The Relationship Between Personality and Preferred Theoretical Orientation in Student Clinicians

Colin Warren Christopher
Pacific University

Recommended Citation

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Health Professions at CommonKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in School of Graduate Psychology by an authorized administrator of CommonKnowledge. For more information, please contact CommonKnowledge@pacificu.edu.
The Relationship Between Personality and Preferred Theoretical Orientation in Student Clinicians

Abstract
Previous research has demonstrated a strong connection between the personality traits of psychotherapists and the theoretical model which they utilize in treatment. While evidence of this relationship has been demonstrated in a number of studies, there is little consistency among researchers in regard to the specific personality variables responsible for these findings. Previous studies have primarily focused on the presence of this relationship among practicing clinicians and little attention has been given to investigating the presence of this relationship among students in the process of clinical training. This study examined the relationship between personality traits and preferred theoretical orientation among student clinicians in the interest of demonstrating that a significant relationship exists at the earliest stages of clinical development. The relationship between personality and theoretical orientation of therapists currently in training was investigated using the Jackson Personality Inventory-Revised (JPI-R) as well as surveys regarding theoretical interests and experiences. A sample of 39 student clinicians from the School of Professional Psychology at Pacific University were enlisted to determine if significant differences in personality traits were evident between clinicians of differing theoretical orientations. The study found that a significant difference existed between orientation groups on the JPI-R domains of Tolerance, Anxiety, Risk-Taking, and Traditional Values. Psychodynamic participants scored significantly higher on Tolerance and Risk-Taking than other theoretical orientations. Behavioral therapists were significantly higher on Traditional Values than humanistic therapists. Humanistic therapists were significantly higher on Anxiety than those who endorsed the "other" category. Orientation profiles, limitations, and directions for future research are discussed.

Degree Type
Thesis

Degree Name
Master of Science in Psychology

Committee Chair
James B. Lane, Ph.D.

Subject Categories
Psychiatry and Psychology

This thesis is available at CommonKnowledge: https://commons.pacificu.edu/spp/49
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND PREFERRED THEORETICAL ORIENTATION IN STUDENT CLINICIANS

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF
SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
PACIFIC UNIVERSITY
HILLSBORO, OREGON

BY
COLIN WARREN CHRISTOPHER
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY
DECEMBER 5, 2008

APPROVED:

James B. Lane, Ph.D.
ABSTRACT

Previous research has demonstrated a strong connection between the personality traits of psychotherapists and the theoretical model which they utilize in treatment. While evidence of this relationship has been demonstrated in a number of studies, there is little consistency among researchers in regard to the specific personality variables responsible for these findings. Previous studies have primarily focused on the presence of this relationship among practicing clinicians and little attention has been given to investigating the presence of this relationship among students in the process of clinical training. This study examined the relationship between personality traits and preferred theoretical orientation among student clinicians in the interest of demonstrating that a significant relationship exists at the earliest stages of clinical development. The relationship between personality and theoretical orientation of therapists currently in training was investigated using the Jackson Personality Inventory-Revised (JPI-R) as well as surveys regarding theoretical interests and experiences. A sample of 39 student clinicians from the School of Professional Psychology at Pacific University were enlisted to determine if significant differences in personality traits were evident between clinicians of differing theoretical orientations. The study found that a significant difference existed between orientation groups on the JPI-R domains of Tolerance, Anxiety, Risk-Taking, and Traditional Values. Psychodynamic participants scored significantly higher on Tolerance and Risk-Taking than other theoretical orientations. Behavioral therapists were significantly higher on Traditional Values than humanistic
therapists. Humanistic therapists were significantly higher on Anxiety than those who
endorsed the “other” category. Orientation profiles, limitations, and directions for future
research are discussed.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>.ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Orientation and Personality</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Factors</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation Traits</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the Literature</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METHOD</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design and Sample</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of Recruitment Procedure</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Analyses</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESULTS</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Analyses</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Results</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations and Future Research</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX D</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1
JPI-R Scale Scores by Theoretical Orientation ........................................ 24

TABLE 2
Frequencies of TES Responses by Theoretical Orientation ....................... 29
INTRODUCTION

How is it that the field of psychotherapy is represented by such a wide array of theoretical orientations and why is it that there is so little agreement or common identity among psychologists? One answer may be that there is no single model or system that is able to encapsulate all of the various positions held within psychology. There are clearly different theoretically based approaches to psychotherapy which rest on different philosophical assumptions about human nature and behavior. The importance of choosing a theoretical orientation is clearly of great significance to the practicing clinician as it serves “to organize knowledge, generate hypotheses, and focus the realm of data to which one attends in the human reality” (Cummings & Lucchesi, 1978, p.324). The processes which contribute to a psychologist’s choice of theoretical model represent an important factor as to how a psychologist’s role is performed and serves as an orienting principle in the identification and treatment of mental illness. It has also been observed that one’s choice of theoretical orientation is an important component in determining practitioner satisfaction (Vasco et al., 1992) and has important implications for training and selection. Despite the wealth of research regarding the importance of theoretical orientation in clinical practice, the lack of a common theoretical orientation has put individual psychologists in the unique position of choosing a theory of human behavior to embrace.

Literature addressing this topic demonstrates a wide range of explanations proposed to identify the factors responsible for theoretical selection. Research has focused on two primary factors which may contribute to the selection process. These
factors are external factors, such as clinical training and professional practice, and internal or subjective factors, such as personality traits or epistemological beliefs. It has been suggested by some theorists that personality traits influence one's choice of theoretical orientation (Chwast, 1978), implying that the internal components of personality may find expression in a theoretical correlate. Other researchers have supported this position and their work in this area suggests that clinicians may seek out theoretical models which are most representative of, or consistent with, their individual styles, values, or personality characteristics. Despite a number of contributions from researchers positing explanations which point to environmental determinants, support for this position is less compelling given the scarcity of empirical research.

While support for either position is subject to further investigation, an important area for consideration is the development of one's preferred theoretical orientation in the early stages of training. More specifically, if the relationship between personality traits and theoretical orientation is found to exist among student practitioners, what might this suggest about the role of environmental influences assumed to exist at such an early stage of theoretical development. Some researchers have taken the stance that early clinical experiences and exposure to theoretical models emphasized by supervisors or institutions invariably lead to the adoption of those same theoretical orientations (Cummings and Lucchese, 1978, Schwartz, 1978). Other researchers have proposed that personality plays a preeminent role even in this initial phase of selection, but may be confounded by the lack of opportunity presented in the training environment (Chwast, 1978). Although an investigation into this relationship among clinicians currently in training would appear to
present an opportunity for advancing this area of research, a review of the literature
demonstrates a lack of research specifically addressing this population.

Theoretical Orientation and Personality

There have been a large number of studies investigating the relationship between
therapists' personality traits and their therapeutic orientation. Studies by Hart (1982),
Levin (1978), Tremblay et al. (1986), and Walton (1978) were early contributors to this
area of research, providing a great deal of empirical support for the existence of this
relationship. In some cases, studies have proposed that personality characteristics may
provide predictive information regarding orientation selection (Coan, 1978, Hart, 1982).
Other authors have taken the position that environmental factors in conjunction with
subjective variables exert a strong influence on a therapists' choice of theoretical
orientation (Chwast, 1978). Although contributions from these early researchers suggest
that such a relationship exists, the significance and meaningfulness of this relationship is
difficult to determine given the range of variables examined and instruments employed to
assess them.

Walton (1978) examined the relationship of therapists' self-avowed theoretical
orientation to their self-perceived personality and theoretical styles. Using a measure
specifically constructed to differentiate between seven identified concepts rated on a
likert scale, the researchers mailed the questionnaire to 325 practicing therapists. The
final sample consisted of 25 psychodynamic, 33 rational-emotive, 37 eclectic, and 29
behavioral therapists. Data obtained from the questionnaire was factor analyzed, resulting
in eight factors identified as: Outgoing Receptivity, Complexity, Calmness, Initial
Reaction to Strangers, Intuition, Best Friend, Rationality, and Seriousness. Important
distinctions between theoretical orientations became apparent after running the analyses and demonstrated that psychodynamic therapists were higher on factors related to Complexity and Seriousness than rational-emotive therapists. Moreover, rational-emotive therapists were higher on the Rationality factor than eclectic therapists.

