

V. G. J. 18.02.2026

Ques] What is structuralism? Point out the differences between structuralism & Functionalism  
 or Discuss the differences between structural Psychology and Functional psy. with special reference to the subject matter, method & uses. or Compare & Contrast structuralism with functionalism. Discuss their present status. or Discuss the relative Contributions of structuralism & Functionalism to the <sup>evolutionary</sup> growth of psychology?

Ans. I ~~Ans~~ Structuralism & Functionalism

Structuralism and functionalism are two basic schools of psychology. Structuralism developed under the leadership of Wundt & Titchener in Germany. Functionalism on the other hand developed under the leadership of Dewey, Angell & Carr in America. Functionalism is meant such school which deals with the structural components of conscious experience. It deals with simple & the what aspect and the flow aspect of conscious experience.

Wundt established the first psychological laboratory at Leipzig in 1879. He accepted conscious exper. as the subject matter of psycho. & introspection as its method. He stated that psycho. aims at analyzing the structural components or elements of consciousness. So his structural psy. is called elemental psycho. or simple psy. He said that there are three elements of consciousness.

Structuralism and functionalism are two basic schools of psychology. Structuralism developed under the leadership of Wundt & Titchener in Germany. Functionalism on the other hand developed under the leadership of Dewey, Angell & Carr in America. Functionalism is meant such school which deals with the structural components of conscious experience. It deals with simple & the what aspect and the flow aspect of conscious experience. Wundt established the first psychological laboratory at Leipzig in 1879. He accepted conscious exper. as the subject matter of psycho. & introspection as its method. He stated that psycho. aims at analyzing the structural components or elements of consciousness. So his structural psy. is called elemental psycho. or simple psy. He said that there are three elements of consciousness.

Which are sensation, feelings & image.  
Structuralism because of all these three elements  
in consciousness of these structuralism is also called  
"elementalism". (2)

are sensation, feeling & image. Every  
conscious experience is structured by these  
three elements. However conscious exper is  
not the summation of these elements  
rather it is the unique integration of  
these elements. Due to the function

Wundt found that  
due to functioning  
& mental chemistry  
of conscious  
experiences structure  
is unique. He explained it on the basis of  
the law of psychic resultant as the princi-  
ple of creative synthesis. Wundt (1896)  
remarked "Every <sup>psychic</sup> compound has  
chs. which are by no means the mere  
sum of the chs. of the elements". The

Wundtian system was carried over by  
Litchner to Britain & America. He tried  
his level best to popularise structural  
psychology in face of functionalism, he  
could not succeed in his mission.

There are <sup>some</sup> several points of differ-  
ence between structuralism & functionalism.

Firstly, both struc & func.  
accepted conscious exper. as the subject  
matter of psycho. Like Wundt & Litchner,  
Dewey & his associates too accepted that  
conscious experience is the subject-matter  
of psycho. Secondly, the existence of  
introspection was accepted both by the  
structural psychologists & the functional psy-  
chologists. It is another thing that Euro-  
pean functionalists did not accept intro-

rejection of the  
psychology  
of the  
approach to the  
subject matter of  
psychology

in toto. Thirdly, both the schools had similar objectives & wanted to understand the actual subject-matter of psycho. Both the supporters of struc. & those of functionalism rejected the philosophical approach to the subject-matter of psychology.

Structure vs  
functionalism  
aspect  
Differences  
between the  
two schools  
of matter  
the basic diff  
between the two  
schools is as regards  
the subject matter  
of psychology  
that is the  
structuralist  
emphasised on  
the structural  
aspect of  
consciousness while  
Functionalists  
tried to see  
functional aspect  
of consciousness

However in spite of these similarities between structuralism & functionalism there are several differences / between the two which need a mention here.

The difference related to ~~the~~ sub. matter of psycho is a basic diff. between struc. & func.

It is true that both the structural psychologists & functional psychologists accepted Conscious experience as the sub.-matter of psycho. But it is also true that they differ widely regarding the psychological approach to the study of Consciousness.

