

Personality

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The word 'personality' comes from the medieval Latin *persona*, which, broadly, means a mask. The term represents how individuals present themselves to the world. The use of the term in everyday English is relatively new, popularized in a 1937 book entitled *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* by the American psychologist Gordon Allport (1897-1967). The success of this book led to the popular use of the term. Previously, terms such as character or temperament had been used. Allport wanted to define personality so that the concept could be operationalized and measured. He defines personality as a "dynamic organisation, inside the person, of psychophysical systems that create the person's characteristic patterns of behaviour, thoughts and feelings" (Allport, 1961, p.11).

Unpicking this definition, personality represents a set of characteristics which are typical of that individual and which influence how that individual views different situations and acts in them. The term 'psychophysical' is included to represent the interaction of elements of personality and of the physiology to produce behavioural patterns. For example, there is a common physiological response to stress--fight or flight--but individual personality characteristics influence how that physiological response comes to be expressed. These characteristic patterns of responding to the world reflect one's personality. Some kind of internal organization is assumed.

Popular, lay definitions of personality tend to involve value judgments and may even include aspects of physical appearance--for example, the claim that individuals with red hair have fiery tempers or that fat persons are jolly. There is no evidence to support these implicit theories of personality, but they remain popular (see Chiu, Hong, and Dweck, 1997).

The study of personality seeks to explain why persons act as they do, including becoming or not becoming religious. Trying to understand human motivation leads to fundamental questions about human nature. As a species, are we innately aggressive and self-destructive, as Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) suggested? Or are we benign, driven instead toward positive growth and self-acceptance, as the humanist psychologists Carl Rogers (1959-1987) and Abraham Maslow (1908-70) suggested? Rogers and Maslow maintained that it is only when the environment blocks our innate healthy growth instincts that aggressive and self-destructive behaviour occurs. Alfred Adler (1870-1937) suggested that human nature is variable and depends on how individuals were treated within their family initially and then wider society. The behaviourist B. F. Skinner (1904-90) saw the psychological concept of personality and of human nature as unscientific. He argued instead that while genetic inheritance plays some role in determining behaviour, learning and the social environment count more. Skinner's view was influential for some time and may account for the fact that human nature has received scant attention in more recent theorizing about personality.

Contemporary psychology assumes that human nature is malleable and is influenced by both genetic inheritance and developmental experiences. Yet as varied

as humans are, there is a finite range of possible behaviour in any situation. It is also assumed that individuals with similar personalities will behave in broadly similar ways. Before examining this recent work, it is useful to look at the history of theorizing about personality.

History of Theorizing about Personality

Aristotle (384-223 B.C.E.) produced the first account of the influence of what was then termed character on behaviour. He suggested that individual differences in personality characteristics such as vanity, modesty, and cowardice explained whether individuals behaved morally or immorally. One of his students, Theophrastus (371-287 B.C.E.), produced the first classification of personality, describing thirty types of character. Galen (130-200 C.E.) produced a theory of personality based on differences in temperament. This theory was based on earlier work by Hippocrates (460-377 B.C.E.) on how the balance of body fluids (humors) influenced health.

The philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) revisited the humeral temperaments and produced descriptions of four personality types, based on strength of feelings and activity in individuals. These differences produced phlegmatic individuals (low activity), choleric individuals (high activity), melancholic individuals (weak feelings), and sanguine individuals (strong feelings). Philosophers continued to speculate about human nature. The scientific study of personality did not emerge again until the early eighteenth century.

This re-emergence was linked to the advances occurring in physiology and medicine. The study of madness led to what has come to be categorized as the clinically based, as opposed to the more philosophically based, strand of theorizing about personality. Franz Mesmer (1734-1850), a Viennese physician, hypothesized that all humans have a magnetic flow within them. Differences in the level of magnetism account for differences in character. He developed a treatment based on the power of magnets to treat psychological disturbance. He then went on to use what he described as his own healing magnetism to cure patients. He used dramatic settings to influence his audiences. His work gave rise to the term mesmerism, which is acknowledged as the forerunner of hypnosis.

Johann Lavater (1741-1801), a Swiss priest, developed a theory linking physical facial features to individual characteristics. For example, small chins were linked to weak character, and thin lips were linked to meanness. This theory was called physiognomy and was developed by a Viennese physician, Gall, in researching mental illness. He developed what has come to be regarded as the first personality theory of modern times, that of phrenology, which was originally called craniology. Gall suggested that an individual's character can be predicted by the shape of the cranium. Within the cranium different human functions were thought to be located in different areas, and the relative size of these areas affected the shape of the cranium.

Phrenology was extremely popular in Victorian and Edwardian England. Some of Gall's precepts, including the examples noted, have been incorporated into lay models of personality.

Clinically Based Models of Personality

This clinic strand of theorizing about personality continued with the work of Freud and later Carl Jung (1875-1961) and Alfred Adler (1870-1937). The adult personality, in Freud's final metapsychology, consists of three parts: the id, ego, and superego. The id stores the basic instinctual energy. It is the source of survival drives for food and safety, sexual drives for reproduction, and aggressive drives for domination and self-destruction. As the child becomes socialized, the ego develops. The ego is the planning, thinking, and organizing component of the mind, which channels id instincts in more socially acceptable ways. The ego introduces the reality principle, as it is in touch with what is permissible in the real world. The id is not in touch and seeks only pleasure. The superego or conscience develops, consisting of internalised parental and societal attitudes toward right and wrong. These three structures in the adult personality create intra-psychic conflict and defence mechanisms to deal with this conflict (see Freud, 1901/1965).

Freud was heavily influenced by Charles Darwin's (1809-1892) evolutionary theory and suggested that human infants were driven by the biological drives of hunger and sexuality, as are other animals. He hypothesized that we are born with a fixed amount of mental energy, labelled libido, which drives our development and eventually forms the basis for adult sexual drives. Personality development is linked to biological development. He explains how the energy in the libido is invested in different areas of the body--erogenous zones--as the child physiologically matures, with the first three stages being crucial for adult personality development.

Life begins with the oral stage (birth to 1 year), where the erogenous zones are the mouth and lips. Gratification comes from feeding and by association from the relationship with the food provider, who is normally the mother. If sufficient oral gratification is not received for the child to progress satisfactorily to the next stage of development, an oral fixation is likely to be a component of the adult personality, evidenced by excessive eating, smoking, and chewing gum for example.

With physiological development, the child's bladder and bowel come under increased voluntary control and become the new erogenous zone in the anal stage (18 months to three years). Pleasure comes from bowel and bladder control. If parents handle this stage inappropriately, demanding too much or too little, the child may become anally fixated. Two types of personality are associated with anal fixation, the anal-retentive and anal-expulsive. The anal-retentive personality is very orderly and tight-fisted, with a tendency toward hoarding and delaying gratification. Adults with anal-expulsive personality resist all attempts at others controlling them. They are

disorganised and unconcerned about cleanliness. Through parental correction and socialization the ego develops at this stage, and the id is brought under more control.

Next is the phallic stage (3 to 5 years), when the genital area becomes more physiologically sensitive and becomes the focus of libidinal energy, with genital stimulation giving pleasure. Here there emerges in girls, penis envy and feelings of deficiency, as they become aware of their lack of a penis. Boys are thought to respond to girls' deficiency by developing castration anxiety--by the belief that girls had had penises but had been castrated. In parallel there are changes in the child's relationship with their parents. The Oedipal complex develops from the boy's having to resolve his attraction toward his mother, his resentment of the relationship she has with his father and his fear of his powerful father (castration anxiety). These conflicting emotions are resolved by the boy's identifying himself with his father and internalizing his father's values, which become the superego. The Electra complex, coined not by Freud but by Jung, describes a similar process in girls that is resolved by identification with the mother. In this way children become socialized into male and female roles. Freud described fixation at this stage as causing homosexuality in adulthood because of the failure to identify oneself with an appropriate role model or because of promiscuous behaviour, where the sexual gratification denied in childhood is sought. These early years are crucial, with personality being developed by age five. Freud emphasized that individuals are unconscious of the ways that their early experiences determine their adult personalities.

Adler (1973) also stressed the importance of unconscious motivation in explaining behaviour. But for him human motivation comes from the experience of inferiority that every human experiences from birth. All humans are born dependent on others for their care. From birth we are surrounded by individuals who are at more advanced stages of their development than we are. It is this sense of inferiority, Adler claims, that spurs humans to develop and achieve mastery of their environment. From observing individuals with physical disabilities and the way that their attitude to their disability largely determined what they achieved, he suggested that one's individual's attitude to inherent inferiority determines how the personality develops. Some persons try to disguise their inferiority by withdrawing from life for fear of being exposed. Others overcompensate and display an exaggerated sense of their own importance. For Adler, overcoming inferiority is the goal of human behaviour, and personality is influenced by how the goal tackled. He introduced the term style of life, which he equates with personality, to describe the attitudes that persons adopt to their inferiority.

