AQA Psychology A-level

Topic 5: Approaches in Psychology

Notes

Part 1 — The Origins of Psychology

Descartes and Dualism:

- In the 17th century, Descartes suggested that the mind and the body represented a dualism, and that the two interact in different ways to produce different behaviours and thoughts. This was the basis for the nature versus nurture debate.
- Psychology = "The scientific study of behaviour and mental processes and how these are affected by internal and external factors" (IB definition).
- Science = [1]"The pursuit and application of knowledge and understanding of the natural and social world, following a systematic methodology based on evidence".
- Therefore, the features of science are as follows: A universal paradigm, theory construction, hypothesis testing, deduction, falsification, replicability, objectivity, and the empirical method.

Wundt and Introspection:

- In 1879, Wundt set up his first laboratory where he adopted the use of introspection.
- Introspection is defined as [2]"a means of learning about one's own currently ongoing mental states or processes. Introspective knowledge is often held to be more immediate or direct than sensory knowledge".
- It features 3 conditions: The mentality condition (aims to generate beliefs about mental states and events), the first-person condition (aims to generate beliefs about the individual's own mind) and the temporal proximity condition (generates beliefs and describes the individual's current mental life).
- Wundt isolated conscious thoughts into basic structures of thoughts, processes and images, in a process called structuralism.
- The method of data recording was highly scientific e.g. the same stimulus was used each time, allowing for replication under standardised conditions, hence producing reliable data.

Skinner, Watson and Behaviourism:

- Skinner disagreed with the subjective nature of introspection, in which the findings differed greatly from individual to individual, making it difficult to establish general laws and unifying principles of behaviour and cognition.
- Therefore, in the 1930s, Skinner's idea of radical behaviourism (that private events could be measured and quantified in the same way as observable behaviour) was tested using the laboratory experiment method of research.
- This allowed for the objective measurement of observable behaviour, providing reliable data through controlling and eliminating the effects of extraneous and confounding variables, by using highly controlled conditions.
- This marked the beginning of Psychology as a scientific discipline!

Further Progress with Other Approaches:

- The Cognitive Approach = With the invention of the computer in the 1960s, cognitive psychology flourised as psychologists had a metaphor for the functions and workings of the mind i.e. the 'computer analogy'.
- Social Learning Theory = Bandura also agreed with behaviourist principles (i.e. that behaviour is learnt through experience) but argued that these principles are better applied to a social context.
- The Biological Approach = Advances in technology, particularly with brain scanning techniques in the 1970s, allowed psychologists to objectively observe and measure the biological basis of behaviour.

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[1] The Science Council. (2017). *Our definition of science - The Science Council*. [online] Available at: http://sciencecouncil.org/about-science/our-definition-of-science/ [Accessed 6 Aug. 2017].

[2] Schwitzgebel, Eric, "Introspection", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/introspection/>.

A01 Introduction and Assumptions:

- The behaviourist approach is an approach to explaining behaviour which suggests that all behaviour is acquired and maintained through classical and operant conditioning. Hence, only behaviour which can be objectively measured and observed is studied, as demonstrated by Skinner's Box. This is due to the founders of behaviourism, Watson and Skinner, disagreeing with the subjective nature of Wundt's introspective methods, and the inability to formulate general laws and universal principles based on his observations.
- From a behaviourist perspective, the basic laws governing learning are the same across both non-humans and humans. Therefore, non-human animals can replace humans in behaviourist experimental research.

Classical Conditioning and Examples:

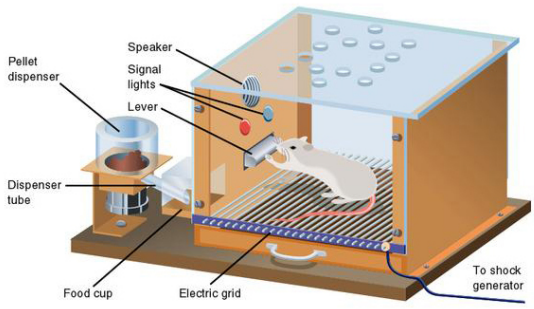
- Classical Conditioning = A type of learning which occurs through associations made between the unconditioned stimulus and the neutral stimulus. Before conditioning, the unconditioned stimulus (UCS) produces the unconditioned response (UCR). During conditioning, the neutral stimulus (NS) is repeatedly paired with the UCS, producing an UCR. After conditioning, the neutral stimulus becomes the conditioned stimulus, producing the conditioned response.
- Pavlov demonstrated that dogs could be conditioned to salivate upon hearing a bell, as follows:

1. Before conditioning, the unconditioned stimulus (food) produced an unconditioned response (salivation).
2. During conditioning, the unconditioned stimulus was repeatedly paired with a neutral stimulus (a bell), to produce the same unconditioned response of salivation.
3. An association was made between the unconditioned stimulus and the neutral stimulus.
4. After conditioning, the neutral stimulus became the conditioned stimulus, producing the conditioned response of salivation.

