FRONTLINE MARKETING MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS JOURNAL
(ISSN – 2752-700X)
VOLUME 04 ISSUE 06 Pages: 1-9
OCLC – 1276793382
Crossref doi Google Scholar WorldCat MENDELEY
FRONTLINE JOURNALS
Publisher: Frontline Journals

Journal Website: https://frontlinejournals.org/journals/index.php/fmmej

Research Article

THE BODY'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THINKING: REDEFINING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF COGNITION

Submission Date: May 22, 2024, **Accepted Date:** May 27, 2024,
Published Date: June 01, 2024

Aditya Sharma
Student at IIT Jodhpur, India

ABSTRACT

For too long, the brain has reigned supreme as the sole seat of thought. This paper challenges this traditional perspective by exploring the body's significant contributions to thinking. We argue that cognition is not a solely cerebral process but rather a collaborative effort between the brain and the body. By examining three key areas – movement, emotion, and sensation – we demonstrate how the body actively shapes our thoughts, perceptions, and decision-making. This novel understanding of embodied cognition necessitates a paradigm shift in how we approach the study of thinking.

KEYWORDS

Embodied Cognition, Body-Mind Connection, Cognition, Movement, Emotion, Sensation, Perception, Thinking, Brain, Redefinition, Collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

For centuries, the brain has been hailed as the sole conductor of our thoughts, the mastermind behind every idea and decision. However, this singular view of cognition is undergoing a fascinating transformation. A growing body of research suggests that the brain is not the solitary

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player in the grand orchestra of thought. Instead, a new understanding is emerging, one that recognizes the body as a vital collaborator in the process of cognition.

This paper delves into this exciting shift in perspective, exploring the crucial contributions the body makes to our thinking processes. We move beyond the traditional brain-centric model to explore how movement, emotions, and sensations actively shape our thoughts, perceptions, and decision-making. By examining these embodied aspects of cognition, we aim to redefine our understanding of how we think and interact with the world around us.

This exploration carries significant implications. By recognizing the body's role in cognition, we open doors to new avenues of research and application. From optimizing learning experiences to enhancing creativity and problem-solving, a deeper understanding of embodied cognition holds the potential to revolutionize how we approach various aspects of our lives.

What is Embodied Cognition?

An idea called "embodied cognition" replaces the idea that the brain is the only resource for cognition with the idea that the body is deeply integrated into cognition. Encapsulated comprehension doesn't deny the focal place of the cerebrum during the time spent insight however opens up the way to different variables for mix. In this sense, it is more like a research plan than a clearly defined theory. The epitome proposal depends with the understanding that the collaboration of psyche, body and the climate is vital for comprehension. An agent‟s real collaboration with the world empowers it to imagine and see the world. We think since we have inputs from the rest of the world to contemplate upon.

According to Wilson and Foglia (2011), "embodied cognition is when it is deeply dependent upon features of the physical body of an agent, that is, when aspects of the agent's body beyond the brain play a significant causal or physically constitutive role in cognitive processing." Two phrases are significant in this definition because they form two major claims for embodied cognition: "causal or constitutive role" and "agent's body beyond the brain" respectively. In the past, prior to the concept of embodied cognition, the body was not taken into account for understanding the nature of mind and cognition. The predominant view was that the think tank

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was inside the skull. According to Fodor (1980), this solipsistic view of cognition is the primary target of the concept of embodied cognition. Exemplified cognizance likewise quarrels over the body's causal job in significantly shaping the psyche. It simply indicates that mental states, particularly cognitive processes, are the result of an agent's body and interaction with its environment rather than being solely possessed by the brain.

Cognition as an Adaptive Evolution

Within the framework of the biological theory of evolution, embodied cognition recognizes cognition as an adaptive evolution process. It contends that organisms evolved cognition in order to better interact with their surroundings. It gave them the tools they needed to survive in a constantly shifting environment. "Embodied cognition treats cognition as a set of tools evolved by organisms for coping with their environment," according to Michael Anderson. Each key term (devices, develop, creatures, adapt, climate) in this characterizing line is significant and assumes a critical part in grasping encapsulated comprehension as a versatile peculiarity. As a skill, cognition has evolved over time. This suggests that evolving organisms modify cognition. It also changes as it helps organisms survive by giving them more control over their changing surroundings. The majority of organisms are concerned with reproduction and survival. They can make use of a variety of the environment's features because of their growing cognitive capacity. Because they are at the height of their cognitive development and evolution, humans have a much greater capacity to utilize and alter their environment to meet their needs.

