



School Counsellors' Cultural Competence and the Management of Anti-Social Behaviours among Students in Public Secondary Schools in Fako Division of South West, Cameroon.

Nformi Doris Jaja; Joseph Lah Lo-oh; Njungwa Zinkeng Martina

Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education University of Buea, Cameroon

ARTICLE'S INFO

Article No.: 020526025

Type: Research

Full Text: [PDF](#), [PHP](#), [HTML](#), [EPUB](#), [MP3](#)

DOI: [10.15580/gjpc.2026.1.020526025](https://doi.org/10.15580/gjpc.2026.1.020526025)

Accepted: 25/01/2026

Published: 09/02/2026

Keywords: School Counsellors, cultural competence, anti-social behaviours, public secondary Schools, Fako Division, Cameroon.

Mots-clés : Conseillers scolaires, compétence culturelle, comportements antisociaux, établissements d'enseignement secondaire publics, département de Fako, Cameroun.

*Corresponding Author

Joseph Lah Lo-oh

E-mail: jlooh233@gmail.com

Article's QR code



ABSTRACT

Cultural competence is a critical predictor of the effective management of anti-social behaviours by school counsellors in secondary schools. In fact, counsellors with higher levels of cultural competence are more likely to successfully mitigate anti-social behaviours amongst students. This paper investigated the relationship between school counsellors' cultural competence and the management of anti-social behaviours in secondary schools in Fako Division of Southwest, Cameroon. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analytical techniques. The convergent parallel mixed-methods design was adopted for the study. The sample was made up of 232 practicing school counsellors randomly selected from 33 public secondary schools in localities in Fako Division. A survey questionnaire was administered to a sample of 212 school counsellors, while 20 others granted in-depth interviews. Findings indicate that the predictor variable, cultural competence does not account for a statistically significant portion of the variance in the management of anti-social behaviour. The quantitative findings revealed that cultural competence is not a significant predictor of the management of anti-social behaviour ($\beta = -0.10$, P-value $0.311 > 0.05$). Other findings from descriptive analysis revealed a mean of 2.65, indicating that participants possess moderate cultural competence in the management of anti-social behaviour. The qualitative findings however revealed that cultural competence supports the effectiveness of other competences (student support competence and consultation competence). This shows that cultural competence appears to play an indirect and direct role in the management of anti-social behaviour. This means that approximately 0.5% of the variance in the management of anti-social behaviours can be explained by the cultural competence of school counsellors. Based on the findings, although cultural competence did not emerge as a statistically significant direct predictor, its supportive role suggests it underpins the effectiveness of other competences. Educational institutions should therefore integrate cultural competence development as a foundational component of behaviour management training rather than treating it as an isolated skill. Given that cultural competence enhances student support competence, schools should embed culturally responsive practices into counselling, mentoring, and psychosocial support services. Practitioners should consider learners' family values, community norms, and cultural expectations when designing intervention strategies.

Résumé

La compétence culturelle est un facteur déterminant de la gestion efficace des comportements antisociaux par les conseillers d'orientation dans les établissements secondaires. En effet, les conseillers possédant une compétence culturelle plus élevée sont plus susceptibles de réussir à atténuer les comportements antisociaux chez les élèves. Cet article examine la relation entre la compétence culturelle des conseillers d'orientation et la gestion des comportements antisociaux dans les établissements secondaires du département de Fako, dans la province du Sud-Ouest du Cameroun. Une approche mixte, combinant méthodes quantitatives et qualitatives, a été employée. Un plan d'étude convergent parallèle a été adopté. L'échantillon était composé de 232 conseillers d'orientation en exercice, sélectionnés aléatoirement parmi 33 établissements secondaires publics du département de Fako. Un questionnaire a été administré à un échantillon de 212 conseillers, tandis que 20 autres ont participé à des entretiens approfondis. Les résultats indiquent que la variable prédictive « compétence culturelle » n'explique pas une part statistiquement significative de la variance dans la gestion des comportements antisociaux. Les résultats quantitatifs ont révélé que la compétence culturelle n'est pas un prédictif significatif de la gestion des comportements antisociaux ($\beta = -0,10$, $p = 0,311 > 0,05$). D'autres résultats issus de l'analyse descriptive ont révélé une moyenne de 2,65, indiquant que les participants possèdent une compétence culturelle modérée dans la gestion des comportements antisociaux. Les résultats qualitatifs ont toutefois révélé que la compétence culturelle renforce l'efficacité d'autres compétences (compétence en matière de soutien aux élèves et de consultation). Cela montre que la compétence culturelle semble jouer un rôle indirect et direct dans la gestion des comportements antisociaux. Cela signifie qu'environ 0,5 % de la variance dans la gestion des comportements antisociaux peut être expliquée par la compétence culturelle des conseillers scolaires. D'après les résultats, bien que la compétence culturelle ne se soit pas révélée être un prédictif direct statistiquement significatif, son rôle de soutien suggère qu'elle sous-tend l'efficacité des autres compétences. Les établissements d'enseignement devraient donc intégrer le développement de la compétence culturelle comme composante fondamentale de la formation à la gestion du comportement, plutôt que de la considérer comme une compétence isolée. Étant donné que la compétence culturelle renforce la capacité d'accompagnement des élèves, les écoles devraient intégrer des pratiques culturellement adaptées dans les services de conseil, de mentorat et de soutien psychosocial. Les intervenants devraient tenir compte des valeurs familiales des apprenants, des normes communautaires et des attentes culturelles lors de la conception de stratégies d'intervention.

INTRODUCTION

Anti-social behaviour among adolescents is an increasingly pressing concern in secondary and high school environments worldwide, owing to its disruptive effects on teaching, learning, and student overall socio-emotional development. In school contexts, anti-social behaviours including bullying, truancy, aggression, theft, examination malpractice, and defiance of authority undermine academic engagement, compromise school safety, and contribute to long-term maladjustment if left unaddressed (Farrington, 2005; Rutter, Giller, & Hagell, 1998). Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that early manifestation of such behaviours is a strong predictor of later academic failure, peer rejection, delinquency, and adult criminality (e.g., Moffitt, 1993; Loeber & Farrington, 2000). Consequently, the effective management of anti-social behaviour has emerged as a critical concern for educators, policymakers, and school counsellors.

Within school systems, counsellors play a pivotal role in preventing, assessing, and managing student behavioural challenges. Their responsibilities extend beyond individual counselling to include consultation with teachers, collaboration with families, advocacy, and the implementation of preventive and intervention programmes. Increasingly, scholars have argued that the effectiveness of these roles depends not only on counsellors' technical skills but also on their ability to understand and respond to students' cultural backgrounds, values, and lived experiences (Sue & Sue, 2016; Gay, 2018). This has brought the concept of cultural competence to the forefront of school counselling discourse.

Cultural competence in counselling refers to the ability to work effectively with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds through cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). In educational settings, culturally competent counsellors are better positioned to accurately interpret student behaviour, avoid cultural bias, and design interventions that are meaningful and acceptable to students and their families. Research from diverse contexts suggests that culturally responsive counselling enhances student engagement, strengthens counsellor–student relationships, and reduces behavioural misinterpretation that often leads to punitive discipline (e.g., Skiba et al., 2011; Day-Vines et al., 2007). However, the extent to which cultural competence directly influences the management of anti-social behaviour remains empirically contested, particularly in non-Western and multicultural contexts.

