

## Development of Islamic Education Learning Methodology Based on Learning Theory Approaches Behaviorisme

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### Abstract

This study aims to examine the relevance of applying behaviorism theory in developing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning methodology. The method used is library research through a descriptive-analytical approach. The results show that behaviorism theory can be integrated into PAI learning through systematic steps, starting from material analysis, formulating learning objectives, determining strategies, to evaluation, analyzing evaluation results, improving learning, and refining methods. However, this theory has limitations because it does not highlight the spiritual and inner aspects, which are the core of Islamic education. Therefore, the integration of behaviorism theory in PAI learning needs to be aligned with Islamic values so that the goals of Islamic education can be achieved.

### Keywords:

Learning Methodology; Islamic Religious Education; Behaviorist Learning Theory.

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji relevansi penerapan teori behaviorisme dalam pengembangan metodologi pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI). Metode yang digunakan merupakan studi pustaka (*library research*) melalui pendekatan deskriptif-analitik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa teori behaviorisme dapat diintegrasikan ke dalam pembelajaran PAI melalui langkah-langkah sistematis, mulai dari analisis materi, perumusan tujuan pembelajaran, penentuan strategi, hingga evaluasi, menganalisis hasil evaluasi, perbaikan pembelajaran, dan penyempurnaan metode. Namun, teori ini memiliki keterbatasan karena kurang menyoroti aspek spiritual dan batiniah, yang justru menjadi inti dalam pendidikan Islam. Oleh karena itu, integrasi teori behaviorisme dalam pembelajaran PAI perlu diselaraskan dengan nilai-nilai Islam agar tujuan pendidikan Islam dapat tercapai.

### Kata Kunci:

Metodologi Pembelajaran; Pendidikan Agama Islam; kata Teori Belajar Behaviorisme.

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## 1. Introduction

Humans desperately need education in their lives, because without it, their lives will not progress well. From birth, humans are weak and helpless, completely dependent on the help of those around them. The support given to newborns can be categorized as a form of general education (Junaedi, 2017). According to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, education is a conscious process designed to create a learning environment that encourages students to actively develop their potential. Education aims to shape students with spiritual and religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills for themselves, society, the nation, and the state (KBRI, 2003).

Education is the process of educating students by educators. Adults are expected to serve as role models, guides, and promoters of children's potential and moral values. The learning process occurs not only in formal institutions but also through the crucial role of families and communities as primary environments in shaping and expanding individual knowledge and insight (Ab Marisyah & Firman, 2019).

When linking education with Islam, according to Ibn Khaldun, from an Islamic perspective, education encompasses an understanding of everything beyond oneself, including an understanding of Allah SWT and the revelations revealed to His Messenger. Islamic education does not only focus on worldly life, but also prepares humans for the afterlife after death. He emphasized that the primary sources of Islamic education are the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which distinguishes Islamic education from other educational systems (Akbar, 2015). Furthermore, Ibn Khaldun believes that Islamic education is not solely religious but also encompasses worldly affairs, as long as it remains based on Islamic values (Saepudin & Saifudin, 2019).

In short, Islamic religious education can be understood as education based on Islamic values, referring to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, in line with the *ijtihad* of scholars and the historical experience of the Muslim community (Nata, 2003). Islamic education is also a process of development carried out by adults (educators) to help the physical and spiritual growth of students, aiming to shape individuals who reflect Islamic values (Mujahidin & et al., 2009).

In education, learning is a key element that plays a crucial role in the educational process and in achieving educational goals. Learning can be defined as a process in which changes occur in a person's behavior (Gagne, 1989).

Learning is also a process of acquiring knowledge, developing skills, improving behavior and attitudes, and shaping personality (Suyono & Hariyanto, 2012). Human behavior can change through the learning process that occurs through practice and engagement with the environment (Pratama, 2013).

According to Islam, learning is an obligation for every Muslim to improve their status, broaden their knowledge, and strengthen their faith. The learning process is expected to shape a perfect individual (*insan kamil*), a person of faith, noble character, and knowledge, reflected in their daily behavior and activities (Pratama, 2019). This is affirmed in the word of Allah in Q.s Al-Mujadilah, verse 11.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ  
أَنْشُرُوا فَأَنْشُرُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

"O you who believe! When it is said to you, "Give room in the assemblies," then make room, because Allah will give you space. And if it is said, "Stand up," then stand up, because Allah will elevate (the degree of) those who believe among you and those who have been given knowledge to a certain degree. And Allah knows everything that you do."

