

University of Al-Qadisiyah

College of Arts

Psychology Dept.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL
READINGS**

قراءات نفسية

For 1st Year Classes

1. Psychology

Psychology is the scientific of behavior and mental processes and how they are affected by an organism's physical, state, mental state, and external environment.

The word "**psychology**" comes from the Greek words "**psyche**", meaning life, and "**logos**", meaning explanation. Psychology is a popular major for students, a popular topic in the public media, and a part of our everyday lives. Television shows such as Dr. Phil feature psychologists who provide personal advice to those with personal or family difficulties. Crime dramas and others feature the work of forensic psychologists who use psychological principles to help solve crimes. And many people have direct knowledge about psychology because they have visited psychologists, for instance, school counselors, family therapists, and religious, marriage, or bereavement counselors.

Most people think of psychology as the study of differences between people, but it also includes the study of similarities between people.

2. Subfields of Psychology

1. Biopsychology

This area of psychology is known by a number of titles including behavioral neuroscience, psychobiology, and neuropsychology. Biopsychologists study the relationship between the brain and behavior, such as how the brain and nervous system impact our thoughts, feeling, and moods. This field can be thought of as a combination of basic psychology and neuroscience.

2. Clinical Psychology

Clinical psychology is the largest specialty area in psychology. These psychologists apply psychological principles and research to assess, diagnose,

and treat patients with mental and emotional illnesses. Clinicians often work in private practices, but many also work in community centers or at universities and colleges.

3. Developmental Psychology

Developmental psychologists study the physical and cognitive development that occurs over the course of the lifespan. These psychologists generally specialize in an area such as infant, child, adolescent, or geriatric development, while others may study the effects of developmental delays.

4. Forensic Psychology

Forensic psychologists apply psychological principles to legal issues. This may involve studying criminal behavior and treatments, or working directly in the court system. Forensic psychologists often conduct evaluations, screen witnesses, or provide testimony in court cases.

5. Industrial-Organizational Psychology

Psychologists in this field apply psychological principles to research on workplace issues such as productivity and behavior. Some psychologists in this field work in areas such as human factors, ergonomics, and human-computer interaction. Research in this field is known as [applied research](#) because it seeks to solve real world problems.

6. Personality Psychology

Personality psychologists study the characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behavior that make each person unique. These psychologists often work in academic settings as instructors or researchers.

7. Social Psychology

Social psychologists study social behaviors, including how individual self-image and behavior is impacted by interactions with others. These psychologists often conduct research in academic settings, but others work in such areas such as advertising and government.

8. Educational and School Psychology

School psychologists work within the educational system to help children with emotional, social, and academic issues. These psychologists collaborate with teachers, parents, and students to find solutions to academic, social, and emotional problems. Most school psychologists work in elementary and secondary schools, but others work in private clinics, hospitals, state agencies, and universities. Some go into private practice and serve as consultants, especially those with a doctoral degree in school psychology.

9. Environmental Psychologists

The environmental psychologist is interested in the relationship between human behavior and physical environments. These environments range from homes and offices to urban areas and regions. Environmental psychology is primarily research oriented and can be used in designing urban areas or work spaces that promote positive human behavior. Environmental psychologists may work for government or private environmental agencies or other agencies and corporations.

10. Health Psychologists

Health psychologists are interested in the promotion and maintenance of good health as well as the prevention and treatment of illness. They investigate issues concerning why people do not engage in healthful practices and then design programs to assist individuals. They may design programs to help people stop smoking, lose weight, manage stress, prevent cavities, or stay physically fit

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

1. Memory and recall
2. Learning
3. Perception and representation

4. Thinking and cognition
5. Creativity
6. Attitudes and behaviour
7. Individual differences and personality
8. Intelligences

What is Behavior?

Any action that others can

observe and measures:

–Walking

–Talking

–Physical movements

What are Cognitive Activities?

