Personality Theories: A Brief Overview

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Introduction

The term personality comes from the Latin word persona, which means mask. Those defining personality as a mask view personality as one's public self. We select to display to the world. This definition of personality implies that important aspects of a person remain concealed for some reason. The description of the personality word has been started with the famous definition given by Allport.[1] He stated that "Personality is a dynamic organization, within the person, of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustment to the environment". Personality is generally defined as individual unique and relatively stable pattern of behaviour, thoughts and emotion. More or less stable, internal factors make one person's behaviour consistent from one time to another, and different from the behaviour other people would manifest in comparable situations.[2]

Theories of Personality

a) Type Theories: The personality types are used to communicate certain expected behaviours based on similarities. Such efforts have been made since ancient times.

	Types of personality	Symptoms
1	**Vata:**	is produced by an interaction of Dry, cold, light, subtle, clear and rough akasha (ether) and vayu (air)
2	**Pitta**	Pitta emerges out of an interaction of Unctuous, hot, acute, fluid, acid, mobile, and poignant vayu and agni (fire)
3	**Kapha**	Kapha is produced by the joint action Cold, soft, unctuous, sweet, stable and viscid of jala

		(water) and prithvi (earth)

i) Charak Samhita of Ayurveda or the Indian science of medicine, the original treatise classifies people on the basis of three elements called doshas i.e., (a) vata, (b) pitta and (c) kapha.

Each of these refers to a type of temperament referred to as prakriti (nature) of the person.

ii) **Hippocrates,3 a Greek physician, who proposed a typology based on the fluid or** humour.

iii) Sheldon was proposed his personality theory on the basis of body structure.

Four temperament categories	Dominane	Characteristic
Sanguine	blood	Highly talkative, enthusiastic, active, and social
Choleric	yellow bile	Extroverted, independent, decisive, and goal-oriented, and ambitious
Melancholy	black bile	Analytical and detail-oriented, and they are deep thinkers and feelers
Phlegmatic	phlegm	Relaxed, peaceful, quiet, and easy-going

Three temperament categories	Body Structure	Temperament
Endomorphic	Fat, soft and round	Relaxed and sociable
Mesomorphic	Strong musculature,are rectangular	Energetic and courageous
Ectomorphic	Thin, long, and fragile	Brainy, artistic, and introverts

b) Trait Theory of Personality

1. In the trait theories the first name is Allport.[5] He conducted idiographic research that focused on conscious motivation and personal traits.

He proposed his theory at three levels of traits:

a) Cardinal trait: These are defining characteristic, in a small number of us, that

dominates and shapes all of our behavior. Mother Theresa is the most cited example of a person whose life focused on altruism

— benefiting others, even to her own detriment.

b) Central trait: These are general character- istic, between 5 and 10 of which shape much of our behavior. For example, cheerfulness and shyness can be central traits.

c) Secondary trait: These are those chara- cteristic, which apparent in only certain situations. For example, being uncomfor- table in confined spaces can be a secondary trait. Our unique pattern of traits determines our behavior.

2. Second prominent trait theory is given by Raymond B. Cattell.[6] He has developed a different approach to the description and analysis of personality. He relies on data collected from three sources: a) person's life record, b) self-ratings, and c) objective tests. Drawing from people's life records and self-ratings, Cattell identified major personality factors both within individuals and across people in general.

He proposed two major types of traits:

A) Surface traits: These are those personality characteristics which are easily seen by other people (one's outward actions).

B) Source traits: In the opposite of surface traits, source traits are more basic traits that underlie the surface traits

Cattell[6] distinguishes between surface traits, which are observable patterns of behavior, and source traits, which he viewed as underlying, internal traits responsible for our overt behavior. He viewed the source traits as more important. Source traits can be identified only by means of computer analysis of all the collected data.

