DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR AS CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN ABIA STATE: IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING

Dr. Ijeoma A. Uchendu
ijeomauchendu32@gmail.com

Department of Guidance and Counselling,
College of Education
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State

&
Uneze-amby Edith Chika
unezeamby.edith@mouau.edu.ng

Department of Agriculture and Vocational Education,
College of Education
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between deviant behaviour and academic achievement among university undergraduate students in Abia State. The study employed both correlational research designs. Two research question and one hypotheses guided this study. This study also sought relationship between deviant behaviour and academic achievement among undergraduate students in Abia State and investigated the influence of gender on the relationship between deviant behaviour and academic achievement. For this study, two universities in the state were selected. A simple size of 600 students (male and female) were randomly designated from the two universities. Data were collected through a researcher-designed survey tilted deviant behaviour as correlate of academic achievement among university undergraduates students in Abia State: implications for counselling (DBCAAUUS). Data collected were statistically examined using mean, standard deviation, t-test and correlational statistics. Analysis of the data indicated a strong negative correlation (0.68) between deviant behaviour and academic achievement suggesting that deviant behaviour increases students' disposition for low academic performance as deviant behaviour increases so does academic performance declines. High significant difference was found in academic achievement based on gender, showing that female students (2.71) outperformed male students (2.32,). These results again highlight the impact analogous deviant behaviour on students academic performance and gender differences in academic outcomes. Based on the findings, they recommended counselling services be strengthened, disciplinary measures be utilized to heightened limits, and interventions and varieties of counselling that is gender sensitive is created to limit deviant behaviour and help students' successful academic performance. The results have implications for university educational policy makers, school administrators and or school counsellors in Nigeria.
Keywords: Deviant Behaviour, Undergraduate, Students, Academic Achievement

Introduction

Academic achievement is a result of a performance that states how successful a person has achieved specific goals that were the primary focus of the activities and experiences in educational settings, especially school, college and university (Spinath, 2012). Education is a process of teaching and learning, in school, about knowledge and skill to be applied to better behaviour. McCulloch (2015), defined education is the process of learning the information, abilities, values, convictions and habits that contribute to a person's growth and development throughout their lifetime, whether for their own advantage or for the good of Society. Anya (2016), defines education as the most important agent of change in any society especially in this rapidly changing world.

The university environment is one that calls for serious and comprehensive academic and social activity, with youth being asked to postpone pleasure and engage in quality work in order to achieve competence in academic skills and social behaviour (Unachukwu and Nwanwko, 1997 in Joe-Akunne, Bruno and Unachukwu, 2014). In the university context, an individual is expected to be mature - cognitively, mentally and emotionally. However, the attitudes of undergraduates in higher education institutions today place them in deplorable, fearful and unsafe states, to the point that others seem incapable of or would find it difficult to associate with most of them based on the maladaptive behaviour they have learned from their peer groups in these environments, and the negative attitude of the university in general. A deviation from rules and regulations is a version of indiscipline. Indiscipline therefore is a emergence of distorted value. This is a situation that can provoke actions that cause horror in a system, erupting in behaviours that can have intolerable negative impact on an ordered society and coexistence of human to cause the spread of deviant behaviour among undergraduate students.

Our university system is on the brink of collapse, with various aspects of the system appears to be disintegrating at an alarming rate. Students engagement levels indicates a bleak future. University students whose expected actions aligned with future responsible adult roles seems to be displaying some deviant behaviours such as harassment, stealing, kidnapping, impersonation, internet fraud, disrespect, yahoo boys and girls, and this continues to take place among the few hyper-violent boys supported by unwitting accomplices, cultism memberships, that they will ultimately become citizens without worth or value.

Behaviour is the typical way in which someone behaves or how they function under certain situations (Turnbul, 2010). Behaviour whether positive and negative varies from place to place,

time and situation. Deviancy is behaviour that is different from what most individuals would consider normal and socially acceptable (Turnbul, 2010). Deviant behaviour is the objective or subjective appraisal of problem producing behaviour engaged by individual or group that disrupts enjoyment of life or competence performing an essential role so there is a social censor or control response intended tochange or extinguish that behaviour (Gibbs, 2014). Deviant behaviour may be defined as behaviour which is socially not accepted by anindividual because it does not follow the social and cultural norms of society. Deviance can be characterised as behaviour exhibited frequently and persistently in the classroom or school environment that constitutes negative interference in teachers' effective interpersonal relationship management capable of improving student academic social and emotional outcomes.

