

A Buddhist Model of Behavior Modification: An Analytical Study of the *Anuggahita Sutta* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya*

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Introduction

Behavioral Modification can be shown as a significant area within the stream of psychology that deals with the behavioral sciences, and through Behavioral Modification, in contemporary society, there can be seen proven positive effects that help individuals to get rid of negative mindsets which lead them towards unwholesome approaches in life. Within modern psychology, it focuses on behavioral modification on a scientific and medical basis, while Buddhism, through its teachings, takes an approach from a spiritual and ethical context which helps individuals to modify their behaviors in a realistic aspect.

According to the Princeton Dictionary (2014, p.463) of Buddhism, “behavior, *carita*, is typically bifurcated into either good (*sucarita*) or bad conduct.” The Pāli-English Dictionary (1996, p.609) edited by T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede can also be recognized as a rich repository gathering definitions on the term “Behavior” or “*Cariyā*.” Within the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, the behavioral transformation is achieved through the cultivation of morality, which is also known as ‘*sīla*’, and that discipline which is created within oneself can pave the way for mindfulness as well as the ultimate realization of wisdom. When referring to the *Anuggahitasutta* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya* provides a concise framework for behavioral modification within its context under five points. These five qualities, namely: moral discipline, extensive learning, discussion on the Dhamma, tranquility, and insightfulness, collectively create a progressive model of behavior modification which removes the underlying causes of the unwholesome behaviors.

Accordingly, this study addresses how the five supportive qualities presented in the *Anuggahitasutta* can be reconstructed into a Buddhist model of behavioral modification applicable to contemporary behavioral development. Through reconstructing these teachings into a behavioral framework, the study contributes to both Buddhist studies and behavioral sciences while demonstrating the continuing relevance of the *Anuggahitasutta* towards behavioral transformation.

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Objectives

The objectives of this study can be shown as follows:

To understand the psychological aspects in Buddhism

To understand the Behavioral Modification strategies derived from *Anuggahitasutta*

To understand the concept of Behavioral Modification in Buddhism

To recognize the Buddhist techniques on Behavior Modification

Methodology

In this research, the Qualitative Dominant Mixed Research Method will be applied and through that, the methods namely: collecting data from Primary and Secondary Sources, providing critical and comparative explanations of the facts, analyzing the data extracted from the Primary and Secondary Sources, classification of data in a historical context, arriving at general conclusions and suggestions will be methodically followed to explicate the literary and the qualitative value of the research.

Results

When paying attention to the *Anuggahitasutta* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, it can be seen how this discourse reveals a systematic framework for behavioral modification through the five interrelated qualities of *sīla*, *sutānuggahita*, *sākaccānuggahita*, *samathānuggahita*, and *vipassanānuggahita* (*Aṅguttaranikāya* III, 2006, p.32) . Although these qualities have been mentioned within the sutta as the qualities required and supported for the development of the right view (*sammāditṭhi*), the findings interpret that these qualities constitute a progressive model for the behavioral modification of individuals.

The analysis identifies *sīla* or morality as the ethical foundation of the behavioral modification, which regulates bodily and verbal conduct in a wholesome manner while encouraging moral reasoning and reflective dialogue, ethical clarification, and the practical application of Buddhist teachings through discussion. Further, this study clearly shows how unwholesome behaviors can be modified through morality, extensive knowledge of the Dhamma, and discussion on the Dhamma, which leads towards insight through tranquility, which endows one with a realistic sight on the impermanent, suffering, and soulless nature of the world.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the *Anuggahitasutta* presents behavioral modification as an integrated process progressing from moral discipline of body and speech to extensive knowledge, reflective discussion, concentration, and transformative wisdom. This reconstructed model highlights the ethical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of the behavioral transformation within early Buddhist thought.

Discussion / Conclusion

By investigating about the Behavioral Modification Techniques that have been derived with the Buddhist teachings, it can be seen how morality played a vital role in transforming the behaviors of the individuals at the time of the Buddha. Due to its indispensable role within Buddhist Philosophy, it not only functions as a system of ethical prescriptions but also as a comprehensive framework for the transformation of human behavior. In this way, when referring to the findings explicate that the *Anuggahitasutta* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya* illustrates a coherent model of behavior modification which has been consisted with ethical discipline, cognitive development, reflective discussion, mental concentration, and wisdom. Although the primary discourse highlights the five supportive qualities towards the right view, these five qualities of *sīla*, *sutānuggahita*, *sākaccānuggahita*, *samathānuggahita*, and *vipassanānuggahita* collectively emphasize a systematic process of behavioral modification.

Through the *Anuggahitasutta*, it can be systematically explored how these five qualities contribute to Behavior Modification and how to chain them to change a person's behavior. As a process that functions as an ethical self-regulation, the principle of 'sīla' can be emphasized, and through this morality, it can lead an individual to learn the relationship between the actions and their consequences. This learning (Bodhi, 2012, p.644) , which is on the actions and their consequences, can be denoted to the dhamma concept of 'sutānuggahita' and this learning which is on the actions and their consequences can be further led towards a discussion on the clarification of dhamma which strengthens individuals on the ethical understanding and when an individual is possessed with a clarified mind on the dhamma, that person is able to concentrate the mind and look on to the world in a realistic approach. Through this five-stage model within the *Anuggahitasutta* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, it is able to modify the behavior of a person towards sustainable behavior change, which is endowed with ethical responsibility integrated with behavioral modification. Also, this type of behavior modification is always motivated by wholesome actions, as individuals who have proper knowledge of the unwholesome and evil consequences of the actions endeavor to perform righteous actions to be surrounded with the wholesome consequences. Further, the behavior modification which is created with this five-

model analysis by changing the behavior of an evil person is able to lead him towards the ultimate bliss of emancipation within the supra-mundane level in Buddhism. Not only for the Supra-mundane level but also with the ethical living, which is created with behavior modification, it is able to pave the pathway of the individuals to have righteous living in their social, economic, and environmental aspects as well.

Although this study is limited to the analysis of a single discourse, this discourse demonstrates the contemporary relevance of the *Anuggahitasutta* as a pathway towards sustainable behavior change, which is encouraged with a realistic understanding and makes individuals motivated to perform wholesome actions and to eliminate craving, which binds them to the *saṃsāric* suffering.

Keywords - Behavioral Modification, Buddhist, Ethical, Model, Morality

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