

HOW ENVIRONMENT SHAPE CHILDREN'S SELF CONTROL

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Abstract

Children self-control ability formed since age 4. Generally, children acts based on environment responses to their behavior, by making comparison of environment responses in several of their behaviors. This response will determine whether the behavior repeated or not. When child reported or seems to have negative act and mistreatment, such as violence and aggressive behavior, who will take responsibility? Human being tends to learn to act by observing their circumstances. By which ages does a child could responsible enough to control their behavior? There are several factors determine self-control development and there is developmental pathways in self-control development in human being especially children. Environment considered taking important role in shaping children's behavior and self-control. This article aims is to acknowledge community about environment's influence in shaping children behavior. Research is using secondary data literature review of phenomenon. The findings represented community's knowledge on environment importance in shaping children behavior has shown, but knowing concept will be different from understanding and application concept of this information. Consequences of the lack of proper learning of self-control in children would bring major impact to children's behavior in the future.

Keywords: Children, Self-Control, Environment

INTRODUCTION

Children live in their family and community. The closest system which influencing child the most is family especially parents. Parent's life is influencing children life. Parent's behavior is the centre of children's growth and competencies (Brooks, 2011). There for parents has important role in children growth and development in the future. According to Brooks (2011), parents are people who are nurturing, protecting and guiding children to a mature life. Parents role are to become friends, instructors and stimulation provider for children's growth and development (Parke & Buriel in Brooks, 2011). Becoming parents are not an easy occupation. Parent needs a lot of information and things to know and understand the needed of a child. Even more, every child needed and approach methods are different, which parent needs to adjust those approaching and nurturing technique. Besides, parent also needs skills to become an effective and adequate to their children needed. Closest circumstances which the children remains, such as sisters, brothers, auntie, uncle and grandparents are giving great influences to children thought and behavior. Children learned by observing their environment and tend to act based on model in their surroundings. How Children evaluate their surrounding also determined by their surrounding evaluation which they get from interaction and communication (form children their age or adult).

Children ability to self-control formed since 4 years old. In this ages, children starts to be able to distinguishing right and wrong by making comparison of responses of the

environment from their behaviors. Children acts based on environment responses, therefore younger children often doing things and deliberately looking in the direction of adult or people around. The purpose is to see environment responses on their action. Sometimes, in the situation which they already know the responses (because they already did it), they would repeat it.

Parents often furious and showing resentment when their child stubborn, naughty and didn't listen to their command and instruction, even resistance. When child reported to have negative act and mistreatment, such as violence and aggressive behavior, parent starts to find parties consider responsible and trying to change those behavior. Without being fully aware of how's child's behavior is shaped. This article purposes are to acknowledge community (parents, family and all community members) about environment behavior and act which would influencing children ability in controlling their self and shape their behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In early childhood (3-6 years old), children challenge are in self-control, cooperation, gender role identification and peer relation. While parents challenge are giving a clear role and value, support peer relation and flexible management (Brooks, 2011). In these ages, self-control problem is one of the most occurring issues in children. Children in this phase shows a high activities level (Brooks, 2011), their attention often switch, has strong will, huge curiosity and needs to control self behavior, even though still needed guide from others (Marotz & Allen, 2013). Therefore, children seem to always in move to fulfil their needs of activities and curiosity of everything they see and interesting to them at that time (Marotz & Allen, 2013). What is attractive to children is controlled by external factors, such as physical properties of the object (shape, colour, etc.) or motivation from others (praise, attention, etc) (Berk, 2013).

Theoretically, self-control construct is domain from self-regulation. According to Thompson (in Berger 2011), self-regulation was ability to monitor and control cognition, emotion and behavior in order to reaching a goal, and/ or adapt to cognition and social demands in certain situation. Self-regulation formed during early childhood (Smith-Donald, Raver, Hayes & Richardson, 2007, in Bondurant, 2010). Brooks (2001) says, children over 4 years old start developing ability to control impulse from within to obey rules and fulfil environment demands (self-regulation). When the child enters school age, they are generally already having understanding of the appropriate and functional type of emotional expression in certain contexts (Shipman, Zeman, Nesin & Fitzgerald, 2003).

