

PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY: PSY30008.

WEEK 1: What is personality psychology and the trait perspective (pg.1-12 & 13-44)

Describing personality is trying to portray the essence of who that person is.

Personality is reflected in what people say and do and in how they do what they do.

DEFINING PERSONALITY (pg.2)

Psychologists focus on personality as an abstraction – referring to an abstraction of what everyone’s personality consists of. Ordinary people focus on the personalities of specific people.

WHY USE PERSONALITY AS A CONCEPT (pg.3)

To *convey a sense of consistency or continuity about a person.*

There is consistency across **time, similar situations and situations that are quite different** to each other.

One person should act in consistent ways from time to time and setting to setting.

Personality attempts to capture this consistency.

The other idea is that the sense of what the person is doing **originates from within.**

Also attempts to **use a few qualities to summarise what a person is like**, due to prominence in their behaviour.

*individual differences and reactions are an important part of personality.

Overall personality conveys a sense of consistency, internal causality and distinctiveness.

A WORKING DEFINITION (pg.4)

Personality is a dynamic organisation, inside the person, of psychophysical systems that create the person’s characteristic patterns of behaviour, thoughts and feelings.

- Personality isn’t just an accumulation of bits and pieces; it has *organization*.
- Personality doesn’t just lie there; it has *processes* of some sort.
- Personality is a *psychological* concept, but it’s inextricably tied to the *physical* body.
- Personality is a *causal force* that helps determine how the person relates to the world.
- Personality shows up in individualized *patterns*—recurrences and consistencies.
- Personality is displayed not just one way but *many ways*—in behaviors, thoughts, and feelings.

TWO FUNDAMENTAL THEMES IN PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY (pg.4)

Individual differences: each person is different from everyone else.

*a really complete account of personality should address where the differences come from and consider why the differences matter.

Intrapersonal functioning: the processes within the person leading them to act the way they do. (Allport) a dynamic organisation of systems.

* A complete account should say something about the processes underlying personality and how and why they work.

THEORY IN PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY (pg.5)

Theory is a summary statement, general principal or set of principals about a class of events.

A set of ideas about how to think and that class of events. The broader the theory the more ambiguous it likely will be.

Theories are used for two purposes:

1. **to explain phenomena it addresses** – give some explanation about why something occurs.
2. **Should allow you to predict new information** - Suggest possibilities you don’t yet know for sure are true.

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WEEK 2: THE MOTIVE PERSPECTIVE (pg. 45 – 72)

* If needs and motives influence peoples thoughts and actions, they're important. A person's needs can even define 'who' they are through the influence on actions.

NEEDS (pg.46)

A **need is an internal state that occurs when something necessary for well-being is lacking.**

- A physical condition that you don't sense directly, instead you **feel it through the motivational state** that it causes. "**An internal directional force that determines how people seek out or respond to objects or situations in the environment**". The strength of a need influences the intensity of the related behaviour.

- needs create movement toward a goal

- **Biological needs** (food, water, air, sex and pain avoidance)

- **Psychological needs** (inherent from a person's individual make-up)

The intensity of a need can be reflected as vigour, enthusiasm, thoroughness OR can help set priorities

>>> the stronger the need, the sooner it is attended to.

* **Needs are directive***

- Toward goals, objects or events (i.e., the need for water also requires you to get water)

- Create movement toward or away from

PRESS: External events. (pg.48)

Press is an external condition that causes a desire to GET or AVOID.

Press arises from psychological state and (like needs) **press leads to motives.**

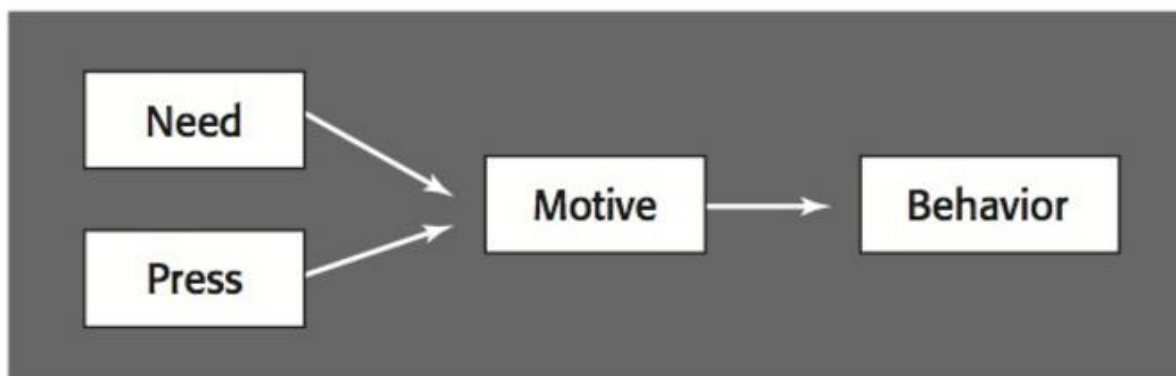
(i.e., being near people who are in committed relationships, may increase your desire for a close relationship).

