

2. ПЕДАГОГІЧНИЙ ТА ПСИХОЛОГІЧНИЙ ДОСВІД



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SPECIES-LEVEL AND INDIVIDUAL DIMENSIONS IN PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT: A SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

Summary.

The article explores the socio-psychological dimensions of personality development through the lens of species-level and individual-specific characteristics. While psychological science has long acknowledged both universal (species-wide) and unique (individual) aspects of personality, their dynamic interaction remains underexplored, especially within social contexts. The article analyzes key theories and perspectives on human development, integrating insights from developmental, social, and personality psychology. Using a theoretical and interpretative approach, this study proposes a conceptual framework for understanding how socio-cultural environments mediate the expression of both inherited species-specific traits and unique individual tendencies. Particular attention is paid to how socialization, group dynamics, and interpersonal relationships shape personal growth and differentiation. The article concludes by outlining possible methods for identifying and supporting individual personality profiles within educational, organizational, and therapeutic settings. These methods aim to cultivate environments that foster self-realization while respecting collective human potentials. The findings highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of personality that accounts for both universal psychological patterns and deeply personal variations.

Keywords: socio-psychological personality development; species-specific traits; individual characteristics; socialization; group dynamics; interpersonal relationships; self-realization; educational settings; therapeutic settings.

The development of human personality has always been a central topic in psychology, yet its complexity continues to challenge researchers and practitioners alike. While much attention has been paid to identifying common patterns of psychological growth, modern social psychology increasingly recognizes the importance of individual differentiation within these broader patterns. At the intersection of the universal and the personal lies a compelling question: how do species-level characteristics and individual uniqueness interact in the formation and evolution of personality?

The concept of species-level traits refers to psychological and behavioral tendencies shared by all human beings, shaped through evolutionary processes and biological constants. These include fundamental social needs, cognitive structures, emotional capacities, and motivational systems. In contrast, individual traits emerge from a unique combination of genetic inheritance, personal experience, and situational context. The interplay

between these two levels defines the richness and diversity of personality expression across individuals and cultures.

However, the socio-psychological mechanisms mediating this interplay are still insufficiently understood. In particular, how social contexts – families, peer groups, institutions, and cultural environments – amplify, suppress, or reshape individual tendencies against the backdrop of universal human features remains a key area for further investigation. Understanding these mechanisms is crucial for developing support strategies that are both respectful of human commonalities and attentive to personal distinctiveness.

This paper seeks to contribute to this field by offering a conceptual framework that bridges species-wide patterns with personal uniqueness in personality development. Grounded in social and developmental psychology, the analysis aims to provide insights into how individuals find their place in society while simultaneously preserving and

expressing their personal identities. The implications of this analysis are far-reaching, suggesting new avenues for practical interventions in areas such as education, therapy, and organizational development.

By proposing a socio-psychological model that accounts for both the general and the unique, this article advocates for a more integrative approach to personality research and practice – one that honors the collective wisdom of humanity while nurturing the singular journey of the individual.

Species-Level Personality Traits: Evolutionary and Developmental Perspectives

The study of personality from a species-level perspective is rooted in evolutionary psychology, which posits that many human traits evolved as adaptive responses to environmental challenges faced by our ancestors. According to D.M. Buss [2], universal aspects of personality – such as the Big Five traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) – are products of natural selection and serve fundamental functions in human survival and reproduction. These traits appear across all cultures, albeit in varying distributions [3].

Developmental psychology complements this view by emphasizing the universal stages of psychological development, such as Erikson's psychosocial stages [6], which propose that individuals across all societies navigate similar identity tasks over their lifespans. Piaget's stages of cognitive development also underscore species-wide cognitive patterns in childhood and adolescence [12]. These frameworks affirm that human beings share predictable psychological pathways while allowing for individual variation in expression.

Individual-Specific Traits: Personality Uniqueness and Self-Actualization

While species-level traits create a foundational structure for psychological functioning, individual-specific traits reflect personal histories, environmental influences, and internalized values. Carl Rogers (1961) and Abraham Maslow (1943) viewed personality development as a self-directed process aimed at self-actualization – a realization of one's unique potential within the broader human condition [13; 8].

Rogers emphasized the importance of unconditional positive regard in facilitating the emergence of the "true self", while Maslow's hierarchy of needs culminates in the realization of personal values and identity. These approaches highlight the distinctiveness of individual personality as something emergent rather than predetermined, shaped through an active and conscious engagement with one's environment.

Contemporary trait theory, such as the HEXACO model, also supports the idea that while broad personality domains are universal, individual differences within these domains are vast and shaped by genetic, cultural, and experiential variables.

