



AN ANALYSIS OF BEHAVIORAL THEORY IN CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MALGUDI DAYS

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Abstract

This article is a comparative analysis of the behavioural theory as depicted in *Malgudi Days* by R.K. Narayan concerning the child characters in the novel. The researcher also discusses how it is relevant to children today and how they can use these theories to improve their behaviour or help others change theirs. This article focuses mainly on children's behaviour and how their environment influences them. This article also focuses on various theories that have been put forward to explain the behaviour of these children. In this article, the researcher discusses the importance of parents' communication with their children from the *Malgudi days*' point of view. In this article, the researcher also focuses on how hope and self-efficacy can positively influence children's future development. This study's limitations and future scope are also defined in the conclusion section.

Introduction

Background

The book "*Malgudi Days*" is written by R.K. Narayan. In this book, the author describes the life and culture of the people living in a small town named Malgudi. The story takes place at different times between 1938 and 1947. It shows how people have changed over time and how they can adapt to new situations. Children with special needs need to be treated differently from other children. They have a different sets of problems, and they should receive special attention. The teacher must understand their situation and handle them more sensitively so they can develop better than normal children. This researcher discusses how the parent or teacher can identify these children, what kind of education is needed for them, their behavioural patterns, and how they can improve upon them. In children with particular reference to *Malgudi Days*, R.K. Subba Rao has

demonstrated signs of cognitive impairment due to maladaptive behavioural strategies used by the child throughout the novel (Rao). These strategies include avoidance, negativism, and perseveration. The purpose of this theory is to focus on observable behaviours and how internal states produce them. John B. Watson first introduced Behaviourism in 1913, and he was an American psychologist and educator.

Theory of Change

In the novel *Malgudi Days* by R.K. Narayan, there are many examples of how the Theory of Change can be seen in action. The first example is when Swami Pranabananda arrives in Malgudi and starts his mission to lead people toward goodness and perfection. He firmly believes that one needs to change behaviour to achieve success or salvation (Bhan *et al.*, 2020). He believes that it is not enough for people to believe in God but also have good values and morals, which will help them progress on the spiritual ladder. The theory of Change is a new paradigm for understanding human behaviour. It postulates that all behaviour is determined by the expectations, or 'expectancies', individuals hold about future events. The theory was developed and first applied to explain how people make decisions in situations where there are two or more possible outcomes, and they are not entirely known.

"Theory of Change" was the central concept on which *Malgudi Days* was based. The Theory of Change is a theory that suggests that people change as a result of their actions and not because others influence them. According to this theory, people make decisions and take actions to achieve goals, leading them to experience changes in their behaviour and personality. In other words, people tend to be consistent with their current behaviours unless caused by external factors like learning new things or meeting new people. Behavioural theory is concerned with the study of human behaviour. It is a scientific approach to understanding and explaining how people act, think and feel. This theory has four basic principles that help explain human actions. These principles are Antecedent-consequent chain reaction, Behavioral inhibition, Operant conditioning, and Response reversal.

Antecedent - Consequent Chain Reaction

A chain reaction occurs when an action leads to another action which in turn causes a third action well. Human activities are not only based on logical thinking but also emotions. In this case, a person's emotion can lead to a particular action that may be bad or good (Mihăeș *et al.* 2021). For example, if a person wants to buy some food and gets angry because of the price, then their body will automatically react by getting aggressive and start punching the wall out of anger. On the other hand, if someone gives them a gift and it's too expensive for their budget, they won't even accept it because it will make them feel bad about themselves.

Behavioural inhibition

Behavioural inhibition is the effort to prevent behaviour that has no immediate reward. This can be seen in a variety of animals, including humans. To perform an action with a delayed reward, one must first wait until they are rewarded for their previous action. Behavioural inhibition is the tendency to avoid acting on impulses

or trying new things when one has not yet formed a complete idea of how to act. This is seen in many personality disorders, like Avoidant Personality Disorder (Priya *et al.*, 2020).

