Personality

Chapter 13
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Guest Lecturer: Sara Branch

An individual’s characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting.

Each dwarf has a distinct and dominant personality trait.

Theories of Personality

- View of the causes and motives underlying personality and personality development

  1. The Psychodynamic Approach
  2. The Humanistic Approach
  3. The Trait Approach
  4. The Social-Cognitive Approach

Psychodynamic Perspective

- “A man should not strive to eliminate his complexes but to get into accord with them: they are legitimately what directs his conduct in the world.”
  - Sigmund Freud
Psychodynamic Perspective

In his clinical practice, Freud encountered patients suffering from nervous disorders. Their complaints could not be explained in terms of purely physical causes.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

Psychodynamic Perspective

Freud’s clinical experience led him to develop the first comprehensive theory of personality, which included the unconscious mind, psychosexual stages, and defense mechanisms.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

Psychoanalysis

- Freud’s theory of personality that attributes thoughts and actions to unconscious motives and conflicts; the techniques used in treating disorders by exposing and interpreting unconscious tensions.

Model of Mind

The mind is like an iceberg. It is mostly hidden, and below the surface lies the unconscious mind. The preconscious stores temporary memories.
Exploring the Unconscious

A reservoir (unconscious mind) of mostly unacceptable thoughts, wishes, feelings, and memories. Freud asked patients to say whatever came to their minds (free association) in order to tap the unconscious.

Dream Analysis

Another method to analyze the unconscious mind is through interpreting manifest (what we remember) and latent (what it means, symbolically) contents of dreams.

Dream Analysis

- “Learn to communicate with your subconscious mind which speaks to you in symbols through your dreams while providing practical insight into our emotional and mental state by analyzing hidden meanings.”

Model of Mind

The mind is like an iceberg. It is mostly hidden, and below the surface lies the unconscious mind. The preconscious stores temporary memories.
Personality Structure

Personality develops as a result of our efforts to resolve conflicts between our biological impulses (id) and social restraints (superego).

ID

- The Id unconsciously strives to satisfy basic sexual and aggressive drives, operating on the pleasure principle, demanding immediate gratification (Pleasure Principle).

Superego

- The superego provides standards for judgment (the conscience) and for future aspirations.
- Moral compass
- Focuses on how we ought to behave

Ego

- The ego functions as the “executive” and mediates the demands of the id and superego (Reality Principle).
- Seeks to gratify the id’s impulses in realistic ways

"Where id was, there ego shall be." - Freud
Id, Ego and Superego

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The **ego** functions as the “executive” and mediates the demands of the id and superego (*Reality Principle*).

The **superego** provides standards for judgment (the conscience) and for future aspirations.

Personality Development

Freud believed that personality formed during the first few years of life divided into **psychosexual stages**. During these stages the id’s pleasure-seeking energies focus on pleasure sensitive body areas called **erogenous zones**.

Psychosexual Stages

Freud divided the development of personality into five psychosexual stages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREUD’S PSYCHOSEXUAL STAGES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral (0-18 months)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anal (18-24 months)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phallic (3-6 years)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latency (6 to puberty)</td>
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<td>Genital (puberty+)</td>
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Oedipus Complex

A boy’s sexual desire for his mother and feelings of jealousy and hatred for the rival father. A girl’s desire for her father is called the Electra complex.

- Males: Fear of castration
- Females: Penis envy

These fears/anxieties result in identification of same sex parent (but motivation is stronger for males because they have something to lose).
Identification

Children cope with threatening feelings by repressing them and by identifying with the rival parent. Through this process of identification, their superego gains strength that incorporates their parents’ values.

Defense Mechanisms

The ego’s protective methods of reducing anxiety by unconsciously distorting reality.

1. Repression banishes anxiety-arousing thoughts, feelings, and memories from consciousness.

2. Regression leads an individual faced with anxiety to retreat to a more infantile psychosexual stage.

3. Reaction Formation causes the ego to unconsciously switch unacceptable impulses into their opposites. People may express feelings of purity when they may be suffering anxiety from unconscious feelings about sex.