The Cameroon school system presents a uniquely complex cultural landscape shaped by linguistic diversity, ethnic plurality, colonial legacies, and ongoing socio-political tensions. Fako Division of Southwest, Cameroon, comprising urban and semi-urban municipalities such as Buea, Limbe, and Tiko, is characterised by students from varied cultural,

linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds. These contextual realities influence how behaviour is expressed, interpreted, and managed within schools. Behaviours that may be perceived as defiant or anti-social within formal school norms may, in some cases, reflect culturally patterned communication styles or socialisation practices. This underscores the importance of culturally informed counselling approaches in managing student behaviour effectively. Being culturally informed **does** not simply mean possessing cultural knowledge as an independent skill. Rather, it means using cultural understanding to guide and strengthen how other professional competences are applied, especially in managing anti-social behaviour.

Despite the relevance of cultural competence in such settings, there is a paucity of empirical research examining its role in the management of anti-social behaviour in Cameroon secondary schools. Existing studies in Africa have largely focused on teacher discipline practices, school leadership, or general behavioural problems, with limited attention to the counsellor's cultural competence as a professional variable, Curtis, C. (2016), DuBois, D. L., (2011) et al. Moreover, much of the available literature relies predominantly on quantitative designs, which may overlook the contextual and relational dimensions through which cultural competence operates in practice Portillo, N., Rhodes, J. E., Silverthorn, N., & Valentine, J. C. (2011).

To address these gaps, the present study investigated the relationship between school counsellors' cultural competence and the management of anti-social behaviours in public secondary schools in Fako Division of the South West Region of Cameroon. Guided by a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, the study integrated quantitative survey data with qualitative interview insights to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. While the quantitative component examined the predictive power of cultural competence on behaviour management outcomes, the qualitative component explored how counsellors perceive and apply cultural competence in their everyday interactions with students, families, and communities.

Understanding Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour has been identified as a growing concern in contemporary societies, particularly within school environments. A significant number of students are exhibiting behaviours that disrupt the teaching and learning process. Anti-social behaviour often leads to issues of conformity with peer culture, as it is deeply embedded among teenagers who are learning how to fit in with their social environment. Such behaviours have direct implications for school counselling practice (Moffitt, 1993; Rutter, Giller, & Hagell, 1998).

In childhood and adolescence, anti-social behaviour is classified as behavioural disorders, impulsivity, theft, vandalism, physical and psychological aggression, bullying, running away from home, and truancy (Farrington, 2005). These are some of the behaviours that fall under the umbrella of anti-social behaviour. In this study, the term "anti-social behaviour" refers to disruptive and harmful behaviours displayed by students. Anti-social behaviour is the first stage of delinquent behaviour. It is believed that it can lead to a variety of negative outcomes, such as academic failure, social and emotional difficulties, peer rejection, delinquency, and even adult criminal activity. Early onset of these behaviours is often associated with more persistent and severe behavioural problems later in life (Moffitt, 1993). Loeber & Farrington (2000) went on to argue that the persistence and chronicity of anti-social behaviour can be differentiated by the age at which it first appeared if it begins at an early age.

Anti-social behaviour by young people has not only raised wide interest in the social sciences but it has also prompted a conceptual challenge. Studies have used different terminologies, such as juvenile delinquency (e.g Ryan, Williams & Courtney, 2013), anti-social behaviour (e.g Vuijk & Crijnen, 2005; Curtis, 2016), anti-social personality disorder (e.g Oglhoff, Campbell & Shepherd, 2016), conduct problems (e.g Jessor & Jessor, 1977; White et al., 2016) and disruptive behaviour (e.g American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Loeber, Burke, Lahey, Winters & Zera, 2000, Bubenzer-Busch et al., Baldry, Farrington & Sorrentino, 2016). Although these constructs related to anti-social behaviour are often discussed in similar terms across the literature, they have also presented significant conceptual challenges. Researchers have defined and approached them differently, with variations across disciplines such as psychology, criminology, and education (Culinary, 2013; Samu, 2010; Antonsich, 2001; Oplett, Campbell, & Sighed, 2016, 1977; White et al., 2016; American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Loeber, Burke, Lahey, Winters, & Zaru, 2000; Du, Dishion, Farrington, & Sorrentino, 2016; Moffitt, 2009; Inch, 2011). Similar inconsistencies appear in the work of Laengo, Otero-López, Romero, Gómez-Fraguela, and Tavares-Filho (1999) and Rice & Waldman (2002).

While these constructs may appear synonymous on the surface, most research in the field has been conducted from a variety of conceptual perspectives, each relying on different criteria and methodological procedures. This variation in research designs and conceptual framing constitutes quantitative designs and qualitative designs while conceptual frames like the categorical models, developmental and dimensional model makes it difficult to integrate findings across studies. Consequently, the constructs, despite surface similarities, are in fact conceptually distinct (Laengo et al., 1999; Rice & Waldman, 2000).

Researchers such as Moffitt (1993) and Rutter et al. (1998) have traditionally focused on categorical criteria

to identify individuals exhibiting anti-social behaviours, often distinguishing between those who meet formal diagnostic thresholds or legal adjudications and those who do not. Similarly, Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1986) emphasized discrete categories in developmental pathways of delinquency, while clinical classifications like anti-social personality disorder rely on categorical symptom criteria defined in the DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Researchers have traditionally focused on categorical criteria for identifying anti-social behaviour, essentially asking whether a given conduct meets a specific threshold of deviance in terms of frequency and seriousness. Two of the most influential categorical approaches are judicial definitions and clinical psychiatric definitions. While these approaches have value, they have been criticized for being overly restrictive in explaining the nature and causes of anti-social behaviour, as they focus primarily on detected cases and omit those who engage in criminal acts but remain outside judicial or mental-health control systems. Estimates suggest that more than half of individuals who commit crimes are never identified by the judicial system (e.g., Dickson, Emerson, & Hatton, 2005; Latimer, Kleinknecht, Hung, & Gabor, 2003). Similar patterns are observed in mental-health settings, where the number of diagnosed cases is relatively small compared to the broader population meeting the behavioural criteria (Rhee & Waldman, 2002).

To address these limitations, some scholars have adopted a dimensional perspective which views anti-social behaviour not as a discrete category (present/absent) but as existing along a continuum of severity, frequency, and impact. This approach often employs self-report measures and other population-level assessments, allowing researchers to capture both subclinical and overtly criminal behaviours (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000). A key advance during this period was the broader inclusion of the "anti-social" label to describe behaviours that, while harmful to society, are not necessarily illegal such as persistent lying, chronic truancy, or exploitative manipulation (Jessor & Jessor, 1977). This conceptual expansion has been theoretically significant, as such non-criminal anti-social behaviours often share similar antecedents, developmental pathways, and manifestations with more serious forms of offending (Rhee & Waldman, 2002).

To address the limitations of categorical approaches, some researchers have adopted a dimensional perspective, which views anti-social behaviour not as a discrete category but as existing along a continuum of severity, frequency, and impact. This perspective recognises that anti-social behaviours can range from mild norm violations to serious criminal acts, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the spectrum of anti-social conduct. Dimensional approaches often utilize self-report measures and population-based assessments, thereby capturing both overt and covert behaviours that might not meet formal diagnostic or

judicial criteria (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000). A significant development within this framework was the inclusion of behaviours labelled as “anti-social” that are harmful to society but not necessarily illegal—such as persistent lying, chronic truancy, or exploitative manipulation (Jessor & Jessor, 1977). This broader conceptualization has important theoretical and practical implications; as such behaviours share common antecedents and developmental pathways with more serious forms of anti-social behaviour (Rhee & Waldman, 2002).