Emotion –Behavior or mental process

Feelings

Thoughts

Dreams –Brain waves or privates thoughts

Perception

Memories

Goals of Psychology

Observe – Exam, watch, or interview a person’s behavior

Describe – Record specific behavior under certain situations

Explain – Give reasons for behavior in terms of feeling of anxiety or distraction

Predict – Determine how a person will behave under a certain situation based on ODE

Control – Change the behavior or mental process by teaching patient new ways of keeping their anxiety under control

- Behavior and mental processes include overt, observable instances but also include subtle kinds of instances, like brain activity.
- Humans and many other creatures included in the scientific study of behavior and mental processes.
- Physical state relates primarily to the organism's biology - most especially the state of the brain and central nervous system.
- Mental state does not have to be conscious - can study mental states in many creatures without their conscious awareness - and can be studied in terms of brain activity.
- All organisms function in an environment that is constantly presenting them with problems and challenges that must be solved.
- Most people think of psychology as the study of differences between people, but it also includes the study of similarities between people.

3. Emotions

One definition states that, “an emotion is a mental and physiological state associated with a wide variety of feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.”

There are several key points embedded in this definition:

1. Emotions have a cognitive (or mental) element – they involve some level of judgment, evaluation or thought; they don’t just occur randomly – they are “about” something. This cognitive element may be conscious, semi-conscious (e.g., a “gut reaction”), or unconscious.
2. Emotions have a physiological basis – they relate to physical experiences and sensations in the body. Bodily responses are central to emotions. Some of the obvious physiological accompaniments of negative emotions are crying, the red face of anger, the churning stomach of fear, etc.
3. Emotions can affect our thoughts and behaviors.

Emotions are subjective:

Key theories about emotions state that emotions are subjective experiences – that is, they are experienced from an individual point of view. Different people can experience different emotions when exposed to the same physical stimuli. Thus for example, when faced with skydiving adventure one person might experience fear while a second might experience excitement or exhilaration and our interpretation of these feelings as positive or negative.

Emotions can be learned:

It is clear that emotions can be “learned”. How each of us interprets our perception of the physical world and our internal physiological states can vary depending on how a given situation relates to our upbringing, our past experiences and our training.

Emotions can have a social side:

How we react often depends on how others around us are reacting. You will know this to be true if you have ever observed how a young child who has fallen down looks to his parents to see how to react to the experience or seen how emotions such as fear or panic can spread in a crowd.

Emotions can be influenced by our emotional dispositions:

The frequency and intensity of our emotional episodes can be influenced by our emotional dispositions. Emotional dispositions are similar to character traits in the sense that certain people may be generally disposed to experience certain emotions. For example an irritable person is generally disposed to feel irritation more easily or quickly than others.

4. MOTIVATION

Motivation is the driving force behind human behavior.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow advanced the following propositions about human behavior:

- Man is a wanting being.
- A satisfied need is not a motivator of behavior, only unsatisfied needs motivate.
- Man's needs are arranged in a series of levels - a hierarchy of importance. As soon as needs on a lower level are met those on the next, higher level will demand satisfaction. Maslow believed the underlying needs for all human motivation to be on five general levels from lowest to highest, shown below. Within those levels, there could be many specific needs, from lowest to highest.

Remember the assumptions of Maslow's hierarchy:

- individuals have multiple needs

- needs are ordered into levels, creating a ‘hierarchy’
- a need, once satisfied, is no longer a need
- Physiological - the need for food, drink, shelter and relief from pain.
- Safety and security – once the physical needs of the moment are satisfied, man concerns himself with protection from physical dangers with economic security, preference for the familiar and the desire for an orderly, predictable world.
- Social - become important motivators of his behavior.
- Esteem or egoistic - a need both for self-esteem and the esteem of others, which involves self-confidence, achievement, competence, knowledge, autonomy, reputation, status and respect.
- Self-fulfillment or self-actualization – is the highest level in the hierarchy; these are the individual’s needs for realising his or her own potential, for continued self-development and creativity in its broadest sense.

5. Anxiety

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling that is common to us all. It is a natural reaction to certain situations and circumstances, and is characterized by a fear or apprehension of what might happen, or what the future might hold. For this reason, it is often associated with circumstances such as illness, unemployment, moving house, exams or job interviews.

