

Antisocial Behaviour among Adolescence: Counselling Implications

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Abstract

Antisocial behaviour has recently grown to be a major issue. Increasing number of students are behaving abnormally in school, which disrupts the learning process. It may lead to issues with conformity with societal values, as it is well-known among teenagers who are learning how to fit in. These have implications for counselling. Antisocial behaviour is viewed as strange and morally wrong. Exam malpractice, rape, bullying, theft, truancy, lateness, and sexual immorality are some of the antisocial behaviours examined in this paper. An examination of antisocial behaviour, its causes, and theoretical explanations was also undertaken in this paper. The implications of antisocial behaviour for counselling and the role of a counsellor in rehabilitating antisocial behaviour are also covered in this paper. It is recommended among others that at all levels of education, there should be professional counsellors to assist in reversing the trend of antisocial behaviour.

Keywords: antisocial, behaviour, adolescence, counselling, implications

Introduction

Adolescence is time of a major shift in one's physical, social, and psychological well-being. It is a time of rapid change and the development of competencies, skills, and habits. It is also a critical period for gauging how well a person will do as an adult in the long run. Adolescence is a time of significant rise in antisocial behaviour (ASB), according to decades of research. The more serious and costly the behaviour is, the more attractive it is for the child to engage in it. According to some estimates, the cost of ASB could reach billions of dollars (Cohen & Piquero, 2009). Even a 1.3% change in all ASB interventions is considered cost-effective because the economic costs are quite high (Edwards et al., 2015). Moffitt (2006) developed one of the most influential developmental taxonomies based on the age at which deviant behaviours first emerge. He argued that adolescents are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour due to the fact that adolescent delinquency has almost become the norm rather than the exception. This occurs more frequently in older children.

One definition of antisocial behaviour is conduct that demonstrates a lack of regard for the rights of others (Gaik et al., 2010). Assault, vandalism, arson, theft, crime, and other delinquent behaviours are all examples of this type of behaviour. Antisocial behaviour in childhood and adolescence is classified by Farrington (2005) as behavioural disorders, impulsivity, theft, vandalism, physical and psychological aggression, bullying, running away from home, and truancy. These are just some of the behaviours that fall under the umbrella of antisocial behaviour. Throughout this paper, the term "antisocial behaviour" refers to a set of behaviours that defy accepted social norms. Antisocial behaviour is the first stage of delinquent behaviour. It is believed that antisocial behaviour can lead to a variety of negative outcomes, including academic failure, social and emotional difficulties, peer rejection, delinquency, and even adult criminal activity. Adolescence and adulthood

are common stages in the progression of antisocial behaviour, according to Gaik et al. (2010). They went on to say that the persistence and chronicity of antisocial behaviour can be differentiated by the age at which it first appeared if it begins at an early age.

Internalizing and externalizing behaviour are two broad categories of behavioural disorders. Internalizing behaviour is characterized by a lack of socialization, withdrawal, and depression, as well as an inability to connect with others. As for externalizing behaviours, they include things like disturbing others, verbal and physical aggression, and violence against oneself or others. Psychiatrists have actually studied a wide range of aspects of child development and how they relate to the emergence of externalizing behavioural problems. In addition to its financial costs, antisocial behaviour has a significant social impact. Personal, family, and societal consequences follow. It has both short-term and long-term effects, and it has repercussions throughout one's life. According to Scott et al. (2011), the costs of ASB in childhood were ten times higher than those of others without conduct disorders in childhood by the time they reached the age of twenty-eight. The costs of crime, the loss of education, and the payment of unemployment benefits are all included in this category. This paper focuses on antisocial behaviour, and its implication for counselling.

