

Teachers Social Feedback on Test Performance of Primary School Pupils

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ABSTRACT: *This study investigated the effect of teachers' social feedback on test performance of pupils. The study adopted the between-subject experimental design. Social feedback perception scale (SFPS) was designed and employed to measure the effect of teacher's social feedback on the participants. Participants age ranges between 7 and 10 years (average age = 8.17 years). There were eight male and ten female pupils randomly selected from a private primary school in Ota, Ogun State. The odd-even number separation method was employed to place the participants into either the experimental or control groups. Two hypotheses were formulated for the study. The study found a significant effect of teachers social feedback on students' perception ($U = 33.500$, $N_1 = 9$, $N_2 = 9$, $p < 0.05$, one-tailed) and a significant difference in perception of teachers social feedback among pupils based on gender ($U = 27.571$, $N_1 = 8$, $N_2 = 10$, $p < 0.05$, one-tailed). Both hypotheses were accepted. Consequent upon these findings, teachers are encouraged to use social feedback as it has a positive effect on pupil's test performance.*

Keywords: *Teachers, social feedback, test, performance, Ota*

I. INTRODUCTION

The idea of teacher feedback has become increasingly popular in the discourse of academic performance of students especially children. This paper explores teacher's social feedback on the test performance of primary school pupils. The essence of feedback is improving academic or cognitive performance. Just as teacher evaluation helps teachers identify the need to improve on their teaching, feedback from teachers to their students impart positively or improve students' academic performance (Pogrow, 1996; Stronge, 2006). Feedback is an essential part of education and training programmes and it helps learners to maximize their potential at different stages of training, raise their awareness and identify actions to be taken to improve performance. Too often, educational reform has produced disappointing results or outright failure (Clark & Astuto, 1994; Pogrow, 1996). According to Larrivee (1985), effective teachers often provide their students with positive feedback. Some of these are on the efficient use of time, good relationship with other students and high success rate. Despite the positive effect of feedback, Eggen & Kauchak (1999) warned that the kind of feedback that is provided should be clear, informative and also be able to shape the desired behaviour. Sadler states that good feedback lies at the heart of good pedagogy, with its source (i.e. teachers or peers) being of less importance than its validity (Sadler, 1998 as cited by Gielenab, Topsa, Dochya, Onghenac & Smeetsa, 2010).

In Nigeria, education at all levels is going through a structured revolution and there is an increasing call on teachers to improve performance especially as it relates to teaching methods, curricular review and use of multimedia equipments and making use of social feedback to students to encourage improved academic performance. Many teachers attempt to use social feedback as a form of positive reinforcement in order to aid learning and motivate students to achieve and behave in positive ways. Most teachers are aware that when a student is recognized for a positive behaviour, they feel less inclined to seek attention in inappropriate ways. Same attitude applies when teachers ignore their students effort, the chances of such students becoming dejected and discouraged is high which may result to disruptive behaviours to attract the needed attention. It is a common belief that positive teacher feedback (praise) during regular lessons has positive rather than negative effects on student characteristics such as motivation, self-esteem and learning. Negative feedback (blame) is usually expected to have the opposite effects. Some experts such as Meyer (1992) and Meyer & Plöger (1979) reported that praise and blame can have counter-intuitive effects on students self-evaluations, meaning that praise can, under some special circumstances, reduce ones self-perceptions of ability, whereas blame can increase such self-perceptions.

One of the objectives of teaching is to ensure students success. The purpose of teaching at any level is to bring about desirable changes in the learners. These changes may be in skills, knowledge, abilities and attitudes. Clark and Starr (1986) described teaching as an attempt to assist students in acquiring or changing

skills, knowledge, attitudes or appreciation. Without support and encouragement, students especially children may not appreciate the value of education. Teachers' social feedback is targeted at promoting student achievement by highlighting progress rather than deficiency (Stronge & Tucker, 2000; Wenglinsky 2001, 2002). Teacher's social feedback indicating personal growth to students will foster learning; improve academic performance and motivational development. Gibbs and Simpson (2004) advised that to raise the potential benefit of formative assessment, students should be stimulated to make effective use of the received feedback. These opportunities have been shown to increase student engagement with academic tasks, decrease problem behaviour, and improve student achievement (Cavanaugh, 2013; Haydon et al., 2010).

