

History and Development of Psychology (The Four Main Approaches of Psychology)

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15480296>

Published Date: 21-May-2025

Abstract: This essay concludes that psychology has developed a lot through time and all the main approaches which the essay looked at are very important in modern psychology.

Keywords: psychology, modern psychology, Four Main Approaches.

INTRODUCTION

This essay will speak about the history and the development of psychology. Will focus on the main four approaches of psychology, will talk about them one by one and how they developed.

First will start with the psychodynamic approach.

1. Psychodynamic approach

In 1885 Freud awarded a fellowship in Paris to study with Jean Charcot who treated conversion hysteria patients. Freud was particularly interested in the brain, he went to medical school with the intention of becoming a medical researcher.

Freud started working with a physician called Josef Breuer (1842-1925) when he went to Vienna. Breuer had achieved some success in treating hysteric by using talking therapy.

Freud and Breuer did experiments with different methods within talking therapy to unearth the buried content of the unconscious mind, after him being convinced that an unconscious part of the mind exerts great influence on behaviour.

They used techniques such as hypnosis, free association, and dream analysis. Freud also from his own experience of depression conducted an extensive self-analysis based on his own dreams to alleviate his mood.

The iceberg model of the mind describes the mind as a big iceberg with only 10 percent or so is out on the surface, and that's the conscious. And with 15-20 hidden below, and that's the preconscious. We can easily retrieve memories or events from the preconscious. And the rest of the iceberg is the unconscious.

Freud theory about the ID, EGO, and SUPEREGO describes the id as always driven by sex and aggression, and the ego as the rational part whereas the superego is the morals, and there are always fights between them. The id needs/wants to do something then the superego tells it is wrong, and here the ego will try to compromise.

Talking therapy is discussing with patients the possibly overlooked reasons for their problems and sometimes delving into the private lives of patients. The techniques included as mentioned hypnosis and talking to patient about their lives both present and past and dreams and looking for patterns or significant events that may be playing a role in their current difficulties.

Little Hans had a phobia of horses. Freud linked this fear to the horse's large penis. Relating only to horses with black harnesses over their noses. Hans's father suggested this symbolised his moustache and his phobia improved. Freud suggests Hans resolved this conflict as he fantasised himself with a big penis and married to his mother. This allowed Hans to overcome his castration anxiety and identify with his father.

When it comes to evaluating the theory, it is useful and true to some extent. As he was the founder of the psychodynamic approach which still a very important approach in psychology, it is also known as the psychoanalytic approach which we

still use till now. It called the psychodynamic as it looks at the dynamics of the psyche, and it called the psychoanalytic as it analyses the psyche, such as therapy.

He experimented his theory by the talking therapy and dream analysis as he used his talking therapy along with Josef Breuer to treat patients with Conversion Hysteria. As he had the chance to study with Jean Charcot who treated Conversion Hysteria. Conversion hysteria is a disorder where patients experience symptoms such as blindness, paralysis, or ticks, but no physiological reasons for them. It is like an extreme version of what we would now call psychosomatic.

He experimented his theory of the interruption of dreams to treat his patients for example in the cases of Ann O, and Little Hans. Although he linked everything to sex in his interpretation to the dreams, especially in Little Hans case, however, his opinions are not quite right when it comes to him assuming that everything is driven by sex and aggression.

When it comes to his definition of the ID, the EGO, and the SUPEREGO, that's really true to some extent. As the ID as he called it, always wants, but according to him it is always driven by sex and aggression.

2. The behaviourist approach

Watson took the psychology of John Hopkins university, he linked philosophy with psychology and strengthen them with biology.

Watson did research on non-humans and became increasingly critical of the use of introspection. He argued that introspective reports are unreliable and difficult to verify, due to the fact that they are based on private experience. In the case which the investigator had no possible access.

He believed that psychologists should only study what's measurable and observable such as behaviour instead of private thoughts.

His argument was that psychology needs to be objective and carried in a scientific way in order to get wide acceptance as science. He argued that we should use the same methods which used in other science and collect the same kind of data as the human consciousness is not measurable.

Empiricism however, is the idea that our ability to form representation of the world are not innate, but instead based on prior experience. As John Locke maintained that the mind was tabula rasa, a blank slate at birth, and shaped by experience. He also argued that the only source of knowledge we get is through our experience and senses.

Empiricists believe that the humans should only measure data that is objectively observable, such as behaviour.

