

Psychological perspectives essay



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It is the ability to make a choice between certain behaviors, implying that behavior is partly random and does not have a cause, therefore it cannot be redirected. Free will assumes that we have the power to choose our behavior, for example we have a free choice over our decision to commit a crime. Most people will feel that they possess free will as it gives them a sense of personal responsibility. This fits in with society's view as the legal system is focused around the idea of holding people accountable for their actions. The individual's behavior is not seen as being determined by causal influences or external events, such as conditioning, therefore it is seen as an act which is free from external coercion.

(The Student Room, 2013) One of the main psychological approaches focusing on free will in order to explain human behavior was humanism. The humanistic approach believes that humans are unique and plan their own actions. Humanism highly criticized other approaches believing that they didn't view the person as whole and could be seen as dehumanizing. Humanism suggested that people make their own choices with free will and a natural basic human motive. This ideographic perspective focuses on how we view ourselves, believing that we behave in a certain way with a desire to achieve self-actualization.

Humanistic theories take experiences, choice and freedom into consideration understanding that human beings have an innate desire to develop, grow and change. This theory was greatly influenced by the work of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow who rejected the methods of intense scientific research and experiments. Instead experiments were conducted at an individual level with methods such as diary accounts and unstructured

interviews and questionnaires to understand how the person felt or thought. (Mcleod, 2013) (Cherry, 2013) Humanistic therapies such as client-centered therapy are based on the assumption of free will, with the therapist helping the client to exercise free will in order to decide what is best for themselves whilst maximizing the rewards in their life. This indicates that owning your own behavior is the key to healthy psychological development and only when the individual takes self responsibility is personal growth achievable. Other strengths of free will can include the sense of empowerment.

It is liberating to think that we have the control over our own lives with the option to make individual choices. It also provides a sense of total moral responsibility whilst adding meaning to ethics, ensuring the deserving are punished and praise and blame can be distributed accordingly. Unlike other theories free will emphasizes the individual suggesting the behavior is free and undetermined by our past. (Cherry, 2013) Although a strong concept for understanding the route of human behavior, free will also faces criticism. The assumption of free will is only focused on humans being morally good and can not be tested scientifically; this makes it more difficult to be accepted within society. Psychologists believe that if everyone exercised free will then it could become dangerous and provoke destructive behavior, whilst total moral responsibility can be seen as a huge burden on the individual.

Free will behavior is not accepted by religious believers and is often criticized for being situational, meaning it doesn't account for feelings or emotions which can frequently determine our behavior. (Student Room, 2013) (The Determinism is another theory used to analyse human behavior, however this approach is highly contrasted with free will as it is a scientific account of <https://assignbuster.com/psychological-perspectives-essay/>

behavior. The determinist approach proposes that all human behavior is determined and can be predictable, stating that people have no control over their actions. Determinist would argue that all behavior has a cause and that it is our internal and external forces that control this. There are various types of determinism, some will include hard, biological, soft, environmental and psychic. HOLAP. Co.

UK, 2013) The key assumption of hard determinism are that no action or behavior is free, and everything has a cause. Hard determinist believe that we never act freely and therefore can not be held morally responsible for our actions. John Locke was a philosopher that strengthened assumptions of hard determinism, proving that even when we have the illusion of free will its is still determined. " Locke gave the example of a man who wakes up in a room that, unknown to him, is locked from the outside. He chooses to stay in the room, believing he has chosen freely. In reality, he has no option. However, his ignorance of this gives him an illusion of freedom.

" (Tutor. Net, 2009) Biological behaviorism is often linked in with hard determinism which understands that our behavior is determined by factors that are inside ourselves. This innate approach believes that we are just born that way and our behavior could be linked to genetics, hormones or our brain structures. (Careered, 2003) Soft determinism argues that human behavior is a direct result of the environment but only to a certain extent.

This theory understands that human behavior may be highly influenced by the situation or moderately influenced by the situation although still has an element of free will, nevertheless it is predominantly controlled by outside

forces. (Careered, 2003) Environmental determinism is often linked to soft determinism and believes that we are determined by factors that are outside of ourselves. It is the environment in which we are surrounded that is able to determine our behavior however we still can not control these factors. Albert Bandeau (1965) was a social learning theorist ho claimed that aggressive and deviant behavior is learnt through observation and imitation.

The series of experiments Bandeau carried out on the ' Boob doll' reinforced his beliefs that behavior is determined by the environment that the individual is in. (Determinism, 2013) Psychic determinism believes that internal unconscious processes such as dreams are the cause of human behavior. This perspective strongly believes that the psychological issues we sometimes face as adults are linked to our own personal childhood experiences.

This approach states that all humans have an unconscious allowing them to store and harbor painful repressed feelings which are too damaging for the person to be consciously aware of. Sigmund Freud strongly analyses psychic determinism whilst focusing on childhood experiences and dream analysis. He believed that our consciousness is a thin slice of the total mind and most of who we are is buried and inaccessible in our unconscious. Our unconscious motives often compete with our conscious and create conflict which Freud believed to determine human behavior.

Mcleod, 2013) The main strength of determinism is that it is an empirical theory used to help understand human behavior. Experiments are conducted which are able to isolate variables making them easier to examine. Society is

often more willing to accept its finding when it is supported with evidence. (HOLAP. Co. UK, 2013) Although determinism is a strong scientific theory for the understanding of human behavior it often faces criticism for being too mechanistic, ignoring the emotional realities in human lives.

It takes away individual responsibility and does not account for individual differences. Hard determinism also means that we cannot praise or blame people for their actions, so if hard determinism were true then people would not be morally responsible or to blame for even the most cold-blooded evil behaviors. (HOLAP. Co.

UK, 2013) In order to analyse human behavior many types of scientific experiments were used. One of the most common ways of explaining human behavior was by using reductionism which was first utilized in biology throughout the mid 19th century. Reductionism was a scientific method used to understand complex things by isolating them down into groups in order to analyse them individually. For example the reductionism would choose to study the cells rather than the whole body in order to assess the basic laws of living things.

Reductionism is the opposite of the holistic view which emphasizes the whole rather than their constituent parts. (Mcleod, 2008) Biological reductionism has been used to show correlation between many diseases and behaviors. DNA research has proven that there is a link between diseases such as addiction and alcoholism with stress related behaviors.