

Introduction/Evaluating Theories of Personality

Chapter 1

<p><u>Cartesian Dualism</u> Mind/body duality As a guiding principle for Western Civilization o Western medicine o Western psychology</p> <p><u>Disease Model</u> Disease vs. Dis-Ease</p> <p><u>What is a Theory</u> Evaluation of a theory Philosophical Assumptions o Evaluating Philosophical Assumptions</p> <p><u>Paradigm</u></p> <p><u>Scientific Terminology</u> Data Operational Definition Trait Self</p> <p><u>Evaluation Scientific Statements</u> Verifiability (empirical observation) Open to falsification Claims are always tentative Compatibility with other data Predictive power Parsimony Usefulness</p> <p><u>Psychology as a Science</u> Assessment Research Psychotherapy</p> <p><u>Basic Statistics</u> Central Tendency o Mean, Median, Mode Correlation</p> <p><u>Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Design</u> Hypotheses, etc.</p>	2
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What is Personality?

- Introduction, outline, and approach
-A place to start

What is a theory of Personality?

- Answer a question with a question

Theories of Personality

What is a theory?

- Set of abstract concepts developed about facts
- Explanatory
- Theories reflect underlying cultural assumptions/backgrounds
- Micro vs. Macro Theories

Scope of Theory

Top/Down versus Bottom/Up

- Top/Down: The theory began with an idea and then went searching for facts
 - Deductive Reasoning (narrow, seeks to collect observations to "confirm" a hypothesis)
- Bottom/Up: The theory arose from the logical organization of once seemingly disparate facts
 - Inductive Reasoning (exploratory, characterizes early research)

Evaluation of Personality Theories

Philosophical

- Greek: philein (love) sophia (wisdom)
- Focus on how to live "the good life"

Scientific

- Latin: scire (to know) → methods to acquire knowledge

Artistic (practical applications)

- How we use these theories in day-to-day life

Philosophical Assumptions

- Freedom versus determinism
- Heredity versus environment
- Uniqueness versus universality
- Proactive versus reactive
- Optimistic versus pessimistic

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Table 1.1 Some Basic Philosophical Assumptions

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	IS NEUTRAL OR BELIEVES IN SYNTHESIS OF BOTH VIEWS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
FREEDOM People basically have control over their own behavior and understand the motives behind their behavior.			DETERMINISM The behavior of people is basically determined by internal or external forces over which they have little, if any, control.	
1	2	3	4	5
HEREDITARY Inherited and inborn characteristics have the most important influence on a person's behavior.			ENVIRONMENTAL Factors in the environment have the most important influence on a person's behavior.	

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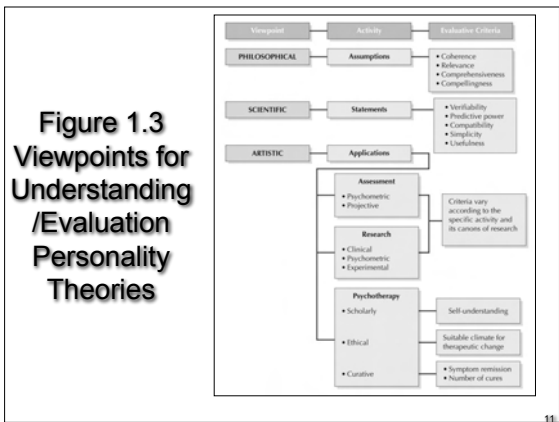
Table 1.1 Some Basic Philosophical Assumptions

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	IS NEUTRAL OR BELIEVES IN SYNTHESIS OF BOTH VIEWS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
UNIQUENESS Each individual is unique and cannot be compared with others.			UNIVERSALITY People are basically very similar in nature.	
1	2	3	4	5
PROACTIVE Human beings primarily act on their own initiative.			REACTIVE Human beings primarily react to stimuli from the outside world.	
1	2	3	4	5
OPTIMISTIC Significant changes in personality and behavior can occur throughout the course of a lifetime.			PESSIMISTIC A person's personality and behavior are essentially stable and unchanging.	

