

Chapter 1

The Nature of Psychology

© 2015 YOLO Learning Solutions

Chapter Outline

The Historical Context of Psychology

The Roots of Psychology

The Founding Schools of Psychology

The Growth of Psychology

Contemporary Perspectives in Psychology

The Humanistic Perspective

The Cognitive Perspective

The Biopsychological Perspective

The Sociocultural Perspective

The Scope of Psychology

Academic Fields of Specialization

Professional Fields of Specialization

Chapter Summary

The Historical Context of Psychology

- Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and cognitive processes.
- The roots of psychology are in philosophy and physiology.
- The commonly accepted founding date for psychology is 1879, when Wilhelm Wundt established the first formal psychology laboratory.
- Structuralism sought to analyze the mind into its component parts.
- Functionalism favored the study of how the conscious mind helps the individual adapt to the environment.
- Gestalt psychology favored the study of the mind as active and the study of perception as holistic.

- Psychoanalysis studies the influence of unconscious motives on behavior.
- Behaviorism rejects the study of the mind in favor of the study of observable behavior.

Contemporary Perspectives in Psychology

- To date, psychology has no unifying scientific paradigm, only competing psychological perspectives.
- The humanistic perspective, which favors the study of conscious mental experience and accepts the reality of free will, arose in opposition to psychoanalysis and behaviorism.
- The cognitive perspective views the individual as an active processor of information.
- The biopsychological perspective favors the study of the biological bases of behavior, mental experiences, and cognitive processes.
- The sociocultural perspective insists that psychologists must study people in their social and cultural contexts.

The Scope of Psychology

- Academic fields of specialization are chiefly concerned with conducting basic research.
- Professional fields of specialization in psychology are chiefly concerned with applying psychological research findings.

“Section Review” Questions

Section Review: The Historical Context of Psychology

1. How did the work of 19th-century scientists lead to the emergence of psychology as a science?
2. What were the contributions of functionalism to psychology?
3. What was Gestalt psychology’s main criticism of structuralism?
4. What prompted the emergence of behaviorism?

Section Review: Contemporary Psychological Perspectives

1. In what way does the cognitive approach combine aspects of Gestalt psychology and behaviorism?
2. What are three areas of interest to psychologists who favor the biopsychological perspective?
3. Why has the sociocultural perspective become influential?

Section Review: Professional Fields of Specialization

1. What is the difference between basic and applied research?
2. How does psychiatry differ from psychology?
3. What is the nature of peace psychology?

Key Terms

psychology (p. 2) The science of behavior and cognitive processes.

The Historical Context of Psychology

analytic introspection (p. 6) A research method in which highly trained participants report the contents of their conscious mental experiences.

behaviorism (p. 11) The psychological viewpoint that rejects the study of mental processes in favor of the study of overt behavior.

differential psychology (p. 5) The field of psychology that studies individual differences in physical, personality, and intellectual characteristics.

empiricism (p. 3) The philosophical position that true knowledge comes through the senses.

functionalism (p. 6) The early psychological viewpoint that studied how the conscious mind helps the individual adapt to the environment.

Gestalt psychology (p. 8) The early psychological viewpoint that claimed that we perceive and think about wholes rather than simply combinations of separate elements.

nativism (p. 3) The philosophical position that heredity provides individuals with inborn knowledge and abilities.

phi phenomenon (p. 8) Apparent motion caused by the presentation of different visual stimuli in rapid succession.

psychic determinism (p. 10) The Freudian assumption that all human behavior is influenced by unconscious motives.

psychoanalysis (p. 9) The early school of psychology that emphasized the importance of unconscious causes of behavior.

psychophysics (p. 4) The study of the relationship between the physical characteristics of stimuli and the conscious psychological experiences that are associated with them.

rationalism (p. 3) The philosophical position that true knowledge comes through correct reasoning.

structuralism (p. 6) The early psychological viewpoint that sought to identify the components of the conscious mind.

