

18: Personality Psychology

Key Concepts

- **Personality** is an individual's characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting.
- **Free Association** is a method of exploring the unconscious.
- **Psychoanalysis** is Freud's theory that attributes our thoughts and actions to unconscious motives and conflicts.
- **Unconscious** is that part of our mind that to Freud, is a reservoir of mostly unacceptable thoughts, wishes, feelings and memories.
- **Defence Mechanisms** in psychoanalytic theory, is the ego's protective methods of reducing anxiety by unconsciously distorting reality.
- **Collective Unconscious** is Carl Jung's concept of a shared, inherited reservoir of memory traces from our species' history.
- **Identity** is one's sense of self.
- **Trait** is a characteristic pattern of behavior or a disposition to feel and act.
- **Reciprocal Determinism** is the interacting influences between personality and environmental factors.
- **Spotlight Effect** is overestimating others' noticing and evaluating.

The Humanistic Perspective

- Focus on "healthy" ways people strive for self-determination and self-realization.
- Abraham Maslow & Carl Rogers.
- Emphasis on human potential.
- Rogers: People are basically good & have self-actualizing tendencies.
- Criticism: can lead to self-indulgence, selfishness, & erosion of moral restraint.

Contemporary Perspectives

- Focused on interaction of persons and environments.
- Analysis of basic dimensions & their impact on behavior.
- Focused on studies of self-esteem, self-serving bias, cultural influences.
- **Trait Perspective**
- William Sheldon, 1954: Body type: endomorph, mesomorph, ectomorph : modestly linked.
- To capture full individuality, place people on several trait dimensions simultaneously.
- **Eysenck Personality Questionnaire:** Use a statistical procedure called "factor analysis" to identify clusters of test items
- Biology influences personality factors.
- **Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI):** empirically derived.
- **Big Five Factors**

Dimension	Endpoints
Emotional Stability	calm/anxious, secure/insecure, self-satisfied/self-pitying
Extraversion	sociable/retiring, fun-loving/sober, affectionate/reserved
Openness	imaginative/practical, preference for variety/preference for routine, independent/conforming
Agreeableness	soft-hearted/ruthless, trusting/suspicious, helpful/uncooperative
Conscientiousness	organized/disorganized, careful/careless, and disciplined/impulsive

- Visiting another culture: traits remain hidden while we carefully attend to social cues.
- **Social-Cognitive Perspective**
- Emphasizes the interaction of persons with their situations.
- Believe we learn many of our behaviours either through conditioning or by observing others and modeling their behaviour.
- Mental processes are also important.
- External Locus of Control: Chance or outside forces determine their fate.
- Internal Locus of Control: To a great extent, each person has control of their own destiny.
- "Internals" achieve more at school, act more independently, enjoy better health, feel less depressed; have more self-control.
- Learned helplessness: passive resignation.
- Greatest advances seen when optimism is combined with realism.

Psychoanalytical Perspective

Sigmund Freud

- Theory of personality.
- First used hypnosis but later switched to free association.
- Retrieve and release painful unconscious memories.
- The mind is like an iceberg where most of our mind, the unconscious, is below our awareness.
- Unacceptable passions & thoughts are repressed or forcibly blocked from consciousness but still have a powerfully influence us.
- **Id** is a reservoir of unconscious psychic energy that constantly striving to fulfill basic drives and operates on the pleasure principle.
- **Ego** operates on the reality principle and acts to gratify the id's impulses in realistic ways and is partly conscious.
- **Superego** is the voice of conscience that focuses on how one ought to behave and strives for perfection but also produces pride and guilt.
- Personality forms during first few years of life: Psychosexual Stages

Conscious Awareness



Unconscious (hidden)

Oral: 0-18 months: pleasure of the mouth

Anal: 18-36 months: bowel & bladder elimination: control

Phallic: 3-6 years: genitals: incestuous sexual feelings

Latency: 6 years – puberty: dormant sexual feelings

Genital: puberty onward: maturation of sexual interests

- Anxiety is the price we pay for civilization and is the ego's fear of losing control.
- Defense mechanisms helps us repress our sexual and aggressive impulses.

REGRESSION: retreating into an earlier, more infantile stage of development

REACTION FORMATION: choices that look like their opposite

PROJECTION: attributes threatening impulses by attributing them to others

RATIONALIZATION: unconsciously generate self-justifying explanations

DISPLACEMENT: diverts one's sexual or aggressive impulses toward an object or person that is psychologically more acceptable

- Projective tests: Thematic Apperception & Rorschach Inkblot test.
- Tests lack validity or reliability
- **Recent research contradicts Freud's specific ideas.**
- Development is lifelong: not fixed in childhood.
- His method of questioning could cause false memories.
- Little support for Freud's idea that defence mechanisms disguise sexual and aggressive impulses.
- Freud's theory rests on few objective observations and offers few hypotheses to verify or reject.
- Subconscious conducts cooler information processing that occurs without our awareness.

Hermann Rorschach



Carl Jung

- Neo-Freudian
- Unconscious contains more than repressed thoughts and feelings.
- Believed in a Collective Consciousness.

How to Use This Cheat Sheet: These are the keys related this topic. Try to read through it carefully twice then recite it out on a blank sheet of paper. Review it again before the exams.