

## **Undergraduate II year**

### **Subject**

### **General Psychology**

### **Title**

## **Trait and Type approaches of Personality**

### **Objectives**

- To explain the Trait approaches of personality
- To discuss different Type approaches of personality

### **Summary**

A trait is a relatively enduring, cross-situationally consistent personality characteristic that is inferred from a person's behavior. Allport indicated that there are three basic traits – cardinal, central and secondary. He also believed that humans possess common and unique traits.

Cattell stated that there are 20 source traits and surface traits. Source traits were again classified as traits of temperament, ability traits and dynamic traits. He developed 16 PF questionnaire to provide a comprehensive view of personality.

Hans Eysenck was the first psychologist to make this trait or temperament business into something more mathematical: He gave long lists of adjectives to hundreds of thousands of people and used a special statistics called factor analysis to figure out what factors - trait dimensions - carry the most weight. He took the results of this work and created a test called the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ). His first trait dimension was extraversion-introversion. His second trait dimension was called neuroticism and emotional stability. Later, he added a third dimension called psychoticism.

The first version, called The Big Five, was introduced in 1963 by Warren Norman. But only in 1990 it became popular with the work of R. R. McCrae and P. T. Costa, Jr., who called it as The Five Factor Theory. These five factors include – Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness.

Psychologists who believed in Type approach are of the opinion that people can be divided into definite types. The first type theory of personality can be traced to the views of Hippocrates, Father of Medicine. According to Hippocrates, temperament is determined by a person's level of four different body fluids, called humors. Blood was associated with a cheerful or sanguine temperament. Phlegm assoc. with a calm or phlegmatic temperament. Black bile was associated with a depressed or melancholic temperament and Yellow bile was associated with an irritable or choleric temperament.

Most recent theories have emphasized the relationship between body characteristics or morphology and personality. The best known theory of this type was the one given by Kretschmer. Kretschmer described the three types of physique he believed to be basic. The first type was the short and heavy set and this was referred to as pyknic type, the second was called the athletic type which was divided as having a strong development of skeleton and muscle with wide shoulders and chest. The third type is called aesthetic, who is slender in body build and tall.

Sheldon's classification is primarily based on Kretschmer's theory. He tried to correlate temperament with body type. According to this view, there is link between a person's body type and personality. These types are ectomorph who is with thin and frail body. Sheldon believed that they would possess a shy, restrained, and introspective temperament called cerebrotonia. Another type is mesomorph who is with muscular and strong body. They are believed to display a bold, assertive, and energetic temperament called somatonia. The third type is endomorph who is with large and soft body. They are believed to display a relaxed, sociable and easygoing temperament called viscerotonia.

According classification of people into different types is given by Jung. People can be divided into two types namely introverts and extroverts. An introvert tends to withdraw into himself and inhibits emotions while an extrovert mixes freely with others and expresses emotions freely.

Influenced by Jung, Myer- Briggs classified people on different dimensions like Introversion-Extroversion, Thinking – Feeling, Sensing- Intuition and Perception and Judgemental.<sup>[LSEP]</sup>

Meyer Friedman, an American cardiologist, labelled people as "Type A" and "Type B" personalities. Type A personalities are work-aholics, always busy, driven, somewhat impatient,

and so on. Type B personalities, on the other hand are laid back and easy going.

Rotters classified people as high on internal locus of control and high on external locus of control.

Witkin classified people as field independent and field dependent.

## **Text**

### **The Trait Approach to Personality**

It is one of the major theoretical areas in the study of personality. The trait theory suggests that individual personalities are composed of broad dispositions. Consider how you would describe the personality of a close friend. Chances are that you would list a number of traits, such as *outgoing, kind and even-tempered*.

The trait approach is probably the oldest and most popular approach resembling the commonsense approach to understand personality. For example, if we want to describe a person, number of adjectives, like helpful, sincere, pleasant, sociable etc. are used. It is assumed that personality of a person can be understood by listing the qualities or traits which an individual possesses. Two leading psychologists have advocated the trait approach-Allport and Cattell.

### **Definition of Trait**

A trait can be thought of as a relatively stable characteristic that causes individuals to behave in certain ways.

### **Gordon Allport's Trait Theory**

In 1936, psychologist Gordon Allport found that one English-language dictionary alone contained more than 4,000 words describing different personality traits. He categorized these traits into three levels:

- Cardinal
- Central
- Secondary

Unlike many other theories of personality, such as psychoanalytic or humanistic theories the trait

approach to personality is focused on differences between individuals. The combination and interaction of various traits forms a personality that is unique to each individual. Trait theory is focused on identifying and measuring these individual personality characteristics.

