

Chapter Six

6. PERSONALITY

6.1. Meaning of Personality

- Derived from the word '**persona**', which has Greek and Latin roots.
- It refers to the theatrical masks worn by Greek actors.

Universally accepted definition

- It the **unique** pattern of **enduring** thoughts, feelings, and actions that characterize a person.

6.2. Theories of Personality

The psychoanalytic theory of personality

- In Freud's view personality has three parts:

Id: If It Feels Good, Do It

- ID is a Latin word that means “it “
- The first and most primitive part of the personality in the infant.
- Containing all of the basic biological drives (hunger, thirst, sex, aggression).
- When these drives are active, the person will feel an increase in physical and psychological tension called libido.
- When the libidinal energy is high, the goal is to reduce libido by fulfilling the drive; Eat when hungry, drink when thirsty, and satisfy the sex when the need for pleasure is present.
- The desire for immediate satisfaction of needs with no regard for the consequences.

Ego: The Executive Director

- Latin word for “I”, is mostly conscious and is far more rational, logical and cunning.
- Satisfy the demands of the id and reduce libido only **in ways that will not lead to negative consequences.**
- Sometimes the ego decides to deny the id's drives because the consequence would be painful or too unpleasant.
- “If it feels good, do it, but only if you can get away with it.”

Superego: The Moral Watchdog

- The superego (also Latin, meaning “over the self”)
- It’s the rules, customs, and expectations of society.
- There are two parts to it:

ego-ideal (measuring device)

- The sum of all the ideal or correct and acceptable behavior that the child has learned about from parents and others in the society.

Conscience

- Makes people pride when they do the right thing and guilt, or moral anxiety when they do the wrong thing.

Defense mechanisms

Repression

- Banishing threatening thoughts, feelings, and memories into the unconscious mind.
- E.g., an Ethiopian husband who is defeated by his wife will not remember/ talk it out again.

Denial

- Refusal to recognize or acknowledge a threatening situation.
- E.g., Mr. Ben is an alcoholic who denies/ doesn't accept being an alcoholic.

Regression

- Involves reverting to immature behaviors that have relieved anxiety in the past.
- E.g., a girl/a boy who has just entered school may go back to sucking her/his thumb or wetting the bed.

Rationalization

- Giving socially acceptable reasons for one's inappropriate behavior.
- E.g., make bad grades but states the reason as having to work through college.

Displacement

- Involves expressing feelings toward a person who is less threatening than the person who is the true target of those feelings.
- E.g., Hating your boss but taking it out on family members.

Projection

- Involves attributing one's undesirable feelings to other people.
- E.g., a paranoid person uses projection to justify isolation and anger.

Reaction formation

- Involves a tendency to act in a manner opposite of one's true feelings.
- E.g., a person who acts conservative but focuses on violence in their behavior.

Sublimation

- Involves expressing sexual or aggressive behavior through indirect, socially acceptable outlets.
- E.g., an aggressive person who plays football.
- ❖ It may not be possible to get through life without such defenses.
- ❖ But, excessive use may create more stress than it alleviates.

The trait theory of personality

Assumptions

- Personality traits are relatively stable, and therefore predictable, over time.
- Personality traits are relatively stable across situations, and they can explain why people act in predictable ways in many different situations.
- People differ in how much of a particular personality trait they possess; no two people are exactly alike on all traits.

The five-factor model or the Big Five theory

Openness

- Willingness to try new things and be open to new experiences.

Conscientiousness

- Careful about being places on time and careful with belongings.

Extraversion

- Is a term first used by Carl Jung.
- Two personality types:
- **Extraverts** (outgoing and sociable)
- **Introverts** (solitary and dislike being the center of attention).

Agreeableness

- Easygoing, friendly and pleasant.

Neuroticism

- Excessive worriers, overanxious, and moody.

Humanistic theory of personality

- Emphasize people's inherent goodness and their tendency to move toward higher levels of functioning.
- Focuses on the things that make people uniquely human, such as subjective emotions and the freedom to choose one's destiny.

Carl Rogers and Self-concept

- Human beings are always striving to fulfill their innate capacities and capabilities and to become everything that their genetic potential will allow them to become.
- This striving for fulfillment is called **self-actualizing tendency**.
- An important tool in human self-actualization is the development of an image of oneself or the **self-concept**.
- The self-concept is based on 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, coworkers, friends, and teachers.

Components of the self-concept

- **Real self** (one's actual perception of characteristics, traits, and abilities that form the basis of the striving for self-actualization)
- **Ideal self** (the perception of what one should be or would like to be).
- The ideal self primarily comes from those important, significant others in one's life, most often the parents.
- When the real self and the ideal self are very close or similar to each other, people feel competent and capable
- It is when a person's view of self is distorted or the ideal self is impossible to attain that problems arise.

Conditional and Unconditional Positive Regard

Conditional positive regard

- Love, affection, respect and warmth comes from the significant others that depend, or seem to depend, on doing what those people want.

Unconditioned positive regard

- Love, affection and respect with no strings attached.
- It's necessary for people to be able to explore fully all that they can achieve and become.
- Fully functioning people are in touch with their feelings and abilities and can trust their innermost urges and intuitions.
- To become a fully functioning, a person needs unconditional positive regard.

Self-actualization and fully functioning

- Self-actualization is a **goal that people are always striving to reach.**
- Only a person who is fully functioning is capable of reaching the goal of self-actualization.
- To be fully functioning is a necessary step in the process of self-actualization.