Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences

www.pjlss.edu.pk

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring Individual Intervention Methods to Address Secondary School Students' Misbehaviour in Malaysia: A Case Study among Counselling Teachers

Ahmad Shahlan Saudi[1*], Norzalinda Mohd Ali Hanafiah[2], Zakiyah Jamaluddin[3]

[1,2,3] School of Applied Psychology, Social Work and Policy, University Utara Malaysia, Malaysia.

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
  *Corresponding Author: shahlansaudi@gmail.com	The post-modern world has witnessed the busyness of humans pursuing worldly life can cause humans to become distracted and eventually fall into various social problems. Social problems, especially among secondary school students in Malaysia, are still at an alarming level and require immediate action so that they do not have a negative impact on the school. There are various intervention methods that can be used by counselling teachers to deal with these social problems at school. There are various intervention methods that can be used by counselling teachers to deal with these social problems such as individual, group, family and community intervention methods. This article will examine the intervention methods that are often used by counselling teachers in secondary schools to deal with student misconduct problems, especially for the mild and moderate categories. The data in this study were obtained from a qualitative study conducted in the states of Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak. A semi-structured interview approach was used to collect study data where four counselling teachers were interviewed. The study data was analysed using thematic analysis methods and the results of the study showed that the individual intervention method is the method most widely used by counselling teachers to deal with student misconduct problems, especially misconduct problems such as not completing schoolwork, not bringing books, lying, cheating, being irresponsible and copying in tests or examinations. In addition, some of the intervention approaches used include giving advice or reprimands, visiting students at home and rehabilitation programs.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of misbehaviour among high school students in Malaysia is one of the issues that is increasingly worrying and causing anxiety among the community. This is because it can affect the learning process and the school environment as a whole if it is not dealt with properly. Students involved in misbehaviour may face various other problems such as emotional stress, peer influence, and lack of support from family. Therefore, effective intervention by counselling teachers plays an important role to deal with this problem. Interventions can also have a positive impact on well-being and quality of life.

There are various methods that can be used by counselling teachers to treat problematic students. Among them are individual intervention, group intervention, family intervention and also intervention in the community. Through these intervention methods, the counselling teacher can help problematic students understand the effects of their actions, try to change their behaviour and

then be able to function again as a problem-free student. In addition, other methods that can be used to deal with student misbehaviour are implementing behaviour-based interventions as well as teaching and reinforcing alternatives that are socially acceptable to students (Robinson et al., 2022).

According to Halimah and Zainab (2015) the Islamic approach can be used to reduce and deal with student misbehaviour such as religious talk programs, anti-smoking and HIV/Aids talks, self-identity courses, leadership courses and visit programs to rehabilitation centers. All of these proactive and comprehensive intervention methods are the key to overcoming misbehaviour and guiding students towards better character and moral development. However, this study only focuses on individual intervention methods conducted by counselling teachers to provide emotional support, improve behaviour, and help students recognize and overcome the problems they face.

Problem statement

Social problems among teenagers are increasing and are very worrying, especially among school-aged teenagers (Mohd Gaid et al., 2022). This disciplinary offense is no stranger in today's society. The desire to try something new is high when they reach puberty or high school age. This is because youth and teenagers at the age of 13 to 17 years are at the stage where they begin to face crises and internal conflicts as they struggle in search of their self-identity. This statement is equal to Crocetti (2017) which states that adolescents repeatedly form and maintain their identity over time through commitment, exploration and reconsideration, with stability associated with psychosocial functioning and well-being. Now, social problems such as drug abuse are becoming more prevalent among teenagers unfortunately it can cause various diseases such as chronic health problems, gambling, prostitution, hanging out, rape and many more.

Wan Abdul Fattah et al., (2021) claimed that many teenagers are involved in promiscuity and adultery which is an act that is forbidden and causes God's wrath on His creations. This can have a negative impact in developing countries because the need to help overcome this problem is costly. Social problems like this are very challenging because they have an impact not only on teenagers but also on the parents and society. In addition, it can also damage the youth involved, parents, and the community where it inclines to affect the harmony and development of the country today (Ismail et al., 2022).

