

The Behaviourist Approach

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Assumptions

- All behaviour is learnt from experience
- All behaviour occurs via learning from experiences of the environment
- The theory of classical conditioning assumes that we learn by association
- The theory of operant conditioning assumes that the law of effect explains why if behaviour is reinforced i.e. rewarded it will be repeated
- General laws derived from the animal experiments can be extrapolated and applied to humans
- The scientific experimental method is the most appropriate method for studying behaviour
- We are born with 'clean slates' and learning is not instinctive
- Cognitive mental processes cannot be observed or measure, so it is assumed they are not relevant to the scientific study of human behaviour
- Unconscious mental processes are no relevant to the study of human behaviour

Classical Conditioning - consists of a response of a stimulus and association.

Studies include - Pavlov's Dogs, and Watson and Raynor Little Albert.

Operant Conditioning - consists of positive and negative reinforcement and punishment.

Studies include - Skinners rat in the box - rat pushes lever for food, rewarded and rats continued to push lever.

- **Positive Reinforcement** - Involves the addition of something
- **Negative Reinforcement** - Involves the removal of something
- **Punishment** - Behaviour which is punished is less likely to occur in the future

Stimulus

- **Unconditioned stimulus** - food presented to the dog
- **Neutral stimulus** - the bell before it is paired with food
- **Conditioned stimulus**
- **Stimulus generalisation** - learnt response to a specific stimulus is generalised to other similar stimulus's

- **Stimulus discrimination** – learnt response to a specific stimulus but doesn't respond the same way to a new stimuli

Observational learning – learnt through other peoples actions