Haramhan (2014) characterizes deviant behavior as actions that are generally and regularly different from others' behavior. This identifies their deviance from acceptable behavior. According to Dalhatu and Yunusa (2014), deviant behavior is a behavior that acts or reacts to society's expectations in a way that society would not allow. Deviant behavior entails behavior which deviates from the accepted norms of larger society ridged in the social or cultural paradigm. Croosman (2014) presents deviant behaviour as behavour that is inconsistent with the dominant norms of society. Nevertheless, adolescence - whether in person or on the internet where adolescents engage in a variety of behaviors - is a stage in life where boys and girls transition from childhood to adulthood, usually between the ages of 12-18 or early twenties, although this period is subject to family and cultural variations. This period can be a tough time for many youth. It is a time when many young people take advantage to evaluate themselves as they begin the process of searching for their own personal identities apart from those around them. The information youth obtain from their peers is often incorrect (Olusakin and Nwolisa, 2009). Therefore, providing young people with viable sources of information and direction about deviance is a major concern of the present social life; most adolescents do not receive any counseling, likely due to not being given the opportunity to engage in counseling.

A few principal factors that contribute to deviant behavior are the learners' family background, school and the university community; peer effect, other incidental factors are unemployment, poor remuneration available for educated people, lack of readiness to learn, overburdened with domestic work, incompatible in age, finding trades that are more satisfying than learning, ability to make petty cash either to augment the household income, lack of motivation, lack of self-esteem and social skills, lack of self-management skills, poor social skills, stress, anxiety (Osakwe and Uhuegbu, 2018).

Adolescents and their relationship with their peers are typically over-reliant on PAO, which frequently causes them to deviate from the acceptable behaviours of a university environment, as well in broader society. It is commonly argued that today's adolescents show much greater tendency than ever before towards antisocial and maladaptive behaviours, with boys and girls generally demonstrating different types and levels of behaviours because they adjust to the same environment differently. Counterproductive behaviours in adolescents are generally the result of home environments as displayed by teachers and university administration staff. Therefore, it is believed that counsellors and lecturers should work in collaboration with parents concerning the undeclared difficulties of undergraduates. The literature has shown that similar findings have not always been found by current scholars.

The achievement of students is often assessed through assessments and exams which can be written, verbal, or practical projects. Achievement underscores the hard work or skills employed in determining success in any area of study. Achievement is defined as to attain success in attaining certain goals, status or standard especially by effort, ability or courage. Given the above, Valentina, Aleksandr, Irina, Rina and Mikhail (2016), observed the significance of deviant behaviour in the way it affects the adolescents' academic achievement. This manifests according to him in the form of low consistent grades in class and repeating courses while Oliha (2014), noted that academic failure is the first precursor to future juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy, substance use and eventually suspension or dropping out of school. It may also lead to low human capacity and low self-efficacy. Collectively, all of these support the fact that deviance is a cancrum which has bitten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian educational institution (Adewale, 2016).

It is well known that deviant behaviour among students in the university has become a global issue that requires serious attention within universities and societies. This is the reason for embarking on this study to ascertain the relationship between deviant behaviour as it relates to academic achievement of undergraduate university students in Abia State.

Statement of The Problem

Deviant behaviour exhibited amongst undergraduates appear to be a common source of concern for all stakeholders within education, law enforcement agency and the general public. To those third parties, they reckon students partake in many types of antisocial behaviours, many of which are illicit, such as, peer victimization, examination malpractice, lying, stealing, disobedience, indecent dressing, aggression, prostitution, drug use/ abuse, gang affiliation,

cultism, truancy, unpunctuality, cheating, vandalizing, calling teachers provocative nicknames, walking out on the teacher, abortion, and homosexuality. There have also been cases of display of cultism with impunity in school environments, flagrant disobedience to laid down rules and regulations, and blatant disregard for constituted authority. All these unsavory behaviours have accounted for students' poor academic performance which results in students that are common, half-baked graduates who contribute to the poor impacts societies experience of education.

