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Theories of Personality
Spring 2009

Chapter 1: Introduction to Personality Psychology

Personality is the set of psychological traits
and mechanisms within the individual
that is organized and
relatively enduring
and that influences his or her interactions with, and
adaptations to, the environment
(including the intrapsychic,
physical,
and social environment).

Grand Theories vs. Contemporary Research

Grand Theories

- Universal Principles
- Fundamental psychological processes
- Philosophical

Modern Research

- Individual and/or group differences
- Domain specific
- Scientific

Six Domains of Knowledge

- Dispositional
- Biological
- Intrapsychic
- Cognitive-Experiential
- Social and Cultural
- Adjustment

Dispositional Domain

- Deals with ways in which individuals differ from one another and, therefore, cuts across all other domains
- Focus on number and nature of fundamental dispositions

Dispositional Domain--(continued)

- Goal of those working in this domain is to identify and measure the most important ways in which individuals differ from one another
- Also interested in the origin of individual differences and how these develop over time

Biological Domain

- Core assumption of biological approaches to personality is that humans are collections of biological systems, and these systems provide building blocks for behavior, thought, and emotion
- Behavioral genetics of personality
- Psychophysiology of personality
- Evolutionary personality psychology

Intrapsychic Domain

- Deals with mental mechanisms of personality, many of which operate outside conscious awareness
- Classic and modern versions of Freud's theory of psychoanalysis, including work on repression, denial, projection, and motives for power, achievement, and affiliation

Cognitive-Experiential Domain

- Focuses on cognition and subjective experience, such as conscious thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires about oneself and others
 - Self and self-concept
 - Goals we set and strive to meet
 - Emotional experiences, in general and over time

Adjustment Domain

- Personality plays key role in how we cope, adapt, and adjust to events in daily life
- Personality linked with important health outcomes and problems in coping and adjustment

Social and Cultural Domain

- Assumption that personality affects, and is affected by, cultural and social contexts
- Much work on cultural differences between groups (e.g., in social acceptability of aggression)

Social and Cultural Domain--(continued)

- Also much work on individual differences within cultures—how personality plays out in the social sphere, including work on sex differences and gender differences in personality processes, traits, and mechanisms
- At human nature level of analysis, all humans have common set of concerns they struggle with in the social sphere