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**Dr. Glory N Amadi**  
Department of Educational  
Psychology, Guidance and  
Counselling University of Port  
Harcourt, Nigeria

**Dr. Nwabueze Faith I**  
Department of Educational  
Psychology, Guidance and  
Counselling University of Port  
Harcourt, Nigeria

## Techniques for promoting positive classroom behaviour among secondary school students in rivers state

**Dr. Glory N Amadi and Dr. Nwabueze Faith I**

### Abstract

This study investigated techniques for promoting positive classroom behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The correlational research design was used for the study. A sample size of 630 students in public secondary schools in Rivers State was drawn from the population using simple random sampling technique. An instrument named Techniques for Promoting Positive Classroom Behaviour Questionnaire (TPPCBQ) was used for data collection. Pearson Product moment correlation statistics was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The study found that reinforcement and punishment relate to positive classroom behaviour. Based on the findings, it was recommended that; teachers should reinforce students whenever they elicit a positive behaviour in order to strengthen such behaviour and also apply authorized punishments on defaulting students immediately and then make them understand the reason for the punishment.

**Keywords:** Techniques promoting positive classroom behaviour among secondary school students

### Introduction

Genuine discipline is significant in the maintenance of a positive atmosphere in the classroom to enhance students learning. Effective learning cannot take place in a coarse environment and that is why the students and the learning environment must be ready for learning to take place. The human being as a dynamic entity is subject to change and the changes influence the behaviour an individual puts up at a given time. An individual is characterized by several traits that are guided by nature and nurture. Nature-based traits are the biological traits inherited from parents while nurture based traits are the environmental factors that influence an individual's behaviour. They both contribute to the positive and negative behaviours an individual portrays.

Behaviour could be viewed as some activities of an organism that changes its association with its environment. Behaviour provides outputs from the organism to the environment. Human behaviour is usually influenced by the endocrine system and the nervous system. Intricacy in the behaviour of a person is linked to the complexity of its nervous system. Individuals with the more complex nervous system have better ability to learn (Anholt, Robert, Mackay and Trudy 2010) [2].

Human behaviour is the response of individuals to internal and external stimuli. It is the physical and observable reactions associated with individuals. Behaviour is impacted by certain traits each individual has, it varies from person to person and is capable of producing different actions depending on the individual (Anholt, Robert, Mackay and Trudy 2010) [2]. Positive behaviours are those behaviours which assist children to move along towards the goal of becoming a well-adjusted and fully functioning adult (Hearron, 2010) [5].

Positive behaviour can be promoted by applying a psychoeducational theory which is based on the individual psychology theory of Adler which states that individuals behave in ways that gratify their needs. This theory believes that it is a belief about the self that establishes the behaviour pattern of a person (Arthur, Gordon & Butterfield, 2003) [3]. Goal-centred theory can equally be useful in establishing positive behaviour by encouraging students to feel that they are valued within the classroom environment (Arthur, *et al*, 2003) [3]. To enhance positive behaviour, reward theory can also be used.

**Correspondence**  
**Dr. Glory N Amadi**  
Department of Educational  
Psychology, Guidance and  
Counselling University of Port  
Harcourt, Nigeria

This theory works by reinforcing or giving students small rewards for any good or positive behaviour they exhibit in the classroom (Akin-little, Eckert, Lovett & Little, 2004) [1]. In a nutshell, positive behaviour in the classroom can be achieved through reinforcement and reward. Reinforcement involves strengthening an action by praising words or a physical reward. A reward is a gift item given to someone who has exhibited a good behaviour or a good service and it is given at the end of the action (Ministry of education, Guyana, 2017).

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered

1. What is the relationship between reinforcement and positive classroom behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers state?
2. What is the relationship between punishment and positive classroom behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State?

**Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between reinforcement and positive classroom behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers state?

2. There is no significant relationship between punishment and positive classroom behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State?

**Methodology**

The study adopted a correlational research design. The population comprises all the 247 public secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample size of 630 respondents (students) was drawn using simple random sampling technique. The instrument for the study was a self-structured questionnaire titled “Techniques for Promoting Positive Classroom Behaviour Questionnaire (TPPCBQ). The instrument was ‘face validated’ by experts in Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation.

**Results**

Research question one: What is the relationship between reinforcement and positive classroom behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers state?

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between reinforcement and positive classroom behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers state?

**Table 1:** Relationship between reinforcement and positive classroom behaviour.

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r-cal	Df	Alpha Level	r-crit	Decision
Positive classroom behaviour	630	20.4348	2.98521	3.21	628	.05	1.96	Rejected
Reinforcement		21.3105	3.45432					

Table one above shows that r-calculated value of 3.21 at .05 level of significance is greater than the critical r-value of 1.96. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a positive relationship between positive classroom behaviour and reinforcement.

Research question two: What is the relationship between punishment and positive classroom behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State?

Hypothesis two: There is a significant relationship between punishment and positive classroom behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State?

**Table 2:** Relationship between punishment and positive classroom behaviour.

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r-cal	Df	Alpha Level	r-crit	Decision
Positive classroom behaviour	630	21.5329	2.88545	2.99	628	.05	1.98	Rejected
Reward		20.4206	2.54431					

Table two shows that calculated r-value of 2.99 at .05 level of significance is greater than the critical r-value of 1.98. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a relationship between positive classroom behaviour and punishment.

behaviour may be reduced or outrightly removed. McDaniel 1980 in Mather and Sam (2018) [6] found that punishment is designed to reduce or suppress the reoccurrence of the undesirable behaviour.

**Discussion**

**Hypothesis one:** Shows that there is a positive relationship between classroom behaviour and reinforcement. This indicates that if students are reinforced, positive behaviour can be strengthened in the classroom. The findings of this study agree with that of Mather and Sam (2018) [6] who found that appropriate application of positive reinforcement has been repeatedly demonstrated to increase both on-task behaviour and work completion.

**Hypothesis two:** Shows that there is a relationship between positive classroom behaviour and punishment. This indicates that if students are punished for an undesirable behaviour, the frequency of the occurrence of such

**Conclusion**

This study was aimed at determining the relationship between reinforcement, punishment and positive classroom behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State. The study showed that there is a positive relationship between the variables and positive classroom behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

1. Teachers should reinforce students whenever they elicit a positive behaviour in order to strengthen such behaviour.

2. Teachers should punish students immediately for any misbehaviour and also make the student understand the reason for the punishment.

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