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The Role of Psychology in the Selection of Content & Learning Processes

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the foundation of a curriculum based on developmental psychology and learning psychology and their respective implications. The method used in this article is literature review or library research. Where researchers collect data from various library sources, such as books, journals, scientific articles, research reports such as theses and dissertations, as well as other sources relevant to the research topic. Student have unique competencies in each phase of development psychology so that educators and curriculum developers can provide treatment that is appropriate to the developmental stage. Because psychology has implications for content and implementation, as well as learning evaluation. Meanwhile, Learning Psychology, which includes Behavioristics, Cognitive Psychology, Constructivism, Phenomenology and Humanism, has implications for determining learning methods by considering the characteristics of students, both in terms of motivation, interests, talents and learning styles that they have. So this article concludes that teachers' literacy willingness to explore the foundations of developmental psychology and learning psychology influences their ability to design and develop in-depth curriculum and meaningful learning.

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini menganalisis landasan kurikulum yang didasarkan pada psikologi perkembangan dan psikologi pembelajaran serta implikasinya masing-masing. Metode yang digunakan dalam artikel ini adalah kajian pustaka atau penelitian kepustakaan. Di mana peneliti mengumpulkan data dari berbagai sumber perpustakaan, seperti buku, jurnal, artikel ilmiah, laporan penelitian seperti skripsi dan disertasi, serta sumber-sumber lain yang relevan dengan topik penelitian. Mahasiswa memiliki kompetensi yang unik di setiap fase psikologi perkembangan sehingga pendidik dan pengembang kurikulum dapat memberikan perlakuan yang sesuai dengan tahap perkembangan tersebut. Karena psikologi memiliki implikasi terhadap isi dan pelaksanaan, serta evaluasi pembelajaran. Sementara itu, Psikologi Pembelajaran, yang mencakup Behavioristik, Psikologi Kognitif, Konstruktivisme, Fenomenologi dan Humanisme, memiliki implikasi dalam menentukan metode pembelajaran dengan mempertimbangkan karakteristik siswa, baik dari segi motivasi, minat, bakat maupun gaya belajar yang dimiliki. Maka artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa kemauan literasi guru untuk menggali landasan psikologi perkembangan dan

psikologi pembelajaran memengaruhi kemampuan mereka dalam merancang dan mengembangkan kurikulum yang mendalam dan pembelajaran yang bermakna.

A. INTRODUCTION

Making the connection between theory and practice is one of the difficult but essential challenges for curriculum designers and educators. In a curriculum-guided educational process, this is inevitable. The development, execution, and assessment of the entire learning process which is always evolving to meet the demands of varied populations and the times, are all influenced by the curriculum. Additionally, it serves to accomplish objectives, offer recommendations for the management of education, and differentiate between different educational institutions (Fauzan & Arifin, 2022). The MKDP Curriculum and Instruction Development Team (Tim Pengembang MKDP, 2017) asserts that human behavior and education are intertwined, and that the curriculum is a tool used to accomplish an educational institution's goals about the process of changing students' behavior.

The curriculum is developed through a cycle of activities. A Curriculum design is the result of curriculum development, and instructional design states that a design can be influenced by a single model or by combining multiple models, which can be used as a guide for putting education into practice (Suparman, 2014). This suggests that the curriculum should constantly be created with educational institutions' needs in mind. An institution or educational body will lag behind if the curriculum is not created in accordance with their needs (Hadi, 2022). According to Steven Golen (Steven, 1987), curriculum creation in practice needs a solid basis. A basic understanding of the foundations of the curriculum will provide the basis for determining the direction of an educational program. According to Steven Golen (Steven, 1987), Albert I. Oliver divides the foundations of the curriculum into three parts: the first is philosophy, which underpins the development of the educational curriculum; the second is society and the factors that affect education; and the third is the activities of students, viewed from the perspective of how they learn.