4. Projection leads people to disguise their own threatening impulses by attributing them to others.

5. Rationalization offers self-justifying explanations in place of the real, more threatening, unconscious reasons for one’s actions.

6. Displacement shifts sexual or aggressive impulses toward a more acceptable or less threatening object or person, redirecting anger toward a safer outlet.
The Neo-Freudians

- Although Freud was controversial, he attracted followers
- Accepted Freud’s basic ideas (id, ego, superego; unconscious; defense mechanisms)
- Differed in two ways:
  - More emphasis on the conscious mind’s role in interpreting experience and coping with the environment
  - Doubted that sex and aggression were all-consuming motivations

The Neo-Freudians

Like Freud, Adler believed in childhood tensions. However, these tensions were social in nature and not sexual. A child struggles with an inferiority complex during growth and strives for superiority and power. Emphasized the importance of belonging.

Like Adler, Horney believed in the social aspects of childhood growth and development. She countered Freud’s assumption that women have weak superegos and suffer from “penis envy.”

Jung believed in the collective unconscious, which contained a common reservoir of images derived from our species’ past. This is why many cultures share certain myths and images (archetypes) such as the mother being a symbol of nurturance.

Types: Introvert/Extravert; Feeler/Thinker
Assessing Unconscious Processes

Evaluating personality from an unconscious mind’s perspective would require a psychological instrument (projective tests) that would reveal the hidden unconscious mind.

Projective Personality Tests

- Measures aspects of personality by asking individuals to respond to ambiguous stimuli
- Assumes that the meaning the person projects onto the ambiguous stimuli reflects unconscious core aspects of personality
- Examples:
  - Thematic Apperception Test (Constructive)
  - Rorschach Test
  - Rotter Incomplete Sentence Test (Completion)

Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)

Developed by Henry Murray, the TAT is a projective test in which people express their inner feelings and interests through the stories they make up about ambiguous scenes.

Rorschach Inkblot Test

The most widely used projective test uses a set of 10 inkblots and was designed by Hermann Rorschach. It seeks to identify people’s inner feelings by analyzing their interpretations of the blots.
Projective Tests: Criticisms

Critics argue that projective tests lack both reliability (consistency of results) and validity (predicting what it is supposed to).

- When evaluating the same patient, even trained raters come up with different interpretations (reliability).
- Projective tests may misdiagnose a normal individual as pathological (validity).

Evaluating the Psychoanalytic Perspective

- Modern Research

- Personality develops throughout life and is not fixed in childhood.
- Freud underemphasized peer influence on the individual, which may be as powerful as parental influence.
- Gender identity may develop before 5-6 years of age.

Evaluating the Psychoanalytic Perspective

- Modern Research

- Freud's psychoanalytic theory rests on the repression of painful experiences into the unconscious mind.

- The majority of children, death camp survivors, and battle-scarred veterans are unable to repress painful experiences into their unconscious mind.
Evaluating the Psychoanalytic Perspective

Freud was right about the unconscious mind. Modern research shows the existence of nonconscious information processing.
- Schemas that automatically control perceptions and interpretations
- Parallel processing during vision and thinking
- Implicit memories
- Implicit attitudes
- Emotions that activate instantly without consciousness

Evaluating the Psychoanalytic Perspective

- The scientific merits of Freud’s theory have been criticized. Psychoanalysis is difficult to test. Most of its concepts arise out of clinical practice, which are the after-the-fact explanation. When one tenet appears to be falsified, another one comes to the rescue.
- Still, what it is an ingenious and clever theory, and a comprehensive template for others to attempt with different premises.

Humanistic Perspective

By the 1960s, psychologists became discontented with Freud’s negativity and the mechanistic psychology of the behaviorists.

