

# Psychology analysis flashcard



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The behaviourist perspective is that we can understand any type of behaviour by looking at what a person has learned. This will include personality traits such as; confidence, shyness, optimism or pessimism as well as other fleeting behaviours. Behaviourist psychologists can explain all human behaviour as resulting from experience. They are two associated thinkers with the behaviourist perspective and they are Pavlov (classical conditioning) and Skinner (operant conditioning).

Both the theorists explained all the types of behaviour as being a result of learning everything i. e. from shyness to aggression, from happiness to depression. Classical conditioning is a theory that was developed by a Russian physiologist called Ivan Pavlov (1849 - 1936). Pavlov worked with dogs in order to investigate their digestive systems, the dogs were attached to a harness and Pavlov attached monitors to their stomachs and mouths in order for him to measure the production of saliva.

Pavlov one day had noticed the dog began to produce saliva when the laboratory assistant had entered the room with a bowl of food before the dog had actually tasted the food. As salivation is an automatic response it seemed quite strange, Pavlov gathered that the dog was producing saliva because it had learned to associate the laboratory assistant with food. Food automatically led to the response of salivation due to salivation being an automatic response which was referred as 'unconditional response'. Unconditioned meant 'not learned', as food automatically led to this response which he referred as 'unconditional stimulus'.

Pavlov then displayed food at the exact same time as ringing a bell to see if the dog would learn to associate the bell with food. After several attempts the dog learned that the bell was linked with the food which it then began to salivate, when only the bell was rung and no food was presented. It had learned the conditioned response, a new learned response of the salivation to the conditioned stimulus of the bell. Operant conditioning is a theory that was developed by Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1904 -1990). Skinner was an American psychologist who worked mostly with rats and pigeons, to discover the key principles of learning new behaviour strategies. Skinner used a very famous device which was called the Skinner box, the box contained a lever which, when pressed, releases a food pellet into the box which then reinforced lever pressing behaviour.

When the rat is first placed in the box it will eventually run around, and sniff the items in the box that are placed there however at some point the rat will press the lever which will then release a food pellet. After a little while when the rat has performed this action repeatedly it will learn that this behaviour (pressing the lever) is automatically followed by the release of a food pellet. As the pellet is experienced as reinforcing the sequence increases the probability of the behaviour being repeated; they are two types of reinforcement which are positive and negative. Skinner investigated negative reinforcement by running a very low electric current on the floor of the Skinner box, however the current could be deactivated if the rat pressed the lever. A punishment may occur when behaviour is followed by a consequence that is experienced as unpleasant.

Skinner researched this by giving the rat a mini electric shock when it pressed the lever. The consequence of lever pressing (electric shock) was experienced as unpleasant, therefore the rat had learned to stop pressing the lever. Social Learning Theory: Social learning theory is a perspective that states that people learn within a social context. Social learning theory is a perspective that states that social behaviour of any sort that we display socially is learned primarily by observing and imitating the actions of others. The effects of groups on behaviour: Humans behaviour is dramatically influenced by the presence of others around us, however much we may believe ourselves to be truly individual in our behaviour.

It was clearly demonstrated in the experiments in the 1950's by social psychologist called Solomon Asch. He was highly interested in a concept called majority influence which is a type of influence exerted by groups that is associated with the individuals desire to be accepted. This is when the presence of others causes us to change our public behaviour or personal opinions as we do not want to stand out from the crowd. Due to us having a powerful desire to belong and will 'go along' with what others in our group say, think or do in order to fit in. This is what Solomon did to test this idea. A group of six participants of the experimenter (people who were play acting according to instructions) were joined by a naïve participant (a genuine participant who didn't have a clue about the nature of the experiment) in a task that apparently tested visual perception.

The experimenter explained that the task involved stating whether a target line shown matched the length of one of a set of three lines (a, b and c) similarly shown to the participants. As far as the genuine participant was

concerned, all the participants that were taking part were similarly naïve for example they didn't know what was happening therefore they were genuine participants. The group were sat in a layout of horseshoe arrangement, with one naïve participant always last but one to be asked to make a judgement. The procedure began with the first participant stating out aloud whether the target line was equal and fair in length to one of the specified comparison lines. Then the next person in the horseshoe seating answered and so it followed on right to the end.

The ' perceptual trial' was repeated 18 times but on 12 of the 18 trials the participants all gave the incorrect answer when the correct answer was blatantly obvious. Shockingly out of 123 naïve participants, 28% gave an incorrect answer eight or more times. This evidently shows how one individual can be influenced by a group/team. The Psychodynamic Approach: The psychodynamic approach is associated with an Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud (1856 - 1936). He developed this theory of psychodynamic psychology and the treatment is known as psychoanalysis.

