

NOTES: 09/03 and 09/05

MARVIN ZUCKERMAN: SENSATION SEEKING

- sensation seekers: people who crave "varied, novel, complex and intense sensations and experiences"
- being high or low on trait can predict a number of behaviors
- Associated with extraversion and openness to experience in the Big 5
- Some characteristics of sensation seekers
 - men tend to be higher in sensation seeking than women
 - people who are divorced are usually higher in sensation seeking than married or single people.
 - Sensation seeking peaks around age 20, then declines with age
 - Regularly practice conventional religion=lower on sensation seeking
 - "higher insurance rates"

Some characteristics of sensation seekers (cont.)

- Scores of first-borns and only-borns rate high in sensation seeking.
- High sensation seekers: more likely to drive drunk or high, ignore traffic laws, forego seatbelts, have a wider variety of sexual experiences and partners, use drugs and/or gamble, take financial risks, have riskier careers (Carducci, 2009)
 - only an average assessment, not all substance abusing (ie Mr. Morris)

The Many-Trait Approach

- Who does that important behavior? What traits does s/he have?
 - Examine correlations between one behavior and many traits
 - A person who does THIS is high on trait X and Y, and low on traits A and B

The Many-Trait Approach

- Delay of gratification: denying oneself immediate pleasure for long-term gain
 - Sex differences: correlates with
 - Girls: intelligence, competence, attractiveness (positive stereotype)
 - Boys: shyness, quietness, compliance, anxiousness
 - Both: playful, reflective, reasonable
 - Ego control: self-control or inhibition
 - Ego resiliency: psychological adjustment (girls only)
 - Ability to adjust to bad situations, bounce back
- Walter Michelle
 - Marshmallow test

Delay of gratification (cont.)

Long term outcomes:

--Low delayers have lower SAT scores, are more likely to be overweight, do drugs. Kids are more likely to have attention problems, behavior probs.

--ability to delay better predictor of academic performance than IQ, in one study

* measure ability to delay gratification rather than brilliance

--want to know more? Don't despair...

possible to learn to delay further

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/05/18/090518fa_fact_lehrer HISTORY OF MARSHMELLOW TEST

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/happiness-in-world/201207/the-power-delaying-gratification> ADULT DELAY OF GRATIFICATION

The Many-Trait Approach

- Other behaviors and their "personality risk factors"
 - Drug abuse-may be able to predict up to 10 years earlier (before use begins)
 - Sensation seeking
 - Delay of gratification
 - Depression
 - Women: stop being so controlled!—over controlled, shy, introverted
 - Men: get more controlled!—impulsive, anxious
 - Political orientation
 - Conservatives: anxious, guilty—value keeping things the same (tradition)
 - Liberal: resourceful, independent (self reliant)
 - Hmmm-political bias?

The Essential-Trait Approach

- Which traits are the most important? Which traits really matter?
- Reducing the many to a few
 - Theoretical approaches
 - Henry Murray: 20 needs related to emotional processes
 - Theorist from the 1930s
 - Can profile someone by making a need hierarchy
 - Needs related to personality trait
 - EX need for dominance, need for affiliation
 - Block: ego-control and ego-resiliency
 - Self control/ inhibition & psychological adjustment

The Essential-Trait Approach

- Reducing the many to a few (cont.)
 - Factor analytic approaches: statistical technique to find relationships in large amounts of variables (swimming pool deaths and ice cream= summer)
 - Eysenck: extraversion, neuroticism, psychoticism (not psychosis!)
 - Psychoticism- creative, mad artist, unconventional
 - Tellegen: positive emotionality, negative emotionality, constraint
 - Cattell: 16 essential traits (too many?)

The Essential-Trait Approach:

The Big Five and Beyond

- Discovery of the Big Five
 - Lexical hypothesis: important aspects of life will be labeled with words
 - If something is truly important and universal there will be many words for it in all languages
 - EX aggressiveness, love, dominance
 - Look for traits that have the most words and are the most universal across languages
 - Factor analysis
 - 5 Essential: everyone has 'em—how much?

The Essential-Trait Approach:

The Big Five and Beyond

1. Conscientiousness (already discussed)—integrity, motivation, doing what you're supposed to
2. Extraversion: social, outgoing, active, outspoken, dominant, adventurous (sensation seeking)
 - Advantages: higher status, rated as more popular and physically attractive, more positive emotions (positive reward for what you're doing)
 - Disadvantage: mate poaching
 - Life outcomes: happy, grateful, long life, healthy, successful relationships, etc.
3. Neuroticism: emotional instability
 - Ineffective problem solving, strong negative reactions to stress- PANIC ATTACK, don't respond to logic
 - Negatively correlated with happiness, well-being, and physical health
 - General tendency toward psychopathology (problems w mental health)
 - Life outcomes: problems in family relationships, dissatisfied with jobs, criminal behavior
 - Oh, well, not much mate poaching, anyway
4. Agreeableness: conformity, compliance, likeability, warmth
 - Tendency to be cooperative and easy to get along with
 - Smoke less
 - Women tend to be higher than men (genetic evolutionary component as well as situational)
 - Among children, related to less vulnerability of being bullied
 - Life outcomes: psychologically well-adjusted, healthy heart, dating satisfaction
5. Openness to experience (Intellect)
 - Most controversial trait
 - Approach to intellectual matters or basic intelligence
 - Value of cultural matters (literature, art)
 - Creativity and perceptiveness