

Perceived Influence of Behaviour Modification Strategies in the Reduction of Truancy among Secondary School Students in Rivers State

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Abstract

This study examined the perceived influence of behaviour modification strategies in the reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researchers formulated three (3) objectives, three (3) research questions and three (3) hypotheses for the study. The design of the study was descriptive survey design. The population of the study is 640 SS 3 students in Obio/Akpor, Port Harcourt and Asari-Toru Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The sampling technique used for the study was stratified sampling technique with a sample size of 390 students. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Behaviour Modification Strategies and Reduction of Truancy among Students. The data gathered from the research questions were analyzed using mean score and standard deviation, while the null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the analysis, the study revealed that there were great influence of positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement and punishment in reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that government through school management should orient the teachers on the use of behaviour modification strategies in the reduction of truancy in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Keyword: Behaviour, Modification, Strategy, Truancy, Students, Secondary school, Reinforcement, Punishment

INTRODUCTION

Behaviour modification is a means of changing behaviour through various techniques used to replace undesirable behaviours with desirable ones. Behaviour modification techniques have been used to treat both adults and children from various problems, such as enuresis (bedwetting), separation and general anxiety, various phobias, obsessive compulsive disorder etc. The methods used vary, but usually involve some form of positive and negative reinforcement. Omabie (2015) observed that behaviour modification techniques work in many situations. He reveals that child behaviour modification techniques include the use of both positive and negative reinforcements and positive and negative punishments. Parents can use a behaviour modification plan to teach their children to have good habits and behaviour.

However, every child is different and what works to modify the behaviour of one child may not work for another. For example, sending a child who enjoys time alone to their room for behaviour modification may have little or no effect. If your child does not enjoy using electronics, taking away time to play a video game will not modify his/her behaviour. For behaviour modification to be effective, it should be used as soon as possible. Consequences are positive punishments and are most effective when they are “natural consequences”.

Behaviours like noise making while a teacher is teaching in the class, signing or making calls in the class when class is going on, coming to school very late and involving in an examination malpractices are the specific behaviours that need to control based on this study. According to Mohaney (2016), every individual all over the world has one form of behaviour or the other. Behavioural attitude is one thing everyone exhibits and it is our nature to do so. Most of our behaviour, left to it, is biased, partial or prejudiced, yet the quality of our life and that of what we build depend on the quality of one's behaviour.

Furthermore, Ekeruo (1990) indicated that behaviour modification is the use of the principles of operant and classical conditioning, to change a given undesirable behaviour to a desirable one. Behaviour could be very difficult to define in precise terms because of cultural differences. Every culture has its own accepted standard or norms of behaviour. A behaviour regarded as appropriate in one culture may be abnormal or inappropriate in another culture. It is a systematic way of changing an undesirable behaviour to a desirable one. Behaviour modification is presently seen as a process of helping people to learn how to solve certain inter, personal, emotional and decision problems. According to Steer and Porter (2011), there is force that serves in three functions of human behaviour; it energizes or causes people to act; it directs behaviours towards the attainment of specific goal and it sustains the effort expanded in reaching those goals. The control importance of motivation in the classroom is for learner to emulate good behaviour. This will foster effective learning in the classroom.

Essuman, Nwaogu and Nwachukwu (2010) agreed that learning is a practical application of the principles of psychology in behaviour modification. Ngwoke (2015) asserted that learning is the establishment of stimulus-response bonds between initially unconnected stimuli or events. In a broad sense, learning is a process, which causes a change in behaviour of an individual. This change in behaviour results in experiences or interaction between the individual and his environment. Teachers have been accepted as behaviour moulders so they are responsible for whatever is happening in the classroom. Pear and Martin (2007) opined that teachers should employ the techniques and strategies that are appropriate in managing classroom disruptive behaviours amongst secondary school students. Behaviour as the way some one behaves. Behaviour can be good or bad, desirable or undesirable, disruptive behaviour may be seen as a deviation from acceptable desirable and appropriate behaviour, which interferes with the individual growth, development, and those of others around him. Essuman *et al.* (2010) defined behaviour as a way we behave which is either overt or covert. An overt behaviour is that behaviour which can be observed and its frequency recorded example talking aloud, laughing, crying, running, standing etc.

Behaviour is the function of interaction of heredity and environment. From this definition, it is worthy to note that behaviour is modifiable, by proper manipulation of the learning process. When behaviour is modified, learning will be more effective. Therefore, learned behaviours are patterns of behaviour that are learned in an environmental milieu. Behaviour can be either desirable or undesirable. In behaviour modification, it also stated that boys always dominate in science-learning activities in co-educational schools when the instruction strategy adopted is competitive. Obianyo (2010) reported that teachers, overt and covert instructional behaviour influence learners' achievement. The effect is that teachers, unconsciously teach science and other courses that are difficult to make boys excel thereby creating the impression that the girls and boys can't learn in the classroom situation. Nzewi and Onimisi (2008) asserted that boys and girls have equal opportunities for learning. The teacher equipped with the principles of psychology, which he derives from his/knowledge of Educational psychology delves into the task of molding students minds, learning involves the

learner, the learning process and the environment. These factors influence each other and equilibrium among them is necessary process is that process through which student acquire positive changes in their behaviour, improve their performance recognize themselves and discover new ways. The environment includes the teachers, the school and the classroom. The school is regarded as a socializing agent for children, each of these aspects of the environment must co-operate with each other in order to facilitate learning. To make learning adoptive to individual needs and interests, it is necessary that teachers posses through knowledge of psychological, social and biological factors basic to growth and achievement. It is important that teachers should have good knowledge of principles of behaviour modification, so as to provide a conducive environment for effective learning. Maintenance of order in the classroom is one of the professional challenges of teachers. Many teachers cannot maintain order in the classroom because of their inability to control the class and manage behaviour problems. Classroom behaviour problems in secondary school includes inappropriate study habit, truancy, fighting, cheating, bullying, quarrelling, conversing, chorus answers, lateness, and eating/chewing etc.

Omabie (2015) agreed that techniques of modifying behaviour are derived from principles developed from learning theories which includes both cognitive, and stimulus response associating learning processes. They are classical and operant condition learning by imitation or modeling, cognitive or intellectual learning (insightful learning). These theories allow the individual to actively participate in finding solutions to his/her problems. Teachers should be able to use behaviour modification techniques such as verbal reinforcement, private chat, fading, ignoring, ear shooting, proximity control, and modeling, tokens to correct erring students who exhibit disruptive and maladaptive behaviour in the classroom setting.

Truancy is a product of a combination of social, economic peer group and media factors which invariably reflect in students' academic performance and resources in school and challenges the competence and resources of school counsellors (Animasahun, 2003). It is noted that students who stay away from school without permission will not only be left out in the learning process but they may also probably end up engaging in antisocial behaviour such as in drug abuse, gangsterism, bullying, alcoholism free and unregulated sex, gambling and loitering with their negative consequences and experience. Truancy is a discipline problem and it is socially undesirable, irritating and socially unacceptable and some cases embarrassing or harmful to the student. Truancy need to be reduced or controlled with appropriate behaviour modification strategies.

Virtually, everyone including children, adolescents and adults need behaviour modification. Those who should provide behaviour management in schools are classroom teachers, school psychologists, behaviour change agents, school counsellors, principals and parents. In the secondary schools, truants can be labeled as poverty prone and at-risk students who are faced with a number of educational challenges which require the building of counsellors to prevent its negative consequences to students and learning. Usually, truant students have high rate of absenteeism, poor academic performance, adjustment problems, lack of interest in school and poor attitude in school work and learning. Such students need the assistance of professional counsellors so as to cope with the academic and social problems, also challenges associated with schooling. The persistence and growing phenomenon of truancy among secondary school students suggest the need to build the professional capacity of school counsellor as to mitigate the negative effects of truancy among secondary school students. The magnitude or prevalence of truancy remains a factor yet to be thoroughly examined among secondary school students. Related to the prevalence of truancy are factors suspected to predispose

students to truancy. Previous studies (Gesinde, 2005; Okwakpam, 2012; Igwe, 2013) have investigated the causes of truancy vis-à-vis students' academic performance. Such studies left unanswered the questions on prevalence of truancy and factors which predispose students to truancy. Answers to these questions are important to understand truancy and to improve school facilities and guidance and counseling services to eliminate truancy among secondary school students. Truancy predisposes students to dropping out of school as students often demonstrate a pattern of increase absence from school over a period of time (Epstein & Scheldon, 2002).

Nawaz (2005) explain that truancy is an act of international absenting of oneself from school without permission, leaving without authorization and dodging of specific classes. It has been reported that many factors are suspected to facilitate truancy among students among which are: lack of qualified teachers, lack of teaching and learning materials, lack of dedication on the part of the teachers, home factor (marital adjustment and broken homes, lack of affection, disability of parents in terms of income, media factor, peer group influence, school environment. It is essential to know the causes of truancy among secondary school students. Such causes include student demographics, family characteristics, student's personal and physical factors, school climate and excessive use of media or electronic facilities. Williams (2000) observed that truancy has interfered adversely with students' academic performance as well as their moral standard. Inadequate guidance and counselling services in schools has been identified as one of the major factors responsible for the increasing rate of truancy among students in secondary schools. Ehindero (1999) observed that because of the many potentials to detail set educational objectives of the students and the school and in view of the short and long term impact of truancy on students learning and personal development. The study will examine the following variables of behaviour modification strategies in the reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Behaviour modification techniques are very influential and powerful tools for bringing out positive change in human behaviour and also facilitate good and conducive learning atmosphere in classroom. Disorderly behaviours increase now among the students. Examples are students indulging in noise making, some students are sighing in class, students now answer calls in class, students indulge in conversation during teaching and learning, some students come to school late, some also involve in examination malpractice during exams. All these behaviours cause problem in the classroom and if not monitored properly may influence teaching and learning negatively. It is important to proffer remedy to these problems now hence some authorities have advanced to explain why individuals, including students misbehave. Some research works have been carried out with different diversified methods on how to end disorderly behaviours, yet students display more increasing disorderly behaviour. Some research works adopt negative reinforcement as behaviour modification technique because it is doubtful fact that disorderly behaviour has psychological and educational consequence on students.

A truant can be described as a person or student that stays out of school without good reasons. He or she is irregular at school attendance, also he or she finds other places more attractive than the school. Truancy is one of the offences which students in institution of learning commit. Therefore, the study will aim at identifying the causes and problems of truancy in school as well as the use of behaviour modification strategies to reduce truancy among public secondary school students in Rivers State. Owing to the causes and problems of truancy in schools, the researcher intend to investigate empirically the negative effect of

social media on the students, the student's family background, peer group pressure, teachers' attitude, school environment, lack of affection, lack of books, parental financial status and examination phobia and behaviour modification strategies such as reinforcements, modelling and alternative behavioural antecedents for reducing truancy among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate behaviour modification strategies in reducing truancy among senior secondary school students in Rivers State. Specifically, the objective of the study includes:

1. To determine the extent to which positive reinforcement influence reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State.
2. To find out the extent to which negative reinforcement influence reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State.
3. To find out the extent to which punishment influence reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be formulated for this study:

1. To what extent does positive reinforcement influence reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does negative reinforcement influence reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does punishment influence reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the influence of positive reinforcement on reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the influence of negative reinforcement on reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the influence of punishment on reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Scope of the Study

The content scope of this study is concerned with use of behaviour modification in reducing truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State. Geographically, the scope of the study is limited to all the senior secondary schools (SS 3) in Port Harcourt Local Government Area, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area and Asari-Toru Local Government Area of Rivers State.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

Akinade (2016) perceived that Watson was a foremost American experimental psychologist. He worked at the University of Chicago, he was instrumental to the establishment of learning theory tradition in American psychology. He popularized the theory of conditioning in

America. He had been acclaimed the “Father of Behaviourism” or “Founder of Behaviour Modification”. He laid the foundation for the use of the scientific inquiry in studying human behaviour. He advocated the use of methodological behaviourism in 1913. He described behaviour as an action which can be observed and measured objectively. He stressed that the real explanation of behaviour lies in the nervous system. He performed several experiments. Watson was best known for his little Albert experiment. In this experiment, he used classical conditioning to teach a nine month old boy to be afraid of a white toy rat by associating the rat with a sudden loud noise. This study demonstrated how emotions could become conditioned response. From his experiment, he concluded that stimulus response connections can be established if trials are made frequently and continuously “the more the trials the more are the possibilities that the correct solution would arrive. Watson was known for introducing the scientific study of behaviour. He reduced human organisms to a bundle of responses. He laid the groundwork and reported the popular case study of little Albert (Watson & Rayner, 1920).

Skinner, Burrhus Fredrick (Operant Conditioning)

B.F. Skinner was born in Pennsylvania in 1904. He was one of the prominent behavioural theorists of the 20th century, Skinner proposed a class of behaviour called operant behaviours because they operate on the environment in the apparent absence of any unconditional stimuli such as food. The theory focused on relationship between behaviour and its consequences.

Akinade (2016) noted that B.F. Skinner was mentioned as the most eminent and influential American Psychologist of the 20th century. He was identified as the most quoted of all authorities. He was the foremost spokesman for the behaviourist, association and environmentalist.

Skinner developed a more sophisticated version of behaviourism than the original conception developed by Watson. He developed operant conditioning i.e. voluntary behaviour that is strengthened by reinforcement. He chose the term to stress that an organism “operates on the environment when it learns. This type of learning is also referred to as ‘instrumental conditioning’ because what the organism does is instrumental in securing reinforcement.

