Causes and Consequences of Personality (PSYL10064)

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Outline
• Five 2-hour weeks
  1. Course intro: Overview of personality
  2. Personality & its facets: Not just 205,891,132,094,649!
  3. Subjective well-being: Hedonia to Eudaimonia
  4. Personality & Society: Values and Politics
  5. "Blink": Easy ideas or breakthroughs?

Format
• Each of you take part in a group leading a presentation on one week’s topic.
• Aim to be done in the first hour
• A substantial period of time will be in a discussion format, critically examining issues raised in research papers and the lectures.
• You will be expected to have your own questions and ideas about this material each week.

Student Background
• What do you know?
• What would you like to know?
• What do you think we are wrong about?
• What are the big unanswered questions?

Personality & Cognition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description (Taxonomy)</th>
<th>Personality</th>
<th>Cognition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ontogeny</td>
<td>5FM</td>
<td>IQ</td>
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<td>Bio-social</td>
<td>DSM-IV</td>
<td>Executive fn</td>
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<td>Interplay of cognition and personality</td>
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<td>Evolutionary and Cultural History</td>
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<td>Natural selection</td>
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Person-Situation Debate resolved
• Mischel’s (1968) contention that behavior is so unstable and narrow as to render the concept of personality unimportant repudiated
• Relative order of individuals commonly preserved over situational changes.
Social Cognitive Models... of traits?

- Bandura (2001) social cognitive theory of personality
- Self-control via self-reward and self-punishment
- Mischel (1999) CAPS
- Series of “if... then” rules for behaving in situations
- Is this anything other than traits re-described?

Summary

- People have traits and differ on these traits
- Mechanisms disputed
- Biological systems: Specialised processors: Amygdala, Orbito-frontal cortex, Neurotransmitters
- Schemas, motivations, attributions, “if... then” rules
- Origins and evolution little understood

5 Factor models: Two versions

- Costa and McCrae (1996)
- "The five-factor model."
- Lew Goldberg (1993)
- The Psycholexical Big Five

The Big-5 and Five-factor models

- Five factor model recognized as the latitude and longitude of any exploration of personality (Ozer and Reise, 1994)
- Question 1: What lies beyond?
- Question 2: What lies within?

Critiques of the 5FM

Block v McCrae

What vs something

Block (2001)

“Millennial Contrarianism”

- A currently popular pursuit, vigorously, resourcefully, and encompassingly advanced, has proposed that all of what we call personality can be well and sufficiently expressed by means of self-report questionnaires.
- ... variants of factor analysis [being] interpreted as manifesting five robust orthogonal factors.
The Realm of the 5FM

- Comprehensive
  - "Both necessary and reasonably sufficient for describing at a global level the major features of personality" (McCrae & Costa, 1986)
- Universal
  - "The 5FM developed in studies of normal personality is fully adequate to account for the dimensions of abnormal personality as well" (Costa & McCrae, 1995, p.347)

“Signifying almost nothing ..... of central importance to the study of personality

- 50 recent articles:
  - Compulsive buying
  - Media use
  - Computer stress
  - The Rorschach
  - Exercise
- Multiple sclerosis
  - Personnel selection
  - Intellectual engagement
  - Spinal injury
  - Expatriate selection

Nothing?

- "A hodgepodge"
- But 4 were major reviews and 2 were substantive JPSP articles...
- Thousands more in the last decade:
  - Conscientiousness and health, education, lifespan...
  - Politics

Not a Theory just a Taxonomy?

- So what if there are 5-factors?: People differ, react, develop... (i.e., where’s the theory about why, and how?)
- Why are there 5 (and not 6 or 4 or 3)?
- Why don’t we all have a "good" value on each trait?
- Is it just noise (because variance is tolerable)?
  - (Cosmides and Tooby, 1996)

Block’s Problems...

- Problem of number
- How many dimensions are there really?
- Problem of measures
  - Would new items (or subjects) generate new factors?
- Problem of meaning
  - Is impulsivity E, or N, or A?

Answers...

