

BEHAVIOURISM, CRIME PREVENTION AND SAFETY MEASURES: THE COUNSELLORS PERSPECTIVE

Helen Chibundu Asita, Ph.D

*Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counseling,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt,
Rivers State, Nigeria*

Abstract

The paper focused on behaviorism, crime prevention and safety measures. It further analyzed the counsellor's perspective. The systematic application of behavioral psychology to crime prevention began only recently, yet it has already contributed significantly to the practical knowledge about prevention and correction and to the general understanding of a pressing social problem. Crime prevention and control is an issue of concern to almost all societies in the globe, due to the frequent rise in the commitment rate of crime. This could be due to behaviourism developed by individuals in the society. This paper aimed to find out counselors' perspective on the subject matter and how they relate to each other. The paper is qualitative in nature. The paper found that behaviourism has an effect on crime rate, and also behavioural approach is an effective measure in crime prevention. The paper concluded that crime prevention and control is an issue of concern to almost all societies in the globe, due to the frequent rise in the commitment rate of crime. This could be due to behaviorism developed by individuals in the society. Therefore, it was recommended that the government take guidance and counseling more seriously, and provide relevant trainings for the current counselors in other to use behavioural approach in crime prevention and safety measure.

Keywords: Behaviourism, crime prevention, safety measures and counsellors perspective

Introduction

Behaviour is composed of reactions and movements that an organism gives and does in a certain situation. The term, behaviour is mostly used for actions that can be observed from outside. Behaviorist learning approach mostly focuses on how behaviours are acquired. Behaviorism, also known as behavioral psychology, is a theory of learning based on the idea that all behaviors are acquired through conditioning, and conditioning

occurs through interaction with the environment. Behaviorists believe that our actions are shaped by environmental stimuli (Kendra, 2022). The hallmark of behaviorism is the notion that people alter or change their behavior according to the reactions this behavior elicits in other people (Bandura, 2001). In an ideal situation, behavior is supported by rewards and extinguished by negative reactions or punishments. Behaviorists view crimes as learned responses to life's situations.

In other words, children learn violence through the observation of others. Aggressive acts are modeled after three primary sources: family interaction, environmental experiences, and the mass media. Research on family interaction demonstrates that children who are aggressive are more likely to have been brought up by parents or caretakers who are aggressive (Jacoby, 2004). The second source of behavioral problems, environmental experiences, suggests that individuals who reside in areas that are crime prone are more likely to display aggressive behavior than those who reside in low-crime areas (Shelden, 2006). One could argue that high-crime areas are without norms, rules, and customs (Bohm, 2001).

Behaviorists address learning as a mechanic process and give particular importance to objectivity. According to behaviorists, people are not good or bad from birth. Experiences and environment constitute a human's personality. According to them, human brain can be compared to a black box. Neither can we know what is going on in this black box nor do we need to know it. What is important is not what is happening in this black box, but what is important is what goes in this black box (input) and what comes out of it (output). Outputs are objective, observable and measurable. Inputs and outputs can be adjusted, arranged and controlled. What is important is not the senses of a person, but the reflection of them.

Concept of Crime

Like other concepts in social sciences, it is very difficult to define. In some cultures, crime means any act that causes a disturbance of order and a deterioration of public safety. A crime is an act or omission that is judged to be detrimental to the public welfare, morals, or the state's interests and is thus illegal. This is a legal infraction. The commission of a crime is the deliberate conduct of an act that is often regarded detrimental or dangerous to society and is specifically defined, banned, and punished by criminal law (Lochner, 2004). In criminal law, crime refers to any act or omission which entices sanctions such as imprisonment, fines, or even death (Caprara, Paciello, Gerbino & Cugini, 2007). Typically, crime is viewed as a more severe kind of physical violence that is more likely to end in bodily damage (Lederman and Loayza, 2002).

