

Perception of Students on the Influence of Behavioural Counselling on Deviant Behaviours among Secondary School Students in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study investigated the perception of students on the influence of behavioral counselling on deviant behaviors among secondary school students in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. Three objectives which were transformed to three research questions and corresponding hypotheses, guided the study. The study was conducted in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. The design for the study was ex post facto design and the population was made up of all male and female students in Government-owned secondary schools in the Area. A sample of 200 students, (100 each for male and female), was drawn for the study. The instrument used in collection of data for the study was a questionnaire designed by the researcher titled “Behavioral Counselling and Deviant Behavior Questionnaire (BCDBQ)”. Data for the study were analyzed using mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation for the research questions. Hypotheses were tested using z test at 0.05 level of significance. Findings from the study revealed, among others that students perceived behavioral counselling as positively influencing deviant behavior of students. Based on the findings, recommendations were made, among which was that constant counselling should be given to students at all levels of schooling.*

Keywords: Counselling, Behaviour, Deviant Behaviour, Behavioural Counselling

Introduction

One of the major social problems in schools and which constitutes a principal setback among students of secondary schools in Nigeria is indiscipline. Disruptive behaviours are a major concern to parents, school authorities and even to fellow students whose education may be adversely affected as well. Behavioural counselling therefore becomes a veritable process and crucial, as it is tailored towards bringing about well understandable, sound behaviour and discipline.

Issues surrounding deviant behaviour among secondary school students and discussions on it, are not relatively new ideas, but deviant behaviour among adolescents has recently taken complex dimensions and has been on the increase over the years. There seems to be sudden emergence of new obnoxious behaviours now than what used to be. Many secondary school students especially in Rivers State manifest various forms of deviant behaviour to the detriment of their academics and general wellbeing. A good number of them for instance, belong to one cult group or another hence the incessant violence and fight in most secondary schools, especially in public schools.

Deviant behaviour could mean any behaviour recognized as violating expected rules and norms (Hastings and Thomas, 2009). Any behaviour that departs significantly from social expectations could also be termed deviant behaviour. It is a deviation from socially accepted, laid down rules of living, hence deviant behaviour.

Counselling on the other hand, has been variously defined by many scholars. Counselling symbolizes a specialized or professional relationship involving a trained person called counsellor and one who is in need, called client. This interaction is often person-to-person, even though it might from time to time involve more than two persons. Counselling is designed to help client come to terms with, and gain more insight about their lives, and to learn to attain their set goals by making relevant and proper choices and by resolving problems that are both intra and interpersonal. Gustard cited in Giadom (2019) averred that counselling is “a learning oriented process, carried on in a simple, one-to-one social environment in which the counsellor, professionally competent in relevant psychological skills and knowledge, seeks to assist the client by methods appropriate to the latter’s needs within the correct context of the total personnel programme. In light of this definition, it is clear that adolescents and young people need guidance and counselling these days, than ever before, because they are living in a significantly more complex world than it was decades ago (Makinde, 2017). The term counselling is used is used number of ways. For instance, counselling may be viewed as a series of definite direct contacts between a counselor and client aimed at offering the client assistance in adjusting effectively to himself / herself and the environment, as a series of intentions or as a psychological process in terms of its goals (June, 2003).

Students tend to learn faster in schools, if there is healthy collaboration between teachers and students. Young people tend to develop certain levels of freedom in their lives as they become aware of options and take advantage of them. Counselling at this point should therefore emancipate people and afford them the skills to effectively manage life situations (UNESCO, 2000). The

work of the counselor must therefore transcend being merely interested in the subject; to equipping himself/herself with applicable knowledge because counselling is concerned with dealing with a complex domain of human behavior.

