

HPS307 PERSONALITY

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

T2 2020

CONTENTS

<i>TOPIC 1: WHAT IS PERSONALITY?</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>TOPIC 2: DOMINANT THEORIES: BIOLOGICAL & TRAIT</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>TOPIC 3: DOMINANT THEORIES: SOCIAL LEARNING & SELF-CONCEPT</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>TOPIC 4: DOMINANT THEORIES: PSYCHODYNAMIC & MOTIVATION</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>TOPIC 5: TESTING & MEASUREMENT</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>TOPIC 6: PERSONALITY ACROSS THE LIFESPAN</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>TOPIC 7: PERSONALITY, HEALTH & WELLBEING</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>TOPIC 8: PERSONALITY DISORDERS AND THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>TOPIC 9: PERSONALITY AND COGNITION</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>TOPIC 10: PERSONALITY IN THE WORKPLACE</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>TOPIC 11: PERSONALITY AND CULTURE</i>	<i>62</i>

1.1 Define personality.

- *Lewin's formula (1936): $B = f(P, S)$*
 - *behaviour is a function of personality and situation*
 - *however, we must define personality to use this formula!*
- *Allport (1961): Personality is the dynamic organisation within the individual of the psychophysical systems that determine his characteristic patterns of thought, feelings and behaviour.*
 - *dynamic organisation – a collection of 'loose-knit' traits, can be modified by context and time*
 - *psychophysical systems – subject to biological and psychological influences (e.g. temperament)*
 - *three raw materials of personality: inherited physique, intelligence, temperament*
 - *a person-centred approach to personality – the organisation of attributes within the individual; development as a system over time*
 - *idiographic – assumes each person has a unique psychological structure*
 - *emphasises uniqueness of individual, internal cognitive and motivational processes which influence behaviour*
 - *habits, skills, attitudes, traits*
 - *biologically determined, shaped by environment*
- *Cattell (1950): Personality is that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation*
 - *interested in population-based characteristics (rather than individual differences)*
 - *nomothetic view – what we share with others; aims to establish laws or generalisations about personality*
- *Personality psychology looks at human universals and individual differences*
- *Twenge & Campbell (2017): Personality describes someone's usual pattern of behaviour, feelings, and thoughts.*
- *Cervone & Pervin (2016): personality describes psychological qualities that contribute to an individual's enduring and distinctive patterns of feeling, thinking, and behaving.*

1.2 Summarise the main perspectives of personality.

- *Psychoanalytic theory – personality is a set of internal psychic forces that compete and conflict with one another*
 - *Theorist: Sigmund Freud*
 - *Strengths: attention to unconscious influences; importance of sexual drives*
 - *Weaknesses: largely untestable concepts*
- *Neoanalytic (psychosocial) theories –*
 - *Theorist: Karen Horney*
 - *Strengths: emphasis on the self as it struggles to cope with emotions and drives on the inside and the demands of others on the outside.*
 - *Weaknesses: still largely untestable concepts*
 - *social learning perspective – behaviour changes systematically as a result of experiences. A person's personality is the integrated sum of what they have learnt up until now.*
- *Biological theory –*
 - *Theorist: Hans Eysenck*
 - *Strengths: focus on tendencies and limits imposed by biological inheritance; easily combined with most other approaches*
 - *Weaknesses: strict biological approaches may ignore the influence of socialisation and context to some extent*
- *Behaviourist –*
 - *Theorist: B F Skinner*
 - *Strengths: emphasis on a more scientific analysis of the learning experiences that shape personality*
 - *Weaknesses: radical behaviourism ignored internal cognitive processes*
- *Cognitive – human nature involves deriving meaning from experiences. Personality reflects the mental organisations used to interpret the world, which shape behaviour.*
 - *Theorists: George Kelly, Roter*
 - *Strengths: emphasis on active nature of human thought; uses modern knowledge from cognitive psychology*
 - *Weaknesses: individual differences are often ignored; it is assumed all internal processing is the same in different people*
- *Trait theory – people have fairly stable qualities that are displayed across many settings and are deeply embedded in the person*
 - *Theorists: Gordon Allport, Cattell, Coster & McCrae*

- *Strengths: focus on good individual assessment techniques; currently the dominant framework for personality assessment*
- *Weaknesses: limited capacity to explain how personality develops*
- *Motive perspective – motive forces underlie behaviour. These motives vary over time and under different circumstances, and some motives are stronger than others. Personality reflects differences in the balance of motives.*
- *Inheritance and evolution perspective – personality is genetically based, dispositions are inherited. Many qualities exist because they once held evolutionary benefits.*
- *Humanistic/existential – emphasises the personal worth of the individual, centrality of human values. Ethics and personal worth*
 - *Theorists: Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers*
 - *Strengths: appreciation of the spiritual nature of a person; emphasises struggles for self-fulfilment and dignity*
 - *Weaknesses: very culture-dependent and somewhat limited ability to explain psychopathology (e.g. Antisocial Personality Disorder)*
 - *self-actualisation and self-determination (organismic) perspective – every person has the potential to grow and develop into a valuable human being if permitted to do so. People naturally tend toward self-perfection*
 - *self-regulation perspective – synthesizing goals and moving toward those goals*
- *Interactionist –*
 - *Theorists: Henry Murray, Lewin*
 - *Strengths: understanding that we are different selves in different situations*
 - *Weaknesses: relies on the assumptions of $B = f(P,S)$*