According to (Dambazau, 2011) Nigeria has been on the world crime map since 1980s. The types of crimes that are very common in country ranges from homicide, armed robbery, rape, housebreak, car theft, fraud, drug and food abuse, bribery and corruption, gambling, kidnapping, smuggling, human trafficking, drug trafficking, cybercrime, money laundering, advanced fee fraud (419) and more recent ones including

oil bunkering and the Boko Haram killings. According to (Win & Maassenvandenbrink, 2010) crime is major source of insecurity and discomfort in our society. Victims of criminality are frequently traumatized by it, with long lasting negative effects on their well-being. Criminality gives rise to feeling of insecurity among people who have not been a victim, as well. This also generates negative effects on well-being.

Crime Prevention

Crime prevention is seen as a collection of strategies and measures designed to reduce the risk of crimes before they are carried out. It is a concept that can involve a community or organized group, such as a specialized task force. This concept can also pertain to an individual, such as a licensed therapist (Wake Forest Uni, 2018). Australian Institute of Criminology AIC (2012) define Crime prevention as the variety of approaches that are applied by individuals, societies, industries, non-government institutions and all tiers of government to target the numerous social and ecological influences that upsurge the danger of crime, disorder and persecution. Decreasing rate of crime also stresses a process of analysis to control the source of specific types of criminal activities as well as the harmonization of resources and abilities of a variety of role players to implement and develop suitable interferences (DiNapoli, 2002).

The level of care-based crime prevention can be broken down into three categories. The first category, primary care prevention, refers to services that are directed toward promoting the welfare of a community. The second category, secondary care prevention, refers to services meant to protect individuals or groups identified as being at-risk. Tertiary care prevention refers to services that are geared toward protecting individuals or groups from known offenders (Wake Forest Uni, 2018). It also aimed at total eradication of the criminal acts. Prisons and probation homes are the agents involved in this stage. These three categories can be applied to various types of crime, such as mass shootings, domestic abuse or sexual assault.

Causes of Crime

With changes in culture, people's outlook towards what constitutes crime changes too. Owing to this, there can be various causes of crime that change based on the nature of the crime, the time and place of its occurrence, and the like.

Mostly, persons known to commit street crimes are the poor, uneducated, often unemployed and residents of low income neighbourhoods (Anasi, 2010). Countries with high rates of economic deprivation tend to witness higher crime rates than other countries. According to the World Bank Report 2004, poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. As stated by Kuhe, Chiawa & Aboiyar, (2016) poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society.

According to Archibong, Effiom & Ojua (2014) crime results from a mixture of various factors. He said the commitment of crime is generally based on three features: (1) those of the offender (2) those of the potential victim, and (3) those of the environs where a crime is expected to be committed. The environment here, consist of the inhabitant of the area, physical location, and happenings in an area that might discourage or inspire the offender in his or her activities. argued that crime are caused by unemployment, poverty, drugs, poor shelter as well as other social features such as poor social interaction and socialization in which the adolescences try to imitate to the existing norms of their that exist either in their households or peer-groups. Dambazau (2011) also posits that criminal activities was learned, not a hereditary trait. In addition, disclosure to crime, both through relations or peers, peer groups or associations have their own cultures, sanctions or rituals into which members are socialized and accordingly, members (especially new members) who do not comply with any of these may be ostracized (Carlson, 2010), give a youth unfulfilled with his or her societal status a choice to partake in crime. These bad effects could be reduced by good relations with parents, teachers/ lecturers, community or an employer.

Archibong, Effiom & Ojua(2014) argued that social changes taking place in Nigeria such as an industrial industrialization and urbanization as well as its associated family and social unsteadiness have influenced crime levels. They further claim that such a poor society, family and economic setting could lead to all kinds of crime.

Counseling

Counseling takes place in the context of a helping relationship in which the counselor and the client work together to resolve a problem, change behavior or foster personal growth and awareness. Although clients may have a number of helping relationships with friends or family, the counseling relationship is different in a number of ways. The counseling relationship is not reciprocal. The counselor's job is to focus on the clients' concerns (Syed & Sajjad, 2017). Counseling services include educational counseling (Olayinka, 2000), vocational counseling and personal-social counseling.

