

Discuss a range of factors that influence children's behaviour (both positively and negatively) in a learning environment

This essay will discuss a range of factors that influence children's behaviour (both positively and negatively) in a learning environment. It will demonstrate an understanding of the factors that influence children's behaviour in learning environments and knowledge of the personal characteristics that influence children's behaviour. It will look at examples from theorists such as Jean Piaget, American psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner, Canadian American psychologist Albert Bandura and American psychologist B.F. Skinner.

All behaviour is a form of communicating, we all communicate through behaviour. For example, an infant may cry when wet or hungry, or an adult may yawn when they are bored. A child's inappropriate behaviour is a sign that they are upset, and something is wrong. (Michigan Alliance for Families, 2025) some children that struggle to communicate may have conditions such as ADHD, Autism, learning disabilities, sensory needs or have a behaviour condition will struggle to deal with certain situations and may act out their feelings or needs by screaming, shouting, hitting, swearing, running away or hiding somewhere in school. (Miller, 2016). Numerous negative influences can disrupt a child's behaviour in the same setting. Difficult family dynamics, including conflict or instability, can manifest as anxiety, withdrawal, or aggression. Underlying physical or mental health issues, such as learning disabilities, ADHD, or unmet sensory needs, can also contribute to challenging behaviour's, often stemming from frustration and difficulty with coping. All behaviour is a way of communication. If there are negative peer influences, inconsistent or unclear classroom rules, and a lack of engaging or relevant learning experiences can disengage a child and lead to acting out. Exposure to violence or trauma, whether direct or vicarious, can create significant barriers to learning and appropriate social interaction. (NHS, 2022)

There are many factors, both internal and external, that shape a child's behaviour within a learning environment. Positively, a child's temperament, such as being naturally curious or resilient, can foster engagement and a willingness to learn. Children that have a secure and stable home life, and that feel secure in school could contribute to a sense of safety and security, which allows a child to feel more comfortable exploring and learning in school. Having a stimulating and supportive learning environment, with well-structured routine, clear expectations, and opportunities for success, provides a framework for positive behaviour. (Paig, 2024) If educational staff apply positive

reinforcement strategies, and peer groups that model prosocial interactions all further enhance a child's ability to thrive and behave constructively. Having a stimulating and supportive learning environment, with well-structured routine, clear expectations, and opportunities for success, provides a framework for positive behaviour. (McLeod, 2024).

According to Skinner's theory of learning, our behaviours are developed or conditioned through reinforcements. ("Behaviourist approach Flashcards – Quizlet, 2022") He referred to this process as operant conditioning. The term 'operant' refers to any behaviour that acts on the environment and leads to consequences. In schools, this translates to staff using rewards like house points, an email home, or a phone call home. (YHT, 2025). This encourages the wanted behaviour. For example, if you give a child house points each time they complete their homework the students will possibly repeat this behaviour. (McLeod, 2024) This strengthens the behavior of completing their homework. This is a positive reinforcement in operant conditioning. If education staff use detentions as a punishment for the students not doing their homework, then this will discourage them from doing this again. (McLeod, 2024) This links in with yht school policy where it states that good relationships are important to positive behaviour management. Staff will encourage and recognise good behaviour first; they will always adopt a calm consistent approach and will use restorative conversations to prevent unacceptable behaviour. (YHT, 2024)

Educational staff can use Bronfenbrenner's theory model to increase students' academic achievements and education attainment by involving parents and observing microsystem and macrosystem factors that may help or inhibit students' learning. (Roundy, 2013). Parents can maintain open, respectful communication with the child's teachers, and the students can be aware of this too. Creating nurturing, supportive classroom environments that foster positive relationships, and a sense of belonging can create positive behaviour. Bronfenbrenner states that a person's development and the way they behave is due to everything in their surrounding environment which includes family, religious setting, peer groups and classroom. For example, reactions to the people in your microsystem will affect how they treat you in return. (Roundy, 2013b) this means that everyone around that student must work together to positively impact that child. The home school policy by yht states that to help children reach their full potential it is important that they are supported by both home and school. In supportive surroundings, they will be able to make the most of their time here. (YHT, Home School Agreement, 2024) Your child will benefit from our joint pledge.

The "mindblindness" theory, more formally known as the theory of Mind Deficit Account of Autism, (Baron-Cohen, S, 1995). proposes those individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) experience significant difficulties in understanding and attributing mental states – such as beliefs, desires, intentions, and emotions – to themselves and others. Proponents argue that people with autism are, in a sense, "blind" to the mental worlds of others. This lack of "theory of mind," as it is often called, makes it challenging for them to predict behaviour based on these internal states, to comprehend social nuances, and to engage effectively in reciprocal social interactions. The theory posits that this impairment in mentalizing is a core deficit underlying many of the characteristic social and communication difficulties observed in individuals with ASD.

This theory suggests that instead of naturally understanding why someone might react a certain way based on their thoughts or feelings, individuals with mindblindness may interpret behaviour in a more literal and concrete manner. They might struggle to grasp the concept of deception, sarcasm, or even a simple misunderstanding, as these all rely on the ability to infer what another person is thinking. For instance, they might not understand why a friend is upset by an innocuous comment, because they may not automatically realize that the comment might have been interpreted differently than intended. This inability to "read between the lines" and grasp the underlying motivations of others can lead to social awkwardness, misunderstandings, and frustration for both the individual with ASD and those around them. It is important to note, however, that while theory of mind deficits is widely observed and supported by research as being relevant to ASD, this is not the sole or unifying factor for all individuals with autism, and the complexity of the disorder is increasingly recognized by researchers. (Baron-Cohen, S, 1987).

Bandura (1977) believes humans are active information processors and think about the relationship between their behaviour and its consequences. Albert Bandura's social learning theory suggests that people learn new behaviours by observing and imitating others. this theory emphasizes observational learning as a primary mode of acquisition. Rather than relying solely on direct experience, individuals internalize skills, attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs by watching others. They observe not only the actions themselves but also the resulting consequences, learning through the experiences of others. This vicarious process is instrumental in shaping an individual's development. Which lead to the modelling and adoption of observed behaviours. (Simply Psychology, 2024) "Parents who discipline their child by discussing the consequences of their actions produce children who have better moral development, compared to children whose parents use authoritarian methods and punishment." (Simon Baron-Cohen, 1987)

In conclusion, this essay has discussed a range of factors that affect children's behaviour a child's behavior within a learning environment is complex. From the inherent temperament they bring to the classroom to the external influences of family, peer groups, and community, several factors constantly shape their actions. Positive behavior is often promoted by a nurturing and structured setting, where clear expectations are communicated, positive reinforcement is expected, and individual needs are addressed with sensitivity. contradictorily, negative behaviours can arise from a lack of these supportive elements, compounded by factors like inconsistent discipline at home, exposure to challenging social environments, or even undiagnosed learning difficulties. Understanding the interplay of these influences – both positive and negative – allows educators and caregivers to develop holistic strategies. These strategies should aim at not just managing challenging behavior but also actively creating supportive learning environments where all children can thrive, feel secure, and develop pro-social behaviours essential for their academic and personal success.

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