- Extinction occurs when the conditioned stimulus is no longer paired with the unconditioned stimulus, so the conditioned response becomes extinct/disappears.
- Spontaneous recovery occurs when the individual carries out the conditioned response some time after extinction has occurred.
- Generalisation occurs when slight changes in the conditioned stimulus, such as different pitches of the bell used in Pavlov's experiment, still produces the same conditioned response.

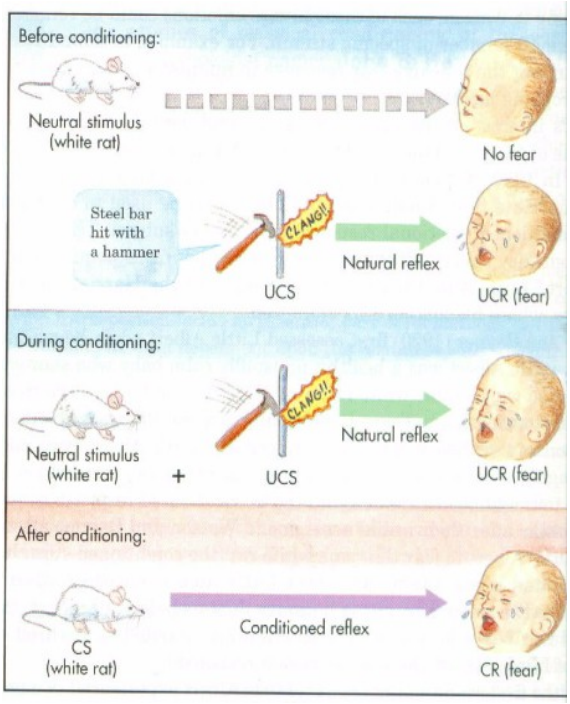
Operant Conditioning and Examples:

- Operant conditioning = A type of learning where behaviour is acquired and maintained based on its consequences. Reinforcement increases the likelihood of the observed behaviour being repeated, whilst punishment (an unpleasant consequence of behaviour) decreases this likelihood.
- There are two types of reinforcement - positive and negative. Positive reinforcement occurs when we carry out a behaviour to receive a reward e.g. completing homework to receive praise from a teacher. On the other hand, negative reinforcement



occurs when we carry out a behaviour to avoid negative consequences e.g. completing homework to avoid being given a detention.

- Skinner's Box = Skinner demonstrated, using a rat, the mechanisms of positive and negative reinforcement. Positive reinforcement was shown when the rats pressed down on a lever to receive food as a reward, and subsequently learnt to repeat this action to increase their rewards. Negative reinforcement was shown when the rat learnt to press down on the lever to avoid the unpleasant consequence of an electric shock.



A02 Potential Application Questions:

1. An understanding of the role of classical conditioning in the acquisition and maintenance of a phobia of white rats in Little Albert (Watson and Rayner, 1920). It would be particularly useful to discuss the extinction of Little Albert's phobia when the loud bang /conditioned stimulus no longer produced the conditioned response of crying (when the loud bang was not paired with the sight of the rat). Generalisations of his phobia to other white, fluffy objects may also be discussed.
2. Being able to differentiate between classical and operant conditioning. These two types of learning involve different mechanisms and have been demonstrated in different scenarios.

A03 Evaluation:

+ Scientific Rigour = In an attempt to objectively and systematically collect reliable data, the behaviourist approach makes use of highly scientific research methods, particularly the laboratory experiment. Strictly-controlled conditions reduce and control for the effects of confounding and extraneous variables, increasing the reliability and internal validity of the findings (as these are more likely to be replicated when research is conducted under the same conditions). By focusing on behaviour which is observable and can be measured, the behaviourist approach increases the scientific credibility of psychology.

+ Real-Life Applications = An increased understanding of classical and operant conditioning has led to the development of treatments and therapies for serious mental disorders. For example, token economies have been used as a way of dealing with offending behaviour: inmates who carry out socially-desirable behaviour (such as tidying their cell and avoiding conflicts) receive tokens (secondary reinforcers) which can be traded for privileges (primary reinforcers), such as extra TV-time. Therefore, behaviourist principles have had positive impacts on the lives of many.

— Environmental Determinism = The behaviourist approach sees all behaviour as the product of past reinforcement contingencies, leaving no room for free will or conscious choices. This hard deterministic stance may be a more appropriate explanation for animal behaviour, whereas explanations of human behaviour should also account for emotions,

motivations and reasoning skills (e.g. as social learning theory does). Hence, the behaviourist approach may be a limited explanation for human behaviour.

