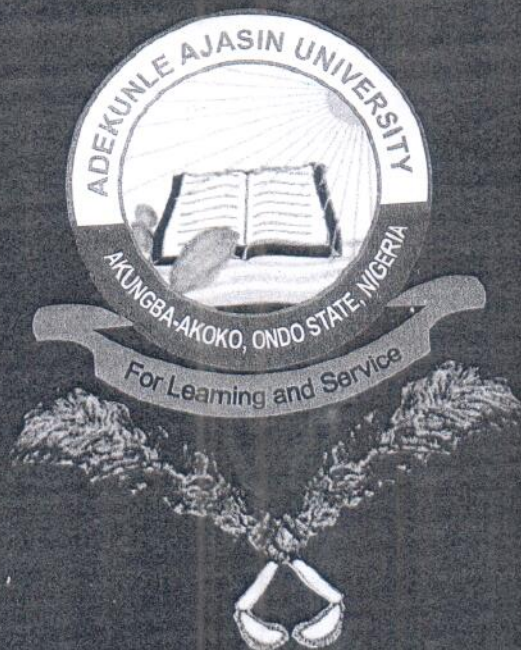




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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE
Parental Child rearing Behaviours as Correlates of Anxiety Related Emotional Disorder among Normal Children Prof. (Mrs) Mary Banke Iyabo OMONIYI	1-13
Correlates of Leadership Behaviour in School Administration among Principals and Teachers in Public and Private Secondary schools in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State Victor Ayebami TORUBELI & Peter Pereotubo AKPE	14-25
Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition among Undergraduate Students of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu, Osun State: Moderating Roles of Autonomous Motivation and Self-efficacy Wasiu Olasunkanmi ADENIYI, Ph. D	26-40
Relationship between Career Information and Career Choice among Undergraduates of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria Florence O. OJEWOLA, Ph. D. & Olufunmilayo TAYO-OLA JUBUTU, Ph. D.	41-52
Psycho-economic Adjustment Strategies of Retirees during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Ondo State, Nigeria Onijuni Olufemi OLATOMIDE, Ph.D.	53-62
Effects of Cognitive Behaviour and Social Learning Therapies on Aggressive Behaviour of In-School Adolescents in Ondo State, Nigeria Emmanuel Oluwasina AYOOLA & Beatrice O. AJIDAHUN, Ph. D.	63-73
Relationship Between Self-Concept and Secondary School Students' Achievement in English Language in North Central Zone of Nigeria Adeniyi Otuoze GBADURA, Ph. D.	74-84
A Survey of Coital Positions of Married Couples in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State: Implications for Counselling Tosin E. AKINDUYO, Ph. D.	85-97
Career Counselling in a Post-Modern Era among Undergraduates in a Tertiary Institution in Ondo State, Nigeria Joseph Kayode ADEYEMI	95-108

Age, Gender, Students' Knowledge and Attitude towards HIV/AIDS in Selected Local Government Areas of Ondo State Temilola Idowu OTUTU, Sunday Imoh EKPENYONG & Catherine Folake AYENI	109-118
Peer Pressure and Time Management as Predictors of Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria I. B. Ogunsakin & Y. O. Shogbesan	119-129
Domestic Violence Among Couples in Ekiti State: Does Spousal Sexual Satisfaction Matter? Stella Oluwakemi OLATUNBOSUN	130-138
Cognitive Restructuring Technique as a Counselling Strategy for Reducing Psychological Distress of Women with Infertility Problems Tolulope Oluwatoyin OLAYIWOLA- ADEDOJA & Oluwaseun Bamidele OSCAR-IRETOR	139-149
Gender Issues, Mathematics Related Disciplines and National Development Christianah Olajumoke SAM-KAYODE, Kayode Oguntuase BALOGUN & Felicia Motunrayo FATOKI	150-161
Influence of Peer Group and Formative Assessment Techniques On Economics Students' Academic Performance in Nasarawa State, Nigeria Amos Bawa AFFI & Maikudi Kwanza ALLAHNANA	162-173
The Influence of Child Abuse on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Ondo State, Nigeria Jimoh Awopetu KAZEEM & Moyosola Jude AKOMOLAFE	174-183
Demographic Factors and Evaluation of Marital Choice Among Students' of Public Universities in South West Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria Maikudi Kwanza ALLAHNANA & Bola Omotayo OGUNKUNLE	184-196

