Study Notes Personality

Personality

**FEATURES AND LIMITATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY PERSONALITY THEORIES**

**Trait Theories**

* + Personality: an individual’s unique and relatively enduring psychological characteristics and behaviour patterns
  + Limitations of trait theories-
  + Theorists do not agree on the number of dimensions or behaviours
  + Theorists don’t consider unconscious processes
  + limited scope
  + not independent theories
  + Trait theories
    - Traits: fairly steady, reliable, and enduring interior characteristic which is inferred from a trend of actions, outlooks, feelings, and habits within the person

**McCrae and Costa Big Five Model OCEAN**

* + The “Big Five Model”:
    - McCrae and Costa theorised five main dimensions of personality:
      * Openness to experience
      * Conscientiousness
      * Extraversion
      * Agreeableness
      * Neuroticism (emotional instability)
    - These factors are often referred to using the “OCEAN” acronym
    - Each factor has four endpoints/sub-factors (listed low to high) that are the main elements of the overall dimension
    - Openness to experience:
      * Down-to-earth – imaginative
      * Uncreative – creative
      * Conventional – original
      * Unadventurous – daring
    - Conscientiousness:
      * Negligent – conscientious
      * Lazy – hardworking
      * Disorganised – well-organised
      * Late – punctual
    - Extraversion:
      * Loner – joiner
      * Quiet – talkative
      * Passive – active
      * Reserved – affectionate
    - Agreeableness:
      * Suspicious – trusting
      * Critical – lenient
      * Ruthless – soft-hearted
      * Irritable – good-natured
    - Neuroticism:
      * Calm – anxious
      * Secure – insecure
      * Unemotional – emotional
      * Vulnerable – hardy
    - Criticisms:
      * Data driven (no theory)
      * Only accounts for “normal” personality trait sphere (limited scope)
      * Generality
      * Subjectivity

**Humanistic theories**

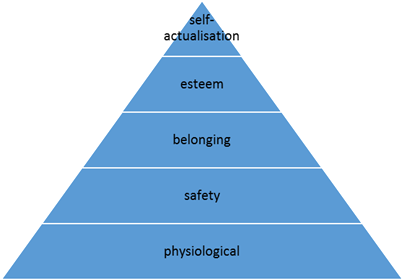
* + The belief that all humans are born good
  + They try to reach their potential throughout their lives
  + Humanists believe personality results from people striving to reach their potential

**Roger’s Humanistic Theory -Unconditional positive regard:**

* + Rogers’ theory of personality surrounded an idea of “unconditional positive regard”
    - Unconditional positive regard: accepting people for what they are without any expectation of change
      * A type of acceptance
      * The second of Rogers’ three conditions for growth
    - Three conditions for growth:
      * Genuineness
      * Unconditional positive regard
      * Empathy
    - Need to experience these conditions from significant people in our lives in order to grow and self-actualise
      * Self-actualisation: living up of one’s potential
  + Central to Rogers’ theory was the concept of self-identity
    - If we are to have a well-adjusted personality, there needs to be a good match between our…
      * Ideal self: the person we want to be
      * Self-image: the person we think we are
      * True self: the person we really are
    - Humans strive for congruence between these views
    - Congruence is needed to self-actualise
  + Criticisms:
    - Too vague
    - Low generalisability
    - Unreliable
    - Unscientific
    - Ignores biology
    - Cultural bias
    - Qualitative data is difficult to compare
    - Overly optimistic

**Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs (Humanistic):**

* + Maslow theorised five levels of needs:
    - Physiological
    - Safety
    - Belonging
    - Esteem
    - Self-actualisation
  + Criticisms:
    - Changes to hierarchy by circumstances
    - Self-actualisation does not universally convey Maslow’s observations
    - Unscientific
    - Ignores biology



* + **Social-cognitive theory - Bandura**
    - Bandura explained human behaviour as being the result of the interaction between…
      * Behaviours
      * Cognitive factors
      * Environmental factors
    - This interaction was dubbed “reciprocal determinism”
      * This relates back to Bandura’s ideas surrounding observational learning in that we observe the consequences of others’ behaviour and alter our behaviour accordingly
      * People’s own thoughts and beliefs about themselves also influence their behaviour
      * Bandura later developed this into his theory of “self-efficacy”
        + Self-efficacy: the degree to which you are sure of your own ability and capability to manage and to be effective in meeting the demands of particular situations
        + Made up of several processes:

Self-criticism

Self-praise

Evaluation of personal standards

Self-persuasion

Evaluation of attachment

Acceptance of challenges

* + - * + When we succeed in mastering a task, our self-efficacy is enhanced
        + When we fail to manage or deal with a situation/task, our self-efficacy is undermined
    - Strengths:
      * Well-grounded in scientific research
      * Has been tested empirically
      * Widely applicable
    - Criticisms:
      * Unconscious mind not considered
      * Biology ignored
      * Emotion not factored
      * No account for mental disorders
      * Very laboratory bases – low ecological validity
  + **Cognitive-affective theory Mischel**
    - Walter Mischel tried to reconcile within a single framework both trait and social-cognitive approaches to explain human behaviour
    - He considered this was necessary to account for apparent inconsistencies in personality in varying situations
    - E.g. a person may be shy/anxious in one situation and then confident/outgoing in another
    - Strengths:
      * Well-grounded in scientific research
      * Wide applicability
      * Robust theory
    - Criticisms:
      * Doesn’t place enough emphasis on biology
      * Difficult to define situations
      * Difficult to study the many complexities of interactions
      * Extreme positions can fail to take into account the complexity of the relationship between personality, behaviour and the situation