

---

## Application of Behaviorism Theory in Dakwah

*Qudratullah*

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Bone

[qudratullah@iain-bone.ac.id](mailto:qudratullah@iain-bone.ac.id)

### **Abstract**

*This research aims to examine the application of behaviorist theory in the practice of da'wah by exploring da'wah communication through the application of the principles of behaviorism. How the right stimulus can stimulate the desired response from the audience becomes the central question. Environmental influences, both social and cultural, are also important aspects to understand in the context of da'wah. How this environment can act as a stimulus that shapes religious behavior. This research uses qualitative research and a literature approach. Data was collected through relevant literature sources. The data has been analyzed through data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that the application of behaviorist theory in da'wah can help achieve the goals of da'wah by looking at the influence of the environment on mad'u behavior. Behaviorism emphasizes the use of da'wah methods that are more measurable, can change individual behavior significantly through stimulus and response such as the use of motivating lectures, the formation of worship habits, or the use of positive reinforcement to encourage participation in da'wah activities, by creating a relatable environment. Behaviorism theory is applied by providing reinforcement for desired or undesirable behavior in preaching. Forming habits in preaching can be done by repeating the desired behavior continuously. Classical conditioning can also be done by associating preaching behavior with certain stimuli, such as certain environments or situations.*

**Keywords:** *Behaviorism; Da'wah; Stimulus; Response; Psychology.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Da'wah, often synonymous with speaking on the pulpit by facing the crowd and delivering messages of kindness. But along with the development of mass media, da'wah is not a product that is always delivered on the pulpit (Qudratullah, 2019). In an increasingly advanced era like today, technological developments have brought many changes to the world of da'wah. Preaching is not only structural and rigid, just standing on a pulpit and delivering preaching material. The delivery of da'wah is not only from stage to stage, but has also been supported by developments in technology and information (Fakhruroji, 2017).

Moreover, humans today use a lot of technology in their daily lives, including in da'wah activities (Qudratullah, 2020). Da'wah has a very important role as a means of conveying Islamic law and good values to the community and their views of man and all changes that

occurred after the da'wah was delivered to mad'u, either directly or indirectly. Da'wah has experienced progress and development, despite facing various kinds of problems.

A dai, in carrying out his missionary duties, must face the fact that the people he preaches certainly have a variety of characters, experiences, thoughts, environments, and other things. Therefore, for da'wah to be effective, dai needs to understand what it is like mad'u that he will face. Da'wah aims to change attitudes, views, and behavior mad'u, so you know psychology mad'u to be something important (Arifin, 1997). From a psychological point of view, da'wah is a process of transformation in society. From a da'wah perspective, psychology has provided guidelines for formulating the selection of material, the objectives of preaching, and determining the methods used. For a preacher, understanding Mad'u's psychology can help analyze various problems in studying behavior mad'u critically and provide a broader understanding of behavior or behavior mad'u.

There are several theories in psychology that discuss human behavior, one of which is behaviorism theory. Behaviorism theory emphasizes individual behavior rather than the brain and nervous system. A popular idea in this theory is stimulus-response (S-R). Later, this theory became known as learning theory, learning means changes in the behavior of living things influenced by the environment (Enjang, 2008). So this article discusses the application of Behaviorist Theory in da'wah.

Behaviorism theory, in a psychological context, emphasizes behavior that can be observed and measured, with the belief that the environment influences human behavior. Meanwhile, da'wah is an effort to convey religious messages or moral values to bring people closer to Allah or increase spiritual awareness. The concept of applying behaviorist theory in da'wah refers to efforts to use behaviorist principles in conveying religious messages. The focus is on changing behavior and responses to preaching messages through the use of observable stimuli and responses.

This research is relevant because it aims to explore da'wah and communication through the application of behaviorist principles. How the right stimulus can stimulate the desired response from the audience becomes the central question. Environmental influences, both social and cultural, are also important aspects to understand in the context of da'wah. How this environment can act as a stimulus that shapes religious behavior.

The role of da'wah leaders in understanding the principles of behaviorism and applying them effectively in communicating with congregations is also the focus of research. In addition, this research tries to highlight the relevance of applying behaviorist theory in facing

contemporary challenges amidst the changing dynamics of modern society. By investigating and analyzing related literature, it is hoped that this research can contribute to further understanding of how the application of behaviorism theory can enrich and increase the effectiveness of da'wah in the context of today's society.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research data was collected by first collecting various relevant sources. This is what differentiates library and field research. This research uses library research which uses reading sources and literary data as the main data in studying a particular phenomenon or problem. This research uses library research which is directly exposed to texts and literature data, not in the form of findings by distributing questionnaires or interviews in the field (Zed, 2004).

