



## BEHAVIORISTIC PARADIGM IN EARLY CHILDREN'S EDUCATION: DON'T KNOW THEN DON'T LOVE

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### INTRODUCTION

Behavioristic theory is very popular in certain decades in the twentieth century with an understanding of the formation of *habitus* or habits through patterns of conditioning (stimulus), connection (response), and reinforcement (*reinforcement*). Learning and learning anything from multiple sources is seen as the main pattern of forming human behavior or habits. Based on this term, learning for life does not occur by itself, but is "conditioned" in events and the learning process.

The behavioristic notion that is used as the main basis in this paper is the idea of Edward Thorndike quoted from Dale H. Schunk (2012) and Margaret E. Bell Gredler (1986). Thorndike's ideas have undergone many revisions and developments in line with the dynamics of individual learning behavior. Hergenhahn and Matthew as quoted by Yoga Anjas Pratama, (2019 in Fajil & Suyadi, 2020), for example, have explained the 3 laws of learning Thorndike's ideas into 4 laws of learning within the individual. Initially, Thorndike (1913 in Gredler, 1986, Translated 1991: 51-53) explained that there are three main learning laws, namely the law of effect, the law of practice, and the law of readiness. In these three laws, other laws related to individual behavior in learning have also been implicit (Gredler, 1986, Alilingual, 1991: 52). *Law of Readiness* (Law of Readiness): when a person is prepared to act, then taking the action is *rewarding*, if not doing so is *punishing*. In learning, if students are ready to learn certain actions or objects (in relation to the level of development or mastery of previous skills), then the behaviors that support the smooth learning of these actions or objects will be *rewarding* or more accurately said to be successful. Conversely, if students are not ready to learn or do not have the prerequisite skills to learn, then try to learn will result in punishment (*punishing*) and wasted time. According to the author, this law of readiness can also be interpreted more broadly in attitudes or behavior after learning. Individuals will

be ready to apply learning outcomes automatically as a result of *reinforcement* that has become a behavior or habit. *Law of Exercise*: Thorndike (1913a) in Gredler (1986, Translated 1991: 51) formulates it through a proverb "Practice makes perfect". In other words, repeated experiences increase the chances of the correct response occurring. However, repetition that is not accompanied by satisfactory conditions will not improve learning. It's like the AUD Mother and Teacher being flight attendants, who every time they fly, must remind passengers about how to use seat belts. 4 times serving flights, then 4 times the flight attendant will demonstrate this. *Law of Effect*: The law of effect is an individual's motivation in doing learning will be awakened if he knows the effect that will be produced after learning. The effect will build individual motivation to do learning. When the individual is very ready to learn, then the object or action is learned, then the effect or result will be very satisfying for the individual who is learning. That's the reward or the prize. Meanwhile, if the individual is not ready, then the effect is a reward or punishment, namely the futility of the individual in learning. This explains that the mechanism of *rewarding* and *punishing* according to the behavioristic paradigm is not intended for corporal punishment, but on satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the results obtained for individuals after learning. *Law of Attitude*: This law of attitude explains that or *attitudes* human can occur in the form of behavior after learning. Based on this, individual attitudes are influenced by what the learner gets in the learning process.

Thorndike also believes that learning occurs through a series of experiments *trial and error* or selecting and connecting (Schunk, 2012: 101). *Trial and error* occur in a series that is repeated so that formed, *reinforcement* is namely reinforcement that becomes a habit. It is the same with efforts to instill interest in reading.

The formation of habituation which is the main issue of behaviorist theory through the ideas of Thorndike (1913b), is contained in one of his contributions in the field of education, namely *principles of teaching*, as quoted by Schunk (2012: 77) that teachers must help students form good habits. Thorndike describes 5 learning principles that can be adopted in an effort to instill interest in reading as follows: (1) Form habits; (2) Do not let students form their own habits; (3) Be careful of forming habits that will later destroy; (4) Do not form two or more habits at the same time when the other cannot be done well; (5) When a habit is formed the teacher must ensure that the learner understands how the habit will be used.

