

Comparison of two theories

Psychology



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Comparison of Two Theories PSY/405 Dr. Judith Sugg Comparison of Two Theories Humanistic and existentialism theories postulate a holistic approach to understanding and determining personality, and the psychological health of the whole person (Feist & Feist, 2009). Abraham Maslow, Gordon Allport, Carl Rogers, Rollo May, and others are theorist of this school of thought (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 275). It is also known as the third force in psychology with the first force as psychoanalysis, and the second, behaviorism (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 275). Dispositional theorist, such as Gordon Allport, Raymond Cattell, Hans Eysenck, and others held the basic assumption that each individual is unique in behavior, and therefore rare (Feist & Feist, 2009, 375).

Carl Rogers and Person-Centered Theory Carl Rogers was the founder of client-centered therapy (Feist & Feist, 2009). Rogers' religious background and experiences during his youth helped him to think liberally and independently (Feist & Feist, 2009). Rogers became one of the most influential therapist-theorist of the 20th century, and his theory produced much research. As a practicing psychotherapist, Rogers was most determined with helping people understand their individual manner of growth and healthy development (Feist & Feist, 2009). Rogers structured his theory and concepts from experiences he had as a therapist (Feist & Feist, 2009). The Theory Rogers' person-centered theory of personality is the broad assumptions of the formative tendency and the actualizing tendency (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 313). The formative tendency process is Roger's belief that "all matter, both organic and inorganic, evolves from simpler to more complex forms" (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 313). Roger's evidenced nature's many examples, according to Feist and Feist (2009): For instance, complex galaxies of stars form from a less well-organized mass; crystals such as

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snowflakes emerge from formless vapor; complex organisms develop from single cells; and human consciousness evolves from a primitive unconsciousness to a highly organized awareness. (p. 313) Roger's second interrelated and more pertinent assumption, according to Feist and Feist (2009), is the actualizing tendency—"the tendency for humans (and other animals and plants) to move toward completion or fulfillment of potentials" (p. 313). Roger's posits that "this tendency is the only motive people possess" (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 313). He concluded that one's hunger drive, expressed deep emotions, and the acceptance self are examples of the sole motive of actualization (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 313). Roger's proposed that actualization encompasses the whole person—physiological and intellectual, rational and emotional, conscious and unconscious (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 313). Roger's strongly believed that people have within themselves the resources necessary for self-understanding, and the tendency to progress toward self-actualization and maturity when embraced by a climate of warmth, sincerity, understanding, and a congruent therapist (Feist & Feist, 2009, pp. 321 & 331).

Gordon Allport and Psychology of the Individual

Gordon Allport wrote "that his early life was marked by plain Protestant piety" (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 376). Allport was directed as a young child to learn the "virtues of clean language and proper conduct, along with the importance of searching for ultimate religious answers" by his mother, whom he described as pious (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 376). An opportune meeting with Sigmund Freud at the age of 22 years-old, made a significant impact on Allport's destiny (Feist & Feist, 2009). During their meeting, Allport sensed that Freud intended to analyze him, so he told him about his "dislike of cooked raisins" (Feist & Feist): I told him I thought it due to the fact that at

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the age of three, a nurse had told me they were “ bugs. ” Freud asked, “ When you recalled this episode, did your dislike vanish? ” I said, “ No. ” He replied, “ Then you are not at the bottom of it. (2009, p. 377) Allport immediately enrolled in the PhD program at Harvard when he returned home to the United States, and after his degree, went to Europe to study under German psychologists Wertheimer, Kohler, Stern, Werner, and others in Berlin and Hamburg (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 377). The Theory Allport’s approach to personality theory ask three mutual questions, “ what is personality, what is the role of conscious motivation in personality theory, and the characteristics of the psychologically healthy person” (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 378). “ To identify personal dispositions, Allport and Henry Odbert counted 17, 953 personally descriptive words in the 1925 edition of Webster’s New International Dictionary, a fourth that described personality characteristics” (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 381). “ Allport placed personal dispositions on a continuum from those are most central to those that are of only peripheral importance to a person” (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 382). Allport divided the dispositions into three categories (Feist & Feist, 2009): 1. Cardinal dispositions—an eminent, rare characteristic or ruling passion that dominates and revolves around the person’s life. Few people have this disposition. 2. Central disposition– traits that each individual possesses. 3. Secondary disposition–greater in number than central traits. The individual theory of personality is more philosophical speculation and common sense than scientific investigation (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 396). Allport believed that most people are conscious, forward-looking, tension-seeking individuals (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 396). The theory “ emphasizes the uniqueness of the individual” (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 375). Allport disagreed with the

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categorizations of general traits that he believed deprived people of their unique individuality (Feist & Feist, 2009). Allport contrasted what he referred to as morphogenic science–in-depth data gathered on an individual–with the methods of other psychologist known as nomothetic–gathered group data (Feist & Feist, 2009). The theory’s “ commonsense approach produced five to ten traits that are central to each person’s life” (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 402).

Comparison/Contrast of Person-Centered Theory and Individual Psychology Theory

Rogers emphasized the uniqueness of the individual. He contended that “ people have some degree of free choice and some capacity to be self-directed” (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 338). Rogers’s theory focuses on the client’s ability to find his or her answers to the problems in their lives with the help of proper therapeutic conditions, unconditional positive regard therapy, calm resolve, and nonjudgmental support (Feist & Feist, 2009, pp. 338 & 339). Allport also focused on the uniqueness of the individual, and suggested that personality dispositions are a different combination in every individual with no two identical (Feist & Feist, 2009). Allport contended with “ trait and factor theories that tend to reduce behaviors to common traits” (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 375). He declared that “ one person’s stubbornness interacts with his or her extroversion and creativity is duplicated by no other individual” (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 375).

Conclusion

Personality theorists have made vast strides in piecing together the puzzle of behavior and cognition. Understanding why an individual thinks, feels, and acts in a certain manner will most likely never be resolved, but the work, dedication, and commitment of great psychologist, such as Maslow, Rogers, May, Allport, Eysenck, Cattell, and others have placed the goal clearly into view.

References Feist, J., & Feist, G. J. (2009). *Theories of personality* (7th ed.)
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