The majority of studies which have been carried out in accordance with these criteria have been considered very restrictive and of little use in the explanation of the etiology of anti-social behaviour. They tend to focus on a limited number of cases where deviant conduct happens more frequently and with greater seriousness. Many of them do not take into account those individuals who have committed criminal acts and who have not been detected by the control systems. It has been estimated that more than half of the individuals who commit crimes remain undetected by the judicial system (Dickson, Emerson & Hatton, 2005; Latimer, Kleinknecht, Hung & Gabor, 2003). This situation is not different in the mental health sector, where the number of diagnosed cases is relatively small, especially when compared to the population that fulfils the established criteria for diagnosing certain diseases (Rhee & Waldman, 2000).

What is considered to be of relevance here is that the phenomenon is conceived as a dimensional continuum and not as a categorical all-or-nothing one. In other words, anti-social behaviour is viewed not as something an individual either has or does not have, but rather as existing along a spectrum of severity or frequency. This dimensional perspective allows for the recognition of varying degrees of anti-social tendencies, ranging from mild to severe rather than forcing the individual into rigid diagnostic categories. This enables one to study not only children and adolescents who begin to commit acts of limited seriousness, and do so not very frequently, but also those who have a long history of acts of considerable seriousness which are committed frequently. This means that the biases arising from the conduct of legal agents (the black list, biases of judicial conduct, etc.), as well as the difficulties public health authorities may have in gaining access to, diagnosing and identifying the population which fulfils the diagnostic criteria for these types of disorders, can be overcome.

Despite theoretical and methodological advances observed so far, there is no consensus on the nature and dimensionality of anti-social behaviour. According to Jessor and colleagues (1991) consider this construct to be a syndrome of problem behaviour defined by one factor that groups a set of deviant acts e.g., alcohol and illegal drugs use, misdemeanours, premature sexual intercourse. (Jessor, Donovan & Costa, 1991; Jessor & Jessor, 1977). This point of view is the polar opposite of the pro-social factor composed of activities related

to involvement with conventional agents of socialization (family, school and other traditional organizations). In addition, other researchers have expressed their agreement with this concept (e.g. Farrell, Kung, White & Valois, 2000; Farrington, 1995; Sherman, Chassin, Sherman, Presson & Macy, 2016).

Another perspective, based on different typologies, views anti-social behaviour as a multi-dimensional construct. This perspective identifies three developmental patterns of problematic conduct in childhood and adolescence. The first is an overt pattern, characterized by direct aggressive behaviours such as fighting or bullying. The second is a covert pattern, involving non-aggressive acts against property, such as theft or vandalism. The third is a conflict-with-authority pattern, which typically begins in childhood with defiant behaviour toward adults and later develops into behaviours aimed at evading adult control (e.g., running away from home or frequent truancy). This typology has been discussed extensively in the work of Loeber and colleagues (Burke, Loeber, & Birmaher, 2002; Thornberry, Huizinga, & Loeber, 2004).

Management Strategies for anti-social behaviour

The management of anti-social behaviour in schools requires more than mere identification and screening. While early detection is crucial for timely intervention, it does not automatically resolve the complex and persistent nature of anti-social tendencies among students. Research indicates that effective management requires a multidimensional and proactive approach, integrating several evidence-based strategies to address academic, social, and emotional needs simultaneously (e.g., Olweus, 1993; Merrell & Gueldner, 2010).

One widely recommended framework is the Multi-Tiered System of Supports, which provides a continuum of interventions ranging from universal prevention for all students to targeted and intensive support for those with significant behavioural challenges. By offering differentiated levels of support, Multi-Tiered System of Supports allows school counsellors and educators to respond to the diverse needs of students while systematically monitoring progress (Sugai & Horner, 2009). It not only reduces behavioural issues but also promotes positive school climate and engagement, thereby fostering better academic and social outcomes (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Another key strategy is Response to Intervention, which emphasizes the use of student progress data to inform instruction and behavioural interventions. Response to Intervention involves continuous monitoring, evidence-based interventions, and tiered support to prevent escalation of academic and behavioural difficulties (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). This data-driven approach enables school counsellors to identify students at risk, adjust interventions promptly,

and measure the effectiveness of their strategies, ensuring that both preventive and remedial actions are well-targeted (Batsche et al., 2005).

School counsellors also employ therapeutic and skills-based interventions to support emotional regulation, social competence, and prosocial behaviour. Cognitive-behavioural strategies, social skills training, and conflict-resolution programs have been shown to reduce aggressive behaviour and improve peer relationships among students with anti-social tendencies (e.g., Lochman & Wells, 2002; Merrell et al., 2008). Integrating these approaches within the school environment ensures a holistic intervention model, where academic support, behavioural management, and emotional development are addressed concurrently.

Finally, collaborative practices involving teachers, parents, and community resources are critical in sustaining positive behavioural change. School counsellors often coordinate with families and external professionals to create consistent behavioural expectations and reinforce positive interventions outside the school context (Kazdin, 2005). Research underscores those multidimensional interventions, when implemented systematically and collaboratively, are more effective in mitigating anti-social behaviour and promoting long-term student success (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2010).

Closely related to counselling is the integration of social-emotional learning and behavioural skills training into counselling programs. Social-emotional learning fosters key competencies such as emotional regulation, empathy, responsible decision-making, and interpersonal effectiveness. Durlak et al. (2011) found that well-structured programs significantly improved student behaviour and reduced both internalizing and externalizing behavioural issues. School counsellors can utilize established programs such as "Second Step" or "PATHS" (promoting alternative thinking strategies), which provide students with practical tools to improve self-control and social interaction.

Another increasingly endorsed approach is the use of restorative practices, which emphasize accountability, reflection, and reconciliation rather than punitive measures. Counsellors can organize restorative circles, facilitate peer mediation, and support conflict resolution dialogues. These practices encourage students to take responsibility for their actions while rebuilding trust and relationships in the school community. Studies indicate that restorative approaches contribute to a reduction in school suspensions and behaviour-related incidents, fostering a more inclusive and supportive school climate (e.g., Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2016; Evans & Lester, 2012).

School counsellors also play a key role in conducting functional behavioural assessments and developing behaviour intervention plans. In collaboration with teachers and school psychologists, they assess the

triggers and purposes of student behaviours, and use this information to create structured plans aimed at replacing disruptive behaviours with positive alternatives. Research confirms that when functional behavioural assessments and behaviour intervention plans are applied with fidelity, they yield significant behavioural improvements, particularly among students with chronic externalizing behaviour patterns (e.g., Gresham, Watson, & Skinner, 2001; Scott, Nelson, & Liaupsin, 2005).

