



Effect of Positive Reinforcement on Reduction Of Truancy Disorders Among Junior Secondary School Students, In Yobe State

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to determine if positive reinforcement (reward) has an effect in reducing truancy among the students of Government Junior Day Secondary School. The researcher used experimental research design specifically pre-test post-test design. Ten (10) students were purposively selected out of the population of 25 Junior Secondary School Students in Bukarti Government Junior Day Secondary School and Karasuwa Local Government Area of Yobe State. Class Attendance registers were used as instruments for data collection. Three hypotheses were formulated. The data collected were analyzed using t-test for the dependent and independent sample and the findings showed the effectiveness of positive reinforcement in curtailing truancy. The mean difference between the pre-test intervention and post-test intervention is 85. The degree of freedom is using the 5% level of significance and the obtained t-value is 11.33 while the critical t-value is 2.263. This revealed that there is a significant reduction level of truancy among students provided positive reinforcement by researcher. And there was no significant gender difference in reduction level of truants students because obtained t-test value is 0.6557 and critical t-value is 2.306. The df is 8 level of significance is 0.05 there was a significant difference in reduction level of truancy among the socio-economic status of students because obtained t-value is 2.703 while the critical t-value is 2.306 df 8 and the level of significant 0.05. Among the recommendations offered were: teachers should use positive reinforcement (reward) rather than punishment in reducing level of truancy disorders.

Keywords: truancy disorders, positive reinforcement, teachers

INTRODUCTION

Staying in school is the first step to a good education and in order to achieve academic excellence, the students are mandated by the school laws to attend school daily but due to some factors most students absent themselves from formal school activities hence engaging in truancy. When this happens, everyone loses; students lose the benefits of instruction, the society loses income and the community suffers from increase juvenile crime, such as drug abuse, stealing, street violence etc.

Stoll (2002) defines Truancy as “absence from school for no legitimate reason”. He went further to state that many students do skip either single class or even a full day school at least once during their academic career. When a child is truant, it implies that he has been constantly absent from school for so many days,

weeks or even months. Truancy is a deliberate absence from school for no medial or justifiable reason, with or without parental knowledge.

Truancy in secondary school is a situation in which students develop and show adverse attitude and behavior to learning. They absent themselves from classes using unnecessary excuses such as an in genuine sickness, fake suspension by the class teacher or school authority and involvement in sport activities. Truancy can equally occur in a boring and boredom classes, harsh teachers who are difficult to approach and un-conducive school environment Obe, (1998) observed that the causes of truancy among secondary school students have been attributed to lack of writing materials such as pen, pencil, exercise book, recommended textbooks, school uniform and midday meal.

Truancy is one of the juvenile delinquencies that are committed by youths in Nigeria, and is capable of leading the youths to unwanted behaviors. Truancy simply means keeping away from school without permission. Shyaman (2006) stated: that most students especially those in secondary school do abandon their lessons to visit internet cafes thereby spending much of their valuable time and resource only to visit pornographic sites and some other sex related sites which will in turn ruin their lives thereby increasing the rate of immoral behavior among youths in our society. The introduction of internet use had denied students the chance of thorough research work as readymade materials are readily found on the internet (Pam willenz, 2006). Some of the factors contributing to truancy include poor home upbringing, school circumstances, peer group influence, psychological and personality factors, socio-economic situation of the students, social and government factors are the major causes of truancy.

Furthermore, the researcher has observed that students come from different family backgrounds as a result of which they have different reasons for playing truancy from school. Some parents are poor, some do not value education and others exhibit non-chalet attitude to the regular school attendance of their wards. Beside, during the researcher's teaching experience, some students cited boredom, loss of interest in school, irrelevant courses, suspensions and bad relationships with teachers as major factors leading to the decision to skip school. In contract, school staff believed truancy to be related to students' problems with families and peers. Therefore, truancy as an academic and social problem needs to be given serious attention.

Reinforcement is a behavior management system in which rein forcers are dispensed for a variety of class room or school behaviors. The consequences brought about by a particular behavior can be pleasant or unpleasant for the individual and others. In other worlds, it is a concept that determines the increase and frequency of behavior. Reinforcement may take the form of comments of approval as smile, handshakes, clap, a nod of the head and the likes. This technically is different from an everyday conversation when people use the term "reinforcement" to mean a reward. Usually a reward is something given in return for service, merit or achievement. Sometimes both terms are used interchangeably. Therefore, reinforcement is a process of using reinforcers to increase the frequency of behavior.

Skinner (1983), asserted that use of Effective Behavior Remediation positive reinforcement is superior to punishment, hence the use of positive reinforcements as behavior interventions plays a significant role in behavior management technique has a high and effective impact on improving adolescents behavior. Positive reinforcement is a behavior management system in which rein forcers are dispensed inform of tangible and non-tangible rewards like verbal praise, a clap of hands, a smile, material gifts and a host of others to strengthen or encourage a desired behavior. In the other words, it is a concept that determines the increase and frequency of behavior. The goal of positive reinforcement is to give to somebody to make the desire behavior happen again.

