# Theories of Personality

FYBA Sem II

Chapter 3

# Freud's Conception of personality.

- Freud's idea about personality developed from the Victorian age that he and his patients raised, which was a time of sexual repression.

- The structure of the mind:

- According to Freud, the mind was divided into three parts:

1) The preconscious: consisting of memories, information and events of which one can easily become aware.

2) The Conscious: Existence of our current awareness.

3) The Unconscious: Remains hidden at all times, surfacing only in symbolic form in dreams and in some of the behaviour people engage in without knowing why they have done so.

- According to Freud, the unconscious mind was the most important determining factor in human behaviour and personality.

- Freud's division of the personality:

1) ID: if it feels good, do it

- Relies on pleasure principle, the desire for immediate gratification with no regard for the consequences.

- It's completely Unconscious, amoral part of personality that exists at birth, containing all of the basic biological drives like hunger, thirst, self-preservation and sex.

2) Ego: the executive director

- Relies on reality principle, which is the need to satisfy the demands of the id only in ways that will not lead to negative consequences.

3) Super ego: the moral watchdog

- The super Ego develops as a preschool-aged child learns the rules, customs and expectations of the society.

- The super ego contains the conscience, the part of the personality that makes people feel guilt or moral anxiety, when they do the wrong thing.

- Sometimes the id or the superego does not get it's way, resulting in a great deal of anxiety for the ego itself.

- The psychological defense mechanisms are ways of dealing with anxiety through unconsciously distorting one's perception of reality.

- Stages of personality development:

- According to Freud, Personality development occurs in a series of psychosexual stages that are determined by the developing sexuality of the child.

- At each stage, a different erogenous zone or area of the body that produces pleasurable feelings, becomes important and can become the source of conflicts.

- Conflicts that are not fully resolved can result in fixation or getting stuck to some degree in a stage of development.

- The child may grow into am adult but will still carry emotional and psychological "baggage" from that earlier fixated stage.

- Oral stage: first 18 months:

- Here the erogenous zone is the mouth.

- Weaning that occurs too soon or too late can result in too little or too much satisfaction of the child's oral needs, resulting in the activities and personality traits associated with an overly adult personality like overeating, drinking too much, chain smoking, talking too much, nail biting, gum chewing and a tendency to be either too dependent and optimistic or too agressive and pessimistic.

- Anal stage 18 to 36 months:

- Here the erogenous zone moves from the mouth to the anus.

- Children here get a great deal of pleasure from both withholding and releasing their feces at will.

- The main area of conflict here is the toilet training, the demand that the child uses the toilet at a particular time and in a particular way.

- Harsh toilet training can lead to any one of the following consequences:

1) An anal expulsive personality (rebel) he would see messiness as a statement of personal control, someone who is distructive and hostile.

2) An anal retentive personality (rebel passively) retaining the feces. No mess, no punishment. As adults they are stingy, stubborn and excessively neat.

- Phallic stage 3 to 6 years:
- Here the erogenous zone now shifts to the genitals.
- Chikdren here have discovered the difference between the sexes (male and females)
- Castration anxiety
- Penis envy
- Oedipus complex
- Electra complex

- Latency stage (6 years to puberty)

- By the end of phallic stage, children will have pushed their sexual feelings for the opposite sex into the unconscious through the defense mechanism called repression.

- In this stage, children grow and develop intellectually, physically and socially but not sexually.

- During this stage boys will play only with boys and girls will play only with girls.

- Genital Stage ( Puberty onwards)

- Here, the sexual feelings that were once repressed can no longer be ignored.

- Bodies are changing and the sexual urges are once more allowed into consciousness, but these urges will no longer have the parents as their targets.

- The focus of sexual curiosity and attraction will become other adolescents, celebrities and other objects of adoration.

# The Neo-Freudians

1. Carl Jung

- Jung believed that the unconscious held much more than personal fears, urges and memories,

- He believed there was a collective unconscious.

- Collective unconscious contains a kind of "species" memory, memories of ancient fears and themes that seem to occur in many cultures.

- These collective, universal human memories were called archetypes by Jung.

