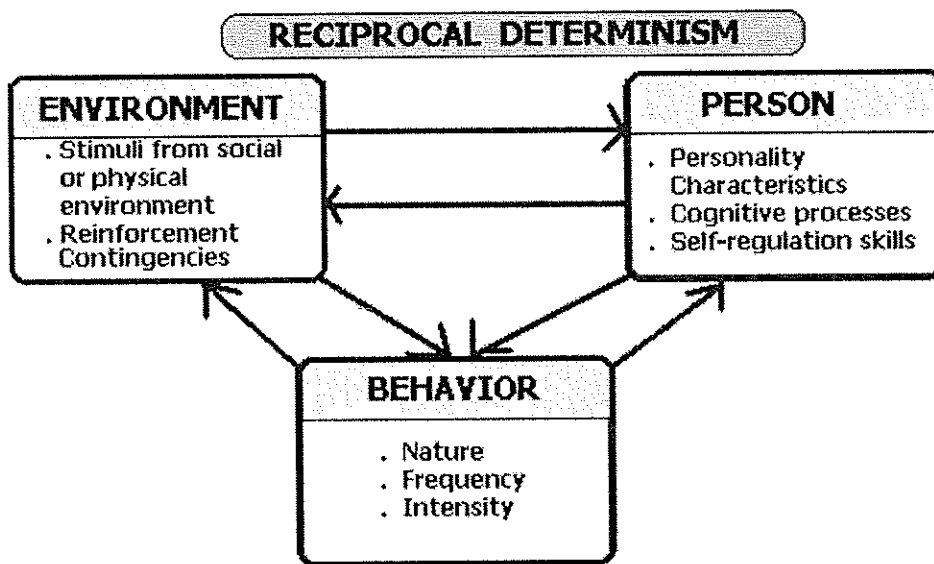


MODULE 59 SOCIAL-COGNITIVE THEORIES AND EXPLORING THE SELF

SOCIAL-COGNITIVE THEORIES

- The SOCIAL-COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE on personality proposed by Albert Bandura emphasizes the interaction of our traits with our situations.
- Those who take the BEHAVIORAL APPROACH to personality development emphasize the effects of learning. We are conditioned to repeat certain behaviors, and we learn by observing and imitating others.
- Bandura views the person-environment interaction as RECIPROCAL DETERMINISM, or the interacting influences of behavior, internal cognition, and environment. Behavior emerges from the interplay of external and internal influences.



- POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY is a psychology concerned not only with weakness and damage but also with strength and virtue. The scientific study of optimal human functioning; aims to discover.

Comparing the Major Personality Theories

Personality Theory	Key Proponents	Assumptions	View of Personality	Personality Assessment Methods
Psychoanalytic	Freud	Emotional disorders spring from unconscious dynamics, such as unresolved sexual and other childhood conflicts, and fixation at various developmental stages. Defense mechanisms fend off anxiety.	Personality consists of pleasure-seeking impulses (the id), a reality-oriented executive (the ego), and an internalized set of ideals (the superego).	Free association, projective tests, dream analysis
Psychodynamic	Jung, Adler, Fromm	The unconscious and conscious minds interact. Childhood experiences and defense mechanisms are important.	The dynamic interplay of conscious and unconscious motives and conflicts shapes our personality.	Projective tests, therapy sessions
Humanistic	Rogers, Maslow	Rather than examining the struggles of sick people, it's better to focus on the ways healthy people strive for self-realization.	If our basic human needs are met, we will strive toward self-actualization. In a climate of unconditional positive regard, we can develop self-awareness and a more realistic and positive self-concept.	Questionnaires, therapy sessions
Trait	Allport, Eysenck, McCrae, Costa	We have certain stable and enduring characteristics, influenced by genetic predispositions.	Scientific study of traits has isolated important dimensions of personality, such as the Big Five traits (conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness, and extraversion).	Personality inventories
Social-Cognitive	Bandura	Our traits and the social context interact to produce our behaviors.	Conditioning and observational learning interact with cognition to create behavior patterns.	Our behavior in one situation is best predicted by considering our past behavior in similar situations.



Comparing Research Methods

COMPARING RESEARCH METHODS USED TO INVESTIGATE PERSONALITY

Research Method	Description	Perspectives incorporating this method	Benefits	Weaknesses
Case study	In-depth study of one.	Psychoanalytic, humanistic	Less expensive than other methods.	May not generalize to the larger population.
Survey	Systematic questioning of a random sample of the population.	Trait, social-cognitive, positive psychology	Results tend to be reliable and can be generalized to the larger population.	May be expensive; correlational findings.
Projective tests (e.g., TAT and Rorschach)	Ambiguous stimuli designed to trigger projection of inner dynamics.	Psychodynamic	Designed to get beneath the conscious surface of a person's self-understanding; may be a good ice-breaker.	Results have weak validity and reliability.
Personality Inventories, such as Myers-Briggs, the MMPI and (thanks to factor analysis) the Big Five	Objectively scored groups of questions designed to identify personality dispositions.	Trait	Generally reliable and empirically validated.	Explore limited number of traits.

EXPLORING THE SELF

- Underlying this research is an assumption that the **SELF**, as organizer of our thoughts, feelings, and actions, is the center of personality.
- **SPOTLIGHT EFFECT** is the overestimating others' noticing and evaluating our appearance, performance, and blunders (as if we presume a spotlight shines on us).
- **SELF-ESTEEM** is one's feelings of high or low self-worth. **SELF-EFFICACY** is one's sense of competence and effectiveness.
- **SELF-SERVING BIAS** is a readiness to perceive oneself favorably. **NARCISSISM** is the excessive self-love and self-absorption. Defensive self-esteem is fragile while Secure self-esteem is less fragile because it is less contingent on external evaluations.
- **INDIVIDUALISM** is giving priority to one's own goals over group goals and defining one's identity in terms of personal attributes rather than group identifications.
- **COLLECTIVIST** is giving priority to the goals of one's group (often one's extended family or work group) and defining one's identity accordingly.

BE ABLE TO ANSWER: What do social-cognitive psychologists consider the best way to predict a person's future behavior?

In a 1997 Gallup Poll, White Americans estimated 44% of their fellow White Americans to be high in prejudice (scoring them 5 or higher on a 10-point scale). How many rated themselves similarly high in prejudice? Just 14%. What phenomenon does this illustrate?

How do individualist and collectivist cultures differ?

PRACTICE FRQ: Briefly describe the two main components of the self-serving bias.