According to Marie Kirchner Stone (Stone, 1985), the psychological foundation plays a crucial role in education. Marie stated that Ralph Tyler, one of the prominent figures in developing curriculum models, was greatly influenced by Dewey's theory, which asserts that learning is closely related to psychology. Tyler also stated that one cannot observe how education unfolds without considering the goals and procedures employed by those involved in the process (Steven, 1987). In line with Tyler's views, as quoted by Marie, Steven Golen argued that a fundamental understanding of the curriculum's foundation determines the direction of an educational program. The idea of how students learn will affect the structure and model of the curriculum, because learning itself is, ultimately, the primary goal of the entire educational process (Steven, 1987). Throughout the learning process, a variety of behaviors are constantly produced by the interactions between students, teachers, and their surroundings. Education is linked to behavioral changes in students, and the curriculum acts as a roadmap for helping them realize their potential and acquire new skills that will help them in the future (Tim Pengembang MKDP, 2017).

Curriculum designers have to make decisions about how students learn, as previously said. In order to comprehend the teaching and learning process, the psychological foundation offers a crucial starting point. This understanding aids in deciding what material should be covered, how to arrange it, and how to teach and assess it. In order for the psychological foundations to be applied to curriculum development design, this article will go into detail about them, especially as they relate to learning and development. Learning theories and their effects on instructional design are discussed, and how the

curriculum can accommodate individual variances. These problems make this article essential for generating a thorough viewpoint on the selection, application, and assessment of content.

B. METHODOLOGY

This article uses a literature review as its research approach. Some call it secondary research since the researcher uses non-primary sources to gather the data and information required to address the research issue (Hikmawati, 2020). Books, journals, scientific papers, research reports (such as theses and dissertations), and other materials pertinent to the study's topic are among the many library resources from which data is gathered. As a result, this work uses a flexible research design and a qualitative technique. The data is gathered by the researcher in person, and analysis is done concurrently with data collection (Arikunto, 2002). The focus of this study is on the development of students in secondary schools.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Psychological foundations play a crucial role in designing and developing the curriculum. These foundations refer to the psychological principles that explain how humans learn, develop, and interact with their environment. In other words, the psychological basis focuses on the students' learning process, integrates the various elements of teaching and learning, and addresses questions related to the learning process from a psychological perspective. It also provides feedback or evaluations that are appropriate to the background, development, needs, characteristics, experiences, and culture of the students to support their learning.

1. Psychological Foundations of the Curriculum

According to Allan C. Ornstein, psychology concerns how individuals learn and contributes to the design and development of the curriculum. Psychology serves as the fundamental basis for understanding the teaching and learning process, which is essential for curriculum developers since the curriculum plays a significant role in the students' learning process (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). According to Harold, students' developmental age and learning interests are the two psychological factors that form the foundation for evaluating the efficacy of curriculum and instruction (Steven, 1987). Individual differences form the basis of the psychological framework. This indicates that every student is unique and has a personality, which influences their viewpoints and abilities. As a result, teachers are unable to treat them all equally or employ the same teaching strategies. Accordingly, the curriculum needs to be created in a way that supports and facilitates the students' varied competences and capacities (Thanavathi & Vimaleswary, 2017). In accordance with Oemar Hamalik's assertion that curriculum development should be aligned with the characteristics of the learners (Hamalik, 2017).

According to psychology, pupils are seen as unique individuals with a variety of innate potentials, including needs, interests, skills, and physical abilities in addition to social, emotional, and personal traits. Since students are individuals who are always evolving, all of their innate potential can be developed through educational and learning activities that are anticipated to improve their quality both now and, in the future (Hamalik, 2017). The curriculum's psychological underpinnings are primarily divided into two areas: learning psychology and developmental psychology (Fauzan & Arifin, 2022). To put it another way, the curriculum and different learning theories are intimately related. Behaviorist Theory, Mental Discipline Theory, and Gestalt Theory are the three categories of theories into which Morris Bigge separates the psychological underpinnings of the curriculum (Steven, 1987). Behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism are the three learning theories that one should be aware of, according to Aweke Shishigu (Shishigu, 2015). Meanwhile, Allan C. Ornstein divides them into three main categories: Behaviorism, Constructivism and Cognitive psychology, and Phenomenology and Humanistic psychology (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). It's necessary to comprehend students' learning theories as well as to have a thorough comprehension of people's demands and natures based on their experiences. Among other things, this is symbolized by the changes that take place as students get older and more mature.