Humanistic Approach

- Focuses on people’s unique capacity for choice, responsibility, and growth
- Stresses the positive, healthy aspect of personality and the uniqueness of the individual
- Emphasis on the conscious mental process (responsibility)
- Humanistic Psychologists:
  1. Abraham Maslow
  2. Carl Rogers
Self-Actualizing Person
Maslow proposed that we as individuals are motivated by a hierarchy of needs. Beginning with physiological needs, we try to reach the state of self-actualization—fulfilling our potential.

Growth and Fulfillment
Carl Rogers also believed in an individual's self-actualization tendencies. He said that Unconditional Positive Regard is an attitude of acceptance of others despite their failings.

Assessing the Self
In an effort to assess personality, Rogers asked people to describe themselves as they would like to be (ideal) and as they actually are (real). If the two descriptions were close the individual had a positive self-concept.

All of our thoughts and feelings about ourselves, in an answer to the question, “Who am I?” refers to Self-Concept.

Evaluating the Humanistic Perspective
- Humanistic psychology has a pervasive impact on counseling, education, child-rearing, and management.
- Concepts in humanistic psychology are vague and subjective and lack scientific basis.
- Very difficult to even figure out what to test, let alone, how to test.
The Trait Perspective
As an outgrowth and more complex version of earlier TYPE theories.
An individual’s unique constellation of durable dispositions and consistent ways of behaving (traits) constitutes his or her personality.

Examples of Traits
- Honest
- Dependable
- Moody
- Impulsive

Lexical Hypothesis
- 1936: Gordon Allport & H.S. Odbert
- Individual differences that are most noticeable and socially relevant in people’s lives will eventually become encoded into their language; the more important the difference, the more likely it is to be expressed as a single word.
- Extracted 18,000 personality-describing words; narrowed to 4500 that described observable and permanent traits

Exploring Traits
Factor analysis is a statistical approach used to describe and relate personality traits.

Identifies clusters of items that tap basic components of personality.

Raymond Cattell (1905-1998)
Exploring Traits

Cattell used factor analysis to develop a 16 Personality Factor (16PF) inventory.

More recent researches have identified 5 global personality traits;
The Big Five

Raymond Cattell (1905-1998)

Personality Dimensions

Hans and Sybil Eysenck suggested that personality could be reduced down to two polar dimensions, extraversion-introversion and emotional stability-instability.

The Big Five Factors

Today’s trait researchers believe that Eysenck’s personality dimensions are too narrow and Cattell’s 16PF too large. So, a middle range (five factors) of traits does a better job of assessment. First mention of the Big 5 was by L. L. Thurstone in his presidential address to the APA, published in 1934 in Psychological Bulletin.

- Conscientiousness
- Agreeableness
- Neuroticism
- Openness
- Extraversion

Five-Factor Model (The “Big Five”)

- Most widely accepted trait theory of personality
- Based on lexical hypothesis; derived from factor analysis
- Strong evidence which documents the presence of the “Big Five” personality traits
  - Stability across time
  - Found cross-culturally
### The “Big Five” Personality Traits

1. Openness
2. Conscientiousness
3. Extraversion
4. Agreeableness
5. Neuroticism

### Openness

- Openness to experience
- Distinguishes imaginative people from down-to-earth, conventional people
- High level of openness:
  - Intellectually curious
  - Nonconforming
  - Daring
  - Appreciative of art
  - Aware of feelings

### Conscientiousness

- Tendency to show a preference for planned behavior; influences control, regulation, and direction of impulses
- High levels of conscientiousness:
  - Dependable
  - Productive
  - Purposeful
  - High achievement
  - Persistent

### Extraversion

- Characterized by positive emotions and the tendency to seek out stimulation and the company of others
- High levels of extraversion:
  - Talkative
  - Sociable
  - Affectionate
  - High energy/activity levels
Agreeableness

- Tendency to be compassionate and cooperative; desire to maintain positive interpersonal relationships
- High levels of agreeableness:
  - Sympathetic
  - Warm
  - Trusting
  - Cooperative
  - Generous
  - Helpful
  - Optimistic view of human nature

Neuroticism

- Tendency to experience negative emotions; emotional instability
- High levels of neuroticism:
  - Emotionally reactive
  - Vulnerable to stress
  - Interpret ordinary situations as threatening
  - Anxious
  - Insecure
  - Self-conscious

