

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT'S LEARNING BEHAVIOUR
THROUGH OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING

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DEDICATION

This project report is dedicated to both my parents, of whom without them I am not the person I am today. Their endless love, support and sacrifices have kept me going even in the darkest of days.

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The path towards the completion of this project report is no walk in the park. There have been days where I have questioned almost everything that I do. I am therefore deeply indebted to so many people that there is no way to acknowledge them all. Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zainudin bin Abu Bakar, for his wisdom, patience, and guidance throughout my research study period. I am also eternally thankful to my family: Papa, Mama, Marvin, Vina and baby Elise, for their care, support and understanding, as well as assuring me that I am never alone. Special thanks too to A, for making my life so special and full of joy. To my classmates, friends, and relatives, thank you for your constant words of encouragement, support and assistance.

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It is truly a blessing to have such caring people with me throughout my journey in obtaining a Master's Degree. No words could truly describe how grateful I am to have all these support in my life. God bless all of you.

“At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.”

- Albert Schweitzer

ABSTRACT

Based on the social learning theory and observational learning concept, children will learn certain behaviours through imitating role models. Similar to other forms of social behaviour, they will acquire learning behaviours in the same way either through observing others or through direct experience. Therefore, the parents' perception on observational learning as well as their own learning practices may be reflected in their children and act as live models for related learning behaviours. The lack of previous research and evidence in implications of parent's perceptions of observational learning and subsequently whether or not they regularly practice it at home towards a child's learning behaviour makes it imperative to explore deeper into this matter. Hence, the purpose of the current study is to investigate the relationship between parent's perception of learning through example and their learning practices. In addition, the relationship between parent's perception of learning through example and the adolescents' learning through observation has also been investigated. A quantitative research method was implemented, which involves the distribution of questionnaires to 469 secondary school students from 5 schools in Kuching, Sarawak, specifically in Form 1, Form 2 and Form 4, along with 469 parents. The findings obtained revealed that the parents' perception of observational learning indicated a positive perception of learning through example, and that the parents' have a high understanding on the good learning practices. A correlation analysis revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between parent's perception of learning through example and their learning practices. However, no significant relationship was found between parent's perception of learning through example and the adolescents' learning through observation. The findings have clearly demonstrated how perception plays an important role in a parent's life which can influence their own behaviours and decisions on a child's development. Additionally, findings from this study are particularly useful for parents, caregivers and educators as it can help them understand about perception and its correlation with behavior.

ABSTRAK

Berdasarkan teori pembelajaran sosial dan konsep pembelajaran pemerhatian, kanak-kanak akan mempelajari tingkah laku tertentu hasil daripada tiruan model contoh. Serupa dengan tingkah laku sosial yang lain, mereka akan memperoleh tingkah laku pembelajaran dengan cara yang sama dengan memerhatikan orang lain atau melalui pengalaman langsung. Oleh itu, persepsi ibu bapa terhadap pembelajaran pemerhatian serta amalan pembelajaran mereka sendiri dapat dilihat pada anak mereka sebagai model nyata untuk tingkah laku pembelajaran yang berkaitan. Kekurangan penyelidikan lepas dan bukti dalam implikasi persepsi ibu bapa terhadap pembelajaran pemerhatian dan seterusnya terhadap tingkah laku pembelajaran menjadikan penyelidikan ini sebagai sesuatu yang mustahak. Oleh itu, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan antara persepsi ibu bapa terhadap pembelajaran melalui contoh dan amalan pembelajaran mereka. Di samping itu, hubungan antara persepsi ibu bapa terhadap pembelajaran melalui teladan dan pembelajaran anak melalui pemerhatian juga telah diterokai. Kaedah penyelidikan kuantitatif dilaksanakan, yang melibatkan pengedaran boring soal selidik kepada 469 pelajar sekolah menengah dalam Tingkatan 1, Tingkatan 2 dan Tingkatan 4 dari 5 buah sekolah di Kuching, Sarawak bersama dengan 469 ibu bapa. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa persepsi ibu bapa terhadap pembelajaran pemerhatian adalah positif, dan ibu bapa mempunyai pemahaman yang tinggi mengenai amalan pembelajaran yang baik. Analisis korelasi menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan positif yang signifikan antara persepsi ibu bapa terhadap pembelajaran melalui pemerhatian dan amalan pembelajaran mereka. Namun, tidak ada hubungan yang signifikan antara persepsi ibu bapa terhadap pembelajaran melalui pemerhatian dan proses pembelajaran melalui pemerhatian yang dialami oleh anak-anak mereka. Hasil kajian menunjukkan dengan jelas bagaimana persepsi memainkan peranan yang penting dalam kehidupan ibu bapa yang dapat mempengaruhi tingkah laku dan keputusan mereka sendiri terhadap perkembangan kanak-kanak. Selain itu, penemuan dari kajian ini sangat berguna bagi ibu bapa, pengasuh serta pendidik kerana dapat membantu mereka memahami dengan lebih lanjut tentang persepsi dan hubungannya dengan tingkah laku.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	TITLE	PAGE
	DECLARATION	iii
	DEDICATION	iv
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
	ABSTRACT	vi
	ABSTRAK	vii
	TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
	LIST OF TABLES	xii
	LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
	LIST OF APPENDICES	xiv
CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	1
	1.1 Introduction	1
	1.2 Background of Problem	4
	1.3 Statement of Problem	6
	1.4 Research Objectives	7
	1.5 Research Questions	7
	1.6 Research Hypothesis	8
	1.7 Theoretical Framework	9
	1.7.1 Theoretical Framework of Observational Learning Theory	10
	1.7.2 Theoretical Framework of Perception	12
	1.8 Conceptual Framework	14
	1.9 Rationale of Study	14
	1.10 Significance of Research	15
	1.10.1 Benefits to Parents of Caregivers	15
	1.10.2 Contribution to Existing Knowledge	16
	1.11 Scope and Limitations of Research	16

