

## COUNSELORS' USE OF BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION TECHNIQUES IN INSTILLING DISCIPLINE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ONITSHA EDUCATION ZONE OF ANAMBRA STATE.

BY

NNADI, GRACE CHINYERE<sup>1</sup>, HELEN E. UZOEKWE<sup>2\*</sup>, OGUZIE, ALPHONSUS EKEJIUBA<sup>3</sup>, EDNA NKECHI OFOJEBE<sup>4</sup>, MOKWELU, OBIANUJU BLESSING<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING, FACULTY OF EDUCATION NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE



### Article History

Received: 09/03/2023

Accepted: 14/03/2023

Published: 16/03/2023

Corresponding author:

**HELEN E. UZOEKWE**

### Abstract

The rate of indiscipline among secondary school students in onitsha is on the increase, there is a need to map out strategies to address this challenges. This study examined counselors' use of behaviour modification techniques in instilling discipline among secondary school student in onitsha education zone, Anambra State, Nigeria.. Three research questions guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprises of 45 school counselors in the 32 government secondary schools in onitsha education zone, 32 counselors were sampled using purposive sampling technique for the study, that is one counselor per school. A structured questionnaire of 12 items was used for the study. The questionnaire was validated by three experts in the field of guidance and counselling and test measurement. The study obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.86. Data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The mean score of 2.50 was accepted as significant. Pilot testing was also carried out in osandenis Secondary School Asaba. The study revealed among others that counselors in the area of the study use positive and negative reinforcement to instill discipline among secondary school students in onitsha education zone of Anambra state. It was recommended that counselors should be encouraged to use reinforcement for behaviour modification and the use of corporal punishment should be outlawed in schools.

**Keyword:** Counselors, behaviour, modification, techniques and discipline..

## INTRODUCTION

Counseling is a process by which a troubled person is helped to feel and behave in a more personal satisfying manner through interaction with an uninvolved person. (Lewis in Okobiah and Okorodudu 2006). Also, Obineli and Nnadi (2019) defined, counseling as a process that occurs when a client and counselor set aside time to explore difficulties which may include the stressful or emotional feelings of the client. It is a talking therapy that involve a trained counselor to listen with empathetic understanding, finding ways of giving meaningful suggestion to the emotional or psychological issues. Counseling is a safe place to hear yourself and think out boldly about your life, express how you are really feeling, and discuss concerns and worries with someone who would not judge you. A counselor is a trained personal who used

his competencies and wisdom to assist clients to understand themselves and their world. Denga (2012) states, that a counselor is a professionally trained person in the field of counseling to help client or students who may be in need of help. The counselor manages the clients personal-social, educational, and vocational potentials in a way that the individual becomes useful to himself and society at a large. Secondary school students exhibit different behaviours, hence the school counselors are face with the challenges of guiding and counselling them in other to mold their characters. Human behaviour is likened to the mirror in which everyone shows their image. Behavioral attitude is one thing everyone exhibit, and it is in our nature to do so (Okorie, 2012). Since behaviour is one thing that every individual exhibits, it is

important to note that not all human behaviours are acceptable, there are some destructive behaviors that students exhibits, if these behaviors are allowed to continue the students will end up destroying themselves, hence the need for behaviour modification cannot be overemphasized.

Behaviour modification according to Onwuasoanya (2006) is a behavioral science technique, which involves the application of principles derived from research in experimental psychology to alleviate human suffering and increase human functioning. Behaviour modification refers to the techniques used to try and decrease or increase a particular type of behaviour or reaction. Achi and Eremie (2018), Egbule (2009), observed that behaviour modification is a treatment procedure psychologically meant to control, prevent or cure problems of human behaviour that is to promote adaptive behavior and eliminate mal-adaptive behaviour. Mal-adaptive behaviour causes distress to people despite every effort to remedy situation. Behaviour modification involves positive punishment, negative punishment, positive reinforcement, and negative reinforcement. Discipline strategies fall under positive or negative punishment. Positive punishment involves adding a consequence while negative punishment involves taking something away. Reinforcement is a technique that encourages or discourages specific behaviour (Amy morin 2021). Since behaviour modification has to do with resolving specific cases of behavioral abnormalities, the aim can only be achieved by applying the right techniques.

