



## EFFECTS OF BEHAVIOURAL COUNSELLING ON DEVIANT BEHAVIOURS AMONG JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ABA, ABIA STATE

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**Abstract:** The study investigated the effect of behavioural counselling on deviant behaviours among junior secondary school students. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Two research purposes, two research questions guided the study. A pretest and posttest study were carried out outside the study area at two weeks interval. The population comprises 118 school counselors randomly drawn through stratified random techniques, were used for the study. A self-made attitude questionnaire titled “effects of behavioural counselling on deviant behaviours among junior secondary school students (EBCDBJSSSQ) made up of 25 items were used for data collection. The study had a reliable coefficient of 0.78 determined through Pearson Product Moment mean and standard deviation in answering the research questions. The findings show that behavioural counselling techniques are effective in curbing deviant behaviours among junior secondary school students. The study concludes that there are different types of deviant behaviours exhibited among junior secondary school students. The study then recommends that every secondary school heads should allow school counsellors to organize orientation service programmes for the new students where the school rules and regulations be spelt out to them on admission.

**Keywords:** Behavioural Counselling, Deviant behaviours, Junior Secondary School Student.

### Introduction

Deviance is behaving contrary to acceptable norms and expectations of a society. Deviant behaviour is common among junior secondary school students. Every society has specific behavioural standards and ways in which people are supposed to act; sometimes these are the paradigms for predictable behaviour in the society. Deviance is described as a violation of the culturally acceptable norms and or a failure to conform to the norms of the society at large (Idris 2016). According to Dunapo (2012) deviant behaviour are terms that synonymous with delinquency. In their work, Best-Njoku and Okezie (2020) defined deviance as any

behaviour that does not conform to the established rules of a group of individuals or the society.

In his report, Boyd (2015) assert that a lot of children are involved in the use of tobacco, amphetamines, barbiturates and heroin. Also, Alao (2010) explained that there are many cases of cultism, sexual abuse, acts of vandalism, blackmail, threats and intimidations reported by classroom teachers as well as the head teachers.

In schools, counsellors or caregivers can use different Behavioural counselling techniques in managing deviant behaviours among children. The use of reward can help curb undesired behaviour among school children. Winkielman (2005) as cited in Best Njoku and Okezie



(2020) reinforcement is a stimulus that strengthens behaviour and increases the frequencies of its occurrence. Counselling is a professional field which has a broad range of activities and services aimed at assisting the students to understand themselves, their problems, the school environment and their world (Ikediashi and Iwuanyanwu, 2017). School counselling services or programmes have been introduced to assist students to overcome a number of challenges they experience at home and school. As noted by Nziramasanga cited in Best-Njoku and Okezie (2020) because of many pressures imposed on the family, parents tend to have little time with their children to give them the necessary traditional guidance they require from them. The whole work now rest on shoulders of school counsellors and the teachers who use psychological principles in many ways to manage deviant behaviours in schools and among the students.

One of the counselling strategies use in school is the Behaviour counselling principles. Behaviour counselling is one of such systematic psychological applications school counsellors use in schools which can simply be defined as the systematic application of principles derived from learning theories and experiences in psychology (Asonibare 2016). The techniques are used to extinguish unwanted behaviours and also help to increase existing positive behaviours. It can also be used to teach new behaviours patterns in extinguishing unwanted deviant behaviour among adolescents. The behavioral approach is based on the assumption that negative behaviour can be unlearned and replaced with positive ones (Daramola, 2006). These behaviours can as well be strengthened by reinforcement techniques.

The use of reinforcement can help to curb undesired behaviour among junior secondary school students. Winkielman (2005) defines reinforcement as a stimulus that strengthen behaviour and increases the frequency of its occurrence. It involves reinforcing one's positive response which in turn blocks the appearance of undesirable behaviours. The school counsellor can praise those who obey rules and regulations thereby ignoring those that are found guilty. Asonibare (2016) asserts that the use of reinforcement helps to provide an explicit model of what is expected among in-school adolescents.