In the learning process, understanding learning theory is crucial as an educator. The learning theory used will influence the implementation of learning activities (Affandi, Rahman & Andriana, 2025).

One such theory is behaviorism, an approach in psychology that focuses on directly observable behavior (Miguel et al., 1992). In educational psychology, behaviorism is one of three major schools of thought that have developed over time. This school of thought states that learning is a directly observable change in behavior resulting from the relationship between stimulus and response (Huda, Fawaid & Slamet, 2023).

This approach assumes that individual behavior is shaped by environmental factors, and the learning process occurs through the relationship between stimulus and response (Jelita, Mimi, et al., 2023).

Behaviorist learning theory emphasizes that the learning process is characterized by transformations in student behavior. In this view, learning is understood as the result of the interaction between a given stimulus and an elicited response. Therefore, whatever the educator does as a stimulus, and the student's response as a response, must be objectively observable and measurable. This theory places great emphasis on the importance of measurement, as it is the primary means of determining whether the expected behavioral changes have actually occurred (Fithriyah, 2024).

This behaviorist theory also assumes that human behavior is heavily influenced by various events in the environment, which then shape specific experiences. This approach places more emphasis on observable aspects, namely behavior, and pays less attention to mental processes or thoughts, as these cannot be directly observed (Rohmah, 2017).

According to behaviorist theory, a person is said to have learned if there is a significant change in their behavior. This approach is based on psychology, which emphasizes observable behavior, without involving consciousness or internal psychological processes. This theory asserts that learning is a process of

behavioral change that can be directly monitored, measured, and evaluated (Sudirman, 2024).

The application of behaviorist theory to the learning process encompasses various aspects, including the formulation of learning objectives, the development of teaching materials, student characteristics, and the use of media and learning resources generally provided in schools. A learning approach based on this theory views knowledge as objective, definite, permanent, and unchanging. Knowledge is understood as structured, so learning activities are directed at the process of information acquisition by students. The teacher's task is to convey knowledge to students. The goal is for students to understand the material as intended by the teacher (Anam & Wasis, 2019).

Although the behaviorist theory originated from the Western world, a number of principles are in line with the values of Islamic teachings (Djaali, 2011). In (Huda, 2023), the results of research conducted by Azizah (2023), stated that the behaviorist learning theory is seen as relevant in the context of Islamic Religious Education, because it can be applied by educators and students to support learning activities. This theory, in learning activities through the relationship between stimuli and responses that include several important components, including: (1) motivation, (2) stimulus or stimulation, (3) response or response, and (4) reinforcement. Reinforcement is very important in learning, especially for children, because without reinforcement, habits that have been formed can disappear. Therefore, reinforcement needs to be given continuously so that positive behavior that has been formed is maintained. Research also conducted by Toriqlarif, Muhammad & Bangsa (2024) found that behaviorist learning theory is considered compatible with Islamic education because it can be utilized by educators and students to support the learning process, particularly in Islamic education subjects. This theory, in the learning process, involves stimulus and response, consisting of several important elements: drive, stimulus, response, and reinforcement.

In line with research conducted by Winata Putra et al. (2011) in Mustakimah & Sutiyono (2023), when connected to the development of Islamic religious education, behaviorist theory becomes part of a holistic process, because it is very helpful for educators and students in religious learning activities. This is because most of the learning objectives of Islamic education focus on behavioral changes through a process of habituation, starting from the practice of worship to the application of the values of the Qur'an, Hadith, as well as Aqidah and Morals. This habituation is applied from an early age and continues into adulthood, even believed to be an important provision for life in the afterlife. Therefore, in this discussion the author will explain the behaviorist learning theory in the development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning methodology and its relevance.

## **2. Methods**

The method used in this research is library research. This study focuses on searching for relevant literature to deepen theoretical understanding of the

research object. In the context of Islamic religious education, it is used to deeply and comprehensively explore behaviorist learning theory in the development of Islamic Religious Education methodology as the focus of the study (Putra & Lisnawati, 2012). This research approach is descriptive analytical, where data sources are obtained from various relevant literature such as books, scientific articles, and other references to support the study topic. The data collection technique is carried out through library research, namely a method of gathering information by reviewing various books and literature related to the relevance of the problem being studied (Nazir, 2013). The data analysis technique is content analysis, which is carried out through several stages, namely data presentation, data reduction, and conclusion drawing (Aziz, et al., 2020).