The purpose behind behaviour modification is not to understand why or how a particular behaviour started. Instead, it only focuses on changing the behaviour and there are various techniques used to accomplish it. These techniques are positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, and extinction. (Achi and Eremie 2018). Positive reinforcement is paring of positive stimulus to a behaviour, that is giving a child something that reinforces good behaviour. Negative reinforcement is the opposite and is the paring of behaviour to the removal of negative stimulus, that is a child is motivated to change a behaviour because it will take away something unpleasant while extinction is the removal of all reinforcement that might be associated with a behaviour. Egbule (2009), states that techniques used in behaviour modification are quite varied. They are ope-rant techniques which include some that deals with the consequences of behaviour, examples are, Positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, extinction, punishment, prompting chaining. Respondent techniques, which are usually applied to reduce conditioned emotional responses such as fear or anger. Vijayalakshi, (2019), conducted a research on Awareness study using Behaviour Modification techniques and concluded that behaviour of a person needs modification, Although the degree of modification may differ. In spite of the available literature, it has not empirically established in onitsha education zone, Anambra state, Nigeria. This situation has warranted the present study to conduct an investigation in other to find out the counselor's use of behaviour modification in instilling discipline among secondary school students in onitsha education zone of Anambra state, Nigeria.

## Statement of the problem

Behaviour modification techniques are very powerful tools for bringing out changes in students behaviors and make them better adults in future. Indiscipline and disruptive behaviours abound among students, for example, students engage in examination misconduct, smoking and alcohol drinking, drug abuse, conversation during teaching and learning, bulling of fellow students, and many other mal-adaptive behaviour which if not handled well will affect their character formation negatively, Many students today respond only to corporal punishment. Is corporal punishment or other negative reinforcement essential and very effective technique for modifying inappropriate behaviour among secondary school students? Smoking and alcohol drinking have caused cardiovascular impairment despite the individual attempt to bring the activity under control but it persisted. What then are the acceptable behaviour modification techniques to instill discipline in secondary school students and how do school counselors apply them so that it will be effective?

## Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to examine counselor's use of behaviour modification techniques in instilling discipline among secondary school students in onitsha education zone. Specifically the study seeks to:

1. Determine the counselor's use of positive reinforcement for behaviour modification.
2. counselor's use of negative reinforcement for behaviour modification.
3. Determine the counselor's use of corporal punishment for behaviour modification.

## Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Do counselor's use positive reinforcement techniques to instill discipline among students in onitsha education zone?
2. Do counselor's use negative reinforcement techniques to instill discipline among students in onitsha education zone?
3. Do counselors use corporal punishment to instill discipline among students in onitsha education zone

## Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. According to Uzoagulu (2011) is a research design in which data are collected, organized, and analyzed and then described as they exist without interfering with them. The population of the study consisted of 45 counsellors from the 32 public secondary schools in onitsha education zone, Anambra state, Nigeria. The sample size of the study comprised of 32 counselors drawn through purposive sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers, based on what they obtained from the literature reviewed. The questionnaire is titled "Counselors' use of behaviour modification techniques in instilling. Discipline among secondary school students questionnaire (CUBMTIDASSSQ). The response items were

structured on a 4-point scale rating of strongly Accepted, Accepted, Moderately Accepted, and not Accepted respectively. The questionnaire was validated by three experts, two from guidance and counselling and one from test and measurement all from Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka, Nigeria.

These experts, made useful correction in other to determine both face and content validity of the research instrument, which made the instrument valid for the study. The correction made by the expert on few items were corrected before distributing them to the participants.

To establish reliability of the research instrument, a pilot test was conducted on a sample of 10 counselors selected from another secondary school in Asaba, Delta state, that is, Osadenis secondary school Asaba, Delta State. These counselors were not included in the area studied. Scores collated after the pilot-test were measured using cronbach Alpha statistics which yielded coefficient reliability scores of 0.83 and 0.89 for each of the two clusters and the scores were added up to give an overall coefficient reliability score of 0.86. These results indicated that the instrument was reliable and dependable to collect the necessary data for the study. The administration of the questionnaire were distributed by the researchers to the respondents to ensure 100% return rate. The respondents showed a positive response by filling all the questionnaires and returned them back before they were sent for appropriate data analysis. Data were analyzed using mean score statistics, bench marks at 2.50 rating, and standard deviation.