Modelling as A Counselling Technique for Reducing Delinquent Behaviour Among In-School Adolescents in Nigeria

**Dr. A. O. AWOYEMI, Dr. S. K. AJIBOYE &
Prof. A. A. ADEGOKE**

194-205

Causative Factors of Child Sexual Abuse among Secondary Students in Akure Local Government Area of Ondo State: Counselling Implications

Olutola Rachael BABAYOMI

206-218

Influence of Class Size and Classroom Physical Environment on Pupils' Academic Performance: Implications for Quality Control

**Nathaniel Olujoba AYOOLA, Moses Dele AMOSUN &
Juliet Amaka OKONKWO**

219-227

**Modelling as A Counselling Technique for Reducing Delinquent Behaviour
Among In-School Adolescents in Nigeria**

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Abstract

Adolescence is a time of transition involving multi-dimensional changes: biological, psychological, including cognitive and social. Adolescents experience social changes through various agents such as the roles they are assumed to play in the family, community and school. The adolescent has needs and problems that arise from organic, psychological and social pressures. These pressures in turn exert influences on them, which makes them exhibit behaviours that are not in consonance with the societal norms leading to delinquency. This might be the reasons why in-school adolescents involve themselves in delinquent behaviours such as examination malpractice, bullying, stealing, truancy, destruction of school properties and even drug use.. Thus, this situation calls for concern in order to avert further damages that the phenomenon could exert on the society. The efficacy of modelling as a technique for reducing delinquent behaviours cannot be overemphasized. The technique has the advantage of involving both the counsellor and clients in the process of behaviour change and thus makes it participatory. This paper therefore provides explanation on the use of modelling as a technique for reducing delinquent behaviour: the steps involve are: attention, retention, reproduction and motivation.

Keywords: Adolescent, delinquent behaviour, modelling, counselling techniques.

Introduction

Adolescents are often described both as the wealth and pride of a nation. The future of any nation therefore depends on the young ones who constitute the potential human resources needed for the continuity of the society. However, the period of adolescence is characterized by different maladaptive behaviours, which range from school-related issues, such as absenteeism and drop out, to other social vices such as cultism, violence

and vandalism to mention just a few. Adolescence is a time of transition involving multi-dimensional changes: biological, psychological cognitive and social. Biologically, adolescents experience pubertal changes, changes in the brain structure and sexual interest. Psychologically, adolescents' cognitive capacities pass through stages of developments. Adolescents experience social changes through various agents during socialization such as the roles they play in family, community and school (National Research Council, 2002). These changes occur simultaneously and at different paces for each adolescent within the gender, with structural and environmental factors often impacting adolescents' development.

The achievement of the nation's growth could be possible when the society is able to find solutions to the problem of delinquent behaviours among the adolescents, particularly the in-school young boys and girls. Thus, efforts and strategies are required in this direction to ensure that in-school adolescents are assisted not to be involved in behaviours debilitating to their lives and the society. In this view, there are different counselling techniques that could be used to modify delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents, these include behaviour contracting, desist strategy, verbal reprimand, modelling and punishment. However, modelling has been found among other techniques such as reinforcement, punishment, flooding, systematic desensitization, aversion therapy, extinction, shaping, fading, chaining among others to be significantly efficacious in handling maladaptive behaviours among adolescents. Thus, this paper discussed the application of the technique (modelling) as a counselling strategy for reducing delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents. In so doing, the concept of adolescence is hereby highlighted.

Concept of Adolescence

Adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adulthood and like all transitions, it is full of challenges for adolescents themselves, parents and teachers. The adolescence, according to Busari (2010), is said to be a period of 'stress and storm', a period of ambivalence and conflict, a period of explosion. It is said to be a period when guidance counsellors, psychologists, social workers, teachers, family and social environment should be supportive of the adolescents to enable them successfully cross the threshold of stress and conflict into wholesome adulthood. Hence, the future of any society rests on how well the society succeeds in preparing adolescents to be productive adults who will be useful to themselves and society at large. The study of the adolescence is therefore very crucial for any forward looking society.

