

THE PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF PUNISHMENT ADMINISTERED ON STUDENTS BY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN OSUN STATE AND THE COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to investigate the perceived effectiveness of punishment by secondary school teachers in Osun state 180 secondary school teachers were randomly selected from 18 secondary schools in Osun state (10 teachers were selected from each school). 10 out of the 18 schools were located in the urban areas. 130 out of the total number of 180 teachers had working experience of 10 years and above as secondary school teachers while 50 had working experience of less than 10 years. Three research hypotheses were and the results showed a statistically significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of punishment by the more experienced teachers. Also, a statistically significant difference was found in the perceived effectiveness of punishment by urban secondary schools compared to the rural secondary schools teachers. Gender difference was also found in the teachers' perceived effectiveness of punishment. The counselling implications were discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Skinner (1972) defines 'punishment' as something that hurts inflicted by one person on another. It could be in terms of withholding of satisfaction of a need from an individual or the inflicting of physical pain on the person. Either way, punishment brings pain. Punishment, is the act of causing someone to suffer for a misdeed, fault, or crime. It can also be defined as dealing roughly with an opponent especially by taking advantage of a weakness and damage with hard blows. Chauhan (1978) views a punisher as an aversive stimulus, which follows a response and frequently serves to suppress it. Punishment, is considered by Marion (1981) as a specific technique used by adults who assert their power or use force to change behaviours while Ejiogu (1990) defines punishment as an action taken to restore lost authority and reestablish respect for rules and regulations. He identified three major criteria that distinguish punishment from other similar concepts as follow:

The act must be painful or at least unpleasant to the recipient

It must be given by someone in authority, and

It must be given to a person as a consequence of breach of establishment rules and regulations on his part.

Skinner (1961) describes punishment as a complicated event that has complicated consequences in that while it is true that punishment inhibits activities that lead to it that same punishment may not bring about a permanent change in behaviour. It might just inhibit the undesirable behaviour temporarily but when the punishment or the threat of punishment ceases, the same undesirable behaviour returns. At times punishment may aid the differentiation of a wrong response from a right one.

NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT AS FORM OF PUNISHMENT

The concepts of reinforcement is central in operant conditioning theory is Skinner. A reinforcer (a reinforcing stimulus) is any event which changes subsequent behaviour when it follows behaviour in time (Chauhan, 1978). A reinforcer can be defined as any event, which can increase the rate of responding behaviour, not just an hypothetical device that produces stimulus response (S-R) connection. Negative reinforcement involves the application of those unpleasant stimuli, which the learner will readily terminate when given the opportunity to do so for example, social disapproval or condemnation by peer group. When negative reinforcement is used, the response to be learned serves to terminate or eliminate the aversive stimulus. For example, if doing certain homework is the only means by which a student can terminate the displeasure of his parents, the student may, over a period of time learn to terminate the annoying stimulus quickly by engaging in the required task. Negative reinforcement is then a means of forcing desirable behaviour to occur. In effect, negative reinforcer strengthens avoidance response. Consequently, through negative reinforcement an organism does something to avoid something. The idea of reinforcement is essentially to shape or modify behaviour of an organism. Negative reinforcers have similar effects to positive reinforcers by they work in inverse ways, in the case of negative reinforcement, the organisms is subjected to a noxious stimulus which can be terminated, when the response to

be learned is produced (Olusakin, 2001). A negative reinforcer could be the teacher's displeasure, which could only be terminated by the pupil doing what the teacher wants him to do. Negative reinforcers and punishment are sometimes similar to each other. A negative reinforcer comes before the response and forces its occurrence so as to terminate the unpleasant conditions whereas the punisher follows the response and decreases the likelihood of the recurrence of the response. A negative reinforcer no doubt strengthens the behaviour by removing or by avoiding the negative stimuli. For example, a child of 8 years does not complete his home assignment, the mother tells him that he will not get a gift if he does not complete his assignment regularly. The child in order to get the gift completes his assignment regularly. The child in order to get the gift completes his home assignment. Suppose a child comes late to school and the teacher announces that anyone who comes late will be marked absent. The child in order to avoid being marked absent comes earlier. He does something to avoid something. The behaviour of coming early is, no doubt, strengthened but the mechanism differs. The terms 'Punishment' and negative reinforcement appear to be the same and have been used interchangeably in some books, but according to Chauhan (1978), there is a difference in the two. In terms of Skinnerian operant conditioning, there are various ways in which the provision of punishment could be linked to negative reinforcement while the withdrawal of such punishment could lead to positive reinforcement. The provision of reward on the other hand could be a positive reinforcement whereas the withdrawal of a reward generates negative reinforcement.