Contemporary Perspectives in Psychology

behavioral genetics (p. 15) The study of the relative effects of heredity and life experiences on behavior.

biopsychological perspective (p. 14) The psychological viewpoint that stresses the relationship of physiological factors to behavior and mental processes.

cognitive perspective (p. 14) The psychological viewpoint that favors the study of how the mind organizes perceptions, processes information, and interprets experiences.

cross-cultural psychology (p. 16) An approach that tries to determine the extent to which research findings about human psychology hold true across cultures.

cultural psychology (p. 16) An approach that studies how cultural factors affect human behavior and mental experience.

ethnic psychology (p. 16) The field that employs culturally appropriate methods to describe the experience of members of groups that historically have been underrepresented in psychology.

evolutionary psychology (p. 15) The study of the evolution of behavior through natural selection.

existential psychology (p. 13) A branch of humanistic psychology that studies how individuals respond to the basic philosophical issues of life, such as death, meaning, freedom, and isolation.

humanistic perspective (p. 13) The psychological viewpoint that holds that the proper subject matter of psychology is the individual's subjective mental experience of the world.

multicultural psychology (p. 16) The field that studies psychological similarities and differences across the subcultures that commonly exist within individual countries.

phenomenological psychology (p. 13) A branch of humanistic psychology primarily concerned with the study of subjective mental experience.

scientific paradigm (p. 13) A model that determines the appropriate goals, methods, and subject matter of a science.

sociocultural perspective (p. 15) The psychological viewpoint that favors the scientific study of human behavior in its sociocultural context.

The Scope of Psychology

applied research (p. 17) Research aimed at improving the quality of life and solving practical problems.

basic research (p. 17) Research aimed at finding answers to questions out of theoretical interest or intellectual curiosity.

behavioral neuroscience (p. 18) The field that studies the physiological bases of human and animal behavior and mental processes.

clinical psychology (p. 19) The field that applies psychological principles to the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of psychological disorders.

comparative psychology (p. 18) The field that studies similarities and differences in the physiology, behaviors, and abilities of different species of animals, including human beings.

counseling psychology (p. 19) The field that applies psychological principles to help individuals deal with problems of daily living, generally less serious ones than those treated by clinical psychologists.

developmental psychology (p. 18) The field that studies physical, perceptual, cognitive, and psychosocial changes across the life span.

educational psychology (p. 20) The field that applies psychological principles to help improve curriculum, teaching methods, and administrative procedures.

environmental psychology (p. 20) The field that applies psychological principles to help improve the physical environment, including the design of buildings and the reduction of noise.

experimental psychology (p. 17) The field primarily concerned with laboratory research on basic psychological processes, including perception, learning, memory, thinking, language, motivation, and emotion.

forensic psychology (p. 20) The field that applies psychological principles to improve the legal system, including the work of police and juries.

health psychology (p. 19) The field that applies psychological principles to the prevention and treatment of physical illness.

industrial/organizational psychology(p. 19) The field that applies psychological principles to improve productivity in businesses, industries, and government agencies.

peace psychology (p. 20) The field that applies psychological principles to reducing conflict and maintaining peace.

personality psychology (p. 18) The field that focuses on factors accounting for the differences in behavior and enduring personal characteristics among individuals.

psychiatry (p. 19) The field of medicine that diagnoses and treats psychological disorders by using medical or psychological forms of therapy.

school psychology (p. 20) The field that applies psychological principles to improve the academic performance and social behavior of students in elementary, middle, and high schools.

social psychology (p. 18) The field that studies how the actual, imagined, or implied presence of other people affects one another's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

sport psychology (p. 20) The field that applies psychological principles to help amateur and professional athletes improve their performance.

Chapter Quiz

1. If you insisted that “seeing is believing,” you would show your belief in
 - a. nativism.
 - b. empiricism.

- c. rationalism.
 - d. psychic determinism.
2. The main difference between a psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist is that the psychiatrist
- a. is a physician.
 - b. might analyze dreams.
 - c. relies strictly on Freudian theory.
 - d. deals with more serious kinds of disorders.
3. When you watch a cartoon in a movie theater, you are experiencing (the)
- a. phi phenomenon.
 - b. Zeigarnik effect.
 - c. psychic determinism.
 - d. analytic introspection.
4. A psychologist would be most likely to
- a. prescribe drugs to treat anxiety.
 - b. study the ability of apes to learn language.
 - c. provide evidence for or against the existence of God.
 - d. treat depression by administering electroshock therapy.
5. The philosopher who would most approve of Hugo Münsterberg's founding of applied psychology would be
- a. Plato.
 - b. Saint Augustine.
 - c. Immanuel Kant.
 - d. Francis Bacon.
6. Darwin's theory of evolution had its greatest impact on
- a. structuralism.
 - b. functionalism.
 - c. Gestalt psychology.
 - d. cognitive psychology.
7. Biology and psychology are both sciences because they
- a. study the brain.
 - b. rely on statistics.
 - c. share a common method.

