

Behaviour Modification Techniques in Reducing Aberrant Behaviour among Secondary School Students.

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ABSTRACT

In Nigeria, there has been a general public outcry about aberrant behaviours in the schools at all levels and the entire society. This type of behaviour that students in secondary schools exhibit in the classroom or within the school has negative impact on learning. It is common to find out that some students who have problem with their teacher in the classroom for example, truancy may be afraid of doing their school work and may sometimes experience poor performance in the results. Such students might not only perform badly but also contributed to other students not achieving their best, because the students might attempt to copy these bad behaviours. Most of the schools used punishment alone which is not enough to solve behaviour problems. Use of these behaviour modification techniques has an impact on reducing aberrant behaviour in secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

The existence of aberrant behaviour's among school children has contributed to their academic failures which had led to the allegation and belief that the standard of education is falling; of course this is a factor accounting for the massive failure. Teachers are also accused of not effectively teaching and controlling the students adequately and this also lead to the falling standard of education of the youth. These behaviour disorders should be effectively managed one suitable techniques should employed for the improvement of teaching and learning in the classroom. The use of these behaviour modification techniques has an impact in ameliorating aberrant behaviour in secondary schools.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Aberrant behaviour as seen by Kirk (1972), as a deviation from age appropriate behaviour which significantly interferes with the child's own growth and development and the lives of others. A child who keeps to himself or herself and does not relate to other people is one whose behaviour is interfering with his own growth and development. On the other hand, a child who behaves in such a way that he is always in conflict with siblings, classmates, teachers, parents and other members of the community is interfering with the lives of others.

Maricon (1981) viewed aberrant behaviour as those actions which often times inhibit students and others from effective learning. Such behaviour could disrupt the teacher's teaching. Garder (1978) sees aberrant behaviours as those actions that are socially unacceptable though they may be satisfying to the student exhibiting them at that point in time. Blackhan and Silverman (1980) highlighted that behavioural problems in school consists of inattention, distractive, noise, social isolation, truancy etc. While Ziv (1971) identified stealing, lying, cheating, disobedience and truancy as part of the behavioural problems among secondary school students.

Aberrant behaviour person does what other children do but his own is either too frequent or is of high degree and intensity. They seem, in their behaviour to be particularly unaware of the appropriate time and places for certain actions except with the strict supervision of adult attendants (Nwoye 1988).

CAUSES OF ABERRANT BEHAVIOUR

Jatau, Uzo and Lere (2001) identified two broad causes of aberrant behaviour. These include hereditary and environmental factors:

1. **Hereditary factors:** These causes are inborn and may result due to chemical or biological changes which interfere with the emotional state of the individual. They include such factor as minimal brain dysfunction and central nervous dysfunction.
2. **Environmental factors:** under environmental factors are included such factors as:
 - a. Unfavourable school and family conditions.
 - b. Negative or wrong modeling of adult behaviours to children.
 - c. Over-permissiveness of parents.
 - d. Learning problems in school.
 - e. Effects of broken home.
 - f. Strict and uncompromising parents.
 - g. Over protective parents.
 - h. The effects of drugs and alcoholic drinks.
 - i. Industrial hazards and accidents.
 - j. Lack of provision of basic needs at home.
 - k. Bad company.
 - l. Poor disciplinary approaches to solving problems.
 - m. Lack of understanding of the uniqueness of every child.
 - n. Deprivation of parental love and concern.
 - o. Poor weather conditions (when it is too cold or too hot).
 - p. Conflicts in the home.
 - q. Anxiety arising from the process of growing up especially at the outset of adolescence.

