

Character Development Outcomes: A Predictive Model for Behaviour Analysis in Tertiary Institutions

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Abstract : As behavior analysts in education continue to debate on how higher institutions can continue to benefit from their social and academic related programs, higher education is facing challenges in the area of character development. This is manifested in the percentages of college completion rates, teen pregnancies, drug abuse, sexual abuse, suicide, plagiarism, lack of academic integrity, and violence among their students. Attending college is a perceived opportunity to positively influence the actions and behaviors of the next generation of society; thus colleges and universities have to provide opportunities to develop students' values and behaviors. Prior studies were mainly conducted in private institutions and more so in developed countries. However, with the complexity of the nature of student body currently due to the changing world, a multidimensional approach combining multiple factors that enhance character development outcomes is needed to suit the changing trends. The main purpose of this study was to identify opportunities in colleges and develop a model for predicting character development outcomes. A survey questionnaire composed of 7 scales including in-classroom interaction, out-of-classroom interaction, school climate, personal lifestyle, home environment, and peer influence as independent variables and character development outcomes as the dependent variable was administered to a total of five hundred and one students of 3rd and 4th year level in selected public colleges and universities in the Philippines and Rwanda. Using structural equation modelling, a predictive model explained 57% of the variance in character development outcomes. Findings from the results of the analysis showed that in-classroom interactions have a substantial direct influence on character development outcomes of the students ($r = .75, p < .05$). In addition, out-of-classroom interaction, school climate, and home environment contributed to students' character development outcomes but in an indirect way. The study concluded that in the classroom are many opportunities for teachers to teach, model and integrate character development among their students. Thus, suggestions are made to public colleges and universities to deliberately boost and implement experiences that cultivate character within the classroom. These may contribute tremendously to the students' character development outcomes and hence render effective models of behaviour analysis in higher education.

Keywords : character development, tertiary institutions, predictive model, behavior analysis

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