— Cost-benefit analyses with the use of animals in experimental research = Skinner's box caused considerable physical harm to the rats, breaching the BPS ethical guideline of protection from harm. Watson and Rayner's classical conditioning experiments on Little Albert failed to protect him from psychological harm, as well as not offering him the opportunity to withdraw. Therefore, much behaviourist research, at least by modern standards, would be viewed as unethical. However, a cost-benefit analysis may show that the benefit of increased understanding of the different types of learning (classical and operant conditioning) outweigh the ethical costs.

Part 3 — The Learning Approach: Social Learning Theory

A01 Introduction and Assumptions:

- Social learning theory (SLT) suggests that learning occurs both directly, through classical and operant conditioning, and indirectly, through vicarious reinforcement.
- Assumes that learning occurs through the following stages: An observer identifies themselves with a desirable role model. This role model displays or models a specific behaviour, which is imitated by the observer. The likelihood that the observed behaviour will be imitated is increased if the role model is seen to be 'vicariously reinforced' or rewarded. Therefore, the consequences of the observed behaviour are more important than observing the behaviour alone.
- Role Model = A person with whom the observer identifies with. The role model is usually attractive, has high social status, is of a similar age and the same gender to the observer. This model can exert influence indirectly by not being physically present in the environment but, for example, seen in the media.
- Identification = The process by which an observer relates to/ associates themselves with a role model and aspires to become more like that role model.
- Vicarious reinforcement = A type of indirect learning which occurs when an observer sees their role model being rewarded for displaying a certain behaviour. The observer is then motivated to imitate this behaviour, in an effort to receive the same reward.
- Mediational processes = Cognitive processes which mediate/intervene between stimulus and response. The 4 mediational processes are: Attention, retention, motor reproduction and motivation.
- The first two mediational processes are involved with the observation and understanding of the behaviour, whilst the latter two are involved in the actual imitation of the behaviour. This separation means that observed behaviours do not always need to be reproduced at the same time.

A02 Potential Applications:

1. Bandura's Bobo Doll Study (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1961) involved 72 children (36 boys and 36 girls), aged 3 to 6 years old [3]. The children were divided into three groups: one observed an adult model behaving aggressively toward a Bobo doll, another observed a non-aggressive adult model, and a third group served as a control and saw no model. The study found that children who observed aggressive behavior were more likely to imitate it, supporting the principles of Social Learning Theory. In a later 1963 study, Bandura examined the effects of film and cartoon portrayals of aggression, showing similar imitation effects depending on the medium of observation.

[3] Bandura, Ross and Ross, Imitation of Film-Mediated Aggressive Model, *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 1963, 66(1), 3-11.

2. Questions may be based upon why some individuals are chosen as role models rather than others, why some children will not reproduce the observed behaviours (individual differences in the use of mediational processes) and the influence of the media on behaviour, according to SLT.
3. Comparisons with other approaches, specifically about why SLT may be a better explanation for human, rather than animal, behaviour.

A03 Evaluation:

— Bandura's Bobo Doll experiment ignores the biological differences between boys and girls = Social learning theory suggests that we learn from experience, and so ignores other biological or psychological factors, thus adopting environmental determinism. However, Bandura ignored the finding that [4]"boys, in relation to girls, exhibited significantly more imitative aggression, more aggressive gun play, and more nonimitative aggressive behaviour". This may be explained due to boys having higher levels of the hormone testosterone, which has been linked to increased aggressiveness. Therefore, this suggests that SLT may not be a complete explanation for gender differences in behaviour, due to not accounting for the biological and hormonal differences between the sexes.

— Demand characteristics in Bandura's Bobo Doll experiment = Bandura's study may lack internal validity, due to not entirely investigating the effect of aggressive role models because the Bobo doll is specifically designed to be hit. The study may also lack mundane realism because it may not represent or measure how children would be aggressive in day-to-day situations, perhaps towards objects or people that are not meant to be struck. Therefore, participants may have deliberately acted more aggressively towards the doll in order to please the experimenter (the 'Please-U effect'). This reduces the generalisability of the findings.

+ Acknowledges the role of human cognition = Human cognitive and decision-making processes may be considered as more complex than that of animals. SLT has the advantage, over behaviourism, that it recognises the role of mediational processes as the conscious and cognitive insight that humans have into their behaviour. Therefore, SLT may be a better explanation of human behaviour, compared to behaviourism.

Part 4 — The Cognitive Approach

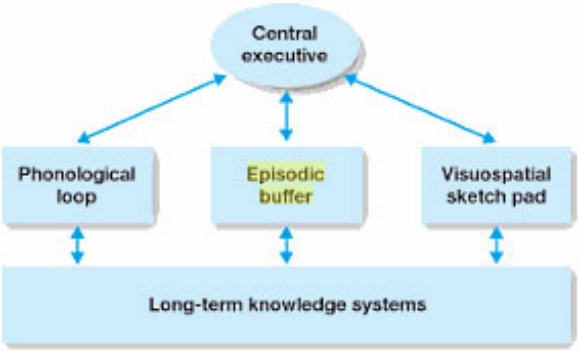
A01 Introduction and Assumptions:

- Assumes that the scientific and objective study of internal mental processes is possible. However, as these private processes cannot be directly observed, cognitive psychologists formulate conclusions of their workings, through making inferences, based upon observable behaviours.
- Therefore, much of the work of cognitive psychologists is the indirect measurement of cognition.
- The cognitive approach sees mental processes as being separate from the brain.