Organisms with particular physical and emotional traits co-evolved cognition. In embodied cognition, emotions functioned as a crucial component of self-regulation. Feelings in a manner functioned as an inspiration towards objective significant activities which helped in driving versatile way of behaving. As a result, there was more interaction with the world and other organisms and more influence. Cognitive processes are utilized by some organism body features. Every living thing makes extensive use of the structures in their bodies to help them survive and move around in the environment. The many things we can do are the result of our unique anatomy. Humans, in particular, are quite distinct in their capacity to develop languages and

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tools. The term "affordance" is connected to this adaptive cognition and anatomy.

Simply using an item based on our ability to interact with it is affordability. A teacup, for instance, has the ability to be grabbed because of its handle. Because it has a rim, it can be drank from and fits in the palm of the hand. Therefore, when designing an object, one must consider how humans would use it based on their physical abilities. Humans have large palms, ten fingers—five on each hand—a certain amount of movement in their arms, and so on. We are able to participate in cognitive processes and interact with our environment thanks to all of these bodily features. As a result, one could say that cognition is a combination of cognitive tools (specific interaction with the world and cooperative interaction with other organisms) that evolved as a result of the organism's adaptive nature to improve their survival status and control their environment for their benefit.

Exemplified insight was a reaction to the possibility that psychological states are pre-made and fitted into the cerebrum however mind (mental states) isn't pre-made. According to Varela, the embodied approach views cognition as the enactment of a world and a mind through various actions performed by a being-in-the-world, whereas the traditional approach views cognition as the representation of a pre-given world by a pre-given mind (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1992). We are situated globally. We interact with the world through our bodies. Subsequently, cognizance is framed based on both the body and the world. Our mental processes operate in this way like dynamical systems.

Embodied Cognition as a Dynamical System

According to Smith (2005), the primary approach is that cognitive systems are dynamical agents. This breaks with the Cartesian tradition, which holds that the brain alone is responsible for all mental states that can affect physical states. The dynamical system, on the other hand, gives the impression that everything that is referred to as the "mind" is fully integrated into the natural world. A dynamical system is one with no concept of a central controller that carries out its tasks and produces results. They engage in their activity by coupling with various system components. They are so intertwined that even a small modification to one can have a significant impact on the system as a wholes performance. The Watt's Governor Model, which asserts that

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the mind is not a single entity, serves as the basis for this dynamical system approach to psychological processes. Because it is a part of the environment, it acts like a system.

The necessity of a centralized representational processing unit is minimized, and dynamicity sometimes even deny its existence. They oppose the conventional representational theory, which holds that an internal model is able to produce the external structures that a cognitive agent can use to direct its behavior. However, the agent's behavior is attempted to be explained in terms of embeddedness and embodiment in dynamical theory. It argues that if an agent is able to sense its environment and allows its body to be directly influenced by it, then the idea of abstract symbolic description can be abandoned.

Major Claims/Support for Embodied Cognition

Embodied cognition is a relatively recent comprehensive framework for the study of the mind. The field of mental brain research has as of late seen a critical increase in help for this strategy. The idea that an agent's worldview must be understood in relation to the mind is gaining traction. Psychology experiments in which subjects are asked to perform particular tasks by manipulating their bodies in particular ways have provided a lot of support. They find that the subjects vary and that simple facts like whether the subjects are right-handed or left-handed affect the results. Without relying on computationalism, which was once thought to be the only solution, robots have also been designed to perform complex tasks like navigating a room.

A well-established school of thought argues that "real-time" pressure must be taken into account when thinking about a specific situation. An organism must quickly respond to predators, stationary objects, changing and hostile environments, and other threats in a real environment. In addition, this assurance defies the conventional authentic viewpoint. Real-world situations call for swift and ever-evolving responses. An organism can only create a complete mental model of motor action in a finite amount of time. However, it is argued that the agent needs quick ways to take the right action in the right situation because of the situation. Mental limits exist in each living thing. Humans have limited capacity for information processing, including working memory and attention span. Therefore, in order to deal with the rapid change in the environment, assistance needs to come

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from other resources. Humans must make use of their environment in order to reduce their cognitive workload. An organism can reduce its cognitive load in two ways: making use of the advantages provided by both the stable environment and the "changing environment itself." To make the process easier (changing the environment), hunting animals, for instance, can locate their desired prey by using scent trails or visual signs like burrow holes (a stable environmental feature). These factors can improve an organism's capacity to interact with and alter its environment. Between the brain and the outside world, there is a dense and extremely intricate data stream that makes up mental cycles. The brain is unable to perform these intricate functions on its own, as numerous behavioral and scientific studies have shown. This is influenced by environment, body, and brain. The brain does not contain the factors that affect cognitive processes; rather, they are dispersed throughout the person and the environment in which they interact. It operates as a single coupled system in which the conscious person and the conscious environment become integrated.