Babatunde (2016) noted that disruptive behaviour can persist if only verbal reinforcement is used by the counsellor in the management of its elimination. Reinforcement from thus require life skill training.

Life skills training however, involves self-management procedure programmes that can be used by the counsellor to manage deviant behaviour. These include: first assertive training. Students who are non-assertive are trained to be assertive may not be involved in deviant behaviours. Asonibare (2016) thus called assertive training “resistance training”. The second one, is called decision-making strategy. This is important for in-school adolescents to develop appropriate decision-making skills. This helps them choose the right alternatives. The third one, is peer group cluster involvement: this can take the shape of organizing peer group counselling in schools. The school clubs and societies within the school can engage in peer cluster to modify norms and attitudes of others. (Adegoke, 2003; Asonibare, 2016).

It is obvious that effective counselling strategies for curbing deviant behaviours among secondary school students are largely dependent on their level of assertive training, decision-making curbing strategies and peer group cluster involvements. Since the researchers are indoubt as to the various ways for curbing deviant behaviours, there is therefore the need to investigate these strategies.

### **Statement of Problem**

The rate of involvement of students in deviant behaviour is of great concern to the school stakeholders in Abia State, Nigeria. Students unruly behaviours has continued to disrupt school academic programmes to the extent that teachers are unable to cover the contents of the school curriculum. This has often resulted into turning out half-baked graduates with poor academic performance of many in-school adolescents. Many research works has been done on deviant behaviours but none of these studies has specifically been examined on behavioural counselling for managing deviant behaviours among in-school adolescents as at the junior level as expressed by school counsellors to the best of the researchers knowledge in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria.



### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the effects of behavioural counselling on deviant behaviours among junior secondary school students. Specifically, the study sought to:

- 1) establish types of deviant behaviours exhibited among junior secondary school students.
- 2) examine the impact of behavioural counselling on deviant behaviours among junior secondary school students.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) what are the types of deviant behaviours exhibited among junior secondary school students in Aba, Abia State?
- 2) what are the impact of behavioural counselling on deviant behaviours among junior secondary school students in Aba, Abia state?

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Theoretical Framework**

B.F. Skinner (1938) and A. Bandura (1977) are two influential Psychologists known for their works in behavioural psychology. Skinner developed the theory of Operant Conditioning which explains how behaviour is changed by its consequences like rewards or punishment. While Albert Bandura developed Social Learning Theory which suggests that people learn new behaviours by observing and imitating others.

Behavioural Modification is one of the therapies that relies on changing individual behaviours through the use of reinforcement (positive and negative) and punishment. Behaviour modification is also based on the assumption that negative behaviour can be unlearned and replaced with positive one (Esere, 2002). It is also based on the principles of Operate Condition that behaviour is “shaped by its consequences such as rewards that increases the frequency of an individuals’ actions or punishment that decrease or stop the frequency of the behaviour or act.

In schools, counsellors or caregivers can use different behavioural modification techniques in managing deviant

behaviours among children. The use of reward can help curb undesired behaviour among school children. Winkielman (2005) as cited in Best-Njoku and Okezie (2020) state that reinforcement is a stimulus that strengthens behaviour and increases the frequencies of its occurrence. It involves, reinforcing one’s positive responses which in turn blocks the appearance of the undesirable behaviours.

Reinforcement are in different forms – intrinsic and extrinsic reinforcement. The intrinsic behaviour occurs when a behaviour strengthens itself, example, eating and playing music. While, extrinsic reinforcement occur when the behaviour is strengthened by external consequence such as praise (reward), payment, bonus or recognition in a work place. We also have primary and secondary reinforcement. Primary reinforcement occurs when things that are important to life such as food, water is involved and secondary reinforcement occurs when things like money and praise (reward) is involved.

School counsellors can help in improving students’ behaviours by using certain verbal reinforcement principles such as praising those students that obey school rules and regulations and ignoring those that are found guilty of the offence. Garber (2006) state that reinforcement strategies in classroom instruction promotes academic achievement. Example, a student who receives good grade for his efforts the rate of his motivation will increase his academic performance in addition.

