Abstract
In this discourse, issues of coping with the challenges of emotionally disturbed children in the classroom were addressed. It was observed that emotionally disturbed children abound in our today's classrooms, as ever, with its attendant problems to the teachers. In order to achieve its' set objectives, the paper focused on a discussion of who an emotionally disturbed child is, and his characteristics. Also, in order to achieve its main objectives, the paper highlighted some behavioural management strategies which could be used by the teachers to reform the affected children at the classroom level. It was therefore concluded that teachers should develop differential acceptance attitude and also establish empathetic relationship with these children in order to reform them to become better students and well adjusted citizens of the society.

Introduction
In the Nigerian pre-primary, primary and post primary institution there are many children who have a variety of problems such as education, medical, social and psychological difficulties which manifest in various ways (Mba 1995). The emotionally disturbed child, also referred to as behaviour disorder, falls under the category of such problematic children. The deviant behaviours exhibited by these groups of children no doubt pose a great challenge to every classroom teachers whose main concern is to prepare learners for a rewarding life in society. However, the first question to be addressed is who is an emotionally disturbed child? Definitions of emotional disturbance (which is also referred to as behaviour disorder) abound in literature. Heward and Cavanaugh (1997) pointed out that basically, children who exhibit emotionally disturbed behaviours are excessively aggressive, withdrawn or a combination of both. The central problem affecting such children is usually unhappiness which results in violation of social rules or the mores and folk ways of the culture.

Moreover, the Individual . with Disability Education Act (IDEA), definition which is stated by Heward (2000) describe serious emotional disturbance as a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects educational performance:
An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory and health factors
An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers
Inappropriate types of behaviour or feelings under normal circumstances
A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression, or
A tendency develop physical symptoms of fears associated with personal or school problems

In summary, it can be said that for a child's behaviour to be considered disordered, it must differ markedly (extremely) and chronically (overtime) from current social or cultural norms.

In this paper, however an emotionally disturbed child (or behaviour disordered) is perceived as the child who is stubborn, rude, aggressive and angry with himself and other people because of frustration and inner tension.

Types and Characteristics of Children with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders

According to Mba (1995), many educators and professionals associated with behaviour management are rather hesitant in classifying children with behavioural problems into distinct categories (Mba 1995).

Nevertheless, few ones are of the opinion that grouping children with special needs into categories enables those working with them to measure precisely the amount of improvement achieved by specific techniques of invention. Thus, in line with this reasoning, Quay (1969) identified four categories of behavioural disordered children:

- Conduct Disorder: This includes behavioural disorders that may manifest as hyperactivity, rudeness, aggression, attention seeking and boisteronsness, e.t.c.
- Anxious-Withdraw: This is shown as hypersensitivity, feelings of insecurity, fear, inferiority complex, lack of self confidence and being too anxious over little things.
- Inadequate Immature: This demonstrates as lack of interest in what is going on, day dreaming, reticence, sluggishness, clumsiness and other signs of immaturity in behaviour
- Socialized Delinquency: The child in this case is often involved in group delinquent acts; he is loyal to delinquent peers and often plays truancy. He does not conform to establish codes of conduct.

From the fore-going, it can be said that no unitary pattern of behaviour would necessarily describe the emotionally disturbed child since they do display an infinite variety of pattem of behaviour.

However, Kauffman (1983) noted that children with emotional disorders are characterized by behaviour that falls significantly
Challenges of Emotionally Disturbed Children ...

outside the norm of their peer group on two broadband dimensions commonly referred to as externalizing and internalizing. Both patterns of aberrant behaviour do have adverse effects on children's academic achievements and social relationships.

Externalizing Behaviour

The most common pattern of behaviour by children with emotional and behavioural disorders consists of antisocial or externalizing behaviours. In the classroom, children with externalizing behaviour problem frequently do the following as noted by Walker, (1997:13):

> Get out of their seats
> Yell, talk out and curse
> Disturb peers
> Hit or fight
> Ignore the teacher
> Complain
> Argue excessively
> Steal
> Lie
> Destroy property
> Do not comply with instructions
> Have temper tantrums
> Do not respond to teacher's correction

There is no doubt that the presence of children who exhibit an ongoing pattern of the above listed behaviour in the classroom can present a major challenge for teachers. The fact is that such children can make our teaching lives miserable and even single handedly disrupt a classroom.

This has led to much punishment, maltreatment and ostracism of the emotionally disturbed child by teachers in a bid to control their class. However, it is pathetic to note that teachers who should facilitate the rehabilitation/reformation of these children see them as trouble makers who should be kept apart so as not to disturb their lesson. At this juncture it is important to state that the way (children) teachers react and handle the emotionally disturbed child will either help to reform them or rather compound their emotional behaviour. Thus, it is very necessary that teachers learn how to manage or cope with the emotionally disturbed child.