The brain's fundamental ability to direct actions through mental components should be viewed as contributing to an agent's behavior. The mental framework developed on the grounds that it is a conduct control framework, which is a urgent transformation quality. Research ought to focus on the roles that cognitive systems play in serving. As a result, separating the cognitive system from the outside world is difficult. For instance, the conventional viewpoint on visual perception holds that some more sophisticated brain mechanisms make use of the existing visual system to construct an internal representation of the world that is perceived. In contrast, it is now understood that visual perception is used to direct actions. For instance, in 1994, David Kirsh and Paul Maglio carried out research on the Tetris game. In the Tetris game, the shapes of falling blocks have to be rotated and arranged horizontally so that they fit as closely as possible with the shapes that have already fallen. This decision regarding rotation should be made early, before the block falls far enough to allow for possible movements. According to the data, players actually use rotation and translation movements to simplify the problem at hand rather than thinking of a solution and then implementing it. According to Wilson (2002), this clearly demonstrates that visual cognition is

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utilized to direct action rather than merely to create mental representations.

"Six perspectives on typified cognition" by Margret Wilson provides a comprehensive overview of the topic (Wilson, 2002). Most, if not all, of the possible aspects of cognitive activity are covered by it. The idea that the characteristics of the agent's physical body influence the characteristics of cognition is the central point of the entire discussion. Beyond that, the functions of the brain and body both influence and contribute to the cognitive processes. Contrast this with the idea that the mind controls all cognitive processes. The nature of the relationship between the body and cognition must now be defined. How does an agent's body affect their ability to think? What role does the body play in cognitive function? The body plays three distinct roles in the cognitive process as a whole, in a broad sense. A body may occasionally aid in the production of cognitive content. It works the whole mental action and aids the conveyance of a few mental cycles. To use a metaphor, the mind of the body is like that of God: G stands for "generator," "operator," and "distributor," respectively.

a. Body as a generator

The body of an agent is a crucial component of cognition, but it also imposes a limit. There is areas of strength for a between the sort of body an organic entity has and the ideas a creature can procure. Depending on the physical characteristics of the agent, a specific thought may appear to be simpler or more difficult. For instance, bats and humans have distinct perspectives on the world. The differences in a person's body, particularly their sense organs, are the source of this difference in cognition. Now and again specific attributes of a life form can bring about altogether different mental substance which people can never insight. The gesture is one of the many bodily features that humans use to create and comprehend concepts, improving their overall cognitive ability.

b. Body as an operator:

The body of an agent can control and operate cognitive activities in a variety of ways. It controls activities of cognition across space and time. One of the primary functions of cognition, as previously stated, is to take actions to deal with the environment. The coordination of an agent's cognition and action is regulated by the body's functions. The agent's bodily structures make it easier to carry out complex behavioral actions in

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real time in response to events in the environment that are both complex and rapidly changing. The body's job is to get information from the world in the form of cognition and then to put that information into action or behavior. Cognitive processes are influenced by the body's feedback. In this instance, the body behaves more like a dynamical system, acting solely in response to external stimuli and without a central controller.

c. Body as a distributor:

The body of an agent divides up cognitive tasks between the body and the brain. Distributing computational and representational load between neural (brain) and non-neural (body) structures is aided by the body. This function has the potential to challenge the conventional conception of cognition, which holds that cognition is restricted to specific regions of the brain. According to body as a distributor, cognition is linked to the environment outside of the body and is not constrained by the skull. The body assists in offloading (distributing) cognitive effort and easing the cognitive process as a whole. Taking an internal mental task and giving it a physical form outside of the brain is known as offloading. When we have a difficult task at hand, it comes in handy. Essentially, offloading expands mental capacity, which improves retention. Gestures can also be used to offload. When taking notes with a pen and paper, when internal thoughts are transferred into the physical world, it is important to offload.

CONCLUSION

Customary mental science depends on two suspicions which incorporate the comprehension that there is an impoverishment of boost information and there is a requirement for an inward illustrative computation on upgrade information. These presumptions are debunked by embodied cognition, which simultaneously counts all of the environment's resources that could support complex behavior. The significant consequence of this line of examination is that we can utilize and create a wide range of mind boggling conduct. The need for a central representational entity to explain behavior and cognition is eliminated by this understanding. The integration of three fundamental components results in our cognition: body, brain, and environment. The most engaging ways that the body can participate in cognitive processes include assisting in the creation of content for

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cognition, distributing cognitive tasks throughout the body and beyond the body, and coordinating cognitive processes themselves. These are some of the ways that mental tasks are transferred to the physical world to make it easier to survive and make it easier to deal with the environment.

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