Operant conditioning

Operant Conditioning: In operant conditioning, behaviour is modified by the consequences that follow it (positive or negative). The consequences are either positive or negative depending on whether they increase or decrease the probability that a specific behaviour will occur again.

Response reversal

Response reversal is when the response is opposite to what was expected. Such as a person who has been given a bad grade on their report card and they do not study more challenging the next time.

Theory of effort, hope, and achievement

According to Baniya (2020), behaviour is determined by the interaction between stimulus and response. As a result, it is believed that behaviour can be changed by changing the environment or modifying the consequences. This theory has been used in education for many years, especially in teaching students with special needs. A child who believes they can succeed has hope, and the one who does not have such faith is hopelessly frustrated. So the theory of effort, hope, and achievement is based on the assumption that a child learns to do something through the desire for success and the belief that they can succeed at it. It also assumes that success depends on how much effort a person puts into their job. This means that if they put more energy into their work, they will be more successful than someone who puts less energy into their job (Baniya *et al.*, 2020). The three factors of effort, hope, and achievement are essential in the lives of children. They help them to develop their potential, attain success in life and have good self-esteem.

Methodology

Behavioral Child Development Theories

Behavioural child development theories are based on the assumption that external environmental factors determine behaviour. These theories focus on learning, which includes both behavioural and cognitive processes. Biological theories of conduct are based on the assumption that all behaviours are genetically determined. They do not consider learning a factor in behaviour because they believe it is impossible to unlearn most behaviours due to their genetic coding. Some examples of biologically-based theories include instinct theory and Skinner's operant conditioning theory. These theories try to understand why some children act out while others do not, why some children develop generally while others don't, and how behaviour problems can be prevented or treated.

Behavioural child development theories help to understand the causes and consequences of children's behaviour. These theories are based on research from various disciplines, such as psychology, biology, and anthropology (Madhavaiah *et al.*, 2022). They provide a scientific basis for understanding the development of

children's behaviour and emotions. Behavioural child development theories are critical because they help to understand how children develop. They also provide a framework for understanding how children learn, which is especially helpful for teachers and parents who want to understand their children's learning process better. The main points of the behavioral theory are that people act a certain way because they have been taught to act a certain way. They will not question the authority figures in their life and will follow through on tasks given to them without much thought. They are also unable to make decisions on their own, so they look for someone else's opinion before making any decision.

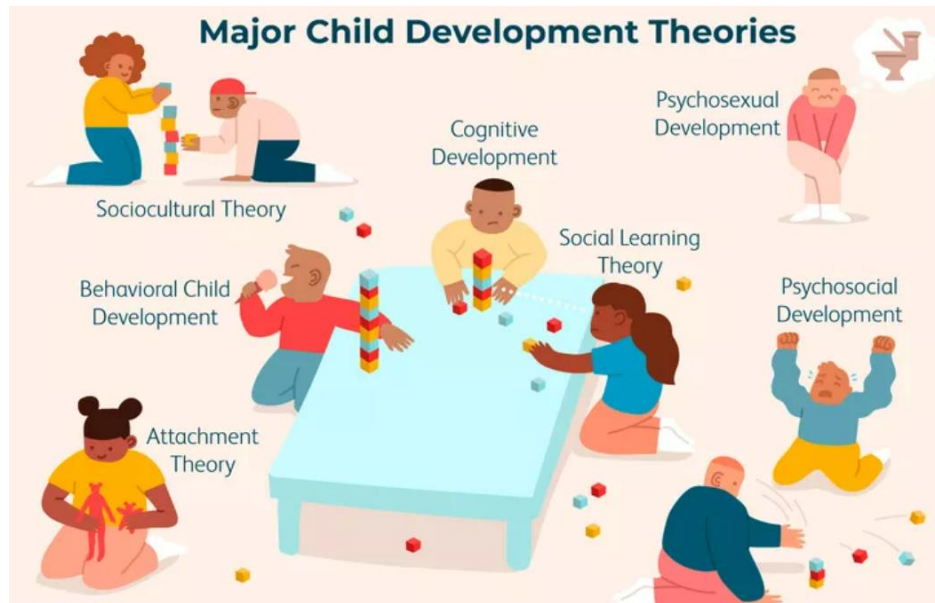


Figure 1: Child Development Theory

(Source: Madhavaiah *et al.* 2022)

