

The Effects of Cognitive Impairment and Dementia in Aging Persons

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Introduction

The psychology of personality is one of the sections in psychology. Its primary focus is on comprehending how people differ from one another in their behavior, thoughts, and emotions. It aims to clarify how personality traits, cognitive functions, and emotional reactions differ between people. This area of study has a long history that can be traced back to the early work of Sigmund Freud and other early psychoanalytic theorists who created theories of personality based on unconscious mental processes and the influence of early experiences.

The psychology of personality has evolved due to efforts contributed by psychologists such as Gordon Allport. He emphasized the role of individual traits in determining personality, and George Kelley created the personal construct theory to explain how people use their experiences to form their distinct worldviews. The study of personality psychology still functions in research and application today. It has a wide range of methodologies and theories being put into practice to comprehend the varying nature of human personality.

Why Psychology of Personality is Needed

A key factor is the psychology of personality. It helps us to understand individual characteristics and how they affect behavior, ideas, and emotions. Some personality psychology theories, including behavioral and social cognitive theories, psychodynamic theories, and humanistic theories, have given directions on how personalities are formed and how they influence different facets of a person's life. For instance, behavioral and social cognitive theories emphasize how learning and the environment influence personality and behavior. Psychodynamic theories put emphasis so much on the role that early events and unconscious tensions have in determining personality. On the other hand, humanistic approaches emphasize the significance of self-actualization and personal development in forming a personality.

Many fields, including clinical psychology, education, and business, use the study of personality. For instance, knowing a person's personality qualities might help doctors identify and treat mental health conditions like dementia. According to recent studies, certain personality qualities, such as conscientiousness and openness, may be protective against dementia development and cognitive deterioration (LaMotte, 2022). It is helpful to know more about these features relating to personality. They can help educators interact with students with various learning preferences and methods. Organizations can find people most appropriate for specific posts and roles by use of these evaluations of personality. Therefore, personality psychology within psychology is an introductory section that assists in understanding individual characteristics and how they affect individuals regarding behavior, thoughts, and emotions. Strategies can be developed to assist people in a variety of areas, such as mental health, education, and business, by getting an understanding.

Erik Erikson Lifespan Theory Method

The life span theory by Erik Erikson is a psychosocial theory that emphasizes the importance of social experiences and relationships over the lifespan. According to the theory, personality evolves via eight stages, each bringing about a psychosocial crisis that must be overcome for healthy personality development (Maree, 2021). Erikson stated that while the poor resolution of these crises might result in dysfunctional behaviors and a sense of identity conflict, successful resolution of these crises leads to forming a sense of identity and a healthy personality. Erikson's theory is significant to psychology because it emphasizes social and cultural influences' role in determining how a person develops their personality.

Also, it emphasizes how personality development is ongoing and can happen at any point in a person's life. The idea also has applications in understanding and dealing with challenges

relating to aging, mental health, and identity formation. Research has shown, for instance, that unresolved crises can contribute to cognitive decline and dementia, whereas successfully resolving earlier psychosocial crises is associated with better cognitive and emotional functioning in later life (Yoneda et al., 2022). Hence, Erikson's lifetime theory has helped us better understand how personalities evolve since it is dynamic and complicated. It also has applicability in several real-world settings, such as mental health, aging, and education.

Stage 8 & the Aging Population

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development states that Integrity vs. Despair, which takes place in late adulthood, is the last stage of life. This period usually starts at the age of 65 and lasts till death. According to Erikson, at this point, people consider their lives and assess if they have led meaningful, fulfilled lives. Psychologists must provide this demographic with assistance in a variety of ways as it continues to age. One strategy is to assist them in resolving any internal tensions they may be experiencing, such as their dread of dying or losing their independence. Additionally, psychologists can support them in resolving external conflicts like coping with social isolation or managing long-term health conditions.

The possibility of dementia and cognitive deterioration is one of the significant problems this generation has to deal with. Conscientiousness and openness, for example, have been found to help prevent cognitive decline and support healthy aging, according to recent studies (LaMotte, 2022). Psychologists can use techniques like participating in mentally challenging activities or practicing mindfulness meditation to help older persons build strategies for sustaining cognitive function. Additionally, even as they experience physical and cognitive changes, psychologists can assist older adults in maintaining a sense of identity and purpose (Sloane, 2019). Psychologists, therefore, can help older adults maintain their well-being and find

meaning in their lives by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the aging population and applying the ideas of Erikson's theory.

