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Original Research Article

Psychological meaning of psychology

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The objective of this study was to know what psychology means for people, since nowadays more and more paradigms are created about what psychology is. Today, there are several occupations that seem or appear to be like psychology, or that people, due to lack of information, can get confused with it. The present investigation corresponds to a descriptive study, with a non-experimental cross-sectional design. For the population, we worked with three samples, one was 35 students from the Autonomous Mexico State University (UAEMex), Tejupilco Professional Academic Unit who are studying a degree in psychology, another was 35 professionals between the UAEMex and the National Council for Teaching and Research in Psychology (CNEIP) who exercise their role as psychologists, and the other, 35 adults who had an occupation other than psychology, either profession or trade. The Natural Semantic Networks technique was used, whose main purpose is to approach the study of meaning in a natural way, the word PSYCHOLOGY was used as a stimulus and the phrases "Psychology is useful for ..." and "Psychology is ..." as illustrative sentences. to guide them to define the stimulus. For the results, the word that was repeated the most in the three samples was the defining word Help. This leads to saying that for people the first thing that comes to mind when they think of psychology is helping.

Key Words: Meaning, psychology, semantics, people, natural

INTRODUCTION

Each person has a concept or idea about what things are, objects, about what they know, this concept or idea arises from both empirical and theoretical knowledge. The meaning of psychology by itself maintains a root or a base. On the other hand, the psychological meaning of psychology for each person is personal, it is different and subjective. For each sample it is different, but, they have similarities. For professional psychologists, psychology has one meaning, for those who are still students it has another and for people who are outside the area of psychology it has another, which motivates them to find out what are those similarities that each sample has about the meaning of psychology.

Defining psychology and what it's entails, is becoming increasingly difficult and complex task. From the professional and academic point of view, it is not so much the disagreement, but the diversity that this generates. Establishing a single and universal conceptual definition of psychology has brought many controversies over many years, due to the diverse multiplicity of its different branches of study and the method used by each one of them. This is why, many may feel confused when entering to read the definitions that are enunciated in different books or that each author gives about it, it is worth mentioning that, in the conceptual and practical aspect -for everything-, the delimitation is a matter as high a priority as it is basic (Mayor and Pérez, 1989).

In people's minds there are many meanings, but not all of them are there because they have ever had direct physical contact, in this age of communication information can be obtained through multiple ways, including ICTs and discourses. media. The meanings are vulnerable to constant changes, but they maintain a relative stability, which makes it possible to maintain a coherence between those already established and those that are emerging. Meaning not only serves to communicate what is thought about a concept, since, as it leaves a direct mark on the subject, it modifies their behavior and directs the actions that the stimulus represents (Mead, 1993).

The relevance of natural semantic networks is that the hierarchies obtained from the subjects are generated from their semantic memory, and the order in which they are arranged is based on their values. These taxonomies arise after a search for

words that the subject does in his memory and then select those that are most related to the concept (stimulus word). All this is a subjective process around the word (Zermeño et al., 2005).

The relationships between semantic memory and episodic memory are those that facilitate the understanding of the structure of memory and the way in which meanings can be associated. Semantic memory is what houses knowledge about language and symbols, it can be considered as a dictionary and an encyclopedia (Smith, 1976; Tulving, 1972). On the other hand, episodic memory is built by the knowledge of the events that mark a temporal-spatial reference that is identified with the empirical knowledge of the person (McKoon et al., 1986).

If this technique facilitates knowing the psychological meaning of objects, then it will also be useful to know the psychological meaning that both students and professionals of psychology and people with occupations other than psychology have about it.

It was decided to use this technique for its purpose, which Valdez (1998: 65) describes as: "approaching the study of meaning in a natural way, that is, directly with individuals, avoiding the use of artificial taxonomies created by researchers".

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present investigation was a descriptive, non-experimental study, with a cross-sectional design. The purpose of these designs is to collect data in a single moment, in a single time, describe variables, analyze their incidence and their interrelation at a given moment.

105 people participated, including male and female psychology students from UAEMex, professionals in psychology from UAEMex and CNEIP, and adults with occupations other than psychology, either profession or trade.

