Introduction

Maladjustment is not of course synonymous with difficult behaviour. The child who is perpetually in trouble, a nuisance in class, annoying to other children and generally unable to adjust to school life wholly merits the description of the maladjusted. But the quite unobtrusive behaviour of the child who has begun to withdraw from human contact presents just as serious a problem as that of the hostile or aggressive child. Such a child may lack the drive to tackle difficulties in school learning.

In the home, insecurities and tensions continue to upset them and thwart the efforts of the school to help them. In school their mobility to apply themselves means that they are unable to satisfy their need for recognition and success. Their longing for affecting and personal attention is difficult to satisfy. They do not respond to ordinary method of teaching and their problem become cumulatively more serious. Some of these children, may, after a short while, appear to be quite well adjusted in the classroom, but nevertheless remain undisturbed in other situations in the play ground at home or in the street. Tanssley and Guilliford (1982) educators sometimes label the maladjusted as defective children, stubborn children, rude children or problem children; social workers call them the socially maladjusted. The psychiatrist and psychologist may call them emotionally disturbed.

Conceptual Meaning of Educational Psychology

Educational psychology is an applied branch of psychology which deals with educational matters. Because it is a branch of psychology it is a science and because it is related education it is
concerned with the learner and instructional processes and different conditions of learning. As a science, it uses methods which can be replicated by anyone and in different places. As a branch of psychology, it has links with other branches and borrows principles, research techniques and ideas. As an applied area of study, it is concerned with real problem encountered in the process of learning and it seeks objectives solutions to these practical problems.

Features of the Maladjusted

Maladjusted children are insecure, and unhappy and that they fail in their personal relationship, the maladjusted child is also characterized by nervous habits, lack of drive and vitality, state of dreaming, depression, anxiety and inactivity, displaying of poor contact with the environment, low intelligence, aggressiveness weeping, temper, tantrums, over dependence on adults, stealing things from other children, restlessness, not able to concentrate, gets tried quickly when undertaking task, dislike towards adults or towards other children. Tansley and Gulliford (1965).

Other features relayed by the maladjusted child include: fighting, biting, hitting and kicking and the use of abusive language unrealistic fears, unable to organise his class work or assignment, over dependent on teachers and peers lack confidence in himself. Plays truancy and always getting into trouble, has dislike for school, bullies other children, acts before thinking and runs about aimlessly in the school and outside the school.

Causes of Maladjustment

a. Health Problems:

Health problem such as central nervous system dysfunction, epilepsy, sickle cell anaemia and asthma are considered as some causes of maladjustment. A child exhibiting maladaptive behaviours may have health problem which interfere with his proper adjustment to classroom situation, for example, a child who is inattentive in class may be struggling with a perceived attack of asthma or epilepsy (Ogbue, Obani & Abori, 1987).

b. Parental Deprivation:

It is considered that a situation where parents are not able to provide foods, clothing, school materials love and affection could lead to the child’s emotion or sense of inner feelings being disturbed. Such disturbance could lead to the child’s exhibiting maladaptive behaviour.

c. Broken Homes:

Causes of maladjustment can be traced to failure in marriage. Some children who are attached to one or both of their parents may feel that all is lost when parents are separated. Amadi and Caulerick (1985) observed that this kind of experience may lead to forms of unacceptable behaviours, such as excessive lack of respects for adults, stealing and truancy. A child who sees his parents fight often is not a happy child and may become aggressive. This emotional problem may result inattention leading to school failure. (Ogbue, et.al 1984).
d. Drug and Alcohol:  
The effect of drugs and alcoholic drinks is considered to lead to maladjustment. A child who is a victim of alcohol and drug may end up having his sense of inner feeling disturbed and maladjusted.

e. Learning Problem:  
Some students may have learning difficulties parents and teachers may expect high performance form their children without considering that the children could have learning difficulties parents and teachers go to the extent of comparing the child with learning difficulties with his peers who may not have difficulties parents and teachers go to the extent of comparing the child with learning problem may be doing his best in school work, though unfortunately his best does not meet the require standard. There is therefore a discrepancy between the child’s capabilities and his actual achievement. A situation like this could lead to behaviour disorders which are outcomes of frustrations, resulting form the discrepancy between the child’s capacity to behave and the requirements of the environment. (Kirk, S.A., 1972).

f. Unfavourable School Conditions:  
A child who is not happy or cheerful in the school due to bullying from his peers and frequent carrying form the teacher can result in the child being maladjusted.

