Chapter 11: Personality: Theory, Research, and Assessment

Defining Personality: Consistency and Distinctiveness

Personality Traits

- Dispositions and dimensions

The Five-Factor Model

- Extraversion
- Neuroticism
- Openness to experience
- Agreeableness
- Conscientiousness

Psychodynamic Perspectives

Freud’s psychoanalytic theory

- Structure of personality
  - **Id** - Pleasure principle
  - **Ego** - Reality principle
  - **Superego** - Morality

- Levels of awareness
  - Conscious
  - Unconscious
  - Preconscious
Conflict
• Sex and Aggression
• Anxiety
• Defense Mechanisms

Freud on Development: Psychosexual Stages
• Sexual = physical pleasure
• Psychosexual stages

Oral, Anal, Phallic, Latency, Genital
• Fixation = Excessive gratification or frustration
• Overemphasis on psychosexual needs during fixated stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defense Mechanism</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>Keeping distressing thoughts and feelings buried in the unconscious</td>
<td>A traumatized soldier has no recollection of the details of a close brush with death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projection</td>
<td>Attributing one's own thoughts, feelings, or motives to another</td>
<td>A woman who dislikes her boss thinks she likes her boss but feels that the boss doesn't like her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>Diverting emotional feelings (usually anger) from their original source to a substitute target</td>
<td>After parental scolding, a young girl takes her anger out on her little brother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Formation</td>
<td>Behaving in a way that is exactly the opposite of one's true feelings</td>
<td>A parent who unconsciously represses a child spoils the child with outlandish gifts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>A reversion to immature patterns of behavior</td>
<td>An adult has a temper tantrum when he doesn't get his way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationalization</td>
<td>Creating false but plausible excuses to justify unacceptable behavior</td>
<td>A student watches TV instead of studying, saying that &quot;additional study wouldn't do any good anyway.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Bolstering self-esteem by forming an imaginary or real alliance with someone or group</td>
<td>An insecure young man joins a fraternity to boost his self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Table 11.2 Freud's Stages of Psychosexual Development |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Approximate Ages</th>
<th>Erotic Focus</th>
<th>Key Tasks and Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>0–1</td>
<td>Mouth (sucking, biting)</td>
<td>Weaning (from breast or bottle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anal</td>
<td>2–3</td>
<td>Anus (expelling or retaining feces)</td>
<td>Toilet training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phallic</td>
<td>4–5</td>
<td>Genitals (masturbating)</td>
<td>Identifying with adult role models; coping with Oedipal crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latency</td>
<td>6–12</td>
<td>None (sexually repressed)</td>
<td>Expanding social contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genital</td>
<td>Puberty onward</td>
<td>Genitals (being sexually intimate)</td>
<td>Establishing intimate relationships; contributing to society through working</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other Psychodynamic Theorists

**Carl Jung: Analytical Psychology**
- Personal and collective unconscious
- Archetypes

**Alfred Adler: Individual Psychology**
- Striving for superiority
- Compensation

Evaluating Psychodynamic Perspectives

**Pros**
- The unconscious
- The role of internal conflict
- The importance of early childhood experiences
- The use of defense mechanisms

**Cons**
- Poor testability
- Inadequate empirical base
- Sexist views
Behavioral Perspectives

**Skinner’s views**
- Conditioning and response tendencies

**Bandura’s social cognitive theory**
- Observational learning
- Models
- Self-efficacy

**Mischel’s views**
- The person-situation controversy

**Evaluating Behavioral Perspectives**

**Pros**
- Based on rigorous research
- Insights into effects of learning and environmental factors

**Cons**
- Over-dependence on animal research
- Fragmented view of personality
- Dehumanizing views
Humanistic Perspectives

Carl Rogers’s person-centered theory

**Self-concept**
- Conditional/unconditional positive regard
- Incongruence and anxiety

Abraham Maslow’s theory of self-actualization

- Hierarchy of needs
- The healthy personality

Evaluating
Humanistic Perspectives

Pros

- Recognized importance of subjective views
- Recognized importance of self-concept
- Laid foundation for positive psychology

Cons

- Many aspects of theory are difficult to test
- Unrealistic optimism
- More empirical research needed

Biological Perspectives

Eysenk’s theory

- Determined by genes
- Extraversion-introversion

Behavioral genetics

- Twin studies
- Heritability estimates

The evolutionary approach

- Traits conducive to reproductive fitness

Evaluating Biological Perspectives

Pros

- Convincing evidence for genetic influence

Cons
— Too much reliance on heritability estimates
— No comprehensive biological theory

A Contemporary Empirical Approach: Terror Management Theory
• Conflict between self-preservation and ability to foresee death
• Culture and self-esteem
• Contemporary Empirical Approaches: Terror Management Theory
• Increasing subjects’ mortality salience causes them to:
  — Punish moral transgressions more harshly
  — Be less tolerant of criticism of their country
  — Give greater rewards to those who uphold cultural standards
  — Respect cultural icons more
• Culture and Personality
• Independent self
• Interdependent self