

Self and Personal

Self and Personality –can be referred as the characteristics in which we define our existence.

These characteristics are usually acquired from our experiences and they show up in our behaviour.

These characteristics make people different from each other. Hence they behave differently in similar situations.

Also same people behave almost similarly in different situations.

Hence it is safe to say that **Different people have different personalities in different situations.**

Self- *Totality of an individual's conscious experiences, ideas , thoughts and feelings with regard to her/himself developed since the beginning(childhood days).*

These experiences and ideas define the existence of an individual both **at personal and social level.**

Parents, friends, teachers and other significant people around ourselves.

Self can be defined under two type of identities:

Personal Identity– Personal aspects: eg Name, personal qualities (honest, hardworking), potential, capabilities (singer, dancer), beliefs (believer in God).

Social Identity- These are those aspects that link a person with society or a cultural group.

Eg- religion(Hindu, sikh), North Indian or a South Indian

Cognitive and Behavioural aspects of Self

I Self- Esteem- The personal value and worth judgement by a person about her/himself is termed as **Self-esteem.**

1. **High Self-esteem-** Those who think highly of themselves, more accepted by others. Are generally happier, more confident, usually perform better at school/work.
2. **Low Self-esteem-** Those who feel less accepted and valued by others. Are generally anxious, depressed and may develop antisocial behaviour.

Studies show children develop self-esteem by the age of 6-7 years in four areas:

1. Academic competence, 2. Social competence, 3. physical/athletic competence and 4. Physical appearance.

II Self-efficacy- Notion of Self-efficacy is based on Bandura's social learning theory. It is the extent to which people believe that they can control their life and the outcomes themselves. Their conviction in themselves.

High Self-efficacy – A strong self of self-efficacy allows people to select, influence and even construct and circumstances of their own life.

III Self-regulation- is the ability to organize and monitor our own behaviour.

High self-regulation– are people who are able to change their behaviour according to the demands of the external environment.

Will power– Resistance to situational pressures and control over ourselves.

Self-control– Learning to delay or defer the gratification of needs is called self-control.

Psychological techniques of self-control:

1. **Observation of own behaviour**
2. **Self- instructions-** to instruct oneself on do something
3. **Self- reinforcement-** Rewarding behaviours that have pleasant outcome.

Culture and Self:

Several aspects of Self are linked to the characteristics and features of the culture in which an individual lives.

e.g Distinction between Indian and Western cultures.

Western culture:

1. In this culture the Individual (self) and the cultural group are two different identities
2. The boundaries between self and group are clearly defined.

3. Individual members of the group maintain their individuality.
4. Western culture is Individualistic.

Diagram:

Indian Culture:

1. Self is not separated from one's own group
2. They both (self & group) remain in state of harmonious co-existence.
3. Lot of dependency and no clear boundaries.
4. Indian culture is Collectivistic.

Concept of Personality

Literary definition- This word is derived from Latin word-Persona, which means mask used by actors in Roman theatre to perform their roles.

Layperson's definition- Personality represents external or physical appearance. They often mistake the superficial features for a person's overall personality.

Eg. We often assume that Good looking person also has a charming personality.

Psychology definition: Personality refers to our characteristic ways of responding to individuals and situations. Personality refers to unique and relatively stable qualities that characterise an individual's behaviour across different situations over a period of time.

People can easily describe the way in which they respond to various situations. Eg- Shy, sensitive, quiet, warm, nervous..)

Overall:

Personality is characterised by following features:

1. It consists of both **physical to psychological components**
2. Expression of personality in form of **behaviour is unique** for each individual
3. It's **main features do not easily change** with time
4. Though **some features may change due to internal or external situational demands**, making personality also **adaptive to situations**.

Some similar meaning words/terms to Personality which are often used as synonyms but differ in meaning:

Temperament: Biologically based characteristic way of reacting

Traits: Stable, persistent and specific way of behaving, in most situations.

