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Perceptions of Agriculture Science Teachers Regarding Negative Deviant Behaviours of Students in Senior Secondary Schools in Botswana

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Abstract

This descriptive survey study covers perceptions of agriculture science teachers regarding negative deviant behaviours of students in schools in the southern district of Botswana. A questionnaire was administered to gather the views of thirty (30) agriculture science teachers in six purposively selected secondary schools. The results showed that the majority (67%) of the respondents were males while only 33% were females. Teacher respondents' perceptions indicated behaviours such as "regular missing agriculture lessons, bullying other students in the garden over the use of tools, vandalism of school agriculture tools, disrespecting technical staff members, fighting other students during class, and failure to wear protective clothing" with a mean of 2.50-3.49. Lack of parental guidance and peer pressure were revealed as primary factors influencing students' behaviours.

Keywords: deviance, negative deviant behaviour, students, deviance, agricultural education, agriculture science.

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INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Students' negative deviant behavior has been the topic of discussion for the past twenty years beginning the 1990s as indicated by MacManus (1995) and Rigby (1996) cited in Moswela (2006). According to George (2009) negative deviant "*behaviour constitutes a violation of principles and values that are assumed to be universa*l" (p.56). Berth and Theron (1999) describe behaviour deviation as a situation whereby a person moves away from ethical or normal codes of conduct thus creating discomfort to the people in the school. Defiance whether done by girls or by boys is an "unlawful, aggressive, sexual and social behaviour visible to others which creates discomfort for them" (Berth and Theron, 1999, p. 441). The concept of deviant behaviour *can manifest itself in different forms that can cause physical and/or psychological harm to others to the extent that to its victim, schooling ceases to be safe and interesting*." (Moswela, 2005 pp.29).

According to Greydanus et. al. (2005) negative deviant behaviours can be in different forms which include suicide, abortion, class boycotting, homosexuality, prostitution, and gang affiliation, abuse, drug abuse, runaways, suicidal ideation or attempt and self harm. In schools and generally in the society, these forms of defiance carry a negative

importance and connotation which in most cases the society stigmatize people committing them. An important aspect of deviant behavior is the recognition that societies accept certain behaviors guided by their norms, standards and laws formulated to keep order in the society. In these circumstances, some people may be viewed as deviant while others engaged in the same behavior may not. Deviant behaviour can be good, odd and bad.

In educational institutions, efforts have been made by different countries to address negative deviant behaviors. For example in Botswana, the 1994 Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) established as a direct intervention the guidance and counseling department of the Botswana's Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoE&SD) and pastoral care units in secondary schools to address negative deviant behaviors. The prevalence of negative deviant behavior in Botswana schools has been confirmed by a study on discipline crisis by Garegae (2008), one on peer victimization, bullying by Moswela (2005); Moswela (2006), and the other study on aggressiveness, disruptive behaviors by Malete (2007).

A number of schools in Botswana have experienced negative deviant behaviors in one way or the other. For example, *Mmegi* Online newspaper of the 20 February 2008 reported about discipline challenges and misbehaving students in form five who ill-treated the newly admitted form four students upon arrival at one of the schools in the south East district. In the same year Monkagedi Gaotlhobogwe (2008) staff of the same newspaper wrote about Juvenile behavious where students were involved in selling illegal substances (*dagga*) in one of the senior secondary schools in the capital city, Gaborone. A study by Garegae revealed that generally the problem of discipline in societies has existed for as long as the human inception by God. However, the author has found that the discipline problem in Botswana schools has taken a more sensitive direction as cases of students misbehaving and breaking laws have become complex. The worst incident in Botswana reported by Shirley Nkepe (Staff Writer) the *Mmegi* newspaper of Friday 30 January 2004 following an incident where nine students died and some became blind after drinking a dangerous laboratory chemical called methanol. These examples and several other disobedience cases committed by students in school grounds including strikes may be viewed as crime Livesey and Lawson © www.onlineclassroom.tv (n.d).

According to Moswela (2005) students who misbehave against other students in school were liable to make them fear school and also cause harm to them physically and psychologically. According to *the development of aggressive behaviour in children and young people* (n.d), being aggressive of a person is character that grows within that particular person from childhood influenced by several factors such as peer pressure, parental care, and parental attitudes, family dysfunctional, socio-demographic, and genetic factors. At an early age such misbehaviors may be linked with delinquency but at an adult stage of development such behaviors become associated with crime in the society.