This research examines the concept of behavioristic theory in its application to the practice of preaching. This research is exploratory in nature so it uses qualitative research, where the researcher is the key instrument (Sugiyono, 2014). The data that has been collected is then analyzed through data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions (Bungin, 2003).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Concept of Behaviorism Theory in Psychology***

Behaviorism was born as a formal psychology school in 1914, started by John Broadus Watson in the United States. Behaviorism means all behavior, behaviorism is a psychological theory that emphasizes visible behavior only (Prawira, 2016). Behaviorism prioritizes the function of learning in describing human behavior which is formed through stimulation based on the stimulus received which can create a response or response stimulus that can be observed, although during the learning process there are several mental changes that occur within a person but these changes are not considered because they cannot be observed (Asfar et al, 2021). Watson believes that human behavior is different because of different knowledge in learning, and he does not agree with the concepts of consciousness, instinct, mentality, soul and imagination. Stimulus is something given from outside, be it the situation, environment, hearing something, or feeling it. Meanwhile, a response is a response to a stimulus received that result in or creates a movement, either changing the atmosphere, feelings or thoughts.

Behaviorism's view of humans is humans as mechanical man or human machine. Humans are like machines that carry out their tasks without any motive behind them and machines work not because of subconscious impulses but work because of the system environment. According

to behaviorism theory, humans can be measured, described and predicted. Apart from instinct, all human behavior is the result of learning (Hermawan, 2021). Behaviorism doesn't care whether humans are rational or irrational, bad or good, but behaviorism only focuses on how human behavior is formed based on environment. For example, children who are often scared will grow up to be fearful children. From a learning perspective, this theory emphasizes human behavior as the impact of stimulus-response on the environment. This theory of behaviorism emphasizes human behavior which is considered to be formed as a result of learning, that is reward and reinforcement from the environment can control human behavior (Zulqarnain et al, 2022). A good environment will form good people, while a bad environment will form bad people too.

Ivan Petrovich Pavlov, a physiologist from Russia, conducted research on the saliva produced by dogs when they were fed. When Pavlov fed his dog, he noticed that the dog was always salivating even when he did not bring food. Initially Pavlov felt disturbed and intended to change his dog's habits. He trained the dog only to salivate when the bell rang to signal feeding time (Mu'minin et al, 2022).

From Pavlov's research it is known as classical conditioning, includes a learning process that associates a stimulus that produces a specific response with a new stimulus, so that this new stimulus causes the same response. A behavioral learning process is a long series of habitual responses, so there is a process of habituation, not a behavior resulting from autonomy. Some terms in this theory are: unconditioned stimulus is a natural stimulus that elicits a response unconditioned response without having to learn it, neutral stimulus is a stimulus that before conditioning does not naturally elicit an interesting response, conditioned stimulus (is a stimulus that was previously neutral and then associated with stimulus is not conditioned to create conditioned response (Haryanto, 2020).

In 1948, Burrhus Frederic Skinner conducted research with 8 pigeons in a box that had been designed. One side of the box is covered with soft material so that pigeons can peck at it and a distribution of food has been designed that can be controlled by Skinner. Previously, pigeons had learned to peck at the sides of boxes covered with soft material to obtain food. If the pigeon pecks at the soft layer, the food dispenser will provide food pellets. Then Skinner set the food dispenser every 15 seconds without any influence on the pigeons' behavior, six pigeons responded by repeatedly behaving abnormally. Another pigeon hopped around to get food while another pigeon bobbed its head. The more Skinner slowed down the feeder, the faster the pigeon's head bobbed (Jaavis, 2021). So Skinner has created a pigeon that makes no sense.

From research conducted by Skinner, the pigeons in the experiment learned to repeat certain behaviors because food came out after the behavior was carried out.

Based on experiments conducted by Skinner, he concluded that reinforcement was an important element in learning. This means that the knowledge formed from the stimulus-response relationship will be stronger if given reinforcement. Skinner divided this reinforcement into two, namely positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement (Shahbana et al, 2020). The form of positive reinforcement is in the form of affection, appreciation or gifts, while the form of negative reinforcement is in the form of physical punishment, verbal punishment or showing displeased behavior. From Skinner's research it is known as operant conditioning includes learning from the consequences of behavior. The required behavior is based on reflex and does not need to be learned. Operant conditioning is better suited to explain intentional behavior, as opposed to classical conditioning explaining how neutral stimuli are associated with unlearned or involuntary responses.

