

# Study on humanistic psychology and abraham maslow



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Humanistic psychology also known as third force psychology developed in the 1960's and was led by Abraham Maslow who published "Toward a Psychology of Being" in 1962. The core belief of humanistic psychology is that humans are innately good and placed emphasis on individual growth and potential and self actualization. The underpinnings of humanistic psychology can be traced to the philosophical viewpoints held by existentialist; in addition its development emerged because of the disagreement with the present schools at the time. Therefore this essay will discuss the association between humanistic psychology and existential philosophy, the development of humanistic psychology in response to behaviorist and psychoanalytic psychology and the difference among these three schools.

Existential philosophy and humanistic psychology are closely related and share some similar ideas thereby they are usually grouped together. Both models share the belief that human nature is based on free will and are responsible for their actions, that humans must be studied as a whole, humans are unique and cannot be learned by studying animals. Moreover both believe that humans seek meaningful lives through personal growth and both reject traditional scientific methodology in studying humans and the best method is through phenomenology which is the study of intact subjective experience (Hergenhahn, 1996).

Prior to the origin of third force psychology, the two dominant schools at the time were first and second force psychology. First force psychology is the approach led by theories of psychoanalysis that was founded by Sigmund Freud in the 1880's who place emphasis on the unconscious desires,  
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instincts and childhood experiences all influenced behaviour. Freud's therapy was directed to uncovering repressed memories, internal conflicts and anxieties from past childhood experiences through his analysis of dreams and free association. Second force psychology arose from 1930's to 1950's that as known as behaviourism, its development is mostly given to credit of B. F. Skinner however also involved the work of Watson and Pavlov. Behaviourism focuses on objective and observable behavior with no consideration of internal mental states. According to Cherry (2005), behaviourism is based upon the idea that all behaviors are acquired through the interaction with the environment. Behaviorist therapy involved modifying maladaptive and undesirable behaviours to healthy behaviours through systematic sensitization, shaping and behavioural contracts.

With these two schools dominating the field of psychology, the humanistic psychology grew in opposition to these two schools in the 1960's. Humanistic psychologists criticized behaviourists for placing too much importance on scientific study and analysis of the actions of people as organisms. In addition they believed that too much effort is spent in laboratory research reduced human behaviour to its elements (Cherry, 2010). According to the humanist perspective behaviorist neglected the basic aspects of people as feeling and thinking individuals. Humanists criticized psychoanalysis for its deterministic stance, which postulates that one's early experiences and drives determine one's behaviour. Furthermore both first and second force schools held the belief that behaviour was either motivate by unconscious thought or by the environment. Psychoanalysis believed that behaviour was driven by unconscious motivations and for behaviorists behaviour resulted

from condition and external factors. However humanistic psychology criticized both for being too deterministic and pessimistic since they failed to take into account the individuals personal choice.

Third force psychology in turn was different from the first and second force schools of psychology as they believed in free will. Humanistic psychology is referred to as nondeterministic in which they reject science as a way of studying humans. They believe that the most important causes of behaviour are self-generated and individuals are free to choose courses of action in which he or she alone is responsible for them (Hergenhahn, 1996). Therefore for humanist, behavior is independent of physical or psychological causes which are held by first and second force psychology. Third force psychology was also different in their methods of treating patients, psychoanalysis aims to bring the individual past conflicts and repressed memories to the conscious level then change them in the positive elements of the individual life in which the psychologist or psychotherapist plays a passive role and the patient plays an active role in talking about his or her past. Similarly in behaviourist therapy the patient plays an active role as he or she engages in homework assignments. In addition the aim is to change maladaptive behaviours into healthy ones. However in third force psychology the psychologist plays a more active role in the process, furthermore where as the focus in psychoanalysis is relief from cognitive dissonance and changing of maladaptive behaviours in behaviourist, in humanistic psychology according to Cassel, 2001 the dynamics that serve as the basis for change are typically positive in nature. The primary role of the psychologist is to interpret whether or not the personal designed plan or mode for action of an

individual meets the requirements for third force psychology and not lead to the personal development or learning of individual involved (Cassel, 2001).

Humanistic psychology brought forward a new notion to the development of psychology, humanist placed emphasis on the role of the individual in controlling and determining their state of mental health. Humanistic psychology has been credited with the influence from both the environment and internal thoughts and desires however as we have seen the views of humanistic psychology is linked to existential philosophy as they both believe humans are good and nondeterministic. A major contribution of Humanistic psychology was the removal of the stigma attached to therapy and its influence on education and healthcare (Cherry, 2010) and the introduction of alternative therapy to psychoanalysis and behaviourist. Each school differ in their perspective towards understanding human thoughts and behaviour and their view of human nature for instance where as humanist believe in free will, first and second force psychology assume the deterministic view. However all schools are highly influential in psychology and are applied to every day life.