[4] Bandura, Ross and Ross, Imitation of Film-Mediated Aggressive Model, *Journal of Abormal and Social Psychology*, 1963, 66(1), 3-11.

- Cognitive psychologists use computer models and theoretical models to better understand and model cognitive processes, through the use of analogies.

The 'Computer Analogy' and Theoretical Models:



- An example of a theoretical model would be the working memory model, which is a diagrammatic representation of short-term memory, made up of the following cognitive components, through which information flows: Central executive, phonological loop, visuo-spatial sketchpad and the episodic buffer.
- Analogies can also be made between the workings of a computer and the functions of the human brain. For example, both contain a series of 3 processes: input, the use of a processor (e.g. the brain) and the production of a comprehensible output (e.g. computer code or human language).
- The invention of the computer in the 1960s was crucial in the development of cognitive psychology, as psychologists now had a metaphor for the mind.

Schemas:

- Schemas are 'packages' of ideas and knowledge about a certain person, place, object or time. They are generated through experience, becoming more sophisticated through time.
- They also act as mental frameworks, providing us with 'mental shortcuts' so we can process large volumes of data quickly and efficiently, thus avoiding sensory overload.
- However, since schemas are 'pre-conceived', they may lead to perceptual distortions due to having an already established mental framework e.g. James Potter et al (2009) showing that when watching TV, [5]"although viewers may share the same story schema, they appear to make different judgements on the schema elements, and hence their judgements about violence vary".

The Emergence of Cognitive Neuroscience:

- Cognitive neuroscience is defined as 'the scientific field concerned with the study of the biological processes and aspects that underlie cognition, with a specific focus on the neural connections in the brain which are involved in mental processes'.
- A brief history of the emergence of cognitive neuroscience is detailed below:

1. Brain Mapping in the 1870s = Carl Wernicke, based on case studies of patients who all had damage to a specific area of the brain and all suffered from the same type of aphasia (Wernicke's), inferred that Broddman's area 22 must be involved in language comprehension.
2. Objectively Investigating Brain Localisation Theory in the 1970s = Advances in technology meant that it was possible to systematically measure and observe the neural processes which coincide with specific brain functions. For example, using PET scans, Petersen et al (1988) found evidence of Wernicke's area being activated during a listening task and Broca's area being activated during a reading task.
3. Current Focuses of Cognitive Neuroscience = Current research focuses on the neural basis of model-based planning (including the role of the dorsal hippocampus), the

[5] W. James Potter, K. Pashupati, R.G. Pekurny, E.Hoffman and K.Davis, Perceptions of Television: A Schema Explanation, *Media Psychology*, 4(1), 2002.

neurological basis of autism, and also the neural basis of moral reasoning (involving the ventral striatum).

A02 Potential Application Questions:

1. The current, modern applications of cognitive neuroscience.
2. The use of theoretical and computer models to understand cognition.
3. Explanations of perceptual errors, using knowledge of schemas.

A03 Evaluation:

+ Scientific Methods and Rigour = The emergence of cognitive neuroscience has substantially increased the scientific credibility of psychology, bringing it closer to that of biology, physics etc. This is due to the emphasis on objectively collecting reliable data through direct observation of the neural processes underlying cognition, as seen in PET, CT, MRI and fMRI scans.

— Overly-Abstract Concepts = Cognitive psychology makes extensive use of schemas and analogies as ways of indirectly studying and inferring the cognitive basis of behaviour. However, this reliance of inference means that some ideas in cognitive psychology may seem too abstract and not have enough supporting empirical evidence of such mechanisms being observed. Therefore, this reduces the potential practical applications of cognitive research, as it remains mainly theoretical.

+ Practical Applications of Cognitive Neuroscience = An increased understanding of the neural processes underlying cognition have proven to be useful in many areas. For example, the design and manufacture of modern technology relies on an understanding of behavioural science and human-computer interactions. In education, cognitive neuroscientists can study a child's performance in phonological tests to serve as a more accurate prediction of their reading ability. Therefore, the impact of cognitive neuroscience is increasingly seen in the real world.
+ Soft Determinism = The cognitive approach sees humans as being able to reason and make conscious decisions within the limits of what they know or their 'cognitive system', and so adopts a soft deterministic approach. This is more flexible than the behaviourist hard determinism stance because it allows for humans to have some conscious insight into their behaviour: a complexity which differentiates us from animals, and so provides a better explanation for human behaviour than behaviourism.

