

# Week 1

## Personality

- **Lewin's Formula (1936)**
  - Behavior is explained by the interaction between a person's personality and the situation they are currently experiencing
- **Allport's Definition of Personality (1961)**
  - Personality is the dynamic (changing) organisation of psychophysical systems (interactions between mind and body) that determines patterns of behaviour / thoughts / feelings
  - This approach is **person-centred** (idiographic), focusing on the uniqueness of the individual
  - It emphasizes the development of personality as a system *over time*
  - Allport identified three raw materials of personality: inherited physique, temperament, and intelligence
- **Cattell's Definition of Personality (1950)**
  - Cattell viewed personality as a way of predicting what a person will do in a given situation
  - He focused on personality as population-based characteristics
  - The primary interest is in how people are similar, rather than how they differ
- **Modern Definitions of personality**
  - **Twenge & Campbell (2017)** describe personality as someone's usual pattern of behavior, feelings, and thoughts
  - **Cervone & Pervin (2016)** define personality as psychological qualities that contribute to an individual's enduring and distinctive patterns of feeling, thinking, and behaving
    - *Enduring* suggests styles of functioning are relatively stable, although people can behave differently in different situations and change over time
    - *Distinctive* refers to tendencies that distinguish us from other people

## Theories of Personality

- **Psychoanalytic (Sigmund Freud)**
  - **Strength:** Identifies unconscious influences and the importance of sexual drives, even in nonsexual spheres
  - **Weakness:** Concepts are untestable
  - **Core Idea:** Personality is a set of internal psychic forces that constantly compete and conflict with each other

- **Neoanalytic (Karen Horney)**
  - **Strength:** Emphasizes the self struggling to cope with emotions
  - Considers internal drives alongside demands from external influences
  - **Weakness:** Still largely untestable
  - *Also called Psychosocial theories*, they historically stemmed from psychoanalytic theories but differ significantly
  - They focus heavily on the formation of relationships
- **Biological (Hans Eysenck)**
  - **Strength:** Focuses on tendencies and limits imposed by biological inheritance, and combines easily with other approaches
  - **Weakness:** Strictly biological approaches ignore the influence of context and socialization
  - The **Biological process perspective** suggests personality reflects the workings of the body and the brain, focusing on how the nervous system and hormones influence behavior
  - Eysenck's example differentiates Extraversion (seeking stimulation) from Introversion
- **Behaviourist (Skinner)**
  - **Strength:** Emphasizes scientific analysis of learning experiences that shape personality
  - **Weakness:** Strict behaviorism ignores cognitive processes
- **Cognitive (George Kelly)**
  - **Strength:** Focuses on the active nature of human thought and uses modern knowledge from cognitive psychology
  - **Weakness:** Often ignores individual differences by assuming all internal processes are the same
  - **Core Idea:** Human nature derives meaning from experiences, and mental organizations of experiences influence behavior Understanding personality involves examining the internal processes that determine actions and reactions to the world
- **Trait (Gordon Allport)**
  - **Strength:** Focuses on individual assessment techniques and is currently the dominant framework for personality assessment
  - **Weakness:** Limited ability to explain how personality develops
  - **Core Idea:** People possess fairly stable qualities (traits) that are displayed across many settings and are deeply embedded
- **Humanistic (Maslow)**
  - **Strength:** Focuses on the spiritual nature of a person, emphasizing struggles for self-fulfilment and dignity
  - This is an optimistic approach that values the worth of individuals and encourages people to reach their potentials
  - **Weakness:** It is culture dependent and has a limited ability to explain psychopathy

- *Self-actualisation/Self-determination perspective* theorizes that every person has the potential to grow and develop into a valuable human being if allowed
  - Self-determination is central because people can move toward self-perfection by exercising free will
- **Interactionist (Henry Murray)**
  - *Strength*: Recognizes that we present as different selves in different situations
  - *Weakness*: Relies on the assumption of  $B = f [P, S]$  (Behavior is a function of Person and Situation)
  - *Core Idea*: Behavior is a function of personal characteristics and the current situations, reflecting Lewin's equation Murray is considered a primary founder

## Other Perspectives

- **Motive perspective**
  - Theorists propose many different motives that vary over time and circumstance
  - The core of personality is the balance of motives, based on differences in underlying strengths of these motives
- **Inheritance and evolution perspective**
  - Emphasizes that human nature is deeply rooted in our genes, having evolved over thousands of years
  - Genetically based dispositions are inherited
  - Many personality qualities exist because they provided evolutionary benefits
- **Social learning perspective**
  - The view that human nature dictates that behavior changes systematically due to our experiences
  - Personality is the integrated sum of everything a person has learned up until now
- **Self-regulation perspective**
  - People are complex psychological systems where recurrent processes form organized actions to attain specific endpoints
  - This requires organization, coherence, and patterning to synthesize goals and move toward them
- **The Person-Situation Debate**
  - This debate addresses whether stable personality traits predict behavior, versus the view that the situation is more important than personality
  - Research, like Milgram's experiments, shows that both personality and situations influence behavior