Behaviour Management

Teachers must know when and how to use behavioural teaching strategies such as:

- Positive reinforcement
- Shaping
- Contingency contracting
- Extinction (ignoring disruptive behaviour)
- Differential reinforcement of other behaviour (i.e. positive behaviours)
- Planned ignoring: The skillful teacher does not need to be told that often enough attention-seeking or provocative behaviour is best ignored.
- Signal interference: Unacceptable behaviour can sometimes be inhibited by a gesture, facial expression and verbal prohibition. Whether this succeeds depends upon the child, the situation and the relationship between teacher and child.
- Involvement in interest relationship: A child losing interest in an activity and is on the verge of being distracted into misbehaviour, may be reinforced on the activity as soon as the teacher shows interest in that activity.

- Hypodermic Affection: A dose of affection in the form of praise injected into the child can help him overcome anxiety or frustration.

- Tension Decontamination by Means of Humour: The teacher can find something humorous to say to a child in whom tension is slowly building up, this can diffuse the tension.

- Restricting: When excitement, noise and disruptive activity are building up, the activity can be changed for a different or quieter one.

- Punishments and Threats: These pose problems. Therefore teachers need to know more about the use of punishment as a means of controlling behavior.

All the above techniques should not be implemented as isolated events, rather it should be incorporated into an overall instructional and classroom management plan that might include a token economy and/or a level system to help each student learn greater independence and earn more privileges. (Anderson and Katsiyannis, 1997; Smith and Farrell, 1993)

**Affective Traits of a Good Teacher**

In addition to academic behaviour management skills, the classroom teacher must be able to establish healthy children-teacher relationships. Morse (1976) identified two important affective characteristics required by a teacher to relate effectively and positively to students with behaviour problems, namely: **differential acceptance and an empathetic relationship**.

Differential Acceptance: This involves the ability of the teacher to receive and witness frequent and often extreme acts of anger, hate and aggression from children without responding. Similarly, even though it is much easier said than done, the teacher must view descriptive behaviour for what it is namely a reflection of the students past frustrations and conflicts with himself and those around him and try to help the child learn better ways of behaving.

However, acceptance should not be confused with approving or condoning antisocial behaviour, the child must learn that he is responding inappropriately. Instead, this concept calls for understanding without condemning.

On the other hand, having an empathetic relationship with a child refers to a teacher's ability to recognize and understand the many nonverbal cues that often are the keys to understanding the individual needs of emotionally disturbed children. Kauffman (1997) stresses the importance of teachers' communicating directly and honestly with such children. In addition, the teacher must also realize that his actions serve as a powerful model. Hence, it is crucial that the teachers' actions and altitudes be mature and demonstrates self-control.

In addition, teachers must be experienced and emotionally well-adjusted.
professionals themselves, because the children will look up to them as models. As such, their behaviour and activities must be directed at:

> Reducing anxieties in the emotionally disturbed children, through avoidance of unnecessary demands on them which might cause anxieties or generate tension
> Reducing undesirable emotional responses by means of negative reinforcements e.g. ignoring undesirable behaviours, withdrawal of privileges, e.t.c.
> Establishing new behaviour pattern through careful use of reinforcement which include giving attention, praise and encouragement
> Providing a congenial atmosphere in which new learning can be tested and proven to be gratifying.
> Avoiding such aversive stimulus as successive pressures, long break periods, long glass day, inconsistency moods of instructions e.t.c.

Recommendation

In view of the characteristics nature of the emotionally disturbed children, this paper recommends that the teacher should realize the fact that the child with behavioural problems needs understanding, love, guidance and tolerance. In addition, an experienced teacher should not see those children as never-do-well trouble makers who should be neglected and punished. Rather, the teacher should show more interest in such child with a view of getting to the root of the problem and helping the child to control the emotional behaviour. Therefore, a teacher should be quick in identifying children with behavioural problems and applying therapeutic and educational remedies to help reform the affected children.

Conclusion

This paper has considered the nature and characteristics of the emotionally disturbed children. These are children who exhibit deviant attitudes to themselves, their peers, parents, teachers and the society. There is no doubt that such children are difficult to cope with in the classroom setting. However, these children can be turned around to illuminate the society if they are identified on time and well managed by the teachers. Moreover, with good bearing and correct strategies on the part of the teachers, the never-do-well behaviour disordered child can become gold mines and super stars of tomorrow.

Reference


Smith S. W. & Farrell D. T. (1993) Level system use in special education:
