

The impact of operant conditioning on modifying students behavior

[Profession](#), [Student](#)



My research will be conducted in the naturalistic environment in the international school I am currently working in on students in the American division. Such setting will provide me with the opportunity to observe the interaction of students and their behavior with each other as well as with their instructors.

Teaching is not an easy process as it became very stressful and demanding these days. Disruptive and undesired behavior has become a hurdle to all instructors throughout schools especially with secondary students.

Interrupting instructors, responding back, bullying, side talks and teasing are factors which occur daily in all classes. These disruptions do not only complicate the instructors' role but also display a negative impact among the rest of students and influence the smooth running of the educational process. Unfortunately, such behavior is contagious as when one student starts the interruptions, others tend to mimic such behavior which affects instructors' ability to manage their classes. So, instead of devoting time to the teaching process, instructors become in conflict between curbing such behavior and completing their task. Hence, the impact of operant conditioning and behavior modification in schools has become a mandatory issue which should be addressed.

The interesting part in my research is addressing all the above issues by investigating the inappropriate behavior and how it is addressed while applying B. F. Skinner's theory of operant conditioning, reinforcement, schedules of reward and punishment in order to modify students' undesired behavior. The theory highlights that behavior is determined by

consequences, Old traditional disciplinary means like suspension or expulsion from schools are no longer effective nowadays. Instructors spend their entire day with students thus they can have a great impact in promoting their academic outcome as well as modifying their behavior. Hence, school as well as instructors should set rules for reward and punishment which accompany complying or failing to conform to them.

Establishing a positive and appealing classroom environment will promote the learning process and subdue unaccepted behavior. Thus instructors role is not only confined to provide needed information but also include how they deal with unaccepted behavior.

My dissertation investigates secondary students' undesired behavior in the American division as it attempts to apply Skinner's theory of operant conditioning to modify such behavior.. Instructors continuously suffer from managing their classes which leads to poor outcome as instructors' ability of skillful management of their classes is directly related to students' motivation as well as better behavior. Hence feelings of burnout and tiredness which instructors' undergo lead them to be completely drained.

Consequently, by investigating Skinner's theory of operant conditioning and applying it on students, instructors including myself will be able to address problematic behavior in a way which will enable us to achieve ultimately the desired outcome. Skinner's theory elucidates that behavior is followed by consequences whether reward or punishment which either leads to its repetition or ending of such behavior. The theory revolves around five key

issues; reinforcement, punishment,, extinction, schedules of reinforcement and shaping which will be discussed and applied in my research.

Reinforcement is directly related to motivation, as skinner differentiates between positive and negative reinforcement. The first may be explained as a kind or reward provided following completion of assigned task. Negative reinforcement is deprivation of certain incentive.

Punishment means a procedure done in order to eradicate certain response yet it postulates many problems; frustration, hidden anger which is manifested when dealing with people and fear while becoming an unforgettable experience for individuals without teaching anything.

Punishment can be positive which decreases the repetition of such behavior by giving an undesired outcome or negative which occurs by removing desired outcome following a bad behavior. Extinction on the other hand, means removal of reinforcement following the desired behavior. Schedules of reinforcements are specific rules set to provide or eliminate reinforcers or punishers following an action. Shaping behavior can be attained by continuous reinforcement. Feedback should be provided immediately to students following their actions because “ the absence of response or feedback will possibly reinforce undesired behavior and affect the feeling of the subordinates and results in confusion and dissatisfaction”. Unfortunately, some instructors are inept or reluctant to provide adequate feedback. Class time should be dedicated for teaching, engaging students by effective means, providing praise, feedback and less reprimands , positive and negative reinforcement which in return stop undesired behavior yet

unfortunately, some teachers do not always follow these rules. Hence the focus of my research topic is handling and modifying students' behavior in a way to allow the smooth flow of the teaching process.

My principal argument is focusing on the fact that students can learn to behave well if instructors apply Skinner's techniques which could also improve their academic outcome.