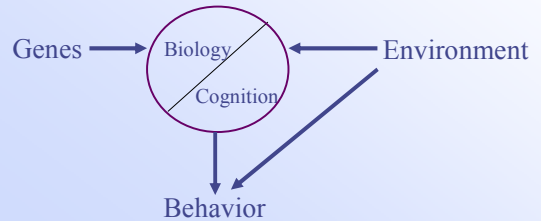


Lecture 24 Personality: Traits

I INTRODUCTION

A. Background

- Behavior as complex interaction of
 - Genes
 - Environment,
 - Person (biology/cognitive).
- combine to produce behavior



I INTRODUCTION

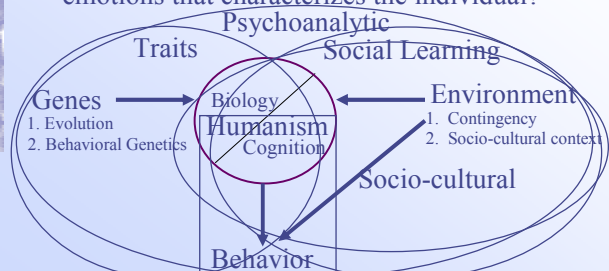
A. Background

- This account of *interacting* forces causing behavior is different from Folk Psychology
 - Genes x Environment x Person → Behavior
 - Mental State → Behavior
- To put this model to work, let's consider research on personality.
 - Personality:** Distinctive and relatively stable pattern of behaviors, thoughts, motives, and emotions that characterizes the individual.

I INTRODUCTION

B. Approaches

- Do people have distinctive and relatively stable pattern of behaviors, thoughts, motives, and emotions that characterizes the individual?



II THEORIES

A. Traits

- **Trait Approach to Personality** is an objective measure of personality.
 - Attempt is to find stable ways in which people differ, often through the use of personality tests.
- From these tests, many different personality traits can be identified.
- Psychologists distinguish between:
 - **Central Traits:** Stable and characteristic ways of thinking, acting, and feeling.
 - **Secondary Traits:** Changeable aspects of personality.

II THEORIES

A. Traits

- To identify Central traits, people have looked for correlated clusters of characteristics
 - Hans Eysenck: Two central traits, with each being a genetically based dimension of personality
 - **Extroversion-Introversion:** Seek sensation due to CNS arousal (RAS: Noepherepherine)
 - **Emotional Stability-Instability.** ANS is less reactive.
 - From these two dimension, many other characteristics can be derived: Emotionally stable extrovert (Leader), Emotionally unstable introvert (Artist)

II THEORIES

A. Traits

- Raymond Cattell argued for 16 central traits.
 - He began with 18,000 vocabulary words to identify the 16.
 - Developed the 16 PF (Personality Factor) test
- In the 1970's two research teams arrived at what is commonly called the "Big Five"
 - Paul Costa and Robert McCrae (at the National Institutes of Health).
 - Warren Norman (University of Michigan) and Lewis Goldberg (University of Oregon)

II THEORIES

A. Traits

- The Big Five (OCEAN):
 - **Openness to Experience:** Original, imaginative and artistic vs. conforming, unimaginative and predictable.
 - **Conscientiousness:** disciplined and organized vs. lack of seriousness and undependable
 - **Extroversion:** Sociability and outgoingness vs. Introversion
 - **Agreeableness:** Good-natured, gentle, and cooperative vs. irritable, abrasive, and headstrong.
 - **Neuroticism:** Emotional instability vs. stability.

II THEORIES

A. Traits

- Evidence of stable differences at birth.
 - **Temperament:** stable individual differences in quality and intensity of emotional reaction, activity level, attention, and emotional self-regulation.
 - Thomas & Chess (1956) categorized babies:
 - **Easy:** Quickly establish regular routine
 - **Difficult:** Irregular in daily routines
 - **Slow-to-warm-up:** Inactive; have mild, low-key reactions to stimuli; adjust slowly to novelty.
 - Jerome Kagan:
 - Shy and inhibited
 - Fear-less and uninhibited

II THEORIES

A. Traits

- These are biologically-based differences because they are evident in infants before learning was possible.
- Evidence of the biological basis of traits also comes from Behavioral Genetics:
 - Twin Studies: Used to assess heritability rating
 - The Big Five personality traits are fairly well correlated between identical (MZ) twins ($r = 0.5$).
 - In contrast, fraternal (DZ) twins usually only end up with weaker correlations ($r = 0.2$) for these same traits.

II THEORIES

A. Traits

- Evaluation of Trait Theory of Personality
 - Traits vary in heritability but it does not mean that traits are rigidly fixed.
 - Social cultural context matters
 - Traits changes over age.
 - Environment underestimated
 - Two types of environments
 - Environments shared with others (family, siblings etc.) vs. those unique to a person (special experiences etc.)
 - Unique may be more important than shared experiences in personality.
 - Generally Trait theory does not specify what role of the environment plays in personality.