



Operant Conditioning Strategies in Limited Face-to-Face Learning Activities in Forming the Responsibility Character

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Abstract

The change in learning from what was originally face-to-face to distance learning and then switched to limited face-to-face learning made students need to adapt to all the provisions in the learning process. It then impacts the student's responsible character. This study, therefore, aims to discuss the process of forming the student responsibility character through the operant conditioning type in limited face-to-face learning activities. The research method used was qualitative with a narrative approach model. This study's subjects were the principal, a fifth-grade homeroom teacher, and nine fifth-grade students of State Elementary School of 1 Barongan. Besides, data collection techniques employed were interviews, observation, and documentation. The data validity was tested by triangulation of sources and data collection techniques in the study. Data analysis techniques utilized were data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. This study's results highlighted those changes in the learning system impacted the student responsibility character; thus, there is a need for the formation of the responsibility character. The formation of the responsibility character will be more substantial if given direct reinforcement (Operant Conditioning Theory). Operant conditioning consists of two main concepts: reinforcement and punishment. Reinforcement is divided into positive reinforcement (such as attention, approval, and appreciation) and negative reinforcement (e.g., reducing material and giving assignment pause). Meanwhile, punishments encompass reprimands, emphasis, and additional assignments.

Keywords:

Responsibility Character, Operant Conditioning, Face-to-Face Learning

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Abstrak

Perubahan pembelajaran dari yang semula tatap muka menjadi pembelajaran jarak jauh kemudian beralih menjadi pembelajaran tatap muka terbatas (PTMT) membuat siswa perlu menyesuaikan diri dengan segala ketentuan dalam proses pembelajaran. Hal itu kemudian berdampak pada karakter tanggung jawab siswa. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membahas proses pembentukan karakter tanggung jawab siswa melalui tipe operant conditioning dalam kegiatan pembelajaran tatap muka terbatas. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan model pendekatan naratif. Subyek penelitian ini adalah kepala sekolah, seorang wali kelas kelas V, dan sembilan siswa kelas V SDN 1 Barongan. Selain itu, teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Keabsahan data diuji dengan triangulasi sumber dan teknik pengumpulan data dalam penelitian. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian ini menyoroti bahwa perubahan sistem pembelajaran berdampak pada karakter tanggung jawab siswa; dengan demikian, perlu adanya pembentukan karakter tanggung jawab. Pembentukan karakter tanggung jawab akan lebih substansial jika diberikan penguatan langsung (Operant Conditioning Theory). Pengondisian operan terdiri dari dua konsep utama: penguatan dan hukuman. Penguatan dibagi menjadi penguatan positif (seperti perhatian, persetujuan, dan penghargaan) dan penguatan negatif (misalnya, pengurangan materi dan pemberian jeda tugas). Sementara itu, hukuman meliputi teguran, penekanan, dan tugas tambahan.

Kata Kunci:

Karakter Tanggung Jawab, Pengondisian Operan, Pembelajaran Tatap Muka

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most important parts of human life (Setiyowati & Trisharsiwi, 2022). Hence, under any conditions, education must continue to run to prepare the nation's next generation of quality. Education is also crucial since educational activities seek to form quality human potential. Human qualities are determined by the characters displayed. Therefore, educational activities seek to build intelligent human resources and noble character (Sagala in Primasari & Zulela, 2021). The statement suggests that the purpose of education does not only include the development of human potential intellectually but also focuses on the process of character building.

The realization of the world of education in instilling character education for students is supported by the 2013 curriculum on strengthening character education in formal education units mentioned by the Ministry of Education. Strengthening character education covers the values of religion, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democratic, curiosity, the spirit of nationality, love for the homeland, respect for achievement, communication, peace-loving, fondness of reading, caring environment, social care, and responsibility. Among the eighteen characters, one of the most important characters for students is the responsibility character since it represents universal fundamental values (Wibowo & Maqfirotun, 2016).

