

**Influence of Reward and Punishment on Academic
Performance of Secondary School History Students in
Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State**

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Abstract

In order to avoid creation of anxiety that causes loss of concentration, fear, distortion and poor learning attitude from the students, teachers need to use commensurable punishment that can bring about a desirable behaviour as well as the reward that will encourage students to acquire skills and knowledge for their own development, not for mere marks. Thus, this study aimed at examining the influence of reward and punishment on academic performance of History students in Senior Secondary School in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 27 History teachers and 90 History students from the nine (9) selected Senior Secondary Schools in Ilorin metropolis as a sample for this study. The instrument administered to collect data and information are questionnaire and profoma, using Pearson product moment correlation statistics at 0.05 level of significance to test the three hypotheses generated in the study. The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' frequent use of reward, punishment and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis. Based on the findings, it is recommended that teachers should cultivate the habit of using reinforcement techniques that would encourage learners to put in extra efforts toward learning. Also, they need to understand that punishing students cannot determine an excellent academic performance. Therefore, there is need for the teachers to minimize the use of punishment so that students can perform better in schools.

Keywords: Reward, Punishment, History Students, Academic Performance

Introduction

Reward and punishment have always been associated with each other in education, though, the latter plays a greater role. Recently, there has been a lot of concern in Nigerian education system, regarding the use of reward and punishment as a means of enhancing academic performance of students in schools (Umoren, 2010). Educationists, parents and teachers have expressed their views in newspapers, journals and so on, about these issues. Many parents and teachers feel the need for educational authority to define its limitation so as not to overstep their bounds (Effiong, 2007). Reward is one of the learning techniques that are always used in many environments including school. The biggest mistake any parent or teacher can make is to delay the reward for an appropriate behaviour. It will be most effective if it immediately follows the behaviour so that the desirable behaviour is validated (Paterson and Callion 2008). Reward is employed by teachers in encouraging and improved academic performance from students because rewarding student comes in different forms, which include, appraisal, gifting of items, and applauding in appreciation of academic performance. According to Krembeltz and Krembeltz (2012), to reinforce a child's behaviour and increase the odds of repeating that behaviour, one should create a reward so that the behaviour becomes associated with a desirable outcome.

Bukoye and Abdulkadir (2008) asserted that reward is a pleasant stimulus that increases the frequencies of behaviour. Some psychologists considered the terms reward and positive reinforcement synonymous which brings about a new piece of desired behaviour. Positive reinforcement increases the possibility of such responses or behaviour to be repeated. Positive rein-forcers increase the probability that a response or good behaviour will be repeated when they are applied. Food and water usually serve as positive rein-forcers. The use of reward and incentives in education settings has generated considerable controversy (Cameroon, Pierce and Bark, 2005). On the submission of Pirasteh (2003), if a teacher fails to recognise individual differences in students, he or she is likely to reduce the effectiveness of the incentives. Rewards work in a short term, students will perform for the prizes.

However, the result is not really motivation but compliance. Rewards are not a solution, but tricks to bring out a desired behaviour, and as such, they cover the problem rather than resolve it (Krembeltz and Krembeltz, 2012).

Punishment, on the other hand is an aversive stimulus that occurs after some specific responses and it is intended to suppress that response. Punishment is employed whenever a certain unacceptable behaviour is exhibited by students. These include, beating, abusing, flogging, and other corporal punishments employed by teachers to curb bad academic performance (Ime, 2008). According to Bukoye and Abdulkadir (2008), punishment is a negative consequence that leads to a reduction in the frequency of the behaviour that produced it and when punishment is appropriately used, it can be an ethical and valuable tool for discouraging inappropriate behaviour. Barto (1998) stated that reward and punishment are the potent modulators of human and animal behaviour. So, one of the means through which a teacher can maintain class discipline in a secondary school is through reward and punishment. Also, punishments serve as a method of modifying behaviour in children or adults at home, school and any other setting.

