

Trait Theories II

This is the dominant approach, predicated on empirical evidence, is falsifiable, explicit, replicable and observable.

The question of whose trait theory is the best is highly contentious.

Jeffrey Gray's Theory of Personality

This was firmly rooted in psychophysiological mechanisms. The brain has reward and punishment systems. Most evidence obtained through animal research.

45° (later amended to 30°) rotation of the Eysenckian dimensions of Extraversion and Neuroticism: This resulted in to alternative dimensions to describe the same space: **anxiety** (sensitivity to punishment) and **impulsivity** (sensitivity to reward).

Anxiety is associated with the Behavioural Activation System **BAS** brain system, which controls sensitivity to reward. A.K.A the 'GO' system.

Impulsivity is associated with the Behavioural Inhibition System **BIS** brain system, related to sensitivity to punishment. Known as 'avoidance motivation' or 'STOP' system.

Support has been scarce and inconsistent although there is strong evidence from animal studies. Human anxiety appears to be much more susceptible to **cognitive control**.

The psychometrics of this theory is also problematic in terms of operationalisation of BIS/ BAS and their relationship. They are mutually inhibitory but orthogonal.

Hans J Eysenck (1947)
Wrote 1000+ journal articles and 80 books.

It developed considerably after his book Dimensions of Personality (1947). He initially proposed E versus Introversion (based in the CNS and caused by arousal of reticular activating system) and N versus Stability (based in ANS, highly reactive in neurotics).

In 1976, Hans Eysenck added Psychoticism versus Normality to his taxonomy. This was the second psychopathological symptom. He used this to distinguish between borderline schizophrenics. This is characterised by adjectives like 'emotionally cold' and 'non-comformist'

His ideas have considerable empirical support (particularly E and N).

E and N can be considered as positive and negative emotion, respectively. Canli et al. (2001) found that E is characterised by Amygdala and limbic system activation whereas N is characterised by activation of the Middle Frontal Gyrus.

Psychoticism has the weakest theoretical and empirical foundations but has been found to correlate highly with maleness. Eysenck postulated that it is linked to male hormonal levels (androgens).

Eysenck developed the EPI (1964), the EPQ (1975) and the EPQ-R (1985) (probably the best) and the EPP (1992) (took facets in to account and accounts 'cant decide' responses).

Petrides, Eysenck, Eysenck et al. (1998) demonstrated replicability of Eysenckian factors with data from 34 countries. P tends to be lost over cultures however.

It has been argued that it is an excellent factor structure with good reliabilities (not so much for P). **Eysenck et al. (1989)** argued that around **70% of population variance** is genetic.