

# Behavior Modification Techniques - An Awareness Study

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## Abstract

*Behaviour modification refers to the techniques used to try and decrease or increase a particular type of behaviour or reaction. This might sound very technical, but it is used very frequently by all of us. Parents use this to teach their children right from wrong. Therapists use it to promote healthy behaviours in their patients. The purpose behind behaviour modification is not to understand why or how a particular behaviour started. Instead, it only focuses on changing behaviour, and there are different methods used to accomplish it.*

**Keywords:** behaviour modification therapists, techniques of Behaviour Modification, Aversive Therapy

## Behaviour Modification

Behaviour modification refers to the techniques used to try and decrease or increase a particular type of behaviour or reaction. This might sound very technical, but it is used very frequently by all of us. Parents use this to teach their children right from wrong. Therapists use it to promote healthy behaviours in their patients. Animal trainers use it to develop obedience between a pet and its owner. We even use it in our relationships with friends and significant others. Our responses to them teach them what we like and what we don't.

Behaviour modification relies on the concept of conditioning. Conditioning is a form of learning. There are two major types of conditioning; classical conditioning and operant conditioning.

Classical conditioning relies on a particular stimulus or signal. An example of this would be if a family member came to the kitchen every time you baked cookies because of the delicious smell. The second type is known as operant conditioning, which involves using a system of rewards and punishments. Dog trainers use this technique all the time when they reward a dog with a special treat after they obey a command.

Behaviour modification was developed from these theories because they supported the idea that just as behaviours can be learned, they also can be unlearned. As a result, many different techniques were developed to either assist in eliciting behaviour or stopping it. This is how behaviour modification was formed.

## Techniques of Behaviour Modification

The purpose behind behaviour modification is not to understand why or how a particular behaviour started. Instead, it only focuses on changing behaviour, and there are different methods used to accomplish it. This includes:

- Positive reinforcement
- Negative reinforcement
- Punishment
- Flooding
- Systematic desensitization
- Aversion therapy
- Extinction

**Positive reinforcement** is pairing a positive stimulus to behaviour. A good example of this is when teachers reward their students for getting a good grade with stickers.

**Negative reinforcement** is the opposite and is the pairing of behaviour to the removal of a negative stimulus. A child that throws a tantrum because he or she doesn't want to eat vegetables and has his or her vegetables taken away would be a good example.

**Punishment** is designed to weaken behaviours by pairing an unpleasant stimulus to behaviour. Receiving detention for bad behaviour is a good example of punishment.

**Flooding** involves exposing people to fear-invoking objects or situations intensely and rapidly. Forcing someone with a fear of snakes to hold one for 10 minutes would be an example of flooding.

**Systematic desensitization** is also used to treat phobias and involves teaching a client to remain calm while focusing on these fears. For example, someone with an intense fear of bridges might start by looking at a photo of a bridge, then thinking about standing on a bridge and eventually walking over a real bridge.

**Aversive Therapy** involves developing love towards a person nourishing positive thoughts about the person. Instead of finding fault of a person, one notice significant good aspects the person possesses, one may not tend to have an aversion to others. Aversion is a boomerang that returns and assaults the person who shot it. Hence it is wise to avoid aversion.

**Extinction** involves making a person get rid of unwanted behaviour. A child who is put on a time-out because of bad behaviour may eventually stop that behaviour.

### Significance of the Study

In recent years, the concept of punishment has had many critics, though these criticisms tend not

to apply to negative punishment (time-outs) and usually apply to the addition of some aversive event. The use of positive punishment by board certified behaviour analysts is restricted to extreme circumstances when all other forms of treatment have failed and when the behaviour to be modified is a danger to the person or others. In clinical settings, positive punishment is usually restricted to using a spray bottle filled with water as an aversive event. When misused, more aversive punishment can lead to affective (emotional) disorders, as well as to the receiver of the punishment increasingly trying to avoid the punishment (i.e., "not get caught").

Behaviour modification programs form the core of many residential treatment facility programs. They have shown success in reducing recidivism for adolescents with conduct problems and adult offenders. One way of giving positive reinforcement in behaviour modification is in providing compliments, approval, encouragement, and affirmation; a ratio of five compliments for every one complaint is generally seen as being effective in altering behaviour in a desired manner and even in producing stable marriages.

The right behavioural intervention can have profound system effects. Parent management training programs sometimes referred to as behavioural parent training programs, have shown relative cost-effectiveness for their efforts for the treatment of conduct disorder. Thus, such intervention can have profound effects on socializing the child in a relatively cost-effective fashion and help get the parent out of poverty. This level of effect is often looked for and valued by those who practice behavioural engineering and results of this type have caused the Association for Behaviour Analysis International to take a position that those receiving treatments have a right to effective treatment and a right to effective education.

