

When psychology was first established as a science separate from biology and philosophy, the debate over how to describe and explain the human mind and behavior began. The different schools of psychology represent the major theories within psychology

## Major Schools of Thought

### 1. Structuralism

Structuralism was founded by the **Wilhelm Wundt**. He was a German physician, physiologist, philosopher, and professor, who noted psychology as a science apart from biology and philosophy; He is widely regarded as the "father of experimental psychology". In 1879, Wundt founded the first formal laboratory for psychological research at the University of Leipzig. This marked psychology as an independent field of study. The school of psychology that Wundt began and championed all his life is referred to as "structuralism". For this reason, Wundt is often referred to as the **father** of structuralism.

Structuralism is widely regarded as the first school of thought in psychology. The focus of structuralism was on breaking down mental processes into the most basic components. The structuralists used techniques such as **introspection** to analyze the inner processes of the human mind.

**Introspection method:** Introspection is examination of one's own conscious thoughts and feelings. In psychology the process of introspection is the observation of one's mental state, while in a spiritual context, it may refer to the examination of one's soul.

Edward B. Titchener was a student of Wundt. He worked with Wundt's on experimental psychology. He translated "Principles of Physiological Psychology" into English. He develops structuralism based on the ideas or concepts of his teacher. Titchener and his teacher both tried to describe the structure of mind with the help of introspection method. Wundt emphasizes the study of consciousness and its components:

#### Consciousness

The normal state of being awake and able to understand what is happening around you, it represents a person's mind and thoughts. In psychology of sensations, perceptions, ideas, attitudes, and feelings of which an individual or a group is aware at any given time. Your conscious experiences are constantly shifting and changing.

#### Sensation

Sensation refers to sensing our environment through touch, taste, sight, sound, and smell (the 5 senses). Sensation is something you feel.

#### Perception

Perception is the way which we interpret these sensations and therefore make sense of everything around us. Perception occurs when your brain gets involved, and you assimilate what you sense into an experience. Perception is something you see. Sensation couldn't exist without perception and perception couldn't exist without sensation. They're not the same but they're related. e.g, you can feel the piece of paper and you can see it.

#### Thoughts

Thought can refer to the ideas or arrangements of ideas that result from thinking, the act or process of producing thoughts. Despite the fact that thought is a fundamental human activity familiar to everyone.

#### Emotions

A mental state that arises spontaneously rather than through conscious effort and is often accompanied by physiological changes. It is a conscious mental reaction (as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as strong feeling usually directed toward a specific object and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioral changes in the body.

### 2. Functionalism

This school founded by the American psychologist **William James**, became prominent in the 1900s. Functionalism formed as a reaction to the theories of the structuralism school of thought and was influenced by the work of William James. James studied that how humans and animals use mental states, what the mind does; the functions of mental activity, and the role of behavior in people which adapt to their environments. Major functionalist thinkers included:

- **John Dewey**
- **Harvey Carr**

### 3. Behaviorism

**John B. Watson** was the first person to advocate the behavioral approach named **behaviorism**. It became a dominant school of thought during the 1950s. It was based upon the work of thinkers such as:

- **John B. Watson**
- **Ivan Pavlov**
- **B. F. Skinner**

This school of psychology was focused on observable behavior. Behaviorism suggests that all behavior can be explained by environmental causes rather than by internal forces.

### 4. Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalytic is a school of psychology founded by **Sigmund Freud**. This school of thought focused on the influence of the **unconscious mind** on behavior.

The term Freud used for both his theory of personality and his therapy for the treatment of psychological disorders; the unconscious is the primary focus of psychoanalytic theory.

Freud believed that the human mind was composed of three elements: **the id, the ego, and the superego.**

- **Anna Freud**
- **Carl Jung**
- **Erik Erikson**

### 5. **Cognitive School of Psychology**

Cognitive psychology is the school of psychology founded by Jean Piaget that studies mental processes including how people think, perceive, remember and learn. That sees humans as active participants in their environment; studies mental processes such as memory, problem solving, reasoning, decision making, perception, language, and other forms of cognition.

#### **Memory**

The encoding, storage, and retrieval process in the human mind of past experiences and events.

#### **Reasoning**

The human ability to use facts, logic, science, math, etc. Find solutions to practical and intellectual problems.

**Problem-solving** is a mental process that involves discovering, analyzing and solving problems.

- Identify the issues.
- Understand everyone's interests.
- List the possible solutions (options)
- Evaluate the options.
- Select an appropriate option

**Decision-Making** is regarded as the cognitive process resulting in the selection of a belief or a course of action among several alternative possibilities.

The **stages of cognitive development** theory proposed by **Jean Piaget.**

### 6. **Gestalt School of Psychology**

Gestalt school of psychology founded by **Max Wertheimer** based upon the idea and experience that we perceive objects and patterns as whole units and that the perceived whole is more than the sum of its parts. This approach to psychology began in Germany and Austria during the late 19th century in response to the approach of structuralism.