

The Students' Role Obligation and Their Perceptions of Legitimacy of Being Rewarded or Punished in Confucian Society

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The educational psychologists in the west have done researches to indicate an asymmetry of using rewards and punishments by teachers in moral and academic domain in the elementary and junior high schools. Teachers administer more punishments to students violating moral rules, while administering more rewards than punishments for performance in the academic domain. This research was aimed at studying the legitimacy of teachers' use of rewards and punishments, as perceived by students, in moral and academic domains in Taiwan. In this study, scenario questions were used to survey 119 junior high school students in Taipei, and found that the pattern of using rewards and punishments in the moral domain is similar to that of the West. That is, students who practice positive duties do not need to be rewarded, while those who violate negative duties should be punished. The patterns of using rewards and punishments in academic domains of the West are quite different from those of Confucian society. Participants in this research thought that teachers should give more punishments to those effortless students, than those putting forth great effort, but with low academic achievement. They also thought teachers should apply more blame than recording a demerit. When students performed well in academic domains, only those students who made efforts should be rewarded, and teachers should give more rewards to such effortful students than effortless students. The above results can be inferred from students' and teachers' role-obligations in Confucian society. Learning hard is a student's obligation, and guiding students to obtain higher academic achievements is a teacher's duty. The arguments in this research can be generalized to the patterns of the use of punishments in educational situations in Confucian society.

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