CHAPTER ONE

ESSENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY

1.1. DEFINITION OF PSYCHOLOGY AND RELATED CONCEPTS

- **Questions**
  - What comes to your mind when you hear about the word psychology?
  - Have you ever heard about, read or listened to anything related to psychology?
  - What was its content about?
  - Did you appreciate it? Why?
  - What do you expect from the course in psychology?

Cont.…

- The word "psychology" is derived from two Greek words 'psyche' and ‘logos’.
  - Psyche refers to mind, soul or sprit
  - logos means study, knowledge or discourse.

:. Psychology epistemologically refers to the study of the mind, soul, or sprit

- it is often represented by the Greek letter Ψ (psi) which is read as ("sy").

Cont.…

- Psychology is the scientific study of human behavior and the underlying mental
  - There are three aspects; science, behavior and mental processes:
- **Science**: psychology uses scientific methods to study behavior and mental processes in both humans and animals.
- **Behavior**: refers to all of our outward or overt actions and reactions, such as talking, facial expressions, movement, etc.
- **Mental processes**: refer to all the internal, covert activities of our minds, such as thinking, feeling, remembering, etc.

1.2. GOALS OF PSYCHOLOGY

- **Questions**
  - Why do you think is psychology important?
  - What do you think a psychologist is doing when studying behavior and mental processes?

Cont……

- As a science, psychology has four goals; description, explanation, prediction, and control.
- **Description**: Description involves observing the behavior and noticing everything about it. It is a search for answers for questions like
  - What is happening?
  - Where does it happen?
  - To whom does it happen? And
  - under what circumstances does it seem to happen?

Cont….

- **Explanation**: Why is it happening? Explanation is about trying to find reasons for the observed behavior.
- **Prediction**: prediction is about determining what will happen in the future.
- **Control**: How can it be changed? Control or modify or change the behavior from undesirable one (such as failing in school) to a desirable one (such as academic success).

Cont.…

❖ **Question**

✓ **What is the relationship and difference between the four goals of psychology?**

1.3 Historical background and major perspectives in psychology

- Psychology is a relatively new field in the realm of the sciences, only about 125 years old. Began as a science of its own in 1879 in Leipzig, Germany by Wilhelm Wundt.
- Wundt developed the technique of objective introspection to scientifically examine mental experiences.
- Psychology then begun as an independent field of study and with Wundt as its founder or "father of modern psychology ".

School of thought in psychology

1.3.1. Early schools of psychology

- ✓ **What do you think is a school of thought?**
- ✓ **Do you think we have schools of thought in psychology? If yes, like what, for example?**

Cont.…

- A school of thought is a system of thinking about a certain issue, say, for example, about human behavior or mind.
- There are five such early schools of psychology.
  - **Structuralism-** structuralism views psychology as a study of structure of mind. Edward Titchener is the founder of structuralism (1867-1927).
  - The goal of structuralists was to find out the units or elements, which make up the mind such as; **sensations, images, and feelings.** The best-known method used by them was introspection.

Cont.…

- **Functionalism-** functionalism views psychology as a study of function of the mind. William James (1848-1910)
  - ✓James focused on how the mind allows people to function in the real world; work, play, and adapt to their surroundings.
  - ✓Developed methods including questionnaires, mental tests and objective descriptions of behavior.

Cont.…

Gestalt psychology: Gestalt psychology views psychology as a study of the whole mind. Max Wertheimer and his colleagues in the 20th century.

- The German word "gestalt" refers to form, whole, configuration or pattern.
- Mind should be thought of as a result of the whole pattern of sensory activity and the relationships and organizations within their pattern.
- Gestalt psychologists acknowledge consciousness.
- "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Means mind is greater than its parts (images, sensations, and feelings).

Cont….

- **Questions**
  - what is common to all the three schools of though?
  - How can we answer the question of subjectivity in psychology?

Cont.….