The supporters of Structuralism emphasised simply the structural aspect of Conscious experience. They did not bother about the functional aspect of Consciousness. On the other hand the supporters of functionalism emphasised the functional aspect of Consciousness & also recognised the existence of Consciousness.

The supporters of structuralism (Wundt & Titchner) accepted a more analytical approach to the subject.

The structuralist made an early attempt to divide consciousness into its diff. elements or components.

Wundt (1879) analysed consciousness into three components namely the sensation component, the feeling component & the image component. On the other hand the supporters of functionalism such as Dewey, Angell & Carr made somewhat eclectic approach to the sub. matter of psycho. They did not attach much importance to the structural components of consciousness. They attached much importance to the integrative func. of the components of the consciousness.

The structural psychologists accepted simply the existential value of conscious experience. They were satisfied with the existential analyses of the components of consciousness. They did not attach any importance to the practical aspect of consciousness. On the other hand the functionalists attached greater importance to the practical aspect of consciousness. However the Chicago functionalists were liberal enough to accept the existential importance of consciousness as well but the European functionalist such as Katz, Rubin & others were rigid enough to accept the existential value of consciousness.

Structuralism was simply concerned with only the two aspects of consciousness - what aspect & how aspect.

The structuralist made an early attempt to divide consciousness into its diff. elements or components. Wundt (1879) analysed consciousness into three components namely the sensation component, the feeling component & the image component. On the other hand the supporters of functionalism such as Dewey, Angell & Carr made somewhat eclectic approach to the sub. matter of psycho. They did not attach much importance to the structural components of consciousness. They attached much importance to the integrative func. of the components of the consciousness.

The structural psychologists accepted simply the existential value of conscious experience. They were satisfied with the existential analyses of the components of consciousness. They did not attach any importance to the practical aspect of consciousness. On the other hand the functionalists attached greater importance to the practical aspect of consciousness. However the Chicago functionalists were liberal enough to accept the existential importance of consciousness as well but the European functionalist such as Katz, Rubin & others were rigid enough to accept the existential value of consciousness.

Structuralism was simply concerned with only the two aspects of consciousness - what aspect & how aspect.

Structural Psychology was concerned with two aspects of the mind that aspects of consciousness were functionalist view interested in all the time aspects like what how why aspects (5)

Wundt & Titchener limited to understand a: to what are the components of consciousness & how are they composed of. On the other hand Dewey & other functionalists tried to understand all the three aspects that is what, How & Why. They put greatest importance on the why aspect of consciousness. Thus Woodworth & Sheehan have said "A psy. that attempts to give give an accurate & systematic answer to the ques. What do men do? And then go on to the questions, how do they do it & and why do they do it?, is called a functional psychology."

Introspection with varied conditions method

It is obvious that there are sharp differences between structuralism & functionalism in respect of the sub. matter of psycho.

Differences in regions of the methodology of the structural psychologists accepted introspection as sole method of psychology where as functionalists accepted introspection as sole method of psycho. but on the other hand the functional psychologists accepted both introspection of varied condition method in the study of conscious experience

The difference related to methodology - The second major diff. between struc. & func. is in respect of methodology. The structural psychologists accepted introspection as the sole method of psycho. They stressed that conscious experience can be studied only by introspection. They did not accept any other method in addition to introspection as the method of psycho. but on the other hand the functional psychologists accepted both introspection of varied condition method in the study of conscious experience.

It should be noted here that there have been two branches of



Why to study the abnormal people in addition to normal adults.

abnormal people in addition to normal adults.

(3) So it is obvious that there are clear differences between structuralism & functionalism in respect of methodology as well.

Difference as regards Usage or utility (3)

The difference related to Usage - The third major diff. between structuralism & functionalism lies in the Utility of these two schools. Structuralism has been wholly subjective & hence its utility has been highly limited. It has been concerned with the internal aspect of consciousness which has not much importance in science.

