

THE EFFECT OF GADGETS ON LEARNING BEHAVIOR

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The recent development of technology and the fast-growing industries of online applications tremendously impacted the education system not only in the Philippines but also throughout the world. The effect of these industries on the physiological and psychological aspect of learners leave a deep imprint not only in their lives but also on their behaviors.

Merriam dictionary defines behavior as “the way in which someone conducts oneself or behaves”. Behavior is a psychological faculty on which training is required. There are several ways to modify a particular behavior.

Operant conditioning occurs when an association is made between a particular behavior and a consequence for that behavior. This connection is built upon the use of reinforcement and/or punishment to encourage or discourage the behavior. Operant conditioning was first defined and studied by behavioral psychologist B.F. Skinner, conducted several well-known operant conditioning experiments with animal subjects.

According to Vinney C. (2018) behavior could be shaped using scheduled reinforcement such as:

Continuous reinforcement occurs when a particular response follows each performance of a given behavior. Learning happens rapidly with continuous reinforcement. However, if reinforcement is stopped, the behavior will quickly decline and ultimately stop altogether, which is referred to as extinction.

Fixed-ratio schedules reward behavior after a specified number of responses. For example, a child may get a star after every fifth chore they complete. On this schedule, the response rate slows right after the reward is delivered.

Variable-ratio schedules vary the number of behaviors required to get a reward. This schedule leads to a high rate of responses and is also hard to extinguish because its variability maintains the behavior. Slot machines use this kind of reinforcement schedule.

Fixed-interval schedules provide a reward after a specific amount of time passes. Getting paid by the hour is one example of this kind of reinforcement schedule. Much like the fixed-ratio schedule, the response rate increases as the reward approaches but slows down right after the reward is received.

Variable-interval schedules vary the amount of time between rewards. For example, a child who receives an allowance at various times during the week if they've exhibited some positive behaviors is on a variable-interval schedule. The child will continue to exhibit positive behavior in anticipation of eventually receiving their allowance.

The Generation Z - the learners of today's era, comparatively was born with gadgets in their hands. Technology became their daily dose of rice, and social media was a normal part of their daily diet. Digital or hybrid cellular phones were as normal as waking up and sleeping. Since this group of learners lives in an era of technological advancement in a rapid state, their behavior is highly affected by these stimuli. Aside from social behavior that has been affected by these technologies, their learning behavior was also affected.

Since technology is part of their daily activities, teachers like us should use these technological advancements in the learning process. The development of learning resources on media platforms will be more accessible and more relevant to today's learners and industry. Books and blackboards turn out to be a thing of the past. Today's

educators should shift from the tangible classroom into a virtual learning environment so that we will not be isolated and left behind by this new era of teaching and learning in generation Z.

Usage of gadgets in learning has two faces, the negative and positive aspects. The behavior of learners changes much in this era of technology. The common norm of the 1990s, 1980s, and 2000s students were almost extinct. Social media become their platform of communication, online games become their sports known as e-sports. Spending much time in the virtual world creates social sickness of isolation and imprisonment without knowing it. Learners who get addicted to gadget tends to be more socially detached and create a virtual world on their own with their social friends. To mitigate this scenario, we should use these technologies as a means of learning not only as entertainment. By then, behavior conditioning will be introduced.

According to Statistica.com (2021), there are 82.3 million people that use their mobile phones. Based on their projections this year there are already 84.7 internet-connected phones. The figure provided a glimpse of how learning should take place. Today's learners are no longer confined in a four-walled classroom but in a limitless virtual reality.

As teachers, we should handle technology as a tool for learning, not as an enemy to be avoided but as a weapon against mass ignorance. We cannot let our past hinder the growth in the learning process.

According to sociology, a man cannot be subjected to a highly controlled condition, a man is a social being, therefore man needs interaction. Behavior modification will be possible if, we teachers handle this technological advancement and use of gadgets in learning. The balance between the virtual and real world should be well kept.

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