

2 ib psychology

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Examine the contribution of the humanistic perspective as an alternative approach to the psychological study of human behaviour.

Key words: contribution, alternative approach to the psychological study of human behaviour.

Contribution: what has humanistic psychology given to

alternative approach to the study of human behaviour: in what way is the humanistic perspective different from the other perspectives....(e.g. learning perspective).

Command term: examine (this means according to the guide: investigate an argument or concept and present their own analysis. Students should approach the question in a critical and detailed way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue).

Introduction:

something about humanistic psychology as the 'third force' in psychology and a reaction against...(mention here previous paradigms)..and a brief outline of the essence of what you're going to say in the essay but focus here on the differences between the previous paradigms. Perhaps it would be wise to mention Maslow and Rogers here but also say that you'll focus specifically on Rogers' theory of the self because it is very representative of the alternative approach and that there is more empirical research in relation to his theory. State very briefly at the end some contributions like 'self-theory' based on phenomenology and subjective experience, use of alternative methods in research and therapy and how 'freedom' was part of the Zeitgeist in the USA and the West which is why issues of cultural bias can be raised.

Development

- focus on alternative areas of interest: phenomenology, the human experience and potential for growth _ new theories and concepts related to self and the human experience: self-concept (Rogers self-actualisation). Analysis: show how this is different to other paradigms and say why it is so.... Include a study here, e.g. Darley and Fazio (1980) on how self-concept is maintained by others. Role of congruence and self-esteem in the theory; 'self-esteem' can be measured, e.g. Coopersmith 'self-esteem inventory'. Analysis: All this points at the heavy focus on 'self' and relation to 'individualistic cultures'.
- Alternative to focus on free will in psychology at the time. Free will based on the assumption that humans can change and direct their energies towards self actualisation instead of determinism- only determined if not congruent. But what is freedom and are humans really free? what about poverty and illness?
- Alternative to traditional directive therapies: Great contribution in client-centred therapy because non-directive, focus on clients' own experiences and interpretations and possible to change. Analysis: considerable influence on therapy as such because it is now widely acknowledged the importance of humans own interpretation of what happens to them. Outcome research based on changes in self-esteem (q-sort). link to next paragraph

- focus on alternative methods: Very important break with traditional psychological research and many did not consider humanistic research for scientific. Because of the new areas of research based on the individual new methods were introduced
 - use of qualitative methods (e.g. interview and q-sort which is outcome research (outcome of therapy) (as a contrast to experiments and control, i.e. quantitative research), basically the difference between idiographic and nomothetic.
 - clinical interview: say something about this method in general, and that the clinical interview was used by Rogers to collect research data also; then evaluate strengths of the hum. approach here and relate this to what you said about client-centred therapy earlier
 - triangulation _richer data, e.g. Coopersmith (1967) used several methods to investigate background of 'self-esteem'. Evaluation: sample bias and cultural bias but probably useful in terms of interpreting Western behaviour.
- Evaluation: hum. psy. very much a Western phenomenon. The focus on the self and self-esteem typical for 'individualistic cultures' (and not for collectivistic) so this may limit the interpretation of behaviour from a humanistic viewpoint. For example, self-esteem is not a very useful measure in Japan where (say something here about problems in using the 'self' and self-esteem here). It has been seen though, that in the process of modernisation humanistic concepts such as self-esteem and self-esteem inventories have been successfully used in a population from Hong Kong. This could be interpreted in terms of.....
- Conclusion:
 - humanistic psychology given 'the human being' back to psychology, i.e. the focus on human experience and 'the free will' and belief in the goodness of humans.
 - humanistic research influenced the return to qualitative research and humanistic psy raised the issue of how you can study the human experience in a scientific way.