggested by the research on parenting and children's character development (N & Mussen, 1989). According to Maccoby, self-control children learn mostly from their parents or family (E.E., 1980). Schools are still exploring these avenues as, despite the strong research base, the methods to incorporate it in the character education program are still a difficult task. According to Ryan and Patrick, students with report increased self-regulatory skills from the class of those teachers who are perceived by students as expecting respectful relations in the classroom (Ryan, Allison, Patrick, & Helen, 2001). The teachers who regularly clean the garden of the school usually attract many students, happily following them and cleaning the garden without even being asked. The effectiveness of a teacher in the classroom can be understood by the operational efficiency depicted by the students of their class.

Creating School to Perform as Caring Community

The school is the second home for the children as they spend much of their time there and a lot of development and learning happens over there. There is evidence from various research that students having a strong emotional bonding with their school or college depict a better character as compared to those with bitter experiences at the emotional level associated with their school or college (Berkowitz, Marvin, Grych, & John, 2000). Also, it has been observed that schools having a higher student engagement quotient tend to result in better character development in their students (C & E, 2003). Studies have proved that a better student-teacher relationship at the preschool level enhances the advanced cognitive activity and positive attitude in the student. They tend to be more successful in dealing with the complexity of life and have shown more ego resiliency, according to Howes and Ritchie. In their Child development Project, Solomon revealed that the student's perception of their classroom as a caring community is directly related to the effectiveness of basic education and resultantly on character education (Solomon et al., 2000). In 1997, Solomon established with the help few studies that teacher's

emphasis on imbibing prosocial values and cooperative spirit among students impacts the student's relationship with the school and results in their perception of school as a caring community (V, D, M, & E, 1997).

According to Ryan and Patrick, when students are most inspired to have academic achievement, self-regulation, self-efficacy, and character development in middle school when they perceive their teachers as being fair and supportive, supporting respectful student interactions instead of relying more on negative tactics and behavioral and conduct rules (Ryan, Allison, Patrick, & Helen, 2001). The classroom management practices based on increased class engagement, student participation in extracurricular activities, healthy environment, good physical health, non-harsh disciplinary practices resulted in better bonding with the school (J.P., R.P., & JA, 1989). According to Resnick, student's attachment to parents & family and school are important impacts on reduced rude and risky behavior among students (Resnick et al., 1997).

Here we can clearly say that the environment of the school and the role of teachers have a strong impact on developing the character of the students. So, we can conclude that effective practices in character education must target the psychological perspective of the student towards their teachers, family, and school. The establishment of these forces as supportive in the minds of the students results in more effective character education.

Creating Own Reflection by Students on Social and Moral Issues

The prime focus of character education is not only to tell students right and wrong but also to develop the rationale to judge right from wrong. Bloom's taxonomy refers to the stage of analysis and evaluation as advanced stages of learning which need to be induced in practice by consistent efforts. The students must be encouraged to critically evaluate such situations and develop moral reasoning to reach a just conclusion (Sizer, R., Sizer, & Faust, 1999). Peer moral discourse appears to be an efficient way to approach moral reasoning (C, A, & L, 1989). A significant amount of research has demonstrated the effectiveness of promoting the development of moral-reasoning capacities. Also, there is an argument on integrating such observations in educational areas such as science education as a way of encouraging character education and academic learning (Berkowitz & Oser, 1985).

Character education often includes the study of moral heroes that inspires the child brain to develop higher moral and have a principled life. The ideologies of war heroes emerging victorious at the end though been exposed to many obstacles, develop a sense of pride and followership in the child. This promotes moral judgment in the students.

Research suggests that a guided discussion on such thought-provoking philosophies helps students build a belief system and results in character formation. But the staff needs to be efficient in facilitating the students to reach the desired learning from the discussion. The failure to create such a meaningful outcome may result in bitter arguments and defeat the entire purpose. Employment of pedagogical processes that rely on structured, respectful peer discussion of those issues is a central element of ineffective use of moral content in character education. As already mentioned, staff development is important in creating and implementing social norms for respectful disagreement and training social skills for the effective inclusion of such peer moral discourse experiences.

CONCLUSION

This paper is descriptive research that explored the opinions and views of various researchers towards creating impactful character education programs. It is evident that character education effectively promotes the social/moral/emotional development and academic achievement of the students. On exploring the ways to make character education more effective, the article came out with few suggestions which can be put to use in order to ensure effective implementation of character education among the students.

We observed during the discussion in the article that there are many forms of character education, few of which are proved to be working while others need more research and modifications. The effectiveness of the character education programs may be debated upon, but there is unanimity in observing that character education is an inevitable part of education. Therefore, significant research must be continued in the area to make it as meaningful and purposeful as possible. If we understand Bloom's taxonomy in the context of character education, it covers all the stages of learning. First, the students must remember that it is important to be a person of good character. Then they should be able to understand the concept of character and why it is important to learn it. Then they must apply the learnings of character education and reflect upon the benefits that are accrued resultantly. The students then must develop an analytical approach towards these learnings and be able to distinguish good from the bad. This grappling with the moral code will empower students to evaluate every situation as per their own observations and learnings, making them independent and of sound judgment. Finally, as the students reach the completion of their character education, they must be able to create their own code of morals and principles based on their reflections from the various learnings. This entire process will result in successful character education inculcation in the students.

No amount of research is enough to conclude the ever-growing area of education, and that is the future scope of this study. We need to conduct more research to understand better how and when character education is most effective. Nonetheless, the findings of this paper must contribute and help educators to design effective initiatives that will foster the development of character in students.

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