Importance of Theories of Personality for Effective Teaching and Learning Process

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Abstract

Personality is generally stable, although it can be influenced by environmental factors. An individual's personality causes them to react to certain scenarios and people. Personality is the total set of behaviors, feelings, thought patterns etc. that makes a complete individual. Personality theories address the origins of personality as well as the traits that define a personality. These theories look to understand why people develop different character traits and respond to external and internal stimuli differently. In simpler form, a personality theory gives an idea of how a person thinks, feels, and behaves. This includes how the person interacts with his environment. Personality theories, in general, provide a framework to understand individual's personality including the causes and motivation for thoughts, behaviour and social interactions. There exists more than one personality theory and they are the result of hypotheses, experiments, case studies, and clinical researches led by educationists, scientists in the psychology and human behavior field. Personality theories study how an individual develops their personality and can be utilized in studying personality disorders.
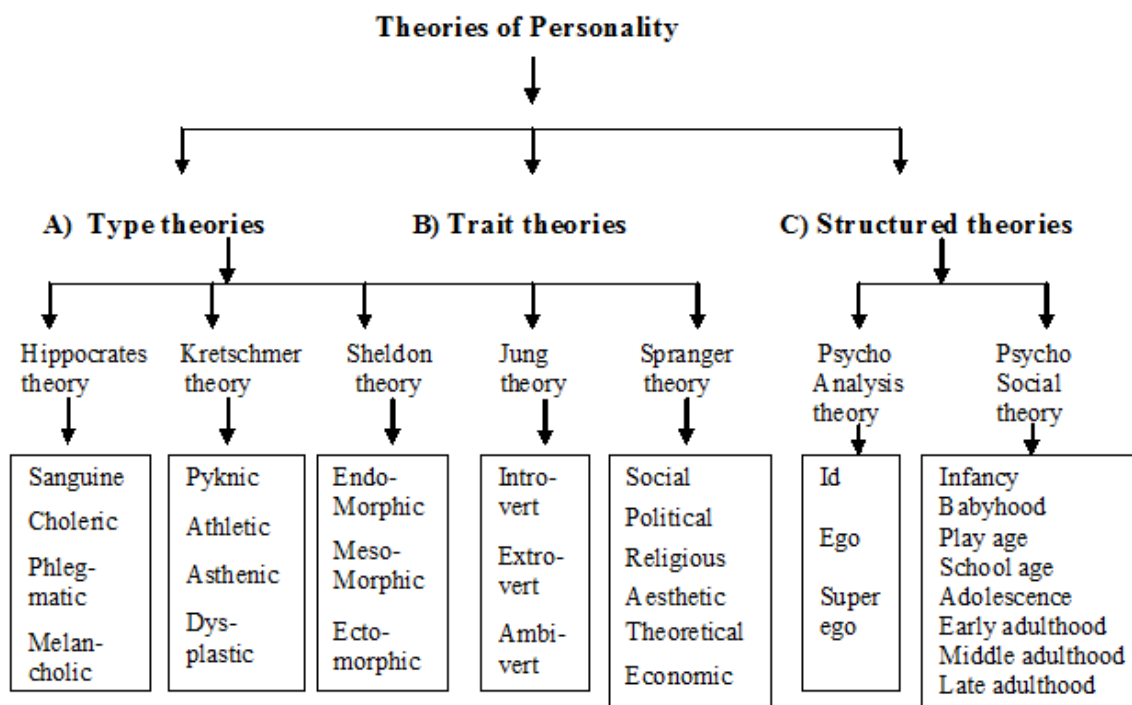
Introduction:

Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristics behavior and thought – Allport

There have been a number of theories to explain how personality and its dimensions develop. Some of the personality theories attempt to tackle a specific area of personality while others attempt to explain personality much more broadly.

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Biological theorists (like Eysenck) suggest that genetics are responsible for personality. *Behavioral theorists* (like Skinner and Watson) suggest that personality is a result of interaction between the individual and the environment. *Humanist theorists* (like Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow) emphasize the importance of free will and individual experience in the development of personality. They promote the concept of self-actualization.