(1) Limited wider use of the Structural School is wholly subjective to consciousness & hence its utility and functional School is objective so it has wider utility usage in

On the other hand functionalism has been more objective and so it has great importance in the growth of psycho.

(2) Structuralism functionalism accepted only the structural value of consciousness while functionalism emphasized the functional value of consciousness.

The supporters of structuralism have accepted only the structural value of consciousness whereas the functionalists have emphasized the functional value of consciousness. The Chicago functionalists stated that Consciousness has its own importance in the dev. of human beings.

Woodworth & Sheehan have remarked "like James the early Chicago functionalist accepted the definition of psy. as the sc. of Consciousness & held that conscious processes should be studied not only as existential facts but also as playing their parts in the dev. of indiv. in adaptation to the environment."

③ The Americanism & functionalism. The combination of these two led to the second growth of psychology and many schools like Gestalt, behaviorism, etc. developed. It is obvious that functionalism has contributed a lot to the scientific growth of psycho. in comparison to structuralism. The Germanic psycho, behaviorism & operationalism have developed under the influence of functionalism. Even Gestalt psycho. has much debt to the European functionalism.

In spite of these <sup>three</sup> major differences between the two schools there are some minor differences or surface differences between the two.

④ The minor differences between the two schools are as follows:  
 1) Structuralism was developed in Germany in 1879 whereas functionalism was originated in Chicago in 1899 & spread to other countries.  
 2) Structuralism was revived in old content psychology whereas functionalism was revived in old content psychology.

The 1st surface diff. is that structuralism developed earlier than functionalism. Structuralism originated in (1879) & was established as a systematic school in 1898. On the other hand func. was originated in 1899. The second diff. is that structuralism developed in Germany & could not spread over other countries of the world. It was originated in Leipzig & was brought to Britain by Titchner. Titchner tried his best to make this school popular but he failed. On the other hand func. was originated & developed in Chicago & soon spread over other countries.

The third diff. is that structuralism was the revival of old content psycho. because like content psy. struc. psy. also put emphasis on the study of the contents of the consciousness. On the other hand func. was the revival of old act psy. because both were revival of functional psy.

put emphasis on functional aspect of consciousness.

⑦ The structural school is rigid as they regard consciousness as subject matter of psychology & introspection is its method. It is liberal because it accepts various conditions & method of psychology & consciousness.

The fourth diff. between the two is - struc. has been rigid where as func. has been liberal. The supported struc. did not accept either function of consciousness or varied condition method. They simply concerned with the structure of consciousness & introspection. On the other hand Chicago functionalist recognized even existential value of consciousness & introspection.

In the light of above facts we can conclude that the structural school has not died out. It is still very much in the hands of the functionalists. We can say that the two schools have been bridged up & have come much closer. We can conclude that structuralism has died out. It is still survived by its introspection. The method of introspection is still in practise in several names such as verbal report, method of impressions & the like. Boring (1956) has very rightly declared. "Although the method is still in doing business under various names of which verbal report is one." For

Thus we find that there are several substantial differences & surface diff. between the two schools. It is also obvious that functionalism has contributed greater than structuralism to the science of psychology. The growth of psych. but the present status of these two schools indicates that the gap between the two has been bridged up & the two schools have come much closer. It will be wrong to conclude that structuralism has died out. It is still survived by its introspection. The method of introspection is still in practise in several names such as verbal report, method of impressions & the like. Boring (1956) has very rightly declared. "Although the method is still in doing business under various names of which verbal report is one." For

(10)

Psychology is ~~not~~ functionalist  
or broad minded behaviorist!

has undergone rapid changes & its shape has so much changed that it is difficult to isolate or identify a pure func. psychologists. (Woodworth & Sheehan have remarked. "We have some doubt whether to classify Michotte & Katz with the functional or gestalt school, & in other cases we should hesitate whether to class some psychologists as a functionalist or as a broad minded behaviorist.")