Characteristics of antisocial behaviour

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

1. Behaviour or feelings that are out of place in the context of normal social norms.
2. They have no self-control and are unable to focus on anything.
3. There is a general sense of gloom or dissatisfaction.
4. They are always irrational and uncontrollable.
5. They view the world as a place where one can either succeed or fail.
6. They are always at odds with the rest of their community.
7. They frequently join the opposition.
8. They are unable to freely interact with others.
9. There can be no allegiance to legitimate authority.
10. Reasonable people are put at risk by their existence.
11. There is inability to form or maintain good relationships with others.

Types of antisocial behaviour

i. **Examination malpractices:** According to Ogbodo (2016), examination malpractices include any act of wrongdoing or neglect that goes against the accepted practice before, during, or following an examination. Students, examiners, and other agents involved in the examination process are engaging in an unacceptable practice to gain an unfair advantage and receive an undeserved grade. Exam malpractice, which is a violation of the Examination Act 1999, is discovered and made public nearly every year in schools at all levels. As Exam malpractice can result in students receiving unjustly high grades, various testing organizations may decide to cancel or penalize test centres that are found to be engaging in such irregularities. In most cases, this action may have an impact on all test takers present at that particular testing facility.

ii. **Truancy:** This is when a student skips out on class without a valid excuse. In other words, it is when a child is not at home or at school during the day. In Tor-Anyiin (2015), Longe (2010) 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". As a result, chronic absenteeism is a sign of a problem with psychosocial adjustment. It all begins with a lack of attention to school and a lack of communication with one's parents or significant other, as well as the loss of school supplies or fees. According to Odeomelam and Ajoku (2006), "truancy is a situation where a pupil loiters, wanders, and idles about, galls, rigmaroles, walks around, and perambulates while lessons are progressing in the classroom." Children like these can leave home for school and not make it there. Students who engage in this behaviour are more likely to engage in risky behaviours such as drug use in men and unwanted pregnancies in women. Similarly, truancy, according to Edwards et al. (2015), occurs when a student leaves the school grounds and returns at any time without authorization.

iii. **Bullying:** It is a form of violence. Intentionally hurting someone is a form of bullying (Edwards et al., 2015). A bully is someone who threatens or harms those who are smaller and weaker by using his or her strength and ability to do so. Some students bully their peers to demonstrate their superiority over the weaker or more vulnerable members of their peer group. Physical assault, extortion, and verbal humiliation and intimidation are just a few examples of bullying described by Gaik et al. (2015). Kicking, biting, threatening, locking the victim in a room and harsh teasing, gossip, and making unreasonable demands are all common forms of bullying.

iv. **Tardiness**
Schools are concerned about tardiness because it is a social problem; tardiness means arriving late to school. Many students are chronically absent because of tardiness. There is a set time for students to return to school, but Pere (2014) explains that some students arrive late, often when the morning assembly is nearly over or the teacher is already in the classroom teaching. This frequently causes disturbances in the classroom.

v. **Stealing**
Simply taking another person's possession by deceit or without permission is stealing, and this implies that stealing could involve both material and non-material things. Material things, according to Tor-Anyiin (2015), include books, food, clothing, money, and any other physical things that can be touched. There are many examples of non-material things like dishonesty, taking someone else's work as one's own, or sneaking into someone's house without permission in order to gain information that could harm the person or benefit oneself or an agent. If left unchecked, this type of behaviour can lead to a wide range of other undesirable behaviours in a student, which can have a negative impact on their academic performance.

vi. **Drug abuse:** A drug abuser is someone who uses drugs without a doctor's permission or for a purpose other than what they were prescribed for. According to Longe (2010), students have been caught smoking Indian hemp, cigarettes, heroin, and other drugs that doctors do not recommend. The act of smoking cigarettes is often associated with drug users due to the common practice of smoking drugs like shredded leaves or other substances wrapped in pieces of paper. Alcohol consumption is a constant activity among members of any cult. To keep themselves awake, these so-called cultists imbibe in various forms of alcohol. Tobacco use and alcoholism are currently a hot-button topic. As recently as a few decades ago, it was unheard of for young people to smoke or go to bars to drink beer and alcoholic beverages like "ogogoro" (hot drink).

