

Personality psychology analysis



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According to Guralnik (1987), personality is defined as, the quality or fact of being a person or a particular person.

Guralnik (1987) also defines personality as, distinctive individual qualities of a person, considered collectively. Personality is a definition that is hard to put one definition. Individuals each have their own definition. Even psychologists only agree on a vague term of personality. Instead of agreeing on one specific definition, psychologists have instead chosen to develop theories that describe the origins of an individual's personality.

Five separate theories emerge from the different perspectives of notable psychologist. Biological theorists believe that personality is genetic.

Behaviorists agree with the idea that personality is a direct result of the influence of the individual's environment. Third the psychodynamic theory journeys into the unconscious mind and childhood to describe personality.

Humanist use free will as their explanation of personality. Finally the trait theory suggests that the development of personality is derived from many different traits. Contemporary psychologists do agree on the factors of personality development. Why they might subscribe to a different theory and what origin affects the factors, the majority believe in the " big five. " The big five are the five factors that psychologists believe make up an individual's personality.

Throughout history however a different view was believed to be true. Gordon Allport in the early 1920's developed a list of 4, 000 traits. Raymond Cattell analyzed 16 primary traits, but found five that became the, " big five. The

big five traits are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness.

Biological Theory The biological theory states that personality development is a result of the genetic make-up of each individual person (Allpsych, 2003). Research conducted in heritability suggests that there is a direct link between genetics and personality. The leading psychologist in this theory was Hans Eysenck (1916-1997). Eysenck inspired the link of biological factors. He introduced his ideas of extroversion and neuroticism (Allpsych, 2003).

These were the two fundamental factors in personality development. Neuroticism is defined as a personality trait characterized by instability, anxiety, and aggression (Allpsych, 2003). Extroversion is the directing of an individual's concerns externally. Eysenck stated that these two dimensions were super traits. **Behavioral Theory** Behavioral theory describes the relationship between an individual's personality and the influence of their environment.

Psychologists use observable and measurable behaviors and disregard an individual's feelings or emotions (Cherry, 2013). A leading behaviorist was B. F. Skinner (1904-1990). He had a strict view of personality and development (Bukisa, 2010). He firmly believed that in order to change a person's behavior, one must change the environment that influences that individual (Bukisa, 2010).

Skinner believed that it is the different experiences that an individual was exposed to that resulted in their behavior. In the light of personality Skinner

saw that individuals will behave and develop a personality that will likely produce reinforcement from their environment (Bukisa, 2010).

Psychodynamic Theory Psychodynamic attempts to explain behavior through understanding the individual's childhood experience and unconscious mind. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) believed that the three components of personality were the id, ego, and superego (Mcleod, 2007).

The id is the cause of all needs, the superego deals with ideas and morality. The ego is the balance between the two. According to Freud, the unconscious mind is in conflict with the ego. Freud believed that personality is shaped from different times during childhood, or as he called it, the psychosexual development (Mcleod, 2007).

Humanistic Theory Humanistic Theory is the development of personality through a person trying to achieve what Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) described as self-actualization (Cherry, 20113). This idea suggests that the most important aspect of a person's behavior is the present time (Cherry, 2013). This theory is based on psychologically healthy people taking responsibility of their actions, positive or negative. This theory also describes that a person's drive should be for personal growth and understanding (Cherry, 2013). **Trait Theory** Trait theory is the most widely accepted theory of personality (Cherry, 2013). This theory describes the development of personality is influenced by many traits.

Traits are characteristics that cause a person to behave in a certain manner (Cherry, 2013). Trait theory is a collection of Cattell's and Eysenck's theories and factors of personality. It uses the 4, 000 traits from Cattell and the three

universal traits from Eysenck and forms the five-factor theory of personality, (Cherry, 2013) Five-Factors Many researchers believe that there are five factors that affect personality development. The five factors are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness (Cherry, 2013). Researchers believed that Cattell's model was too complex and that Eysenck's was too broad (cherry, 2013).

One of the leading psychologists in this theory was D. W. Fiske who developed this train of thought in 1949. Extraversion is a trait that includes excitement, social aspects, talking, and emotion (Cherry, 2013).

Agreeableness includes kindness and other social behaviors (Cherry, 2013).

Conscientiousness contains thoughtfulness, impulse control, and goal directed behaviors (Cherry, 2013).

Neuroticism is made up of anxiety, aggression, and sadness. Openness is made up of creativity and having a variety of interests. When discussing these five traits there are two extremes, extraversion and introversion (Cherry, 2013). Extraverts tend to look for stimulating situations where as introverts avoid these situations (Cherry, 2013). Most individuals contain a balance of the two (Cherry, 2013)).

Summary Personality, although it has a definition in dictionaries, is hard to define. Like other areas of psychology personality deals with a wide range of behaviors and attitudes. Research in this field is ongoing. Researchers have to have the ability to understand the foundation of personality. Personality requires a level of perspective to understand that each individual goes through different life experiences, has a different genetic make-up, and lives

within different social environments. It is important to understand the ideas that describe the origins of personality to fully recognize the reason for normal and abnormal behavior within different individuals.

Understanding personality is made up of a wide variety of traits or characteristics that assist in the development of personality.