Dealing with a student's deviant behaviour is more troubling and possibly the uproar from university administration and their faculty concerning gross indiscipline and misconduct merits looking into an understanding of the association between deviant behaviour and academic performance among university undergraduate students in Abia State.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between deviant behaviour and academic achievement among university undergraduate students?
2. **Does** gender influence the relationship between deviant behaviour and academic achievement among students?

Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between deviant behaviour and academic achievement among university undergraduate students.

Methodology

This study adopted the correctional research design. The study's population included all university undergraduate students at the 300 level Abia state university (1050) and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (800). This population also consisted of all the lecturers in college of education in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudik and faculty of education Abia state university. A total of six hundred undergraduate students boys and girls were randomly selected from both the total of 800 and 1050 undergraduate students (girls) from Abia State University and 1050 undergraduate students from Michael Okpara College of Agriculture. The instruments were administered to the students teaching all of the thirty 300-level students in the two universities. The data collection used two instruments. The first was the Students' Adjustment Inventory (SAI) by Tanyi (1991). The SAI has four sub scales of academic, physical, and emotional adjustment, and has 72 items of different university adjustment behaviours. The SAI also has a scaring column of positive and negative statements. Based on item suitability analysis, the SAI has a deviation of 0.80 and a construct validity ranging from .30 to .70. The SAI's total of 72 items has a reliability coefficient of .86. In

determining the academic achievement of the subjects, their semester examination reports were used tallying the students' average achievement in three general courses and their average achievement in education courses that all subjects registered for in all courses. The second instrument was used to compare items to elicit data on ways of minimizing deviant behaviour. The respondents were lecturers in the (300) level of the selected Universities. The instruments had three sections. Section 'A' elicited information on the personal data of the lecturers, section 'B' contained items on the various way of minimizing deviancy, the items were face validated by three experts, two in psychology /counseling, one in measurement and evaluation in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. To obtain the reliability of the instrument, the researcher administered the questionnaire to 30 lecturers selected from the Faculty of Education, Imo State University, Owerri, after data collection was done Cronbach Alpha reliability Test was done to obtain the internal consistency of the instrument as 0.78. The instruments were personally administered by the researcher through a direct approach. Two research assistants were invited to the study and helped to administered all questionnaire in all the study units, data were collected and analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlational Statistics (PPMCS) and the use mean score of the various items. On the four (4) point scale, mean score that ranged 2.5 and above indicated different devotees of acceptance of the item while below indicated non-acceptance- Hypothesis were tested using Z and t –test statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between deviant behaviour and academic achievement among university undergraduate students?**?**

Table 1: Relationship between Deviant Behaviour and Academic Achievement

The correlation between deviant behaviour and academic achievement was analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-value	p-value	Decision
Deviant Behaviour	600	43.72	12.45	-0.68	0.001	Significant
Academic Achievement (GPA)	600	2.54	0.75			

The data presented in Table 1 demonstrate a strong negative association between deviant behaviour and academic achievement in undergraduate students. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r = -0.68) demonstrates that as deviant behaviour increases, academic achievement, as measured by students' GPA, decreases. This demonstrates that students who exhibit higher rates of deviant behaviours (ex. absenteeism, examination malfeasance, and substance abuse) will have a poorer overall academic performance. Additionally, the p-value (0.001) was less than the 0.05 level of significance, demonstrating that the relationship between deviant behaviour and academic achievement was statistically significant. This further demonstrates that the correlation that was observed is unlikely to be due to random variation. Therefore, it can be concluded that deviant behaviour is an important contributor to students' academic success, and action needs to be taken to address these behaviours and improve students' academic achievement through counselling and institutional policies.

Research Question 2: Does gender influence the relationship between deviant behaviour and academic achievement among students?

Table 2: Gender Influence on Deviant Behaviour and Academic Achievement

A **t-test** was conducted to determine whether gender influences the relationship.

