**Movement of Structuralism and Functionalism to Behaviorism and Cognitivism**

Name

Institution Affiliation

Course

Instructor

Date

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The evolution of the history of psychology has been an interesting experience because it has led to the development of theories and approaches that enhance the current perception of mind and behavior (Gould & Howson, 2024). This paper elaborates on the evolution of early school: structuralism, functionalism, and introspection to the later developments of behaviorism and cognitivism. These transitions reflect the changes of focus, approach, and paradigms defining the field of psychology as a science discipline from the time of its inception. By examining key figures, theories, and the effects of these movements on today's psychological thinking, this paper will reveal the footprints of these movements in the history of psychology.

**Functionalism, Structuralism, and Introspection**

**Structuralism**

Structuralism, initiated by Wilhelm Wundt in the late 19th century and subsequently developed by his student Edward Titchener, is accredited to be the first formal school of psychology. Wundt is considered a pioneer of psychology, better known as the "father of experimental psychology," and founded the first psychological laboratory in 1879 at the University of Leipzig. His work aimed to break down mental processes into their most basic components, akin to how chemists break down substances into elements (Gould & Howson, 2024). In the belief of Structuralists, it was posited that mind structure could be delineated by sensations, feelings, and images, which are thought to form the basic composition of consciousness. This approach heavily used introspection, which requires the subject to report what goes on in their mind as reactivity to stimulus. However, structuralism received criticism over time due to weaknesses, especially in using interviews and self-observation, which seemed to need more objectivity. The method's reliance on personal reflection made it difficult to achieve consistent results, leading to questions about its scientific validity.

**Functionalism**

On the other hand, functionalism emerged in the USA in reaction to structuralism, which focused on examining mental structures. William James, John Dewey, and Harvey Carr's type of functionalism replaced the part analysis of the mind with the purpose of mental processes. On the other hand, functionalists were in tune with the social evolution theory formulated by Charles Darwin, which focused on the role of behavior and psychological processes. William James, in particular, made an effort to claim that consciousness is more of a stream and not a sum of various components, a theory he labeled as "stream of consciousness" (Gould & Howson, 2024). Functionalism depends mainly on the idea that the primary goal of psychology is to examine how consciousness assists people in adjusting to the environment. The approach paved the way for the applied type of psychology as it sought to address several fields, such as education, industry, and mental healthcare. Functionalism was interested in why activities of the mind were beneficial to the person in the context of his interactions with the environment.

**Introspection**

One of the methods of structuralism is introspection, which entails self-observation and reporting of experiences (Ericsson & Crutcher). As a method, it entailed skilled analysts to assess and explain their reactions to stimuli in the form of thoughts, emotions, and feelings. While introspection formed the core of Wundt's and Titchener's works, it was criticized for being highly subjective and unreliable. Some of the criticisms that were leveled at the concept of introspection were the fact that the process was tainted with bias since it depended on one being able to explain the internal experience to another in a language that was distorted by language barriers, memory impairment, and interferences, and of course the perennial theme; self-deception. Gradually, introspection was criticized as an insecure method of psychological investigation; thus, it was replaced with a more advanced and realistic method.

**Relevance to Modern Psychology**

Structuralism and functionalism are still closely connected with modern psychology since both laid the basis for future science. Therefore, even though this school of thought had its problems with methodology, structuralism helped to put forward the view that the mind could be analyzed scientifically. It differed from the past approaches to the study of the mind, which depended on purely philosophical stands that needed more support from research. The structuralist focus on accurately observing and carrying out experiments paved the way for later experimentation methodologies in psychology (Gould & Howson, 2024).

It is essential to focus on the positive impacts of functionalism on the development of applied psychology with emphasis on the adaptive nature of mental processes. The perspective has been used in several branches of psychological practice: an educational and organizational psychological practice based on studying the ways the learning processes contribute to the adaptation of students in these environments as well as the ways the mental processes and behaviors can promote efficiency and well-being of workers in the organizations (Gould & Howson, 2024). Also, such a perspective as evolutionary psychology is similar to the functionalist perspective focused on the purpose of mental activity, as it examines how certain mental features and behaviors help an individual solve certain adaptive tasks.

Introspection, though limited, helped to lay the foundation of early psychological theories by revealing the data of the direct consciousness (Niikawa, 2020). The method helped to analyze the subjective phenomenon that significantly impacts the phenomenon of phenomenology and qualitative research in the sphere of psychology. Introspection is not used in the contemporary approaches of scientific psychological studies; however, the fascination with self-observations, individual feelings, moods, or aspirations is still preserved in such fields as humanistic psychology or the science of consciousness.

#### Behaviorism and Reinforcement in Behavior Therapy

**Modern-Day Applications of Reinforcement**

Reinforcement in behavior therapy is an important concept based on the fact that the results can influence behavior. Positive reinforcement can be defined as the act of using a reward to encourage the next time the behavior is executed. For instance, a therapist may employ the use of praise, tokens, or any other form of reward to boost the desirable behavioral patterns of a client with anxiety or depression (Blackwell & Heidenreich, 2021). Negative reinforcement, however, refers to the withdrawal of a noxious stimulus due to a particular behavior. It also increases the possibility of repetition of the behavior since the child will be motivated to continue with the behaviors that make them attractive to their peers. An example of negative reinforcement in therapy is when a client is pressured by the need to show that they are relaxed, hence making it easier for them to continue practicing relaxation techniques and reducing anxiety symptoms.

Reinforcement is one of the techniques used in behavior therapy to treat several psychological disorders, including anxiety, depression, phobias, and substance abuse. Studies including token economies, contingency management, and exposure therapeutic strategies are founded on reinforcement. For example, in a token economy, the clients get tokens after demonstrating positive behaviors, and the tokens can be redeemed for tokens (Blackwell & Heidenreich, 2021).

