

CRITIQUE OF CONTEMPORARY DECLINING STUDENTS RESILIENCE: A SIGNAL TO LACK OF INITIATIVE AND PRODUCTIVITY

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Abstract

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress such as family (sudden loss of a loved one), relationship problems, and a serious health challenge. Resilient individuals are able to successfully adapt to the associated stress that comes with education. Using the method of critical analysis, the researcher finds out that, the cause of lack of initiative and productivity in students is traceable to decline in students' resilience. The ability of students to cope with the inevitable challenges of life has significant implications for both their well-being and academic success. The researcher therefore, recommends that students must not only survive setbacks and challenges but also, learn how to thrive in the face of adversity. Parents and teachers should also develop strategies to reposition students for a better academic performance.

Keywords: Resilience, Decline, Initiative, Multi-dimensional, Productivity, Adversity

Introduction

Academic resilience is the ability to overcome academic setbacks, stress and study pressure associated with school as manifested by internal and external protective factors (Storer, Cychosz, Licklider, 1995). Decline in resilience is multi-dimensional in nature which encompasses various domains

such as academics, social and emotional resilience. Resilience which aids coping and adjustment, prevents lack of initiative and productivity for students exposed to adversities. Parents are the custodians of children and the first instruction a child receives is from the home. Career parents no longer care and show much love to their children, forgetting that love and affection are the basis of children growth and proper development. Mothers love is priceless and mothers are children's best teachers by showing examples and precepts, but most career driven mothers neglect their responsibilities leaving it in the hands of house helps and nannies(majority of which are not learned) which cannot guide the child properly with home drill. In primary schools, teachers do little or no teaching and therefore knowledge is not passed after all forgetting that primary school is the bed rock of education with reference to a religious saying "if the foundation is destroyed what can the righteous do?"

These days parents control teachers on how to train their children while in school environment. Teachers are not as devoted and dedicated as their predecessors, they no longer teach students the way they were taught but blame students, parents and the government of the aftermath. Some teachers have the notion that I will do what I can and leave the rest for the parents, after all the child has parents forgetting that everybody helps in the training of every child, (Nwabunwaora, n. d).The predecessors of these teachers knew the importance of a child's future and so were committed with high morals and sound values and they believed that the school complements the home and vice versa, knowing that training a child is not just the sole responsibility of parents but a collective responsibility. Unconducive environment can affect students during learning or during studies, for example when schools are close to markets, parks, main road and when

students are from homes close to noisy environments with no room for intensive reading. The influence of academic resilience is magnified by the rapid changes in the school environment especially in the societies characterized by a high focus on good academic grades with stiff competition for training and employment opportunities. The purpose of this research work is to investigate and spot check the cause of decline in students' resilience.

Conceptual Framework of Academic Resilience

Academic resilience means students achieving good education outcomes despite adversity. Education brings about an inherent and permanent change in a person's thinking and capacity to do things, so just reading books and understanding what you have read does not mean you have been educated (or permanently changed), if you don't integrate what you have read into attitudes and memory. Many people have superficial concept of education by equating it with doing a particular course or obtaining a particular qualification but qualification and courses obtained can never be equated with effective education. They do this because they are not worth more than the certificate they have. Real education is very different from just having access to information about something but embeds things into one's brain and everyone who understands the process of learning will understand that this comes from repeated exposure and use of information and skills.

Resilience is not merely a natural ability; a person can develop new or stronger resilience skills Masten (2001). Factors that enhance resilience include social support, physical health, self-regulation, cognitive flexibility, and optimism (Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999). The ability of students to cope with the inevitable challenges of life has significant implications for both well-being and academic success. Resilience has benefits

that relate to persistence and the ability of a student to recover from challenges related to mental health. Students who are resilient depend on this strength as a central determinant of mental health. Resilience allows people to maintain or recover good mental health in the face of adversity. Resilience is also an important determinant of academic performance (Leary & DeRosier, 2012); it allows students to persist and bounce back from academic challenges, such as failing an exam. Mental health, depression and anxiety, exam malpractices, procrastination, environmental influence(poverty), language of instruction, poor quality of instructional teaching materials, abuse and neglect, lack of qualified teachers, parents are contributing factors to lack of initiative and productivity (Eagan, Lozano, Hurtado, & Case, 2013).

