



## Cattell's Trait Theory of Personality

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### Abstract:

*The Personality is often understood in terms of being good looking, attractive etc. They go by the impression created by the person concerned. The ability to talk and interact with others pleasantly in addition to being good looking, would make others say that the person concerned has a good personality. Persons who do not have good looks or not well dressed or do not interact adequately are considered to have poor personality, but psychologically this is not a true concept of personality. In fact, psychologists consider any attempt to define personality in terms of social attractiveness inadequate because of two reasons, first it limits the number and types of behavior considered important and worthy for incorporation into the study of personality. Second, such notion carries the absurd implication that some people who have unique abilities and temperament traits are devoid of having a personality.*

*There are several definitions of personality and several theories of personality have been developed so far to explain its nature. Psychologists have designed studies by employing factorial analysis method to extract the factors of personality. The psychologist R.B. Cattell designed 16 PF of personality.*

**Keywords:** Personality, Theories, Traits, Cattell's Trait.

### Introduction:

Personality theories offer systematic explanations of how individuals think, feel, and behave. By studying this theories teacher can design instructional methods, adopt classroom management strategies, and create supportive environments that align with students' needs. Traits are stable and predictable characteristics of a person and reflect a person's ability to respond consistently across circumstances and over time. Cattell's theory of personality is called factorial theory of personality traits and their measurement through factor analysis. This study explores the Cattell's' personality theories and study the 16 PF of person as well as students.

### Personality:

**Meaning and Definition of Personality:** (Kaushik N, Saxena A. (2007) page no. 385):

The word personality has been derived from Latin word 'Persona'. The persona means mask, to speak through. It means personality used to mean the outward appearance of a person. It is very wide concept. Some people who have unique abilities and temperament traits are devoid of having a personality. The term

personality is often understood in terms of social attractiveness good personality is considered to be one who impresses other people and who has the ability to get on well with others. Those who do not possess such ability are said to have relatively poor personality. A scientific point of view, being attractive to others is not a true concept of personality. Every person has different personality. So many factors and dimensions are responsible for developing personality.

**According to Boring:** “Personality has come to be regarded as the individuality that emerge form interaction between a biological and social, physical world.”

**According to Allport:** “Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychological system that determine his unique adjustment to his environment.”

“A personality is the product of the dynamic and unique organization within the individual of psychological structure or systems and their actions within the environment.”

**Definition of personality by sociologist:** (Kaushik N, Saxena A. (2007)):

“**personality** is the integration of all traits which determine the role and status of a person in society.”

“Individuality is the personality” Ideas of perfection is the personality.

**According to Stephen P. Robbins:**” Personality as the sum total of ways in which an individual reacts and interacts with others.

### **Assessment of Personality:**

Personality assessment refers to the estimation of one’s personality make up, that is the person’s characteristic behaviour patterns and salient and stable characteristics. It is important to that personality assessment may also differ with respect to the purposes for which it is done. For example, if the purpose is self-understanding, the person may select different tests/ inventories, if the purpose is to classify person’s as per their personality traits a different set of tests may be useful. Finally, if the purpose is diagnostic (clinical psychologist, counsellors etc.) an entirely different set of tests may be more useful.

### **Some of the important tests and techniques measuring personality:**

- i) Interviews
- ii) Projective techniques
- iii) Association techniques
- iv) Expressive techniques

### **Cattell’s Theory of Personality:**

#### **1. Cattell’s Trait Approach:**

Raymond Cattell(1950) considered personality to be a pattern of traits providing the key to understanding it and predicting a person’s behaviour . According to Cattell, traits are relatively permanent and broad reaction tendencies of personality . They serve as the building blocks of personality. He distinguished between

- i) Surface trait and source trait,
- ii) Constitutional and environmental-mold traits

iii) Ability, temperament and dynamic traits.