Azzyyati (2017) in her research found that the existence of social problems will contribute to discipline problems among students at school which will interfere with the cultivation of commendable character and morals. The former Mufti of Penang, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Salim, claimed that the growing prevalence of bullying was caused by a lack of moral values among students (Syajaratulhuda, 2021). He also explained that the Islamic and Moral Education curriculum used in schools is ineffective in shaping students' morals. The former Mufti's statement is supported by research conducted by Azmil et al., (2017) which shows an increase in student crime statistics every year. It is also said to be more prevalent every year among Muslim teenagers in Malaysia (Wan Abdul Fattah et al.,2022). This means that student misconduct requires immediate rehabilitation action as it is a long-standing issue (Nurzatil Ismah et al., 2022).

METHODS

Research design

Ghazali and Sufean (2018) believes that a research method or research design must be in line with the theoretical framework of the study, the purpose and objectives of the study and the importance of answering the research questions. A method is like a push in a certain direction, that is, a method has its own scope of coverage and limitations as well as strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, in this study, the researcher has adopted the qualitative method. The qualitative method is one of the

techniques in conventional research that is usually chosen by researchers other than the quantitative method.

A significant difference between qualitative and quantitative research is that the essence of qualitative research is based on words while quantitative research uses numbers. Qualitative research is an approach to explore and understand the meaning created by a person or a group of individuals about something related to humanity or social issues (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative studies also focus on understanding how people interpret experiences, build lives and give meaning to those experiences (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

This qualitative method burdens efforts to find and provide evidence and non-numerical observations even if there is evidence that refers to statistics (Chua, 2011). This method also provides more information about human nature and conditions by using a general view of any social action. Therefore, it is inevitable that qualitative research is more focused on obtaining quality information by focusing on small samples and this method is certainly not focused on the quantity of the information collected (Sulaiman et al., 2021).

Interview technique

Mokmin (2012) stated that the interview technique has many benefits, one of which is the flexibility of the interviewer to research and determine the subject that needs to be researched in depth in relation to the research issue. The purpose of the interview is to gather information about the views, experiences, and perceptions of the research subjects on the topic under study (Lee et al., 2018).

The interview protocol is a guideline for data collection through an interview method that involves face-to-face or non-face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the study subject. The purpose of the interview is to gather information about the views, experiences, and perceptions of the research subjects on the topic under study (Lee et al., 2018). The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews where questions were prepared in advance before the live interview session was conducted (Yazan and De Vasconcelos, 2016).

In this study, the researcher used the interview as the main instrument as it allows the researcher to get accurate information through the study participants. A semi-structured interview method was used to interview school counsellors. The purpose of this interview was to find out the actions taken by counsellors in dealing with misbehaving students at school. The researcher interviewed four study participants who are teacher counsellors representing four schools in the states of Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak. Interviews were conducted individually where each study subject were interviewed for three times about the type of intervention given by the school, especially the counsellors in dealing with the problem of school student misbehaviour. The interview data was manually analysed through thematic analysis.

RESULTS

Background of participants

This study uses a qualitative approach where face-to-face interviews and telephone calls were conducted over several months to collect data. The counselling teachers who were interviewed had working experience between two years and 19 years. In general, all study participants are female counselling teachers between the ages of 32 and 43. Table 1 below describes the demographic information about the counselling teachers involved in this study.

Table 1: Summary of participants (N=4)

Participants	Gender	Age	Experience as a counselling teacher	State
Participant 1	Female	32	2 years	Perlis

Participant 2	Female	35	13 years	Kedah
Participant 3	Female	43	19 years	Pulau Pinang
Participant 4	Female	40	10 years	Perak

Qualitative results

Based on interviews with four secondary school counselling teachers in Malaysia, it was found that the intervention method most used by counselling teachers to deal with mild and moderate student misbehaviour is individual intervention. In detail, the counselling teacher's statement is as follows:

" I focus on individuals. After intervention sessions with students, then i approach the parents or families and groups. As a school counsellor, I prefer to use this approach when I conduct sessions with my students. In addition, I want to try to be their friend. People tend to perceive counselling teachers negatively especially in terms of confidentiality. So, we try to be friends and build trust with students. After trust is built, we can give advice to students and students will express problems to us."