A key follower of Freud was called Erik Erikson (1902 - 1994) who adapted aspects of Freud's approach. The importance of the unconscious mind: Sigmund Freud described the situation when a Member of Parliament was referring to the MP for Hull, with whom he had disagreed about a policy. Instead of saying the ' the honourable member from Hull' he started saying ' the honourable member from Hell'. Sigmund Freud was one of the earliest thinkers to bring to public attention the idea that we are not always aware of all aspects of ourselves. Freud suggested that what we are aware of is represented in our conscious mind but that many of our memories, feelings

and past experiences that are hidden away in a part of our mind which is referred as the 'unconscious'. We humans cannot access the contents of our unconscious, however they often leak out in dreams and slips out of the tongue.

Freud believed that the conscious mind was like the tip of the iceberg for e. g. only the small part being available to awareness. However the part of the unconscious that we can easily access he referred as the pre-conscious. This contains information not yet in full conscious but that can be easily retrieved for e. g.

a name of a pet. Erik Erikson was psychologist who agreed with much of Freud's theory in so far as he thought that we developed through a series of stages. However he thought that these continued throughout our lifetime and were essentially social in nature. Erik also believed that Freud had too much input of emphasis on our desire for individual gratification and not enough on our need to be accepted by society and lead a meaningful life.

Erikson suggested that we move through a series of psychosocial crises with a different social focus at each stage. For e. g. Between birth and the age of one. The Humanistic Perspective: Humanistic psychology looks at human experience from the viewpoint of the individual.

It focuses on the idea of free will and the belief that we are all capable of making choices. They are two psychologists that are associated with this approach they are Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Abraham Maslow: Maslow (1908 - 1970) was an American psychologist who believed that we are all seeking to become the best we can possibly be; spiritually, physically

emotionally and intellectually. He referred this as self-actualisation which is tendency we all possess as human beings to become the best that we all can be in all aspects of personality. He developed a theory known as the hierarchy of needs which he explained every human being requires certain basic needs to be met before they can progress and approach to the next level.

Carl Rogers: Rogers (1902 - 1987) was particularly interested in the concept of self. There many aspects of self but two are especially important here. Self - concept refers to how we view ourselves, this includes physical and biological attributes such as being male or female, blonde or brunette, tall or short along with personality traits such as being kind, humble, assertive and hard working. Self- concept is formed at an early stage of life and young children internalise which is when we take in information from the outer world and build it into sense ourselves which then becomes a part of our feelings, thoughts and beliefs about who we are and what we expect from the society around us, other peoples judgments of them. This becomes a part of one's self concept, for e. g.

if a child is told they are silly and naughty and is not of any good part of their self - concept will contain these aspects. However on the other hand if a child is praised and encouraged to succeed they will have a positive self - concept and see themselves as someone who is worthwhile. The Cognitive Perspective: Jean Piaget (1896 - 1980) was a Swiss psychologist who initially worked on measuring intelligence. During his research he noticed that children of the same age group made the same mistakes in logic, however

bright they were. Piaget came to a conclusion that cognition develops through a series of stages.

Cognitive behaviour represents approach to understanding the effects of learning the instigation of behaviour. Cognitive perspective studies how people perceive, remember, reason, decide and solve problems to resolves the cause of mental illnesses. George Kelly: George Kelly (1905 -1996) developed a unique psychological theory known as the psychology of personal constructs. Kelly saw the individual as a scientist, making predictions about the future, testing them and revising them according to new evidence.

A construct is a way of interpreting reality and the environment, for example if a person develops deafness in middle age they may see this as a disaster and then begin to withdraw from the outer world and be socially isolated. Alternatively, if they construe this as a challenge they may seek out new opportunities and work around their deafness and continue to live a fulfilling life. The Biological Perspective: Maturation theory: The theory of maturation holds that the effects of the environment are very minimal. The baby is born with a set of genetic instructions passed down from its parents, and it's cognitive, physical and various other developmental processes merely unfold over time, rather than being dependent upon the environment to mature.

It is in effect, a theory which states that developed is due to nature and not nurture. Gesell's theory of maturation: Arnold Gesell (1880 - 1961) believed that development occurred according to a sequence of maturational



processes. For example development in the womb follows a fixed set of stages; firstly the heart begins to form along with the rudimentary nervous system. Bones and muscles develop next and over a period time the organism develops into a fully functioned human being and is ready to be born. As the child develops and progresses from birth onwards, its genes allow it to blossom gradually into the person he/she is meant to be.

The environment should provide support for this unfolding of talents, skills, personality and interests; however the main thing driving this development is the maturational process.