

**INFLUENCE OF COUNSELLING TECHNIQUES ON DEVIANT SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS  
AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF JOS, PLATEAU STATE,  
NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

This study investigated the influence of counselling techniques on deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of University of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. The study was carried out using cross-sectional survey research design. The study was guided by three objectives, research questions and hypotheses. The study used random and purposive sampling techniques to draw the sample of 384 from the population. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher developed questionnaire titled "Influence of Counselling Techniques on Deviant Sexual Behaviours among Students Questionnaire (ICTDSBSQ)". The instrument was validated by three experts for content validity from Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Jos, and a reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha method. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while ANOVA was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed a significant difference in the type of deviant sexual behaviours that is prevalent among undergraduate students of the University of Jos based on age. It was recommended among others that guidance should be made compulsory in curricula, and counselors should be trained on trauma-informed care.

**Keywords: Counselling techniques, deviant sexual behaviours, risky sexual behaviour, undergraduate students, University of Jos.**

**Introduction**

Deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students are a pressing concern globally. Adolescent and young adult sexual behaviour has become a major public health and educational concern in Nigeria, with increasing reports of risky and deviant sexual practices among students in tertiary institutions (Adewuya, Ola & Aloba, 2017; Omigbodun & Bella, 2018). Such behaviours include multiple sexual partners, unprotected intercourse, transactional sex, coercive sex and other forms of sexual misconduct that expose students to sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, psychological trauma and academic disruption (Adepoju & Owoye, 2016; Okafor & Okafor, 2018). Deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students have increasingly become a subject of concern in contemporary Nigerian society due to their implications for students' psychological well-being, academic performance, and public health outcomes. Deviant sexual behaviour refers to sexual practices that deviate from socially and culturally accepted norms, including risky sexual engagements, compulsive sexual acts, and participation in unconventional sexual activities (Offong, Ajet, Ajayi & Amoo, 2019).

Evidence from Nigerian universities indicates that a significant proportion of undergraduates engage in risky sexual behaviours. These behaviours expose students to serious consequences including sexually transmitted infections and the likes (Onah, 2022; Yusuf, Yakubu, Isiaq & Ali, 2016). The university environment, characterized by increased independence, exposure to diverse social networks, and reduced parental supervision, often predisposes students to experimentation and risk-taking behaviours. Studies have shown that factors such as peer pressure, substance use, curiosity, and socio-economic challenges significantly contribute to the prevalence of deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduates in Nigeria (Wusu & Okoukoni, 2011; Ekundayo, 2014; Nwasor & Unachukwu, 2023). Furthermore, the proliferation of internet access and social media platforms has significantly reshaped students' perceptions and attitudes toward sexuality. Exposure to sexually explicit content and changing global norms has contributed to the normalization of behaviours that were previously considered deviant within traditional Nigerian society. Psychological factors such as low self-esteem, impulsivity, emotional instability and poor decision-making skills have also been identified as contributing to risky sexual behaviours among university students (Ekundayo, 2014; Idoko & Nympha, 2023; Olawole, Olugbemi & Ogunyemi, 2024).

Counselling techniques have emerged as effective tools for addressing maladaptive behaviours and promoting positive behavioural change among young people. Counselling in educational settings involves structured interventions aimed at helping individuals understand themselves, develop coping strategies, and make informed decisions. Various counselling approaches including cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), client-centered therapy, behavioural modification techniques, and group counselling have been widely applied to address behavioural and emotional challenges among students (Onah, 2022).

Evidence from Nigerian studies shows that structured psychological interventions such as cognitive behaviour therapy, cognitive restructuring, logotherapy and peer counselling can significantly reduce risky sexual behaviour among in-school youth (Hoffman, Sawyer & Asnaani, 2010; Kocsel, Szabo, Galambos & Kokonyei, 2017). However, despite the availability of guidance and counselling services in universities, deviant sexual behaviours remain prevalent, suggesting that existing counselling approaches maybe inadequate, inconstantly applied or poorly accessed by students.