Character is defined as an inner state that can respond to situations well in three interrelated moral parts: knowledge, feelings, and behavior (Shidiq & Hidayat, 2020). In this case, responsibility is a good character that individuals must own. Responsibility has become human nature, meaning it has become part of human life. Responsibility is also an essential moral value in community life as accountability for the parents' and oneself's actions (Rosyida & Saputri, 2022). The responsibility character can be seen from several indicators, including 1) doing assignments and homework well, 2) being responsible for every action, 3) completing tasks according to a predetermined schedule,

and 4) working on group assignments together (Syafitri, 2017).

Moreover, a student is a human being who must be responsible during the learning process and in the learning environment. Responsibility in learning is the obligation to complete the task that has been accepted entirely through maximum effort and dare bear all the consequences. Sari & Bermuli (2021) mentioned indicators of student responsibility: 1) having the readiness to learn before learning; 2) discipline; 3) actively participating in learning; 4) working on and completing assignments on time; 5) taking the initiative to be actively involved in completing group assignments.

Learning is characterized as a process showing a continuous relationship between the responses that arise and the given stimuli. Learning is, in essence, a human process to achieve various competencies, skills, and attitudes needed for the future of humans (Ristianita et al., 2020). One of the well-known learning theories is behavioral learning theory (behaviorism). Skinner argued that the individual is an organism that acquires a repertoire of behavior through learning (Koeswara, 1991).

For this reason, the responsibility character is one of the behaviors that must be taught to children. Repetition and training are used so that the desired behavior can become a habit formed. The response that arises due to the given stimulus gets reinforcement. This explanation is consistent with the operant conditioning theory developed by B. F. Skinner. Operant conditioning is a learning situation in which a behavior or a response is made more likely to occur when directly reinforced (Zaini, 2014).

Furthermore, Indonesian Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System states that learning is a process of interaction between students and educators and learning resources in a learning environment. In learning, there is a process that students must do to achieve a goal. The purpose of learning is a change in terms of cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitude), and psychomotor (skills). Based on this statement, it can be concluded that distance learning is still less effective, especially in the students' character formation, due to the limited space

and time and the lack of interaction; in the end, children only get the theory without being able to put it into practice (Basar, 2021).

In this case, the government took decisive steps by returning to the learning method as before, regardless of existing limitations. The change in learning methods from face-to-face to distance learning and then switching to limited face-to-face learning, in the end, makes the child need to re-adjust to all the provisions in the learning process (Handarini & Wulandari, 2020). It undoubtedly again impacts the student's responsible character. One responsible student characteristic is the readiness to learn before learning (Sari & Bermuli, 2021).

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted by researchers in October 2021, the data revealed that the State Elementary School of 1 Barongan had implemented limited face-to-face learning (PTMT) on August 30, 2021, according to Central Java Governor Instruction No. 10 of 2021, concerning the Implementation of the Enforcement of Restrictions on Community Activities (PPKM) Levels 4, 3, and 2 of Coronavirus Disease. The Central Java Provincial Government has begun to allow schools to conduct PTMT with several conditions that must be met, one of which is that the regency or city has entered PPKM levels 2 and 3. In this case, Kudus Regency is one of the regencies in Central Java Province that has met the requirements for implementing PTMT.

Specifically, the State Elementary School of 1 Barongan is one of the leading elementary schools in Kudus Regency, which makes their students must have more responsible characters than those in other elementary schools. The visible character of responsibility is the stability in collecting assignments, where most students still submit assignments on time during distance learning. Even when they could not submit assignments on time, both students and parents informed the homeroom teacher so that there was good coordination between students, parents, and teachers in supporting the learning process and inculcating the student responsibility character.

Slightly different from what happened during distance learning, students have not

been maximal in implementing the responsibility character in schools during limited face-to-face learning. Some students were still late for school, did not do assignments, and had not been active in learning since they needed to adapt to changes in the system and learning atmosphere.

Based on the identification of the problems described, students, as God's creations who are unique and different from others, need to be led to experience growth in responsible character. One alternative solution applied in forming the student responsibility character is operant conditioning. Through this presentation, this study aims to discuss operant conditioning strategies in shaping the student responsibility character during limited face-to-face learning activities.

METHODS

This study employed qualitative research methods. Qualitative methods are research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior. In this study, the model used was a narrative approach model, where the form of this research is expressed through several theories, then described in words and arranged in the form of a story (Faizin & Haerussaleh, 2020). The research location was in the State Elementary School of 1 Barongan. Then, this study's subjects were the principal, a fifth-grade homeroom teacher, and nine fifth-grade students.

