

1. Behaviourism Theory Suggests That Behaviour Observed Is A Result Of1. Teaching2.Internal Factors3.External

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Behaviourism is a foundational theory in psychology and education that emphasizes the observable aspects of human behavior. It posits that all behaviors are acquired through conditioning, which occurs via interaction with the environment. This perspective shifts focus away from internal thoughts, feelings, and motivations, instead highlighting external stimuli and responses as the primary drivers of behavior. Understanding how behaviourism interprets the origins of behavior—whether through teaching methods, internal factors, or external influences—is essential for educators, psychologists, and learners aiming to shape and predict behavior effectively.

In this article, we explore the core tenets of behaviourism, particularly how it views the causes of observed behavior. We will analyze the roles of teaching strategies, internal factors, and external influences, providing a comprehensive understanding of the behaviourist perspective.

Understanding Behaviourism: An Overview

Behaviourism emerged in the early 20th century, with pioneers like John B. Watson and B.F. Skinner advocating for a scientific approach to psychology focused on observable phenomena. Unlike previous theories that emphasized internal mental states, behaviourism contended that only measurable behaviors could be studied scientifically.

Central to behaviourism are key concepts such as:

- Classical Conditioning: Learning through association, exemplified by Pavlov's experiments with dogs.
- Operant Conditioning: Learning through consequences, such as reinforcement and punishment.
- Stimulus-Response (S-R) Relationship: The idea that specific stimuli elicit specific responses.

This framework has profoundly influenced teaching methodologies, therapy practices, and behavior modification programs, emphasizing the controllability and predictability of behavior through external manipulations.

Behaviourism and the Origin of Behavior

At its core, behaviourism suggests that the observable behavior of individuals is not random but results from specific causes. These causes are broadly categorized into three areas:

1. Teaching Methods
2. Internal Factors
3. External Factors

Let's delve into each of these to understand their roles within the behaviourist paradigm.

1. Teaching Methods as a Source of Behavior

In behaviourist theory, teaching strategies are viewed as external stimuli that influence behavior through reinforcement and repetition. The way educators design lessons, feedback, and classroom activities can directly shape student responses.

How Teaching Influences Behavior:

- Reinforcement and Punishment: Teachers can encourage desired behaviors through positive reinforcement (praise, rewards) or discourage undesirable behaviors via punishment.
- Repetition and Practice: Frequent practice of specific behaviors increases the likelihood of their recurrence.
- Structured Learning Environments: Clear instructions and consistent routines serve as stimuli that elicit predictable responses.

Example:

A teacher rewards students who participate actively in class, which reinforces participation. Over time, students associate class involvement with positive outcomes, leading to more frequent engagement.

Implication:

Effective teaching methods serve as external stimuli that condition learners to behave in specific, desirable ways, aligning with behaviourist principles.

2. Internal Factors and Their Role in Behaviour

While behaviourism minimizes the importance of internal mental states, it does

acknowledge their existence but considers them secondary to observable behavior. According to behaviourists, internal factors such as thoughts, feelings, or motivations do not directly cause behavior but are often inferred from external actions.

Behaviourist View on Internal Factors:

- Internal factors are seen as hypothetical constructs that cannot be directly measured.
- Behavior is primarily a response to external stimuli, not driven by internal mental processes.
- Internal states may influence behavior indirectly through learned associations.

Example:

If a student feels anxious (an internal state), behaviourism would argue that this anxiety manifests externally through behaviors like avoidance, rather than internal thoughts causing the behavior directly.

Implication:

In behaviourist theory, internal factors are considered correlated with behavior but not causal. The focus remains on observable responses to external stimuli.

3. External Factors as the Primary Drivers of Behavior

External factors encompass all environmental stimuli that can influence behavior. Behaviourism asserts that behavior is predominantly shaped by external influences, such as:

- Environmental Stimuli: Rewards, punishments, social cues, and physical surroundings.
- Consequences of Behavior: Reinforcement increases the likelihood of behavior, while punishment decreases it.
- Situational Context: The specific environment where behavior occurs can significantly impact responses.

External Factors and Conditioning:

- Classical Conditioning: External stimuli become associated with responses (e.g., Pavlov's bell with salivation).
- Operant Conditioning: External consequences (rewards/punishments) modify behavior.

Example:

A child learns to say "please" after being consistently rewarded with treats or praise. The external reward encourages the behavior to be repeated.

Implication:

External factors are the most controllable aspect within behaviourist frameworks, making them central to behavior modification strategies.

Integrating Teaching, Internal, and External Factors in Behaviourism

While behaviourism emphasizes external factors, understanding the interplay between teaching, internal factors, and external influences provides a holistic view of behavior development.

Key Points:

- Teaching methods are designed to create external stimuli that elicit desired responses.
- Internal factors, while acknowledged, are viewed as outcomes or reflections of external stimuli rather than direct causes.
- External factors form the foundation of behaviourist interventions, with the environment shaping behavior through reinforcement mechanisms.

Practical Application:

In educational settings, teachers utilize behaviourist principles by:

- Designing reward systems to reinforce positive behaviors.
- Using consistent routines to establish predictable responses.
- Applying punishment judiciously to reduce undesirable behaviors.