	Provided	Withdrawn
Punishment	Negative Reinforcement	Positive reinforcement

Practically, a student may be told, "if you succeed you will get a new shirt" (positive reinforcement) or if you fail you will not get any new shirt" (Negative Reinforcement). If you behave well I will not punish you". (Positive Reinforcement) or if you don't behave well I will punish you (Negative Reinforcement). Students are often under tension, because, they are undergoing a process of adaptation into the social system of the school and a process of anticipatory adjustment into the social systems of the community. This process is referred to as socialisation. According to Glidewell (1972), 'socialisation' can be conceived as the process by which individuals become aware of the alternative modes of behaviour available to them, become aware of the consequences of adopting each mode and adopt as effective and proper those behaviour most often approved. The goal of socialisation process is influenced by the cultural values, ethnic concerns, social norms, sex roles, and the psycho-social context of the process. All these are aimed at building up the behaviour of the individual. Behaviour can be regarded as any activity of an organism, which is either overt or covert. The overt behaviour is one that can be observed and its frequency recorded while the covert behaviour cannot be observed but implicitly manifested. The totality of the school experience is expected to shape the student's social behaviour because students acquire new patterns of behaviour and change some old ones while in school. Teachers are the custodians of the students in schools and as such they exercise their authority in curbing maladaptive behaviours of these students by punishing them when deemed necessary. Behavioural problems in schools are categorised by Gardner (1978) as those actions that are socially unacceptable behaviours might be deriving some satisfaction from their actions. According to Olusakin (2003), behaviours that constitute and reflect maladjustment among students include all forms of disobedience to constituted authority (Principal, Vice-principals, teachers, administrative staff, elderly persons, senior students and class captains or representatives) bullying the junior students or classmates, lying, stealing, lateness to school or school programmes, untidiness/inappropriate dressing to school, absenteeism, truancy, fighting cheating during examinations or tests and all forms of examination malpractices. These unacceptable behaviours usually have appropriate punishments allotted to them depending on the degree of deviation from established school rules and regulations and the social norms and values. The punishment ranges from warning, blame, censure, disgrace, isolation, pass cutting/manual labour to removal of privileges and corporal punishments such as canning, slapping and so on. The teachers expect these measures to serve as deterrent to the students' acts of indiscipline.

Statement of the Problem: There are a lot of behavioural problems that are being manifested by the youths of nowadays which were not glaringly in manifestation in the past. Corporal punishment as a form of control was freely used in the past by teachers. One begins to wonder whether the slack in the control of these students has anything to do with the diminishing use of punishment (Olusakin, 2005a). There is an urgent need to seek for ways of managing secondary school students' diverse behavioural problems such as lack of respect for their teachers and even elders in general, laziness and pride in addition to the common problems of pilfering, bullying, lateness to school, truancy, and examination malpractices and so on. A child should not just have experience but the right type of experience. On the other hand, because there are some people who would readily judge the value

if a teacher on the basis of classroom quietness, deliberate punishment is frequently used in the classroom in an effort to achieve the desired quietness while the unruly behavioural manifestations continue immediately after such teachers leave the classroom (Olusakin, 2005b).

Purpose of the Study: This study was undertaken to revisit the use of the use of corporal punishment in our secondary schools by seeking to determine if there would be statistically significant difference in secondary school teacher perception of the effectiveness of punishment based on such teachers years of experience and the schools location (rural/urban). Also, to consider the counselling implications of the use of corporal punishment in curbing acts of indiscipline within the school system.

Research Questions: The following research questions were raised and traced in this study

1. Is there any significant difference in the perception of more experienced and less experienced teachers on the effectiveness of corporal punishment in solving the problem of indiscipline in secondary schools?
2. Does teachers urban or rural location, have any significant effect on the their perception of the effectiveness of corporal punishment in secondary schools?
3. Are there gender differences in the teachers' perception of punishment as being effective in redressing the problem of indiscipline among students?

Hypotheses: Three research hypotheses were formulated and tested based on the research questions.

