

Introduction to Human Behavior

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Key concepts, major theories, and practical implications

1. What Is Human Behavior?

Aspect	Description
Definition	The range of actions, thoughts, and emotions displayed by individuals in response to internal drives and external stimuli.
Scope	Includes observable actions (e.g., speaking, walking) and internal processes (e.g., motivation, cognition).
Levels of Analysis	- Biological (neurochemical, genetic) - Psychological (cognition, emotion) - Social (culture, group dynamics) - Environmental (situational cues, physical context)

2. Foundations of the Study of Human Behavior

Discipline	Core Focus	Typical Methods
Psychology	Mental processes & individual differences	Experiments, surveys, neuroimaging
Sociology	Social structures & group influence	Observations, ethnography, statistical analysis
Anthropology	Cultural patterns across societies	Fieldwork, comparative studies
Biology/Neuroscience	Brain mechanisms & genetics	EEG, fMRI, genetic sequencing
Economics (Behavioral)	Decisionmaking & incentives	Game theory, field experiments

3. Major Theoretical Perspectives

Perspective	Central Idea	Representative Theorists	Key Concepts
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Behaviorism	Behavior is shaped by external reinforcement and punishment.	B.F. Skinner, John Watson	Classical & operant conditioning
Cognitive Psychology	Mental representations and information processing drive behavior.	Jean Piaget, Ulric Neisser	Schemas, mental models, cognitive load
Humanistic	People are intrinsically motivated toward growth and self-actualization.	Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers	Hierarchy of needs, unconditional positive regard
Social Learning (Social Cognitive)	Observation and modeling influence behavior; cognition mediates.	Albert Bandura	Reciprocal determinism, self-efficacy
Evolutionary Psychology	Behaviors are adaptations that increased reproductive success.	Leda Cosmides, John Tooby	Adaptive problems, kin selection
Psychodynamic	Unconscious drives and early experiences shape behavior.	Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung	Id, ego, superego; defense mechanisms
Cultural/Contextual	Culture provides meaning and norms that guide behavior.	Lev Vygotsky, Geert Hofstede	Cultural scripts, collectivism vs. individualism

4. Core Processes Influencing Behavior

1. Motivation

- **Intrinsic** (interest, mastery) vs. **Extrinsic** (rewards, penalties).
- Theories: Maslow's hierarchy, Self-Determination Theory (autonomy, competence, relatedness).

2. Emotion

- Affects judgment, decision-making, and social interaction.
- Models: James-Lange (physiology → emotion), Cannon-Bard (simultaneous), Schachter-Singer (cognitive appraisal).

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3. Cognition

- Perception, attention, memory, problem solving, and reasoning.
- Dual-process models: System 1 (fast, automatic) vs. System 2 (slow, deliberative).

4. Social Influence

- **Conformity, obedience, social norms, persuasion.**
- Classic studies: Asch line judgment, Milgram obedience, Zimbardo