Remediation  
There are no clear-cut remedy given for maladjustment which can be described step by step. Any clear-cut remedy given is therefore bound to appear rather vague and somewhat remote from the difficult reality of the classroom where one so often has to compromise between what one knows is right for a particular child and what is needed for the rest of the class (Tsnely and Guilliford 1965).

However, the following general principles should be applied as far as possible.

1. A Case Study is Needed:  
A case study should be made to discover some reasons for the maladjustment. In many cases, knowing the causes indicates the approach that is needed, and in other cases it enables us to afford the child some relief by encouraging him to talk about his anxieties instead of bottling them up. At least, knowing some of the reasons why the child behaves as he does makes us more sympathetic and tolerant.

2. A Broad Based Curriculum is Needed:  
A more permissive atmosphere is easier to maintain, if the curriculum include many outlets for activity and emotional expression. The freedom and variety of play with younger children, art and craft, physical activity for older ones provides the means of strong emotional energies features of any form of therapy.
3. A Good Teacher Relationship:
The teacher’s understanding of the child should lead the child to realize that he is understood. The extra word of encouragement, the extra help with work, the teachers’ willingness to discuss problems, to trust and give him some simple responsibilities would create cordial relationship. A sense of honour demonstrated by the teacher can draw them out of the mood. It can reduce tension and grievances.

e. Counseling is Needed:
It is also important that the child is taken to the schools counseling centre where the counselor would assist him to become self-confident and self-directing, become more of the person the child would like to be, adopt more realistic goals for himself, behave in a more mature way, become more accepting of others and make sure that the maladaptive behaviour, even if it has been a long established one such as chronic alcoholism, is removed.

Parents can also be involved in the counseling process. Parents should be around in the centre during the counseling process or could advise on the assistance that can be given on how the child can overcome his maladaptive behaviours.

5. The Values of Education Approach:
Irrespective of what other treatment can be given, it is often profitable to tackle the child’s problem through his education failure. It can be easier to give the child extra attention that he needs through some special help, in basic subjects and if progress can be made in these areas then there is often an all-round improvement.

6. Follow-Up Services:
Follow-up services are very important in assisting a maladjusted child. Regular progress report would show the extent the child has made some progress in removing the maladaptive behaviours and we recommend other strategies on how the child can improve on his maladaptive behaviour, if need be.

Recommendations
The effects of drugs and alcoholic drinks is considered to lead to maladjustment. This may end up having his sense of inner feelings disturbed and maladjusted. Therefore parents should not allow their children to take drug or alcohol.

Parents should avoid parental deprivation to their children. They should provide food, clothing, school materials, love and affection to their children so that they could have a sense of belonging in the family.

Parents should avoid over-permissiveness on their children. Some parents allow their children to always have their way any time they make their demands without considering the outcome.

Parents should avoid rigid rules on their children because it makes such children to be over dependent on others, not able to concentrate on school work without assistance and they get tired quickly when undertaking a given task.
Conclusion
This work has brought out some of the characteristics of causes of maladjustment. It has spelt out some principles, which should be applied to the maladjusted so as to remove the maladaptive behaviours, thus the maladjusted would not pose problems to themselves, teachers, peers and the society.

It is hoped that the suggestions made in this paper if applied would go a long way to assist the maladjusted to remove the barrier which blocks his education process, which in its widest sense is the development of an individual to the point of being able to fit into his environment and to contribute to the best of his ability, to the well being of the society.

References