3. Hans Eysenck[7], proposed a theory that is trait as well as type in nature. He was tried to reduce description of personality to three major genetically influenced dimensions, which everyone possesses to varying degrees. He was also used factor analysis, a statistical procedure that identifies common factors among groups of items, to simplify a long list of traits into his three dimensions:

a) Extroversion measures our sociability and tendency to pay attention to the external environment, as opposed to our private mental experiences.

b) Neuroticism measures our level of instability — how moody, anxious, and unreliable we are — as opposed to stability — how calm, even-tempered, and reliable we are.

c) Psychoticism measures our level of tough-mindedness — how hostile, ruthless, and

insensitive we are — as opposed to tender-mindedness — how friendly, empathetic, and cooperative we are.

4. Paul Costa and Robert McCrae8 proposed a latest theory in the area of personality. They have developed a five-factor model of personality, nicknamed, "The Big Five." In cross-cultural studies, the same five factors have been identified in trait ratings. The Big Five Theory includes the traits of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. (Acronym OCEAN).

i) Openness-Person's willingness to try new things/experiences

ii) Conscientiousness-   Person's organization and motivation

iii)Extraversion- Outgoing and social

iv) Agreeableness-Basic emotional style of a person (easygoing, friendly, and pleasant)

v) Neuroticism-A person's emotional instability or stability (excessive worriers, overanxious, and moody).

Trait theories basically describe the personality in terms of different different traits.

c) Psychoanalytic based theories

Sigmund Freud9 developed a number ofhypothetical models to show how the mind(or what he called the psyche) works: (a) Topographic model of the psyche: how the mind is organized. (b) Structural model: how personality works. (c) Psychogenetic modelof development: how personality develops.

Conscious

a) Topographic model:-In the topographic model the mind is divided into three sub-parts.

Sub-conscious

i) Conscious: It is the part of the mind that holds everything you are currently aware.

ii) Preconscious: It contains everything youcould become aware of but are not

Unconscious

currently thinking about.

iii) Unconscious: It is the part of the mind thatwe cannot usually become aware of.

This is the deepest part of the mind. According to Sigmund Freud[10] our all type of repressed and disturbing memories stored in the unconscious level.

c) Structural model: According to Freud, structure of the mind divided into three parts:

 i) Id: It functions in the unconscious level and it is closely tied to instinctual and biological processes. It is the primitive core from which the ego and the superego develop. It is based on 'pleasure principle' the idea that all needs have to be satisfied immediately, avoiding pain and seeking pleasure, regardless of external conditions.

 ii) Ego: It focuses on ensuring the id's impulses are expressed effectively in the context of the real world. The ego, as a source of rationality, conforms to the 'reality principle' – delaying the discharge of energy from the id until an appropriate object or activity can be found.

 iii) Superego: Third structure, the superego, which provides moral guidance, embodying parental and societal values. It has two sub-systems:

  (a) conscience: It consist images of what is right and what deserves punishment – this is the basis for guilt.

  (b) Ego ideal: It consist images of what is rewarded or approved of this is the basis for pride.

Sigmund Freud[9] describes two types of instinct:

a) Life instinct or Eros: A drive for life, love, growth, self-preservation, constructive works and human propagation. Libido – energy force for sexual activities.

b) Death instinct or Thanatos: A drive for aggression and death and destructiveness. Death instinct If external, leads to a person toward homicide and if internal leads to the person toward suicide or self-harm.

Types of anxiety

He defines anxiety in terms of an affective and unpleasant feeling which alerts ego to the impending danger so that person can behave in an adaptive way.

 i) Realistic anxiety: It occurs when the emotional response to real danger.

 ii) Neurotic anxiety: It occurs when anxiety regarding the ability of control of ego on id wishes, particularly sexual and aggressive impulse.

 iii) Moral anxiety: It occurs when ego is threatened by superego.

c) **Psychogenetic model:** In the psychogenic model he emphasize on stages of

personalitydevelopment. Freudgave emphasis on the childhood traumas as key to neurotic disorder during adulthood.He believed that people normally progress through five stages of psychosexual development.

i) Oral stage (0 to18 months): The newborn baby is completely dependent on others for the satisfaction of all needs. During this stage body pleasure is centered on the mouth. The baby gets satisfaction from sucking, eating, and biting in the course offeeding.