Syamsu Yusuf classifies the characteristics of individual development as follows: Preschool Age, Elementary School Age, and Secondary School Age. Individuals in pre-school settings are situated throughout critical periods, when physical development and basic needs are most prevalent. In elementary school age, children experience an intellectual period with the development of more structured cognitive and thinking skills. In the secondary school stage, individuals are marked by physical, emotional, and social changes as they progress through this period. Additionally, there are aesthetic factors that reflect a person's sensitivity and lack of self-control (Tim Pengembang MKDP, 2017).

Meanwhile, according to Jean Piaget, during the secondary school stage, individuals are capable of handling diverse situations and exhibit logical thinking. Jean Piaget classified school-age individuals into the formal operational stage, which includes those aged 11 and above. At this stage, individuals can understand both formal and abstract concepts, analyze ideas, think logically about abstract data, evaluate information based on acceptable criteria, formulate hypotheses, infer potential consequences, and construct theories and reach conclusions without direct experience in the subject matter. At this stage, there are few or no limitations on the learning content, and learning depends on the individual's intellectual potential, environment, and experiences (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018).

2. The Role of Psychology in the Selection of Content and Learning Processes

a) Learning Psychological

Learning psychology is an integration of two fields: psychology and education, that seeks to explain how individuals acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as learning theory. According to Fauzan, the study of learning psychology focuses on individual behavior within the learning context (Fauzan & Arifin, 2022). The core discussion revolves around the nature of learning itself, the mental processes involved, and the surrounding environment, all viewed through the lens of learning theories that later serve as the foundation for curriculum development. This approach is undertaken to enhance the quality of education (Asrori, 2020). Its significance is evident when curriculum developers formulate objectives; they should refer to relevant learning theories and curriculum models (Nurdin, 2016). According to Allan C. Ornstein (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018), the three major groups of theories are Behaviorism, Cognitive Psychology which includes Constructivism, Phenomenology and Humanistic Psychology.

Table 1. Major Groups of Theories (*Adapted from various sources*)

No.	Learning Theory	Definition & Assumptions	Key Concepts	Core Principles
1	Behavioristic	Children are born without any inherent potential and that their development is shaped by external environmental factors	Includes theories such as S-R Bond, Conditioning, and Reinforcement.	S-R Bond: all behavior is a result of stimulus-response links
2	Cognitive Psychology	Emphasizes that learning is an internal mental process that cannot be directly observed. It focuses on how individuals process, store, and retrieve information	Memory Systems and Cognitive Functions	Maria Montessori: Consider children's developmental stages and sensory experiences; Vygotsky: Emphasized the social and cultural contexts of cognitive development
3	Constructivism	Constructivism addresses the nature of knowledge and learning by asserting that learners actively construct their own understanding rather than passively receiving information	Active Learning and Educational Practice	That learners actively construct their own understanding rather than passively receiving information

4	Phenomenology-Humanism	Phenomenology describes learning as a process deeply rooted in self-awareness, personal experiences, feelings, and attitudes; Humanistic learning theory stresses that learning begins and ends with the individual, who has the freedom to choose and direct their own learning process.	Abraham Maslow: His Hierarchy of Needs theory explains that human motivation is driven by a progression of needs; Carl Rogers: Emphasizes personal growth and self-directed learning.

