The Effectiveness Of Negative Punishment On Behavior Change In Toddlers

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Introduction

Operant behavior is defined by the fact that the consequences of certain actions characterize it. As a result, operant conditioning uses reinforcements of behavior to study reversible behaviors. Punishments and reinforcements are majorly utilized to change, dissuade, or encourage these behavior changes. B. F. Skinner (can you please add the year), in his studies on Operant conditioning, argues that certain behaviors are not only attributable to environmental forces, but there is also the influence of the environment on existing behaviors. Conclusively, Operant conditioning is conceptualized as the development of a habit through the supported interaction between the environmental stimuli and individual responses.

Within Operant conditioning, as mentioned, punishments and reinforcements are adhering to strict schedules. The various experiments done on animals in an attempt to further understand learning processes reveals that the application of orderly scheduled effects incites certain behavior changes in individuals. In the experiments carried out by B. F. Skinner and his colleagues (Year?) on Operant conditioning, certain key principles were revealed that affect the behavior change process. Amongst these principles, the reinforcement schedule is important. The reinforcement schedule, according to (Staddon & Cerutti, 2003) (Can you please check APA format in-text citation?), is defined by its ability to reinforce in accordance with stated rules. The influence of reinforcement schedules on behavior change is fundamental to the response, which eventually becomes the learned behavior.

The use of punishment as a reinforcement method is widely adopted as well as being criticized. Punishments can be used in different situations that require learning. The applicability of this principle is not only limited to the educational sector but also other sectors such as traffic rules, and in work settings. Punishment is defined by the removal of a pleasant, pleasure-giving item. The aim is to extinct undesirable behavior through punishment. Therefore, the individual learns a new behavior through an unpleasant response after an undesirable behavior. In both punishment and reinforcements, the urgency of reinforcement delivery is highlighted. (Bonawitz, Ferranti, Saxe, Gopnik, Meltzoff, Woodward, &Schultz, 2010) (Citation format?) argue that punishment or reinforcement should come immediately after undesired behavior for learning to occur. The more time that passes between the undesirable behavior and the punishment, the less likely for the behavior to be unlearned. The other aspect, tied in with the reinforcement schedule is the consistency. In the delivery of punishment, there is a need to be consistent in order to avoid extinction. Consistency, therefore, increases the chance of unlearning the undesirable behavior in this case.

Punishment, in its applicability, can either be positive or negative. Positive punishment is defined by the addition of a negative consequence after a behavior is exhibited, to reduce undesirable behavior (Can you add a reference?). On the other hand, negative punishment refers to the removal of a favorite item with the exhibition of an undesired behavior aiming to extinct it completely (Reference?). The two forms of punishment vary in that one, positive punishment, involves the addition of a negative consequence, for instance, more time-out with each rule-breaking in a class. The other negative punishment would involve the removal of a favorite item, for instance, the taking away of a phone at home every time a curfew is broken. Therefore, the two concepts aim to reduce the target behavior by introducing an unpleasant condition for undesirable behavior. Punishment versus reinforcements is an argument that surrounds operant conditioning and its applicability to real-life situations. The effectiveness of reinforcements has been researched upon at large. The effectiveness of both positive and negative reinforcements as compared to punishments have been argued upon by numerous researchers. Positive reinforcement can be described as the addition of a rewarding consequence targeting the increase of desirable behavior. Negative reinforcements involve the introduction of an unpleasant stimulus to motivate the desired behavior. (Repetitive – you already defined them in the previous page)

You should have already started writing your literature review on the topic “the Effectiveness Of Negative Punishment On Behavior Change In Toddlers.” The paper is very general and it seems like you will never describe your study. Please focus on similar studies and their findings and write about them. You may remove the below paragraph and you can shorten the previous pages. Please mention directly relevant studies.