- Types of archetypes:

a. Anima/animus: The feminine side of a man/ the masculine side of a woman.

b. Shadow: the dark side of the personality

c. Persona: the side of one's personality that is shown to the world.

## 2. Alfred Adler

- According to Adler, all young helpless children develop feelings of inferiority when comparing themselves to the more powerful superior adults in their lives.

- The driving force behind all human emotions and thoughts was seeking of superiority.

- The defense mechanism of compensation was prominently figured in Adler's theory.

- Also, according to him birth order of the child affected personality.

- First borns feel inferior after the arrival of their younger sibling.

- Middle child have it easier.

- Younger children are pampered and protected but feel inferior because they are not allowed the freedom and responsibility of the older children.

3. Karen Horney

- Horney came up with the concept of "womb envy", stating that men felt the need to compensate for their lack of child-bearing ability by striving for success in other areas.

- Horney focused on the basic anxiety created in a child born into a world that is so much bigger and more powerful than the child.

- People with less secure upbringing would develop neurotic personalities and maladaptive ways of dealing with relationships.

- Some people deal with anxiety by moving towards people, becoming dependent and clingy.

- Some move against people, becoming aggressive, demanding and cruel.

- Some would move away from people by withdrawing from personal relationships.

4. Erik Erikson

- He emphasized on social relationships that are important at every stage of life.

- He gave 8 psychosocial stages of personality development.

# The Behavioral and Social Cognitive View of Personality

- **Learning Theories**

- According to the Behaviorists, *personality is a set of learned responses or habits*.

Eg: a shy personality could be because of the harsh discipline style shown by parents towards the child. Punishment is avoided by being out of sight of the parents and remaining quiet. Later, the child might generalize that avoidance response to other authority figures and adults. Thus the pattern of shyness would develop.

- According to the social cognitive learning theorists, *observational learning, modeling and other cognitive learning techniques* can lead to the formation of pattern of personality.

- According to Bandura's Social Cognitive View, the behavior is governed not just by the influence of external stimuli and response patterns but also by cognitive processes such as *anticipating, judging, memory and learning through imitation*.

- **Bandura's Reciprocal Determinism and Self-efficacy**

- According to Bandura three factors influence one another in determining the pattern of behavior that makes up the personality.

a. *The environment (reinforcers)*

b. *The behavior itself*

c. *Personal or cognitive factors (beliefs/expectations/personal dispositions/ past experiences)*

- Another important variable according to Bandura is ***self-efficacy***, it's a person's expectancy of how effective his or her efforts to accomplish a goal will be in any circumstance.

- Self-efficacy can be high or low, depending on what has happened in similar circumstances in the past, others feedback and their own assessment of their abilities.

- People high in self-efficacy are more persistent and expect to succeed.

- People low in self-efficacy expect to fail and tend to avoid challenges.

- ***Rotter's Social Learning Theory: Expectancies***

- Julian Rotter, viewed personality as a relatively stable set of potential responses to various situations.

- ***Locus of control,*** which is a tendency for people to assume that they either have control (internal Locus of control) or do not have control (external locus of control) over the events and consequences in their lives.

- High ***internal locus of control*** was associated with characteristics of high achievement motivation.

- High ***external locus of control*** was associated with patterns of learned helplessness and depression.

- According to Rotter, there are two key factors influencing a person's decision to act in a certain way given a particular situation.

a. ***Expectancy***: high expectancy for success is similar to a high self-efficacy and is also based on past experiences with success and failures.

b. ***Reinforcement value***: it refers to individual's preference for a particular reinforcer over all other reinforcing consequences.

- The strengths and limitations of the behavioral and social cognitive views of personality:

- The theory takes into account ***mental processes and social influences*** on learning.

- The concepts here have been ***tested under scientific conditions.***

- Some critics think that human personality and behavior are too ***complex*** to explain through cognitions and external stimuli interacting.

# The third force: Humanism and Personality

- ***The Humanistic Perspective:***

- The humanistic perspective, led by psychologists ***Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow,*** wanted psychology to focus on the things that make people uniquely human, such as subjective emotions and the freedom to choose one's own destiny.