- **Behaviorism**: behaviorists view psychology as a study of observable and measurable behaviors.
- John B. Watson is the founder of behaviorism. Other proponents include E.Thorndike and F. Skinner.
- For Watson, psychology was the study of observable and measurable behavior.

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- Behaviorism had three other important characteristics
  - conditioned response as the elements or building blocks of behavior,
  - learned rather than unlearned behaviors, and
  - focus on animal behavior.
- All the four schools of thought discussed so far were focusing on human mind and behavior as conscious experiences.
- What is unconscious experiences?

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- **Psychoanalysis:** psychology studies about the components of the unconscious part of the human mind**.**
- Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)
- He called emotional causes of illnesses as ‘ hysteria‘ or conversion reaction.
- The unconscious contains hidden wishes, passions, guilty secrets, unspeakable yearnings, and conflict between desire and duty.

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- We are not aware of our unconscious urges and thoughts and they make themselves known in dreams, slip of the tongue, apparent accidents and even jokes.
- He used clinical case studies (hypnosis and Dream analysis) as a method.

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- **Question**
  - ***Discuss how the old schools of psychology differ in terms of their object of study, their goal, and method of analysis?***

1.3.2. Modern schools of psychology

- Modern psychologists tend to examine human behavior through several views.
- The views that predominate today are
  - **Psychodynamic,**
  - **Behavioral,**
  - **Humanistic,**
  - **Cognitive,**
  - **Biological, and**
  - **Sociocultural perspectives.**

Cont….

- **Psychodynamic perspective –**
  - It has its origins in Freud's theory of psychoanalysis
  - This perspective emphasizes the unconscious dynamics within the individual such as inner forces, conflicts or instinctual energy.
  - The psychodynamic approach emphasizes:
    - The influence of unconscious mental behaviour on everyday behaviour
    - The role of childhood experiences in shaping adult personality
    - The role of intrapersonal conflict in determining human behaviour

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Behavioural Perspective-

- It emphasizes the role learning experiences play in shaping the behaviour of an organism.
- Behaviourists focus on environmental conditions (e.g. rewards, and punishments) that maintain or discourage specific behaviours.
- called the *"black box" approach in psychology(* mind as less useful *in understanding human behaviour* and focus *on what goes in to and out of the box)*
- interested in the effects of the environment on behaviour

Cont.….

Humanistic Perspective-

- According to this perspective, human behaviour is not determined either by unconscious dynamics or the environment.
- Rather it emphasizes the **uniqueness of human beings** and focuses on **human values** and **subjective experiences**.
- focus on individual‘s **free will**
- helping people to express themselves **creatively** and achieve their **full potential** or self-actualization.

Cont.…

- **Cognitive Perspective-**
  - it emphasizes what goes on in **people's heads**; how people reason, remember, understand language, solve problems, explain experiences and form beliefs.
  - This perspective is concerned about the **mental processes** of how people's **thoughts and explanation**s affect their actions, feelings, and choices.
- **Biological Perspective-**
  - it focuses on studying how **bodily events** or **functionin**g of the body affects behaviour, feelings, and thoughts.

cont.,..

- brain chemicals affect psychological processes such as learning, performance, perception of reality, the experience of emotions, etc

Cont….

- **Socio-cultural Perspective-**
  - It focuses on the social and cultural factors that affects human behaviour.
  - social psychologists examine how group membership affects attitudes and behaviours, why authority and other people affect each of us.
  - Cultural psychologists examine how cultural rules and values affect people's development, behaviour, and feelings.

1.4. Branches/sub fields of psychology

- ***Developmental psychology***
  - It studies the physical, cognitive and psychological changes across the life span.
- ***Personality Psychology***
  - it focuses on the relatively enduring traits and characteristics of individuals.
  - Personality psychologists study topics such as self-concept, aggression, moral development, etc.
- ***Social Psychology***
  - deals with people‘s social interactions, relationships, social perception, and attitudes.