Disposition: Tendency of a person to react to a specific situation

Character: The description based on overall pattern of regularly occurring behaviour

Habits: Over learned modes of behaving, become involuntary reactions/actions.

Values: Goals and ideals that are considered important and worthwhile to achieve.

Benefits of understanding diverse personalities:

Different Approaches to study Personalities and behaviours:

- Type approach
- Trait Approach
- Interactional Approach
- Psychodynamic approach
- Behaviour approach
- Cultural Approach
- Humanistic approach

Type Approach: This approach attempts to comprehend and segregate people into groups by examining and based on their **broad patterns in observed behaviours**.

So each pattern type refers to a group of people who have similarity of their behavioural characteristics that match with the pattern that set denotes.

Greek physician Hippocrates had proposed a typology of personality based on fluid/humour: Sanguine, Phlegmatic, melancholic, choleric.

Charak Samhita famous treatise on Ayurveda classifies as- *Vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* based on 3 humoral elements- *Tridosha*

Typology of personality based on *trigunas*:

Sattva- Cleanliness, Truthfulness, dutifulness, detachment and discipline.

Rajas- Intensive activity, desire for sense gratification, dissatisfaction, envy.

Tamas- Anger, arrogance, depression, laziness, feeling of helplessness.

Sheldon theory: based on body type and temperament

Endomorphic- Fat, soft and round. Relaxed and sociable.

Mesomorphic- Strong muscular, rectangular body and energetic and courageous by temperament

Ectomorphic- Thin, long, fragile by body type and creative, brainy and introvert by temperament.

Jung theory- Introverts, Extroverts

Friedman & Rosenman- Type A & Type B

Type A- Possess high motivation, lack patience, fall short of time, in a great hurry, always feel burdened with work, cant slow down.

Type B- Absence of category of Type A

Type C- Unassertive, cooperative, patient

Type D- Proneness of depression.

Trait Approach: This type groups people as per specific set of traits. For eg Shyness is a trait, so people can be rated in terms of degree of presence or absence of that trait in individuals as Less, More, Not shy at all against that. Friendliness can be another trait and many others.

1. Traits are relatively stable over time
2. They are generally consistent across situations
3. Their strengths and combinations vary across individuals leading

All of the above lead to individual differences in personality.

Gordon Allport's Trait theory: As per Allport, Traits are the intervening variables between situations which stimulate and person's response to them.

1. **Cardinal traits:** They are highly pervasive and generalized and indicate the goals around which an individual's life revolves. g. Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence – Gandhian trait

and Hitler's Nazism – Hitlerian trait

1. **Central traits:** These are less pervasive, still much generalized dispositions. E.g. warm, sincere , diligent

We often use these traits for writing a job recommendation or in our resume.

1. **Secondary traits:** These are least generalized Commonly found in various people, cannot be made the basis for differentiating personalities of people. E.g. likes mangoes, prefer ethnic clothes, likes black dresses.

Cattell theory: Trait based personality factors- He developed a test called sixteen personality factor questionnaire.

1. **Source traits:** Stable and are considered as building block of personality.
2. **Surface traits:** They result out of the interaction of source traits.

Eysenck's Theory: Based on biological and genetically governed, Personality could be reduced into **two broad dimensions**– (However, in his later work Eysenck introduced 3rd dimension also).

1. **Neuroticism Vs Emotional stability:** It refers to the degree of control people have on their feelings. People who score high on the neuroticism are anxious, moody, touchy, restless, distressed, irritable, emotional unstable. The opposite /low scores are calm, emotionally stable.
2. **Extraversion Vs Introversion:** Extraversion refers to people who are outgoing, active, gregarious, impulsive, thrill seeking and introversion refers to people passive, quiet, cautious and reserved.

3. **Psychoticism Vs sociability:** Person scoring high on psychoticism tends to be hostile, egocentric, anti-social. The opposite are friendly and sociable.

Five Factor Model of Personality:

Paul Costa and Robert McCrae have examined all possible personality traits. They indicated set of Big five factors, which are useful and consistent in analysing personality traits across cultures, languages, hence most promising empirical approach to study personality.

