

Autumn Nash

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6. The six criteria used by personality psychologists to judge the scientific worth of theories are comprehensiveness, precision and testability, parsimony, empirical validity, heuristic value, and applied value. Comprehensive theories encompass a greater scope or range of explanation for various phenomena (Ryckman, 44). Whereas some theories may be narrow in focus (explaining a limited number of observations). Freud's Psychodynamic Theory discusses comprehensive personality explaining, marriage and religion, love and war, humor, and incest. Precision and Testability demands that a good theory consist of constructs that are clearly defined, tightly interrelated, and readily open to reliable and valid measurement through falsifiable hypotheses (Ryckman, 44). Good theories should also expose themselves to rigorous hypothesis testing. Parsimony is a theory trimmed of excess concepts and needless explanation would likely manifest the correct explanation of the world (Ryckman, 45). All things being equal, the simpler or more parsimonious theory is likely the correct one. Empirical Validity says that beyond comprehensiveness, our confidence in a theory's viability is strengthened by its ability to correctly predict and control phenomena (Ryckman, 45). An example of this would be sport fans who change their jerseys and hats and franchise affiliations based on the final championship game. A theory's heuristic value involves its ability to generate unique thoughts and perspectives and directions in other fields (Ryckman, 46-47). Initially business was conducted among interpersonal relationships, whereas the invention of the computer generated a new

conceptualization of the brain. And a theory's applied value can be measured by the extent to which it offers effective solutions to life's problems (Ryckman, 47). Freud's free-association "talking cure" was used as a treatment for a new form of war neurosis called "shell-shock."

7. Some strengths of the case study method are that these studies provide detailed and qualitative information, provide insight for further research, and permit investigation of otherwise impractical or unethical situations. Case studies allow a researcher to investigate a topic in far more detail than might be possible if they were trying to deal with a large number of research participants. Case studies are often used in exploratory research. They can help us generate new ideas that might be tested by other methods (Ryckman, 12). They are an important way of illustrating theories and can help show how different aspects are related to each other. Some weaknesses in the case study method are that they are lacking in scientific rigor and providing little basis for generalization of results to the wider population. Also a researcher's own biases may influence the case study. They can be difficult to replicate and time-consuming and expensive. This is due to the volume of data and the time restrictions in place which can impact the depth of analysis that was possible within the available resources (Ryckman, 13). Because a case study deals with a single person/setting/group, the conclusions drawn from a particular case may not be transferable to other settings. Also, case studies are based on the analysis of qualitative data, a lot depends on the interpretation the psychologist places on the information they have acquired. This means that there is a lot of scope for observer bias, and it could be that the subjective opinions of the psychologist intrude in the assessment of what the data means.

9. Claude Steele created the self-affirmation theory to show that people have a fundamental motivation to maintain self-integrity, a perception of themselves as good, virtuous, and able to predict and control important outcomes (Ryckman, 7). In all cultures and historical periods, there are socially shared conceptions of what it means to be a person of self-integrity. Having self-integrity means that one perceives oneself as living up to a culturally specific conception of goodness, virtue, morals and agency. In simpler terms, to do the right thing even when no one is watching. Self-affirmation theory examines how people maintain self-integrity when this perception of the self is threatened. The study tested its validity by examining participants' neural activity during a self-affirmation task specifically designed for functional magnetic resonance imaging (Ryckman, 8). Testing the extent to which exposure to self-affirmation produced increases in brain systems associated with positive valuation, self-related processing, and emotion regulation. In addition, they examined whether the neural effects of affirmation are moderated by temporal orientation.