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Chapter 1

What is personality? What are some of the limitations of current definitions of the term?

Personality is the essence of what makes human beings unique. It pertains to the dynamics and categorized characteristics that an individual possesses by certain influences, motivations, and behaviors. Personality is intangible, which makes the study of personality complex because it holds different meanings to individuals. There are different approaches one might use to define personality. For instance, from a humanistic approach, they would believe that it's how people feel about themselves is what makes them a person. On the other hand, from a behaviorist approach, they would focus on the behavior of a person. Both humanistic and behaviorist approaches do play a crucial role in personality, but the study of personality goes in depth. Personality shouldn't be categorized into one meaning. There are different elements that create a person's uniqueness. Soren Kierkegaard elaborates the importance of including different parts of one self to becoming oneself. Psychologists have created a divide of one self that has dimmed the importance of personality, but Kierkegaard shines light on the collaborative impact of how every part relates to one another.

Social attractiveness defined in terms of personality has limitations to the true meaning of a person. In fact, it limits different kinds of behavior that makes up a personality and only perceives physical traits or attractiveness. It also hinders the values of a person. For instance, *In Theories of a Personality*, it states that, “ it limits the number and kinds of behavior considered as aspects of personality; that is, only those kinds of behaviors that the perceivers select in

making judgments about the attractiveness or unattractiveness of the perceived are regarded as part of personality. Second, it carries the absurd implication that some individuals, who obviously have unique learning histories and unique, biologically based temperament traits, are devoid of personality,” (Ryckman, 4). Social attentiveness doesn’t define personality, in fact it diminishes the value of a person. In fact, only focusing on physical traits as a person can be belittling. To view personality, we must analyze the levels that construct a person’s whole entire identity. Psychological construct is used to embody the abstraction of an individual’s unique genetic background such as learning how certain factors can influence a certain response to various environments or situations.

Why are control groups used by investigators who are testing hypotheses using the experimental method?

The development of theories enables psychologists to explain an individual's distinct response to various situations. Certain explanations lead to predictions that can be tested empirically. In this way, theories can help us understand individuals and accurately predict their behavior. The theories are tested using control groups. Psychologists must conduct laboratory experiments to thoroughly and precisely test hypotheses. An hypothesis is a theoretical statement about how events correlate to one another or in other words predictions. The experimental method involves the investigator systematically changing certain variables to see how they affect certain variables. There are two variables tested: independent variables and dependent variables. An experimental group manipulates the independent variable, whereas the control group does not manipulate the dependent variable, allowing for a more accurate experiment on the effects of the independent variable.

What are the six criteria used by personality psychologists to judge the scientific worth of theories? Give some examples of each.

The six criteria used by personality psychologists are Comprehensiveness

Comprehensiveness is a general agreement between researchers and theoreticians, of a theory that encompasses and accounts for a wider range and diversity of data. Science involves the knowledge of integrating and elaborating the interrelationships between a variety of phenomena. I.e. A theory that elaborates on marriage and religion, or love and war etc.

Precision and Testability. Scientists should be able to elaborate in a clear and concise language. If the theory is embedded in an unclear language, it lessens the effectiveness and efficiency of communication between scientists and can affect scientific progress. A good theory must contain relational statement. The testability of its hypotheses should contain empirical evidence. Without empirical evidence, the testability will be seen as discredit for the theory. I.e A good theory must include the testability of a hypothesis and precision of an adequate scientific theory.

Parsimony- To meet the test of parsimony, it includes constructs, relational statements, and assumptions for the explanation of its domain of the phenomenon. In order to execute parsimony, one must elaborate the coherence of constructs and assumptions, for too simplistic might not do justice.

Empirical Validity - Data that supports good theory. Hypotheses must be tested with accurate and precise data, by key observations determined by the investigators accuracy of prediction.

Heuristic Value- Further theorizing and research. This involves the challenging ways of sparking new ideas and research. Certain theories can develop investigators to new paths of discovering new ideas.

Applied Value- Creative solutions should be of interests to people and concerns. For instance, If they are supporting data for a theory that specifies the development of physically and psychologically healthy and unhealthy children, parents could adopt the kinds of discipline that would be encouraging for their children.