The position of authenticity within extant models of personality

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A B S T R A C T

The aim of the current study was to explore where authenticity, derived from the humanistic tradition of psychology, was positioned within a number of extant models of personality. Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis of data from four samples (total N = 1286) suggested that authenticity can be considered as loading on the Honesty–Humility factor of personality. These findings are discussed in terms of the wider theoretical overlaps between Honesty–Humility and psychological functioning as emphasised by the humanistic tradition of psychology.

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1. Introduction

Within the humanistic tradition of psychology authenticity is seen as the core aspect of human functioning (Horney, 1951; Rogers, 1959). Authenticity comprises three aspects: (1) a lack of self-alienation, involving a consistent sense of identity which is consistent with all deep down beliefs, actual feeling, inherent tendencies, and objective reality; (2) authentic living, in line with this identity, and (3) not accepting external influence, when it goes against personal beliefs (Wood, Linley, Maltby, B_aliasus, & Joseph, 2008). Authenticity occurs when the three are in alignment. Therefore a person is authentic when they have a fully consistent identity in line with reality (low self-alienation), behave consistently with this (high authentic living), and do not allow external influences to either distort self-perception or prevent the authentic behavioural expression of one’s self (low accepting external influences). Clinically, distress is caused when inauthenticity comes to conscious awareness (Joseph & Linley, 2005). The Authenticity Scale (Wood et al., 2008) measures conscious awareness of authenticity, with the self-alienation, accepting external influence, and authentic living subscales measuring stable ways of functioning, demonstrating trait like properties evidenced by consistency between scores over time (e.g. r = .79–.84 over 2 weeks and r = .78–.81 over 4 weeks).

Given the central role of authenticity in the Humanistic school in psychology, its place within wider extant personality models has been little considered. Studies examining the tripartite model of authenticity shows appropriate but distinct variance from the six main personality traits; the five factor model of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992), comprising extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness, and the sixth factor of personality, ‘Honesty–Humility’ (Lee & Ashton, 2008). These traits account for a small but significant 11–13% of the variance in authenticity (Wood et al., 2008). Further, Gray’s (1987) and Cloninger’s (Cloninger, Svrakic, & Przybeck, 1993) models of personality account for between 5.8% and 18% of the variance in authenticity (Pinto, Maltby, & Wood, 2011). However, little is known as to where authenticity can be exactly positioned in regards to extant models of personality, or whether, authenticity, similarly to other variables, such as religiosity, conservatism, or risk taking (Paunonen & Jackson, 2000), are positioned outside extant models of personality.

The first context is the six main factors of personality. Authenticity may load on more than one of these factors. For example, authenticity is intrinsically related to positive well-being (Wood et al., 2008). Given the prominence of neuroticism and extraversion in predicting affect across the life-span, respectively (Wilson & Gullone, 1999), either of these two personality factors may encompass authenticity. However, authenticity seems most comparable to Honesty–Humility, which comprises adjectives such as truthfulness, positive values, honesty and sincerity (Ashton & Lee, 2007). Similarly, the literature emphasises authenticity as comprising the promotion of positive experiences, truthfulness, uniqueness, and positive growth (Rogers, 1965). Therefore, Honesty–Humility seems most similar to encompass authenticity. However, Wood et al. (2008) found correlations no larger than r = .11 between the tripartite model of authenticity and the Honesty/Humility subscale of the HEXACO Personality Inventory (Lee

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& Ashton, 2004). This finding seems surprising given the identified overlaps in descriptions between the constructs. Therefore, the relationship between the tripartite model of authenticity and honesty/humility requires further consideration.

The second context is to include other extant personality models. These include the biological models of personality; Eysenck’s (1990) model of personality (neuroticism, extraversion and psychotism); Gray’s (1987) reinforcement sensitivity theory (behavioral approach and inhibition systems); and Cloninger’s (Cloninger et al., 1993) model of temperaments (novelty seeking, harm avoidance, reward dependence and persistence) and character domains (self-directedness, cooperativeness and self-transcendence). These personality models can be positioned largely within the six factor personality framework (Revelle, 1997). For example, Eysenck’s model maps directly onto the five factor model with psychotism as better represented by low agreeableness and low conscientiousness. Gray’s behavioral approach and Cloninger’s novelty seeking are thought to mirror extraversion, and Gray’s behavioral inhibition and Cloninger’s harm avoidance mirror neuroticism (Revelle, 1997; Stewart, Ebmeier, & Deary, 2004). However, Pinto et al. (2011) have noted theoretical and empirical overlaps between Horney’s (1951) descriptions of low authenticity emerging from neurosis and leading to inhibited behaviors reminiscent of Gray’s inhibitory system or Cloninger’s harm avoidance, and therefore the consideration of biological models of personality is important in this consideration.