- d. require specialized education.
8. Strict determinism would most likely be rejected by a
- a. psychoanalyst.
 - b. biopsychologist.
 - c. behavioral psychologist.
 - d. humanistic psychologist.
9. The psychological perspective that is interested in studying the brain, the hormone system, and the effects of heredity on behavior is the
- a. differential perspective.
 - b. neurochemical perspective.
 - c. cerebrocortical perspective.
 - d. biopsychological perspective.
10. The discussion of women in the early history of psychology noted that, since the early 20th century, psychology has been
- a. more hospitable to women than to men.
 - b. more hospitable to women than other sciences have been.
 - c. less hospitable to women than other sciences have been.
 - d. about as hospitable to women as other sciences have been.
11. A research study on the effectiveness of psychological counseling techniques in helping Olympic athletes reach their potential would be an example of
- a. pure research.
 - b. basic research.
 - c. applied research.
 - d. psychic determinism.
12. The discovery of possible universal psychological truths is central to
- a. parapsychology.
 - b. cultural psychology.
 - c. humanistic psychology.
 - d. cross-cultural psychology.
13. If a psychologist insisted that a person's recent fall down a flight of stairs was more attributable to unconscious self-loathing than to clumsiness, she would be supporting the Freudian notion of
- a. stimulus control.
 - b. psychic determinism.

- c. positive reinforcement.
 - d. psychophysical parallelism.
14. Near the end of his life, Carl Rogers lamented that humanistic psychology had little impact on mainstream psychology, in part because it
- a. lacked scientific rigor.
 - b. was too concerned with sex.
 - c. likened the human mind to a computer.
 - d. stressed unconscious motivation instead of conscious experience.
15. Neither behaviorism nor psychoanalysis
- a. studies the mind.
 - b. uses case studies.
 - c. considers the environment.
 - d. focuses on the conscious mind.
16. Research in differential psychology, a field founded by Francis Galton, would be most likely to
- a. use placebo control groups.
 - b. determine the effect of exercise on academic performance.
 - c. study factors that make certain individuals more stress-resistant than others.
 - d. assess changes in the personality of a single subject across various life stages.
17. A behaviorist would be most likely to agree with the belief that leaders
- a. are made, not born.
 - b. are born, not made.
 - c. use will power to dominate other people.
 - d. are motivated by an unconscious desire for control.
18. An interest in the unconscious mind would be most characteristic of
- a. behaviorism.
 - b. psychoanalysis.
 - c. humanistic psychology.
 - d. cognitive psychology.
19. B. F. Skinner would be most likely to attribute your desire to pursue a college education to
- a. your drive for self-actualization.
 - b. an unconscious need to prove yourself.

- c. your past success in academic courses.
 - d. intellectual interests inherited from your parents.
20. If a psychologist is interested in helping you to feel more self-actualized in your life, she is probably a(n)
- a. forensic psychologist.
 - b. cognitive psychologist.
 - c. humanistic psychologist.
 - d. experimental psychologist.
21. The main employment settings of psychologists are
- a. private practices.
 - b. businesses and industries.
 - c. colleges and universities.
 - d. governmental research laboratories.
22. Cognitive psychology can be viewed as the offspring of
- a. psychoanalysis and functionalism.
 - b. behaviorism and Gestalt psychology.
 - c. structuralism and humanistic psychology.
 - d. biopsychology and differential psychology.
23. The idea that the proper subject matter of psychology should be a person's conscious mental experience was put forth by
- a. Ivan Pavlov.
 - b. Roger Sperry.
 - c. B. F. Skinner.
 - d. Abraham Maslow.
24. According to philosopher Thomas Kuhn, as a science matures, it develops a paradigm shared by most scientists. Today, psychology
- a. lacks a unifying scientific paradigm.
 - b. is dominated by the humanistic paradigm.
 - c. is dominated by the behavioristic paradigm.
 - d. is dominated by the psychoanalytic paradigm.
25. The first psychological laboratory was established in 1879 by
- a. Sigmund Freud.
 - b. Wilhelm Wundt.