1.3 Describe the scientific basis of personality psychology.

- *Quantitative approach – looks at broad trends or patterns, unable to make claims about the individual*
 - *descriptive and inferential statistics – mean, SD*
 - *correlations – relationship between two variables*
 - *uses an experimental design*
- *Qualitative approach – looks at the individual and their context, unable to make generalisations to population*
 - *social constructivism perspective*
 - *interviews, analysis of archival data, case studies, thematic analysis*
 - *less objective*

- *Mixed methods approach*
- *Deductive reasoning – using our knowledge of basic psychological principles in order to understand each individual person. A ‘top-down’ approach; theory to data.*
- *Inductive reasoning – concepts are developed based on what is observed from the data. A ‘bottom-up’ approach; data to theory.*
- *Three ways of describing personality (individual differences)*
 - *Type approach – personality comes in a limited number of distinct categories (e.g., enneagrams). Each person belongs to only one category, there are no gradations or partial memberships in a category.*
 - *Traits – a trait is a quantitative measure of a focused set of characteristics. Each person is a combination of many traits.*
 - *Factors – factors are made up of a collection of correlated traits to describe a broader range of behaviour. Quantitatively measured.*

1.4 What makes a good theory of personality?

- *Theory – a conceptual tool for understanding certain specified phenomena. It includes concepts (theoretical constructs) and statements about how they are related (theoretical propositions).*
- *Three major criteria for a good theory are: verifiability, comprehensiveness, applied value*
- *A theory of personality should satisfy:*
 - *description*
 - *explanation*
 - *testable concepts*
 - *empirical validity*
 - *comprehensiveness – explains a broad range of behaviour*
 - *parsimony – should include as few assumptions (concepts) as possible*
 - *heuristic value (fertility) – ability of a theory to suggest new ideas for further research*
 - *applied value – practical applications to the real world*

1.5 Outline the basic issues in personality psychology.

- *The unconscious – how and to what extent do unconscious forces play a role in human behaviour?*
- *The self – how should we conceptualise the self (e.g., using traits or social roles)? How important are social influences?*

- *Individual differences – to what extent can we apply general methods to all people? Is a nomothetic approach (which seeks to create general principles) or an idiographic approach (concerned with individual cases) better to understand personality?*
- *Gender – do psychological differences between men and women arise from biology or social influences?*
- *Situation – how do we account for the fact that everyone is influenced, in part, by the given situation?*
- *Culture – how does the culture or environment we grow up in shape our personality? Which parts of personality are relatively fixed, and which are more changeable?*

2.1 Summarise how modern research supports Darwin's Theory of Evolution in explaining personality development.

- *The Origin of Species (1859)*
- *Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection comprises of three main components:*
 - *Common descent, the idea that all life on earth has evolved from a single ancestor,*
 - *Descent with modification, the idea that offspring are descended from their parents, but have modifications (i.e. they are genetically different to their parents), and*
 - *Natural selection, the idea that characteristics within a species that enhance their ability to survive in their environment and reproduce, will be passed on through subsequent generations - or 'selected' for by environmental pressures.*
- *Evolutionary psychology – how have humans evolved, and by what environmental pressures? How has human psychology changed as a means of adaptation?*
- *Fossil evidence shows that human brain capacity has more than doubled in the last 3.5 million years → cognitive ability and intelligence must have changed*
- *Complex emotions contribute to successful reproduction.*
 - *Lust (sexual behaviours)*
 - *Love (caretaking; rearing of offspring)*
 - *Jealousy (detection of cheating behaviours; mate selection)*
- *Darwinian theory is the study of individual differences in human personality, and how well they affect survival (health, well-being, relationships)*

2.2 Describe how biological systems can influence personality development

- *Behavioural genetics – how much of human behaviour can be attributed to genetics?*
 - *twin studies (quantitative genetics) – analyse twins adopted or separated at birth to compare nature and nurture*
 - *molecular genetics – examines the products and correlates of a specific gene*
- *Behavioural genomics – the study of how genes affect behaviour*
 - *how genes function together with each other and the environment to influence behaviour*
 - *searches for stable individual differences in biological responsiveness*
- *Gray's reinforcement sensitivity theory*
 - *Behavioural inhibition System (BIS) – provides the orienting response to novel situations and responds to things that are punishing.*