The punishment versus reinforcement debate is based on the effectiveness of reinforcements and especially positive reinforcements. The study of punishments in operant conditioning is often plagued with criticisms of imposing hurt on the subjects. The use of animals in these experiments is the major source of such claims. The experimental use of animals with no care of the harm imposed was a characteristic of behavioral experiments in the development of major learning theories. With the institution of ethical codes, the safety of subjects became a mandatory principle hence protecting them from any harm. The use of animal subjects necessitated special guidelines to minimize the harm imposed as much as possible. The effectiveness of both positive and negative punishments concerning behavior change has been tested. Forensic psychology posits the ineffectiveness of the two types of punishments when it comes to criminal development. Studies show that some forms of punishment increase the likelihood of an exhibition of undesirable behavior as opposed to leading to their extinctions (Bonawitz et al., 2010). The effectiveness of punishments in initiating behavior change could be more prominent in certain demographics than others. The generalization of these principles, i.e., the effectiveness of punishment in people of all ages doesn't look at individual variables and how they affect the process of learning. This study will seek to understand the effectiveness of negative punishment on behavior change for a toddler aged 5.

McLeod (2015) argues on the involvement of retroactive interferences in the extinction of undesirable behaviors under the process of Operant conditioning. His argument is based on the fact that the impact on learning isn't attributable to the entire concept of Operant conditioning but on its tenets such as punishment, omission learning, and more. In this view, therefore, behavior change is induced by the current stimulus and its context. This means that behavior change is determined by several things (What things?) within the environment. This places emphasis on the immediate environment involved in the process of learning behavior. The context determines the success of unlearning an undesirable behavior determined by its significance to the situation (Not clear). The issue of hierarchical relation is also considered in terms of the context. Ideally, negative punishment should target an aspect that is of great significance to the individual. The unlearning of the behavior is dependent on the significance of the pleasurable item being taken away.

Amongst the criticisms associated with punishments and Operant conditioning, in general, is its focus on environmental influences on behavior change. The principle of punishment works under the assumption that the only factor initiating a behavioral change is based on the application of negative punishment. The principle concentrates on the impact of these external stimuli on determining a behavior change. Therefore, operant conditioning fails to capture the influence of factors such as cognitive influence, personality attributes, and genetic influence. Operant conditioning highlights the relationship between the cause and effect with bias as it doesn't factor in the influence of other aspects. It is, therefore, the common argument that the results from some operant conditioning experiments are ungeneralizable (Dubi, Rapee, Emerton, & Schniering, 2008). (Again, general information. You may shorten this paragraph)

I think your introduction is way too general. You should really focus on your topic. You can also mention the aim of the study in the first page. Rather than including a detailed description of operant conditioning, punishment, etc. you can write a great intro and a literature review that directly focuses on your topic.

**Methodology**

**Experiment participants and description of the experiment**

Experimenters can not reveal the participants’ identity. So, we cannot write Mary. Also, supposedly, you should be the one doing the experiment.

The experiment involved a toddler-aged five named Mary and her mother. (Maybe you can write the reasons of why it is crucial to have 5 year old participant in this study here). The recording of the events that unfolded were recorded as a complete observer. Mary’s age was crucial to the development of the research (Why?). The age demographic that she belonged to exhibited the tendencies that were needed for the experiment (What tendencies?). Mary’s susceptibility to behavior change, as characterized by her developing age, was the major facilitator for her as a subject (Not convincing – no support). Her mother was to act as the punisher throughout the experiment. In instances where the observer was absent the mother would record the events that occurred. According to (Bonawitz et al 2010) (APA format?) learning capabilities of the brain are best at the relative age Mary is in (Why?). Therefore, testing the effectiveness of negative punishments on behavior change can easily be measured through the experiment. The experiment involved Mary's habit of leaving toys all over after she finished playing with them and the introduction of negative punishments for undesirable behavior. Basically, Mary was informed that at the end of every day any toy that isn't in her toy basket would be confiscated the whole of the next day. The effectiveness of the use of negative punishment on Mary's ability to learn how to store her toys better after use was the experiment.