MOTIVES

Motives are clusters of cognitions with affective overtones, organised around preferred experiences or goals. Motives become thoughts that are either **desired or undesired**, and so are **emotionally toned.**

Motives **eventually produce actions that distinguish needs.**

(i.e., food starts as a need that is triggered by the body. The need results in hunger, which is the motive)



internal need states and external press, can both influence motives to engage in particular kinds of actions. Once motivated to produce an action (as a result of the need), behaviour results.

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WEEK 3: THE SELF-REGULATION PERSPECTIVE (pg. 277 - 304)

~ explain schemas

Schemas:

- Suggest actions to take
- Help us to understand events
- Recognise what others are doing
- Guide in making behaviour.

Schemas often include information about behaviour that helps us to decide what to do in situations, or help us to understand what others did when hearing a story.

Mirror neurons activate BOTH when someone is watching and doing an action - This suggests a strong link between thinking and doing.

~ Describe intentions and their types:

There are two types of intentions:

Personal attitude and social.

Both combined = subjective norm which can form intentions.

Intention means setting up a goal to reach-

Actions often follow from prior intentions.

Azjen & Fishben:

The process may be that of a **mental algebra**, that creates action probability – if the probability is high then intention forms which results in pursuing the act.

When people decide to do something:

- 1. they think about the likely outcome and how much they want it**
- 2. The outcome and its desirability form an attitude about the behaviour**

(Attitudes are your personal orientation to an act, because they stem from your own wants)

The acts social meaning:

- 1. whether people who matter to you want you to do the action.**
- 2. How much you want to please that person/people.**

* When these two merge, they become a **subjective norm** about that action.

Intention is derived from Attitude & Subjective norms:

- When both favour the behaviour it is very likely to occur.
- When both do not, it is unlikely the behaviour will occur.
- When they conflict, you must decide whether satisfying yourself or others is most important to you.

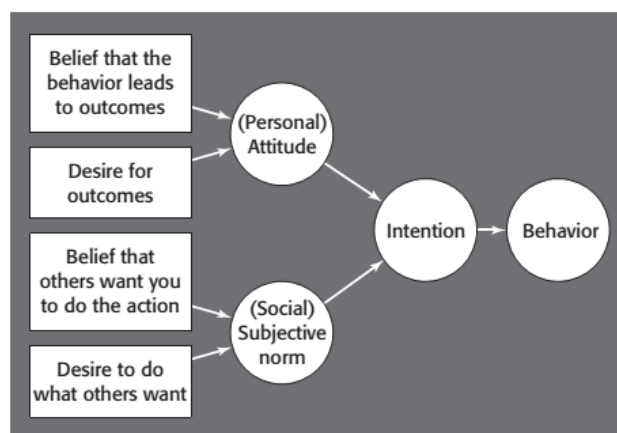


FIGURE 1

Foundations of intentions. The belief that an act will produce a particular outcome and the personal desirability of the outcome merge to form an *attitude* (a personal orientation to the act). The belief that other people want you to do the act and the desire to go along with their wishes merge to form a *subjective norm* (a social orientation to the act). The attitude and the subjective norm are weighted in forming the *intention*. The intention then influences the *behavior*.

Source: Based on Ajzen, 1988.

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WEEK 4: Genetics, Evolution and Personality (pg. 73 – 100)

~ Describe the major themes in evolutionary psychology

Hippocrates and Galen:

- Hippocrates proposed four personality types
- Galen added that each reflects an excess of a bodily fluid.

As a result, the idea that a person's physical makeup determines their personality arose.

Physical makeup: has meant different things at different times.

Early 20th cent, it meant physique or body build.

Today, it means genes.

Many people believe that most qualities of personality are in part, genetically determined.