Furthermore, any deliberation should include Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002) that makes the distinction between autonomy, controlled and impersonal motivations. Autonomy, controlled and impersonal motivations of Self-Determination Theory seem to be largely independent of the five factor model, though control and impersonal motivations overlap with agreeableness and neuroticism, respectively (Olesen, Thomsen, Schnieber, & Tonnesvang, 2010). However, autonomy places an emphasis on demonstrating intrinsic and truthful (albeit by being consistent), needs, values, and motivations and therefore may reflect authenticity.

To properly consider whether authenticity is positioned within or outside existing personality theory and research, it is necessary to consider the position of the tripartite model of authenticity within a range of extant personality theories. Using the biological and self-determination theories alongside the six factors derived from the lexical hypothesis would be useful to ensure factors were optimally operationalized. The aim of the current study was to obtain an ethnically diverse sample. Ages ranged from 18 to 68 years (M = 38.2, SD = 12.7). Participants were predominantly White (37.2%) with 30.9% of respondents Asian and 30.0% Black.

2.2. Measures

Authenticity was measured using the Authenticity Scale (Wood et al., 2008) comprising three four-item subscales; Authentic Living (e.g. “I am true to myself in most situations”), Accepting External Influence (e.g. “I usually do what other people tell me to do”) and Self-Alienation (e.g. “I feel out of touch with the ‘real me’”). Responses are scored on a 7-point scale, anchored to 1(Disagree Strongly) to 7(Agree Strongly). Internal reliabilities range from .70 to .86 and test–retest reliabilities range between .78 and .91 (Wood et al., 2008). The subscales demonstrate validity via expected relationships with positive emotional and social functioning (Wood et al., 2008).

The Five Factor Model of Personality was assessed via the 50-item International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) measures of extraversion (e.g. “Start conversations”), neuroticism (e.g. “Get upset easily”), agreeableness (e.g. “Feel others’ emotions”), conscientiousness (e.g. “Like order”) and openness (e.g. “Have excellent ideas”; Goldberg et al., 2006). Responses are scored on five-point scales, anchored to 1(Strongly Disagree) and 5(Strongly Agree). The scales show internal reliability statistics of between .77 and .86 and correlations with the NEO Personality Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992) of between .85 and .92 (Goldberg et al., 2006).

The Honesty–Humility factor was assessed via the four 8-item IPIP facet scales (Sincerity, e.g. “Don’t pretend to be more than I am”; Fairness, e.g. “Try to follow the rules”; Greed Avoidance, e.g. “Don’t strive for elegance in my appearance” and Modesty e.g. “Am just an ordinary person”) for the HEXACO Personality Inventory (IPIP–HEXACO; Ashton, Lee, & Goldberg, 2007; Goldberg et al., 2006). Responses are scored on a five-point scale, anchored to 1(Strongly Disagree) and 5(Strongly Agree) and the subscale scores were added together to form an overall score for Honesty–Humility. The IPIP–HEXACO scales internal-consistency reliabilities range from .73 to .88, and convergent correlations of between .76 and .98 with the original HEXACO facet scales (Ashton et al., 2007).

Cloninger’s model of personality was assessed by using the IPIP–TCI Scales (Goldberg et al., 2006). Two hundred and eighty-nine items from the IPIP are used to measure four temperament domains; Novelty-Seeking (e.g. “Break rules”), Harm-Avoidance (e.g. “Avoid dangerous situations”), Reward Dependence (e.g. “Follow directions”) and Persistence (e.g. “Meet challenges”) and three character domains; Self-Directedness (e.g. “Know what I want”), Cooperativeness (e.g. “Reasure others”) and Self-Transcendence (e.g. “Radiate joy”). Responses are scored on 5-point scales, anchored to 1(Strongly Disagree) and 5(Strongly Agree). The scales show internal reliability statistics of between .66 and .86 and

2.1. Sample 1

Seven hundred and eight respondents (332 males, 376 females) were sampled from a series of community groups and workplaces in the Midlands and Yorkshire region of the United Kingdom. Ages ranged from 18 to 70 years (M = 33.54, SD = 9.9). Participants were predominantly White (57.6%), with 17.5% of respondents Asian and 16.7% Black.

2.1.2. Sample 2

One hundred and seventy-nine respondents (60 males, 119 females) were sampled from a Midlands university undergraduate student population in the United Kingdom. Ages ranged from 18 to 24 years (M = 19.55, SD = 1.2). Participants were predominantly White (69.8%), with 18.4% of respondents Asian and 8.4% Black.