Endpoints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait Dimension</th>
<th>Endpoints of the Dimension</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Organized, Methodical, Orderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>Sympathetic, Warm, Trusting, Cooperative, Generous, Helpful, Optimistic view of human nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>Emotionally reactive, Vulnerable to stress, Interpret ordinary situations as threatening, Anxious, Insecure, Self-conscious</td>
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Questions about the Big Five

1. How stable are these traits?  
   Quite stable in adulthood. However, they change over development.

2. How heritable are they?  
   Fifty percent or so for each trait.

3. How about other cultures?  
   These traits are common across cultures.

4. Can they predict other personal attributes?  
   Yes. Conscientious people are morning type and extraverted are evening type.
Assessing Traits

Personality inventories are questionnaires (often with true-false or agree-disagree items) designed to gauge a wide range of feelings and behaviors assessing several traits at once.

MMPI

The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) is the most widely researched and clinically used of all personality tests. It was originally developed to identify emotional disorders. 567 true-false items!!

The MMPI was developed by empirically testing a pool of items and then selecting those that discriminated between diagnostic groups.

Evaluating the Trait Perspective

The Person-Situation Controversy

Walter Mischel (1968, 1984, 2004) points out that traits may be enduring, but the resulting behavior in various situations is different. Therefore, traits, by themselves, are insufficient predictors of behavior.
The Person-Situation Controversy

Trait theorists argue that behaviors from a situation may be different, but average behavior remains the same. Therefore, traits matter.

With age, personality traits become more stable, as reflected in the correlation of trait scores with follow-up scores seven years later (Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000).

The Person-Situation Controversy

Traits are socially significant and influence our health, thinking, and performance (Gosling et al., 2000).

Samuel Gosling – What your FB profile says about you

Social-Cognitive Perspective

Bandura (1986, 2001, 2005) believes that personality is the result of an interaction that takes place between a person and their social context.
Social-Cognitive Approach

- Suggests human experiences, and interpretations of those experiences, determine personality growth and development
  - Social = experiences
  - Cognitive = interpretation of experiences

Social-Cognitive Approach

- Influenced by behaviorism
  - Classical conditioning
  - Operant conditioning
  - Modeling

- Locus of Control
  - The amount of control that a person feels he or she has over the environment
    - External vs. internal

- Self-efficacy
  - The belief one holds about their own ability to perform a task or accomplish a goal

Reciprocal Influences

The three factors, behavior, cognition, and environment, are interlocking determinants of each other.

Individuals & Environments

Specific ways in which individuals and environments interact

- Different people choose different environments.
  - The school you attend and the music you listen to are partly based on your dispositions.

- Our personalities shape how we react to events.
  - Anxious people react to situations differently than calm people.

- Our personalities shape situations.
  - How we view and treat people influences how they treat us.
Behavior

Behavior emerges from an interplay of external and internal influences.

Assessing Behavior in Situations

Social-cognitive psychologists observe people in realistic and simulated situations because they find that it is the best way to predict the behavior of others in similar situations.

Past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior as long as the situation and the person remain much the same.

Evaluating the Social-Cognitive Perspective

Critics say that social-cognitive psychologists pay a lot of attention to the situation and pay less attention to individuals, their unconscious mind, emotions, and genetics.

Exploring the Self

Research on the self has a long history because the self organizes thinking, feelings, and actions and is a critical part of our personality.

- Research focuses on the different selves we possess. Some we dream and others we dread.
- Research studies how we overestimate our concern that others evaluate our appearance, performance, and blunders (spotlight effect).
Exploring the Self
Research on the self has a long history because the self organizes thinking, feelings, and actions and is a critical part of our personality.

- Research studies the self-reference effect in recall.

Self-Serving Bias
We accept responsibility for good deeds and successes more than for bad deeds and failures. Defensive self-esteem is fragile and egotistic whereas secure self-esteem is less fragile and less dependent on external evaluation.