The University of Jos located in Plateau State draws a diverse population of undergraduates who are exposed to multiple socio-cultural, economic and peer pressures that can encourage experimentation with deviant sexual practices (Fatoye, Adeniji & Egbijile, 2019; Namu & Ugboha, 2024). Studies conducted in Jos and Plateau State have documented early sexual debut, unsafe sexual practices and other forms of deviant behaviour among adolescents, underscoring the urgent need for effective counselling responses. While prior research in Nigeria has examined the effectiveness of specific counselling interventions in reducing risky sexual behaviour among adolescents in secondary schools and other settings. There is limited empirical evidence focusing on how different counselling techniques actually influence deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria, with a view to providing evidence-based recommendations for strengthening university counselling services and promoting healthier sexual behaviour among students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Deviant sexual behaviours, such as unprotected sex, multiple partnerships, transactional sex, and coercive practices remain alarmingly prevalent among undergraduate students at the University of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria, despite the presence of University counselling services. Studies, such as Adepoju & Owoye (2016); Okafor & Okafor (2018) indicate high rates of sexual deviance (25.38% of reported campus incidents), with many students engaging in risky unprotected intercourse (over 60% among sexually active females in similar Nigerian university settings) driven by peer pressure, financial incentives, and socio-cultural norms (Fatoye et al., 2019; Namu & Ugboha, 2024).

On the ground, undergraduates at the University of Jos face diverse pressures including peer influence, economic hardship, and campus culture that normalize early sexual debut and experimentation, leading to widespread deviant practices without consistent intervention. Official records from 1983-1988 show escalating trends in sexual deviance alongside other antisocial behaviours, and recent Plateau State studies confirm persistent risky sexual activities among youths.

These behaviours result in severe health risks like STIs (including HIV/AIDS), unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, psychological trauma, and academic disruptions such as dropout rates (Omigbodun & Bella, 2018). Additionally, they contribute to broader social issues like gender-based violence and long-term mental health challenges, straining university resources and public health systems in Nigeria.

Ideally, undergraduate students would exhibit responsible sexual behaviours which are characterized by informed consent, consistent condom use, delayed debut, and mutual respect – supported by proactive, evidence-based counselling techniques like cognitive behavioural therapy and peer education that foster healthy decision-making.

The core problem lies in the gap between available counselling services and their ineffective influence on reducing deviant sexual behaviours, as prevalence remains high despite interventions signaling inadequate adaptation to local contexts, poor student access or limited empirical evaluation of techniques' impact at the University of Jos.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of counselling techniques on deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of University of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. The specific objectives include to:

1. determine the prevalence of deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos;
2. find out the factors contributing to deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos;
3. find out the influence of counselling techniques on deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the types of deviant sexual behaviours that are prevalent among undergraduate students of the University of Jos?
2. What are the factors contributing to deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos?
3. What is the influence of counselling techniques on deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were raised and tested in the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the types of deviant sexual behaviours that are prevalent among undergraduate students of the University of Jos based on age.
2. Counselling techniques have no significant influence on deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos.
3. There is no significant difference in the rating of students on the most effective counselling techniques in addressing deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students based on departments.

### **Methodology**

The study was carried out using cross-sectional survey research design which captures data from a population at a single point in time, making it ideal for efficient studies in fields like counselling psychology (McLead & Guy-Evans, 2023). The study used random, census and purposive sampling techniques to draw the sample of 384 from the population. The instrument for this study was questionnaire. The content validity method was used in validating the instrument of this study. Cronbach Alpha method was equally used to test the reliability of the instrument, and reliability coefficient of 0.78 was realized which was sufficient enough for the research instrument to be used to collect data. Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A).

## Results

**Research Question One:** What are the types of deviant sexual behaviours that are prevalent among undergraduate students of the University of Jos?

Table 1: Results of the Analysis on Types and Prevalence of Deviant Sexual Behaviours among Undergraduate Students of the University of Jos

S/N	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std.	Decision
1.	Engaging in sexual acts in public spaces.	0	76	23	168	117	3.85	1.078	Agree
2.	Sexual harassment	19	57	152	114	42	3.27	1.01	Agree
3.	Non-consensual sexual activities	19	19	19	247	80	3.91	0.95	Agree
4.	Transactional sex	0	0	232	0	152	3.79	0.98	Agree
5.	Multiple sexual partners	0	0	4	247	133	4.34	0.50	Agree
6.	Pornography addiction	19	95	4	210	56	3.49	1.16	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>							<b>3.78</b>		<b>Agree</b>

Table 1 reveals the result of the types of deviant sexual behaviours that are prevalent among undergraduate students of the University of Jos. From the result, all the items have mean scores above the criterion mean of 3.00. This indicates that students engage in sexual acts in public spaces, they carry out sexual acts in public spaces, they carry out sexual harassment, and non-consensual sexual activities, such as rape or sexual assault and coercion. Furthermore, students are found carrying out transactional sex, having multiple sexual partners, and being pornographic addicts. Since the grand mean of 3.78 is above the criterion mean of 3.0, the result is implying that the aforementioned are the types of sexual deviances prevalent among the students of the University of Jos.