Punishment can be used in reducing deviant behaviours as well. Punishment refers to the use of aversive stimuli to decrease undesirable behaviour. Punishment is used when all other techniques have failed. We have two types of punishment – positive and negative punishment. Positive punishment is enforced when the teacher applies aversive consequences like kneeling down and flogging, while negative punishment occurs when it involves the withdrawal of certain privileges (Asonibare, 2014). Example, a student loses recess time for not completing homework, resulting in increased completion of homework or assignments.

Apart from using reinforces, there are other strategies such as, social learning theory that involves life skill training which involves self-management procedures/programmes.



The counsellor can use this in managing deviant behaviours. These includes assertive training, decision making strategies and peer group cluster involvement strategy. According to Asonibare (2016), non-assertive students that are trained to be assertive can also be called resistance trainers. Non assertive students are those, who may find it difficult to communicate their thoughts, feelings or needs effectively. At times, shy away from expressing their opinions or needs or being hesitant to ask questions. Teachers can help out by encouraging open communication and respectful communication. Decision making strategies are used to help students select the best course of action from available options to achieve a specific goal or solve problem. When adolescents develop appropriate decision making strategies, it helps them choose the right alternatives.

Also, available for the counsellor is the peer cluster which is referred to as small group of individuals of similar age, background or interests, who share experiences, provide support and influence one another is thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Peers also offer emotional support, empathy and understanding. They share common challenges or interest and can influence one another's attitudes, behaviours and decisions. Within the school, peer group counselling inform of organizing school club or societies can engage peer cluster in modifying norms and attitudes (Adegoke, 2015).

### **Conceptual Framework**

#### **Deviance Behaviour Among Junior Secondary School Students.**

Deviance behaviour in children involves actions, activities or behaviours that is far from societal norms, expectations and even values. These actions, activities or behaviours can be regarded as being unacceptable, problematic or disturbing to parents, adults, or educators and or the society at large.

Deviant behaviour is commonly found with children in their formative years when character is formed and reformed to suit the expectation of the family and the community. Every society has a specific behavioural standards and ways in which people are supposed to act. Sometimes, these are the paradigms for predictable

behaviour in the society. Deviance is a departure from certain forms of behaviour from the norms of a particular society at a particular time and place.

All over Nigeria, deviance is described as a violation of culturally acceptable norms and or a failure to conform to set rules and ways of doing something that is traditionally prescribed. Deviance is generally seen as any behaviour that does not conform to the established rules of a group of individuals or the society at large (Adeoye, 2016; Balu-Steve and Adebayo, 2016).

Deviant behaviour are terms synonymous with delinquency which was defined by Ikediashi and Iwuanyanwu (2012) as crimes committed by adolescents/students below the age of eighteen years usually characterized by violation of existing social norms and values. According to Daramola (2006), a disruptive act is characterized by covert or overt hostility and intentional aggression towards others. He referred to it as an overall lack of adherence to the societal norms and standards that allow members of a society to coexist peacefully.

Children with deviant behaviours are learners with conduct disorders, who have low tolerance for frustration, usually act on impulse, lose their tempers quickly, lie easily and skillfully, often bullies, fight, cheat, steal, and are truants in the schools. They also blame others for their misdeeds, feel picked out by their parents, teachers and never seem to learn from their mistakes.

According to Garbe (2016) deviant behaviours are actions which conflict with the societal norms. It could also be referred to as the engagement of people in criminal offences, illegal, antisocial and unethical behaviour. Deviant behaviour could be any form of behaviour that contravenes the rules and regulations or even laws that govern an establishment. Scholars have identified different types of deviant behaviours among junior secondary school students like truancy, examination malpractices, substance abuse, bullying, vandalism, hitting, anxiety, depression or mood swings (Odumuyiwa, 2021; Esere, 2008). However, Goode (2007) further stated that behaviour that is deviant in one society may not be the same in another. Also, within a society, what is deviant today may not be deviant tomorrow.



According to Suleiman (2011), a particular behaviour may be antisocial in any society if any of the following three criteria are seen: when behaviour does not allow a person to function effectively with others as a member of the society; when such behaviour does not permit the person to meet his or her own needs and when behaviour has a negative effect on the wellbeing of others.

