

The study of human behaviour



Anti-social behaviour is any aggressive, intimidating or destructive activity that damages or destroys another person's quality of life. People with anti-social behaviour used to be called psychopaths or sociopaths. (<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/anti-social-behaviour/what-is-asb/>) . The disorder is characterised by pervasive violation of the rights of others, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adulthood. The signs and symptoms include failure to conform to social norms, repeated lying or swindling for pleasure or personal gain. Difficulty to hold down jobs and or to honour financial obligations. A large proportion of crimes are made by people with antisocial behaviour. (Colman, 1999). On the other hand, there is also pro-social behaviour, which can be defined as doing something voluntarily, without the intentions of gaining anything from this. This can also be called helping behaviour. It is the absolutely opposite to anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour is most definitely very frightening and uncomfortable for other people in society. Anti-social behaviour is becoming more of a massive problem, especially in binge drinking offenders. ' The General Household Survey found that 37% of adults exceeded the daily recommended drinking levels (41% of men and 34% of women)'. (The Guardian), (23rd Dec 2003) www.guardian.co.uk

The aim of this essay is to critically evaluate three psychological perspectives. The first perspective that shall be evaluated is Behaviourist Approach. The next perspectives that will be critically evaluated will be Humanistic Approach and lastly will be the Psychoanalytical Approach.

Behaviourism Approach was founded by John Watson in 1913. <http://www.psych.utah.edu/gordon/Classes/Psy4905Docs/PsychHistory/Cards/Watson>.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-study-of-human-behaviour/>

html. John Watson believed that behaviourism should be seen as science. One of the best-known aspects of behavioural learning theory is classical conditioning. Discovered by Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov, classical conditioning is a learning process that occurs through associations between an environmental stimulus and a naturally occurring stimulus. Operant conditioning was founded by a Pennsylvanian psychologist B. F Skinner. This method of learning that occurs through rewards and punishments for behaviour. Through operant conditioning, an association is made between a behaviour and a consequence for that behaviour. " All we need to know in order to describe and explain behaviour is this: actions followed by good outcomes are likely to recur, and actions followed by bad outcomes are less likely to recur" (Skinner, 1953). (http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/b/b_f_skinner.html) Our behaviour develops as a result of punishment or reward. Some psychologists believe that anti-social behaviour develops from our environment, television, peers, parents, experiences, and also that this type of behaviour in children is copied. To support this there were several experiments carried out, such as Bandura's Bobo doll experiment 1961. The aim of this experiment was to see if children that are exposed to anti-social behaviour would they imitate the aggressive behaviour when given the opportunity. There is also a claim that the media influences anti-social behaviour, however to prove this theory there was also an experiment carried out. On St. Helena in the South Atlantic. This approach also claimed that anti-social behaviour is influenced by television. ' The argument that watching violent television turns youngsters to violence is not borne out, and this study on St. Helena is the clearest proof yet. (Charlton, 1998) The children have watched the same amount of violence and in many

<https://assignbuster.com/the-study-of-human-behaviour/>

cases the same programmes, as British children. But they have not gone out and copied what they have seen'. ([http://www. simplypsychology. pwp. blueyonder. co. uk](http://www.simplypsychology.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk)) [Accessed 30th Oct 2009]

The above study/experiment completely clashed with the Behaviourist approach, as it claims that behaviour is copied. The key principal in this was that good behaviour will be rewarded and bad behaviour will be punished. The assumptions of the perspective is that people have no choice neither any free will. This perspective is inadequate when addressing anti-social behaviour. If it is true what B. F Skinner and Ivan Pavlov have implied then there should be less anti-social behaviour where in fact anti-social behaviour is rising. People in our society commit anti-social behaviour every day and assume that this is absolutely acceptable. People that binge drink and behave inappropriately should be punished, and when they are, most offenders do not care whether they will be punished again. Punishment has to be applied immediately when anti-social behaviour happens. In many cases this can happen as some offenders do not realise the consequences or perhaps don't care about the consequences or the punishment. Sometimes punishment does not teach appropriate behaviour and in most cases anti-social behaviour occurs. This perspective is inadequate when addressing anti-social behaviour and in some cases this could make the offenders worse. It could make offenders worse as they could get angry or upset. And the next crime they would commit crime could be a lot worse.