School counsellor's cultural competence and the management of anti-social behaviours

Merlin-Knoblich (2016) conducted a study to examine the frequency with which school counsellors enact multicultural education behaviours and the obstacles preventing those behaviours. Using theoretical dimensions and approaches to multicultural education, they developed an instrument measuring school counselling multicultural education behaviour. After pilot testing the instrument ($n = 114$), they distributed a refined instrument to a state school Counsellor database, and 594 school counsellors participated in the primary data collection. They used exploratory factor analysis to determine five factors comprising 72% combined variance of school counsellor multicultural education behaviours (Merlin-Knoblich, 2016). Participants enacted behaviours in two factors (Classroom Guidance with Multicultural Education Emphases and Human Relations) occasionally and behaviours in three factors (professional development with multicultural education emphases, knowledge construction, and teaching the exceptional and culturally different) rarely. These factor analyses jointly showed that school counsellors' multicultural education behaviours clustered into five factors accounting for 72% of the total variance. Behavioural problems among secondary school students in Osun State with a focus on principals' administrative effectiveness. Using a survey design and multistage sampling, 300 teachers from two Local Government Areas participated in the survey. Data collected through a modified instrument (QPASBP) were analysed using percentages, relative strength index, and multiple regression. Results showed a behavioural problem prevalence rate of 27.2%, with disruptive behaviour, vandalism, thuggery, and tardiness being most common. Principals' effectiveness in instructional management, internal relations, and student performance significantly influenced students' behaviour, with combined administrative effectiveness predicting reduced behavioural problems ($R^2 = 0.034$, $F = 1.681$, $p < .05$).

Similarly, Onu et al. (2013) examined strategies for remediating anti-social behaviours among adolescents in Nigeria using a descriptive survey of 160 parents and educators. Findings highlighted location differences (urban vs. rural) in the occurrence of anti-social behaviours and stressed the importance of tailored remediation strategies.

Additionally, Kauffman and Koalich (2015) conducted a quantitative study involving 594 school counsellors from one U.S. state to assess the frequency of multicultural education behaviours and identify barriers to their implementation. Using a researcher-developed instrument based on multicultural education theory and exploratory factor analysis, the study revealed that most counsellors only occasionally engaged in multicultural guidance. The primary obstacles identified were limited time and a lack of perceived necessity. Although the study highlighted the presence of five behavioural factors, it did not establish a direct link between these practices and student outcomes. A key limitation was its restricted geographic scope, which limits generalizability. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that cultural competence is inconsistently applied in school settings, thereby reducing its effectiveness in addressing diverse student behaviours, including anti-social conduct.

Moreover, Chambers (2023) conducted a correlational study to investigate whether multicultural self-efficacy predicts counsellor competence in social advocacy, particularly in addressing behavioural and systemic challenges in schools. The study involved U.S. school counsellors engaged in advocacy roles and utilized the Multicultural Self-Efficacy Scale along with a Social Advocacy Competency tool. Findings revealed a strong positive correlation between counsellors' perceived multicultural self-efficacy and their competence in addressing behavioural issues, indicating that those with higher cultural confidence were more effective in promoting inclusive practices and managing anti-social behaviour (Chambers, 2023). However, the study relied on self-reported data and lacked a longitudinal design, limiting its ability to assess long-term impact. Despite these limitations, the research reinforces the importance of cultural competence in empowering school counsellors to respond effectively to diverse student needs and behavioural concerns.

In yet another study, using the self-efficacy scale, Sutton and Fall (1995) looked into the relationship between school counsellor self-efficacy and school climate. Participants in the study were all school counsellors from public schools in the states of Maine and Massachusetts. They found that support from colleagues and from administration is among the most vital indicators of high counsellor self-efficacy and outcome expectancy. For instance, in the study, the principals who promoted and supported programs that allowed students and trainees to exchange ideas between each other program that allowed the students and the trainees to exchange ideas on self-efficacy and counselling programs positively impacted and empowered the school counsellors.

Statement of the Problem

Anti-social behaviours among students in public secondary schools have become an increasingly serious challenge to effective teaching, learning, and

student development. Behaviours such as bullying, aggression, truancy, examination malpractice, theft, sexual misconduct, and persistent defiance of school authority disrupt classroom instruction, compromise school safety, and negatively affect students' academic and psychosocial outcomes. When such behaviours are not effectively managed, they often persist and escalate into more severe forms of delinquency and maladjustment later in life, posing long-term social and economic consequences for individuals and society.

In Cameroon, particularly in the South West Region, schools operate within highly diverse cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic contexts. Fako Division, which includes urban and semi-urban municipalities such as Buea, Limbe, and Tiko, brings together students from multiple ethnic groups, languages, belief systems, and family backgrounds. These cultural differences significantly influence how students express behaviour, interpret authority, and respond to disciplinary practices. As a result, behaviours that are perceived as anti-social within school norms may, in some cases, be rooted in culturally patterned modes of communication or socialisation. This complexity increases the risk of behavioural misinterpretation, inappropriate disciplinary responses, and strained counsellor–student relationships.

School counsellors are professionally mandated to prevent, assess, and manage students' behavioural challenges even in culturally diverse environments like the southwest of Cameroon. In recognition of such cultural diversity, cultural competence has been widely promoted in counselling literature as a critical professional attribute that enables counsellors to understand students' cultural realities, reduce bias, and implement culturally responsive interventions. However, despite its theoretical importance, empirical evidence regarding the actual influence of school counsellors' cultural competence on the management of anti-social behaviour remains inconsistent, particularly within African and Cameroonian contexts.

Most existing studies on cultural competence and behaviour management are based on Western settings and often rely on quantitative designs that prioritize measurable outcomes while overlooking contextual and relational processes. In Cameroon, research on anti-social behaviour has largely focused on disciplinary practices, teacher effectiveness, or school administration, with limited attention given to the role of school counsellors and their cultural competence. Consequently, there is insufficient empirical evidence to determine whether cultural competence directly predicts effective management of anti-social behaviour or whether its influence is indirect and context-dependent.

Furthermore, the continued prevalence of anti-social behaviours in public secondary schools despite the presence of trained counsellors raises critical questions about the adequacy of current professional preparation programmes as well as counselling

practices in the field. If counsellors possess high levels of cultural competence yet anti-social behaviours persist, it becomes necessary to examine whether cultural competence alone is sufficient, or whether other ecological, institutional, and psychological factors play a more decisive role in behaviour management.

Against this backdrop, the problem addressed in this study is the lack of clear empirical understanding of the extent to which school counsellors' cultural competence influences the management of anti-social behaviours in public secondary schools in Fako Division of the South West Region of Cameroon. Without such understanding, efforts to design effective counsellor training programmes, behaviour management policies, and school-based interventions risk being inadequately targeted and contextually misaligned. This study therefore sought to bridge this knowledge gap by systematically examining both the measurable effects and contextual applications of cultural competence in managing anti-social behaviour among secondary school students.

METHODS

Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research approach, specifically the convergent parallel mixed-methods design. The choice of this design was informed by the need to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between school counsellors' cultural competence and the management of anti-social behaviours in public secondary and high schools in Fako Division of the South West Region of Cameroon. In a convergent parallel design, quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently, analysed separately, and then merged during interpretation to compare, corroborate, and complement the findings. The quantitative component enabled the investigation of the predictive power of school counsellors' cultural competence over the management of anti-social behaviours using statistical

procedures. The qualitative component, on the other hand, provided in-depth insights into counsellors' lived experiences, perceptions, and practices regarding cultural competence and behaviour management. By integrating both strands, the study addressed not only the "extent" of the relationship but also the "how" and "why" behind the observed patterns.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A total sample size of 232 school counsellors was used for the study. This sample was drawn from 33 public secondary schools across selected sub-divisions in Fako Division of southwest Cameroon. The sample size was considered adequate to provide reliable quantitative analysis while also allowing for meaningful qualitative exploration. For the quantitative strand, 212 school counsellors were selected and administered structured questionnaires. This sample size ensured sufficient statistical power for regression and correlational analyses, thereby enhancing generalizability of findings.