### **Cardinal Traits**

Cardinal Traits are those that dominate an individual's whole life, often to the point that the person becomes known specifically for these traits. People with such personalities often become so known for these traits that their names are often synonymous with these qualities. Consider the origin and meaning of the following descriptive terms: Freudian, Machiavellian, narcissism, etc. Allport suggested that cardinal traits are rare and tend to develop later in life.

### **Central Traits**

These are the general characteristics that form the basic foundations of personality.

These central traits, while not as dominating as cardinal traits, are the major characteristics we might use to describe another person. Terms such as *intelligent*, *honest*, *shy* and *anxious* are considered central traits.

### **Secondary Traits**

These are the traits that are sometimes related to attitudes or preferences and often appear only in certain situations or under specific circumstances. Some examples would be getting anxious when speaking to a group or impatient while waiting in line.

### **Common Traits and Unique Traits**

He also classified traits into '*Common traits*' found in all people, and '*Unique traits*' characteristic of particular individuals. Unique traits are those qualities which influence behavior extensively and mark an individual out as distinct from others. Ex: Some individuals bring sense of humor in almost all situations unlike most people.

## **Raymond Cattell's Trait Theory**

Trait theorist Raymond Cattell reduced the number of main personality traits from Allport's initial list of over 4,000 down to 171, mostly by eliminating uncommon traits and combining common characteristics. Next, Cattell rated a large sample of individuals for these 171 different traits. Then, using a statistical technique known as factor analysis, he identified closely related terms and eventually reduced his list to just 16 key personality traits.

According to Cattell, these 16 traits are the source of all human personality. He also developed one of the most widely used personality assessments known as the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF).

### **Source Traits and Surface Traits**

He suggested that there are two kinds of traits namely Source traits and Surface traits. The source traits are the real basic traits which are very important.

Cattell has identified about twenty source traits and classified them into –

- Traits of Ability
- Traits of Temperament and
- Dynamic traits
  
- *Traits of Ability* are those which are related to the ability of a person to perform actions. E.g. intelligence.
- *Traits of temperament* relate to the ways in which a person reacts to events and arouse behavior.
- *Dynamic traits* are most important in understanding personality which are constitutionally called as Ergs or environmentally called as Meta ergs moulded.

Some of the traits identified by Cattell are as follows:<sup>[[L]]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

#### **Source traits:**

- Balanced, frankness, optimism

- Intelligence, disciplined mind
- Egotism, assertiveness
- Stubbornness
- General emotional, highly strung

### **Surface traits:**

- Trained, cultured & aesthetic
- Adventurous, carefree, kind
- Vigorous, energetic, persistent
- Friendly, trustful

### **Eysenck's Three Dimensions of Personality**

British psychologist Hans Eysenck developed a model of personality based upon just three universal traits:

- Introversion/Extraversion
- Neuroticism/Emotional Stability
- Psychoticism

#### **Introversion/Extraversion**

Introversion involves directing attention on inner experiences, while extraversion relates to focusing attention outward on other people and the environment. So, a person high in introversion might be quiet and reserved, while an individual high in extraversion might be sociable and outgoing.

#### **Neuroticism/Emotional Stability**

This dimension of Eysenck's trait theory is related to moodiness versus even-temperedness. Neuroticism refers to an individual's tendency to become upset or emotional, while stability refers to the tendency to remain emotionally constant.

#### **Psychoticism**

Later, after studying individuals suffering from mental illness, Eysenck added a personality dimension called psychoticism to his trait theory.

Individuals who are high on this trait tend to have difficulty dealing with reality and may be antisocial, hostile, non-empathetic and manipulative.

### **The Five-Factor Theory of Personality**

Both Cattell's and Eysenck's theory have been the subject of considerable research, which has led some theorists to believe that Cattell focused on too many traits, while Eysenck focused on too few. As a result, a new trait theory often referred to as the "Big Five" theory emerged.

The first version, called The Big Five, was introduced in 1963 by Warren Norman.

But it wasn't until R. R. McCrae and P. T. Costa, Jr., presented their version, called The Five Factor Theory, in 1990, that the idea really took hold of the individual differences research community.

This five - factor model of personality represents five core traits that interact to form human personality. While researchers often disagree about the exact labels for each dimension, the following are described most commonly:

- Extraversion
- Agreeableness
- Conscientiousness
- Neuroticism
- Openness

#### **Extraversion**

- Adventurous
- Assertive

- Frank
- Sociable
- Talkative

### **Introversion**

- Quiet
- Reserved
- Shy
- Unsociable

### **Assessing the Trait Approach to Personality**

While most agree that people can be described based upon their personality traits, theorists continue to debate the number of basic traits that make up human personality. While trait theory has objectivity that some personality theories lack (such as Freud's psychoanalytic theory), it also has weaknesses. Some of the most common criticisms of trait theory center on the fact that traits are often poor predictors of behavior. While an individual may score high on assessments of a specific trait, he or she may not always behave that way in every situation. Another problem is that trait theories do not address how or why individual differences in personality develop or emerge.

