

What are Trait researchers?

TRAIT RESEARCHERS

- ☞ THE GOAL: Identify types of traits that can be applicable to a large number of people (population) and that can be used to predict behavior
- ☞ DO NOT try to predict nor explain a person's behavior; they focus on the CORRELATION between a TRAIT and a SPECIFIC behavior;

EX: when a person scores high on sociability, that person is more likely to engage in conversations with strangers at a party

Psychoanalysts = explaining why a person is or is acting like so, predict how the person's behavior might be

Trait psychologists = predict how people who score high or low on a particular scale would behave

Typology Systems – personalities classified according to “types”

Type – assigning labels; where you belong

Trait – a dimension of personality used to categorize people according to the degree to which they manifest a particular characteristic; HOW HIGH OR LOW you score in a given measure (trait)

EX: Type = introverts/extraverts; Trait = introverts (low in extraversion measures, vice versa)

What is the difference between the Type and Trait approach?

They focus on the traits, not the person!!!

- ☞ They compare people from a particular continuum; whether the SCORE high or low
- ☞ 4000 ADJECTIVES which can be used to describe personality (Allport, 1961)

How do you sum these all up???

Can all the kinds of people (personalities) ever be catalogued?

At the end of the discussion, let us try to answer whether the trait approach is stable as a perspective in personality theory

EARLY ATTEMPTS TO “CATALOGUE” HUMAN PERSONALITY

Greeks:

Sanguine – happy

Melancholic – unhappy

Choleric – temperamental

Phlegmatic – apathetic

Personality Types based on Physique:

Endomorphic - obese

Mesomorphic - muscular

Ectomorphic – fragile

Did the Greeks or the other capture all the personalities in this class? – relate to activity!!!

Two important assumptions of Trait Psychologists

1. personality remains stable across time
2. personality remains stable across situations

Do you agree? Do you think you behave in a relatively stable manner across time and situation?

How do we measure this?

Principle of Aggregates!!!

What do you think is the strength of the Trait approach? – Psychology is a SCIENCE!!!

Where does trait approach draw its predicting strength from? – ability to quantify

dimensions!!!; STRENGTH of TRAIT approach

- ☞ we can easily measure whether one is HIGH or LOW in a particular dimension
- ☞ acknowledged the weakness of the trait approach
- ☞ RECOGNIZE that people are subject to EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

GORDON ALLPORT

Nomothetic Approach – traditional; people fall somewhere in the continuum

Idiographic Approach – identifying the combination of traits that dominate the personality

Common Traits – traits that are identifiable from the general population

Central Traits – the combination of traits that describe a single person

Cardinal Traits - dominant trait for a specific person

Functional Autonomy – when behavioral characteristics take on a MOTIVATION of their OWN, different from its initial motivation

What might be some of the things that you used to do for some other reason, but now do

for another?

EX: Brushing your teeth (to fight tooth decay; not to have bad breath); studying!!!

Proprium – the positive, creative, growth-seeking, forward-moving, quality of human nature; could be likened to LIBIDO; his concept of the SELF

How does the concept of self develop?

- ☞ Infants begin not even cognizant about their own body; no SELF-CONCEPT; then they learn to CONTROL their extremities, fine motor movement, they learn to manipulate objects = they begin to understand that they are separate from the world around them.

The importance of touch during infancy!!! – HAPLOS NG PAGMAMAHAL

ALLPORT'S STAGES OF PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

1. *the **Sense of Bodily Self**, which is a sense of one's own body, including bodily sensations, attests to one's existence and therefore remains a lifelong anchor for self-awareness.*

- ☞ Drinking your own spit; it is external, therefore we do not like it.

2. *the **Sense of Self-identity**, the second aspect of the proprium is self-identity. This is most evident when the child, through acquiring language, recognizes himself as a distinct and constant point of reference.*

- ☞ Babies who recognize that something has changed in their face when a dot or mark is placed somewhere on their face have a sense of identity

3. ***The Sense of Self-Esteem or Pride**, which is an individual's evaluation of himself and the urge to want to do everything for oneself and take all of the credit.*

- ☞ Prior to this, infants do not really care if you scold them

4. ***The Sense of Self-Extension**, occurs during the third year of life, which states that even though some things are not inside my physical body they are still very much a part of one's life.*

- ☞ That's my toy!!!

5. *The **Self-Image** or how others view "me" is another aspect of selfhood that emerges during childhood.*

- ☞ The Looking Glass Self; the GOOD or BAD person

6. ***The Sense of Self as a Rational-Coper** occurs between the ages of six and twelve in which the child begins to realize fully that he has the rational capacity to find solutions to life's problems, so that they can cope effectively with reality demands.*

7. **Propriate Striving**, which Allport believed to be the core problem for the adolescent. It is the selection of the occupation or other life goal, the adolescent knows that their future must follow a plan, and in this sense makes them lose their childhood.

☞ Liberty; finding their own destiny!

