

Exploring Behaviour and Interventions in the Learning Environment

ECIE4011

Discuss a range of factors that influence children's behaviour (both positive and negative) in a Learning Environment

Submitted To:

Mrs. Sue Ainsworth

Submitted By:

Nerissa Ieka

February 28, 2025

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

This essay aims to outline the negative and positive factors that influence children's behaviour in a school setting.

Behaviour is a general term that refers to any response of an organism that can be measured (Cardwell, 2010). There are multiple internal and external factors that can shape and mould children and their actions in a learning environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Some children can develop along strategies to control the course of what goes around them despite of significant risk factors that may arise. This ability to withstand and not deterred from seeking out and taking learning opportunities is called 'resilience' (Bates, 2023). Internal factors are those that comes from within the student and often relate to emotional, psychological and cognitive aspects that could play a major part in their learning behaviour such as motivation, goal setting and resilience while external factors often stem from the student's environment, their interactions with other people and the community conditions. The society today listens to the child, and it is vital for educators to be aware of those contributory factors (Education Act, 2002). Most importantly, all staff should be aware of the measures outlined in the school's behaviour policy and how they should implement these measures to promote good behaviour (Department of Education, 2022). Thus, the following factors will attempt to discuss how they influence student's behaviour in a school setting.

Firstly, poverty and deprivation as an external factor are likely to affect the children's behaviour in school and these children can be subject to daily challenges affecting their emotional, psychological, social and academic performances (Brooks-Gunn, & Duncan, 1997). A child who lives in poverty may undergo chronic stress because of financial instability, family conflict, or food insecurity. This stress can lead to anxiety, depression, or behavioural outbursts in school (The Children's Society, 2025). Research has regularly presented key points on how poverty and deprivation influenced children's behaviour "the link between poverty and poor educational outcomes is well established" (Mcbride, 2017). The pointers include difficulty to focus; social and behavioural problems; lack of educational support; absenteeism; disruptive behaviour as a coping mechanism; and lower expectations and reduced opportunities (The Children's Society.org). According to the above organization; poor nutrition, sleep deprivation and disordered household environments make them frustrated and may lead to a disengaged behaviour in the classroom. The children in such situation may also experience trauma, neglect, or abuse that can affect their relationship to their classmates including teachers and they may display aggression and withdrawal resulting to difficulty in making friends (Elder, 1999). Also, parents who are struggling with poverty may have less or no time to help with homework nor engage with the child's education which will diminish any motivation from the child leading to acting out as a sense of failure. Moreover, financial instability may result to children not turning to school due to illness, no transport, or maybe looking after siblings and other relatives. Their absenteeism can impede their learning and friendships leading to anxiety about returning to school. (Coleman & Schaefer, 1990). In most cases, unmet needs lead to children's disruptive behaviour to express themselves or as a self-protection; It can also be an acquired way for them to gain attention or control in such temperamental surroundings (Algorani & Gupta, 2021). According to Maslow's theory of motivation, which is related to the hierarchy of needs, progression is not possible if the level of needs is not met (Bates, 2023). Therefore, tackling these issues need integral support from schools, families, and the society to help the child's well-being and provide an environment that can promote positive behaviour and

possible academic success. Equally, UK government breakfast club program help students to start the day and can contribute to improved readiness to learn, increased concentration, and improved wellbeing and behaviour (UK Government, 2025).