A study conducted by Levin (1978) examined the differences among 91 psychotherapists of various theoretical orientations using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Based on Jung’s theory of typology, the measure scores the individual on four scales: Extroversion-Introversion, Thinking-Feeling, Sensing-Intuition, and Judging-Perceiving. In addition, participating therapists were asked to identify their preferred theoretical stance among the five options, identified as: rational-emotive, behavioral, psychoanalytic, gestalt, and experiential. Analyses revealed that there were no significant differences detected on the Extroversion-Introversion and Sensing-Intuition dimensions between orientations. A difference was detected between rational-emotive and experiential therapists on the Thinking-Feeling scale, with rational-emotive therapists scoring significantly higher on Thinking. Regardless of orientation, therapists generally scored higher on Intuition over Sensing. Further analysis revealed that gestalt and experiential therapists scored higher on the Perceiving pole of the Judging-Perceiving dimension than all other theoretical orientations represented.

Coan (1979) investigated orientation choices among a large number of psychologists to determine if theoretical correlates could be identified across personality measures. Research was conducted using the Theoretical Orientation Survey (TOS), a measure developed by the author to determine the subjective theoretical beliefs of the participants. The TOS consists of 120 variables that fall into eight primary factors and
two second order factors, identified as Subjectivism vs. Objectivism and Exogenism vs. Endogenism. Administering the TOS to 106 psychologists along with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), relationships were found between the TOS factor of Endogenism and the MBTI factor of Introversion and the factors Exogenism and Extroversion. Additionally, an emphasis on feeling over thinking on the MBTI was significantly correlated with the TOS factor of Subjectivism. Another sample of 90 psychologists was administered the TOS in conjunction with the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF). Relationships were identified between some personality and theoretical orientation factors, the most notable being a negative correlation between the 16PF factor of Premsia (sensitive, dependent, and tender-minded) and the TOS factors of Objectivism and Physicalism. He concluded from these findings that personality traits could be correlated with the objectivism and subjectivism dimensions of theoretical orientation and suggested that individual temperament and life history will also make an individual receptive to different theories.

Hart (1982) employed the MBTI in another study of personality to determine if the relationship identified by Coan (1979) could be detected in undergraduate psychology majors. Hart determined participants' theoretical orientation using Coan's (1979) Theoretical Orientation Survey (TOS) as a measure of subjective theoretical beliefs. Hart administered the two measures to 181 junior and senior level psychology majors, with TOS scores acting as predictor variables and MBTI scores as the dependant variables. The Sensing-Intuition dimension of the MBTI was identified as being most strongly related to differences in theoretical orientation. His research supported Coan's (1979) earlier identification of a distinction between objective and subjective theoretical beliefs.
in psychology, and indicated that the polarized scales of the MBTI reflected many of these qualities. Hart concluded that objective theoretical beliefs in psychology are related to high scores on Extraversion, Sensing, Thinking, and Judging, and that subjective theoretical beliefs are related to high scores on Introversion, Intuition, Feeling, and Perceiving. While Hart's and Coan's work is significant in a number of respects, their recognition that theoretical preferences may be difficult to ascertain through categorical measures and that one's endorsement of a particular theoretical model may not reflect subjective preferences are important contributions.

Keinan, Almagor, and Ben-Porath (1989) approached this topic with an interest in examining the perceptions held by therapists with regard to their own personality characteristics and those of their colleagues. In a study conducted using 64 therapists who were self-selected based on their affiliation with one of 3 theoretical orientations (psychoanalytic, behavioral, and eclectic), perceived characteristics of these therapeutic models were measured using an instrument constructed by the researchers. The Therapists' Characteristic Rating Scale (TCRS) is a trait rating scale developed to assess perceived personality characteristics along 3 dimensions: action-oriented, insight-oriented, and authoritarian. Participants were asked to assess themselves using this measure and then rate a typical affiliate of each of those orientations represented in the study. Despite the novelty of the approach, they reported their only significant finding suggested that behaviorists tended to rate themselves higher for action-oriented characteristics.

More recent studies employing stricter methodological guidelines and standardized instrumentation provide support for this position by demonstrating that a
psychotherapists personality is a major determining factor in selecting a theoretical orientation (Tremblay et al., 1986; Scandell et al., 1997; Arthur, 2001). These researchers were critical of earlier studies, citing that they were equivocal, impressionistic, employed small and sometimes non-representative samples, and frequently indicated the need for further systematic investigation. Criticism has also been leveled at the failure of some early researchers to employ instruments which were intended for or adequately validated to measure personality or theoretical orientation (Scandell et al., 1997). In an attempt remedy these perceived flaws in research protocols and instrumentation, more contemporary research has demonstrated equally significant findings under improved conditions.

Tremblay, Herron, and Schultz (1986) conducted the first comprehensive and rigorous study of personality differences by orientation using a standardized instrument. They administered the Personality Orientation Inventory (POI) developed by Shostrom (1964) and a demographic survey to 180 practicing psychotherapists. Theoretical orientation was determined by participants' endorsement of one of three categories: psychodynamic, behavioral, and humanistic. The POI is a measure of personality variables thought to be related to self-actualizing tendencies, with higher scores indicating an increased capacity for engaging in self-fulfilling behaviors. The POI is comprised of 12 scales with two major scales, Time-Competence and Inner-Directedness, encompassing most of the test items. Supporting earlier research conducted by Tremblay (1983), the resulting data indicated that there were significant differences between the three orientations on seven of the twelve scales that comprise the POI. Humanistic psychotherapists had significantly higher scores than other orientations on Inner
Directedness, Self-Actualizing Value, and Spontaneity. Behaviorists scored significantly lower than other therapists on Existentiality, Acceptance of Aggression, Capacity for Intimate Contact, and Feeling Reactivity. In addition, the mean scores for all groups were higher than the POI norms on all scales, leading the researchers to conclude that all of these orientations shared in a common, healthy profile with distinctive features attributed to each orientation.

In a study conducted by Scandell, Wlazelek, and Scandell (1997), evidence for a link between theoretical orientation and personality was demonstrated using the five-factor model of personality under improved methodological conditions. Forty-one psychotherapists completed the NEO-PI-R, a 240 item instrument designed to measure aspects of personality consistent with the five-factor model, and a questionnaire regarding their adherence to principles of several identified theoretical orientations. This approach to theoretical identification resulted in a multidimensional description of participants’ interests distinguishing it from previous studies employing self-report or objective measures for classification. In lieu of their criticism that some early studies shared a “common weakness” by employing instruments inappropriate for measuring personality, their use of the NEO-PI-R served to demonstrate consistency with more recent advances in trait theory by examining personality as the interaction of five primary domains: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Significant positive correlations were found between psychotherapists who exhibited humanistic and gestalt orientations and the Openness domain, suggesting a greater tendency for imagination and intellectual curiosity. The humanistic orientation was significantly associated with the Openness to Action facet of
that domain, which reflects a willingness to try new activities, varied interests, and a preference for novelty. Those psychotherapists rated as having a primarily cognitive orientation were found to be significantly correlated with the Agreeableness domain, particularly the facets of Straightforwardness and Altruism.

External Factors

A few researchers have investigated the possibility that factors other than, or in addition to personality, may be connected with a therapists' selection of a theoretical orientation. Some researchers have taken the position that orientation is largely determined by environmental influences such as training models, supervisory and clinical experiences, and economic factors (Lazarus, 1978; Schwartz, 1978; Steiner, 1978; Cummings & Lucchese, 1978). With a few exceptions (Steiner, 1978), researchers which have posited external factors as a primary contributor to theoretical selection have not tested these hypotheses by experimental means. As with studies which investigated the role of personality in selection of a theoretical orientation, little conclusive evidence has been provided regarding the specific variables involved.

Cummings and Lucchese (1978) emphasized the role of inadvertent factors by suggesting that early training experiences will profoundly influence selection of a theoretical model. They observed that psychotherapists share a remarkable number of similarities, and that, despite being exposed to a multitude of theoretical orientations, tend to assume professional styles and beliefs consistent with their colleagues. They concluded through a review of case examples and previous literature that one's selection of orientation is a product of the ambiguity present at the onset of clinical training and modeling which results in the adoption of a theoretical paradigm consistent with that of
their supervisors. They propose “that accidental factors play an important, if not primary role, at times leading to selection which may be inconsistent or in conflict with one’s personality” (Cummings & Lucchese, 1978, p.327). Given the degree of environmental determinism present in the selection of a theoretical orientation, they advise training institutions to be particularly attentive to policies which foster parochialism and limit theoretical diversity.

