

DEVIANT BEHAVIOURS IN SCHOOLS: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING.

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Abstract

Deviant behavior has become a daunting problem lately. More pupils are displaying abnormal behavior and thus destabilizing learning processes within school settings. It is a well-known fact that teenagers usually learn how to adapt to society and that deviant behavior may lead to problems with conformity to societal values. This study examines deviant behaviours in schools as well as implications for counselling. Deviant behaviour is considered to be strange and morally unacceptable. Types of deviant behaviours include examination malpractice, rape, bullying, stealing, truancy; lateness and sexual immorality were explored in the paper. Similarly, characteristics of individuals with deviant behaviours were examined. Causes of deviant behaviours in schools, its effects, as well as theoretical explanation of deviant behaviours were considered in this paper. Various implications of deviant behaviour for counselling and the roles of the counsellor in ameliorating deviant behavior were presented. Finally the paper recommended the optimum utilization of these implications for counselling to curb this socially undesirable behaviour in our schools.

Keywords: deviant behaviour, deviance, counselling implication.

Introduction

Issues related to deviant behaviours are controversial and cause a lot of debate within the media and among politicians and civil organizations. Deviant behavior is also a major focus of public concern and debate. Great energy has been devoted to detecting, reducing and preventing crime, policing and police powers, overcrowding in prisons, the growth of internet crime and identity theft, terrorism, human trafficking, antisocial behaviour and teenage crime which is more paramount among our students in our various schools. Goode (2008) defines deviant behaviour as a behaviour, beliefs and physical characteristics that break social norms and produce negative reactions. In his view, deviant behaviour may be mild or more extreme. In the case of mild deviance, such as telling a little lie or parking illegally, the penalties imposed

might involve harsh words or a small fine. However, we would not think of the person who tells a lie or parks on double yellow lines as a deviant. Extreme deviant behaviours include behaviours or beliefs that are so far outside the norms of that people who have been extremely heavily tattooed or pierced and people who claim they have been abducted by aliens (Goode, 2008). This is to say that deviant behaviour is not considered normal or morally correct by most people.

Deviant behaviour is any behaviour exhibited by members of a group or society which is at variance with established rules of the group or society (Idris, 2016). It has been noted that deviant behaviour increases globally yearly (Damron-Bell, 2011; Hanimoglu, 2019). Deviant behaviour short chains the purpose of education by impacting negatively on teaching and learning in school (Torrente & Vazsonyi, 2012; Agboola & Salawa, 2011; Njoroge, Onduso & Thinguri, 2014; Nabiswa, Misigo, Makhanu, 2016). Deviant behaviour varies from one society to another. It is certain that what might be seen as normal behaviour in another community might be seen as abnormal in another. For example, in the Eastern parts of Nigeria, young adults can greet their elderly ones by just a handshake without prostrating. This would not be seen as morally unacceptable unlike the South- Western states where it might be labeled as “one who does not respect his/her elders”. Opong (2008) opined that deviant behaviour is a disease that is against transparency, justice and fair play. School is the hallmark of progress for effecting change and growth. Therefore, nothing that would hinder the expected goals of its establishment should be encouraged. Pertinently, it is on the basis of this, that government is making education a top most priority to ensuring that, every person’s goal is achieved. Hence, effective policies would enhance educational growth of the citizenship (Angel, 2016).

The primary functions of schools in the training and changing the citizens cannot be overemphasized. Agi (2015) opined that education is the art of leading a person from the dark era of ignoramus into the limelight of knowledge and understanding. This implies that an educated person can assist in transforming the society for positive growth and development. Sequel to this, Eremus (2015) opined that rules and regulations are not obeyed in our schools as there are many cases of examination malpractice, truancy, bullying, extortion, sexual offences, indecent dressing, negative behaviours, dishonesty and many others. According to Eremus (2015), these ill-attitudes signify deviation from standard functionality of students’ behaviours. It is on this assertion that Angel (2016) opined that schools has become a place of committing different types of atrocities and urged the government, parents and school administrators to wake up and ensure proper elimination of deviant behaviours in our schools.