Michael (2004), States that "when a type of behavior is followed by reinforcement there will be an increased future frequency of that type of behavior". Cooper (2007) noted that making a behavior occur more frequently is not the only strengthening that can occur. The duration, latency, magnitude, and/or to pornography of behavior can be strengthened. Miltenberger (2008), State that "reinforcement is the process in which a behavior is strengthened by the immediate consequence that reliably follows its occurrence".

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives are formulated to guide the study:

1. To find out whether or not positive reinforcement reduces Truancy Disorder Among Students of Government Junior Day Secondary School Bukarti.
2. To find out whether or not there are significant gender differences in the reduction level of truancy among the students when provided with positive reinforcement.
3. Find out whether or not there is any difference in the reduction level of truancy between students of varying Socio-Economic Backgrounds provided with positive reinforcement.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study the following research questions are formulated in the course of the study:

1. To find out whether or not positive reinforcement reduces truancy Among the Students of Government Junior Day Secondary School?
2. To find out whether or not there is any difference in the reduction level of truancy among the students when provided with positive reinforcement.
3. To determine whether or not there is any difference in the reduction level of truancy between students of varying socio-economic backgrounds provided positive reinforcement.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated in this research:

1. There is no Significant Difference between students given positive reinforcement and those not given.
2. There is no significant gender difference in the reduction level of truancy among students provided with positive reinforcement.
3. There is no significant difference in the reduction level of truancy between students of high and low socio-economic status provided with positive reinforcement.

METHODOLOGY

Quasi experimental Research design specifically pre-test post-test design was employed so as to find out if the independent variable has an effect on the dependent variables that is to determine if positive reinforcement has an effect on the reduction of truancy among Junior day secondary school, in Yobe State.

Van Dalen (1973) in Maiwada (2011) described experimental research as a research through manipulating an experimental variable under highly controlled condition, the researcher strives at ascertain how why and where particular condition or event occurs.

Population and Sample

The target populations for this study comprise the entire truant students of Government Junior Day Secondary School, Bukarti in Karasuwa zonal education authority Gashua zone.

Table 1: showing of class, enrolment, types of truants and its total number

Class	Enrolment	Habitual truant	Casual	Occupational	Total num. Of truant
JSS 1A	50	0	1	0	1
JSS 1B	53	2	0	1	3
JSS 1C	57	1	2	2	5
JSS IIA	50	1	2	0	3
JSS IIB	55	0	1	0	1
JSS IIC	58	2	1	0	3
JSS IIIA	55	0	1	0	1
JSS IIIB	54	0	2	0	2
JSS IIIC	58	2	1	0	3
JSS IIID	31	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	521	10	10	05	25

Bade Zonal Education Authority Gashua Zone (2021)

Sampling Techniques

This refers to the procedures adopted by a researcher in the selection of sample to serve as a representative of the population, the researcher in this study was used purposive/random sampling technique to select habitual truants as representative of the target population. According to Awotunde, Ugodulunwa and Ozoji, (2002). Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher attempts to select a sample that appear as being representative of the population defined by the research problem.

Sample Size

For the purpose of this research, the sample size for the study was truants' students from JSSIIIA to JSSIIID in Government Junior Day Secondary School Bukarti.

Instrumentation

Data collection instrument are instruments that help the researcher gather data to be used, either to answer the research questions or to test hypotheses Gishiwa, (2013). In this research, the researcher will use (1) class attendance registers, (2) terminal examination records of the students. Which the researcher used to identify and determine the level of students' attendance and performance before and after interventions of positive reinforcement by the researcher/teacher

Validity of the Instruments

The class attendance registers and terminal examination records of the students was validated by experts to ensure the two research instruments covered What it is supposed to cover. Three experts were drawn from Bayero University, Kano from Department of Special Education.

Reliability of the Instruments

The reliability of the instruments was established following a pilot study conducted in Babuje Primary School on a sample of JSSI Students. Class Attendance registers and terminal examination records of the students was taking before and after intervention and the statistical technique that was used in analyzing the data had been the t-test of independent samples. And the reliability index is 0.75.

Data Collection Procedure

To enhance cooperation and smooth conduct of the research in the selected school, a letter was collected from Office of the Registrar Umar Suleiman College of Education Gashaua, introducing the researcher and his topic to the principal for permission to conduct the research in the school and to accord the researcher all the necessary support. The researcher was soliciting the assistance of class teachers who was serving as research assistants of this study. The researcher will go through the items of the instrument (class attendance registers,) with the subject's teachers or research assistance to ensure they have clear understanding of the items on the instruments. The data in this study was collected in two (2) different stages the class attendance registers, (students) and administering of the treatment package to the respondents. In the first stage, the total attendance record of the previous eight (8) weeks of the experimental and control groups was taken before intervention (pre-test). From the school authority and the same data was collected after eight (8) weeks after the intervention of the positive reinforcement (post-test).

