

Chapter 12

Personality: Theory, Research, and Assessment

Personality Definition :

- The concept of personality is used to explain the stability in a person's behaviour over time and across situations (consistency) and the behavioural differences among people reacting to the same situation (distinctiveness).
- Personality refers to an individual's unique constellation of consistent behavioural traits.
- A personality trait is a durable disposition to behave in a particular way in a variety of situations; adjectives like honest, moody, impulsive, and excitable describe dispositions that represent personality traits

Trait Model : (Page 519)

- Extraversion - scores signify that a person is outgoing, sociable, upbeat, friendly, assertive, and gregarious. Some trait models refer to this as positive emotionality
- Neuroticism - scores signify that a person is anxious, hostile, self-conscious, insecure, and vulnerable. Some models call this negative emotionality
- Openness to experience - associated with curiosity, flexibility, vivid fantasy, imaginativeness, artistic sensitivity, and unconventional attitudes
- Agreeableness - associated with people who are sympathetic, trusting, cooperative, modest, and straightforward; it may have its roots in temperament.
- Conscientiousness - people are diligent, disciplined, well-organized, punctual, and dependable; some models refer to this trait as constraint and they are related to high productivity in a variety of occupational areas

Freud's Theories & Stages :

Structure of personality

- **Id** (pleasure principle / Devil) - the primitive, instinctive component of personality that operates according to the pleasure principle, which demands immediate gratification and engages in primary-process thinking (primitive, illogical, irrational, and fantasy oriented) (Only unconscious)
- **Ego** (reality principle / Angel) - the decision-making component of personality that operates according to the reality principle, seeking to delay gratification of the id's urges until appropriate outlets can be found, thus mediating between the Id and the external world
- **Superego** (morality / how one reacts) - moral component of personality that incorporates social standards about what represents right and wrong; the superego emerges out of the ego at around 3–5 years of age

Levels of Awareness :

- Conscious - contact with outside world
- Unconscious - what one is not aware of (Filled with conflict, aggression and sexually)
- Preconscious - material just beneath the surface of awareness

Defence Mechanism : (*****)

- Freud saw behaviour as the outcome of an ongoing series of internal conflicts between the id, ego, and superego; with conflicts centring on sex and aggressive impulses having far-reaching consequences. These conflicts lead to anxiety, which causes the ego to construct defense mechanisms, exercises in self-deception, as protection

TABLE 12.1 Defence Mechanisms, with Examples

Defence Mechanism	Definition	Example
Repression	Keeping distressing thoughts and feelings buried in the unconscious	A traumatized soldier has no recollection of the details of a close brush with death.
Projection	Attributing one's own thoughts, feelings, or motives to another	A woman who dislikes her boss thinks she likes her boss but feels that the boss doesn't like her.
Displacement	Diverting emotional feelings (usually anger) from their original source to a substitute target	After parental scolding, a young girl takes her anger out on her little brother.
Reaction formation	Behaving in a way that is exactly the opposite of one's true feelings	A parent who unconsciously resents a child spoils the child with outlandish gifts.
Regression	A reversion to immature patterns of behaviour	An adult has a temper tantrum when he doesn't get his way.
Rationalization	Creating false but plausible excuses to justify unacceptable behaviour	A student watches TV instead of studying, saying that "additional study wouldn't do any good anyway."
Identification	Bolstering self-esteem by forming an imaginary or real alliance with some person or group	An insecure young man joins a fraternity to boost his self-esteem.
Sublimation	Occurs when unconscious, unacceptable impulses are channelled into socially acceptable, perhaps even admirable, behaviours	A young man's longing for intimacy is channelled into his creative artwork.

Note: See Table 14.2 on page 629 for additional examples of defence mechanisms.

