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## **IMPACT OF BEHAVIORIST THEORY OF LEARNING ON PSYCHOLOGY VARIABLES IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

This study was designed to predict high school students' academic performance and thinking level from students' psychological factors(Self-concept, test anxiety, interest in schooling, attitude towards motivation and locus of control) and performance at the lower cognitive levels(knowledge and understanding).“Psychologists ‘invented’ behaviorism itself as a basis for theoretical explanations, prediction, and testing”. From its inception, the term behaviorism provided a “direction for research that would allow control and measurement of all relevant variables by ignoring human thought or cognition”. Therefore, behaviorists were not interested in what might occur in people's minds; they were only interested in behavioral responses. As a result, these responses were measured in relation to test stimuli. In other words, behaviorists saw this as a way for them to be viewed as scientific in the same way. Their goal was to achieve a greater use of scientific methods for developing stronger theories. Psychology became an accepted science in the latter part of the nineteenth century and was defined as the science of consciousness. “Behaviorism was, and is, a moment primarily in psychology that rejected consciousness as psychology’s subject matter and replaced it with behavior in High School Students”.

**KEYWORDS:** Psychology, Behaviorist, Critical, Learning, Education, Behaviorism, Impact, responses, achieve, etc.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The problem of underachievement in high school students, despite the fact that it is one

of the core subjects recommended in the National Policy on Education has been a

growing cause of concern amongst parents, teachers, researchers and the entire society. In an attempt to improve such predictions, there has been an upsurge of interest within the past few years on non-cognitive variables such as self-efficacy, self-concept, emotion, locus of control, interest, anxiety, self-esteem, self-identity but to mention a few. Psychology became an accepted science in the latter part of the nineteenth century and was defined as the science of consciousness. "Behaviorism was, and is, a moment primarily in psychology that rejected consciousness as psychology's subject matter and replaced it with behavior" [1-5]. Behaviorism was rooted in the 1880s and continues to evolve in the twentieth-first century and beyond. Although behaviorism has been intensely studied, behaviorists continue to have difficulty agreeing on a definition for behaviorism and identifying who were the true behaviorists [2]. The publication of *The Behavioral Learning Theory* by Watson in 1913 was responsible for the movement towards behaviorism and away from functionalism. This publication was a study of the relationship between

organisms and their environment [6]. The child's conditioned fear of a white rabbit was so ingrained in his behavior that he became fearful of other white furry objects [8]. Although most psychologists have agreed that psychology is the study of human behavior, the only scientists that consider themselves behaviorists today.

Researches have shown that the behavior of high school students especially in relation to the sciences, generally and mathematics in particular is greatly influenced by certain psychological or non-cognitive factors. For example, [9] found out that self-concept, attitude towards, sex-stereotyping, confidence, motivation and problem solving habit are all related to students' achievement. Other psychological factors which influence the performance of high school students include self - concept, locus of control, study habit, career plan / aspiration, test anxiety, attitude towards, motivation, interest in schooling. [11] Showed in a research conducted on students' self-concept achievement that, students who have positive self-concept of themselves performed well high school students. The child who views himself and his abilities positively is the one who can maximally benefit and achieve good results in school

learning experiences. Several investigations have also revealed that the attitude of the student to any particular subject may determine his/her performance in that subject. For instance, in a comparative study of factors influencing achievement, [10] found that there is a direct link between students' attitude and their outcomes. Hence, students who have a poor attitude towards will show a high degree of inconsistency in overt action. Previous researches have also revealed that test anxiety has a debilitating effect on academic achievement of students. Some of these studies have associated high test anxiety with low achievement.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

“The behaviorism of Watson and Skinner is based on a positivistic approach to science, that is, a reductionist view in which all that can be addressed is the relation between sensory stimuli and the unique corresponding response” [8]. However, Skinner eventually came to the realization that human beings go beyond just responding to the environment. He found that they also react to the environment based on prior experiences [9-11] suggested that “psychologists ‘invented’ behaviorism itself as a basis for theoretical explanations,

prediction, and testing”. From its inception, the term behaviorism provided a “direction for social science research that would allow control and measurement of all relevant variables by ignoring human thought or cognition”. Therefore, behaviorists were not interested in what might occur in people's minds; they were only interested in behavioral responses. As a result, these responses were measured in relation to test stimuli. In other words, behaviorists saw this as a way for them to be viewed as scientific in the same way as the hard sciences of chemistry or physics are viewed. By narrowing their focus, the behaviorists provided for greater use of statistical analysis of experimental results. Their goal was to achieve a greater use of scientific methods for developing stronger theories.