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## **Question 2**

The development of psychology began with the postulations of philosophers and physiologist and progressed into thoughts of twentieth century modern psychological schools that are applied in different fields today. No school is considered the perfect model in the history of psychology however this paper will discuss the psychoanalytic school as being the best and most outstanding school in psychology based on the concepts proposed, subsequent research, applicability and evaluation of the characteristics that make a good theory.

Psychoanalysis was founder by Sigmund Freud in the 1880's and began with Freud collaborating with neurologist Breuer and Charcot in treating patients

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who suffered from hysteria. Freud discovered that patient problems began from their childhood trauma and was effectively treated through free association in which they were encouraged to talk about their traumatic experiences. Freud's proposed a number of concepts on dream, development, personality, the mind, instincts and defense mechanism which were all found in the ideas of past Greek philosophers, Romanticism, Existentialism and German philosophy. These concepts were applicable to Freud's time and are still applied today demonstrating the noteworthy paradigm of psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalytic theory sort to analyzes and interprets ideas and fantasies by observing the manner in which they are being expressed and acted out in culture (WordIQ. com n. d.). Freud developed a theory which stated that normal and abnormal behavior and development was shaped by unconscious motivations. Freud's theory has stimulated research and has been applied personality, developmental and abnormal psychology, he proposed that an individual's personality is the end product of its own history; that past acquisitions continue to effect further psychological development; that study of the development of each aspect of the personality can provide information about man that cannot be obtained in any other way; and that personality develops in distinct five psychosexual stages. His theory also states that in both normal and abnormal development, the major characteristics of personality are permanently established in early childhood, through each child's pleasures and frustrations in various developmental stages in which they may develop fixations (Tharney, 2010). These ideas were found in this

concepts of id, ego, superego, instincts, unconscious, fixations and regression.

Psychoanalytic theory as we have seen proposed a diverse number of concepts, all theories allow us to organize, understand and observe a phenomenon which in turn helps us make predictions and improve the phenomenon observed. Scientific theories are differentiated from intuitive and irrational ideas; a good theory is characterized by possessing: heuristic value, internal consistency, parsimony, comprehensiveness, functional significance, applicability and verifiability. We can evaluate psychoanalysis based on these characteristics which will illustrate its value and paramount theory in psychology. A high rating indicates that a theory meets the criterion in question well, a moderate indicates that the theory meets the criterion to some acceptable degree and low rating suggest that theory failed or barely meet the criterion.

On the criterion of heuristic value which is the degree that a theory has directly stimulated research and not used in a global sense to address the question of how well a theory has captured the public's attention, psychoanalysis rate as high. Psychoanalysis have influenced a number of subsequent researchers such as Jung, Adler, his daughter Anna Freud, Horney and Erickson who have all branched out as neo-psychoanalysis and developed Analytical psychology, Individual psychology and Ego psychology.

On the criterion of Parsimonious theory which entails a few and simple concepts, Freud rates moderate since some of his concepts were complicated in nature as it claims to offer explanations for all of human

personality and that his theory also had heavy emphasis on sex and  
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aggression as the sole motivators of behaviour. The criterion of functional significance refers to the range and diversity of phenomena encompassed by a theory. Freud rates high since his psychodynamics' concepts such as repression, ego, Oedipus and Electra conflicts have become part of the vocabulary of educated laypersons, countless individuals have been affected by some form of psychoanalytically based theory. In addition his theory has been applied to different disciplines such as economics, literature, history, anthropology and psychoanalysis has reshaped human nature in 20th century. Freud also rates high on comprehensiveness which is the range and diversity of phenomena encompassed by a theory. Freud's theory was most comprehensive as he developed a system of thought that covered an enormous range and diversity of behavioural phenomena such as psychological disorders, dreams, humor, unconscious, motivation, death, creativity, war, forgetfulness and social taboos. A further characteristic is internal consistency; this requires the theory to be consistent with itself, the theory must account for whatever phenomena it encompasses in a logical and coherent fashion. Freud rates moderate since the nature of his theory allows for essentially opposite behaviours to be accounted for by the same concept of the same behaviour to be explained by different concepts. On the criterion of on verifiability which requires the concepts of a theory to be clearly and explicitly defined related to one another and can be empirically investigated. Freud rates low since his concepts lacked operational specificity, so empirical testing is currently difficult if not impossible.