TYPES OF ABERRANT BEHAVIOUR

According to Quay cited in Nwoye (1988), there are four possible ways of categorizing aberrant behaviour in children. These are:

1. **Conduct disorder:** Which are manifested in such problem behaviours like hyperactivity, rudeness, aggression, attention, seeking and boisterousness.
2. **Anxious:** Withdrawn reaction: manifested in such problems behaviours like hypersensitivity, feeling of insecurity, fear, inferiority complex, lack of self-confidence and being too anxious over little things.
3. **Inadequate:** Immature reactions: exemplified in such problem behaviour like lack of interest in what is going on, day dreaming reticence, shyness, clumsiness and other related forms of immature behaviours.
4. **Socialized delinquency:** Demonstrated in expression of loyalty to delinquent peers and gangs, giving rise to such self-defeating behaviours like truancy and an inability to conform wisely to established codes of conduct.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN WITH ABERRANT BEHAVIOUR

Oguntunde (2003) identified some symptoms of aberrant behaviour which includes:

1. Aggressive tendencies which are exhibited inform of bullying, fighting, biting, hitting and kicking others, angry responses and usage of abusive language, damaging things, stubbornness, lying, stealing and criminal acts.
2. Social immaturity which leads to difficult in building and maintain satisfactory relationship, and also general difficulty in building and maintain satisfactory relationship, and also general difficulty in socializing with others.
3. Emotional disturbances which could manifest inform of withdrawal tendencies, cultism, easily irritated, crying without reason, insanity, chattering to self, interiority complex, low-self-concept and self-esteem, abnormal and unnecessary fears, hatred for others, feeling of insecurity and rejection, temper tantrums, timidity, frustration at the slightest failure, general moodiness or unhappiness in situation others express excitant and happiness.
4. Physical bad habits such as finger sucking, nail biting, be ducting, soiling under-wears, twisting hairs, twisting hands, restlessness, fidgeting, facial twitching, nervous spasms, rocking body back and forth, hitting objects, making unnecessary noise etc.
5. Sexual immaturity as reflected in masturbation, inability to relate positively with people of opposite sex, rape, lesbianism, homo-sexualize etc.

Some social and emotional characteristics serve as pointers to help teachers and parent identify children who have behaviour problem. A person (child) who is emotionally disturbed and socially maladjusted actions and reactions that are symptoms of his problem.

Mishra (2014) described these characteristics as:

- i- Externalizing behaviour: involves striking out against others; aggressive or disruptive behaviour that is observable behaviour directed toward others.
- ii- Internalizing behaviour: involves mental or emotional conflicts, such as depression and anxiety.

A child may exhibit several behaviours associated with internalizing problems (e.g. short attention span, poor concentration) and several of those associated with externalizing problems as well(e.g. ,fighting, disruptive behaviour, annoying others). Comorbidity-the co-occurrence of two or more conditions in the same individual is not unusual.

Certain characteristics may indicate behaviour disorders in relating appropriately to peers, siblings, parents, and teachers. They may also have difficulty responding to academic and social tasks as well. Most children find it difficult to maintain friendships so they seek out others like themselves. They do this because they feel unconnected to other peer groups. They have a hard time with interpersonal relationships, educational progress and life at home.

This emotions and behaviours may be influenced by genetic, neurological, or biochemical factors or by a combination of these. Very good parents sometimes have children with serious emotional or behavioural disorders, and incompetent, neglectful, or abusive parents sometimes have children with no significant emotional or behavioural disorders. Sensitivity to children's needs, love-oriented methods of dealing with misbehaviour, and positive reinforcement (attention and praise) for appropriate behaviour tends to promote desirable behaviour in children.

Parents who are generally lax in disciplining their children but are hostile, rejecting, cruel, and inconsistent in dealing with behaviour are likely to have aggressive, delinquent children. Broken, disorganized homes in which the parents themselves have arrest records or are violent are particularly likely to foster delinquency and lack of social competence.

Educators must be aware that most parents of youngsters with emotional or behavioural disorders want their children to behave more appropriately and will do anything they can to help them. These parents need support resources not blame or criticism for dealing with very difficult family circumstances. Some children already have emotional or

behavioural disorders during their school years, perhaps in part because of damaging experience in the classroom itself. Children who exhibit disorders when they enter school may become better or worse according to how they are managed in the classroom.

The school can contribute to the development of emotional problems in several rather specific ways. For instance, teachers might be insensitive to children's individuality, perhaps requiring a mindless conformity to rules and routines. Educators and parents alike might hold too high or too low expectations for the child's achievement or conduct, and they might communicate to the child who disappoints them that the child is inadequate or undesirable.

