

Behaviorism among an american psychologists



Watson made a major contribution to the world of personality psychology when he introduced behaviorism. After reading this week's selections and watching the assigned video on learning, discuss a specific area in the practice of psychology where behaviorist theory and treatment is valid in modern psychology. Describe how this theory is applied. Support and explain your opinion as to why behaviorism is valid in this specific area. Post should be at least 300 words. Respond to at least two of your classmates' postings by Day 7.

B. F. Skinner was an American psychologist that expanded behaviorism. According to Berecz (2009) "Skinner is to behaviorism what Tiger Woods is to golf he did not invent the game, raised it to a new level of excellence." Skinner believed that for behavior to be shaped there had to be rewards as well as consequences. Skinner believed that consequences are the most important aspect of changing behavior. Skinner's operant conditioning is still valid in today's modern psychology.

Skinner argued that operant conditioning is changing behavior by the use of reinforcement that is used after the behavior has been displayed. Skinner states that there are two operant responses that follow behavior reinforce, and punishers. "Reinforcers are any consequence which increase the likelihood of a response, and any consequence which decreases the probability of a response is a punisher" (Berecz, 2009 Pg 77). The core of Skinner's behaviorism is the ABC's of operant conditioning.

Berecz (2009) states that "operant conditioners have repeatedly shown that if a particular behavior (B) is immediately followed by a pleasant or rewarding consequence (C), this behavior will almost increase in frequency."

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For example, operant conditioning could be applied to a child in school. If a child is doing extremely well in school and brings home a good report card in operant conditioning his or her parent's would reward and praise the child in which Skinner calls positive reinforcement. Skinner argues that the positive reinforcement will help the child to continue bringing home good reports cards.

On the other hand, if the child is not doing well in school and brings home a bad report card in operant conditioning his or her parent's would distribute negative reinforcement by enforcing an unpleasant consequence to teach the child the behavior of getting a bad report card will not be tolerated. Skinner would state that if a negative consequence would not be enforced the child would continue to bring bad report cards. Eysenck was a British psychologist that argued that trait theory consisted of three broad super factors that were universal, and each made up of narrower traits.

According to Berecz (2009) Eysenck believed that personality is composed of specific responses, habitual responses, and traits all organized into more or less stable and enduring configurations of a person's temperament, intellect, and physiology that characterize unique adjustment to the environment. Eysenck's trait theory spelled the word PEN. Eysenck stated that the three broad super factors are psychoticism, extraversion, and neuroticism. A person high on psychoticism shows aggressive, cold, egocentric, impersonal, impulsive, antisocial, unempathic, creative, tough-minded traits.

People high on extraversion are seen as active, assertive, carefree, dominant, lively, sensation seeking, sociable, surgent, and venturesome. Individual high on neuroticism are described as anxious, depressed,

irrational, moody, emotional, shy, tense, and experiencing guilt and low self-esteem (Berecz, 2009 Pg 117-118). Berecz (2009) states that " E covers normal range of traits, while N and P encompass traits more commonly encountered in clinical problems such as neurosis, psychosis, and psychopathy. " An example of Eysenck trait theory could be used in a game of one on one basketball.

An individual that is playing a game and is fouling and being extremely aggressive and cold with other players on a daily basis would be viewed as being high on psychoticism. If the same individual would play one on one basketball on a daily basis with his friend would be viewed of having a personality of an extraversion. If an individual would be playing a game of basketball and would be extremely emotional, and tense would display the personality of neuroticism. Through evaluating Eysenck's trait theory it is based on physiology and genetics.

Eysenck was considered a behaviorist of learned behavior, but he also considered personality as a genetic inheritance. I believe that Eysenck's theory had a lot of merits through being able to add both behaviorism, and biology. Eysenck is a legend to trait theory and made a lot of valid points in his theory the only drawback I felt was his extreme dislike for psychoanalysis. I believe that in psychology every theory has some validity. Berecz, J. M. (2009). Theories of personality: A zonal perspective. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.