We worked with the Natural Semantic Networks technique which, whose fundamental purpose is to approach the study of meaning in a natural way, that is, directly from individuals. The word PSYCHOLOGY was used as a stimulus and the phrases "Psychology is used for:" and "Psychology is:" as illustrative sentences to guide them to define the stimulus, the subjects were asked to put 5 words that would define psychology for them and later they will place a hierarchy in number according to the order of importance for them. Based on the taxonomies obtained by all of them, the results of the five values or results were obtained;

- J value: It results from the total of defining words that were generated by the subjects to define the stimulus in question.
- M value: Result obtained from the multiplication of the frequency of appearance by the hierarchy obtained for each of the defining words generated by the subjects.
- SAM set: It is an indicator of which were the fifteen most defining words that make up the central core of the network. It is the central core of the concept or stimulus (Valdez, 1998).
- FMG value: This value is obtained for all the defining words that made up the SAM set, through the simple rule of three, taking as a starting point that the defining word with the largest M value will present 100%.
- Semantic categories: These categories were proposed by Valdez and Hernández (1986) and Valdez and Reyes (1992), these are the part in which, based on the synonymy that some words have, a conjunction is made between them, taking the most general or the most common as the definitive. This leads to a decrease in the J value in the set Sam in the tables.

The participants who collaborated in the research were located and invited by electronic means for reasons of the Covid-19 pandemic and because several of them live in geographical areas far from each other. Likewise, the electronic test prepared in Google Forms was sent to them and the data was collected there.

RESULTS

Once the applications were carried out, the five main values or results were obtained, with which the information generated by the subjects could be analyzed.First, we worked with the results of each sample individually:

For the J value in the application of the test for this first sample it was a total of 64 words and the words with the highest M value were HELP with a value of 84 and ORIENT with a value of 27(Table 1).

For the semantic categories of the SAM set, a word conjunction was first made based on the synonymy that the fifteen words with the highest M value had, their values were added and the FMG value was obtained, which in the end only gave a total of 13 words for the value J, with HELP being the word with the highest hierarchy and LEARNING as the last one (Table 2).

Table 3 shows that the J value in the application of the test for the second sample was 62 words, and the words with the highest M value were HELP (72), and LOVE (53).

Table 4 shows the semantic categories of the SAM set. A word conjunction was first formed based on the synonymy of the fifteen words with the highest M value, their values were added, and the FMG value was obtained, yielding a result of 12 words for the value J, with HELP having the highest hierarchy and EMOTIONS having the lowest.

In Table 5, the J value in the application of the test for the third and final sample was a total of 73 words, and the words with the highest M value were HELP (35), and SCIENCE (24).

For the semantic categories of the SAM set, a word conjunction was first formed based on the synonymy of the fifteen words with the highest M value, their values were added, and the FMG value was obtained, yielding a result of 12 words for the value J, with HELP having the highest hierarchy and DISCIPLINE having the lowest(Table 6).

With the data obtained, a list of the five words that coincide in the three samples was created, with the word HELP serving as the defining word with the highest M value (Table 7).

Subsequently, with the same general results of the table, a semantic network was made, the words placed around the word that was defined, the shorter the line, the closer this word is to the stimulus (Figure 1).

DISCUSSION

In the first part of the introduction to this study, they talked about the meaning that each person gives to things, the psychological meaning, later it was specified that the psychological meaning of psychology was sought. Adding the values of the three samples, a J value of 199 was obtained, that is, 199 words were obtained among all participants to define psychology, which made a more complex process to be carried out when analyzing the results.

The results obtained in this research affirm that the semantic network technique allows a closer assessment of what people think about an event, according to factor analysis, the concepts associated with meanings are differentiated.

When giving a stimulus, the words that are most common for them are incorporated into people's cognitions, for example, it was found that the word Help is the most representative for people who think of the word psychology, verifying that that was the word highest. According to the authors Smith, 1976; Tulving, 1972, they mention that semantic memory is the one that houses knowledge about language, it can be considered as a dictionary and an encyclopedia, an event that was evidenced in the participants when asking about the word Psychology , they related it to the word help.