According to Ezewu (1983) unusual behaviour in people is shown when the person fails to conform to the rules, regulations and norms that are set for that particular educational institution. Students' behaviour in secondary schools as implied in Moswela (2006) is no longer showing loyalty, trustworthy, submissiveness, obedience, and respectfulness to their teachers. It is based on goals students set themselves (Decatur et.al., 2008). In the United States, misbehaviour in agricultural education has been observed as far back as the 1980s (Burnett. and Moore 1988) and is seen to be improving (Croom and Moore, 2003). An obvious misbehavior observed in students of agriculture as reported by Croom and Moore (2003) was that of negative attitudes toward school. In Botswana, agricultural education is a young subject in curriculum (Hulela and Miller, 2003) thus very little research has been done regarding student behaviors.

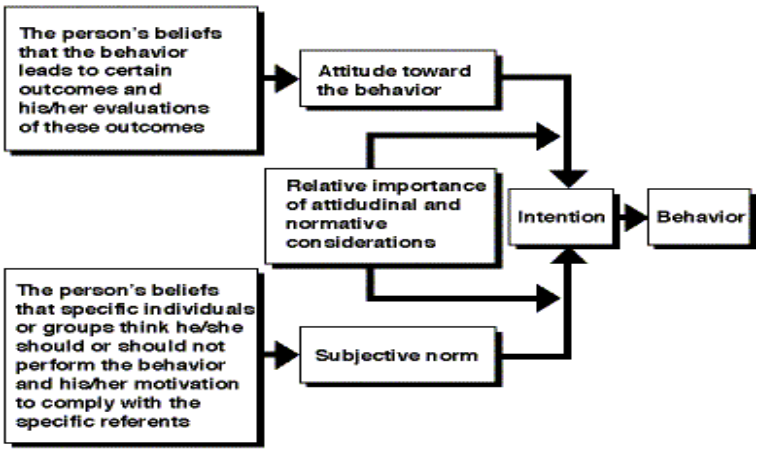
The Theoretical Framework

The framework of this study is supported by the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Figure 1) developed by Ajen and Fishbein (1980). Ajen and Fishbein theory explains that behaviors of people are influenced by outcomes of beliefs held as they impact on the attitudes to influence what the person would do (behaviours). In this regard behaviour is a product of beliefs and attitudes the person holds, as influenced by social environment including the shared norms and values. The theory also explains that behaviours performed by a child can be predicted from way of life. These go hand in hand with beliefs that what a person thinks she or he can do or not do (self-efficacy). The theory elucidates that the person's behavior is determined by goal put forward to carry out the behavior and that these targets may be influenced by social environment and norms. According to Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) as cited in Thompson and Warnick (2007) demographic variables, knowledge and observations influence beliefs, which impacts on attitudes, intentions, and finally behaviours."

Ajen and Fishbein (1980) theory proclaims that the people's attitudes can be used to explain actions that people take like the deviant behaviors committed by students in schools. That is, students' attitudes can be used to predict the forms of behaviour, positive and or negative. The theory further advanced that deviant behaviour is a function of an individual's

exposure to certain activities and their acquaintances, which also reinforces either socially acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. The Prochaska and DiClemente (1983) trans-theoretical model implies that behavior change occurs in stages that are different from one another through which people move in a cyclical or spiral pattern. This suggests that behaviors stages of development are not linear rather complex to be understood.

Figure 1: The theory of reasoned action (TRA)



Source: Ajen and Fishbein (1980)

A school can be viewed as a social organization with sections, rules and regulations established to govern the actions of all stakeholders in operation to meet the set goals. The goal of a school is for students to learn the set curricula, norms of society, the rules and regulations. This may be a form of prescribed documents or not written down at all but known to guide people in achieving the goal of education (Lynch, 1994).

