



Textbook of

Psychology

for Post Basic BSc Nursing Students

(As per the INC Syllabus of Post Basic BSc Nursing)

Special Features

- Conforming to the syllabus of Post Basic BSc Nursing
- Text enriched with recent updates
- Includes appropriate examples on Clinical Applicability
- Studded with numerous Tables, Flowcharts and Figures
- Nursing Implications covered exclusively



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CHAPTER 2

Attention

Learning Objectives

After the completion of the chapter, the readers will be able to:

- Define attention.
- Describe the various processes of attention.
- Explain different types of attention.

Chapter Outline

- Introduction
- Definitions
- Process of Attention
- Types of Attention
- Determinants of Attention
- Duration of Attention
- Alteration of Attention

Key Terms

Akinesia: It is the incapacity to make a perceivable movement.

Attention: Attention is a mental process that focuses on stimuli.

Attitudes: A generally accepted and long-lasting assessment of something, someone, a group, a problem, or a concept on a scale ranging from unfavorable to favorable.

Critical thinking: It is a way of thinking that develops a person's capacity for logical reasoning and the ability to reflect his/her unique, autonomous thoughts.

Contd...

Emotion: Conscious mental responses to situations or occurrences are known as emotions.

Environmental stimuli: Physical and psychological changes are caused by the stimulating variables that are present in people's surroundings.

External stimuli: The external forces that cause physical and psychological changes from outside of the body.

Hemispatial neglect: It is a syndrome that causes people to be less aware of stimuli on one side of a space, even when there may be no sensory loss.

Internal stimuli: The factors which activate physical and psychological changes from inside of the body.

Involuntary attention: It is not intentional rather happens because of some outside events.

Mental function: Any cognitive process or activity, such as thinking, sensing, or reasoning. —APA

Mood: Mood is collection of persisted feelings connected to cognitive and evaluative states that affect all subsequent feelings, behaviors, and judgments.

Motivation: Motivation is a process that directs and guides someone toward achieving his/her goal.

Phenomenon: The event or fact that can be observed.

Stimuli: A factor that activates a physical or behavioral change.

Syndrome: A cluster of symptoms is known as a syndrome.

Thought: It is a thinking process or a thinking-related concept, image, opinion. —APA

Voluntary attention: It is intentional and self-initiated activity.

INTRODUCTION

Attention is a normal psychological phenomenon. It is a state of consciousness which enables a person to act or respond to a stimulus. The only organ fully utilized in the attention process is the brain. Attention is influenced by emotions, attitudes, interests and memory.

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DEFINITIONS

Attention is the process of obtaining an object and clearing the mind.

—Ross

The focus is on some specific factors of our environment. This is a preparatory adjustment for the answer.

—Morgan, 2018

The attention process involves the very act of listening and focusing on a specific object, topic or event in order to achieve the desired goals.

— Prachi Juneja, 2015

Attention is defined as a mental process that can help focus on an individual's internal and external environment for a better understanding and interpretation of his world.

—According to the Author

PROCESS OF ATTENTION

Attention is a process through a systematic organization of recorded environmental inputs to better understand and recognize our environment in the future. It could be processed in the following ways (Fig. 2.1):

Exposure to the Stimuli

This is the first level of attention; it could be the selective reaction to environmental stimuli that draws the individual's attention.

Mental Function Stimulation

In the second level, attention is evenly distributed to the presence of external stimuli, but focuses on a specific area of stimuli that has really attracted a lot. The motivation of cognitive factors entails a greater concentration on focused stimuli and eventually, the limitation of other stimuli present in the exposed environment.

Concentration or Focusing of Stimuli

In this third level of attention there is a sharp focus on stimuli such as color, size, type of stimuli which is performed with the help of sensory functions such as hearing and visualizing. Many of the research articles (Spotlight Model and Zoom-Lens Model) have supported the statement that the effectiveness of attention depends on the work of the sense organs.