Discipline in the school might be too lax, too rigid, or inconsistent. Instruction might be offered in skills for which the child has no real or imagined use. The school environment might be such that the misbehaving child is rewarded with recognition and special attention (even if that attention is criticism or punishment), whereas the child who behaves properly is ignored.

Finally, teachers and peers might be models of misconduct the child might misbehave by imitating them. Teachers must ask themselves questions about their academic instruction, expectations, and approaches to behaviour management.

DESIGN OF INTERVENTION PLANS ON ABERRANT BEHAVIOUR

After collecting data on a student's behaviour, and after developing a hypothesis of the likely function of that behaviour, a team develops (or revises the student's behaviour intervention plan or strategies in the IEP. These may include positive strategies, program or curricular modifications, and supplementary aids and supports required to address the disruptive behaviours in question. It is helpful to use the data collected during the functional behavioural assessment to develop the plan and to determine the discrepancy between the child's actual and expected behaviour.

The input of the general education teacher, as appropriate (i.e. if the student is, or may be participating in the regular education environment), is especially crucial at this point. He or she will be able to relay to the team not only his or her behavioural expectations, but also valuable information about how the existing classroom environment and/or general education curriculum can be modified to support the student.

Intervention plans and strategies emphasizing skills students need in order to behave in a more appropriate manner, or plans providing motivation to conform to required standards, will be more effective than plans that simply serve to control behaviour. Interventions based upon control often fail to generalize (i.e., continue to be used for long periods of time, in many times they serve only to suppress behaviour—resulting in a child manifesting unaddressed needs in alternative, inappropriate ways. Positive plans for behavioural intervention, on the other hand, will address both the source of the problem and the problem itself.

IEP teams may want to consider the following techniques when designing behaviour intervention plans, strategies, and supports:

- a- Manipulate the antecedents and/or consequences of the behaviour;
- b- Teach more acceptable replacement behaviours that serve the same function as the inappropriate behaviour;
- c- Implement changes in curriculum and instructional strategies; and
- d- Modify the physical environment.

BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION TECHNIQUES FOR CHANGING ABERRANT BEHAVIOURS.

Behaviour modification techniques are referrals, punishment, time-out, counselling and reinforcement.

Referrals

Falaye (2009). Identified referral as human knowledge is limited, so also that of the school counsellor. He or She does not know everything, hence, cannot provide solutions to all problems. From time to time, it may be necessary for other people to support the services provided by the school counsellor. He and She must be humble enough to identify his or her inadequacies. Where a counsellor cannot manage certain cases, such should be referred to other people for management. For example, where an issue or a problem is health related, the counselee needs to be referred to health personnel, like doctors and nurses, for better management.

Referral could be of two types. The first is vertical referral, in which case, referral is made from a lower to a higher level, e.g. from a junior to a senior and more experienced counsellor, or from a school clinic to a general or teaching hospital. Referral could also be horizontal, in which case a counsellor could refer a counselee to his or her colleague for some reasons. For instance, if counselling is getting too intimate, or the counsellor does not have enough time for the interaction, he or she may terminate the counselling session and refer the counselee to a colleague for management. However, the counsellor must keep an accurate record of referral services provided.

Punishment

Lerner (1997) punishment is to stop or diminish aberrant behaviour and reduce the probability that an unwanted behaviour will occur. Teachers often use reprimands in the classroom as a response to unwanted behaviour. Research suggests that reprimands are most effective when they are immediate, unemotional, brief, and consistently backed up with timeout or a loss of privileges (Barkley, 1995).

There are several types of punishments some of them are mentioned, some of these below: Corporal punishment, scolding, insult, fines, detaining etc.