Data collection techniques utilized were interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted in a structured manner with the principal, fifth-grade homeroom teacher, and fifth-grade students through face-to-face meetings to find more open and in-depth problems regarding the responsibility character of the State Elementary School of 1 Barongan students in PTMT activities. Then, observations were made by collecting data directly from teachers and students about the student responsibility character in the State Elementary School of 1 Barongan in PTMT activities. Researchers also made direct observations by communicating with students, teachers, and a principal to obtain information about the

student responsibility character in PTMT activities and efforts that could improve the student responsibility character. In carrying out data collection techniques with the documentation method, the researchers used written documents regarding the responsibility character of the State Elementary School of 1 Barongan students in the form of learning implementation plan documents, photos of activities, written rules, notes from teachers during PTMT, and student habits in the school environment. The documentation was performed secretly without the knowledge of the students. Documentation was also taken starting from the interview process and when carrying out daily activities at school.

Furthermore, the data validity was obtained by triangulation of sources and data in the study. Triangulation of sources to test the data validity was done by checking the data about the responsibility character of the State Elementary School of 1 Barongan student in PTMT activities obtained from several sources: principals, teachers, and fifth-grade students. Additionally, triangulation of data collection techniques was also used to test the data validity. Triangulation of data collection techniques was performed by checking data from the same source with different techniques, such as data obtained by interview, and then checking with observation and documentation about the responsibility character of the State Elementary School of 1 Barongan student in PTMT activities. Further, the data analysis techniques consisted of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The collected data were selected according to the research topic (reduction). The data that had been reduced were then presented according to the subject matter. Afterward, the data were compared to the suitability of the questions from the research subjects with the meanings contained in the basic concepts in the research (drawing conclusions).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Responsibility Character Changes

Based on the research findings in October 2021, the data found that the responsibility character of fifth graders at the State Elementary School of 1 Barongan at the beginning of limited face-to-face learning

(PTMT) decreased. However, after several months of PTMT, precisely in April 2022, there was an increase in the student responsibility character. As stated by Mr. Ali as a fifth-grade homeroom teacher:

"Selama PTMT kelas V ini pendiam cuman kurang aktif, kalau datangnya dulu ada yang terlambat tapi seminggu ini sudah tepat waktu. Kemudian peningkatan hasil belajarnya juga bagus, sekarang anak-anak juga sudah bisa mendengarkan dan memperhatikan dengan baik, padahal dulu masih suka ngobrol".

[“During PTMT, this fifth grader was quiet and less active; about attendance, they used to be late, but this week, they have been on time. Then, the increase in learning outcomes is also good; now, the children can also listen and pay attention well, even though they still liked to talk in the past.”]

The increase in the responsibility character could be seen during the learning implementation. The forms of responsibility that arose were that students arrived on time, continuously obeyed the rules according to health protocols, were enthusiastic and actively participated in learning, constantly did and collected assignments on time, and were active in group activities. It aligns with the indicators of the responsibility character according to Sari & Bermuli (2021), including (1) having the readiness to learn before learning; (2) discipline; (3) actively participating in learning; (4) working on and completing assignments on time; (5) taking the initiative to be actively involved in completing group assignments.

Factors Influencing the Responsibility Character Changes

Additionally, in every decrease or increase, there must be factors influencing it. The decline in the children's responsible character at the beginning of PTMT was caused by it being the first experience for students, so they needed to adapt to changing situations and conditions. When students could adapt to existing situations and conditions, students were again faced with changing homeroom teachers. Changes in homeroom teachers make students increasingly need to

adapt not only to situations and conditions but also to new teachers' rules and teaching styles.

Teachers' rules and teaching styles are habits that students must follow during learning. Habituation is a process of forming attitudes and behaviors that are relatively permanent and automatic through a repeated learning process and carried out outside of class hours (Gularso & Firoini, 2017). Repetition and training are used so that the desired behavior can become a habit formed. In line with Rochmah's (2016) opinion, a character, which is a natural substance, i.e., a character that naturally becomes part of human beings, cannot appear immediately. To create an excellent responsible character, the character needs to be honed and accustomed to humans.