This view has been supported by other researchers attempting to identify factors related to selection of a theoretical orientation. Steiner (1978) conducted a survey of psychotherapists in which 30 respondents provided information regarding their theoretical orientation. The survey asked for the following information: the respondent’s orientation, reasons for changing their orientation if this had occurred, influences on their selection, life experiences that may be consistent with their orientation, and the relationship between the types of interventions used and personality factors. She found that the influence of one’s own therapist was ranked as being the most influential factor in determining their current orientation; followed by course work, instructor’s orientation, and lastly by clinical supervisor’s orientation. Although respondents’ provided descriptive information regarding personality factors and life experiences believed to be involved in the selection process, specific responses were found to be too varied to organize in any meaningful way.

Other researchers have demonstrated strong opposition to suggestions that personality directly influences the selection of theoretical orientation. Arnold Lazarus (1978) argued that attributing orientation selection to personality resulted in misguided stereotyping, and proposed that psychotherapists would instead shape their orientations to
reflect their personalities. Schwartz (1978) offered a similar position by suggesting that a
psychotherapist's initial selection of an orientation is largely determined by the training
environment and will later be altered to reflect practical considerations and treatment
styles. Schwartz maintained that the therapist's personality characteristics are only related
to the likelihood of maintaining one's initial theoretical orientation. Similar to the
position held by Lazarus, Schwartz held that therapists would tend to change their style
of therapy prior to switching theoretical orientation and that this would largely be
determined by the degree of flexibility of the theory and the developmental needs of the
therapist.

Traits of Theoretical Orientations

A number of studies have identified aggregates of personality traits thought to be
representative of particular theoretical orientations. A review of the literature has
provided some descriptive information in regard to particular traits of members of a given
theoretical orientation. For instance, the work of Tremblay (1983), Tremblay et al. (1986)
and that of Ginot et al. (1986), among others, were consistent in their identification of
character trait clusters that have been ascribed to practitioners of different theoretical
orientations. Coan (1979) reported a tendency for subjective orientation among
psychoanalytic practitioners and an objective orientation among behavioral practitioners
as represented by that scale on the Theoretical Orientation Survey. It has been observed
that a subjectivist orientation closely parallels the Feeling over Thinking constructs
represented in measures such as the MBTI and demonstrates a capacity for sensitivity,
dependency, and tender-mindedness (Coan, 1979; Hart, 1982). An objectivist orientation
is more closely identified with higher scores on the Thinking and Judging poles of the
MBTI and tends to endorse items on other measures that reflect conventional thinking and extroverted activity (Coan, 1979, Hart, 1982).

Previous research in this area has primarily focused on examining traits specific to the behavioral and psychoanalytic traditions and related orientations. Arthur (2001) demonstrated through a comprehensive review of previous research that common trait features could be identified among many of these studies regarding the behavioral and psychodynamic traditions. His review suggests that behaviorists have been described as externally-focused, objectivistic, empirical, rational, and limited in their flexibility while the psychodynamic profile has been described as subjectively oriented, intuitive, and metaphorical. Arthur conducted his own investigation into personality and cognitive-epistemological traits thought to be representative of the psychoanalytic and behavioral traditions. His examination of 247 registered and qualified psychotherapists in the United Kingdom supported his earlier findings, and led him to identify a pattern of distinct personality and epistemological trait descriptions consistent with those he identified in his previous research. Arthur concluded that although similarities exist between theoretical orientations, “major and significant differences exist in styles of thinking, theories of knowledge, motivational aims, and, to a lesser extent, some interpersonal behaviors” (p.52, 2001).

Research conducted by Tremblay (1983) and Tremblay, Herron, and Schultz (1986) demonstrated that significant differences could be identified between the psychodynamic, behavioral, and humanistic traditions and that personality patterns were evident among behavioral and humanistic practitioners. Utilizing the Personality Orientation Inventory (POI), significant differences between the three orientations were
detected on seven of the twelve scales that comprise that instrument. Behavioral therapists were found to have the most unique negative personality traits on the POI, indicating that they had relatively limited flexibility, limited acceptance of their own feelings, and limited development of relationships. Humanistic practitioners had the most unique positive personality traits, their scores indicating an increased capacity for inner directedness, affirmation of self-actualizing values, and expressing feeling in action. The psychodynamic profile contained attributes associated with the other two orientations and more closely approximated the norm, leading the authors to conclude that a unique personality pattern could not be identified for this group. These profiles were further supported by a study conducted by Ginot, Herron, and Sitkowski (1986), which also concluded that a unique profile could not be identified for psychodynamic practitioners using the Theoretical Orientation Inventory and a scale reflecting defensive styles. Suggestions from both studies regarding the need for further research using a diverse array of personality measures seems warranted given Arthur's (2001) later observation that there was sufficient trait information within the literature to formulate a psychodynamic profile.

Other theoretical orientations have received less attention in assigning personality profiles that are representative of their practitioners. It has been speculated by some researchers that this lack of representation within the literature reflects an inability on the part of testing instruments to correctly identify practitioners with more flexible or varied theoretical interests or intervention styles (Wogan & Norcross, 1985). Wogan and Norcross (1985) administered a 99 item survey of self-reported intervention techniques and demographic information to 224 practicing psychotherapists in an effort to
demonstrate the predictive capacity of these measures in identifying theoretical orientation. Using 13 factors derived from the survey, only 48.5% of eclectic therapists and 58.7% of humanistic practitioners were correctly identified by their intervention styles as compared to 88% of psychodynamic and 90% of behavioral therapists. Researchers have noted that an eclectic identification poses a number of difficulties for studies employing self-nomination of orientation, primarily because the term “can mean any number of things...resulting in wide variations in the number of eclectics” (Jensen et al., 1990, p.124). It is therefore apparent that a survey of psychologists’ theoretical orientations would need to include response options representative of the population of interest as well as include a method to further classify eclectic and integrative practitioners.

Summary of the Literature

Despite a wealth of research examining the relationship of theoretical orientation to personality traits, the lack of uniformity in the procedures, instrumentation, and constructs employed allows for little generalization of these findings across studies. To begin with, some of the results from these studies would appear to be contradictory with regard to the factors responsible for selection of a theoretical orientation. Some researchers have found that internal factors play a primary role in the selection process (Coan 1979), while others concluded that external or accidental factors are more important (Cummings & Lucchese, 1978, Schwartz, 1978). Most of those studies examined were concerned with only one set of factors, either external or internal, making it difficult to conclude which set of factors were most influential to orientation selection. Although these distinctions make identifying the specific variables underlying a
relationship difficult, research specifically examining subjective variables demonstrates some consensus in that a relationship between personality and theoretical orientation has been shown to exist. Arthur's (2001) review of the literature revealed that of the 45 articles available on this subject, only 14 were actual studies and all of those found evidence that personality was a strong factor in theoretical selection.

While this provides a strong argument in support of further research, concern has been raised regarding the empirical validity of research that has been overwhelmingly correlational in nature (Conway, 1992). Despite findings that support the existence of trait profiles associated with particular orientations, there is little if any definitive evidence to suggest a causal relationship in selection of a particular theoretical orientation. Analysis of existing studies does provide some tentative descriptive information regarding personality traits associated with practitioners of specific theoretical orientations, particularly those of the behavioral and psychodynamic traditions (Tremblay et al., 1986, Ginot et al., 1986, Arthur, 2001). Trait information specific to other orientations, particularly clinicians identified with eclectic or integrative models, is limited and may reflect limitations in the instruments employed, inadequate representation, or construct validity. Opportunities are therefore present to expand upon this research by employing different personality measures in samples representative of more diverse theoretical interests.

There is limited research which specifically investigates the presence of this relationship among psychotherapists in training. The present study would therefore benefit this field of research as whole by providing further information on the presence of
this relationship within a population that is at the early stages of their clinical
development and, possibly, more susceptible to environmental determinants.