Openness to experience: Those who score high on this are imaginative, curious, and open to ideas. Interested in cultural pursuits. Opposites are cold and rigid.

Extraversion: Socially active, assertive, outgoing, talkative and fun loving. Opposite are shy.

Agreeableness: Helpful, cooperative, caring and nurturing. Opposite are hostile, self-centred.

Neuroticism: People scoring high on this are highly emotionally unstable, anxious, irritable, hypertensive. Opposites are well adjusted, calm.

Conscientiousness: Achievement oriented, dependable, responsible, prudent, hardworking and self-controlled. Opposites are impulsive.

The Interactional Approach: This theory claims that situational characteristics play an important role in determining our behaviour. People may behave as dependent or independent not because of their internal trait, but because of external rewards or threats. The compelling situations can be used to observe people's behaviour in places like a market, a courtroom, or a place of worship.

Psychodynamic approach:

Highly popular approach to study personality, by Sigmund Freud. He used '*Free Association*' the technique (a method in which a person is asked to openly share his thoughts, feelings and ideas that comes to his/her mind) Dream and error analysis to understand the functioning of mind and help analyse thoughts by expression.

Based on the theory of *Levels of consciousness*, Freud visualizes the human minds in terms of 3 levels of consciousness:

Conscious: Thoughts, feelings, actions people are aware of.

Preconscious: The mental activity people are aware of only if they pay attention to it closely.

Unconscious: This includes mental activity people are unaware of. These are instinctive, animalistic drives concealed and repressed away from conscious mind because they may lead to psychological conflicts.

Freud used therapy of Psychoanalysis to bring the repressed, unconscious materials to consciousness.

Leading people to live more self-aware and integrated life.

According to this theory there are 3 structural elements of Personality- **Id, Ego and Superego.**

Id – It is source of a person's instinctual energy. Deals with immediate gratification of primitive needs- sexual desires, aggressive impulses does not care for moral values, society or any individuals. Id is energised by two instinctive forces- **life instinct & death instinct.**

The life force that energises the **Id is called libido**, which seeks immediate gratification.

Ego- It grows out of Id only but seeks to satisfy an individual's instinctual needs in accordance with reality. Works by **reality principle**. Ego often directs the Id towards more appropriate ways of behaving, which are socially acceptable.

Eg: A boy sees some one having an ice-cream. His Id may want him to snatch it and eat it. But Ego guides him to ask permission and then take it, which is socially more acceptable behaviour.

Human behaviours reflect an attempt to deal with or escape from anxiety. People avoid anxiety by distorting reality. Freud described defence mechanism of 5 types:

Repression: Anxiety provoking behaviours or thoughts are totally dismissed by the unconscious mind. When people repress any desire at times they totally become unaware of that desire. E.g When someone does something which expresses that desire in a situation, they say, 'I do not know why I did this.'

Projection: In projection, people attribute their own traits to others. E.g People who have aggressive tendencies may see other people also acting aggressive towards them. i.e projecting their own behaviour.

Denial: Person in this trait totally refuses to accept reality.

e.g. A person with AIDs refuses to accept or deny his illness.

Reaction formation: This person to defend against anxiety adopts a behaviour totally opposite to the instinctive feeling.

e.g Many people acquire religious practices to channelize their strong sexual urges.

Rationalization: Trying to rationalize their unreasonable feelings and behaviours making them seem reasonable and acceptable.

e.g. When a student after doing poorly in exams buys new pens to rationalize reason of bad performance and tells himself that he will do well with these new pen.

Super Ego- Super Ego can be characterised as the moral branch of mental functioning. Super Ego tells the Id and Ego whether gratification is ethical or not.

e.g. Extending the same example, If the child who wants ice cream, if asks his mother for it which is socially and morally correct.

Stages of Personal Development:

Freud Approach: Freud claims that core aspects of personality are formed at an early stage and remain stable throughout life. He has proposed a 5 stage theory.

