

# Personality traits



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Individual personality is what makes the individual to be different from the other people perhaps the individual might be even unique. The aspects of personality i. e. the individual differences are the central issue for personality theories (Caprara & Cervone, 2000). Personality theories are concerned on such thing like traits, types and tests which can be used to compare or categorize people (Spring, 2006). The entire individual across the globe are interested in physiology and genetics, development and learning, culture and social interaction which all come together in the individual (Caprara & Cervone, 2000).

In this regard I will discuss dispositional approach-traits and motives, social-cognitive aspects, culture and personality, and integrating of self, to point out whether personality is significantly an expression of traits/dispositions reflecting our internal world or is it a result of cultural and social shaping in our responsiveness to the role expectations of the current social situation. Personality Expression Social cognition involves the study of how individuals process social information, especially as it regards to encoding of information, storage of that information, retrieval and the application to social situations.

The focus on information processing basing on social cognition has many affinities with related discipline of cognitive psychology (Brewer & Hewstone, 2004). On the other hand social cognition neuroscience involves investigation of biological basis of social cognition i. e. the processes that involves the interaction of the members of the same species. Individual have mental structures (schemas) that can be referred to as cognitive

representation of social objects. Schemas represent some world's aspects (Corsini, 2002).

These schemas are organized in individuals memory in what is referred to as an associative network. Similar schemas are organized together in the associative network. When specific schema is activated another schema that is related to that schema may be activated as well (Brewer & Hewstone, 2004). The activation of schemas in the associative network increases the accessibility of the related schemas. When the schemas become more accessible it can therefore be activated quickly and be used in particular situations.

Activation of related schemas inferences of information beyond the one given in particular social situation may influence social behaviors and thinking regardless of whether the inferences are accurate or not accurate. An individual may or may not be aware of an activated schema (Corsini, 2002). Priming and salience are two processes that increase the accessibility of schemas. Salience refers to the degree to which certain particular social object stands out in situations relative to other social objects. Higher salience of particular object makes it more likely for a particular schema to be more accessible.

For example in a group of people where there are eight males and one female for instance, gender schemas of female may be more accessible and often influences the behavior of the group and thinking towards the female group member. Priming on the other hand refers to immediate experiences prior to the situation that caused the schema to be more accessible. For example if an individual watches a late night scary movie in a theater the

movie might increase accessibility of frightening schemas that affects the perceptions of the person of background noise and shadows as potential threats (Corsini, 2002).

The researchers of social cognition point out that the pre-established schemas tend to guide the attention to new information. Individuals selectively tend to attend to the information that is consistent with the pre-established schemas and often ignore the information that is not consistent. Attending to consistent information and ignoring inconsistent information is referred to as confirmation bias (Corsini, 2002). Inconsistent information sometimes is stored away and sub-categorized as a special case and the original schema is left without any alteration which is a phenomenon known as subtyping.

The situational activation of a schema is beyond the controls of an individual and it is automatic. However in many situations the activated schematic information may sometimes be in conflict with social norms of the situation. Therefore an individual may be motivated to inhibit influence of that particular schematic information on their social behavior and thinking. Whether an individual is successful in regulating the application of the activated schema it often depends on the individual differences in the self-regulatory abilities and presence of the situational impairments to executive control (Corsini, 2002).

Lack of situational impairment on the executive control and high self-regulatory control increases the likelihood of an individual to successfully inhibit the influence of the automatic activated schemas on their social behaviors and thinking. When individuals stop suppressing the influence of

unwanted thoughts however, a rebound effect may occur and the thoughts becomes hyper accessible. Trait/disposition theory suggests that a trait is a stable quality that is readily identifiable and characterizes an individual from other persons.

These traits serve the functions of predicting, summarizing and explaining the conducts of a person (Nicholas, 2008). The basic assumptions in trait/dispositional approaches are that traits presents particular ideas about the disposition of an individual i. e. the way in which an individual is likely to behave overtime and across the situations. Also it is assumed that personality trait and human behavior can be organized into a hierarchy or be placed on a continuum (Nicholas, 2008). Each person has a unique set of personal disposition or the personal traits. These personal traits have been categorized into secondary, central and cardinal.

Central traits are the qualities that characterize daily interactions of a person and therefore in order to understand an individual one should look at the central traits. Secondary traits on the other hand are the characteristic that an individual exhibit in particular situations and they are easily modified than the central traits. Cardinal trait is dominant traits in which the entire life of an individual revolves around although many people do not have these cardinal traits (Kunda, 1999). Integration of self is a key construct in psychology and refers to the cognitive representation of an identity of an individual.

