EFFECT OF SHAPING TECHNIQUES IN HANDLING LATENESS TO SCHOOL AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract
The study was on the effect of shaping techniques in reducing lateness among secondary school students. The study was carried out in Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State using quasi-experimental design. Two hundred and sixty-five (265) latecomers made up the population of the study, while ninety (90) latecomers made up the sample. An observation guide designed by the researcher was used for data collection. One research question were answered using frequency, and two null hypotheses were tested using ANCOVA. Result showed among others that shaping technique is effective in reducing both the number of days of lateness to school and the magnitude of lateness of the latecomers. Based on the findings, recommendations were made. These include: (1) School guidance counsellors in the State should organize Parents' day for PTA members and apply shaping technique on them to enable those of them who are responsible for their wards being late to school to rethink and come to the aid of these children. (2) Physical punishment should be abolished in secondary schools set aside by the school authorities on lateness to give room for more meaningful and purposeful psychological therapies.

Keywords: Secondary school students, lateness to school, Shaping technique and Enugu State.

Introduction
Lateness and punctuality are common phenomena in life activities. They are opposite sides of each other, like opposite sides of a coin. Punctuality entails doing things in time (early). Lateness entails doing things behind time schedule. Lateness is generally what one experiences in everyday activities at home and public life. Evidence abound that people go late to activities, including work. Teachers come late to school; workers in other fields of work attend to their duties late. This has negative effect on both the work and the workers (employees) respectively. The work may be done hurriedly and at the end the output may be less and of poor quality. In the work situation, lateness by the employees without permission from the supervisor in advance will attract him sanction and he may look for an opportunity to work the balance of his scheduled shift as a make-up. According

to Green (2007) many people possess this sad habit, and there are some who are constantly and consistently late. He finally concluded that millions of people suffer from it.

Daily observations show that many students in different parts of Nigeria come late to school habitually, be it private, public or mission secondary schools. Between the hours of 9.00am and 10.00am, secondary schools students are seen coming to school which had started by 7.30am or 7.45am. This problem is considered serious enough in the sense that teachers who ought to be in the class teaching between these hours of 9.00am and 10.00am are busy monitoring the latecomers. It is also observed that lateness to school by these secondary schools students is increasing at a tremendous rate all through the country. Ifelunni (1991) equally noted that the rate at which students go late to school is on the increase.

Consequent upon the observed increase in lateness in secondary schools by students, there is a feeling that there are various factors contributing to this problem among students. Thus, one can argue that the extent of lateness a student exhibits depends on these factors, which may be acting singly, or in combination for some students and not others. Adeyemo (1975) outlined these factors to include bad company, keeping late nights and uninteresting method of teaching by the teacher. Oyebanre (2000) suggested that maladaptive behaviour, which includes lateness to school, is caused by poor conditions in homes and environment; and that it is more prevalent among lower-socio-economic population.

Lateness to school has some negative implications for the students. It may lead to the students telling lies`, cheating, keeping malice, quarreling, missing class lessons and failing examinations (Anagbogu, 2002). It may also lead to truancy and dropping out of school (Ogbuvbu, 2008). Moreover, experience shows that students who come late to school are severely punished. For example, they are beaten, flogged and kept under the sun kneeling down for long hours; all in a bid to see if they will either stop coming late to school, or at least reduce the rate at which they come late to school.

Despite such punishment measures as noted earlier, which the school authority uses to check lateness among secondary school students, these students still come late to school. This is worrisome, and one stands to reason that punishment does not help in solving problem behaviour among students. Instead it has lead to increase in undesirable behaviour like aggression. Such punishment strategies as tongue-lashing, prolonged torture, ridiculing and flogging among others, no doubt inflict pains on the late comers. Moreover, they tend to cause more psychological, emotional, social, moral and personal problems than bring about the desired results. Verbal punishment for instance could make a late-coming student lose confidence in himself or herself since it is ego-deflating. This inhibits the student's attainment of his or her goals.

Since the various forms of punishments commonly used in secondary schools to address lateness behaviour among students have failed but even have in some cases increased their problems leading to increased lateness, the researcher is motivated to tackle the problem using counselling techniques of shaping.

Shaping strategy is training the individual to acquire a desired behaviour by reinforcing every response the individual makes which brings him or her closer to the desired behaviour while eliminating the undesired response by ignoring them through non-reinforcement. It implies using reinforcement to bring about change in behaviour. According to Okoli (2002), the technique is used to teach new behaviour. Invariably, it is

necessary to investigate the effect of cognitive restructuring technique and shaping technique in handling lateness among secondary school students.