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

To encourage students to become actively involved in school activities put difficult demand on teachers. Faced with the problem of managing limited classroom time which is often consumed as students struggle with ideas that may seem simple or obvious to an adult, teachers are often tempted to neglect their students. While this may be an appropriate move in some circumstances, it may also undermine the development of students' own understanding. If students are to be encouraged to pursue ideas themselves, then teachers must have the ability to identify students who appear to be moving down the wrong path and guide them in a more promising direction through the use of social feedback without taking over the work from them. Positive classroom environments are generally assumed to be educationally desirable ends in their own right and studies such as Chacko (1981); Stage (1995) and Alausa (1998) found that they account for more variance in student learning outcomes than other variables. This study is therefore designed to investigate the effect of teachers' social feedback on test performance of pupils.

III. METHOD

Design

This study adopted the between-subject experimental design. The experimental group was exposed to the experimental condition while the control group was not exposed to any intervention. At the end of the treatment, observation and measurement were taken for both groups to see if there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control group.

Setting and Participants

Participants were selected randomly and assigned to the experimental and control group. The study involved 18 Primary three pupils within the ages of 7 and 10 years (average age = 8.17 years). There were eight male and ten female pupils. The odd-even number separation method was employed to place the participants into either the experimental or control groups, nine participants in each group. All the participants understand and speak English language. The pupils were confident, attentive and displayed good listening skills. The research was done in a classroom. The classroom was properly lit and the temperature was appropriate and conducive for learning. The pupils were made to be very comfortable and the room used had only the amount of functional furniture needed and had no non-essential furnishings. Control was also ensured by making sure that the entrance to the room and the hallway outside were not causing distractions to the participants during lessons.

Instruments

The materials were designed by the researcher. There was a ten (10) word vocabulary list which also contained ten questions, and the social feedback perception scale (SFPS). These instruments were used to measure the effect of teacher's social feedback on pupil's test performance. The scale is a twelve (12) item likert-type scale with four options: none of the time, some of the time, most of the time and all of the time. The items were generated by reviewing literatures. Sixteen (16) items were initially generated but after a preliminary study including expert opinions, the items were reduced to thirteen and after the pilot study, the items were reduced to twelve (12). Some of the items are: I like my teachers to tell me all my mistakes; I like to listen to my teachers instruction; My teachers teaches well e.t.c.

Reliability of the SFPS

The reliability of the SFPS was ascertained by employing a test-retest reliability coefficient. The test-retest reliability was carried out by administering the research trajectory to a group of 15 pupils who were not part of the final study. Six (6) males and nine (9) females responded to it. The essence was to ensure that the items are not ambiguous and that the wordings and spellings are appropriate and correct. After an interval of a week, it was re-administered to the same set of people. The two sets of scores were correlated using the Pearson's *r*. The correlation coefficient was found to be 0.87. The multiple split halves returned a reliability of 0.81. The research trajectory was therefore considered adequate for the study. It was established from the pilot

study that the instrument has content validity. The Social Feedback Perception Scale has positive questions and was scored by adding all the responses of the respondents together to obtain a total score.

Ethical Considerations

The study received ethical approval from the principals and parents of concerned students. Participation was voluntary, participants were educated on the aim of the survey, assured of strict confidentiality of their responses, and informed consent signed by individual parents was obtained prior to commencement of the study.