Hypotheses

With respect to the identified goals of this study, the hypotheses to be tested are:

1) Personality is a prominent factor in selection of a theoretical orientation and evidenced
   by significant differences in personality traits between doctoral level students of different
   theoretical orientations, 2) this finding will be supported by participants subjective
   appraisals of the role of personality in their choice of theoretical orientation, and 3)
   training opportunities and environmental demands are not perceived as primary
   determinants in orientation selection. This predictive relationship is not anticipated as
   being strong as it is assumed that the consistency of traits within a theoretical orientation
   as well as students' exposure to diverse trainings is limited. As participants may not be
   clear as to their preferred orientation based on their limited exposure, this presents one
   confounding factor that may influence findings. In addition, identified characteristics
   associated with particular theoretical orientations will be examined in light of previous
   research and compared to these trait clusters to evaluate their continuity with these
   findings.
METHOD

Research Design and Sample

The study sample was comprised of clinical psychology students of at least second year standing and currently enrolled at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon. A sample size of 50 students was obtained by recruiting participants at the Portland and Hillsboro campuses of that institution. Student participants were required to have had prior or ongoing clinical training as the application of theory to clinical practice was deemed essential to the identification of one's theoretical orientation. Data collection involved a one-time administration of the Jackson Personality Inventory Revised (JPI-R) and two surveys which required participants to identify their theoretical orientation and rate their experiences in making that selection.

Method of Recruitment/Procedure

Research was conducted with prior authorization by the Institutional Review Board of Pacific University. Student practitioners enrolled in the School of Professional Psychology were contacted and recruited at the beginning of their regularly scheduled classes with the cooperation and consent of instructors. Invitations to participate in this study were also sent through secure campus e-mail to the student body. The e-mails included a brief statement about the nature of the study and a request that those students interested in participating in this study meet at an appointed time on campus in an available room. Arrangements were made with the University in advance to ensure that
rooms were made available to conduct this study. Administration of the testing materials was conducted with the investigator present in both group and individual formats.

Participants were informed that the study was intended to investigate the relationship between personality traits and selection of theoretical orientation. Participants were required to read and sign a consent form prior to receiving the testing materials. In this form, the investigator explained to participants the purpose of the study, the objectives of the project, possible risks and benefits of participating, and the instruments used. Participants were also verbally informed that, should they require assistance, they could ask questions at any time or withdraw from the study without consequence. Participants were informed that the study was expected to take 35 to 45 minutes to complete and that there was no time constraint aside from those imposed by room availability. For the purposes of this study, all participants were assigned a code number that was put on both their consent forms and their testing packet. The participants were given a testing packet that included the Theoretical Preference Survey (TPS), the Theoretical Experiences Survey (TES), and the Jackson Personality Inventory-Revised (JPI-R). Testing packets were randomized prior to administration to further limit potential risks to confidentiality. Specific directions to all testing instruments were provided at the top of each measure, and an investigator was present in the room to answer any additional questions.

Measures

The *Theoretical Preference Survey* (TPS) was developed for the present study to determine participants' preference of theoretical orientation. Inclusion in one of three identified theoretical orientation groups was determined by the participants' responses to
items that allowed them to indicate their preference. The survey asked that participants identify their theoretical orientation from the four categories presented. Three of these categories reflect the primary theoretical domains examined in this study and are thought to represent commonly identified theoretical orientations. The three orientations in question, Behavioral, Psychodynamic, and Humanistic, have been identified as predominant domains in previous research (Tremblay et al., 1986) and allow for some comparison with the results of this study. A fourth category, indicated as “other”, was included in recognition of the diverse array of orientations not represented within this study which may be endorsed by participants.

The *Theoretical Experiences Survey* (TES) was designed to determine participants perceptions of the origins of the development of their theoretical orientation and allows them to identify specific environmental contributors that were perceived to have impacted their decision. The TES consists of six True/False items that reflect environmental conditions that may have contributed to the selection process. This survey provided qualitative information to be included in the discussion section of the study for the purpose of examining environmental conditions. The information obtained by this measure will not be used in the final statistical analysis.

The *Jackson Personality Inventory-Revised* (JPI-R) is considered to be one of the most psychometrically sound instruments currently employed to measure personality. The JPI-R assesses personality variables relevant to the functioning of a person in a wide range of settings such as those involving work, educational settings, organizational behavior, or interpersonal situations. The JPI-R consists of 300 True-False statements
representing 15 scales which assess five major dimensions of personality identified as Analytical, Extroverted, Emotional, Opportunistic, and Dependable.

The scales are intended to capture specific areas of personality functioning and proceed from the assumption that scores on a given scale reflect the degree to which that trait is present in the individual's personality structure. The 15 scales which comprise the JPI-R were operationalized as dependent variables and are identified within the study as: Complexity (CPX), Breadth of Interest (BDJ), Innovation (INV), Tolerance (TOL), Empathy (EMP), Anxiety (AXY), Cooperativeness (CPR), Sociability (SOC), Social Confidence (SCF), Energy Level (ENL), Social Astuteness (SAS), Risk Taking (RKT), Organization (ORG), Traditional Values (TRV), and Responsibility (RKT). Strong reliability has been established in several studies and validity appears well established. Correlations with several other commonly administered personality measures provide evidence of convergent and discriminant validity.

Statistical Analyses

Scores obtained from the testing materials were initially hand-calculated and were checked a second time to ensure the accuracy of the findings. Descriptive statistics and statistical analyses were all conducted using SPSS Version 11.0. Statistical analyses began with an initial MANOVA to determine if there were differences between the identified theoretical orientations on the 15 dependent variables which correspond to the JPI-R scales. Individual ANOVAs were conducted for each of these 15 variables to determine if significant differences would be detected at the .05 probability level. A chi-square of independence was conducted to examine the relationship between theoretical orientation and items from the Theoretical Experiences Survey (TES). Results from this
analysis were not valid due to the limited number of data samples and disproportionate representation across theoretical groups.
RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in the following order: (1) descriptive statistics, (2) results regarding orientation differences on the JPI-R, and (3) findings with regard to the perceived relevance of environmental factors on orientation selection. Initial analyses were conducted using a MANOVA to identify significant differences between theoretical domains. Because of the limited number of participants within each theoretical domain, individual ANOVAS were conducted to assess variability and to better identify significant differences that may otherwise be attributable to error. Although information related to the Theoretical Experiences Survey (TES) was not correlated directly with data gathered from the JPI-R due to the small sample size, frequencies of responses are included to demonstrate the perceived relevance of environmental factors on theoretical selection. Responses to the TES were further grouped by theoretical orientation to assist in determining if environmental factors exerted any influence on the selection process.

Descriptive Statistics

The sample consisted of 37 doctoral level students of second year standing or higher with a minimum of one year of clinical experience. All participants attended the same university at which this study was conducted and were drawn primarily from those students in their 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} years. Participants were selected on the basis of their identification with or preference for a particular theoretical model by which they conducted therapy and interpreted clinical material. Participants were asked to select their preferred theoretical orientation by endorsing one of four theoretical categories on the
Theoretical Orientation Survey (TOS). This survey is included as Appendix A of the present work. Of the 37 participants, 8 reported behavioral or cognitive-behavioral as their sole or primary theoretical orientation, 10 reported psychodynamic as their sole or primary theoretical orientation, and 13 reported a humanistic model as their sole or primary theoretical orientation. Six participants reported that their theoretical orientation was not represented by these categories and marked the “other” category. Two of these individuals indicated that their theoretical stance was primarily integrative, while a third participant reported a preference for control-mastery theory. Table 1 presents the breakdown of the descriptive variables by theoretical orientation.
Table 1

*Means score exceeds 1SD of normed data for college-level students*
Statistical Analyses of Between Group Differences

A one-way between-groups multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate personality differences between theoretical orientations. Personality traits were assessed using the Jackson Personality Inventory-Revised (JPI-R). The 15 scales which comprise the JPI-R were operationalized as dependent variables. The independent variable was theoretical orientation, represented by the categories: Behavioral, Psychodynamic, Humanistic, and Other. The “Other” category was comprised of those theoretical orientations which were not specifically identified or otherwise subsumed under the broader typological categories.

Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity. There was a statistically significant difference between theoretical domains on the combined personality variables: $F(45,63)=1.93$; Pillai’s Trace=1.74; partial eta squared=.58. Use of Pillai’s trace for statistical interpretation was indicated by the small sample size, unequal distribution of the sample, and violation of several key assumptions reported previously. However, because of the large number of variables involved in the analysis, the Bonferroni correction was applied to correct for type 1 error and a probability level of .003 was established. The results demonstrated no significant differences between groups when the variables were examined separately. This implies that, despite indications that a significant difference was detected with a large effect size, no conclusions can be drawn from these results regarding between group differences on specific scales.
One-way between-groups analyses of variance were conducted for each of the fifteen scales of the JPI-R to more clearly identify differences between theoretical domains on these personality variables. Assumptions regarding homogeneity of variance between groups were violated for two of the fifteen variables examined. Both Cooperation (CPX) and Organization (ORG) were precluded from further examination as they violated this assumption and lacked statistically significant between group differences. Statistically significant differences were detected at the $p<.05$ level in four of the JPI-R scales among the four categories of theoretical orientation. As results in the previous analyses did not significantly meet the demands of a reduced alpha level, the potential for detecting significant differences due to repeated testing requires that the results that follow be interpreted with some degree of caution. It is interesting to note that Risk-Taking ($p = .008$) approached the more stringent probability level established in the previous analysis ($p = .003$), and produced the most robust overall findings. The presence of large effect sizes for these variables also warrants caution in light of the small sample size and the violation of several key assumptions noted previously. The potential impact of such constraints will be explored more fully in the discussion section of this work. The variables of interest will be examined in the following order: 1) Tolerance (TOL), 2) Anxiety (AXY), 3) Risk Taking (RKT), and 4) Traditional Values (TRV).