Concept of Deviant Behaviour

The word "deviant" (from Latin *deviatio*) means an abnormality (Collinsdictionary.com). The term “deviant behaviour” is a problem-producing behaviour committed by an individual or group that interferes with the enjoyment of life or essential role performance of one or others that is sufficient to produce a social censure or control response intended to change or eradicate that behaviour (Eremus, 2015). This definition is intended to place the concern squarely on the external behaviours themselves and not on the inherent characteristics or traits of individuals. The researcher tries to examine deviant behaviours and not de-behaved. Indeed, allow the researcher to suggest that “de-behaved”, as such do not exist. While some individuals certainly do engage in what may appear to be frequent acts of deviant behaviour, they do not do so consistently all of the time. These same individuals may also exhibit acceptable, even ideal, conforming behaviours at other times. In fact, we are often surprised, as well as disappointed, when our religious, political, or cultural leaders and heroes, who have otherwise led what appear to be exemplary lives worthy of emulation, “fall from

Grace” by committing various deviant acts or “crimes and misdemeanors”. Moreover, individuals, who may have been considered “ten- times losers”, may suddenly cease and desist and reform.

The real issue is socially disruptive or undesirable problem behaviour in the eyes of others. This is what is meant by “objective” assessment. However, additionally, perpetrators themselves may also find their own behaviour personally (“subjectively”) disturbing and feel unhappily handicapped or disadvantaged by what they do or have done. They too may, as a consequence, be unable to enjoy their lives or perform their essential work or family duties responsibly. This is commonly observed, for instance, in individuals who engage in compulsive behaviours such as; substances users, gamblers and others affected by one or more of the so-called “addictions”. Whatever the case, when behaviour committed by individuals or groups reaches a level where lives are adversely impacted to the point of interfering with individual happiness or the ability to perform necessary tasks, we define this as “deviant behaviour”.

This may bring us to other definitions from some scholars. In the opinion of Angel (2016), deviant behaviour is any behaviour that lacks conformity and acceptability of the people in the society. Deviant behaviour describes an action or behaviour that significantly contravenes the accepted or prescribed norms of a given society. It is a deviation that attracts punishment or sanction in the society or school.

Diche (2016) defined deviant behaviour as that behaviour that violates the laid down rules and regulations of a given organization or group. He went further to emphasize that deviant behaviour is a common phenomenon among students in schools which has led them to join secrets cults, and other heinous crimes in the school.

Gibbs (2014) defined deviant behaviour as conduct that deviates from the societal norm. By this definition, Deviancy is neither good nor bad, but must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Such behaviour may be described as “different”, or “unexpected”, and may elicit positive negative responses from other people.

Characteristics of Individuals with Deviant Behaviour

The following are the behavioural disorder of deviant youths or students:

- Victims are not always necessary. Many acts of deviant behaviours are, to put it simply, victimless. Some examples from American society are prostitution, gambling, pornography, substance use / abuse.
- Inappropriate types of behaviour or feeling under normal conducts.
- They always aim high and cannot concentrate in life.
- A general pervasive mood or unhappiness.
- They are always temperamental and cannot reason normal.
- They see the world as a place of do or die.
- They are always at loggerhead with their people. They usually join opposition.
- They do not interact freely with people.
- They are catalysts and cannot be loyal to the lawful authority.
- Their existence is a threat to people who are reasonable.
- Inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relations with people around them.

Types of Deviant Behaviour in Schools

Ibuchin (2016) identified number of deviant behaviours that are prevalent in our schools. These are: examination malpractice, truancy, bullying, lateness to school, stealing, drug Abuse, cultism, sex offences and absenteeism.

Examination Malpractice: The issue of examination malpractices is not new in our schools. According to Ogbodo (2016), examination malpractices is any act of wrong doing or neglect that contravenes the rule of acceptable practice before, during and after an examination by anybody in any way is tantamount to malpractice. This is unacceptable act perpetrated by the students, examiners and other agents during and after examination with intention to have undue advantage and earn unmerited grade. It has been discovered and announced almost every year that most students in our schools at various levels indulge into examination malpractice which contravenes the examination act 1999. It could be said that Exam malpractice make students get undeserved high grade which might make the various examination bodies to cancel or mark down certain centers where such anomalies are committed. Most times, this action might affect all candidates who may be in that particular examination center.

Truancy: Truancy is a situation where a child stays away from school without good reason. This is being away from home and school during school hours. Longe(2010), cited in Tor-Anyiin(2015), defines truancy as “absence from school without permission, leaving school without authorization and evading specific lessons, probably typical of adolescent rebellion, self-assertion and reaction over certain developmental and psychological problems”. Truancy therefore is a symptom of psychosocial adjustment problem. It starts from being absent from school without adequate knowledge of the parents and or significant other and one's poor attention to school; It also includes losing of school materials or school fees. Thus, according to Odomelaiam and Ajoku(2006), “truancy is a situation where a pupil loiters, wanders, and idles about, gallivants, rigmaroles, walks about and perambulates while lessons are progressing in the class”. This explains why such children can leave home for school without reaching there. This habit makes students to spend their time in inappropriate places which could lead to drug abuse in male and unwanted pregnancy in females. Similarly, Dike (2015) explained that, truancy involves leaving the school premises and coming back any time without permission.