Anal stage (18 to 3 years): It is characte- rized by a shift in body pleasure to the anus. It is reflected by a concern with the retention and expulsion of faces. This is why Freud felt that it is during toilet training a child has the first experience with externally imposed control. The pattern of toilet training, therefore, may influence later personal qualities and conflicts experienced by the person.

ii) Phallic stage (3 to 6 years): In this stage the child observes the difference between male and female and experiences what Freud called the Oedipus complex. This kind of attraction leads to serious conflict, which he termed as Oedipus and Electra Complexes in boys and girls, respectively.

iii) Latency stage (7 to puberty): This stage follows the phallicstage; there is very little explicit or overt concern with sexuality. The child represses his or her memories ofinfantile sexuality and forbidden sexual activity.

iv) Genital stage (puberty and above): During this stage the personattains maturity in psychosexual development. The person becomes capable of genuine love for other people and can achieve adult sexual satisfaction. He or she may relate to others in a heterosexual fashion. However, if journey towards this stage is marked by excessive stress or overindulgence, it may cause fixation to an earlier stage of development.

Carl Gustav Jung Analytical Psychology

Definition of personality: Personality as wholeness or unity which helps to adapt with physical environment and society by thought, feelings, behavior and conscious and unconscious process.Jung believed that personality is shaped by the cumulative experiences of past generations extending back to our evolutionary past.

a) **Ego:** It is the conscious mind, responsible for our feeling of identity and continuity. Structure of personality: According to Jung's[10] analytic theory of personality, the psyche—or whole personality—consists of interacting systems

including the ego; the personal unconsciouswith its complexes; the collective unconscious with its archetypes, attitudes, and functions; and the self.

b) **Personal unconscious:** it is similar to Freud's preconscious and unconscious, a storehouse of all our own past memories, hidden instincts, and urges unique to us. It contains complexes, which are groups of associated, emotional, unconscious thoughts that significantly influence our attitudes, and associations that act as driving forces.

c) **Collective unconscious** : is the powerful and influential system of the psyche that contains universal memories and ideas that all people have inherited from our ancestors over the course of evolution. The inherited memories are archetypes or common themes found in all cultures, religions, and literature, both ancient and modern.

Four especially important archetypes in Jung's theory are known as persona, shadow, animus &anima and self.

i) Persona – It is named after the mask worn by ancient Greek actors, or public personality, mediates between the ego and the real world.

ii) Shadow – A reverse image of the persona contains traits that are unacceptable to the persona, whether they are positive or negative.

iii) Animus – It is the masculine side of females while the anima is the feminine side of males.

iv) Self - It is the innate potential for wholeness, an unconscious ordering principle directing overall psychic life that gives rise to the ego, which compromises with and is partly shaped by external reality.

Psychic energy – the energy by which the work of personality is performed is called psychic energy. Principle of opposite- aspolarity in physical energy like polarity is in the wish, affect of the person. i.e. affect of pleasant and unpleasant. Principle of equivalence-if energy is expended in bringing about a certain condition, the amount expended will appear elsewhere in the system. Principle of entropy-states when two bodies of different temperatures are placed in contact with another heat will pass from the hotter to the colderbody.

Alfred Adler Individual Psychology

While Freud emphasized sex, and Jung empha-sized ancestral thought patterns, Adler emphasized social interest as the primary determinant of behavior. He made consciousness the center of personality in his individual or ego theory of personality.[11]

Personality – Adler saw individual as unique. He also postulated a principle of dynamism, which in every individual is future directed and moves toward a goal. Once the goal is established, the psychic apparatus shapes itself toward attainment.

Subjectivity of perception – Humans are motivated by their expectation of the future than by experiences of the past. Personality is not determined by external cause rather by subjectivity perception.