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1	2	3	4	5
Freedom				Determinism
1	2	3	4	5
Heredity				Environment
1	2	3	4	5
Uniqueness				Universality
1	2	3	4	5
Proactive				Reactive
1	2	3	4	5
Optimistic				Pessimistic
1	2	3	4	5
Top/Down				Bottom/Up

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Evaluating Philosophical Assumptions

Evaluating a theory

- How coherent is the theory?
- How relevant is the theory?
- How comprehensive is the theory?
- How compelling is the theory?

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Coherence

- Clear, logical, and consistent
- Fundamental contradictions?
- May be incomplete

Relevance

- Must have a bearing on our concept of reality
- Philosophy influenced by scientific knowledge

Comprehensiveness

- Does the theory cover what it claims?
- Superficial?

Compellingness

- Convincing? Do you buy it?

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Scientific Assumptions

Paradigm (Thomas Kuhn, 1962)

- Model or concept of the world that is shared by members of the community
 - Shifts over time -- The Atom
- Influences our perceptions & actions

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Scientific Terminology

Objective Data

- "I see a person."
- Data through observation

Subjective Data

- "I see a person."
- Data through experience

Consensual Validation

- Repeated observations to arrive at agreement

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Scientific Terminology

Operational Definitions

- Specifies what behaviors we include in a definition
- What do we mean when we say depression?

Scientific Constructs

- Hypothetical entities postulated to explain what we observe

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Constructs: Examples

Trait

- A tendency or predisposition to respond in a certain way
- Descriptors of a person
 - Emotional characteristics, introversion vs. extroversion, Big Five

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Constructs: Examples

Self

- Psychological processes that govern an individual's behavior
- Permits prediction of what a person will do in a given situation

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Evaluating Scientific Statements

- Verifiability (empirical observation)
- Open to falsification
 - Claims are always tentative
- Compatibility with other data
- Predictive power
- Parsimony
- Usefulness

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Applications

Assessment

- Psychometric tests
- Projective tests

Research

- Psychometric
- Clinical
- Experimental

Psychotherapy

- Scholarly
- Ethical
- Curative

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Fundamentals of Assessment

Standardization

- Uniform administration of the test
- Same conditions, settings, etc.

Objectivity

- Double-blind, placebo controlled
- Multiple choice format

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Fundamentals of Assessment

Reliability

- Consistency of scores over time
- "Clustering"

Validity

- The test measures what it was intended to measure
- Do Intelligence tests really measure IQ?
- Or is it some proxy of IQ?

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Research

Clinical Approach

- Clinical observation
- Asking questions, interviewing
- Case histories

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Research

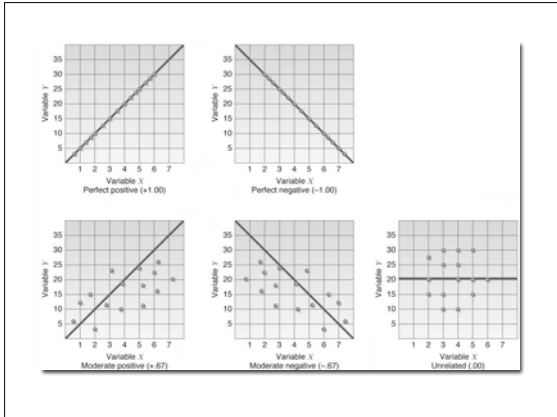
Psychometric Approach

- Based on mathematical techniques

Correlational Studies

- Compare the relationship of two or more variables
- Correlations range from -1 to +1
- Correlation does not imply causation

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Research (cont'd)

Experimental Approach

- Effects of the Independent Variable on the Dependent Variable (IV→DV)
- Random selection from the population
- Random assignment to condition
- Apply some experimental manipulation to see its effects on some outcome
- Medical trials are experiments

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Psychotherapy

Scholarly

- Means of understanding self/human nature

Ethical

- Helping individual change, improve, & grow
- Improve quality of life

Curative

- Replacing troublesome behaviors/symptoms with more suitable behaviors

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So, what is personality?

Characteristic pattern of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with psychological mechanisms—hidden or not—behind those patterns

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My definition of Personality

The part of ourselves that someone else can get to know.

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