Factors that Influence decline in Students' Resilience Depression and Anxiety

Depression and anxiety have been rising steadily for many decades, according to a meta-analysis of studies using the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (Twenge et al., 2010) it shows increasing focus among young people on extrinsic motivations, such as status, grades, and money, along with impossibly high expectations for these goals that contribute to the negative trends in resilience, initiative and productivity. In other words, young people are in a constant state of vulnerability if they are fixated on objectives that are largely outside their own control. These high external expectations can decrease their motivation and ability to overcome barriers and depression can make students pessimistic about their futures, reducing their motivation to make long-term investments by taking their studies seriously

Nnaemeka Critique of Contemporary Declining Students ... being primary, paramount and detracting from every other secondary motivations that will decline the possibility of obtaining good grades and persisting to graduation. Depression is associated with gaps in enrollment of a semester or more (referred to as discontinuous enrollment) (Arria et al., 2013) and a twofold increase in risk of departure from college without graduating (Eisenberg, Golberstein, & Hunt, 2009).

Environmental Influence

Students of similar abilities enter school with differences in readiness to benefit from instruction, primarily based on their “social class backgrounds” (Rothstein, 2004). It has been shown that children from parents with higher educational levels have been read to more frequently, have more books in the home, have already learned how to use computers, and had differing patterns of interactive reading and conversation than those children from families with less education and fewer resources (Chatterji, 2006). The skills gained from early exposure and continued enrichment are transferable to readiness for academic instruction and provide modeling for achievement orientation. From birth to age 5, forces have already been put in place that encourage some children to “shine” and fulfill their potentials in school and life while other forces stunt the growth and development of children who have just as much potential (Hodgkinson, 2003). Furthermore, students from lower income families may have limited access to programmes outside of school that provide lessons and enrichment opportunities that add to student competence in a learning environment, confidence in ability to learn new things, social interaction skills, and background information that may transfer to an academic setting. Involvement in school-related activities in general is associated with higher achievement (Everson & Millsap, 2004). However, these opportunities frequently have registration and

participation fees that make them inaccessible to students from low-income families. Class differences are greater than differences within racial groups; for instance, the black and white middle class parents resemble each other in the way they manage their children's leisure time"

(Lamont & Small 2006, p. 14). Middle and upper class parents, regardless of race or ethnicity, pass along cumulatively important advantages to their children through availability of organized leisure activities, summer programmes, educational enrichment, family vacations, and connection to other families with similar supports (Lareau, 2003). In other words, opportunities to learn in group settings and exposure to information-rich environments have been found to be less available to children in poverty, placing them at a disadvantage relative to more affluent classmates when they enter the school environment. Opportunities for high-ability students in particular may be differentially available according to structures within the public schools that allow greater resources to be available to the dominant culture (Cross & Cross, 2005). Some students are initiated into cultism by bad company which distracts their focus. Specifically, exam malpractices are distraction in school, which may reduce accrual of both real skills and outward signals (such as high grades) that increase expected job opportunities and productivity.

Examination Malpractices

Examination is a test to show the knowledge and ability of a student in a particular subject or to obtain a qualification (Wikipedia).

Malpractice is a dereliction of professional duty or a failure to exercise an ordinary degree of professional skill or learning (Webster Merriam). Examination malpractice is an illegal act that helps students during or immediately after

Nnaemeka Critique of Contemporary Declining Students ... examination, to achieve success without hard work. Examination malpractices is any form of deliberate cheating on examinations which provides one or more candidates with an unfair advantage (of earning excellent grades) or disadvantage(inept). Examination malpractice have polluted and caused gradual decay in educational system which affects academic performance of students hence making them lazy to cultivate reading culture, play truancy, lack self-efficacy, become inept, thus leaving a negative influence on those with strong affinity to reading and researching (success) which with time diminishes their initiative and productivity therefore hampering the development of the nation.