The description of the behavioristic paradigm above is deliberately used as an introduction to this paper because the limitation of Early Childhood in Indonesia according to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System stipulates that Early Childhood is in the age range from birth to kindergarten, namely 0-6 years. This will be used as the basis, although education or medical experts have provided a lot of evidence, that early childhood should be in the age range of 0-8 years.

Based on the age range of 0-6 years, the behavioristic paradigm with the 5 principles above is very helpful for parents/teachers in dealing with the intellectual and social development of children from reading habits to their future.

## WHY PARENTS AND EDUCATORS NEED TO KNOW THE BEHAVIORISTIC PARADIGM?

Like the title of this article, I say, "I don't know, so I don't love," which departs from professional experience when referring to various sources that generally reject the behavioristic paradigm in the world of education. The refusal was justified, because the mechanism *reward* and *punishment* were deemed inhumane. If we together trace back, then we need to say that actually "it's not the mother's fault that she is pregnant" meaning, the behavioristic understanding is actually not wrong. The error lies in the interpretation in implementing it. *Rewarding* which is a gift from a behavior that is done properly and correctly, is interpreted literally as a gift in the form of candy or the like, which seems too naive for children. In fact, *rewarding is* according to Thorndike and the behaviorists only a concrete form. The intended reward is bigger and deeper than just candy, namely the satisfaction of success, which will then be imprinted forever in behavior. Likewise with *punishment*, which is

generally taken literally as corporal punishment. In fact, just like *rewarding*, *punishment* is a feeling of failure in the learner, because of the failure. In reality, these things are also rejected in the world of education, when *punishment*, among others, is also attempted with rattan and the slogan "There is gold at the end of the rattan".

Both those who still take sides and those who reject the behavioristic paradigm are not wrong, because it is a matter of perception and interpretation. Moreover, this paradigm emerged since the beginning of the establishment of education in Indonesia during the colonial period. Inlander, which is actually more dominated by the common people, is generally very left behind, especially in the education aspect. Corporal punishment became the main choice of Dutch officers in shaping the "behavior" of workers who then pushed into the school environment, at that time.

Thorndike's idea which is closely related to the principle of conditioning is primarily concerned with the formation of associations which is a fundamental type of learning. According to Thorndike, learning occurs through the formation of associations or connections between sensory experience, namely the perception of a stimulus or event and nerve impulses or responses that manifest in the form of behavior. Thorndike also believes that learning occurs through a series of experiments *trial and error* or selecting and connecting (Schunk, 2012: 101). This is done repeatedly until the formation of *reinforcement* or reinforcement of behavior automatically. It's like eating rice. Because every time you eat, rice is definitely served, so a strengthening is formed in the *minds* of Indonesians, that eating is rice. Not eating rice is the same as not eating.

Two paradigms that emerged later contradicted behaviorism, namely cognitive and constructive, which stem from humanistic philosophy. The main principle of learning according to the cognitive paradigm is that learning will be more successful if it is adjusted to the stage of cognitive development of students. Cognitivism believes that humans, especially early childhood (AUD), react to the environment through efforts to assimilate various information into their cognitive structures. In the process of assimilation, individual behavior is governed by the brain/cognitive structure. When accommodating the environment, cognitive structures are changed by the environment. Assimilation is achieved when individuals integrate new information into the information treasury they already have and replace it with new information.

Individuals organize the meaning of the new information into (*long-term memory long-term memory*). This organized long-term memory is defined as the cognitive structure. Example: A 4 year old child receives information from his parents about the term “rat walk”. At the same time his cognition will recall information about the words "road" and "rat" stored in *long-term memory*. The process of assimilation, association, and disequilibrium the child runs simultaneously which then says: **“Wow ..! That means the old rats were big, right, Bun...?”**

Cognitive structure or the human brain contains billions of neurons that are connected to form a number of coding that contains aspects of the intellect that regulate or govern individual behavior. Each stage of development describes the contents of a typical cognitive structure according to the differences between stages as described below. There are 4 stages of development of human cognition according to Jean Piaget, a biologist who is more famous in the field of Developmental Psychology, especially the development of human cognition. The author will only discuss 2 stages according to the age range of Early Childhood, namely 0-7 years.

