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PSY441: Psychology of Personality  
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The definition of personality stems from how we think, our behavior and the things that set us apart as an individual. As we get older, our personality doesn't change much, however the way we behave may change overtime. Our personality may consist of the following: Qualities like loyalty, wanting to be perfect and or being outgoing. We may also have values and morals that stem from our character. Lastly, the way behave can stem from how we were brought up that can dictate how we react to things. This can mean how we deal with different emotions like being upset or frustrated and how we express ourselves, also known as our temperament.

Personality however, once established is hard to change. Research implies that not only are we already born with certain patterns and qualities, but they are developed over time. Our personality can be guided by our genes, experiences we face throughout our lifetime, adversities we may have to endure and the bonds we create in our community.

There are many presumptions about personality development and how our childhood experiences affect our personality. Tests like the Meyer Briggs that is a questionnaire that allows us to understand how we understand those around us and the way we make decision. The main 4 Meyers-Briggs personality types are introversion/extraversion, sensing/intuition, thinking/feeling and judging/perceiving.

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## Psychodynamic theories

Sigmund Freud commenced the idea on psychodynamic personality theories of id, ego, and superego. Freud understood these three ideas of the mind and part of human personality. ID also known as identification is based on responses and emotional impulses that could be seen as irrational, while ego weighed pros and cons in a rational way. The super ego is based on social norms, rules and personal values that can encourage to act a certain way based on our core beliefs and values. Later, the idea of psychosexual personality was developed into Freud's theory, and he elaborated on how a person decides on ideals and beliefs to follow. Freud thought experiences in someone's childhood is very important as it is how role is introduced. For example, oral is for the mouth that is used for sucking reflexes, anal for bladder and bowel movement, phallic which is for genitals and what identifies as a boy or a girl and latency in how we read social cues, and lastly our genitalia when we reach maturity in our sexuality and can understand our interests and orientation. Freud in his studies suggested that each is a milestone and once a person overcame one, they were ready to move onto the next phase and so on.

## Trait Theories

Trait theory is a personality theory where it promotes the idea that our personality varies from one another, and which one are more dominant. Kindness for example is a personality trait that not everyone has, so it can be seen as a sliding scale. You can also be more kind or less kind than someone else. One of the top traits is called the five-factor theory that can also be called the big 5 which was introduced by Donald W. Fiske. This idea is made of 5 distinct traits: being agreeableness, being conscientious, extraversion, neuroticism, and being open to an experience. A trait that goes

Each trait has a range that goes from one extreme to another, and each person falls somewhere along that range.

## Humanistic theories

The humanistic approach to theories of personality involves understanding not only behavior and thought patterns, but also what someone believes gives their life meaning.

Humanistic theories propose that someone's personality depends heavily on what they think of themselves — who they believe they are.

[Abraham Maslow's](#) humanistic hierarchy of needs, for example, suggested that personality is the result of someone being able to meet — or not meet — basic needs like safety, self-esteem, and belongingness.

[Carl Rogers](#) explored the concept of self-actualization. This theory asserts that people are driven by their need for personal growth. The quest for learning and growing is what structures someone's personality.

### *Expectancy-value theory*

Another behaviorism-based model of human personality is [Julian Rotter's](#) framework.

Rotter proposed human behavior is motivated by the expected rewards or punishment it can gain. This expectation comes from past experiences and whether or not you thought the consequences of your actions were under your control.

When someone believes they have control over an outcome, they're more motivated to action. This is particularly so when they anticipate a positive outcome because similar actions have been rewarded in the past.

## 4. Social cognitive theories

Social cognitive theories of personality include several schools of thought like behaviorism, social learning theory, and expectancy-value theory.

### *Behaviorism*

Behaviorism theory proposes that human behavior is the direct result of facing rewards and punishments.

In other words, you're conditioned to respond a certain way because of a reward-punishment pattern in your life.

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## Evolutionary theories

[Charles Darwin](#) first introduced the concepts of evolution and natural selection in the mid-1800s. His work sparked an entire field of evolutionary biology.

Later, other scientists explored Darwin's premises to explain human behavior. According to this framework of evolutionary theories, human personality is primarily the result of genes and most useful traits.

Ultimately, evolutionary theory states that personality characteristics that increased your ancestors' chances for survival are the traits you may have at the core of your personality today.

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The self-affirmation theory is a meant to guide people in understanding how to maintain self-integrity, and having discernment is on what's good or bad and can be held responsible for one's actions. In most cultures, they have their own definition on what it means to be someone with integrity. For someone to have self-integrity, it means that they exhibit in behaviors that are good and virtuous. Self-affirmation also explores the idea that people feel if they don't have it, then their character is threatened. People like Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers who investigate the psychology of self-esteem and how it enhances our sense of personal pride. Some also feel that personal regard stems early on as a baby and will remain over the lifespan of a person.

Claude Steele who first suggested the theory of self-affirmation believed that it was under the notion of holding a specific stature like being “a good child” or “a good citizen”. Individuals are eager to maintain self-integrity especially when its noticed by the public because it can stimulate ones ego.

The social psychologist Claude Steele first proposed the theory of self-affirmation. A major insight of this theory involves the notion that although people try to maintain specific self-images (such as “being a good student” or “being a good family member”), that is not their primary motivation. Rather, individuals are motivated to maintain global self-integrity, a general perception of their goodness, virtue, and efficacy. There is thus some fungibility in the sources of self-integrity. If individuals feel relatively positive about themselves in one domain, they are willing and able to tolerate a threat to their self-integrity in another domain.

Self-affirmation theory led to a reinterpretation of classic research findings in cognitive dissonance. In a classic cognitive dissonance study, people are shown to change their attitudes to bring them in line with their past behavior. People led to commit an action espousing a position with which they disagree (for example, students who write in favor of tuition increases) subsequently come to agree with the position when they believe that their actions were freely chosen. Doing so is a form of rationalization and self-justification; it convinces the individual that his or her action was the right one. Previously, such effects had been viewed as evidence of a basic motivation for psychological consistency; people want to see their attitudes as consistent with their actions. However, Steele and colleagues demonstrated that these effects arise, in part, from the motivation to maintain self-integrity. Thus, when people are given an opportunity to affirm their self-integrity in an alternative domain, the rationalization effect disappears. For example, when people were given the opportunity to express the importance of a cherished personal value (for example, when science students were allowed to don a white lab coat, or when people who valued aesthetics were allowed to assert their love of art), these individuals did not defensively change their attitudes to make them concordant with their behavior.

Self-affirmations can also help to reduce physiological and psychological stress responses. David Creswell and colleagues had participants complete a self-affirmation procedure before engaging in the stressful experience of public speaking and mental arithmetic in front of a hostile audience. Unlike those in a control condition, those in the self-affirmation condition did not show any changes from baseline in their levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Because chronic stress is linked to physical illness, this finding also suggests that affirming the self could have positive effects on health outcomes.