However in the view of applicability, Freud's theory is rated high as his theory after fifty years is still being applied today in much discipline such as child rearing, treatment of disorders, personality, counseling, therapy and <https://assignbuster.com/study-on-humanistic-psychology-and-abraham-maslow/>

treatment of addiction. Overall Freud's theory rates high on the traits of what makes a good theory which therefore demonstrate its merit as the best model offered in psychology.

Freud has been criticized for lack of verifiability, method of collection and over emphasis on sex however he has pioneered in the development of therapy and counseling, and has meet all the criteria for a good scientific theory. Overall his theory is one of the most useful theories applied today and can be seen based on its applicability, functional significance, parsimonious, comprehensives and heuristic value as the best paradigm offered in psychology .

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## Question 3

The contemplation of human existence dates back to Greek philosophy and still exists in the modern world. Philosophers, psychologist, religious leaders as well as individuals have asked and reflected on what a satisfying life encompasses. Responses vary from our behaviours, adherence to society organizations and standards, achievements, obedience and even observance of a supreme being. It should be noted that these responses depended on the zeitgeist therefore the context in which the theorist lived influenced their definition and suggestion of the human existence. This paper will focus on

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two psychologist; Rogers and Freud and their classification of a “ satisfying” life and how such life is achieved by individuals.

Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis is known for his pessimistic outlook of human nature, Freud believe that behavior is determine by unconscious motivations, irrational forces and biological and instinctual drives as they progress through five psychosexual stages which occur in the first five years of life. Despite Freud’s pessimist outlook of human nature, Freud proposed his characterization of a satisfying and happy life. Freud defined satisfaction in terms of pleasure, in which stated is carried out by the id that we are born with and is operated by the pleasure principle that continuously seeks pleasure and satisfaction. Freud stated that happiness and pleasure was the main goals of humans According to Freud, all humans “ strive after happiness; they want to become happy and remain so”.

Satisfaction for Freud was humans wanting to experience pleasure and avoid pain in which this pleasure principle dominated life and was common in human at all times. According to Freud (1920, as cited by Raab, 2009) the “ principle dominates the operation of the mental apparatus from the start”, from the time we are born, the pleasure principle is working inside of us for instance crying as a baby to satisfy a need such as hunger.

However Freud stated that satisfaction cannot be permanently achieved since we constantly seek pleasure or gratification from something. In Freud’s book “ The Pleasure Principle and the Reality Principle”, Freud suggests that people agree that the only purpose in life is to be happy, which in turn he stated can only be achieved by the pleasure principle. However since this is never ending, Frued proposed the reality principle which is driven by the ego <https://assignbuster.com/study-on-humanistic-psychology-and-abraham-maslow/>

that plays an important role in satisfying the individuals desires within reality. As we can see Freud saw satisfaction as fulfilling the individual desires and not to a specific need but whatever the individual desired. In achieving satisfaction within the realm of reality, Freud stated that human employ the defense mechanism such as sublimation which was a concept proposed by philosopher Arnold Schopenhauer who Freud credited and displacement. Displacement according to Freud is replacing an anxiety provoking goals with one that does not and sublimation is the process in which we replace and sexual goal that provokes anxiety with a nonsexual one (Hergenhahn, 1996). According to Bullock, n. b., individuals sublimate the energy that comes from desires which they are unable to fulfill by expending that energy in creating works of art or intellect. Therefore though sublimation and displacement people may find happiness however not everyone has the ability to do this and such individuals may repress their desires. Fried saw religion as a mass delusion in which he claimed that religion is a protective mass delusion in this section where he discusses various forms of happiness. According to Freud, religion is based in the idea that reality is the enemy (Bullock, n. d.). Freud believe that satisfaction can be achieved by two ways; first individuals can try to avoid all the causes that bring unhappiness, from the other experience a strong, but short, feeling of happiness and secondly the most important goal is not to get used to our happiness because it might disappear (Bullock, n. d.). Satisfaction for Freud was constant in all human and involved pleasing our desired however satisfaction according to Freud was short-lived.

Carl Rogers, a humanistic psychologist view of human nature was opposite to that of Freud as his outlook was optimistic as he viewed humans as innately good. Satisfaction according to Rogers was seen in the concept of the fully functioning person also known as his theory of optimal development. Rogers believed that satisfaction is achieved when a person achieved their full potential. Rogers similarly to Maslow believed in self-actualization; the ability to be open to experience and embraces the higher values of human existence, according to Rogers by using this actualizing tendency, individuals will live fulfilling lives and ultimately reach their full potential (Hergenhahn, 1996). Rogers described achieving satisfaction as an organismic valuing process in which the individual is motivated by his or her own true feelings and rather than mores, beliefs, traditions, values, or conventions imposed by others (Hergenhahn, 1996), a concept seen in existential philosophy.