This kind of anxiety is extremely common and most of us learn to manage it; it tends to pass relatively quickly; however, sometimes anxiety becomes so extreme that it is disabling and interferes with everyday life. Anxiety often goes hand-in-hand with depression, which can be difficult for individuals, and it may take time for a doctor to make a clear diagnosis and find an appropriate treatment.

As with any condition that affects individuals, anxiety may also be challenging and difficult for family, friends and colleagues. It can interfere with our ability to relate to others and to the world around us. It can be difficult for others to understand that reassurance and logic may not be comforting, or appear realistic to those experiencing deep anxiety.

What are the symptoms of anxiety?

Experiences of anxiety can vary between individuals. Some people experience primarily psychological and emotional symptoms, whilst others may experience a range of physical effects. Anxiety has a certain self-perpetuating quality, because the physical symptoms can be so distressing that they can make people even more anxious.

Psychological effects

The psychological effects of anxiety may include:

- An overwhelming sense of fearful anticipation
- Inability to concentrate
- Constant worrying
- Heightened alertness and a tendency to ‘catastrophise’
- Sleep disturbance

Physical effects

- Tightness in the chest / chest pains / pounding heart
- Nausea
- Rapid shallow breathing / butterfly feelings in the stomach
- Loss of appetite
- Headaches / dizziness / faintness
- Muscle tension Anxiety
- Sweating
- Frequent urination
- Panic attacks

What causes anxiety?

There is no one cause for anxiety. It varies from person to person. For some it may begin after a long period of stress. Others may feel they are not in control of certain aspects of their life, and may develop a general anxiety about the future.

Some people may have experienced stressful life events in the past and become anxious about encountering similar experiences in the future. Some people appear to have a genetic predisposition towards anxiety; certainly there is an increased risk of developing anxiety problems if there is a family history of anxiety.

There is evidence that anxiety problems can be caused by physical factors such as an overactive thyroid gland. It can also be a side-effect of certain drugs including some commonly prescribed antidepressants and is a common symptom of withdrawal from benzodiazepine drugs such as Valium. Use of recreational drugs can also trigger episodes of anxiety. Some people experience many of the physical effects of anxiety because of involuntary rapid, shallow breathing, called hyperventilation or over-breathing. Hyperventilation can trigger panic attacks; episodes of severe and sudden anxiety that can...

6. Defense mechanism of Freud

Sigmund Freud describes how the Ego uses a range of mechanisms to handle the conflict between the Id, the Ego and the Super ego, which is why these mechanisms are often called 'Ego defense mechanisms'.

Anxiety and tension

Freud noted that a major drive for most people is the reduction in tension, and that a major cause of tension was anxiety. He identified three different types of anxiety.

Reality Anxiety. This is the most basic form of anxiety and is typically based on fears of real and possible events, such as being bitten by a dog or falling from a ladder.

The most common way of reducing tension from Reality Anxiety is taking oneself away from the situation, running away from the dog or simply refusing to go up the ladder.

Neurotic Anxiety. This is a form of anxiety which comes from an unconscious fear that the basic impulses of the ID (the primitive part of our personality) will take control of the person, leading to eventual punishment (this is thus a form of Moral Anxiety).

Moral Anxiety. This form of anxiety comes from a fear of violating values and moral codes, and appears as feelings of guilt or shame.

Defense Mechanisms

When anxiety occurs, the mind first responds by an increase in problem-solving thinking, seeking rational ways of escaping the situation. If this is not fruitful (and maybe anyway), a range of defense mechanisms may be triggered. In Freud's language, these are tactics which the Ego develops to help deal with the Id and the Super Ego.

Freud's assumption about human behavior

Freudian theory assumes that abnormal behavior stems from events in the individual's past and that it occurs in response to unconscious and uncontrollable impulses.

Is defense mechanism indispensable to human life?