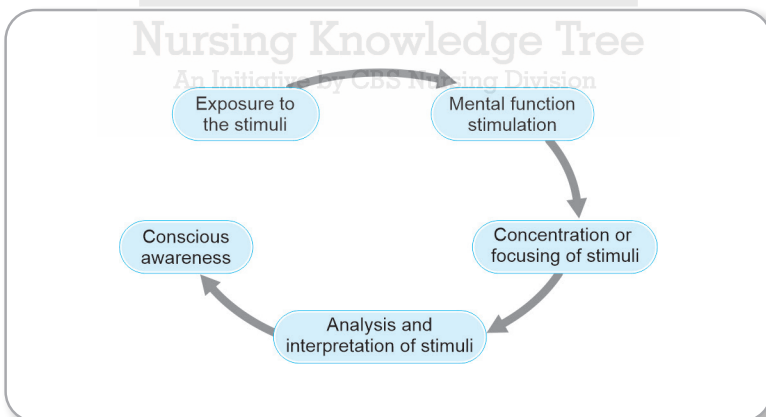


Figure 2.1: Process of attention

Analysis and Interpretation of Stimuli

In this level of attention, the mind will understand and recognize focused stimuli, and eventually it is a matter of eliminating unnecessary associations with accompanying stimuli.

Conscious Awareness

This is the final level of attention, which states that increased knowledge of perceived stimuli can be evidenced by an individual's emotional response when exploring the information.

TYPES OF ATTENTION

According to Ross

According to Ross, there are the following two common types of attention.

1. **Involuntary attention:** This is called spontaneous or involuntary attention or non-volitional attention. In this, we do not see involvement of any role of stimuli focus; it urges one's desire and attachments.

For example: Attention can be focused on taking care of loved ones when needed.

2. **Voluntary attention:** It is also called volitional attention. In this type of attention one needs to focus on the stimulus which requires a conscious effort to achieve something in life.

For example: Understand and answer a question during a test. Here we can certainly give special or voluntary attention more than automatic attention.

Attention Based on Circumstances

The following types of attention are based on the circumstances (Fig. 2.2):

1. Constant Attention

This type of attention is the ability to focus on a particular task or work. Most likely a person who uses this kind of attention can fully focus on his/her allotted work only. The attention span is longer and longer enough to overcome distractions.

For example: While reading popular books, it is easier to remember the characters or events if constant attention is paid to them in an appropriate way.

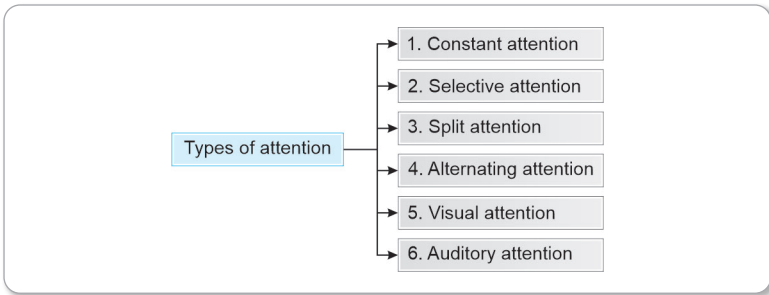


Figure 2.2: Types of attention based on circumstances

2. *Selective Attention*

In this type, the person focuses only on selected environmental stimuli that he really needs and ignores other stimuli despite his proximity to them. This lack of attention does not depend on the stimuli but on the necessity of the individual.

For example: Avoid understanding rose flowers if you want to study the leaves of a rose plant.

3. *Split Attention*

In this type of attention, the focus can be on different types of tasks at the same time or on multiple works simultaneously because the focus is evenly distributed over the entire task.

For example: While organizing a party, one can take care of the food service, invite guests, and give speeches at the gathering. All of the above tasks can occur simultaneously. So the person who took part in it should focus on each work equally to complete the work. Here, we may be easily distracted by the rapid exhaustion of our energy.

4. *Alternating Attention*

With this attention, focusing on multiple tasks can be possible but it really depends on completing the tasks accordingly one by one. Alternating Attention is the ability to change focus attention between two or more stimuli. While divided attention is the ability to attend different stimuli or attention at the same time.

For example: The preparation of the student for the final exam can include the preparation of the study material, the revision of the material

and the practical exam to get a good academic result. Students here are used to focusing on each step of applying alternative attention.

5. Visual Attention

The sensory organs play a central role in visual attention, especially the eyes because the focus on an event or situation initiated by environmental stimuli is picked up by the eye and then it is interpreted in detail. It denies all other stimuli in the environment.

For example: We used to catch our visual attention while reading and watching TV.