The goal of crime prevention is to not only reduce crime, but to also reduce the risk of people being victimized. A trained counselor can play a substantial role in helping carry out this objective. Their work can be instrumental in developing proactive strategies to help neutralize the threat of future criminal acts, and it can be crucial in identifying at-risk behaviors that could turn into bigger issues. Ultimately, the work of a counselor can help build and fortify a safe community. How they accomplish this goal depends on the type of counselor. According to Fafunwa in Mogbo, (2011), the mandatory student guidance and counseling services is to provide the true condition and situation in Nigeria, security issues inclusive.

History of Contemporary Behaviorism

Behaviorism was a movement in psychology and philosophy that emphasized the outward behavioral aspects of thought and dismissed the inward experiential, and sometimes the inner procedural, aspects as well; a movement harking back to the methodological proposals of John B. Watson, who coined the name. B. F. Skinner later hardened behaviorist strictures to exclude inner physiological processes along with inward experiences as items of legitimate psychological concern (Skinner, 2002). By the early 20th century, the science of psychology has had important turnouts, 20-30 years after Wundt established the first psychology laboratory (Baum, 2005). Of all these turnouts, the method of introspection is the leading one. Wundt and his followers thought that the subjects such as conscious and feelings expected to be studied by psychology, could be studied just by introspection and they didn't consider it risky to use introspection as a scientific method (Mills, 2000). Psychology can use introspection as a scientific method since it deals with inner lives of people just as sciences about outer world use external observation as a scientific method. However, many have considered objectivity and reliability of introspection as a real problem (Plotnik 2005).

While radical behaviorists believe that psychology should study just the observable behaviours and environmental processes, methodological behaviorists think that cognitive processes can also be studied, but methods of behaviorist approach should be used (Schultz & Schultz, 2007). On the other hand, when we come to today, behaviorism not only has lost strength but also seems to be defeated by cognitive revolution. Put strict behaviorists such as Watson, Pavlov and Skinner aside, new-new behaviorists state that they are cognitive-behaviorists. Even, according to a research, two thirds of the members of American Behaviour Analysis Association established depending on behaviorist approach define themselves as cognitive-behaviorist.

Basic Concepts of Behaviorist Approach

While behaviorist approach claims that the research subject of psychology should be observable behaviours, this approach also claims that all behaviours have learning as its base and that learning is conditioning. According to behaviorist approach, there are conditionings at the base of human behaviours. Behaviorist approach came out against concepts that express mental processes such as mind and conscious. Key concepts of behaviorism comprise the stimulus – response (S-R) equation, the classical and operant conditioning, and the reinforcement and punishment notions (Faq-ans, 2021).

Conditioning

Behaviorist approach claims that learning takes place through conditioning. Conditioning occurs in a way that an organism matches a certain stimulus around with a certain reaction. When a reaction is associated with a stimulus apart from a stimulus that naturally moves itself, it is said to be conditioned. Conditioning can be divided into two

such as classical and operant. Classical conditioning states that a neutral stimulus is matched with an unconditioned reaction while operant conditioning states that the possibility of an organism to display a certain behaviour again through reinforcement.

Stimulus

Stimulus is composed of changes in the internal and external states that move the organism. For a great part of behaviorist approach, this change of state is mostly external. They may not deal with internal changes of state. When searching for stimuli that foster violent acts, social learning theorists suggest that an individual is likely to inflict harm when he or she is subject to a violent assault, verbal heckling or insults, disparagement, and the inability to achieve his or her goals and aspirations (Siegal, 2009).