Causes of deviant behaviour in secondary schools have been attributed by some researchers to many factors. Some of them mainly include students' poor family background, effects of mass media and pressure or influence from society. Simourd, and Andrews (1994) noted that students brought up by callous parents usually have the tendency to exhibit delinquent behaviours. They become unruly and resort to criminal activities to achieve what they could not get from their parents. Such students, in the views of Charon (2007), take part in criminal activities such as stealing, rioting, rebellion and so on. Similarly, mass media has been implicated as having negative effect on students, more specifically the violent content that are aired on the television or in cinemas. Dibia and Nicholas cited in Giadom (2019) stated that children often times tend to accept what they see in the media as true, more than what happens in the real life situation. Based on the foregoing, Barr (2010) therefore asserts that deviant behaviour is a notable hindrance towards the achievement of quality education among students in our educational system.

The herculean task of taming today's youth who will sometime take responsibility for our socio-political, economic and cultural sustenance, rests on the school. Therefore, a conscientious teacher and committed school administration will provide students with vital social and intellectual skills. With the government ban of corporal punishment as a strategy for managing indiscipline in schools, schools administration are left with the option of suspension, expulsion and manual work but with the emphasis on guiding and counselling the victim.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to ascertain the perception of students on the influence of behavioral counselling on deviant behaviors among secondary school students in Etche LGA of Rivers state. Specifically the objectives are to:

1. Examine students' perception on the influence of behavioral counselling on examination malpractice among secondary school student in Etche LGA of Rivers state.
2. Determine the perception of students on influence of behavioral counselling on drug abuse among secondary school student in Etche LGA of Rivers state.
3. Find out the influence of behavioral counselling on rebelliousness among secondary school students as perceived by students in Etche LGA of Rivers state.

1.4 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the perception of students on the influence of behavioral counselling on examination malpractice among secondary school student in Etche LGA of Rivers state?
2. How do students perceive behavioral counselling influence on drug abuse among secondary school student in Etche LGA of Rivers state?
3. What is the influence of behavioral counselling on rebelliousness among secondary school students as perceived by students in Etche LGA of Rivers state?

1.5 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the perception of influence of behavioral counselling on examination malpractice among secondary school student in Etche LGA of Rivers state.
2. There is no significant difference in the perception of influence of behavioral counselling on drug abuse among secondary school student in Etche LGA of Rivers state.
3. There is no significant difference in the perception of influence of behavioral counselling on rebelliousness among secondary school student in Etche LGA of Rivers state.

Study Design

This study adopted the Ex-post Facto design. Nwankwo (2013), explained Ex- post Facto as a design that involves collecting and analyzing data about some variables retrospectively or about variables which are already in place without manipulating any of them, in order to find out how some of them influence, or are related to other variables. In this present study, the researcher collected data from a large sample of students in Etche LGA of Rivers state in order to determine the influence of behavioural counselling on deviant behaviour among them.

Concept and meaning of Counselling

Counselling is a concept and a practice that has been in existence for a long period of time. Over the ages, man has sought self understanding, tried to get direction, develop potential and become conscious of possibilities for surviving. In our various families and communities, there used to be, and still is a deep-rooted belief that in times of need, one can have people who could be of help. There are those who help others find ways of getting around their life's challenges.

Counselling is a learning-oriented process that usually takes place in an interactive relationship, targeted towards helping someone to learn more about themselves, and applying such understanding to make it possible for the person to be a well-adjusted member of society. It is a process through which the professional counsellor (helper) expresses care and concern towards the individual who has a problem (client), and facilitates that individual's own advancement, thereby bringing about change through self-insight (UNESCO, 2000).

The need for counselling across all spheres of life, especially for adolescents, has become vital in order to promote the well-being of the child and therefore cannot be overstressed. Effective counselling is expected to advance the personality and self-perception of youths and promote accomplishment of life tasks. Counselling should be a means through which adolescents can be empowered to actively take part in the socio-economic development of their society, as well as benefit from it.

Oyediran and Awoniyi (2012) noted that counselling involves applying psychological principles and techniques in order to facilitate efficient performance at the developmental process and the life-span of individuals. Counselling according to them, is designed to help clients acquire useful knowledge, improve strategies in coping with the demands of life and develop a variety of capacities for solving problems and making decisions.