### **Agreeableness**

- Altruistic
- Gentle
- Kind
- Sympathetic
- Warm

### **Conscientiousness**

- Competent
- Dutiful
- Orderly



- Responsible
- Thorough

### **Emotional Stability (Norman)** [SEP]

- Calm
- Relaxed
- Stable

### **Neuroticism (Costa and McCrae)**

- Angry
- Anxious
- Depressed

### **Culture (Norman) or Openness to Experience (Costa and McCrae)**

- Cultured
- Esthetic
- Imaginative
- Intellectual
- Open

### **Type Approach** [SEP]

Other theorists subscribe to the view that individuals may be categorized into distinct personality types. Types are different from Traits. In types, a person cannot be said to possess a type to varying degrees. Whereas traits on the other hand are the factors that are thought to be normally distributed throughout the population and hence represented in every one with varying degrees.

It was assumed that the earliest type theory was the Greek physician Hippocrates division of human beings into Sanguine, Phlegmatic, Melancholic and Choleric temperamental types.

It was thought that the personality was dominated by a particular body fluid, namely, Blood, Phlegm, Black and Yellow bile.

Some personality theorists have categorized people into personality types on the basis of distinctive personality characteristics- Kretschmer, Sheldon and Jung.

William Sheldon (1942) assigned people to one of three categories dependent on their somatotypes (or body build), Endomorphic, Ectomorphic and Mesomorphic.

<b>Body type</b>	
<b>Personality</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> Endomorphic (fat, soft, round). eating.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> Ectomorphic (long, thin, delicate). in</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> Mesomorphic (muscular, strong). insensitive.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;">Relaxed and sociable, fond of</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Introverted, intellectual, uninterested</p> <p style="text-align: right;">consuming food and drink.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Energetic, hearty, assertive,</p>

<b>Body type</b>	
<b>Temperament</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> Endomorphic (fat, soft, round). Visceral activities</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> Ectomorphic (long, thin, delicate). ,Cerebral activities</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> Mesomorphic (muscular, strong). ,Muscular activities</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;">Viscerotonic temperament,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Cerebrotonic Temperament</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Somatotonic Temperament</p>

Sheldon's type theory is interesting but could not be sustained and has not been found to

predict people's behavior. People come in all shapes and sizes and cannot be categorized easily into one of Sheldon's somatotypes.

Few centuries after Hippocrates, the next systematic theory of typology was given by Ernst Kretschmer, a German Psychiatrist. On the basis of his clinical experience and observations he classified people into two psychological types.

The first is the '*Cyclothymic type*', in which people are generally active, outgoing, easily moved and are capable of shifting from one activity to another. They are very excitable either pleasantly or unpleasantly. Persons of extreme levels of Cyclothymic temperament are known as Cycloids. However, little evidence was found in support of the links between body type and temperament.

The other type is the '*Schizothymics*', who show the opposite characteristics, in which people are not very outgoing, not easily excited, prefer to be by themselves and are generally preoccupied with their own thoughts and emotions. In extreme form they are called as Schizoids.

Other type theories have categorized people into purely psychological categories. Jung (1923), the psychoanalytic theorist proposed that people are predominantly either '*Introverts*' or '*Extraverts*', the introvert being shy and withdrawn and the extravert being confident and outgoing.

## CASE STUDY

### FAQ

- • **What Is "Type"?** "Type" refers to personality models that are *neutral* regarding emotional health, intellectual functioning, and psychological adaptation. Every personality type identifies normal and valuable behavior, and each type is equally necessary and good.

- • **How type approaches are different from trait approaches?**

Personality type approaches are different from trait approaches which measure the quantity of a characteristic that a person has in his/her personality. Personality type does not measure

variation along a continuum, but instead, identifies a person's inborn preferences relating to his/her way of taking in information, making decisions, and relating to the world.

- □ List 16 Personality Factors.

The 16 personality traits include:

1. Warmth (A)
2. Reasoning (B)
3. Emotional Stability (C)
4. Dominance (E)
5. Liveliness (F)
6. Rule-consciousness (G)
7. Social Boldness (H)
8. Sensitivity (I)
9. Vigilance (L)
10. Abstractedness (M)
11. Privatness (N)
12. Apprehension/Apprehensiveness (O)
13. Openness to change (Q1)
14. Self-reliance (Q2)
15. Perfectionism (Q3)
16. Tension (Q4)

- • **What makes the trait approach to understanding personality different from the other theories?**

While most theories represent attempts at better understanding the development of

personality, trait theorists typically talk very little about development. Second, predicting a person's behavior in a given situation is also not a concern for trait theorists. Third, unlike many other theoretical orientations, trait theorists are interested in the comparison of people through based on not just aspects, but also degrees. And finally, and likely the biggest difference, trait theory does not inherently provide a medium of personality change.