**Results**

**Research Question 1:** Do counsellors use positive reinforcement techniques to instill discipline among students in Onitsha Education zone?

**Table 1: Positive reinforcement for behaviour modification**

S/N	Statement Items	Mean	S.D	Remark
1.	Positive reinforcement assists the school system	3.38	0.79	Accepted
2.	Positive reinforcement helps students to do well in school	3.63	0.61	Accepted
3.	Positive reinforcement provides enough opportunities for students to learn properly	3.56	0.62	Accepted
4.	Positive reinforcement is a good techniques for instilling discipline among students	3.16	0.37	Accepted

The data in table 1 revealed that all the 4 items were accepted with the following mean scores 3.38, 3.63, 3.56, and 3.16, respectively. This indicates that school counsellors uses positive reinforcement

to a great extent for behavioral modification in secondary schools. The table also showed that the standard deviation of the response ranged from 0.37-0.79 in item 1-3, including that the respondents were not too far from the mean of each other's opinion

**Research Question 2:** Do counselor's use negative reinforcement techniques to instill discipline among students in onitsha education zone?

**Table 2: counselor's use of negative reinforcement for behaviour modification**

S/N	Statement Item	Mean	S.D	Remark
1.	Negative reinforcement assist student to obtain proper counselling in school.	2.75	1.27	Accepted
2.	Negative reinforcement is but not the best for secondary school.	2.75	1.16	Accepted
3.	Negative reinforcement assists students in learning ability and effects the school system.	2.19	1.09	Not Accepted
4.	Negative reinforcement motivates students to learn	1.44	0.80	Not Accepted

Data in table 2 showed that the mean score of 2.75 in item 5 accepted that negative reinforcement assists students to obtain proper counselling in school. Item 6 indicates that respondent accepted that negative reinforcement is not the best for counselling secondary school students. The mean score of 2.19 and 1.44 in item 7 and 8 revealed that respondent do not accept that negative reinforcement assist students learning ability and affects the school students. It also shows that Negative reinforcement do not motivate students to learn. The table also shows that standard deviation of responses ranges from 0.80-1.27 an indication that the respondent were too far from the mean of each other's opinion

**Research Question 3:** Do counselors use corporal punishment to instill discipline among students in Onitsha education zone?

**Table 3: counselors' use of corporal punishment for behaviour modification**

S/N	Statement Item	Mean	S.D	Remark
1.	Corporal punishment as a behaviour modification technique improves the	2.06	0.76	Not Accepted

	school system			
2.	Corporal punishment as a behaviour modification techniques assist school to maintain high education standard	2.25	0.84	Not Accepted
3.	Corporal punishment brings out the best behaviour in the student	2.19	0.97	Not Accepted
4.	Corporal punishment is not the best counselling techniques because it can be abused	2.50	0.95	Accepted

Data presented in table 3 showed that the mean score of 2.06, 2.25, and 2.19 in items 9, 10, and 11 were not accepted by the respondent, indicating that they do not use corporal punishment or extinction of reinforcement as a counselling technique. The mean score of 2.50 in item 12 was accepted by the respondents indicating that the respondents agrees that corporal punishment is not the best counselling techniques because it can be abused. Also, the closeness of the standard deviation 0.76-0.97 is an indication that the respondents were not too far from the mean score of each opinion.

### Discussion of Results

One of the major findings of the study was that positive reinforcement assists the school system in Onitsha education zone. This was evident from the mean score or 3.38. The mean score of 3.63 accepts that positive reinforcement helps students to do well in school. Also, the mean scores of 3.56 and 3.16 accepts that positive reinforcement provides enough opportunities for students to learn properly and that it is a good technique for instilling discipline on students. These findings agreed with Egbule (2009), who asserted that positive reinforcement involves introducing a pleasant event after the target behaviour. Beckett (2005) also noted that positive reinforcement is paring a positive stimulus to a behaviour example when a teacher rewards student for getting good grade with stickers. Also, it was found that negative reinforcement assists students to obtain proper counseling this was indicated by the mean score of 2.75, this is supported by Onwuasonanya (2006) who stated that negative reinforcement is reinforcement which increases the rate or strength of a response by removing an unpleasant stimulus. It often require s the counselor to introduce in the first place aversion stimulus. However the

respondents agreed that negative reinforcement is a good counseling technique for behaviour modification but not the best. This agrees with Onwuasonanya (2006), who noted that negative reinforcement leads to the decrease in probability of emission of behaviour.

