

The Importance of the (Social Model) in Child Development: Case Study

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Abstract

This research examined the importance of social model in the child development. Comparative Case Study was used to achieve this goal through comparing a rich child committed a theft crime against another self-steamed and hard working child. The findings of this research indicated some important factors in child development and behavior. The key finding in this regard reflected in the fact that in the two cases. The Family relations did play an important role in the child life where each child tried to fill the gap in his life from friends and street relations. This included the good or bad social model that each child adopted in his life and his social outlook to his future in general. Thus, sociologists should focus their research to the significance of social model in child life and development.

Introduction

There has been a severe increase world wide in individual and group violence. Although security measurements have been improved, most groups and societies started to witness some increase in social violence. Such increase in violence was unfamiliar, especially in conservative societies like Jordan. Progress in telecommunication tools may result in such increase, yet human values seem to have much less room in the present capitalist and materialist world system, where money is the first aim. Sociologists focus too much on child development. Such development managed by several social institutions such as family , schools , friends , media , religion , jobs , and social clubs. It is clear that there is an absence of the social model in each stage of child life . Therefore, the aim of this research paper is to bring back the attention of scholars to the importance of the acceptable social model in child development.

Methodology

Due to the nature of the research, comparative case study will be used between a distinguish juvenile delinquent and a best gifted student in Jordan. There will be a comprehensive study for each case in order to identify the key elements affecting child behavior. This should include interviews with the child himself, friends, parents, teachers, and notes written by the child on books and personal papers.

Case # 1

His name was SA`AD, or (fox) as nick name, and his age was 13 years old. He lives in a middle class area of Amman called Jabel Amman. He has two brothers and one sister, and this is a normal family size in Jordan. The family relationships with relatives from the father side seem to be very limited, unlike relationships with the relatives from the mother side. This is very normal fact these days with the large spared of the nuclear family instead of the extended family. The father personality tends to be rough, with his wife as well as with children. He works as wholesale merchant where most of his time at his store, far from his family. It might be safe to say that he is a successful merchant, but unfortunate father. Therefore, his child (the fox) used to spend most of his time outside the house, with his friends. Unfortunately, his friends seem to be not good ones. When the police arrested (the fox) with theft crime , he explained that he wanted to be an independent , self supported, and strong boy ,who earned his own income by himself . This does not mean that his father did not give (The Fox) the money he needs. In fact, he used to tell his child to take the money he needs from the store, even without asking. Thus, the child acquired the wrong values (mentioned above) from his bad friends, who were older than him by for to six years. This is a clear indication about the importance of friends in child development in general. The father explained his responsibility by locating the money needed for all family members. This is not enough.

The case is not a matter of money only, there are many other things that the child needs in general, such as, caring, worm feeling, value teaching, and personality building. Lacking of such needs from the father side simply means that other parties will take over. The picture will be more understood when we look at the mother. She was uneducated, passive, and very close to her children. Therefore (the Fox) used to love his mother very much, unlike his father. Among the thing he wrote in his diaries, the (fox) said he thought many times a bout commuting a suicide to end his life, but he did not want his mother to drop one tear from her eyes. Thus, it clear that the fox cares too much a bout his mother. This also means that he enjoys deep truthful emotions and humanitarian feelings towards his mother. If such feeling and emotion were met by good care from others, the child would not commit a crime. Thus, the father responsibility does not mean to earn money, but also to be close from the other basic needs of the child.

The (fox) was arrested in a theft crime. He was used in the crime by unknown adults, since he was under 18 years old. He used to look at these adults as good friends regardless of the difference in age, because they earn money by themselves without relying on others.

Therefore, they represent a good model to be adopted. The (fox) used to sleep at home, and sometimes out side with friends, far from direct observation from family. As a result, he believes that these friends are closer to him than his father. It was a great moment when the (fox) mentioned the fact that he used to drink alcohol and smoke with friends almost every week. This is very strange behavior at this age.

Case # 2

His name was Omar, living in the city of Sult, west of Amman. His parents used to work as teachers. When he was 12 years old, his father left for the U.S.A to study PH.D in education. As a result the mother took over the responsibilities of the father.

Omar used to be a normal student before the migration of his father. In fact, his older brother as well as uncle and many other relatives craned their high degrees from U.S.A and England. With the support of his mother, Omar shifted himself from a normal student to one of the highest top ten students in high school diploma. Thus, it can be concluded that the social environment has a great impact in Omar's development in general, where parents, relatives, and friends played a major role. When Omar was asked about the most important factor behind his creative success in his study, he answered that he wanted to be as his father and relatives. Having finished the high school diploma, Omar studied medicine at the University of Jordan, and now he is completing his higher education in medicine at a well known university in the U.S.A. Most of his friends did the same. When Omar was asked if parents (or any other relative) practiced any sort of pressure on him in this regard, his answer was big no. Thus, it is so clear that Omar was fully convinced that he selected the way he likes, and the area of study he wanted to be in. This fact should not underestimate the wise and effective role of his mother. In fact, she was a good example of a good guardian in the absence of his father. Added to all of this is the fact that Omar selected his father as a social model in his future life.

Concluding Remarks

In the light of the two cases studied in this paper, it can be concluded that there are many important factors that might effect child development in general. However the social model that the child wants to be in did play a significant role in this regard. In case # 1, the child (fox) adopted a negative social model, which was a group of men older than him These men persuaded the child that earning money from theft is a good aspect of self steam people who rely on themselves. The father was busy in his store, leaving the child with no good social model. In case # 2, Omar was raised up in a good, educated, and well caring family, where father, relatives, and friends played good social models. Thus Omar was very hard working child in observing and imitating these good models.

Finally, it can be safe to draw the attention of sociologists and educators to the importance of good social models in child development. The absence of such models simply means that negative ones will take over.

In doing this research, it was very clear that little research have been found about the importance of social model in child development, especially in dealing with violent acts among children these days.

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