Human behavior are determined by the future expectation

Fictional Finalism – Adler called this fictional finalism. Many people behave as if there were a heaven or a hell in their personal future. Of course, there may be a heaven or a hell, but most of us don't think of this as a proven fact. That makes it a "fiction" in Vaihinger's and Adler's sense of the word. And finalism refers to the teleology of it: The fiction lies in the future, and yet influences our behavior today

Style of life: Adler's self is a personalized, subjective system that interprets and makes meaning from our experiences, trying to fulfill our unique style of life, the system principle by which the individual personality functions. Striving for success: Our creative self-constructs our personality out of the raw material of heredity and experience. Adler believed that people strive for superiority to be altruistic, cooperative, creative, unique, aware, and interested in social welfare. He thought that we all try to compensate for inferiority complexes based on what we see as physical, intellectual, or social inadequacies. Social interest: Social interest is the inevitable compensation for all of our natural weaknesses. Adler thought that birth order was an important factor controlling personality. Birth order: He hypothesized that the oldest child (who is prepared for the appearance of a rival) is likely to develop into a responsible, protective person; the middle child is likely to be ambitious and well adjusted; and the youngest child is likely to be spoiled.

Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Theory

Erikson developed a theory of personality development with a focus on social adaptation. He calls attention to the problems of social adaptation. With advancing age we face a wider range of human relationships. The solution of problems faced during the eight psycho-social stages determines adult development. His emphasis on social and cultural forces is crucial as it distinguishes him from Freud. He also viewed development as a life-long process. In this process ego identity is central. His concept of identity crisis of adolescent has drawn considerable attention. Erikson believed that "human personality in principle develops according to steps pre-determined in the growing person's readiness to

be driven toward, to be aware of, and to interact with, a widening social radius". On the other hand, the society "in principle, tends to be so constituted as to meet and invite this succession of potentialities for interaction and attempts to safeguard and to encourage the proper rate and the proper sequence of their enfolding." Thus young people must generate for themselves some central perspective and direction that gives them a meaningful sense of unity and purpose. Favorable outcomes of each stage are sometimes known as "virtues", a term used in the context of Erikson's work as it is applied to medicine, meaning "potencies."

The Erikson life-stage virtues, in order of the eight stages in which they may be acquired, are:

I. **Basic trust vs. basic mistrust:** This stage covers the period of infancy. 0-1 year of age. - Whether or not the baby develops basic trust or basic mistrust is not merely a matter of nurture. It is multi-faceted and has strong social components. It depends on the quality of the maternal relationship. The mother carries out and reflects their inner perceptions of trustworthiness, a sense of personal meaning, etc. on the child. If successful in this, the baby develops a sense of trust, and virtue named 'hope' is developed which "forms the basis in the child for a sense of identity".

II. **Autonomy vs. Shame** – It around early childhood around 1–3 years old- Introduces the concept of autonomy vs. shame and doubt. During this stage the child is trying to master toilet training.

III. **Initiative vs. Guilt** - Preschool / 3–6 years

   - Does the child have the ability to or do

   things on their own, such as dress him or herself? If "guilty" about making his or her own choices, the child will not function well. Erikson has a positive outlook on this stage, saying that most guilt is quickly compen- sated by a sense of accomplishment. After successful completion of this stage child has developed 'purpose' virtue.

IV. **Industry vs. Inferiority:** School-age / 6-

   11. Child comparing self-worth to others (such as in a classroom environment). Child can recognize major disparities in personal abilities relative to other children. Erikson places some emphasis on the teacher, who should ensure that children do not feel inferior. In the successful completion of this stage the virtue is competence has been developed.

V. **Identity vs. Role Confusion:** - Adolescent

/ 12 years till 18. Questioning of self. Who am I, how do I fit in? Where am I going in life? Erikson believes, that if the parents allow the child to explore, they will conclude their own identity. However, if the parents continually push him/her to conform to their views, the teen will face identity confusion. Fidelity virtue has been developed.