Table 1. Results of psychology students:

M and J value of psychology students

HIERARCHIES	1	2	3	4	5	
SEMANTIC VALUE (SV)	5	4	3	2	1	
DEFINING		VM				
help	9	4	6			81
guide	4		2		1	27
listen	3		1	1		20
hope		2	3	1	1	20
love		2	2	2	1	19
heal	2	1	1	1		19
understand		1	2	1		12
to get better		2	1			11
support		2		1	1	11
Useful			3			9
science	1			1	1	8
growing up		2				8
guide		1		2		8
smile			1	1	3	8
faith	1			1		7
learning	1				2	7
analyze			2	1		7
understand			1	1	2	7
investigate	1				1	6
to study			2			6
fight	1					5
behaviour	1					5
meet me	1					5
build up	1					5
interest	1					5
peace	1					5
fullness	1					5
Health	1					5
transcend	1					5
know		1			1	5
attitude		1				4
Act		1				4
contribute	1					4
fun	1					4
understand me	1					4
honesty	1					4
persons	1					4
rational	1					4
rebuild	1					4
to think			2			4
conduct		1				3
to meditate		1				3
world		1				3
patience		1				3
perceive		1				3
transform		1				3
confidence			1	1		3
motivation			1	1		3
change			1			2
behaviorism			1			2
look after			1			2
empathy			1			2
wonderful			1			2
relate			1			2
accompaniment				1		1
Calm down				1		1
condition				1		1
relief				1		1
documentation				1		1
increase				1		1
objectivity				1		1
personal				1		1
get it back				1		1
satisfy				1		1
J: 64						

Source: self made

According to Valdez (1998: 65) the purpose of the technique is: "to approach the study of meaning in a natural way, that is, directly with individuals avoiding the use of artificial taxonomies created by researchers", this is verified at the moment in which people define the word help with psychology having 216 in the value M.

For the second word closest to the stimulus, Understand, which can be said to be a procedure that is linked to both affective and cognitive experience. Grondin (2005) mentions: «Understanding, deep down, is not so much a" knowing "but rather an experience that sustains us and from which we nourish ourselves. It is the element in which we breathe and that allows us to understand each other and share our experiences "(p. 42). It enables dialogue with people and establish a fusion of horizons in order to reach a solution, not everyone can understand certain things, you have to be knowledgeable about the subject.

The third defining closest to the Psychology stimulus was Healing, which following the theory of Padovani (2003) "Healing is to promote a better, deeper understanding that our human and spiritual dynamics must complement each other and be in tune with each other. with the other, everything that our imperfect human condition allows, being a subjective character ", this people keep in mind and take into account psychology to be able to do it, that is why Sanar was one of the closest words to define psychology.

Science was the fourth closest defining word obtained to

Table 2. Semantic categories of the SAM set for psychology students

SET SAM	VALUE M	VALUE FMG
help	92	100%
guide	35	38.04%
hope	27	29.34%
understand	26	28.26%
listen	20	21.37%
heal	19	20.65%
love	19	20.65%
to get better	11	11.92%
Useful	9	9.78%
Growing up	8	8.69%
science	8	8.69%
smile	8	8.69%
learning	7	7.6%
J:13		

Source: self made

Table 3. Results of People with occupations other than the area of psychology

M and J values of people with occupations other than psychology

HIERARCHIES	1	2	3	4	5	
SEMANTIC VALUE (SV)	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
DEFINING						**VM**
help	9	3	2	3	3	72
love	1	3	1	1		53
understanding	3	1		2	3	26
heal	3	1	1			22
stability	2	1		1		16
science	2			3		16
peace		1	2	2		14
smile		2	1	1		13
hope		1	1	2	2	13
self-acceptance	2	1				11
recognize	2					10
reasoning	1	1				9
study	1			1	2	9
know		2			1	9
emotions	1		1			8
understand	1			1	1	8
analyze		1	1		1	8
release	1			1		7
mind		1	1			7
to get better			1	3		7
happiness	1		2		1	6
discipline		1		1		6
Liberty			1	1	1	6
talk	1					5
listen	1					5
test	1					5
empathy		1			1	5
guide			2		1	5
soul		1				4
awareness		1				4
conduct		1				4
discernment		1				4
meet		1				4
investigation		1				4
forgive		1				4
regulation	1					4
to breathe	1					4
Health	1					4
self-knowledge		2				4
support		1				3
esteem		1				3
clarify		1				3
communication		1				3
confidence		1				3
humano		1				3
sorry		1				3
process		1				3
reflect		1				3
overcome		1				3
behaviour			1			2
deal			1			2
fullness			1			2
tranquility			1			2
move along				1		1
wellness				1		1
cure				1		1
talk				1		1
medicine				1		1
methodology				1		1
chance				1		1
sort out				1		1
J:62						