The term Adolescence has been variously defined by different authors. According to Adegoke (2012), the word adolescence comes from a Latin word *adolescere*, which means, "to grow up," pointing to the period of life between childhood and adulthood. Adolescence begins with the onset of puberty which technically refers to the time at which an individual is first able to reproduce. Adolescence is commonly used to describe the transitional stage between childhood and adulthood. It is a critical period in human

development where the individual begins to develop a stance towards the world or an identity (Nwankwo, 2014). There are lots of things that happen in the life of adolescents which usually may not conform with the norms of the society where they found themselves, particularly the school setting. Adolescents involved in delinquent behaviours such as examination malpractices, bullying, stealing, truancy, destruction of school properties, staying away from school activities and even drug use which ideally, one may not imagine would happen at such stage of development.

Physical developmental changes typically start in early adolescence and go until middle adolescence. This includes the start of a woman's menstrual cycle and puberty for both men and women. Intellectual development occurs during all three stages of development, up until early adulthood. Social development also occurs during all three stages, where the teenager starts to have social interactions with friends and other groups of people outside of the home dynamic. Cognitive development includes: ability to think abstractly; exhibit increased communication skills and becomes argumentative and demonstrate an intense need to be right.

In the light of this, understanding the nature and scope of adolescent developmental characteristics and responding appropriately requires patience, empathy and a sense of humour. Adolescents therefore possess the following characteristics: biological growth and development, an undefined status, increased decision making, increased pressures and the search for self (Benjamin, 2017).

Concept of Delinquent Behaviour

Ideally, every society has a way of measuring acceptable behaviour. This makes behaviour that deviates from the acceptable behaviour to be referred to as delinquent behaviour. Nwankwo (2006) stated that behaviour is considered delinquent if it is uncommon, different from the norm and does not conform to what society expects. Delinquent according to Lawson (2011), is a person who commits a misdemeanour. Adolescents' delinquent behaviour portrays individual's negative side of social development (Igbo & Ikpa, 2013). The definition of delinquent behaviour is elusive but one can simply put it as behaviour that violates the norms and expectations of a group. Delinquency has been from time immemorial a social evil. These delinquent behaviours consist of acts that violate the laws of the society (Jacob, Olawuyi & Jacob, 2015). According to Jacob, Olawuyi and Jacob (2015), delinquency is a behaviour that involves retraction from rules that govern behaviour among in-school adolescents. Delinquent behaviour is apparent when an individual finds it very difficult to adhere to the norms or standards of his social environment like home or school.

According to Roberts (2011), a particular behaviour is not acceptable or delinquent if any of these three criteria are seen: firstly, if the behaviour does not allow a person to function effectively with others as member of the society, secondly, if the behaviour does not permit

the person to meet his/her own needs and lastly, if the behaviour has a negative effect in the well-being of others.

Causes of Delinquent Behaviour among In-school Adolescents

The adolescent has needs and problems that arise from organic, psychological and social pressures. These pressures in turn exert influences on them, which make them exhibit behaviours that are not in consonance with societal norms leading to delinquency. Okorodudu and Okorodudu (2003) listed environmental factors, social factors, physical factors, psychological factors, peer group influence, drug abuse and the family factor as the main causes of delinquency among adolescents.

The type of environment that a child grows up according to Lawson (2011), affects how he/she will live his/her life. The type of neighbourhood and school a person goes to can have tremendous effects on the type of behaviour they exhibit in adolescence. Children's behaviours often correlate with the type of resources found in a home and school. For many adolescents, school is considered to be a major stepping stone in life. However, it can also be seen as an unpleasant challenge due to failure to meet academic or behavioural standards leading to frustration, loss of self-esteem and confidence, detachment and delinquent behaviour. These factors can result in a student acting out and holding aggression towards peers, parents, teachers and which can have long term effects on the child's behaviours.

Morongwa (2010) also listed some of the factors that can make in-school adolescents exhibit various delinquent behaviours such as parental/home influence, teachers/educators, political, social and economic factors, and learners with emotional problems, head teachers/principals factor, influence of gender and race; and public schools versus private schools. Also, Parson (2004) listed the school, the society, wrong ideals, idleness, and lack of good leadership, injustice, lack of realistic rules, peer influence, mass media, the curriculum, bad home training and upbringing as factors that can make in-school adolescents exhibit these various delinquent behaviours.

