

Determinism vs Free will

Determinism

Our internal mental processes and schemas have an impact on our behaviour, e.g. your schemas may be determined by your use of social media. However, there is some free will in the cognitive approach. Both therapies (CBT and REBT) suggest that you can change your thought processes.

This is both a strength and weakness of the approach. It is a strength as it allows psychologists and individuals to know what is causing behaviour, this can then lead to therapeutic interventions. However, it may be a weakness as some people feel that due to their behaviour being determined, they have no control over their own actions.

Reductionism vs Holism

Reductionist

The cognitive approach suggests that human behaviour is dominated by the processes of the mind. Therefore, the approach does not take into account other factors such as the role of emotions or social influences.

Taking a reductionist view could be considered as both a strength and weakness of the approach. The benefit is that it offers a detailed look at individual factors (cognition). However, it does mean that other factors are not taken into account, this may lead to an incomplete picture of human behaviour.

Applications

Applications

The cognitive approach is one of the most successful approaches in psychology. Many of the theories and research from the cognitive approach has drastically improved many areas of society, e.g. cognitive therapies are frequently used around the world.

This is a strength of the approach as it has benefited society across a range of areas, e.g. health and the justice system.

Idiographic vs Nomothetic

Nomothetic

The assumptions of the cognitive approach are applicable to many people. The concepts proposed, such as how our minds work like computers, suggest that all minds work in a similar way.

Being nomothetic can be seen as a strength and a weakness. By having ideas that apply to many people the approach allows itself to be useful for everyone. However, the approach can be criticised for ignoring the role of individual differences. Is it likely that everyone's mind works in the same way?

Nature vs Nurture

Interactionist

The approach does acknowledge both nature and nurture. Many of our internal mental processes are innate (memory) but some of our knowledge is a product of our environment (schemas influenced by our surroundings).

Taking into account the role of both innate and environmental factors can be seen as a strength. It results in a more complete picture of how cognition impacts human behaviour.

Scientific nature

Scientific

The cognitive approach is considered a scientific approach. The use of controlled experiments, e.g. Loftus and Palmer, mean many of the concepts are replicable, objective, and falsifiable.

This is a strength of the approach as the use of scientific methods add credibility to the approach. In turn, this can lead to wider acceptance of the ideas in society and an increase of funding.