Between the ages of three and five years, children develop their style of life influenced by parental role models and siblings. Parents are needed to provide realistic conceptions of the main tasks in life--work, friendship, and love--and to support their children in age-appropriate ways to develop their competence and overcome their inferiority, can reinforce the child's sense of inferiority, and an inferiority complex can develop. Birth order within the family influenced personality

development with different characteristics described for eldest, second, youngest and only children. There is continuing interest in researching birth order although the evidence is equivocal. An adult style of life (personality) develops influenced by birth order and treatment within the family.

Based on clinical observations, Adler (1973) described four personality types: the socially useful, ruling, avoiding and getting. The socially useful type is the healthy option, where the individual has no inferiority complex, is caring, socially concerned and interacts well with others. The ruling types are described as being manipulative, exploitative and striving for power and achievement. The avoiding type tries to avoid problems, attributing the cause of problems to others and quickly attribute blame to others, and overall contributing little to others throughout their life. Finally the getting types, who are very passive, avoid responsibility using their charm to get others to do things for them.

Jung disagreed with Freud over Freud's theory of psychosexual development, as had Adler. To understand his difficulties with Freud, he set about examining why Freud and Adler had disagreed about fundamental concepts. From analysing a patient's case history from both a Freudian and an Adlerian perspective, he concluded that the differences in their analyses of the patient resulted from Freud's and Adler's own very different personalities. Jung sought further evidence in clinical cases and concluded that there were at least two different personality types, extraverts and introverts. Extraverts were outgoing and sociable. Introverts were shyer and more retiring, preferring their own company.

Jung further classified personality types in terms of how they chiefly interacted with the world: by sensing, thinking, feeling, or intuiting (see Jung, 1971). The result was sixteen different combinations, or personality types. Psychologists later developed a psychometric test, the popular Myers-Brigg Type Indicator (AMBIT) (see Myers and McCauley, 1985) based on Jung's concept of personality. This test is used mainly in occupational testing (see DeVito, 1985). Hans Eysenck (1916-97), a British psychologist, researched extraversion and introversion and included them in his trait model and measure of personality, the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (see Eysenck & Sybil Eysenck, 1975).

Trait Approaches

Before the psychologist Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1929) began studying personality, all the theories were based on descriptions of discrete types of personality based on observations and reflection. Individuals were categorised as being a particular personality type based on the characteristics that appeared to be dominant in their behaviour. Only relatively small numbers of characteristics were considered in these typologies. In 1874, Wundt moved from categorizing personality as types to introducing the modern trait approach. Using Kant's humoral types of personality, Wundt demonstrated that individuals can be placed on a continuum of emotions from

highly emotional to unemotional and from changeable to unchangeable in their activities. He demonstrated that other personality characteristics could also be measured on continuous scales with individuals being high on some characteristics and lower on others. These characteristics are termed personality traits and represent dispositions to behave in particular ways across a range of situations. Traits are the fundamental units of personality and by combining levels of traits descriptions of individuals' personalities are produced. Psychologists have measured the levels of different traits in large population samples. The ways in which particular traits cluster together in groups of individuals are then examined and these produce descriptions of different personalities. This is then a very empirically derived assessment of personality based on measuring how individuals typically behave in different situations. This can be self-assessed, assessed by others or ideally a combination of both.

William Sheldon (1970) played a major role in developing trait approaches by introducing an empirical psychometric dimension to personality research, undertaking surveys of large populations and statistically analysing the data he collected. He produced a personality theory relating body physique to temperament, the extremes of which were ectomorphs (slim, private, and inhibited), mesomorphs (large, muscular, assertive, and active), and endomorphs (chubby, sociable, liked food and relaxation). His theory is of less importance than the psychometric approaches he introduced.

Other psychologists adopted what is called the lexical approach to personality. The lexical hypothesis suggests that it is the important differences between individuals that become encoded as words, so that the frequency of the use of particular words reflects their importance. Allport identified four thousand five hundred English words describing personality traits and produced his own classification system, but that system has not stood the test of time (see Allport and Odbert, 1936).

The lexical approach advanced only after Raymond Cattell (1950) applied factor analysis, developed by Charles Spearman (1863-1945) in 1904 to the analysis of lexical data. Factor analysis is a statistical technique used to simplify complex data sets by identifying items that cluster together because individuals respond in the same way to these items. The statistical clusters are termed factors. The structure of personality emerges from the way that traits in individuals cluster together to form higher order structures or super-traits. Surveying large samples and using factor analysis, Cattell produced a complex description of personality based on the identification of sixteen major factors (see Cattell and Kline, 1977). This scheme is assessed using the Sixteen Personality Factor (16PF) questionnaire. The 16PF has become a standard measure of personality, especially in occupational settings.