- • **What are the limitations of Big 5 Theory of personality?**

Critics argue that there are limitations to the scope of Big Five as an explanatory or predictive theory. It is argued that the Big Five does not explain all of human personality. The methodology used to identify the dimensional structure of personality traits, factor analysis, is often challenged for not having a universally-recognized basis for choosing among solutions with different numbers of factors. Another frequent criticism is that the Big Five is not theory-driven. It is merely a data-driven investigation of certain descriptors that tend to cluster together under factor analysis.

## ASSIGNMENT

### I. I. Choose the correct answer for the following statements:

1. 1. \_\_\_\_\_ theories of personality focus on identifying the key dimensions along which people differ.  
a. a. Psychodynamic    **b. Trait**    c. Behaviouristic    d. Type
1. 2. A single trait that dominates an individual's entire personality is called\_\_\_\_\_  
a. a. Central    **b. Cardinal**    c. Secondary    d. Unique
1. 3. Key dimensions of personality that underlie many other traits are called \_\_\_\_\_ traits.  
a. **a. Secondary**    b. Surface    **c. Source**    d. Common
1. 4. Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) which is most widely

used for personality assessment was developed by \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. a. Kretschmer    b. Sheldon    c. Allport    **d. Cattell**

1. 5. \_\_\_\_\_ relate to the ways in which a person reacts to events and arouse behavior.

- a. a. Introversion    b. Traits of ability    c. Dynamic traits    **d. Temperament traits**

1. 6. \_\_\_\_\_ developed a model of personality based upon just three universal traits.

- a. a. Hippocrates    b. Allport    **c. Eysenck**    d. Cattell

1. 7. The first version, called The Big Five, was introduced in 1963 by \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. **a. Warren Norman**    b. P.T. Costa    c. Mc crae    d. Costa & McCrae

1. 8. \_\_\_\_\_ body type has cerebrotonic temperament.

- a. a. Schizothymic    b. Cyclothymic    **c. Ectomorphic**    d. Mesomorphic

1. 9. \_\_\_\_\_ body type are relaxed, sociable and fond of eating.

- a. a. Schizothymic    **b. Endomorphic**    c. Ectomorphic    d. Mesomorphic

1. 10. A person with \_\_\_\_\_ dimension may be considered hostile, manipulative, anti-social and non-emphathetic.

- a. a. Cyclothymic    b. Mesomorphic    c. Neuroticism    **d. Psychoticism**

## ANSWERS

1. 1.    b

2. 2.    b

3. 3.    c

4. 4.    d

5. 5. d
6. 6. c
7. 7. a
8. 8. c
9. 9. b
10. 10. d

## **I. II. TUTORIALS**

1. 1. What are central and source traits?
2. 2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of trait approach?
3. 3. What are the “big five” dimensions of personality?
4. 4. In what way type approach is different from trait approach?

## **REFERENCES**

### **BOOKS**

- • Berger,J.M.(2011). Personality. Eight edition. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning,U.S.A.
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## WEB LINKS

- • [psycnet.apa.org/books/11301/003](http://psycnet.apa.org/books/11301/003)
- • [psychology.about.com/.../theories of personality/.../trait-theory.htm](http://psychology.about.com/.../theories-of-personality/.../trait-theory.htm)
- • [www.indiastudychannel.com/.../142390-Classification-personality.aspx](http://www.indiastudychannel.com/.../142390-Classification-personality.aspx)
- • [mbttoday.org/wp-content/uploads/N-Quenk-on-Type-and-Trait.pdf](http://mbttoday.org/wp-content/uploads/N-Quenk-on-Type-and-Trait.pdf)
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- • <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/intropsych/pdf/chapter14.pdf>
- • <https://www.personalitypage.com/html/info.html>
- • <http://www.experiment-resources.com/personality-type-theory.html>
- • <http://psychology.jrank.org/pages/484/Personality.html>

## VIDEO LINKS

- • [www.youtube.com/topic/ZTAsEgG2wUc/trait-theory](http://www.youtube.com/topic/ZTAsEgG2wUc/trait-theory)
- • [www.youtube.com/channel/HCZTAsEgG2wUc](http://www.youtube.com/channel/HCZTAsEgG2wUc)
- • [www.youtube.com/topic/\\_.../extraversion-and-introversion](http://www.youtube.com/topic/_.../extraversion-and-introversion)
- • [www.youtube.com/watch?v=AERmX7vxvhw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AERmX7vxvhw)

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