

Comparing Personality Theories

P-E-N Advantages: Assessment is straightforward. Empirical evidence in favour of Eysenck. Tested on humans. Larger sphere of influence.

BIS/BAS Advantages: More detailed physiological descriptions.

Eysenck vs. Gray: Because the theories define the same factor space, anxiety can be recast as neurotic introversion versus stable extraversion, impulsivity can recast as neurotic extraversion versus stable introversion.

Giant 3 vs. Big Five: Eysenck & Grey vs. Costa, McCrae & Goldberg. Psychobiological focus and why focus vs. Descriptive and how question.

Eysenck vs. Grey: E, N & P vs. Impulsivity, Anxiety & Fight/Flight. CNS, ANS vs. BIS, BAS.

Advantages of Giant 3: Explanatory power (Why). Bridges Psychology and Biology. Accommodates individual differences not account for by environment. Consistent with animal research. Supports pharmacological interventions.

Disadvantages of Giant 3: Less comprehensive (less factors). Limited methodology for assessing brain function. Overemphasise biological factors. Deterministic (little scope for interventions).

Advantages of Big Five: More comprehensive. More thorough, due to scope of lower-order facets. Dominant as facilitates accumulation of evidence. O, A and C have wider nomological networks than P.

Disadvantages of Big Five: Moderate to strong factor intercorrelations (A & C). Weak explanatory power. Over reliance on semantic accounts of phenomena. May be factors beyond big five.

Comparisons of Giant 3 vs. Big Five

P-E-N vs. Gray

Nature of science

There are many ways to acquire knowledge: **intuition, authority, rationalism and empiricism.**

Why science? We perform science in the attempt to **describe, explain, predict and control.**

This is the best method as it yields information based on reality. It is a logic of enquiry to be followed in solving problems and acquiring a body of knowledge. The process is as follows: develop theory, form hypothesis, design experiment and operationalise variables, conduct experiment, interpret results, feed back and if necessary amend theory.

Assumptions: **Reality In Nature** What we see, hear, feel and taste is real and has substance (Empiricism is based on observable characteristics of natural world). **Rationality** there is a rational basis for events that occur in nature. **Regularity** events in nature follow same laws and occur the same way at all times and places. **Discoverability** not only is there unanimity in nature but it is possible to discover it.

Psychodynamic Approach

Humanistic Approach

Trait Theories

Posit that personality is a constellation of dispositions that influence how people think, feel and behave.

Fundamental constructs of theory are nebulous (e.g. psychic energy)

Overemphasises importance of sexual drive, overlooks genetic factors.

Clinical effectiveness repeatedly called in to question (Eysenck, 1952).

Unfalsifiable, vague and so unscientific.

Strong on description and labelling. Weak on prediction and explanation.

Same variance (factor space) conceptualised in many ways. Due to arbitrariness of factor analysis, which underpins hierarchical trait theories.

Multiple competing theories enjoy considerable empirical support.

Overemphasises importance of appreciating personhood and keeping close contact with feelings.

Overlooks social and genetic determinants of personality and being.

Overemphasises existential ideas of self-actualisation and so makes the theory impossible to evaluate.

Rejects scientific method. Mind is self-aware and so not capable of being studied.