Okumbe (1998) opined that the use of punishment in schools is to instill discipline and is meted out on students who violate agreed upon rules and regulations in schools. It is administered to bring about a desirable change in behaviour and therefore improve school discipline, if commensurate with the offense committed. Barliver (1992) observed that punishment is a weapon that can be risky for the teachers and it is distasteful to the student. David (2005) stated that the use of punishment in school can lead to undesirable side effects such as anxiety, anger and negative feelings towards teacher. The period of secondary school age is transitional from childhood to adulthood in which the child experiences many developmental changes. However, it is believed that a period of change is likely to be accompanied by many difficulties (Gear, 2005). Matsoga (2003) he discovered the widespread violence and misbehaviour that existed in many Secondary Schools. This lack of discipline which interferes with the teaching and learning process manifested itself in various ways including bullying, lateness, vandalism, alcohol consumption and substance abuse, truancy and inability or unwillingness to do class work at home. Schools disciplines are among the strategies designed to instill good conduct of students. This implies self-control, good behaviour and obedience to school authority (Adams, 2003).

Adeyemo (2005), in his study on the level of discipline in Secondary Schools in Nigeria, established that there is wide spread violation of school rules and regulations such as striking a student with a pointer or ruler, slapping the face or head, which was capable of obstructing the smooth functioning of the school system and thereby affect students' performance. The teacher who uses these measures runs the risk of vigorous parental action. Thus, this study examined the influence of reward and punishment on academic performance of Senior Secondary School History students' in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.

Statement of the Problem

It is observed that some History students continue to show poor attitude towards learning, some always run away from the classrooms to avoid punishment and this often reflects in their academic performance in both internal and external examinations. Punishment creates fear in students of History, especially during learning processes as they learn simply to please the teachers and not to acquire skills and knowledge for their own development. Physical punishment results in fear and distorts students' motivation to learn. Students who are physically and emotionally abused develop anxiety that causes loss of concentration and poor learning. Furthermore, some History students depend on reward given to them by their teacher, though rewards work in a short term and they perform for the prizes, the result is not really motivation but compliance.

Hence, this study investigated whether there will be effective learning of History in the absence of punishment and to ascertain the influence of reward on learning and the academic performance of History students in Senior Secondary Schools in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State.

Research Questions

1. Does teachers' frequent use of reward encourage sound academic performance of History students?
2. Does teachers' use of punishment discourage poor academic performance of History students?
3. What is the relationship between reward and punishment used by the teachers on academic performance of History students?

Research Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between the teachers' frequent use of reward and academic performance of History students in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between the teachers' frequent use of punishment and academic performance of History students in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between the frequent use of reward, punishment and academic performance of History students in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey method. The population of this study comprised all the teachers and students in seventy-five (75) senior public secondary schools in Ilorin South, Ilorin West and Ilorin East Local Government Area respectively in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State while the target population were History teachers and SS 3 History students from the nine (9) selected Senior Secondary Schools in Ilorin metropolis. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select three (3) History teachers from each of the nine (9) selected Senior Secondary Schools to make a total number of twenty-seven (27) History teachers and ten (10) History students were randomly selected from each of the nine (9) selected Senior Secondary Schools which equaled to ninety (90) History students as sample. This sample was considered because some of the senior secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis do not offer History as a subject. The Questionnaire titled, "Influence of Reward and Punishment Questionnaire" (IRPQ) and a proforma tagged "Students' Academic Performance" (SAP) were used to collect data for the study. Questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents based on the teachers' frequent use of reward and punishment while SAP was used to collect final year student results in West African Examination Council (WAEC) in History from 2014 to 2017. Research question 1 to 3 had corresponding hypotheses and were tested using Pearson product-moment correlation statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between teachers' frequent use of reward and academic performance of History students in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State.

Table 1: Teachers' Frequent Use of Reward and Students' Academic Performance in History

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	Cal r-value	P-value	Decision
Use of Teachers' Frequent Use of Reward	117	2.51	.74	115	.635	.000	Ho ₂ Rejected
Students' Academic Performance	117	12.41	4.99				

***Significant $P < .05$**

Table 1 shows the calculated r-value of .635 while p-value (0.000) is lesser than the significance level (0.05) for 115 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between the teachers' frequent use of reward and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State is rejected. The finding reveals that, there was a significant relationship between the teachers' frequent use of Reward and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between Teachers' frequent use of punishment and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State.

