

Application of the behaviourist perspective psychology essay



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Operant conditioning is a process of learning, it was found by Burrhus Frederic Skinner BF Skinner. Skinner invented the operant conditioning chamber, also known as the Skinner Box. He innovated his own philosophy of science called radical behaviorism, and founded his own school of experimental research psychology – the experimental analysis of behavior. His analysis of human behavior culminated in his work Verbal Behavior, which has recently seen enormous increase in interest experimentally and in applied settings. Operant conditioning is a type of learning in which an individual's behavior is modified by its consequences; the behavior may change in form, frequency, or strength. Operant conditioning is distinguished from classical conditioning in that operant conditioning deals with the modification of voluntary behavior or operant behavior. Operant behavior operates on the environment and is maintained by its consequences. Classical conditioning (also Pavlovian conditioning or respondent conditioning) is a form of learning in which the conditioned stimulus (CS), comes to signal the occurrence of a second stimulus, the unconditioned stimulus (US). (A stimulus is a factor that causes a response in an organism.) The conditioned response is the learned response to the previously neutral stimulus. The US is usually a biologically significant stimulus such as food or pain that elicits a response from the start; this is called the unconditioned response (UR). The CS usually produces no particular response at first, but after conditioning it elicits the conditioned response (CR). Classical conditioning differs from operant or instrumental conditioning, in which behavior emitted by the subject is strengthened or weakened by its consequences (reward or punishment).

This perspective is most useful in explaining our different 'Learned' behaviours. It lets us look at a specific behaviour and see where we got it from and how we got it. Changing behaviour is where we change our behaviour sometimes because of maybe a fear or phobia. Classical conditioning is used for explaining these but it is also good for helping us change these behaviours. There is a method to change phobic behaviour, this is called 'Systematic Desensitisation'. You would put together a list of things that relate to the fear, and relax to the point where you are comfortable enough to look at the thing without being scared. Then you would move up to the next level of it. For example, if you were afraid of spiders, you would get comfortable with seeing a picture of a spider, then the next level would be having a spider in the room with you but in a cage, and this could progress up to you being able to hold the spider. This is called a 'Hierarchy Of Fear'. Classical conditioning has also been used to treat other things like alcoholism, they are given a drug, when that drug is mixed with alcohol it causes them to feel sick and be sick. They then associate alcohol with sick and unpleasantness.

Application of the Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory suggests that many things can influence our behaviour. This could be things like; Peers, Siblings, Parents, Television, Sports, Personalities and celebrities. If we see someone we admire behaving in a certain way, we are more likely to imitate them. Albert Bandura is a famous Psychologist at Stanford University. For almost six decades, he has been responsible for contributions to many fields of psychology, including social cognitive theory, therapy and personality psychology, and was also

influential in the transition between behaviorism and cognitive psychology. He is known as the originator of social learning theory and the theory of self-efficacy, and is also responsible for the influential 1961 Bobo doll experiment. He felt that learning did not have to be conditioned or reinforced all the time. New behaviour could be could be learnt by observing others. Observational Theory refers to learning of a new behaviour through watching someone else perform the behaviour. This behaviour can be learnt but does not have to be reproduced unless the individual is motivated to perform the new behaviour. Role Theory suggests that because we live in a certain culture, come from a certain religion or are friends with certain types of groups, we adopt certain roles as we are expected to live up to certain expectations. It also suggests we change our roles to suit our environment. Bandura also thinks that our behaviour is influenced by the presence of others.

Because people learn by observing others, we can do different things to teach people things, like using celebrities for example; Comic Relief involved a ton of celebrities of a wide variety, from singers to TV stars, which attract many different people. These celebrities are role models to people so when comic relief use them to ask the public for money, the public are more likely to give because a celebrity has asked. Also when Princess Diana visited an AID's Hospice and shook hands with a patient, she broke the taboo that everyone gets aids if they touch these people, and removed prejudice towards them, because Princess Diana was of such high status, this occurrence was more recognized to the public. This theory has been applied in many workplaces around the world to improve them, by firstly setting a

model like behaviour for all employees, not by telling them but by showing them so they have a more defined understanding of it, encouragement to imitate this behaviour is done to make sure it is always used and not forgotten, and passed on easily. So this theory is applied in many different situations, from charities to people doing things to teach others.

