

COUNSELLING STRATEGIES FOR MODIFYING LYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated counselling strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students as in Awka South Local Government of Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey design, and the population comprised of eighteen respondents (18) respondents which was studied entirely without sampling because of the small size of the population. The instrument used in collecting data for the study was a structured questionnaire titled Counselling Strategies for Modifying Lying Behaviour in Secondary School Students (CSMLBSS). Mean was used to answer the research question and test the hypothesis. The instrument was dully validated by two experts in the Department of Guidance and Counselling. The findings from the study showed that remedial counselling strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students are systematic desensitization, thought-stopping technique, cognitive restructuring, assertive training technique, social skills training technique. The findings of the study equally showed among others that the corrective counselling strategy for modifying lying behaviour are self-monitoring, praise and ignore technique, modeling, role playing, token economy. It was recommended among others that Guidance Counsellors should ensure kin and objective observation on students' lying behaviours and guard against such behaviours that could be detrimental to students' academic achievement and social relationship.

Keywords: counselling, counselling strategies, lying behaviour, secondary school students.

INTRODUCTION

The modern day secondary school counsellor is like a doctor charged with the duty of saving lives. However, unlike the conventional hospital, the counsellor only gets a few hours within the day to meet the widest behavioural and attitude concerns of these students who largely

fall within the age bracket of teenagers. One of the focal points of the Secondary School Counsellor's job is to help the students modify their lying behaviours.

It is difficult to generally define the broad concept of lying. As aptly captured by Feldman (2010), there is no universally agreed definition of lying. What scholars and lexical defined lying behaviour to be is based on their perception, with the presence of some defining factors. Lies are intentional denial of the truth. Lying required that a statement be made; hence that form of deception that consists in withholding a statement from another person with the intention that the other person infer a believed falsehood—sometimes called a lie of omission or a concealment lie—does not count as lying, exaggerating, being misleading, hedging or being evasive with the intention that the other person infer a believed falsehood, also does not count as lying (Padgett, 2005).

Although the above definitions and a litany of other expatiations on what constitutes a lie vary, we see that for something to pass as a lie, it must be communicated, it must be false, the maker of the statement must know of its falsehood and it must flow from an intention to deceive.

Behaviour is another major variable in this study. Simply put behaviour in its definitive sense is a class or pattern formed over time (Baum, 2014). Behaviour is a complex state of affairs that includes a specific person's acting to accomplish purposes, engaging in physical processes or performances, achieving outcomes, and engaging in actions having significance (Bergner, 2011).

Lying as a behaviour predates the modern classroom structure and spans throughout diverse cultures, ages, and environments. Lying also seems to be associated with several societal problems and negative behaviours; it has caused rifts in social relationships, workplaces, and corrupts politics as well as the minds of individuals. Lying is a behaviour that needs improvement with self-will and self-efficacy (Chigbu, Obi, Uzoekwe& Juliana, 2021; chigbu, Ofojebe, Grace&Mokwelu 2022).

The Counsellor's job usually starts with correcting the thought pattern that was created in the mind of the student right from home. According to Angus (2023), if children see and hear their parents telling white lies all the time, this could increase the chances they could tell them all the time, too.

Understanding the causes as well as the problems and traits associated with lying behaviour in secondary school would aid in discovering the appropriate measures and strategies to be carried out in modifying lying behaviours. Abodike (2010) opined that adults intentionally or unintentionally teach children how to tell lies. When children see indifference in the attitude of adults to lying, they often begin to accept the attitude as a trend and replicate it in school. In reality, there should be a negative attitude and concern towards lying.

Having understood that the secondary school student's tendency to lie is largely developed overtime, it is important to emphasize the increasing worrisome state on the student and the resultant threat to the student's academic success, performance, achievement and teacher-student interpersonal relationship within the school environment.

There is no exaggeration in buttressing the fact that lies affect the overall self-esteem of the communicator—secondary school student. From research, Preuter (2021) found out that people who lied on a given day experienced a decrease in self-esteem compared to their self-esteem on the previous day and to their average level of self-esteem.