Rogers published a book "One Becoming a Person" in 1961 which he described the good life and fully functioning person as a process, not a state of being and listed a number of characteristics of such person. According to Rogers satisfaction is achieving one full potential and in order to do so one must possess the following traits; a growing openness to experience, living each moment fully, increasing organismic trust, freedom of choice, creativity, reliability and constructiveness. According to Rogers, 1961 life of the fully functioning individual as rich, full and exciting and suggests that they experience joy and pain, love and heartbreak, fear and courage more intensely. Rogers believed that only someone who experiences unconditional positive regard can become a fully functioning person, which is when one

person is completely accepting toward another person and is not just a show of acceptance, but is an attitude that is then demonstrated through behavior (Psychology Glossary, 2010). Rogers saw satisfactions as a process in attaining one's full potential in life.

Satisfaction is classified differently to each individual, what is satisfaction for one person will mean something else for another. Where Freud saw satisfaction as biological and determined, Rogers saw satisfaction was ongoing and of free will. Moreover while Freud defined satisfaction as attaining pleasure and avoiding pain, for Rogers satisfaction was achieving one's potential in life. Freud believed that satisfaction was short lived and can be achieved by avoiding things that bring unhappiness and understanding that happiness can disappear however Rogers believed that satisfaction is achieved by possessing a number of characteristics and most importantly embodying unconditional positive regard. As we can see individual seek satisfaction in a number of way whether to satisfy physiological needs, intellectual need or attain one's full potential, achieving satisfaction as agreed upon by both Freud and Rogers is found in everyone.

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## **Question 4**

Psychoanalytic and behaviourist psychology were the two main forces in psychology in the 20th century, both schools were founded in the 20th century and pioneered in treating individuals who endure some psychological crisis in order to help them lead a healthy and normal life. As a result of their accomplishment and significance in developing psychology, each school generated copious research by a large number of investigators, who then become well known theorist that developed the own branch of psychology. This paper will examine the notion of both psychoanalytic and behaviourist schools and the arguments by subsequent researchers that led to the development of neo-psychoanalysis and neo-behaviourist. It is important to understand such expansion as it aided in the progression of psychology.

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Sigmund Freud was the founder of psychoanalytic theory which focused on unconscious forces, repression of childhood experiences and includes concepts division of the psyche into the id; the pleasure seek part of the psyche, the ego; the rational part of the psyche and the superego, the moral part of the psyche which all interact together and cause behavior.

Behaviours is motivated by instincts that are broken down into life instinct (Eros) whose goal is to sustain life through pleasure, satisfying hunger, thirst and reproduction, and is motivated by energy he called the libido and the death instinct (Thanatos) that is the unconscious wish to die that is expressed through self-destructive behaviors such as war. Freud employed techniques such as free association, dream interpretation, and analysis of resistance and transference in order to explore repressed or unconscious impulses, anxieties, and internal conflicts resulting from the psyche.

Freud was criticized for his method of data collection since he developed most of his concepts by observing himself and his patients. He was also criticized for his the inability to test his concepts such as the unconscious, Oedipal complex, penis envy and psychic energy and for placing too much emphasis on sex and did not tolerate anyone who ideas that were in opposition of his. During the development of psychoanalytic psychology, Freud collaborated with a number of psychologists who later disagreed with some of his concepts and proposed their own theory. In addition other psychologist who emerged from Freud's psychoanalysis also disagreed with some of his concepts and offered alternative, all of which are now referred to as neo-psychoanalysis. Neo-psychoanalysis are people who relate to any psychoanalytic system based on but modifying Freudian doctrine by



emphasizing social factors, interpersonal relations, or other cultural influences in personality development or in causation of mental symptoms and illnesses (Dictionary. com, 2010).