I think this section needs to be organized. It feels like you jump around. It will be stronger if you write how did you choose your participant? Why your participant is good for this study? I think you need to organize the part where you mention her age is crucial. You can say, X, Y, Z happens at five 5 (by supporting with other studies). This is why she is a perfect participant, etc. Hence, your argument will be stronger. You also need to explain why having X,Y,Z are necessary for your analysis?

**Independent and dependent variables**

The experiment targeted two key variables; the negative punishment and the behavioral change. In this case the ative(?) punishment was the negative punishment which was directly affecting the behavioral change which is the dependent variable. The experiment targeted the interaction between these two concepts by measuring one's effect on the other. The experiment set was in that any of Mary's toys found lying on the floor at the end of the day would be confiscated, and she wouldn't play with them the next day. The confiscating of the toys acted as the negative punishment resulting in Mary being denied her toys, which she derives pleasure from by playing with. The dependent variable, the anticipated behavioral effect of the punishment was that Mary would learn to pick up her toys after playing with them for a day. The hypothesized relationship was that if Mary's undesirable habit of leaving toys strewn around were punished consistently, then it would become extinct (awkward wording) and in its place would be a desirable behavior where she stores her toys away appropriately.

**Behavior measurement**

The conceptualization of this experiment needed an appropriate measurement of behavior changes. The dependent variable itself involved the recording of a behavioral change that was as a result of the application of negative punishment (grammar of the sentence?). The negative punishment in this scenario is measured through the confiscation of toys. The recorded number for the punishment would be the number of toys confiscated at each end of the day since the beginning of the experiment. The record will consistently observe the different number of toys accounted for each day. This will also apply as the behavior change variable. A record of all the confiscated toys will be collected and analyzed to reveal the change after punishment is introduced. The application of the punishment should be consistent, and observe an orderly interval. The experiment involved the administering of the punishment for two weeks from 5 to 6 o'clock each evening (maybe you can write this sentence to the methodology part where you introduce participants). The experiment was consistent in the administering of punishments as well as observing the time factor. It is through this adherence to a consistency that the measurement of the behaviors was possible.

**Results**

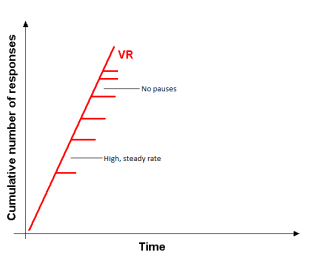
When it comes to negative punishment, it has been considered a very effective approach in handling or altering the behavioral patterns of individuals. In a study conducted by Honig & Staddon (1977), it indicated that within the concept of negative punishment, utilizing it in an effective way can ensure that a person alters their behavior. It means that one has to do it repeatedly for the behavior to stick (Shouldn’t this be in the literature review part?). *Within this section of the report, the focus will mostly be on presenting the scenarios that unfolded within the experiment It will present the results of the experiment and some graphs based on the data that was collected* (I think these sentences are not necessary).. The use of punishment is a very effective way of deterring or eliminating undesired behavior. Considering the approach that it uses, and looking at B.F. Skinner's work on operant conditioning, negative punishment happens almost every other time within our homes, schools, and even work (Again this sentence should be in the lit rev part).

In the experiment, the aim was to understand the ways in which the mother would apply negative punishment to alter the behavior of the five-year-old child. Prior to the commencement of the experiment, the mother was made aware of the ethical perspective of the experiment and that no physical or emotional harm would come to her daughter. This was important because, according to UN human rights, any experiment done on human beings is prohibited, especially if it causes them to harm either physically or emotionally. Therefore, after providing the ethical perspective in this case, data was collected with the help of the mother in times where the observer was not around. It focuses on various areas such as timing, obedience, behavior patterns, and adherence to the necessary rules and standards. These could have been considered as the important factors that the experiment was focusing on in as far as the effectiveness of the negative punishment was concerned in this case. (Not relevant to the results – include to the methodology. You should mostly mention what did you find in this section. How did she behave each day? How did her behaviors change daily? How did she react? Did she improve day by day?, etc. ).

