

# Good essay on theoretical perspectives

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





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## Introduction

The psychological field is familiar with the difference of B. F. Skinner and John Watson's theoretical perspectives. However, none of the two differs as much as Edward Tolman's perspectives. One of his popular assertions is that he believes in the importance of every aspect in the psychological field. In addition, all those aspects can undergo investigation through perpetual theoretical and practical analysis of rat demeanor determiners in a maze (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). These different perspectives are captivating and are popular in this era's modern psychology. This paper will generate a fair comparison and contrast on Skinner and Watson's perspective with those of Tolman's with regard to modern psychology.

## John Watson

Watson asserts that with the provision of a response then one can predict the stimuli and vice versa (Watson, 2009). This is the manner in which the theorist thinks, thus his name the father of the behaviorist theory. John Watson's theoretical perspective faces practical proof with the popular



experiment conducted on a baby that was almost a year old. After the perpetual introduction of the unconditioned stimuli, the production of an unconditioned response followed. Rayner, his assistant, is the one who conducted the experiment whereby the rat served as the conditioned stimuli. Lil Albert, the unconditioned response, developed a phobia against animals and white objects. However, before the experiment conduction the child did not hold any fear against white objects and rats. After the experiment undertaking for a number of repeated times, they noted that Lil Albert then developed the phobia gradually.

This emanated the suggestion that the manifestation of classical conditioning phobias affects one's demeanor. This generated the theory that the management of a child's environment can often affect their future developing behavior. Theorist Watson's research created to the controversial debates that concern the conditions and responses that create certain ramifications. Currently, Watson's theoretical techniques are in use in emotional therapy and child development, as well as in corporations.

#### B. F. Skinner

Skinner's theoretical perspective varied from that of Watson through the inclusion of operant conditioning. Skinner revived behaviorism during the 1930s and 40s, and adapted Watson's descriptions on behaviorism principles in an extensive manner (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). His interest laid primarily in various animals' behavior, thus leading to humans' behaviorism. The majority of Skinner's practical experiments were under human application just as Watson did. However, his attempted experiments on humans were not as hazardous as those of Watson. He theorized the manner



in which people could view behavior by examining an action's causes and the resulting consequences, thus naming it operant conditioning.

Just as Watson became the father of the behaviorist theory, Skinner is the father of operant conditioning. However, his work bases on Thorndike's law of effect. He further introduced a new law effect terminology which is reinforcement. Reinforced behavior may be repeated thus strengthening it. On the other hand, unreinforced behavior tends to weaken or extinguish in the long run (Watson, 2009). Currently, his psychological and theoretical research is of great essentiality in behavioral therapy of psychology. His groundbreaking masterpiece construction was through Watson's work, but he expounded it to a higher level. The cognitive psychological world is among the many that utilize operant conditioning in various ways.

## **Edward Tolman**

Tolman's work is a complete contrast to both Skinner and Watson's perspective theories. His theorization of Behaviorism completely differs from the two theorists. His theories often reiterated molecular over molar behavior and a behavior's goal-directedness and purpose. In addition, it also lays emphasis on the utilization of intervening variables (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). Tolman realized that the study unit has to be extensively researched more than the molecular research carried out by Watson. Moreover, he theorized that neurological responses accompanied by glandular responses were extensive in the study unit. One of Tolman's intelligent students illustrated that when a rat was taught how to swim through a maze then it could run accurately through it.

Therefore, things that people learn cognitively are not only kinesthetic



responses as theorized by Watson and Skinner. The Gestalts theory that influenced Tolman greatly asserts that behavior as a whole is greater than its units' sum of stimulus response. During Tolman's time, molar behavior covered a wide array of behavior patterns. Motor nerves and sensory nerves and glands and muscles have some partial involvement in every human behavior. In addition, these organs bear sufficient properties and act independently too. Moreover, the field theory generates the suggestion that every kind of behavior has a goal. Tolman achieved goal directedness just as simply as the rats walking in the maze. The rat's core objective was to get food only. This is almost equivalent to evolutionary thinking whereby the species' survival influences their overall behavior. Perchance, it is the species' main objective hence creating a certain behavior. Tolman refers to these deeds as purposiveness (Watson, 2009).

Intervening variables is another aspect used extensively in the field of psychology. It means that hypothetical factors that are indirectly seen receive inference from the manner in which dependent and independent variables undergo operational definition (). For instance, thirst is a good example of an intervening variable because it is not observational yet it exists as a ramification. Disallowing the subject to have access to drinks or liquids for long time periods results into thirst. In this case, the intervening variable is thirst. The subject behavior holds a goal orientation of quenching thirst. Tolman theorized that a ramification of learning is the creation of an expectation.

Another of Tolman's theories is the cognitive map that is almost equivalent to that of theorist Lashley. Tolman realized that the rats confined in the



maze did not ending up learning the stimulus response connections.

However, the rats established a kind of cognitive map in the maze. In one of Tolman's writings he speaks of the two rats that internalized a maze to perfection that they could climb outside the box, run across and jump back in to eat at the opposite end. The fact that Tolman was willing to submit cognitive intervening variables brands him as an essential link between cognitive psychology and behaviorism.

Tolman had a healthy attitude towards the perception and approach of his different theories. He was aware of the fact that better theories would come up, but this did not bother his conscience at all. He viewed psychology as a personal aspect of his endeavors of attaining conclusions. The passion and dedication he gave towards his work exemplified his analysis and findings and gave an outline map of behavior today. Tolman's ethics and manners are more popular than the research he carried out throughout his life. This is an exhilarating teaching for majority of today's psychologists since taking oneself seriously hinders research in the psychological department.

The behaviorist approach in the current world of psychology still likens to that of Watson. This approach concentrates on the environment that alters people's and animals' behavior. In addition, behaviorists focus less attention towards the heredity behavior aspect and instead reiterating that heredity cannot undergo any change (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). Therefore, it is better to concentrate on the aspects that can undergo change such as environmental factors. Modern day psychology also follows Skinner's behaviorist theories. The modern theory asserts that behavior is a succinct



result of consequences. Skinner realized that the determinant of a response is the events that follow that specific response. This assertion is still in practice in the psychological arena today. The cognitive approach in today's psychological field links directly to Tolman's cognitive theory. His approach has gained increased popularity in the modern day psychology (Schultz, 2012). Tolman's behavioral theory had a clear characteristic of direction and purpose. His lessons, unique teachings, alternate path studies and response theories have a place in the modern psychology.

## **Conclusion**

The biological approach psychologists assume that experiences and behavior are a result of activity in the body's nervous system. By focusing on the brain organs that are responsible for the one's behavior, is the skill psychologists in the field utilize. For instance, the broca part of the brain monitors human language. Biological psychologists agree with the alteration of the heredity aspect. The approach used by Skinner and Tolman is that of valid scientific evidence. However, Watson made an attempt in the documentation of his research in order to depict valid conclusions. The three theorists make up the backbone of the modern day psychology. Data depicts that the use of ethics and moral character development, many psychologists will be successful in taking up theories and drawing valid conclusions on them.

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