2.1.3. Sample 3

One hundred and ninety-two respondents (79 males, 113 females) were sampled from six large employers in the Yorkshire region of the United Kingdom. Ages ranged from 18 to 60 years (M = 38.50, SD = 10.4). Participants were predominantly White (60.2%), with 17.2% of respondents Asian and 13.0% Black.

2.1.4. Sample 4

Two hundred and seven respondents (86 males, 121 females) were sampled from a number of community and religious groups in the Yorkshire region of the United Kingdom with the aim of obtaining an ethnically diverse sample. Ages ranged from 18 to 68 years (M = 38.2, SD = 12.7). Participants were predominantly White (37.2%) with 30.9% of respondents Asian and 30.0% Black.

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appropriate correlations with the Temperament and Character Inventory (Cloninger et al., 1993; Goldberg et al., 2006).

Gray's model of personality was measured via the 24-item BIS/BAS Scales (Carver & White, 1994). The BIS scale assesses anxiety sensitivity to events (e.g. "Criticism or scolding hurts me quite a bit"). The BAS scale is subdivided into Drive (e.g. "I go out of my way to get things I want"), Fun-Seeking (e.g. "I crave excitement and new sensations") and Reward Responsiveness (e.g. "It would excite me to win a contest"). Responses are anchored to 1 (Very true for me) to 4 (Very false for me) format. Internal reliabilities for the scales range from .77 for the BIS, and .89 for Reward Responsiveness, .85 for Drive and .80 for Fun Seeking (Cooper, Gomez, & Aucote, 2007). Validity for the scale is demonstrated via corresponding performances on reward and punishment tasks (Brenner, Beauchaine, & Sylvers, 2005).

The dimensions of Self-Determination Theory were assessed by the General Causality Orientation Scale (GCOS; Deci & Ryan, 1985). The scale comprises 17 vignettes which describe social or achievement oriented situations (e.g. a scenario where the individual is asked to lead a work project), each with three reactions. Then, on a 7-point scale, from 1 (Very unlikely) to 7 (Very likely), respondents indicate the extent to which their reaction is autonomous (e.g. "seek participation from others"), controlled (e.g. "take charge in making decisions"), and impersonal (e.g. "follow precedent"). Internal reliability (> .75) and test–retest (> .74) coefficients are reported for the three scales (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The validity of the scale is demonstrated via the autonomy orientation being positively related to self-esteem and self-actualisation, the controlled orientation being related to public self-consciousness, and the impersonal orientation being related to poorer well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Hodgins, Koetsner, & Duncan, 1996).

The administration order of the measures was counterbalanced within each sample. Due to the length of the questionnaire, participants were allowed as much time as required to complete the questionnaire and return it at a later date if required.

3. Results

3.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis

The first step of the analysis was to determine the factor structure of the data using the data from sample 1 (n = 708). The 23 scales were subjected to Maximum Likelihood Analysis (Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = .815; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, χ² = 5261.15, df = 253, p < .001).

The decision on the number of factors to retain is important to Exploratory Factor Analysis. Typically, this is based on the K1 method (eigenvalues greater than one, Kaiser, 1960), Scree Plot (Cattell, 1966) and parallel analysis of Monte Carlo simulations (Horn, 1965), the latter allowing the comparison of the eigenvalues to those that might be expected from purely random data with no structure. The K1 approach may overestimate the number of factors and the Scree Test can be more exact but it can be ambiguous, difficult to interpret and interpretation can vary between researchers (Ledesma & Valero-Mora, 2007; Zwick & Velicer, 1986). Consequently, various studies have suggested that parallel analysis is the most appropriate and accurate method to determine the number of factors because it demonstrates the least variability and compares well to other methods (Ledesma & Valero-Mora, 2007). Therefore, parallel analysis was used to determine the number of factors, with the eigenvalues relevant to producing a Scree Plot included.

For the parallel analysis of the current data, the 7th eigenvalue (4.51, 3.12, 2.29, 1.75, 1.27, 1.19, .86, .75, .74) failed to exceed the 7th mean eigenvalue (1.34, 1.29, 1.24, 1.20, 1.17, 1.15, and 1.12) calculated from 1000 generated datasets with 708 cases and 23 variables. This suggests an optimal six factor solution with the first six factors accounting for 19.62%, 13.57%, 9.97%, 7.61%, 5.54%, and 5.18% of the variance, respectively.

These factors were then subjected to oblique (promax) rotation with delta set to 0. An oblique rotation was used as the factors were expected to be correlated. Table 1 presents the rotated matrices (noting the inclusion of internal reliability statistics for each scale).