- **Surface traits** :Basic, underlying structures which form the building blocks of personality. Exist at a deeper level of personality and determine observed behaviour in human beings.
- **Source traits**: These are visible qualities or surface-level qualities in human beings. These can include helpfulness or generosity. But surface traits aren't consistent over time and are not as important.
- **Constitutional traits**: They come from the biological and physical conditions.
- **Environmental mold traits**: These arise out of a person's social and physical environment.
- **Ability traits**: These demonstrate a person's skill and effectiveness in pursuing a goal.
- **Temperament traits**: These direct towards emotional qualities – or a person's temperament.
- **Dynamic traits**: Motivational elements that influence human behaviour. These are powerful traits that direct people towards goals they assign themselves.
- **Unique traits**: These are rare traits which are unique to certain individuals or groups of individuals.

2. **Cattell 16 PF**: Cattell defined personality in terms of “that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation.” Cattell found 23 source traits in normal persons and 16 of which he studied in detail. These 16 basic source traits were then used in the construction of the Sixteen Personality(16 PF) Questionnaire popularly known as “16 PF test”. The sixteen factors identified by Cattell include

- i) Reserved vs outgoing
- ii) Less intelligent vs more intelligent
- iii) Emotional vs stable
- iv) Humble vs assertive
- v) Sober vs happy-go-lucky
- vi) Expedient vs conscientious
- vii) Shy vs venturesome
- viii) Tough-minded vs tender-minded
- ix) Trusting vs suspicious
- x) Practical vs imaginative
- xi) Forthright vs shrewd
- xii) Placid vs apprehensive
- xiii) Conservative vs experimenting
- xiv) Group-tied vs self sufficiency
- xv) Casual vs controlled
- xvi) Relaxed vs tense

## Personality Factors:

Factor	Low score description	High Score description
A-Warmth	Reserved tendencies-detached, critical, aloof, stiff	Outgoing-warm, easy-going, participating
B- Intellect	Less concrete though process	More Intelligent, bright, abstract thinking
C- Emotional stability	Affected By feelings, emotionally less stable, easily upset, changeable	Emotionally Stable, mature, calm
E- Aggressiveness	Humble, mild, easily led, docile, accommodating	Assertive, aggressive, stubborn, competitive
F-Liveliness	Sober, low-energy, serious	Happy-Go-Lucly, enthusiastic
H-Social Assertiveness	Shy-timid, threat-sensitive	Uninhibited, socially bold
I-Sensitivity	Tough-Minded, self-reliant, realistic	Tender-Minded, sensitive, clinging, overprotected
L-Paranoia	Trusting, accepting conditions	Suspicious, hard to fool, doesn't trust easily
M-Abstractness	Practical," down-to-earth" mind-set	Imaginative, absent-minded
N-Introversion	Forthright, unpretentious, genuine	Polished, socially aware
O-Anxiety	Self-Assured, Secure, complacent, serene	Apprehensive, insecure, worrying, troubled
Q1-Open mindedness	Conservative, respecting traditional ideas	Experimenting, liberal, free-thinking
Q2-Independence	Group-Dependent, a "joiner" and sound follower	Self-/sufficient, resourceful, trusts oneself
Q3-Perefectionism	Undisciplined Self-Conflict-lax, follows own urges, careless of social rules	Controlled, exacting will power, socially precise, compulsive
Q4- Tension	Relaxed, tranquil, un-frustrated, composed	Tense, frustrated, driven

## Uses and Applications:

The 16PF Questionnaire is used in a wide range of settings, including industrial/organizational, counselling and clinical, basic research, educational, and medical settings. The questionnaire is also widely used in career counselling settings. Although the 16PF Questionnaire is a measure of normal-range personality, it can be used in counselling/clinical settings to provide an in-depth, integrated picture of the whole person.

### 1. Employee selection, promotion, and development:

The 16PF Questionnaire has proven itself invaluable in making a range of organizational decisions, such as employee hiring, promotion, development, coaching, outplacement, and retirement counselling. There is an extensive body of research demonstrating the 16PF Questionnaire's ability to predict a wide variety of occupational profiles.