Consequences of Delinquent Behaviour on In-school Adolescents

The problem of delinquent behaviour affects in-school adolescents irrespective of gender, family type, school type and class level though, the degree and magnitude vary from school to school. It is noteworthy to mention some common delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents. These include disobeying the school rules and regulation, vandalism, the use of obscene language, academic dishonesty, gang fighting to mention just a few. These unacceptable behaviours have caused many adolescents to become drop outs. Some are remanded in juvenile homes while many others have lost their academic and career dreams as a result of expulsion from school.

Counselling Strategies for Reducing Delinquent Behaviour

There are different counselling strategies that can be used to reduce delinquent behaviours

such as: punishment, reinforcement, stimulus satiation, systematic desensitization, desist strategy, verbal reprimand and modelling etc. Ali, Dada, Isiaka and Salmon (2014) explained the followings as a brief overview of some of the strategies to be employed in reducing delinquent behaviours among in-school adolescents in Nigeria: Positive Teacher-Learner, Relationships, Environment, Clear Guidelines/Rules, Behaviour Contracting, Non-Traditional Methods and Modelling Behaviour.

Concept of Modelling

The origin of modelling techniques can be traced to Albert Bandura (1977). In this theory, Albert Bandura posits that human behaviour is learnt observationally through modelling. That is, he lays emphasis on the importance of observation and imitation that takes place from an individual's perspective. Modelling is a behaviourally based procedure that involves the use of live or symbolic models to demonstrate a particular behaviour, thought, or attitude that a client may want to acquire or change. The major assumption of social learning theory is that all behaviours whether adaptive or maladaptive, social or antisocial, defiant or non-defiant, delinquent or non-delinquent, praiseworthy or condemnable are learned and can also be unlearned. It could be said therefore that all manners of delinquent acts that pervade secondary schools' environment today or that are prominent among students at all that levels of education might be as a result of poor learning experiences. Bandura suggests that a child who has seen his/her parents being kind and caring will tend to do the same. Conversely, a child who has seen aggressive behaviour of parents is likely to be violent in solving problems. Reward or vicarious reinforcement is some of the factors that influence imitation. A child that observes someone being rewarded for a certain conduct may be influenced to take up the behaviour that was rewarded. Therefore, people around the child will determine the way a child will respond to the behaviour he or she imitates. If a child got rewarded by imitating the behaviour of a model, he/she is likely to continue with that behaviour. In the light of foregoing, students are more likely to imitate behaviours exhibited by adults. The behaviour of parents, siblings, friends and teachers can define the behaviour expected from a student. Through observing teachers' behaviour, the students may be encouraged or discouraged from similar behaviours. Bandura identified three kinds of models: live, verbal, and symbolic. A live model demonstrates behaviour in person. A symbolic model can be fictional characters or real people who demonstrate behaviours in books, movies, television shows, video games, or Internet sources.

Steps in the Modelling Process

Bandura (1989) described specific steps in the process of modelling that must be followed if learning is to be successful: they are *attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation*.

Attention. This is the act or state of applying the mind to something. Various factors increase or decrease the amount of attention paid include distinctiveness, affective valence, prevalence, complexity, functional value. One's characteristics (e.g. sensory capacities, arousal level, and perceptual set, past reinforcement) affect attention.

Retention: This is the condition of retaining or keeping something in one's memory. It means remembering what one paid attention to such as symbolic coding, mental images, cognitive organization, symbolic rehearsal and motor rehearsal.

Reproduction: This is the act or process of copying or reproducing. Reproducing the image including physical capabilities and self-observation of reproduction i.e the model lee must be capable of carrying out the behaviour.

Motivation: This is the reason for acting or behaving in a particular way. Having a good reason to imitate includes motives such as past (i.e. traditional behaviorism), promised (imagined incentives) and vicarious (seeing and recalling the reinforced model)
This can be illustrated thus:

