Your notes

GCSE Psychology: revision notes

The self

Contents

1. The self and self-concept
2. Identity and free will
3. The humanistic theory
4. Personality
5. Key studies
6. Key terms
7. Quick questions
8. What to do next

The self and self-concept

- The self is who we think we are. Lewis (1990) split it in two: the **existential self** is knowing that you exist, separately from others, and the **categorical self** is knowing that you belong to groups, such as your age or gender.
- Rogers (1959) said that your self-concept has three parts: **self-image** (how you see yourself), **self-esteem** (how much you value yourself) and the **ideal self** (who you'd like to be).
- **Congruence** is when your **self-image** and **ideal self** match, and incongruence is when they don't.
- **Self-actualisation** means fulfilling your potential, and becoming the person you could be.

Identity and free will

- Erikson (1959) said that identity develops through eight stages across life, each with a conflict to resolve. In the teenage years, it's identity against role confusion.
- A strength is that it covers the whole of life. A weakness is that the stages can't really be tested, and they may not fit every culture.
- Baumeister (2008) said that believing in free will makes people behave better: they take more responsibility, and they're more helpful and honest.
- A weakness is that free will is hard to measure, and it's not clear which causes which.

The humanistic theory

- Rogers (1951) said that children need positive regard from others. **Unconditional positive regard** is being loved whatever you do. Conditional positive regard is being loved only if you meet someone's expectations.

- **Conditions of worth** are the rules someone has to meet to feel valued. They can lead to low **self-esteem** and incongruence.
- Maslow (1943) put our needs in a hierarchy: physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and finally **self-actualisation**. Lower needs have to be met first.
- A strength is that it sees people as having free will, and has a positive view of them. A weakness is that its ideas, such as **self-actualisation**, are hard to measure.

Your notes

Personality

- The self is shaped from the inside by temperament, the personality we're born with, and from the outside by our experiences.
- Personality can be measured with personality scales, which are usually questionnaires, and by sorting people into personality types.
- Allport (1936) described three kinds of trait: cardinal traits rule someone's whole life, central traits are the main parts of their personality, and secondary traits only show in some situations.
- Cattell (1946) reduced personality to 16 factors, and made a questionnaire called the **16PF** to measure them.
- A strength of trait theory is that it can be measured. A weakness is that questionnaires rely on honest answers, and that people behave differently in different situations.

Key studies

- Vohs and Schooler (2008): students read a passage saying that free will is an illusion, or a neutral passage. Those who read that it was an illusion were more likely to cheat in a maths test.
- Van Houtte and Jarvis (1995): children in the later years of primary school who had pets had higher **self-esteem** and more independence than those without.

Key terms

Existential self	Knowing that you exist, separately from others.
Categorical self	Knowing that you belong to groups, such as an age or gender.
Self-image	How you see yourself.
Self-esteem	How much you value yourself.
Ideal self	The person you'd like to be.
Congruence	When your self-image and your ideal self match.
Self-actualisation	Fulfilling your potential.
Unconditional positive regard	Being loved and accepted whatever you do.

Conditions of worth	The rules someone has to meet to feel valued.
16PF	Cattell's questionnaire that measures 16 personality factors.

Your notes

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What is the existential self?
2. What is the categorical self?
3. What is self-esteem?
4. What is congruence?
5. Which is the top of Maslow's hierarchy of needs?
6. What is unconditional positive regard?
7. According to Erikson, what's the conflict in the teenage years?
8. How many personality factors does Cattell's questionnaire measure?

Answers

1. Knowing that you exist, separately from others
2. Knowing that you belong to groups
3. How much you value yourself
4. When your self-image and ideal self match
5. Self-actualisation
6. Being loved and accepted whatever you do
7. Identity against role confusion
8. 16

What to do next

Practise 11 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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