**Tolerance**

The Tolerance (TOL) scale, as with all of the JPI-R's scales, was developed to represent specific dimensions of personality functioning. The Tolerance (TOL) scale refers to an individual's capacity to accept persons holding attitudes and customs different from their own. A statistically significant difference was detected at the $p<.05$ level for
TOL scores across the four categories of theoretical orientation \[F(3,33)= 3.3, p= .03\]. Effect size for this difference was calculated at eta squared of 0.23. Although this is considered a large effect size, consistent with Cohen's (1988) methodology, caution is warranted given the small sample size and variation in cell sizes across groups. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD revealed significant differences between means scores for those participants who endorsed a Psychodynamic orientation (M= 13.7, SD= 3.56) and those who endorsed a Behavioral orientation (M= 9.87, SD= 1.36). No significant differences were detected for either the Humanistic orientation or “Other” category.

Anxiety

The Anxiety (AXY) scale is intended to assess non-clinical levels of stress experienced by the individual and the degree to which this impedes functioning. There was a statistically significant difference at the \(p< .05\) level in AXY scales scores between the four categories of theoretical orientation \[F(3,33)= 3.5, p= .027\]. Calculations of eta squared revealed a large effect size at 0.24, although caution is warranted given the previously noted constraints. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD revealed significant differences between the mean scores of the Humanistic orientation (M= 13.61, SD= 3.75) and those participants who endorsed the “Other” category (M= 8.33, SD= 4.63). Means scores for the Psychodynamic and Behavioral orientations were not observed to be significantly different.

Risk-Taking

The Risk-Taking (RKT) scale reflects the individual's tendency to engage in risky behaviors, with a specific focus on physical, monetary, social, and ethical risk-taking behaviors. A statistically significant difference was detected at the \(p< .05\) level for
RKT scale scores between the four categories of theoretical orientation \[ F(3,33) = 4.7, p = .008 \]. Effect size for this difference was considered large based on the calculation of eta squared at 0.29; although caution is again urged in light of those constraints mentioned previously. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD revealed that the mean score the Psychodynamic orientation (M= 12.1, SD= 4.84) differed significantly from both the Humanistic orientation (M= 7.3 , SD= 3.35) and those participants who endorsed the “Other” category (M= 6.0, SD= 3.74). The Behavioral orientation was not significantly different from these groups.

**Traditional Values**

The Traditional Values (TRV) scale is intended to assess an individual's identification with older values as opposed to more modern views that may reflect cultural change. There was a statistically significant difference at the \( p<.05 \) level in TRV scale scores for the four categories of theoretical orientation examined \[ F(3,33) = 4.1, p = .01 \]. The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was estimated at 0.27. As with previous analyses, a limited sample size may have inadvertently inflated the observed effect size. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the Behavioral orientation (M= 7.0, SD= 2.2 ) was significantly different from the Humanistic orientation (M= 3.53, SD= 2.33). Significant differences were not detected for either the Psychodynamic or “Other” categories.

**Theoretical Orientation Survey Results: Perceptions of Influence**

Results from the Theoretical Experiences Survey (TES) are intended to provide descriptive information regarding participants’ experiences in selecting a theoretical orientation as well as their perceptions of the significance of environmental factors in this
determination. The TES survey is included as Appendix C of the present work. It was
hypothesized that responses would largely indicate that training opportunities and
environmental demands were not significant determinants in orientation selection if
personality was a significant contributor to orientation selection as proposed in
Hypothesis 1 or perceived contributor as indicated in question 1 of the survey. A chi-
square test of independence was conducted to determine whether the frequency of
responses on the TES survey was related to participants identified theoretical orientation.
The significance of these results, if any, could not be determined as the assumption of
expected cell sizes was violated in all cases. Any interpretations of these findings are
therefore speculative and have been reserved for the discussion of this paper.

Participants’ responses to these six items are included as Table 2.

Table 2

Frequencies of TES Responses by Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beh. (n=8)</th>
<th>Psych. (n=10)</th>
<th>Hum. (n=13)</th>
<th>Other (n=6)</th>
<th>N=37</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflects Personality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>8 (100%)</td>
<td>10 (100%)</td>
<td>13 (100%)</td>
<td>6 (100%)</td>
<td>37 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflects Training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>8 (100%)</td>
<td>7 (70%)</td>
<td>11 (85%)</td>
<td>5 (83%)</td>
<td>31 (84%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>2 (15%)</td>
<td>1 (17%)</td>
<td>6 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflects Options</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>6 (75%)</td>
<td>7 (70%)</td>
<td>8 (62%)</td>
<td>6 (100%)</td>
<td>27 (73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>5 (38%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options Available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>5 (63%)</td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td>8 (62%)</td>
<td>2 (33%)</td>
<td>21 (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>3 (37%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>5 (38%)</td>
<td>4 (67%)</td>
<td>16 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominant Orientations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>8 (62%)</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>19 (51%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td>5 (38%)</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>18 (49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EST Trends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>6 (75%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>3 (23%)</td>
<td>2 (33%)</td>
<td>13 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>8 (80%)</td>
<td>10 (77%)</td>
<td>4 (67%)</td>
<td>24 (65%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to examine the possible relationship between personality and theoretical orientation within the context of a doctoral level training environment by measuring and comparing the personalities of students who endorsed a particular theoretical orientation. The discussion which follows will focus on each of the hypotheses' respective results, how they relate to prior studies, and possible reasons why differences were or were not found. It should also be noted that consistency with previous research may be speculative on the basis that the present investigation utilizes a relatively newer testing instrument. Therefore, where possible, similarities between JPI-R trait constructs and those of other instruments will be identified in the interest of supporting existing personality profiles for the theoretical orientations examined. Comparisons to the Big Five trait clusters will be made in the interests of incorporating these findings into a more global estimate of personality functioning and provide some cohesiveness within the existing research. A brief summary of these results and their implications will also be provided, as well as limitations of the current study and directions for future research.

Hypothesis 1: Between Group Differences

Hypothesis 1 predicted that significant differences in personality variables would be detected between members of different theoretical orientations. This result was as hypothesized using the initial MANOVA test, but differences between specific
personality scales were not detected using the more stringent alpha levels required by that test. Confirmation of significant between group differences on individual variables were identified with further testing using 15 individual ANOVAs, although caution was suggested on the basis of the number of tests employed and the use of standard alpha levels. As mentioned in the Results section, differences were identified in four of the JPI-R traits tested. These traits categories (Anxiety, Traditional Values, Tolerance, Risk-Taking) will be examined individually with respect to their implications and bearing on previous research in this area. Although direct support for these findings is limited as no other investigations examining personality differences between clinician of differing theoretical orientations has employed the JPI-R, support for each of these scales will be provided using studies employing descriptively similar scales from the existing research.

**Tolerance**

Participants who identified themselves as psychodynamic in theoretical orientation scored significantly higher on the Tolerance scale of the JPI-R than their behavioral counterparts. High scorers in this domain of personality functioning can be characterized as accepting and open-minded toward others and are receptive to conflicting ideas or beliefs. Low scorers are thought to be opinionated and intolerant, and prone to making value judgments regarding others whose opinions differ from their own. The Tolerance scale contributes to the Analytic domain, one of the five “higher order” clusters of personality functioning identified in the JPI-R manual (Jackson, 1994). Consistencies between the Analytic domain and the Big Five dimension of Openness to Experience have been identified by previous researchers, and similarities are apparent in the trait descriptors and items which contribute to these domains. Openness to Experience
has been described by Costa and McCrae (1992) as relating to an individual's
"...preference for variety, intellectual curiosity, and independence of judgment" (p.15). As
these facets correlate strongly with the specific trait components that contribute to the
Tolerance scale, support for present findings comes from research that has identified
significant differences in the Openness domain.

