
Principal Features

Table 7.1  Preview of Allport's Theory

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Question: What is meant by the following statement?

"Allport's theory is called 'personological' … "  (191)
Question: What is meant by the following statement?

"Allport's eclectic approach included contributions from various schools of psychology … "

Major Themes in Allport's Work

"(Gordon) Allport had a major influence on the selection of issues that would concern the field of personality as it developed during the following decades."

Personality Consistency

Question: What is Gordon Allport's concept of personality consistency?

Social Influence

Question: What is Gordon Allport's concept of social influence?
The Concept of Self

**Question:** What is Gordon Allport's concept of the self? (195)

Interaction of Personality with Social Influence

**Question:** What did Gordon Allport say about the notion of the interaction between personality and environment?

**Allport's Definition of Personality**

"After (reviewing) … definitions of personality in psychology, theology, philosophy, law, sociology, and common usage, Allport proposed what has become a classic definition of **personality**:

"*Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to the environment.*"

**Dynamic Organization**

**Question:** What is Gordon Allport's concept of the dynamic organization? (195-196)
Psychophysical Systems

Question: What is Gordon Allport's concept of psychophysical systems?

Question: What did Gordon Allport mean by the following expression?
"Personality = f. (Heredity) × (Environment)"

Determinative

Question: What did Gordon Allport mean by the statement?
"Personality … traits are real in a physical sense."

Complete the following:
"The assertion of traits as determinative distinguishes Allport's view of personality from two alternatives."
"The first alternative is the view that personality traits are simply …
"The second alternative assertion that traits are …"
Unique

Question: What is Gordon Allport's concept of unique traits? (198)

Adjustments to the Environment

Question: What is Gordon Allport's concept of the coping functions of personality?

Personality Traits

"According to Allport, the primary unit of personality is the trait. Listing a person's traits provides a description of that person's personality."

Allport's Definition of Trait

"Allport defined a trait as

\[
\text{a generalized and focalized neuropsychic system (particular to the individual) with the capacity to render many stimuli functionally equivalent, and to initiate and guide consistent (equivalent) forms of adaptive and expressive behavior.}
\]

Complete the following:

"In this definition, he reiterated themes from his definition of personality: the …"
Can We All Be Described by the Same Traits?

Question: How did Gordon Allport distinguish between individual traits and common traits?

[Examples] Traits.

Complete the following:

"The real units of personality are unique traits, which exist …"

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

"Traits are individualized adaptive entities …"
Can We All Be Described by the Same Traits?
(Continued)

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

"To understand an individual fully … only an idiographic approach can adequately describe an individual." (199)

Evidence: Idiographic approach to personality psychology.

Inferring Traits

"How do we know that traits a person possesses? Allport suggested several methods for inferring a person's traits. He began, sensibly enough, with the wisdom of everyday language."
**Inferring Traits From Language: The Dictionary Study**

**Question:** What is Gordon Allport's dictionary study of traits?

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**Inferring Traits from Behavior**

"Traits may also be inferred from behavior."

![Illustrations] Inferring traits from behavior.

**Question:** What are expressive traits?

![Evidence] Expressive traits.
"We can infer traits from many documents or records of people's lives including diaries, letters, public statements, and so forth. Sometimes existing documents, those not produced specifically for research purposes, may be unusually rich."

"Allport was given a collection of 301 letters written from 1926 to 1937 by Jenny Masterson to her friends."

Gordon Allport used what he called a structural-dynamic content analysis technique to interpret Jenny's letters and concluded that her personality could be summarized by eight traits.

**Question:** How did Allport describe Jenny's personality based on a content analysis of her letters?

**Question:** What is the value of the content analysis research technique?
Note in this section the description of the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values inventory.

### Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values

#### Table 7.2

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### Allowing for Inconsistency in Making Trait Inferences

**Question:** What is meant by the following statement?

"Traits and behavior do not have a one-to-one correspondence."  

(203)

**Examples**

Traits and behavior.  

(210)
Allport's Attitude toward Methodology

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

"Allport raised serious concerns about methodology in trait measurement."

The Pervasiveness of Traits: Cardinal, Central, and Secondary Traits

Question: How pervasive is the influence of a particular trait?

Central Traits

Question: What is Gordon Allport's concept of a central trait?

[Examples] Central traits.
Secondary Traits

Question: What is Gordon Allport's concept of secondary traits? (204-205)

[Examples] Secondary traits.

Cardinal Traits

Question: What is Gordon Allport's concept of a cardinal traits? (205)

[Examples] Cardinal traits.
Levels of Integration of Personality

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

"… traits appear on a continuum of pervasiveness."