Sensory stage (*sensory motor*) Cognitive development of this stage occurs at the age of 0-2 years. The key word for cognitive development is the process of *decentration*, meaning that at this age babies cannot separate themselves from their environment. It is *centered* self. In this sensory stage, infants move from actions *instinctive reflex* at birth to the onset of symbolic thought. Infants construct an understanding of the world by coordinating sensory experiences with physical actions. At this stage, the child's thinking begins to involve sight, hearing, shifting and touch and taste. This means that children have the ability to perceive everything through their senses. In the world of developmental psychology, at this stage the child is like a sponge, which absorbs everything he sees and hears which then enters his subconscious world which is still wide open. Example: When the child begins to learn to walk because of censoring others can stand, run, and walk. He started to imitate it but failed. Let the process *trial and error* or fall and get up to do it yourself, so that all the neurons in his brain work diligently to think how to walk like adults. But what happened? Adults are so worried about exclamations, even shouts and expressions. Language **“don't do this”...“don't do that”...**This process fails, and children then grow up to be shy, timid, inferior, and so on. For Piaget, this period is very important for fostering the development of

thought as the basis for developing intelligence. Children's thinking is practical and in accordance with what they do. If a child has begun to have the ability to respond to adult verbal words, according to this theory, it is more habitual, not yet entering the stage of thinking. Like when the child starts making sounds”, *ta ta ta*”mama mama.. Mother will immediately respond that the child has called her. In fact, the child is trying to hear his own voice. But because he heard the panicked voice of the mother who immediately wanted to “help” the child, a habit was formed in the child, in order to get “help”, as soon as he woke up and there was only silence around him, he immediately cried loudly. As a result, children will grow up without independence.

Preoperational stage (*preoperational*): This phase occurs in the age range of 2-7 years. At this stage, children begin to represent the world with words and pictures. These words and pictures indicate an increase in symbolic thinking and beyond the connection of sensory information and physical action. The way children think at this level is unsystematic, inconsistent, and illogical. It is characterized by the following characteristics: a) *Transductive reasoning*, namely a way of thinking that is neither inductive nor deductive but illogical; b) Unclear cause-and-effect relationships, namely the child recognizes illogical cause-and-effect relationships; c) *Animism*, which assumes that all things live like themselves. The child talks to the doll and everything around him, even speaks to himself; d) *Artificialism*, namely the belief that everything in the environment has a soul like humans; e) *Perceptually bound*, i.e. children judge something based on what they see or hear; f) *Mental experiment*, the child tries to do something to find answers to the problems he faces. For the boy, the new toy car he bought had been stripped down, wanting to know why it could run or vice versa, why it couldn't run as fast as his father's car. For girls, playing with mother's kitchen knife, because she saw mother very skillfully using those knives in slicing onions and vegetables or meat, cooking them and serving delicious dishes at the dinner table; g) *Centration*, namely the child focuses his attention on something that is most interesting and ignores other characteristics. The child is learning how to commit; and h) *Egocentrism*, namely the child sees the world in his environment according to his will. Because he saw adults doing something without asking other people for help, he also wanted to do the same thing, for example fetching water from the dispenser himself and apparently pressing the hot water button.