People at one time or the other have used shaping to change undesirable behaviour. According to Davidoff (2009) some parents use shaping intuitively to teach small children. For example, mothers have used it to give potty training to their small children. Holme (2012) shaping was successfully used to reinstate verbal behaviour in hospitalized psychotics. Narayan (2015) also discovered that shaping can be used when new complex responses are desired. Nwosu (2007) said it worked very effectively in persons with mental problem and also in children who find it difficult to communicate.

It is important to note that these techniques have proved effective in handling some problem behaviours. Therefore, it is hoped that the technique will also be effective in handling lateness among students.

Statement of the Problem

The routine method of using punishment to control lateness does not appear to be effective. In fact punishment has failed because it is externally imposed and does not mobilize the willpower and participation of the individual concerned. Against this, it is thus important to find out non-punitive measures to control lateness among secondary school students. Hence the choice of shaping techniques to allow for full participation of the late comers. Shaping technique will change their behaviour towards lateness.   The fundamental problem is how to reduce lateness to school among secondary school students.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the effect of shaping techniques in reducing late-coming behaviour to school among secondary school students.

Specifically, the study sought to determine:
1.   How effective shaping technique is in reducing lateness among students.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study:
1.   How effective is shaping technique in reducing lateness among secondary school students?

Hypotheses

The following two null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 statistical level of significance:
1.   There is no significant difference in the reduction in the number of days of lateness of the students treated with shaping technique and those in the control group.
2.   The changes in the magnitude of lateness for students treated with shaping technique and those in the control group do not differ significantly.

Theories of Shaping

Shaping is one of the techniques derived from operant conditioning theory. The theory postulates that human behaviour can be acquired, maintained and therefore controlled by its consequences. Thus the frequency of a response may increase or decrease behaviours depending on whether the outcome of the response is pleasant or aversive (Essuman, Nwaogu, & Nwachuku, 1990).

According to Colman (2003), shaping involves gradual building up of a desired pattern of behaviour by selectively reinforcing closer and closer approximation of it … The desired behaviour is evoked by reinforcing successive response approximation of that behaviour (Akinade & Adedipe, 1994). Behaviour that increasingly approximates the desired behaviour are re-inforced until the individual achieves the target behaviour. (Okoli, 2002) affirmed this by saying, progressively, behaviours that increasingly approximate the desired behaviour are reinforced until the student emits the target behaviour.

This technique is often used when client is to acquire a new behaviour or complex behaviour. The trainer, also called behaviour change agent, reinforces the small steps towards the final behaviour or desired behaviour and by so doing the response that are not similar to the desired behaviour are eliminated (Uba, 1989). As the initial approximation is performed consistently the criterion for reinforcement is altered slightly so that the next response resembles the final goal more closely than did the previous response (Uba, 1989). According to Uba, the procedure is continued until the terminal response is developed.

The basic conditions necessary for effective shaping are as follows according to (Akinade & Adedipe, 1994).

1   Identifying the problem behaviour.
2   Identifying the terminal behaviour.
3   Identifying successive approximations.
4   State them in behaviour terms.
5   Reinforcing behaviour approximation promptly i.e. as soon as it is executed and
6   Successive approximation must be appropriately reinforced, not too slow and not too fast.

On the strength of the process involved in using shaping techniques, latecoming behaviour among secondary school students can be adequately handled. The shaping technique will allow for every little effort a late comer makes towards coming to school on time to be reinforced as to get at the expected behaviour, which is punctuality to school. This explains why the technique is considered adequate for handling lateness among secondary school students.

Research Design

The design for this present study was quasi-experimental. The quasi-experimental design is that which offers less-well and less-rigorous control compared to the true experimental design (Ali, 1996). Two groups were used for the study; one experimental groups and one control group. One experimental group tagged experimental group I was to shaping technique, while the control group was not exposed to any treatment.

