

Types and Traits Theories of Personality!

The earliest attempt to categories personality was made by Hippocrates (400 BC).

He categorised people on the basis of four body humours and prominent personality characteristics associated with them such as:

<i>Humours</i>	<i>Personality type</i>	<i>Temperamental characteristics</i>
Blood	Sanguine	Cheerful, light hearted, happy, hopeful, etc.
Yellow bile	Choleric	Irritable, angry, ambitious, etc.
Phlegm	Phlegmatic	Cold, calm, slow, indifferent, etc.
Black bile	Melancholic	Depressed, dejected, sad, pessimistic, etc.

Recently, psychologists have attempted to study personality in their own way. They have formulated various theories to explain personality.

These are divided into two types, viz., types and traits theories. Both these theories of personality focus on people's personal characteristics. However, 'type' theorists and 'trait' theorists differ in the ways they use characteristics to describe people.

Type Theories:

Type theorists have explained personality on the basis of physique and temperament. Temperament refers to emotional aspect of the personality like changes in mood, tensions, excitement, etc. A 'type' is simply a class of individuals said to share a common collection of characteristics.

Three important 'Type theories' of personality are explained here:

CG Jung's Classification:

CG Jung has classified personality on the basis of sociability character as Introverts and Extraverts.

Introverts are described as people who share characteristics such as shyness, social withdrawal, and tendency to talk less. Because of these characteristics these people appear to be self-centered, unable to adjust easily in social situations. They are not easily suggestible. They are future oriented, very sensible and rigid in ideas.

Extraverts share a tendency to be outgoing, friendly, talkative, and social in nature. They prefer social contacts, generous, sportive, and courageous.

They are happy-go-lucky persons and show interest in present reality than future. They express their feelings openly. Take decisions quickly and act upon quickly. They are not affected easily by difficulties.

Ambiverts:

There are only few people who are pure introverts or pure extraverts. The remaining majority of people possess both the qualities of introverts and extraverts.

Such people are called as Ambiverts. This classification was made by psychologists who came after Jung.

Ernest Kretschmer's Classification:

German psychologist Kretschmer has attempted to correlate physique and character. From his studies on mental patients, he found that certain body types are associated with particular types of mental disorders. He has classified personalities into four types:

a. Pyknic type:

These are people who are short and having round body. They will have personality traits of extraverts. These people are more prone to suffer from a mental disorder called Manic Depressive Psychosis (MDP).

b. Asthenic type:

These people will have a slender or slim body. They will have the personality traits of introverts. These people are more prone to suffer from a serious mental disorder called Schizophrenia.

c. Athletic type:

These people will have strong body. They are more energetic and aggressive. They will be strong enough, determined, adventurous and balanced. They are comparable with ambiverts. They are more prone to suffer from MDP.

d. Dysplastic type:

These people will have unproportionate body and do not belong to any of the three types mentioned above. This disproportion is due to hormonal imbalance. Their behaviour and personality are also imbalanced.

William Sheldon's Classification:

Sheldon has proposed a theory of personality correlating temperament and body type. He has divided people into three types:

a. Endomorph:

These people will have soft, fat and round body, having predominance of abdominal region. They are sociable and relaxed (can be compared to pyknic type).

b. Ectomorph:

These are the people who are tall, thin and flat chested, having the skin, bones and neural structure predominantly. They are shy, reserved and self-conscious (can be compared with asthenic type).

c. Mesomorph:

These people are well built with heavy and strong muscles appear predominantly. They are physically active, noisy, adventurous by nature (can be compared to athletic type).

Traits of Personality and Trait Theories:

Traits are tendencies to behave in relatively consistent and distinctive ways across situations. These are the measurable aspects of personality. The most common way to describe people is to list these traits or qualities possessed by them. For example, friendliness, social, honesty, perseverance, submissiveness, dominance, etc.

The groups of personality traits are known as personality factors or dimensions of personality. Allport and RB Cattell are famous for their work on personality studies using traits.

GW Allport was the first person to adopt the trait approach against the type approach for the description of personalities. According to him the traits are the basic units of personality. Every person develops a unique set of organised tendencies called traits.

Allport has identified three types of traits—cardinal, central and secondary. Cardinal traits are primary and they cover all aspects of an individual's behaviour and attributes.

Central traits represent few characteristics which can be used to describe a person such as kindness, honesty, etc. Secondary traits appear in only a relatively small range of situations. These are not strong enough like cardinal traits and hence they are not regarded as integral parts of one's personality.

RB Cattell has identified two types of traits. They are source traits and surface traits. Source traits are the underlying structures or sources that determine our behaviour. Surface traits are influenced by source traits and are manifested in our behaviour.

Cattell, by adopting a method called factor analysis has recognised 16 'Source traits' as building blocks of our personality. The 'Sixteen personality factor test' developed by him includes these factors. This test is widely used, because these personality characteristics can be measured and described more objectively.

Development and Organisation of Personality:

As defined—the personality is a dynamic organisation of various qualities including physical and psychological aspects. Personality is something that grows and develops as a result of interplay of biological, sociocultural and psychological factors. Because of the developmental process, the personality is subjected to change. That is why there are individual differences. What causes these differences? The answer to this question lies in the factors influencing the development of personality. These factors are classified into three categories:

Biological Factors:

These are also called as physiological factors which include endocrine glands, blood sugar and other externally imposed biological conditions. There are many endocrine glands which are situated in different parts of the body.

These glands produce different hormones. Normal secretion of these hormones promotes healthy and normal personality. Abnormalities in secretion like over or under secretions lead to im-balancement.

In addition to the biological factors drug dependence, alcoholism also affects personality. Dietary problems like—semi- starvation, vitamin deficiencies, diseases which are acute as well as chronic—like toxic and bacterial infection due to syphilis, encephalitis or such other diseases cause very severe damage to the personality development and functioning.

Sociocultural Factors:

The society and culture play important role in the development of personality. Among the factors which influence the personality— the influence of home atmosphere is very crucial. Parental behaviour will have greater impact on children.

Parental attitude towards children, pattern of care like over protection, over indulgence, rejection, negligence, encouragement, discouragement, their attitude towards life, relationship with friends and relatives all will affect the development. Number of children in a family, order of birth, peer group, school atmosphere also influences personality development.

Psychological Factors:

The psychological factors like intelligence level, motives, different interests acquired by the person, attitudes developed, will and character, thinking and reasoning abilities, perceptual ability, emotional development and such other psychological factors also influence the formation, development and organisation of personality.