Freud and Jung worked together in the early 1900's, Jung's work on schizophrenia led to his collaboration with Freud. Jung became critical of Freud's emphasis on sexuality as the dominant factor in unconscious motivations, along with Freud's beliefs on the psychosexual origins of neuroses and Freud's concept of the libido. Jung believed that Freud placed too much emphasis on sexuality and his concepts were negative, he also believed that human behaviours were shaped not only by past events but as well as the future. Jung saw the libido as a creative force that could be applied to individual growth whereas Freud saw it as sexual energy that drove personality (Hergenhahn, 1996). Jung also minimized the role of the unconscious and developed his approach known as Analytical Psychology, a detailed theory of personality types and full description of the universal, primordial images known as archetypes deriving from the deepest layers of the unconscious psyche (Edinger, 2008). Freud worked with Adler in creating psychological treatments for patients who suffered from neuroses. Adler broke from Freud and founded an independent school of psychotherapy known as Individual Psychology which focused on the uniqueness of each person. Adler disagreed with Freud's emphasis on the role of sex and denied that universality of biological motives and goals ascribed by Freud for penis envy by women thereby he minimized the influence of sex on personality and he focused on the conscious rather than the unconscious. Adler

proposed that inferiority feelings are a motivating force in a person's behavior in his concept of inferiority complex.

Another psychologist who disagreed with Freud was Karen Horney who criticized Freud's view of women and his belief that males and females were born with inherent differences in their personality and placed much more emphasis on the social environment for example the parent - child interaction. In addition she proposed the development of the womb envy which is the men's envy of womb ability to bear children in relations to Freud's penis envy that occurred that the phallic stage of psychosexual development. Freud was also criticized by Erik Erikson for placing too much emphasis on sexuality; Erikson disagreed with Freud's notion that most of human development takes place in childhood and he proposed eight stages of psychosexual development in which humans develop throughout their lifespan based on the social desire to affiliate with other people.

Not only were there neo-psychoanalysis, but there was also neo-behaviourist that consist of psychologists who adopted the line of thinking and methodology of Watson, but were born or worked after Watson (WordPress.com, n. d.). John B Watson is credited for the founding of behaviorism who that that psychology's goal be the prediction and control of behavior (Hergenhahn, 1996). Watson focused only on observable behavior and rejected the idea of studying the mind, his work was based on the experiments of Pavlov who studied conditioning process in animals and found through paired associations of a neutral stimulus and conditioned stimulus, and behaviour can be learned. Watson's demonstrated that through conditioning, an individual can learn fear which he showed in the <https://assignbuster.com/study-on-humanistic-psychology-and-abraham-maslow/>

Little Albert experiment. Watson theory proposed that mentalistic concepts were irrelevant, he rejected the idea of individual differences, he believed that the environment was the most important aspect of learning and behaviours; he used contiguity to explain learning and explored the strength of learning.

One of the first neo-behaviorist was Clark Hull who developed the theory of hypothetico-deductive of learning which states that if experimentation supports the deductions from this theory, the theory gains strength; if not, the part of the theory on which the deductions were based is revised or rejected. Hull defined habit strength as the number of reinforced pairings between a stimulus and a response. He saw reaction potential as a function of the amount of habit strength and drive present (Hergenhahn, 1996).

Tolman proposed purposive behaviour in which he believed that all behaviour has a purpose and was directed in achieving a goal. He believed that psychology should; focus only on overt behaviours and not internal mental states and therefore is considered a neo-behaviourist. Edward Guthrie also put forward an alternative view of behaviourism, Guthrie like Watson focused on observable behavior however Guthrie believe in one trial learning which states that the association between a pattern of stimuli and a response develops at full strength after just one pairing of the two. Guthrie's also proposed that learning was based on the law of contiguity where there is an association between a stimuli and response that occurs together. Guthrie's notion on behaviorism shared with Watson that learned behavior resulted from stimulus and responses.

In summation, the expansion of both psychoanalytic psychology and behaviourist psychology through the emergence of neo-psychoanalysis and neo-behaviourist have all provided commendable and essential alternates to the original notion proposed by Freud and Watson that stimulated to growth of psychology. These alternatives are also wide applicable in understanding personality, human development, behaviour modification, education and child rearing.

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## Question 5

The development of psychology comprises of different schools in which each school proposed a theory explaining human thoughts and behavior. The

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mainstream schools consist of Psychoanalysis, Behaviourist, Humanistic and Gestalt psychology, each school is widely influential not only the growth of psychology but in its application. This paper will contrast the viewpoint of these schools; firstly I will compare behaviourism of Tolman and Watson, then the Behaviourist school to Gestalt school, Gestalt school to Psychoanalytic and Behaviorist school to Psychoanalytic. Lastly I will discuss how Gestalt psychology is similar to Humanistic / Third force psychology.

The founding of behaviorism is credited to John B Watson who stated that behaviour can only be studied through studying over behaviour and not mental thoughts. Watson is famous for his experiment with Little Albert in which he showed the conditioned emotional response. Watson later demonstrated the desensitization of a phobia in another little boy named Peter by slowly exposing him to his fear object until he was able to touch it. Watson's theory focuses on the environmental as the central aspect of learning and used contiguity to explain learning.