1.12	Operational Definition	17
1.12.1	Parent’s perception towards Learning through Example	17
1.12.2	Learning Practices of Parents	18
1.12.3	Observational Learning in Children	18
1.13	Conclusion	19
CHAPTER 2	LITERATURE REVIEW	21
2.1	Introduction	21
2.2	Social Learning Theory	21
2.3	Observational Learning Theory	26
2.4	Observational Learning Effects: Inhibitory and Disinhibitory Effects	30
2.5	Learning Behaviours	30
2.6	Implications of Observational Learning on Children’s Learning Behaviour	31
CHAPTER 3	METHODOLOGY	33
3.1	Introduction	33
3.2	Research Design	33
3.3	Population	35
3.4	Sampling	36
3.5	Instrument	38
3.5.1	Parent’s Perception of Learning through Example Questionnaire	38
3.5.2	Parent’s Learning Practices Questionnaire	39
3.5.3	Observational Learning Questionnaire	39
3.6	Pilot Study	40
3.7	Validity and Reliability	41
3.8	Data Collection Procedure	42
3.9	Data Analysis Techniques	43
3.9.1	Descriptive Statistical Analysis	43
3.9.2	Inferential Statistical Analysis	44

	3.9.2.1	Correlation	44
3.10		Conclusion	45
CHAPTER 4		DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	47
4.1		Introduction	47
4.2		Data Analysis	47
	4.2.1	Demographic Profiles of Respondents	48
		4.2.1.1 Demographic Profiles of Parents	48
		4.2.1.2 Demographic Profiles of Students	50
	4.2.2	Descriptive Statistical Analysis	51
		4.2.2.1 Descriptives Statistical Analysis of Parent's Perception of Learning through Example	51
		4.2.2.2 Descriptives Statistical Analysis of Parent's Learning Practices	53
		4.2.2.3 Descriptives Statistical Analysis of Observational Learning in Adolescents	55
4.3		Inferential Statistical Analysis	59
	4.3.1	Data Normality Analysis	60
	4.3.2	Pearson Correlation Test	61
		4.3.2.1 Pearson Correlation Analysis between Parents' Perception on Learning through Example and Parent's Learning Practices	61
		4.3.2.2 Pearson Correlation Analysis between Parents' Perception on Learning through Example and Observational Learning in Adolescents	62
4.4		Conclusion	63
CHAPTER 5		DISCUSSION	65
5.1		Introduction	65
5.2		Summary of Findings	65

5.3	Discussion on Research Objectives	68
5.3.1	Parents' Perception on Observational Learning	68
5.3.2	Parents' Learning Practices	70
5.3.3	The Relationship between a Parent's Perception on Learning through Example and the Parents' Learning Practices	72
5.3.4	The Relationship between a Parent's Perception on Learning through Example and the Observational Learning in Adolescents	74
5.4	Implications of Research	76
5.4.1	Theoretical Implications	77
5.4.2	Implications of Research Findings	78
5.4.2.1	Implication towards Parents and Caregivers	79
5.4.2.2	Implication towards Educators	79
5.4.2.3	Implication towards Adolescents	79
5.4.3	Suggestions	80
5.4.4	Recommendations for future research	81
5.4.5	Contributions of research	83
5.5	Summary	84
	REFERENCES	85

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
Table 3.1	Determining Sample Size from a Given Population by Krejcie & Morgan (1970)	37
Table 3.2	Reliability Scores of Scales	41
Table 4.1	Gender Demographics of Parents	48
Table 4.2	Age of Parents	48
Table 4.3	Education Level of Parents	49
Table 4.4	Employment Status of Parents	49
Table 4.5	Gender Demographics of Students	50
Table 4.6	Age of Students	50
Table 4.7	Grade Level of Students	50
Table 4.8	Analysis of Items in Parent's Perception of Learning through Example	51
Table 4.9	Analysis of Items in Parent's Learning Practices	53
Table 4.10	Analysis of Items for the Observational Learning in Adolescents	56
Table 4.11	Normality Analysis	60
Table 4.12	Pearson Correlation r-value Range	61
Table 4.13	Correlation between Parent's Perception of Learning through Example and Their Learning Practices	61
Table 4.14	Correlation between Parent's Perception of Learning through Example and Adolescents' Observational Learning	62
Table 5.1	Summary of Hypothesis Results	67