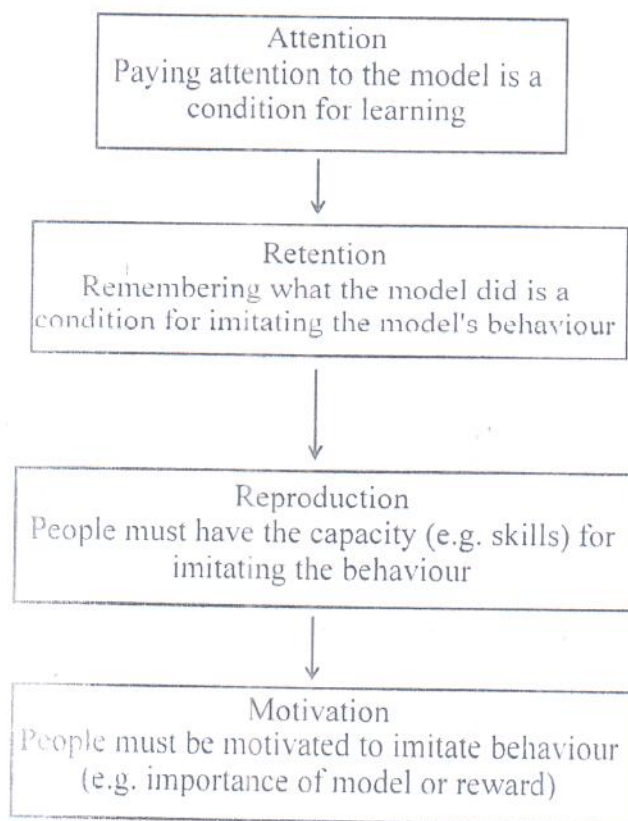


Diagram of a modelling process
Source: Google search (2018)

How Modelling is used to Reduce Delinquent Behaviour

Modelling technique can be categorized into 5 stages (Bandura, 1977).

Stage One: Preparation Stage

The Counsellor will firstly identify in-school adolescents with delinquent behaviour (especially a truant) through various techniques such as observation, referral, Cumulative Record Folder (CRF), etc. The counsellor will thereafter look for an appropriate model. For instance, the Counsellor identifies a model (the student who has an adequate record of school attendance) would be used to modify delinquent clients. The types of behaviour to be emulated will be highlighted such as punctuality, obedience, respect etc.

Stage Two: Seeing an action portrayed in the media

At this stage, the client will be required to pay attention by viewing the records of attendance and performance of the model. Thus, the client here refers to the selected in-school adolescents with delinquent behaviour.

Stage Three: Viewer identifies with the actor

At this stage, the client(s) will be encouraged to identify with the model (actor) by accepting the personality or the nature of the model. For instance, the client will be discouraged from any sentiment that may reduce the value and the goal of the model. The counsellor will ask the clients to speak on the model presented, particularly the characters to be emulated such as honesty, punctuality, obedience, etc. Thus, learning will most likely occur if there is a close identification between the observer and the model and if the observer also has a good deal of self-efficacy. Identification allows the observer to feel a one-to-one connection with the individual being imitated.

Stage Four: Viewer imitates the actor

At this stage, the clients will be encouraged to demonstrate the behaviour to be emulated; this could be done in a role play. The counsellor will teach them how to imitate the model in a way that guarantees learning of such acceptable behaviours.

Stage Five: Viewer gets motivated if the activity gets some rewards

This last stage is purposively meant to provide a feedback to the client in form of reinforcement. The counsellor is therefore required to motivate clients who have adequately motivated the model in order to enhance permanent learning. Thus, the counsellor will pay attention to how each client imitates the model and simultaneously reinforce such action; it could be verbal or token reinforcement.

Conclusion

Delinquent behaviour in schools continues to be a matter of great concern globally and it varies from one society to another. These unacceptable behaviours have caused many adolescents to become drop outs. Some are remanded in juvenile homes while many others

have lost their academic and career dreams as a result of expulsion from school. However, modelling has been found to be instrumental in modifying different maladaptive behaviours particularly among adolescents. Thus, this was considered efficaciously useful while choosing on techniques to reduce delinquent behaviours among in-school adolescents. Hence, counsellors are encouraged to adhere to the patterns involved in applying modelling as discussed in this paper in order to enhance acceptable behaviour.

Suggestions

Based on this paper, the following suggestions are made:

- Parents should serve as good models to their children/wards.
- Teachers should set good examples for students to emulate since students learn both moral and immoral behaviours based on what they see than what they hear.
- Professional counsellors should continue to counsel the in-school adolescents on the negative outcomes of delinquent behaviours using modelling.
- Government at all levels should provide conducive and enabling environment for in-school adolescents to adopt positive behaviours.

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