- They believed that humans beings are always striving to fulfill their innate capabilities and capacities and to become everything that their genetic potential will allow them to become.

- This striving for fulfillment is called the ***self-actualization.***

- An important tool here is ***self-concept,*** it is based upon what people are told by others and how the sense of self is reflected in the words and actions of important people in one's life such as parents, siblings etc.

- Real and Ideal Self

- Real self is one's actual perception of characteristics, traits and abilities that form the basis of the striving for self-actualization.

- Ideal self is the perception of what one should be or would like to be.

- According to Rogers when the real self and ideal self are very close or similar to each other, people feel competent and capable. When there is a mismatch between the real and the ideal self, it could lead to anxiety and neurotic behaviors.

- When a person has a realistic view of the real self and the ideal self is something that is actually attainable, then there isn't a problem of a mismatch.

- Conditional and Unconditional Positive Regard

- According to Rogers positive regard is a warmth, affection, love and respect that come from the significant others in people's life.

- Positive regard is vital for people's ability to cope with stress and to strive to achieve self-actualization.

- Unconditional positive regard or love, affection and respect with no strings attached, is necessary for people to be able to explore fully all that they can achieve and become.

- Whereas, Condition Positive Regard, is love, affection, respect and warmth that depend or seem to depend on doing what those people want.

- According to Rogers, a person who is in the process of self-actualizing actively exploring potentials and abilities and experiencing a match between the real and ideal self, is a fully functioning person.

- A fully functioning person is in touch with their own feelings and abilities and are able to trust their innermost urges and intuitions.

- To become fully functioning, a person needs unconditional positive regard.

- According to Rogers, to be fully functioning is a necessary step in the process of self-actualization.

- Current thoughts on the Humanistic view of Personality
- Humanistic view of personality shows a very rosy picture
- Some critics believe that the picture is a little too rosy, ignoring the more negative aspects of human nature.
- Some aspect of humanistic theory is difficult to test scientifically.
- Humanistic theory's greatest contribution has been in the development of therapies designed to promote self-growth and to help people better understand themselves and others.
- Some of the premises of positive psychology have their roots in humanistic psychology.
- The term positive psychology was first used by Maslow in 1954 when he stressed the need for psychology to focus on human potential rather than on problems.

# Trait Theories

- A trait is a consistent, enduring way of thinking, feeling or behaving.

- Trait theories describe personality in terms of a person's traits.

1. **Gordon Allport**

- Allport and his colleagues scanned the dictionary for words that could be traits after eliminating synonyms.

- These traits were wired into nervous system to guide one's behavior across many different situations and that each person's constellation of traits was unique.

## 2. Raymond Cattell

- Raymond Cattell defined two types of traits

a. **Surface traits**, that represents the personality characteristics easily seen by other people. Eg: Shyness

b. **Source traits**, are more basic traits that underlie the surface traits. Eg: Introversion

- Using a statistical technique called factor analysis, he identified 16 source traits.

- Later he developed a personality assessment questionnaire called Sixteen Personality Factor (16 PF) based on just 16 source traits

# Modern trait theories: the big five

- The five trait dimensions can be remembered using the acronym OCEAN

1. Openness:
- Its person's willingness to try new things and be open to new experiences.

2. Conscientiousness
- It refers to person's organization and motivation, being careful about time and belongings as well.

3. Extraversion
- They are outgoing and sociable

4. Agreeableness
- It refers to the basic emotional style of a person, who may be easy going, friendly and pleasant.

5. Neuroticism
- It refers to emotional instability or stability.

# Current thoughts on the trait perspective

- According to some theorist personality traits will not always be expressed in the same way across different situations.

- According to trait-situation interaction, particular circumstances of any given situation are assumed to influence the way in which a trait is expressed.

# Personality: Genetics and Culture

- The biology of personality: Behavioral genetics

- Behavioral genetics, studies how much of an individual's personality is due to inherited traits.

a. Twin Studies

- Identical twins share 100 percent of their genetic material.

- Fraternal twins share 50 percent of their genetic material.

