PYSC 301/333
Psychology of Personality

Session 1 – Introduction to Psychology of Personality

Lecturer: Dr. Margaret Amankwah-Poku, Dept. of Psychology
Contact Information: mamankwah-poku@ug.edu.gh
Session Overview

• Introducing students to what to expect in this course
• Providing information on how students will be assessed on the course
• Introducing Psychology of Personality and the various topics to be discussed in each session
• A general overview of the definition of personality, and the key features in the various definitions
• Research methods used in the study of personality will also be discussed
Session Goals and Objectives

At the end of this session, you should be able to

• Outline the content of this course and the expected learning outcomes
• Define and explain what personality is
• Discuss the main common features of the various definitions
• Describe the various research methods used in studying personality
• Do self-introductions in the Chat Room (on Sakai) and discuss your expectations for the course
The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

• Topics to be taught in this course
• What is personality
• Definitions of personality
• Research methods used in the study of personality
Reading List

- Carducci, B. J. (2009). *The Psychology of personality* (2nd ed.). Chichester: John Riley & Sons Ltd (Ch. 1)
Assessment

• **a. Assignment**  10%
• Week 6
• **b. Interim assessment**  30%
• Date will be announced in week 6
• The format of the assessment will be communicated
• **c. End of semester exams**  70%
• The format of the exam will be communicated

*Generally questions will be very practical/ applied*
Topic One

TOPICS TO BE TAUGHT IN THIS COURSE
What do you think is the scope of personality psychology?

What is important to know in the psychology of personality or

What elements should we be discussing in this class?
Topics to be taught

• A. Introduction
  1. An Overview Of Psychology Of Personality
     • Defining personality-
     • Key features of the definition of personality
     • Research methods used in the study of personality psychology
Topics to be taught

• B. Theories of Personality
  – 1. Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality- Freud
    • Levels of consciousness
    • Structure of personality
    • Nature and role of anxiety
    • Types of defence mechanisms
    • Psychosexual Stages of Personality Development
    • Neo–Freudians
- 2. Biological Theory of Personality
  - The Jim twins
  - Hippocrates and the four humours
  - Sheldon’s lie on the link between body type and personality
  - Behavioural genetics perspective of personality
  - Psychophysiological perspective of personality - Eysenck
Topics to be taught

- 3. Trait Theory of Personality
  - Gordon W, Allport’s edžplanation of personality
  - Raymond B. Cattell (1905-1998)- 16 Factor Personality questionnaire
  - Hans Eysenck (1916-1997)- 3 trait dimension personality
  - The Five-Factor Model- 5 trait dimension personality
Topics to be taught

- 4. Humanistic Theory of Personality
  - Abraham Maslow (1908-1970)- The Motivational Perspective
  - Carl Ransom Rogers (1902-1987)- The Phenomenological Perspective
– 5. Social-Cognitive Theory of Personality

- Albert Bandura (1925 – date)- Observational learning
- Walter Mischel (1930- date)- The Cognitive-Affective Personality System (CAPS) perspective
Topics to be taught

- 7. Culture and Personality
  - Personality in a cultural context
  - Three approaches to the study of cultural influence on personality
  - Cultural orientations
8. Personality Assessment

- Settings where personality assessments may be required
- Personality Assessment Techniques
  - Objective self-report techniques,
  - Projective techniques
  - Behavioural techniques
  - Clinical Interviews
  - Psychophysiological techniques
Topic Two

DEFINING PERSONALITY
Brainstorming - What is Personality?

• What comes to mind when you hear the word personality?
• Q: What word(s) will you use to describe your personality or that of a friend, parent, sibling, teacher etc.?

• *Think about examples*
What is Personality?

• Quite often, we use personality to explain the behaviour of people we interact with:

• Example- “Jack is an *outgoing* person”
  – “Araba is an *impatient* person” or,
  – Kate is a *shy* and *sensitive* person
  – Kojo is an *orderly* person, or
  – Yaa is *domineering* etc..
What is Personality?

• We use adjectives such as hardworking, reliable, serious-minded, sociable, creative, lazy etc.. when we speak about people

• Sometimes we may use one word to describe a person’s personality e.g. a terrific personality, or a terrible personality, or an introvert etc..

• These describe different aspects of a person which makes individuals similar to/ or different from other people
What is Personality?

- Examples are, describing someone as:
- Thoughtful – inner qualities of mind
- Charming, humorous – effect one has on other people
- Domineering – how a person relates to others
- Deceitful - strategies used to achieve goals
  (Larsen & Buss, 2008)
What is Personality?

• Every individual has a personality which defines him/her as a person (Lahey, 2001)

• Personality has helped to shape individuals’ lives and continues to do so (Schultz & Schultz, 2005)

• Example- one will choose a career based on his/her personality- an aggressive person may choose to become a boxer
What is Personality?

