

Understanding Human Behavior: A Review of Psychological Theories and Their Applications

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Abstract

Psychology is a scientific discipline that concentrates on the mind and behaviour, having initially dissociated from philosophy and medicine. It has experienced a lengthy process of acceptance as a separate science. Examine the many works of literature on psychological ideas, human conduct, and its applications in this article. This review highlights the value of diverse psychological theories in understanding and influencing human behavior. Models such as the ARCS model, self-determination theory, expectation-value theory, and goal-orientation theory offer insights into motivation, decision-making, and behavioral maintenance. These theories have practical applications across education, health, and organizational settings—particularly in sustaining behaviors like physical activity, weight loss, and smoking cessation. Understanding cognitive, emotional, and social influences enhances decision-making and promotes healthier behaviors. Emphasizing behavioral maintenance over initiation is vital for long-term outcomes. Overall, integrating these theories provides a strategic framework for developing interventions that support personal growth and societal well-being.

Keywords: Self-Determination Theory, Human Behavior, Psychological Theories, Education, Health, Organizational Settings, and Behavioral Theories.

1 Introduction

In today's environment, understanding human behaviour is crucial since workers and people are the reason a business exists. Working in a company is very challenging if you don't understand human behaviour. It is important to examine how human vision has evolved throughout time in order to comprehend human conduct. Individuals with varying personalities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions,

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motivations, goals, and talents make up any organisation [1]. People vary from one another, which is the primary reason to explain conduct. No two people are alike. According to early research, scientific management was founded on the similarities rather than the differences among employees, and ideas of organisation and administration handled individuals as if they were all the same. On the other hand, contemporary theories of human conduct are predicated on individual variations and how those differences may impact the organisation. There are various individual distinctions, such as the fact that some workers are driven to work while others are not [2].

The many mental processes, feelings, motives, and beliefs that impact our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are all included in the psychological components of human behaviour. How we react to others and to ourselves is greatly influenced by these underlying psychological components [3]. From a critical and competency-based educational methodology, the course "Psychological Aspects of Human Behaviour" equips social science professionals with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand the basic principles of human behaviour (psychobiological, emotional, behavioural, and cognitive) and the practical application of some of these concepts in everyday social contexts. This successfully and cogently guides the particular tactics and proficiencies of every profession from a pluralistic and complexity-based standpoint [4], [5].

A. Human behaviour

Throughout the various phases of human existence, human behaviour encompasses the manifested and potential capacity for "mental, social, and physical activity". Like other animal species, humans have several developmental phases throughout their typical life cycle, each of which is characterised by a distinct set of morphological, physiological, and behavioural characteristics. These phases include pregnancy, childhood, youth, middle age, old age, and infancy. From birth to old age, the study of human development—also referred to as developmental psychology—seeks to explain and clarify how "human cognitive, emotional, and behavioural abilities" and functioning change over time [6].

The time period between birth and early adolescence has been the primary focus of scientific research on human development due to the rapidity and severity of the psychological changes that occur throughout those stages, which culminate in the most advanced mental functioning of early adulthood. One of the primary motivations for numerous researchers in this field has been the desire to comprehend the final stages of maturation. Consequently, the primary emphasis of this article will be on the development of humans during the first twelve years of existence [7].

B. Psychological theories

Theories of psychology are concepts that can elucidate specific aspects of human emotions, behaviours, and beliefs. Psychologists create these theories in order to predict possible future human actions or events that could occur in the case that certain behaviours are seen. While formulating strategies to enhance employee motivation, productivity, and behaviours, these theories are advantageous in the workplace. The applications of psychological theories are many [8]. They may help determine what habits and

behaviours can improve an organization's performance in the workplace. Additional justifications for the significance of psychological theories are as follows:

- Theories can assist in the identification of information that is beneficial for the development of new strategies.
- Understanding which techniques encourage certain habits or behaviours may be aided by them.
- They are able to describe certain actions and what drives workers to succeed at work.

C. Type of psychological theories

Some of psychology's most well-known ideas have been influenced by the perspectives of many subfields. Each represents a unique viewpoint on the mentality and behaviour of individuals [9]. This suggests that no theory is correct or better than any other. It only shows that there are several approaches to understanding, explaining, and predicting human conduct and cognition.