There is also Edward Lee Thorndike who has done research on cats. The cats are placed in one cage and then given fish which are placed outside the cage. In various ways, the cats tried to get out of the cage so they could reach the fish. Eventually, the cat stumbles on the bar and the cage opens and the cat heads to the feeder (Haryanto, 2004). From the experiments conducted by Thorndike, he created a trial and error theory, that is learning through trial and error. Learning often occurs through trial and error where someone carries out certain behavior because they have learned through the experiences they have gone through. Based on this experiment, cats tend to abandon actions that are futile or have no results. Each response causes a new stimulus, then this stimulus will cause another response, and so on.

Trial and error theory is often encountered in everyday life, for example, sometimes someone tries and tries things that then produce results and are considered successful, then this behavior tends to be repeated at other times. Then the trial and error that results in mistakes is less likely to be repeated. Thus, learning is a process of connecting physical and mental events in the nervous system. Physical events include everything that is the result of human sensory input in the form of stimuli and responses, while mental events in question are everything that is felt by the mind and heart.

The next theory in behaviorism is the social learning proposed by Albert Bandura. A person's behavior is learned or acquired by the socialization process, in which humans make observations. According to Albert, a person's behavior is not only due to automatic reflexes

between stimulus and response but also due to reactions that arise as a result of interactions between the environment and the individual. Moral and social learning usually goes through a process of imitation and presenting examples of behavior (Wahyuni & Fitriani, 2022). Apart from that, Albert still views the importance of the process conditioning, behavioral habits in the socialization process are important. Likewise with giving reward and punishment. When the social behavior performed brings reward then it tends to be repeated, while social behavior is what brings it punishment will be abandoned.

It is possible that the behavior that often appears becomes mechanical and automatic so that the person concerned and other people are no longer aware of either the stimulus that causes it or the consequences that are obtained. This behavior seems to be autonomous. Behaviorism theory has the following main characteristics (Saihu & Agus Mailana, 2019):

1. Mechanistic in nature, because behaviorism studies the mechanisms of changing a person's behavior.
2. Emphasize the role of the environment in shaping behavior. Based on the tabula rasa theory, it explains that humans are born like white paper where the environment provides the colors, patterns, images on the paper. Likewise with human behavior, the environment is what shapes it.
3. Emphasize practice, the more practice you do of a behavior, the stronger the behavior will be.
4. Prioritize the mechanism of learning outcomes from behavior.

#### ***Application of Behaviorism Theory in Da'wah***

Da'wah is a dynamic activity that is aimed at humans. Da'wah should be able to provide answers to every change that occurs in society. Etymologically da'wah comes from the root word masdar from the verb da'a - yad'u which means a call, exclamation or invitation. Meanwhile, in terms of terminology, scholars differ in defining da'wah because of differences in the meaning of the word 'da'wah'. According to Muhammad al-Khaydar Husayn, da'wah is inviting and calling for goodness and virtue (ma'ruf), then prevent and forbid evil to obtain happiness in this world and in the hereafter. According to Muhammad Abu al-Futuh, da'wah is teaching and conveying, as well as practicing the teachings of Islam to all people in life (Faizah & Effendi, 2015). So da'wah is an activity of conveying, inviting and practicing the teachings of the Islamic religion in everyday life. The essence of da'wah lies in efforts to prevent social problems of a psychological nature by guiding, motivating, stimulating and inviting a person or

group to be healthy and prosperous in body and soul so that they can accept and carry out the teachings of the Islamic religion with full awareness in accordance with the guidance of the Shari'a.

A dai must be faced with the fact that mad'u has diversity in various things. This diversity makes mad'u different in receiving and responding to the material from the da'wah given. Therefore, when carrying out da'wah, one must look at what the target of the da'wah needs and dai must also try to stimulate the target to practice the message that has been conveyed. This means that a preacher is required to master the human psyche as an individual or as a member of a group (Fabriar, 2019). The mental aspects and processes of human behavior related to the process of da'wah are called psychology of dai, namely the science that examines human psychology and behavior in the process of preaching, especially regarding psychology. Mad'u and the dai's psychology. The psychology of da'wah tries to study the human psyche which is the object of da'wah in this case mad'u and dai, until mad'u can accept and practice dai's teachings. There are several theories or schools in psychology, which discuss human behavior in society to make it easier for people to understand mad'u, including the theory of behaviorism.