- c. John B. Watson.
- d. Edward Titchener.

Review Questions

True/False

1. Psychophysics is the field of psychology that studies individual differences in physical, personality, and intellectual characteristics.
2. Gestalt psychology is the early psychological viewpoint that claimed that we perceive and think about wholes rather than simply combinations of separate elements.
3. According to Wertheimer, the phi phenomenon shows that the mind does not respond actively to discrete stimuli, but instead organizes stimuli into individual parts.
4. According to Maslow, memories of early childhood experiences stored in the unconscious mind continue to affect behavior throughout one's life.
5. Evolutionary psychology studies the relative influence of hereditary and environmental factors on human and animal behavior, such as the genetic bases of autism.

Multiple Choice

6. Sciences are "scientific" not because they share a common subject matter but because they share
 - a. the phi phenomenon.
 - b. analytic introspection.
 - c. a common method.
 - d. a cognitive perspective.
7. _____ is the philosophical position that true knowledge comes through correct reasoning, while _____ is the philosophical position that true knowledge comes through the senses.
 - a. Structuralism; rationalism
 - b. Empiricism; rationalism
 - c. Nativism; structuralism
 - d. Rationalism; empiricism
8. Behaviorism rejects the study of mental processes in favor of the study of
 - a. overt conduct.
 - b. unconscious motivation.
 - c. conscious experiences.

- d. individual differences in physical, personality, and intellectual characteristics.
9. Which of the following are two contemporary perspectives in psychology?
- a. Structuralism and functionalism
 - b. Behaviorism and psychoanalysis
 - c. Functionalism and behaviorism
 - d. Humanistic and biopsychological
10. Research aimed at improving the quality of life and solving practical problems is
- a. basic research.
 - b. applied research.
 - c. comparative research.
 - d. developmental research.

Fill-in-the-Blank

- 11. _____ rejects the study of the mind in favor of the study of observable behavior.
- 12. _____ sought to analyze the mind into its component parts.
- 13. The _____ perspective views the individual as an active processor of information.
- 14. The _____ perspective favors the study of conscious mental experience and accepts the reality of free will.
- 15. _____ studies the influence of unconscious motives on behavior.

Answers

Answers to “Section Review” Questions

The Historical Context of Psychology

- 1. The structuralists tried to analyze the mind into its component elements and discover how the elements interact.
- 2. Functionalism stressed the importance of how the mind helps us adapt to reality, and it expanded the kinds of methods, subjects, and settings used in psychological research.
- 3. Structuralism was criticized as being “brick-and-mortar psychology” for its attempt to analyze mental experience into discrete elements.
- 4. Behaviorism emerged when John B. Watson and other psychologists, seeking to make psychology an objective science, rejected the study of the unobservable mind in favor of studying observable behavior.

Contemporary Perspectives in Psychology

1. Like Gestalt psychologists, cognitive psychologists stress the active role of the mind in organizing perceptions, processing information, and interpreting experiences. Like behavioral psychologists, cognitive psychologists stress the need for objective, well-controlled, laboratory studies.
2. The three areas of interest to psychologists who favor the biopsychological perspective are the brain, the hormonal system, and the effects of heredity on psychological functions.
3. The sociocultural perspective is a reaction against the tendency to presume that psychological research findings in Western cultures are automatically generalizable to other cultures.

The Scope of Psychology

1. Basic research aims at contributing to knowledge, and applied research aims at solving practical problems.
2. A psychiatrist is a physician who has served a residency in psychiatry, which takes a medical approach to the treatment of psychological disorders.
3. Peace psychologists conduct research and seek to apply their findings to help prevent violence, reduce conflict, and avoid war.

Answers to “Chapter Quiz”

1. b
2. a
3. a
4. b
5. d
6. b
7. c
8. d
9. d
10. b
11. c
12. d
13. b
14. a
15. d
16. c

17. a
18. b
19. c
20. c
21. c
22. b
23. d
24. a
25. b

Answers to Review Questions

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. False
6. c
7. d
8. a
9. d
10. b
11. Behaviorism
12. Structuralism
13. cognitive
14. humanistic
15. Psychoanalysis