



Introduction To Psychology

Chapter 01

Definition

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes.

behavior and mental processes mean many things: it encompasses not just what people do but also their thoughts, emotions, perceptions, reasoning processes, memories, and even the biological activities that maintain bodily functioning

- Psychologists try to **describe, predict, and explain** human behavior and mental processes,
- as well as **helping** to change and improve the lives of people and the world in which they live.
- They **use scientific methods** to find answers that are far more valid and legitimate than those resulting from intuition and speculation, which are often inaccurate

WHAT ARE THE BIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF BEHAVIOR?

Behavioral neuroscience is the subfield of psychology that focuses on how the brain and the nervous system, as well as other biological aspects of the body, determine behavior. For example, neuroscientists consider how our emotions are related to physical sensations.

HOW DO PEOPLE SENSE, PERCEIVE, LEARN, AND THINK ABOUT THE WORLD?

If you have ever wondered why you are susceptible to optical illusions, how your body registers pain, or how to make the most of your study time, an experimental psychologist can answer your questions. ***Experimental psychology*** is the branch of psychology that studies the processes of sensing, perceiving, learning, and thinking about the world.

Several subspecialties; ***cognitive psychology***, which focuses on higher mental processes, including thinking, memory, reasoning, problem solving, judging, decision making, and language.

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF CHANGE AND STABILITY IN BEHAVIOR ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN?

A baby producing her first smile . . . taking his first step . . . saying her first word. These universal milestones in development are also singularly special and unique for each person. ***Developmental psychology*** studies how people grow and change from the moment of conception through death. ***Personality psychology*** focuses on the consistency in people's behavior over time and the traits that differentiate one person from another.

HOW DO PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS AFFECT PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH?

Frequent depression, stress, and fears that prevent people from carrying out their normal activities are topics that interest a health psychologist, a clinical psychologist, and a counseling psychologist.

Health psychology explores the relationship between psychological factors and physical ailments or disease. For example, health psychologists are interested in assessing how long-term stress (a psychological factor) can affect physical health and in identifying ways to promote behavior that brings about good health

HOW DO PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS AFFECT PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH?

Clinical psychologists are trained to diagnose and treat problems that range from the crises of everyday life, such as unhappiness over the breakup of a relationship, to more extreme conditions, such as profound, lingering depression. Some clinical psychologists also research and investigate issues that vary from identifying the early signs of psychological disturbance to studying the relationship between family communication patterns and psychological disorders.

HOW DO PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS AFFECT PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH?

Counseling psychology focuses primarily on educational, social, and career adjustment problems. Almost every college has a center staffed with counseling psychologists. This is where students can get advice on the kinds of jobs they might be best suited for, on methods of studying effectively, and on strategies for resolving everyday difficulties, such as problems with roommates and concerns about a specific professor's grading practices. Many large business organizations also employ counseling psychologists to help employees with work-related problems.

HOW DO OUR SOCIAL NETWORKS AFFECT BEHAVIOR?

Our complex networks of social interrelationships are the focus for many subfields of psychology. For example, **social psychology** is the study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and actions are affected by others. Social psychologists concentrate on such diverse topics as human aggression, liking and loving, persuasion, and conformity.

Cross-cultural psychology investigates the similarities and differences in psychological functioning in and across various cultures and ethnic groups. For example, cross-cultural psychologists examine how cultures differ in their use of punishment during child rearing.

EXPANDING PSYCHOLOGY'S FRONTIERS

Evolutionary psychology considers how behavior is influenced by our genetic inheritance from our ancestors. The evolutionary approach suggests that the chemical coding of information in our cells not only determines traits such as hair color and race but also holds the key to understanding a broad variety of behaviors that helped our ancestors survive and reproduce.

Behavioral Genetics Another rapidly growing area in psychology focuses on the biological mechanisms, such as genes and chromosomes, that enable inherited behavior to unfold. Behavioral genetics seeks to understand how we might inherit certain behavioral traits and how the environment influences whether we actually display such traits.

EXPANDING PSYCHOLOGY'S FRONTIERS

Clinical neuropsychology unites the areas of neuroscience and clinical psychology: It focuses on the origin of psychological disorders in biological factors. Building on advances in our understanding of the structure and chemistry of the brain, this specialty has already led to promising new treatments for psychological disorders as well as debates over the use of medication to control behavior.

Today's Five Major Perspectives

Men and women who laid the foundations of psychology shared a common goal: to explain and understand behavior using scientific methods.