Skinner contribution to behaviour therapy arose from his dedication to serious experiment work in the laboratories. He conducted several experiments using rats and pigeons to demonstrate the efficacy of operant conditioning. A rat was placed in the feeder attached to a lever. The hungry rat searching for the food in the chamber when the animal presses the lever, a food pellet is delivered from the feeder. The delivery of food pellet is contingent on the response of pressing the lever. Contingently delivered food pellets act to reinforce the lever – pressing response. Skinner had a large following on the basis of the results of his work and contribution. Much of the appeal of his work is the promise of applying conditioning principles to practical problems of managing behaviour such as in training; behaviour disorders, parent training, rehabilitation programme and retards. He proposed the principle of learning which says that behaviours are naturally emitted without eliciting stimuli. From the view, workers on behaviour modification could shape many kinds of behaviour emitted by an organism. Skinner advocated that certain desirable actions of children should be reinforced and therefore strengthened while undesirable ones should be ignored or go unreinforced. He advocated that we should use with consistency all scientific knowledge that is acquired from experimental works. He claimed that if this is done, one should be able to solve most of our everyday living problems.

The principle of operant conditioning will help in removing fear from the students. Using positive reinforcement should be encouraged. Reinforcement should not be delayed for it to have positive effect on the learner.

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Behaviour Modification Technique

Behaviour modification is the generic term given to any process derived from learning theory. The goal is to change a person's behaviour or the way he/she interacts with the world (Onwuasoanya, 2016). To understand behaviour modification we have to grasp the two main concepts that is based on classical and operant conditioning. Classical conditioning is credited to Ivan Pavlov. It is produced by persistently pairing of two stimuli, one of which evolves an automatic response. Akinade (2015) opined its response naturally in learning (unconditioned response - UR) elicited by an unconditioned stimulus (US), comes to be elicited by a different and formerly neutral stimulus (NS) and becomes a conditioned stimulus (CS) Operant conditioning is the process by which an operant response is strengthened or weakened by the consequences that follow it.

In the same vein, Behaviour modification is a behavioural science technique which involves the application of principles derived from research in experimental psychology to alleviate human suffering and increase human functioning. Behaviour modification, which is sometimes called behaviour therapy is the use of empirically demonstrated behaviour change techniques to improve one's behaviour such as altering an individual's behaviours and reactions to stimuli through positive and negative reinforcement of adaptive behaviour and reduction of maladaptive behaviour through punishment.

Behaviour modification in the classroom by N. Mather and Sam Goldstein, include a huge or extra playtime for kindergartners, help with handing out paper or early departure for lunch for middle school students or extra computer time or self- creation of a class. Pear and Martin (2007) postulate that behaviour modification is mostly used in clinical and educational psychology, particularly in case of people with learning difficulties. In the day-to-day life, it is mostly used in the classroom scenario, where the teacher uses some techniques to reform the behaviour of a child.

Uba (2016) agrees that behaviour modification refers to the application of behaviour principles of human situation, including child rearing. Education, psychotherapy, vocational technology, business and social movements help in behaviour modification of our students. Mahoney (2016) avers that behaviour friction as any technique, which involves the use of broadly define set of clinical procedures whose description and national often rely on experimental findings of psychological research. Okwuasoanya and Enwuezor (2007) agree that behaviour modification is a practical application of the principles of psychology, especially learning. It is a systematic and scientific way of changing an undesirable behaviour to a desirable one. In recent times, however, behaviour modification has come to refer to mainly the techniques for increasing adaptive behaviour through reinforcement and decreasing maladaptive behaviour through punishment. Observable and measurable behaviours are good targets for change. All behaviours follow a set of consistent rules.

Skinner (2013) defines behaviour modification as the application of the techniques of operant conditioning techniques to modify behaviour. Behaviour modification, behaviour therapy, and behaviour counseling are often used interchangeably in counselling profession Akinade and Adedipe, For the purpose of this research, the researcher would want to ascertain the

behaviour modification techniques appropriate for managing disruptive behaviour exhibited by students in the classroom. Sprinthall and Sprinthall (2016) postulate that behaviour modification is a specific type of behaviour influence that translates the theories and principles of learning derived from experimental psychology into an applied technique for behaviour change.

Many teachers have not acquired the necessary expertise needed by them in applying behaviour modification technique, they are not guided by any known principles, hence the use of behaviour modification techniques in the classroom, can be prone to abuse by these teachers. If the applications of these techniques are not properly monitored, then freedom of students will be jeopardized in our schools. For this to be in effect, it will negatively influence the instructional processes in classroom. The Nigerian Union of Teachers Third Bi-annual Conference that took place in Bendel State in 1991 recognized the numerous factors that cause disruptive behaviour in the classroom and the problems they create for the achievement of set goals of an instruction. This conference emphasized that the departure of teachers from the ethics of their profession, could contribute to the growth rate of indiscipline in our schools. It called for total commitment to duty, by the teachers and advised parents and guardians to contribute to proper upbringing of their children and wards by providing the needs of these children and co-operating with their teachers.