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
Figure 1.1	Theoretical Framework of Observational Learning Theory	9
Figure 1.2	Theoretical Framework of Perception	10
Figure 1.3	Conceptual Framework	14

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX	TITLE	PAGE
Appendix A	Approval Letter from Malaysian Ministry of Education	93
Appendix B	Approval Letter from Sarawak Education Department	94
Appendix C	Survey Introduction for Parents	95
Appendix D	Demographics Information Questionnaire for Parents	96
Appendix E	Parent's Perception of Learning through Example Questionnaire	97
Appendix F	Parent's Learning Practices Questionnaire	102
Appendix G	Survey Introduction for Students	107
Appendix H	Demographics Information Questionnaire for Students	108
Appendix I	Observational Learning Questionnaire for Students	109

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The role of the environment has been emphasized in the individual formation of an individual (Teh & Otman, 2018). According to Bandura's social learning theory (1977), a certain behavior exhibited by an individual is the result of the interaction between three factors: human, human habits, and the environment. Bandura (1977) presented an argument that even though there are existing interactions between the three factors, those factors cannot operate independently. Any one of the three factors could potentially carry more influence compared to the others at a certain time in order to produce something. Feelings, values and behaviors in humans are shaped through the observation of what the members in a community or society are doing.

Bandura (1997) also considers that it is through imitation that children and teenagers alike will learn a lot. Subsequent behaviors as they enter adolescence will be the outcome of child care experience. Therefore, most behavior exhibited by teenagers is in line with the needs of parents as well as the community.

Albert Bandura (1986) provided a proposition in which individuals can acquire certain behaviours through a similar mechanism as they do with other complex forms of social behaviors by first-hand experience and observing others. This process is more specifically known as observational learning (Young, 2014). The area of research surrounding the impact of parental and caregivers' behaviours on children's behaviours is therefore worth exploring further.

Before looking into the attainment of learning behaviour, attention must first be brought towards understanding the formation of behaviour in an individual. To start,

there have been various studies done involving the “Bobo doll” in which adults were required to behave either aggressively towards the doll (kicking or hitting it with a hammer) or interacting peacefully towards it. Concurrently, a number of children witnessed how these adults interacted with the doll. Based on Albert Bandura’s theory, he predicted that children would behave the same way towards the doll as what they had initially observed the adults were doing. Had the adults been aggressive towards the doll, the children would act the same way and vice versa. Results from those studies concluded that children learn behaviors from adults, and therefore when it comes to the formation of behavior in children, parents could potentially have the biggest impact.

In the context of education, the characters found in the learner’s environment must be in line with the attributes that an academic program aims to convey to students in order to ensure proper and effective transmission of education goals and objectives, attitudes, skills and aptitude, mainly because the environment carries a heavy influence over the learning outcomes of the students (Edinyang, 2016). Having the capability to model after a character that is deemed as desirable will both build the learner’s confidence and character, as well as determine the lengths to which a learner will be accepted within the school and the community, hence, moving towards the direction of academic goals achievement.

Based on the social learning theory and observational learning concept, children will learn certain behaviours through imitating role models. Therefore, similar to other forms of social behaviour, they will acquire learning behaviours in the same way either through observing others or through direct experience. Therefore, the parents’ perception on observational learning as well as their own practices in daily life with regards to learning will be reflected in their children as they will act as live models for related learning behaviours.

For the current study, it is hypothesised that there is a relationship between parents’ perception on observational learning and their practices in learning or daily life towards the acquisition of learning behaviour in children. Perception is essential in comprehending our environment and understanding the surrounding events helps in

acting effectively. Ultimately, adaptive perception functions towards the functional behavioral response to the environment.

From the evolutionary perspective, human development as a species has shown that perceptual abilities and functions developed as humans started to behave (Dijksterhuis & Bargh, 2001). Perception is summarised as a component for “doing” and it acts as the best guide for our action as well as a control device. Therefore, it was concluded that there is indeed an express connection between the perceptual input and the behavioural output.

Perception is thought to have an effect on the subsequent actions of an individual. With this statement in mind, a parent’s perception of observational learning therefore acts as a guide as to how they themselves would respond and act with regards to learning behaviour. Supposing a parent perceives that observational learning is an important aspect in the development of behaviour of his or her child, guided by their perception, they would then act in a way that encourages good learning behaviour. This good learning behaviour is then observed by their children and may potentially be fabricated in the children themselves.

