

The Effect Of Vignettes on Social Validity Ratings of Timeout as an Intervention

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INTRODUCTION

Literature:

- Social validity is a very important aspect of Applied Behavior Analysis and is defined by John Cooper as “the acceptability of a behavior change procedure.” (Cooper et al., 2020)
- Cooper defines timeouts as “the withdrawal of the opportunity to earn positive reinforcement, or the loss of access to positive reinforcers for a specified period of time, contingent on the occurrence of a behavior” (Cooper et. al p.357 2020)
- Foxx et. al (1980) use of timeout decreased severe behavior from 90% to 19% in 3 months. Within a year, it was decreased to 4%.
- Despite the efficacy of using time-out procedures, there are misperceptions about its use, and therefore the social validity of using it.

Purpose:

- The main goal for this research is to study people’s self-reported perceptions about timeout as an intervention used in applied behavior analysis and educational settings. The purpose is to determine whether the participant’s perceptions change due to viewing pictures of actual timeout rooms with specific scenarios on when and how they are used in clinical and educational settings.
- Another goal is to explore whether there are differences in self-reported perceptions between those with and without experience in the field of behavior analysis.

Hypothesis:

- The hypothesis is that those with experience in the field of behavior analysis will rate the timeouts in a more positive fashion than those without this experience, and that after viewing the photos and vignettes, that the total ratings will be more positive. The change in scores will also be greater for those with less experience in the fields of applied behavior analysis and education.

METHOD

Participants:

- 69 total responses to the survey
- 48 participants completed the entire survey, and are included in this analysis

Setting:

- Online survey through surveymonkey.com

Materials & Equipment:

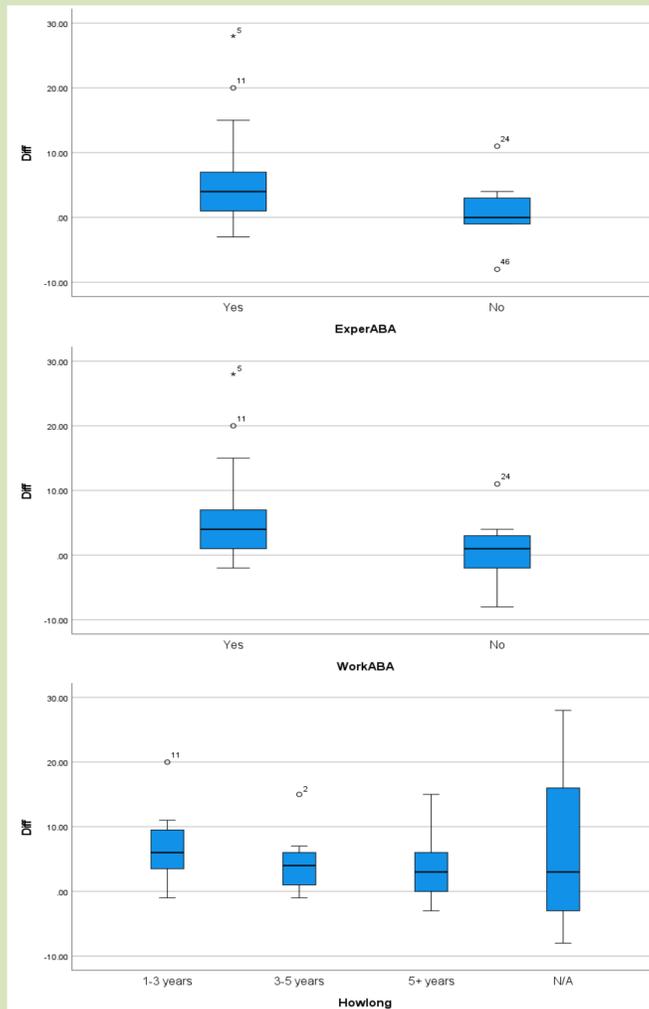
- SurveyMonkey, Excel, and SPSS

Experimental Design:

- PxE design: Person (experience in field) x difference score (pre versus post-survey)

Variables:

- Independent Variable: Person category
- Dependent Variable: Difference scores (Pre minus Post Score on survey questions)



PROCEDURE

- Received recruitment email via snowball method
- Using link provided, participants were sent to SurveyMonkey site
- The participants accepted or declined
- If they accepted, they filled out their demographics
- They then answered 15 pre-test questions on their perceptions of timeout procedures
- They then read 3 vignettes and observed 3 photos of timeout rooms that correspond
- Last, they answered a post-test which were 12 of the same questions as the pre-test
- This took them to a Thank you page

RESULTS

Data Explanation:

Outcomes:

- Higher difference scores mean that the perceptions of timeout became positive after viewing the vignettes
- See Figure 1.
 - The first graph is those who had or had not experienced ABA. Note that those who had not scored lower on the difference measure. This was also true for those who did not work in ABA versus those who do.
 - Note in the third graph that the highest scores were for those reporting 1-3 years in the field, followed by those with 3-5 and 5+ years in the field. Those with no experience ranged more in their difference scores, but also scored lower overall.

Figure 1. The data shown here is the difference in scores from pre-test to post-test. Respondents answered whether or not they had experience with Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and/or work in ABA, and how long they have worked in ABA.

DISCUSSION

Major Findings:

- Most people changed their self-reported perception of time-out after viewing the pictures and descriptions.
- People with the least amount of experience in the field (1-3 years) changed the most on the post-survey, and those with no experience varied.
- Those with more experience in the field tended to have relatively stable scores, but did shift to a slightly more positive score post-survey.

Limitations:

- Not the same number of questions in the pre and post test
- Survey time was not long, so limited opportunity to recruit more people with no experience in ABA.
- People were able to skip questions
- One question could be interpreted different ways

Future Research:

- Does the time of a timeout procedure matter?
- Are best practices being used in timeout?
- Is there adequate training on the use timeout procedures for parents of children who are being put in timeout?
- Is there training for staff?
- Get background information on experience and severity of population
- Give an introduction to different severities of behaviors

REFERENCES

- Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2019). Applied Behavior Analysis (3rd Edition). Hoboken, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Foxx, C. L., Foxx, R. M., Jones, J. R., & Kiely, D. (1980). Twenty-four hour social isolation: A program for reducing the aggressive behavior of a psychotic-like adult. Behavior Modification, 4(1), 130–144. <https://doi-org.corvette.salemstate.edu/10.1177/014544558041008>