Secondly, personal characteristics as an internal factor such as age, sex, personality and preferences, temperament or emotional immaturity can influence children's behaviour (The international journal of management education, 2023). Different age group can influence children's behaviour as they differ in processing information and coping mechanism; the younger ones may have difficulty in controlling their emotions and can be more impulsive but as they grow older, they may experience a change in their cognitive capabilities and improved logical thinking (Piaget, 1972). The children's puberty period which is related to emotional vulnerability due to hormonal changes can also affect the moods of the student and can manifest in their behaviour (Susman, 1997). Male and female often interacts uniquely and can impact how they deal with stress. Males often express their shortcomings in anger whilst the girls passively deal with their feelings resulting to anxiety or even depression (Chaplin, 2015). Research also shows that girls in general, are more studious and follow instructions better as well as organized, and engaging in school activities; whilst boys may display more disruptive behaviour in the classroom, though these behaviours differ across cultures and individual circumstances (Pomerantz, et al., 2009). William Glasser's choice theory believed that the behaviour of the student is influenced by internal motivation and the choices they make. He stresses that the student's behaviour is a manifestation of their desires to meet needs such as survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun (Glasser, 1998). Subsequently, schools are guided with the policies and procedures such as 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).

Moreover, teacher's personality, their tactics or styles in imparting knowledge to the students is another factor that can impact student's behaviour in school (Miller, 2006). Nowadays, a teacher could be the one

healthy adult a student can come in contact within a daily basis; teachers are not only educators but mentors, advocates, as a substitute parents and many more (Freiberg, 2002). Hence, it shows how teacher's personality and teaching style profoundly influences a learner's behaviour as well as their general performances (National Association of Special Education Teachers, 2025). There are four classifications of teaching style a teacher can act, such as a formal authority teaching a passive student; a demonstrator serving as a role model; a facilitator who encourages and helps students to learn by themselves or could be a delegator by shifting the responsibility of learning to the students (Cardwell, 2010). The quality of student-teacher relationship and the strategy the teacher applies is significant and can have a direct influence on how pupils behave "educators create the atmosphere in the classroom" (Barr, 2016). For example, a teacher who is calm and collected can manage classroom effectively comparing to a teacher who is an overly disciplinarian in style that can create confusion, fear and rebellious behaviour in students. Also, A teacher with inspiring and encouraging personality motivates the learners to perform in their best. These teachers can use incentives such as individual or house points to motivate learners to participate and promote a positive learning environment. An approach associated to Skinner's operant conditioning whereby the response determines what actions follow (Skinner, 1953).

Lastly, disabilities or medical condition can impact on student's behaviour although the nature of this factor depends on the severity of the condition and the illness itself. For example, mobility impairment due to myalgic encephalomyelitis where they feel extremely tired all the time and, in some cases, ended as a wheelchair user (NHS, 2025). This can impact on student's behaviour and general experience in school as they may face challenges in moving around the school as well as needing support in personal care. These students may exhibit defiance and outburst to express their frustrations and as a coping mechanism with their mobility limitations and needing additional time and accommodations. If the environment is not adapted to their needs, it can result in feelings of isolation, low self-esteem, and become passive in the classroom (Oliver,

2013). Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, autonomy vs shame and doubt show how independence can affect assertiveness and with impaired mobility a student face many challenges as they are reliant on others (Erikson, 1958, 1963). In such cases there is a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs (The equality act, 2010). The school is equipped and guided accordingly, providing pastoral support, collaborative support and individualised education plans to support pupils manage their condition and behaviour (YHT, 2024).

To conclude, the essay has outlined and discussed some positive and negative factors that influenced students' behaviour in school along with some humanistic theories. Also, it presented how the school is guided on their approach to manage students' behaviour according to policies and procedures in a learning environment. As a result, it is crucial to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment to address behaviours as they could bounce back psychologically with the right support. Most importantly, the behaviour needs to be addressed not the individual displaying the behaviour through modification approaches such as positive and negative reinforcement.