Ukeje (2007) in an address to the 11th Convocation Ceremony of the Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri, recognized problems of misbehaviour when he said “serious views must be taken of moral anxiety in our schools, corporal punishment which is not wicked punishment should be applied to grab and control some of these excesses of students. He also contended that teachers being the key will do this effectively. Teachers should help the students because nobody knows what they are going to be tomorrow. We should not wait for government to recognize our work and worth all the time but since we are working for God, he will not let the teacher down. Let us help these children change from the bad behaviour to good behaviour no matter what it will cost us, because in future some of them might be our leaders, in laws, and sisters-in-laws etc. If we apply some of these behaviour modification techniques it will affect their lives positively. Some of these techniques needed to modify behaviour includes:

Reinforcement: Reinforcement are the ways in which a desired behaviour is encouraged or that which increases the future frequency of a desired behaviour. According to Shertzer and Stone (2008), reinforcement is the creation of desired consequences that will strengthen or facilitate certain behaviour like patting the back, passing a smile or sometimes given of material tokens such as chocolate, sweet etc, when a person behaves properly, it is positive reinforcement. Negative reinforcement, on the other hand, increases the likelihood that a particular negative behaviour would not happen in the future. Negative reinforcement is often confused with punishment. While punishment is negative, negative reinforcement is positive. It is a positive way of reducing a particular behaviour.

Systematic Desensitization: This is a behaviour modification technique where anxiety reaction is extinguished. It involves gradually introducing a student to increasingly fear arousing stimuli in such a way that his/her fear of them is gradually extinguished (Okeke, 2012). This technique was developed by Joseph Wolpe 1950's. To him a fear-response can be inhibited by substituting an activity, which is typically inhibited here, this anxiety and the response frequently substituted is relaxation and calmness.

Shaping: Shaping is the judicious use of selective reinforcement to bring desirable change in the behaviour of an organism. Here, only positive reinforcement is used to help new behaviours to be established. Shaping involves a careful observation on the part of the teacher or counselor. For instance, if a counselor observes a student who engages in a disruptive behaviour while a particular subject is being taught, the counselor can help develop positive attitude of liking the subject by reinforcing all desirable behaviours towards the subject. Appropriate behaviours to be reinforced include reinforcing the student to come to that class early, sit in a good seat and be calm during the class (Onwuasoanya, 2008).

The disruptive behaviours shown by the students in the classroom while the lesson is going on create a very big problem to the teacher. The teacher will not be able to achieve the goals of his/her instructions as well as maintaining classroom discipline. As far as the classroom is not properly controlled and managed, there will be chaos and students will resort to behavioural problems, such as noise making, inattentiveness, leaving the classroom without taken permission from the teacher etc. Teacher should always advice these students, even though it is difficult we should not give up. Okeke (2016) agreed that behavioural problems are evident in our schools. These problems are therefore the concern of parents, teachers, counsellors, administrators and students. If these problems are identified and treated, then we would have gone a long way in solving our numerous problems, especially during teaching/learning process in the classroom.

Techniques for Behaviour Modification

Techniques are those ways aimed at enforcing behaviour when they are appropriately done by an individual. Behaviour when reinforced in a positive way encourages the student to keep it up and make the bad behaviour to change to good. Technique for behaviour modification refers to establishing appropriate behaviour in individuals and discouraging those that are undesired among the students. Research over the year has led to the formulation of certain techniques that are used for behavior modification. If we allow these children to deviate from it, there will be no respect for our culture, acceptable norms of the society.

There are traditional techniques of modifying behaviour in our students because they are from various cultural settings some of the techniques are very similar from among the various cultures. Undesirable behaviours such as fighting, bullying, stealing, cheating and noise making are some of classroom disruptive behaviour among student. As teacher we have some traditional way of modifying a student example by canning the child or knelling him/her down.

Negative Reinforcement Strategies

When a student acts the same after deploying preventative, teaching and positive reinforcement strategies, negative reinforcement strategies might be required. Examples of negative reinforcement strategies include a time out, seating away from the rest of the class, removal of playtime privileges, referral to the principal, a note home to parents or an oral reprimand.

Counselors should be sensitive and skillful in deterring the intermediate steps to be used in the procedure. Shaping as technique for modifying undesirable behaviour and teaching the student new behaviour that was not in their behaviour repertoire before and also save the child from future problem. It requires reinforcing of behaviours already in the repertoire of the individual, which resemble the terminal response or behavior in view. Consequences are arranged to develop desirable behaviour so that student will benefit from it. For shaping to be

effective, skills should be used which consist of selecting the right responses to reinforcement and knowing how long to reinforce each approximation before moving to the next step. In conclusion, shaping as a technique can be used in many different settings. Parent can use shaping to praise himself etc, even if he has made a few mistake, later, parent will complement the child if he has dressed himself perfectly. It can also be used in school setting to improve student academic performance and personal-social life. It enables teachers and students to relate well.