Strengths and Limitations of Behaviourism in Explaining Behavior

Strengths:

- Empirical and measurable: Focus on observable behavior allows for scientific study.
- Practical application: Effective in behavior modification, training, and education.
- Clear cause-and-effect relationships: External stimuli reliably produce predictable responses.

Limitations:

- Neglects internal mental processes: Ignores thoughts, motivations, and emotions that influence behavior.
- Over-simplifies complex human behavior: Not all behaviors can be explained solely by

external stimuli.

- Limited in explaining intrinsic motivation: Behaviors driven by internal desires may not be fully accounted for.

Conclusion

Behaviourism offers a compelling perspective on the origins of behavior, emphasizing the pivotal role of external stimuli and reinforcement in shaping observable actions. According to behaviourism, behaviour observed is primarily a result of external influences—be it teaching strategies or environmental factors—rather than internal mental states. While internal factors are acknowledged, they are viewed as secondary or derivative of external stimuli.

Understanding this theory is invaluable in designing effective teaching methods, behavior modification programs, and psychological interventions. It underscores the importance of the environment in influencing behavior and provides practical tools for educators and psychologists to promote desirable behaviors through systematic external conditioning.

By recognizing the interplay of teaching, internal, and external factors within behaviourism, practitioners can develop more targeted and effective approaches to behavior change, fostering environments conducive to learning and growth.

Keywords for SEO Optimization:

- Behaviourism theory
- Behavior observed
- Teaching and behavior
- Internal factors in behavior
- External influences on behavior
- Conditioning in behaviourism
- Behavior modification
- Observable behavior
- Learning theories
- Behaviorism in education

Frequently Asked Questions

What does behaviorism theory suggest about the factors influencing observed behavior?

Behaviorism theory suggests that observed behavior is primarily a result of external factors, such as environmental stimuli and reinforcement, rather than internal factors.

According to behaviorism, which factor plays the most significant role in shaping behavior?

External factors, including consequences like rewards and punishments, play the most significant role in shaping behavior according to behaviorism.

Does behaviorism consider internal factors like thoughts and feelings as primary influences on behavior?

No, behaviorism de-emphasizes internal factors and focuses on observable behaviors influenced by external stimuli.

How does behaviorism explain the learning process?

Behaviorism explains learning as a result of external reinforcement and conditioning, where behaviors are acquired through interactions with the environment.

Can internal factors such as motivation influence behavior according to behaviorism?

Behaviorism primarily attributes behavior to external factors and considers internal factors like motivation as less significant or not directly observable.

What role do external stimuli play in behaviorist theory?

External stimuli are central in behaviorist theory, as they trigger responses that are reinforced or extinguished to shape behavior.

Is teaching based on behaviorism primarily focused on internal understanding or external actions?

Teaching based on behaviorism primarily focuses on external actions and observable behaviors rather than internal understanding.

How does behaviorism differ from theories that emphasize internal factors?

Behaviorism differs by emphasizing external factors like environment and reinforcement, whereas other theories focus on internal processes like cognition and emotions.

In behaviorist learning, what is the importance of reinforcement?

Reinforcement is crucial in behaviorist learning as it strengthens desired behaviors through external rewards or punishments.

Can behaviorism explain complex human behaviors such as creativity or problem-solving?

Behaviorism is limited in explaining complex internal processes like creativity or problem-solving, as it focuses on observable behaviors influenced mainly by external factors.

Additional Resources

Behaviourism Theory Suggests That Behaviour Observed Is A Result Of

The landscape of educational psychology has long been shaped by various theoretical frameworks that attempt to explain how individuals acquire, modify, and exhibit behaviour. Among these, behaviourism stands out as a foundational perspective emphasizing observable actions over internal mental states. The core assertion of behaviourism—that behaviour observed is a result of external stimuli and reinforcement—has profoundly influenced teaching methodologies, therapeutic interventions, and our understanding of human learning processes.

This article delves into the intricacies of behaviourism, exploring how it posits that observable behaviour is primarily shaped by external factors and the environment, while also considering the role of internal factors. We will examine the foundational principles of behaviourism, dissect the mechanisms through which external and internal factors influence behaviour, and evaluate contemporary debates surrounding this theory.

Understanding Behaviourism: A Historical Perspective

Behaviourism emerged in the early 20th century as a reaction against introspective and subjective approaches to psychology. Pioneered by figures such as John B. Watson and B.F. Skinner, behaviourism advocated for a scientific approach grounded in observable phenomena. Watson famously declared that psychology should focus solely on behaviour that can be objectively measured, dismissing the importance of consciousness or mental states.

B.F. Skinner extended behaviourism into operant conditioning, emphasizing that behaviour is influenced by its consequences—reinforcements or punishments—embedded within the environment. This perspective shifted the focus from internal thoughts to external stimuli that could be manipulated to shape behaviour.