vii. **Cultism:** As the term "cult" suggests, a "secret cult" is a form of organized religion in which members are not allowed to discuss their beliefs with anyone outside the cult. In the cult, members speak in a specific language that is unique to them. The heinous deeds

of the secret cult are carried out at night by its members. According to Gaik et al. (2010), a cult or secret society is defined as an organized group with its own ideology and objectives, which are only known to its members. As the name suggests, this occurs when a group of students bond together under one name or an alias with the express purpose of intimidating or disrupting school activities (Wadsworth, 2000). Some students, join cults to make up for their own shortcomings, whether there be academic, social, or economic.

viii. **Sexual misconduct:** Students' sexual misconduct ranges from masturbation to lesbianism to homosexuality to premarital sex and even abortion. Their academic performance can suffer as a result, which can lead to them dropping out of school (Wadsworth, 2000).

Factors associated with antisocial behaviour

1. Family

A child's behaviour is influenced by parenting practices. In the past, parenting styles have been categorized into two broad categories: responsiveness and adversity (Walsh, 2019). Parental involvement in their children's lives, such as providing love, guidance, and support, as well as establishing limits on their behaviour and monitoring what they see or hear, are all beneficial to their growth and development. Even when they occur separately, parental warmth and behavioural control are protective factors for externalizing behaviours, aggression, delinquency and the use of alcohol or other addictive substances. Risk factors include both overprotection and hostile and intrusive control (Pascal, 2015).

The influence of family diminishes as the influence of friends increases during adolescence. Both violent and nonviolent antisocial behaviour can be attributed to a person's friendship with an antisocial individual. Parenting practices can be amplified or diminished depending on the type of friendships a child has (Longe, 2010). Directly or indirectly, parents have the power to shape the social circles of their children. Choosing a neighborhood, school, activities, and so on can influence a child's social reputation and the groups he or she joins; parents can also influence their children's behaviour, social reputation, and the groups they join (Pascal, 2015). Deviant peers benefit from parental monitoring. Adolescents are more likely to open up about their lives, what they do, and who they do it with if their parents create a warm, communicative environment (Edwards et al., 2015). This allows parents to exert some control over their children's social circles.

Behavioural interventions have been greatly influenced by theories of social learning (Bandura, 1977). Observation, testing, and making sense of the feedback received are the primary ways in which new behaviours are learnt. This shows the reciprocity of social and cognitive processes. In accordance with the theories of social learning, children observe their environment, form attitudes and beliefs based on what they see, and then act in ways that are consistent with their observations and attitudes. This method of lifelong education can be used in a positive or negative way. Examples include a child growing up in a loving, nurturing environment in which their basic needs are met, and where they receive consistent affection, as well as a child who grows up in an environment in which problems are dealt with rationally and unemotionally.

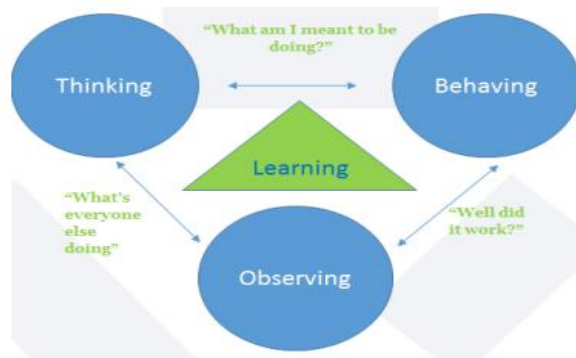


Figure 1: Social Learning Theory (Gaik et al., 2010)

2. Peers

Furthermore, when a young person experiences rejection from their pro-social peers, they are more likely to engage with their ASB peers. This is explained by the concept of confluence proposed by Gaik et al. (2010). When a young person is rejected by a group of positive peers, they are more likely to engage with a group of negative peers who are also likely to have been rejected. According to Patterson's (1992) theory of coercion, cited in Pascal (2015), ASB can serve as a useful behaviour for some young people, allowing them to accomplish something worthwhile. Involvement in a team or having a good time are all examples of what is meant by "place in a group." Recognizing this is critical because the benefits of doing so may far outweigh the risks.