According to Fellegi (2004) an educational institution is bound to have major consequences on delinquency behaviours of people for some reasons. This is so because, first, a school brings together a large number of young people who are still at the highest developmental capacity. Second, a school is a place for children to interact and get some experiences, as it may in a way confines and shields them through rules and regulations. In schools, delinquencies may include misbehaving to teachers and classmates, bullying, fighting, stealing, assaulting, robbing, and murdering (Fellegi, 2004). In agricultural education programs, eating and vandalizing crops in the garden are situations that are unacceptable to the teacher in the classroom. In schools, the behaviour problem can be of gender bias since boys tend to cause more problems in the garden than girls (Fontana, 1995). Theories of deviance suggest that social class was influential in delinquency (Kelly and Balch, 1971). In other words, the class in which a person is found places an impact on his or her behaviour**.** According to Kelly and Balch, 1971:

> *We cannot change a boy's social class, but we can do something about his school. If we can make the classroom and school activities generally, more rewarding and more engrossing for students, perhaps we can reduce the amount of juvenile delinquency (Kelly & Balch, 1971, p. 428).*

There are several factors that contribute to human behaviours' complexity or change. Similarly, several strategies have been suggested to address negative deviant behaviours (Garegae, 2007; Matoga, 2003, Morell, 2001). According to Bhatia (2005) people develop in stages in both physical and mental. From this sociological perspective, people become deviant because of factors related to friends, relatives and family members they interact with that support children and families. This suggests that single parent families need more help monitoring their children. If levels of instrumental control (monitoring) could be increased in these households, levels of deviance should decrease (Bates, et. al., (2003, p. 184).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to profile teachers' perceptions with regard to negative deviant behaviours in agriculture classes. The specific objectives were to:

a. Describe the respondents' demographic characteristics
b. Describe the frequency of negative deviant behaviours as perceived by respondents in the study
c. Describe factors influencing students' deviant behaviours as perceived by teacher respondents

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a descriptive survey design. This design was found appropriate for this study to measure the perceptions of the teacher of agriculture in terms of opinions, views and feelings of the respondents. The design has the advantage of gathering more information from the respondents. The purpose of the study was to describe the perceptions of teachers with regard negative deviant behaviours of students of agriculture science. The study described the patterns of demographic characteristics of teachers of agriculture science. Respondents' views regarding factors perceived to influence deviant behaviours of agriculture students were also described.

Population and Sampling

The population of this study comprised of a census of teachers of agriculture in six senior secondary schools in the southern part of Botswana. A purposively selected sample of six senior secondary schools each with five teachers giving a total of 30 teachers were used in the study. The six schools were purposively selected to participate in the study because of their proximity to Botswana College of Agriculture where the researchers were based. The Regional Secondary Education office based in Gaborone provided the researchers with an up-to-date list of teachers of agriculture in the schools with the school name, telephone and address.

Instrumentation

A survey questionnaire was used to gather data. The instrument was developed by the researchers using the descriptions of behaviours listed by Ezewu (1983). The instrument consisted of four parts. In part 1, the respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which the selected behaviours occurred during agriculture lessons. Each behaviour was anchored on a Likert-type scale described as; 1 = Not occurring (NO), 2 = Less frequently occurring (LF), 3 = Moderately occurring (MO), 4 = Frequent Occurring (FO), and 5= Very frequently occurring (VFO). In part 2 respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to statements describing the factors perceived to influence deviant behaviours in secondary school students. Descriptions of behaviours were anchored on a rating scale for teachers to indicate whether they; 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Not Sure (NS); 4 = Agree (A), or 5 = Strongly Agree (SA). In part 3 respondents were asked to provide their personal demographic information which included age, marital status, and educational level achieved, experience in teaching, position currently held and also to indicate whether or not they were involved in guidance and counselling of students as they teach agriculture in schools.

Face and content validity for the instrument was established by a group of lecturers at Botswana College of agriculture in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Education and Extension (AEE). Pre-testing of the questionnaire was conducted using teachers of agriculture at Kagiso senior secondary school in Ramotswa who were not part of the main study. Kagiso senior secondary school is in the south east region not included in the study. The Conbalch's Alpha value was found to be 0.70 which according to Ary et.al (2001) indicates that the instrument was consistent enough to measure what it is meant to measure.