Learning psychology theories provide an extensive framework for understanding how individuals acquire knowledge and develop, significantly influencing both curriculum design and teaching strategies. To begin with, the behavioristic approach commonly known as the Stimulus-Response (S-R) Theory holds that children are born without any inherent capabilities, with their development primarily molded by external factors such as family, school, society, and religion (Tim Pengembang MKDP, 2017). In this paradigm, learning is understood as the process of forming associations between sensory experiences and corresponding responses. Edward L. Thorndike's early work in connectionism laid the groundwork for the S-R Bond theory, which is based on principles including the Law of Effect, the Law of Readiness, and the Law of Exercise. These principles assert that observable changes in behavior arise from the regular application of stimuli and reinforcement. Although this approach was further developed by figures like J.B. Watson and Edwin Guthrie, it has been critiqued for its limited attention to the complex cognitive processes that underlie learning (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Despite this, behavioristic theory continues to influence educational models such as individualized instruction, direct teaching, and mastery learning (Nazona, 2022).

Shifting focus from external behaviors to internal processes, cognitive psychology emphasizes that learning is an internal mental activity involving the processing, storage, and retrieval of information a process not directly observable (Priyanto, 2017). This perspective distinguishes between short-term memory and long-term memory, underlining how the organization and transfer of information are crucial for developing critical, creative, and intuitive thinking (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Prominent figures such as Maria Montessori and Vygotsky have greatly contributed to this approach. Montessori stressed the significance of developmental stages and sensory input, whereas Vygotsky highlighted the importance of social and cultural contexts such as language and formal education in shaping higher-level cognitive functions.

In contrast, constructivism contends that learners actively construct their own understanding rather than simply absorbing information passively. This theory posits that knowledge emerges from the integration of new information with preexisting cognitive structures, making learning an inherently active and self-driven process (Suryaman, 2024). It promotes problem-solving and differentiated instruction as vital components of effective learning, urging learners to actively engage with and reflect upon their experiences in order to derive meaningful insights (Pramono, 2023). Finally, the phenomenological–humanistic approach offers a perspective of learning that is deeply rooted in self-awareness, personal experiences, and emotions. This viewpoint asserts that an individual's self-concept is pivotal in shaping their learning behaviors. Within a humanistic framework, learning is viewed as a self-directed journey, with individuals possessing the autonomy to determine their own educational paths (Lefudin, 2014). Influential theorists such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers have been central to this approach. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs illustrates how human motivation progresses from basic physiological needs to self-actualization.

Abraham Maslow stated that individuals essentially behave to fulfill hierarchical needs. His famous theory is the hierarchy of needs theory. Maslow explained that humans are motivated to satisfy their life needs in levels, from the basic physiological needs to the highest level, which is self-actualization (Setiawan, 2017). These needs include basic necessities such as food and drink, the need for safety, comfort, and security, the need to be loved and cared for, the need to be valued, and the need for self-actualization to prove and demonstrate oneself to others (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). While Rogers emphasizes the importance of personal growth and self-guided learning. Together, these ideas imply that curriculum development should encompass not only academic competencies but also the emotional and motivational dimensions of learning.

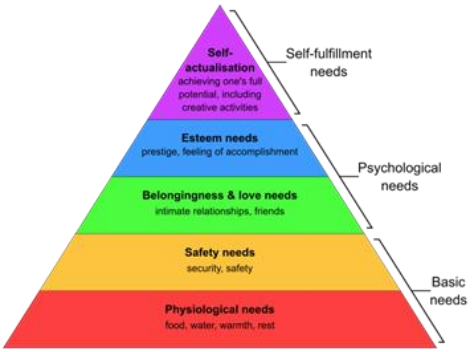

Figure 1. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/)

