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**Bachelor of Psychology**

**Psychology of Learning**

**Contributions of Psychology of Learning**

**ATLANTIC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

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**March 2022**

Table of Contents

[Introduction 3](#_Toc99632622)

[Description, General Analysis and Discussions 4](#_Toc99632623)

[**What Is Behaviorism**? 5](#_Toc99632624)

[**Types of Conditioning** 6](#_Toc99632625)

[**Operant Conditioning** 9](#_Toc99632626)

[Actualizations / Applications of the Concepts 13](#_Toc99632627)

[Conclusion 15](#_Toc99632628)

[References 16](#_Toc99632629)

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# Introduction

Learning involves permanent change in the behavior of individuals and is aided by experience. Psychology of learning primacy is on various topics that relate to how individuals learn and interact with their environments. Based on all the research and background we know that the contributions of Psychology of learning to the field of psychology in general and to other branches of knowledge have been extensive. And this paper focuses on behaviorism, behavioral psychology, operant conditioning, classical Conditioning, cognitive learning, human psychology behavior, behavior analysis, applied behavior analysis, and reinforcement. Using the concepts, the essay is developed and their application on a local, regional level and global level.

# Description, General Analysis and Discussions

**What does Psychology of learning studies**

Psychology of learning is a discipline that is built within the tradition of experimental psychology, that tries to explain and predict the acquisition, maintenance, and change in the behavior of organisms as a result of experience.

Gianluca Francia, psychologist and researcher, in his publication entitled "What is the psychology of learning: history, books and authors", defines and quotes verbatim "learning is a central concept for psychology, not only in what touches to the theories that try to explain animal and human behavior, but also regarding various fields of application of knowledge, such as education and health, among others.

An article published by Telesup University in March (2019), defines learning as “the process by which the human being modifies and acquires abilities, skills, knowledge, behaviors, or values necessary for personal development. At the present time it is also applied in artificial systems. It defines learning as the branch of psychology that studies the learning process that the human being possesses” The research tries to understand the temporary or permanent behavioral changes that a person can develop. In said article they cite two academic currents that explain how humans and animals exercise learning, which are constructivism and behaviorism.

# **What Is Behaviorism**?

It is also referred to as behavioral psychology and alludes to learning. The theory notes that all the behaviors of individuals are adopted by interaction with the environment and happen in a process referred to as conditioning. It implies that the behavior of persons is more of response towards environmental changes. Behaviorism is largely concerned about the way persons respond to stimuli. The response is noted in a systematic and observable manner.

According to Moore (2011), all the behavior of persons is learned from the environment. Behaviorism stresses the role of environmental elements in impacting the behavior of persons, to the point where they can even exclude the innate or inherited determinants. It implies that behaviorism has its focus largely on learning. Individuals learn new behaviors through classical or operant conditioning. The two modes of learning are all referred to as learning theory.

Behaviorism argues that psychology should be seen as a science. The concept argues that theories must have some scientific underpinning supported by empirical data. The data used in supporting the viewpoints need to be gotten through careful and controlled observation and then used to measure behavior. According to Clark (2018), psychology as behaviorist view is mostly an objective and experimental branch of natural science. The theoretical objective is mostly forecasting and control. Behaviorism requires that the facades of a theory need to be very simple. Behaviorists propose the application of operational definition, and they do so through defining observable and measurable events.

Behaviorism focuses on observable behavior and, in most instances, ignores internal events such as thinking and emotion. The first instance for most behaviorists is the rejection of introspection. The concept never encourages getting into the heads of individuals, as is the case with mainstream psychology. Baum (2018) notes that even though behaviorists acknowledge the existence of cognition and emotions, they do not accept their study as the only observable behavior given that they may be objectively and scientifically measured. Most theorists of this behavior acknowledge that individuals may have minds; they argue that it may never be possible for individuals to observe thoughts of persons, their different motives, and meanings, let alone the desires and unconscious needs. It implies that most internal events can be expounded using behavioral terms.

There is also a small gap in the learning in humans and other animals. There is no significant difference between human and animal behavior. It means that research may also be done on animals and humans. For the behaviorists, rats and pigeons have stood out to be one of the most resourceful sources of data, given that their environments can easily be controlled.

Behavior is also due to stimulus-response. All behavior, regardless of their complexity, may be reduced to a simple stimulus-response association. Therefore, according to behaviorism, psychology intends to predict the reaction that will take place or even state the situation or stimulus that has led to the reaction.

# **Types of Conditioning**

As noted by Cherry (2019) there are two primary types of behavioral psychology, and they include classical and operant.

**Classical Conditioning**

It is a technique that is widely use when individuals are imparting behavioral training. Classical training ensures that there is combination of neutral stimulus with the naturally occurring ones. The neutral stimulus effectively evokes a similar response like the natural one even without having the natural stimulus presenting itself. The notion is often guided by two important assumptions. The first is that all the learning is ensured through interactions with the environment. The second assumption is that the environment where one is shapes their behavior. Classical conditioning entails the placement of a neutral signal before a natural one. When experimenting with the dogs, Pavlov had the neutral signal as the sound of a tine and the natural reflex as the salivation response to food. There was a salivating response by linking the neutral stimulus with the environmental stimulus.