Data Collection Procedures

To collect data from the respondents, a letter was mailed to heads of schools participating in the study to request permission to allow teachers of agriculture science to participate in the study. The letter also introduced the researchers in the study and further explained the importance of the study to teacher respondents. The second letter was mailed seven days afterward attached to the questionnaire, requesting teachers to respond to the questionnaire, at the same time providing instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. A self-addressed envelope was enclosed together with the questionnaire for respondents to enclose the completed questionnaire and handed over to the school head.

The questionnaire was self-administered. Teachers responded by checking on the answers they perceived best suitable to represent their perceptions. In order to control the non-response error, the researchers had explained to the respondents the importance of their response and contribution the study would make to the education system. The explanation was hoped to encourage teachers to participate in the study by giving their views or opinions.

Data Analysis

Frequencies and percentages were computed to show the gender of people in the study, educational level achieved, and number of years they have been teaching their subject of agriculture in secondary schools. The means and standard deviations were computed for behaviours studied. The higher means denoted positively perceived and most frequently occurring behaviour while lower means signified negatively perceived occurring behaviours in schools.

Ethical Considerations

The use of head teachers was not meant to pressurize the teachers into participating in the study. Respondents were told that they were free to participate or not and if they chose not to participate they were not going to be negatively affected in any way. The use of head teachers was to facilitate a central point where the questionnaire could be collected and delivered. The collection and return of the questionnaire was done in a way that ensured anonymity. Teachers were not asked to provide their names and whatever they said was not used in any other way except for the purposes of the study. The study did not pose any serious risk to the teacher respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data gathered was analyzed using PASW/ Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17. To examine the non-response bias, a t-test was used to compare early and late respondents. The t-value obtained indicated that there was no statistical difference between the early and late teacher respondents. The results of the study were presented in tabular and narrative forms sub divided according to the objectives of the study. There were three objectives. Results were also divided into three sections, namely; demographic characteristics, frequency of deviant behaviours and perceived influencers of students' behaviours in schools.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This part of the study presents and discusses the demographic characteristics of respondents as shown in Table 1. The results showed that the majority (67%) of the teacher respondents were male while only 33% were females. This statistics may be unique to agricultural education in Botswana because agriculture was a new field introduced into schools in the late 1970s and taught only to male students. Majority of the teachers at its inception in education were mainly expatriates and were males. Culturally, agriculture was seen as the domain of males in Botswana (Hulela and Miller, 2003). These results were inline with Kesley (2006) who found that majority of teachers in agricultural education in the Oklahoma state were male. The study by Kesley further revealed that even though there were many women prepared as teachers of agriculture it was established that few of them enter teaching for some reasons. The same studies found that women teachers seem not to be committed to teach agriculture, were mindful of where they were posted and were prejudice from the administrators point as women.

Table 1 also showed that the ages of the respondents in this study ranged between 21 and above 41, with the majority aged between 31 and 40 years. The results imply that most of the teachers of agriculture in schools were relatively young. Educationally, the majority of agriculture science teachers in schools hold a Diploma in Secondary Education (32.3%0), followed by those who hold Bachelor of Science on Agricultural Education (30.0%), then Bachelor of Science General agriculture (23.3%), and only 10 percent hold Master of Science degree in agricultural education. At least three percent teachers had a Diploma in Agric Education. These results imply that teachers of agriculture in schools were educated enough with ten percent having a Master of Science degree (MSc). The results were not surprising as Botswana had just started training teachers of agriculture in the late 1970s up to a level of diploma. The Bachelor of Science degree program was introduced in the early 1990s (Hulela and Miller, 2003) when the government started the Botswana College of Agriculture (BCA) agric education program and the Tonota College of Education secondary teacher preparations. Perhaps what needs to be investigated further is the impact of the highly trained teachers on the students' behaviour modification.

The results in Table 1 illustrate that agriculture teachers in schools were not very experienced; close to two thirds (63.3%) having up to 10 years of teaching experience, followed by one third respondents with teaching experience of 11 to 20 years and only three percent have taught for a period of 20 to 30 years. These statistics may be close to accurate since agriculture was new and teacher preparation (Hulela and Miller, 2003) accelerated by teacher attrition (Kesley, 2006; Mojaphoko and Subair, 1999). The results of this study also explain the practice that experienced teachers in Botswana tend to graduate from the classroom to become education officers, school heads, and or leave teaching for other careers as implied by Subair and Mojaphoko.

