

To: All Participants, the General Theory of Constitutional Law Class

From: Chung Wonsang, Senior at College of Law

Date:

Re: Approaching Methods in Psychology

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### **Backgrounds/History of Psychology**

- The history of psychology is the history of the thought about human consciousness and conduct. Psychological theory has its roots in ancient Greek philosophy and has been fed from streams such as epistemology (the philosophy of knowing), metaphysics, religion, and Oriental philosophy.
- Over the centuries psychology and physiology became increasingly separated. A split developed between the essentially phenomenological (experiential) and mechanistic (physiological) conceptions of psychology. In general, through the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British and German traditions were phenomenological, while the French and American were mechanistic. The history of psychology from the 19<sup>th</sup> century may be viewed as a debate between schools of systematic thought concerning mind, such as structuralism, and functionalism. 20<sup>th</sup> century psychology began with structuralism, which employed the method of introspection to describe mental events. It then evolved into psychoanalysis, a derivative of psychiatric tradition, and produced behaviorism and Gestalt psychology, which were reactions against structuralism. Humanistic psychology presented a rebellion against the deterministic learning of earlier schools.
- By World War Two, “Schools” of psychology had largely faded away, leaving a common pool of psychological knowledge to which theoreticians, researchers, experimenters, and clinicians all contribute. Biopsychology, a study of combining psychology and physiology, grew in conjunction with these developments.
- # Current definition of Psychology => Scientific discipline that studies mental processes and behavior in human and other animals.

### **Behavior approach**

Behaviorism: The doctrine which asserts that human behavior can be understood in terms of stimulus response-relationships without necessarily referring to underlying mental states.

- The Pavlov experiment and Skinner’s work<sup>1</sup> form the basis of modern application of this theory.
- Behavior learning theory: The behavior view generally assumes that the outcome of the learning is change in behavior and emphasizes the effects of external events on the individual.
- Behavior → Reinforcer<sup>2</sup> (Consequence) → Strengthened behavior (Effect)  
    ↳ Repeated behavior (Effect)
- Behavior → Punisher<sup>3</sup> (Consequence) → Weakened behavior (Effect)

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<sup>1</sup> Skinner’s work on operant conditioning changed the way we think about consequences and learning.

Cf. Operants: Voluntary (generally goal-oriented) behaviors emitted by a person or an animal ↔ Respondents: Responses (generally automatic or involuntary) elicited by specific stimuli

<sup>2</sup> Reinforcer: Any event that follows a behavior and increases the chances that the behavior will occur again.

<sup>3</sup> Punishment: Process that weakens or suppresses behavior.

⚡ Decreased frequency behavior (Effect)

Ex> Stimulus Presented: Positive reinforcement-> “reward” (extra recess)

Stimulus Removed or Withheld: Negative reinforcement-> “Escape” (excused from chores)

### **Cognitive Approach**

Cognitive Approach: Social theories point to cognitive processes as means of controlling emotion. According to this approach, if it is possible for people to change the way they make attributions about the nature and cause of events, their emotion experiences can be changed.

- Comparison #1 📊 (different perspective)
  - ✓ “Behavior approach”-> Viewing the learners and their behaviors as products of incoming environmental stimuli
  - ✓ “Cognitive approach”-> Seeing learners as sources of plans, intentions, goals, ideas, memories, and emotions actively used to attend to, select, and construct meaning from stimuli and knowledge from experience.
- Comparison #2 📊 (they differ in their assumptions about what is learned.)
  - ✓ “Behavioral view”-> the new behaviors themselves are learned.
  - ✓ “Cognitive view”-> knowledge is learned, and changes in knowledge make changes in behavior possible.
- Comparison #3 📊 (difference in the methods each group has used to study learning)
  - ✓ Much of work on “behavioral” learning principles has been with animals in controlled laboratory setting. The goal is to identify a few general laws of learning that apply to all higher organisms (including humans, regardless of age, intelligence, or other individual differences).
  - ✓ “Cognitive” psychologists study a wide range of learning situations. Because of their focus on individuals and developmental differences in cognition, they have not sought general laws of learning. This is one of the reasons that there is no single cognitive model or theory of learning representative of the entire world.

**Neurophysiological Approach** <- 1. Contribution of C. Darwin 2. Human brain has about 12 billion nerve cells.

**Psychoanalytic Approach** <- 1. Focused on emotion and unconsciousness. 2. Sigmund Freud (1959) linked creativity and play-> Take your time, and Play!

### **Humanistic Approach**

Humanistic View➔ Approaches to motivation that emphasizes personal freedom, choice, self-determination, and striving for personal growth. 1. A rebellion<sup>4</sup> against the deterministic learning of earlier schools 2. People are continually motivated by the “inborn need” to fulfill their potentials-> Self-esteem movement!

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<sup>4</sup> The humanistic view is sometimes referred to as “third-force” psychology, because it developed in the 1940s as a reaction against the two forces then dominant, behaviorism and Freudian psychoanalysis.