For interpretation purposes, the criteria of .32 was used for a minimum loading of an item, because this equates to 10% overlapping variance with other items on the factor (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In this solution, the first factor to emerge would be the sixth factor of personality with the IPPP Honesty–Humility subscales loading on this factor. Moreover, the authenticity subscales load on this factor, with accepting external influence and self-alienation loading negatively on the factor, and autonomous orientation loading positively, and the controlled orientation loading negatively on this factor. The second factor is an Extraversion factor with extraversion loading alongside the three behavioural activation system subscales and novelty seeking. The third factor is an Agreeableness factor, with agreeableness, loading alongside reward dependence and cooperativeness. The fourth factor is a Neuroticism factor, with neuroticism loading alongside behavioural inhibition and harm avoidance. The fifth factor is a Conscientiousness factor with conscientiousness loading alongside persistence and self-direction. The final factor is an Openness factor, with openness to experience loading alongside self-transcendence. Finally, amotivation orientation derived from Social Determination Theory failed to load above .32 on any of the six factors, but loaded the most highest on the neuroticism factor.

The correlations between the factors, using Cohen's (1992) effect size criteria (.1 = small, .3 = medium, .5 = large) to assess interpretation.
the degree of association, were generally small ($r < .25$) with three exceptions. The Honesty–Humility factor shared a positive correlation of a medium effect size with the agreeableness ($r = .36$) and conscientiousness ($r = .31$) factors and a negative correlation of a medium effect size with the neuroticism factor ($r = -.36$).

3.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The factor structure suggested by the EFA was tested with multigroup Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), using Samples 2, 3, and 4, and performed using covariance structural equation modelling with the Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) software. In contrast to conventional CFA, multigroup CFA additionally tests whether the factor structure is invariant across samples and demographic groups (Byrne, 2004). Thus, the multigroup approach provides several replications of the CFA, as well as testing the generalizability of the findings.

Three multigroup analyses were performed to test the fit of the six factor model, and to, respectively test whether the model was invariant across (a) sample, (b) gender, and (c) ethnicity. Each multigroup analyses tested the same model. Six latent factors were specified, as in Table 1. Each variable was specified as loading on only one factor. The six factors were allowed to correlate, however the error variances of the observed variables were not allowed to covary. This provides a highly conservative test of the six factor model, specifying that each variable loaded on only the theoretically expected factor, and variables were only correlated due to their shared loadings on this factor. Model fit was tested with the chi-squared test of the difference between the implied and reproduced correlation matrices, the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR), and the root mean square error of approximation. As the chi squared test is sensitive to sample size, Hu and Bentler (1999) recommend basing model fit assessments on the CFI and SRMR. CFA models are sensitive to the number of variables in the model, and to, respectively test whether the model was well reproduced correlation matrices, the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR), and the root mean square error of approximation. As the chi squared test is sensitive to sample size, Hu and Bentler (1999) recommend basing model fit assessments on the CFI and SRMR. CFA models are sensitive to the number of variables in the model, and to, respectively test whether the model was invariant across samples and demographic groups (Byrne, 2004).

The loadings of each variable for each CFAs performed as part of the multigroup analyses are presented in Table 2 (noting the inclusion of internal reliability statistics for each scale). In most cases variables loaded highly on the latent variable. The table also shows a remarkable amount of consistency in the size of the loadings across the three samples, three broad ethnic groupings and both genders. Based simply on visual examination, it seems that the model is invariant across these categories – although this assessment is tested statistically through the multigroup CFA.

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<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Reliability statistics and factor loadings from three multi-group factor analyses.</th>
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4. Discussion

From the Exploratory Factor Analyses of a number of personality measures a factor solution emerges that reflects the six main personality factors: Honesty–Humility, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness and openness to experience, with authenticity loading on the first of those factors. The subsequent Confirmatory Factor Analysis suggests that this six factor model provided an acceptable fit to the data, and the model was invariant across three samples, gender, and ethnicity. This finding suggests authenticity, a key concept in Humanistic and Counselling psychology, is positioned within the six factors of personality. This finding contrasts with Wood et al. (2008) who found no significant association between authenticity and Honesty–Humility. However, the previous finding is based on one single correlation among one sample. We present a finding replicated across Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analyses, and within a multi-group CFA which shows the relationships to be invariant across samples, ethnicity and gender. This suggests the current findings provide a more robust consideration of the relationship.

One aspect to consider from the current findings is the loadings of authenticity and autonomy orientation alongside Honesty–Humility. Ashton and Lee (2007) have used an evolutionary theoretical framework, specifically reciprocal altruism, to explain the concept of Honesty–Humility. The current findings indicate that the Honesty–Humility factor may expand in another theoretical direction regarding psychological functioning as emphasised by the humanistic tradition of psychology.

In summary, the study shows how authenticity is positioned within extant models of personality, with all three aspects of the tripartite model of authenticity loading on the honesty-humility factor of personality.

References