

The diverse nature of psychology



Psychology is an incredibly diverse profession. Cognitive analysis, neurobiology and neuropsychology, sociobiological analysis of behavior, behaviorism and operant conditioning... all are parts of the analysis of human behavior, emotion, illness, and treatment. Two relevant psychological disciplines are social psychology and the study of cognition. Social psychology tries to analyze the behavior, feeling, reactions and phenomenology of people in social contexts. Smith and Mackie (2000, p. 3) defines social psychology as “ the scientific study of the effects of social and cognitive processes on the way individuals perceive, influence and relate to each other”. Social psychology tries to understand people as social animals in social environments and contexts. As the below diagram by McAndrew (2011) indicates, social psychology is a combination of cognitive psychology, sociolinguistics, social anthropology and individual psychology. What is the difference between microsociology and social psychology? Thoits (1995) argues, “[S]ociologists generally devote their efforts to identifying which social phenomena have effects on individuals while psychologists generally specialize in identifying the mechanisms or processes through which social phenomena have their effects on individuals”. The distinction is between dyadic and monadic analysis. Social psychology tries to analyze people as they are effected by social factors. They look at people qua people and see the social factors as the next level of analysis. But microsociology looks at people as units in a dyadic relationship: They form dyads but the analysis is of the dyads. Social psychology looks at Katrina, Bob and Joe individually; microsociology looks at Katrina-Bob, Bob-Joe and Katrina-Joe. Social psychology is immensely applicable to my sociological focus. To understand the dyads, it's important to understand the monads. People's individual

behaviors are vital to determining how they interact in groups, through a few mechanics. First: People respond to each other based on actions. Second: People expect different actions on the part of others. They anticipate behavior and, whether out of fear or anticipation, curtail their behavior thusly. Third: Social psychology determines how people feel about the behavior microsociology predicts. Meanwhile, Neisser defines cognitive psychology as “ Cognition is the act of knowing, and cognitive psychology is the study of all human activities related to knowledge. These activities include attention, creativity, memory, perception, problem solving, thinking, and the use of language”. He claims, “ Until about 1970 the cognitive approach had little impact outside the experimental laboratory. In the years since then, however, various cognitive theories of personality have been developed, as well as information-processing analyses of intelligence tests and a number of cognitively oriented therapies (see cognitive therapy)”. How people come to learn and know, and how they think they know what they know, is vital to how they behave. Cognitive psychology has immensely varied impacts. In economics, what people think and know is vital, especially when cognitive bias factors are created through branding or advertising. False memories are vital to criminal justice system. The famous gorilla suit experiment is also vital for criminal justice: If eyewitnesses can miss a gorilla when they're in a calm lab environment, they could easily miss the true shooter in the panic of a gunshot (Dawkins, 2008). Education is impacted too: “ The processing which occurs at each stage is assumed to be learned and the degree of this learning is evaluated with respect to two criteria: accuracy and automaticity. At the accuracy level of performance, attention is assumed to be necessary for processing; at the automatic level it is not.

Experimental procedures are described which attempt to measure the degree of automaticity achieved in perceptual and associative learning tasks. Factors which may influence the development of automaticity in reading are discussed” (LaBerge and Samuels, 2004). Cognitive psychology has major impacts on psychology: Images and effects meet. “ We target the underlying roots of stigma and propose an integrated approach to guide future studies which combines a content analysis of television, with an analysis of effects on individuals and efforts directed to individual change” (Pescolido, 2009). What people know has impacts on how they behave, and cognition is heavily influenced by social forces like education, food, etc.

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