The earliest formulation of integration of self in the modern psychology stems from distinction between the self as me, often the object that is known am and the self I, often the subjective knower. The current psychology views

of self diverge greatly from the early conceptions and position the self as playing an important part in human cognition, motivation, social identity and affect (Papadopoulos, 1992). Self integration is one of the archetypes in Jungian theory (Papadopoulos, 1992). Self in this theory signifies coherent whole, unified unconsciousness and consciousness of an individual.

According to this theory self is realized as a product of individuation which is the process of integrating the one's personality (Krueger, 2002). This theory suggests that there are centers of individual personality i. e. ego which is the center of consciousness and the self which is the centre of the total personality and include ego, consciousness and unconsciousness. The self is both the centre and the whole, while ego is a little circle of the centre contained within the whole. In this regard self can be explained to mean the larger circle (Papadopoulos, 1992).

On the other hand other theorist proposed bi polar self comprising two narcissistic perfection systems i. e. systems of ideas and systems of ambitions (summers, 1999). The pole of ambitions is referred to as the narcissistic self i. e. the grandiose self, while the pole of ideals is referred to as idealized parental imago. According to these formulations the poles of the self represented natural progressions forms the psychic life of the toddlers and the infants. Culture and personality studies seek to understand growth and development of social or personal identity and how they relate to the surrounding social environment.

I. e. through the examination of personalities of an individual, generalization and broader correlations of the members of a specific culture can be made (Helson et al, 2002). This has therefore led to examination of the modal

personality types, national character and configuration of the personality. Personality differences across age are quite similar across the different cultures. A study which was carried out by McCrae in the year 1999 across six different cultures, showed a consistent age differences (McCrae et al, 2000).

People across different culture or regions try to become more open to experiences and less extraverted, conscientious, more agreeable and emotionally stable (McCrae et al, 2000). Similar studies conducted by Helson and Kwan also showed that there are similar patterns of the cross-cultural similarities in the development of personality. During their review of the data that was drawn from the china and the United States they found out that individuals become socially dominant and norm adhering as they aged (Helson et al, 2002). Conclusion

Social cognitive theory explains how individuals acquire and maintain particular behavioral patterns and provides the basis for intervention strategies. Evaluation of changes of behavior depends on the environmental factors, people and the environment. Environmental factors refer to what can affect the behaviors of a person (Corsini, 2002). There are physical and social environments. Physical environment would include ambient temperatures size of a room etc while social environment include friends, colleagues and family members. Situation and environment provide a framework for the understanding of individual behaviors.

Situation may be regarded as the mental or cognitive representation of the environment that affects the behaviors of an individual. Situation is the perception of the person of the time, place, activities and physical features

(Corsini, 2002). The three factors people, environment and behavior constantly influences each other in that environment is not simply the result of behavior and the people, just as the behavior is not simply the result person and the environment (Mitchell , Macrae & Banaji, 2005). Environment provides the model for the behaviors.

On the other hand dispositions are assumed to be relatively stable and enduring and produce some degree of consistency in behaviors across circumstances and time. Most psychologists of dispositional conceptualize an enduring disposition of an individual as inherent elements of the personality and as permanent and distinguish them from temporary states or conditions (Huitt, 2006). States often results from transient conditions or situations such as fatigue, illness or sudden changes the life circumstances. For example trait anxiety can be regarded as predisposition to be anxious.

Individual who are high in trait anxiety are not necessarily anxious all the time, but they are readily and often more anxious than an individual who is low in trait anxiety. Individuals who are low in trait anxiety can only exhibit state of anxiety under very stressful conditions (Huitt, 2006). Integrating of self on the other hand suggests that exhibionistic striving and ambitions of a child can be chronically frustrated, and therefore arrest in grandiose self would lead to preservation of false, expansive self that can be manifested outwardly (Krueger, 2002).

The manifestation of false and expansive sense is often in the visible grandiosity of frank narcissist. However this may fails to be manifested outwardly and therefore remain hidden from the view unless it is discovered in the selfobect transference thus exposes these primitive strivings and



fantasies. These forms of transference are referred to as mirror transference (Krueger, 2002). On the other hand arrests in the poles of ideals occur when a child suffers from excessive and chronic disappointment due the failings of early idealized figures.

McCrae et al suggested that culture is an environmental factor and lack effects on the development of personality and therefore it can be argued that development of personality is a human universal that is not affected by the environmental experiences. Cross-cultural studies also show that the development personality is driven by the universal tasks of social living. However changes in culture across different regions are related to different patterns o f development of personality (McCrae et al, 2000).