(Participant 1)

"The intervention given is an individual intervention. One of the things we have done and still do until now is the mosque's young friend program. For this mosque's young friend program, we usually work with three mosques that are close to the school. These three mosques are the parishes closest to where the school students live. So we work with these three mosques to deal with discipline problems. This means that students who have disciplinary problems will be helped by the mosque by implementing programs that focus on individuals such as spiritual strengthening for students but our target is individuals. We usually hold religious studies classes such as morals and manners classes for the students involved. In addition, we also hold skills workshops such as time management skills. After that, we often conduct home visits to build relationships with students' families to find out the next problem. We also consult with parents because cooperation from parents is very necessary".

(Participant 2)

"My friend and I will do an individual intervention session. The three main approaches we emphasize are rehabilitation, development and prevention. We really focus on individuals. If student don't know the appropriate learning skills, we will use developmental interventions. For instance, prevention approach is for a student who is lazy in studying and skips school, we can do preventive intervention so that the student returns to school. Rehabilitation, for example, if a student reaches the point of crisis and wants to commit suicide due to stress, we counselling teachers use rehabilitation techniques. For study skills, for example, my friend and I took the initiative to do a reading program for students who can't read. This program does not only involve students with disciplinary problems but it is open to all students who need help in terms of reading. For now my friend and I focus on the Malay language module. As for the prevention program, every year we will do a back-to-school program where there are various interesting activities such as educational games and motivational talks to attract students to come to school. The rehabilitation technique used is immediate and direct. We approach the student by giving advice, not punishing and stabilizing emotions by using breathing techniques to calm students in crisis. We call it crisis intervention".

(Participant 3)

"The school, especially the Counselling Unit, conducts counselling sessions. We focus on individuals by giving advice and reprimands to students. After that is the group session. Individual sessions are really important for this school so that the school can provide effective intervention. For us, advice and criticism have a great impact on our students. In addition, we also conduct visits to the homes of students who have problems so that we can build relationships with the students' families to identify the problems that are occurring and what the school can do to help".

(Participant 4)

The results of the data analysis showed that the individual intervention method is the most used method by counselling teachers to deal with the problem of misbehaviour of high school students. Counselling teachers use this method to deal with various problems such as not completing school work, not bringing books and also behaving badly such as lying and cheating in tests or examinations. The intervention method focuses more on giving advice and reprimanding students. In addition, the counselling teacher also uses the method of building relationships with students to build trust so that they are comfortable sharing their issues and receiving advice accordingly.

In addition, counselling teachers also conduct individual interventions by visiting students at home to form relationships with students and families. This is essential to maintain cooperation with parents as cooperation from parents is vital to establish change in the behaviour of problematic students. In addition, by approaching these students, the counselling teacher can identify the cause of the problem and then find an appropriate approach to deal with or solve the problem.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the analysis on the narratives of the research participants, three emerging sub-themes were identified. The formation of the themes is detailed in table 2 below:

Table 2: Formation of the themes

Basic Theme	Sub Theme
Individual intervention	Advice
	Rehabilitation Program
	Home visits

Advice

"As counselling teachers, we try to be friends and build trust with students. After trust is built, we can give advice to students and students will express their problems to us."

(Participant 1)

"The rehabilitation technique used is immediate and direct by approaching the student that is, giving advice, not punishing and stabilizing emotions by using breathing techniques to calm students who are in crisis. We call it crisis intervention".

(Participant 3)

"Individual sessions are important for this school so that the school can provide effective interventions. For us, advice and reprimands have a great impact on our students."

(Participant 4)

Rehabilitation program

A rehabilitation program is one of the programs carried out to help individuals or groups overcome certain problems and improve their behaviour in order to be able to function effectively in the society again. In the context of rehabilitation, especially for problematic high school students, rehabilitation programs are conducted to deal with issues such as discipline problems, misbehaviour problems, and negative influences from the environment as well as emotional and psychological stress that can disrupt their learning process. Through a focused and structured approach, rehabilitation programs provide a variety of interventions that can be tailored to the needs of students to help them achieve better character and moral development. The following are the statements of the study participants:

"The rehabilitation program focuses on individuals such as spiritual strengthening for students but our target is individuals. We usually hold religious studies classes such as morals and manners classes for the students involved. In addition, we also hold skills workshops such as time management".

(Participant 2)

"We coordinated a rehabilitation program where my friend and I took the initiative to do a reading program for students who cannot read. This program does not only involve students involved with disciplinary problems but it is open to all students who need help in terms of reading. For now, my friend and I are focusing on the Malay language module.