Procrastination

Procrastination is the avoidance of doing a task that needs to be accomplished, it is a habitual or intentional delay of starting or finishing a task despite its negative consequences (Wikipedia). Students who procrastinate have poor and lackadaisical attitude towards learning and they experience higher levels of frustration, guilt, stress and anxiety and in some cases leading to serious issues like low self-esteem and depression. Causes of procrastination includes; distractions (not attentive when teaching/lectures are ongoing), poor study routine(students tends to be fairly habitual which automatically leads to little conscious thought), optimistic about time(overestimate the amount of time left to complete the assignment and underestimate the amount of time it will take to complete them).

Lack of Parental Responsibility

Parents are the custodians of children and the first instruction a child receives is from the home. It is the sole responsibility of parents to provide the basic needs of their children and these

needs are essential which could be physical, emotional, biological and social interaction; the lack of which leads to misbehaviour among children. On the part of parents, Nuns (1981) noted that, in the olden days, parents devoted their time for their children studies but career driven parents have little or no time to look at their children's school work collaborating on this point, the researchers equally believe that, it is due to the pressure of work to counter the present global economic meltdown.

Lack of Instructional Materials

Instructional materials are those materials that aid or enhance the learning process. According to Alifa (1994), instructional materials aid teaching and learning. Ozigi (1977) expressed the importance of equipment and stressed that pupils' performance depends very much on school equipment. Items of school equipment are essential aids to effective teaching and learning; they are teachers' trade tools. Any school lacking them cannot expect to achieve its main goals, not only should equipment be of good quality, but they should be enough and available all the time for the training of students. We learn what we do hence the need for instructional facilities in our schools to aid teaching and learning (Dewey, 1977). The education of our children depends directly on the availability of facilities and also conducive environment (Adesina, 1980).

Lack of Qualified Teachers

Teachers are those who are professionally trained and equipped to guide the act of instruction. When teachers are ill-equipped and lack the quality of instruction, what they give to students will be sordid and the products of such teaching will equally be half-baked and of low quality. Other areas of crisis are the constantly declining quality of those sent every year to the class room to train the minds of the nations resulting in low

Nnaemeka Critique of Contemporary Declining Students ... quality of education of teachers who train minds (Adesina, 1977). Graduates who are not educationalist are recruited into educational system without knowing the method and process of teaching. Government of Nigeria uses corp members (NYSC body), majority of which are not educationalist. What can a teacher who is bereft of knowledge teach? Some teachers deviate from the universal language "English" which is the language of instruction and use dialect in teaching when some students do not understand that dialect. Teachers are over-lenient in not enforcing deadlines for home drill with penalty of which students who are very smart will with time cease to be serious and in no time external deadlines manifest into internal deadlines.

Pupils' Attitude towards Learning

Education is a two sided coin. The first side is teaching by teachers and the other is the learning side which is to be done by the students. Attitude towards learning matters in the quality of education. A person who is emotionally upset, irritated, sluggish, restless, tired, indifferent or saddened is usually not ready to learn as he should (Callahan, 1972),. Most school pupils and students today have found themselves in this ugly situation as a result of which they hardly pay attention to learning in the classroom, talk more of doing home exercises and learning on their own. Indiscipline among pupils and students results in low educational quality. Inability of the pupils and students to understand what is being taught in the class, lack of sufficient time for reading and studying cause poor quality education. The causes of indiscipline are planted in the home by parents, watered in the schools by teachers and harvested by the society at large (S.M.O, 1980).

Conclusion

Education is the bed rock of any nation's development. It gives men tools to navigate their ways through the world. Being resilient does not mean never asking for help or never being affected by difficult situations but it is the ability to adapt and reinforce to spring back from tough situations. And so, students need to be equipped to bounce back from tough situation or those where they did not achieve perfection.

Recommendations

Factors that enhance resilience is based on child's interest and strength, parenting and teaching styles. Strategies to help develop students' resilience includes; developing attachment with your child, learning links and counseling (in order to forget past failings and recognize short comings), giving responsibilities (in order to promote self-esteem, independence, pride in work, and confidence in abilities), develop emotion regulation skills, community involvement, mindfulness, support children asking for help and goal setting (in order to be independent in developing a plan for highly motivated tasks). And so parents and teachers should develop strategies to reposition students' for a better academic performance.

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