Bullying: This is an aggressive behaviour. It is a behaviour intended to hurt (Pascal, 2015). A bully is someone who uses his or her ability and strength to threaten or hurt those who are smaller and weaker sometimes the bully uses words to intimidate his or her victims. Some students bully other students a way of showing superiority over the younger or tender ones. Okechukwu (2016) enumerated various forms of bullying such as, physical assault, extortion and verbal humiliation and intimidation. Most of the common types of bullying include: kicking, beating, biting, threats, locking the victim inside a room, harsh teasing, gossip and making unreasonable demands etc.

Lateness to school: Lateness is a social problem that attracts the attention of the school authority; lateness is coming to school not on time. Students come late to school and class. Pere (2014) states that there is prescribed time for resumption of school but some students often come to school late when morning assembly is almost over and in some cases, when the teacher is already in the class teaching. This often leads to distractions in class.

Stealing: Stealing is simply an act of taking another person's possession by deceit or without permission and the mention of expression implies that stealing could involve both material and non - materials things. According to Tor-Anyiin (2015), material things include books, food stuff, clothes, money and any other physical things. While non - material things include mental aspects like dishonest, taking of another person's work as yours or sneaking in without notice to obtain information with the aim of causing harm or advantage for self or agent. Sandro (2018) explained that most students indulge in the habit of taking what does not

belong to them in school. This behavior if not checked could give rise to other unwanted behaviours in a student and may affect their academic performances in school.

Drug Abuse: This is indiscriminate use of drugs without doctor's prescription or use of drugs other than their main purpose. Chamberlin (2015) opined that students in school and outside the school setting have been found smoking indian hemp, cigarette, heroine and other drugs not recommended by doctors. Smoking of cigarettes is often associated with drug addicts since some of the drugs are in the form of shredded leaves or other substances that are usually wrapped up in papers and smoked like cigarettes. While drinking alcohol is a perpetual activity of those who are mostly members of any cult. These cultists, as they are called drink all forms of alcohol to stimulate them. Smoking and alcoholism are recurrently topical issues. In some decades back it was unheard of that children and youth smoked or went to bars to drink beer and 'ogogoro' (hot drink).

Cultism: Secret cult is referred to as a system of worship that is expressed in rituals and which is kept from the views of others expect the cult members. Members concentrate in cult language which is peculiar to them. The secret cult members carry out their heinous activities in the night. The Federal Government of Nigeria (1999) defines cultism or secret society as: an organized group with its own ideology, and objectives, which are only known to their members. This happens when a group of students come together under one name or umbrella with the intention of intimidating fellow students or disrupting the activities of the school for their evil objective (Wadsworth, 2000). According to him, some students involve in cultism to make up for their deficiencies either academically, socially or economically.

Sex offences: This involves various degrees of sexual misconduct exhibited by students which include, masturbation, lesbianism, homosexual, premarital sex and abortion. This usually affects their academic performances and may lead to dropping out of school (Wadsworth, 2000).

Causes of Deviant Behaviour among school students

It is evident that the causes of deviant behavior among students lie in peculiarities of interconnection and interaction of the person with his or her surrounding world, and social environment (Lewis & Frydenberg, 2004). Three main causes of deviant behavior are biological, psychological and social. The biological causes are expressed in the physiological peculiarities of the teenager, i.e. their impairments. The psychological cause lies in the peculiarities of their temperament, accentuation character. Whereas the social causes reflects the interaction of the teenager with his or her society, family, and school. The following could be seen as the basic causes of deviant behaviours in schools. They are:

Family background: Family is the first socializing agent that a child encounters. Often the preconditions for deviant behaviors lurk in the family. A family inculcates in a child, basic values, behavioral stereotypes and norms. The emotional sphere of the child's psyche is formed in the family. Defects that occur due to home education are therefore very hard to fix. It is not disputable that a child is born and brought up in a family. Family is the first place of education in the life of any child. The child is exposed to various aspects of learning before being to the formal kind of education. The home a child is brought up can influence that child in two ways. The individual might be positively or negatively influenced from home. There may be the tendency for that individual to exhibit deviant behaviours in school. The family background encompasses family socio-economic status, child rearing practices and many others. For example an over permissive family/ home exposes the child to all kinds of behaviours including maladaptive behaviour (Agi, 2016). Chuks (2016) asserted that the factors within the

home/family and poor parental relationship are capable of breeding children that misbehave in school.