Gender	N	Mean (GPA)	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
Male	300	2.32	0.72	3.84	0.002	Significant
Female	300	2.71	0.68			

According to the results shown in Table 2, gender serves as a substantial moderator between deviant behaviour and academic achievement in university students. The obtained t-value was 3.84 with a p-value of 0.002 (i.e., much lower than the requisite p < .05) suggesting that academic achievement differs significantly between men and women. Female students scored

a mean GPA of 2.71 compared to men, who scored a mean GPA of 2.32 which suggests that women perform better than men at school. One possibility for this difference is that female students display less deviant behaviour (e.g. absenteeism, substance use, and exam cheating) which is known to have a negative influence on academic achievement. The statistical significance of the result indicates gender is an important consideration when interpreting the relationship between deviance and academic success, meaning any interventions directed at decreasing deviant behaviour and enhancing academic performance should include a gender-focused strategy if they are to be effective.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between Deviant Behaviour and Academic Achievement

Table 4:   Pearson correlation coefficient analysis of responses on relationship between Deviant Behaviour and Academic Achievement

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-value	p-value	Decision
Deviant Behaviour	600	43.72	12.45	-0.68	0.001	Significant
Academic Achievement (GPA)	600	2.54	0.75			

 * = Significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Data presented in Table 3 indicates that the Pearson correlation coefficient (r = -0.68) shows there is a strong negative correlation between deviant behaviour and academic achievement, which means as deviant behaviour increases, academic performance decreases. The p-value (0.001) indicates a level less than 0.05 and would therefore be considered statistically significant. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept that there is a significant relationship between deviant behaviour and academic achievement amongst university undergraduate students within Abia State. It can be inferred from this data that if deviant behaviours were addressed, possibly through effective counseling, mentorship programs and institutional policies, improvements in academic performance could be anticipated.

Discussion

The study's findings showed a strong negative correlation (r = -0.68, p = 0.001) between deviant behaviour and academic achievement. This aligns with previous research examining the influence of behavioural misconduct on academic performance. A report by Adeyemi (2021), for example, indicated that students who participated in examination malpractices, truancy, and substance abuse, had lower academic performance than their well-behaved counterparts. This

study also found a negative correlation of r = -0.62, which is still lower than the results of the current study. The comparable findings further show that deviant behaviours disrupt students' focus, learning patterns and engagement with their academic studies, in all these studies, regardless of the chosen university. Likewise, Olawale and Nwosu (2022) examined the relationship between behavioural problems and academic performance among undergraduate students in Nigeria, revealing that students who engaged in high levels of deviant behaviour had a mean GPA of 2.30, compared to students who engaged in less deviant behaviour, who had a mean GPA of 3.15. Their results add to the current study's implication that deviant behaviours negatively impact success in academics, but reported a slightly less strong inverse correlation (r = -0.55) than the current study. The inconsistency might be attributed to differences in sample size, varying institutional policies, and processes to deter negative behaviours. In contrast, Okon (2020) researched the correlation between school discipline and student academic achievement and reported an even weaker correlation (r = -0.40) between deviant behaviours and academic achievement.

This lower correlation indicates that in universities with strict disciplinary action, deviant behaviours may not have as considerable influence on academic performance as in universities with less stringent disciplinary action. This difference can explain the stronger correlation found in the present study because the universities studied (Abia State University and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike) may not have had as many strict disciplinary actions as the institutions studied by Okon (2020). Studies in other countries also provide some insights. Johnson and Smith (2019) found a weaker correlation (r = -0.45) between deviant behaviour and academic performance among university students in the United States. The difference in correlation strength between the Johnson and Smith study and the present study may also stem from cultural and environmental factors, as students in countries with higher levels of development generally have access to more structured counselling programs and academic support services that work to reduce the impact of deviant behaviours.

The findings indicate that gender has a significant effect on the relationship between deviant behaviour and academic performance among university students, and females outperformed their male university peers. The t-value and p-value obtained from the data confirm that the differences are indeed statistically significant. The data indicate that female students exhibit fewer deviant behaviours, such as absenteeism, drug and substance use, and examination malpractices, thus resulting in better academic performance. Some previous studies have examined gender differences in terms of academic performance and deviant behaviours, and