In the novel, *Malgudi Days*, several theories of child development can be applied to children with particular reference to the various characters. There are three main aspects of human development, namely physical, emotional and intellectual growth. In each element, there are different stages through which a child passes during their lifetime. A child is born without any sense or knowledge about life. So they gain mastery over time and from their teacher and parent. The author has tried to explain on *Malgudi Days* how Ravi and his family members develop their behaviour from childhood till adulthood. Some of the important events are narrated through the eyes of Ravi, who was only seven years old when he started telling. Child development helps the growth and Change that occurs as children progress from birth to adulthood. It includes many different areas, such as motor skills, cognitive development, socialization patterns, moral reasoning, and creativity.

Parents Become an educators

Childhood is the period between birth and adolescence. It is a time of growth, learning, Change, and exploration for both children and adults. In this stage of life, children develop their social skills, language skills, self-control, and independence and learn new things. Psychologists have developed theories that explain how children develop through childhood over the years (Sundaram *et al.*, 2022). Each stage has its characteristics

and needs to be treated differently by parents or guardians. A parent should understand their child's specific needs at each stage of life so that they can provide the best care for them. Parents can help to develop behavioural child development theories in children by allowing them to understand the world around them. Parents play a key role in developing their children's personalities, behaviours, and emotions. They provide their children with the love, support, and guidance they need throughout life as they help shape who their children will become. Parents can encourage their children to be confident and self-assured by providing them with positive examples of themselves, demonstrating that it is okay for them to be who they are.

Children learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process. This is why teachers should include children during all stages of the lesson plan, including those outside the classroom. And this is the best way if they get their parents as a teacher, they learn things quickly and easily. Parents can help their children develop problem-solving skills, self-control, and perseverance. Children should be taught how to make good decisions and follow through on those decisions. This will allow them to learn how to delay gratification, an essential skill all children need to succeed. Parents can also help their children develop healthy peer relationships by modelling positive behaviours for their children. These theories apply to all children irrespective of their background, social class, and gender (Saikia *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, these theories provide teachers with a framework within which they can make predictions about what will happen when certain types of behaviour are displayed by children and then plan accordingly. Behavioural child development theories provide a way for parents and teachers to understand how children develop physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially.

Follow-up work

Children's future is always of great concern to parents because a child's development is directly related to their success in life. To ensure that the child's future will be successful, it is necessary to monitor their development from an early age and provide them with all the conditions for forming good habits and skills. Many different theories of child development attempt to explain how children develop over time. These theories can be applied to various situations, such as learning disabilities or autism spectrum disorders. Each theory has its unique way of explaining the process of child development and how it applies to specific populations (Seth *et al.*, 2018). These theories were developed to prove that how a child behaves determines their future behaviour. They were created as an alternative to psychoanalytic and genetic child development theories because they believe there is no direct genetic link between behaviour and future behaviour. Follow-up helped shape the understanding of how children develop over time and how their behavior can be understood as a series of stages or structures they go through in their lives. This is highly beneficial because it has helped to create a more comprehensive picture of child development, which has provided us with a better understanding of how to support best children who may be struggling or those who may need additional help with specific areas of their development.

Follow-up work gives them a chance to continue with the same activities they had previously started in school. It helps them to improve their academic skills and also allows them to stay engaged in learning new things. Research shows that regular follow-up activities are essential for promoting students' long-term academic

achievement, general knowledge, and motivation. In the book, "Malgudi days" by RK Narayan, a character named Swami has a very important role in the story. He is an older man, and he teaches English to Raju and his friends while they are growing up. He teaches them how to write essays and prepare for exams in school. From that, the researcher identifies that Follow-up work is an integral part of the overall work of a child psychologist. It is essential to keep track of the progress made by the child in therapy and make sure that they continue with it. To do so various methods can be used for this purpose. The way which has been used most often in Malgudi Days is home visits.