Figure 7.2 Levels of Integration in Personality

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Question: What is Allport's notion of a higher level of integration? (205-206)

Personality Development

"In his description of personality development, Allport emphasized the later, more developed, stages."

Functional Autonomy

Question: What is Gordon Allport's concept of functional autonomy? (206)
Question: What are meant by the following statements?

"... motivation becomes fully contemporaneous ..."

"Allport criticized psychology for its preoccupation with the past."

"Allport thought the principle of functional autonomy ... as 'a declaration of independence for the psychology of personality.'"

Qualities of a Normal, Mature Adult

"Allport listed several characteristics of a mature (i.e., healthy) personality."

Extension of the Sense of Self

Question: What is the notion of "extension of the sense of self insofar as Gordon Allport was concerned?"
Warm Human Interaction

Question: What is the notion of "warm human interaction insofar as Gordon Allport was concerned?"

Emotional Security (Self-Acceptance)

Question: What is the notion of "emotional security" insofar as Gordon Allport was concerned?

Realistic Perception, Skills, and Assignments

Question: What is the notion of "realistic perception" insofar as Gordon Allport was concerned?

Self-Objectification: Insight and Humor

Question: What is the notion of "self-objectification" insofar as Gordon Allport was concerned?

Unifying Philosophy of Life

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

"… the mature person has a unifying philosophy of life."

[Evidence] Unifying philosophy of life.
Unity of Personality

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

"With maturity comes integration or unification of personality."

[Example] Unity of personality.

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

"People experience a crisis of values when unification is threatened."

Question: Why was Allport criticized for his notions regarding the unity of personality?
Question: What is meant by the following statement?

"In referring to the unity of personality, Allport used the Latin phrase unitas multiplex, the 'unity of multiples.'"

The Proprium

Complete the following:

"Allport suggested a theoretical concept, the proprium, which includes …

Stages of Development

"Allport suggested a list of stages of development, but he warned that any stages identified by a theory are somewhat arbitrary."

1. Bodily Sense

Question: What is the notion of "bodily sense" insofar as Gordon Allport was concerned?

2. Self-Identity

Question: What is the notion of self-identity insofar as Gordon Allport was concerned?
3. **Ego-Enhancement**

Question: What is the notion of "ego-enhancement insofar as Gordon Allport was concerned?"

4. **Ego-Extension**

Question: What is the notion of *ego-extension* insofar as Gordon Allport was concerned?

5. **Self-Image**

Question: What is the notion of "self-image" insofar as Gordon Allport was concerned?

6. **Rational Agent**

Question: What is the notion of a *rational coper* insofar as Gordon Allport was concerned?

7. **Propriate Striving**

Question: What is the notion of a *propriate striving* insofar as Gordon Allport was concerned?
8. The Knower

Question: What is the notion of self as knower insofar as Gordon Allport was concerned?

Continuity and Change in Personality Development

Question: What did Gordon Allport say about personality change in relation to chronological age?

Table 7.3 Factors Contributing to Consistency in Personality

Influence of Personality on Social Phenomena

"Allport viewed humans as social beings."

"Nonetheless … he looked for the causes of behavior within the individual rather than in the social environment."

"Thus, his contributions to the understanding of prejudice, religion, and rumor transmission emphasize the importance of personality rather than social causation."
Prejudice

Note in this section Gordon Allport's contributions to understanding the nature of prejudice.

**Question:** What did Gordon Allport say about personality change in relation to the reduction of prejudicial behaviors?

Religion and Prejudice

**Question:** What did Gordon Allport say about personality change in relation to religion and prejudice?

**Question:** What did Gordon Allport say about personality change in relation to individuals who have an extrinsic religious orientation?

**Question:** What did Gordon Allport say about personality change in relation to individuals who have an intrinsic religious orientation?
Evidence: Extrinsic and intrinsic religious orientations.

Table 7.4  Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiousness
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Religion and Prejudice
(Continued)

"Intrinsically religious people have been found to have higher than average prejudice against homosexuals."

[Evidence] Religious orientation and prejudice. (213-214)
Religion and Prejudice
(Continued)

Question: What is the difference between religious orientation as a quest and religion as immanence?

Rumor Transmission

Question: How did Gordon Allport and Leo Postman investigate the psychology of rumor?

[Description] Applied social psychological research of the psychology of rumor.
"Allport believed that … the psychology of personality should gain truth from many areas. He called this approach *systematic eclecticism.*"

**Question:** What was the notion of *systematic eclecticism* insofar as Gordon Allport was concerned?

"Allport accepted insights from various theories."

Complete the following:

"He accepted Freud's assertion that sexual conflict is particularly important in the …

"He included many psychoanalytic mechanisms in his eclectic approach, including "*rationalization*, …

"He also included Adler's concept of …

**END**