6. Auditory Attention

Here, the focus of an event or situation occurs according to what we hear from our environmental stimuli. Hearing plays an essential role in auditory attention.

For example: While hearing songs, we need auditory attention to the speech of the guest and the lecturer.

DETERMINANTS OF ATTENTION

Attention can be influenced by both external and internal factors.

External Factors

It is an input of attention one gets from surroundings. The following factors are considered external factors:

- **Intensity:** The strength of stimulus or strong stimuli is more likely to attract our attention.

Example: Food with fragrance gets more consumer due to its strong smell induce appetite.

- **Size:** The size of the objects gets more eye captures than others (Fig. 2.3).
- **Movement:** Moving stimuli get more attention than stimuli that remain stationary.
- **Novelty:** New or strange stimuli attract our attention the most (Fig. 2.4).

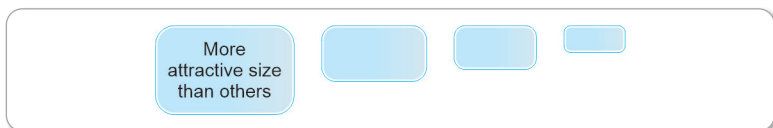


Figure 2.3: Various shapes' sizes cause differences in attention

- **Change:** If a different stimulus appears that breaks our attention, it will be directed to the new stimulus and will make us feel more important in the face of new stimuli (Fig. 2.5).
- **Color:** Colorful stimuli draw more attention than black and white. As we view a colored stimulus or object, our focus automatically shifts to what could be black and white objects (Fig. 2.6).
- **Contrast:** Stimuli that contrast with a group attract our attention more (Fig. 2.7).

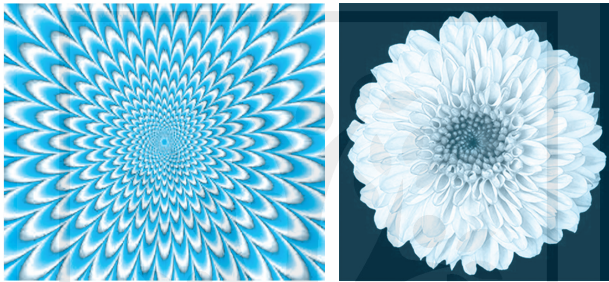


Figure 2.4: Example showing how new and divergent objects are more attractive than other stimuli



Figure 2.5: Example showing how new stimuli replace the existing ones by their appearance and attract attention

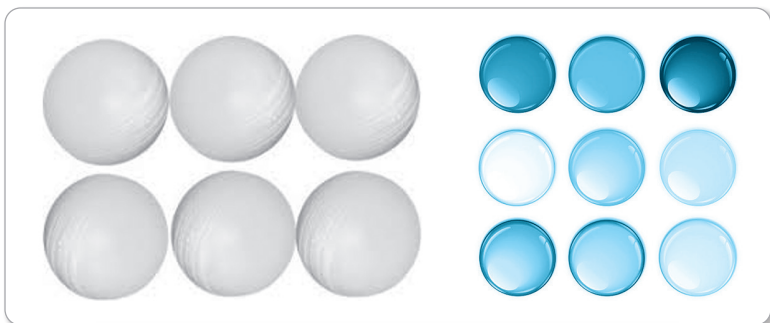


Figure 2.6: Example showing how the color difference and movement of objects that resulted in a difference in attention



Figure 2.7: Example showing how the stimulus in contrast causes an attention difference

Internal Factors

It comes from the individual and therefore varies from person to person. Some examples are:

- **Interests:** We focus more on the stimuli that matter to us.
- **Emotion:** Stimuli that elicit stronger feelings attract more attention. However, it should be borne in mind that a positive mood contributes to the concentration of attention resources, but a negative mood makes concentration more difficult.
- **Effort required by task:** People make a prior assessment of the effort required to do a task and, depending on it, will attract more or less attention.
- **Physiological need of the individual:** For example, thirst or hunger, stimuli related to the satisfaction of these needs will attract more attention to the resource.

- **Thought exercises:** When thoughts follow a specific path, based on concrete thoughts, the appearance of stimuli associated with those thoughts will attract more of our attention.
- **Attention and motivation:** There is a close relationship between attention and self-motivation because the self-motivation will influence the attention.