Although previous studies have tended to employ a variety of measures, much of
the supporting research has identified consistent distinctions between psychodynamic and
behavioral practitioners using different, but descriptively similar, trait scales. The present
investigations findings are consistent with those identified by Tremblay (1983), who
found that psychodynamic clinicians scored higher than behaviorists on two scales of the
Personality Orientation Inventory (POI) which measured sensitivity to one's own feelings
and flexibility in applying values to one's life; both of which demonstrate descriptive
similarity to the Tolerance and Openness domains. A study conducted by Herron (1978)
also identified higher mean scores for scales contributing to the Openness domain by
psychodynamic practitioners; a highly relevant finding considering his use of doctoral-
level students as participants.

Such findings appear to support distinctions between these two theoretical
orientations, and provide support for observations made by a number of researchers that
psychotherapists' personalities tend to be congruent with their chosen orientation
have noted an emphasis in the psychodynamic tradition on exploration, understanding,
and receptivity; traits which appear to find support in the present investigation of the
Tolerance scale. Additionally, as particular theoretical traditions may emphasize and
encourage specific therapeutic styles and intervention strategies; those traits identified by Kubacki and Chase are central to the psychodynamic style of intervention. It may be speculated that although significant differences in personality traits were detected, preexisting differences may be further accentuated by the theoretical and instrumental components of a given orientation.

Anxiety

Participants who identified themselves as humanistic in theoretical orientation scored significantly higher on the Anxiety scale of the JPI-R than their counterparts who identified themselves as belonging to “other” orientations. As Anxiety represents a fairly stable dimension of personality functioning which reflects an individual's ability to tolerate stress, high scorers have a tendency to become overly preoccupied with concern regarding future events and exhibit worry over inconsequential matters. Participants practicing from “other” orientations are more likely to remain calm in stressful situations and experience life events without undue worry. According to the JPI-R manual, the Anxiety scale contributes to the higher order domain of Emotional functioning and is descriptively similar to the Big Five domain of Neuroticism (Jackson, 1994). Costa and McCrae (1992) describe Neuroticism as representing a tendency to exhibit poor emotional adjustment and experience negative affect such as anxiety, insecurity, and hostility. Although use of the JPI-R has not been utilized in previous studies examining personality differences between clinicians of differing theoretical orientations, inferences can be made based on the descriptive similarities of other measures to the Anxiety scale and the more global conception of Neuroticism.
Previous literature provides little direct support for the present findings, as prior research has failed to find any significant differences between orientation on personality traits related to the Neuroticism domain or, more specifically, to anxiety-related characteristics. Additionally, as will be noted throughout the discussion section, the humanistic tradition and "other" orientations are not well represented in studies examining personality differences. Studies such as those conducted by Scandell et al. (1997), Tremblay (1983), and Tremblay et al. (1986), are among the few to have included humanistic practitioners in their investigations but failed to find any significant negative traits to distinguish them from other orientations. In contrast to the elevated Anxiety scores observed in the present investigation which might be characterized as a negative feature of personality functioning, Tremblay (1983) and Tremblay et al. (1986) report that humanistic practitioners had a unique positive personality profile. This positive personality profile indicated that these practitioners had an increased capacity for inner directedness, affirmation of self-actualizing values, and emotional expression. Scandell et al.'s (1997) study, which made specific use of the Five-Factor Model by the employing the NEO-PI-R, failed to detect any differences in levels of Neuroticism between orientations. Further research is therefore necessary to determine if the differences detected in the present investigation represent an accurate, and previously undetected, feature of the humanistic profile.

Risk-Taking

Participants who identified themselves as psychodynamic in theoretical orientation scored significantly higher on the Risk-Taking scale of the JPI-R than participants who identified as humanistic or "other" in orientation. According to the
JPI-R manual, Risk-Taking reflects an individual’s capacity for taking chances, exposing themselves to unpredictable situations, and adventurousness. High scorers are thought to be more willing to take chances, are less concerned with negative outcomes, and enjoy engaging in behaviors with an element of risk. Low scorers, represented by humanistic and “other” categories, exhibit a high degree of caution when faced with uncertainty and are more likely to avoid situations that involve personal risk. The JPI-R manual indicates that the Risk-Taking scale contributes to the Opportunistic domain, which loads moderately on the Openness to Experience domain of the Big Five trait clusters (Jackson, 1994). Jackson’s recommendation that Risk-Taking might in fact contribute to a separate dimension of personality functioning referred to as Individualism/Adventurousness has not as yet led to the development of a new domain. This disposition towards autonomy and agency is reflected in the Openness to Experience domain of the Big-Five and may serve to incorporate previous research.

The present findings find little support in the existing literature and may reflect both the dearth of available literature on humanistic personality profiles and discrepancies between testing instruments. Previous research also presents some strong contrasts with the present findings, as research by both Scandell et al. (1997) and Tremblay et al. (1986) suggest a greater disposition to Openness and Risk-Taking for humanistic practitioners. Scandell et al.’s (1997) investigation revealed significant positive correlations between humanistic and gestalt orientations and the Openness domain of the NEO-PI-R. In addition, the humanistic orientation was significantly associated with the Openness to Action facet of that domain, which reflects a willingness to try new activities, have broader interests, and a preference for novelty. Tremblay et
al. 's (1986) investigation, although somewhat less compelling based on methodological concerns, revealed a higher degree of spontaneity among humanistic practitioners than their psychoanalytic counterparts. Apart from those studies cited previously which suggest a strong correlation between psychodynamic practitioners and facets of the Openness domain (Tremblay, 1983, Herron, 1978), none of the literature examined provided specific support for greater Risk-Taking behavior within the psychodynamic orientation. Interestingly, and contrary to the present findings, Keinan et al.'s (1989) investigation revealed that psychoanalysts rated themselves as being lower on activity, initiative, and assertive behavior.

Because therapeutic methods and processes may encapsulate the therapeutic values to which they are related, the therapeutic methods of these orientations are also considered relevant to the present investigation (Kuback & Chase, 1998). As the Risk-Taking facet contributes to a sense of autonomy and agency, it is interesting to note the parallels this may present in clinical theory and application. As pointed out by Kubacki and Chase (1998), a major goal of psychodynamic treatment is the increased autonomy of the self and an increased sense of agency upon the resolution of unconscious conflict. Research examining the epistemological values of psychodynamic practitioners supports this emphasis on autonomy, and suggests a clinical style characterized by individualism, activity, and purposefulness (Johnson et al., 1988). The present findings may also be reflected in the clinical style of humanistic practitioners. Intervention styles associated with this orientation may emphasize a more passive or reflective approach to treatment which is guided primarily by the client. Although the present findings are somewhat less compelling without the benefit of more empirically-grounded support, the observed
parallels between clinical practice and trait dispositions provides some basis for these findings.

**Traditional Values**

Behaviorist participants scored significantly higher on the Traditional Values scale of the JPI-R than their humanistic counterparts. The Traditional Values scale reflects the value an individual attributes to traditional values and beliefs and their tendency towards conventionality. Behaviorist participants, consistent with those traits attributed to high scorers, are thought to be fairly conservative in their outlook relative to contemporary standards and may place more value on traditional customs and beliefs. As low scorers, humanistic participants can be characterized as adopting a more liberal attitude, acting in more unconventional ways, and challenging social norms and traditions. The Traditional Values scale contributes to the “higher order” cluster of personality traits labeled Dependable, and is thought to be strongly correlated with the Big Five dimension of Conscientiousness (Jackson, 1994). The domain of Conscientiousness has been described as one’s tendency to show self-discipline, aim for achievement, and engage in purposeful planning (Costa and McCrae, 1992). As noted in the previously reported findings, comparisons to the Big Five facets of personality functioning may serve to integrate the existing research with the present findings.

A comprehensive review of the literature conducted by Arthur (2001) lends support to the present findings by providing a personality profile for the behavioral orientation that bears descriptive similarities to high scorers on the Traditional Values scale. Based on an evaluation of 13 previous studies involving behavioral and cognitive-behavioral practitioners, Arthur concluded that a conventional personality style for this
orientation was indicated based on descriptive traits identified across these studies. Johnson et al. (1988), one of the authors cited in this review, found that the epistemological styles and personality traits associated with behaviorists indicated that they tended to be "...traditional, predictable, orderly, stable, and realistic" (2001, p.54). These profile characteristics are descriptively similar to those traits described by Jackson as contributing to high scores on the Traditional Values scale, and provides some continuity with the present findings.