Part 5 — The Biological Approach

A01 Introduction and Assumptions:

- According to the biological approach, humans are biological organisms made up of physiological processes.
- Therefore, all thoughts, ideas and cognitive processes must be biological in origin. This means that the mind 'lives' within the brain, and is not separate (as viewed by the cognitive approach).
- The actions of genes, hormones, neurotransmitters and neurochemical mechanisms must be understood in order to explain behaviour fully.

The Biological Basis of Behaviour:

- Heritability coefficients can be used to quantify the genetic or biological basis of a certain characteristic. For example, IQ is said to have a heritability coefficient of 0.5 (Plomin), and so the influence of nature (genetics) and nurture (the environment) are equal.

- Behaviour genetics is defined as [6]"the study of the influence of an organism's genetic composition on its behaviour and the interaction of heredity and environment insofar as they affect behaviour". Therefore, behavioural genetics is crucial in researching the extent to which behavioural characteristics are inherited in the same way as psychological characteristics.
- An individual's genotype is their genetic make-up, where a gene is a short section of DNA coding for specific proteins.
- An individual's phenotype is the physical expression of their genotype.
- Therefore, the interaction between the phenotype and the environment results in individual behaviour.
- Two people may have the same genotype but different phenotypes. This may be due to personal choices they've made to alter their appearance, such as dying their hair or piercing their ears, or due to the influence of epigenetics.
- Epigenetics is a change in gene expression, without altering an individual's genetic make-up. Epigenetic markers, such as DNA methylation and histone tail modification, can be left on DNA through exposure to certain environmental factors, such as specific diets and pollution.

Natural Selection and Evolution:

- Natural selection = The mechanism of evolution. The theory suggests that any genetically-determined behaviour, which gives the individual a selective advantage (increasing their chances of surviving, reproducing and passing down this beneficial allele onto their offspring), will be present in future generations.
- This is due to the genetic transmission of 'beneficial' characteristics from one generation to the next (i.e. heredity).
- Examples of genetically-determined behaviours with a selective advantage include: avoiding fire and deep water (these are the prepared stimuli suggested by Seligman's theory of learned preparedness), certain individuals having longer necks (Lamarck's example of an animal who is better adapted to reaching and eating leaves at the tops of trees) and specific cows producing more milk (increasing the chance of survival of their young).
- Evolution = [7]"The process by which organisms change over time as a result of changes in heritable physical or behavioural traits".

A02 Potential Application Questions:

1. How certain genetic and psychological disorders demonstrate the interaction between genotype and phenotype.
2. An explanation of why two individuals can have the same genotypes, but different phenotypes.
3. Examples of behaviours which have a 'selective advantage'.
4. Comparative points between the biological approach and the cognitive approach.

A03 Evaluation:

+ Practical application in the development of drugs = An increased understanding of the biological processes which underpin mental health diseases has led to the development of psychoactive drugs e.g. for depression and schizophrenia. These may target specific candidate genes to directly treat the disorder, or may alter neurotransmitter levels to help

[6] Encyclopedia Britannica, published on 22.01.17, accessed on 05.07.17, Plomin, R. https://www.britannica.com/science/behaviour-genetics

[7] Darwin, C., On the Origin of Species, 1859.

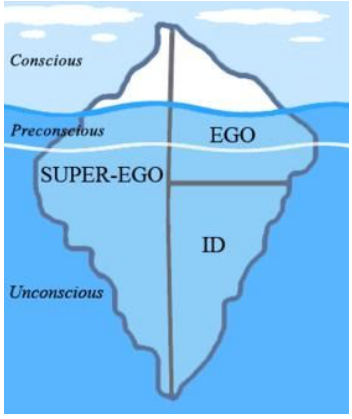
alleviate symptoms e.g. dopamine antagonists, such as Chlorpromazine, reduce dopamine action and so normalise neurotransmission in the hypothalamus and ventral striatum in the brains of schizophrenia sufferers. The main advantage of such drug treatments, compared to cognitive therapies such as CBT, is that they require minimal effort on the part of the patient. They are non-invasive and not time-consuming, unlike cognitive therapies which require willpower and regular sessions.

— Biological Determinism = The biological approach suggests that all behaviour is caused by internal biological forces over which we have no control i.e. the influence of genes, hormones, neurochemistry etc. However, this has serious implications for the judicial system and the economy. The current judicial system expects individuals to take moral responsibility for their actions, and so such actions cannot be entirely blamed on genetic factors. However, if, for example, a criminal gene or a schizophrenia gene was discovered, this could lead to 'diminished responsibility' of these individuals, as well as shorter prison sentences. The economical impact would be that if such information about genes coding for mental health disorders or criminality were made public, then such individuals may be denied health insurance and jobs on this basis. Therefore, such biological determinism has potentially severe real-life consequences.

