

A more explicit strategy is to abandon the search for causes and simply describe what people do. Anthropologists can report customs and manners, political scientists can take the line of "behavioralism" and record political action, economists can amass statistics about what people buy and sell, rent and hire, save and spend, and make and consume, and psychologists can sample attitudes and opinions. All this may be done through direct observation, possibly with the help of recording systems, and with interviews, questionnaires, tests, and polls. The study of literature, art, and music is often confined to the forms of these products of human behavior, and linguists may confine themselves to phonetics, semantics, and syntax. A kind of prediction is possible on the principle that what people have often done they are likely to do again; they follow customs because it is customary to follow them, they exhibit voting or buying habits, and so on. The discovery of organizing principles in the structure of behavior—such as "universals" in cultures or languages, archetypal patterns in literature, or psychological types—may make it possible to predict instances of behavior that have not previously occurred. The structure or organization of behavior can also be studied as a function of time or age, as in the development of a child's verbal behavior or his problem-solving strategies or in the sequence of stages through which a person passes on his way from infancy to maturity, or in the stages through which a culture evolves. The philosophical concepts of empiricism and determinism demand explanations of human behavior that cannot be derived from a mentalistic viewpoint. These principles are not compatible with mentalism, another widely held philosophy that emphasizes assumed internal processes such as thought and perception as the key to understanding why human beings behave the way they do. Empiricism is the belief that knowledge can be derived only from sensory experiences – from that which can be seen, heard, touched, tasted, or smelled. Basic behavioral principles describe the functional relationships between our behavior and environmental events.

Definition and History of Behaviorism

Behaviorism as a philosophy is grounded in the principles of empiricism and determinism. The characteristics that define behavior are as follows. Behavior involves a person's actions (what people do or say); it is described with action verbs. A behaviorist would instead describe and quantify behaviors that might indicate the person is joyful, such as smiling, laughing, jumping up and down, or making cheering noises. All of these are examples of hypothetical constructs that do not lend themselves to observation and measurement and therefore cannot be subjected to empirical testing. Because a behavior is an action that involves movement through space and time (Johnston & Pennypacker, 1981), the occurrence of a behavior has some effect on the environment in which it occurs. Sometimes the effect on the environment is obvious. It is a well-founded principle of behaviorism that human behavior must be defined in terms of that which can be observed and measured. They insist on putting ideas to the empirical test, a scientific experiment arranged to directly experience the truth or untruth of a statement or hypothesis. Determinism is the belief that nothing that happens in the world is haphazard. Modern-day authors have proposed many models showing how the brain processes information in much the same way as a computer does without the neurological data to prove such processes (e.g., Schyns, Gosselin, & Smith, 2009). Frequency, duration, intensity, and latency are all physical dimensions of a behavior. Behavior is not a static characteristic of .the person