Cognitive behavioural interventions have been used to modify a wide variety of social and affective behaviours such as attention deficits, impulsivity, anger, depression, noncompliance, attributions, motivation, social skills, and meta-cognition as well as academic deficits in reading, written expression, handwriting, math, and spelling. In this context, the present study assumes significance.

## Objectives of the Study

The investigator has framed the following objectives for the study:

1. To highlight the salient aspects of Behaviour Modification.
2. To find out the extent of Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers.

## Population and Sample

The population for the study comprises of Secondary Grade Teachers serving in Sivagangai District. The sample for the study consists of 90 Secondary Grade Teachers serving in Schools run by Government and Management. The sampling technique used for the study is a random sampling. Survey Method has been adopted for the study.

The sample includes both genders drawn with varied characteristics or sub-variables viz., Type of Institution working, Locality they hail from, Qualification, Experience etc.

## Tools Used

### Behaviour Modification Questionnaire

This is a standard tool developed by Vijayalakshmi N conforming to the tests of validity and reliability. There are 25 items of the scale. There are five responses to each stimulus (statements) viz., SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, N – Neutral, D – Disagree and D – Strongly Disagree. This is the Likert type of Scale. A score of 5 is given for the response SA, 4 for A, 3 for N, 2 for D and 1 for SD for items of Positive Polarity. For items coming under negative polarity, the scoring is done under reverse order.

## Data Analysis

Data will be analysed using statistical techniques such as Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-Test.

## Limitations of the Study

1. The study is limited to Secondary Grade Teachers.
2. The study is limited to certain schools in Sivagangai District.

## Analysis and Interpretation of Data

### Hypothesis 1

There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Gender.

**Table 1: Difference due to Gender**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	“t” value	Sig.
Male Teachers	45	76.44	9.38	0.65	NS
Female Teachers	45	77.69	8.78		

df=88; t(0.05) = 1.96; t(0.01) = 2.58

### Interpretation

The calculated “t” value 0.65 is less than the table value. “t” value is not significant at any level. Hence the research hypothesis is not accepted. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Gender.

### Hypothesis 2

There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Type of Institution.

**Table 2: Difference due to Type of Institution (Government Vs Management)**

Type of Institution	N	Mean	SD	“t” value	Sig.
Government Schools	45	75.16	8.54	2.04	S
Management Schools	45	78.98	9.24		

df = 88; t(0.05) = 1.96; t(0.01) = 2.58

### Interpretation

The calculated “t” value 2.04 is more than the table value. “t” value is significant at 0.05 level. Hence the research hypothesis is accepted. There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of

Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Type of Institution. Management School Teachers exhibit more awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques.

### Hypothesis 3

There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Locality they hail from.

**Table 3: Difference due to Locality**

Locality	N	Mean	SD	“t” value	Sig.
Urban	32	74.47	8.42	2.11	S
Rural	58	78.50	9.14		

df=88; t(0.05) = 1.96; t(0.01) = 2.58

### Interpretation

The calculated “t” value 2.11 is more than the table value. “t” value is significant at 0.05 level. Hence the research hypothesis is accepted. There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Locality they hail from. Teachers hailing from rural area exhibit more awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques.

### Hypothesis 4

There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Qualification.

**Table 4: Difference due to Qualification**

Qualification	N	Mean	SD	“t” value	Sig.
High	41	76.05	9.10	0.97	NS
Low	49	77.92	9.02		

df=88; t(0.05) = 1.96; t(0.01) = 2.58

### Interpretation

The calculated “t” value 0.97 is less than the table value. “t” value is not significant at any level.

Hence the research hypothesis is not accepted. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Qualification.

### Hypothesis 5

There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Experience.

**Table 5: Difference due to Experience**

Experience	N	Mean	SD	“t” value	Sig.
High	35	76.09	9.01	0.82	NS
Low	55	77.69	9.10		

df=88; t(0.05) = 1.96; t(0.01) = 2.58

### Interpretation

The calculated “t” value 0.82 is less than the table value. “t” value is not significant at any level. Hence the research hypothesis is not accepted. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Experience.

### Findings of the Study

The calculated “t” value 0.65 is less than the table value. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Gender.

The calculated “t” value 0.58 is less than the table value. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Type of Institution.

The calculated “t” value 1.88 is less than the table value. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Locality they hail from.

The calculated “t” value 0.97 is less than the table value. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness of Behaviour

Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Qualification.

The calculated “t” value 0.82 is less than the table value. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness of Behaviour Modification Techniques among Secondary Grade Teachers in terms of Experience.

### Conclusion

It will be laudable if one is endowed with skills to lead a full-fledged desirable life style. It always doesn't happen that persons are infused with desirable psychological and social traits. The behaviour of a person needs modification; the degrees of modification may differ. Emotional Intelligence, Stress Coping, Peer Influence, Cognitive Behaviour Modification (CBM) are the strategies that could be adopted for modifying the behaviour of the individual. Teachers who are the role models for the students should be aware of the need for behaviour modification and the techniques involved in the same.

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