- **Behavioral Theories:** The idea that all actions are taught via conditioning is the foundation of behavioural psychology, often known as behaviourism, as a theory of learning. This approach totally disregards internal mental processes. Rather, it underscores the potential of associations, incentives, and consequences, as well as interacting with the environment, to influence and develop behaviour [10].
- **Cognitive Theories:** Theories of cognitive psychology place a strong focus on internal states, such as problem-solving, motivation, reasoning, attention, and decision-making. Some of the mental processes that these theories attempt to explain include how the mind processes information and how our ideas affect our moods and behaviours. Cognitive psychology theories suggest that our thoughts impact how we see and respond to the world around us. According to certain beliefs, the human mind functions similarly to a computer in terms of processing, storing, retrieving, and using information [11].
- **Humanistic Theories:** The ideas of humanistic psychology began to acquire momentum in the 1950s. Humanist theories like as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow were among the most influential. The basic goodness of humans was given greater weight in humanist conceptions of conduct than in earlier perspectives, which often focused on abnormal behaviour and mental health problems. These beliefs emphasise free choice and the intrinsic drive that each person has to grow and reach their greatest potential [7].
- **Psychodynamic Theories:** Psychodynamic theories investigate the unconscious concepts that shape our emotions, attitudes, and personalities. Finding the fundamental causes of unconscious conduct is the aim of psychodynamic approaches. The unconscious is the collection of memories, emotions, impulses, and thoughts that are not aware of our conscious mind. Although we are not aware of it, psychodynamic theorists contend that the unconscious nonetheless influences our behaviour. These opinions are intimately linked to Sigmund Freud and his supporters. Many Freudian concepts are instances of the psychodynamic approach, such as the notion that the ego, superego, and id are the three elements of the personality and that our adult actions are a result of our early experiences [10].

- **Developmental Theories:** Development theories provide us a framework for thinking about human learning, growth, and development. If you've ever wondered what motivates people's thoughts and actions, knowing these concepts may help you better comprehend humanity. Developmental theories provide an assortment of concepts and tenets that describe and explain human development. "Kohlberg's theory of moral development" is one of the developmental theories that focusses on the development of a certain attribute [2].
- **Grand Theories:** Prominent thinkers like Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, and Jean Piaget often proposed grand theories, which are comprehensive ideas. Learning theory, cognitive theory, and psychoanalytic theory are examples of grand theories of development. In light of recent studies, these theories—which aim to explain a large portion of human behavior—are often seen as antiquated and lacking. While broad theories are often used as a foundation for investigation, psychologists and researchers also take into account more current studies and smaller hypotheses [12].
- **Mini-Theories:** Mini-theories are devoted to the examination of a small, highly specific aspect of development. A mini-theory might explain smaller actions, including early socialisation or the growth of self-esteem. The notions presented by big theories are often the foundation of these theories, which do not seek to describe and explain every facet of human activity and evolution [13].
- **Emergent Theories:** Theories that have been developed relatively recently are known as emergent theories. They are often produced by carefully combining several mini-theories. Although these theories do include ideas and research from a variety of domains, they are not yet as extensive or far-reaching as large theories. A good example of a new theory of development is Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory [14].

D. Application of psychological theories

- **Motivation:** The most critical factor that is crucial to reaching our objectives is motivation. You cannot put your best effort on any work you do in your everyday life if you lack sufficient motivation.
- **Health:** Even though everyone knows that smoking, drinking, and using other substances may be harmful to their health, many nonetheless fall victim to these addictions. These toxins are very tough for them to get rid of. Psychology may help in this situation.
- **Sports:** The holistic development of a sportsperson is also influenced by psychology, which is considered crucial for mental as well as physical wellness.
- **Relationships:** Relationships are another area in which psychology is used practically. A comprehension of human behavior's psychology can enhance the quality of relationships.
- **Leadership:** Regardless of whether you are a volunteer in a local group or a manager at a company, you must have recognised the significance of leadership skills. Although some individuals possess these leadership traits from birth, others may still develop into effective leaders.

2 Literature Review

(Bandhu et al., 2024)[15] "The ARCS model, self-determination theory, expectancy-value theory, goal-orientation theory, arousal theory, incentive theory, intrinsic theory, extrinsic theory, and instinct theory" are among the motivational theories that are examined in this research. According to the expectation-value theory, people's actions are impacted by their estimations of their own chances of success and the importance they attach to the job. Teachers, coaches, managers, and people may examine what motivates behaviour and how to use it to accomplish their objectives by knowing these many theories of motivation. To put it simply, having a thorough understanding of these different motivation theories provides individuals from diverse backgrounds with a tactical toolkit to navigate the complex landscape of human behaviour, resulting in a deeper understanding of what drives behaviour and how to use these insights to accomplish more significant goals.

(Mehrad et al., 2023) [16] An examination and deconstruction of the scope of social psychology are conducted to comprehend the constituent components of the subject. The researchers' primary focus in this study article is on the several moving components that make up social psychology, including "behaviour, social influence, happiness, peer pressure, social media, social proof, prejudice and discrimination, inclusion, belonging and love", and so on. The field of social psychology encompasses many other areas. Consequently, these discoveries and investigations from prior research will be beneficial to future researchers and individuals who are interested in social psychology and seeking to acquire a deeper understanding of its significance and focus, which are derived from the social behaviour and communication of individuals in a variety of cultures and societies.