Some other theories are discussed hereunder in broader perspectives**.**

Theories of Personality

A) Type theories		B) Trait theories			C) Structured theories	
Hippocrates theory	Kretschmer theory	Sheldon theory	Jung theory	Spranger theory	Psycho Analysis theory	Psycho Social theory
Sanguine Choleric Phleg-matic Melan-cholic	Pyknic Athletic Asthenic Dys-plastic	Endo-Morphic Meso-Morphic Ecto-morphic	Intro-vert Extro-vert Ambi-vert	Social Political Religious Aesthetic Theoretical Economic	Id Ego Super ego	Infancy Babyhood Play age School age Adolescence Early adulthood Middle adulthood Late adulthood

A) Type Theories:

Type theories explain personality on the basis of physique and temperament (temperament refers to emotional aspect). According to Morgan and King, *A Type is simply a class of individuals said to share a common collection of characteristics*. It means that people are classified into categories according to the characteristics they share in common.

Below presented are the different classifications to explain the personalities according to Type theories.

i) Hippocrates's Classification:

Greek physician Hippocrates (460-370 BC) is a disciple of Aristotle. He described the four temperaments according to four bodily fluids (humors) - blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile (along with four elements). These humors affect human personality traits and behaviors.

- **Sanguine:** Individuals with more blood in liver, physically and emotionally strong. They are talkative, enthusiastic, active, extrovert, social, optimistic, hopeful and accommodating. The element associated is *Air.*
- **Choleric:** They have yellow bile in spleen, physically strong and emotionally weak. They are irritable, angry but independent, decisive, goal-oriented and ambitious. The element associated is *Fire.*
- **Phlegmatic:** They have mucus in lungs, physically weak and emotionally strong. They are cold, calm, sluggish and indifferent. The element associated is *Water.*

- **Melancholic:** Black bile is present in gall bladder, physically and emotionally weak. They are bad tempered, dejected, sad, depressed and pessimists. The element associated is *Earth.*

ii) Kretschmer's Classification:

Ernest Kretschmer was a German psychiatrist who classified individuals into four categories according to their physical structure.

- **Pyknic type**: People with short and round fat body. They have large head and thick neck. They are sociable, easy going and good natured.
- **Athletic type:** Muscular individuals with broad shoulders. They are more energetic and aggressive. They optimistic, determined, adventurous and balanced.
- **Asthenic type:** These people will have a slender or slim body (leptosomatic). They are reserved, shy and pessimistic.
- **Dysplastic type:** These people will have unproportionate body due to hormonal imbalance. Their behavior and personality are also imbalanced.

iii) Sheldon's Classification:

American psychologist William Sheldon too has proposed a theory of personality according to body type. He has divided people into three types:

- **Endomorph:** These people will have soft, fat and round body. They are sociable and relaxed (similar to pyknic type).
- **Mesomorph:** These people are well built with heavy and strong muscles appear predominantly. They are physically active, adventurous and optimistic (similar to athletic type).
- **Ectomorph:** These people are tall, thin and flat chested. They are shy, reserved and self-conscious (similar to asthenic type).

iv) Jung's Classification:

Swiss psychiatrist, Carl Jung classified people according to their social participation and typology of introversion and extroversion.

- **Introvert:** Individual is interested in his own mental self, reserved prefer solitary activities to social interaction which includes reading, writing, listening music, and so on. They do not make friends easily and have few friends, but their friendship is deep rooted.
- **Extrovert:** Extroverts are socially confident, communicative and outspoken. They tend to be more social, practical, informal and enthusiastic. They make friends wherever they go.
- **Ambiverts:** *Strictly speaking, there are no introverts and extraverts pure.* **Ambiverts have a blend of traits from both introverts and extroverts, as well as their own unique strengths. They are adaptable.**

v) Spranger's Classification:

Spranger was a German philosopher and psychologist who classified people according to ideals or values of life. He classified people into six types. They are,

- **Social type**: These are interested in love, help, human relationships and virtues.
- **Political type:** They are more interested in power and wants to influence people in every walk of life.
- **Religious type**: Such individuals are interested in finding an ultimate meaning and unity.
- **Aesthetic type**: People are more interested in beauty, form and harmony.
- **Theoretical type:** They are more interested in intellectual pursuit and discovery of truth. He becomes either a scientist or a philosopher.
- **Economic type**: Individuals are interested in time, money and resources.