Application of the Psychodynamic Perspective

Psychodynamic Psychologists assume that our behaviour is determined by unconscious forces which we are unaware of. Each surface thought, utterance or behaviour hides a hidden motive or intention. The hidden motives for our behaviour reflect our instinctive biological drives and our early experiences, particularly before the age of five. Most particularly, it is the way we are treated by our parents as children that shapes our adult behaviour. The main theorist behind Psychodynamic Theory is Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud was an Austrian neurologist who became known as the founding father of psychoanalysis. Freud qualified as a Doctor of Medicine at the University of Vienna in 1881, and then carried out research into cerebral palsy, aphasia and microscopic neuroanatomy at the Vienna General Hospital. This led in turn to his being appointed 'outside lecturer' in the University, and thus entitled to lecture to fee-paying students. On the basis of his clinical practice Freud went on to develop theories about the unconscious mind and the mechanism of repression, and created psychoanalysis, a clinical method for treating psychopathology through dialogue between a patient and a psychoanalyst.

The psychodynamic perspective is an approach, in the study of psychology that says behaviour is driven by unconscious forces in which we have little

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control over. These subconscious forces can be presented through slips of the tongue or in dreams and represent the unconscious truth. In a health care setting, these subconscious forces are studied to determine a diagnosis or disorder. It originates from Freud's work on the Id ego and superego which are 3 parts of our psyche. The id is like a child is often impulsive and feeds on the basic needs. The ego is our conscious self the one portrayed to the outside world. The superego is also subconscious and acts as a mediator of the Id's basic desires to make the ego one that is socially acceptable and healthy . Originally Freud used something called psychoanalysis which involved looking into the subconscious drives and where problems lie here, that may affect our ego (conscious self). It's a holistic approach that looks not only at the here and now (as you may expect in CBT) but how our past experiences have shaped the problems within the ego. It is believed that the memories are hidden by the superego as a protective mechanism to our ego. The therapy attempts to uncover these subconscious memories in a controlled environment. The relationship between therapist and client is very important and it is often a very long term therapy, in order to gain a trusting relationship. It has been criticised however as it is believed that this kind of approach could coax out false memories. Anxiety means we are fearing what may happen or something that has already happened. Denial is often used to control anxiety but it doesn't really work, this often appears as physical symptoms.

Application of the Humanistic Approach

The Humanistic Approach Theory looks at human experiences, 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. The lead theorists behind this are Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Maslow Believed that we were all seeking to become the best that we can be (Self Actualisation). He constructed a theory called the ' Hierarchy Of Needs'. Maslow subsequently extended the idea to include his observations of humans' innate curiosity. His theories parallel many other theories of human developmental psychology, some of which focus on describing the stages of growth in humans. Maslow used the terms Physiological, Safety, Belongingness and Love, Esteem, Self-Actualization and Self-Transcendence needs to describe the pattern that human motivations generally move through.

Carl Rogers was interested in the concept of self. (Self-Concept). He also believes that we also hold a concept of self, called ' Ideal Self'. This is a view of ourselves as we would like to be, who we want to be. Rogers' theory of the self is considered to be humanistic and phenomenological. His theory is based directly on the " phenomenal field" personality theory of Combs and Snygg (1949). Rogers' elaboration of his own theory is extensive. He wrote 16 books and many more journal articles describing it. However, Prochaska and Norcross(2003) states Rogers " consistently stood for an empirical evaluation of psychotherapy. He and his followers have demonstrated a humanistic approach to conducting therapy and a scientific approach to evaluating therapy need not be incompatible. Rogers says when there is a mismatch between actual self and ideal self, we become troubled and unhappy.

This approach helps others develop empathy, which means listening to another person and being able to put yourself in their situation and feel how

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they feel, with putting aside judgments. To understand this theory, it involves using your emotions and sensitivity to become a more professional and effective worker. Applying this means you need to have active listening and respect other people and adopt a non-judgmental approach.