— Twin studies cannot differentiate between the effects of nature and nurture = MZ twins usually show higher concordance rates for mental disorders and psychological characteristics compared to DZ twins. From a biological perspective, this is often explained by how MZ twins share 100% of genes with each other, compared to only 50% for DZ twins. However, this makes the naïve assumption that the only differences these twins have are genetic. MZ twins are more likely to grow up in the same household, be exposed to similar experiences and be raised using parenting styles. This may explain the differences in concordance rates between MZ and DZ twins, as opposed to only genetic differences. This may also explain why MZ twins often have higher concordance rates than ordinary siblings, despite both sharing 50% of genes. Therefore, this suggests that behaviour cannot and should not be explained in purely genetic terms (as suggested by the biological approach), without accounting for social contexts, through adopting an interactionist approach.

+ Scientific Rigour and Methods = The biological approach uses EEG, PET and fMRI scans to objectively and systematically measure the biological or neural basis of behaviour. Drugs are also then developed on this basis, whilst family and adoption studies can lead to an increased understanding of the concordance rates and heritability of certain psychological characteristics. This increases the scientific credibility of Psychology, through the strict control of extraneous and confounding variables.

Part 6 — The Psychodynamic Approach



A01 Introduction and Assumptions:

- Freud adopted the use of psychic determinism = This is the idea that all behaviour is caused by unconscious internal conflicts, over which we have no control.
- There are 3 levels of consciousness: The conscious, preconscious and unconscious.
- We are only aware of our conscious. Contents of the preconscious are revealed through parapraxes, slips of the tongue and dreaming.

Therefore, since we are completely unaware of our unconscious, inferences of its workings can be made through the psychoanalysis (analysing symbols in dreams) and psychotherapy.

- The unconscious stores our biological drives and instincts (e.g. hunger, thirst and sex) as well as upsetting and disturbing thoughts repressed from the conscious.

Freud's Tripartite Personality:

- Freud viewed the personality as made up of three components i.e. 'tripartite'. These are the Id, ego and superego.

1. Id = This is the innate part of the personality, and operates on the pleasure principle. Therefore, the Id constantly demands instant gratification (e.g. to fulfill innate, biological instincts, such as hunger and thirst) and so is in conflict with the superego.

Stage	Ages	Focus of Libido	Major Development	Adult Fixation Example
Oral	0 to 1	Mouth, Tongue, Lips	Weaning off of breast feeding or formula	Smoking, Overeating
Anal	1 to 3	Anus	Toilet Training	Orderliness, Messiness
Phallic	3 to 6	Genitals	Resolving Oedipus/ Electra Complex	Deviancy, Sexual Dysfunction
Latency	6 to 12	None	Developing Defense Mechanisms	None
Genital	12+	Genitals	Reaching Full Sexual Maturity	If all stages were successfully completed then the person should be sexually matured and mentally healthy.

2. Ego = Formed during the first 3 years of life, and operates on the reality principle. The ego helps to resolve the conflict between the id and the superego through the use of defence mechanisms (repression, denial and displacement). The strength of the unconscious depends upon how efficiently the ego resolves this conflict.
3. Superego = Formed at the end of the phallic stage, and operates on the morality principle. This contains the child's internalised sense of right and wrong, based upon their same-sex parent. The superego is in constant conflict with the Id.

The Psychosexual Stages:

- Freud adopted a nomothetic approach by suggesting that there a series of developmental stages through which all children progress, and in the same order.
- Each stage is characterised by a conflict, which must be resolved to pass to the next stage, apart from latency.
- Failure to do so results in 'fixation' at that stage, where dysfunctional behaviours associated with that stage are carried forwards to adulthood.
- The ideas of the Oedipus and Electra Complexes were developed on the basis of case studies conducted on Little Hans, where Freud suggested that Little Hans' phobia of horses stemmed from a fear towards his father, due to having sexual desires for his mother.
- This is an example of the idiographic approach to research (i.e. the use of case studied), but with a nomothetic application (i.e. all boys experience the Oedipus Complex, whilst all girls experience the Electra Complex).

A02 Potential Application Questions:

1. Comparisons between the psychodynamic approach and humanism.
2. Explanation of the case of Little Hans, using the psychosexual stages.

3. Links between the psychodynamic approach and the current scientific status of Psychology (synoptic with Research Methods).
4. Psychodynamic explanations of mental disorders, making links with the tripartite personality and the role of the unconscious.

A03 Evaluation:

— Unconscious Concepts = Since we are unaware of the unconscious, then it is not possible to objectively and systematically measure it. Therefore, this means that, according to Karl Popper, that the psychodynamic approach does not meet the scientific criterion of falsification, leaving it unfalsifiable and a pseudoscience. This does little to improve the scientific credibility of psychology, and indeed has left many with an inaccurate view of psychology as a scientific discipline.