However, there remains the unexhausted question about why secondary school students lie. The many reasons secondary school students lie include: to impress others, avoid punishment or criticism, win admiration, or for personal gain. According to Courtney (2023), difficulties at home or in close relationships and mental concerns make teenagers lie to get attention, to gain a sense of control, or because they perceive that telling the truth feels unsafe.

In inter-personal relationships among secondary school students, it is common to find males exaggerate their abilities or past accomplishments, while females tend to be less truthful about their feelings or emotions. Lawrenz (2023) medically certified that lying sometimes occur with mental health conditions like: anxiety disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, bipolar disorder and oppositional defiant disorders. Lies may adversely affect the emotional and psychological health of the individual as it generates guilt, anxiety, and fear of being caught.

Also, lying could also affect the academic performance of the student. Cizek (2013) posited that when students cheat or plagiarize in academic activities, instructors cannot accurately assess student performance or evaluate students' mastery of the knowledge, skills and applications necessary in their field. Cizek further emphasized that as a result of this situation, institutions may grant credentials to those who do not really deserve them, which can have serious ramifications in the workplace.

But positively changing the perception of these students about lies is not impossible because as children get older, their moral evaluations of both lies and truths increasingly gets influenced by whether they think this behaviour will cause harm to either others or themselves (IANS, 2016). The Counsellor plays a vital role in aiding students with such behaviours through specific counseling strategies that are peculiar to the student's personality. Such strategy includes seminars and workshop (Chigbu, Oguzie, Obi, Akuezuilo&Ogben, 2023).

Lying is widely considered to be normal in growing children as a shield to protect them from consequences of their actions, test the boundaries between reality and fantasy and understand how people think. Marchetter (2017) emphasized that lying is not necessarily indicative of psychological problems as lying is often a normal part of children's social, emotional, behavioural, and cognitive development. On a large scale, we can classify lying as either pathological or compulsive.

According to Lebow (2022), pathological lying also known as pseudologia fantastica, mythomania, and morbid lying is a compulsive pattern of telling people things you know are not true. The individual who indulges in such often has no reason for lying. These lies are said to be extensive and elaborate as they find it very difficult to control the impulse of making up stories and they are goal-oriented in telling lies

Compulsive lies on the other hand, are often developed when people feel more comfortable lying than telling the truth. These habits often develop from childhood. According to Karthik (2022), a major difference between pathological liars and compulsive liars is that unlike compulsive liars, pathological liars are near impossible to catch in the act because they are excellent at it. Also, a compulsive liar may be sold out because they often exhibit anxiety, avoid eye contact, break out into sweat, trip over their words or ramble while lying (Pallavi, 2022).

Again, secondary school students are generally regarded to have attained the age of reasoning. Konnikova (2016) assured that lying for children is a part of growing up, testing limits and adjusting to social expectations and norms. Because they perceive the society wants so much from them, and even in school, they could lie to avoid punishment and conflict with authorities, to avoid embarrassment, cover up emotions, make themselves look better and establish autonomy. However, Li (2023) believed that contrary to popular opinion, rebellion is the least likely reason why teens lie. On the other hand, Li affirmed that teenagers may desire autonomy from their parents, but they do not see this as a rebellion against them.

The researcher observes that much research has not been carried out in the area of modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students and desires that attention be given to this study in order to avoid disruptive consequences that lies would have on the students if not addressed immediately. Against this background, this study is will determine counselling strategies to modify lying behaviour among secondary school students in Awka and help mitigate the far-reaching consequences, lying has on the society.

Statement of the Problem

It would be denying the truth to state that lies never existed before now. There are several reasons why lying has been considered a problem in past times. First, lying can lead to a breakdown of trust between students and teachers, which can harm the learning environment. It can also have negative consequences for students' social relationships, and mental health.