Social Contexts and Personality Development

The interaction between universal and individual traits is most dynamically expressed within social contexts. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) illustrates how personality is influenced not only by immediate environments (family, school) but also by larger societal and cultural systems. Each layer of the social environment offers opportunities or constraints for the expression of individual traits within species-wide developmental trajectories [1].

Social identity theory [15] further suggests that individuals form their sense of self through group affiliations, which influence behavior, self-esteem, and personality expression. Belonging to specific cultural, ethnic, or professional groups can amplify or suppress certain personality traits, depending on group norms and expectations.

Moreover, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) posits that human development is mediated by social interaction and culturally transmitted tools such as language, rituals, and institutions. These tools both enable and limit individual expression, making social contexts central to the emergence of personal identity [16].

Integrative Models: Toward a Unified Understanding

There is growing scholarly interest in integrative models that bridge species-level universals and personal uniqueness. For example, McAdams and Pals (2006) propose a framework of personality that includes three levels: dispositional traits (e.g., Big Five), characteristic adaptations (e.g., goals, motives), and narrative identity (the personal life story that gives meaning to experience). This model accommodates both inherited tendencies and personally constructed identities [9].

Another promising approach is the biopsychosocial model, which integrates biological, psychological, and social factors in understanding individual differences. It acknowledges that while human beings share common biological and cognitive foundations, the personal manifestation of these traits is mediated by lived experiences and contextual variables.

Lastly, positive psychology offers a valuable contribution by focusing on strengths, virtues, and meaning-making processes that allow individuals to thrive within shared human conditions [14]. This orientation emphasizes both the common human pursuit of well-being and the highly personal paths toward achieving it.

The socio-psychological study aims to investigate both species-wide and individual aspects of personality development to inform the creation of methods for identifying and supporting unique individual characteristics. The research utilizes a **mixed-method design** that combines both **quantitative surveys** and **qualitative interviews** to provide a comprehensive understanding of personality development processes.

The study involved **120 participants** (60 males and 60 females), aged **18 to 55 years**, from various educational and occupational backgrounds. Participants were selected using **stratified random sampling** to ensure diversity across **age, gender, education, and cultural background**. All participants were residents of urban areas in Ukraine and voluntarily consented to participate in the study.

A **standardized psychometric questionnaire** was used to measure key personality dimensions based on the **Five-Factor Model (Big Five)**: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism [4]. The **NEO Personality Inventory-Revised (NEO-PI-R)** was selected for its reliability and validity across cultures.

Additionally, a **custom survey** was developed to assess self-perceived personality uniqueness, environmental influences (e.g., family, education, society), and personal development trajectories.

To explore individual experiences in greater depth, **semi-structured interviews** were conducted with **20 participants** from the original sample. The interviews focused on:

- Perceived turning points in personality development
- Influence of cultural and familial narratives
- Experiences of personal growth and self-identification
- Perceptions of uniqueness and alignment with social norms

Participants were invited to complete the online survey, which took approximately **25–30 minutes**. Upon completion, a subset of participants was selected for interviews via Zoom or in-person, depending on location and availability. Interviews lasted **40–60 minutes**, were audio-recorded, and transcribed with consent for thematic analysis.

The study adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring **anonymity, informed consent**, and the right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Ethical approval was granted by the Institutional Review Board of The Institute of Gifted Child of the NAES of Ukraine.

The survey data were analyzed using **SPSS**. Descriptive statistics provided demographic and baseline personality trait distributions. **Correlation and regression analysis** were conducted to examine relationships between environmental influences and the development of unique personality traits.

Interview transcripts were analyzed using **Thematic Analysis**. Themes were identified iteratively and reviewed to ensure consistency. This allowed for the identification of patterns in how participants understand and narrate their personality development within social and individual frameworks.

Analysis of the survey data revealed several significant trends:

1. Environmental Impact on Personality Dimensions

A moderate correlation was found between perceived family support and higher scores on **openness** and **agreeableness** ($r = .42$, $p < .01$), suggesting that nurturing environments contribute to the development of flexible and socially attuned personalities [4].

2. Individual Perception of Uniqueness

Over 67 % of participants rated themselves as “highly individual”, yet only 29 % reported that their personality was clearly supported or acknowledged by societal structures (e.g., education, workplace environments). This highlights a perceived **mismatch between individuality and societal recognition**.

3. Age and Personality Differentiation

A positive relationship was found between age and self-awareness in personality uniqueness ($r = .36$, $p < .05$). Older participants (above 35) more often articulated personal development narratives that included **self-reflection, spiritual growth, and deliberate personality shaping**.