Their ideas were further developed by David Hume in his. 'Treatise on Human Nature. He wrote about the self and nature of cause-and-effect relationships, which still remain key concerns in modern psychology, and because of the importance of establishing cause and effect relationships, behaviourist psychology was heavily influenced by it.

Positivism on the other hand argued the world could be described objectively without reference to the human creator. It assumes that what cannot be observed and numerically measured is not available for scientific investigation and this is very important idea in scientific psychology and behaviourism in particular.

Darwin influenced this approach as his evolutionary theories he suggested that we humans and animals came from the same ancestors, therefore, we can study the human behaviour by studying animals.

While talking about behaviourist, we should not forget about Pavlov, as his work. His theory the classical conditioning led to discoveries in psychology and helped shape this approach. Although he was not a psychologist, his discoveries while studying digestive processes of dogs have been applied to many behaviours and is counted one of the biggest discoveries in psychology. It came with a fact that unconditional stimulus will produce unconditioned response, and conditioned stimulus will produce conditioned response, while neutral stimulus will produce no conditional response.

Thorndike is also a key contributor to this approach, as he proposed the Law of Effect, which means in a given situation, an outcome followed by a satisfying consequence is more likely to occur, whereas an event followed by unsatisfying consequence is less likely to happen.

Reward is a positive reinforcement, applying something positive, or negative reinforcement which is taking something negative to increase the behaviour. Punishment is also two types, positive punishment which is applying something negative to decrease behaviour and negative punishment or response cost.

Based on the classical conditioning theory, exposure therapies have been developed to help treat things like phobias. In systematic desensitisation patients will learn muscle relaxation techniques then will gradually be exposed to the fear-provoking stimulus.

In flooding, it is vice versa, patients are not gradually exposed to their fear, in fact they just face them with it. For example, if someone is afraid of spiders, they will not be gradually exposed to their fear like in systematic desensitisation. In the contrary they will be exposed to it right away without stages.

However, in token economy good behaviour will be rewarded with tokens for the sake of increasing the chance of the behaviour to be repeated, which in another words, positive reinforcement. Negative punishment can also be used if the person behaved in a way which is not acceptable for the purpose of the token economy, the tokens can be taken away. Bear in mind tokens can be things like food or actual token.

Token economies are used in many places, for example, school, homes, and prisons. However, they showed much success in the treatment of addiction. If the person provided free urine sample, they will be given token, and the token increases every time they provide free urine sample.

In conclusion, the theory looked at very important areas, such as that, we must look at psychology the same way we look at other sciences and collect the same kind of data and it needed to be objective. So, it is tested using scientific methods therefore more reliable. It is application and usefulness as well.

However, behaviourists focus only on how we learn by examining the process by which experience influence behaviour. It is therefore reductionist and deterministic.

3. The cognitive approach

Cognitive psychology is a stimulus-organism-response theory. As psychologists argued that we should study what goes on between the stimulus and the response. In another words, the internal mental processes which have reacted to the stimulus and produced a response, and what is going on within the individual during the time that stimulus response connections are being established.

As for the meaning of the word cognitive, it came from the Latin word *cognito*, meaning to apprehend, understand or know. These are all internal processes which involves the mind. So cognitive psychologists see the mind as a processor which selects, organises, stores and uses information.

During the 1920-1930s, the Gestalt school grew in reaction to Behaviourism, mainly in Germany. Gestalt psychologists reacted against the reductionism of human experience advocated by the behaviourists. The primary focus of the Gestalt school was on unified wholes. The central idea that the whole is different from the sum of its parts, in this view when we break actions down to individual elements something crucial is lost.

While learning was a main focus for research by behaviourists, Gestalt psychologists demonstrated that conditioning alone could not explain all human behaviour. Gestalt laws of perceptual organisation emphasised how we see a whole picture rather than a series of features.

Wundt can be regarded as an early cognitive psychologist, as he brought people into lab and tried to study the internal mental processes.

Cognitive psychology did gain popularity after the invention of the computer, as the computer was processing information to produce an outcome, cognitive psychologists thought the mind can also be studied, so its mental process. Broadbent (1958) was one the first to use an information processing model of attention to try to understand human mental processes during specific cognitive tasks such as selective attention.

The three parts of the assumptions of the approach are that: First, according to the way the mind works, behaviour can be explained

Second, the mind works in a way just like a computer.