Overall, the diverse theories of learning psychology, behavioristic, cognitive psychology, constructivist and phenomenological–humanistic approaches underscore the critical need to align instructional design with an in-depth understanding of how students learn. By synthesizing insights from these varied frameworks, educators can develop curricula that are both comprehensive and responsive to the diverse needs of learners, thereby enhancing cognitive development, fostering motivational and emotional growth, and ultimately promoting lifelong learning. Given how learning psychology affects teachers' ability to choose the best teaching strategies, tactics, and approaches to enhance learning, a thorough understanding of the subject is essential. Teachers should be aware of their students' motivation, interests, skills, and learning preferences in order to choose the best teaching approach. Fauzan asserts that in order to choose learning materials that are appropriate for their depth and increase the effectiveness of the learning process, a careful analysis of the Basic Competencies, Learning Outcomes (CP), and appropriate time allocation are required (Fauzan & Arifin, 2022). All of the learning theories have their own advantages and disadvantages, but they all help to explain different facets of learning psychology in schools and classrooms. And These learning theories can help determine learning content, design the learning process, and make curricula (content, implementation, and evaluation) that fit the goal.

b) Psychological Considerations in Curriculum Design

In the curriculum, where a thorough understanding of developmental psychology becomes a decisive factor in the learning process it is crucial to understand pupils. Students' talents, material, teaching strategies, and evaluation factors are all taken into account while customizing school instruction (Tim Pengembang MKDP, 2017). As a result, character development is always at the heart of the learning objectives that are developed. To create meaningful learning experiences, teaching methods, strategies, and resources are modified to fit the needs and interests of the students. Furthermore, Muhammad Kristiawan (Kristiawan, 2020), asserts that a child's developmental stage plays a critical role in defining their success and

accomplishments in life; hence, teachers who possess an understanding of developmental psychology would be better able to apply educational and learning procedures. Additionally, Fauzan claims that the difficulty level of any teaching content must be adjusted even if it falls under the same subject (Fauzan, 2017).

Regarding teachers as facilitators of learning, they are certainly capable of assisting students in solving various problems they encounter and taking proactive measures (Kristiawan, 2020). Meanwhile, as implementers of learning teachers are given the flexibility to refine and adjust the curriculum even if it has been systematically structured. These adjustments are intended to facilitate teachers in selecting and organizing instructional materials, determining appropriate teaching methods and media, and choosing evaluation instruments that suit the needs, interests, and developmental stages of the students. Curriculum designers need to develop learning sequences that support students' cognitive development and promote sustainable learning. Schools consider psychological principles and the stages of students' thinking, which are based on grade levels, in formulating learning objectives. This approach aims to maximize students' developmental potential and ensure that learning objectives are met effectively (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Taba emphasizes that understanding knowledge as part of the thinking process shows that thinking and acquiring knowledge can occur simultaneously (Taba, 1962). From this, it can be concluded that the curriculum should be designed to integrate facts and thinking processes from an early stage, as students' ability to think abstractly may develop earlier than expected. For instance, in biology learning, which requires experiments, each subsequent experiment offers the opportunity to become more sophisticated than the previous one. Taba further underscores that the sequence and continuity in learning should focus on steps that form concepts and cognitive processes, rather than the sequence within specific areas of knowledge (Taba, 1962).

c) *Psychological Considerations in the Evaluation of Learning*

As one of the principles outlined in the Learning and Assessment Guidelines (Ginanto et al., 2024), assessment is an integrated part of the learning process, learning facilitation, and the provision of holistic information, serving as feedback for educators, students, and parents/guardians to guide them in determining subsequent learning strategies. Examples of assessment implementation include: educators reinforcing assessments at the beginning of instruction to design learning activities according to students' readiness; planning instruction with reference to the intended objectives and providing feedback so that students can determine steps for future improvement; offering supportive feedback to stimulate a growth mindset; involving students in the assessment process through self-assessment, peer assessment, self-reflection, and peer feedback; and providing students with opportunities to reflect on their abilities and ways to enhance them based on the assessment results.

