

The strengths and weaknesses of psychobiography



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Psychobiography is a methodology of psychology which utilizes various psychological concepts, principles or theories in order to study and understand people in the present or past. In most cases, psychobiographies make an assumption that there is a reciprocal association between people and their social, cultural, and political positions. Therefore, psychobiographies rely on depth psychology in the analysis of cognitive processes, social history, environment, and developmental aspects of people. The term depth psychology has been taken to mean any theory, particularly Freudian or psychoanalytic, which relies on unobservable constructs (the unconscious mind) in analyzing people's behaviors or personalities. Therefore, psychobiographies assume that certain personal qualities inform about differences in people's behaviors/personalities (McDermott, 2004).

Despite the underlying bias towards the assumptions that influence studies and interpretations, psychobiographies have a wide range of strengths. First, psychobiographies provide important insights into people's political positions and their behavior/personality. Secondly, psychobiographies highlight the significance of studying the impact of different roles and personalities on a person's performance and outcomes. Thirdly, psychobiographies have proved to be important for studying the association between opinion and personality by investigating the nature and consequences of a person's attitudes and beliefs. Lastly, psychobiographies provide important insights into the relationship between attitudes and socialization styles by analyzing the political, social, and development aspects of the subjects under study (McDermott, 2004).

On the other hand, psychobiography as an approach to understanding personality is limited in different aspects. For instance, many critics of the psychobiography approach note that it is not possible for a biographer to apply the causality from one case to a theory. It implies that most psychobiographies lack controlled comparison, which can provide scientifically supportable causal patterns. Furthermore, it is not possible to explain the relationships between variables using one psychobiography considering that the experimental method requires that variables must be relative to different values in order to discover their associations. Moreover, in the psychobiography approach, causal conclusions may be based on inconsistent standards of inference, and hence making the analyses and conclusions which cannot be substantiated. Lastly, most psychobiographies do not consider alternative hypotheses, which can provide important insights into the behavior of the person under examination (McDermott, 2004).

In conclusion, the foregoing discussions indicate that the psychobiography approach is an important subset of psychology which seeks to study personality on the basis of various psychological concepts, theories, and principles. Therefore, this approach is very important considering that it provides insights into the relationships between personality styles and performance/outcomes among other aspects. On the other hand, this approach is limited in that it seeks to examine the relationships between different variables from a constant point of view. Furthermore, most psychobiographies fail to consider alternative hypotheses, which may provide important information about the personality styles of the subjects under study.