This early work on assessing personality traits was not without its critics. Walter Mischel (1968) led the critique, questioning how much behaviour is influenced by personality alone and how much by the situation--the person-situation debate.

Research on the person-situation debate improved the quality of research on personality with statistically more rigorous methods being applied to produce more reliable assessments tools, so that there is now consensus that personality can be assessed with a high degree of accuracy and that there is always an interaction between the personality and the situation which determines what kind of behaviour will be produced. There will be unpredictability in human behaviour when novel situations are encountered. But in the situations individuals typically encounter, research suggests that personality has a relatively stable effect on behaviour.

Eysenck (1947, 1982) emphasized the importance of genetic inheritance of personality while adopting a trait approach to measurement. He measured personality traits in large samples of individuals and then, again using the statistical technique of factor analysis, identified which traits cluster together. He identified personality as composed of three super traits (factors) : extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism. Within each, there were many traits. For example, aggressiveness, impulsivity, coldness, lack of empathy, creativity, egocentricity, tough-mindedness, impersonality, and antisociability all mark psychoticism. Eysenck's three-factor model is measured by the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ). There is a wealth of research using this measure, with the work on extraversion and neuroticism being well supported. The psychoticism scale has been more problematic, despite attempts to refine it (see Eysenck, 1992).

Today psychologists increasingly agree that five rather than three supertraits capture personality. Initial support came from a re-analysis of Cattell's sixteen factor data, which produced only five factors (see Fiske, 1949; Norman, 1963). Lewis Goldberg (1981) made a convincing case for what has come to be known as the Big Five based on the lexical approach. Using factor analysis on large data sets, Paul Costa and Robert McCrae (1985; 1997) produced the same five factors or supertraits, with six associated traits contributing to supertrait. This scheme is called the Big Five model. It continues to be hugely influential. The five factors are openness (traits = fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, values) , conscientiousness (traits = competence, order, dutifulness, achievement-striving, self-discipline, deliberation), extraversion (traits = warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement-seeking, positive emotions), agreeableness (traits = trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, tender-mindedness) and neuroticism (traits = anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, vulnerability). Costa and McCrae (1992) developed a Neurotic, Extraversion, Openness Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) to measure the factors.

Research on religion and personality

Freud (1933) took the position that religious belief is an illusion and associates it with the neurotic personality and with a tendency toward hysteria. His views on religion have stimulated research in the last fifty years on the relationship between religious belief and mental health. For example, Samuel Juni and Richard Fischer (1985)

were interested in the role of pre-oedipal fixations in religious beliefs that emerge in the oedipal stage. They suggested that belief in deities was consonant with the need to be nurtured by a powerful other and could be associated with oral fixation. While the need for regular church attendance was suggested to be associated with pre-oedipal anal fixation. They used measures of oral and anal fixation, belief in God and three questions to measure religiosity: belief in God, belief in an afterlife, and church attendance. They reported significant associations between anal and oral fixation measures and the religious measures. This research was criticized for the lack of a systematic measure of religiosity. Christopher Lewis and John Maltby (1992) replicated the study using a better measure of religiosity and replicated the results for anal fixation but not for oral fixation. Emily Kim, Veronika Zeppenfeld and Dov Cohen (2013) explored the relationship among Freudian defence mechanisms, religious belief, and creativity. They found that sublimating religiously taboo material increased creativity among Catholics and Jews.

There is much research on Eysenck's three factor model of personality and religiosity. In a review of this research, religious individuals are found to score lower on the psychoticism scale being described as being extravert, kind, sensitive and friendly (see Maltby & Day, 2004).

The personality theorist Allport (1966) attributed differences in orientation among religious individuals with different personality characteristics. In intrinsic religiosity the individual has a deep faith and follows the philosophy and teachings faithfully. In extrinsic religiosity the individual looks to religion for protection, social status, and consolation, regarding the place of worship as a place to make friends. Daniel Batson (1976) added a third category, quest religiosity, to describe the individual who is seeking answers from within the individual's religion. A review of research by Vassilis Saroglou (2010) examining the relationship between religiosity and personality using the Big Five model, reported that intrinsic religiosity was associated with agreeableness and conscientiousness supertraits, as was quest religiosity. Extrinsic religiosity was positively related to higher scores on neuroticism. Low scores on the personality factor openness to experience were associated with religious fundamentalism.