Assessment in the current curriculum is divided into two types: formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment is aimed at monitoring and improving the learning process, as well as evaluating the achievement of learning objectives. This assessment is conducted to identify students' learning needs, the obstacles or difficulties they face, and to obtain information about their progress. This information serves as feedback for both students and educators. In contrast, summative assessment at the elementary and secondary education levels is intended to evaluate the achievement of learning objectives and/or students' learning outcomes as the basis for determining class promotion and/or graduation from the educational institution. The evaluation of students' learning outcomes is carried out by comparing their performance to the criteria for achieving the learning objectives (Ginanto et al., 2024)(BSKAP, 2024).

For educators, assessments provide information about the individual learning needs of the students they teach. For students, assessments are useful for reflection, enabling them to monitor their

learning progress, the challenges they face, and the steps they need to take to continually improve their achievements thus sparking their drive to become lifelong learners. Assessment should be administered in a tiered manner, meaning that the difficulty level of questions or instructions covering the aspects of knowledge, cognition, and affect should range from easy to moderate to challenging (Hamalik, 2017). Additionally, the instructions must be clear, and the types of questions should be specific and aligned with the learning objectives and outcomes to match the students' abilities and understanding.

From a psychological perspective, assessment plays a crucial role not only in measuring learning outcomes but also in supporting the cognitive, affective, and motivational development of students. By providing systematic feedback, assessments help students recognize their strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to engage in deep self-reflection and to design appropriate learning strategies. The implementation of tiered assessments, with difficulty levels ranging from easy to challenging, considers individual differences in cognitive abilities and emotional readiness. This approach aligns with learning psychology theories that emphasize the importance of meaningful and efficient learning experiences, while facilitating the development of self-regulated learning. As a result, students become better at managing their own learning process, building confidence, and fostering intrinsic motivation. Another psychological implication is the creation of a learning environment that supports emotional well-being. Clear instructions and adjustments in the difficulty of questions can reduce learning anxiety and cognitive overload, allowing students to feel more comfortable and motivated to tackle challenges. This is in line with character development goals, where assessment focuses not only on academic results but also on personal growth and the development of soft skills.

D. CONCLUSION

By incorporating diverse theories such as behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, and humanistic approaches, curriculum developers can tailor instructional strategies, content, and assessments to address students' unique cognitive, emotional, and developmental needs. This alignment not only enhances cognitive development and motivation but also supports lifelong learning by fostering a learning environment that is both adaptive and inclusive. Based on the formulation of the research problem and the objectives of the study, it can be concluded that:

Psychological foundations contribute to Curriculum Development, psychological foundations offer critical insights into the learning process by highlighting how individual differences in motivation, cognitive abilities, and developmental stages influence learning. These insights guide curriculum developers in selecting appropriate content, designing effective teaching strategies, and formulating assessments that cater to the diverse needs of learners.

Learning psychology emphasizes the importance of internal mental processes such as memory, problem-solving, and reasoning. It underpins the development of instructional methods that are not merely focused on content delivery but also on engaging students actively through self-directed and constructivist approaches. This ensures that educational content is relevant, appropriately challenging, and aligned with students' learning styles and developmental stages.

Psychological principles inform the design of assessment strategies that go beyond measuring academic performance. By implementing tiered assessments and aligning evaluation methods with students' cognitive and emotional readiness, educators can provide constructive feedback. This approach not only identifies areas for improvement but also supports the development of self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation, ultimately contributing to both academic success and personal growth.

This article still requires improvement to increase its wider applicability. The need exists for developmental research that incorporates these diverse viewpoints, with transpersonal psychology serving as its main pillar. In the same way that

humanistic psychology seeks to discover the potential inside people, transpersonal psychology highlights the spiritual aspect that sees people as more than just distinct personalities. This paradigm can provide a thorough framework for comprehending and maximizing students' potential, but it has not received enough attention in contemporary psychology.

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