(Soares, 2023) [17] The scientific study of mind and behaviour, psychology, first separated from medicine and philosophy and has since undergone a protracted process of being recognised as a separate science, will be discussed in this work. Leading pioneers from the 19th century include John Dewey, William James, Wilhelm Wundt, and Edward Titchener, as well as the well-known Thorndike. Thorndike found a principle that has influenced psychology and is relevant to a wide range of human behaviours: if an organism is rewarded for a certain reaction, the stimulus will likely cause that response over time. One of this text's objectives is to present psychology as a discipline serving mankind in the twenty-first century. It will consider the significance of constructivist narratives and paradigms as well as the idea that psychotherapy is a multiverse.

(Vergara et al., 2023) [14] In this class note, the topics and divisions of study that were developed in the Psychological Aspects of Human Behaviour course are presented. From a critical and competency-based educational methodology, the document provides professionals in the social sciences with tools to understand the basic principles of human behaviour (psychobiological, emotional, behavioural, and cognitive) and the practical application of some of these concepts in everyday social contexts. It also briefly describes the theorists and authors that students should take into consideration to better understand the concepts being studied.

(Zammit & Willard, 2019) [18] This article describes how a curriculum was developed to offer developmental psychology to distant "learners pursuing a two-year, part-time MSc Psychology (Conversion) degree" accredited by the BPS. This asynchronous online program was delivered using psychological concepts. Our objectives for this module were to: (1) provide interesting and educational material; (2) foster critical thinking in the students; and (3) enhance their capacity to apply developmental psychology theory in practical contexts. Our module design was based on five fundamental principles: Collaborative teaching, scaffolding, lowering cognitive load, a naturalistic or friendly delivery style, and stimulating exercises to improve learning. The purpose of this essay is to stimulate discussion among other practitioners involved in remote delivery about their experiences acclimating to a remote learning environment.

(Joseph et al., 2016) [19] This review's objectives were to assess the body of existing research and identify key behavioural health theories that are used in intervention studies to encourage the maintenance of healthy behaviours. We reviewed the theories used in intervention studies to assess the maintenance of weight reduction, physical activity, and smoking cessation over the long term (≥ 6 months postintervention). Thirty-four papers in the research referenced five important theories of behaviour: "the social cognitive theory, the transtheoretical model, the theory of planned conduct, the self-determination theory, and the social ecological model". These ideas are described, and examples of their applicability are given. Future research implications are highlighted.

3 Research Gap

Despite extensive research on psychological theories explaining human behavior, significant gaps remain in understanding their real-world applicability across diverse cultural, social, and technological contexts. Much of the existing literature emphasizes classical theories without integrating emerging perspectives from neuroscience, behavioral economics, and digital psychology. Additionally, the dynamic influence of modern factors such as social media, virtual environments, and AI-driven interactions on human behavior is underexplored. There is also limited interdisciplinary analysis connecting theoretical frameworks to practical interventions in areas like education, healthcare, and organizational behavior. Addressing these gaps is essential to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of psychological theories in contemporary society.

4 Research Objective

- In this article study various research's work on human behavior, psychological theories and their applications.
- Study the concept of human behavior, psychological theories and its type.

5 Research Methodology

This review paper adopts a qualitative research methodology, utilizing secondary data and a comprehensive literature review to explore the human behavior, psychological theories and their

applications. The study analyzes academic journals, scholarly articles, official reports, and case studies published between 2015 and 2025 to ensure a current and in-depth understanding of the subject. By synthesizing insights from various psychological frameworks—such as cognitive, behavioral, psychodynamic, and humanistic theories—the review investigates how these models explain human behavior and are applied in fields such as education, healthcare, organizational development, and social policy to address contemporary challenges.

6 Conclusion

This review emphasises how important different psychological theories are for comprehending and influencing human behaviour in social, health, and educational situations. Important frameworks for examining what motivates people to behave and how motivation may be maintained are offered by important theories of motivation, such as "the ARCS model, Self-Determination Theory, Expectation-Value Theory, and Goal-Oriented Theory". These models emphasize critical components such as autonomy, competence, relevance, and goal alignment, all of which are essential for behavioral engagement and long-term success. In health psychology, the application of behavioral theories has proven particularly effective in maintaining positive health behaviors such as physical activity, weight loss, and smoking cessation—factors crucial for chronic disease prevention. Unlike initiation, behavioral maintenance is key to achieving lasting health outcomes. Additionally, understanding the interplay of cognition, emotions, decision-making, and social influences allows for a more comprehensive grasp of how individuals behave and interact within society. Recognizing cognitive and emotional biases enhances decision-making, while exploring the impact of social relationships and pressures informs the design of effective mental health interventions. Overall, the integration of psychological theories offers a powerful, interdisciplinary approach to decoding complex human behaviors and supports the development of targeted strategies that improve well-being, productivity, and social cohesion.

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