THE NEUROSCIENCE PERSPECTIVE: BLOOD, SWEAT, AND FEARS

considers how **people and nonhumans function biologically**: how individual nerve cells are joined together, how the inheritance of certain characteristics from parents and other ancestors influences behavior, how the functioning of the body affects hopes and fears, which behaviors are instinctual, and so forth. Even more complex kinds of behaviors, such as a baby's response to strangers, are viewed as having critical biological components by psychologists who embrace the neuroscience perspective. This perspective includes the study of heredity and evolution, which considers how heredity may influence behavior; and behavioral neuroneuroscience.

THE PSYCHODYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE: UNDERSTANDING THE INNER PERSON

argue that behavior is motivated by inner forces and conflicts about which we have little awareness or control. They view dreams and slips of the tongue as indications of what a person is truly feeling within a seething cauldron of unconscious psychic activity. The origins of the psychodynamic view are linked to one person: Sigmund Freud. Freud was an Austrian physician in the early 1900s whose ideas about unconscious determinants of behavior had a revolutionary effect.

THE BEHAVIORAL PERSPECTIVE: OBSERVING THE OUTER PERSON

Suggests that the focus should be on external behavior that can be observed and measured objectively. John B. Watson was believed that one could gain a complete understanding of behavior by studying the environment in which a person operated. In fact, Watson believed rather optimistically that it was possible to bring about any desired type of behavior by controlling a person's environment. The behavioral perspective was championed by B. F. Skinner, Much of our understanding of how people learn new behaviors is based on the behavioral perspective.

THE COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE: IDENTIFYING THE ROOTS OF UNDERSTANDING

focuses on how people think, understand, and know about the world. The emphasis is on learning how people comprehend and represent the outside world within themselves and how our ways of thinking about the world influence our behavior.

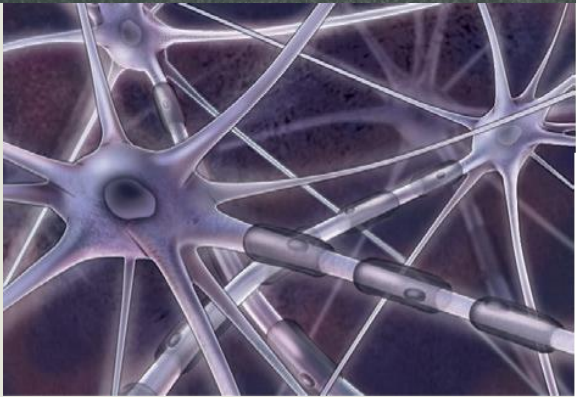
Many compare human thinking to the workings of a computer, which takes in information and transforms, stores, and retrieves it. In their view, thinking is information processing.

THE HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE: THE UNIQUE QUALITIES OF THE HUMAN SPECIES

suggests that all individuals naturally strive to grow, develop, and be in control of their lives and behavior and maintain that each of us has the capacity to seek and reach fulfillment.

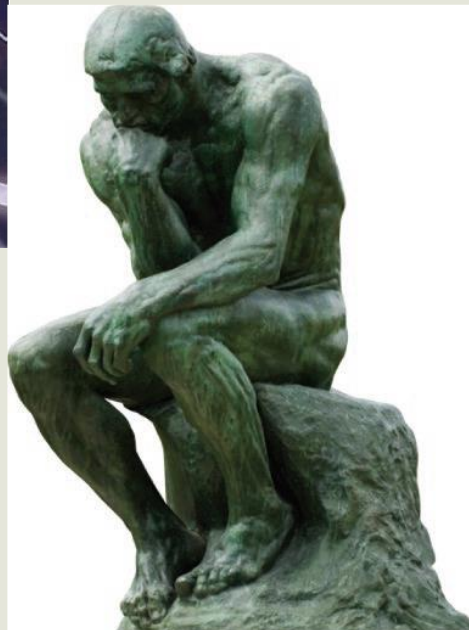
According to Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, who were central figures in the development of the humanistic perspective, people strive to reach their full potential if they are given the opportunity. The emphasis of the humanistic perspective is on free will, the ability to freely make decisions about one's own behavior and life. The notion of free will stands in contrast to determinism, which sees behavior as caused, or determined, by things beyond a person's control.. it stresses the role of psychology in enriching people's lives and helping them achieve self-fulfillment

THE MAJOR PERSPECTIVES OF PSYCHOLOGY



Neuroscience

Views behavior from the perspective of biological functioning



Cognitive

Examines how people understand and think about the world

Behavioral

Focuses on observable behavior



Humanistic

Contends that people can control their behavior and that they naturally try to reach their full potential

Psychodynamic

Believes behavior is motivated by inner, unconscious forces over which a person has little control