VI. **Intimacy vs. isolation:** - This is the first stage of adult development. This develop- ment usually happens during young adult-hood, which is between the ages of 18 to

35. Dating, marriage, family and friendships are important during the stage in their life. By successfully forming loving relationships with other people, individuals are able to experience love and intimacy. Those who fail to form lasting relationships may feel isolated and alone.

VII. **Generativity vs. stagnation:** - It is the second stage of adulthood and happens between the ages of 35-64. During this time people are normally settled in their life and know what is important to them. A person is either making progress in their career or treading lightly in their career and unsure if this is what they want to do for the rest of their working lives. Also during this time, a person is enjoying raising their children and participating in activities, that gives them a

sense of purpose. If a person is not comfortable with the way their life is progressing, they're usually regretful about the decisions and feel a sense of uselessness.

VIII. **Ego integrity vs. despair:** - This stage affects the age group of 65 and on. During this time an individual has reached the last chapter in their life and retirement is approaching or has already taken place. Many people, who have achieved what was important to them, look back on their lives and feel great accomplishment and a sense of integrity. Conversely, those who had a difficult time during middle adulthood may look back and feel a sense of despair. Wisdom virtue is emerging in this stage.

Erikson's research suggests that each individual must learn how to hold both extremes of each specific life-stage challenge in tension with one another, not rejecting one end of the tension or the other.

Karen Horney

Horney brought a feminist perspective to psychoanalytic theory and sharply attacked

the male bias, she saw in Freud's work. Her counterpart to Freud's penis envy in females was the male's wombenvy or desire to procreate. She thought that males and females both are envious of attributes of the other sex, but that women were more envious of men's societal status than their penises. Horney proposed that youngsters feel helpless and threatened, and learn to cope by showing affection or hostility toward others, or by withdrawing from relationships. Adults who use all three strategies are healthy, whereas according to her theory, using only one strategy leads to mental illness.[13]

Needs of child hood: Horney believed that there are two needs are important in childhood: satisfaction need and safety need.

Basic anxiety: these are the feelings of loneliness and helplessness which is connected to the repression of hostility.

Neurotic needs: recurrent failure becomes parts of personality which leads to neurotic needs.

These 10 neurotic needs can be classed into three broad categories:

1. Needs that move you towards others:

   These neurotic needs cause individuals to seek affirmation and acceptance from others and are often described as needy or clingy as they seek out approval and love. The need under this category are Need for Affection and Approval, Need for a Partner, and Need for Personal Admiration.

2. Needs that move you away from others: These neurotic needs create hostility and antisocial behavior. These individuals are often described as cold, indifferent, and aloof. The neurotic needs under this category are Need to Restrict One's Life, Need for Self-Sufficiency and Independence.

3. Needs that move you against others: These neurotic needs result in hostility and a need to control other people. These individuals are often described as difficult, domineering, and unkind. The needs under this category are Need for Power, Need to Exploit Others, Need for Prestige, Need for Personal Achievement, and Need for Perfection and Unassailability.

d) **Humanistic Theories of Personality**

Abraham Maslow's Holistic Dynamic Theory[14]: Trained as a behaviorist in the 1920s, Maslow thought that behaviorism could not account for his observations of developing children. He asserted that we are born good and move toward self-actuali- zation as our goal.

i) The physiological needs. These include the needs people have for oxygen, water,

protein, salt, sugar, calcium, and other minerals and vitamins. Also, there's the needs to be active, to rest, to sleep, to get rid of wastes (CO_2, sweat, urine, and feces),to avoid pain, and to have sex.

ii) The safety and security needs. When the physiological needs are largely taken care of, this second layer of needs comes into play. One will become increasingly interes-ted in finding safe circumstances, stability,and protection.

The love and belonging needs. When physiological needs and safety needs are, by and large, taken care of, a third layer starts to show up. One begin to feel the need for friends, a sweetheart, children affectionate relationships in general, even a sense of community.

iii) The esteem needs Maslow noted two versions of esteem needs, a lower one and a higher one. The lower one is the need for the respect of others, the need for status, fame, glory, recognition, attention, reputa- tion, appreciation, dignity, even dominance. The higher form involves the need for self- respect, including such feelings as confi- dence, competence, achievement, mastery, independence, and freedom.

iv) Self-actualization: is reaching toward the best person one can be.