Also, Boyd (2015) reported that a lot of children are involved in the use of tobacco, amphetamines, barbiturates and heroin. In the same vein, Gordon (2001) revealed that smoking and drug use are basically societal problems among adolescents in the secondary schools. According to Adeoye (2016), there are many cases of cultism, sexual abuse, acts of vandalism, blackmail, threats and intimidations reported by class room teachers as well as school head teachers. Idris Adeoye, affirmed that there is an increase in the rate of moral decadence among children as a result of lack of discipline. Such discipline activities among students, have culminated in juvenile delinquency. Scholars have identified some of deviant behaviours among secondary school students. According to Suleiman (2011) the environment in which adolescents live can influence them especially when there is lack of parental guidance at home.

The school is a major and important environment where a child develops during the formative years. When parents do consistently react to the undesired behaviour of an adolescent, the child might continue to engage in more deviant behaviours in school. Poor academic performance also predisposes youth to deviant behaviours. According to Olawale (2001) behavioural problems are common among children of lower intelligence. Also, Babatunde (2016) noted that some children resort to antisexual behaviour due to their inability to cope with the academic rigors of the school.

The home is an agent of socialization. This is the place where values and morals are transmitted. The poor moral conduct of parents can result in broken homes which negatively influence the students' behaviour. According to Goode (2007) many parents have lost their leaderships roles in the home and poor home training causes students to engage in deviant behaviours. Gbadamosi (2003) observed that causes of deviant behaviour are linked to

faulty curriculum plans, administrative deficiency, inadequate school faculties, harsh school rules and societal problems. Many of these students cope with their problems by getting involved in behaviours like vandalism, stealing, involvement in illicit sex activities and drug abuse. All these according to Ibrahim (2012) are risky behaviours that negatively affect the public order and the sense of safety of the youths.

### **Behavioural Counselling to Help Curb Deviant Behaviours Among Junior Secondary School Students:**

Counselling is a professional field which has a broad range of activities and services aimed at assisting the students to understand themselves, their problems, their school environment and the world around them (Ibrahim, 2012; Daramola, 2008; Babatunde, 2016) Best-Njoku and Okezie (2020) added that the development of effective study habits in relation to low one can utilize students assets and manage their abilities for optimal development as an essential service of school counselling. In relation to the above view Balo-Steve and Adebayo (2016) saw counselling as a process of planned intervention within the school system by which the total development of students is stimulated in areas relating to their personal, social career, emotional and academic concerns.

School counselling programmes however, is introduced to assist students overcome a number of challenges they experienced at home, and school. Nowadays, families are undergoing many pressures imposed on them by the bad governance in the country such that parents tend to have little time with their children to give them necessary guidance they need in life.

The challenges these children brought from home to school fall on the school counsellors and the classroom teachers who re-sought to using psychological principles available to them to help the children placed under them to come out of their deviant conditions or behaviours. This approach is based on some systematic psychological principles like Behavioural Modification Principles to tackle the issues presented by these students. Behaviour Modification is simply defined as the systematic application of principles derived from learning theories and experience in psychology (Asonibare, 2016). The technique is used in



extinguishing unwanted behaviour and at the same time helped to increase existing positive behaviours. It is used to teach new behaviour by extinguishing unwanted deviant behaviours in school adolescents. There are many strategies that can be employed like behavioural approaches that focuses on overt behaviours and the environmental issues that influence them like when using Classical and Operant Conditioning that shape human behaviours.

**Methodology**

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study consists of 118 school counselors from the 119 public secondary schools in the Education Zone of Aba, Abia State. No sampling technique was adopted because of the small number of the school counselors. The instrument used for data collection is a self-constructed questionnaire titled “effects of

behavioural counselling on deviant behaviours among junior secondary school students (EBCDBJSSSQ). The questionnaire comprises two sections A and B. Section A, consists of demographic data of the respondents while section B, consists of objectives of the study. The EBCDBJSSSQ was measured on a 4-point scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree; which were assigned numerical values of 4,3,2 and 1. The face and content validity of the instrument was established by two experts. The liability of the instrument was found to be 0.87 using Crombach reliability statistical method. Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions.