1. Corporal punishment: At present corporal punishment is given to student in schools. Boxing the ear mildly, slapping, or caning are some of the forms of punishment given in schools. Corporal punishment should be avoided. When all other forms of punishment have failed, only then should corporal punishment the following things may be kept in mind:

- i- Corporal punishment should be given only for a very serious misconduct or offence, viz, disrespectful behaviour towards the teacher, disobedience, agitation, serious charges relating to character etc.
- ii- The principal of the school alone should give corporal punishment. The assistant teachers should not be given this right.
- iii- When any serious charge against any student is proved only then should corporal punishment be given. It should not be given when there is any doubt regarding the offence.
- iv- Small children should not be given corporal punishment.
- v- While inflicting corporal punishment, the health of the child should be taken into consideration.

2. Scolding: It proves very effective when employed properly. One has to be very careful while scolding. Abusive language should not be used.

3. Insult: insulting the student is a very bad punishment. If a teacher makes a student in the class stand on the chair or makes a few unsavoury remarks against him, this will have greater and more lasting effect on him than corporal punishment. Hence, great care should be taken in this respect. The success of the scolding given depends on the personality of the teacher.

4. Fines: if the student has committed such an offence which has caused economic loss to the school or his class-fellows, fines may be imposed in order to compensate the loss. However, the imposing of fines is not very good.

5. Detaining the student after school hours: This is not good from the psychological point of view. The student begins to feel tired after 4 or 5 hours of work in the school and he is not inclined to read after that. Sometimes the evil effect of this goes so far that the students develop a dislike for the studies and also for the teacher concerned. If any student has not done his homework, or has left out a portion of it, he should be advised to complete it so that he may learn to be systematic. A psychological approach should be made so that the student may do his work the next day and may become regular in his work.
6. Social Boycott: If any offence of a student is condemned collectively by the students, he is likely to give up his bad habit.
7. Apologising: If any student has committed a serious offence, he may be asked to tender an apology. It will be better if he apologises to the teacher and principal.
8. Removal from a post of responsibility: If a student does not discharge his responsibilities or if he has done something wrong while holding a responsible post, he should be removed from that office (viz., president ship, monitor ship or secretary ship of the class or some association).
9. Reducing marks: It is seen in some schools that some marks are awarded for good work and some marks are deducted when the student misbehaves. If marks have been fixed for some work the awards should be made separately for the work concerned. It is not desirable to deduct marks from answer-books for any other wrong committed by the student elsewhere.

Contract Technique

On the other hand, is a situation were by a teacher and his students reach an agreement. The students promise to complete certain activities or show certain behaviour while the teacher pledges certain behaviour or reward in return. Contract may be written or oral, through written ones seem to be more official in term of commitment.

Contracts may include social or emotional behaviour and may vary with time, criterion selection, and or selection of rewards. The procedures in contract technique are that the teacher will explain the contract terms, specify the target behaviour, and determine the behavioural goals. It also involves selecting the re-enforcers, typing the contract along with the students and witness, signing the forms and placing the contract in plain view. Once the term of the contract has been completed the teacher will cross check if the contingencies as contract have been made.

Time-Out

Time-Out technique involves the withdrawal or removal of all reinforcement for a specific period. This may range from the withdrawal of social attention to isolation into a special room or corner. Time-Out is done in the following procedure; (a) discuss time-out ahead of time with student; (b) decide on the time-out place (c) incorporate a warning system in the time-out procedure, (d) if disruptiveness continues to remain, ask the child to go to the room or corner. The teacher at this point must remain calm, does not lecture; or scold or criticize the child, (e) if the child still elects not to go, physically help the child. Use of a certain countdown may be used before the teacher could consider to physically help the child, (f) as soon as the child calms down in the padded room, the teacher starts the counting. The child normally stays in the room for at least five minutes, (g) outwardly ignore the child during the time-out and limit any positive reinforcement from other sources. Some teachers make their children remove belts and shoes before they are placed in the time-out place (h) log the time spent in the quiet area and the behaviour that precipitated the placement, and finally (i) remember to reinforce alternative behaviour so that punished behaviour will not reappear.