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All types of personalities under 'Type Approach' (which include Hippocrates, Kretschmer, Sheldon, Jung and Spranger classifications) are shown in the following table for easy reference.**Theory**	**Classification**	**Personality type**	**Personality**
Type Theories	**Hippocrates** Classification (based on humors and temperaments)	Sanguine (More blood in liver)	Active, happy, optimistic, adjustable, e... physically and emotionally strong.
		Choleric (Yellow bile in spleen)	Angry, irritable, passionate, physically ...
		Phlegmatic (More mucus in lungs)	Slow, rigid, lazy, isolate, indifferent physically weak, emotionally strong.
		Melancholic (Black bile in gall bladder)	Dull, inactive, pessimist, sad, bad temp... physically and emotionally weak
	Kretschmer Classification (based on physique)	Pyknic	Short, stout, thick neck, easy going, po...
		Athletic	Muscular, adjustable, optimistic, non-c...
		Leptosomatic	Weak, tall, thin, shy, introverts, pessim...
		Dysplastic	Abnormal physique and behavior.
	Sheldon Classification (based on physique)	Endomorphic	Short, obese, sociable, affectionate, opt...
		Mesomorphic	Muscular, tall and strong, confident, ri...
		Ectomorphic	Tall, thin, fragile, sensitive, lean, weak, calm, introvert, isolate
	Carl Jung Classification (based on social participation)	Introverts	Withdrawing, shy, isolate, reserve, caln... pessimists, imaginative, talent in fine ar...
		Extroverts	Sociable, friendly, risk takers, adventur... talkative, leadership qualities, anxious, ...
		Ambiverts	Exhibit characteristics of both introvert... Majority people belong to this category.
	Spranger Classification (based on values)	Social values	Social servants, group activities and ag...
		Political values	Interest in power, leadership qualities, c...
		Religious values	Interested in religious, spiritual activiti...
		Aesthetic values	Artistic, sensuous gratification, beauty ...
		Theoretical values	Idealistic, specific lifestyle, scientists, i...
		Economical values	Interested in material world, pragmatic,...

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B) Trait Theories:

A trait can be thought of as a relatively stable characteristic that causes individuals to behave in certain ways. The trait theory suggests that individual personalities are composed of these broad dispositions. Systems that address personality as a combination of qualities or dimensions are called trait theories.

The trait approach to personality is focused on differences between individuals. The combination and interaction of various traits form a personality that is unique to each individual. Trait theory is focused on identifying and measuring these individual personality characteristics.

❖ **Allport's Trait Theory:** Allport categorized traits into three levels:

i)**Cardinal Traits:** These traits are very rare and dominate an individual's whole life. The individuals become well-known specifically for these traits. Their names are often synonymous with these qualities. Cardinal traits often develop later in life and modify individual's behavior and attitudes. For example,

- *SardarVallabhai Patel is*popularly known as the 'Iron Man of India'.
- Albert Einstein is known for his genius.
- Sachin Tendulkar is famous for straight drive.

ii) **Central Traits:** These are common traits and serve as building blocks of the personality. These traits are not dominating but characteristic of that individual which are easily recognisable. The central traits describe overall character of the individual. Terms such as 'obedient', 'optimistic', 'intelligent' 'anxious' are examples for central traits.

iii) **Secondary Traits:** These traits are limited and appear only under certain situations or circumstances. They are not considered strong enough to be regarded as part of personality. For example, a normally cool person might become very anxious under severe pressure.

Cardinal traits are thus central to the description of one's personality. These traits combined with a few central traits form the core of characteristic traits of one's personality.

❖ **Cattell's Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire :**
(16PF Questionnaire):

Raymond Cattell used factor analysis technique to compile a list of over 17,000 traits and started out with more than 4,000 adjectives (taken from the English dictionary) that could describe people for their personality. By eliminating similarities and synonyms, he reduced the list to 171 dictionary words related with personality and called these *trait elements*. By way of correlation, he identified some 35 *surface traits*. After removing the overlapped surface traits, *16 source traits* were obtained which are key personality traits. This Trait theory by Cattell predicts the behavior of individuals on the basis of their personality traits.

Cattell also developed one of the most widely used personality assessments known as the "Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire ". The personality traits measured by the 16PF Questionnaire are Warmth, Reasoning, Emotional Stability, Dominance, Liveliness, Rule Consciousness, Social Boldness, Sensitivity, Vigilance, Abstractedness, Privateness, Apprehension, Openness to Change, Self-Reliance, Perfectionism and Tension.