In 1954 Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow introduced Humanistic approach into psychology. The Humanistic approach focuses on the conscious mind, free will, human dignity and the capacity for self actualization. Humanistic
<https://assignbuster.com/the-study-of-human-behaviour/>

approach rejects scientific methodology like experiments and typically uses qualitative research methods, such as Case studies, informal interviews, open ended questionnaires, Q-Sort Method introduced by Stephenson in 1953. <http://www.simplypsychology.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/humanistic.html>. The principle of this approach is that people would have free will. The study would focus on Holism which is the study of the whole person. And the study of the self (self Worthing, self-image and self-actualization.) This perspective could possibly give us an answer why Anti Social Behaviour happens. It could also give psychologist a hope to find an answer to Anti Social Behaviour problems. Humanistic approach believed in people having free will and do not use laboratories in order to support experiments, if this approach were to be used to cure anti-social behaviour a lot would have to be learned about the binge drinking offenders. The problem with this approach is that all experiments won't be accurate and never will give an accurate answer in psychology. Because the Humanistic approach ignores unconscious mind, and does not use any scientific experiments. Qualitative data is highly difficult to compare. Therefore this approach will not explain or give any accuracy in psychology. The basic assumptions of this approach is that humans will have free will, and that not all behaviour is determined. Other assumptions or maybe even beliefs is that human behaviour should only be tested on humans and not animals, as humans do not behave like animals. Another assumption of this approach is that psychology should study at an individual's case level instead of an average performance of groups. So does this approach cure anti-social behaviour especially binge drinking? To some extent the Humanistic approach could possibly explain anti-social behaviour, however as humanism do not use any scientific

<https://assignbuster.com/the-study-of-human-behaviour/>

experiments and all the research is done by, informal interviews, open ended questionnaires, and many more. People that are offenders of anti-social behaviour could have these tests on them which will then let us know more why this behaviour has been done by them, and perhaps even help them. On the other hand, people that have been indulging in anti-social behaviour, especially binge drinking would not agree to be doing any experiments or tests. So this approach will not give us an answer why anti-social behaviour happens. As people will not want to participate. Humanistic approach could be applied to real life however as humanistic approach agrees with free will people would have to agree to take part in any experiments and tests.

In 1896 Sigmund Freud, an Austrian neurologist founded the psychoanalytic perspective.. Research into this was done by different case studies, hypnosis, also by free association and different projective tests. Assumptions of this, psychological perspective was that all behaviour is rooted from childhood. According to this perspective behaviour is made up of three parts: the id, ego and superego. Our behaviour and feelings are powerfully affected by unconscious motives. These were some of the assumptions of the psychoanalytical approach in psychology, however there are few more such as personality is shaped as the drives are modified by different conflicts at different times in childhood (during psychosexual development). In the run, the question would be could the psychoanalytical approach explain anti-social behaviour. The answer would be definitely no, as most case studies that Freud did were mainly middle aged women from Vienna (i. e. his patients). This makes generalisations to the wider population (e. g. the whole world) difficult. The main problem here is that the case studies are based on

studying one person in detail. The criticism of the psychoanalytical approach is that it is unscientific in its analysis of human behaviour. So no, the approach do not have much of a chance at giving an explanation about anti-social behaviour. As it was explained earlier the tests that were completed and the experiments that were done are only concentrating on one individual or Freud's patients. This is highly biased, as this does not look at the bigger picture, and including more people into this. This approach will not give us an answer why for example a middle aged man is binge drinking and behaving in an anti-social way. It will not give an explanation as all Freud studies were carried out on women, all around the same age. Also everyone is an individual with different views and needs.

The conclusion on this essay will concentrate on the both positive and negative key points in all three perspectives. With Behaviouristic Approach the positive points should be that this approach is fully scientific and that there is evidence behind all experiments that were done. And also it has identified comparisons between animals and humans. On the other hand the negative points in this approach are that it is too deterministic therefore humans had very little free will, and that it totally ignores biology. In the Humanistic approach there are also positives and negatives. The positives would be that the focus of behaviour to the individual / whole person rather than the unconscious mind, genes, observable behaviour. Highlights the value of more individualistic and idiographic methods of study. The negatives would be that this whole approach is unscientific, any qualitative data is very hard to compare therefore it possible be inaccurate. Coming to the third approach the Psychoanalytical, the positives in this approach would

be that this approach highlighted the importance of childhood and the unconscious mind. Negatives would be that this is Unscientific, too deterministic, which means that people have little free will and very biased samples have been used in the experiments. The whole point of this, is to point out that no perspectives in psychology can fully explain the reasons for any anti-social behaviour. As has been pointed out in other paragraphs nothing has been 100% successful.

References:

- Information about anti-social behaviour online at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/anti-social-behaviour/> and <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/anti-social-behaviour/what-is-asb/>

Assessed 30th October 2009
- More information about anti-social behaviour and explanation available from text book:

What is Psychology? (3rd edition)

Andrew M Colman, 1999
- Statistics about binge drinking available online at:

www.guardian.co.uk Assessed 23rd October 200

(The Guardian), (23rd Dec 2003)
- Direct quote from B. F. Skinner available at:

http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/b/b_f_skinner.html
- and also:

Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour (Hodder Arnold Publication) by Richard Gross

- John Watson founder of behaviourism information available on:
<http://www.psych.utah.edu/gordon/Classes/Psy4905Docs/PsychHistory/Cards/Watson.html>
- Direct quote about St. Helena experiment available from:
James L Charlton 1998
- Information about St. Helena Experiment information is available from:
<http://www.simplypsychology.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk> Accessed 30th Oct 2009