Psychosexual Stages

TABLE 12.2 Freud's Stages of Psychosexual Development

Stage	Approximate Ages	Erotic Focus	Key Tasks and Experiences
Oral	0–1	Mouth (sucking, biting)	Weaning (from breast or bottle)
Anal	2–3	Anus (expelling or retaining feces)	Toilet training
Phallic	4–5	Genitals (masturbating)	Identifying with adult role models; coping with Oedipal crisis
Latency	6–12	None (sexually repressed)	Expanding social contacts
Genital	Puberty onward	Genitals (being sexually intimate)	Establishing intimate relationships; contributing to society through working

Psychodynamic Theorists :

Carl Jung :

Analytical Psychology

- Personal and collective unconscious - the **personal** unconscious, which houses material that is not within one's conscious awareness because it has been repressed or forgotten; and the **collective** unconscious, which houses latent memory traces inherited from people's ancestral past. (memories/past drives behaviours)

- Jung called these ancestral memories archetypes—emotionally charged images and thought forms that have universal meaning, the mandala
- Introversion/extroversion - the first to describe the introverted (inner-directed) and extraverted (outer-directed) personality types

Alfred Adler:

Individual Psychology

- Striving for superiority: the foremost source of human motivation is striving for superiority—a universal drive to adapt, improve oneself, and master life’s challenges (Realize we fall short sometimes so we try to compensate)
- Compensation : everyone feels some inferiority and works to overcome (Defence mechanism)
- Inferiority complex/overcompensation: When the feelings are excessive, an inferiority complex can result. People can also conceal, even from themselves, their feelings of inferiority, resulting in overcompensation, seeking status and power, and flaunting their success to cover up underlying inferiority
- Birth order: first to stress the possible importance of birth order as a factor governing personality.

Pros & Cons of Psychodynamic Theories

Pro: Psychodynamic theories have resulted in groundbreaking insights about the unconscious, the role of internal conflict, and the importance of early childhood experiences in personality development.

Con: they have been criticized for their poor testability, inadequate empirical evidence, and male-centred views.

Behavioural Perspectives

Skinner's theory

- Skinner’s views on personality were similar to his views on all other human behaviour; it is learned through conditioning. (Alarms, using phone)
- He had little interest in unobservable cognitive processes and embraced a strong determinism, asserting that behaviour is fully determined by environmental stimuli, and free will is but an illusion.
- Personality, according to Skinner, is based in response tendencies; acquired through learning over the course of the lifespan.
- response tendencies come from reward/punishment conditioning

Bandura's Theory

Social learning theory - focusing on how cognitive factors such as expectancies regulate learning.

- Cognitive processes and reciprocal determinism - is the idea that internal mental events, external environmental events, and overt behaviour all influence one another.
- Observational learning models - holds that behaviour is shaped by exposure to models, or a person whose behaviour they observe.
- Self-efficacy - referring to one's belief about one's ability to perform behaviours that should lead to expected outcomes. He believes that self-efficacy (or lack thereof) influences which challenges people tackle and how well they perform. Researchers believe that self-efficacy is fostered by parents who are stimulating and responsive to their children.
- (know we are going to get punished but still do it)

Mischel's Theory

- with a focus on the extent to which situational factors govern behaviour, instead of personal variables (like Bandura & Skinner but if environment changes, so will our response)
- situation changes = behavior changes

Pros & Cons of Behaviourist Theories

Pros: Behavioural views are based on rigorous research and have provided ample insights into how learning and environmental factors mold personality

Cons: they have been criticized for an over-dependence on animal research, their fragmented view of personality (carving up personality into stimulus-response relations with no unifying structural concepts tying these pieces together), and radical behaviourism's dehumanizing view of human nature (no free will).

Humanistic Theories

Carl Rogers:

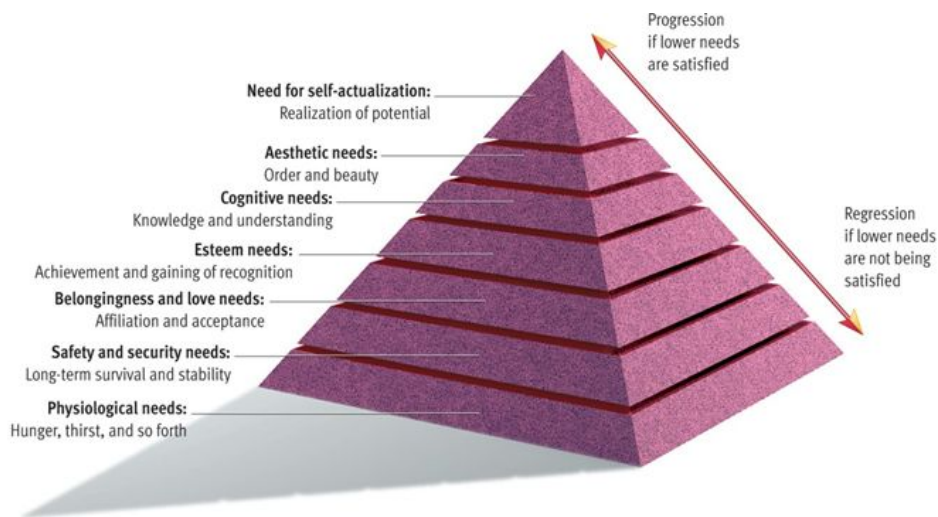
Person-centred theory : collection of beliefs about one's own nature, unique qualities, and typical behaviour—a person's mental picture of themselves.

Self-concept

- Conditional/unconditional positive regard: it may not be consistent with reality. Rogers believed that when parents make their affection conditional, that is, dependent on a child's living up to expectations, the child may block out of their self-concept those experiences that make them feel unworthy of love. Unconditional love is based in assurances that a child is worthy of affection, no matter what they do. (Healthy personality development depends largely on healthy self definition)
- Incongruence and anxiety: When self-concepts don't match reality (incongruence), they are threatened, and anxiety results.

- Match between who you think you are / can do and what you actually respond to
- we developed because of conditional positive regard
- only be loved if they are a certain way
- parents put positive regard (dad wants kid to be a good hockey player, only shows love when he plays good in hockey)

Abraham Maslow (*****)



- Like Rogers, Maslow argued that humans have an innate drive toward personal growth, culminating in the need for self-actualization, which is the need to fulfill one's potential (the highest need in his hierarchy). "What a man can be, he must be."
- Maslow set out to identify people who had self-actualized, healthy personalities for study. Self-actualizing persons, according to Maslow, are people with exceptionally healthy personalities, marked by continued personal growth.
- Maslow found that these people are tuned in to reality and at peace with themselves. They are open and spontaneous and sensitive to others' needs, making for rewarding interpersonal relations.
- balanced person if needs are met

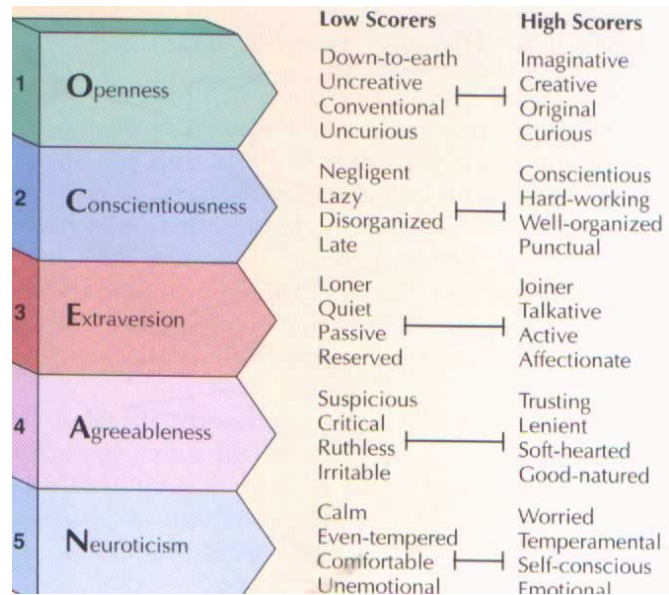
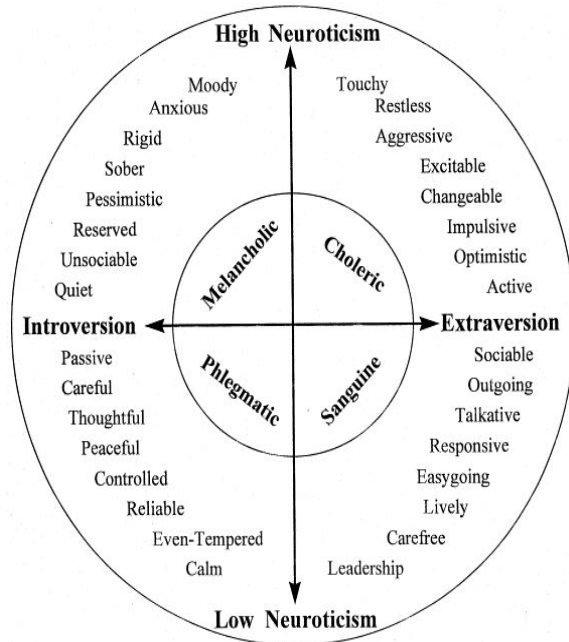
1. **Biological and Physiological needs** - air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep.
2. **Safety needs** - protection from elements, security, order, law, stability, freedom from fear.
3. **Love and belongingness needs** - friendship, intimacy, affection and love, - from work group, family, friends, romantic relationships.
4. **Esteem needs** - achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, self-respect, respect from others.
5. **Self-Actualization needs** - realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences.