Support for the present findings is also evident in the research conducted by Kubacki and Chase (1998), whose examination of cognitive-behavioral therapists identified a tendency for conventionality and objectivity. It has been pointed out that these values find expression in the particular mode in which behavioral therapy is carried out, emphasizing normative and socially acceptable behavior in the therapeutic setting (Messer, 1986, as cited in Kubacki and Chase, 1998). It is also the contention of some authors that the intervention styles employed by cognitive-behavioral therapists reinforce these dominant values by attempting to eliminate negative or maladaptive thoughts and their co-occurring behaviors and feelings (Kubacki & Chase, 1998). Unfortunately, the humanistic tradition is underrepresented in studies examining differences between practitioners’ styles and personalities and limits any explanation of the present findings to speculation based on therapeutic style and theory. Person-centered and gestalt therapies tend to emphasize the exploration of what is meaningful to the client and phenomenologically relevant, regardless of the client’s fit with prescribed social norms of acceptability or not. This stance may reflect an innate disposition for humanistic
practitioners to better accommodate unconventional modes of thought and behavior, or suggests the accentuation of such features by way of theory and practice.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived Environmental Influence on Selection of Theoretical Orientation

Despite finding significant personality differences, sampling limitations precluded a thorough investigation and analysis of the impact of perceived environmental factors on theoretical selection. A rationale for this line of investigation was derived from a number of authors who have purported that training experiences are a significant, if not the most significant, contributor to selecting a theoretical orientation (Henry et al., 1971, Sundland, 1977, Steiner, 1978, Norcross & Prochaska, 1983). Some of these investigators have also reported that course work, orientations of colleagues and instructors, and one's own therapist's orientation were also significant contributors to the selection process (Steiner, 1978, Norcross & Prochaska, 1983). The Theoretical Experiences Survey (TES), was intended to capture many of the factors identified in this research and endorsed by participants based on the perceived relevance of such factors.

Moreover, student clinicians were assumed to be more dependent than practicing clinicians on external sources of information and influenced by their training environment. Research conducted by McNeill et al. (1985) conceptualized the development of therapists' theoretical and clinical experience as progressing in a series of stages. The earliest levels of development are characterized by a heightened period of anxiety and greater dependence on information received from training sources; a stage often attributed to graduate-level training. The present investigation approached this with the recognition that if environmental factors were strong determinants for selecting
theoretical orientation, than they would be significantly pronounced in the observed population and the relevance of such factors would be endorsed strongly. Conversely, if personality can be conceptualized as a stable and enduring set of traits across the lifespan, then the relevance of personality characteristics in selecting an orientation should be evident at the earliest stages of training. Although the former position could not be fully explored based on methodological limitations, the latter position has found support in the present investigation.

Personality emerged as an important factor which was influential in adopting a theoretical orientation and was endorsed by all participants regardless of their orientation group. Although not an environmental determinant, this item was included in the TES survey as a means of assessing participants’ subjective appraisals of the influence of personality. This subjective endorsement lends support to this investigation’s initial hypothesis that personality is an important contributor to theoretical selection and complements findings related to the JPI-R. This finding is also consistent with those identified in previous studies, namely Chwast’s (1978) report that all participants in his study endorsed a similar item and Keinan et al.’s (1989) finding that a majority of their participants believed that personality played a significant role.

Although the remaining findings from the TES administration are somewhat less compelling without the benefit of statistical analyses, it is worth noting some of the observed differences by orientation related to the frequency of endorsement for specific items. The majority of participants (84%) reported that clinical training also significantly influenced their selection of theoretical orientation, a finding which lends support for earlier observations that one’s training environment and supervisor’s orientation is an
important contributor to this process (Henry et al., 1971, Sundland, 1977, Steiner, 1978, Norcross & Prochaska, 1983). All participants (100%) identified as behavioral in orientation endorsed this item, suggesting the possibility that training may bear more influence for some individuals on their adoption of a theoretical orientation. Behaviorists were the only group to strongly endorse (75%) that their selection was influenced by recent trends in the field to provide empirically-supported treatment to clients. Psychodynamic and humanistic participants tended to respond in a manner that was consistent with the overall group frequencies and observed differences were negligible.

Individuals endorsing "other" orientations provided some of the most striking differences, although the small sample size for this group may have inadvertently inflated these differences. These participants reported that they were influenced by the options made available to them (100%) but also reported a considerable lack of support for receiving additional training for their chosen orientation (33%). Such findings may reflect the fact that some of those orientations (integrative, control-mastery theory) have limited representation within the training environment and individuals sought specific training opportunities elsewhere. Although not conclusive, this findings suggests that the presence or absence of a particular theoretical model within the training setting may influence the direction of selecting a theoretical orientation and lends credence to the observation made by Cummings and Lucchese (1978) that accidental factors may play a significant role in this process. Contrary to their proposal however, it would appear that such participants may actively seek their desired training experiences elsewhere rather than settling for that which is available.
Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The present study has several limitations that warrant further attention and highlight future areas of research. A significant limitation of the study, and one which impaired the range of analyses employed as well as their interpretation, is the use of a small pool of participants to explore personality differences. Although significant differences were detected between groups, the ability to correctly identify significant findings, or power of a test, is proportional to the sample size employed. Another concern lies in the disproportionate representation of participants across theoretical categories. A small sample size may inadvertently inflate differences between groups when outliers are not taken into consideration. Given the limited representation of both the behaviorist (n= 8) and participants identified as "other" (n= 6) relative to other categories, significant differences may be more correctly attributed to individuals scores rather than group trends. Although such factors were addressed by employing a more stringent alpha level when conducting the initial MANOVA, subsequent analyses were subjected to less stringent criteria and may therefore be subject to the above constraints. It should also be noted that this lack of representation may reflect methodological flaws in the recruitment procedure. Despite requiring that participants strongly identify with and practice from a particular theoretical orientation, no attempt was made to actively recruit for particular theoretical domains. Discrepancies in theoretical representation are therefore thought to reflect the distribution of theoretical interests among the target population or may reflect the greater availability of some student practitioners to participate based on their interest in the study and familiarity with the researcher. Future research would therefore benefit from using a larger sample to increase the power of any
statistical findings, while more adequately controlling for group size by employing stricter recruitment procedures such as target cut-offs and wider sampling.

Another limitation of this study is the exclusive focus on self-report measures to obtain information regarding personality styles, theoretical preference, and environmental influence on selection. These findings are therefore subject to many of the common criticisms leveled at self-report measures and may be especially susceptible to socially desirable responding. Given that all testing was conducted in a campus setting and primarily in a group format, close proximity to peers and environmental pressures to conform to perceived expectations may have inadvertently influenced response styles. Although the JPI-R has been demonstrated to have strong psychometric properties and well-suited to the population of interest, both the Theoretical Orientation and Theoretical Preference Surveys were constructed for the present study without the benefit of statistical support or previous trials. Items on these surveys were completely transparent with regard to the subject matter of interest and are therefore subject to the accuracy of participants reporting. It should also be noted that using an extensive 300 item measure to assess personality style may have been a barrier to recruiting participants due to the time commitment involved.

As mentioned throughout this investigation, use of the JPI-R as a testing instrument posed some limitations for correlating the present findings with existing research. Although the domains of the JPI-R resemble the five-factor model on a descriptive basis with some noted exceptions, research supporting this connection is speculative and limited to observations proposed in the JPI-R manual. The domains contributing to the JPI-R, while relevant to the present investigation, have limited
representation in psychological literature of any kind and prevented a more detailed look at whether differences in particular domains were driven by particular facets. This, in turn, limited this investigations ability to provide more detailed descriptions of the present findings and support existing theoretical profiles. Additionally, the variety of testing instruments employed in the service of examining the relationship of personality to theoretical orientation proved to be a barrier to effectively integrating the existing literature. Given the preeminence of the five-factor model in personality research, a more thorough investigation may require the use of additional measures that adequately capture these domains for the purposes of integration.