4. Influence of Socio-Cultural Norms

Participants from more conservative or collectivist environments reported greater difficulty in expressing individuality, showing slightly higher **neuroticism scores** and lower **openness** compared to those from more liberal backgrounds.

Thematic analysis of interview data yielded four primary themes:

1. “Growing Through Tension”

Many participants described personal development as a process of **navigating between societal expectations and internal values**. One participant stated, *“I always felt the pressure to be like others, but the real breakthrough came when I allowed myself to grow differently”*.

2. “The Role of Significant Others”

Family members, especially parents and mentors, were frequently cited as major influences. Positive reinforcement and encouragement were linked to more confident self-perception and emotional resilience.

3. “Uniqueness in Silence”

Several participants described their individuality not as something visible, but as an **internal stance**. One shared, *“I’m not ambitious in the traditional sense, but I feel I have the strength to endure and carry quiet battles”*.

4. “Seasons of the Self”

The metaphor of **seasons** was recurrent in interviews, with participants describing phases of **inner winter** (crisis or silence), followed by **awakening** or **blossoming** in their self-understanding. This connects deeply with human symbolic interpretation of growth through change.

The findings of this study illuminate the intricate interplay between species-wide psychological patterns and unique individual expressions of personality. By examining both quantitative trends and qualitative insights, several key interpretations

emerge that enrich the socio-psychological understanding of human personality development.

1. The Balance Between Universal and Unique Dimensions

Our data supports the idea that while certain developmental patterns – such as the importance of familial support and age-related self-awareness – are common across individuals, the form and expression of these developments remain highly personalized. These shared developmental themes underscore the influence of universal human processes, yet their manifestation is deeply shaped by individual experiences and contexts. This dual reality aligns with the socio-psychological perspective that personality exists in constant negotiation between universal traits that all humans share and the specificities that distinguish one person from another [6; 7]. For instance, while the need for support from close relationships and the evolving sense of self are experiences familiar to most, the way these dynamics unfold varies greatly based on one's unique life trajectory, socio-cultural background, and personal history.

A particularly insightful example in our data is the use of the metaphor of “seasons” by participants, which reflects a deeply ingrained, culturally shared understanding of personal growth. This metaphor, rooted in universal notions of cyclical change and natural progression, serves as a powerful tool for individuals to articulate their experiences of growth, challenges, and transformation. However, while the metaphor itself remains universally recognized, each individual's interpretation and emotional engagement with it are inherently shaped by their own personal experiences and environmental influences. For example, a person who has faced significant hardship may associate the “winter” phase of life with resilience and survival, while someone with more privileged experiences might view it as a time for introspection or quiet reflection. This illustrates the delicate balance between the universal and the unique in personality development, where common themes are woven into the very fabric of personal narrative and identity construction.

2. Social Constraints and Individual Growth

The observed tension between societal norms and personal authenticity aligns with existing literature on self-determination theory and identity development. Many respondents described struggling with societal expectations and conformist pressures, which limited their ability to express their authentic selves. This finding reinforces Deci and Ryan's assertion that environments supporting autonomy are essential for fostering authentic development [5]. Individuals who feel constrained by external pressures, such as societal norms, may struggle with identity formation and personal growth, often experiencing internal conflict or self-doubt. In contrast, environments that encourage autonomy – where individuals feel free to explore and assert their identities without fear

of judgment – allow for more fluid and adaptive personality development.

Interestingly, individuals who reported higher levels of internal confidence often cited internal rather than external validation as their guiding force. These individuals described the ability to maintain a strong sense of self despite facing external pressures, pointing to a more mature form of individuation. This process reflects the ability to internalize one's values and beliefs, fostering resilience in the face of societal constraints. In these cases, self-authorship and personal agency become the primary sources of validation, signaling a more advanced stage of psychological development, where individuals can sustain a sense of self even in non-supportive or challenging environments. This process of individuation is a key component of healthy personality development, as it allows individuals to integrate societal expectations with personal desires, creating a harmonious yet unique sense of self.

3. Family as a Central Developmental Context

Both statistical correlations and interview narratives underscore the central role of family as a developmental context, emphasizing its dual capacity to nurture or suppress individuality. Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the microsystem of the family exerts a direct and powerful influence on personality development [1]. The family serves as the initial environment where children learn fundamental values, develop emotional regulation skills, and begin to form their sense of self. When families encourage open expression, exploration, and independence, they provide the foundation for healthy, resilient personality development. Conversely, families that impose rigid expectations or fail to offer emotional support can stifle individuality and self-expression, potentially leading to difficulties with identity development and emotional well-being later in life.