Third, psychology is a pure science based on laboratory experiments.

however, cognitive psychologists are particularly interested in studying five internal mental processes. Which are:

First, perception, the way which sensory information is organised, consciously experienced, and interpreted.

Second, attention the process of focusing in a particular event from other possible events.

Third, language using words and systematic rule to organise the words used to tell a message from a person to another within a communication system.

Fourth, memory the ability to absorb information, store it, and recall it another time.

Fifth, thinking, the cognitive behaviour in which mental representations, ideas or other hypothetical elements of thought are considered, experienced, or manipulated.

According to Piaget, schema is hypothetical structure within the mind.

Research findings from Piaget and Bruner have had an enormous impact in the field of education. They were interested in how the child acquired and developed knowledge. Many principles of their research have been applied to classroom and nursery.

The use of scientific method, e.g., research into memory

Less deterministic- we are free to choose our thoughts.

The weaknesses are:

Machine-reductionism, different between humans and computers ignored.

It ignored the influence of human emotion and motivation and how it may affect ability to process information. Emotional factors such as anxiety may affect the human memory on eyewitnesses as the research found.

4. The biological approach

After our understanding of the brain structure has developed along with our understanding to biology, the link between biological psychology and physiology became notable. According to the Greek physician Galen our personalities and our nature may be linked to the level of blood and water in our bodies. Gall's technique of phrenology at deciding the certain brain structure involved with specific behaviour and characteristics, it is now known as the localisation of function, it was one of the first attempts to link the biological psychology with physiology, it is now largely seen as pseudoscience.

As Darwin made link between humans and animals arguing that we came from the same ancestors, and more like them in our biology that led to an interest in Genetics. If we look like them in our biology, then we can study them in order to understand the human behaviour. As the understanding of biology has developed, the biological approach has evolved alongside with it. As with biology it focuses on the brain, the nervous and endocrine systems, and genetics, which are the main areas of interest for the biological approach. Much of this development influenced by the work of Darwin.

The biological approach to psychology has merged and run side by side to the rest psychological through since early Greek time. Through the development of medicine important insights for human behaviour and experience were gained. This development included biochemistry, physiology, and the knowledge of the internal structure of the brain.

Neuroscience, the science which deal with the structure or function of the nervous system and the brain developed, and localisation of function became an important part of biological psychology. For that reason, biological psychologists started to shift their focus to the areas below.

First, the cerebellum, it is responsible for actions such as walking

Second, the brain stem or the medulla, it controls temperature regulation and basic functions such as breathing and swallowing.

Third, the cerebrum which is split into two halves, the right hemisphere, and the left hemisphere. The left hemisphere controls the right part of the body, it specialized in taking care of analytical and verbal tasks, and it speaks much better than the right side. While on the other hand the right hemisphere controls the left part of the body, and it takes care of space perception tasks and music for example. They both joined together by the corpus callosum.

When we give direction for instance or make a map we involve the right hemisphere, it can only produce basic words and phrases, without the help of the right hemisphere, we can only be able to read the word cat for example without being able to imagine it. As it contributes emotional context to language.

Each half of the cerebrum is split into four lobes, frontal, temporal, parietal and occipital

Occipital lobes are key role in vision also temporal and parietal are involved in vision 50% of entire cerebral cortex devoted to visual processing.

The parietal lobes receive information from various senses about temperature, pain and pressure.

The frontal lobes are responsible for planning, thinking, and reasoning.

The temporal lobes involved in auditory processing, speech perception and also memory information.

As genes are passed from our parents to us, they join to create circumstances which create behaviour or mental illness. For that the biological approach focuses on the role of genetic factor in our behaviour. Genetics also plays an important part in the development of our behaviour. Biological psychologists also studied the role of neurotransmitters that carry information across the nerve cells in the brain, for the understanding and treatment of depression.

The medication or treatment that have been created to treat mental disorders are anti-psychotic drugs for schizophrenia and anti-depressants were created to treat depression.

The biological approach is applied nowadays in the treatment of mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and depression.

Pseudoscience, the localisation of function in the brain became an important part of biological psychology.

Weaknesses of the approach is that it ignored the role of nurture in nature verses nurture debate, as well as it was badly used to divide between races and classes.

CONCLUSION

This essay concludes that psychology has developed a lot through time and all the main approaches which the essay looked at are very important in modern psychology.

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