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## **Introduction**

Human psychology remains the main object of professional and public interest.

Hundreds of books shed light on the most controversial aspects of human psychology. Saundra Ciccarelli and J. White White's Psychology is no exception: the authors create a sophisticated but coherent picture of psychology and its implications for human development and growth.

It goes without saying that all chapters and concepts in the book are closely related. The first chapters set the stage for understanding the meaning of more complex scientific categories. Ciccarelli and White's textbook presents a sophisticated but easy-to-understand picture of human psychology, which explains complex body-mind relationships and creates the basis for controlling and influencing behavioral and mental processes in humans. Ciccarelli and White begin their discussion with a brief definition and description of psychology. The fact that " psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes" (Ciccarelli & White 4) sets the stage for understanding the meaning and significance of other concepts, including the relationship between biology and psychology in Chapter 2 and its implications for human development, in Chapter 8. It should be noted, that the authors place emphasis on the biological aspects and elements of psychological functioning in humans.

Thus, it comes as no surprise that Ciccarelli and White's definition presents psychology as a predominantly biological concept. Chapter 2 describes the biological perspective of human psychology in detail. According to Ciccarelli

and White, a complex system of cells, chemicals, and organs is primarily responsible for the development of behaviors, actions, and thoughts (48).

The nervous system is just the first part of this complex nervous arrangement (Ciccarelli & White 48). The most interesting is the description of mirror neurons, which play an important role in social interaction and brain activity (Ciccarelli & White 82).

I often catch myself imitating an action being performed by another person, for example, being a driver while sitting in a passenger's seat. Psychology is a scientific study of mental processes and behaviors, and this knowledge of neural processes helps to explain human behaviors, predict and influence them. It also helps to understand the meaning and complexity of human development processes from the biological (Chapter 8) and personality perspectives (Chapter 13). Chapters 8 and 13 present a complex view of human development from two different viewpoints. Chapter 8, in turn, is profoundly connected to Chapter 2, which discusses the biological foundations of human psychology. However, biology is not solely responsible for human behaviors and reactions.

Ciccarelli and White claim that the nature vs. nurture debate continues to persist (311). Nature refers to biology and heredity, whereas nurture is the environment that influences human development (Ciccarelli & White 311). As a child, I used to imitate my parents' behaviors and reactions; in my life, parents often played a role of the environment that affected my behaviors beyond genetics.

Human development is not merely about physical maturation. It is a complex process which neither genetics nor environmental influences can explain.

Individuals pass a series of stages which, as Freud suggested, include oral stage, anal stage, phallic stage, latency stage, and genital stage (Ciccarelli & White 525). Individuals develop self-efficacy and determination.

They are scored, based on the degree of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Ciccarelli & White 536). The interconnectedness of these concepts and categories is difficult to underestimate. Humans develop conscious reactions to external stimuli. They have dreams and learning abilities.

They can memorize things and events and are motivated to solve their problems quickly and easily. All these concepts are discussed in detail in Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9. Ciccarelli and White define consciousness as “awareness of everything that is going on around you and inside your own head at any given moment, which you use to organize your behavior” (137). Consciousness includes thoughts, feelings, and sensations (Ciccarelli & White 137). Dreams are an essential ingredient of human consciousness. Here, the relationship between chapters 4 and 8 is obvious: like most processes and patterns of human psychology, dreams are complex products of both genetic and environmental influences. The nature vs. nurture phenomenon presents itself through (a) the genetic predisposition of humans to see dreams; and (b) the environmental influences that predetermine what exactly humans see in their dreams.

My own dreams usually reflect the most important events and occurrences in my life. My dreams often become a unique source of learning and knowledge about myself. That dreams can help us to understand our behaviors has been abundantly established. Dreams are colorful and predictive. The knowledge and information they provide can cause relatively permanent changes in behaviors (Ciccarelli & White 178). This is what Ciccarelli and White call 'learning' (178). The latter is closely linked to the concepts of classical and operant conditioning described in Chapter 5.

Individuals who have some of their dreams 'come true' quickly learn that dreams possess a predictive value. However, dreams are not the only sources of learning. As a child, I learned that attending a dentist's office was associated with pain. The sensory information (namely, pain) was quickly encoded and converted into a form usable in the brain's system (Ciccarelli & White 222).

Those memories would predetermine my reactions to medical procedures for years ahead. Apparently, consciousness (Chapter 4) drives learning and development (Chapter 5), which are impossible without memory (Chapter 6). As I was growing, I slowly realized that my fears of dentists were mostly invalid. That was when I learned that the use of anesthetics relieved physical pain during medical operations.

By that time, my fears had already turned into a big problem which had to be solved (Ciccarelli & White 268). It is easy to see that the concept of problem solving is directly linked to learning and memories (Chapters 5&6) and relates to the concept of motivation in Chapter 9, since effective problem

solving is impossible without motivation. In my case, I was driven by intrinsic motivation. Simply stated, I tried to act in ways that would be rewarding and satisfying in an internal manner (Ciccarelli & White 359). Individuals cannot always describe the happiness and exhilaration they feel at being able to achieve their goals. Motivated extrinsically and intrinsically, people have a tendency to experience joy and satisfaction once they meet the desired objective. This satisfaction is partly due to the influence of biological factors on human psychology, e. g.

hormones (Chapter 2). This satisfaction further influences all spheres of human activity, including sexuality. How individuals choose to express their satisfaction depends upon their gender: society operates a complex system of gender role expectations, which require that women and men follow a prescribed set of behaviors and develop particular personality traits (Ciccarelli & White 400).

This is how chapters 9 and 10 are related. In a similar fashion, failure to meet the desired goal may easily lead to stress. The latter is described in Chapter 11. Stress is an indispensable element of our daily routines. We experience stress each time our expectations do not fit in the objective reality.

External stressors are numerous and varied, from catastrophes and traumatic events to simple pressures and misunderstandings (Ciccarelli & White 437). Stress by itself is not as dangerous as individuals' inability to control stressful emotions and their influence on personal decisions and actions. In this sense, Chapter 11 is directly related to Chapter 14, which

describes the main criteria of abnormality and their implications for human psychology. In my judgments of normality and abnormality of stress, I tend to rely on subjective discomfort; that is, I know that my stress is abnormal, when it prevents me from coping with my workplace and family obligations. Certainly, not all abnormal behaviors are associated with or lead to personal discomfort (Ciccarelli & White 558). So, what can psychologists do to detect the signs and prevent the development of psychological abnormalities? Ciccarelli and White write that psychoanalysis is an effective way to expose the impurities of the unconscious that are responsible for abnormal behaviors and feelings (600). Psychoanalysis can work through dream interpretation (Ciccarelli & White 600); here, we return to the discussion of sleep and dreams in Chapter 4.

Person-centered and gestalt therapy are widely spread instruments of modern psychoanalysis (Ciccarelli & White 604). Based on this analysis of concepts and meanings, human psychology stands out as a complex interrelationship of numerous internal and external influences, which result in the development of a balanced, conscious personality, with unique learning abilities and motivation to live a happy and self-fulfilling life.

## **Conclusion**

Human psychology is one of the main objects of public and professional interest. Ciccarelli and White's textbook presents a sophisticated but easy-to-understand picture of human psychology, which explains complex body-mind relationships and creates the basis for controlling and influencing behavioral and mental processes in humans.

All concepts and chapters are closely related. Based on this analysis, human psychology stands out as a complex interrelationship of numerous internal and external influences, which result in the development of a balanced, conscious personality, with unique learning abilities and motivation to live a happy and self-fulfilling life.

## **Works Cited**

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