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Trait Approach of Personality

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Trait Approach

- The trait approach to personality is focused on differences between individuals.
- Trait theorists assure that people differ on a number of personality characteristics each of which represent a trait.
- A trait refers to a characteristic that differs from person to person in a relatively permanent and consistent way.



G.W.Allport

- He was the 1st psychologist who gave thorough thought to the concept of traits.
- His theory is known as the trait theory because he emphasized the nature & evolution of personality traits.
- Theory is also called the Psychology of Individual.

Allport cont

- He categorized these traits into three levels-
- **Cardinal Traits-** Allport suggested that cardinal traits are rare, and dominate, usually developing later in life..They tend to define a person to such an extent that their names become synonymous with their personality

Allport cont..

- **Central traits-** These general characteristics form basic personality foundations. These traits typifies a person behaviour. They describe the major characteristics you might use to describe another person. Terms such as "intelligent," "honest," "shy," and "anxious" are considered central traits.

Allport cont..

- **Secondary traits:** Secondary traits are sometimes related to attitudes or preferences. They often appear only in certain situations or under specific circumstances. Some examples include public speaking anxiety, or impatience while waiting in line.



Hans Eysenck

- British psychologist Hans Eysenck developed a model of personality based upon three universal traits were sufficient to describe human personality.

Eysenck cont..

- **Introversiion/extraversiion –**
Introversiion involves directing attention to inner experiences, while **extraversiion** relates to focusing attention outward on other people and the environment.
- A person high in introversion might be quiet and reserved, while an individual high in extroversion might be sociable and outgoing.

Eysenck cont..

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

Eysenck cont..

- **Psychoticism** - Later, after studying individuals suffering from mental illness, Eysenck added a personality dimension he 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.

R.B.Cattell

- Cattell using a statistical method to study personality, identified 16 factors to describe personality.
- He used a number of traits and using the technique of factor analysis grouped them into 16 factors.
- These 16 factors can be represented on a profile for any personality.



Big Five model

- Lewis Goldberg proposed a five – dimension personality model, nicknamed Big five.
- The five – factor model of personality represents five core traits that interact to form human personality.

Big five cont..

- **Openness to Experience**- the tendency to be imaginative, independent, and interested in variety vs practical , conforming, and interested in routine.
- **Conscientiousness** – tendency to be organized, careful and disciplined vs disorganized, careless and impulsive.

Big five cont..

- **Extraversion** – the tendency to be sociable, fun – loving, and affectionate vs retiring, somber, and reserved.
- **Agreeableness** – the tendency to be soft-hearted, trusting, and helpful vs ruthless, suspicious, uncooperative.
- **Neuroticism** – the tendency to be calm, secure, and self- satisfied vs anxious, insecure, and self- pitying.