

An Analysis for Increasing the Learning Efficiency of Elementary School Students in the UK by Developing Positive Behavioural Interventions – Schemes Designed to Enhance the Learning Efficiency of Elementary School Students in the UK

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DOI: 10.26821/IJSRC.9.4.2021.9416

ABSTRACT

Due to the positive achievement of recent 'nudge' reports in health, energy and tax fraud / debt, the development of behavioural interventions can effectively change people's behaviour, and the real merit of behavioural interventions can attain a better progression of policy benefits than the conventional interventions.

Keywords: Behavioural Interventions

1. INTRODUCTION

Basically, policy benefits are expected to include various social or environmentally desirable goals. Importantly behavioural approaches stress interventions which are not regulatory in nature. Similarly they do not simply rely upon rational economic responses to tax and other financial interventions; nor are they simply educational campaigns. In addition, the purpose of behavioural interventions approach is to find intelligent ways to 'softly' encourage, support and enable people to make better choices for themselves. Through behavioural interventions approaches, people's behaviour can be changed naturally without rules as well as regulations and the rich policy benefits can be therefore acquired. So far as the policy-making is concerned, there are

three conventionally intervention approaches used to change people's behaviour, including law intervention and financial intervention. However, these 'hard' intervention approaches may difficult to change people's behaviour naturally and even easy to reduce the policy benefits furthermore. Hence, a 'soft' intervention approach has therefore been designing for acquiring the policy benefits positively. Most important of all, an aggressive attitude conducted by the Department to develop and trial behavioural intervention schemes is extremely important to lead to either a good achievement of behavioural interventions approaches or rich policy benefits.

2. PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OF BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTIONS IN UK POLICY-MAKING

So far three reports have been published concerning issues of health, energy use and tax fraud / debt. Meanwhile, the practical examples of how behavioural insights have been applied in 2010–11, including organ donation, healthier food, consumer empowerment, tax, and environment. In order to realize the behavioural investments in UK policy-making, a practical example of health issue, smoking cessation, will be described as follows.

2.1 Example of Health Issue – Smoking Cessation

So far as the health issues are concerned, it is estimated that more than half of all years of healthy life lost are as a result of behavioural factors, including smoking, teenage pregnancy, alcohol, diet, diabetes, and food hygiene. Among these issues, smoking remains the biggest preventable cause of death in the UK, so how to design an effective smoking cessation programme has become an increasing issue for the Department of Health. Due to the description above, the Department of Health drawing on behavioural insights for smoking includes [1]:

- **Continuation of effective quit smoking marketing campaigns**– including efforts to break down how to quit into manageable steps and actions
- **Ending the display of tobacco products in shops**– to passively decrease the smoking desire arising from the visual temptation
- **Exploring new products for people addicted to nicotine** – products that deliver nicotine quickly in a fine vapour instead of as harmful smoke could prove an effective substitute for ‘conventional smoking’
- **Trialling new ways of encouraging people to quit** – Behavioural Insights Team and the Department of Hygiene are also working in partnership with Boots and professional academic researchers. Further, research suggests that combining behavioural and pharmacological support gives smokers the best chance of quitting

3. RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIALS (RCTs)

Basically, the behavioural interventions trials carried out and proposed by the Nudge Unit have included randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of a kind rarely used in UK policy-making, and this aspect has been talked about as contributing to good evidence-based policy-making. In order to explore the effectiveness of the insights set out in different contexts, the Behavioural Insights Team has adopted a ‘test, learn, adapt’ approach. Central to this is the development of randomized controlled trials (RCTs), which are

considered to be the gold standard of research trials.

Generally, this involves dividing the study population into two or more groups and randomly assigning individuals to each of these groups. By giving the intervention to one of these groups while continuing to treat the other group as business per usual, we can determine the difference in effectiveness of each of the interventions. The key ingredient to this approach is the randomisation of individuals to groups, which enables us to assume that any difference in outcomes is attributed to the intervention rather than other factors [2].

4. SCHEMES DESIGNED TO INFLUENCE THE BEHAVIOURAL OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE UK IN LEARNING EFFICIENCY

Purpose – enhance the learning efficiency of elementary school students in the UK by behavioural interventions

Current Situation – low learning efficiency of elementary school students in the UK

Part 1: Lessons from behavioural science – three steps to enhance the learning efficiency of elementary school students in the UK

The three insights below are all based on evidence from behavioural science. They show that, by going with the grain of how people behave, we can enhance the learning efficiency of elementary school students in the UK.

Insight 1. Diagrammatic textbook: Using the textbooks with more diagrammatic explanation than text explanation for making pupils realize the content of textbook easier.

Insight 2. More field trips: Increasing the amount of field trip per month to make pupils practically understand the knowledge taught in the textbook.

Insight 3. Various extracurricular activities: Increasing a variety of extracurricular activities to train pupils a great diversity of interests and capabilities.

Part 2: Test, learn, adapt – three trials to enhance the learning efficiency of elementary school students in the UK (for RCTs)

Trial 1. Ordinary textbook: Examines whether the learning efficiency of pupils using the textbooks with

more diagrammatic explanation is better than that of pupils using the ordinary textbooks

Trial 2. Normal field trip: Examines whether the learning efficiency of pupils with more field trips per month is better than that of pupils with normal amount of the field trips per month

Trial 3. Normal extracurricular activities: Examines whether the learning efficiency of pupils with a variety of extracurricular activities is better than that of pupils with normal extracurricular activities

5. REFERENCE

[1] Source: Applying Behavioural Insight to Health, 2010, Cabinet Office Behavioural Insights Team; Behavioural Insights Team Annual update 2010–11, 2011, Cabinet Office Behavioural Insights Team.

[2] Source: Applying Behavioural Insight to reduce fraud, error and debt, 2012, Cabinet Office Behavioural Insights Team.

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