For the qualitative strand, 20 school counsellors were purposively selected from the larger sample to participate in in-depth interviews. They were selected based on their experience, exposure to culturally diverse student populations, and willingness to provide detailed accounts of their counselling practices. Data saturation was achieved by the seventeenth interview, with no new themes emerging in subsequent interviews; however, interviews continued up to twenty participants to ensure completeness and confirm saturation.

A random sampling technique was used to select schools and counsellors for the quantitative component, ensuring that each eligible counsellor had an equal chance of being included in the study. For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was employed to identify information-rich participants capable of providing deep insights into cultural competence and behaviour management practices.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Participant Observations on School Counsellor's Cultural Competence

Manifest variables	Measurement						Mean
	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	SA+A	Disagree	Strongly disagree	D+SD	
	n/%	n/%	n/%	n/%	n/%	n/%	
I have knowledge of cultural backgrounds and experiences of students	19 8.6	33 15.0	52 23.6	39 17.7	129 58.6	168 76.3	1.74
I understand the impact of culture on students' academic and personal development	18 8.2	25 11.4	43 19.6	55 25.0	122 55.5	177 80.5	1.72
I can communicate effectively with students from diverse cultural backgrounds	136 61.8	66 30.0	202 91.8	14 6.4	3 1.4	17 7.8	3.54
I have the ability to adapt counselling interventions to meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds	14 6.4	34 15.5	48 21.9	150 68.2	22 10.0	172 78.2	2.18
I am able to build trust and rapport with students from diverse cultural backgrounds	71 32.3	121 55.0	192 87.3	19 8.6	9 4.1	28 12.7	3.15
I have knowledge of culturally responsive interventions and strategies to manage students	75 34.1	116 52.7	191 86.8	21 9.5	8 3.6	29 13.1	3.17
I am able to use counselling interventions that are responsive to students' cultural backgrounds and experiences	23 10.5	139 63.2	162 73.7	47 21.4	11 5.0	58 26.4	2.21
I can adapt interventions to meet the unique needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds	26 11.8	160 72.7	186 84.5	25 11.4	9 4.1	34 15.5	2.92
I believe that cultural differences are an important factor to consider when working with students.	24 10.9	177 80.5	201 91.4	13 5.9	6 2.7	19 8.6	2.99
I understand how cultural differences can impact student behaviour and academic performance.	19 8.6	168 76.4	187 85.0	26 11.8	7 3.2	33 15.0	2.90
Aggregate	425 19.32	1039 47.24	1464 66.56	409 18.59	326 14.82	735 33.41	2.65

Descriptive statistics on table 1 illustrate varying levels of counsellor observations around cultural competence. Statistics around the first item revealed that only 52 (23.6%) out of 220 respondents agreed to having knowledge of cultural backgrounds and experiences of students, while majority 168 (76.3%) disagreed. Similarly, only 43 (19.6%) agreed that they understand the impact of culture on students' academic and personal development, while an overwhelming majority 177 (80.5%) disagreed. Out of the 219 participants who responded to the item on communicating effectively with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, majority 202 (91.8%) of the respondents agreed, indicating that they communicate effectively, while a few, 17 (7.8%) disagreed.

Out of the 220 participants who responded to the question of cultural diversity, 48 (21.9%) agreed that they have the ability to adapt counselling interventions to meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. On the same question, however, majority 172 (78.2%) of respondents disagreed to have the ability to adapt counselling interventions to meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. It was also observed that 192 (87.3%) of 220 respondents agreed that they are able to build trust and rapport with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, while 28 (12.7%) disagreed. The majority of respondents, 191 (86.8%) also agreed that they have knowledge of culturally responsive

interventions and strategies to manage students while 29 (13.1%) disagreed.

Whether school counsellors were able to use counselling interventions that are responsive to students' cultural backgrounds and experiences, 162 (73.7%) out of the 220 respondents agreed while 58 (26.4%) of them disagreed. One hundred and eighty-six others (84.5%) agreed that they can adapt interventions to meet the unique needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds, while 34 (15.5%) disagreed to having such ability. On the question of beliefs whether cultural differences are an important factor to consider when working with students, a massive 201 (91.4%) agreed while a meagre 19 (8.6%) disagreed. It was also observed that 187 (85.0%) of the respondents agreed that they understand how cultural differences can impact student behaviour and academic performance, while 33 (15.0%) of them disagreed.

The mean values observed showed the closeness of the data. This measure also determined the nature of

diversity of the items used to measure school counsellor's cultural competence. The minimum value was set at 1.00 while the maximum value was set at 4.0. The overall mean ($M = 2.65$) was found within the category 2-2.9 rated as Moderate in the response format, which indicated "Moderate" cultural competence in the management of anti-social behaviours. Similarly, an aggregate of 66.56% for SA+A fell within the range of 34-66%, indicating that majority of the participants possessed "Moderate" cultural competence in the management of anti-social behaviours, while few 33.41% for D+SD fell within the range of 0-33% indicating that few participants possessed "Low" cultural competence in the management of anti-social behaviours.

Based on these observed data, it was hypothesized that school counsellor's cultural competence has no significant effect on the management of anti-social behaviour among students in public secondary schools.

Table 2: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.207	1	.207	1.032	.311 ^b
	Residual	43.792	218	.201		
	Total	43.999	219			

a. Dependent Variable: Management of Anti-Social Behaviours

b. Predictors: (Constant), School Counsellor's Cultural Competence

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) presented on table 2 confirmed that the overall regression model is not statistically significant, $F(1, 218) = 1.032$, $P = 0.311 > 0.05$.]

Table 3: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1 (Constant)	3.469	.269		12.913	.000	2.940	3.999	
	Cultural Competence	-.102	.101	-.069	-1.016	.311	-.300	.096

a. Dependent Variable: Management of Anti-Social Behaviours

The quantitative findings were further checked for supplementary purposes through interview data. The data showed quite significant themes that suggested

the importance of cultural competence towards the management of anti-social behaviours among students.

Table 4: Emerging themes around school counsellor's cultural competence and management of anti-social behaviours

Sub-themes	Initial codes	Participants' quotes (Appendix G)
Students' cultural background awareness	Understanding cultural norms; cultural awareness of behaviour; and linguistic differences	P1, P3, P6, P9, P13, P14, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20.
Culturally responsive counselling	Culturally informed questioning; use of culturally relevant examples; Adapting counselling style to culture	P2, P3, P6, P9, P13, P14, P15, P16, P18, P19, P20
Family and community cultural values	Involving families; respecting traditions; Community elders' involvement	P5, P8, P11, P13, P15, P16, P18, P19
Addressing cultural barriers	Language barriers; misinterpretation of behaviour; differing customs of expression	P6, P9, P13, P14, P15, P16, P18, P19

Cultural awareness and interpretation of student behaviour

One of the most salient findings is the importance of counsellor awareness of students' cultural backgrounds, including cultural values, linguistic identity, and family norms. Participants consistently reported that behaviours initially perceived as defiance, disrespect, or non-compliance were, upon closer examination, culturally influenced patterns of communication or social interaction. This underscores the risk of cultural misinterpretation in school settings, where dominant norms may be unconsciously used as the benchmark for acceptable behaviour.