References

- Algorani, E.B., & Gupta, V. (2021). Coping mechanisms. Available: In StatPearls (Internet) Accessed: 04-02-2025. StatPearls publishing.
- Barr, V.C. (2016). Quality and leadership in the early years. March 2016 187(1):1-14. Available: DOI:[10.1080/03004430.2016.1150273](https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2016.1150273) Accessed 04-02-2025.
- Bates, B. (2023). Learning theories simplified, 3rd edition. Sage publication, UK

- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist*, 32(7), 513–531. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.32.7.513>. Accessed 01-18-2025
- Brooks-Gunn, J., & Duncan, G.J. (1997). Cited: The effects of poverty on children. *Future Child*. 1997 Summer-Fall;7(2):55-71. PMID: 9299837. Accessed 01-18-2025.
- Cardwell, M. (2010). AZ handbook 4th edition. Philip Allan updates, UK
- Chaplin, T.M. (2015). Gender and emotion expression. Available: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1754073914544408>. Accessed 04-02-2025.
- Children Society Organization Available: <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/> Accessed: 10-02-2025.
- Coleman, D.F., & Schaefer, N.V. (1990). Weather and absenteeism. Available: *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences* 7(4): 35–42. Accessed 10-02-2025.
- Department of Education. (2022). Available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>. Accessed 18-01-2025.
- Education Act. (2002). Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents>. Accessed 18-01-2025
- Elderr, G.H. Jr. (1999). Children of the great depression: Social change in life experience. Available at: <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1998-06389-000>. Accessed on 10-02-25
- Equality Act. (2010). Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>. Accessed 10-02-2025
- Erikson, E. (1958, 1963). Available at: <https://www.verywellmind.com/erik-eriksons-stages-of-psycho-social-development-2795740> (accessed on 10-02-25).
- Freiberg, H.J. (2002). Essential skills for new teachers. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294315490_Essential_skills_for_new_teachers (Accessed On 11-02-25.)
- Glasser, W. (1998). Choice theory: A new psychology of personal freedom. Available at: [https://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?q=Glasser,+W.+\(1998\).+Choice+theory:+](https://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?q=Glasser,+W.+(1998).+Choice+theory:+)

[A+new+psychology+of+personal+freedom.+New+York.+Harper+Collins+\(intern
et\)&hl=en&as_sdt=0](#). Accessed 10-02-2025

- International journal of management education. (2023). (Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/the-international-journal-of-management-education/publish/guide-for-authors>. Accessed 10-02-2025
- McBride, T. (2017). On poverty, behaviour and school attainment. Available at: <https://www.eif.org.uk/blog/behaviour-and-attainment-understanding-the-impacts-of-poverty-on-children>. Accessed 18-01-2025
- Maslow, A. (1954). Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Available at: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>. Accessed 18-01-2025
- Miller, L.A. (2006). Teacher personality and its influence on student behavior. Available at: <https://www.proquest.com/openview/68a81dcc9bf02b994d0cd99064ce94ef/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>. Accessed 10-02-2025
- National Association of Special Education teachers (2025). Available at: <https://www.naset.org/publications/classroom-management-series/series-ii-archive/series-ii-step-5-how-teacher-personality-and-style-affects-the-growth-of-self-confidence> accessed 18-01-2025.
- National Health Services. (2025). Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/> Accessed 10-02-2025.
- Oliver, M., (2013). Mike Oliver: A pioneer for disability rights. Available at: <https://socialistworker.co.uk/socialist-review-archive/mike-oliver-pioneer-disability-rights/>. Accessed 10-02-2025.
- Piaget, J. (1972). *The Psychology of the Child*. Available at: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Psychology-Child-Jean-Piaget/dp/0465095003> Accessed 10-02-2025.
- Pomerantz, E.M., et al. (2009). The role of parental control in children's development. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2009.01653.x>. Accessed 10-02-2025
- Skinner, B.F. (1953). Operant conditioning: What it is, How it works, And examples. Available at: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/operant-conditioning.html>. Accessed 10-02-2025

- Susman, E.J. (1997). Modelling developmental complexity in adolescents: Hormones and behavior in context. Available at: <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1997-06523-003>. Accessed 10-02-2025
- UK government (2025) On breakfast club available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/breakfast-clubs-early-adopter-guidance-for-schools-and-trusts-in-england> accessed 18-01-2025.
- Ysgol Harri Tudor (2025). Policies and procedures: Available at: <https://www.ysgolharritudur.cymru/home-201.php>. Accessed 01-18-2025