The opposite end is true as well. Parents who perceive negatively towards observational learning would disregard the importance of setting good examples and being good role models for the children in the educational aspect. This negative perception leads them to place low importance in their own learning behaviour which would then be learned and imitated by their children. As children pick this behaviour up, similar to the behaviour exhibited by their parents, they would disregard the importance of good learning behaviour as well.

It is apparent that there is an existing intercorrelation between the three components, which are the environment, the behaviour and the person itself, and this can be described better as reciprocal determinism. The reciprocal determinism proposed by Albert Bandura suggests that the three components interact continually with one another and reciprocally influence each other (Cherry, 2018).

Based on the theory of social learning and observational learning as well as previous research surrounding this area, it is clear that there is indeed a link between parent's behaviour and subsequent child behaviour as they learn from and imitate parental behavior. There is still however a lack of evidence with regards to identifying what exactly are the main factors encompassed in parental behaviour that could have an impact on learning behaviour in children. More specifically, the absence of previous research regarding the implications of parent's perceptions of observational learning and subsequently whether or not they regularly practice it at home towards a child's learning behaviour makes it imperative to explore deeper into this matter.

1.2 Background of Problem

The learning behaviour in children maintains the link between the way children and young people learn with their behaviour and social knowledge. How a student behaves with regards to their learning will have an impact on the learning outcomes. Additionally, the interaction between the learner's thinking, feelings and interactions will influence the learning behaviour (Powell & Tod, 2004). Good learning behaviours were described as being able to stay on-task on academic work as well as possessing "engagement, collaboration, participation, communication, motivation, independent activity, responsiveness, self-regard, self-esteem, and responsibility, in addition to the avoidance of disruptiveness and disaffection" (Powell & Tod, 2004).

The learning behaviour approach is grounded to a view that the 'behaviour' exhibited in the classroom and whole schools' settings will not occur on its own, but rather, as a product of various influences and not solely the outcome of a child's unwillingness to learn or behave as instructed by the teacher (Northampton Centre for Learning Behaviour, 2012). The social learning theories therefore suggest that learners who are exposed to appropriate behaviours will encourage the achievement of goals and objectives of the curriculum, and will therefore nurture students possessing the right behaviour, attitudes and values (Edinyang, 2016).

Horsburgh & Ippolito (2018) attempted to probe into medical students' and clinical teachers' understanding of learning through role modelling. It was found that those students were able to describe ways in which they have learnt from role models. They however agree that it was rather complex and haphazard. Additionally, they described that they selectively and consciously paid attention to the role models, specifically using retention strategies, reproducing observed behaviour and having the motivation to imitate. There was evidence from this study on the powerful impact of direct and vicarious reinforcement.

Going towards the educational context, a study was carried out by Samsudin et. al (2017), in which they attempted to determine if Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory can be applied when teaching academic writing. Basing the theory towards the teaching of writing, it was assumed that students are able to learn to write a specific text solely through the observation of structure as well as the linguistic features of that text. Through this observation, it was hypothesised that as the written text is observed, students can gain an idea on its formation, and can later use this information as a guide when producing resembling texts in the future. The results from this study proved that the human natural learning process can indeed be explained through social learning theory, and therefore approaches to educating students on writing skills should be based on this theory. Additionally, the study suggests that it is through observational learning of sample texts that students can obtain guidance on improving their writing skills as they gain awareness on the different organization techniques for different communicative purposes.

In a separate but related study, Harris & Goodall (2008) investigated the impact of innovative work with parents towards student achievement. Results from the study indicated that while getting parents involved in school activities benefits the social and community function, the biggest impact parents could have towards a positive difference in learning outcomes is through the engagement of parents in learning in the home. With regards to student achievement at school, parents who are deeply engaged in their children's learning at home will make the greatest positive difference.

Similarly, Li & Qiu (2018) hypothesised in their study that children's learning habits can be cultivated through parenting behavior and educational support which

would have an effect on a child's academic performance. It was revealed that the parent's education participation has a significant positive impact on the learning behaviour of children learning. A more active children's learning behavior is cultivated through parents' positive behaviour and participation in education.

The social learning theory upholds that a person is able to acquire new behaviours by observing and imitating others. Therefore, with regards to learning behaviours, it is hypothesized in this study that the manner in which a child is able to acquire learning behaviours is linked with the parent's perception on observational learning and their own learning practices at home, which will then be imitated by their children.

1.3 Statement of Problem

The problem being researched is that behaviors in children, such as learning behaviour, have been linked to occur from observing the acts of others (Bandura, 1986). Most human behavior is learned by observation through modelling. By observing others, one forms rules of behavior, and on future occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action.