— The use of an idiographic approach / Case studies = Many of Freud's theories, most notably the Oedipus and Electra Complexes, were based on data from individual case studies and interviews. There are several problems with this. The first, is that participants selected to be subjects of case studies are often of some kind of special psychological interest, and so cannot represent the experiences of the general population, so the findings lack ecological validity. Secondly, mainly qualitative data is collected, which means that the researcher draws their own subjective conclusions. This is particularly the case if the researcher knows what they are looking for and/or the aims of the investigation, so the results will be affected by researcher bias. Therefore, Freud's data and theories suffer from limited applications and generalisability.

— Psychic Determinism = Freud suggested that all behaviour is the product of unconscious, internal conflicts (between the Id and the superego, whilst being mediated by the ego) over which we have no control. This means that every action, even 'accidental' slips of the tongue, has some kind of meaning and can give us insight into our unconscious. However, this adds to the subjectivity of interpretations of these meanings, and therefore is not in line with scientific methods of investigating behaviour. This is all in contrast to the hard determinism approach used by behaviourism, reciprocal determinism used by social learning theory, soft determinism used by the cognitive approach and biological determinism used by the biological approach.

+ Practical Applications = Psychotherapy and psychoanalysis are both rooted in the psychodynamic approach and still have modern uses. For example, Kohlenberg et al (2002) found that [8]"FECT / Functional Analytic Cognitive Therapy produced a greater focus on the client-therapist relationship and is a promising approach for improving outcomes and interpersonal functioning. It also appears that a focus during sessions on clients' problematic cognitions about the therapist adds to the efficacy". Therefore, Freud's psychodynamic approach has made a long-lasting contribution towards treatment of various mental disorders, such as depression.

Part 7 — The Humanistic Approach

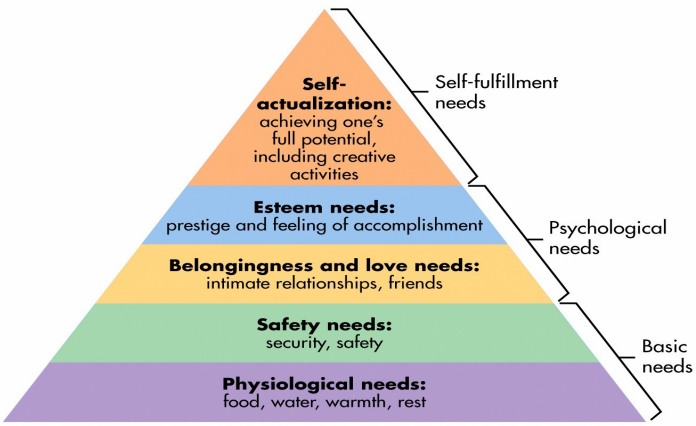
A01 Introduction and Assumptions:

[8] Robert J. Kohlenberg, Jonathan W. Kanter, Madelon Y. Bolling, Chauncey R. Parker, Mavis Tsai, Enhancing cognitive therapy for depression with functional analytic psychotherapy: Treatment guidelines and empirical findings, Cognitive and Behavioral Practice, Volume 9, Issue 3, 2002, Pages 213-229,

- Assumes that we all have free will and are 'mistresses' and 'masters' of our own development, so we can ignore the influence of internal and external factors on our behaviour.
- Sees self-actualisation, as achieved by being the top level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, as a crucial part of being human.
- Due to having free will, we also have to ability to progress through this hierarchy of needs and better ourselves.

Incongruence and Self-Actualisation:

- The 'self' is a term to describe all the ideas and values we have about ourselves, including perceptions of our abilities.
- The 'ideal self' describes our perception of the best version of ourselves.
- When there is too large a gap between the self and the ideal self, we experience incongruence. The consequent negative feelings of low self-worth and low self-esteem prevent us from progressing through Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and so we cannot achieve self-actualisation.
- When there is little or no gap between the self and the ideal self, then we have achieved congruence, allowing us to progress up the hierarchy, with the aim of achieving self-actualisation.
- Self-actualisation refers to the innate desire we all have to become the best version of ourselves, through personal and psychological growth i.e. "achieving one's full potential" (as shown on the right).



Rogerian Therapy, Conditions of Worth and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:

- Rogerian therapy aims to reduce the gap between the self and the ideal self, thus increasing increasing the likelihood of achieving congruence and subsequently, self-actualisation.
- According to Rogers and Maslow, conditions such as low self-esteem and low self-worth originate in childhood, where adults restrict the love they show towards their children, by imposing conditions of worth e.g. "I will be proud of you only if you achieve top grades at school". This represents a lack of unconditional positive regard.
- Rogerian therapy views a good therapist as being open, genuine, empathic and most importantly, providing the unconditional positive regard which the patient most likely lacked during childhood.
- These therapies view patients as 'experts' of their conditions, and so they are encouraged to arrive at their own solutions to these problems, with the help of a therapist.