Counselling is a process of helping individuals or group of people to gain self-understanding in order to be themselves. Burker and Steffler cited in National Open University of Nigeria (2006) see counselling as a professional relationship between a trained Counselor and a client. Olayinka (1993) defined it to be a process whereby a person is helped in a face-to-face relationship while Makinde explained counselling as an enlightened process whereby people help others by encouraging their growth.

Counselling service forms the central part of the overall assistance given to the individual through guidance programme. Counselling is a process of enabling the individual to know himself and his present and possible future situations in order that he may make substantial contributions to the society and to solve his own problems through a face-to-face relationship with the counsellor. It is a learning oriented process carried out in a social environment in which the professionally competent counsellor attempts to assist the counsellee using appropriate procedures to become a happy and productive member of the society by formulating realistic and purposeful goals for total personal growth.

Counselling is a process by means of which the helper expresses care and concern towards the person with a problem, and facilitates that person's personal growth and brings about change through self-knowledge. It is a relationship between a concerned person and a person with a need. This relationship is usually person-to-person, although sometimes it may involve more than two people. It is designed to help people to understand and clarify their views, and learn how to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices, and through the resolution of emotional or interpersonal problems. It can be seen from these definitions that counselling can have different meanings.

Conceptualizing Behavioral Counselling

Behavior may be conceived as what individual does, how the individual relates to others, the individual's accomplishment, what he reports about his emotional experiences, how he approaches a learning task, performs in a competitive situation and how he uses cognitive behavior to influence other behaviors (Garner, 1978). In view of this therefore, Behavioral Counselling is therefore focused on human behaviour and seeks to eradicate maladaptive behaviour. This type of therapy is typical for people with behavioural challenges or mental health conditions that involve unwanted behaviour. Examples of such behaviours include addictions, anxiety, phobias and obsessive compulsive disorder, and other deviant behaviours.

Chinnard cited in Na-ta'ala, (2015) explained problem behavior as those behaviors that digress from what the majority approves, or a variation from a normal behavior. Behavior related problems apply to any kind of behavior that creates difficulties to a point of interfering with the effective functioning of the student or the classroom. It may also be a behavior that reveals the presence of difficulties which show a sign that the student or the group is not functioning efficiently.

Behavioral Counselling, also known as behaviour therapy or behavioral psychotherapy is a broad term referring to clinical counselling/psychotherapy which applies techniques derived from behaviorism. Behavior therapists tend to look at specific, learned behaviors and how the environment influences those behaviours (O'Leary, and Wilson, 1975). They search for treatment outcomes that are objectively measurable. There is no one specific method involved in Behavior therapy, rather it has a wide range of techniques that can be used to treat the psychological problems of a client.

Concept of Behaviour Problem/Deviant Behaviour

Behaviour problem or deviant behaviour could be defined as behaviour that is socially perceived as a problem, as a source of concern, or as undesirable by the social/legal norms of conventional society and its institutions of authority, and usually elicits some form of control response (Jessor, Graves, Hanson and Jessor, 2008). Among secondary school students, behaviour problem is of great concern to educators, counsellors and parents. This is so because behaviour problem at the adolescent stage has the tendency to undermine the achievement of both personal and national development goals. The danger to the achievement of goals stems largely from the varying control responses that are often elicited with regard to behaviour problem.

Behaviour problems could be broadly classified into two categories: externalizing and internalizing problem behaviours. Externalizing problem behaviours are characterized by emotions, feelings and actions that are aggressively outwardly expressed, usually toward other persons. Some of them include physical aggression, property damage, violation of the rights of others and of social norms as well as a disregard for authority. Internalizing problem behaviours, on the other hand, are characterized by actions, emotions, and feelings that are inwardly directed at the individual some of which include overwhelming anxiety, depression, and loneliness, etc. Both forms of Behaviour problems are recognized as being prevalent among secondary school students the world over.

