

Behaviourist theory for atypical behaviour

[Psychology](#), [Behaviorism](#)



Behaviourist Theory (10 marks) First of all, behaviourists are psychologists that believe that behaviours are learnt instead of them being natural.

Behaviourist theory believes that people learn to be phobic rather than are born phobic. Reason being, many people link their fear of an object or situation to something bad they have experienced. For instance, if someone is scared of needles, it may have been because they had a bad experience with it as a child, thus causing a phobia. This I known as classical conditioning – learning by association; learn to associate a certain response with a certain stimulus.

However, even behaviourists do take into account that some behaviour are not learnt, but are instinctive instead. This is called unconditioned response. This contains of instinctive responses such as sexual arousal and anxiety. Unconditioned responses are triggered by unconditioned stimulus. They can be objects or events that naturally cause the reaction such as stimulating genitals might cause arousal or a threat may cause us to be anxious. Yet, sometimes these responses happen in the presence of a neutral stimulus. Neutral stimuli don't cause a reaction.

However we assume it does when we experience something good or bad. For example if a person ate chips and got sick -vomited, they may assume chips cause a bad reaction every single time. This is known as classical conditioning. Therefore each of the neutral stimuli is then described as a conditioned stimulus because they trigger a learnt response. A reaction to a conditioned stimulus is called a conditioned response. Also operant conditioning is a term used by the behaviourist to describe learning by

consequences. If the consequences of an action are worthwhile we learn to do them again.

Yet if the consequences are not good, we are likely not to do it again. Atypical behaviours are learnt in the same manner as typical behaviours. Atypical behaviours are just more uncommon cases of classical conditioning. One of the criticisms of this theory is that it ignores the mind and the thinking behind it. For example if we two people got robbed at night, one is likely to think of it as one time incident and forget about it- rational. Whereas the other will think it will happen many times again - irrational. Thus causes to develop a phobia of dark. Different people have different outlook to the event.