

Question

Chapter 2 discusses five perspectives on personality. Reflect briefly on the nature of personality from the different perspectives.

Sample discussion

Freud's psychoanalytical perspective divides personality into the id, the ego, and the super-ego. Also, mental processes are referred to as the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious. Reference is also made to the existence of defence mechanisms, which fulfil a valid function. Other psychologists, in the psychoanalytical tradition, put forward other interpretations.

In the interpersonal perspective, the personality theories of both Rogers and Kelly originated from the fields of counselling and psychotherapy. Both theories assign great importance to how individuals perceive themselves and their environment, and how a subjective view is matched against objective reality. Rogers' theory describes how a discrepancy between the self-concept and the ideal self may result in tension and maladjustment. In Kelly's theory, people use their personal constructs to interpret situations and to predict future events. Whereas, in Rogers' approach, a discrepancy between self-concept and ideal self results in imbalance, the threat of the validity of personal constructs causes disturbance in Kelly's theory.

The main processes in the behavioural perspective are concerned with reinforcement, imitation, and socialization. People become who they are because certain past behaviour was reinforced or punished, by imitating others, and meeting the expectations about, for example, male and female behaviour. Also, situational variables may play a role in how an individual's personality is expressed. The trait and type perspectives are reflected in the contributions of

theorists such as Eysenck, Jung, and Myers.

An influential development in this field of study in recent years is the Big Five Factor theory, which contains five basic dimensions of personality, namely: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and intellect or openness.

Finally, a cognitive perspective, with its emphasis on information processing, draws distinctions between people on dimensions such as internal locus of control, self-efficacy, self-monitoring, sensation-seeking, and field-dependency/independency. People vary in the way they possess these properties and can be described as having different personalities.