Adolescents have varying degree of behavioural problems ranging from indiscipline, truancy, bullying to alcohol consumption, examination malpractice, etc. Indiscipline is a multifaceted phenomenon regarding its displays and causes as well as its meanings and functions in the social, psychosocial and pedagogical fields. Concerning its displays, Freire and Amado (2009) believed that the major situations are framed in what they point out as the first level of indiscipline and which are those incidents of disruptive nature whose disturbance affects the good classroom functioning. The incidents that might be framed in the second and third levels are conflicts among peers and conflicts within teacher-student relationship which might be taken on proportions of violence and even delinquency.

The social deviant behaviour could be in form of verbal abuse, offensive language against teachers and other students, possessing of weapons, supplying or using illegal drugs, intrusions into the school classrooms by students with the intention of confronting teachers, etc. all of these have become a case of study that needed immediate attention. And the problem now is alarming and jeopardizing the administration of the school especially.

Statement of the Problem

Indiscipline and other disturbing behaviours are common vices in society as a whole. But more particularly, in schools, there is steady increase in the level of indiscipline which has been observed. These are major societal evils which beset the citizens especially adolescents in secondary schools, in their effort to achieve their life goals. Some of these social problems are generated within the school environment and promoted by factors which are inherent in the society. Although what may be termed deviant behaviour may differ from society to society, but deviant acts in the school may include, but not limited to drug and alcohol abuse, truancy, promiscuity, avoiding classes, riots, smoking, vandalism, fighting, insulting, lateness to school, being rebellious etc. These acts negatively influence the learning and teaching processes as they undermine the purpose of teaching and learning.

In view of the foregoing therefore, it becomes a major problem of this study to ascertain the perception of students on the influence of behavioral counselling on deviant behaviors among secondary school student in Etche LGA of Rivers state.

Instrumentation

The instrument for collection of data for the study was a questionnaire designed by the researcher titled "Behavioural Counselling and Deviant Behaviour Questionnaire (BCDBQ)". It comprised two sections – A and B. Section A contained the respondents' demographic data, while section B was on items related to the possible factors on counselling and deviant behaviour. It was in the pattern of a four-point Likert instrument, that is $4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5$, therefore, a calculated mean (\bar{x}) score of 2.5 will be adopted as the criterion mean. Hence, all items whose mean scores were up to 2.5 and above were accepted, while those below 2.5 were rejected.

Population for the Study

The population for this study consist all students in all Government-owned secondary schools in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers state.

Sample and Sampling Methods

The sample for this study was 200 students drawn using cluster and simple random sampling technique. The schools were grouped into 10 clusters and then simple random sampling was employed in drawing 20 students from each of the 10 clusters, making a total of 200 students (100 male students and 100 female students).

Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) for the research questions. While hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What is the is the perception of students on the influence of behavioral counselling on examination malpractice among secondary school student in Etche LGA of Rivers state?

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in perception of the influence of behavioural counselling on examination malpractice among male and female students in Etche LGA of Rivers state.

Table 1: z- test analysis of male and female students on influence of behavioural counselling on examination malpractice

| Students | N | \bar{x} | Std. Dev. | df | z-cal | z-crit | Alpha level | Result |
|----------|-----|-----------|-----------|-----|-------|--------|-------------|-----------------|
| Male | 100 | 2.88 | 1.02 | 198 | 1.88 | 1.960 | 0.05 | Not Significant |
| Female | 100 | 2.60 | 1.08 | | | | | |

In the above table, the z-test analysis of the mean for male and female students on the influence of behavioral counselling on examination malpractice showed that the z-cal is 1.88 which is less than the z-crit of 1.960. This implies that the null hypothesis of no significant difference on the influence behavioral counselling on examination malpractice among male and female students is accepted and the alternate rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the influence of behavioral counselling examination malpractice among male and female students in Etche Local Government Area.

Research Question Two: How do students perceive behavioral counselling influence drug abuse among secondary school student in Etche Local Government Area?

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in perception of the influence of behavioral counselling on drug abuse among male and female students in Etche Local Government Area.