Motivation and habituation are factors that increase the student's character of responsibility. It is per the fifth-grade homeroom teacher's statement, stating that:

"Saya selalu memotivasi pada anak-anak seperti ini mbak "Kalau patuh dengan apa yang disampaikan guru, pasti akan terlaksana dengan baik". (1) Dia harus menjadwalkan program belajar, yang dulunya wayahan sekarang harus rutin. Belajar rutin paling gak satu hari satu jam. (2) Kemudian dia harus bisa memanager waktu ketika belajar. Di kelas saya selalu menginstruksikan "15 menit selesai" ya selesai. Dengan dia berpikir dalam waktu singkat, kalau dia sudah terbiasa pasti kan malah bisa karena biasa. Kalau sudah terbiasa dengan tepat waktu, pasti dia akan berfikir jauh lebih baik. (3) Saya juga di kelas selalu mengshare nilai anak-anak biar tau, jadi nilai itu nanti yang disampaikan ke orang tua, kalau orang tua tau nilainya jelek otomatis motivasi dari orang tua ada. Jadi dari saya ada, dari orang tua ada, dari keinginan anak sendiri ada. Nah, inilah yang saya rasakan ada peningkatan. Kenapa bisa ada peningkatan? Karena saya selalu memberi motivasi bagaimana anak-anak itu bisa mengenali dirinya sendiri. Yang utama berdoa dan berusaha, orang yang berusaha mempersiapkan hidup lebih dini itu akan menjadi lebih berhasil daripada yang tidak mempersiapkan sama sekali".

["I always motivate children like this, Ms. "If you obey what the teacher says, it will definitely be done well." (1) He has to

schedule a study program, which used to be once in a while to be routine now. Studying routine is at least one day for one hour. (2) Then, he must be able to manage time while studying. In class, I always instruct, "15 minutes finished," yes, it is finished. With him thinking in a short time, if he is used to it, he will definitely be able to because he is used to it. If he were used to being on time, surely he would think much better. (3) I also always share the children's grades in class so they know. Thus, those grades will be conveyed to parents later. If parents know their grades are bad, automatically, there will be motivation from parents. Therefore, there is motivation from me, their parents, and the wishes of the children themselves. Well, it is what I feel there is an improvement. Why can there be an improvement? It is because I always motivate the children to recognize themselves. The main things are to pray and try; people who try to prepare for life earlier will be more successful than those who do not prepare at all."]

Homeroom teachers carried out the motivation and habituation as student parents at school. The role of the homeroom teacher is vital in shaping the student's character of responsibility. Also, schools cannot reach all students, so there needs to be an unwritten rule in a class in the form of an agreement between the teacher and students. One of the agreements in the fifth grade of the State Elementary of 1 Barongan was about a seating system using a row system (called the RT system). As stated by the fifth-grade homeroom teacher:

"Sistem RT itu sistem tempat duduk per banjar, untuk memudahkan saya dan anak-anak. Ketika saya memerintahkan RT 1, RT 2, mereka langsung sudah tau. Yang di depan pak RT, yang di belakang bu RT. Jadi, untuk memudahkan penyebutan saja. Kenapa yang di depan saya jadikan pak RT? Itu juga melatih tanggung jawab mereka. Ketika saya beri tugas membagikan, mengumpulkan soal itu kan tanggung jawab. Pokoknya dia bertanggung jawab di RTnya masing-masing. Yang duduk di depan itu anak-anak yang nilainya rendah sebagai bentuk strategi saja. Karena kalau dibuat seperti itu mereka merasa ada tekanan, otomatis kalau mereka di depan kan merasa seperti tahanan, jadi mereka akan selalu terpancing untuk belajar

karena pemikirannya saya bisa pasti yang lain bisa”.