## 2. Meta-analytic job performance evidence:

The 16PF Questionnaire shows even greater ability to predict occupational outcomes through its more fine-grained primary traits, which are more powerful in capturing important variance about specific behaviours.

## 3. Social Occupations:

16PF Profiles have also been identified for social or helping occupations such as teaching, counselling, customer service, human resource personnel, ministers/priests, nurses, and physical therapists.

## 4. Career development counselling and coaching:

The 16PF Questionnaire is widely used in career development planning, counselling, and coaching, both inside and outside organizations, to help clients understand their strengths and limitations, and plan self-development goals and effective career paths.

16PF Questionnaire has proven particularly useful in marital or couples counselling, where it provides information about how the two partners' unique traits combine and interact. The Questionnaire is a comprehensive and widely used measure of normal, adult personality which was developed from factor-analytic research into the basic structural elements of personality.

### Improve student personality based on 16PF factors:

1. **Enhance Emotional Stability (Factor C):** Help students handle stress better by providing counseling, mindfulness training, and fostering a supportive, low-conflict classroom environment. Enhance self-motivation of students.
2. **Develop Social Boldness (Factor H):** The students score low on this trait tend to be shy, withdrawing, cautious, retiring. They dislike occupations with personal contacts, prefer one or two close friends to large groups and are not given to keeping in contact with all that is going on around them. Encourage shy or timid students to participate in group activities, debates, and public speaking to move from a “shy” to “venturesome” personality.
3. **Foster Rule-Consciousness and Discipline (Factors G & Q3):** The people have low on factor G tend to be unsteady in purpose. They are often casual and lacking in effort for group undertakings and cultural demands. Encourage conscientiousness, goal-setting, and responsibility to help students move from “expedient” to “conscientious” and from “undisciplined” to “controlled”.
4. **Increase Openness to Change (Factor Q1):** Low scorers on Factor Q1 are confident in what they have been taught to believe, and accept the “tried and true”. Promote these types of students intellectual curiosity and flexibility in thinking to help students become more experimental and less rigid in their approaches to learning.
5. **Boost Self-Reliance (Factor Q2):** The students score low on Factor Q2 prefer to work and make decisions with other people and like depend on social approval and admiration. Encourage that type of students independent thinking and decision-making to help “group-dependent” students become more “self-sufficient”.
6. **Improve Warmth and Socialization (Factor A):** The students score low on Factor A tend to be stiff, cool, skeptical, and aloof. Encourage reserved students to engage in collaborative projects and team-building activities to foster more outgoing behavior.

### **Educational importance of Cattell's 16PF:**

1. **Individual Difference:** Teacher can adapt strategies to students' trait profiles. For example, extraverts may thrive in group work, while introverts may prefer independent tasks.
2. **Assessment and Guidance:** Trait-based assessments can guide career counselling and help students understand their strengths.
3. **Classroom Management :**Recognizing that some students are naturally conscientious while others struggle with organization helps teachers provide appropriate support.
4. **Student-Centered Learning:** Teachers should create an environment where learners feel valued and respected.
5. **Holistic Development:** Education should nurture creativity, self-expression, and moral values, not just academic performance.
6. **Motivation:** Teachers should ensure that basic physiological and psychological needs are met so students can focus on higher-order learning.
7. **Self-Concept:** Positive reinforcement helps learners build confidence and a healthy self-image.

All types of personality tests available possess certain difficulties which are both of theoretical and practical in nature. Every approach comes up with certain advantages and disadvantages. Personality measurement research has gained enough importance. Still various devices are in the process of improvement.

### **Conclusion:**

Understanding Cattell's personality theories is essential for educators who aim to nurture holistic development in learners. Teachers can design flexible, empathetic, and student-centred learning environments that enhance motivation, foster resilience, and encourage lifelong growth.

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