Research Hypothesis I: There is a significant difference in the perception of teachers with ten of more years and those with less than ten years of experience in their perception of the effectiveness of the use of corporal punishment in schools.

Research Hypothesis II: There is a significant difference in the perception of teachers in rural and urban secondary schools on the effectiveness of the use of corporal punishment in schools.

Research Hypothesis III: There is a significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers of the effectiveness of the use of corporal punishment schools.

METHODOLOGY

Sample: A total of 180 teachers were randomly selected from 18 secondary schools in Osun State (10 teachers from each school of who 5 each are male and female, 10 out of the 18 schools were located in the urban areas while 8 schools were chosen from rural areas. 130 out of the 180 teachers had teaching experience of at least 10 years while the remaining 50 had less than 10 years teaching experience.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The teacher's perception of punishment effectiveness questionnaire (TPEQ) was designed by the researcher to collect the data used in this study. The TPPEQ has two sections. section A was to do with biographical information and general information such as age, sex, qualification, years of experience and location of school. Section B consisted of 14 'Yes or No' questions regarding the teachers' perception of the effectiveness of corporal punishment in schools ('Yes' carries one mark while 'No' carries 0 mark). A test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.74 and content validity of 0.81 were established regarding the psychometric properties of this research instrument.

PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

The copies of the questionnaire were administered to the teachers by the researcher. They were told that there were no right or wrong answers and that it was not necessary for them to put their names. The completed copies of the questionnaire were subsequently collected for data analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

Independent t-test statistic was employed in analysing the data collected to test the three research hypotheses.

RESULTS

To test research hypothesis 1 which stated that "there is a significant difference in the perception of teachers with ten or more years and those with less than ten years of experience in their perception of the effectiveness of the use of corporal punishment in schools" an independent t-test statistical analysis was employed and the result was as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Independent t-test analysis of the mean scores and the standard deviation of the scores of the more experienced and the less experienced teachers

Experience	N	\bar{x}	SD	T	df	P
0.10 years	50	9.36	1.72	22.41	178	
Above 10 years						

N = Number

\bar{x} = Means scores

SD = Standard Deviation

df = 178

t(observed) = 22.41 and this is greater than t(critical) of 3.29. P = .001. Hypothesis 1 was therefore accepted because a statistically significant difference was found between the scores of the two groups. In testing hypothesis II which stated that "there is a significant difference in the perception of teachers in rural and urban secondary schools of the effectiveness of the use of corporal punishment in schools" an independent t-test statistical analysis was used to obtain the result shown in Table II.

Table II: Independent T-Test Analysis of the means and the standard deviations of the scores of rural and urban teachers

Location	N	\bar{x}	SD	T	df	P
Rural	80	10.01	1.92	17.28	178	.001
Urban	100	12.15	1.31			

t(observed) = 17.28

Since t(observed) (17.28) is greater than t(critical) of 3.29 P.001 Hypothesis two was accepted. The result showed that there is a statistically significant difference in the rural and urban teachers perception of the effectiveness of punishment. Also the same independent t-test statistical analysis was used to test hypothesis III which stated that "there is a significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers of the effectiveness of punishment in schools". Table III shows the result.

Table III: Independent T-test analysis of the means and the standard deviation of the scores of male and Female Teachers

Teacher's Sex	N	\bar{x}	SD	T	df	P
Male	90	13.04	1.88	178	11.39	.001
Female	90	9.12	1.35			

t(observed) = 11.39

since t(observed) of 11.39 is greater than the t(critical) of 3.29 at .001 level of significance therefore research hypothesis III is accepted and that is, there is a statistically significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers regarding the effectiveness of corporal punishment in schools. Male teachers view corporal punishment as being effectiveness more than the female teachers considered corporal punishment to be.

DISCUSSION

The results showed that the more experienced teacher perception of the effectiveness of punishment in schools was significantly higher than that of the less experienced teachers. Hypothesis I was therefore accepted. The more experienced teachers were likely to have gone through strict disciplinary training while they were in school. This finding is in consonance with Marion (1981) who found out that punishment was usually employed by matured adults to enforce discipline. A statistically significant difference was also found into the perception of rural and urban secondary school teachers concerning the effectiveness of punishment in school. The urban secondary school teachers recorded a significantly higher level of perception of the effectiveness of punishment in schools than the rural secondary schools teachers. This could be because the students in urban areas engage in

