

Human behaviors strengths and weaknesses as per the cognitive behavior's approach...

[Psychology](#), [Behaviorism](#)



Evaluate the cognitive approach in terms of strengths and weaknesses (16)

Mediational Processes

A major advantage of the cognitive approach especially when compared with the behaviourist approach is that it focuses on the important processes between the stimulus and responses, whereas behaviourists do not attempt to investigate what goes on in the black box (brain), cognitive psychology explains how mediation processes such as memory and perception can affect our responses to the world.

This can explain practical elements of human behaviour, cognitive psychologists look at ways to improve memory using retrieval cues (stimulus that help retrieve certain memories) such as shopping lists.

Therefore the cognitive approach can show us findings such as why we create retrieval cues such as shopping lists to retrieve certain memories.

Nature and nurture

The cognitive approach considers the influence of both internal factors (processes in the mind) and external factors (Experiences in the formation of schemas), it doesn't consider the important elements of nature and nurture ignoring the role of genes in human cognition, even though research in intelligence consistently looks at it through twin studies. Also social and cultural factors (nurture) are ignored which seems unrealistic. An example would be, within the field of cognitive development, key theorists such as

Piaget fail to consider the role of culture and gender on the development of thinking in children.

Therefore a weakness of the cognitive approach is that it ignores both important factors of nature and nurture in humans.

Important contributions

The cognitive approach has influenced many area of psychology, it has been useful in its application in therapy such as CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy), treating disorders such as depression. It has also been applied in developmental psychology, for example, theories on how children thinking develops has guided teaching practices in school. Piaget (1970) developed one such theory, suggesting children thinking is not the same as adults, suggesting children aged 8 to 9 can't think abstract, if they wanted to solve maths skills they'd have to use a concrete form such as using wooden sticks to count. Piaget's ideas have had an impact on teaching in primary schools as teachers have realised the importance in using concrete examples on students.

Additionally, Cognitive psychology has advanced memory research such as in the field of eyewitness testimony. The work of Loftus has shown that eyewitness testimony can easily be distorted by post event information, which resulted in the police changing interview techniques, with the abolishment of using leading questions.

The cognitive approach has therefore advanced many fields such as improving children education and also making the justice system more efficient

Determinist approach

Schemas are an important assumption of the cognitive approach which are acquired through experience. Piaget suggested that Cognitive development is essentially the development of schemas. A young child would call everything with four legs and hair, a dog. Later the child would learn various related schemas, one for dogs and one for cats. Another way schemas are acquired are through social interactions. Stereotypes about people and situations are acquired, such as the belief that blond haired women are stupid but fun and those with glasses are intelligent

Therefore these stereotypes (or schemas) may have a determinist way on how we interpret situations and how we'd behave

Scientific approach

Like the other approaches, a strength of the cognitive approach is that it lends itself to objective and controlled scientific research. Memory research is conducted under strict laboratory conditions and in recent times through brain scanning techniques such as MRI scans and PET scans which pinpoint specific areas in the brain involved in short and long term memory.

This field is known as cognitive neuroscience which is devoted in pinpointing the exact biological mechanisms involved in our cognitive processes. In a scientific and objective manner, researchers are able to establish the exact

responsibilities of different areas in the brain in relation to our cognitive process.

Cognitive neuroscience can also try understand what our brain does at rest, effectively studying mindwandering.

Therefore the cognitive approach has emerged as an extremely scientific approach in psychology in which stimulus and response relationships between emotions, cognitions and behaviours can be confidently predicted.

Mechanistic approach

Another criticism of the Cognitive approach is that it is mechanistic, portraying human behaviour like machines. The cognitive approach is based on behaviours of computer, so it would be inevitable that the approach would have a mechanistic view of human behaviour.

This raises philosophical issues such as whether or not a computer could perform like a human brain.

The main objection towards the Mechanistic explanation is that it ignores Social and emotional factors. The cognitive view of mental illnesses such as depression is that it is the result of faulty thinking patterns which can be changed. However the cause may be due to life events which changing thinking patterns won't remove the stimulus which caused the person to feel how they feel

This view also ignores the important roles emotion plays in influencing cognitive processes. This is because the approach views computers and human as similar.

However this isn't the case as computers can accurately recall information inputted while humans can't.

Therefore another weakness of the cognitive approach is that it is mechanistic, not regarding external stimuli and ignoring the roles emotions play in influencing human behaviour.