Parents' communication with the Children

Parents are the first educators of children. They have a crucial role in developing their future potential. Parents' communication with their children is very important for their future development because it impacts their cognitive, affective, and social development. Some parents may not be aware of the importance of effective communication with their children. This can lead to poor child-parent relationships, negatively impacting a child's future development (Bhan *et al.*, 2021). The Malgudi Days story 'Mother and Son by R K Narayan was chosen to highlight the importance of effective communication between parents and children. Parents are one of the most important roles in life because they give their children their bodies, minds, and souls. They sacrifice everything just so their children can have a better future. Without parents, there would be no society as we know it today.

Malgudi Days is one of the most loved and well-known novels by R.K. Narayan. The novel revolves around a small town in South India, Malgudi, and its inhabitants who struggle to live their lives in an environment dominated by tradition and rituals. The first thing is that communication is vital for the development of children's self-esteem as well as their ability to cope with problems on their own without depending too much on others (Ramchandra *et al.*, 2021). Communication is important in helping the child feel comfortable, confident, and happy about himself. Good communication between the parents and children will help them understand each other better and lead to a healthy relationship between both parties. In 'Malgudi Days', Swami Prabhupada describes how parents try to communicate with their children to build a strong bond with them. He states that they should talk like friends rather than talk like teachers.

Result and Discussion

Psychological outcomes

The present study was conducted to analyze the psychological impact of Malgudi Days on the future development of children. The novel represents the life of Kannan Malgudi as it is seen through the eyes of his friend and biographer Balu. Kannan's personality is described as an introverted child who is reserved and somewhat fearful but with a great sense of responsibility toward his family and community. He had no interest in playing outside or making friends during his childhood; instead, he preferred spending most of his time

reading books or writing letters to people he met during that time. The future development of children is important because it can profoundly affect the world around them. Psychology concerns how people think, feel and act (Syed *et al.*, 2021). Future development affects children's thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. It has been proven that how parents raise their children from birth to age 18 impacts their mental health later in life. Children's future development also affects society as a whole because it can shape the behaviours and beliefs of young adults.

Hope and self-efficacy

Hope helps people cope with stress and encourages them to make healthy lifestyle choices. When an individual has high levels of hope, they are more likely to engage in healthy behaviours such as exercising, eating well, and getting enough sleep. In contrast, when an individual does not have much hope, they are more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviours such as smoking, drinking alcohol or soda pop excessively, or skipping meals. Without hope, people will lose faith in everything, and they won't be able to see a future for themselves or their children. Society should be cohesive and robust to withstand any challenges that might come its way (Elnady *et al.*, 2018). If society breaks down, there will be no one to hold it together when things get rough. This social cohesion is crucial for the proper functioning of any society and its survival in the long run.

Self-efficacy is a person's belief in their ability to perform a task successfully. This is an individual's belief that they can accomplish something and, therefore will be successful at it. A child with high levels of self-efficacy believes that they can complete tasks on their own, without needing assistance from others, and will be able to do so with ease. The child who lacks this self-belief may require help to complete specific tasks or projects because they lack the confidence to do them. "How do you expect to get somewhere if you don't know where you are going?" This quote from the American writer and philosopher John F. Kennedy expresses the importance of self-efficacy in a person's life. The idea that one cannot achieve success without having a sense of personal efficacy is supported by several studies conducted on adolescent students (Kumar *et al.*, 2019).

