

University of Batna 2
Department of English Language and Literature

Module : SHS

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Chapter III Psychology

1. Introduction to psychology
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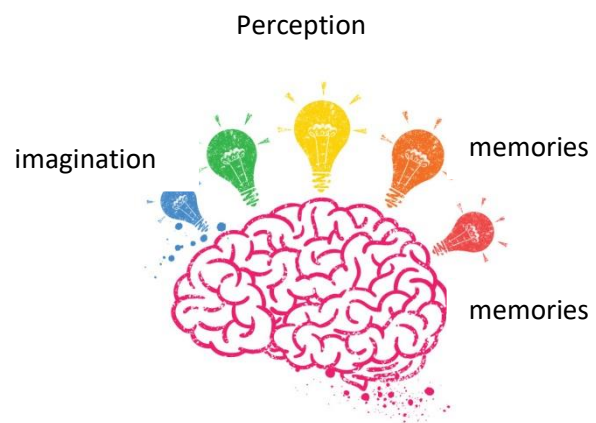
1. Definitions of Psychology

A brief common definition of psychology, belonging equally to many researchers and psychologist is known as: a *scientific study* of the *human mind* and *behavior*.

- **Scientific study** → following a systematic scientific method, based on logic and evidence.
- **Mind** → It is defined as a set of *cognitive* faculties including *consciousness*, *imagination*, *perception*, *thinking*, *judgments*, *thoughts*, *feelings*, *memories*, *beliefs* and *language* .



A picture of a real human brain



A picture that symbolizes the mind

In the previous definition, all the words written in bold are the components which describe the mind but **not the brain**. Traditionally, scientists have tried to define **the mind as the product of brain activity**: The brain is the **physical substance**, and the mind is the **conscious product** of those firing neurons, according to the classic argument. But growing

evidence shows that the mind goes far beyond the physical workings of the brain. In simple words, the brain represents the physical house where the mind resides.

- **human behavior** → is the all the actions and mannerisms made by individuals (singing, verbal language, shouting, gestures, sleepingand many others are examples of human behavior).

Psychologists attempt to understand the role of **mental functions** in individual and **social behavior**, while also exploring the physiological and biological processes that underlie **cognitive functions** and behaviors.

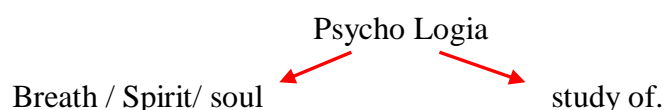
Human behavior Vs. Social behavior : human behavior refers to what is acted by an individual while the interactions and the reactions that happened between one individual and other members of his society represent the social behavior.

According to the American Psychological Association. Psychology is a multifaceted discipline and includes many sub-fields of study such areas as human development, sports, health, clinical, social behavior and cognitive processes. It added “psychology embraces all aspects of the human experience, from the functions of the brain to the actions of nations, from child development to care for the aged.”

Michael and Eysenck (2000), defined psychology as the **science** that makes use of behavioral and other evidence to understand **the internal processes** leading **people** and **members of other species** to behave in the ways they do. According to the, psychology doesn't concern only human beings, but it covers also animals.

1.2- Etymology of Psychology

The origins of Psychology can be traced back to ancient Greece, 400 – 500 years BC. The word **psychology** is derived from Greek roots which stand for **the study of the psyche, or soul**.



The earliest reference to the word psychology in English was by **Steven Blankaart** in 1694 in **The Physical Dictionary** which refers to "Anatomy, which treats the Body, and **Psychology**, which treats of **the Soul**."

1.3- Psychologists' Interests:

In the field of psychology, the main goal of scientists is to generally understand **why** individuals do and animals behave the way they behave. They seek as well to reach four other important areas of research which are:

- a) **Describing a behavior**: Since psychology deals with abstract terms and notions, psychologists attempt to simplify and decipher more complicated cognitive ideas, and generalize accessible laws of human behavior. For example: Through describing the

response of his dog, the psychologist, Pavlov helped to generalize stimulus-response theory as a law in learning, and to clarify how it happens —————> the **HOW?**

- b) **Explain a behavior:** After describing the general laws and theories of a certain behavior, researchers go further to explain why this behavior happens in this way, and why it doesn't happen the other way. —————> the **WHY ?**
- c) **Predict a future behavior :** Psychologists make efforts to attain the ability of predicting possible future behaviors after ,ofcourse, a scientific reaserch study. If a prediction is not yet confirmed, then it is still on might need to be checked and revised. —————> The **WHAT ?** (in the future)
- d)**Change a behaviour:** changing, modifying and controlling a certain behavior can be possibly done only if researchers respect the previous steps respectively: describing, explaining and predicting when necessary. —————> the **ACTION**

2. Branches of Psychology:

a) **Cognitive Psychology:**

It involves the *study of internal mental processes*, representing all of the things that go on inside your brain, including *perception, thinking, memory, attention, language, problem-solving, and learning*. It is one of the most popular subfields in psychology. It helps psychologists to treat illness with cognitive therapy methods, treat also speech or language disorder, and help exploring different interventions for learning disabilities.

- b) **Forensic Psychology:** Mauro (2010), describes forensic psychology as the interaction of the *practice* or study of *psychology* and *the law*. In the same context, Mauro added, Psychologists interested in this line of applied work may be found working in prisons, jails, rehabilitation centers, police departments, law firms, schools, government agencies, or in private practice, to name a few. They may work directly with attorneys, defendants, offenders, victims, pupils, families, or with patients within the state's corrections or rehabilitation centers. The *aim* of this field of study is *to reformulate psychological findings* into the *legal language* of the courtroom, providing information to legal personnel *in a way that can be understood*. (Nietzel &Michael, 1986)

- c) **Social Psychology:** Allport (1985), defined it as the scientific study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are *influenced by* the actual, imagined or implied *presence of others*. It is beyond the level of studying one individual. The concern now reaches the individual and his relation to the other members of his surroundings because human beings may behave defiantly when they are connected with others.

- d) **Developmental Psychology** McLeod (2017), stated that developmental psychology is a scientific approach which aims to explain *growth, change* and *consistency* though the *lifespan*. Developmental psychology looks at how thinking, feeling, and behaviour *change* throughout a *person's life*.

Further References

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Hergenhahn, B. R., Henley (2013), *An Introduction to the History of Psychology*. Seventh edition. Texas University