The narratives suggest that when counsellors lack cultural awareness, there is a tendency to pathologize or criminalize culturally grounded behaviours, thereby escalating rather than mitigating anti-social behaviour. Misdiagnosis of behaviour may result in inappropriate disciplinary referrals, strained counsellor–student relationships, and reduced trust in counselling services. Conversely, culturally informed counsellors demonstrated greater patience, reflective judgement, and contextual understanding, which enabled them to distinguish between intentional misconduct and culturally patterned expressions of behaviour. This aligns with the broader view that cultural competence reduces bias and promotes fairer behavioural assessments, ultimately contributing to more constructive behaviour management outcomes.

Culturally responsive counselling practices

Closely linked to cultural awareness is the application of culturally responsive counselling strategies. Participants described deliberate efforts to adapt counselling approaches through culturally informed questioning, the use of culturally relevant examples, and flexibility in counselling styles. These practices acknowledge that counselling is not culturally neutral

and that strategies effective for one group of students may be ineffective or even counterproductive for another.

The findings indicate that students are more receptive to counselling when they feel their cultural identities are respected and valued. This sense of cultural validation appears to foster openness, cooperation, and willingness to reflect on behaviour. Culturally responsive counselling therefore functions not only as a technique but also as a relational process that builds trust between counsellors and students. By aligning interventions with students' cultural realities, counsellors increase the likelihood of behavioural change and reduce resistance that often accompanies perceived cultural insensitivity.

Importantly, culturally responsive counselling shifts the focus from control and punishment to understanding and restoration. It allows counsellors to negotiate behavioural expectations in culturally meaningful ways, making interventions more sustainable. This reinforces the idea that cultural competence enhances the effectiveness of behaviour management by promoting engagement rather than compliance.

The role of family and community cultural values

Another significant theme was the recognition of family and community cultural values as integral to managing anti-social behaviour. Participants emphasized the involvement of families, respect for cultural traditions, and engagement with community elders as strategies that strengthen counselling interventions. This reflects an understanding that students' behaviours are deeply embedded in family and community socialization processes.

This theme highlights cultural competence as extending beyond individual counsellor skills to include systemic and relational engagement. Counsellors who

respect and integrate family and community perspectives are better positioned to address the root causes of anti-social behaviour and promote consistency in behavioural expectations across contexts.

Cultural barriers to effective behaviour management

Despite the demonstrated benefits of cultural competence, participants also identified significant cultural barriers that hinder the effective management of anti-social behaviour. Language barriers, misinterpretation of behaviour, and differing customs of expression were reported as persistent challenges. Language differences, in particular, were noted to limit effective communication with both students and parents, reducing opportunities for meaningful dialogue and collaborative problem-solving.

These barriers often result in misunderstandings, frustration, and reduced parental involvement, which can weaken counselling interventions. This implies that without deliberate strategies to overcome such barriers—such as the use of interpreters, culturally appropriate communication styles, or additional training—counsellors may struggle to consistently implement culturally responsive practices. This reinforces the notion that cultural competence is not static but requires ongoing development, institutional support, and structural accommodation.

DISCUSSIONS

School counsellor's cultural competence and the management of anti-social behaviour

Quantitative findings revealed that school counsellors' cultural competence does not have a significant effect on the management of anti-social behaviour among students in public secondary schools. This suggests that cultural competence alone may not be a decisive factor in influencing how effectively anti-social behaviours are managed within the school context. Rather, the management of anti-social behaviour appears to be influenced by a combination of other variables beyond counsellors' cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding can be explained using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which emphasizes that student behaviour is shaped by multiple interacting systems, including family, school environment, peer groups, and broader societal factors. Within this framework, counsellor cultural competence represents only one component of the school microsystem, and its influence may be overshadowed by stronger factors such as school discipline policies, peer influence, parental involvement, and socio-economic conditions. Therefore, even when counsellors demonstrate cultural sensitivity, these broader ecological factors

may limit its direct impact on managing anti-social behaviours.

The finding also aligns with Bandura's social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), which posits that students acquire behaviours through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Anti-social behaviours are often learned and reinforced through peer interactions and environmental cues. Consequently, the effectiveness of managing such behaviours may depend more on consistent behavioural reinforcement strategies, role modelling by teachers, and peer regulation rather than counsellors' cultural competence alone. This may explain why cultural competence did not significantly predict behaviour management outcomes in this study.

The choice theory also posits that human behaviour is internally motivated and driven by the need to satisfy five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun (Glasser, 1998). According to this theory, individuals choose their behaviours as a way of meeting these needs, and behavioural change occurs when individuals take responsibility for their choices rather than when external factors are imposed upon them. This finding aligns with Glasser's assertion that external factors alone cannot control or significantly alter behaviour unless the individual chooses to change (Glasser, 1998). In this sense, the finding supports the choice theory by reinforcing the idea that behavioural management depends more on students' internal motivation and personal responsibility than on counsellors' culturally competent practices. Therefore, cultural competence, as an external professional attribute, may not directly influence students' behavioural choices unless it is integrated into strategies that foster responsibility, self-evaluation, and need fulfilment.

The cognitive behavioural theory, particularly Albert Ellis's rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT) model (1962), emphasizes that behaviour is largely determined by individuals' beliefs, thoughts, and interpretations of events rather than by external conditions themselves. According to Ellis (1962), it is not what happens to individuals that causes problematic behaviour, but how they cognitively interpret those experiences. The here, therefore, supports the central premise of cognitive behavioural theory. If maladaptive behaviours stem primarily from irrational beliefs and faulty thinking patterns, then improvements in behaviour would depend more on cognitive restructuring, problem-solving skills, and emotional regulation techniques than on counsellors' cultural awareness alone. Cultural competence, while valuable for rapport building, may not be sufficient to modify the underlying cognitive distortions that drive anti-social behaviour.

Ellis (1962) argued that effective behaviour change requires direct intervention on students' belief systems. The present finding suggests that unless cultural competence is accompanied by structured cognitive-behavioural interventions, its impact on managing anti-social behaviour may be minimal. This reinforces

CBT's emphasis on cognitive processes as the primary mechanism for behavioural change, thereby supporting the theory's explanatory power in the school counselling context. Taken together, the findings suggest that while cultural competence is an important professional attribute, it may function more as a facilitating condition rather than a direct causal factor in managing anti-social behaviour. Both choice and cognitive behavioural theories emphasize internal processes choice, responsibility, beliefs, and cognition as primary drivers of behaviour. The non-significant effect of cultural competence therefore does not invalidate these theories; rather, it reinforces their focus on internal mechanisms over external counsellor characteristics.

The implication is that school counsellors may achieve better behavioural outcomes by integrating culturally competent practices with choice-based counselling strategies and cognitive-behavioural techniques that directly address students' decision-making and belief systems. This integrated approach aligns with both Glasser's and Ellis's theoretical frameworks and may be more effective in managing anti-social behaviour in public secondary schools.

The qualitative findings clearly demonstrate that school counsellor cultural competence is central to the effective management of anti-social behaviour in public secondary schools. Emerging themes such as students' cultural background awareness, culturally responsive counselling, family and community cultural values, and addressing cultural barriers collectively explain how the counsellors' understanding and application of culture shapes both their interpretation of behaviour and the effectiveness of intervention strategies. Rather than viewing anti-social behaviour as a purely individual or disciplinary issue, the findings highlight it as a socially and culturally situated phenomenon that requires culturally informed responses.

