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Studies of personality and their distinctions

Study of personality is the observation of how one captures input from their surroundings, process the input, and then react accordingly. Within this cycle, we can evaluate an individual’s characteristics, attempt to explain certain qualities, try to predict proclivities, and perhaps work towards changing some. The different theories that deal with this study run the gamut as in what they take into consideration.

Psychodynamic theory of personality, which is rooted in principles of scientific thinking and tries hard to remain objective, performs this analysis by attributing one’s behavior to both conscious and more dominantly unconscious mind. Believing that we directly have little to no control over subconscious and unconscious respectively and attributing a lot of importance to childhood memories, it tries to explain psychological disorders in terms of differing, deep rooted feelings and thoughts that we are not even aware of. These thoughts and feeling that crate a tension seem to have a sexual nature or association. Subsequently it employs psychoanalysis to gain access to the unconscious and intern try to explain or even modify behavior. This black box system, which subjectively looks at input and output and has little regards for the individual being traded, lost favor with the rise of humanistic psychology.

Humanists focus on the person and motivations that are based on hierarchy of needs. Our most basic need is food for which we take great risks. As soon as that need is satisfied, we are moved to seek security. Subsequently we seek love, then self-esteem and a few lucky individuals that surpass these levels move on to self-actualization and ultimately self-transcendence. Thinking in terms of this arch almost forces us to accept human goodness, which works in simplistic terms and becomes ambiguous in complicated situations. A hungry child taking an apple is a sign of a human simply satisfying a physiological need and theorists are employing an effective tool to deter their enemies and provide for their security. This theory is ambiguous when it comes to explaining the actions of a kleptomaniac or that of a mass murderer.

Traits theory of personalities tries to return objectivity to humanistic thinking. It focuses on various temperaments and puts the tendencies that are exhibited together under an umbrella. It goes about collecting this information via self-assessments and self-reporting, which is a hallmark of humanistic psychology. By mapping various traits, it tries to actualize or predict a personality. Traits theory, which accepts biological inheritance of these tendencies, can use a different number of them in evaluating a personality. The big five factors listed on page 350 are conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness, and extraversion.

Social-cognitive theories consider the interaction between our environment and us. This way of thinking adds our individual traits with an environment that fosters such traits to arrive at our exhibited personality. Obviously, an environment that does not foster the innate trait subtracts from the chances of its realization.

In reflecting on content of this chapter I am reminded of the first class of PSY201 where we talked about psychology as a young science. We talked about the existence of various theories and the difficulty of scientifically proving any number of them. Having said that, perhaps the best technique is to be mindful of these theories and try to benefit from all of them. The SDV100 (Student Development) class had personality questionnaires that were very eye opening. I learned that my best weapon for long-term retention of information, based on my personality traits, is to internalize the information and rewrite it in my own words. I certainly find this classification useful. Similarly, if such a test were going to limit my potential I would work to circumvent or mitigate it. Perhaps a humanist psychologist would combine my use of the word “potential” in the previous sentence with my return to academia as an adult to explain that I am building my self-esteem on my way to self-actualization. If that is true then using social- cognitive principals, I would be well advised to surround myself with people who have surpassed J,O,B and are working on fulfilling a career.

Works Cited

Myers, David G. *Psychology.* 10th ed. New York: Worth Publishers, 2011. Print.

four perspectives on personality you learned in this chapter-

psychodynamic

                uncontsciouse , childhood experiances

humanistic,

trait,

social-cognitive

==== emphasizing what makes that approach distinct from the others. ====

Then identify and explain which perspective(s) most aligns with your own approach to personality.

Perspectives on personality and their distinctions

Hi Shannon,

I value the last sentence in your post. However, I wonder how important knowing that your childhood experiences can influence your current behavior is. Would such knowledge, in and of itself, be enough to alter a behavior? Even if we could (via some sophisticated psychoanalytic technique) relate

Hi Ronell,

I think there is a lot of gray area that surrounds the small islands of absolutes here. Your own participation in the military exhibits, at least a willingness, to sacrifice your basic needs for the sake of others. Parents that choose to go without for the sake of their children is another example.

Casey

Hi Hareem,

I think your dismissal of other people and focus on schoolwork must give you a sense of control, which is helpful. Getting top grades in school is a tangible thing. A straight A report card is a clear self-validation tool.