

Different perspectives in psychology

Psychology



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Different Perspectives in Psychology

There are various theoretical approaches in psychology, which can be termed as helpful in understanding various phenomena. Some of the most common approaches include behaviorism, cognitive approach, as well as humanism approach. Behaviorism refers to an approach based on behavior, which can be observed. As such, behaviorism does not focus on internal process that may include emotions, feelings, as well as thinking. Behavior holds that, since external behavior is observable, it can be measured in scientific and objective methods. Based on behaviorism, processes that are internal to the body can also be explained with regard to processes that can be termed as behavioral. According to behaviorism, human behavior is learned, and it can be maintained through reinforcement, which can either be negative or positive. For example, the probability that behavior can be repeated in the future is dependent on whether that behavior is reinforced (Reis & Judd, 2000).

Behaviorism is crucial to the understanding of psychology since it forms the basis for understanding why people tend to repeat some forms of behaviors, or avoid other behaviors. Positively reinforced behavior will be repeated in the future while negatively reinforced behavior is not likely to be repeated.

The cognitive approach in psychology refers to a theoretical perspective that studies aspects such as learning, mental functions, reasoning, perception, decision making, as well as language. Cognitive approach in psychology is also based on the contention that the brain is a complex system, which engages in computing. For example, through cognitive psychology, one can learn how human beings acquire information, as well as knowledge. This approach influences psychology today since it brings the understanding that

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human cognition is based on scientific methods (Jarvis, 2000).

The humanistic approach in psychology refers to a field of study, which engages in the studying of a person entirely and how a person can be termed as different from others. Based on the humanistic approach, human behavior is evaluated both through the perspective of the person behaving and the perspective of the person doing the observing. Under the humanistic approach, it is believed that human beings tend to exercise free will in their actions. This means that people make certain choices in life, and these choices have some consequences. For example, the theory assumes that people have to live with their own choices. This approach influences psychology today since it gives a detailed explanation of what determines the choices that people make (Reis & Judd, 2000).

The three approaches can be compared with regard to the similarities and differences that exist between them. Behavioral psychology only focuses on behavior that can be observed and does not emphasize on processes, which engage the mind. On the other hand, the humanistic approach largely focuses on issues that can be termed as human, which include love, health, and nature among others. On the contrary, cognitive psychology can be termed as an approach that relates to the human mind and thought processes. The similarities between the three approaches emanate from the fact that they explain the factors that influence human behavior. All the three approaches focus on conditions, which can be considered as central to human behavior (Jarvis, 2000).

References

Jarvis, M. (2000). *Theoretical Perspectives in Psychology*. London: Routledge.

Reis, H. T., & Judd, C. M. (2000). Handbook of research methods in social and personality psychology. Cambridge, U. K: Cambridge University Press.