Source: self made

psychology. Subjectivity aside, psychology makes use of selective techniques such as observation and correlation, to gather data and analyze them, but not only the description is enough, it also uses the why to explain the causes of the behavior, and once knowing them, it is possible to intervene in them in order to improve so much in the particular life of the person and socially (Arana et al., 2006).

For the fifth defining who was Smile, this is for many something normal in everyday life, but for others it is a triumph, something that is struggled to achieve. Smiling and joy can be perceived as a simple emotion "a temporary or partial satisfaction of the sensitivity" (Lalancle, 1967), "a fugitive encounter in the instant of eternity". "Joy has been considered by many philosophers as one of the passions of the soul" (Ferrater, 1965,). For Saint Augustine it was about a status where the soul is found, "full", "in exaltation and triumph" (Idem), in a state of plenitude. Following this theoretical line, Spinoza defined it as "the passage of man from a lesser perfection to a greater perfection" (p. 65). For Descartes, it was "a pleasant emotion of the soul" consisting of "the enjoyment he has of the good" (p. 65). On the other hand, Locke said that, "joy is a pleasure that the soul feels when it considers the possession of a present or future good as assured; and we are in possession of a good when it is in such a way in our power that we can enjoy it. him when we want "(p. 65). Therefore, all people seek peace, stability, joy, all people seek to smile, that is why this word is within the definition of psychology, since it can be a means to achieve it.

Szalay and Bryson (1974) refer to psychological meaning as the fundamental unit of the cognitive organization, which is composed of both affective elements and knowledge, which is subjective, therefore, it is the reflection of the image of the universe and culture. that each person has. Following these theoretical assumptions, there are authors such as Arana et al. (2006) who have studies where they state that there are people who say that psychologists are for crazy people or only for those who have

Table 4. Semantic categories of the SAM set of people with occupations other than psychology

SET SAM	VALUE M	VALUE FMG
help	72	100
love	53	73.61
understanding	51	70.83
stability	30	41.66
heal	22	30.55
self-acceptance	21	29.16
science	16	22.22
smile	13	18.05
hope	13	18.05
study	9	12.5
know	9	12.5
emotions	8	11.11
J:12		

Source: self made

Table 5. Results Psychology professionals

M and J value for professionals in psychology

HIERARCHIES	1	2	3	4	5	
SEMANTIC VALUE (SV)	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
DEFINING						**M**
help	3	2	1	4	1	35
science	4	1			1	24
support	1	2	1		1	17
Health	2	1				14
understand	1	1	1	1		14
growing up	1	1	2			12
analyze		3				12
meet	2				1	11
accompany	2			1		11
self-knowledge	1	1		1		11
conduct		2	1			11
guide		1	2		1	11
heal	2					10
happiness	1	1				9
to prevent	1	1				9
recognize	1	1				9
to accept	1		1			9
discipline	1			2		9
hope		2				8
guide	1			1		7
listen		1	1			7
emotion			2		1	7
understanding	1				1	6
rebuild		1		1		6
to get better				2	2	6
change	1					5
study	1					5
human	1					5
important	1					5
love			1	1		5
to motivate			1	1		5
develop			1		2	5
beliefs		1				4
foment		1				4
break free		1				4
get free		1				4
limits		1				4
sorry	1					4
profession	1					4
rehabilitate	1					4
empathy		1			1	4
harmony		1				3
goodness		1				3
reconcile		1				3
stability		1				3
strengthen		1				3
inquire		1				3
fullness		1				3
re-educate		1				3
I respect		1				3
to serve		1				3
medium		1				3
overcoming		1				3
transform		1				3
learning			1		2	3
attend			1			2
make aware			1			2
Balance			1			2
humanity			1			2
organic			1			2
passion			1			2
reinvent itself			1			2
feed back			1			2
smile			1			2
treat			1			2
quality					1	1
control					1	1
orientation					1	1
enhance					1	1
answers					1	1
sensitize					1	1
to work					1	1
J:73						

