

Final

Psychology



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Modernism, Postmodernism and Aging in Psychology Your School

Department, This paper is a partial fulfillment for the subject _____, under Professor _____.

Abstract

This paper is concerned about the nature of psychology, particularly aging, viewed in the modernist and postmodernist way. Since modernism is quite rigid postmodernism can be beneficial in appreciating aging more and in promoting positive aging.

Modernism, Postmodernism and Aging in Psychology

Modernism and postmodernism thoughts are present in all academic fields, and even if they have separate names and connotations, they still share some similarities. Both, for example are secular and they do not go to religion or spirituality for answers. Some may also view postmodernism as a revised form of modernism, in which they hold the same tenets; only that postmodernism is more refined. But the differences are starker. The human mind, according to modernist thinking, man is a natural creature and is governed by the laws of nature to reproduce and to survive. In a postmodern setting, that train of thought is not true, stating that the human mind is not defined by nature but rather his collective experiences that define the self. The postmodern theory states that the human mind's perspective of reality is socially constructed; unlike in the modern theory that reality is what it actually is. This is actually the biggest difference of the two schools of thought: the modern thinking suggesting that reality is objective while the postmodern thinking suggests that reality is subjective. In psychology, this means that modernist approach largely deals with the clinical aspect of therapy like behavior therapy while postmodern approach deals humanistic

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therapy, which is client centered.

Aging is defined as the manifestation of biological events that happen over time and is characterized by physical, behavioral and mental changes.

Old age seen the last phase in a person's life. According to one theory, an aging person may become disengaged towards the society. This makes the elders become less involved with life, and in turn, it modifies a person's self-concept. Hence, the activity theory states that a person, even if he is old, should have a sense of responsibility to keep an active life in maintaining a positive value on him and the society, which is basically the main aspect of positive aging.

The major issues of aging are generally about maintaining one's quality of life. For example, raising their pensions. Biologically speaking, the old human body is not as productive as a young one, thus, older people are made to retire at a mandated age. This is for their sake, as well as the employers. However, this biological and modernist standpoint is not reliable at times. There are other elders that are more productive than some of the younger people. They are more experienced and more knowledgeable in certain areas. There are even elders that are healthier than the young ones. The modernist view would not permit an elder to employ because of the "limitations of age as had been defined by science". Hence, the postmodern/humanistic interpretation of aging is more beneficial to the elders compared to the modern interpretation which limits their abilities according to a number, not because of their own personal capabilities as defined by their own self and experiences. Other issues like having an organic disease like

Some may say that the postmodern approach is too subjective, lacking in any scientific standpoint. One must remember the tenets of chaos theory: certain things might appear randomly but they actually consist of infinite number of different periodic motions (Krippner). According to Buhler, humanistic/postmodern psychology is the scientific study of behavior, experience and intentionality. This states that even if human experiences are too many, too unique, there are still patterns that the scientists may gather from the chaos to produce a logical, client-centered solution to a problem raised by an individual. And since the brain is a largely complex, chaotic tool of nature, psychology and chaos theory is a logical pairing.

Chaos theory is widely used in studies concerning epilepsy, since the attacks are seemingly occurring at random. But the scientists have had evidence that there is actually a pattern to these seemingly random attacks. It's the same in the issue of aging, particularly in the age-specific diseases like Parkinson's. As a rule, nature is chaotic and normally, the human body is chaotic and when it ceases to be chaotic (when it gets to be simple), it gets diseased, like the brain of a patient with Parkinson's (Kyriazis, 2003).

Additionally, like epilepsy, Parkinson's occurs to seemingly random people too and slowly, with chaos theory, the mystery would get uncovered too.

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