**Strengths of Behavioral Therapy**

One of the most significant advantages of behavioral therapy is that the approach is informed by empirical evidence. The application of reinforcement is highly effective due to the research base of the principles of reinforcement, and for this, behavioural interventions are highly effective in bringing about behavior change (Bazzano, 2020). However, because the behaviors targeted as maladaptive are well-defined and specific, behavior therapy lends itself well to objective measurement of progress, thus making it easier to assess the efficacy of the intervention. Therefore, behavioral therapy effectively treats disorders where specific behaviors must be changed or managed. For instance, exposure therapy that aims at exposing clients with reduced chances of avoiding fear stimuli has been proven to be very useful in the treatment of phobias as well as anxiety disorders.

**Weaknesses of Behavioral Therapy**

One of the most significant criticisms is the reliance on measured behavior, sometimes completely ignoring mental processes that play a role in the development of psychological disorders. Some of the critics suggest that while using the behavioral therapy approach, there is not much emphasis put on thoughts, beliefs, or even emotions, which can be the root cause of many illnesses, thus ignoring the significant aspects that may help in the prevention of many mental illnesses. One weakness of behavioral therapy is that it is highly possible to be over-dependent on external reinforcement. Sometimes, this may cause the clients to rely on extrinsic motivation to change behavior; a problem arises since it is challenging to make such changes sustainable once the incentives are withdrawn (Bazzano, 2020).

#### Emergence of Cognitivism and Its Influence on Behavior Therapy

**The Cognitive Revolution**

Post-behavioral focus in psychology also referred to as the cognitive revolution, which started in the 1950s and 1960s, moved the focus in psychology from observable behavior to internal mental processes. Prominent pioneers who contributed to the exit of the behaviorist view included Jean Piaget, Albert Bandura, and Noam Chomsky, who supported the theory of cognitive systems study. Their work together stated that some external stimuli and reactions could not fully explain human behavior and thinking; there were internal processes such as perception, memory, and reasoning (Orzechowska et al., 2021).

Jean Piaget was one of the pioneers in exploring cognitive development, which showed that children acquired cognition in pre-defined stages and included the concept of internalized mental structures, which orients the cognitive process towards objects. Albert Bandura created the concept of self-efficacy and focused on modeling, stating that people learn behaviors through experiences that they conduct themselves and by observing others (Orzechowska et al., 2021). Chomsky's work, especially his criticism of behaviorist theories of language acquisition and his theory of an innate language acquisition device, underlined the part played by internal mental processes in learning.

The theory of cognition is dominated by the belief that the mind is an active processor of information and that the stimulus does not predetermine its activity. The approach resulted in the formulation of cognitive models that explain encoding, storage, and retrieval. These models showed how people process information from the environment and make meaning from what they encounter. Also, this conflicts with the behaviorist course of thought that individuals only behave because of the reinforcement and punishment rendered to them. Cognitive psychology asserts that thoughts, attitudes, ideas, and anticipation have a powerful impact on behavior, making reinforcement more complex than simple stimulus control (Orzechowska et al., 2021).

**Influence on Reinforcement in Behavior Therapy**

The addition of cognitive concepts in behavior therapy has contributed to a better definition of reinforcement (Blackwell & Heidenreich, 2021). Behavioral psychology, which dominated the academy in the middle of the twentieth century, reduced psychological phenomena to stimuli and responses, ignoring cognitive processes inside individuals. However, the cognitive revolution showed how individuals perceive events can alter their reinforcement capacity.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) integrates the cognitive and behavioral modes of treatment. It seeks to correct distorted thinking processes in a patient with a particular mental disorder (Orzechowska et al., 2021). CBT is aware that these unhealthy behaviors stem from an individual's irrational thought processes and viewpoints. Thus, suppression of those types of thinkers, in addition to the reinforcement of positive thoughts, should be part of therapy. For instance, CBT in depression treatment may work on encouraging good clients' behaviors, including social activities that lead to better moods and reduced loneliness. Besides, CBT is also aimed at negative automatic thoughts that are typical of the depressive state, including cognitive biases such as over- or under-inclusive thinking.

The cognitive revolution has also impacted the variety of cognitive models of reinforcement. These models focus on how cognition and mental activities, including attention, expectation, and attribution, influence reinforcement. Studies in cognitive psychology have revealed that the expectation of reinforcement is very influential on behavior (Orzechowska et al., 2021). It is used to predict the intention or the likelihood of an individual exhibiting a certain behavior because if they expect that the behavior has a positive outcome, the behavior will be shown. On the negative side, if they consider that the chances or possibility of reinforcement are low or even out of reach, they may need more incentive to go out there and perform.

Moreover, the cognitive reinforcement models emphasize the necessity of changing clients' cognitions by working with their biases and distortion during therapy. For example, people with anxiety are likely to have an over-biased perception of the probabilities of aversive events, hence negating the theory of reinforcement in countering anxious responses. In this way, CBT facilitates the effects of reinforcement regarding the cognitive pointers, which in turn contributes to more functional behavioral patterns (Orzechowska et al., 2021)

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the movement from structuralism and functionalism through introspection to behaviorism and cognitivism is evidence of the concept and practice of psychology. The approaches have helped arrive at the idea of the mind and behavior, constructing modern-day psychology. Psychoanalysis offered the first theoretical models for approaching the mind through structuralism and functionalism, in addition to behaviorism's more scientific and measurable method. The cognitive revolution, which claimed that internal mental processes are essential in controlling behavior, has added more dimensions to psychology and advanced treatment techniques

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