Table 2: z- test analysis of male and female students on influence of behavioral counselling on drug abuse.

| Students | N | \bar{x} | Std. Dev. | df | z-cal | z-crit | Alpha level | Result |
|----------|-----|-----------|-----------|-----|-------|--------|-------------|-----------------|
| Male | 100 | 2.79 | 0.98 | 198 | 0.34 | 1.960 | 0.05 | Not Significant |
| Female | 100 | 2.84 | 1.09 | | | | | |

The z-test analysis of the responses of students to the influence of behavioral counselling on rebelliousness indicated that the z-cal is 0.34 which is less than the z-crit of 1.960. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the influence of behavioral counselling on drug abuse among male and female students in Etche Local Government Area is accepted and the alternate rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the influence of behavioral counselling on drug abuse among male and female students in Etche Local Government Area.

Research Question three: What is the influence of behavioral counselling on rebelliousness among secondary school students as perceived by students in Etche Local Government Area?

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the perception of influence of behavioral counselling on rebelliousness among secondary school student in Etche Local Government Area

Table 3: z- test analysis of male and female students on influence of behavioral counselling on rebelliousness among secondary school students in Etche Local Government Area

| Students | N | \bar{x} | Std. Dev. | Df | z-cal | z-crit | Alpha level | Result |
|----------|-----|-----------|-----------|-----|-------|--------|-------------|-----------------|
| Male | 100 | 2.72 | 1.0 | 198 | 0.73 | 1.960 | 0.05 | Not Significant |
| Female | 100 | 2.84 | 1.06 | | | | | |

From the z-test analysis of the male and female students on the influence of behavioral counselling on rebelliousness among secondary school students in Etche Local Government Area, it indicated that the z-cal which is 0.73 is less than the z-crit of 1.960. This means that the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted and the alternate rejected. There is no significant difference in the influence of behavioral counselling on rebelliousness among secondary school students in Etche Local Government Area.

Discussion of the findings

Influence of behavioral counselling on students' deviant behaviors

The findings on the influence of behavioral counselling on examination malpractice among secondary school students in Etche LGA of Rivers state indicated that both male and female students accept that behavior counselling positively influences examination malpractice. This result is in line with the findings of Agi (2013) who discovered that the high prevalence of adolescent delinquency among secondary school students can be curbed through counselling the secondary school students and introducing different skills and techniques of dealing with delinquency in schools. This finding is not surprising to the researcher because a lot of deviant behaviors had been corrected through counselling.

Also, on the influence of behavioral counselling on drug abuse, the finding revealed that the students accepted that behavioral counselling positively influences drug abuse among them. This result supports the findings of Akponyia, and Memoth (2018) as they noted that there was a significant impact of guidance and counselling on the management of students' use and abuse of drugs. Modukpe (2015) also noted that adolescents' involvement in substance abuse is on the increase and can be minimized through effective counselling and behavior modification technique. Counselling techniques, as observed, have been so effective in managing behavioral problems of adolescents.

This is not surprising because guidance and counselling has severally been effective in controlling some addictive behaviors of adolescents.

Similarly, male and female students accepted that behavioral counselling has influence on rebelliousness among them. This result corroborates that of Bolu-steve, and Esere (2017) who, in their findings revealed that certain deviant behaviors are caused by a lack of effective parental upbringing, and so recommended that counselors should continue to provide right information to in-school adolescents about the negative effects of deviant behaviors. The researcher also agrees with this because the effectiveness of behavioral counselling in curbing rebellious behavior of students cannot be over emphasized.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings:

1. There should be constant counselling given to students at all levels of schooling.
2. Counselling should be compulsorily made a part of the curriculum for schools.
3. Schools should employ more counselors at various levels of education- primary, secondary and tertiary.
4. Parents should also be careful the kind of things they expose their children to, as this may lead them into acquiring certain deviant behaviors.
5. Students should be made to understand the dangers of deviant behavior and be encouraged to lead healthy lifestyle.

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