Achievement and Effort

There are many ways of helping a child develop their abilities and talents. Some parents believe that the best way to help a child grow is to buy them toys, clothes, or other things that will make them happy. Other parents think it is more important for the child to have opportunities and experiences so they can learn from these experiences. Their parents' efforts and achievements positively influence the children's future development. The study shows that, in terms of personal self-concept, the children raised in a single-mother family had lower self-esteem than those raised in a two-parent family (Sahu *et al.* 2018). This is attributed to the low level of parental support they received from their mothers. In addition, both parents are expected to provide positive role models for their children during their childhood years. This will help children develop a sense of belongingness, enhancing their self-esteem.

Children need to put in the effort if they want their abilities and talents to improve. Those with high self-control levels also tend to be more successful in life. The ability to delay gratification is important for success in school

and career. The present society is not only based on money but also power. Money is the most important thing for every person in this world. Power is the key to success in business and politics. The way of life influences children in their early childhood years and determines their future development. According to a study, parents need to spend more time with their children so they have a better chance of raising happy, well-adjusted kids who will do well in life. Knowing the influence of genetic and environmental factors on children's cognitive abilities (Puttaiah et al. 2018) is essential. The cognitive skills influenced by genetic factors include fluid intelligence, working memory, and long-term memory. Environmental factors like nutrition, health care, and educational practices also impact children's cognitive abilities. In this regard, the effort has a significant role in children's future development as it contributes significantly to their motivation for learning.

Heterogeneous effects

Humanity's future depends on children's health and ability to develop optimally. The ability to create is critical for success because it affects a child's learning capacity, behaviour, and physical and mental health. Heterogeneous effects have a significant role in the development of children because they can impact various aspects of a child's brain development. Some internal and external things are their, such as biological and environmental factors significantly affect a child's development (Bansal *et al.*, 2021). However, psychological factors also have an important role in children's development. The most significant influence is the way parents behave toward their children. Behavioural theories are essential for understanding how parents can raise their children in the best way to promote their future development. Biological factors such as genetics, hormones, and brain structure directly affect a child's physical and mental health. Environmental influences such as poverty, stress, and lack of family support can also affect a child's mental health.

The children's future development is very important for the parents and grandparents, who look forward to their grandkids' future success. The parents and grandparents want to see their grandkids grow up as successful individuals with high educational achievements, good jobs, and sound personal health. Heterogeneous effects strongly affect the children's future development because it changes the environment in which the grandchildren grow up (Deshpande *et al.* 2018). Heterogeneous effects occur when some members of a group experience advantages or disadvantages that others do not experience.

Conclusion

Malgudi Days depicts the social and cultural life of an imaginary small town in South India, which was very similar to the life of real people who lived at that time. The novel also has many other aspects, like philosophy, religion, and politics, all interwoven into its fabric, making it a complete package of different themes. The development theories explain the various stages in which a child develops. There are many development theories that differ from each other in some aspects. But there is one thing common to all: all these theories agree that a child develops through his interaction with the environment, experiences, and interactions with others around him.

Future Scope

The field of psychology has contributed significantly to society by providing a better understanding of how people think and behave. The behaviourist school of thought focuses on studying observable behaviours rather than internal thoughts or feelings. In 1900, John Watson was one of the first to conduct research in animal behaviour. His studies were focused on how rats responded to stimuli in their environment. He believed that all behaviour is determined by stimulus and response, which can also be applied to humans. A child with ADHD may benefit from a more structured environment, whereas a child with autism may benefit from less structure and more independence.

Limitations

Behavioural theory is a widespread way of explaining the behaviour of human beings. The behaviourist believes that all behaviour is determined by stimulus and response. In this context, the motivation is the external event, and the response is an action. A behavioural theory of children is based on the assumption that every child has a set of instinctual behaviors, which are involuntary and not under their control. To understand this theory, it is important to know what it means by instinct. According to Skinner, an instinct is a behavior that an organism performs all its life without being aware of the reason for performing it and without learning any other behaviour in response. This theory has also been used to explain children's behaviours in Malgudi days. But some limitations in this approach need to be considered for a proper understanding of a child's behaviour.

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