

# 06 - 6. Personality

## 6. Personality

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Theories of personality consider the following different dimensions:

1. Personality as an enduring and consistent feature (dispositional) vs. differing with and influenced by situations (situationalism)
2. Personality traits are shared and comparable (nomothetic) vs. traits are unique to individuals and not comparable (idiographic)

Various theories of personality differ in the degree to which they embrace situationalism (vs. dispositionalism) and the notion of idiography (uniqueness).

(Adapted from Gross Psychology 9e Page 731) Allport's theory: Allport analysed 18000 adjectives used as 'trait labels'. A trait refers to an enduring disposition viewed as a continuous dimension. He described three types of traits:

1. Cardinal traits: influential, core traits
2. Central traits: 5 - 10 traits, less general
3. Secondary traits: least important, least consistent traits that only close friends can notice.

Cattell's approach: Cattell selected 4500 traits from Allport's work, and further reduced them to 171 elements before factor analyzing them to identify 16 dimensions. Surface traits are correlated to one another but not important for understanding one's personality and Source traits that are basic building blocks of the 16 PF questionnaire devised by Cattell. Cattell undertook oblique factor analysis to identify these source traits. Cattell's factors are a larger number of less powerful somewhat correlated (not fully independent) factors arising out of first order analysis - called traits. Cattell maintained that a •Unique features •Variable and situational •Unique features (idiographic) •Consistent and enduring •Variable and situational •Shared features •Shared features (nomothetic) •Consistent/enduring (dispositional) Eysenck's factors Cattell's traits Eysenck's factors Cattell's traits Psychoanalytic theories Psychoanalytic theories Situationism Humanistic school Situationism Humanistic school Kelly's personal construct theory Kelly's personal construct theory

© SPMM Course fundamental discontinuity exists between normal and abnormal personalities (categorical). During his work Cattell identified 3 types of data that reveal qualities of one's personality: 1. Q-data: obtained from questionnaires 2. L-data: Obtained from lifetime records (e.g.

report cards, friend's accounts etc.) and 3. Tdata: test based data (e.g. Thematic Apperception Test etc.). Eysenck's approach: Eysenck used second order analysis (orthogonal factor analysis) that identified small number of powerful independent factors. This method yielded 3 dimensional traits. These are neuroticism (vs. stability), psychoticism and extraversion (vs. introversion). Eysenck's personality questionnaire contains a lie scale. Biologically, extraversion is related to arousal and ascending reticular activating system; neuroticism may be related to sympathetic system reactivity. Introverts are said to be easily aroused. Hence they are also more easily conditionable than extraverts; this may explain why introverts stay indoors more often. Extraverts have low arousal state; hence they are not easily conditionable. Eysenck maintained that no fundamental discontinuity exists between normal and abnormal personalities (dimensional view). Cloninger's psychobiological model of personality includes four dimensions of temperament (each 50 to 60 % heritable), which manifest early in life and 3 components of character, which are shaped by environment. The temperamental dimensions include □ Novelty-seeking (includes frustration avoidance, impulsive decision-making) □ Harm-avoidance (pessimistic worry about the future, passive avoidant behaviour, fear of uncertainty); □ Reward-dependence (sentimentality, social attachment, and dependence on praise and approval) □ Persistence (high perseverance and tolerance of frustration) The character dimensions are self-directedness, cooperativeness, and self-transcendence. DSM identifies 3 clusters of personality disorders. In general Cluster A personalities are associated with low reward-dependence. Cluster B personality with high novelty-seeking and Cluster C personalities with high harm-avoidance traits. Rotter's locus of control theory is a single trait theory - where external and internal loci are used to measure personality attributes. Note that both Cattell's and Eysenck's are multitrait theories. Big Five Traits- McCrae & Costa 1992:

1. Openness
2. Conscientiousness
3. Extraversion
4. Agreeableness
5. Neuroticism (OCEAN) The Big-Five concept has provided a unified framework for trait research. NEO decreases with age; AC increases with age.

© SPMM Course Kelly's personal construct theory: Kelly proposed an idiographic theory of personality influenced by the humanistic school. According to him one's personality can be deciphered only when observations regarding interpersonal relationships are made and hypotheses are formulated and tested. For this purpose, Kelly used a repertory grid. Initially a list of important people is generated (called elements). 2 elements are chosen and contrasted with the third one to see what themes emerge - called constructs. Such constructs are applied to elements down the list till all are exhausted and sufficiently descriptive. Such constructs and elements can also be used for measuring formal thought disturbances (Bannister grid). Humanistic or phenomenological school of personality focuses on the individuals' view of the world rather than their unconscious impulses. In contrast to trait-based approaches that view personality as relatively enduring and shared, the humanistic school emphasises on the uniqueness of an individual's personality and the capacity for growth in an optimistic manner. Therapeutic models such as Roger's Client Centred Therapy originated from humanistic school. Interactionism: A major issue with trait theories (nomothetic approaches) is the poor correlation between one's traits and observed behaviour. This led to a raise in the prominence of the so-called situationalism that contends that all are apparently enduring behavioural patterns are in fact a result of environmental demands on an individual. A middle path is the concept of interactionism (Magnusson and Endler, 1977), which proposes that

personality and the environment interact with each other to produce the observed behaviour. Typology: Early personality theorists such as Sheldon and Kretschmer used body shape based physical types to describe associated personality traits. Kretschmer related body types to personality variations and dispositions to major psychoses (1921). □ Asthenic - thin body; aloof individuals; correlated with schizophrenia □ Pyknic - plump individuals; childish with swings in mood; correlated with manic-depression □ Athletic - well-built individuals with a steady temperament. Based on the study of thousands of nude photographs of first year college students, Sheldon proposed three body types (1954). □ Endomorphic - plump and round people who are relaxed and outgoing. □ Mesomorphic - strong and muscular people who are energetic and assertive. □ Ectomorphic - tall and thin people who are fearful and restrained; associated with schizophrenia Friedman & Rosenman introduced Type A / Type B personality classification. Type A persons show impatience, excessive time consciousness, insecurity, high competitiveness, hostility and aggression and are incapable of relaxation. They may be high achievers and workaholics. Type B persons are relaxed, and easy-going; creative, often self-analyze and evade stress but cope poorly when under stress. Type A was first described as a risk factor for coronary disease but MRFIT study later concluded that there is no difference between Type A and Type B in regard to coronary proneness. This classification has poor

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