Table 2: Teachers' Frequent Use of Punishment and Student's Academic Performance in History

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	Cal r-value	P-value	Decision
Teachers' Frequent Use of Punishment	117	1.75	.94	115	.074	.061	Ho ₁ Not Rejected
Students' Academic Performance	117	12.41	4.99				

***Not Significant $P > .05$**

Table 2 shows the calculated r-value of .074 while p-value (0.000) is greater than the significance level (0.05) for 115 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between the teachers' frequent use of punishment and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State is not rejected. The finding reveals that there was no significant relationship between the teachers' frequent use of punishment and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between the Teachers' frequent use of reward, punishment and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State.

Table 3: Teachers' Frequent Use of Reward, Punishment and Students' Academic Performance in History

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	Cal r-value	P-value	Decision
Teachers' Frequent Use of Reward and Punishment	117	1.59	.89	115	.625	.000	Ho ₃ Rejected
Students' Academic Performance	117	12.41	4.99				

***Significant $P < .05$**

Table 3 shows the calculated r-value of .625 while p-value (0.000) is lesser than the significance level (0.05) for 115 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the teachers' frequent use of reward, punishment and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State is rejected. The finding reveals that there was a significant relationship between the teachers' frequent use of reward, punishment and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State.

Discussion of the Findings

Based on the result of the findings, it was discovered that there was a significant relationship between the teachers' frequent use of reward and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State. This findings is in line with the findings of Paterson and Callion (2008) who stated that reward is one of the learning techniques that are always used in many environments including school. The biggest mistake any parent or teacher can make is to delay the reward for an appropriate behaviour. A reward will be most effective if it immediately follows the behaviour so that the desirable behaviour is validated. Most learning activities in our lives are impacted by these techniques. Similarly, Daramola (1998) affirmed that some children showed greater gains in learning when they were praised, while others learned better when only neutral statements were uttered.

The findings from Research Hypothesis Two indicates that, there was no significant relationship between the teachers' frequent use of punishment and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. This finding confirms the submission of Okumbe (1998) who stated that the use of punishment in school is to instill discipline and is melted on student who violates the agreed rules and regulations. It is administered to bring about a desirable change in behaviour and therefore improve school discipline, if commensurate with the offense committed. This shows that, punishment helps other students to shy away from embarrassment, discourage them from playing and that students who are beaten because of poor academic performance may perform better than an applauded students if they take to the correction.

The outcome of the findings from research hypothesis three reveals that, there was a significant relationship between the teachers' frequent use of reward, punishment and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State. This findings corroborates that of Barto (1998) who opined that reward and punishment are the potent modulators of human and animal behaviour. One of the means through which a teacher can maintain class discipline in secondary schools is through reward and punishment.

Summary of the Findings

1. There was a significant relationship between the teachers' frequent use of Reward and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.
2. There was no significant relationship between the teachers' frequent use of punishment and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.
3. There was significant relationship between the teachers' frequent use of reward, punishment and academic performance of History students' in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that teachers should always make use of reward techniques that can encourage students to learn History as a subject and perform better in their academic performance. Similarly, the use of punishment should be minimized in schools because it shy away students and create panic to their mind which may discourage them from learning. Commensurable punishment can be used to correct inappropriate behaviour from the students who violate upon the school rules and regulations so that they can pay serious attention to their study. This shows that teachers need the two approaches to maintain discipline and enhance student academic performance in school.

Recommendations

Base on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Teachers should cultivate the habit of using reinforcement techniques that will encourage learners to put in extra efforts toward learning.

- ii. Teachers should know that punishing students cannot determine an excellent academic performance. Therefore, there is need for the teachers to minimize the use of punishment so that students can perform better in school.
- iii. There is need for teachers to practise the two approaches that is, reward and punishment during the teaching and learning, because situations will request for the appropriate technique to use at appropriate times.

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