Taken together, these findings illustrate that cultural competence enhances counsellor ability to manage anti-social behaviour effectively. Cultural awareness informs accurate interpretation of behaviour, culturally responsive counselling promotes student engagement, family and community involvement reinforces interventions, and addressing cultural barriers improves communication and understanding. The absence of these competencies, however, risks exacerbating behavioural challenges through misjudgement, exclusion, and ineffective intervention. These qualitative findings are strongly supported by established counselling, psychological, and educational theories, as well as empirical studies that emphasize the role of cultural competence in understanding and managing student behaviour.

Emerging sub-themes such as cultural background awareness, culturally responsive counselling, family and community cultural values, and cultural barriers closely align with multicultural counselling frameworks

and behavioural theories that view student behaviour as socially and culturally constructed. For example, the importance of recognising students' cultural background is theoretically grounded in multicultural counselling theory, particularly in the model proposed by Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992). Their tripartite model identifies cultural awareness as a core competence, emphasizing that counsellors must understand how their own cultural assumptions influence their interpretation of client behaviour. The misinterpretation of culturally influenced behaviour as defiance, as revealed in this study, reflects what Sue et al. (2007) describe as cultural bias in behavioural assessment.

Culturally responsive counselling practices, the second sub-theme aligns strongly with the culturally responsive pedagogy and counselling theory (Gay, 2018; Sue and Sue, 2016). These frameworks emphasize adapting counselling approaches to align with students' cultural experiences, values, and communication styles. The participants' use of culturally informed questioning, relevant examples, and flexible counselling styles reflects what Gay (2018) describes as cultural congruence, where interventions resonate with students lived realities.

From a behavioural perspective, the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) also supports this finding. The theory posits that behaviour change is more likely when individuals identify with and trust the source of guidance. When students feel culturally valued, they are more likely to internalize behavioural expectations modelled by counsellors. This theoretical lens explains why participants observed increased receptiveness and cooperation among students when culturally responsive strategies were employed. Empirical studies reinforce this connection. Williams and Graham (2014) found that culturally responsive counselling significantly improves student engagement and reduces behavioural resistance. Similarly, Day-Vines et al. (2007) reported that culturally adapted counselling interventions lead to better behavioural outcomes because students perceive counsellors as empathetic and respectful of their identity. These studies align with the current findings that cultural responsiveness enhances the effectiveness of managing anti-social behaviour.

The role of family and community cultural values eloquently observed in this study is theoretically supported by the family systems theory which views individual behaviour as inseparable from family dynamics and cultural norms (Bowen, 1978). Participant emphasis on involving families and community elders reflects this systems-based understanding of behaviour. Counsellors who engage families and respect cultural traditions are better positioned to reinforce behavioural change beyond the school environment. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) further supports this finding by situating families and communities within the mesosystem and exosystem that directly influence

students' behaviour. Behaviour management strategies that ignore these sub-systems are less likely to succeed, particularly in collectivist cultural contexts where authority and discipline are shared among family and community members.

Meanwhile, the identification of language barriers, misinterpretation of behaviour, and differing customs of expression as cultural barriers to effective behaviour management is theoretically aligned with Hall's (1976) cross-cultural communication theory. The theory explains how differences in language and non-verbal communication can lead to misunderstanding and conflict. Participant experiences reflect the consequences of high-context versus low-context communication differences, where meaning may be conveyed implicitly rather than explicitly.

Overall qualitative evidence confirms that school counsellors' cultural competence expressed through cultural awareness, responsive counselling practices, family and community engagement, and the ability to navigate cultural barriers plays a critical role in the effective management of anti-social behaviour among students in public secondary schools. The observed discrepancy between the quantitative and qualitative findings does not signify a contradiction but rather reflects the complementary strengths of mixed-methods research. While cultural competence did not emerge as a statistically significant predictor in the quantitative analysis, qualitative insights revealed its contextual and indirect role in shaping counsellors' interactions and decision-making processes in the management of anti-social behaviours.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between school counsellors' cultural competence and the management of anti-social behaviours in public secondary schools in Fako Division of the South West Region of Cameroon, using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. By integrating quantitative and qualitative evidence, the study provides a nuanced understanding of the role of cultural competence in behaviour management in culturally diverse school contexts.

The quantitative findings revealed that school counsellors' cultural competence did not account for a statistically significant proportion of variance in the management of anti-social behaviours among students. Cultural competence explained only a minimal percentage of the variance, suggesting that it is not, on its own, a strong direct predictor of behaviour management outcomes. This indicates that the management of anti-social behaviour in schools is influenced by a complex interaction of multiple factors, including school discipline policies, peer dynamics, parental involvement, counsellor self-efficacy, institutional support, and broader socio-economic and environmental conditions.

In contrast, the qualitative findings demonstrated that cultural competence plays a crucial contextual and facilitative role in the management of anti-social behaviour. Counsellors consistently highlighted the importance of understanding students' cultural backgrounds, applying culturally responsive counselling strategies, engaging families and community structures, and addressing cultural and linguistic barriers. These practices were shown to improve counsellor–student relationships, enhance communication, reduce behavioural misinterpretation, and promote more constructive and restorative responses to student misconduct. Cultural competence, therefore, emerged not as a direct causal factor, but as an essential foundation that shapes how behavioural interventions are interpreted, implemented, and sustained.

The apparent discrepancy between the quantitative and qualitative findings does not represent a contradiction but rather illustrates the complementary strengths of mixed-methods research. While statistical analysis captures direct and measurable relationships, qualitative insights reveal the processes, meanings, and contextual dynamics through which cultural competence influences behaviour management. The findings suggest that cultural competence operates indirectly—by enhancing trust, reducing bias, and facilitating engagement—rather than producing immediate, quantifiable effects on behavioural outcomes.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings align with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, Bandura's social learning theory, Glasser's choice theory, and Ellis's cognitive behavioural theory. Collectively, these frameworks underscore the fact that student behaviour is shaped by multiple interacting systems and internal cognitive processes, and that external professional attributes, such as cultural competence, are most effective when integrated with strategies that promote responsibility, positive modelling, cognitive restructuring, and consistent reinforcement. Cultural competence, therefore, functions as an enabling condition that enhances the effectiveness of evidence-based behavioural interventions rather than replacing them.

In practical terms, the study underscores the need for school counselling practice to move beyond a narrow focus on cultural awareness as a standalone competency. Instead, cultural competence should be embedded within comprehensive behaviour management frameworks that include continuous professional development, collaboration with teachers and families, school-wide positive behaviour supports, and the use of cognitive-behavioural and restorative approaches. Education authorities and school administrators should therefore prioritize ongoing training that equips counsellors with both culturally responsive skills and evidence-based behavioural intervention strategies.

In conclusion, while school counsellors' cultural competence may not independently predict the management of anti-social behaviour in public secondary schools, it remains a vital professional attribute that enhances the relevance, fairness, and effectiveness of counselling interventions. In culturally diverse settings such as Fako Division, the integration of cultural competence with systemic, cognitive, and behavioural approaches offers a more holistic and sustainable pathway for managing anti-social behaviour and promoting positive student development.