The behaviorist perspective focuses more on individual behavior than the brain and nervous system. An identical theory from this perspective is the stimulus and response theory, which means that relevant stimulation produces a response. This school of thought argues that the stimulation aspect from the environment is very important to develop humans but pays less attention to the talent or innateness that a person possesses. Later this theory became known as learning theory (social learning) because human behavior is the result of learning, except instinct. Learning means changes in human behavior influenced by the environment. Behavior is the result of experience and is driven by the need to increase pleasure and reduce suffering (Rakhmat, 1994). For example, psychological state mad'u those who live in rural areas will be different mad'u who live in urban environments. This is based on the behaviorist perspective which states that human behavior is greatly influenced by environmental stimuli.

The application of behaviorism theory in da'wah can help achieve the goals of da'wah by looking at the influence of the environment on mad'u behavior. Here you can analyze how the environment is mad'u, then adjust the appropriate da'wah method in conveying the da'wah message according to the environment and experience mad'u. Behaviorism emphasizes the use of da'wah methods that are more measurable, can change individual behavior significantly through stimulus and response such as the use of motivating lectures, the formation of worship habits, or the use of positive reinforcement to encourage participation in da'wah activities, by

creating an environment which is relevant (Rufaedah, 2017). Several principles from behaviorism theory that can be applied in preaching include:

1. Positive Reinforcement and Negative Reinforcement (Reward and Punishment) Positive reinforcement is given as a reward for desired behavior, while negative reinforcement can be given as punishment for undesired behavior. Like giving praise or appreciation to mad'u who is active in da'wah activities (Nursyamsi, 2021). Reward and punishment intended to motivate someone towards positive behavior and prevent negative behavior in accordance with Islamic values. And in da'wah it explains that if you obey Islamic law will get success reward in the form of a reward and if you break the law will get punishment in the form of torment in the afterlife.

2. Habit Formation

Habits can be formed through constant repetition of desired behavior. The application of habit formation in da'wah can be done through the repeated story method to instill values in the person of mad'u. Apart from that, it can be done through the behavior of preachers who speak politely, are affectionate, and help each other in life, in other words this can be implemented by providing examples that show the desired religious behavior, so that mad'u moved to imitate the dai's behavior. And the environment greatly influences the formation of habits, thus habit formation can be done through various methods and activities including the story method, dai's behavior and the environment.

3. Using Classical Conditioning

Classical conditioning can be done by associating a neutral stimulus with a desired or undesired stimulus, thereby creating a response. In da'wah, this can be applied by associating desired behavior with positive outcomes such as happiness or success to encourage mad'u exhibit this behavior (Dliyauddin, 2019). In addition, conveying the message of da'wah with a friendly and constructive approach, creates a positive emotional connection with mad'u.

4. Environment

Creating a supportive environment to encourage desired religious behavior, such as creating an environment conducive to preaching. These principles can be applied by providing reinforcement for desired or undesirable behavior in da'wah. Forming habits in da'wah can be done by repeating the desired behavior continuously. Classical conditioning can also be done by associating da'wah behavior with certain stimuli, such

as certain environments or situations. Behaviorism theory in terms of da'wah can be applied to shape behavior mad'u which is in accordance with Islamic teachings. Apart from that, behaviorist theory can also be used as an approach and basis for developing da'wah methodology, but it must be adapted to Islamic teachings and not ignore aspects related to individual mentality and consciousness. Behaviorism theory can be useful in understanding and influencing religious behavior in preaching.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the description of the discussion, it can be concluded that Behaviorism is a psychological theory that emphasizes behavior. Behaviorism focuses on the role of learning in describing human behavior that occurs through stimulation based on the stimulus received which can cause a response or stimuli that can be observed, even though during the learning process there are mental changes within a person. But these changes do not need to be taken into account because they cannot be observed. Watson believed that differences in human behavior were caused by different learning knowledge. Behaviorism theory includes classical conditioning, operant conditioning, trial and error, and social learning. The application of behaviorism theory in da'wah can help achieve the goals of da'wah by looking at the influence of the environment on mad'u behavior. Behaviorism emphasizes the use of da'wah methods that are more measurable, can change individual behavior significantly through stimulus and response such as the use of motivating lectures, the formation of worship habits, or the use of positive reinforcement to encourage participation in da'wah activities, by creating a relatable environment. Behaviorism theory is applied by providing reinforcement for desired or undesirable behavior in da'wah. Forming habits in preaching can be done by repeating the desired behavior continuously. Classical conditioning can also be done by associating preaching behavior with certain stimuli, such as certain environments or situations.