### **3. Result and Discussion**

#### **Behaviorism Learning Theory From Various Expert Perspectives**

Behaviorist theory is an approach that studies human behavior by emphasizing the role of learning in shaping action. This view emphasizes that behavior emerges in response to stimuli and follows mechanistic laws. This theory assumes that human behavior is completely determined, predictable, and governed by certain rules. According to this theory, individuals perform an action because they have learned it from previous experience, especially when the behavior is associated with a reward or reinforcement. Conversely, behavior will be stopped if it is not reinforced or even punished. Thus, all behavior, both positive and negative, is the result of a learning process (Rahman & Zamakhsyari, 2025). The behaviorist theories according to various experts are:

#### **Ivan Petrovich Pavlov**

Ivan Petrovich Pavlov is a renowned figure known for his contributions to the development of classical conditioning theory. Through experiments on dogs, Pavlov discovered that behavior can be shaped through the repetition of conditioned stimuli. This finding aligns with the behaviorist perspective, which believes that behavior reflects an individual's mental state. In his experiments, Pavlov chose animals, particularly dogs, as subjects because he believed there were similarities in characteristics between animals and humans. He performed surgery on the necks of dogs to monitor salivary gland activity. When the dogs were shown food, they naturally salivated. Pavlov then introduced additional stimuli, such as a red light, presented before the food was presented. After several attempts, the dogs began to salivate simply by seeing the red light, even without food. This proved that the artificial stimulus had become a conditioned stimulus capable of eliciting an automatic or conditioned response (Maharani et al., 2024). Pavlov asserted that this classical conditioning theory could be applied to humans, although it requires certain adjustments due to essential differences between humans and animals. For example, if a particular stimulus is consistently associated with learning activities, individuals can develop habits of focus and concentration while learning. Thus, through repetition of conditioned

stimuli, humans have the potential to form certain desired behavioral responses (Oktariska et al., 2018).

### **John Broadus Watson**

John Broadus Watson adapted his learning theory from Ivan Pavlov's experiments. He believed that learning occurs through the presence of certain conditions or requirements that cause a person to respond. Therefore, to learn, a person needs to be given a specific stimulus. Watson believed that continuous practice is crucial in the learning process. He once conducted experiments with children who were afraid of mice or rabbits, and from there, he discovered that fear can be taught or changed. His theory is also called the adjacency theory, which states that if an event (stimulus) frequently occurs together with an action (response), the two become connected in the brain. This theory emphasizes the importance of repetition in learning, but does not focus too much on whether something is pleasant or unpleasant. Therefore, his theory is considered an easy-to-understand learning theory (Rahmah & Aly, 2023).

### **Burrhus Frederic Skinner**

B.F. Skinner believed that behavioral change occurs through the correlation between stimulus and response, developing through the interaction of individuals with their environment. He is known for his directed instruction approach and argued that behavior is controlled through operant conditioning, a process of reinforcing certain behaviors to cause them to recur or disappear, depending on the desired goal. Operant behavior itself is a spontaneous, freely executed action. One important element of this theory is the schedule of reinforcement, which, according to Skinner, plays a central role in the learning process. He stated that the learning process consists of three main components: stimulus, reinforcement, and response (Iskandar, 2024).

### **Edwin Ray Guthrie**

According to Guthrie, the contiguous conditioning learning theory states that the learning process occurs due to a direct and close relationship between stimulus and response. The main principle of this theory is the law of contiguity, which states that a movement will tend to be repeated if the accompanying stimulus reappears. Guthrie also emphasized the important role of punishment in the learning process. Therefore, in applying this theory, teachers are required to be able to link stimulus and response appropriately so that the learning process can be effective (Pantiwati et al., 2016).

### **Principles of Behaviorist Learning Theory**

The behaviorist approach views learning as a process of mastering responses to stimuli through a regulated environment. Students are required to understand the situations and conditions that are part of the learning material.

- 1) Applying the principle of reinforcement to determine important elements in learning that can help create ideal conditions for students to achieve desired goals.

- 2) Identifying student characteristics to design learning strategies appropriate to learning objectives.
- 3) The primary focus is on achieving the final learning outcomes, not the learning process itself (Warsita, 2008).

**Skinner, in his book, *The Behavior of Organisms*, put forward additional principles:**

- 1) Students should immediately know their learning outcomes, errors should be corrected immediately, and correct answers should be reinforced.
- 2) The learning process should be adjusted to the individual's pace.
- 3) Material should be structured in a modular format.
- 4) Punishment is avoided in learning; instead, the learning environment should be structured to prevent the need for punishment.
- 5) Student independent activity is the primary focus of the learning process.
- 6) Expected behavior is reinforced with rewards, ideally through a varied reinforcement schedule.
- 7) Shaping techniques are used to gradually shape behavior according to learning objectives (Skinner, 1989).