Lying has led to set backs in students' academic performance, success and achievement rate, friction in the relationship between students and their parents as well as their teachers, anti-social behaviours in the society. The researcher, during the days of her counselling practicum, observed the rift in teacher-student relationship, social isolation and negative academic performance on the side of the students caused by lying in secondary school. This may be because concerted efforts have not been made to find out counselling intervention strategies that may be used to effectively handle the menace of lying among students. The problem of this study is to explore effective counselling strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students in Awka south of Anambra State.

Scope of the Study

The study focused on the counselling strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students in Awka South, Anambra State. The study is delimited to remedial, corrective and punitive counselling strategies for modifying lying behaviour as perceived by counsellors in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the remedial counselling strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students?
2. What are the corrective counselling strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students?
3. What are the punitive counselling strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students?

METHOD

Research Design

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. According to Nassaji (2015) a descriptive survey design is a one in which data is collected in a qualitative manner and analyzed using quantitative procedures. Nwogu (2015) says that it involves the collection of extensive data from the population for the purpose of describing and interpreting an existing situation under study using a questionnaire. In other words, it refers to the scientific methodology in which observation of the sampled population is carried out in its natural surroundings.

Area of the Study

This study was carried out in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. Awka South LGA is made up nine towns namely: Amawbia, Awka, Ezinato, Isiagu, Mbaukwu, Nibo, Nise, Okpuno, and Umuawulu.

Population of study

The population of the study consists of 18 School Counsellors in the 19 public Secondary schools in Awka South Local Government of Anambra State (PPSSC, 2023).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The entire population of 18 guidance counsellors in the 19 public Secondary Schools was used for the study since the size is considered manageable. Due to this fact, there will be no sampling for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data for the study was collected by means of questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument is titled "Counselling Strategies for Modifying Lying Behaviour in Secondary School Students" (CSMLBSS).

Validation of the Instrument

Face validity of the instrument was established using the opinions of experts, Two experts from the Department of Guidance and Counselling, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Method of Data Collection

The data for collecting the instrument was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used in data analysis. The data collected was analyzed using mean score to determine the answer of the question. The decision on the questionnaire was based on item means relative to the real limits of numbers as follows;

Response	Rating Scale	Real limit of numbers
Strongly Agree	4	3.50-4.00
Agree	3	2.50-3.49
Disagree	2	1.50-2.49
Strongly Disagree	1	1.00-1.49

The criterion mean of 2.50 served as the benchmark for making decision. Any mean scores below 2.50 criterion mean score will be rated to a low extent while any mean scores above 2.50 criterion mean score will be rated to a great extent.

RESULTS

Research question 1: What are the remedial strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students?

Table 1: Mean rating of respondents on the remedial strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students?

S/N	Remedial Strategies	Mean	Remark
1	Systematic desensitization	3.06	Agree
2	Thought-stopping technique	3.13	Agree
3	Cognitive restructuring	3.20	Agree
4	Assertive training technique	3.13	Agree
5	Social skills training	2.86	Agree

From table 1 above, it is observed that items 1 - 5 obtained mean rating above the criterion mean 2.5, indicating that the respondents agreed to the remedial strategies listed. This means that the remedial strategies presented in table 1 are considered to be effective by the counselors in Awka South.

Research Question 2: What are the corrective strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students?

Table 2: Mean rating of respondents on the corrective strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students?

S/N	Corrective Strategies	Mean	Remark
6	Self-monitoring	3.60	Agree
7	Praise and Ignore	3.13	Agree
8	Modelling	3.33	Agree
9	Role Playing	3.00	Agree
10	Token Economy	3.00	Agree

Data in table 2 showed that all the items (6-10) obtained mean rating above the criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that the respondents agreed that all the items are the remedial strategies

for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students in Awka South of Anambra State.

Research Question 3: What are the punitive strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students?

Table 3: Mean rating of respondents on the punitive strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students?