Poor self-regulation will affect impulsive and unregulated behavior that can have significant impact on the individual and his/her environment (Berger, 2011). Cole et al. (1994) and Eisenberg et al. (1996) say that inability to regulate the emotion is associated with behavior problems, such as externalizing in under regulated children (delinquent and aggressive) or internalizing in overregulated children (withdrawal, somatic and anxious behavior) (Schroeder & Gordon, 2002). Besides, children in early childhood according to David in Schroeder and Gordon (2002), in general express their emotion uninhibitedly (spontaneous), such child response in stimulus (i.e., wanted something) were angry with hitting, kicking, slamming, etc. Also occur disobedience and oppositional behavior in these children ages (Mash & Wolfe, 2010). Those preferences

and activities sometime make children seem too hard to control and shows aggressive behavior.

Grolnick and Farkas (2002) explained that self-regulation is a behavior initiated by one self and carried out intentionally and autonomy (in Wenar & Kerig, 2000). Self-regulation develops since children born and influences by individual's temperamental characteristic and continues to develop through interaction and stimulation of the environment (Calkin, 1994, Kagan, 1994, in Schroeder & Gordon, 2002; Blair, 2002; Rothbart, Ellis, Rueda, & Posner, 2003, in Bondurant, 2011). Furthermore, a child learned about self-regulation through modelling, discipline and reinforcement from parents or caregiver (Schroeder & Gordon, 2002). Together with stimulation and interaction with parents and caregiver in a way to regulates emotion and behavior, their cognition and language skills also continue to develop. In this early childhood phase, children also learn to take insight from different aspects in their mind, making planning, effective decision making of situation which has significance emotional consequences (i.e. rewards and meaningful loss). With this way of thinking, children become aware if inner speech as part of cognition activities. Children ability in self-speech could uses to control their mind and behavior, therefore help develop their self-control internalization. Besides, children also learned about inner life from others and their theory of mind become complex (Berger, 2011). Consequently, in school ages (6 – 12 years old) children should learn to more responsible and aware of their behavior (Bronson, 2000, in Berger, 2011).

In this ages phase (early childhood), a child already understand in right and wrong. But they tend to evaluate behavior based on the result they get (Brooks, 2011). Here, children observe and learn every reaction from environment in knowing which behavior accepted socially (Brooks, 2011). According to behavioristic theory, a behavior will strengthen if the child gets positive result for him/her (Ivey, D'Andrea, Ivey & Simek-Morgan, 2009).

METHOD

The article method using literature review in collecting supporting subject and phenomenon studied. American Psychological Association (APA, 2010) describes literature review by organizing, integrating and evaluating previously published material to clarifying a problem. The literature review uses to; (a) define and clarify the problem; (b) summarize previous investigation to inform reader of the state of research; (c) identify relations, contradictions, gaps and inconsistencies in the literature; and (d) suggest the next step or steps in solving the problem (APA, 2010).

Based on these explanation, this article using secondary data in means to define and clarifying, identify relation and also suggest discussion as the next steps in solving the problem studied. Data are collecting from various relevant references and literature explaining self control and parenting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on above theoretical review, shows that self-control develops since child born and influences by internal characteristics of a child and continue to develop through interaction and stimulation from environment. A child could control their cognition, emotion and behavior since early childhood ages (3-6 years old) and within an

appropriate teaching and stimulating in these ages, will form good understanding of emotional expression and adequate behavior skills in school ages. Therefore, teaching, assisting and role modelling given by the environment (i.e., parents, family and community) around children are important things because children tend to act by observing, learning and evaluating based on model they saw and results obtain from the behavior they display.

According to behavior theory, a behavior will be strengthening if a child gets a positive result for them (Ivey, D'Andrea, Ivey & Simek-Morgan, 2009). Therefore, children behavior are very much determined by the responses given by people around them, including parents. If negative behavior gets a response which is not negative or even positive according to children perspective (being scolded can sometimes be a positive response for the child, as a form of attention), then it is likely that such behavior will be strengthened and repeated in the future. For example, when parents expect children to pray (sholat) on time, but fathers, mothers and others around them do not do it so, praying on time will not become a motivation for children. Or when it's explained that smoking is unhealthy, but closest environment of the child (even when near the child) does it, which behavior will be done?

