**Introduction to Psychology**

**Chapter 1**

**Definition of Psychology**

Psychology is the science of human and animal behavior. When explaining the definition underline the main components of the definition.

**What is science?**

***Steps in scientific Study***

* Problem identification (example: sanitary problems in the family)
* Data collection (family size, age, gender, expenditure, access to potable water)
* Instruments for data collection (observation, interview, questionnaire, case studies, focus group discussions)
* Organizing the data and reporting
* Based on the conclusions arrived putting into practice

**What is behavior?**

Behavior is an action, activity or process that we can observe and measure indirectly.

*Example*: to know health practices of a family we can interview members of the family or head of the household by asking different questions.

**Scope of Psychology**

Psychologists work in research laboratories, hospitals, and other field settings where they study the behaviour of humans and animals. Some psychologists are researchers and others are practitioners, but all psychologists use scientific methods to inform their work.

Although it is easy to think that everyday situations have commonsense answers, scientific studies have found that people are not always as good at predicting outcomes as they often think they are. The hindsight bias leads us to think that we could have predicted events that we could not actually have predicted.

Employing the scientific method allows psychologists to objectively and systematically understand human behaviour.

Psychologists study behaviour at different levels of explanation, ranging from lower biological levels to higher social and cultural levels. The same behaviours can be studied and explained within psychology at different levels of explanation.

The first psychologists were philosophers, but the field became more objective as more sophisticated scientific approaches were developed and employed. Some of the most important historical schools of psychology include structuralism, functionalism, behaviourism, and psychodynamic psychology. Cognitive psychology, evolutionary psychology, and social-cultural psychology are some important contemporary approaches.

Some of the basic questions asked by psychologists, both historically and currently, include those about the relative roles of nature versus nurture in behaviour, free will versus determinism, accuracy versus inaccuracy, and conscious versus unconscious processing.

Psychological phenomena are complex, and making predictions about them is difficult because they are multiply determined at different levels of explanation. Research has found that people are frequently unaware of the causes of their own behaviours.

There are a variety of available career choices within psychology that provide employment in many different areas of interest.

**Goals of Psychology**

The major goals of psychology about what psychologists strive to accomplish, and how psychology is used to solve real-world problems.

## Describe

Psychology is a science. It aims to understand the behavior of others and gather information about the way the brain works in order to better serve humanity. By observing different human behaviors, psychologists determine what is normal and healthy and what is unhealthy. Psychology analyzes the thoughts, feelings, actions and goals of people through the help of various case studies, observations and surveys.

Have you ever heard of Pavlov’s dogs? Pavlov noticed that his dogs were salivating as the result of a stimuli – the lab assistant approaching – before food was even presented to them. This observation acted as a description of what was happening. Once psychologists can describe a behavior or phenomenon, they can use that as a basis for learning more about that behavior. And yes, many psychologists have studied animals in order to learn more about human behavior! You’d be surprised how many similarities there are.

## Explain

Why does this behavior occur? Under what circumstances will it occur again? In order to explain a behavior, psychologists must conduct experiments to ensure that the behavior is not an anomaly. If there’s only one person (or animal) exhibiting this behavior, it certainly isn’t a cultural norm. In the case of Pavlov, he was able to conduct an experiment using multiple dogs that all seemed to behave in the same way. Through this experiment he was able to notice a handful of important things about the behavior of others. And thus, classical conditioning came to be.

When presented with an unconditioned stimulus (the food), the dogs began to salivate – which is the unconditioned response. When presented with delicious food, humans tend to salivate, right? After the dogs were fed for a period of time, Pavlov began to notice that even the presence of his lab assistant, who fed the dogs, caused them to salivate. Once he noticed this was happening, he realized that he had come across a wonderful psychological discovery. The lab assistant, which was once a neutral stimulus, had become a conditioned stimulus. To further his experiment, Pavlov introduced a bell as a neutral stimulus.

## Predict

Based on past observed behavior, a psychologist aims to predict how that behavior will appear again in the future and if other people will exhibit the same behavior. Pavlov predicted that the new neutral stimulus – the bell – would become a conditioned stimulus if he presented it with food enough times. Sure enough, after presenting the dogs with food at the same time the bell was sounded, he was able to condition the dogs to salivate when the bell rang even when they weren’t presented with food. This discovery held a lot of importance in the world of psychology and allowed many people to influence the behavior of others.