Mass media: Children's exposure to bad television programmes, immoral magazines as well as pornographic films and materials, make students to be involved in immoral behaviour. This has contributed to high risk level deviant behaviours in our schools these days. This is why Stan Cohen, 2002 argues that the media are involved in the creation of moral panics. Moral panics according to him involve exaggerating the extent and significance of a social problem. McQuail (2003) in his view claimed that the internet has become the latest medium to provoke a "moral panic" at the ease with which explicit sexual (and other undesirable) content can enter the home and be accessed even by children. Kento (2015) posited that the effects of unwholesome mass media seem to have negative impact on the character development of children than their positive impression. The students find it difficult to adjust to good personal, vocational, social and educational demands.

Peer group: Peer group refers to the group an individual identifies his or her self with. Peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his or her attitudes, values or behaviour in order to conform to that of the group norms. It is seen as another factor which has contributed in destroying our children. Most students indulge in deviant behaviour in school because of influence of their wrong peers (Onyejiaku, 2010).

Biological factors: These include genetic factors such as psychopath (inherited antisocial behaviour), brain damage. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neuron behavioural developmental disorder primarily characterized by the "co-existence of intentional problems and hyperactivity with any behaviour occurring infrequently alone". This behaviour problem is common with children especially during their school stage and it means them to exhibit high deviant behaviour in school.

Societal factors: Societal factors are one of the pressing problems predisposing students to deviant behaviours. For example, as the society experiences growth and becomes complex in nature so also do societal factors causing students' deviant behaviour (Agi, 2016). The increase in deviant behaviour in our society today cannot be overemphasized. This is why Onyejiaku (2010) brought forward psychological factors such as cognitive level and personality traits as factors that contribute to deviant behaviour in our schools.

Economic Factors: Economic factors influencing deviant behaviour in the youths are mostly related to the level of income the youth have and or the level of income of their family members.

Theoretical Explanation of Deviant Behaviour Psychoanalytic Theory:

This theory was developed by Sigmund Freud. It explained that all humans have natural drives and urges that are repressed in the unconscious layer. He went further to state that, all humans have criminal tendencies. These tendencies are curbed, however, through the process of socialization. A child that is improperly socialized then could develop a personality disorder that causes him or her to direct antisocial impulses. Those who direct their antisocial impulses inward would likely become neurotic while those who direct theirs outwardly would likely become deviant criminal.

Learning Theory: Learning theory is based on the principles of behavioural psychology, which opined that a person's behaviour is learned and maintained by its consequences and rewards. Individual, thus learn deviant and criminal behaviour by observing other people and witnessing the rewards or consequences that their behaviour receives. For example, an individual who observes a friend stealing without being caught or punished rather the individual is rewarded for being an achiever might likely begin to follow such negative footsteps of that his/her friend.

Cognitive Development Theory: This theory postulates that criminal and deviant behaviour results from the way in which individuals organize their thoughts around morality and the laws. During the first stage, called the pre conventional stage which is reached during the middle childhood, moral reasoning is based on obedience and avoiding punishment. The second level is called conventional level and is reached at the end of middle of childhood. During this stage, moral reasoning is based on the expectations that the child's family and significant others have for him or her. The third level of moral reasoning, the post conventional level, is reached during early adulthood at which point individuals are able to go beyond social conventions. That is, they value the laws of the social system. People who do not progress through these stages may become stuck in their moral development and as a result become maladjusted individuals.

Effects of Deviant Behaviour

The following are the effects of deviant behaviour as stipulated by Agi (2016). Deviant behaviour affects teaching and learning as teachers spend more time trying to control students rather than teaching them. It leads to poor parent-child relationship. Most involved students do not benefit from schooling. It affects their academic performance because, they are often into one deviant act or the other losing most vital class lessons (Agi, 2016). Deviant students often threaten their teachers, school authorities and even parents at home. It leads to demonstrations and destruction of school properties and in some cases deviant students observe frequent demonstrations in the face of little issues (Agi, 2016).