More specifically on the family level, a child will act as observers and can obtain new patterns of behaviour simply by observing the performance of parents, resulting in learning that could be in the form of judgmental standards, new behaviour patterns, cognitive competencies as well as generative rules for creating behaviours (Bandura, 1989). In the context of education, a parent's behaviour towards learning could be taken up by their children as they act as models for this behaviour which will then be imitated.

This study will attempt to investigate the relationship between parent's perception of observational learning and learning practices towards the learning behaviour of children. Understanding the perceptions of parents towards observational learning is important because it provides an insight on their views towards this concept.

Since their subsequent behaviour is a product of their individual perceptions, it is therefore important to collect and investigate the information pertaining to their perceptions of observational learning to help us understand the link with their own practices towards learning.

By understanding their perceptions and own learning practices, the effect towards observational learning of learning behaviour by children can then be identified. Despite the importance of understanding the underlying mechanisms towards observational learning of learning behaviour in children, there is still a lack of research pertaining to this area. Addressing the problem of lack of research will not only benefit parents and caregivers, it can also contribute to the existing knowledge relating to observational learning.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- i. To identify the perception of parents on learning through example.
- ii. To examine a parent's learning practices in daily life.
- iii. To determine the relationship between a parent's perception on learning through example and their learning practices.
- iv. To determine the relationship between a parent's perception on learning through example and the observational learning in adolescents.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions will be investigated in the study:

- i. What are the perceptions of parents on observational learning?
- ii. What are the learning practices of parents in their daily life?

- iii. What is the relationship between a parent's perception on learning through example and their learning practices?
- iv. What is the relationship between a parent's perception on learning through example and the observational learning in adolescents?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

From the four stated research questions, there two research hypotheses that will be investigated are as follows:

The hypothesis H_{01} below is based on the third research question.

H_{01} : There is no relationship between a parent's perception on learning through example and their learning practices.

Meanwhile the hypothesis H_{02} below is based on the fourth research question.

H_{02} : There is no relationship between a parent's perception on learning through example and the observational learning in adolescents.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