In classical conditioning, there is creation of links happening in two stimuli and the outcome is a learned response. In the process, three important stages arise. The first stage is referred to as before conditioning. During the phase, there will be a naturally occurring stimulus that leads a response. One such example is the salivation process when responding to the smell of food, and it is grouped as a naturally occurring stimulus. During the process phase, the unconditioned stimulus creates an unconditional response. For instance, the presentation of the food (the UCS) helps naturally and automatically triggers the salivation response. There is a neutral stimulus during the phase that produces no effect yet. The evoking of the response only happens when the neutral stimulus is paired with the UCS. During the first phase, two important components emerge.

### **Examples of Classical Conditioning**

Different examples of classical conditioning exist, including fear response and taste aversions. The fear response was demonstrated by Little Albert, where a rat is paired repeatedly with loud, scary sounds, and the child cries, but before pairing, the child never cried (Powell & Schmaltz, 2021). At last, the child would cry when he saw a white rat and developed general fear of various white fuzzy objects (Green). The same can be attributed to the bystander apathy, and the fear individuals develop when assisting others. Before the experiment, the rat was just a neutral stimulus, and the scary noises became the unconditioned stimulus. The response by Little Albert due to fear when he heard the noise is the unconditioned response. The experiment shows that phobias can occur due to classical conditioning.

Taste aversion is an example of classical conditioning. The concept argues that if one is exposed to consuming something that makes one sick, the individual will avoid eating the same food. The avoidance ensures that they do not suffer sickness or even dire consequences like death.

The other example is in the advertising techniques. Each day, advertisers consider certain objects or persons to use in adverts as a way of eliciting the desired response from customers. A certain emotional response is inspired, and hence customers get convinced to sign up or consume the product.

The theory of classical conditioning is anchored on scientific facts. It is on this basis that its validity is strengthened. In most instances, classical conditioning implies a reductionist explanation of human and animal behavior, given the complexity of behavior through which they are broken down into very simple pieces. Several support the approach and note that breaking down several complex concepts makes it possible to test them by focusing on individual parts scientifically. While classical conditioning may be used in stressing the significance of nurture over nature, it is a bit limiting for one to assume that the behavior can end up in nurture or nature as opposed to the two combined.

Classical conditioning is essential in the learning process as it dictates psychological behavior. It is applicable in children's education during their early childhood and onward. The concept emphasizes the notion of nurture over nature. Owing to the limitations of classical conditioning, children must learn the development of positive associations for classical conditioning to have a positive impact.

# **Operant Conditioning**

It is a method that applies rewards and punishments for behaviors. It creates association between some behavior and the likely consequence of the given behaviors (Cherry, 2019). Through operant conditioning, reinforcement and punishment happen in the natural environment and structured environments like therapy sessions and classrooms. Behaviorist properly describes operant conditioning, which is the rationale for reference as Skinnerian conditioning. The notion alludes that it is not important to check on the internal thoughts and motivations for one to expound on the behavior. According to the concept advocated by Skinner, one needs to focus on the external and observable reasons behind the behavior of humans. The early behaviorists had their focus on interests linked with associative learning. In operant conditioning, the interest is mostly on the likely consequences of the actions of individuals. The term operant alludes to active behavior that operates in a defined environment to create some form of outcome. According to the concept of operant conditioning, one can understand how persons acquire some form of learned behaviors that they showcase each day.

In operant conditioning, the actions followed by desirable outcomes stand a high chance of being repeated. In contrast, the ones preceded by undesirable outcomes have a high probability of repetition. Operant conditioning mostly depends on the premise that actions are followed by reinforcement and will be strengthened and have chances of occurring again in the future. For instance, those who share funny episodes in life and persons who laugh stand a high probability of sharing some other funny episodes again in life. This occurs because the behavior is followed by reinforcement or some stated outcome and then the action following is strengthened. The actions that lead to punishment or undesirable outcome is likely to weakened or may not happen easily. In case one shares a funny episode, and no one laughs, there are chances that they will never share again. This is because the episode is not followed by strengthening.

Under operant conditioning, there are two types of behaviors, respondent behaviors and operant behaviors. The respondent behaviors include the ones that happen automatically and reflexively. They are behaviors that one does not need to learn. Most of the behaviors are acquired automatically and involuntarily. The other type of behaviors is operant. These include the behaviors that are under the conscious control of a person. Some behaviors may never happen spontaneously, and others may occur purposely. However, the actions matter and count in influencing if the behaviors happen again.

### **Reinforcement in Operant Conditioning**

Several important concepts exist for operant conditioning, and one such is the reinforcement in operant conditioning. Reinforcement refers to any event that may help in increasing the behavior. Usually, there are two important types of reinforcement, positive and negative. The positive reinforcers entail the different favorable events or outcomes presented after a behavior. In the positive reinforcement scenarios, there is always a strengthened response, which is done by praising the affected parties or offering them a reward. If one excels at work and the employer offers a bonus, then it is a positive reinforcer. Through positive reinforcement, behavior occurrence is encouraged. This happens when the individuals involved are aware that for each of the behavior there is a consequence. A case in point is a parent promising good grades to their child if they perform well and through hard work, the child gets good grades.