According to Okeke (2012) reinforcement-preamble is a common knowledge that learning is not the outcome of accidental contingencies. Educators and learning theorist have come to agree that certain variable influence the rate at which learning takes place. Reinforcement is a behavioural theory was the first psychologist to advance the importance of reinforcement to education. Reinforcement can be used to sustain desirable behaviour. Having done schedules used in the classroom. Some learning psychologists of behaviour should help us to settle the practical application of reinforcement in the classroom, since it is common knowledge that reinforcement determines to a great extent person's actual performance. Reinforcement is used to sustain desirable behaviour. It helps to create desirable consequences that will strengthen or facilitate certain behaviour.

Shertzer and Stone in Okeke (2016) review that reinforcement, and event or action is followed by a response such that it increases the probably a response such that it increases the probability that such a response will occur. A little girl who washes the plates in a basin performs an action. In our classroom we should try and praise or students, given them pats on the back to response to their good behaviour, it is capable to sustain that behaviour. You can use sweet, food, money and so on, it can be reinforcing some students especially student from poor families, given them attention and care can be more reinforcing for students from wealthy families. Observation is another good way to identify rein forcers that are strong as well as valued by students. It is good to encourage student when they do well so that they will continue- negative reinforcement is used to encourage the occurrence of desirable behaviour by removing obstacles against recurrence (UNESCO, 2000 in Okeke, 2012). For example, a child who plays a lot in class with a particular child who comes from the same area as him can be helped to stop playing in the class by removing his friend to another class. In this way, the obstacle that is his friend has been removed and the likelihood of the child not playing in class at least for some time is high.

Punishment: In punishment aversion stimulus is applied to correct undesirable behaviour. Punishment is the behaviour modification technique that has been over used thus, leading to stigmatization on the mind of students. Onwuasoanya (2016) agreed that teacher sometimes, give token economy as symbolic reinforces to students when they exhibit desirable behaviour. The symbolic reinforces and later exchanged for genuine reinforces (Prizes and award), token economy is a form of operant conditioning that is used in the behaviour modification that involves rewarding desirable behaviours with token which can be exchanged for items or privileges and punishing undesirable behaviour by taking away tokens.

Okeke (2012) believed that token economics help in schools where teachers give gold stars to student who demonstrate desirable behaviour while those who exhibit undesirable behaviour are given black starts. In this regard, every student makes effort to get gold star instead of black one. The gold star at the end of the school year are translated into prizes. So, token economics help pupils/students to make effort to avoid any undesirable behaviour because

they do not want to be associated with black star. This is an interesting effort from the teachers just to encourage desirable behaviours on our pupils/student because they are our future hope. Some of them may end up as teachers, doctors, lawyer, Governor and so on, if we therefore should allow them to dwell in undesirable behavior, from the classroom they may carry it to the large society and it will be disastrous. As parents from our various homes if we teach our children the right way to behave in good time, when they get to the classroom they will put it into practice and we will have a better society. We should therefore ensure that we apply these techniques in our classroom to help the student to change from undesirable behaviour to a desired behaviour. Stimulus control is a technique derived from Pavlov's classical condition theory. Pavlov is one of the stimulus response theorists. A stimulus is any observable, identifiable event or situation.

According to Okeke (2016), a stimulus most of the time leads to a response, when one is given a slap by another, that slap is a stimulus and the tempting response, which could be considered appropriate, is to slap back. But one can discard the urge to slap back and goes away, that determination not to slap back is control. Stimulus control is a process by which environment contingencies are altered in order to reduce the probability of particular behaviour occurring. This technique is used to improve self control such as the urge to eliminate urine carelessly. Teacher should put this type of technique into practice so that student can be able to control themselves.

Extinction: This is a type technique commonly used in homes, schools and offices. It is technique used to eliminate undesirable behaviour. This technique can be used intentionally. In a staff meeting, for instance, a staff member may want to make a contribution but may not get the recognition or the mandate of the head to do so. If the head continues to ignore the staff in spite of his effort to be recognized the staff may become frustrated, hurt and may vouch never to contribute at staff meetings. The use of extinction to decrease undesirable behaviour is gradual and tends to get worse initially before it begins to improve.