## REFERENCES

- Arifin, M. Psikologi Dakwah Suatu Pengantar Studi. Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1997.
- Asfar, Irfan Taufan et al. "Teori Behaviorisme". Program doktoral Ilmu Pendidikan. Universitas Negeri Makassar, 2021.
- Bungin, Burhan. Analisis Data Penelitian Kualitatif, (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2003.
- Dliyauddin, Arie Muhammad. "Penerapan Prinsip Behavioristik dalam Kegiatan Muhadharah di Tarbiyatul Muallimien Al-Islamiyah Al-Amien Prenduan Madura". Kajian Teknologi Pendidikan,. Vol. 2 Number 3, August 2019.
- Enjang. "Dakwah Smart: Proses Dakwah Sesuai dengan Aspek Psikologis Mad'u". Ilmu Dakwah. Vol. 4, Number 12, July-December 2008.
- Fabriar, Silvia Riskha. "Urgensi Psikologi dalam Aktivitas Dakwah". An-Nida. Vol. 11, Number 2, July-December 2019.
- Faizah, dan Lalu Muchsin Effendi. Psikologi Dakwah. Cet. II; Jakarta: Kencana, 2015.
- Fakhruroji, Moch. Dakwah di Era Media Baru: Teori dan Aktivisme Dakwah di Internet. Bandung: Simbiosis, 2017.
- Haryanto, Budi. Psikologi Pendidikan dan Pengenalan Teori-teori Belajar. Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, 2004.
- Haryanto, Suryadi. Psikologi Behaviorisme: Perilaku Universal Binatang dan Manusia. Banjarmasin: CV. Garuda Mas sejahtera, 2020.
- Hermawan, Agus. Psikologi Dakwah. Salatiga: Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat IAIN Salatiga, 2021.
- Jaarvis, Matt. Pengenalan Ilmu Psikologi dan Tentang Pendekatan Psikologi Perilaku. Bandung: Nusa Media, 2021.
- Mu'minin, Ummul et al. "Konsep dan Karakteristik Psikologi Behaviorisme". Al-Din. Vol. 8, Number 2, 2022.
- Nursyamsi. "Konsep Reward dan Punishment dalam Pendidikan Islam". Mau'izhah. Vol. 11, Number 2, July-December 2021.
- Prawira, Purwa Atmaja. Psikologi Umum. Cet. III; Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2016.
- Qudratullah. (2019). Media Massa Sebagai Sarana Dakwah Kontemporer. Jurnal Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Dakwah, 13(2), 217–230.  
<https://www.bing.com/search?q=dakwah+qudratullah&cvid=39fc3a2ff4e2463dbd9349250a0ed88f&aqs=edge..69i57.5273j0j9&FORM=ANAB01&PC=ASTS>

- Qudratullah. (2020). Strategi Dakwah sebagai Solusi terhadap Problematika Masyarakat Hedonisme. At Tabsyir Jurnal Komunikasi Penyiaran Islam, 7(2), 210–222.
- Rakhmat, Jalaluddin. Psikologi Komunikasi. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 1994.
- Rufaedah, Evi Aeni. “Teori Belajar Behavioristik Menurut Perspektif Islam”. Pendidikan dan Studi Islam. Vol. 4. Number 1, December 2017.
- Saihu, dan Agus Mailana. “Teori Pendidikan Behavioristik Pembentukan Karakter Masyarakat Muslim dalam Tradisi Ngejot di Bali”. Pendidikan Islam. Vol. 8, Number 2, October 2019.
- Shahbana, Elvia Baby et al. “Implementasi teori belajar Behavioristik dalam Pembelajaran”. Serunai Administrasi Pendidikan, Vol. 9, Number 1, March 2020.
- Sugiyono, Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D. Bandung: Alfabeta, 2014.
- Wahyuni, Nurul and Wahidah Fitriani. “Relevansi Teori Belajar Sosial Albert Bandura dan Metode pendidikan Keluarga dalam Islam”. Ilmu Kependidikan. Vol. 11, Number 2, December 2022.
- Zed, Mestika. Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2004.
- Zulqarnain et al. Psikologi Pendidikan. Yogyakarta: Deepublish Publisher, 2022.