

Chapter 1: Introduction to Psychology

Is Psychology a Science?

Psychology: the scientific study of behavior and mental processes

A field of study qualifies as a science if it uses the scientific method to acquire knowledge.

Scientific method: A systematic procedure that researchers follow.

1. Observe and theorize
 - a. **Theory:** a general principle or set of principles proposed to explain how a number of separate facts are related.
2. Formulate a hypothesis
 - a. **Hypothesis:** a testable prediction about the conditions under which a particular behavior or mental process may occur.
3. Design a study
4. Collect data
5. Apply results to the hypothesis
 - a. **Replication:** the process of repeating a study to verify research findings.

The Goals of Psychology

There are four broad goals:

- **Description:** identifying and classifying behaviors and mental processes as accurately as possible
- **Explanation:** proposing reasons for behaviors and mental processes
- **Prediction:** offering predictions (or hypotheses) about how a given condition or set of conditions will affect behaviors and mental processes
- **Influence:** using the results of research to solve practical problems that involve behavior and mental processes

Two types of research help psychologists accomplish these goals:

- **Basic research:** research conducted to seek new knowledge and to explore and advance general scientific understanding
- **Applied research:** research conducted specifically to solve practical problems and improve the quality of life

Exploring Psychology's Roots

Psychology became a science in the 19th century when people who wanted to learn more about behavior and mental processes began to use the scientific method.

Structuralism and Functionalism

3 german scientists, Ernst Weber, Gustav Fechner, and Hermann von Helmholtz were

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Shane R. Thye, Edward J. Lawler



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