A02 Potential Application Questions:

1. The impact of humanism on counselling psychology.
2. Comparisons with other, reductionist approaches.
3. Explanation of mental disorders using the Maslow's idea of a hierarchy of needs, conditions of worth, a lack of unconditional positive regard in childhood and subsequent incongruence.

A03 Evaluation:

+ Practical Application to Therapy = Rogers' client-centred therapy has had a major impact on counselling psychology, and how such therapies are used both in the USA and the UK. This therapy is particularly beneficial due to acknowledging that individuals do have free will and do have the ability to improve themselves, through focussing on developing solutions to the patient's current problems. This is in stark contrast with Freud's psychotherapies, which tend to dwell upon childhood experiences and so may be frustrating for the patient who has identified the cause of their problems. Nonetheless, Roger's client-centred approach is not suitable for treating serious mental disorders, such as schizophrenia or depression.

+ Holistic Approach = The humanistic approach is unique in that it adopts holism, therefore focussing on the individual's subjective experiences as a whole, as a method of investigating behaviour. This is in contrast with the cognitive approach (which sees the brain's functions as analogous to a computer), the biological approach (which sees humans purely as biological organisms which are made up of physiological processes) and behaviourism (where all behaviour is seen as the product of past reinforcement contingencies). Therefore, humanism is a refreshing alternative, compared to other reductionist explanations of behaviour.

— Untestable and subjective concepts = As with Freud's psychodynamic approach, humanism suffers from a lack of empirical evidence and no possibility of systematically observing and measuring the processes which it describes. Self-actualisation cannot be objectively measured, due to individual differences and a lack of a universal measuring scale. Similarly, congruence may also be up to personal judgement, especially as opinions of whether one has is their 'ideal self' will differ. This does little to improve the scientific credibility of both humanism and Psychology.

— A culture-bound explanation of behaviour = Maslow's ideas of self-actualisation, the need to improve oneself, and congruence can be mostly viewed as attitudes typical of Western, individualist cultures where the needs of the individual are greater than the needs of the group. Therefore, due to this cultural bias, humanism may be more readily accepted by Western cultures who will identify more with these values, as opposed to Eastern collectivist cultures, where such a desire for personal growth may be seen as selfish considering that the needs of the group are greater than that of the individual.

Part 8 — Comparison of Approaches:

	Behaviourism	SLT	The Cognitive Approach	The Biological Approach	Humanism
Nature Vs Nurture	Behaviour is learnt through experience i.e. stimulus-response links.	Behaviour is learnt through the observation and imitation of an identified role model, within a social context.	Babies are born with a select few innate schemas (e.g. sucking) but develop other sophisticated schemas over time.	The activity of genes, hormones and neurotransmitters is inherited/ innate. However, epigenetics (affected by external factors) also affects gene expression.	Nurture — A lack of unconditional positive regard in childhood, due to implemented conditions of worth, leads to low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness.

	Behaviourism	SLT	The Cognitive Approach	The Biological Approach	Humanism
Holism Vs Reductionism	Environmental Reductionism i.e. all behaviour is explained in terms of simple stimulus-response links.	Reductionist view that behaviour can be explained in terms of classical conditioning, operant conditioning and vicarious reinforcement.	Reductionist view that behaviour can be explained in terms of the influence of schemas.	Biological Reductionism — Behaviour can only be explained by the actions of genes, hormones and neurotransmitters.	Holism — The whole, subjective human experience is used to study behaviour, without formulating general laws.
Free Will Vs Determinism	Environmental Determinism — All behaviour is the result of classical and operant conditioning, where we have no conscious insight into our behaviour.	Reciprocal Determinism — We operate on the environment, but the environment in turn operates on us.	Soft Determinism — We are free to make conscious decisions and reason within the limits of what we know/ our cognitive system.	Biological Determinism — All behaviour is caused by internal, biological forces over which we have no control.	Free Will — Humans are free to reject the external forces that operate on us, because we are 'masters'/'mistresses' of our own development.
Explanation of Mental Disorders	Caused by associations made between the unconditioned and neutral stimulus (classical conditioning) and maintenance through operant conditioning e.g. avoidance behaviour in OCD is negatively reinforced.	Caused by the observation and imitation of inappropriate role models, using the 4 mediational processes (attention, retention, motor reproduction and motivation). The role model is seen as particularly desirable.	Faulty schemas generated through specific experiences, leading to perceptual errors and sensory stimuli distortions.	There may be candidate genes for specific mental health disorders and criminality e.g. CHD-13 (criminality) and 5HT1-D beta (OCD). These genes then influence neurotransmitter and hormone production.	A lack of unconditional positive regard in childhood, due to conditions of worth imposed by parents, leads to incongruence and an inability to self-actualise.