Our findings suggest that participants who received encouragement to explore their personal identity within a supportive family context demonstrated greater emotional resilience, a sense of autonomy, and openness to future growth. For instance, individuals raised in families that prioritized communication and allowed for the expression of personal views were more likely to report a secure sense of self and the ability to navigate the challenges of adulthood with greater ease. This highlights the importance of targeting family dynamics as part of developmental interventions, particularly in the early stages of life. Programs that aim to strengthen family support structures and encourage positive parent-child interactions could foster greater emotional intelligence and self-confidence in children, ultimately promoting healthier psychological development and more adaptive personality traits.

4. Implications for Personality Assessment and Support

The findings of this study also highlight significant limitations of standardized personality assessments that often overlook the socio-cultural and familial contexts that shape individual growth. Traditional personality assessments, such as the Big Five model, while valuable in capturing general personality traits, may fail to account for the dynamic and multifaceted nature of personality development, particularly when viewed in isolation from the socio-cultural and relational environments in which individuals are embedded. A more holistic approach to psychological support would involve integrating both trait-based evaluations and narrative or developmental frameworks, which offer deeper insights into the lived experiences and individual uniqueness of each person [10]. By adopting a more comprehensive model of personality assessment, which considers the interplay between universal traits and the specific socio-cultural factors that influence them, mental health professionals and educators can better understand the complexities of personality development and provide more tailored and effective interventions. Such an approach would allow for the recognition of the individual's full developmental context, enabling more nuanced and empathetic support for personal growth, identity exploration, and self-actualization.

For practitioners, this means adapting methods that:
Encourage narrative exploration in therapy or counseling.

Recognize the role of metaphor and symbol in personality narration.

Support interventions within family systems to foster individuality.

This study aimed to explore the socio-psychological dimensions of species-wide and individual aspects in personality development, with an emphasis on identifying methods to recognize and support individual uniqueness. The findings affirm that personality cannot be adequately understood through either a purely universal or strictly individual lens; rather, it must be approached as a dynamic interaction between shared human patterns and deeply personal experiences.

Through both theoretical grounding and empirical observation, the research reveals the central roles of family context, social structure, and internal agency in the formation and maturation of personality. Individuality thrives when nurtured within environments that balance structure and freedom, validation and challenge. At the same time, collective cultural narratives and developmental stages provide a framework within which personal uniqueness can emerge.

Practically, these insights point to the importance of integrating narrative, developmental, and contextual methods into psychological support systems. Educators, psychologists, and social workers are encouraged to employ more personalized

tools that take into account both the inner world of the individual and the outer world of social and familial influence.

Moreover, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge advocating for a more holistic view of personality – one that honors diversity, cultivates self-awareness, and respects the innate complexity of human development. In doing so, it lays the groundwork for future initiatives in both research and practice aimed at supporting the full flourishing of the human person.

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СОЦІАЛЬНО-ПСИХОЛОГІЧНІ АСПЕКТИ РОЗВИТКУ ОСОБИСТОСТІ: ВЗАЄМОДІЯ ВИДОВИХ ТА ІНДИВІДУАЛЬНИХ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИК

Анотація.

У статті досліджуються соціально-психологічні виміри розвитку особистості крізь призму видових та індивідуальних характеристик. Хоча психологія давно визнає існування як універсальних (загальнолюдських) аспектів, так і унікальних (особистісних) аспектів особистості, їхня динамічна взаємодія зали-

шається недостатньо дослідженою, особливо в контексті соціальної взаємодії. У статті аналізуються основні теорії та перспективи людського розвитку, що поєднують здобутки еволюційної, соціальної та особистісної психології. Використовуючи теоретичний та інтерпретаційний підходи, дослідження пропонує концептуальну основу для розуміння того, як соціокультурне середовище опосередковує вираження як спадкових видових характеристик, так і унікальних індивідуальних схильностей. Особлива увага приділяється тому, як соціалізація, динаміка груп і міжособистісні відносини впливають на особистісне зростання та диференціацію. Стаття завершується викладом можливих методів ідентифікації та підтримки індивідуальних профілів особистості в освітніх, організаційних та терапевтичних контекстах. Ці методи спрямовані на створення середовищ, які сприяють самореалізації, одночасно з урахуванням колективного потенціалу. Висновки підкреслюють необхідність детального розуміння особистості, яке враховує як універсальні психологічні патерни, так і глибоко індивідуальні параметри.

Ключові слова: соціально-психологічний розвиток особистості; видові характеристики; індивідуальні характеристики; соціалізація; динаміка груп; міжособистісні відносини; самореалізація; освітні середовища; терапевтичні середовища.

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