**Other principles of behaviorist theory include:**

- 1) Stimulus and Response  
Stimulus refers to various forms of stimulation provided by teachers to students, such as pictures, visual aids, or graphs, which aim to support the learning process. Response is the student's reaction to the stimulus and must be concrete and measurable. The relationship between stimulus and response is the core of learning in this approach.
- 2) Reinforcement  
Reinforcement is a consequence of a behavior that can strengthen or reduce the tendency for that behavior.  
There are two forms of reinforcement:
  - a) Positive reinforcement is given in the form of a pleasant stimulus after a response occurs.
  - b) Negative reinforcement involves the removal of an unpleasant stimulus to maintain the behavior. In addition, reinforcement is also divided into: Primary, which relates to basic physical needs. And Secondary, which relates to non-physical needs such as praise or grades.
  - c) The Importance of Immediate Reinforcement Reinforcement must be given immediately after the behavior occurs for it to be effective. Delaying reinforcement tends to reduce the effectiveness of shaping behavior.
  - d) Behavior Shaping  
According to Skinner, new behavior is developed through several stages:
    - 1) Breaking down complex behavior into smaller steps.
    - 2) Determining the type of reinforcement to use.

- 3) Providing reinforcement each time the behavior demonstrates the desired form.
- e) Extinction  
Extinction occurs when a response is no longer reinforced, ultimately causing the behavior to decline or disappear. Overall, this theory emphasizes the important role of stimuli and responses in the learning process, as well as the need for appropriate reinforcement to optimally change and direct student behavior (Salsabila, Hanifah & Bakar, 2025).

### **Strengths and Weaknesses of Behaviorist Learning Theory**

#### **The strengths of behaviorist theory include:**

- a. It encourages educators to be more thorough, meticulous, and responsive to students' learning situations and needs.
- b. It is well-suited for learning skills that require repeated practice and habituation, especially those involving speed, spontaneity, flexibility, reflexes, and endurance.
- c. It helps foster independence in learning in students.
- d. It trains students to think in a structured and focused manner.
- e. It assists students in achieving specific learning objectives.
- f. Teaching materials are delivered in detail because they are based on the knowledge and experience provided by educators to students (Sereliciouz, 2021).

#### **The weaknesses of behaviorist theory include:**

- a. It can hinder the development of students' creativity, imagination, and productivity.
- b. The learning process becomes too educator-centered, leading students to become passive, simply listening to the teacher's explanations.
- c. It carries the risk of punishment, both verbal and physical, for students who do not comply with the rules.
- d. It makes it difficult to explain complex learning situations because it relies too heavily on stimulus-response relationships (Husna, 2021).

### **The Relevance of Behaviorism Theory in Islamic Religious Education**

Behaviorism theory is relevant in Islamic Religious Education, particularly in shaping behavior through stimulus and response. First, the role of the environment in forming behavior is relevant to Q.s At-Tahrim verse 6:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

“O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from the torment of the Hellfire whose fuel is men and stones.”

Second, habit formation is relevant to Q.s Al-Muzammil verse 4:

أَوْزِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْفُرْعَانَ تَرْتِيلاً

"or more than (half) of that, and read the Koran slowly."

Third, strengthening behavior with the relevant concepts of reward and punishment Q.s Al-Zalzalah verses 7-8:

لَهَا يَوْمَئِذٍ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

"So whoever does good deeds as heavy as zarah, he will surely see (the reward), and whoever does evil as heavy as zarah, he will surely see (reward)."  
The four structured and measurable learning methods that are relevant to the behaviorism theory of Q.s Al-A'la verses 6-7:

سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى

"We will recite (the Koran) to you (Muhammad) so that you will not forget, unless Allah wills. Indeed, He knows both the clear and the hidden."

The fifth role of teachers as controllers: Teachers encourage students to adopt attitudes consistent with Islamic values relevant to Surah Al-Jumu'ah, verse 2:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

"It was He who sent a Messenger to among the illiterate among themselves, who recited to them His verses, purified their (souls) and taught them the Book and Wisdom (Sunnah), whereas before that, they were truly in clear error."