Okeke (2002) stated that when extinction is initially used to decrease undesirable behaviour that can be tolerated temporarily i.e. behaviour who's stamping out will rather hurt the client or others. Extinction should not be used in stamping out undesirable behaviour like fighting, drinking smoking marijuana and bullying. In using extinction to eliminate undesirable behaviour, there is need to ensure that what is reinforcing particular undesirable behaviour can be withheld. Students who scarcely keeps the rules and regulation of the school and who insults teachers can be said to have undesirable behaviour. This behaviour can be sustained by the reinforcement he gets in form of cheers from the peers. Reinforcement good, but extinction should be combined with other techniques for more effective teaching so that transfer of learning will take place.

Concept of Truancy

Truancy is any international, unjustified unauthorized, or illegal absence from school. It is a deliberate absence by a student's own will and usually does not refer to legitimate excused absences such as could relate to medical issues (Wikipedia).

Concept of Behaviour

According to Akinade (2016), behaviour may be described as anything an individual does or any activity that can be observed, recorded and measured. This includes all characteristic features of humans. It also includes what people say, do or write, physiological changes such as blood pressure and brain waves. Behaviour refers to the department and the whole gamut

of activities of individuals such as learning, unlearning, smoking, working, playing, sleeping and solving problems. It is a function of the integral growth of the individual. It all depends on their maturational level and experience. It is a kind of reaction or response given to a particular stimulus or situation. The response may be verbal, written or acted.

METHODOLOGY

This section deals with the methods used in carrying out the study. Specifically it is discussed under the following sub-headings; Research design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, instrument for data collection and method of data analysis.

Research Design: The study made use of descriptive survey design. The design provides descriptive overview of the data retrieved from the respondents concerning behaviour modification strategies in the Reduction of Truancy among Secondary school students in Rivers State. The population of the study consists of all the public senior secondary school three (SS 3) students from three selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State with a total population of Six Hundred and Forty (640) students. The study made use of simple random sampling technique with a sample size of 390 students. The instrument used for the study is self-developed questionnaire. The items were ranked and weighed using Four-point Scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The data gathered were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Data Presentation

Research Question 1: To what extent does positive reinforcement influence reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean Responses on the Extent to which Positive Reinforcement Influence Reduction of Truancy among Secondary School Students in Rivers State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	No	$\Sigma \bar{X}$	Mean \bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Positive reinforcement like final adjusted models control truant behaviour	130	170	50	40	390	1170	3.00	1.73	High Extent
2.	Uses of favourable reward helps to reduce truant behaviour	170	150	40	30	390	1270	3.26	1.81	High Extent
3.	Praising students helps to reduce truant behaviour among students	150	180	40	40	390	1260	3.23	1.80	High Extent
Grand Mean								3.16		

The analysis on Table 3 reveals that the respondents accepted that positive reinforcement like final adjusted models control or reduce truant behaviour. It was also observed from the table that the respondents accepted the view that use of favourable rewards for students help to reduce truant behaviour among the students. The table still shows that the respondents accepted that praising students helps to reduce truant behaviour among students in secondary schools.

Research Question 2 To what extent does negative reinforcement influence reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State?

Table 4: Mean Responses on the Extent to which Negative Reinforcement Influence Reduction of Truancy among Secondary School Students

S/N	Questionnaire Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	No	$\Sigma \bar{X}$	Mean \bar{X}	SD	Decision
4.	Letting problem student sit away from the rest of the class helps to reduce truant behaviour	120	180	50	40	390	1160	2.97	1.72	High Extent
5.	Teacher or school management removing of playtime privilege from students will help to reduce truant behaviour among students	180	130	60	20	390	1250	3.20	1.79	High Extent
6.	Writing a note to the students' parents at home helps to reduce truant behaviour among the students	170	180	30	10	390	1290	3.31	1.82	High Extent
Grand Mean								3.16		

The analysis on Table 4 indicates that the respondents accepted the view that letting problem student sit away from the rest of the class helps to reduce truant behaviour among secondary school students. The table also reveals that the respondents accepted the point that teachers or school management removing of playtime privilege from the students will help to reduce truant behaviour among secondary school students. It was still observed from the table that the respondents accepted the item that writing a note to the students' parents at home helps to reduce truant behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: To what extent does punishment influence reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State?