Oral stage: Newborn's instincts are focused on the mouth. The baby seeks pleasure in food that reduces his hunger, thumb sucking, biting, and babbling through his mouth.

Anal stage: It is found that around ages of 2 or 3 child learns to respond to some of the needs of society and learns to control the bodily functions of urination and defecation. If left to themselves, most children at this age experience pleasure by focusing on their anal area and in moving their bowls.

Phallic stage: This stage focuses on genitals. At age of 4 to 5, children begin to realise the difference between males and females. During this stage male children may feel Oedipus complex, which involves love for mother and hostility towards father. And female child experiences Electra complex wherein they are more attached to father and see mothers as their rivals.

Latency Stage: From age of 7 to puberty, child continues to grow physically. Sexual urges are relatively inactive.

Much of their energy is channelled in social or achievement activities.

Genital Stage: During this stage, individual develops maturity in psychosexual development. People learn to deal with opposite gender in a socially mature way. However, if the journey is marked thorough excessive stress or over-indulgence, it may cause **fixation to that stage or regression to an earlier stage of development.**

Post Freudian Approaches: A number of theorists developed their ideas following Freud.

These theories are less characteristics of sexual and aggressive tendencies of the Id and the expansion of the concept of Ego. The human qualities of creativity, competence and problem solving abilities are emphasised.

Carl Jung : Aims and aspirations: Jung worked with Freud in his early stage of career. Later he broke away as he believed that **human beings are also driven by their aims and ambitions besides sex and aggression.**

Karen Horney: She another disciple of Freud also derived her theory further from Freudian principles. She adopted a more optimistic of human life. **As per her human beings are also driven by growth and self-actualization.**

She also contributed by challenging Freud's treatment of women as inferior. As per her each gender has attributes to be admired by the other, neither being superior or inferior. **Women are more affected by social and cultural factors.**

Psychological disorders like **anxiety** are caused by disturbed interpersonal relationship during childhood. Indifferent, discouraging, excessively dominating.

Alfred Adler: Lifestyle and social interest

His basic assumption is that **human behaviour is purposeful and goal directed** each one chooses and creates. Personal goals are the source of motivation.

In Adler's view every individual suffers from feeling of inadequacy and guilt i.e. **Inferiority complex.**

Overcoming these complexes is essential for optimal personality development.

He believed human beings are social beings and psychological qualities such as growth and realization resulted from desire of freedom and striving for justice/truth.

Erik Erikson: Search for identity

This theory **lays stress on rational, conscious, ego processes in personality development.**

Identity is granted a central place in the process. His concept of identity crisis of adolescent age has drawn considerable attention.

Reasons for criticism of Psychodynamics theories:

These theories are strongly condemned for following reasons:

1. They are largely **based on case studies and not** backed by **scientific**

1. Small and archetypical individuals were taken as sample groups for studies for advancing generalizations.
2. Concepts are not properly defined. And they can not be subjected to scientific testing.
3. Freud theory has used males as prototype of all human personality development. He overlooked female experiences and perspectives.

Behavioural Approach:

This approach does not give importance to the internal dynamics of behaviour. The behaviourists believe in data, which they feel are definable, observable and measurable.

The theory focuses on study of stimulus – response and reinforcements. Personality can be best understood as a response of an individual to the environment. They see the development as a change in response characteristics .i.e person learns new behaviours in response to new environments and stimuli.

Cultural Approach:

This approach attempts to understand personality in relation to the features of ecological and cultural environment. Rituals, ceremonies, religious practices, arts, recreational activities, games and plays are the

means through which people's personalities get projected in a culture. People develop various personality qualities in an attempt to adapt to a culture or ecological features of groups in life.

Thus cultural approach considers personality as an adaptation of individuals or groups to the demands of ecology or culture.

Humanistic approach: This approach is mainly built on the theories of Freud, Carl Roger and Abraham Maslow.