On the other hand, negative reinforcers entail removing the different unfavorable events or outcomes after one displays their behavior. In such cases, a response may be strengthened through the removal of an item that one may consider as unpleasant. Through negative reinforcement, it is evident that unpleasant consequences may assist in improving behavior of individuals. Unlike positive reinforcement, where the actions of a person are rewarded, the reverse is the case. For instance, the burden of reward is placed on the child so that when they fail to meet certain expectations, they pay up their parent an agreed sum of money.

Focusing on the two forms of reinforcement affirms that negative reinforcement is the most effective. For positive reinforcement, if a child does not meet the set expectations, they stand no chance of losing anything. In negative reinforcement, the child is not at liberty to choose anything but work hard. Negative reinforcement becomes most effective compared to a positive one.

### **Concept of Punishment in Operant Conditioning**

Punishment often entails adverse events or outcomes that may lead to reduction in the behavior of individuals. Punishment under this concept is often in two forms. However, in both cases, the behavior of one reduces. First, there is positive punishment that happens by application and often represents an unfavorable event or outcome that seeks to weaken a response. When one opts to spank for misbehavior their action entails positive punishment. On the other hand, negative punishment includes punishment by removal and happens when a favorable event or outcome is detached after a behavior happens. For instance, when a child decides to misbehave, a parent may opt to take away the child’s video game.

### **Reinforcement Schedules and Applied Behavior Analysis**

This is an important concept that may never be straightforward, and various elements can easily impact the best way new things may be learned. In most cases, how and when a behavior is reinforced is essential in determining the speed and strength of acquisition. It implies that the timing and frequency of reinforcement affect the learning of new behaviors and the modification of the old behaviors.

The concept is widely applied when shaping the behavior of students. Most students are often lazy and never complete their assignments on time. The behavior can be shaped and discouraged. The discouragement is because handing in the assignments late will not accord the tutor sufficient time to mark the assignments. They will have a chance to consider alternative times or even work overtime to complete the marking. One of the ways to instill behavior change is by creating a reinforcement schedule. It will be a means of encouraging the students to change their behavior and ensure timely submission of assignments. For example, the students will be punished and forced to pay a certain amount to submit their assignments. It means that most of the learners will avoid payment by ensuring timely delivery of assignments.

# Actualizations / Applications of the Concepts

## **At Local Level**

There are various examples of operant conditioning that could be useful in our community. First is the children completion of the test and then earning a reward from the parent or teacher or the employees completing a project to get praise or promotions. In the different examples, the promise or possibility of rewards will lead to an increase in behavior. The operant conditioning may also arise to reduce a behavior, and this may happen through the removal of a desirable outcome or by one applying a negative outcome.

## **Regional Level**

At the regional level, looking at it more from a student angle, nationwide individuals can sit for exams, and if pass then received a reward from the examining bodies in the region or a public recognition from the audience. The act is a positive reinforcement and may inspire individuals to consider more of the performance roles instead. It means that many of the students will be encourage to better themselves and consider passing the regional exams for the reward purposes at the same time.

## **Global Level**

Globally, most universities could set requirements for sitting exams and attendance throughout the semester. Some can require that one take part in all the attendance and not take a comprehensive exam. The action for different examining bodies is a means of removal of unpleasant stimulus (final test). Hence, this means that students will have to be present throughout the classes.

At a global level, the token economy can be applied, which is effective in managing psychiatric patients. Token economy comprises of targeted behavior reinforced and then later exchanged. Tokens for most organizations are in the form of privileges or rewards at work. Through implementing the token economy program, the staff gets a lot of power. Staff must never favor certain individuals if the program being executed is to work.

Also worldwide, behaviorism can be applied in therapy sessions. For instance, behaviorism is common in the treatment of children with autism. The professionals combine behavioral analysis with conditioning to aid the children in acquiring new skills and techniques.

# Conclusion

Several lessons can be drawn from the concepts learnt in the course. One of the elements is that behaviors arise from the learning process. One understands internal thoughts, memories, and thoughts through the behavioral school of thought. All the behaviors of a person are learned from the environment. Behaviorism argues that psychology should be seen as a science. Behaviorism focuses on observable behavior and, in most instances, ignores internal events such as thinking and emotion. Behavior is also due to stimulus-response. It means that all behavior, regardless of their complexity, may be reduced to the simple stimulus-response association.

Therefore, according to behaviorism, psychology intends to predict the reaction that will take place or even state the situation or stimulus that has led to the reaction. In this study, it also emerged that there are two types of conditioning: classical conditioning and operant conditioning. Applying the concepts, the application of psychology at the local, regional, and global levels has been espoused. Some of the applications include the learning environment and work environment.

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