(Participant 3)

Home visit

Counselling teachers also use visits to the homes of troubled students to deal with student misbehaviour on an individual basis. Through direct interaction with the family in the home, the counselling teacher or the school can identify the causes that may affect the behaviour and performance of students at school. These visits not only help to build a closer relationship between the school and the family, but also provide a clearer picture of the challenges that these students face in their daily lives. This approach is important in planning more appropriate and holistic interventions to help rehabilitate troubled students. The statement is as follows:

"We often do home visits to build relationships with students' families to find out the next problem. In addition, we also consult with parents because cooperation from parents is very necessary".

(Participant 2)

"We also conduct visits to the homes of students who have problems so that we can build relationships with the students' families to identify the problems that are occurring and what the school can do to help".

(Participant 4)

The interview results from this study show that the individual intervention method is the most important intervention method used by counselling teachers. All four counselling teachers who were interviewed used individual intervention methods to deal with student misbehaviour in secondary schools. Here are some of the main themes that emerged from the interview results through an individual approach. All counselling teachers are more likely to use an individualized approach to dealing with student misbehaviour, building trust between counsellors and students, and helping students express their problems.

This approach helps in advising and guiding students personally. Second, a collaborative program where counselling teachers also work with local institutions, such as mosques, to implement programs that focus on strengthening the spirituality of troubled students. Third, through the Recovery, Development, and Prevention approach. Counselling teachers use these three main approaches depending on the level of problems faced by students. For example, rehabilitation is used for more critical cases such as suicidal tendencies, while development and prevention are used to improve behaviour such as laziness or truancy and the last is parental involvement. Apart from individual intervention sessions, counselling teachers also involve parents through consultation sessions to ensure cooperation in dealing with student problems.

CONCLUSIONS

Individual intervention is the most appropriate and most widely used method or approach to deal with student misbehaviour. Due to its nature of being more focused and personal, it allows counselling teachers to pay special attention to each student in depth. Each student has a different

problem and background, so this approach provides space to understand the student's problem in a specific and personal way, then plan the right strategy to deal with the issue. In addition, individual intervention is used because of effective problem solving because the counselling teacher to adjust the most appropriate strategy for each student based on their needs and situation. This ensures for more effective solutions to address behavioural problems such as lying, cheating, not completing schoolwork, etc. Another reason seen is the emphasis on character development. Individual intervention is not only intended to solve behavioural problems, but also to help students develop their social skills, sense of responsibility, and personality. This is important in ensuring students can function well in school and society.

In conclusion, social issues among students is an issue that is often discussed at this time because students are the generation that will determine the future of the country. The encouragement that comes from the social environment may influence and educate students to do positive or negative actions. Self and peer factors were identified in this research. This study needs to be carried out to find an effective solution to combat student involvement in social problems through individual intervention by teacher counsellors at school because after parents at home, school is the place where students spend most of their days at. Individual intervention refers to various actions and approaches taken by counsellor teachers or counselling professionals to provide specific support to individuals facing problems or challenges.

It involves a systematic process of understanding, assessing, and acting on the needs of individuals personally. The main objective of individual intervention is to help individuals understand their problems, develop skills or strategies to overcome them, achieve personal goals or desired development. Therefore, all parties must work together to find out and take into account the elements that affect the involvement of students in social problems. Appropriate and continuous programs and interventions need to be developed and established as a guide for students who are stuck in social issues which can affect the well-being of the country. This study is expected to help stakeholders deal with social issues by using appropriate methods. Therefore, students can stop social problems by building their responsibility.

REFERENCES

Azmil, H., Mas'ani, A., & Zahratun Sakinah, J. (2017). Amalan Pembelajaran Pendidikan Akhlak Menurut Al-Ghazali : Kajian Terhadap Pelajar di Sekolah Agama di Negeri Perak. *Journal of Islamic and Arabic Education*, *9*(1), 1–11.

Azzyyati, M. N. (2017). Faktor Penyimpangan dalam Kalangan Remaja Berisiko dari Perspektif Islam. *Jurnal Islam Dan Masyarakat Kontemporari*, *15*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.37231/jimk.2017.15.1.217

Chua, Y. P. (2011). *Kaedah penyelidikan* (Kedua). McGraw- Hill Education.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the International Speech Communication Association, INTERSPEECH*.