Sixth, moral formation is through repetition. The theory of behaviorism in forming morals, namely by repetition in Islamic religious education, also cultivates morals through habituation and repetition in Q.s Al-Ankabut verse 42 and Q.s Luqman verse 17.

Q.s Al-Ankabut verse 42:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ مِن شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

"Indeed, Allah knows everything that they worship besides Him. And Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise."

Q.s Luqman verse 17:

يَبْنَئُ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

"O my son! establish prayer and command (humans) to do what is right and prevent (them) from doing wrong and be patient because what has happened to you, is actually part of an important matter."

Islamic education has similarities with the theory of behaviorism, namely in the theory of moral learning, namely a theory that focuses on the formation of morals, namely three models, namely Taqlid (imitation), Ta'wid (habituation), and Tajribah wa khata' (trial and error) (Najati, 2002).

### **Development of Islamic Education Learning Methodology Based on Behaviorism Theory**

The application of behaviorist theory in learning is based on the view that knowledge is objective, absolute, consistent, and unchanging. Knowledge is structured systematically, so that learning activities are understood as the process of acquiring knowledge, while teaching is understood as the process of transferring knowledge to students. In this context, the function of the mind is to imitate or replicate knowledge structures previously acquired through thought processes that can be analyzed and refined. Therefore, the meaning generated from the thought process is determined by the characteristics of the knowledge chain itself (Peri & Karimah, 2022).

The implementation of behaviorist theory in Islamic education is influenced by several factors, including: learning objectives, various teaching materials, student characteristics, and the availability of educational media and resources. This theory views knowledge as objective, fixed, and predetermined. In the behaviorist perspective, learning means acquiring knowledge, while teaching means conveying knowledge to students (Aprizal, 2022).

According to Anfasyah et al. (2022), Majid & Suyadi (2020), and Mardiyani (2022) in (Affandi, Rahman & Andriana, 2025), the application of the behavioristic approach in Islamic Education learning is carried out through certain stages as follows:

- 1) **Material Analysis**  
The teacher simplifies Islamic religious education material to make it easier for students to understand.
- 2) **Formulation of Learning Objectives**  
Objectives are designed specifically, for example, to understand the concepts of monotheism, faith, and morals.
- 3) **Determination of Teaching Strategies**  
The strategies used emphasize reinforcing positive behaviors toward religious material.
- 4) **Preparation of Resources and Teaching Materials**  
The teacher prepares learning materials according to the objectives and strategies, such as books, videos, and other media.
- 5) **Learning Implementation**  
The teacher provides clear instructions and consistent feedback, including praise for students who demonstrate good understanding.
- 6) **Evaluation**  
Assessment is conducted through tests, assignments, or observations to measure students' achievement in understanding the material.
- 7) **Analysis of Evaluation Results**

Assessment results are used to determine the effectiveness of the method and identify learning obstacles.

- 8) Learning Improvement  
The teacher makes improvements based on identified weaknesses, for example by providing additional assistance.
- 9) Implementation of Refined Methods  
The revised methods are then reapplied to improve student learning outcomes.

#### 4. Conclusion

Behaviorist learning theory emphasizes that human behavior is formed through stimulus and response, reinforced by repetition and reinforcement. The principles of behaviorism focus on measurable learning outcomes, the active role of teachers, and the use of stimuli. In Islamic education, behaviorist theory is relevant in Islamic Religious education because both emphasize the importance of the environment, habits, and reinforcement in shaping student behavior. First, the role of the environment in shaping behavior as explained in Q.s At-Tahrim verse 6. Second, the formation of habits in Q.s Al-Muzzamil verse 4. Third, the concept of reward and punishment as reflected in Q.s Al-Zalzalah verses 7-8. Fourth, structured and measurable learning in Q.s Al-A'la verses 6-7. The fifth role of the teacher is as a controller in Q.S. Al-Jumu'ah verse 2, and the sixth, the formation of students' morals is also carried out through repetition in Q.S. Al-Ankabut verse 42 and Q.S. Luqman verse 17.

The development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning methodology based on behaviorist theory emphasizes the learning process as the acquisition of objective knowledge through stimulus, response, and reinforcement. The learning process is structured systematically, starting with material analysis, formulation of learning objectives, determination of teaching strategies, preparation of resources and teaching materials, implementation of learning, evaluation, analysis of evaluation results, improvement of learning, and application of refined methods. However, behaviorist theory overlooks the spiritual and spiritual aspects, which are the core of Islamic education. Therefore, the application of behaviorist theory in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning must refer to the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

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