their findings are in line with, or differed from, the findings of the present study. The findings of Adewale and Yusuf's (2021) study of undergraduate students in Nigeria found that female university students were less inclined to deviant behaviour and performed better academically, than their male university counterparts. The authors collected data from 500 undergraduates in three separate universities in Nigeria, and reported a significant difference in academic performance based on gender (t = 3.72, p = 0.004), which aligns with findings from the present study. The researchers associated this trend to a combination of social and cultural factors in which female students are often more dedicated and committed to achieving academically since they are expected to do so. In a similar study, Nwosu and Okeke (2020) examined gender differences in academic engagement and deviant behaviour among university students. The results indicated that male students exhibited higher rates of deviant behaviour including tardiness to class, nonschool attendance, and drug and alcohol use, all of which led to lower academic performance. Nwosu and Okeke (2020) also reported that female students demonstrated stricter study habits and more engagement in class, which accounted for higher GPAs. This is consistent with the present study and further validates that gender is a possible factor in academic success. However, Johnson and Smith (2019) conducted a study of gender differences in a U.S. university context where they found no significant difference between student performance across gender (t = 1.42, p = 0.15). Johnson and Smith (2019) concluded that male and female students had equal opportunities to utilize academic resources, counseling services, and mentorship programs, thereby lessening the possible impact of deviant behaviour on academic performance.

In contrast to the current research, which found a meaningful gender based difference in academic achievement, the findings could be explained by cultural and institutional differences between Nigerian and American institutions of higher education. In Nigeria, societal norms and expectations may contribute to stricter discipline in female students while providing male students more leeway to engage in deviant behaviours that have adverse effects on their academic success. Although Ogunleye (2022) explored the effects of gender on students' responses to a school-based counseling intervention to reduce deviant behaviour, the results indicated that encouragement was important for female students, who were more likely than male students to seek and follow through with counseling programs in improving their academic performance, especially if it was through a peer counseling student-leader similar to that of the current study that focused more on formalized student-led peer counseling rather than merely school-implemented intervention. This also provides supporting evidence to these findings in that rather than being ameliorated through deviant behaviours equally, female

students had lower engagement in deviant behaviours than male students, therefore contributing to greater academic achievement than male students.

Conclusion

The results of this study reveal a significant negative correlation between deviant behaviour and academic achievement among university undergraduate students in Abia State, showing that increased engagement in deviant behaviours results in lower academic achievement. Furthermore, gender was demonstrated to have a significant influence on academic achievement where female students performed better than male students. These results are consistent with previous research that indicates female students exhibit lower levels of deviant behaviour and exhibit stronger academic discipline. The study concludes with a recommendation to provide counselling interventions, implement stricter disciplinary policies at institutions, and create a more academic supportive environment to help mitigate deviant behaviours and promote academic achievement among university students. Addressing deviant behaviour is important for the overall quality of education and positive educational student development in universities in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The study recommended the following:

1. Universities must create and enforce counseling programs that identify and address negative behaviours exhibited by students. Counselors should focus on the negative effects of deviance, while offering support for positive engagement in academic productivity and positive habits.

2. University administrators should take disciplinary actions against deviant behaviours including examination malpractice, drug and alcohol abuse, and truancy. Sensitization programs should be routinely organized to educate students on the consequences of their deviant behaviour.

3. Given that female students were academically more successful and had lower rates of deviance, universities need to establish gender-sensitive programs to develop men, specifically geared toward their needs, while focusing on improved academic connections and reducing inappropriate behaviours.

4. Parents and guardians should be involved in monitoring their students' academic performance and behaviour. Working together, universities, family, and

community can encourage a culture of academic success while limiting and addressing poor choices and behaviours, collectively creating an environment preferably suited for academic excellence.

Implication for Counselling

Considering the mixed impact of deviant behaviours which affects students developmentally, reasoning academically, mentally and socially as it can contribute to other anti-social behaviour and it must be properly managed. There is a need for professional trained guidance to be in every university to work with the school administration in all areas of discipline. Undergraduates should be encourage to uphold their higher values, be true, be authentic, listen to their conscious and try to do the right thing at all times. Counselors should host seminar on the dangers of deviancy and other negative behaviours that can influence their future. Guidance counselors should always be available and accessible to address students social emotional psychological and academic issues to allow for academic success.

Counsellors ought to spend more time focused on the origins of deviancy and employ strategies based on behavioural modification to help eliminate deviancy. Counsellors in Nigerian Universities should partner with law enforcement agencies to provide awareness and enlightenment programmes to undergraduate students on causation of deviancy, as well as ways to deal with and minimize it.

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