DETERMINING GENETIC INFLUENCE ON PERSONLITY (pg.74)

Early biological views: Physique and personality (pg.75).

Kretschmer (1925) classified people as thin, muscular or obese – with each group prone to different disorders.

W.H Sheldon, expanded that idea to dimensions and looked at normal personality; believing that each quality relates to one of three layers of the embryo

Endomorphy: Being soft and round. Tending toward plumpness, reflecting digestion.

Mesomorphy: Being rectangular, hard, and strong. Tendency toward muscularity, bone and muscle.

Ectomorphy: Being delicate and frail. Tendency toward thinness. Reflecting skin and nervous system.

W.H Sheldon also proposed three types of temperament

Viscertonia: qualities such as relaxation, tolerance, sociability, love of comfort and easygoingness.

Somatotonia: qualities such as boldness, assertiveness and a desire for adventure and activity.

Cerebrotonia: avoidance of interaction, restraint, pain sensitivity & mental intensity/apprehensiveness.

Sheldon later found that the embryo's and temperaments go together – That is body types related to personality. He also was the first to mention that personality and body type were inherited.

~explain the area of behavioural genetics, especially research methods of twin and adoption studies

Behavioural genetics: the study of genetic influences on behavioural qualities, including personality. It is a mix of psychology and genetics.

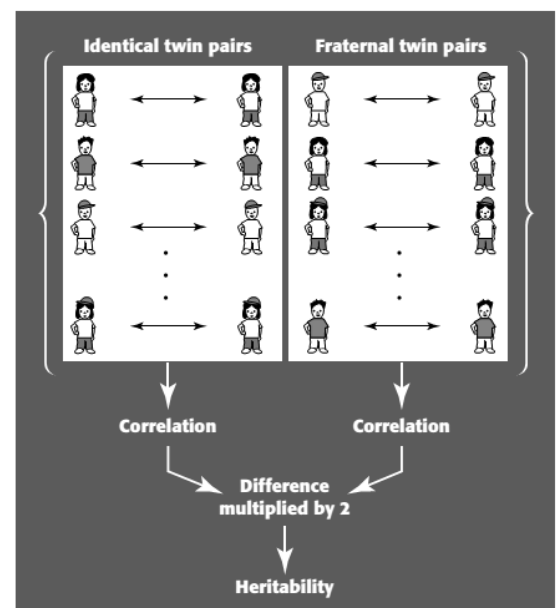
TWIN STUDY METHOD (pg.74)

Used for over 5 decades. Based on the assumption that similarity of life experiences of DZ and MZ twins raised together are equal.

Monozygotic twins (MZ): the result of the first split of cells (into two) becoming separated. Because they come from a single cell they are 100% genetically alike.

Dizygotic twins (DZ): occur when two eggs are released from the mother's ovary. They are like any other pair of brother and sister. As with normal siblings, DZ twins are approximately 50% alike genetically, but can range from 0%-100%.

FIGURE 1
A basic twin study method examines pairs of identical and same-sex fraternal twins raised together. Members of each twin pair are assessed on the variable of interest, and a separate correlation is computed for each type of twin. The correlation for fraternal (DZ) twins is subtracted from the correlation for identical (MZ) twins. Multiplying this difference by 2 gives an index of the heritability of the characteristic—an estimate of the proportion of variance in that characteristic that is accounted for by inheritance.



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WEEK 5: BIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE (pg. 101 – 128)

Biological process approach to personality: assumed human behaviour reflects the operation of a single, complex biological system, reflecting the way were organised as living creatures. In this view, biological processes have systematic influence on behaviour and experiences.

* Theorists examine biological systems to see what they're about and how they work. They then consider how this might influence phenomena identified in personality.

Contemporarily this approach has the idea that personality is influenced by the workings of the body. Previously it was believed that personality is embedded in our bodies.

Similarities = everyone has a nervous system (NS) and an endocrine system (ES)

Differences = parts of the NS and ES are more active or passive in some people than in others.

EARLY IDEAS: EYSENCK'S VIEWS ON BRAIN FUNCTIONS (pg.102)

~ *Describe Eysenck's view on Extraversion and cortical arousal and Neuroticism and emotional arousal*

Eysenck saw personality as composed largely of **two supertraits**, which were rooted in the body:

1. Neuroticism:

He argues, people high in neuroticism are easily aroused in the brains emotion centres. This arousal intensifies manifestations for both introversion and extraversion (causing both to emerge fully in behaviour), causing them to become 'more of what they are'.