Evaluating Humanistic Theories:

- Humanistic theories are credited with highlighting the importance of a person's subjective view of reality. They are also applauded for focusing attention on the issue of what constitutes a healthy personality.
- They are criticized for lacking a strong research base, poor testability, and what may be an overly optimistic view of human nature (Maslow had a hard time finding live people who had self-actualized).

Biological Theories

- Eysenck's theory → He believes that **genes influence physiological functioning**, thereby influencing ease of acquiring conditioned responses.
 - Three higher order traits → they are all determined by genetics
 - Extraversion
 - neuroticism
 - psychoticism
- Behavioural genetics and personality
 - novelty-seeking and genetics
 - Some studies have suggested that there is a **specific gene** for novelty seeking, which involves being impulsive, exploratory, excitable, and extravagant. Evidence is, at this point, inconclusive.
 - twin studies
 - Twin studies indicate that identical twins are more similar than fraternal twins in personality characteristics, with heritability estimates in the vicinity of **40%**. Interestingly, **shared family environment does not lead** to similar personality characteristics among siblings, leading some theorists to assert that parents matter very little in how their children develop.
- The evolutionary approach
 - traits conducive to reproductive fitness
 - Evolutionary analyses of personality suggest that certain traits **and the ability to recognize them** may contribute to reproductive fitness give a reproductive advantage.



*studies show that identical twins have a lot stronger correlation with the *Big five personality traits* than fraternal twins*

parenting has very little to do with personality, it's genetic or nonshared environments, 3 siblings can have very different personality traits.

Evaluating Biological Theories

Pros

- Convincing evidence for genetic influence

Cons

- Conceptual problems with heritability estimates vary depending on sampling procedures and other considerations, and should only be used as ballpark figures.
- Artificial carving apart of nature and nurture
- No comprehensive biological theory

Approaches to personality traits

- Narcissism
 - Narcissism, which is characterized by an inflated sense of self-importance, need for attention, sense of entitlement, and difficulty dealing with criticism, appears to be on the rise in our culture leading to materialism and resource depletion.
 -

- Perfectionism
 - Self-oriented, other oriented, other prescribed
- Markus and Kitayama
 - Independence vs interdependence
 - According to Markus and Kitayama Western cultures foster an **independent** view of the self as a unique individual who is separate from others, as is diagramed on the left. In contrast Asian cultures encourage an **interdependent** view of the self as part of an interconnected social matrix, as diagramed on the right. The interdependent view leads people to define themselves in terms of their social relationships (e.g., as someone's daughter, employee, colleague, or neighbour).
 - culture
 - Markus and Kitayama study cultural differences in personality, asserting that American culture fosters an independent conception of self, while Asian cultures foster an interdependent view of the self. These different self-conceptions foster cultural disparities in the tendency to engage in self-enhancement.
- Sensation seeking ← a trait concept developed by Marvin Zuckerman
 - High sensation-seekers show the following four sets of characteristics: **thrill and adventure seeking, experience seeking, disinhibition, and susceptibility to boredom**. High sensation-seekers are tolerant of stress but may be more likely to exhibit impulsive decision making, have poor health habits, reckless driving, high risk sexual behaviour, problem drinking, recreational drug use, gambling, delinquency, and criminal behaviour.