For example: If we are positively motivated by an event or an object perception, our mind will take it in a positive direction and attend to it while reacting to it. Attention is greatly elevated if a person has interest and self-motivation in a task or activity.

- **Emotional instability:** Emotional reaction plays a pivotal role in enhancing attention, which is based on how we are exposed to stimuli and how we focus on them.

For example: If individual exposure to positive stimuli attracts us more than the opposite one because it is favorable for us and we like it, we enjoy it more. It takes our attention without any conscious effort compared to a neutral one.

DURATION OF ATTENTION

Attention span indicates the length of time it takes to focus and concentrate on an event and situation. It may end before the distraction process and could vary with individual age and cognitive function capacity.

According to Wilson, Karen, et al. 2007

Transitional Attention

It is a short-term response to a stimulus that temporarily draws or distracts attention. Researchers disagree on the exact amount of human transient attention span.

Sustained Selective Attention

It is also known as focused attention, which is the level of attention that produces consistent results on an activity over time. Common estimates of the attention span of healthy adolescents and adults range from 5 to 6 hours; however, there is no empirical evidence for this estimate. People can repeatedly choose to focus on the same thing again. This ability to renew attention allows people to pay attention to things that last longer than a few minutes, such as long films.

Extra Edge

Older children are more capable of longer attention spans than younger children. One report, for example, cited that the average attention span in children is: 6–10 minutes for 2-year-old; 9–15 minutes for 3-year-old; 12–20 minutes for 4-year-old; and 14 minutes for 5-year-old.

ALTERATION OF ATTENTION

Attention could be altered by deterioration in an optimal level of cognitive function. The following are common alterations of attention:

- **Aprosexia:** Inattention.
- **Hypoprosesia:** Decreased attention span. Within this category the following can be distinguished:
 - **Distraction:** Inability to sustain attention characterized by shifting focus from one subject to another.
 - **Inhibition:** Inability to mobilize attention.
 - **Abandonment:** Abandonment syndrome usually manifests as inattention, akinesia and hemispatial abandonment.
 - **Apathy:** Lack of response or attention to environmental stimuli.
- **Paraprosesia:** Abnormally occupying attention on a particular idea or object.
- **Hyperprosiesia:** Excessive and temporary focus of attention.

Nursing Implications

- Nurses need to pay attention in order to carry out daily tasks successfully.
- Studying attention and its functioning help a nurse in understanding both her own capacity for attention and that of the client for attentive participation in the therapeutic process.
- It supports a nurse's ability to compete while delivering thorough care, particularly for patients with chronic or life-threatening conditions.
- A nurse who is paying attention will be present in the working unit in a cooperative and organized manner.
- Attention always helps to be enthusiastic by understanding their role and responsibility as nurses in the healthcare sector.
- The best attention abilities enable a nurse to have strong critical thinking and assessment abilities, which improves professional quality.
- A nurse's decision-making skills can be enhanced by paying close attention.
- Their persistent demand for attention can lead to exhaustion and a lowered ability to focus, which can have an immediate impact on the organization and provision of patient care.

SUMMARY

- Attention is a normal psychological process that helps in critical thinking and associating facts.
- Attention is a systemic process that includes exposure to stimuli, stimulation of mental function, concentration or focusing of stimuli, analyzing, interpretation of stimuli and conscious awareness.
- According to Ross, there are voluntary and involuntary forms of attention.
- Involuntary attention takes place without making a conscious attempt, attention will happen.
- Voluntary attention takes place with conscious effort.
- Constant attention is the capacity to pay attention to a specific job or endeavor.
- Selective attention is focused only on selected environmental stimuli.
- In split attention the focus can be on different types of tasks at the same time or on multiple works simultaneously.
- Alternating Attention is the ability to change focus attention between two or more stimuli.
- Divided Attention is the ability to attend different stimuli or attention at the same time.
- In visual attention the focus is on an event or situation initiated by environmental stimuli is picked up by the eye.
- Auditory attention is the focus of an event or situation occurred according to what we hear from our environmental stimuli. Hearing plays an essential role in auditory attention.
- Attention can be influenced by both external and internal factors.
- Attention span indicates the length of time it takes to focus and concentrate on an event or situation.
- Transitional attention is otherwise called short-term attention.
- Long-term attention, or sustained selective attention, varies with age and attention span.
- Loss or modification of focus results from disturbances in the attention process.

