

PSYCHOLOGY



INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION OF PSYCHOLOGY

Scientific study of thought and behavior. Psychologists study how the brain creates thoughts, feelings, and actions, and how internal and external environments affect them.

RESEARCH STUDIES

1. **Studies find hypotheses:** testable explanations of observed events.
2. **Students must have reliability and validity**
 - a. **Reliability:** study produces consistent results when replicated
 - b. **Validity:** study accurately measures what it claims to measure. There are 3 types of validity:
 - i. **Construct:** study measures the effect it is trying to measure
 - ii. **Internal:** study shows that only the experimental factor caused an effect
 - iii. **External:** results of study apply to other situations

TYPES OF STUDIES

1. **Correlational study:** expresses the relationship between 2 variables, does not imply causation
2. **Experiment:** the manipulation of an independent variable to understand its effect on a dependent variable. Identifies cause-and-effect relationships.
 - i. **Sampling:** the process of choosing subjects for study
 - a. **Sample:** group of subjects selected for study; a subset of a population
 - b. **Population:** group of people about whom the researcher wants to make conclusions. Sample should be representative of the population.
 - ii. **Random assignment:** random placement of subjects into experimental or control groups
 - iii. **Control group:** group not subject to experimental manipulation
3. **Variables:** things that can vary among subjects
 - i. **Independent variable:** manipulated by researcher, produces a change in dependent variable
 - ii. **Dependent variable:** measured by the researcher
 - iii. **Controlling variable:** any possible variable—other than the independent variable—that may cause the observed effect

STATISTICS

Describes data and quantifies relationships between variables

1. **Frequency distribution:** an arrangement of data points based on how frequently they occur
2. **Normal distribution:** frequency distribution with the shape of a normal curve (a symmetrical bell-shaped curve)
3. **Central tendency:** measures of the center of the frequency distribution. There are 3 types:
 - i. **Mean:** the arithmetic average of data points
 - ii. **Median:** the middle data point
 - iii. **Mode:** the most frequent data point

NORMAL DISTRIBUTION AND STANDARD DEVIATION



- a. **Variability:** how the data are dispersed or spread around the mean
- b. **Range:** the distance between the highest and lowest data-point
- c. **Standard deviation (SD):** average distance of a data point from the mean

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (x - \bar{x})^2}{n}}$$

- Small SD means the scores are relatively close to the mean score
- Large SD means the scores have a wider range around the mean

1. **Statistical significance:** means that the differences observed are too big to have occurred by chance
 - i. **Two types of errors in significance testing:**
 - a. **Type I error:** false positive; perceive an effect that is not there
 - b. **Type II error:** false negative; do not perceive an effect that is there

NEUROPSYCHOLOGY

THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

Structure and biological information

1. **Central Nervous System (CNS):** brain and spinal cord. Brain is split into right and left hemispheres. Brain exhibits **contralateral control** (each hemisphere controls opposite side of body), and **specialization** (left and right hemispheres have different functions). The three major parts of the brain are the **hindbrain**, **midbrain**, and **forebrain**.

- i. **Hindbrain:** top part of the spinal cord, includes Medulla, pons, and cerebellum.
 - a. **Cerebellum:** basic biological functions like breathing, swallowing, and balance
 - b. **Pons:** basic expressions, sleep, and dreaming
 - c. **Cerebellum:** fine motor movements
- ii. **Midbrain:** coordinates basic movements with sensory information

THE INTERIOR OF THE BRAIN



- i. **Forebrain:** large in humans, includes the cerebral cortex and subcortical structures, such as the thalamus, hypothalamus, and basal ganglia
- ii. **Basal ganglia:** regulates muscle contractions and movement
- iii. **Thalamus:** incorporates and relays sensory information to the cortex
- iv. **Hypothalamus:** controls motivated behavior like eating, drinking, and sex
- v. **Hippocampus:** helps process and receive long-term and spatial memory
- vi. **Amygdala:** emotion, evaluation of stimuli
- vii. **Cerebral cortex:** receives sensory information and transmits motor information. **Corpus callosum:** nerve tract beneath cortex that connects the two hemispheres and allows them to communicate. Cerebral cortex consists of four lobes:
 - Occipital lobe:** processes vision
 - Temporal lobe:** processes sound
 - Parietal lobe:** integrates sensory systems and is involved in attention
 - Frontal lobe:** speech, learning, thinking, decision-making, and abstract thought