Table 1:   Diagrammatic representation of the experimental design

Group	Pretest	Experimental Variables	Posttest
C	O_1	-	O_2

E$_1$	O$_1$	X$_2$ Shaping	O$_2$

Key:
C	=	Control
E$_1$	=	Experimental group I – Shaping
O$_1$	=	Pretest measures
O$_2$	=	Posttest measure
Instrument	=	Observation guide
Treatment Group =		Experimental Groups I & II

Population of the study

Population of the study was made up of all the latecomers in the three junior secondary schools of Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State that were used in the study. From the records kept on late comers to school by the school guidance counsellors and teachers on duty in the three schools, as at first term of 2007/2008 academic session, the late comers numbered 265. Accordingly, these 265 late comers made up the population of the study.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample of this study was 60 latecomers. This number was made up of 30 most frequent latecomers from three junior secondary schools. The two schools were drawn by simple random sampling with replacements and the 30 most frequent latecomers from each of the three schools that made up the sample of 60 was picked purposively as they were the most frequent latecomers in the list of latecomers in these schools.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instruments for the collection of data for the study were documentary evidence and observation guide developed by the researcher. The documentary evidence on lateness enabled the researcher to identify latecomers, while the observation guide was for identifying magnitude and number of days of lateness.

The observation guide contained five days of the week and thirty numbers, representing the thirty latecomers. It also had the magnitude or degree of lateness using time intervals which were: -

Very Mild Lateness (V.M.L.)	-	7.35am – 8.05am.
Mild Lateness (M.L.)	-	8.06am – 8.35am.
Severe Lateness (S.L.)	-	8.36am – 9.05am.
Very Severe Lateness (V.S.L.)	-	9.06am – 9.35am.

Method of Data Collection

Before the commencement of the study, the researcher went to the three schools she used in the study and advised that the school guidance counsellors and the teachers on duty in each of the schools kept record of latecomers for one term. From the record, most frequent latecomers were selected for the study, thirty from each school. When the study commenced, the researcher made use of the school guidance counsellors and two teachers to check the late comers. These people were the research assistants.

During the pretest, the research assistants had to fill the prepared observation guide for the researcher, day by day for twenty (20) days. The same thing was done during the posttest. Also the researcher decided to use the number of times each latecomer was

late in a week as well as the magnitude of lateness to determine the reward to be given to the subjects who received shaping treatment.

At the end of the twenty days pretest and that of the posttest, the researcher collected all the records kept by the research assistants and did the tallying.

Experimental Procedure

The subjects for this study were assigned to two groups – experimental group I and control group. The experimental group I, designated as school I, received shaping treatment; while the control group designated as school II, received no treatment. Each school served as a centre as no principal would allow his students to be taken to another school or place.

The Experimental Group I, which was given shaping received treatment two times per week. Therefore, for the few weeks of treatment, the group received a total of eight sessions of treatment. The researcher used the counselling period in the school time table (since she was allowed to do so) to have sessions with the subjects used in the study. Each session lasted one hour (9.00am-10.00am).

The control group was left in the hands of the school guidance counsellor who gave the usual group counselling.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for this study was put in table. Frequency was used in answering the research question, while ANCOVA was used to provide answers to the null hypotheses

Research Question 1

How effective is shaping technique in reducing lateness among secondary school students?

Table 1:   Pre and Posttest Scores of Number of Days the Students who Received Shaping Technique and Those in the Control Group

No of Days of Lateness	Shaping Technique		Control Group	
	Pretest Frequency	Posttest Frequency	Pretest Frequency	Posttest Frequency
12	-	1	-	-
14	-	5	-	-
15	-	6	-	-
16	-	2	-	-
17	-	5	-	-
18	-	5	-	2
19	-	5	-	3
20	30	1	30	25
Total	30	30	30	30

Table 1 shows that after receiving shaping technique therapy, one out of the 30 students who were late for 20 days before the treatment came late for 12 days, 5 of them

came late for 14 days, 6 came late for 15 days, 2 came late for 16 days, 5 of them came late for 17 days and 5 of them came late for 18 days. Also 5 of the students came late for 19 days while one of them came late for 20 days, showing no change in behaviour.

Again 2 of the 30 students in the control group came late for 18 days, 3 of them came late for 19 days, while 25 of them came late for 20 days, showing no change in behaviour.

Shaping as a technique is therefore effective in reducing lateness among secondary school students.

Null Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the reduction in the number of days of lateness of the students treated with shaping technique and those in the control group.

Table 2:   ANCOVA on the Number of Days of Lateness of Students Treated with Shaping Technique and those in the Control Group

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	Cal-F	Crit-F	P> 0.05
Corrected Model	163.350	1	163.350			
Intercept	0.000	0				
Pretest	0.000	0				
Treatment Model	163.350	1	163.350	72.42	4.00	0.05
Error	130.833	58	2.256			
Total	294.183	59				

In Table 2, it was discovered that at 0.05 level of significance, 1 df numerator and 59 df denominator, the calculated F72.42 is greater than the critical F4.00. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The researcher concludes that there is significant difference in the reduction in the number of days of lateness of the students treated with shaping technique and those in the control group.