CONCLUSION

Attention is one of the most important cognitive components that help improve other cognitive functions. The abnormal phenomenon of attention results in a great loss of the normal psychological function of the human being, which leads to abnormal psychopathological conditions.

ASSESS YOURSELF

Short Answer Questions

1. Define attention.
2. Write about different types of attention.
3. Write about factors influencing the attention.
4. What is alteration of attention?
5. Write about duration of attention.

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain in detail the process of attention.
2. Describe in detail the determinants of attention.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Which of the following statements about voluntary attention is true?
 - a. Conscious process
 - b. Unconscious process
 - c. Motivated
 - d. All of these
2. What does selective attention entail?
 - a. Focus particular task
 - b. Focus on multiple task
 - c. Focus on different task
 - d. Focus on selective task
3. Which of the following is a prime example of a factor influencing external attention?
 - a. Emotion
 - b. Interest
 - c. Color
 - d. All of these
4. What is the normal adult attention span?
 - a. 2–3 hours
 - b. 3–4 hours
 - c. 4–5 hours
 - d. 5–6 hours
5. What term will be used to indicate abnormally occupied attention?
 - a. Aprosexia
 - b. Hypoprosxia
 - c. Apathy
 - d. Paraprosxia

Answer Key

1. a. 2. d. 3. c. 4. d. 5. d.

Psychology

for Post Basic BSc Nursing Students

This textbook has been designed for undergraduate nursing students, especially for the students of Post Basic Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs, and also for the healthcare students. It covers Applied Psychology relevant to nursing, with special focus on clinical application with diagrams, examples, and summaries for retention. It offers complete and up-to-date information for modern clinical settings.

Learning Objectives enumerate what the students will learn after studying the entire chapter.

Learning Objectives

After the completion of the chapter, the readers will be able to:

- Define attention.
- Describe the various processes of attention.
- Explain different types of attention.

Chapter Outline provides a quick glance of the entire chapter in one go.

Chapter Outline

- Introduction
- Definitions
- Process of Attention
- Types of Attention
- Determinants of Attention
- Duration of Attention

Important **Key Terms** have been added in the beginning of every chapter for quick and easy understanding of important terms.

Key Terms

Behavior: The actions taken by a living creature in response to external or internal stimuli.

Cognitive function: Cognitive function refers to how well the mental functions of perception, learning, memory, comprehension, awareness, reasoning, judgment, intuition, and language are carried out.

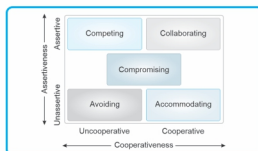
—APA

Nursing Implications box covered throughout the book for implementation of better clinical practices.

Nursing Implications

- Nurses need to pay attention in order to carry out daily tasks successfully.
- A nurse who is paying attention will be present in the working unit in a cooperative and organized manner.

Numerous **flowcharts** and **tables** are used throughout the book to make the learning easy and interesting.



Assess Yourself exercises will facilitate structured learning and revision of the material provided in the respective chapters.

ASSESS YOURSELF

Short Answer Questions

- Define psychology.
- Write about the scope of psychology.

Long Answer Questions

- Discuss the history of psychology.
- Describe in detail the significance of psychology in nursing.

Multiple Choice Questions

- Psychology generally is defined as:**
 - Study of emotion
 - Study of attitude

Each and every chapter ends with **Summarized one-liners** for quick revision of the chapter.

SUMMARY

- The word 'emotion' is derived from the French word 'emouvoir', which means 'move' or 'stir up'.
- Emotion is an individual's reaction to one particular life situation or event.

Scopes of psychology

- Clinical psychologist
- Psychiatric social worker
- Educator
- Rehabilitation counselor
- Guidance counselor
- Army psychologist

Common branches of psychology

- Cognitive psychology
- Developmental psychology
- Evolutionary psychology
- Forensic psychology
- Health psychology
- Neuropsychology

About the Author



Sivasankari Varadharasu PhD (N), MSc (MHN) has been working as an Associate Professor and Head of the Mental Health Nursing Department at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology University in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. She is having 15 years of teaching and research experience.



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