THE SURFACE OF THE BRAIN and the cerebral lobes



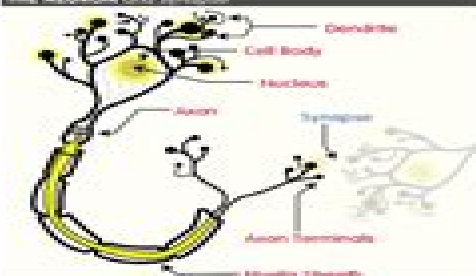
1. **Peripheral Nervous System:** includes all nerves that spread through the body from the brain and spinal cord. Has 3 divisions:
 - i. **Somatic division:** controls voluntary muscle movements and sense organs
 - ii. **Autonomic division:** controls involuntary actions and the internal organs

NEUROLOGY

- a. **Soma:** cell body, stores energy for cell
- b. **Dendrites:** receives messages from other neurons and conducts the messages toward the soma
- c. **Axon:** sends messages to other neurons

- i. **Terminal branches (axon terminals):** end of axon that contains neurotransmitters
- ii. **Myelin sheath:** insulates axons so that signals can travel quickly
- iii. **Glial cell:** creates myelin, supports and guides neurons, and helps repair neurons

THE NEURON and Synapse



INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Neurons communicate by receiving and transmitting nerve impulses

- a. The axon terminals of the presynaptic neuron are stimulated. The terminals contain **synaptic vesicles**, which empty neurotransmitters into the **synapse** between the neurons. Neurotransmitters activate the postsynaptic neuron, changing its voltage. Once the **excitation threshold** is reached, the **action potential** begins, and a nerve fires.
- b. **Synapse:** small gap between neurons where information is exchanged
- c. **Synaptic vesicles:** places where neurotransmitters are stored until release into the synapse
- d. **Neurotransmitters:** chemicals that stimulate neurons so they can communicate
- e. **Excitatory:** makes neurons more likely to fire
- f. **Inhibitory:** makes neurons less likely to fire
- g. **Excitation threshold:** the voltage differential necessary (+55 millivolts) to denature a neuron, causing an action potential to occur
- h. **Action potential (nerve impulse):** the brief change in electrical charge that denatures a neuron. The action potential stimulates the axon terminals, restoring the process.

SENSATION

STATE OF THE EYE

- a. **Cornea:** protective covering where reflected light first enters the eye
- b. **Lens:** bends refracts light rays. Focuses a flipped, inverted image onto the retina
- c. **Retina:** vision structure at back of eye that contains 2 types of receptor cells:
 - i. **Rods:** cells in the periphery of the retina that respond to black and white. Better in low light, more sensitive to motion, and have less visual acuity than cones
 - ii. **Cones:** contained in the fovea (middle of the retina). Respond to color, good for daytime vision, more visual acuity
- d. **Optic nerve:** carries visual information to the lateral geniculate nucleus of the **thalamus**
- e. **Blind spot:** place where the optic nerve exits the eye. Has no receptor cells, so no vision

VISION

- a. **Light waves:** electromagnetic waves that stimulate receptors in the eye
- b. **Intensity:** amount of energy per unit of time (brightness)
- c. **Wavelength:** distance between two wave crests (color)
- d. **Process of color vision:**
 - i. **Trichromatic theory (Young-Helmholtz):** 3 types of cones detect 3 wavelengths of light (blue, green, red). Filtering does not require negative afterimages.
 - ii. **Opponent-process theory:** if you stare at one color, then look at white space, you see a color afterimage as the complementary hue of the original stimulus.
- e. **Opponent-process theory (Hering):** receptor cells arranged in pairs (red-green, blue-yellow, black-white). If one color is stimulated, the other is inhibited.

Abnormal Psychology Sparkcharts

CH Cherryholmes



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