Procedure

The thrust of this study was to examine the effect of social feedback on pupil’s test performance. The study made use of eighteen pupils whose parents signed the consent form. They were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. The experiment was conducted in the morning after engaging in a formal introduction with the pupils. With the help of research assistants (two teachers in the school), the students were informed on the procedure for the study. They were taught ten (10) English vocabularies after which they were tested. The participants were taught for two days. On the first day, the experimental group was taught and the teacher gave the students positive feedback. The control group was taught by the other teacher and they were given negative feedback after the study. On the second day, there was a change of teachers but same treatment was given to the two groups (experimental positive feedback and control negative feedback). After each teaching on both days, the two groups were given the same test to measure the effect of the feedbacks. After the test, the participants were administered the Social Feedback Perception Scale (SFPS).

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant effect of teachers’ social feedback on pupils’ perception
2. There is a gender difference in perception of teachers’ social feedback among pupils

Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed using both the descriptive and inferential statistical methods. For the purpose of this study, a statistical level of significance of $p \leq 0.05$ was used as the acceptable level. All statistical analyses were performed using the SPSS software programme (version 17.0, Chicago, IL, USA). Descriptive statistics was employed to analyse the demographic variables while Mann-Whitney U was used in testing the research hypotheses.

IV. RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristics = 60	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	8	44.4
Female	10	55.6
Total	18	100.0
Age (mean = 8.2)		
7	2	11.11
8	12	66.67
9	3	16.67
10	1	5.55
Total	18	100.0

Table 1 show that more females (77.8%) than males (22.2%) participated in the study. About a third (66.67%) of the participants were eight years old while 3 of the participants were 9 years old. Two (11.11%) participants were 7 years old while only one was 10 years old.

Table 2: Mann- Whitney U summarizing Hypothesis 1

Variables	N	Mann-Whitney U	p
Experimental	9	33.500	<0.05
Control	9		

In this study, the experimental and control groups are independent and they represent at least hypothetical random samples of the sub-population they represent. Table 2 reveals there was a significant effect of teachers social feedback on students’ perception ($U = 33.500, N1 = 9, N2 = 9, p < 0.05$, one-tailed). Based on this result, hypothesis 1 was sustained.

Table 3: Mann- Whitney U summarizing Hypothesis 2

Variables	N	Mann- Whitney U	P
Male	8	27.571	.000
Female	10		

As revealed in Table 3, there is a significant difference in perception of teachers social feedback among pupils based on gender ($U = 27.571$, $N_1 = 8$, $N_2 = 10$, $p < 0.05$, one-tailed). Based on this result, hypothesis 2 was sustained.

V. DISCUSSION

The effect of teachers' social feedback on student's perception was investigated in hypothesis one. The result shows a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the effect of teachers' social feedback. This translates that pupils can do well with teachers' feedback than in the absence of teacher's social feedback or positive reinforcement. Social feedback is expedient in improving a pupil's test performance or in making the pupils perform better than they used to. Thus, pupils in the experimental and control were able to differentiate if feedback was given or not. This agrees with the position of Wenglinsky (2001) that teachers can contribute as much to student learning as the students themselves. Angelo and Cross (1993) contended that teachers who want to improve the quality of learning in their own classrooms can do so by encouraging students' active participation in classroom. The result further indicated there was a significant difference in teacher's social feedback based on gender. Thus, sex has effect on test performance based on the feedback extended to them. This study has brought to the fore the need to promote active involvement of teachers and students in the classroom. Teachers' social feedback on their children can be likened to the effect of students' feedback on teachers' performance (Witrock, 1986). It is important to note that students are the recipients of the teachers' teaching, as a result therefore, teachers must teach as though the students matter. This study has shown that teachers' social feedback has a positive effect on the pupil's test performance.

VI. CONCLUSION

Since teachers teach to bring about desirable changes in learners, there must be a feedback mechanism through which the teacher can monitor the teaching-learning activities. This type of mechanism would provide the teacher with information on how students are receiving the teachers teaching and to help determine the impact or influence of the teaching-learning environment. As revealed in this study, teachers' feedback on students brought about better performance in their academics.

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