Null Hypothesis 2

The changes in the magnitude of lateness for students treated with shaping technique and those in the control group do not differ significantly.

Table 3:   ANCOVA on the Magnitudes of Lateness of Students Treated with Shaping Technique and those of the Control Group.

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	Cal-F	Crit-F	P> 0.05
Corrected Model	16.301	2	8.150			
Intercept	2.145	1	2.145			

Time of Lateness	0.284	1	0.284			
Treatment Model	16.128	1	16.128	98.33	4.00	0.05
Error	9.349	57	0.104			
Total	25.650	59				

Table 3 shows that at 0.05 level of significance, 1 df numerator and 59 df denominator, the calculated F98.33 is greater than the critical F4.00. Therefore, the second null hypothesis is rejected. The researcher concludes that there is significant difference in the changes in the magnitude of lateness for students treated with shaping technique and those in the control group.

Discussion of Findings
        Shaping technique was found to be effective in reducing the number of days of lateness of perpetual latecomers. Before the treatment, 30 students were found to be late for 20 consecutive days. After the treatment, one of them came late for 15 days, 5 came late for 14 days, 6 came late for 15 days, 2 came late for 16 days while 5 of them came late for 17 days. Although 5 came late for 19 days, one did come late for the 20 days after receiving treatment.
        The findings above agree with the views of Okoli (2002) who pointed out that shaping technique could be used effectively in handling lateness among secondary school students. In addition, the present finding is in line with that of Akinade and Adedipe (1994), which used shaping successfully to reinstate verbal behaviour of hospitalized psychotics.
        Also, the present finding agrees with the views of Afolagbe (2003) on the issue that when desirable behaviours are followed with immediate tangible rewards, they become more frequent. So lateness to school by students was reduced by praises and giving gifts to habitual latecomers who showed change in behaviour. The rewards were to encourage punctuality in the students.
        Furthermore, it was discovered that shaping technique was effective in reducing the magnitude of lateness among secondary school students. Specifically, before the treatment, 23 out of 30 students were late to school between 8.35 and 9.05am (severe lateness) while the remaining 7 came late between 9.06 and 9.35am (very severe lateness). Then after receiving shaping therapy, 6 of the latecomers came to school between 7.35 and 8.05am (very mild lateness), 23 others came late to school between 8.06 and 8.35am (mild lateness) and only one of them came late between 8.36 and 9.05am.
        According to Ogbuvbu (2008), a child might be making every effort to come to school on time but could not make it due to traffic jams in the morning. A little encouragement for students in this problem can make them device a means of avoiding the traffic jams. So may reduce in their magnitude of lateness if they could not avoid being late.
        Another category of students whom Okoye (2001) said could reduce in their magnitude of lateness if encouraged are those whose parents carry to school. If they have been identified as habitual latecomers and are given treatment like shaping, they may be reminding and disturbing their parents that they do not like going late to school. Sometimes they could lead to making their parents improve in their take-off time. If the parents of

these children do not value sending them to school on time, there is nothing the above therapy could do on the children.

Osisioma's (1997) view was collaborated by the findings of this study. She was of the view that any encouragement or motivation like the one used in this shaping therapy on the students who come late to school because they do not want to participate in tidying up the school compound, will make them change their behaviour. Some of these latecomers who were coming late because they do not like taking part in the cleaning and tidying the compound could have been among those that changed positively in their behaviour.

Conclusion

From the discussions, lateness to school has been in existence and people have been contemplating and participating in the battle against the ugly behaviour. Today, the findings of this study have opened the doors of hope.

shaping technique has been found to be very effective not only in reducing the number of days of lateness but also the magnitude of lateness of habitual latecomers. So there is hope now for our children.

Implications of the Study to Counselling

The findings of this study have shown that the guidance counsellors who were using non-working methods or techniques in combating late coming, could now make use of any of the two techniques.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and their implications, the following recommendations were made: -
1.   Workshops, Conferences and Seminars should be organized by the State Education Commission for the serving guidance counsellors through the State chapter of Counselling Association of Nigeria on the usage of some common and basic counselling and other behaviour modification techniques.
2.   Physical punishment should be set aside by the school authorities on lateness to give room for more meaningful and purposeful psychological therapies.
3.   Teachers should be referring latecomers to the school guidance counsellors for diagnosis, dialogue and counselling since it was observed that majority of the latecomers do so because of circumstances beyond their control.

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