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….

oThe 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

oit 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

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).

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

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- **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

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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

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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.

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- **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.

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- 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.

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- ***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.

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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)

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II. Case 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…**