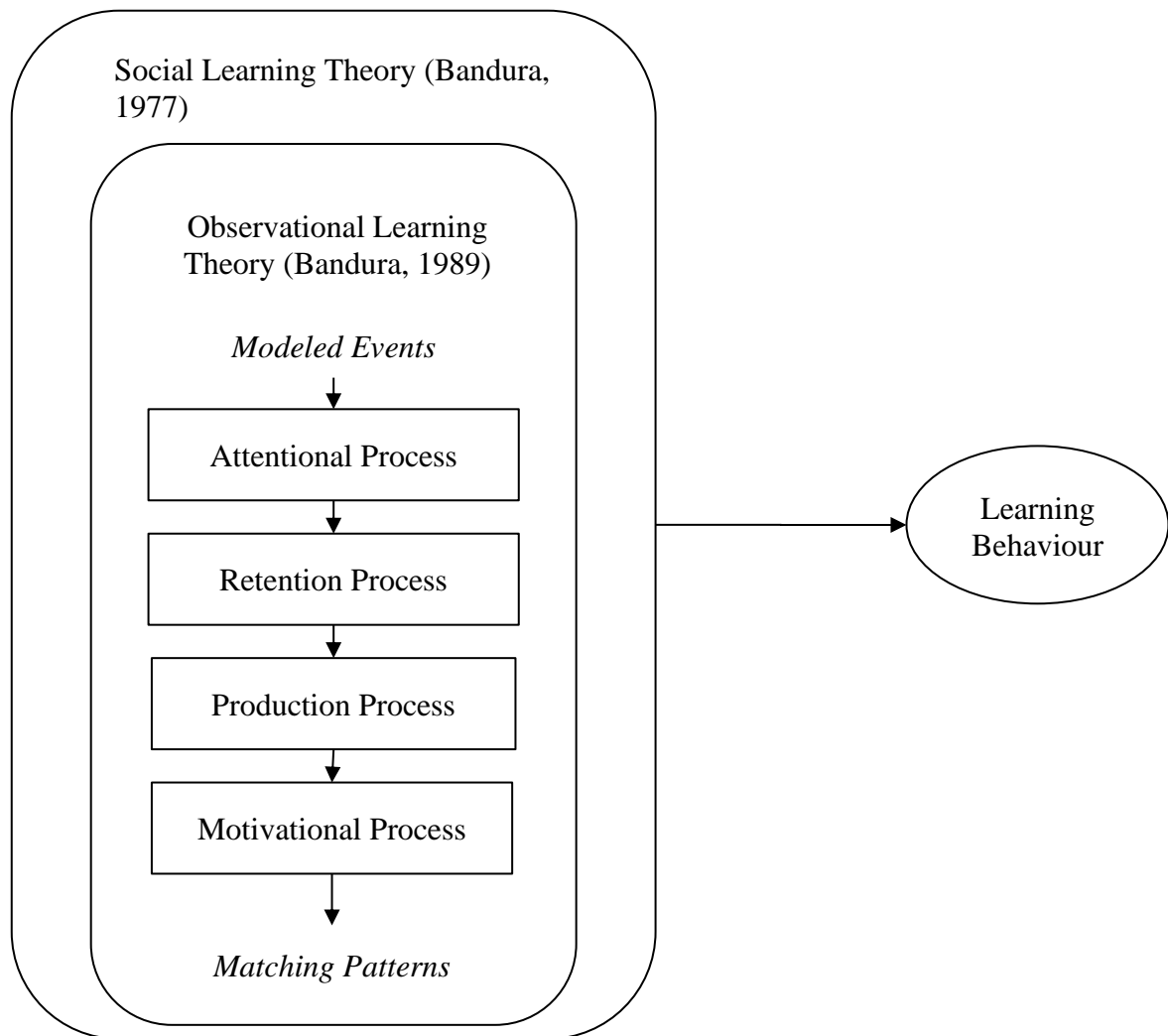


Figure 1.1 Theoretical Framework of Observational Learning Theory

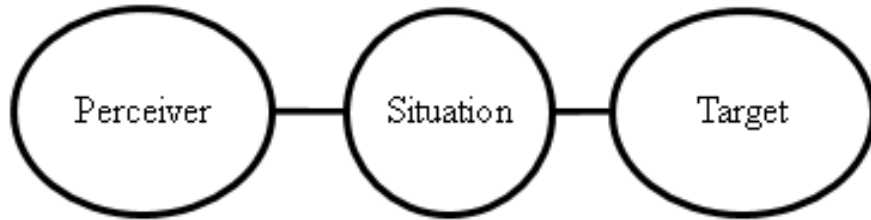


Figure 1.2 Theoretical Framework of Perception

This research is carried out based on the Observational Learning Theory (Bandura, 1989) which is a subset of the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) and will be elaborated further in subtopic 1.7.1. Additionally, this research is also based on the concept of Perception which will be discussed in subtopic 1.7.2. The overall theoretical framework is shown in Figure 1 and 2 above.

1.7.1 Theoretical Framework of Observational Learning Theory

Observational learning is a learning method that involves observing and modeling another person's behavior, attitudes, or emotional expressions (Stone, n.d.). Observational learning is a major component under the social learning theory by Bandura (1977). Bandura (1989) asserts that learning involves information-processing activity whereby information concerning the structure of behaviour and about environmental events is transformed into symbolic representations that functions to guide a certain action. In the social cognitive analysis within observational learning, the influences of modelling operate primarily through the informative function. One of the effective ways to convey information about the rules for producing new behaviour is through a model of thought and action.

Observational learning is regulated by four essential processes, which are: *Attentional process*, which regulates exploration and perception of modeled activities; *retention process*, which converts transitory experiences into symbolic conceptions for memory representation that serve as internal models for response production and standards for response correction; *production processes*, which regulate the organization of constituent sub skills into new response patterns; and lastly *motivation*

processes, which specifies whether or not competencies acquired through observation will be put to use.

In order for an observer to imitate a certain model, it is crucial that the observer is able to pay attention to the model's behavior, retain important information regarding the behaviour, have the capability to produce similar actions, and possess the motivation to reproduce the action. Imitation (but not necessary learning) will not occur if any stage is missing (Levy, n.d.).

Human beings rely heavily on their vision and hearing in order to respond and adapt to environmental demands. The ability to imitate what we see or hear depends on whether or not we attend to crucial elements of modeled behavior. The level and rate of observational learning will be influenced by the discriminability, salience, and complexity of modeled activities (Bandura, 1989).

Learning experience obtained previously, in the form of perceived similarity to oneself, will have a significant impact on the probability of attending to different models in one's environment (Levy, n.d.). There is a higher likeliness for an individual to attend to individuals of the same sex, age, race, ethnicity, social class, and other variables. Additionally, people are more likely to pay attention to "authority figures" or "role models", earned or assigned.

Next, with the words of Bandura (1989), people simply cannot be greatly impacted through observing modeled activities if they cannot remember them. The second major process which governs observational learning pertains to the retention of knowledge about previous modeled activities, shown at one time of another. In order for observers to imitate or learn from the behaviour of others when the models are no longer present, the information from that behaviour must be represented in the memory through symbolic form. Transitory modeling experiences can then be maintained through the medium of symbols in permanent memory. Humans are able to learn much of their behaviour by observation due to the advanced capacity for symbolization.

The process of retention comprises the active restructuring and transformation of information about certain events (Bandura, 1989). Most observed activities contain

many copious or irrelevant details that are just too much to be retained exactly as portrayed. In response to this, observers therefore need to transform what they have observed into compact symbols to capture the essential features and structures of modeled activities.