- A person’s personality will help determine the limits of his/her success, happiness, and fulfilment in their lives (Schultz & Schultz, 2005)
- A person’s personality can limit him/her while for others it can open up a world of experience
- What one has achieved so far and what he/she expects to achieve in life can be influenced by his/her personality and that of others he/she interacts with
Defining Personality

- No universally acceptable definition for personality
- Several theories have been developed to understand and explain how personality develops
- Definition of personality cuts across different domains such as:
  - the biological, social, cognitive, behavioral, etc., domain of the individual
Defining Personality

• Cattell, (1950) “That which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation” (p. 2)

• Allport (1961) “Personality is a dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determines his characteristics, behaviour and thought” (p. 28)
Defining Personality

- Mischel (1999) “*The distinctive patterns of behaviour (including thoughts as well as “affects”, that is feelings and emotion and actions”) that characterizes each individual enduringly*” (p. 4)
Defining Personality

- Larsen and Buss (2008) “the set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring and that influence his/her interaction with and adaptation to the intra-psychic, physical and social environments” (p. 4)
Defining Personality

- Coon, (2001) “a person’s unique and relatively stable behaviour patterns”

- “it is the consistency in what you are, have been and will become……..the special blend of talents, attitudes, values, hopes, love, hatred and habits that makes each of us a unique person” (p.480)
Defining Personality

• Lahey, (2001) “the sum total of all of the ways of acting, thinking and feeling that are typical for that person and makes that person different from all other individuals”

• Or “the sum total of the typical ways of acting, thinking and feeling that makes each person unique” (p. 460)
Two key features of these definitions are:

1. **Uniqueness of the individual**

One may share similar characteristics with other people e.g. being tolerant or trustworthy, or being domineering or opinionated.

However, no two persons have the exact combination of typical ways of acting, thinking and feeling - individuals are unique.
Key features

2. Consistency of behaviour:
- Refers to typical ways of acting
- There is consistency of behaviour over time and different situations
- The individual has some characteristics that are relatively unchanging
- For instance being typically kind-hearted, outspoken, argumentative, friendly etc..
Defining Personality

• Example- Jane is conscientious both at home and at school or hardworking at home and in school, or helpful etc..

• We assume that personality is relatively stable and predictable

• Thus, based on one’s typical characteristics, we know what to expect of that person
Defining Personality

- Does not suggest that personality will never change
- Some situations can change a person’s personality e.g. a traumatic experience such as the loss of a loved one
- An extrovert may become an introvert which can affect other psychological characteristics
- There is a longstanding debate about the consistency of personality
The scope of personality development

- Personality psychology is not just about definitions of personality
- Personality psychologists:
  - develop theories of personality,
  - formulate and test personality theories,
  - assess personality and
  - apply personality psychology to different aspects of life
Topic Three

RESEARCH METHODS USED IN THE STUDY OF PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY
Research methods in personality psychology

- Personality psychologist conduct research that focuses on:
  - How personality develops and changes over time
  - Causes of the similarities and differences in personality
  - Consistencies and inconsistencies in behaviour from one situation to the other etc..
Clinical approaches to the study of personality include, case studies, interviews and analysis of personal documents.

1. **Case Studies (Case History)**

- In-depth analysis of a case
- E.g. investigating an individual’s psychological disorder or obtaining information about a person’s past history and current situation
Clinical approaches

- Investigate a person’s educational background, family history, work background, medical history, examine history of emotional adjustments etc.. (Carducci, 2009)

- Case studies enable psychologists to study rare phenomena and test theories
Clinical approaches

2. **Individual Interview**
   - One-on-one interview to gain in-depth information from a client
   - A semi-structured interview schedule as a guide during interviews
   - Interviews are recorded and transcribed for analysis
Clinical approaches

• **3. Analysis of personal documents**
• Include- medical records, school records, diaries, autobiographies, letters, verbal recordings, utters, speeches etc..
• *Any written or spoken record that intentionally or unintentionally yields information about the structure and dynamics of the author’s life* (Caducci, 2009 p. 401)
• Example- studying the personality of a prominent or famous person- a past president, a celebrity, etc..
Correlational method

• To investigate the extent to which two variables are associated
  • Example- association between personality type and work productivity or
  • Personality and relationship formation or
  • Personality and healthy eating
Correlational method

• Does high achievement need correlate with higher grades

• To determine whether a relationship is positive, negative or zero

• The strength of the correlation - low, moderate, high or perfect correlation

• Not that correlational method cannot determine causation
Experimental approach

- Several experimental methods exist
- The research study, will determine the design
- E.g. Bandura’s Bobo doll experiment to determine if aggression will be imitated by children
- The experimental approach requires 3 elements, “Intervention, observation and control” (Caducci, 2009)
Experimental approach

Meta-analysis

• Helps to identify/ determine the trend across several different studies- e.g. on a particular intervention such as cognitive behaviour approach

• Used to determine “the consistency and magnitude of findings from different experimental studies of a particular topic”

• Results are combined and averaged
END OF SESSION 1
References

• Carducci, B. J. (2009). *The Psychology of personality* (2nd ed.). Chichester: John Riley & Sons Ltd.