Source: self made

Table 6. Semantic categories of the SAM set of professionals in psychology

SET SAM	VALUE M	VALUE FMG
ayudar	52	100%
encontrarse	40	76.9%
comprender	26	50%
ciencia	24	46.15%
salud	24	46.15%
crecer	12	23.08%
acompañar	11	21.15%
conducta	11	21.15%
orientar	11	21.15%
prevenir	9	17.3%
felicidad	9	17.3%
disciplina	9	17.3%
J:12		

Source: self made

problems, but this vision, without being entirely erronea is only partial, the treatment of mental, educational and relationship problems are undoubtedly very important to treat them, but they are not the only occupations that psychology is responsible for. The word heal occupies the third place in the responses of the

Table 7.*General results*

METHOD OF OBTAINING SEMANTIC CATEGORIES

SET SAM	SUM OFVMT	VALUE M	VALUE FMG
HELP	52+92+72	216	100%
UNDERSTAND	26+26+51	103	47.7%
HEAL	22+19+24	65	30.1%
SCIENCE	16+8+24	50	23.15%
SMILE	13+8+9	30	12%

Source: self made

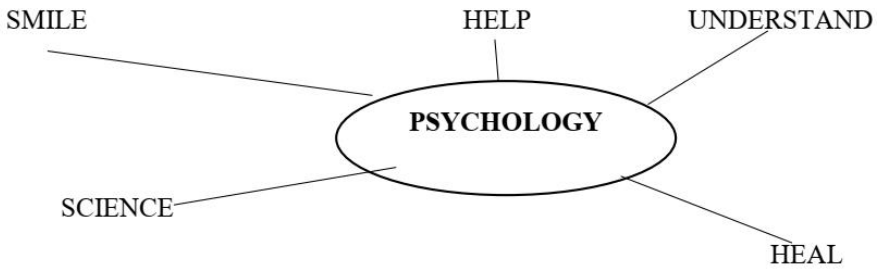

Figure 1: The semantic network of the word PSYCHOLOGY with its five definitions

people who participated in this research, this reinforces what the authors say about the erroneous idea of the psychologist's work, it is important to note that there are certain characteristics that the population shares, generally has ingrained ideas that result in subjective knowledge and reflect seeing the world and society; therefore, psychologists must develop a plan to publicize the work they are doing, in all areas where a psychologist operates.

CONCLUSION

Regarding the instrument used in this research, it can be said that natural semantic networks are an excellent technique to know the psychological meaning that people give to things, since they allowed a completely personal and subjective access to the results.

Now, in terms of the results, a large number of words were obtained among the three samples, words that all have a stable part of what or the usefulness of psychology, but that when doing the whole process of analyzing them and when making convergences and similarities it was concluded that there are five words that define psychology for the population. These five words are not only from vulgar use as mentioned above, that people always think that psychology is only for crazy people or for those who have problems, but that people also gave an answer to what psychology is in terms not so Popular terms such as science, understanding and smiling, these have their application in different branches of psychology, such as cognitive psychology, psychometry, developmental psychology, educational psychology, forensic psychology, neuropsychology, etc. This leads to knowing that, on the one hand, if you have reliable knowledge about what psychology is and the functions of psychology, but, on the other hand, if it is necessary to make more precise and complementary information available to the general population, which would be It is very useful to put an end to the erroneous paradigms that are disseminated today and in this way that psychology and its functions are used and in this way take advantage of them to improve both personally and socially.

All these words that were obtained in the results are recorded in the memory of each person. Human memory systems are capable of a rich variety of operations. On the one hand, they allow the encoding of details of sensory images to enable the identification and classification of stimuli; on the other hand, they record and use the experience to use it in everyday life. Sometimes this information is easy to retrieve, in others it is impossible.

This is why semantic memory, according to Tulving (1972), is a mental treasure, which organizes the knowledge that a person possesses about words and other verbal symbols, their meanings and their referents, about the relationships between them and about the rules, formulas and algorithms for the manipulation of these symbols, concepts and relationships. Semantic memory is therefore productive or generative, having direct effects on the behavior of individuals.

The sample of the subjects is not large enough to allow generalization of the results obtained, but it may be a good start for future research.

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