The third process of observational learning pertains to production. This component demands the conversion of symbolic conceptions (from the retention process) into appropriate actions (Bandura, 1989). A proper analysis of conceptual-motor mechanisms of performance is needed to fully understand the representational guidance of enactments. A majority of modeled activities are abstractly represented in the form of conceptions and rules of actions which function to indicate what should be done. By organizing responses with regards to the conception of activity, behavioural production is achieved.

With regards to the last process which is the motivational process, based on the social cognitive theory, acquisition and performance are distinguishable. The distinction between them is emphasized because people do not execute everything that they have learned (Bandura, 1989). People may acquire and store the capability to enact modeled activities but ultimately rarely or never actually perform them. When the acquired behaviour carries high risk of punishment or has little functional value, the discrepancies between learning and performance will most like occur. Observational learning, which was previously unexpressed, will be promptly translated into action when positive incentives are provided.

1.7.2 Theoretical Framework of Perception

Perception is the method of processing our senses' signals to provide the environment with order and meaning. Perception helps to filter out and arrange the dynamic and diverse input that our senses of sight, scent, touch, taste, and hearing receive (Solso et al, 2013). Interpreting is the key term in this context. Actions are frequently based on the interpretation of reality that their perceptual system provides,

instead of basing it on reality itself. The perception one holds on the environment will influence his or her behaviours.

There are three components of perception: (1) the perceiver, (2) the target, (3) the situation context of the perception occurrence. Firstly, the perceiver will encounter needs, emotions and experiences that may influence the perceptions of a target (Solso et al., 2013). Experience is one of the perceiver's most significant characteristics that affects his or her impressions of a target. Past interactions contribute to the creation of aspirations by the perceiver, and these expectations shape present beliefs. Often, we are led to perceive what we want to perceive due to our needs unconsciously affecting our perceptions, and that certain emotions can influence our perceptions.

Secondly, perception requires the comprehension and the adding of meaning to the target, in which this interpretation and addition are highly likely to occur in uncertain targets (Solso et al., 2013). Perceivers have a need to address those uncertainties. All the information given by the target is not or cannot always be used by the perceiver. In these cases, greater precision could not be met from a decrease in complexity. Thirdly, in any situational context, every instance of perception exists, and this context will affect what one interprets. Adding information concerning with the target is the most significant impact that the situation will have.

Perceptions play an important role in a parent's life and can influence their behaviour and decisions, as well as how a child's development is evaluated. Parents form perceptions during the process of educating their children, and their perceptions influence their behaviour, specifically on how they act around their children. If a parent perceives that their children carefully watch their actions and may imitate them, the parent will act more cautiously around them while attempting to exhibit good behaviours.

Likewise, if a parent does not perceive that children will learn through observations, they will not place importance onto setting good examples for their children. Different people have distinct ways of thought, values, feelings and aspirations, where almost every person will act accordingly. Different individuals will have multiple interpretations for the same things simply because of these variables.

These variations of interpretations are because of how people view things and subsequently the variations of decisions and behaviour will follow.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

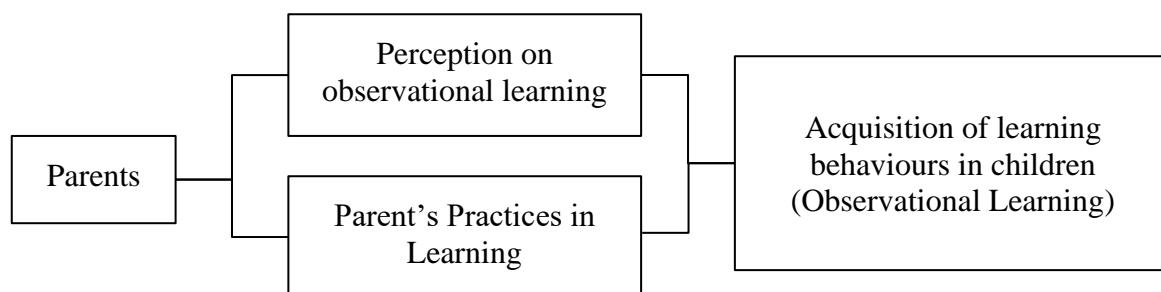


Figure 1.3 Conceptual Framework

Figure 3 shows the conceptual framework of the research study, which defines the input, process, and output for the current study. This conceptual framework presents the main components that the researcher will focus on, which are the parents, perception on observational learning, practices in learning and the acquisition of learning behaviours. The input, which are the parents and adolescents, will provide important information on the perception of observational learning and practices in learning.

1.9 Rationale of Study

The rationale behind this study being carried out is to describe how learning behaviors are developed in adolescents through observational learning. This study attempts to identify specifically the impact of parent's perception on learning through example towards parents' learning practices as well as towards adolescents' observational learning.

Based on the Social Learning Theory and Observational Learning, we know that there is a definite link between parent's behaviour and how a child can learn from as well as imitate parental behavior. However, the lack of evidence in impacting factors from parental behaviour that could affect the learning behaviour in adolescents specifically the implications of parent's perceptions of observational learning and learning practices at home towards a child's learning behaviour makes it necessary to explore further.