According Brooks (2011), if a child showing disturbing emotions, such as anger and aggressive, parents should support child to take action to solve the problems. Parent also has to teaches and give understanding that every behavior has it consequences, positive or negative. This would help child to make planning and solving the problems, so that they can behave effectively in social activities (Brooks, 2011). Aggressive behavior also could happen as the result of children being unable or not used to solving problems verbally and not knowing that this method is more effective. It takes practice and example from parents so that children can learn and get used to expressing verbally effectively. First, teach children to identify emotions they feel, then after knowing their feelings, on negative emotions such as anger and sadness, children can be taught to "STOP" and do nothing; take one deep breath; say what is the problem and what emotions are felt. This exercise needs to be done repeatedly and also modelled by parents consistently, so that it becomes a habit and children can have more effective problem solving methods.

Aggressive behavior if left continuously will eventually continue to the next stage of the child and have a greater impact, not only on emotional but also academic and social problems (Brooks, 2011). Based on longitudinal study by Caspi, Moffitt, Newman and Siva (1996, in Schroeder & Gordon, 2002), it was said that the behavior of children who are under regulated, such as impulsivity, irritability, cannot sit quietly and behave rudely un uncontrollably by age 3 years will have a high probability of experiencing antisocial personality disorder and involved in criminal acts at the age of 21 years. There are no parents who want these to be happened, so when the aggressive behavior occur and becoming preferences of child's problem solving method, parent and environment need to do positive assisting by being assertive/ firm and teaching children how to deal with problems more precisely, as explained above.

According to Kendziora and O'Leary (in Schroeder & Gordon, 2002), effective and optimal parenting for early childhood ages are has to adjust expectation, stimulation and responsibility with child developmental ages; reinforces exact behavior; accept and

care for children with affection; monitor children's activities and provide reason of the rules and restriction given. Besides, attention and warm relationships in the family are also very influential on emotional development, self-control, self-acceptance, adjustment to environment and problem solving skills (Schroeder & Gordon, 2002). Optimal parenting also requires quality time between parent-child. Quality time ("time bind") means short but intense contact. This is important for children, by taking intense time together can form a positive emotional bond between parents and children (Berk, 2013).

The findings above represented community's knowledge on environment importance in shaping children behaviour. Community, especially parent, need skills to become adequate in nurturing children because knowing concept will be different from understanding and application concept of this information. Applications need high awareness, effort, time and consistencies.

CONCLUSIONS

Then, how environment shape children's self-control? Giving role model to the child of how good and bad behavior and giving the right respond and stimulation of child's behavior consistently. Children learn from what environment say, think and react. Shaping positive words, thought and behavior in community and aware of it would brought and develop also a positive children in community. Consequences of the lack of proper learning of self-control in children would bring major impact to children's behavior in the future.

Children need is be to taught rules and character. In order for rules and discipline to be effective, consistency and sustainability are needed in the implementation. For example, parent should make clear rules/ structure regarding thins that may or may not be done in daily life and their consequences. Involve children in making these rules. The purpose is that the children learn the boundaries that exist within the environment and can act in accordance with these norm, values and limits and understand responses that are acceptable and not by the social environment. Appreciate the work done by children by giving praise and rewards (with systems and strategies and not using prizes as 'weapon'). Explain and show that every behavior carries out has both positive and negative consequences, by giving rewards for good behavior and time-out and negative reinforcement in any bad behavior. Do it consistently. The aim is to teach 'cause and affect incentives' to children which is used to improve task-focused behavior and reduce aggressive behavior (behavior modification). Avoid using short methods to make children obey, such as physical punishment, lying, threatening and lure (apart from implementing a clear reward system). Keep using effective communication, such as giving concrete explanations and the purpose of the activity, to avoid the orientation of gifts from the effort he did (reduce internal motivation). In addition, parents are also expected to be able to learn to express emotions verbally and teach about the language of effective communication with others.

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