HENRY MURRAY

☞ influenced by the psychoanalytic perspective of Carl Jung – developed the Thematic Apperception Test

What strength does the TAT have in eliciting responses that come from the unconscious mind?

Personology – study of the person

Viscerogenic Needs – food, water, shelter

Psychogenic Needs – needs that are primarily psychological in nature, page 172.

RAYMOND CATTELL

☞ Suggests the need to use empirical methods in studying personality, not find explanations to verify our preconceived notions about human personality – TRAIT APPROACH!!!

☞ Let DATA speak for itself, not try to find EVIDENCE for some preconceived theory about human personality

What do you think did he mean by this?

**refer to page 178 for SIXTEEN SOURCE TRAITS, THE BIG FIVE*

Factor Analysis – a statistical method for factoring out the most common, general trait among a number of **basic traits**

Source traits – the factor of the basic traits

****take activity paper and try to do a factor analysis on the basic traits*

CRITICISMS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE BIG FIVE MODEL

1. The Big Five as a result of our limited language capability

EX: *Utang ng Loob*

2. Other traits cannot be placed well within the Big Five, others overlap

☞ *special, immoral, masculinity vs femininity (androgynous)

☞ The Big Five, *plus or minus two*

***Answer Bem's Sex Role inventory (?)

3. The Big Five as being atheoretical

☞ No hypothesis testing, the strength of science relies on being able to test hypotheses, not form one AFTER THE DATA has been gathered

4. In applications, measuring specific traits (sociability, cooperativeness, etc...) are more useful

☞ Too SUMMED UP!!!

☞ A matter of technicality!!!

EX: anxiety, depression scales more useful for psychiatrists than *neuroticism*.

☞ Since Allport, the trait approach has had its share of applications

EX: schools, placement tests, achievement and aptitude tests

TRAIT MEASURES DO NOT PREDICT BEHAVIOR VERY WELL

☞ Debate over which governs much of our behavior (person or situation)

Person-by-situation Approach – looking at both the traits of a person and the circumstances surrounding the person to predict behavior MORE ACCURATELY

EX: people who are aggressive, a frustrating situation

How might you relate this to the frustration-aggression hypothesis from last meeting?

☞ Even a person LOW in AGGRESSIVENESS scales, would become aggressive when placed in a very FRUSTRATING SITUATION

The Fundamental Attribution Error

The Self-fulfilling Prophecy

☞ Personality traits do not accurately predict future behavior; STILL SUBJECT FOR DEBATE; Safely put, it tells one's probability to behave in a particular manner, COMPARED to OTHERS in the same scale.

☞ (?)A study that attempted to see whether personality traits coupled with drinking to cope with stress to predict hazardous drinking found that trait does not predict hazardous drinking, it was the drinking to cope that more strongly did

***but the fact that it is still in use today might suggest otherwise; or simply the lack of more accurate psychological measures

***still has been proven to be of SOME HELP at the very least IN APPLICATIONS

THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE FOR CROSS-SITUATIONAL CONSISTENCY

- ☞ *trait such as honesty may have a number of manifestations IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS (lying, stealing, cheating, etc...)

IN DEFENSE OF PERSONALITY TRAITS

- ☞ Traits are consistent, lest everyone would be UNSTABLE personalities
- ☞ people have generally consistent traits; CHANGE occurs when coupled with situational factors

EX: loving, demure, compassionate person turns into a bitch because partner cheated!!!

- ☞ The predictive capability of traits on behavior also rests on whether it is a central or secondary trait for that person; CONSTRUCT VALIDITY
- ☞ TRAIT MEASURES CAN INFLUENCE ONE ANOTHER

How would you interpret the data on page 188?

EX: low consistency and high consistency traits affect friendliness scores

Criticisms

1. does not suggest treatment; only good for indentifying
 2. lacks a theoretical framework to knit everything together
 3. PROBLEM with SELF-REPORTS;
 - fakers (good vs bad) – employment tests; temporary insanity cases*
 - social desirability*
 - carelessness; test fatigue*
 - sabotage*
- ☞ Decisions should not be based of test data alone

Strengths

1. CONTRIBUTION of trait approach is more on APPLICATION;

EX: workplace: people high in conscientiousness (organized, self-disciplined, careful)

What is the difference between Basic vs Applied science?

2. Trait approach is MORE EMPIRICAL than psychoanalysis; quantitative wise

RELEVANT RESEARCH

ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

- ☞ Focused on entrepreneurial behavior

- ☞ Researchers used the psychogenic need for Achievement and TAT to identify people who would be more likely to be good in the business world.

EX: Those that are not risk takers and score high in nAchievement

Predicting Achievement Behavior

- ☞ *Children who are given enough support and encouragement to develop a strong sense of courage and competence; BUT not too much as to rob them of independence and initiative (1983 study)

***note how they integrate concepts from different theories!!!

- ☞ Research also show that nAchievement scores have a strong predictive capability

EX: high or low achievement scores correlate with future careers (entrepreneurial)

- ☞ High nAchievement does not work very well with higher managerial positions; they do not want to delegate authority

Gender and Culture

- ☞ More recent research also indicate that women also follow the same pattern of nAchievement and career

- ☞ Gender difference in values placed on achievement and definition of success

EX: women might consider raising a family more as an achievement than career.