Counselling

Counselling is one of the techniques used for changing aberrant behaviour in secondary schools. According to Shertze and Stone (1981) counselling is seen as a process in which the counsellor assists the counselee to make interpretations of facts relating to a plan or adjustment which he needs to make. Falaye (2009) referred to an interact between two or more people during which the counsellor assists the counselee to solve his or her problem. Counselling could also be defined as the process by which counsellors help counsees to define their goals, clarify their values and change their attitudes and behaviour so as to solve their problems. Shetzer and Stone (1981) also identified counselling as a process which takes place in one-to-one relationship between an individual, troubled by problems, which he cannot cope alone, and professional worker whose training and experience have qualified him to help others reach solutions to various types of personal difficulties. Patterson (1980), stated that a concept can be defined by exclusion or designating what a thing is not. Excluding what counselling is not would help us understand better. Counselling is also relationship which facilitates growth and change in the client to become more freely and fully functional.

A professional counsellor uses counselling for changing aberrant behaviour. According to Falaye (2009) school counselling services are designed to focus on academics, vocational and personal aspects of students' development. Using individual or small group interactions with the guidance counsellor, students' problems in these areas can be resolved through self-understanding and change in attitudes and behaviour.

Reinforcement

In psychology, to reinforce mean to present or terminate a stimulus, which will strengthen response. Lerner (1997) identified reinforcement as a consequent event that occurs after a person makes a behaviour response. The reinforcement has the effect of increasing or strengthening the target behaviour. Reinforcement is further defined as the creation of desirable consequences that will strengthen or facilitate certain behaviour, (Shertzer and Stone 1980).

A positive reinforcement involves responding to the child's behaviour with a reinforcement, which increases the likelihood that the person will make a similar response in similar situations in the future. For e.g. if Matthew is rewarded for bringing in his homework, he is more likely to do it again.

A negative reinforcement is an adverse consequence, and the individual behaves to avoid the adverse stimulus. For e.g. the driver of an automobile will buckle a seatbelt in the car to avoid the annoying buzz of the seatbelt warning system.

Sometimes teachers or parents inadvertently reinforce inappropriate behaviour. For example, if Jim, who usually shouts out answers, is recognized by the teacher as soon as he raises his hand, he will tend to raise his hand in the future. If Willie Clowns around and the teacher pays attention to him, the teacher's negative attention to his actions can reinforce an aberrant behaviour. The box "Finding reinforcers" describes some items than can be used as positive reinforcement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made:

1. Government in collaboration with school inspectors should embark on frequent school supervision to handle any misbehaviour cases exhibited in the school on side of students or teachers and report to the appropriate authority for intervention. As will provision should be made for materials reinforcement to maintain desirable behaviour and to change aberrant behaviour.

2. A part from the common method followed by the teachers in curving aberrant behaviours in secondary school, there should be conventional ways of dealing with behaviour problems among secondary schools nationwide through organizing and workshops to teachers on new strategies of handling behaviour problem, as well as to establish guidance and counselling services to students to receive professional guidance on how handle related issues to expected behaviour in general.
3. For the effectiveness of the instructional techniques employed in curving the aberrant behaviour of students, the government should provide more accommodation for students and also more instructional materials for effective learning. Schools also should play an important role by showing some films that may help drug abuse students to instantly reform. Teachers should be role models worthy of emulation by students because teachers who lack proper discipline will relatively affect the system.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the issues of aberrant behaviour in school have contributed to the allegation and belief that the standard of education is falling. Teachers are also accused of contributing to the students falling standard of education.

A general public outcry about aberrant behaviours in the schools at all levels and the entire society. This type of behaviours that students in secondary schools exhibited in the classroom and in the school in general has the negative impact on learning. Some research carried out to this aberrant behaviour, most of the schools used punishment alone, which is not enough to solve behaviour problems.

The issues related to tackling behaviour problems are the collective responsibility of parents, teachers and members of the society, so that the desired objectives will be achieved. For any organisation to achieve their aims successfully there must be rules and regulations followed by their members and there must be consequence if any member goes against stipulated rules. In school as an organisation there must be rules and regulations governing their affairs. Every member including teachers and students must obey. So, the use of these behaviour modification techniques has impact on reducing aberrant behaviour in secondary schools.

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