a lot of acts of indiscipline due to their exposure to negative television programmes and violent films. Research hypothesis III was also accepted because a statistically significant difference was recorded showing that male teachers were higher in their perception of the effectiveness of punishment than female teachers. The explanation could be that female teachers are usually more passive in dealing with the students than male teachers and even when the need arises for female teachers to punish the students many would readily seek for the assistance of the male teachers. *The counselling implications of the Use of Corporal Punishment in Carbing Acts of Indiscipline in Secondary Schools* In general the control of learning in school has relied more on punishment than on reward. It is common to punish for failure to accomplish the set task, but refuse to reward success. According to Stone (1981), punishment may be meted out to the larger part of a class, while reward is usually given to the most successful one or two children. Punishment is similar to negative reinforcement in some respects, but differs from it in that the noxious stimulus follows the activity. In the case of school, it could be the teachers displeasure which follows a maladaptive behaviour and which is calculated to prevent the recurrence of such behaviour. In everyday life, avoidance activity constitutes an important part of our behaviour and much of the apparatus of government and law is based on punishment. Punishment should be employed with caution in the teaching learning process. Apart from its dubious efficacy, the problem of precise control is extremely difficult. Furthermore, anxiety and fear do not remain confined to just one stimulus, but spread like the ripples on a pond to every aspect of class activity. For example, a Mathematics teacher with cane in his hand while teaching may arouse more anxiety and fear than interest in the subject.

IGNORING AS A MEANS OF DEALING WITH MALADAPTIVE BEHAVIOURS

To ignore means not to take notice of something or somebody. It also means to pretend not to know or see somebody or something. In behaviour modification, this is another technique employed to correct undesirable behaviour. Sometimes, people engage themselves in awkward behaviour to seek recognition but when their maladaptive behaviour is not accorded recognition, they are ignored and tend to revert to the more acceptable behavioural pattern. Teachers and parents can make effective use of extinction by ignoring undesirable behaviour so that the child gets no attention, which might otherwise reinforce the behaviour and lead to its repetition. In the case of classroom misdemeanors, ignoring the activity, so long as it is not upsetting other children may be more effective than giving the child attention. At the root of much undesirable classroom activity is the need for attention, and this activity is reinforced if the teacher makes a fuss by punishing the miscreant. The effect of reinforcement on this attention and possibly the approval of some of the other children may well be greater than the effect of punishment the teacher might use. The point should perhaps be made, however, that ignoring behaviour is by no means the same as being unaware of it. When a behaviour is not reinforced it gradually tends towards extinction Counselor and teachers alike can use this ignoring method, by recognizing the behaviour but not giving it attention. When certain maladaptive behaviours are ignored, there is every tendency that they will fade into oblivion. Ignoring is a form of punishment because the exhibition of such ignored behaviour will not get any reward. This helps undesirable behaviour to give way to more acceptable behaviour. Punishment, like reward, must however fit the child. Some children need the security of stern discipline: others may feel repressed with too much discipline. It must be in accordance with the personality of the individual students, the class as a whole, and the teacher. The characteristics and report of the one administering the punishment and the pupil being punished have important bearing on the outcomes of punishment. Other factors affecting the outcomes are (1) the criteria maladaptive behaviour and the administration punishment, (2) the time interval between the exhibition of the maladaptive behaviour and the administration of punishment (3) the form of punishment and its relation to the maladaptive behaviour and (4) the severity of the punishment. Guidance counselors should be employed to guide and counsel the students and to facilitate the management of behavioural problems within the educational system.

CONCLUSION

Many studies have shown that the experience of being in school influences the students' reaction towards themselves (Schmuck, 1983, Purkey 1990; Olusakin, 2002). The reaction toward self consists, for example, of students' perceptions, feelings, and evaluations of themselves as individuals and of self directed behaviours such as self-gratification. The school as a primary setting for academic and social experience therefore influences the students' self-development. School experience also affect the type of reaction that the person has towards other individuals such as peers, teachers, or other adults. For orderliness in society, people's behaviours are expected to be acceptable by the society. This presupposes that the behaviour of individuals within the society are expected to promote harmony and concord instead of raising disharmony and discord. The whole society, the Governments

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school administrators and parents must see the issue of discipline in schools as a joint responsibility and therefore should encourage and resist teachers in both rural and urban areas to appropriately and effectively use punishment as a corrective measure when it becomes necessary. We should not spare the rod and spoil our children.

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