Attribution and Goals

- ☞ Researchers also use our attributions to predict how well we respond to success and failures, ergo, future behavior

EX: Stability, Locus, Control, page 211

Actor-observer Effect

Achievement Goals

- ☞ Researchers also say that the type of goals we set have an influence

Mastery

- ☞ Concerned with learning; longer retention in memory; choose more challenging tasks (so they learn more); continued interest even after receiving recognition

Performance

- ☞ Concerned with receiving good evaluations

Activity: page 210

TYPE A – TYPE B BEHAVIOR PATTERNS

☞ A scale in achievement rather than a trait

Type A

1. High nAchievement
2. More likely to respond to frustration with hostility. Easily aroused
3. Efficient workers, compulsive, hard driven, works hard to meet deadlines
4. competitive

Type B

1. More relaxed and unhurried, low nAchievement
2. Not competitive

☞ A's are more prone to heart attacks

☞ Shows the link between personality characteristics (traits), behavior, and health status

☞ Criticism: how to isolate which type A behavioral pattern, attitude or lifestyle causes health problems.

SOCIAL ANXIETY – a scale or trait

☞ Being shy is more common than you might think (Zimbardo 1977, 1986)

☞ As opposed to introverts (who choose to be alone), socially anxious people do not like their “shyness”

☞ Often preoccupied with SELF-EVALUATIONS during conversations which interferes with their COGNITIVE PROCESSES; they fall into SILENCE which makes the situation even more UNCOMFORTABLE

EX: socially anxious people often have dead-airs in conversations because they think too much of what they would say

Evaluation Apprehension

☞ Shyness comes from FEAR of people not RESPONDING FAVORABLY to them

☞ Cope with this using avoidant-coping strategies

Which of the psychogenic needs would socially anxious people score high in?

EMOTIONS

Affectivity – how we experience positive and negative emotions; how affected we are

Positive Affect – active, content, satisfied ~ sad, lethargic

Negative Affect – nervousness, anger, distress ~ calm, serene

Intensity – the strength of the emotions

Expressiveness – how we express our emotions

Emotional Affectivity – evaluative term depending on where a person scores in the positive and negative affect dimension

High in positive affect = low negative affect?

- ☞ Research (correlational) has shown that high positive affect = high social activity; but which causes which?
- ☞ People high in positive affect are also able to better resolve conflict in relationships – better attitude basically
- ☞ People high in negative affect, report more health problems...

Are they actually sick or do they just complain more? – their mood might actually affect their health

Affect Intensity

- ☞ Some people experience emotions more intensely than others; although they may equal on average the number of times they experience either positive or negative affect – *importance of distinguishing traits (dimensions) during measurement!!!*
- ☞ People high in affect intensity experience both positive and negative affect intensely
- ☞ Overacting to situations as perceived by people at the other end of the dimension

Which one lives happier lives? – they live different not better or worse lives!!!

EX: low affect may have an equally high happiness rating for more calm serene moments compared to high affect people in exhilarating moments

Emotional Expressiveness

- ☞ Women tend to be more expressive than men (1998); they are also better at reading other people's emotions (2000)
- ☞ The better people are able to express their feelings, the fewer problems they have in their relationships (1984) – *communication!!!*

☞ Good for your psychological health; less prone to depression – *catharsis*

OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM

☞ Positive attitudes, yield positive outcomes; even in medical conditions = general truth proven by research (1998)

☞ Also researched as a trait to measure a person's optimism and pessimism – *dispositional optimism*

Optimistic people...

1. achieve more
2. set higher goals and believe they can achieve it
 - ☞ confidence as a key to success
3. don't allow set backs to get them down
4. often from individualist cultures – why do you think?
5. deal better with misfortunes
6. cope better = active coping strategies

Relationship between optimism and good health:

1. optimists seek social support which contribute to overall health
2. lower levels of stress
3. their attitudes lead to kinds of behavior that promote good health

EX: exercise, proper diet, not smoke, etc...

Defensive Pessimism

☞ coping mechanism to deal with upcoming events; expecting the worst

EX: expecting to fail prepares yourself; if it happens, it doesn't feel that bad;

EXPERIMENTS SHOW that they achieve just as well as the optimists

***their strategy is not to fail, BUT TO EXPECT THE WORST!!!

☞ When not allowed to use their coping strategy, they feel worse, and actually perform worse (1993)

EX: experiment with arithmetic test and proof reading as distraction, others allowed to reflect on their thoughts

☞ This suggests that there are people that benefit more from being pessimistic than thinking about positive things only

Additional instructions for reflection paper: Compare and contrast the Psychoanalytic and Trait approach to personality