Reinforcement and punishment

Reinforcement is the process of increasing the possibility of an organism to display behaviour to a certain stimulus once more. The stimulus used in this process is called reinforcer. Reinforcers help a motivation of the organism to be satisfied at least to some extent. The responses to an organism's behaviour may be three kinds: (a). Reinforcement, (b) Punishment and (c) Not reinforcing

While reinforcement increases the possibility of behaviour to be displayed once more, punishment is used to increase the possibility of not displaying a certain behaviour. On the other hand, not reinforcing means not giving any response and it generally decreases the possibility of behaviour to be repeated.

In general, behaviorists are against punishment. Because punishment does not give any clue to the organism about which behaviour it should display as well as causing some negative feelings. Or, in more familiar words, punishment teaches what should not be done rather than teaching what should be done. Such a case is not included in definitions of learning and education. Because education tries to teach a student what she/he should do rather than what she/he should not do. If we come to think from the point of organism, reinforcement guides organism about what it should do while punishment does not include a guide about what to do. Moreover, the studies have shown that reinforcement is more efficient than punishment.

Reinforcement, which can be understood as rewarding in daily language, is divided into two as positive and negative. While positive reinforcement means adding a nice stimulus to the situation in which the organism lives, negative reinforcement means eliminating a bad stimulus from the situation. From the point of student, giving chocolate to a student who displays a good behaviour is positive reinforcement. Allowing a prisoner who displays the expected behaviours in jail to go home for the weekend is negative reinforcement, because the prisoner is allowed to avoid prison or to get rid of the limitations on his/her freedom (for a certain time).

Punishment is also accepted to be in two types. In the first type of punishment, an unpleasant stimulus is added to the situation in which an organism lives while in the second type of punishment, a pleasant stimulus is eliminated from the environment. It is the first type of punishment if a student who doesn't do his/her homework suffers from physical violence while it is the second type of punishment if his/her toys are grabbed.

Behavioural Crime Prevention: Why It Matters

Lots of crime prevention communication is targeted at influencing potential offenders' behaviours. This is particularly important for some new types of crime. Research by Point Park University (2021) reveals that prevention of these kinds of problems can be leveraged by blending nudges, tugs and teachable moments. The behavioural theory revolves around the idea that human behavior develops through experience (Dabney, 2004). Specifically, behavioral theory focuses on the idea that people develop their behavior based on the reaction their behavior gets from those around them. This is a form of conditioning, where behavior is learned and reinforced by rewards or punishment (Conklin, 2007).

So, if a person is in the company of those who condone and even reward criminal behavior – especially a figure of authority – then they will continue to engage in that behavior. For example, social learning theorist Albert Bandura maintains individuals are not born with an innate ability to act violently. He instead suggests people learn violent behavior through observing others. Typically, this comes from three sources: family, environmental experiences and the mass media.

Conclusion

The relationship between psychology and criminal behavior is significant. For centuries, scholars have been attempting to explain why someone commits a crime. Behavioral theory suggests human behavior is fostered through learning experiences. At the forefront of this theory is the premise that individuals change their behavior according to reactions from others. In the real world, there exists the assumption that behavior is reinforced via rewards and eliminated by a negative reaction or punishment.

Crime prevention and control is an issue of concern to almost all societies in the globe, due to the frequent rise in the commitment rate of crime. This could be due to behaviorism developed by individuals in the society. Crime rate in Nigeria has assumed a worrisome dimension. In the light of the worsening crime situation, and the ineffectiveness of the crime control apparatuses, Nigeria can be deemed to have a crime problem. The expression of criminality pervades the society and the negative repercussion of not addressing it stare us in the face every day. Crime prevention involves the community, government as well as individuals. Therefore, crime prevention is everybody's business.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following are thereby recommended:

- i) Government should take guidance and counseling more seriously, and provide relevant trainings for the current counselors in other to use behavioural approach in crime prevention and safety measure.
- ii) Parents should monitor and guide their children's exposure, socializations, and devise mechanisms, shield their children from negative media and other global evils.
- iii) School management should incorporate compulsory regular reorientation programs for students.

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