Personality

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Outline

* Defining personality
* Why should we care?
* Measuring personality
* Approaches to personality
* Traits
* Psychodynamic
* Humanistic
X!”%*
Defining Personality

* The complex characteristics that distinguish an individual especially in relation to interacting with others

* The myriad of motivational, emotional, behavioural attitudinal tendencies of an individual
Why should we care?

* Understanding human nature
* e.g. Appreciate diversity
* Being able to relate to one another
* e.g. Counselling
* Identifying roles
* e.g. Employment
* Creating rules and regulations
* e.g. Social control
Measuring personality

* **Self report data**
  * Psychometric scales
  * Diary studies

* **Informant data**
  * Ask someone who knows you

* Analyse history
  * Social media
  * e.g. Facebook
Physiological data
Introverts – inward looking
Extroverts – outgoing
Reticular Activating System
  * Modulates sleep-wake
  * Controls saliva
More stimuli = greater response
Introverts avoid extra stimulus
Lemon test shows introverts produce more saliva
Some characteristics have been shown to be genetic

- Monozygotic twin studies
  - Compare children raised together or not
- Similarities in personality despite nurture?
- Temperament
  - Reactivity and energy
- Related to dopamine genes
  - Also sensation seeking/risk taking
Case studies

* The curious case of Phineas Gage (1823-1860)
* Historically, thoughts and theories about psychology have lead to different approaches to personality.

* Psychology is interested in questions such as...
  * How does it develop?
  * What influences are there?
  * Does it keep developing?
  * Is it consistent?
Approach: Traits

* Believe that personality is constitutional
  * Endures over lifespan
* Many ways to describe someone
* Many contexts in which people act differently
* Define personality using traits
  * Relatively stable thoughts and behaviours
* Different from states
  * Transient and contextual
* Many attempts to condense the list...
## The BIG 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>Tendency to experience psychological distress, overreactiveness, and instability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>Preference for social interaction and lively activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to experience</td>
<td>Receptiveness to new ideas, approaches, and experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>Selfless concern for others, trust, and generosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Organization, ambitiousness, and self-discipline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
* Largely measured through self-report data
* Psychometric development
  * Test validity
  * The Mismeasure of Man (Gould, 1991)
* Cultural differences
  * Question of universality
* Trait stability/consistency
  * Personality paradox
    * What we say – what we do – different?
    * Power of the situation
Approach: Psychodynamic

* Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

* Treated patients for hysteria
  * Symptoms were psychogenic
  * Used *Free Association* test
    * Uncover topics of *repressed* memory
  * **Psychoanalysis** used to uncover the memory
Conflicted mind

Code of conduct

Reality principle

Pleasure principle
Development

- Personality rooted in early development
- *Defence mechanisms*
  - Buffer against conflict anxiety
- Psychosexual stages of development
  - Shifting pattern of gratification
  - Oral – Genital
- Individual differences in respect to each stage
  - e.g. analy retentive type
Approach: Humanistic

- Criticises other theories for dehumanising
- Committed to phenomenology
- Understanding individuals perspective
- Goals are reward in and of themselves
- Not always internal conflict
- Maslow (1968)
- Hierarchy of Needs
Humans want to self actualise
  * Become their ideal self
* The self schema
  * Representation of self
  * Ideals, values, beliefs
    * Makes relevant things more impo
* Role of self esteem
  * Selective memory of events
Humanistic approach is very vague
  * But focuses on more than basic drives

Positivism goes further
  * Looking at positive states
    * Being happy
  * Looking at positive traits
    * Character strengths
      * Making an individual happy
      * At the same time not making anyone unhappy

* Optimistic
Are any of them right in thinking about personality?