- Identical twins are more similar than fraternal twins or unrelated people in intelligence, leadership abilities, the tendency to follow rules, tendency to uphold traditional cultural expectations.

- They are alike with respect to nurturance, empathy, assertiveness and aggressiveness even if they are raised in separate environments.

b. Adoption Studies

- Studying unrelated people who are raised in the same environment helps investigators discover the influence of environment.

- Researchers can uncover some of the shared and nonshared environment and genetic influences on personality.

Current findings:

- The studies of genetics and personality indicates that variations in personality traits are about 25 to 50 percent inherited.

- Environmental influences accounts for about half of the variation in personality traits as well.

# Assessment of Personality

- Interviews, Behavioral assessments and personality inventories

a. **Behavioral assessments**

- According to Behaviorists the personality is merely habitually learned responses to stimuli in the environment.

- In **direct observation**, the psychologist observes the client engaging in ordinary, everyday behavior, preferably in the natural setting of home, school or workplace.

- In **rating scale method**, a numerical rating is assigned by the client for specific behaviors.

- In a **frequency count method**, the assessor counts the frequency of certain behaviors within a specified time limit

**b. Interviews**

- It's a method of personality assessment in which the professional asks questions to the client and allows the client to answer either in a structured or unstructured fashion.

- Structured has specific response pattern

- Unstructured flows naturally

- Semi-structured is a combination of both.

c. Personality Inventories

- It's a questionnaire that has standard list of questions and only requires certain specific answers, such as yes no or cant decide.

- It has standard nature of questions

- Its more reliable.

i.    The MMPI-2-RF

-    It's the most common personality inventory.

-    It specifically tests for abnormal behavior and thinking patterns in personality and psychopathology.

-    It tests for a particular kind of behavior or way of thinking.

-    Its used in the mental health setting.

-    Additionally  for vocational guidance and job screening.

- Validity scales are built into any well-designed psychological inventory, are intended to indicate whether a person taking the inventory is responding honestly.

- Other common inventories

- Cattell's 16 PF

- NEO-PI-R

- MBTI

- Evaluating

- Clients can lie, misremember, distort the truth, give socially desirable answers.

- Biased interviewers.

- Halo effect, which is a tendency to form a favourable or unfavourable impression of someone at the first meeting, so that all of a person's comments and behavior after that first impression will be interpreted to agree with the impression positively or negatively.

- Observer effect and observer bias, can be controlled by having multiple observers.

- Inventories are standardized

- Validity scales are not always perfect

- Projective tests

a. The Rorschach Inkblots

- It's a projective test that uses 10 inkblots as the ambiguous stimuli.

- People being tested are asked to look at each inkblot and simply say whatever it might look like to them.

- Using predetermined categories and responses commonly given by people to each picture, psychologists score responses on key factors.

b. TAT

- The Thematic Apperception test, consists of 20 pictures, all black and white that are shown to the client.

- The client is asked to tell a story about the person or people in the picture.

- The story development by the client is interpreted by the psychoanalyst, who looks for revealing statements and projections of the client's own problem onto the people in the picture.

- Other types: sentence completion test, draw a person test, house and tree person.

- Problems with projective tests

- They are very subjective.

- It is not known for its accuracy

- Reliability and validity is a problem

- However, its still used and some believe that the latest versions of these tests still have practical use and some validity, especially when a client's answers on these tests are used as a starting point for digging deeper into client's recollection, concerns and anxiety.

# Questions

1. Explain how the mind and personality are structured, according to Freud.
2. Distinguish among the five psychosexual stages of personality development.
3. Describe how neo-Freudians modified Freud's theory
4. Compare and contrast the learning theories of Bandura and Rotter.
5. Describe Humanistic/Carl Roger's theory of personality.
6. Describe early attempts to use traits to conceptualize personally.
7. Identify the five trait dimensions of the five-factor model of personality.
8. Explain how twin studies and adoption studies are used in the field of behavioral genetics.
9. Identify the advantages and disadvantages of using interviews, behavioral assessments and personality inventories to measure personality.
10. Identify the advantages and disadvantages of using projective personality tests.