The roles of the counsellor in ameliorating deviant behaviour

- The Guidance counsellors should counsel the students on responsibility, good morals, positive study behaviours, hard work, determination and dedication to studies to avoid a fraudulent method of passion examination.
- Counsellors must liaise with parents to get to the roots of truancy by examining the various needs of the child in the given psychological environment. Modify truancy; psychological needs (such as love, affection, protection, independence, freedom, adventure, exploration, and self-esteem among others) which are the foundation of truancy should be deployed.
- The counsellor should train the students the skills of self-control, self-monitoring and self-management.
- The counsellor needs to inform the students/parents, the importance of punctuality, and parents should wake children early and keeping their time through the use of alarm clock is important.
- The counsellor should employ appropriate individual and group counselling in school to help control bullying. Senior students should be enlightened on their obligations towards the junior ones. Orientation on the consequences of bullying should be intensive.
- School counselling orientation should be organized in schools to provide proper information to the new entrants about the dangers of cultism. It is during the orientation that students could be informed to be aware of the Greeks gifts in the school. They should be told that unsolicited gifts could be a bait to get them into a cult group. Both the new and the old students need to be aware of the characteristics of cultism, only then will they be able to avoid involvement.

Implications for Counselling

Bearing in mind that students pass through various channels of conflicts and frustrations in our schools and larger society; parents, teachers, religious leaders and other adults have varied roles to play in correcting delinquencies in students. In this regard there is need to understand the nature of students development, developmental tasks and problems affecting them. This will affect our attitudes towards students and our mode of working with them. Some vital implications for counseling evolved from the findings of this study. The research has shown that students in senior classes are prone to more deviant behaviours than those in junior classes. The school counsellor could organize symposium for teachers on behaviour modification strategies needed for changing behaviour to the desired direction; teachers must be taught to be vigilant and good at detecting behaviour disorders when they surface and know how to handle them, and where necessary refer to the professional counselor.

As for gender, the boys should be made to understand by the school authorities especially the counsellor that their physical energy can be controlled and channeled towards more useful venture especially their academic pursuits other than deviant acts. To Eremus (2015) adults should guide students properly on physical changes of the body at this stage of life. They should be guided on development of sexuality and sexually experiences into full maturity, that is by providing sex information through sex education. However, Agi (2016) stressed that since some of the behaviour disorders are rooted in the home, their management should involve the home as well. Parents should contribute by observing their children's behaviour so as to help school assess them more accurately. Counselling parents of deviant children will help to reduce the adverse effect of broken homes, over strict homes, over-permissive homes and effects of television, video types, magazines and pictures full of immoral displays, and teachers in the school should lead by good examples.

In case of crisis situations, the counsellor can act as a mediator between the conflicting parties such as students and administrators. The counsellor should be ready to work with administrator and other Para-professionals to modify and eliminate undesirable behaviour in and outside the classroom. Agi (2016) maintained that for cases that require counseling, the nature of the problem will dictate the mode of counseling that will be employed. But the counseling must be designed to reduce frustration and its effects among students. Finally, the counsellor can help to build students' assertive behaviour by giving them topics on decision-making expressing opposing views, arguing fairly, controlling emotions, refusing unreasonable request and dealing with anger appropriately.

Conclusion

Deviant behaviour is a behaviour or action of individual or group that are not in conformity with the acceptable standards of the society. In schools, deviant behaviour of students is understood in relation to the existing schools rules and regulations. Peer pressure and school related factors have great consequences on the academic well-being of students. It is pertinent at this juncture to state that the counsellor is in better position to treat maladaptive behaviours of students. She is also to help students, identify and understand the appropriate measures for any form of delinquent behaviour. The presence and importance of counselors in secondary schools cannot be over emphasized. It is therefore imperative for government, parents and schools owners and administrators to put adequate measures in place to curb the trend of deviant acts in our schools because of its increasing rate in our societies.

Recommendations

1. The following recommendations are made based on the nature of deviant behaviour. Parents and guardians should always monitor the activities of their children at all time with the aim of curbing the negative behaviour.
2. Professional counsellors should be employed both in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions of learning. They should be encouraged to take their responsibilities seriously and never engage them in classroom teaching due to shortage of teaching staff.
3. Since most of the causes of deviant act are traced to schools, home, peer influence to mention but a few, there is need for parents and school administrators to work hand-in-hand to keep students behaviour under effective check.
4. Parent should monitor their adolescent children closely and correct them whenever they deviate. Earlier correction will help them to live a normal healthy life.
5. Secondary school teachers should be groomed in behaviour modification techniques (reinforcement, shaping extinction, modeling and so on) to enable them dictate and modify deviant behaviours as they arise.
6. Parents whether rich or poor should try to provide for their children's affections, basic and educational needs. This can help to eliminate deviant behaviours and bring about close understanding between both parties.

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