Finally, the identification of theoretical domains of interest was somewhat arbitrary. The primary theoretical domains (Behavioral, Psychodynamic, Humanistic) in the TPS survey reflected those orientations consistently represented in the literature and were assumed to represent distinct categories. While this proved methodologically useful, this assumption may have failed to capture important distinctions between specific theoretical models that were grouped into larger typological categories. This concern is particularly evident in the use of the “other” category on the TPS survey to encapsulate orientations which were not represented by the other three categories. Additionally, participants self-selection of preferred theoretical orientation is problematic, as they may merely be expressing an interest or identify themselves in a theoretical orientation category that may not necessarily express their actual training and practice. This is particularly problematic when investigating a student population, as preferred theoretical orientations may be subject to change over the course of training and career path. Future investigations might employ measures specifically designed to address such concerns,
such as Coan's (1978) Theoretical Preference Survey, to determine the subjectively held theoretical beliefs of participants to more accurately represent their particular model of therapy.

Conclusion

The intention of the present study was to identify if personality differences exist between student practitioners of different theoretical orientations by administering a leading and well-supported personality measure to participants who practiced from a specific theoretical model. It was anticipated that any identifiable differences which were detected would be consistent with findings identified in previous research and support existing literature regarding personality profiles specific to predominating theoretical orientations. The present study has also sought to contribute to the existing literature by examining personality differences within a student population, a population which has received little attention in this area of investigation. It was hoped that identifying and supporting areas of significant difference between the personality traits of theoretically diverse student practitioners would also reveal the extent to which environmental factors may influence theoretical selection at a particularly sensitive period of professional development.

The study found that a significant difference existed between orientation groups on the JPI-R domains of Tolerance, Anxiety, Risk-Taking, and Traditional Values. Psychodynamic participants scored significantly higher on Tolerance than behavioral therapists and significantly higher on Risk-Taking than those who endorsed the humanistic or "other" category. Behavioral therapists were significantly higher on Traditional Values than those practitioners who identified themselves as humanistic.
Participants who endorsed a humanistic orientation were significantly higher on Anxiety than those who endorsed the “other” category. When examined in light of JPI-R normative data for college populations, raw scores for psychodynamic practitioners were significantly higher for the domains of Tolerance and Risk-Taking. These findings were supported by the subjectively held views of participants that their preferred theoretical orientation was a reflection of their personality.
REFERENCES


orientation in psychology and personality type. *Psychological Reports, 50*, 795-801.


APPENDIX A:

Theoretical Preference Survey

My preference of theoretical orientation at this time and one in which I see myself practicing from in my clinical work is (please check one of the following):

- Behavioral [CBT, REBT, DBT]
- Psychodynamic/Psychoanalytic
- Humanistic [Existential, Person-Centered, Gestalt]
- Other

Please rank order these 3 statements as you see them applying to your practice in therapy (1 highest, 3 lowest):

- Psychotherapy is a method of human relating based on openness and honest, self-awareness, self-responsibility, awareness of body, attention to feelings, and an emphasis on the here-and-now.
- Psychotherapy is the correction of maladaptive learned behavior through the application of techniques derived from laws of learning.
- Psychotherapy is the clarification of feelings and the making of interpretations to bring the unconscious into consciousness, enabling the acquisition of insight.

Please rank order these 3 statements as they relate to your view of psychopathology (1 highest, 3 lowest):

- Most major forms of psychopathology are the result of environmental pressures and conditioned responses.
- Most major forms of psychopathology are the result of intrapsychic conflict or interpersonal factors.
- Psychopathology can be better characterized as an adjustment to life situations.
APPENDIX B:

Theoretical Experiences Survey

Please answer each of the following statements by indicating yes or no:

1. My preferred theoretical orientation at this time reflects my personality and individual interests.
   Yes______ No_____ 

2. My preferred theoretical orientation reflects my experiences in my practicum training and supervision.
   Yes______ No_____ 

4. My preferred theoretical orientation at this time has been influenced by the options made available to me at my current or former training site(s).
   Yes______ No_____ 

4. I believe that options have been made available to me to choose my theoretical orientation and receive training and information specific to that orientation at my current or former training site(s).
   Yes______ No_____ 

5. My experience of choosing a theoretical orientation has been influenced by my perception of their being predominating theoretical orientations.
   Yes______ No_____ 

6. I have been influenced in my choice of theoretical orientation by current trends to provide empirically-supported treatments to clients.
   Yes______ No_____
APPENDIX C:

PACIFIC UNIVERSITY
INFORMED CONSENT TO ACT AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

The Relationship Between Personality Traits and Preference of Theoretical Orientation
Among Student Clinicians

Investigator(s) Contact Information

Principal Investigator(s):
Colin Christopher
Pacific University
School of Professional Psychology
(503) 913-3343
Chri5202@pacificu.edu

Faculty Advisor:
James B. Lane, Ph.D.
Pacific University
School of Professional Psychology
(503) 352-7323
lanejb@pacificu.edu

1. Introduction and Background Information

You are invited to be in a research study examining the relationship between personality and preferred theoretical orientation. You were invited to participate because you are a student of the School of Professional Psychology and have had some clinical experience. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in this study.

This study is being conducted by Colin Christopher and James Lane, Ph.D. The purpose of this study is to see how personality may influence choice of theoretical orientation.

2. Study Location and Dates
The study is anticipated to begin March 2007 and to be completed by August 2007. The location of the study will be Portland, Oregon.

3. **Procedures**

   If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to fill out a brief personality test and some surveys regarding your preferred theoretical orientation and your perceptions of this process. Your participation in this study should take no more than 45 minutes.

4. **Participants and Exclusion**

   Only participants who meet the following conditions will be included in the study: students currently enrolled in the School of Professional Psychology with some practicum experience. Participants who do not meet the above criteria will be excluded from the study.

5. **Risks and Benefits**

   There are risks and benefits to participating in this research. Possible risks include feeling inconvenienced by taking the time to fill out the test and surveys. It is possible that you may feel some discomfort in having to identify your theoretical orientation, particularly if the options given are not representative of your orientation or if you are undecided on theoretical preference. If you feel any discomfort, you may stop the study at any time. However, the likelihood of any psychological discomfort is small.

   Possible benefits include gaining knowledge of test measures that may be of use in your clinical practice. Additionally, information regarding your perceptions of the process of choosing a theoretical orientation within the clinical environment may serve to advance the field as a whole and provide the clinic with important data about the decision-making process. However, you may receive no direct benefit by completing this study.

6. **Alternatives Advantageous to Participants**

   Not Applicable

7. **Participant Payment**

   As a psychology student at Pacific University you may be eligible to receive credit for your participation in this study. You will receive a research participation receipt upon request following the completion of the test packet.

8. **Promise of Privacy**

   The records of this study will be kept private and be handled confidentially. The consent forms, which will include signatures, will be kept in a sealed envelope separate from the data collected. Consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet within the faculty advisor’s office. Data will be kept in a password-protected computerized database.
and will be available only to the principal investigator and faculty advisor. Again, this informed consent form will be kept separately from any data collected. If the results of this study are to be presented or published, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you as an individual.

9. Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Pacific University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without prejudice or negative consequences.

10. Compensation and Medical Care

Not Applicable

11. Contacts and Questions

The experimenter(s) will be happy to answer any questions you may have at any time during the course of this study. The experimenter(s) can be reached at (503) 913-3343 chri5202@pacificu.edu and (503) 352-7323 lane@pacificu.edu. If you are not satisfied with the answers you receive, please call Pacific University’s Institutional Review Board, at (503)352-2215 to discuss your questions or concerns further. All concerns and questions will be kept in confidence.

12. Statement of Consent

I have read and understand the above. All my questions have been answered. I am 18 years of age or over and agree to participate in the study. I have been given a copy of this form to keep for my records.

Participant’s Signature ____________________________ Date ____________

Participant contact information:

Street address: ______________________________________

______________________________

______________________________

Telephone: ________________________

Email: __________________________

55
This contact information is required in case any issues arise with the study and participants need to be notified and/or to provide participants with the results of the study if they wish.

Would you like to have a summary of the results after the study is completed? ___Yes ___No

____________________________________________________________________

Investigator’s Signature                                      Date
APPENDIX D:

Sample e-mail text for recruitment of Pacific University students

To SPP students:

I am currently in the process of conducting a research study and would like to invite you to participate. I am conducting research about the personalities of student clinicians and how this relates to choice of theoretical orientation. Participation is open to those students with some clinical experience and current enrollment in the School of Professional Psychology is required. As this study is specific to student clinicians, participants are required to have had some practicum experience and contact with clients. Participants may be compensated for their time by receiving research credit. If interested, please meet with me in room XX on (date and time). The study should take about 45 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at (503) 913-3343, chri5202@pacificu.edu. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Colin Christopher