A study which aims to collect such information, especially on how learning behaviours manifest through parent's perceptions and practise in learning is warranted.

1.10 Significance of Research

This study was carried out based on several factors that contribute to its rationale. Various parties such as parents, caregivers and the general public could benefit from the research findings. Additionally, these findings can contribute to the current existing knowledge pertaining to the theories of social learning and observational learning.

1.10.1 Benefits to Parents or Caregivers

The main idea for this study is that the real-life experiences and exposures of a child will directly and indirectly shape their behaviour. For younger children especially, the primary source of these experiences is in the context of the parent-child relationship and the family environment. More specifically, the parent's own perception and practices pertaining to observational learning of learning behaviour could potentially shape how the adolescents themselves behave when it comes to academics. Therefore, findings from this study could provide an insight on the issues that the parents should be aware of, such as the contributing factors in a parent-child relationship and how the child's learning behaviour are shaped from this interaction.

It is hoped that through these findings, parents would be able to mould their child's learning behaviour by being good and reliable models for their children.

1.10.2 Contribution to Existing Knowledge

The findings from this study is believed to have the ability to contribute greatly in the knowledge of how observational learning occurs in the learning behaviour context. More specifically, it can provide an insight on how learning behaviours manifest through parent's perceptions and practices in learning. Previous research pertaining to the impacting factors from parental behaviour that could affect the learning behaviour in adolescents specifically the implications of parent's perceptions of observational learning and learning practices at home towards a child's learning behaviour is still scarce especially in the Malaysian context.

1.11 Scope and Limitations of Research

This research generally aims to identify the relationship between parent's perception on learning through example towards parent's learning practices in daily life and adolescents' observational learning. This research was also carried out based on a certain degree of limitations and focus towards the scope that has been specified. The limitation includes the aspect of research sample, variables and research instrument.

In order to obtain the necessary data pertaining to the perception of parents on observational learning and parent's learning practices in daily life towards the acquisition of adolescents' learning behaviour, the study will only involve the factors of parent's perception and parent's learning practices. Other factors that may contribute towards how adolescents acquire learning behaviours will not be explored.

The sample for this research is 469 secondary school students. Meanwhile, the sample of schools that is involved is 5 total number of schools from Kuching, Sarawak. Similarly, a sample size of 469 parents who were parents of the participating students are also involved in the study.

In addition, the study would be carried out through the distribution of questionnaires to the students and their parents as a method of survey and reference. Through this strategy, it is hoped that the researcher will be able to identify the relationship of parent's perception on learning through example towards parent's learning practices in daily life and adolescents' observational learning.

1.12 Operational Definition

1.12.1 Parent's perception towards Learning through Example

Perception has been defined operationally as an individual's or group's unique way of witnessing a phenomenon, which involves stimuli processing (Walker & Avant as cited in McDonald, 2011). Perception will involve the incorporation of experiences as well as memories in the understanding process. In a qualitative research, it involves the understanding of a certain phenomenon within the interest of the research. Quantitative studies on the other hand aims to examine what is perceived by a targeted population to explain certain behaviours.

For this research, the parent's perception towards observational learning refers to the parent's awareness and understanding of observational learning as well as their acknowledgment of observational learning as a factor towards the attainment of learning behaviours in adolescents.

1.12.2 Learning Practices of Parents

In the context of education, learning practices refer to the strategies and techniques used and implemented in academics. For this research, learning practices refers to the steps and practices taken by parents in the context of academics, for example, frequent reading and homework encouragement.

1.12.3 Observational Learning in Children

Powell & Todd (2004) described good learning behaviours as possessing “engagement, collaboration, participation, communication, motivation, independent activity, responsiveness, self-regard, self-esteem, and responsibility, in addition to the avoidance of disruptiveness and disaffection”. These behaviours are also described as being able to stay on-task on academic work. The learning outcomes of a child bears on how a student behaves with regards to their learning habits.

In the current research, learning behaviours in adolescents refers to the behaviours of adolescents that will have an effect on their learning patterns and academic achievement. The student’s learning behaviors involve actions or habits that pertain to their resourcefulness, creative thinking, imaginative activities, love for their learning, as well as high interest for reading and writing. These learning behaviours are hypothesized to be learned through observing, which has been described by Bandura (1989) to be regulated by four essential processes, which are: (1) Attentional process; (2) retention process; (3) production processes; and lastly (4) motivation processes. With relations to these processes, factors that could potentially affect the acquisition of learning behavior through observational learning includes attention, reinforcement for paying attention, reproduction and personal characteristics of model.

1.13 Conclusion

This chapter describes the introduction, background of problem and problem statement for the study, whereby the objectives are recognised along with its rationale, significance and limitations. In the next chapter, an in-depth literature review will be presented regarding the observational learning of learning behaviours.

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