# Psychological Perspectives Of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (COD)

#### Part (a)

'Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is a form of anxiety where the person has thoughts, images or ideas which they find hard to ignore (obsessions). This can lead to them feeling that they have a need to perform certain things to feel better (compulsions).

Most people worry, about something or other, all the time, and have routines and things they like to do in a particular way. It’s when the thoughts or actions start to affect a person’s everyday life that it’s considered to be OCD. Around one per cent of children and young people suffer from OCD. So in a secondary school of 1000 students there may be 10 people with OCD.

There are lots of different types of OCD. For some people it’s the same worrying thoughts or images that keep coming into their head – the ‘obsessions’ which they feel they have to ‘cancel out’ in some way with other thoughts. Other people feel the need to do things in order to stop or alleviate the thoughts (compulsions or rituals). '

Using a table like the one below, identify and analyse the key characteristics of 4 psychological perspectives that could be used to explain the cause of an obsessive compulsive disorder.

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| Psychological perspective | Key characteristics of perspective to explain cause of OCD | Analysis of the perspective to effectively explain the cause of OCD |
| Psychodynamic perspective  This psychodynamic perspective of psychology states that every human behavior is influenced by certain unconscious factors. According to Inbar and Lammers (2012) the Freud’s Psychoanalytic Theory explains that human behavior is the outcome of three psychodynamic factors of personality that are Id, Ego and Superego. The psychodynamic perspective also involves other factors like family, life events, difficulties and experience that develop human behavior. | This perspective has explanatory power for human behavior  Explain the cause of conflict between intrapsychic forces and consciousness  The perspective states that human development is performed by psychosexual stages where these stages are dependent on specific behavior and psychodynamic developments (Overduin and Furnham, 2012). | Strength  OCD is a behavioural defect and the psychodynamics perspective proves that these behavioral defects are outcome of defect in human psychology occurring due to changes in human living factors and activities (Angelakis et al. 2015).  Weakness  This perspective does not involve a scientific experimental approach to prove psychodynamics as a cause of OCD.  Evidential Studies  The obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (OCPD) is considered as an initiator of obsessive-compulsive disorder. There are other psychodynamic factors like a family, experience and events that causes OCD (Young et al. 2013). The activities in the family like worry, tense environment, the burden of responsibility and distress causes OCD to be developed in conscious of people. Lastly, the life events and experiences act as triggering factor that leads to OCD (Harris and Cranney, 2012). |
| Sociocultural perspective  This perspective states that human behavior is the outcome of its social setting, environmental signals, social burdens and cultural circumstances. The manipulations in sociocultural factors can negatively or positively influence human behavior.  These social and cultural factors included race, religion, gender, sexuality, and social standards of humans (Overduin and Furnham, 2012). | This perspective helps to understand variation in environmental conditions of people  It explains the impact of outer environment on inner conscious of mankind  This perspective helps to understand social basis of human behavior and personality development  This determines the importance of social factors in human life (Cowan and Swearer, 2011). | Strength  The different cultures reveal similar occurrence rates and surprising reliability in the content and forms of obsessions and compulsions    Weakness  The symptoms of OCD vary from culture to culture or on the basis of social differences (Campbell and Longhurst, 2013).  Evidential Studies  But as per studies of Lewin et al. (2009) the social-cultural factors construct the OCD expression but there is no direct evidence for the impact of social cultural factors on the development of OCD.  The social differences of people determine their habit for any particular act. Therefore, the socio-cultural background is essential to be analysed before predicting OCD. |
| Behavioral Perspective  The behavioral perspective makes it understand that abnormal behavior is sometimes the outcome of cognitive factors like feelings, thoughts, thinking and analysis. These factors control the conscious of mind and manipulate it according to developed prospects. The Cognitively Based Theory states that cognitions develop behaviours. These positive and negative developments of cognitive factors completely depend on conscious of human mind developing experience and analysing the stimuli (Moritz et al. 2010). | This perspective explains the importance of thinking and thought process in human behavior  The role of external stimuli on developing positive and negative thought process is determined by behavior perspective  This perspective works as a powerful tool to understand behaviorism (Rees and Anderson, 2013). | Strength  This perspective indicates that OCD sufferes have a strong conscious developed for their thinking process, which indicates that obsession and complusions put a deep impact on person’s conscious (Inbar and Lammers (2012).  Weakness  This perspective does not carry any scientific or experimental approach for its explanation as a cause of OCD.  Evidential studies  It is experimentally stated that 80% people suffering from OCD holds a stronger belief about their thoughts when compared with people without OCD.  The development of strong though process for any kind of obsession leads to compulsion and OCD development in the body (Moritz et al. 2010). |
| Biological Perspective  The biological perspective explains the biology of the nervous system and its relation with human behavior (Cowan and Swearer, 2011). The biological perspective states that nervous system along with hormones regulates our thought process, which determines human behavior. Any kind of malfunction in nervous system activities leads to the development of abnormality (Griffiths et al. 2011). | This perspective helps in understanding biology of human brain  More logical approach for understanding human behavior | Strength  The biological perspective provides scientific explanation to cause of OCD. There are various biological factors experimental proved to be the causes of OCD.  Weakness  Along with OCD these biological factors show link with other abnormalities as well. Therefore, it is difficult to relay only on biological perspective as cause of OCD.    Evidential studies  The people suffering from Tourette’s syndrome have 50% chances to develop OCD. The individual having OCD has four times increased chances to have another family member with the same disease (Marini and Stebnicki, 2012). It is been experimentally proved in research of Guo et al. (2014) that OCD sufferers have different blood flow patterns in the brain when compared to the normal individual.  The orbital gyrus and caudate nucleus head of people suffering from OCD differ from normal individual visualized by brain imaging process. |