[“The RT system is a seating system per row to make it easier for the children and me. When I ordered RT 1 and RT 2, they immediately knew. The one in front is Mr. RT, and the one behind is Mrs. RT. Thus, it is only for ease of mention. Why is the one in front of me made Mr. RT? It also exercises their responsibilities. When I gave the task of distributing and collecting questions, it was a form of responsibility. Anyway, he is responsible for his respective RT. Those sitting in the front are also children with low grades, as a form of my strategy. It is because if they are made like that, they feel pressure, and automatically if they are in front, they feel like prisoners. Therefore, they will always be provoked to learn because the thought is that I can do it, surely others can.”]

The agreement is a regulation outside the written rules of the school. It corroborates with the purpose of education, which does not only include the development of human potential intellectually but also focuses on the process of character building. The realization of the world of education in instilling character education for students is supported by the 2013 curriculum through character education strengthening programs (Suwartini, 2017).

Motivation and habituation are carried out through character education implementation. In the learning process, character education is integrated through providing motivation and class rules, class activities, and delivery of subject matter in core activities. Some descriptions above align with the forms of character education implementation in learning according to Sari & Bermuli (2021), including (1) giving motivation and class rules consistently in every meeting, (2) training and directing students to practice the responsibility character through group discussion activities, (3) the integration of the value of the responsibility character in the subject matter delivery, and (4) reflection activities in the closing section.

Students will bring up a response after being given motivation and habituation. To make this response stronger, reinforcement is needed so that it will form the desired behavior. This explanation is consistent with

the operant conditioning theory developed by B. F. Skinner. Operant conditioning strengthens operant behavior, which can result in the behavior being repeated or disappearing as desired. In this regard, reinforcement is a consequence that increases the chances of a behavior occurring. Meanwhile, the consequence is a pleasant or unpleasant condition that occurs after a behavior and affects the behavior frequency in the future. Pleasant consequences are reinforcement actions, while unpleasant consequences are punishments (Yulianti et al., 2019).

Roles of Operant Conditioning in the Responsibility Character Formation

According to Skinner as cited by Feist & Feist in *Theories of Personality* operant conditioning consists of two main concepts:

Reinforcement

Reinforcement is divided into two, positive and negative reinforcement.

a) Positive reinforcement

Positive reinforcement made by the homeroom teacher was first attention, where the teacher directed students always to arrange seats and sit according to the agreement. The teacher also always kept the class clean. When the class is clean, it will create comfort in learning (Khasanah, 2015). In addition, the behavior that students wanted to repeat or improve was orderly to create comfort in the classroom, and a pleasant reinforcement or stimulus was attention.

During the learning process, the teacher approved for students to answer when the teacher asked questions and students wanted to answer. The behavior to be repeated or improved here was the student's confidence to answer questions, and the reinforcement or a pleasant stimulus was the approval.

When students could answer or only dared to come forward to do assignments, the teacher gave awards in the form of additional values and small things, such as applause (Hero & Esthakia, 2021). Here, the behavior to be repeated or improved was the student's courage to answer questions, and the reinforcement or a pleasant stimulus was the award.

This attitude follows the meaning of positive reinforcement, according to Skinner, that any stimulus increases the likelihood that

a behavior will occur when included in a situation. Expected behavior will also increase as a pleasant stimulus follows it (Mustaqim, 2016). Forms of positive reinforcement are food, water, money, social approval, rewards, and physical comfort. When highlighted in a behavior, each can increase response.

b) Negative reinforcement

Homeroom teachers reinforced negative reinforcement by reducing the material in learning even though the teacher used the lecture method so that students could still think creatively and be active in learning. As stated by the fifth-grade homeroom teacher:

“Saya menggunakan tidak satu pakem mbak, bahkan saya sering menggunakan metode ceramah karena mungkin ada beberapa anak yang cocok dengan model ceramah. Tetapi saya tidak langsung memberikan jawaban, ketika contoh kemarin saya memberikan data, siapa yang bisa maju? Nah itu berpikir kreatif dia bisa menemukan sendiri”.

[“I do not use one standard, Ms., and even I often use the lecture method because maybe some children fit that model. However, I did not immediately answer; for example, when I submitted the data yesterday, which could come forward? Well, it is a form of creative thinking since he can figure it out on his own.”]

In this case, the behavior to be repeated or improved was to think creatively and be active in learning, and the unpleasant stimulus to be eliminated was the teacher giving too many lectures so that students could think creatively and be active in learning.