Freud believed that both normal and abnormal behavior result from interactions among the id, ego, and superego. At times, either the id or the superego will threaten to overwhelm the ego's control, resulting in unacceptable feelings or behavior. In response to this threat, the person experiences anxiety. Most anxiety is not experienced consciously but is

held in check by defense mechanism. Though often adaptive, overuse of defense mechanism may interfere with thought processes and everyday functioning.

All Defense Mechanisms share two common properties :

- They often appear unconsciously.
- They tend to distort, transform, or otherwise falsify reality.

In distorting reality, there is a change in perception which allows for a lessening of anxiety, with a corresponding reduction in felt tension.

Freud's list of basic Defense Mechanisms includes:

- Denial: claiming/believing that what is true to be actually false.
- Displacement: redirecting emotions to a substitute target.
- Intellectualization: taking an objective viewpoint.
- Projection: attributing uncomfortable feelings to others.
- Rationalization: creating false but credible justifications.
- Reaction Formation: overacting in the opposite way to the fear.
- Regression: going back to acting as a child.
- Repression: pushing uncomfortable thoughts into the subconscious.
- Sublimation: redirecting 'wrong' urges into socially acceptable actions.

7.Memory

What is memory?

Memory is the retention of information over time and involves encoding, storage, and retrieval.

Storage: consists of the retention of information over time.

Retrieval: takes place when information is taken out of storage.

There are three types of memory that vary according to their time frames

1. **Sensory memory:** holds information from the world in its original sensory form for only an instance.
2. **Short term memory:** information is retained only for a brief instance.
3. **Long- term memory:** is a type of memory that holds enormous amounts of information for a long period of time.

8.Stress

What is a Stress?

Stress is a biological and psychological response experienced on encountering a threat that we feel we do not have the resources to deal with. A stressor is the stimulus (or threat) that causes stress, e.g. exam, divorce, death of loved one, moving house, loss of job.

What does sudden and severe stress generally produce?

1. Increase in heart rate
2. Increase in breathing (lungs dilate)
3. Decrease in digestive activity (don't feel hungry)
4. Liver released glucose for energy

How does our body response to the stress?

Firstly, our body judges a situation and decides whether or not it is stressful. This decision is made based on sensory input and processing (i.e. the things we see and hear in the situation) and also on stored memories (i.e. what happened the last time we were in a similar situation).

Freud: Dreams as the Road to the Unconscious Mind:

In his book *The Interpretation of Dreams*, [Sigmund Freud](#) suggested that the content of dreams is related to wish fulfillment. Freud believed that the manifest content of a dream, or the actually imagery and events of the dream, served to disguise the latent content, or the unconscious wishes of the dreamer.

Freud also described four elements of this process that he referred to as 'dream work':

- **Condensation** – Many different ideas and concepts are represented within the span of a single dream. Information is condensed into a single thought or image.
- **Displacement** – This element of dream work disguises the emotional meaning of the latent content by confusing the important and insignificant parts of the dream.
- **Symbolization** – This operation also censors the repressed ideas contained in the dream by including objects that are meant to symbolize the latent content of the dream.
- **Secondary Revision** – During this final stage of the dreaming process, Freud suggested that the bizarre elements of the dream are reorganized in order to make the dream comprehensible, thus generating the manifest content of the dream.

Hall: Dreams as a Cognitive Process:

Calvin S. Hall proposed that dreams are part of a cognitive process in which dreams serve as 'conceptions' of elements of our personal lives. Hall looked for themes and patterns by analyzing thousands of dream diaries from participants, eventually creating a quantitative coding system that divided the content of dreams into a number of different categories.

According to Hall's theory, interpreting dreams requires knowing:

- The actions of the dreamer within the dream
- The objects and figures in the dream
- The interactions between the dreamer and the characters in the dream
- The dream's setting, transitions, and outcome

Domhoff: Dreams as a Reflection of Waking Life:

G. William Domhoff is a prominent dream researcher. In large-scale studies on the content of dreams, Domhoff has found that dreams reflect the thoughts and concerns of a dreamer's waking life. Domhoff suggests a neuro cognitive model of dreams in which the process of dreaming results from neurological processes. Dream content, he suggests, results from these cognitive processes.