

Examrace

Psychology Study Material: Allport's Basic Traits Categories

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Allport's Trait Theory

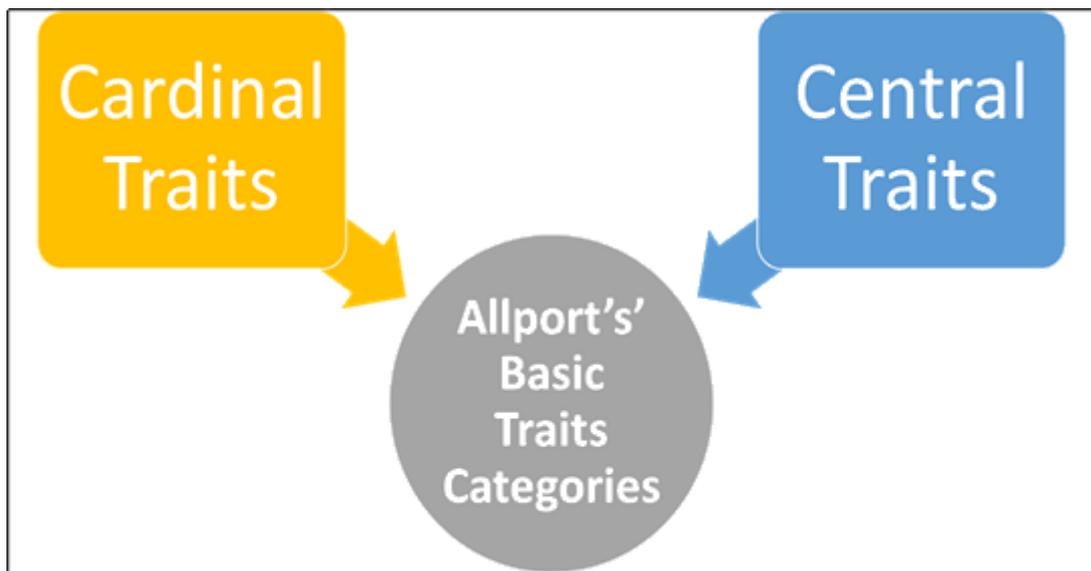
- After skimming an unabridged dictionary, Gordon Allport identified 18000 separate terms that could be used to describe personality.
- After eliminating synonyms, he came up with a list of 4500 descriptions

But the important question was that: What Were The Most Basic Traits?

Allport ' S ' Basic Traits Categories

There are three classic categories of traits:

- Cardinal traits
- Central traits
- Secondary traits



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Cardinal Traits

- A single personality trait directing most of the person's behaviours and activities e. g. affection, affiliation, kindness, greed.
- The person's whole life, or behaviour, is influenced by this trait. A person who served the poor and the weak all his life may have a very high degree of "kindness" or "nurturance" .
- Or a person who likes to hoard things, people, and wealth may be ruled by a high degree of "greed" , or perhaps "inferiority" .

Central Traits

- Do all people possess cardinal traits that encompass all aspects of their being?
- Perhaps Not! ! !
- Most people develop a group or set of traits rather than a single one, that form the core of their personality.

- Central traits are those major characteristics that make up the core of someone's personality.
- Central traits usually number from 5 - 10 in a person. e. g. , affection, love for humanity, and nurturance will form one type of personality.
- Inferiority, need for control, and greed may give a different shape to personality.

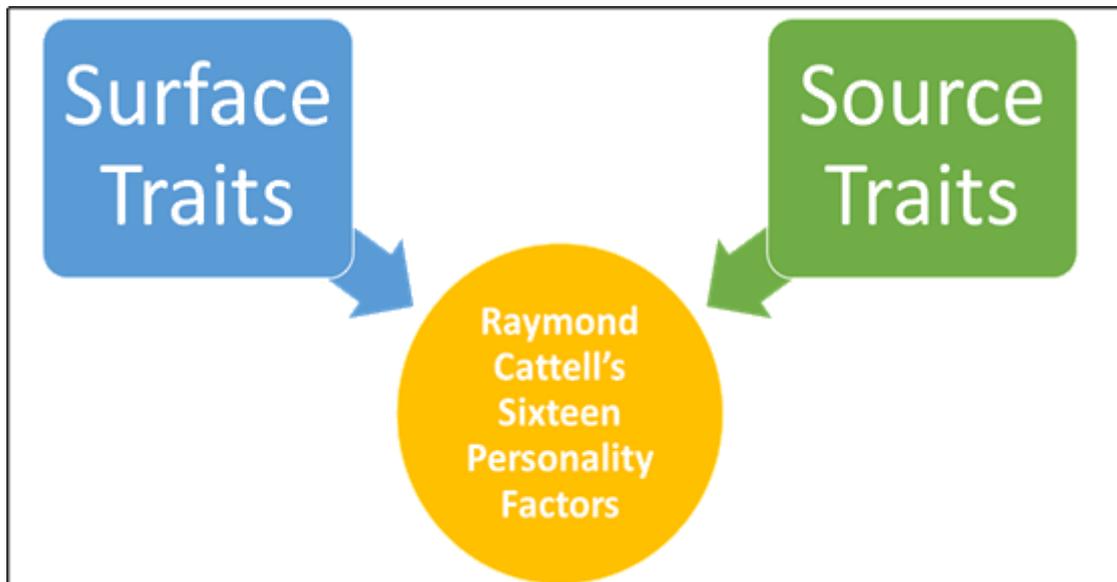
Trait Theories Based Upon Factor Analysis

- A number of trait theories are based upon factor analysis.
- Factor analysis: a statistical method whereby relationships between a large number of variables are summarized into fewer patterns. These patterns are more general in nature ... The extensive list is
- For example: A researcher prepares a list of traits that people may like in an ideal man then administered to a large number of people, who are asked to choose traits that may describe an ideal man.
- Through the factor analysis, the responses are statistically combined, and the traits associated with one another in the same set (or person) are computed. Thus, the most fundamental patterns are identified. These patterns are called factors.
- Psychologists Raymond B Cattell, and Hans Eysenck presented trait theories based upon factor analysis.

Raymond Cattell's Sixteen Personality Factors

After using factor analysis Cattell proposed that two types of characteristics form our personality:

- Surface traits, and
- Source traits



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Surface Traits

- Cattell's factor analysis showed that there are 46 surface traits or clusters of related behaviour.
- These traits are the characteristics that we can observe in a given situation.
- The frequently quoted example in this regard is that of a friendly, gregarious librarian, who is so helpful that he might go out of his way to help you as a result of your interaction with him it can be decided that he possesses the trait of sociability.
- His sociability is a surface trait in Cattell's terms.
- But surface traits may not necessarily represent the traits that actually underlie the personality of a person; Surface traits are what we directly observe, and these are based upon our perceptions and representations of personality. These may not be the true descriptions of the actual underlying dimensions of someone's personality.
- The characteristics that form the actual roots and basis of all behaviour may be different, and fewer in number.

Source Traits

- In order to go beyond the surface traits, Cattell carried out further factor analysis.
- He could identify 16 traits that that represent basic dimensions of personality.
- He called these traits, source traits.

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