

# [Q; actualized by the use of operants- intentional](https://assignbuster.com/q-actualized-by-the-use-of-operants-intentional/)

Q; Describe How Skinner’s Approach of Operant Conditioning Can Be Applied to theKenyanEducation System. INTRODUCTIONB. F. Skinner is termedas the father of operant conditioning. In developing the theory, he stated thatan individual’s behavior is a function of its consequences.

This approach wasrooted on a belief that the in attempts to understand behavior, one should lookat the causes of an action and its repercussions, rather than focusing oninternal cerebral events, in order to get the best results. Operant conditioning isactualized by the use of operants- intentional actions that have an effect onthe environment of an individual, administered upon a desired response. Accordingto Skinner, a behavior is likely to be modified through a number of processes. These include; (i)                Reinforcement; These are responsesthat cause a behavior to occur with greater frequency. The reinforcement couldbe positive (reward) or negative (escape).

(ii)              Punishment: This is response thatdecreases the probability of the repetition of behaviour. Positive or negative, punishment results in weakened behavior.    Operant conditioning isbased on the assumption that human behavior is learned. Bearing in mind thatthe reinforcement theory focuses on observable behavior, it has been used inmany areas of study, including the raising of children and training oflearners.

By learning to adjust reinforcement or motivation through stimuli, schools in the Kenyan education system can help teachers gain a broaderunderstanding of human behavior exhibited by pupils in the classroom setup. Learners receive apositive or negative response from teachers depending on their actions. Reinforcement for goodbehavior in the Kenyan education system is in mostly done in form of tangibleitems, praise and occasionally, money and tokens. The most instant formis praise, whereby the learner receives feedback on the spot every time desiredbehavior is recorded. For example, in training students to have etiquette incommunication, the teacher can ask them to lift their hands up when they wantto make verbal contributions and stand up as they speak. Upon recording thebehavior, the teacher praises them, making the leaner have the need to impressthe teacher again, increasing the chances of the student repeating the samebehavior. Constant praise is pleasing to the learner, hence ensures that there are efforts to sustain the desired behavior.

Praise is followed inrank by tangible rewards, ranging from pens, pencils, books, foodstuff andothers depending on the region. These are mostly given sparingly, especiallyduring prize giving ceremonies in schools. Tangible rewards make the recipienthave a sense of achievement. The learner sustains efforts of hard work in hopesto be rewarded again, increasing the probability of recurrence of goodbehavior.

Money and tokens suchas vouchers are rarely used though most appreciated. Reinforcement forundesired behavior ranges from verbal disapproval, spanking, pinching, mildcaning, and grounding from trips amongst others, depending on factors such asgender, intensity of undesired behaviour and the frequency in which it occurs. In some instances, inappropriate remarks are recorded from teachers, seeingthat since the ban of corporal punishment, there are very few forms ofpunishment.

In the case of praiseor disapproval, teachers can positively reinforce good performance by the useof symbols such as ticks or ‘ good’ and ‘ excellent’ remarks on classroomassignments and exams issued. This ingrains the message of achievement and encouragesthe learner to make efforts to submit similarly satisfying work in future. Sermonsto the office for revision of poor work submitted or an instruction to repeat thework tempts the student away from making the mistakes again. To note is that mostteachers apply reinforcement schedules according to what they find practical intheir set up, rather than taking the theoretical approach, which isrecommended. To identify the methodto be used, a variety of factors are to be considered. These include theschedule of reinforcement employed and the response cost.

Reinforcement can becontinuous or partial.   (a)   Continuous reinforcement; This is rewarding thelearner every time they display desired behaviour during learning sessions. Continuous reinforcement generates long lasting changes in learning. It is mostapplicable in the case of public institutions where top achievers require constantmotivation to maintain healthy competition; else they drop drastically in academicperformance. This is with the consideration that public schools are highlypopulated.(b)   Partial reinforcement; Also calledintermittent reinforcement, the learners are only reinforced occasionally whendesirable behaviour is recorded during the learning sessions. This method keepsthe learners on toes; not knowing when a reward would come their way, henceensures constant efforts to maintain good academic performance. Operant conditioninghas strength in the fact that it is helpful in the raising of children, teaching them and shaping their behaviour.

Learners rewarded for good behaviourare likely to continue with good behaviour, while those punished for undesirablebehaviour are less likely to model the behaviour again. It has a weakness inthat if positive behaviour is reinforced all the time, the reinforcement eithergets exhausted or extinct. Also, the learners may develop dependency torewards. For example, if the tangible item offered gives instant gratificatione.

g. sweets, the learner may eventually struggle to maintain the positivebehavior without the reward. In this case, thechoice of reward is to be put into serious consideration.

In addition, teachersshould tactfully employ both continuous and partial reinforcement for optimal academicsuccess of learners. With nurturing the student being the focal point of the learning process, employing operant conditioning methods in the planning of lessons makes it possibleto ensure that students learn good behavior and useful life skills. If teachers bear a good attitude and take a positive approach n the applicationof operant conditioning, the results attained would be desirable.       REFERENCE1. McLeod, S. A.

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