Roger proposed the idea of a **fully functional person**. **Fulfillment** is the motivational force for **personality development**. People try to express their capabilities, talents and potentials to the fullest extent.

He observed that **each person** has a concept of **True self and an Ideal self about him**. Correspondence between the two leads to a happier and contented person in congruence with himself.

When there is discrepancy and these two spheres don't overlap each other at all it leads to unhappiness and dissatisfaction.

As per Roger's principle people have a tendency to maximize self concept through self actualization. And personality development is a journey towards that.

Who is a Healthy Person? As per humanistic approach.

The Humanistic theory suggests that no one can be a healthy person by mere adjusting to the society.

It involves following characteristics:

1. **Awareness of self** , one's feelings and their limits and accept themselves.
2. Experience **Here and Now**. **Mindfulness**.
3. **Don't** so much **live in the past and dwell in the future** through anxious expectations and distorted defences.

Personality Assessment:

A formal process aimed at understanding personality of an individual with minimum error and maximum accuracy is termed as personality assessment.

Uses of Personality Assessment:

1. Helps understand how an individual is likely to behave in a given situation.

2. Accurate assessment is also useful for diagnosis, training, placement, counselling

Techniques:

- Psychometric tests
- Self- report measures
- Projective techniques
- Behavioural Analysis

Self Report: Method to assess a person by asking him/her about himself/herself. These are structured measures in which subjects are made to objectively report verbal responses using a rating scale.

1. Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)- developed for psychiatric diagnosis but later applied to variety of psychopathology- hypochondriasis, depression, hysteria masculinity, femininity. True/false questions
2. Eyesenck Personality Questionnaire – (EPQ)

Tests 2 dimensions of personality- Introverted / Extraverted and Emotionally stable/unstable.

Later Eyesenck added 3rd dimension to this theory psychoticism (lack of feelings for other). Such people have a tough manner of interaction, tendency to defy social conventions.

1. Cattell- Sixteen personality factor questionnaire – (16PF). The tests provides with declarative statements and the subjects respond to the specific situation by choosing from a set of given alternatives.

Uses of Self-report test:

1. Career guidance, vocational exploration and occupational testing for students/adults.
2. To assess specific dimensions of personality type (e.g. authoritarianism, locus of control, optimism)

Limitations of Self-report tests:

1. Social desirability: this is a tendency on part of a student to endorse/select responses basis socially desirable behaviour.
2. Acquiescence: It is a tendency of the subject of saying Yes to items irrespective of the content, which makes it less reliable for an effective outcome.
3. Hesitant to open: This being a direct method where assessment is based on the information directly obtained from the subject, hence he knows that he is been assessed for personality and gets self-conscious and hesitates to share his private feelings.

Hence these tests should be performed under careful supervision of an expert or a trained person.

Projective Technique:

This technique is an indirect method, used to uncover and assess the large part of the behaviour which is governed by unconscious motives, as direct (self-report) methods cannot assess this.

Methods include: Reporting association with stimuli- words, inkblots, story writing around pictures, some require sentence completion, expression through drawings.

Features of this technique:

1. The stimuli are relatively or fully unstructured and poorly defined.
2. The subject is not told about the purpose of assessment and method of scoring and interpretation.
3. The person is informed that there is no correct or incorrect answer.
4. Each response is considered to reveal a significant aspect of personality.
5. Scoring and interpretation are lengthy and sometime subjective.

Examples of Projective tests:

1. **Rorschach Inkblot Test:**

This test was developed by **Hermann Rorschach**. The tests consists of 10 inkblots (5 black and white, 2 red and remaining of pastel colours) printed in the centre of a cardboard of 7" to 10".

1st Phase- Performance proper: Subjects are shown the cards and are asked to tell what they see in each.

2nd Phase- Inquiry: A detailed report of responses is prepared by asking the subject to tell on where, how and on what basis was a particular response made.

Use of the test requires extensive training to make fine judgement and interpretation.