Table 1 also showed that slightly above half (51%) of the respondents in this study hold positions of senior teacher I, senior teacher II and school deputy head. These positions in addition to the actual subject matter classroom teaching were attached with some responsibilities. Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents were also providing guidance and counselling roles. This may be due to realization of the need for behaviour modification in teenagers.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents'

Characteristics		***Frequency (F)***	***Percentage (%)***
Gender	**Category**		
	Male	22	66.7
	Female	8	33.3
Age			
	21-25	4	13.3
	26-30	3	10.0
	31-35	11	36.7
	36-40	10	33.3
	41 and above	2	6.7
Education Level			
	Diploma Agric Education	1	3.3
	Diploma in Secondary Education	10	33.3
	Bachelor of Science Agric Education	9	30.0
	Bachelor of Science General	7	23.3
	MSc	3	10.0
Experience			
	1-10 years	19	63.3
	11-20 years	10	33.3
	21-30 years	1	3.3
Position held			
	Temporary teacher	1	3.3
	Assistant teacher	5	16.7
	Teacher	6	20.0
	Senior teacher I & II	15	50.0
	School Deputy Head	3	10
Guidance & Counselling			
	Yes	15	50
	No	15	50

Perceived Student Deviant Behaviours

The respondents were asked to rate the frequency with which each of the negative behaviours occurred during their teaching of agriculture. The results in Table 2 show statistical means, standard deviations of behaviours descriptors ranked from the most frequently occurring to the least occurring. To interpret the statistical results, means ranging from zero to 2.49 (0.00 – 2.49) denoted behaviours perceived rarely occurring (denoted as RO=3), means of 2.50-3.49 denoted average occurrence behaviours (denoted as AVE = 2), and a mean of 3.50 and above denoted behaviours perceived to be most frequently occurring (denoted as MF=1) in agriculture science classrooms. The behaviour which had the highest mean indicated most prevalent and the lowest mean indicated the least occurring behaviours in the schools. Based on these criteria, the following mis-behaviours were perceived to occur frequently in the teaching of agriculture science; "coming to school late" with mean = 3.70; SD = 1.12, followed by "stealing from fellow students' projects" and "absenteeism" both with means of 3.67; SD = 1.09. The behaviours as rated by the respondents could be valid because students in

schools were mainly teenagers. In a study conducted by Croom and More (2003) the findings revealed mis behaviours such as negative attitude toward school were frequently occurring. However, the measures of variability as seen in Table 2 were high for the four variables. The higher standard deviations implied some greater deviation of the group surveyed from the mean of each behaviour statement.

The results in Table 2 showed respondents' perceptions of descriptors of students' negative behaviours. Results show three descriptors "coming to agricultural lessons late" (M=3.70; SD= 1.12), "stealing from fellow students" and "absenteeism during agriculture classes" both with (M= 3.67; SD= 1.09) ranked higher as most frequently occurring. Seven negative behaviour descriptors were categorized as moderately occurring (AVE=2) with means ranging from means 2.50-3.49. These included, "*regular missing agriculture lessons*" "*vandalism of school agriculture tools*", *bullying other students in the garden over the use of tools",* "*disrespecting technical staff members"*, "*fighting other students during class*", *failure to wear protective clothing*" and *taking drugs such as motokwane, glue and alcohol*" Generally, the results on bullying confirm the outcomes of a study by Moswela's (2005) on ill-treatment practiced by some students in schools. The results are also inline with what Matsoga termed the increase on prevalence of indiscipline in schools. According to Laskorusky's (2009) report delinquency children involved in run-away from their homes tend to affect their self-esteem. The results in Table 2 further showed that four behaviours were perceived to be rarely occurring (RO) such as stealing, strikes, taking alcohols and chemicals with means ranging between 1.27 and 2.43. These results could be close to accurate since such behaviours appear to be a crime and an indication of serious law breaking in the society. These behaviours occur in rare case (denoted RO) in schools as revealed in the study.