Table 5: Mean Responses on the Extent to which Punishment Reinforcement Influence Reduction of Truancy among Secondary School Students

S/N	Questionnaire Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	No	Σ \bar{X}	Mean \bar{X}	SD	Decision
7.	Striking the students either across the buttocks or palms of their hands help to reduce truant behaviour	150	180	40	20	390	1240	3.18	1.78	High Extent
8.	Spanking or smacking the students with the open hand helps to reduce truant behaviour	120	180	50	40	390	1760	2.91	1.71	High Extent
9.	Suspension of students from school helps to reduce truant behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State	180	120	50	40	390	1220	3.13	1.77	High Extent
Grand Mean									3.08	

The analysis in Table 5 shows that the respondents accepted the point that striking the students either across the buttocks or palms of their hands helps to reduce truant behaviour among secondary school students. It was also observed from the table that the respondents accepted the view that spanking or smacking the students with the open hand helps to reduce truant behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State. The table still indicates that the respondents accepted the fact that suspension of students from school helps to reduce truant behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the influence of positive reinforcement and reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Table 6: T-test Analysis of Significant Difference between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Students on the Influence of Positive Reinforcement and Reduction of Truancy among Secondary School Students in Rivers State

Status	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male respondents	110	5.81	2.8	388	3.16	1.96	Rejected
Female respondents	280	2.29	3.0				

Analysis in Table 6 reveals that the t-cal (3.16) is greater than the t-crit (1.96). This implies that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the influence of positive reinforcement and reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the influence of negative reinforcement and reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Table 7: T-test Analysis of Significant Difference between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Students on the Influence of Negative Reinforcement and Reduction of Truancy among Secondary School Students in Rivers State

Status	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male respondents	110	5.81	0.25	388	3.16	1.96	Rejected
Female respondents	280	2.29	0.22				

Analysis in Table 7 shows that the t-cal (3.16) is greater than the t-crit (1.96). This implies that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the influence of negative reinforcement and reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the influence of punishment and reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Table 8: T-test Analysis of Significant Difference between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Students on the Influence of Punishment and Reduction of Truancy among Secondary School Students in Rivers State

Status	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male respondents	110	5.81	2.8	388	3.08	1.96	Rejected
Female respondents	280	2.29	3.0				

Analysis in Table 8 reveals that the t-cal (3.08) is greater than the t-crit (1.96). This implies that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the influence of punishment and reduction of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that the respondents accepted that positive reinforcement like final adjusted models control or reduce truancy behaviour. It was also observed from the findings that the respondents accepted the view that uses of favourable rewards for students help to reduce truancy behaviour among the students. The findings still show that the respondents accepted that praising students helps to reduce truancy behaviour among students in secondary schools. The findings also indicate that the respondents accepted the view that letting student seating away from the rest of the class helps to reduce truancy behaviour among secondary school students.

These findings are in agreement with Okeke (2012). He reviewed that reinforcement are the ways in which a desired behaviour is encouraged or that which increase the future frequency of a desired behaviour. Shetzer and Stone (2008) also supported the findings by observing that reinforcement is the creation of desired consequences that will strengthen or facilitate certain behaviour like patting the back, passing a smile or sometimes giving of materials token such as chocolate, sweet, etc.

The study reveals that the respondents accepted the point that teacher or school management removing of playtime privilege from the students will help to reduce truancy behaviour among secondary school students. It was still observed from the findings that the respondents accepted the item that writing a note to the students' parents at home helps to reduce truancy behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State.

The findings of the study are in line with Onwuasoanya (2016). He asserts that punishment is the behaviour modification technique that has been overused. Punishment aversion stimulus is applied to correct undesirable behaviour. Onwuasoanya has also opined that negative reinforcement like timeout, seating away from the rest of the class, removal of playing privileges might help or are required to control undesirable behaviour.

The findings show that the respondents accepted the point that striking the students either across the buttocks or palms of their hands helps to reduce truancy behaviour among secondary school students. It was also observed from the findings that the respondents accepted the view that spanking or smacking the students with the open hand helps to reduce truancy behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State. The findings still indicate that the respondents accepted the fact that suspension of students from school helps to reduce truancy behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State.

The findings of this study are in collaboration with Okeke (2012). He stated that teachers sometimes give token economy as symbolic reinforces to students when they exhibit desirable behaviour and punishing undesirable behaviour by taking away the tokens. Okeke also believed that token economics help in schools where teachers give gold stars to student who demonstrate desirable behaviour while those who exhibit undesirable behaviour are given black stars.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, the following conclusions were made: Behaviour modification strategies are those ways aimed at enforcing behaviour when they are appropriately done by an individual. Therefore, the study concludes that positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement and punishment can be used in the reduction of truant behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State. The study still deduced that truant behaviour can be reduced through behaviour modification strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that:

1. Government through the schools management board should enlighten the teachers on how to use positive reinforcement behaviour modification strategies to reduce truant behaviour in secondary schools.
2. School management should use negative reinforcement in reducing truancy hence it is helpful in controlling undesirable behaviour.
3. Punishment should not be left behind in the reduction of truant behaviour hence studies have shown that it facilitates reduction of unfavourable or undesirable behaviour.

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