Starting with timing, in the initial phases of the experiment, based on the data that was collected, the family had no timing (awkward sentence). More so, the child would often play every time she was free, and this sort of hindered her from doing anything else. The mother could be heard from the other rooms yelling and calling to Mary without any luck, and from her voice, one would tell the disappointment. Mary had very many toys. She would often play a lot, and each time she and her mother went out, she would cry for another toy. Therefore, to her, this was just an ordinary behavioral pattern, but deep within, one could tell that she was questioning her decision in as far as how she handled her daughter was concerned (This paragraph does not include results – please use better grammar and sentences and move it to the methodology part).

Therefore, after days of conducting the experiment on both the mother and the daughter, one could observer(?) some certain changes in how the daughter behaved (Yes, Finally you are writing the results). The data before the experiment began would indicate a child that was stubborn and had to get her way. Each time she would be called to eat, she would have preferred to play with her toys rather than go eat. Therefore, as part of the negative punishment, each time the child would be called and they did not answer, one toy would be taken away from them (Is this result of the experiment? And above you say you only take away the toys when she lays them around – now it changed. Please be consistent). To make it even more effective, the mother would target her favorite toys till she had nothing by the end of the day (awkward sentence). During the first few days, all the toys would be taken away by midday and the child would be left crying all along. There were some times the mother would feel pitiful and want to give the toys back, but based on the experiment, this was not possible (Are they results or methodology? Please be careful). At the end of the experiment, the child was adhering to timing quite effectively because, on the last day, she had all her toys with her by the end of the day.

Additionally, another area or aspect that the experiment focused on was the obedience of the child. When the experiment began, the mother did not notice how much the child was ignoring her. As a matter of fact, each time the mother called her daughter, she would often just keep quiet and she would end up assuming that everything was just fine. After meeting with her and pinpointing some of the negative punishments that she would have applied, we came up with one that the child would notice was gone (Not clear). It was her in-between snack and cakes (Unclear). Each time the child was called and she did not come or answer, her mother would notify her that her snack time was postponed till later. This was quite effective because Mary loved cakes and sweets. It was also effective because it kept her on her toes for the next calling. An important aspect to consider within this case was that at the beginning of the experiment, each time Mary was called, she would just continue playing. However, by the end of the experiment, she was quite attentive when she was called. Using the linear graph below that indicates the obedience of the girl against the time, one can see how much Mary was changing her behavior over the course of the experiment. It indicates the impact that is moving her snack time away each time she was disobedient had to the ultimate result or experiment. (How did you conduct the experiment should be in the methodology part. This section should include only the results. How did you conduct the experiment is vague and not consistent. It would be better if you read the whole section and edit it accordingly)



(What is VR? Did she change her behavior from day 1? I don’t think this graph makes sense. Please explain it better)

Figure 1: Changes in Behavior over time

The experiment was also keen on evaluating the adherence and behavior patterns of the child. It focused on comparing the change in the behavior of when the experiment began and the end of the experiment. Although the whole experiment would have been considered as a form of behavioral evaluation experiment, it can also be looked at as a section on its own. In as far as the adherence of the child was concerned, the focus was mainly on how well she responded to a calling or need that her mother made. One aspect that we noted, when the child was watching cartoons on TV, she would hardly adhere to what her mother was saying or even to her being called. In the first day, there was an incidence between the mother and the daughter where the mother called Mary to come to the kitchen and eat. However, Mary was busy watching her cartoons and she barely even winked or heard her mother. In this case, as part of the experiment, we agreed with the mother to switch off the television each time she did not adhere to her calling. In the first few days, there was a lot of switching off, and this was quite understandable. However, during the last three days, her mother would call her, and she would go running despite the cartoons being on. It was concluded that the negative punishment, in this case, was effective. (Again, new methodology written in the results section. Please introduce what are the steps in the experiment and include only results in this section)