The Central Tenet: Behaviour as a Result of External Factors

External Stimuli and Conditioning

At its core, behaviourism asserts that all behaviour is acquired and maintained through interactions with the environment. External stimuli—events or conditions outside the individual—serve as triggers that elicit specific responses. The process through which

behaviour is learned and maintained is known as conditioning, which manifests mainly in two forms:

- Classical Conditioning: Coined by Ivan Pavlov, this form of learning involves associating a neutral stimulus with an unconditioned stimulus to produce a conditioned response. For example, a student might associate the sound of a bell with recess and respond by preparing to go outside.
- Operant (Instrumental) Conditioning: Developed by B.F. Skinner, this involves behaviour being strengthened or weakened by its consequences. Reinforcements increase the likelihood of behaviour, while punishments decrease it.

Reinforcement and Punishment

The mechanisms of reinforcement and punishment are fundamental to behaviourist models. They serve as external tools to shape behaviour intentionally:

- Positive Reinforcement: Adding a pleasant stimulus to encourage behaviour (e.g., praise for correct answers).
- Negative Reinforcement: Removing an unpleasant stimulus to encourage behaviour (e.g., reducing homework for good behaviour).
- Positive Punishment: Introducing an unpleasant stimulus to decrease behaviour (e.g., detention for misconduct).
- Negative Punishment: Removing a pleasant stimulus to decrease behaviour (e.g., loss of privileges).

The effectiveness of these mechanisms underscores the behaviourist belief that behaviour can be controlled and modified predominantly through external interventions.

Internal Factors: Their Role and Limitations in Behaviourism

While behaviourism emphasizes external factors, it does not entirely dismiss internal factors such as motivation, cognition, or emotion. However, it regards these internal states as less relevant or as behavioural outcomes themselves, rather than as causes of behaviour.

Internal Factors as Behavioural Outcomes

- Internal Factors as Responses: For example, feelings of anxiety or motivation are seen as internal responses to external stimuli rather than as initiators of behaviour.
- Cognitive Processes as Behavioural Patterns: Some behaviourists acknowledge that internal mental states can influence behaviour indirectly, but only through their influence on observable actions.

Limitations of Internal Factors in Explaining Behaviour

- Lack of Direct Measurement: Internal factors are inherently subjective and challenging to quantify, making them less central in behaviourist models.
- Focus on External Control: Behaviourism prioritizes controllable external stimuli, often leading to criticisms that it neglects the complexity of internal mental processes.

Despite these limitations, modern cognitive-behavioural approaches attempt to integrate internal factors within a behaviourist framework, acknowledging that internal states can influence how external stimuli are perceived and responded to.

The Interplay Between External and Internal Factors

Although behaviourism emphasizes external stimuli as primary determinants of behaviour, contemporary perspectives recognize a dynamic interplay:

- Internal Factors Modulate External Responses: Internal states such as motivation or attention can influence how external stimuli are perceived and responded to.
- External Factors Influence Internal States: Reinforcements and punishments can alter internal feelings such as satisfaction or frustration, which in turn affect future behaviour.

This bidirectional relationship suggests that behaviour is shaped by a complex system where external and internal factors are interconnected, even within a behaviourist paradigm.

Contemporary Relevance and Critiques of Behaviourism

Practical Applications in Education and Therapy

Behaviourism's principles underpin numerous practical applications:

- Behavioural Therapy: Techniques such as systematic desensitization and token economies rely on reinforcement principles.
- Classroom Management: Teachers use reinforcement strategies to encourage desirable behaviour.
- Training and Skill Acquisition: Behaviourist methods are employed in teaching new skills through repetitive practice and reinforcement.

Critiques and Limitations

Despite its successes, behaviourism faces significant criticism:

- Oversimplification of Human Behaviour: Critics argue that behaviourism neglects internal mental processes, creativity, and intrinsic motivation.

- Ethical Concerns: The manipulation of behaviour through external stimuli raises questions about autonomy and consent.
- Limited Scope: Behaviourism is less effective in explaining complex, abstract behaviours such as moral reasoning or self-awareness.

Integration with Other Theories

Modern psychology often adopts an integrative approach, combining behaviourist principles with cognitive, humanistic, and biological perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of behaviour.

Conclusion: The Lasting Impact of Behaviourism's Core Idea

The assertion that behaviour observed is a result of external factors remains a cornerstone of behaviourist theory. By focusing on observable actions and the environmental contingencies that shape them, behaviourism has provided valuable insights into learning, conditioning, and behaviour modification. While internal factors are acknowledged as influencing behaviour, behaviourism maintains that the primary drivers are external stimuli and their associated consequences.

In an era of increasingly complex psychological models, the behaviourist perspective continues to influence educational practices, therapeutic interventions, and behavioural research. Its emphasis on observable, controllable factors offers a pragmatic framework for shaping behaviour, even as contemporary psychology recognizes the importance of internal mental states.

Understanding behaviourism's core premise—that behaviour observed is a result of external factors—remains vital for developing effective strategies in education, therapy, and behaviour management. It underscores the importance of environment and reinforcement in shaping human actions, a principle that continues to resonate across disciplines and applications.

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This comprehensive overview underscores the enduring relevance of behaviourism's central idea that observable behaviour is primarily a consequence of external stimuli, while also recognizing the nuanced role internal factors play within this framework.

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