Furthermore the respondents did not accept that negative reinforcement assist students learning ability and affect school system, they did not accept that negative reinforcement motivate students to learn this was revealed by the mean scores of 2.19 and 1.44 respectively. Finally the respondent did not accept corporal punishment as a behaviour modification technique s that improves school system, assist school to maintain high education standard and bring out the best behaviour in the student. This was observed from the man scores of 2.06, 2.25, and 2.19. The respondents accepted that corporal punishment is not the best counseling technique for behaviour for instilling discipline in secondary school students because it can be abused; this was showed by the mean score of 2.50. This observation was supported by Achi and Eremie (2018) who noted that in 2012 a teacher flogged her student Chidimma Ukachukwu to death at St. John of God Secondary School Akwa, Anambra State. Adeloye, (2009), also States that corporal punishment is a physical punishment which can lead to injury on student if not properly applied. Onwuasoanya (2006), also noted that corporal punishment has several· adverse and undesirable effects, although when carefully applied, it may be useful. Finally, findings from this study agrees with the pilot testing carried at Osadenis Secondary School Asaba were the school counselor accepted reinforcement as a behaviour modification technique used for instilling discipline in secondary school students also Achi and Eremie (2018), in a similar study carried out in Imo state recommended a total ban on the use of corporal punishment in our school system.

### Conclusion

Behaviour modification techniques are vital tools used by counselors to instill discipline in secondary school students, among the techniques, positive reinforcement see as to be the best technique for the modernday education system. Corporal punishment is a disciplinary method in which a supervising adult deliberately inflicts pain upon a child in response to a child's unacceptable behaviour and or in appropriate language . The use of corporal punishment should be replaced with positive and negative reinforcement in the school system because of the negative impact and effect on the students and school system when not properly handled. Corporal punishment is an ineffective, unacceptable, and damaging method of instilling discipline in students therefore should be discouraged.

### Recommendation

1. Counselors Should be encouraged to adopt the use of reinforcement as a behaviour modification techniques to instill discipline on secondary school students.
2. The use of corporal punishment in schools be outlawed because of the negative consequences associated with it when used inappropriately

3. Non-violent method of counseling and control should be adopted in schools

## Reference

1. Achi, J.N., and Eremie , M. (2018), Behavior modification techniques secondary schools in I mo State, Nigeria: *The role of the school counselor, International Journal of innovative social and science.*
2. Adeloje, J. A. (2009), Truancy among secondary students in Kano. *Metropolis and causes. Proceedings of the 32nd Annual Conference of the Counseling Association of Nigeria.*
3. Amy, m. l (2021), Behaviour modification techniques [Hittps://www.very well family. Com.](https://www.verywellfamily.com) Retrived on 2nd march 2023
4. Becket t, C. (2005), The Swedish myth: The corporal punishment ban and *child death statistic. British Journal of social work, 35(125 - 138).*
5. Denga, D.I (2012), The school counselor in a developing Nation. *Problems and prospects. Jos Savannah press limited.*
6. Egbule, J. F., (2009), Principle and techniques of behavior modification: *Benin, Justics Jeco Press, and Publishing Ltd.*
7. Obineli, S.U and Nnadi, G.C (2019), Deviant Behaviour in this new Era. *Counselling and psychology issues Enugu, Hugotez Publicatuions.*
8. Okobiah, O . C, and Okorodudu, R. I. (2006), Issues, concepts theories *and techniques of guidance and counseling: Benin, Ethiopia publishers.*
9. Okorie, A. C ( 20 12) Use of Behaviour modification technique for *managing classroom disruptive behavior by Teachers in Afikpo Education zone; M.ED project report U N Nsukka.*
10. Onwuasoanya, P.N., (2006). Behaviour modification techniques in *counseling:Nsukka, u Great AP Express Publishers Ltd*
11. Uzoagulu, A.E. (2011 ), Practical guide to writing research project reports, *Enugu, Cheston Ltd.*
12. Vijayalakshmi, N.(2019), “Behaviour Modification techniques- An Awareness study” *Shariloc International Journal of Education. Vol7, no2 pp20-24.*