**Research Question Two:** What are the factors contributing to deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos?

Table 2: Results of the Analysis of Factors Contributing to Deviant Sexual Behaviours among Undergraduate Students of the University of Jos

S/N	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std.	Decision
1.	Peer pressure and social influence.	57	19	19	209	80	3.61	1.28	Agree
2.	Exposure to pornography and social media.	19	19	19	190	137	4.06	1.02	Agree

3.	Lack of comprehensive sexuality education.	38	0	0	285	61	3.86	1.02	Agree
4.	Substance abuse	38	0	38	228	80	3.81	1.08	Agree
5.	Economic hardship and transactional sex.	0	0	19	304	61	4.11	0.44	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>							<b>3.89</b>		<b>Agree</b>

Table 2 shows the factors contributing to deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos. From the result, all the items have mean scores above the criterion mean of 3.00. This indicates that peer pressure and social influence, exposure to pornography and social media, lack of comprehensive sexuality education, substance abuse, economic hardship and transactional sex are all factors contributing to deviant behaviours among students. Since the grand mean of 3.89 is above the criterion mean of 3.0, the result is implying that all the above factors contribute to deviant sexual behaviours among the University students.

**Research Question Three:** What are the influence of counselling techniques on deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos?

Table 3: Results of the Analysis on the Influence of Counselling Techniques on Deviant Sexual Behaviours among Undergraduate Students of the University of Jos

S/N	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std.	Decision
1.	Cognitive behavioural therapy is effective in addressing deviant sexual thoughts and behaviours.	0	19	175	0	190	3.45	1.078	Agree
2.	Behavioural modification techniques used in counselling reduce deviant impulses and sexual behaviours.	0	19	38	266	61	3.96	0.68	Agree
3.	Group counselling helps reduce feelings of isolation related to sexual behaviours/issues.	0	57	38	228	61	3.76	0.89	Agree
4.	Relapse prevention training in counselling is helpful for avoiding deviant sexual behaviours.	38	19	57	209	61	3.61	1.12	Agree
5.	Social skills training are included in counselling sessions are effective.	38	57	19	190	80	3.57	1.25	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>							<b>3.67</b>		<b>Agree</b>

**Testing Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference in the type of deviant sexual behaviour that is prevalent among undergraduate students of the University of Jos based on age.

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA Results of the Type of Deviant Sexual Behaviours among Undergraduate Students of the University of Jos based on Age

	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P-Value</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Between Groups	5754.358	2	2877.179	292.472	.000	Significant
Within Groups	4023.181	381	10.560			
<b>Total</b>	<b>9777.539</b>	<b>383</b>				

Table 5: Scheffe Post Hoc Result on the Type of Deviant Sexual Behaviours among Undergraduate Students of the University of Jos based on Age

<b>(I) Age</b>	<b>(J) Age</b>	<b>Mean Difference (I – J)</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
10 – 15	16 – 26	-4.368*	1.667	.033
	26 – 35	-13..622*	1.635	.000
16 – 26	10 – 15	4.368*	1.667	.033
	26 – 35	-9.253*	.417	.000
26 – 35	10 – 15	13.622*	1.635	.000
	16 – 26	9.253*	.417	.000

Table 5 reveals the ANOVA result on difference in the type and prevalence of deviant sexual behaviour among undergraduate students of the University of Jos based on age. The result yielded  $F(2, 381) = 272.47, P < 0.05$ . Since the P-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. It is indicating that there is a significant difference in the type of deviant sexual behaviours that is prevalent among undergraduate students of the University of Jos based on age.

**Hypothesis Two:** Counselling techniques have no significant influence on deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos.

Table 6: Influence of Counselling Techniques on Deviant Sexual Behaviours

<b>Variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P-Value</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Counselling Techniques	384	22.65	5.05	382	.948	.000	Significant
Deviant sexual behaviours	384	18.35	4.28				

Table 6 shows the result on relationship between counselling techniques and deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos. The result yielded  $F(382) = .948, P < 0.05$  level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significantly positive strong relationship between the counselling techniques and students' deviant behaviour among undergraduate students at the University of Jos.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant difference in the rating of students on the most effective counselling techniques in addressing deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students based on departments.

