Big Five Personality Traits And Trait Theories

How would you describe a close friend's personality, what kind of sentences would you like to say? A few terms that might come to your mind are, 'social,' 'kind-hearted' and 'outgoing.' All of these represent different types of traits. What exactly does the word 'trait' mean?

A trait can moderately stable attribute that causes individuals to behave in different ways. In the study of personality psychology, A trait approach is one of the major theoretical approaches. This approach proposes that the personalities of individuals are made up of these inner moral values.

The trait approach to personality is primarily focused on discrimination between individuals. The mixture of various traits forms an individual personality that is unique to every individual. A trait approach mainly focused on finding and compute these individual personality characteristics.

Trait Theory by Gordon Allport’s

American psychologist Gordon Allport originate an English-language based dictionary that consists of more than 4,000 words explaining different kinds of personality traits. He classified these traits into three classes

Cardinal Traits: These are traits that control an individual’s life, usually those that the person becomes known particularly for these traits. People with these personalities can be associated with these traits that their names are usually synonymous with these qualities. Consider the meaning of the following expressive terms: warmth, intellect, emotional stability, sensitivity, etc.

Allport suggested that cardinal traits are not very common and tend to develop later in life.

Central Traits: These are the classifications that form the foundations of personality. Central traits are not as controlling as cardinal traits. These characteristics are used to describe another person. Terms like 'shy,' 'irritability,' 'honest,' and 'anxious' are considered as examples of central traits.

Secondary Traits: These are the traits that are described relative to attributes or preferences. They usually appear particularly in situations or under distinct circumstances. Examples are getting nervous when speaking to a group and anxious while waiting in line.

Raymond Cattell (A trait theorist) lessens the number of personality traits from Allport’s list of over 4,000 traits down to 171. He eliminates uncommon traits and combining common attributes.

After that, Cattell proposed a large sample of individuals for these 171 traits. Then, using a statistical technique known as factor analysis, he classifies closely related terms and conclusively reduced his list to just 16 major key personality traits. These 16 traits are the source of all human personalities. He also developed famous personality assessments known as the 'Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire.'

Personality Factors for Counseling and Career Guidance

Three Dimensions of Personality: psychologist Hans Eysenck proposed a model of personality based upon three universal traits. These traits are followings:

Introversion/Extroversion: Introversion includes getting attention for inner experiences, while extroversion focusing attention outward on other people and the environment. A person high in introversion might be quiet, reserved and not interested in parties. While an individual high in extraversion might be interested in outgoing and parties.**Neuroticism/Emotional Stability:** This importance of Eysenck's trait theory is relevant to impatience versus even-tempered. Neuroticism refers to an individual's capacity to how quickly someone gets upset or emotional, while stability refers to the control to remain emotionally stable.**Psychoticism:** After studying numerous individuals suffering from mental illness, Eysenck proposed a personality term which he called psychoticism in his trait approach. Individuals who are high on this kind trait refers to have difficulty in dealing with reality and maybe antisocial, scary, nervous, and manipulative.

The Five-Factor Theory of Personality

Cattell's and Eysenck's theories have become the subject of reasonable research. This has led some theorists to admit that Cattell focused on many traits, while Eysenck focused on a few traits. Hence, a new trait theory frequently referred to as the 'Big Five' model.

This big five model of personality represents five major traits that help to form human personality. Researchers usually not agreed about the exact tags for each dimension, the following are explained most commonly:

1. Extraversion
2. Agreeableness
3. Conscientiousness
4. Neuroticism
5. Openness

Assessing the Trait Approach to Personality

Most theorists and psychologists believe that personality can be explained based on their personality traits. However, theorists continue to debate how many are the exact number of basic traits that make up a human personality completely. While trait theory has neutrality that some major personality theories lack (like Freud's theory), it may also have weaknesses.

Criticisms: Some of the most common criticisms of this trait theory are based on the fact that traits are usually not good predictors of behavior. While an individual may get a high score on assessments of a particular trait, he may not always behave in the same way in every kind of situation. Another major problem is these trait theories do not tell properly that how or why individual differences or similarities in personality develop or reduce.

Conclusion

The study of personality and types of shapes and the consequences of each person is delightful. Those who study the psychology of personality have varying opinions. However, they do agree or disagree with one another but theorists prefer to refine the work of their predecessors, which is common in all scientific fields.

What is most important to understand is that everyone may have the same or different personality traits. We each have particular traits that control our personality with a mixture of infinite traits that can arise in different situations. Moreover, our traits can remain the same or change over time and can be shaped by our life experiences.