Crocetti, E. (2017). Identity Formation in Adolescence: The Dynamic of Forming and Consolidating Identity Commitments. *Child Development Perspectives*, *11*(2), 145–150. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12226

Ghazali, D., & Sufean, H. (2018). *Metodologi penyelidikan dalam penyelidikan: Amalan dan analisis kajian* (p. 653). Universiti Malaya.

Halimah, A. H., & Zainab, I. (2015). Pendekatan Pencegahan Kaunselor Muslim dalam Menangani Salah Laku Pelajar Sekolah Menengah di Daerah Klang, Selangor. *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, *8*(1), 17–26. https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.08.2015.003

Ismail, N. H., Awang Halifah, D. N. A., & Makhsin, M. (2022). Factors of Social Problems Among

Students. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, *7*(46), 674–685. https://doi.org/10.35631/ijepc.746051

Lee, K. C., Zakri, A., & Chua, L. N. (2018). *Penyelidikan Dalam Pendidikan*. Oxford Fajar Sdn Bhd.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (Fourth). Jossey-Bass A Wiley Brand.

Mohd Gaid, S. N., Mohamad Zain, F., Ab Rahman, F., & Kasim, M. (2022). Factors Influencing Smoking Activity Among Students and the Actions of Counsellors in Dealing With It. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, *7*(46), 154–167. https://doi.org/10.35631/ijepc.746014

Mokmin, B. (2012). Bab 4 : Kaedah Kajian. *ResearchGate*, *November*, 105–106. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.1443.0168

Nurzatil Ismah, A., Mariam, A. M., Noraini, M., Abur Hamdi, U., Noor Hafizah, M. H., & Aisyah Humairak, A. R. (2022). Faktor penglibatan salah laku delinkuen dalam kalangan remaja: Kajian di pusat pemulihan. *E-Jurnal Penyelidikan Dan Inovasi*, *September*, 59–74. https://doi.org/10.53840/ejpi.v9i2.86

Robinson, J., Duncan, K., London, D., Gershwin, T., Trapp, L., & Shen, G. (2022). Prevention is the best intervention: Proactive strategies for supporting students who engage in escalated behaviors. *Journals.Sagepub.Com*, *31*(3), 163–174. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/10742956221110907

Sulaiman, T., Abdul Wahid, M. K., Jainurin, J., & Intan Soliha, I. (2021). Cabaran dalam Proses Kutipan Data Kaedah Kualitatif Ketika Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP) dan Pandemik Covid-19. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, *6*(9), 35–48. https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v6i9.1034

Syajaratulhuda, M. R. (2021). *Tangani Isu Buli Melalui Pendekatan Akhlak: Mufti*. https://www.sinarharian.com.my/article/177883/berita/nasional/tangani-isu-buli-melalui-

Wan Abdul Fattah, W. I., Ahmad Syukran, B., Lukman, A. M., Nik Salida Suhailah, N. S., Zulfaqar, M., Zuriatunfadzliah, S., Syh Noorul Madihah, S. H., Mohamad Aniq Aiman, A., & Nurul Syazwani, A. K. (2021). Tinjauan Awal Terhadap Punca-Punca yang Menyebabkan Remaja Islam di Malaysia Terlanjur. *International Convention on The Basic Structure of Constitution (ICOBAC 2021)*, *December*, 212–222. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358926413_Tinjauan_Awal_Terhadap_Punca-Punca_yang_Menyebabkan_Remaja_Islam_di_Malaysia_Terlanjur

Wan Abdul Fattah, W. I., Lukman, A. M., Nik Salida Suhailah, N. S., Ahmad Syukran, B., Zulfaqar, M., Syh Noorul Madihah, S. H., Zuriatunfadzliah, S., Mohamad Aniq Aiman, A., & Nurul Syazwani, A. K. (2022). Permasalahan Keruntuhan Akhlak Dalam Kalangan Remaja Muslim Di Malaysia: Isu, Cabaran Dan Cadangan Penyelesaian. *Al-Qanatir: International Journal of Islamic Studies*, *26*(2), 47–61.

Yazan, B., & De Vasconcelos, I. C. O. (2016). Three approaches to case study methods in education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake. *Meta: Avaliacao*, *8*(22), 149–182. https://doi.org/10.22347/2175-2753v8i22.1038