**Results**

Research Question 1: What are the types of deviant behaviours exhibited among junior secondary school students.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on types of deviant behaviours.

S/N	Items	Mean X	SD	Dec.
1.	Truancy	3.47	0.65	A
2.	Examination Malpractice	3.13	0.83	A
3.	Drug abuse	2.94	0.98	A
4.	Bulling	2.67	0.74	A
5.	Vandalism	3.07	0.89	A
6.	Lateness to school	3.11	0.55	A
7.	Stealing	2.95	0.89	A
8.	Absenteeism	2.98	0.92	A
9.	Sex offences	2.67	0.70	A

Results in table 1 shows that all the items scored 2.50. This implies that offences listed are the types of deviant behaviour exhibited among junior secondary school students in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria.

**Research Question 2**

What are the effects of behavioural counselling on deviant behaviours among junior secondary school students.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the effects of behavioural counselling on deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

S/N	Items	Mean X	SD	Dec.
1.	Reinforcement methods	3.39	0.65	A
2.	Reprimands	2.83	0.75	A
3.	Cognitive restructuring	2.77	0.91	A
4.	Assertive training	2.60	0.73	A



5.	Training on decision-making skills	3.56	0.59	A
6.	Helping students select personal values from the values of others	3.52	0.62	A
7.	Peer group cluster method	2.98	0.69	A
8.	Advising parents on how to cope with their deviant children	3.31	0.76	A
9.	Bibliography method (providing students with books that can enhance their lifestyle)	3.26	0.76	A
10.	Organizing seminar on how to enhance positive behaviour	3.18	0.67	A
11.	Provision of accurate moral education	2.97	0.74	A
12.	Playing intermediary counselling role between students and the school authority	3.38	0.55	A
13.	Organizing individual and group counselling for at risk students	3.17	0.60	A
14.	Attending all disciplinary meeting in order to counsel students.	3.11	0.63	A
15.	Creating students counselling friendly programmes.	2.90	0.73	A
16.	Signing of undertaking on behaviour change	2.60	0.773	A

Table 2 revealed responses on the counsellor expression on the effective strategies used in curbing deviant behaviour among junior secondary school students. All items recorded the mean score ranging from 3.56 to 2.60. All the items were found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50 on four point likert type scale. This indicates that counsellors accepted that all these strategies can be used in managing deviant behaviours among junior secondary school students in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria.

### Discussion

The study revealed that examination malpractice, bullying, truancy, lateness to school, cultism, drug abuse and absenteeism are types of deviant behaviours exhibited among junior secondary school students. This result is in line with the findings of Suleiman (2017) who reported that students exhibited deviant behaviours such as examination malpractices, rape, bullying, stealing, truancy, lateness and sexual immorality. Finally, the study revealed that there are effective counselling strategies for curbing deviant behaviour among junior secondary school student. This result is in line with the findings of Balu-Steve and

Adeboye (2016) that the major strategy employed by counsellors in handling behavioural problems is the reinforcement technique. Babatunde (2016) agreed that reinforcements are important strategies that influence school learning. It is evident that this strategy positively affects the behaviour of the students when applied appropriately. Adeoye (2016) explains that one of the basic functions of the school counsellor is to provide necessary information to the teachers on the different types of reinforcement schedules that can enhance in-school adolescents behaviour. Okobiah and Okorodudu (2006) confirmed that these behavioural counselling are effective in reducing deviant behaviours among in-school adolescents.

### Conclusion

The study concludes as follows:

- 1) There are different types of deviant behaviours exhibited among junior secondary school students.
- 2) That behavioural counselling are effective for curbing deviant behaviours among junior secondary school students.



### Recommendations

The study recommends that:

1) Every school heads should allow school counsellors to organize orientation services for the new students every year where the rules and regulations that guide students behaviours in the schools should clearly be spelt out.

2) There should also be regular reminder of all these rules which will further reinforce compliance.

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