C) Structured Theories:

Structure theories describe the functioning of a whole organism made up of interdependent elements. It means psychical apparatus is studied as a whole. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory and Erik Erikson's psycho-social theories are discussed here.

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i) Psychoanalytic Theory:

Sigmund Freud developed his school of thought known as *school of psychoanalysis* basing on the view that people are being engaged in a constant struggle to tame their biological urges. His psychoanalytic theory is built on the premise that the mind is topographical and dynamic. The human mind has three interrelated divisions namely, the conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious. These three levels of the human mind are continuously clash with each other and compromise to produce typical personality of the individual. Sigmund Freud determined that the personality consists of three different elements, the *id*, the *ego* and the *super ego.*

The *id* is raw and immoral system of personality that is hidden in the deep layers of unconscious mind. It acts on *pleasure seeking principle*. It follows no values, no laws, no rules and no right or wrong. The id is driven by internal and basic drives and needs. These are typically instinctual, such as hunger, thirst, and the drive for sex, or libido.

Ego is the policeman that check and unlawful activities of id. It follows the *principle of reality* and acts with intelligence to control, select and decide what needs have to be fulfilled and in which way. It helps to separate what is real and realistic of our drives.

Superego is the ethical or moral system of personality. It follows the *principle of morality*. It is idealistic and does not care for realities. It acts in connection with the morality of higher thought, judging our sense of right or wrong and action. Instead of instinctively acting like the id, the superego works to act in socially acceptable ways.

A continuous confrontation exists between id and superego with the ego attempting to mediate. The extent to which the ego is able to perform its responsibilities decide the personality make-up of the individual.

ii) Psycho-Social Development Theory:

Erik Erikson developed psycho-social development theory which identified eight stages through which an individual pass through from infancy to old age. During each stage, the person experiences a psychosocial crisis which could have a positive or negative outcome for personality development. The crises are of a psychosocial nature because they involve psychological needs of the individual (i.e., psycho) conflicting with the needs of society (i.e., social). Successful completion of each stage results in a healthy personality and failure to successfully complete a stage can result in unhealthy personality. Erikson believed that personality progressed through a series of stages, with certain conflicts arising at each stage. Success in any stage depends on successfully overcoming these conflicts.

The series of eight stages and their respective psycho-social crises are mentioned with age as follows:

Stage 1: Infancy   (Birth to 1½ years)   - trust vs. mistrust
Stage 2: Babyhood   (1½ to 3 years)   - autonomy vs. shame or doubt
Stage 3: Play age   (3 to 6 years)   - initiative vs. guilty
Stage 4: School age   (6 to 12 years)   - industry vs. inferiority
Stage 5: Adolescence   (12 to 20 years)   - role identity vs. role confusion
Stage 6: Early adulthood (20 to 45 years)   - intimacy vs. isolation
Stage 7: Middle adulthood (45 to 65 years)   - generativity vs. stagnation
Stage 8: Late adulthood   (from 65 onwards)   - integrity vs. despair

       To feel satisfied or dissatisfied about one or the other issue is common and natural. Therefore, it is essential to strike a balance between the positive and negative crises to successfully lead one's life. The well-balanced optimistic outlook in every stage of life is required in order to live the life as gracefully and productively as possible.

Conclusion:

The knowledge of personality theories is necessary and unavoidable in the teaching-learning process. Present day education is successful with guidance and counseling at required times and organize ideas in the learning process. The personality theories help teachers in putting all the learning styles and individual differences in a theoretical frame work. Education is directed towards the change in the behavior of learners. The pedagogy should be developed upon knowledge of that behavior which is the result of scientific research in different fields. Sigmund Freuds psychoanalysis contains definite views on human behaviour and the ways to change it. The teacher needs to shape the personality of the child and psychoanalysis must be given due importance of the unconscious as a determinant of behaviour. Psychoanalysis brings about better self- knowledge and helps the educator to normalize the occurrence of deviant behaviour in the learner. The trait personality theory mainly focuses on the characteristics of the personality. It believes that feelings such such as happy, outgoing, and angry, make up one's personality. This theory shows the differences between individuals basing on their personalities which depend on the combination of the traits.

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