REFERENCES

- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Author.
- Antonsich, M. (2001). Meanings of place and aspects of the self: An interdisciplinary and empirical account. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 83(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0435-3684.00085>
- Atkins, M. S., Hoagwood, K. E., Kutash, K., & Seidman, E. (2010). Toward the integration of education and mental health in schools. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 37(1–2), 40–47. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-010-0299-7>
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Prentice Hall.
- Batsche, G. M., Elliott, J., Graden, J. L., Grimes, J., Kovalski, J. F., Prasse, D., Reschly, D. J., Schrag, J., & Tilly, W. D. (2005). *Response to intervention: Policy considerations and implementation*. National Association of State Directors of Special Education.
- Bowen, M. (1978). *Family therapy in clinical practice*. Jason Aronson.
- Bradshaw, C. P., Mitchell, M. M., & Leaf, P. J. (2010). Examining the effects of schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 12(3), 133–148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300709334798>
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.
- Burke, J. D., Loeber, R., & Birmaher, B. (2002). Oppositional defiant disorder and conduct disorder. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 41(3), 234–247. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00004583-200203000-00006>
- Chambers, S. (2023). Multicultural self-efficacy and school counsellor social advocacy competence. *Journal of School Counseling*, 21(4), 1–30.
- Colvin, G. (1992). *Managing acting-out behavior*. Sopris West.
- Colvin, G. (2001). *Managing the cycle of acting-out behavior in the classroom*. Sopris West.
- Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group. (2010). The effects of the Fast Track preventive intervention. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 78(6), 911–926. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021350>
- Curtis, C. (2016). Anti-social behaviour and youth development. *Youth Studies Australia*, 35(2), 45–53.
- Day-Vines, N. L., Wood, S. M., Grothaus, T., Craigen, L., Holman, A., Dotson-Blake, K., & Douglass, M. J. (2007). Broaching the subjects of race, ethnicity, and culture. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 85(4), 401–409. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2007.tb00608.x>
- Dickson, K., Emerson, E., & Hatton, C. (2005). Self-reported anti-social behaviour. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 49(7), 507–517. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2788.2005.00681.x>
- DuBois, D. L., Portillo, N., Rhodes, J. E., Silverthorn, N., & Valentine, J. C. (2011). How effective are mentoring programs? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 12(2), 57–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100611414806>
- Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405–432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x>
- Elliott, S. N., & Gresham, F. M. (1991). *Social skills intervention guide*. Sopris West.
- Ellis, A. (1962). *Reason and emotion in psychotherapy*. Lyle Stuart.
- Evans, K., & Lester, J. (2012). Zero tolerance, zero justice. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48(4), 539–568. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X11436295>
- Farrell, A. D., Kung, E. M., White, K. S., & Valois, R. F. (2000). The structure of problem behaviors. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 41(7), 971–982. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-7610.00682>
- Farrington, D. P. (1995). The development of offending. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 36(6), 929–964.
- Farrington, D. P. (2005). Childhood origins of anti-social behavior. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 12(3), 177–190. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.448>
- Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (2006). Introduction to response to intervention. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 21(1), 1–2.
- Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Glasser, W. (1998). *Choice theory: A new psychology of personal freedom*. HarperCollins.
- Gregory, A., Clawson, K., Davis, A., & Gerewitz, J. (2016). The promise of restorative practices. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 108(6), 761–778. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000099>

- Gresham, F. M., Watson, T. S., & Skinner, C. H. (2001). Functional behavioral assessment. *School Psychology Review, 30*(2), 156–172.
- Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Anchor Books.
- Hill, N. E., & Tyson, D. F. (2009). Parental involvement in middle school. *Developmental Psychology, 45*(3), 740–763. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015362>
- Holmes, S. E., Slaughter, J. R., & Kashani, J. (2001). Risk factors in childhood. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 6*(2–3), 113–137.
- Jessor, R., & Jessor, S. L. (1977). *Problem behavior and psychosocial development*. Academic Press.
- Jessor, R., Donovan, J. E., & Costa, F. M. (1991). *Beyond adolescence: Problem behavior and young adult development*. Cambridge University Press.
- Jeynes, W. (2012). A meta-analysis on the effects of parental involvement. *Urban Education, 47*(4), 706–742. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912445643>
- Kauffman, J. M., & Koalich, K. (2015). Multicultural education behaviors among school counsellors. *Professional School Counseling, 19*(1), 45–56.
- Kazdin, A. E. (2005). *Parent management training*. Oxford University Press.
- Lane, K. L. (1999). Identifying and supporting students with anti-social behavior. *Preventing School Failure, 44*(1), 8–14.
- Lane, K. L., & Menzies, H. M. (2001). Teacher preparation and anti-social behavior. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 24*(2), 144–156.
- Lochman, J. E., & Wells, K. C. (2002). Contextual social-cognitive mediators. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 70*(5), 1111–1120.
- Loeber, R., & Dishion, T. (1983). Early predictors of male delinquency. *Psychological Bulletin, 94*(1), 68–99.
- Loeber, R., & Farrington, D. P. (2000). *Young children who commit crime*. Sage.
- Loeber, R., & Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986). Family factors. *Crime and Justice, 7*, 29–149.
- Mayer, G. R. (2001). Anti-social behavior. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 9*(1), 3–9.
- Merlin-Knoblich, A. (2016). Multicultural education behaviors of school counselors. *Journal of School Counseling, 14*(12), 1–45.
- Moffitt, T. E. (1993). Adolescence-limited and life-course-persistent anti-social behavior. *Psychological Review, 100*(4), 674–701.
- Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school*. Blackwell.
- Rhee, S. H., & Waldman, I. D. (2002). Genetic and environmental influences. *Psychological Bulletin, 128*(3), 490–529.
- Rhodes, J. E., Grossman, J. B., & Resch, N. L. (2006). Agents of change. *Journal of Community Psychology, 34*(6), 691–707.
- Rutter, M., Giller, H., & Hagell, A. (1998). *Anti-social behavior by young people*. Cambridge University Press.
- Scott, T. M., Nelson, C. M., & Liaupsin, C. J. (2005). Behavior intervention planning. *Preventing School Failure, 49*(2), 33–38.
- Sheridan, S. M., & Kratochwill, T. R. (2007). *Conjoint behavioral consultation*. Springer.
- Skiba, R. J., Horner, R. H., Chung, C. G., Rausch, M. K., May, S. L., & Tobin, T. (2011). Race is not neutral. *Educational Researcher, 40*(2), 85–107.
- Sue, D. W., & Sue, D. (2016). *Counseling the culturally diverse* (7th ed.). Wiley.
- Sue, D. W., Arredondo, P., & McDavis, R. J. (1992). Multicultural counseling competencies. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 70*(4), 477–486.
- Sugai, G., & Horner, R. (2009). Responsiveness-to-intervention. *Perspectives on Behavioral Interventions, 32*(1), 2–8.
- Thornberry, T. P., & Krohn, M. D. (2000). The self-report method. *Criminal Justice, 4*, 33–83.
- Walker, H. M., & Severson, H. H. (2001). *Systematic screening for behavior disorders*. Sopris West.
- Walker, H. M., Ramsey, E., & Gresham, F. M. (2004). *Anti-social behavior in school*. Wadsworth.
- Webster-Stratton, C. (1999). How to promote children's social competence. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 28*(2), 146–161.
- Williams, M. T., & Graham, J. R. (2014). Culturally responsive counseling. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 61*(1), 1–10.

Cite this Article: Jaja, ND; Lo-oh, JL; Martina, NZ (2026). School Counsellors' Cultural Competence and the Management of Anti-Social Behaviours among Students in Public Secondary Schools in Fako Division of South West, Cameroon. *Greener Journal of Psychology and Counselling, 6*(1): 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.15580/gjpc.2026.1.020526025>.