Achievement motivation is another important factor in prediction of high school students' performances. [14] Revealed that achievement motivation positively influenced academic performance. Highly motivated students performed better academically than lowly motivated students and females are highly motivated compared to their male counterparts. The influence of achievement goals may also be moderated by the extent to which students attribute

success or failure to internal or external factors, i.e., factors under or not under their control.

### **1. Importance of Educational Psychology:**

Education is a purposive attempt to bring about desirable changes in the students behavior. The objectives of education are realized in terms of behavioral changes among the students. Teachers have to create the learning conditions to provide knowledge and experiences to the students for the changes of behavior. They have to relate teaching to learning by appropriate method of teaching. Knowledge of psychology can be helpful in many areas of education. It aids the teacher in understanding the basic behavior and/or motivation of his/her pupils, students, colleagues and administrators. Educational psychology provides insights into learning processes.

### **2. Educational Psychology:**

We learnt about the meaning of Psychology. We also explained some branches of psychology, one of it being Educational Psychology. Having defined and described the nature of Psychology let us now look specifically at Educational Psychology. We will discuss it in terms of its definition and

more importantly, why is it an essential area of study for prospective teachers. This knowledge will enable us to assess the measure in which our knowledge meets the objective of preparing us for a teaching career. Educational Psychology is the branch of Psychology that specializes in understanding teaching and learning in education settings [12]. It is the study of how humans learn in educational settings, the effectiveness of educational interventions, the psychology of teaching, and the social psychology of schools as organizations. Educational Psychology is concerned with the study of learners, learning and teaching [13].

### **3. Behavioral Learning Theory:**

Psychology became an accepted science in the latter part of the nineteenth century and was defined as the science of consciousness. "Behaviorism was, and is, a moment primarily in American psychology that rejected consciousness as psychology's subject matter and replaced it with behavior" [5]. Behaviorism was rooted in the 1880s and continues to evolve in the twentieth-first century and beyond. Although behaviorism has been intensely studied, behaviorists continue to have difficulty agreeing on a definition for behaviorism and identifying

who were the true behaviorists [2]. The publication of *The Behavioral Learning Theory* by Watson in 1913 was responsible for the movement towards behaviorism and away from functionalism.

#### **4. Branches of Psychology:**

After learning what psychology is, let us now briefly discuss some branches of psychology. There are many branches that have been developed, since Psychology is a growing and broad subject. The first branch of psychology is Social Psychology which studies the behavior of people in different groups. It investigates the influence of people on one another. It addresses questions like why do we like some people and dislike others, why do people behave differently and other many questions. Secondly, we have Developmental Psychology which covers aspect of development of human behavior. We have Clinical Psychology that deals with diagnosis and treatment of abnormal behavior [14]. Clinical Psychologists treat groups as well as individuals and may be in private practice or may work in public health centers. Furthermore, there is Industrial Psychology that deals with the study of production in industries. Industrial and Organizational Psychologists address

the problem of training personnel, improve working condition and the issues related to employ and production. Counseling Psychology – it performs personal and interpersonal operations in a person's being wherein the main concern are the emotional, social, vocational, educational, health-related, developmental and organizational areas. Although we have many other branches of psychology, we should not forget Educational Psychology which is our main focus in this Course.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Psychology was redefined in the late 1950s and the 1960s when many psychologists began practicing cognitive psychology, which examined how people problem solve behaviorism, memorize information, and use language. This latter group of people, often consisting of behaviorists, and guided continued to attack those who subscribe to constructivism those who wished to return to behaviorism viewed cognitive psychology as having a fundamental weakness in thinking that mental processes could be measured. In education today, there continues to be considerable debate as to whether teachers practice behaviorism, the dispensing of information through direct instruction or through constructivism, the practice of being

facilitators of learning. Constructivism has a point of view that is presently considered the more popular of the two theories in “education policies, education models and education practices focus on constructivism”.

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