3. Age

Moffitt's (2006) theory of adolescent life indicates that teens experience a maturity gap. That is, whilst they are biologically mature during early-late teens, they are not psychologically or emotionally mature. ASB can be a way to assert their maturity and this is reinforced by other negative peers and disapproving adults. This theory is generally understood to fit with the widely accepted concept of 'age-crime-curve' that can be graphically illustrated to show how young people engage in problematic and challenging behaviours as they transition out of childhood and into adolescence. However, these behaviours reduce in their frequency and intensity as they continue to develop.

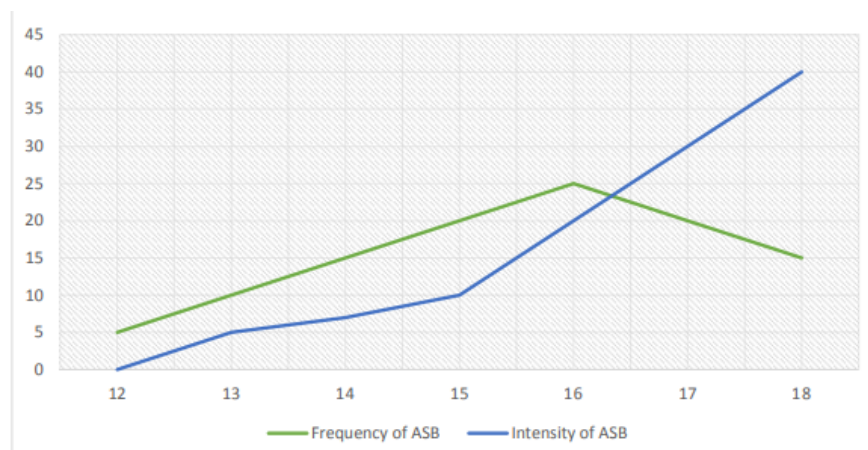


Figure 2: Moffitt Theory (Gaik et al., 2010)

4. Attachment and antisociality

According to Ainsworth, cited in Walsh (2010), an attachment is defined as an emotional bond formed between two people. When it comes to emotional bonds, comfort, safety, and support are all part of what Pascal (2015) calls an "attachment bond." An attachment is defined as a child's "inclination to seek proximity and contact with a specific figure," according to Pascal (2015). Feeding and sexual behaviour are not related in any way to the dynamics of attachment. An individual's basic emotional needs are met by this. As a result, attachment behaviour promotes the growth of affectionate ties between children and their parents throughout the course of healthy development (Ogbodo, 2016).

This theory has been used in developmental psychology to study the differences between children and their parents. A child's internal representational working models are based on the quality of early parent-child interactions, according to Hodgkinson et al. (2009). Ainsworth then outlined three distinct attachment patterns: secure, anxious-resistant, and avoidant.

a) A Secure attachment

A "secure" attachment is one in which the child relies on the attachment figure to provide stability and security in his or her life. Adolescents who have a strong bond with their parents are more likely to have a positive self-perception and experience fewer symptoms of depression (Hodgkinson et al., 2009). Children who have a strong sense of attachment are less likely to engage in antisocial acts. They are also better at school and have better relationships with friends and family. In fact, they show less anxiety about being alone and socially rejected, and instead use more flexible coping mechanisms.