## Control

What did Pavlov’s discovery mean for the future of psychology? It meant that teachers could take control of their classroom easier, parents could [teach their children to exhibit good behavior](https://www.udemy.com/outcome-of-parenting-styles-and-positive-parenting-skills/?tc=blog.goalsofpsychology), and manipulative older siblings could control the behaviors of their younger siblings. In other areas of psychology, experiments are used to train new employees faster, increase the success of students and reduce drug addiction.

**Chapter 2**

**Major Schools of Thought in Psychology**

When psychology was first established as a science separate from biology and philosophy, the debate over how to describe and explain the human mind and behavior began. The first school of thought, structuralism, was advocated by the founder of the first psychology lab, Wilhelm Wundt. Almost immediately, other theories began to emerge and vie for dominance in psychology. The following are some of the major schools of thought that have influenced our knowledge and understanding of psychology:

**Structuralism vs. Functionalism**: Structuralism was the first school of psychology, and focused on breaking down mental processes into the most basic components. Major structuralist thinkers include Wilhelm Wundt and Edward Titchener. Functionalism formed as a reaction to the theories of the structuralist school of thought and was heavily influenced by the work of William James. Major functionalist thinkers included John Dewey and Harvey Carr.

**Behaviorism:** Behaviorism became the dominant school of thought during the 1950s. Based upon the work of thinkers such as John B. Watson, Ivan Pavlov, and B. F. Skinner, behaviorism holds that all behavior can be explained by environmental causes, rather than by internal forces. Behaviorism is focused on observable behavior. Theories of learning including classical conditioning and operant conditioning were the focus of a great deal of research.

**Psychoanalysis**: Sigmund Freud was the found of psychodynamic approach. This school of thought emphasizes the influence of the unconscious mind on behavior. Freud believed that the human mind was composed of three elements: the id, the ego, and the superego. Other major psychodynamic thinkers include Anna Freud, Carl Jung, and Erik Erikson.

**Humanistic Psychology**: Humanistic psychology developed as a response to psychoanalysis and behaviorism. Humanistic psychology instead focused on individual free will, personal growth, and selfactualization. Major humanist thinkers included Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers.

**Gestalt psychology**: Gestalt psychology is based upon the idea that we experience things as unified wholes. This approach to psychology began in Germany and Austria during the late 19th century in response to the molecular approach of structuralism. Rather that breaking down thoughts and behavior to their smallest element, the gestalt psychologists believed that you must look at the whole of experience. According to the gestalt thinkers, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

**Cognitive Psychology:** Cognitive psychology is the branch of psychology that studies mental processes including how people think, perceive, remember, and learn. As part of the larger field of cognitive science, this branch of psychology is related to other disciplines including neuroscience, philosophy, and linguistics. One of the most influential theories from this school of thought was the stages of cognitive development theory proposed by Jean Piaget.

**Major Fields of Psychology**

**Educational psychology.** It is about Ways and methods of educating people. *Example*: Which seating arrangement (chairs in rows, chairs in small groups, chairs in a circle) increases participation of community members in discussing the following community problem. (How can we protect the spring water in the community to make it safe and clean?) Remind the trainees on the advantages of participatory learning in health education in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

**Developmental psychology.** Deals with aspects of human development over the entire span of life.

Span of life covers from conception to death.

Aspects of human development are the following: ▪ Physical ▪ Mental ▪ Social

**Social psychology**. It is the study of how people’s thoughts, feelings and actions are affected by others. Social psychologists study aggressive behaviors (example: violence, rape, alcoholism in the community). Social psychologists study conflict between groups, communities, and ethnic groups and methods of solving it.

**Behavioral psychology**. It is about the role of environment in developing behavior. It is about ways of learning new knowledge and skills

*Example:* When introducing a new way of thinking in health start from what community members already know and proceed from the known to the unknown.

* It is about shaping human behavior using rewards.
* Toilet training in children
* Dietary habit in the family
* Sanitation practices in the family

**Clinical psychology**. It is about Psychological disorders and their treatment. It is about how to change the environment to prevent the prevalence of psychological disorders. *Example*: the role a health extension worker plays in sensitizing the bad effects of alcohol, and tobacco on health and productivity Note: indicate that there are traditional ways of healing psychological disorders in our society.

**Health psychology.** Emphasizes the preventive aspect of health than the curative aspect. Health is not merely the absence of illness. Health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being. *Example*: Teaching about personal hygiene is not enough. But the family and the society at large must participate in health programs. Recognizing the role of every member in the community is important to implement any health program.