S/N	Punitive Strategies	Mean	Remark
11	Verbal Reprimand	2.86	Agree
12	Response cost	2.46	Disagree
13	Time out	2.53	Agree
14	Flogging	2.46	Disagree
15	Suspension	2.00	Disagree

From table 3 above, it is observed that items 11 and 13 obtained mean rating above the criterion mean of 2.50, while items 12, 14 and 15 obtained mean rating less than the criterion mean. This indicates that the respondents agreed that the factors in items 11 and 13 are the punitive strategies that are more effective in modifying lying behaviours among secondary students, while they disagreed that the factors in items 12, 14 and 15 are effective punitive strategies for modifying lying behaviours among secondary school students in Awka South.

Summary of the Findings

Based on the results of the data analysis, it was discovered that:

1. Systematic desensitization, thought-stopping technique, cognitive restructuring, assertive training technique, social skills training are remedial counselling strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students in Awka South, Anambra State.
2. Corrective strategies for modifying lying behaviour include: Self- monitoring, praise and ignore technique, modeling, role playing, and token economy.
3. Verbal reprimand and time out are effective punitive strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students in Awka South, Anambra State. However, the findings showed that response cost, flogging and suspension are not effective punitive strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students.

Discussion of Findings

Considering the results of the analysis of data made in the study starting with the research questions;

The first research question sought to find out the remedial strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students in Awka South, Anambra State as perceived by school counsellors in the area. The findings showed that the respondents all agreed that items 1-5 are remedial strategies that can be used to modify lying behaviour among secondary school students with cognitive restructuring having the highest mean of 3.20 followed by thought-stopping technique and assertive training technique with a mean of 3.13. Hence, the respondents indicated that systematic desensitization, thought-stopping, cognitive

restructuring, assertive training and social skills are effective remedial counselling strategies for modifying lying behaviour in secondary students. The findings of this study agree with the results of previous researchers who concluded that cognitive restructuring, systematic desensitization, thought-stopping, assertive training are effective counselling strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary students (Abodike, 2020). The second research questions examined the corrective strategies used for modifying lying behavior among secondary school students. The findings revealed that items 6-10 in the questionnaire are effectual corrective strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students; self-monitoring producing the highest mean of 3.60 amidst other corrective strategies indicated that majority of the counsellors in Awka south perceived it to be the most effective corrective strategies among other strategies. Most importantly, the respondents agree that self-monitoring, praise and ignore, modelling, role playing, and token economy are corrective strategies that are functional enough to modify lying behaviour among secondary school students in Awka south, Anambra State. This finding goes in accordance with previous reports by (Barrios, 2021). who pointed out that practical corrective counselling strategy for modifying lying behaviour included: token economy, modelling, self-monitoring, role playing and praise and ignore technique. Finally, the last research question examined the punitive counselling strategy for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students. The findings showed that the respondents agreed that items 11 and 13 were effective punitive strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students in Awka South. Through this finding, the respondents indicated that verbal reprimand and time out were valid punitive strategy for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students. The result of this research commensurate with a study by Baker (2021) which showed that verbal reprimand was effective in decreasing lying behaviour in students when used consistently and with clear expectations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is expedient to deduce that counselling strategies for modifying lying behaviour among secondary school students are systematic desensitization, thought-stopping technique, cognitive restructuring, assertive training technique, social skills training technique which are categorized under remedial strategy; self-monitoring, praise and ignore technique, modeling, role playing, token economy which fall under the corrective counselling strategy and punitive strategy which include verbal reprimand and time out.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Guidance Counsellors should ensure kin and objective observation on students' lying behaviours and guard against such behaviours as it could be detrimental to students' academic achievement and social relationship.
2. Teachers should observe their students with excessive and compulsive lying behaviour and recommend them for professional counselling. They should also ensure that those with such undesirable behaviour do not rub off their traits on their fellow peers in class.
3. Parents and care-givers should employ the use of counselling strategies to curb lying behaviour in their children and wards or encourage honesty by enrolling their wards in counselling sessions where their cognitive will be restructured.

4. Parents should also indulge their children in open minded conversations so that they ease up enough to be honest to them.
5. The school management should ensure that perpetual liars are punished to deter others from following the same path.

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