Numbers (part 1)

- "The 'true' number of dimensions of human personality is a metaphysical rather than a scientific question"
  - (Costa & McCrae, 1986, p.69).
Answers... Measures & Numbers (part ii)

• Would new items generate new factors?
• Possibly... what would they be?
• Problem of meaning
• Impulsivity is a composite of E, N, & A
• This is a critical insight from trait theory (Eysenck knew it in the 70s)

Numbers – McCrae’s Answer

• “the same five factors emerged from a variety of instruments and methods.”
• Additional factors have not replicated
• No one has seconded the suggestion of Paunonen and Jackson (1996) that the Conscientiousness factor lacks coherence (Costa & McCrae, 1998).
• No persuasive sixth factor of comparable scope and generality (Main contender “honesty”)

Answers... Numbers (part iii)

• Arguments for 6th factors, i.e., Ashton
• Testable
• More factors for Abnormal psychology?
• Poor discrimination amongst personality disorders
• More factors needed? Livesley
• Maybe so. Need not undermine the 5FM (Wuthrich & Bates, 2000)

Taxonomy, Meaning, and Correlates: Is that so bad?

• Personality correlates are why traits are important:
  • They predict health, vocational interests, social interactions, and so on (Weiss et al 2009)
  • FFM provides a systemic framework for the investigation of all these topics,
  • and [for] collecting these findings

And there’s more than correlates!

• Heritability (0.3-0.6)
• Facet heritability (Jang et al.)
• Universal (Across cultures)
• Reliable developmental trends
• Increasing C, decreasing A across life span

And the 5FM is just a system

• Time must test the system
• Researchers (you) must add causes and reasons and mechanisms
Beyond the 5FM

• Three major empirical approaches to extending the 5FM
  • Re-organised 5
  • 6th factors
  • Meta traits (Digman 1997)

Other ways to cut the cake?

• Paunonen and Jackson (1996)
  • Conscientious is better partitioned into
    • Methodical and orderly (e.g., Adolf Eichmann)
    • Dependable and reliable (e.g., Jimmy Carter)
    • Ambitious and driven (e.g., Richard Nixon)
  • Lack of moral factor?
    • Loevinger (1994) (But see Haidt, 2005)

What's beyond the big 5? Plenty?

• Paunonen & Jackson (2000)
  1. Religious
  2. Sly
  3. Ethical
  4. Sexy
  5. Thrify
  6. Conservative
  7. Masculine
  8. Egotistical
  9. Humorous/witty

Critique of Paunonen & Jackson

• Why is feminine, cunning, and witty part of the big 5? i.e., even if they do not correlate, perhaps that mean they should not be in a personality inventory?
  • How would we know?
  • Assume that words should load on just one factor (not multiple R), but if they load on several, they might well load more than .3

Beyond the Big 5: a Big6?

• Saucier & Goldberg (1998)
  • Based of a multiple r of <.3 from the 5-main factors
  • Height, weight, age, attractiveness
  • Only one non-physical outlier: Religiosity

Higher order Factors?

• Digman (1997) "Meta traits"
  • Stability/Socialization: (N,A,C)
    • Impulse control, Conscientious restraint, Aggression-control
  • Growth/Plasticity: (E,O)
    • Positive Emotionality, Venturesomeness, Encountering of life, Surgency, Imagination.
Carrol (late of 2003)

- Teacher ratings (from Digman & Inouye)
- 43 1st order characteristics rated on 499 early adolescents
- Five 2nd order traits
- Two 3rd order "superfactors"

Carrol (slide 2)

- Super-factors explain as much as 75% of the variance (i.e., big 2 does a lot of heavy lifting)
- 1 = "Impulsive", "Restless", "Rude", "Fidgety", "Spiteful", "Outspoken"

Last but not least: homepage and homework!

- Pick a topic and e-mail me
- Complete the FFM online
  - [http://www.psy.ed.ac.uk/people/tbates/courses/y4/personality/](http://www.psy.ed.ac.uk/people/tbates/courses/y4/personality/)
- Find a paper on:
  - Structure above or outside the FFM (6th factor, general factor, self-control, uncorrelated factor)
  - Brain basis of one or more five-factor dimensions

Who would like to do week 2?

- Personality & its Facets: Conscientiousness
- 6 Uses of facets (Costa and McCrae)
- Ashton why use facets
- Impulsivity as NEO facets

11/2/10