Table 7: Summary of ANOVA Results on the Most Effectiveness Counselling Techniques in Addressing Deviant Based on Departments

	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P-Value</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Between Groups	3406.472	3	1135.491	117.202	.000	Significant
Within Groups	3681.567	380	9.688			
<b>Total</b>	<b>7088.039</b>	<b>383</b>				

Table 8: Scheffe Post Hoc Result on the Most Effectiveness Counselling Technique in Addressing Deviant Behaviours based on Departments

<b>(I) Group</b>	<b>(J) Group</b>	<b>Mean Difference (I – J)</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Education	Arts	-2.633*	.470	.000
	Social Science	-5.800*	.422	.000
	Management Science	-7.300*	.458	.000
Arts	Education	2.633*	.470	.000
	Social Science	-3.167*	.545	.000
	Management Science	-4.667*	.573	.000
Social Science	Education	5.800*	.422	.000
	Arts	3.167*	.545	.000
	Management Science	-1.500	.535	.051
Management Science	Education	7.300*	.458	.000
	Arts	4.667*	.573	.000
	Social Science	1.500	.535	.051

Table 7 reveals the ANOVA result on difference in the rating of students on the most effective counselling techniques in addressing deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students based on departments. The result yielded  $F(2, 381) = 272.47, P < 0.05$ . Since the P-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. It is indicating that there is a significant difference in the rating of students on the most effective counselling techniques in addressing deviant sexual behaviours. Table 8 shows the post hoc result on the differences in the faculties. The result indicated that significant difference lies between the Faculty of Education and Arts, Social Science, Management Sciences and Social Sciences ( $P > 0.05$ ).

## Discussion

The findings on types and prevalence of deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos revealed that engaging in sexual acts in public spaces, sexual harassment and non-consensual sexual activities such as rape or sexual assault and coercion, transactional sex, having multiple sexual partners and pornography are the types of sexual deviances prevalent among the students of the University of Jos. It showed a significant difference in the type of deviant sexual behaviours that is prevalent among undergraduate students of the University of Jos based on age. This study is in agreement with the studies of Adewuya et al. (2017), and Omigbodun and Bella (2018), who reported that adolescent and young adult sexual behaviour has become a major public health and educational concern in Nigeria, with increasing reports of risky and deviant sexual practices among students in tertiary institutions.

The results of research question two and hypothesis two revealed that the factors contributing to deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos are peer pressure and social influence, exposure to pornography and social media, lack of comprehensive sexuality education, substance abuse, economic hardship and transactional sex are all factors contributing to deviant behaviour among students. This is in consonance with the studies of Fatoye et al. (2019), and Namu & Ugboha (2024), who asserted that undergraduate students are exposed to multiple socio-cultural, economic hardships and peer pressures that can encourage experimentation with deviant sexual practices.

The results of both research question three and hypothesis three revealed that the influence of counselling techniques on deviant sexual behaviours among undergraduate students of the University of Jos are that cognitive behavioural therapy is effective in addressing deviant sexual thoughts and behaviours, behavioural modification techniques are used in counselling for sexual behaviours, group counselling helps reduce feelings of isolation related to sexual behaviour issues, relapse prevention training in counselling is helpful for avoiding deviant sexual behaviours, social skills training are included in counselling sessions. The result showed a significantly positive strong relationship between the counselling techniques and students' deviant behaviours among undergraduate students at the University of Jos. The result is in line with that of Hofmann et al., (2010); Koosel et al. (2017) who reported that counselling services are crucial in addressing deviant sexual behaviours with techniques such as cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) and solution-focused therapy (SFT) showing promise in reducing deviant sexual behaviours.

## **Conclusion**

This study affirms that targeted counselling interventions, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), peer counselling, and emotional coaching, significantly reduce deviant sexual behaviours, including unprotected sex, multiple partnerships, transactional sex and coercion are prevalent among undergraduate students at the University of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. Despite persistent high prevalence (over 25% of campus incidents linked to economic pressures, peer influence, and weak enforcement), these techniques enhance self-efficacy, cognitive restructuring, and behavioural control in Jos's diverse ethno-religious context. Ultimately, integrating evidence-based counselling bridges the gap in University services, fostering safer campus environments and aligning with Nigeria's public health goals.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings:

1. Counsellors on the Plateau should adopt CBT and peer-led programmes with pre/post assessments; train on cultural sensitivity for Plateau State's context; offer walk-in sessions for at-risk students.
2. University administration should mandate sexuality education in curricula, fund dedicated counselling units, enforce strict anti-deviance policies with survivor support, and partner with Plateau State health agencies.
3. Policymakers and NGOs should scale up nationwide funding for northern university counselling, launch campaigns targeting economic drivers of risky behaviours, and develop trauma-informed protocols.
4. Future research should pursue longitudinal randomized controlled trials (RCTs) at University of Jos comparing CBT versus logotherapy; examine moderators like gender, religion, and locus of control.

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