Dementia

A loss in cognitive abilities such as memory, speech, and reasoning characterize the dementia syndrome. It impairs mental processes because of the death or malfunction of brain cells. The frequency of dementia is rising worldwide, making it an increasingly important issue for the world's aging population. Dementia has been shown to have severe consequences for an individual's sense of self and sense of identity because it impairs their participation in routine tasks and social interactions. Sloane (2019) observed that because dementia patients cannot recall their prior lives and relationships, they feel like a part of them has died.

Dementia can cause a person to lose their sense of self, which can cause much emotional turmoil. Therefore, caregivers and medical professionals need to be aware of this fact. Individuals with dementia can benefit from less stigma and increased opportunities for meaningful social contact, as Warren (2022) emphasizes the significance of person-centered care. The effects of dementia on both individuals and communities are becoming increasingly essential to comprehend as the world's population ages. The quality of life for people with dementia and their caregivers can be vastly improved using findings from dementia research (Butler et al., 2021). Dementia research also has the potential to raise knowledge of the disease and its effects on individuals and society, thereby lowering the disease's negative connotations.

Personality Traits Leading to Dementia

Certain personality traits have been found to raise the risk of dementia later in life, according to research. High levels of neuroticism, low levels of conscientiousness, and low levels of agreeableness were linked to a higher risk of death and cognitive impairment in older

adults, according to a study by Yoneda et al. (2022). Another study by LaMotte (2022) discovered a relationship between negative personality qualities, including pessimism, anxiety, and aggression, with a higher risk of dementia and cognitive decline. A tendency for negative feelings like anxiety, worry, and fear defines neuroticism. Increased brain inflammation caused by this personality feature has been connected to dementia progression (LaMotte, 2022). Additionally, those who exhibit high levels of neuroticism frequently engage in unhealthy behaviors like smoking and drinking, raising their risk of cognitive decline.

On the contrary, conscientiousness is characterized by qualities like responsibility, self-control, and organization. Low levels of conscientiousness can prevent people from engaging in healthy habits like exercise and a balanced diet since they make people more impulsive and disorganized (Yoneda et al., 2022). Dementia and cognitive deterioration can consequently become more likely. Psychology must comprehend how personality features affect the likelihood of developing dementia. Psychologists can work with people who exhibit personality features that indicate they may be at higher risk to help them create risk-reduction strategies, such as adopting healthy habits and getting treatment for mental health issues. Additionally, psychologists may be able to lower the prevalence of dementia and other disorders associated with cognitive decline by encouraging positive personality traits like conscientiousness and agreeableness.

Cognitive Impairment & Dementia

Personality traits have been linked to the development of dementia and cognitive impairment, according to research. A higher risk of cognitive decline and dementia has been associated with neuroticism, poor conscientiousness, and low agreeableness (Yoneda et al., 2022). These traits may be linked to cognitive impairment through a number of mechanisms,

including a decrease in mentally stimulating activities, unhealthy lifestyle choices, and an increase in stress and inflammation. Dementia can substantially impact a person's quality of life, loss of independence, personality and behavior changes, and relationships with loved ones (Sloane, 2019; Warren, 2022). Memory, language, judgment, and problem-solving issues are standard in people with dementia, who may struggle with behavioral and psychological symptoms like agitation, depression, and delusions. These signs and symptoms can be difficult for both the dementia patient and their caregivers, emphasizing the value of preventative measures and early intervention.

Strategies for prevention and therapy can be informed by knowledge of the part that personality factors play in the onset of dementia and cognitive impairment. It could be feasible to lessen the detrimental impact of personality flaws on cognitive function and lower the incidence of dementia (Wang et al., 2021). One way to accomplish this is by encouraging people to adopt healthy lifestyles, reduce stress and inflammation, and engages in more mentally engaging pursuits. Interventions that address the emotional and behavioural symptoms of dementia improve the quality of life for both patients and caregivers.

Conclusion

The results indicate a critical issue with the mental health of the aging population. These findings highlight the importance of recognizing the impact of social isolation and physical sickness on the onset of mental health problems in older people. While the study did not provide a complete solution, it did demonstrate the importance of focusing on and adequately funding the mental health of the aging population. Psychologists can take the first step towards solving this problem by studying the specific difficulties experienced by the elderly and creating tailored interventions to address those difficulties.

Caregivers and clinicians can treat this demographic by giving each patient individualized attention and showing concern for their mental and physical well-being. By facilitating connections with others and providing access to social services, they can also combat feelings of isolation and loneliness. The importance of treating the mental health issues of the aged population, such as dementia, necessitates the participation of all relevant parties. If we pool our resources, we can build a culture that cares about the emotional well-being of its citizens as they age.

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