#### Part (b)

For two of the perspectives named in Part a, one from either Psychodynamic or cognitive and the other from either Biological or behaviourism using a table like the one below evaluate the evidence which you have used to support each perspective.

### Introduction:

The Obsessive-compulsive Disorder (OCD) is considered as a type of anxiety disorder when people suffer from certain ‘obsession’ that includes undesirable and repetitive sensations, feelings, views, images or behaviors (Murphy, 2010). This study particularly focuses on analysing the psychological perspectives that can explain the aetiology of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.

#### Part (a)

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| Psychological perspective | Brief description of study | Evaluation of the data gathering methods used by each perspective (AC2.2) |
| Biological perspective | This experimental study performed by Guo et al. (2014) explores the link between cerebral region blood flow and behavior of people suffering from OCD. It is been evidentially proved in this study that high rate of blood flow in body leads to development of OCD. The experiment involved the performance of Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography (SPECT) process on 139 patients of OCD and 139 controls without OCD. Further, the radioactivity rate (RAR) was calculated to determine results.  It was analysed that RAR value of OCD patient’s was high when compared with RAR value of the control sample. The prefrontal, right occipital and anterior temporal region of the brain showed high RAR in OCD patients.  This experiment concluded that OCD patients have high cerebral blood flow when compared with cerebral blood flow of normal individuals. This experiment supports the biological perspective as an explanation to obsessive-compulsion disorder. | The experiment involved collection of samples that was 139 OCD patients from Psychiatric Department of the First Affiliated Hospital, Zhengzhou University.  The quantitative data collection method was adopted in research that was SPECT and RAR outcome of 139 patients suffering from OCD. The collected data was analysed by SPSS and results indicated higher blood flow rate of patients suffering from OCD (Guo et al. 2014).  This evidential prove is valid and reliable because scientific experimental method (SPECT and RAR value) were adopted to analyse the data. The use of SPECT is ethically valued in medical science as authentic method to determine blood flow rate. |
| Psychodynamic Perspective | This study of Young et al. (2013) involves analysis of ten reviews that establish a positive relationship between OCPD and OCD indicating the results favouring OCPD as the cause of obsessive-compulsion disorder. However, out of ten experimental reviews, there were three reviews that do not favour relationship or favour negative relation between the two but seven review literature based on treatment factors, specific interventions with patients, case studies, clinical assessment tools etc. indicate that OCPD and OCD share a positive relation in anorexia nervosa patients. | This systematic review was studied where ten study papers were collected as per mentioned criteria  Papers were written in the English language  Participants fulfil DSM or ICD diagnosis process  Patients had OCPD traits or OCD symptoms  No sample discrimination on basis of gender and age of participants  In this study the qualitative data collection method was adopted to analyse 10 review articles from electronic sources like Medline, Psyinfo and web.  The collected literature articles were analysed by researchers with cross-sectional to surveying and quasi-experimental approach.  Paper published in any year were collected that fulfilled the data collection criteria  The data was analysed by adopting methods for characteristics, outcome measures and quality measures for results of individual studies, which indicated a positive relationship between OCPD and OCD in patients. |

### Conclusion

The above study performed to analyse the psychological perspective that provided a clear explanation to aetiology of obsessive-compulsion disorder. The four perspectives that explained the cause of OCD were psychodynamics, sociocultural, biological and behavioral perspectives. However, still there is limited research on psychology and aetiology of OCD but the evidence proves provided in this study for psychodynamic perspective and biological perspective clearly explains the psychological perspective of disorder aetiology.

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