Cont.…

- ***Cross-cultural Psychology*** - examines the role of culture in understanding behaviour, thought, and emotion.
  - It compares the nature of psychological processes in different cultures, with a special interest in whether or not psychological phenomena are universal or culture-specific.
- ***Industrial psychology –***
  - applies psychological principles in industries and organizations to increase the productivity of that organization.

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Forensic psychology

- psychological principles to improve the legal system (police, testimony, etc..).

Educational Psychology

- concerned with the application of psychological principles and theories in improving the educational process including curriculum, teaching, and administration of academic programs.

Health Psychology

- applies psychological principles to the prevention and treatment of physical illness and diseases.

Clinical Psychology:

- is a field that applies psychological principles to the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of psychological disorders.

Cont.….

Counselling Psychology:

- is a field having the same concern as clinical psychology but helps individuals with less severe problems than those treated by clinical psychologists.

1.5. Research methods in psychology

- ***Questions***
  - *what science, and the scientific method in particular, is focused on?*

Definition of terms

- ***Scientific method*** **-** a process of testing ideas through systematic observations, experimentations, and statistical analysis.
- ***Theory*** **-** is an integrated set of principles about observed facts that is intended to describe and explain some aspects of experience.
- ***Hypotheses*** **-** is a tentative proposition about the relationship between two or more variables or phenomena. E.g. Males have high self - confidence in making decisions than females

B. Major types of research methods

- **Descriptive research -** in this type of research, the researcher simply records what she/he has systematically observed. include

  - naturalistic observation, case studies, and surveys.

    I. ***Naturalistic observation***: is a descriptive research method in which subjects are observed in their natural environment to get a real (not artificial) picture of how behaviour occurs.

  - Limitations are observer effect(behave artificially when they know watched)

  - and observer bias(not systematically observed, observe what the observer wants and ignore others)

Cont.…

IICase study: is a descriptive technique in which an individual is studied in great detail.

- Advantage - provides tremendous amount of data about a single case or individual.
- Disadvantage- the researchers can‘t apply the results to other similar people, which means what researchers find in one case can‘t necessarily apply or generalize to others.

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iii. ***Survey***: is a descriptive research method used to collect data from a very large group of people.

- **Advantage**- useful to get information on private (covert) behaviours and it addresses hundreds of people with the same questions at the same time.

  - used to for generalization of the result to the population.

- **Disadvantage**- needs a careful selection of a representative sample of the actual population.

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- **Correlational research -** is a research method that measures the relationship between two or more variables.
  - Measures relationship between variables, how strong the relationship is, and in what direction the relationship goes.
  - But it doesn‘t show the cause and effect relationship(causation)
  - Example, academic achievement and parental socio–economic status

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- **Experimental Research:** it is a research method that allows researchers to study the cause and effect relationship between variables.
  - Experiments involve at least one independent variable and one dependent variable.
  - The independent variable is the manipulated, influential, experimental factor.
  - The dependent variable is the factor (behaviour) that is measured in an experiment.

Steps of scientific research

- **Step one - Defining the Problem**
  - **Example, you may raise a research problem focusing on the effect of aggressive videos on children‘s behaviour.**
- **Step two - Formulating the Hypothesis (educated guess about the explanation for your observations)**
  - Example, hypothesis, children who watch violent cartoons will become more aggressive than those who watch non-violent cartoons
- **Step three - Testing the Hypothesis**

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- the researcher employs appropriate research methods and collects data to accept or reject the proposed statement
- Example, the data will be gathered from children who watch aggressive videos and from those who do not watch aggressive videos and make comparisons between the behaviours of the two groups

- **Step four - Drawing Conclusions**

- make generalizations or draw implications from tested relationship
- Example, based on the findings of the research, the researcher may conclude that children who watch violent videos develop aggressive behaviour than those who don’t

- **Step five - Reporting Results**

- **Sharing the results to the concerned bodies…**