1. **The Thematic Appreciation Test (TAT):** developed by **Morgan and Murray**. Little more structured than the Inkblot test. It consists of 30 black and white picture cards and 1 blank card. Each card depicts one or more people in a variety of situations. 20 cards to 5 cards are used for performing assessment.

Method: One card is presented at a time, asking the subject to tell a story describing the situation presented in the picture:

What led up to the situation

What is happening at the moment

What will happen in future

What are the characters thinking and feeling

A standard procedure is followed for scoring the TAT responses.

Indian adaptation done by: Uma Chaudhary.

Rozenzweig's Picture-Frustration study (P-F Study): was developed by **Rozenzweig** to assess how people express aggression in a frustrating situation.

The test consists of cartoon like pictures depicting situations where one person is frustrating other.

The subject is asked to describe:

What the frustrated person will say or do?

Analysis is based on:

1. the Type and Direction of aggression (towards onself or environment or evading the situation).
2. It is examined whether the focus is on frustrating object or protecting the frustrated person, or on constructive solution.

Sentence Completion Test:

This test makes use of number of incomplete sentences. The starting of the sentence is presented and the subject has to provide an ending of the sentence. The type of ending helps assess the unconscious attitude, motivation and conflicts.

e.g.

1. My father.....
2. My greatest fear is.....
3. The best thing about my mother is.....
4. I am proud of.....

Draw-a-Person test:

In this test subject is provided with a pencil, eraser and sheet and asked to draw a picture of a person.

After the completion of the drawing, subject is asked to draw a picture of a person of opposite gender. Subject is asked to make a story about the person as if he/she was a character of a movie/novel. Some examples of the interpretation as follows:

1. Omission of facial features suggests that the person tries to evade a highly conflict-ridden interpersonal relationship.
2. Graphic emphasis on the neck suggests lack of control over impulses.
3. Disproportionately large size of the head suggests organic brain disease or preoccupation with headaches.

Behavioural Analysis:

This analysis can provide us with a meaningful information about his/her personality.

An observer's report contains data obtained from:

Interview

Observation

Ratings

Nomination

Situational tests

Interview:

Structured interview follows a set of very specific questions and set procedure. This is often done to make objective comparison of persons being interviewed.

Use of rating scales add to the objectivity.

Unstructured Interview involves asking a number of questions (not specific) to develop an impression about a person. The way a subject answers and presents himself and answers the questions carries enough potential to reveal about his/her personality.

Observation:

Use of **Observation for a personality assessment** is a sophisticated procedure that cannot be carried out by untrained people. It requires careful training of the observer and fairly detailed guideline to carry out analysis to use observations to assess personality. In spite of the widespread use of this method, it has following limitations:

1. Professional training required for collection of useful data and is quite demanding and time consuming.
2. Maturity of the observer is a precondition. Else personal biases can alter the assessment.
3. Mere presence of the observer may contaminate the results.

Behavioural Ratings

Behavioural ratings are frequently used for personality assessment of individuals in an educational or industrial settings.

Behavioural ratings are generally taken from the people who know the assessee intimately and have interacted over a period of time. In order to use ratings the traits should be clearly defined in terms of carefully stated behavioural anchors.

Limitations of Behavioural Rating method:

1. Raters generally display biases that colour their judgements of different traits. For example most of are greatly influenced by a single favourable/unfavourable trait which colours the overall judgment on all the traits. This is called 'Halo effect.'
2. Raters have a tendency to place individuals in the middle of the scale(middle category bias) or in the extreme positions (called extreme response bias).

Nominations: in this method people in a group who know each other for a long period are asked to nominate another person from the group with whom they would like to work/play/do some activity. Then they are asked to state the reason why they would have nominated that person.

Situational tests: A variety of situational tests have been devised for the assessment of personality. Most commonly used test is –Situational Stress test. It provides us information on how a person behaves under stressful conditions. In performing this test the person is given a task under stressful environment, where others are instructed not to provide any support and act non-cooperative. This is kind of role playing. The subject is observed and a report is prepared. Situations can be videotaped and observed for assessment later.