When giving assignments, the teacher also gave a break so that students did not feel bored and as a form of recharging the spirit of students in learning. The behavior to be repeated or improved here was the enthusiasm for doing assignments and student learning, and the unpleasant stimulus to be removed was that the teacher gave too many assignments, so students felt bored.

The two behaviors above are consistent with the meaning of negative reinforcement, i.e., removing an aversive stimulus from a situation can increase the likelihood that the previous behavior will occur. Negative reinforcement is delaying/not giving rewards,

providing additional assignments, and showing displeased behavior, such as shaking hands, frowning, and disappointed faces or others (Sholihah & Laela, 2021).

Punishment

The punishment that teacher carries out is that when a student makes a mistake, the teacher will punish the student so that they do not make the same mistake (Yulailawati, 2017). For example, when a student was late for class, the teacher reprimanded the student by warning and applying pressure. In this regard, the behavior to be omitted was being late for class, and both reprimand and emphasis were the punishments.

When students forgot or did not do assignments, the teacher gave additional assignments, i.e., students to repeat the complete task and ask them to make a statement on paper and ask for a parent's signature. The behavior to be omitted here was not doing assignments, giving additional assignments, and making a statement were the punishments.

In the fifth grade of the State Elementary School of 1 Barongan, there was also a seating system where the students in the front were those who talked a lot and did not pay attention when learning, so their scores were low. Students sitting in the front were also given more responsibilities, such as distributing assignments, collecting assignments, and being the chairperson during group discussions, so they were motivated to improve their grades to no longer do this. The behavior to be omitted here was the behavior of talking a lot and not paying attention during learning, and being placed in the front and given much responsibility were the punishments.

Some explanations above agree with the meaning of punishment as giving an unpleasant stimulus, such as an electric shock, or eliminating a pleasant stimulus, such as disconnecting a teenager's phone. Punishment is also a consequence that reduces the chances of a behavior occurring (Hastjarjo, 2011).

Moreover, negative reinforcement is not the same as punishment. Negative reinforcement removes, reduces, and avoids an unpleasant stimulus, while punishment is giving an unpleasant stimulus, such as an electric shock, or eliminating a pleasant

stimulus, such as disconnecting a teenager's phone. Also, negative reinforcement reinforces a response, while punishment does not. Although punishment does not strengthen a response, it does not directly weaken the response (Yulianti et al., 2019).

Following the explanation above, Skinner also argues that operant conditioning (Skinnerian conditioning) is a learning situation in which a behavior or a response is made more likely to occur when given direct reinforcement (Radjah et al., 2021). Hence, during PTMT, the stimulus given by the student produced a response, which could then be given reinforcement directly by the teacher.

Based on the research results above, it can be concluded that education is a forum for character building realized in learning with the character education implementation. The character education implementation increases the character that initially decreased due to motivation and habituation. Motivation and habituation then produce a response; to strengthen the response, there needs to be reinforcement to form the desired behavior. Reinforcement, in this case, corroborates with the operant conditioning theory of B. F. Skinner, consisting of the primary concepts of reinforcement (positive and negative reinforcement) and punishment. This reinforcement is vital in learning, especially in shaping students' character.

CONCLUSION

In this study, changes in the learning system impacted the student responsibility character. The decrease in responsibility was caused by students needing to adapt to situations and conditions and the change of class teachers. After a few months during the learning implementation, an increase in the responsibility character was seen. The forms of responsibility that arose were that students arrived on time, continuously obeyed the rules according to health protocols, were enthusiastic and actively participated in learning, constantly did and collected assignments on time, and were active in group activities. Increasing the responsibility of character was also carried out through education.

Education here is a forum for character building realized in learning with the character education implementation. The character education implementation increases the character that initially decreased due to motivation and habituation. Motivation and habituation then produce a response; to strengthen the response, there needs to be reinforcement to form the desired behavior. Reinforcement, in this case, corroborates with the operant conditioning theory of B. F. Skinner, consisting of the primary concepts of reinforcement (positive and negative reinforcement) and punishment. Examples of punishments are reprimands, pressure, and additional work.

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