Data Analysis Procedure

The researcher used inferential statistics that is t-test for independent samples to analyze the hypotheses it effect between the independent and the dependent variables. Accordingly as Bichi (2004), pointed that a study which involves determining whether significant differences exist or not between two groups, t-test is more suitable. This therefore, gives room for the researcher to establish the mean differences between the two groups.

RESULTS

Data were analyzed by taking into consideration the hypotheses posed for the study as follows

Hypothesis One: There is no Significant Difference between students given positive reinforcement and those not given.

Table 2: Pre-intervention and post-intervention t-test result

Intervention	Mean	Mean Difference	Degree of Free (d/f)	Level of Significance	Obtained t-Value	Critical Value
Pre-Intervention	12.5	8.5	9	0.05	11.33	2.262
Post-Intervention	21					

From the above table, the analysis shows that the calculated t-value (11.33) was greater than critical t-value (2.262) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. Meaning that positive reinforcement had reduced the level of truancy among the students significantly.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant gender difference in the reduction level of truancy among students provided with positive reinforcement.

Table 3: Summary Pre and post-intervention attendance obtained by the male and female truant students

Gender	Mean	Mean difference	Degree of freedom (d/f)	Level of significance	Obtained Value	Critical value
Male	8	1	8	0.05	0.6557	2.306
Female	9					

The summary table above shows that the calculated t (0.6557) was less than the critical t (2.306) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there was no significant gender difference in the reduction level of truancy among students provided with positive reinforcement.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the reduction level of truancy between students of high and low socio-economic status provided with positive reinforcement.

Table 4: Summary of the socio- economic scores

Socio-economic status	Mean	Mean Difference	Degree of freedom (d/f)	Level of Significance	Obtained Value	Critical Value
High socio-economic Status	7	3	8	0.05	2.703	2.30
Low socio-economic Status	10					

The summary table above shows that the calculated t- value (2.703) was greater than critical t-value (2.30) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there was a significant difference in reduction level of truancy disorder between students of high and low socio-economic status when they are exposed to positive reinforcement.

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis of the data collected the major findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

- a. There is a significant difference in the reduction of truancy disorder among students who exposed to intervention with positive reinforcement.

- b. There is no significant gender difference in the reduction level of truancy disorder among students provided with positive reinforcement.
- c. There a significant difference in reduction level of truancy disorder between students of high and low socio-economic status when they are exposed to positive reinforcement.

DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

The study revealed that there was a significant reduction level of truancy among the students provided with positive reinforcement by the researcher. This finding agreed with Oliha (2013) on truancy reduction using contingency management and systematic desensitization in the management of school. It confirmed contingency management and systematic desensitization strategies as an intervention; the result shows that there was a significant reduction of truancy among the identified truants. The result of this study was contrary to Michael (2005) who reported that the law enforcement agency can be used in the reduction of truancy among students.

The result obtained in hypothesis two showed no significant gender difference in the reduction level of truancy among students provided with positive reinforcement by researcher. This finding was contrary to Attwood and Croll (2006), Baker (2001) and Ma'aruf (2005). They observed that truancy was more pronounced among boys than girls. The finding was in line with Akimpelu's (1998) findings, which revealed that there was no significant difference between the academic achievement of male and female hearing impaired students.

In hypothesis three, the finding revealed that there was a significant difference in the reduction level of truancy between students of high and low socio-economic status provided with positive reinforcement by researcher. This finding is contrary to Brown (1998), who found that truancy was one of the behavioral problems found amongst adolescents in higher and lower socio-economic families. This finding was in line with Mussen, Conger and Kegan (2000), who reported that socio-economic problems and parent-child relationships could contribute to delinquent behavior and the inconsistent administration of rewards by parents who taught their children the response value and benefits appropriating for their social class.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it was no doubt that truant's responded to positive reinforcement, particularly in the reduction of the truancy syndrome. It can, therefore, be concluded that positive reinforcement n goes a long way in reducing truancy among students. It was also believed that this research has set a stage for further research in this externalized behavioural problem among semi-urban area schools. It was also concluded that government, parents, teachers and all those who were responsible for the affairs of schools could find the recommendations of this research useful and implement them for the betterment of the truants in particular and all students in general.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that teachers should use positive reinforcement in the process of reducing truancy. It is also recommended that the school authority should involve truants in all the curriculum and extra curriculum activities of the school and give them responsibilities, such as class monitor, prefects, etc.
2. It is recommended that parents and caregivers apply positive reinforcement in reducing the level of truancy among the all males and females truants.
3. It is also recommended that more emphasis should be given to all types of positive reinforcement to all truants, such as the removal of all unpleasant things, privileges, gift etc.

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