2. Extraversion: outgoing, uninhibited and immersed in social activity (vs quiet and retiring)

He argues these differences lay in the activation of the cerebral cortex – when the cortex is activated the person is alert. He argued that **extraverts have LOWER cortical arousal than introverts**. As introverts are already highly active cortically, social situations lead to over stimulation, thus they avoid social interactions. Extraverts seek interaction to raise the baseline.

Evidence: alertness is required for vigilance tasks, introverts (who should have higher cortical arousal) are better at these tasks. Also due to higher arousal, introverts have been found to need higher levels of depressant drugs to induce effects.

INCENTIVE APPROACH SYSTEM (pg. 103)

Ideas have been proposed about how the NS relates to personality. All approaches take a functional approach, asking what functions do particular kinds of behaviour serve? These behaviours are then linked to ideas about brain processes, and both are then linked to personality.

BEHVIORAL APPROACH (pg103)

~ *Describe Gray's BAS and identify a behavioural example*

Believe there is a set of brain structure that cause animals to approach incentives (things they desire).

The structures involved in approach behaviour have been given several names: activation system, behavioural facilitation system, behavioural engagement system and behavioural approach system (BAS).

Behavioural approach system (BAS): only engaged during pursuit of incentives. It regulates the psychic motivation (accelerator) that moves you toward what you want. A reward seeking system. It is involved whenever a person is perusing an incentive.

- It is likely that there are different brain areas for specific incentives (food, sex, shelter) – although each of these separate parts are thought to link together to make an overall BAS system.

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WEEK 6: The psychoanalytic perspective (pg.129-160)

Freud's view is psychodynamic is extremely metaphorical - is the idea that personality is a set of processes that are always in motion.

Personality is several processes which sometimes work against each other. Pressures within the personality can conflict with each other.

BASIC THEMES (pg. 130)

Because personality is filled with conflict, defence is a key aspect of is a key aspect of human functioning. Everyone experiences threats about aspects of him or herself – such as desires you think are shameful – and defensive processes prevent these from overpowering you.

the idea of continual defence is important here

Also, human experience is filled with lust, aggression, sexuality and death. Reminding that humans are animals whose purpose in life is reproduction.

Human behaviour is rarely what is appears to be – quite often symbolizing other hidden qualities.

THE TOPOGRAPHICAL MODEL OF THE MIND (pg.131)

How the mind is organised.

THREE REGIONS:

- 1. Conscious:** what you are now aware of
- 2. Preconscious:** can be brought to awareness easily
- 3. Unconscious:** not directly accessible by awareness
Source of desires, urges, feelings and ideas that are tied to anxiety, conflict or pain – Exerting a continual influence on later conscious actions and experience.

The mind is like an iceberg.

Although the conscious and preconscious influence behaviour, Freud saw them as less important than the unconscious – believing that was where the core operations of personality take place.

- Material (thoughts, feelings, desires) pass easily from conscious to preconscious – and back – and into unconscious.
- Unconscious material cannot be voluntarily brought to awareness because forces keep it hidden.

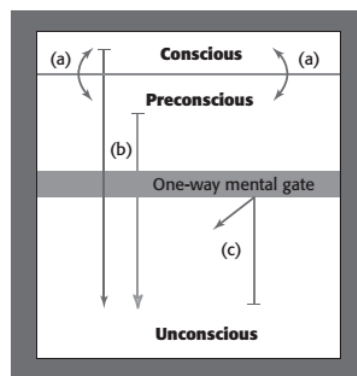


FIGURE 1

Graphic representation of Freud's topographical model of the mind. (A) Material can pass easily back and forth between the conscious and preconscious portions of the mind. (B) Material can also move from the conscious and preconscious into the unconscious. But once material is in the unconscious, the person is prevented from having conscious access to it because (C) a mental gate prevents retrieval.

EGO AND DELAY OF GRATIFICATION

a key function of ego is to delay gratification of impulses. To become productive member of society we must learn to wait for rewards. Delay is most easy for children when they imagine the instant reward is something else, or shift their attention away from it. This is the EGO tricking the ID by distracting it.

Children who are better able to delay have been found to be better at achievement and social responsibility – meaning they have a well-defined ego.

For boys delay = controlling emotional impulses, concentrate and deliberate.

For girls delay = intelligence, resourcefulness, competence and recognising the situationally appropriate response.