The concept of learning according to constructivism theory is that new knowledge is constructed by students themselves based on previously acquired knowledge. The constructivism approach in learning is based on the fact that each individual has the ability to reconstruct the experience or knowledge he already has. Therefore, it can be said that constructivism learning is a learning technique that involves students to actively develop themselves by using existing knowledge. The illustration is as in the lyrics composed of the following tune of an old school song:

**I heard, I forgot!  
I see, I remember!  
I work, I can!  
Take a long time to get used to it!**

From the views and lyrics of the song above, it can be concluded that learning that refers to constructivism learning theory focuses more on students' success in organizing their experiences. Not student compliance in reflection on what has been ordered and done by parents/teachers. However, what happened was that parents/teachers in Indonesia preferred to use shortcuts, immediately notifying them so that the problem would be resolved immediately. Of course, there are many factors that cause this to happen in the world of child care and education in Indonesia. One of them is the phenomenon of career women. All women, including housewives in Indonesia, have a very high prestige when mentioning their name and type of work. Economically, this is very beneficial for the family, but there are things that are neglected, namely the development and development of various things that underlie children's growth and development. This phenomenon gave birth to the shortcut mechanism above, namely the pattern of organizing thoughts into experiences that should occur naturally in the realm of child cognition, but because the mother did not have much time to develop the pattern, the mother immediately informed her. The ideal and very important construction pattern, which should grow because of the child's success in organizing his own thoughts into a very valuable experience, becomes a mere imitation or obedience to what is shown or told directly by parents.

Based on the brief description above, the author rests on the basic assumption and personal belief that learning will occur optimally if the learning procedure lays the foundations for quality learning to motivate learning within the child/student. For this purpose, the authors examine the conceptions of

behavioristic, cognitive, and constructivist learning and learning and how these theories and epistemology lay the foundations of learning so that learning occurs in children/students. If the notions of learning and learning appear diachronically as a result of the pros and cons between facts, principles, concepts, and learning procedures, the author simply tries to look back at them. The understanding of learning and learning which is the *prima donna* and is being discussed at this time is the notion of constructivism and cognitivism. In retrospect, the author assumes that constructing knowledge itself is a *content material* learning and learning the constructivism paradigm will only occur if there is habituation which then turns into a habit of constructing knowledge within the child/student. The habit of constructing knowledge is supported by preliminary habits, namely the fulfillment of human needs to process information in the domain of *mana* or *mind*. The human desire to fulfill and satisfy curiosity about everything that has been, is, and will happen will not grow automatically in their *mind* human if it is not based on the habits of wanting to know and find out. A number of facts, concepts, principles, scientific procedures can be stored properly in the cognition of the learner and can be recalled perfectly when needed by the learner, will only occur optimally if there is habituation in the learner, as proposed by behaviorists. If parents and teachers want their children to have the habit of reading, then give repeated imitations of reading, so that they become a model for the growth of interest in reading in the child. The child is given an assignment by the teacher to read a text on a certain page in the Resource Book or Teaching Materials. At the same time, the Master also read intently the text. However, what happened was that the teacher did not read, so the text was not discussed in detail, but only based on a cursory reading made by the teacher, even only based on students' understanding. The same thing should be done by parents at home. When the concentration of parents is only focused on the content of the news on their *mobile* phone, then don't be angry, if the child is only focused on *Tik Tok* or *Games* on his *cellphone*. The process of imitation of reading interest that is carried out repeatedly will become an *improvement* in the child to also hack himself into a love of reading.

## CONCLUSION

Mardigu Wowiek (2021) one of *YouTubers* the very famous in providing insight on various issues of political, economic, and political Indonesia, even the economic strategies of America and China

today, said that small children can still be shaped by parents at home and teachers in schools.

**Good parents and teachers teach, not teach!  
Better parents and teachers set an example, not tell!**

**The best parents and teachers are inspiring!**

These three things are done through *self-talk* because:

**Speech determines action!  
Action determines habit!  
Habit determines mindset!  
Mindset determines *self talk*!**

To change yourself to be a good parent and teacher for early childhood, is to change *self-talk*, as Michael Jackson said. "If you the word, you must start with the man in the mirror"

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(diunduh 13 Maret 2021)