

Personality

Definitions

Personality comes from the latin root word 'persona' which means **mask**. Personality is therefore the 'public self'

Personality is a dynamic organisation, inside the person, of psychological systems that create the person's characteristic patterns of behaviour, thoughts and feelings. **(Allport, 1961)**

Personality is that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in any given situation. **(Cattell, 1965)**

Approaches

The Trait Approach states that there is a dynamic organisation inside the person of psychophysical systems that create a person's characteristic patterns of behaviour, thoughts and feelings. (Carver et al. 2000)

Classifies traits in to a **taxonomy** and measures the extent to which people have these stable and observable patterns of behaviour.

Deary & Matthews (1993) argue that this approach is flourishing due to growing agreement about the dimensions, a greater understanding of heritability and a growing sophistication of research.

Idiographic assumes that individuals are unique and cannot be described using the same concepts.

Nomothetic assumes that individual differences can be described, explained and predicted in terms of predefined attributes. Personalities can therefore be described in terms of different levels of the same "vectors".

These can further be divided in terms of **traits** and **types**. Traits are ordinal (Extraversion score of 49) whereas types are categorical (introverted).

Dispositional views personality in terms of consistent, unchanging dispositions.

Situational views personality in terms of unrelated states or behaviours determined by situational factors.

Hippocrates/Galen Temperament Theory This assumed that biological differences would cause behavioural differences. It described biological differences in terms of the humors or the specific fluids in the body.

Phrenology linked physical and psychological traits. Eysenck was heavily influenced by this approach.

Somatotype Theory (Sheldon) argued that physical formation influenced personality. The three main types were endomorphs, mesomorphs and ectomorphs.

History

Assumptions

People are unique but their personality can be described and categorised parsimoniously along various dimensions or into specific categories.

Personality dimensions are behavioural dispositions in that they affect social behaviour.

Dimensions are relatively stable over time and in varying social situations.

The personality of a person can be decomposed into specific and fundamental parts and also combined into an organised whole.

Primary Causality of Traits – Causality flows from traits to behaviour and that, although there is a feedback loop, it is less important.

Inner Locus of Traits – The traits describe **fundamental core qualities** of a person that are **latent** rather than manifest.

A Good Theory (Maddi, 1989)

Important It deals with issues that matter.

Operational The meaning of a concepts can be determined by measurement. It ensures a level of prediction.

Parsimonious the theory is as simple as possible.

Clear Good theories avoid figurative, metaphorical or analogical language.

Empirically Valid Theories derive from hypotheses that are empirically tested using reliable methods.

Stimulating It is capable of provoking others to thought and investigations.

1) Identify Phenomena (e.g. Belief in Just World, Lerner)

2) Replication of the Effect

3) Development of a Self-Report Measure

4) Validation of the Measure

5) Factor Analysis & Multidimensionality

6) Development of multiple, multidimensional measures

7) Doubts about the original conquer

8) Acceptance & "Textbookization"

Development of Trait Concepts & Measures