Adolescents who have this self-assurance are not afraid to venture out into the world on their own. As a result, they know they can rely on their parents for support when they need it most. They improve their social skills. When compared to insecure forms of attachment like avoidant or dismissive attachment, which are characterized by the negativity and rejection of one's parents, this form is secure. If a child does not have a strong bond with their parents, they will experience anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, and social withdrawal.

b) Anxious-resistant attachment

These anxious-resistant adolescents exhibit ambivalent behaviour toward caregivers and an inability to be soothed upon their return. They have a low opinion of their own abilities. Reunions with parents can be difficult for those who are categorized as avoidant. Due to parents' mixed messages, teenagers may be unsure of how to approach them or avoid them, making it difficult for them to regulate their emotional responses (Hodgkinson et al., 2009).

The roles of the counsellor in ameliorating antisocial behaviour

1. Students should be counselled by their guidance counsellors on the virtues of responsibility, good morals, good study habits, and dedication to their studies in order to avoid cheating in exams.

2. Getting to the root of truancy requires counsellors to work with parents to examine the child's psychological needs in the context of their current situation. It is important to address the underlying psychological needs that lead to truancy, such as love, affection, protection, independence, freedom, adventure, exploration, and self-esteem, among others.

3. The counsellor should teach the students how to control themselves, monitor themselves, and manage themselves.

4. Counsellors should emphasize to students and parents the importance of being on time, and parents should make sure their children wake up early and use an alarm clock to keep track of their time.
5. Individual and group counselling should be used in schools to combat bullying.
6. Students should receive extensive instruction on the dangers of bullying.

Counselling implications

A counsellor at school serves as a facilitator in creating an environment that is self-sufficient for students' development. Students must be able to demonstrate pro-social behaviour if they are to progress in the social sphere. Social competence and pro-social behaviour are the primary goals of counsellors. It is the counsellor's specific role to assist all counselees in implementing basic services through the preparation of structural services that are classically or systematically presented. Long-term behaviour is the goal of this service, which is organized around developmental stages and tasks. Students' best interests are important to classroom teachers.

In order for adolescents to develop positive interpersonal skills, they should be encouraged and taught how they can collaborate with their peers in order to come to a mutually beneficial conclusion. This is due to the fact that fostering positive gender-based peer relationships will help prevent the development of antisocial behaviours that could lead to higher rates of crime in adulthood. The ability to control one's behaviour and emotions will be viewed favourably among one's peers, and this in turn will make one's friends more likely to have friends who share the same positive attitudes and behaviours.

The counsellor should be ready to work with administrator and other para-professionals to modify and eliminate undesirable behaviour in and outside the classroom. According to Ogbodo (2016), the nature of the problem dictates the type of counselling that should be used in any given case. But the counselling must be designed to reduce frustration and its effects among students. A counsellor can help students develop assertiveness by providing topics on decision making, arguing fairly, controlling emotions, rejecting unreasonable requests and dealing with anger in a manner that is appropriate for their age and maturity level. People who exhibit deviant behaviour are those who display actions that go against the accepted norms of society. In schools, students' deviant behaviour is viewed in terms of the school's established rules and regulations.

Conclusion

A counsellor is in a better position to treat maladaptive behaviour by assisting students in locating and grasping the most suitable measures to be taken in case of criminal conduct. Counselors' role in secondary schools is critical. It cannot be understated. Because of this, it is imperative that the government, parents, and schools should all work together. It is the responsibility of the schools' owners and administrators to take appropriate steps to stop the spread of criminal behaviour.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. At all levels of education, there should be professional counsellors.
2. Parents and school administrators must work together to keep students' behaviour under effective control, as many of the causes of anti-social behaviour can be traced to schools, homes, and peer influence, to name just a few.
3. It is important for parents to keep an eye on their adolescents and correct them if they deviate from the norm. They will be able to lead a normal and healthy life if they correct their behaviour early on.
4. Secondary school teachers should be trained in behaviour modification techniques (such as reinforcing, shaping, extinction, modelling, and so on) so that they can detect and modify deviant behaviours as they occur.
5. Parents should strive to meet their children's basic and educational requirements.

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