Rogers'self-theory

He proposed the self-theory,[15] an organized, consistent set of beliefs andperceptions about us, which develops in response to our life experiences. Experiences that are inconsistent with our self- concept cause us to feel threatened and anxious. Ifwe are well adjusted, we can adapt by modifying our self-concept. Rogers believed that we are all born with a need for unconditional positive regard, for acceptance and love from others independent of how we behave, and positive self-regard from ourselves. When positive regard is not unconditional,conditions of worth dictate behaviors that cause usto approve or disapprove of ourselves. The difference between our real self, and what Rogers calls the ideal self, or what we think society wants, is called incongruence. To become fully functioning (Rogers' term for self-actualization), we must learn to accept ourselves (unconditional positive self- regard) and unite the real and ideal selves into oneagain.

e) Behavioral Theory of Personality

i) Skinner was an influential behavioral psychologist of the last half century. As a result of his observations of experimental studies with pigeons, rats, people, and a variety of other organisms, Skinner deve- loped his operant conditioning theory. Skinner maintained

that behavior is personality. The environment shapes who we become, and who we become is determined by the contingencies of reinforcement we have experienced. If we change someone's environment, we change his/her personality.

i)   George Kelly's Personal Construct Theory. The primarily cognitive theories of personality, the personal-construct theory of engineer and psychologist George Kelly is the best known. He thought that, like scientists, we all try to make sense of our world by generating, testing, and revising hypotheses about our social reality, called personal constructs. We develop personal constructs, for example, when we consider how someone is similar to or different from someone else. Our personal constructs are a set of bipolar categories we use as labels to help us categorize and interpret the world. For example, our personal constructs can include happy/unhappy, energetic/ inactive, selfish / generous, etc. We apply our personal constructs to all of the situations we are in, and revise them when they are not accurate. Our pattern of personal constructs determines our personality. People who use few constructs tend to stereotype others. People who use too many tend to have difficulty predicting other people's behavior.

Bandura thinks that we learn more by observational learning than by operant conditioning. He explains behavior using his concept of reciprocal determinism, which states that the characteristics of the person, the person's behavior, and the environment all affect one another in two-way causal relationships. The person includes persona- lity characteristics, cognitive processes, and self-regulation skills. The person's behavior includes the nature, frequency, and intensity of actions. The environment includes stimuli from the social or physical environment and reinforcement contingencies. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is the major factor in how we regulate our lives. Self-efficacy is our belief that we can perform behaviors that are necessary to accomplish tasks, and that we are competent. Bandura has extended his theory to behavior of the individual in groups. Collective efficacy is our perception that with collaborative effort,   our group will obtain its desired outcome.

ii)   Julian Rotter's social learning theory is focused on locus of control, the degree to which we expect that a reinforcement or outcome of our behavior is contingent on our own behavior or personal character- istics, is under the control of others, or is unpredictable. Those with an internal locus of control think they control and are responsible for what happens to them—for example, their hard work gets rewarded[19].

Conclusion

All personality theories stress the importance of experiences, particularly childhood

experiences, in shaping and influencing personality. They differ, of course, in the precise dynamics of how experiences contribute to personality development and change. Whereas the effects of experience take center stage in personality theories, physiological factors are normally given only a secondary role. Though some theories mention heredity and other biological factors (Eysenck's theory in particular), the classic theories have mostly ignored biological sources as contributors to personality. The personality theorist attempts to describe what all humans have in common (human nature), what some have in common, and the uniqueness of each individual (individual differences). A comprehensive explanation of personality would specify the relative importance of genetics, traits, sociocultural determinants, learning, existential– humanistic considerations, unconscious mechanisms, and cognitive processes.

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