Table 2: Frequency of occurrence of selected behaviours

	Statement	**Mean**	**STD**	**Rank**
MF	Coming to agriculture lessons late	3.70	1.12	1
MF	Stealing from fellow students' plots	3.67	1.09	1
MF	Absenteeism during agriculture classes	3.67	1.09	1
AVE	Regular missing agriculture lessons	3.47	1.11	2
AVE	Vandalism of school agriculture tools	3.43	0.82	2
AVE	Bullying other students in the garden over the use of tools	3.33	0.96	2
AVE	Disrespecting technical staff members	3.20	1.37	2
AVE	Fighting other students during class	3.13	0.97	2
AVE	Failure to wear protective clothing	3.0	1.06	2
AVE	Taking drugs such as *motokwane* glue, and alcohol	2.87	1.11	2
RO	Stealing of agricultural produce in the garden	2.43	1.04	3
RO	Taking alcohol during school/ agriculture hours	2.33	1.15	3
RO	Taking laboratory chemicals	1.57	0.97	3
RO	Strikes and demonstrations	1.27	0.88	3

The 3rd objective described the perceptions of teacher respondents on whether or not the factors related to parental, family and societal and development listed influence deviant behaviours on students. The statistics results in Table 3 showed that variables were ranked 1 to 9 based on means computed ranging from the highest influence Mean = 4.10; SD= 0.86 to a low Mean= 2.127: SD = 0.91 denoting lowest influence. The variable "Lack of parental guidance" (mean = 4.10; SD = .86) followed by "Peer pressure" Mean= 4.00; SD = 1.02) were perceived highly influential to students' behaviours. The variable, "Staying with foster parents" (Mean =2.27; SD=0.91) and "Forming gangs to boycott projects" Mean =2.43; SD=1.28 were perceived less influential on student behaviours. These results were not different from what Subair (1999) viewed as factors affecting the Juvenile delinquency misbehaviour of children. The results of this study also affirm the findings and conclusions drawn from studies conducted by Garegae (2007) and Matsoga' (2003) indeed several factors contribute toward negative behaviour or indiscipline in schools.

Table 3: Means and standard deviations of Perceived influencers of behaviours (n=30)

Statement	**Mean**	**STD**	**Rank**
Lack of parental guidance	4.10	0.86	1
Peer pressure	4.0	1.02	2
Frustration from the family	3.97	0.77	3
Lack of self esteem	3.97	0.85	4

Divorces in the family	3.93	0.82	5
Family conflicts	3.93	0.87	6
Negligence by parents	3.70	0.88	7
Advancement in media images in the country	3.63	1.03	8
Lack of material support	3.63	0.96	9
Being an orphan	3.33	1.06	10
Forming gangs to boycott projects	2.43	1.28	11
Staying with foster parents	2.27	0.91	12

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The study found that respondents agreed that negative student behaviours do occur during the teaching of agriculture science in the classroom, thus there was need for strategies and policies to guide the behaviours of students in agricultural education reduce negative behaviours.
2. The demographic characteristics as shown in the study revealed that teachers of agriculture science in schools were mainly men, relatively young, moderately educated and inexperienced but involved in counselling their students. However, what needs to be investigated further is the impact of the highly trained teachers on negative deviant student behaviours.
3. The study revealed that negative deviant behaviours can be categorized into three groups as perceived by respondents; behaviours that were perceived to be most frequently occurring during agriculture science classes. Agriculture as a practical science subject and the environment upon which it is offered in secondary schools in Botswana could provide that opportunity for students to misbehave if teachers are not vigilant. Depending on culture, students at the age at which they are in secondary schools may not know which behaviours to display during class. With regard to arriving late for agriculture science lessons, the situation in schools particularly in Botswana where students do not have base classrooms there is a high chance of late coming.
4. The findings also revealed that some behaviour perceived to be rarely occurring have implication on educational policies, rules and regulations that forbid 'crime' and related factors in school grounds. The respondents' perceptions could be accurate because things like strikes, taking alcohol, chemicals and stealing are seen to be a crime and an indication of law breaking in the society, so they are rare.
5. Several factors such as lack of parental guidance, peer pressure, frustration from the family, lack of self esteem influence students' deviant behaviours as shown by majority of the behaviour variables studied and ranked from high influence to low influence. These being psychosocial and developmental factors need to be monitored.
6. A national study be conducted to cover all schools in the country concentrating on strategies and policies helping to adjust negative deviant behaviours.

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