



INTRODUCTION to THEORIES OF PERSONALITY

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CAG UNIVERSITY
PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT
THEORIES OF PERSONALITY II
PSY 445
WEEK I

PERSONALITY: WHAT IT IS AND WHY WE SHOULD CARE

- It's everything about you that makes you what you are—a unique individual who is different, in large and small ways, from everybody else.
- It's a simple word, but a difficult concept to truly comprehend.
- Everybody has one—a personality, that is—and yours will help determine the boundaries of your success and life fulfillment.
- It is no exaggeration to say that your personality is one of your most important assets. It has already helped shape your experiences up to now, and it will continue to do so for the rest of your life.
- Your personality can limit or expand your options and choices in life, prevent you from sharing certain experiences, or enable you to take full advantage of them.
- It restricts, constrains, and holds back some people and opens up the world of new opportunities to others.

PERSONALITY

- Personality refers to the enduring characteristics and behavior that comprise a person's unique adjustment to life, including major traits, interests, drives, values, self-concept, abilities, and emotional patterns.
- Various theories explain the structure and development of personality in different ways, but all agree that personality helps determine behavior.
- The field of personality psychology studies the nature and definition of personality as well as its development, structure and trait constructs, dynamic processes, variations (with emphasis on enduring and stable individual differences), and maladaptive forms.
- The subject of personality is too complex for such a simplified description, because humans are too complex and changeable in different situations and with different people. We need to be more precise in our language to adequately define and describe personality. For that reason, psychologists have devoted considerable effort to developing tests to assess, or measure personality.

PERSONALITY

- What we will be studying are the forces and factors that shape your personality.
- Whether we are born with a certain type of personality or learn it from our parents, whether personality is influenced by unconscious forces, and whether it can change as we get older.
- We will cover a variety of theories that have been proposed to help answer these and related questions about human nature.
- Whenever we use the word *I* (Adams, 1954). When you say *I*, you are, in effect, summing up everything about yourself—your likes and dislikes, fears and virtues, strengths and weaknesses.
- The word *I* is what defines you as an individual, separate from everybody else.

PERSONALITY



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- The word goes back to about the year 1500, and derives from the Latin word *persona*, which refers to a mask used by actors in a play.
- *Persona* came to refer to our outward appearance, the public face we display to the people around us.
- Personality refers to our external and visible characteristics, those aspects of us that other people can see. Our personality would then be defined in terms of the impression we make on others—that is, what we appear to be.
- Viewed from that perspective, personality is the visible aspect of one's character, as it impresses others.
- In other words, our personality may be the mask we wear when we face the outside world.

STABLE AND PREDICTABLE CHARACTERISTICS- UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

- Our definition of personality may also include the idea of *human uniqueness*.
- We assume that personality is relatively stable and predictable but sometimes our personality can vary with the situation.
- Yet although it is not rigid, it is generally resistant to sudden changes.
- We see similarities among people, yet we sense that each of us possesses special properties that distinguish us from all others.
- Personality is an enduring and unique cluster of characteristics that may change in response to different situations.
- Each personality theorist offers a unique version, a personal vision, of the nature of personality, and that viewpoint has become his or her definition.
- We will examine an understanding of the different versions of the concept of personality and the various ways of defining the word *I*.

THE ROLE OF RACE AND GENDER IN SHAPING PERSONALITY

- Despite their disagreements and divergences, however, personality theorists all share certain defining characteristics in common. All are White, of European or American heritage, and almost all are men.
- There was nothing unusual about that, given the period because in most fields, educational and professional opportunities for women and people of ethnic minority groups were severely limited.
- All the patients and subjects the earlier theories were based on were also White. Even the laboratory rats were white. Also, the majority of the patients and subjects were men.
- Yet, the personality theorists confidently offered theories that were supposed to be valid for all people, regardless of gender, race, or ethnic origin.

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN SHAPING PERSONALITY

Matematik Olimpiyatlarında Çin'i yenerek şampiyon olan ABD Milli Takımı..



- Personality is formed by both genetic and environmental influences. “Among the most important of the latter are cultural influences” (Triandis & Suh, 2002, p. 135).
- Japanese who emigrated to the United States, compared to those who stayed in Japan. Those who moved became much more “American” in their personalities. They changed in significant ways in response to their changed culture (Gungor, Bornstein, De Leersnyder, Cote, Ceulemans, & Mesquita, 2013).
- Anxiety and other negative emotions may also be related to cultural differences. Asian Americans reported a far greater number of negative emotions in social situations than the European-Americans did (Lee, Okazaki, & Yoo, 2006). Western people in general, and Americans, in particular, also exhibit greater optimism and view themselves and their future more positively.

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN SHAPING PERSONALITY (Different Cultural Beliefs About Destiny)

- The concept of *karma* may be seen as a fatalistic and deterministic view of human nature. Thus, in this view, our fortune or misfortune, health or sickness, happiness or unhappiness are preordained and independent of our own actions.
- This belief may lead to a passive, resigned personality type, accepting of whatever comes one's way and not being motivated to take action to change it.
- Contrast this with a view more typical of American culture that emphasizes free choice and action, and the role of our own personal effort and initiative in bringing about our personal success or failure.
- Research shows substantial cultural differences between East and West in this Notion of fate attribution or destiny (Norenzayan & Lee, 2010). However, there is also evidence that as Eastern cultures such as China modernize and become more Westernized, that cultural belief is reduced (Wong, Shaw, & Ng, 2010).

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN SHAPING PERSONALITY (Individualism)

- Individual competitiveness and assertiveness are often seen as undesirable and contrary to Asian cultural standards. Western cultures are typically depicted as the opposite.
- In an individualistic society, the focus is on personal freedom, choice, and action.
- In a collectivist society, the focus is on group norms and values, group role expectations, and other cultural constraints on behavior.
- One massive study of over 400 million people in 63 countries found that the personality trait of individualism was strongly and consistently related to positive well-being (Fischer & Boer, 2011).

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN SHAPING PERSONALITY (Child-rearing Practices)

- In the individualistic culture of the United States, parents tend to be noncoercive, democratic, and permissive in their child-rearing techniques.
- In collectivist cultures, such as Asian and Arab societies, parental practices tend to be more authoritarian, restrictive, and controlling.
- Studies in Arab countries showed that adolescents felt a greater connection with their parents than did American adolescents. They “follow their parents’ directions in all areas of life, such as social behavior, interpersonal relationships, marriage, occupational preference, and political attitudes.... they do not feel that they suffer from their [parents’] authoritarian style and are even satisfied with this way of life” (Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, & Farah, 2006, p. 264).
- The authoritarian parental practices did not adversely affect the mental health and emotional well-being of the Arab teenagers as they would in more liberal Western cultures.
- Differences in child-rearing practices and their resulting values will influence the development of different kinds of personalities.

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN SHAPING PERSONALITY (Self-enhancement)

- Self-enhancement is defined as the tendency to promote oneself aggressively and make one conspicuous.
- The opposite of that, self-effacement, is considered to be more in agreement with the cultural values of Asian societies.
- Self-enhancement was far more prevalent among the Canadian students; self-criticism was significantly more evident among the Japanese students (Heine, Takata, & Lehman, 2000).
- Collectivist cultures (Japan and China) showed significantly greater self-criticism and significantly lower self-enhancement than those from individualistic cultures (the United States and Israel) (Heine & Renshaw, 2002; Kurman, 2001).