Lastly, her behavioral patterns were also another aspect or factor that was focused on within the experiment. In the first two days or so, we would observe Mary jump into small tantrums whenever she was denied anything that she needed or asked for. At one point, when they were in the mall, her mother even recorded that she lay down on the floor and her mother had to drag her out of the mall just to get her into the car. Based on this observation or presentation of information, it was clear that Mary was very used to having her own way that each time she was denied, she would jump into these tantrums. Nonetheless, as part of the process, the experiment required that each time she had those tantrums, her mother would tell her that the next time they would go to the mall, she would not get anything. In addition, her toys were also under threat because each time she got into one of those tantrums, one toy would be taken away. By day four, she almost had no toys because of her excessive tantrums, and we can remember her seating around all bored. Day five, however, was quite different as it went by without her having any tantrum whatsoever. The line graph below that indicates the behavioral change of Mary over time is an indication of the effectiveness of negative punishment. It shows her change in behavior from the first day to the last day, which is a very effective approach in as far as operant conditioning is concerned.

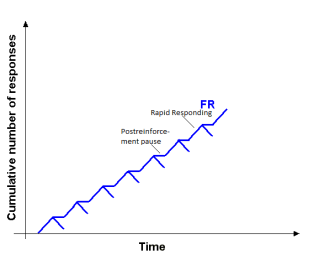


Figure 2: Changes in Behavior over time

**Discussion**

In as far as the findings of the experiment are concerned, they align with what can be considered as operant conditioning within most studies that have been conducted within the field. According to Silva (2019), the author notes that when applied effectively, negative punishment has the ability to alter the behavioral patterns of an individual to a certain angle. Therefore, looking at this statement and the data and results obtained from the experiment, it is clear that the behavior patterns of the child were altered because of the application of the negative punishment approach. The approach is often used to discourage certain behavioral patterns that are not liked or are unpleasant. It is not only used among children, but it can also be applied within school settings and even at work. For instance, among teenagers, if they break the provided curfew, they can be grounded for some time, and this can be considered as negative reinforcement. It is meant to do away with some unpleasant behavior that a child or a person exhibits.

Looking at the experiment, there were some certain strengths that exhibited themselves within the context. One, the experiment was quite clear on the ethical perspective that it was focusing on. This is an important factor because following a certain ethical standard can play a great role in ensuring that the research or experiment is valid. In addition, the mother also provided her consent for the experiment because it would help her understand her daughter better. The results, as seen, were in line with what most studies on operant conditioning and more so negative punishment focus on. Another important trait was the fact that the study entailed detailed communication patterns that were important in making certain that the research was valid.

There were also some weaknesses that were exhibited in this case. For instance, one major weakness was the fact that there was very limited time in conducting the experiment. In experiments such as these, there is often a substantial amount of time that is needed to ensure that every angle is covered effectively. However, in this case, the experiment was limited to only seven days, which was quite limiting and voided the important aspects or factors that are necessary to conduct an effective and efficient experiment. In addition, the other weakness, although it might not have been too much was the fact that the research was on people that were familiar to the researcher. According to an article by Guimaraes et al. (2019), conducting research on family members or friends often has a certain effect where the individuals tend to act in a certain way or manner. Therefore, even though the experiment was not hindered by this, it can also be considered as a weakness to some point. (You can also mention the small sample size)

In as far as the future of this form of the experiment is concerned, I can argue that operant conditioning and specifically, negative punishment is quite an effective field or approach. It can more so help people understand various notions and areas that can help improve or alter the behavioral changes of children, teenagers, and adults as well. It is effective within the school setting, at home, and even at work. Therefore, by understanding the theories that apply in this case and how they can be mastered to boost or alter the behavior patterns, there is a great likelihood that this field or direction can be very productive. As a therapist, or even a doctor, or any other profession, understanding the ways of negative punishment is a very effective undertaking. It can also be used within other fields and organizational settings, making it a universal concept that has a lot to offer.

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