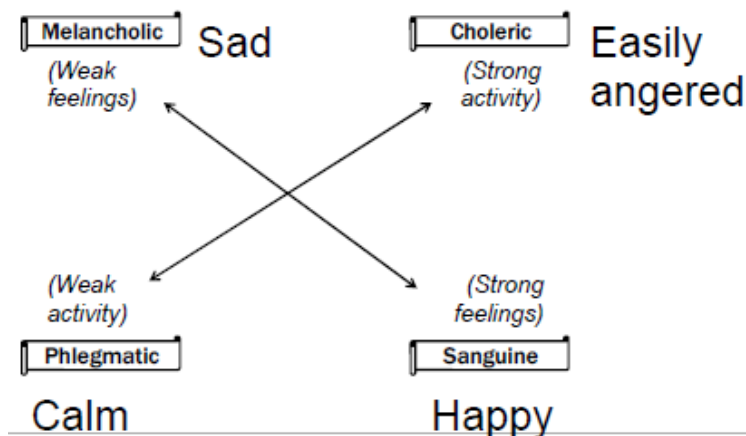


Introduction to Individual Differences Psychology Summary

Personality:

- Definitions:
 - Personality is an individual's characteristic way of thinking, feeling and acting across a broad range of settings (Smither, 1998).
 - Those characteristics of the person or those people generally that account for consistent patterns of response to situations (Pervin, 1980).
 - The set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organised and relatively enduring and that influence his or her interactions with, and adaptations to, the intrapsychic, physical and social environment (Larsen & Buss, 2012).
 - Allport (1961) described personality a dynamic organisation, inside the person, of psychological systems that create the person's characteristic patterns of behaviour.
 - Characteristics that usefully and reliably distinguish between individuals are identified, and individuals are then compared with each other or with population norms.
 - There is no consensus on a definition for personality within psychology.
- Criteria for psychological definitions:
 - Relatively stable
 - Enduring
 - Important aspect of self
- Personality theories aim to explain:
 - The motivational basis of behaviour
 - The basic nature of human beings
 - The developmental experiences that help to shape personality
 - Categorisations of types of human personality that can be used to predict behaviour.
 - What defines the individual difference?
 - Universality
 - Consistency/ stability
 - Source
 - What is its structure?
 - Conscious and unconscious aspects
 - Number and size of factors
 - Properties of factors
 - ❖ Latent: Observe it or not.
 - ❖ Orthogonal: Is one factor influencing another?
- Approaches to studying psychology:
 - Idiographic: Adopts case study types of methodology, studying individuals and stressing the uniqueness of each individual.
 - Nomothetic: Studies groups of individuals aiming to identify similarities.
 - Report (self or others):
 - Questionnaires
 - Rating scales
 - Adjective checklists
 - Observation
 - Presence/absence
 - Frequency
 - Setting

- Other
 - Projective
 - Implicit measures
- Personality theories can be difficult to evaluate owing to the absence of research on particular theories or concepts within theories.
 - Suggestions for evaluating theories:
 - Empirical validity
 - Testable concepts
 - Comprehensiveness
 - Parsimony
 - Experimental value
 - Applied value
- Distinguishing features of personality theories:
 - Free will v determination.
 - Nature v nurture.
 - Stability/consistency v instability
 - Uniqueness v universality
 - Equilibrium v growth
 - Optimism v pessimism
- Implicit Theory of Personality: Intuitive (non-scientific) beliefs that can be held about (almost anything)
 - Immanuel Kant (1742 – 1804): Produced a description of 4 personality types based on the strength of the individual's feelings and how active the person was.
 - He described types of personality rather than personality traits.
 - ❖ Personality Types: Describe discrete categories into which individuals can be placed.
 - ❖ Personality Traits: Continuous dimensions, and individuals can be positioned along the dimension depending on how much of the trait they possess.



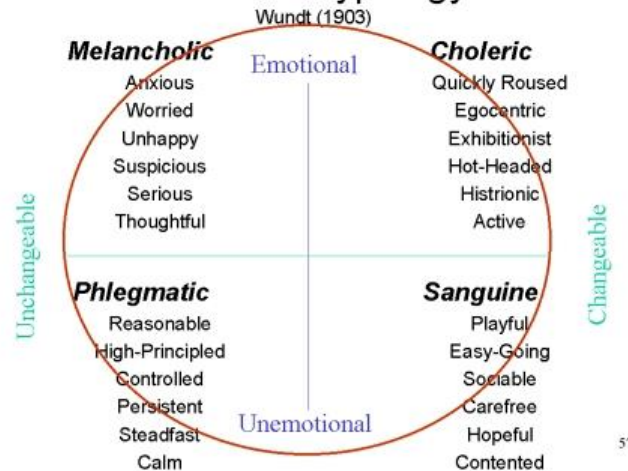
The Classical Fourfold Typology

Kant (1798, after Hippocrates and Galen)

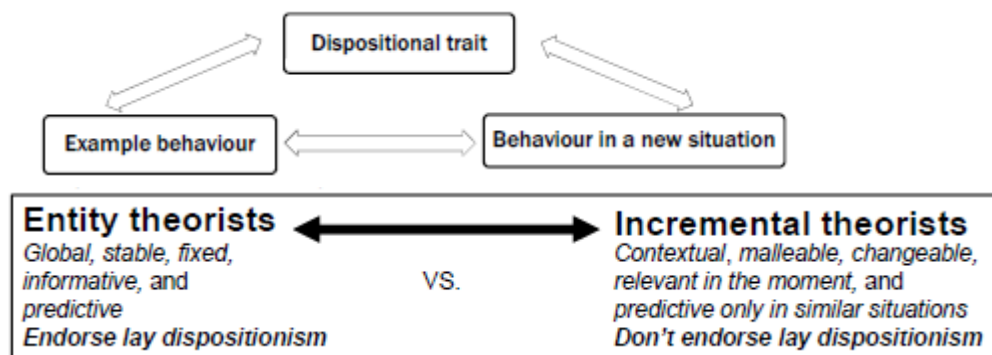
- **Melancholic**
 - Anxious
 - Worried
 - Unhappy
 - Suspicious
 - Serious
 - Thoughtful
- **Choleric**
 - Quickly Roused
 - Egocentric
 - Exhibitionist
 - Hot-Headed
 - Histrionic
 - Active
- **Phlegmatic**
 - Reasonable
 - High-Principled
 - Controlled
 - Persistent
 - Steadfast
 - Calm
- **Sanguine**
 - Playful
 - Easy-Going
 - Sociable
 - Carefree
 - Hopeful
 - Contented

- Wilhelm Wundt (1903): Recognised that individuals could be placed along the dimensions of mood stability and the strength of their emotions due to changes in their feelings.

Dimensional Analysis of the Classical Fourfold Typology



- Francis Galton (1884): Lexical Hypothesis
 - The meaningful characteristics that we share are captured in language.
- Overarching idea: Who you are is fixed.
- Lay Dispositionism: Is the tendency to describe people in terms of traits.



Intelligence:

- What is intelligence?
 - Being able to adapt to your environment.
 - Being able to think and determine things within our heads.
 - Information processing.
- Implicit Theories: Fold theories, layperson, everyday idea that surround a particular topic area.
 - Drive the way in which people perceive and evaluate their own intelligence and that of others.
 - Useful when an investigator thinks existing explicit theories are wrong and may provide useful avenues for research.
 - Vary as a function of:
 - Knowledge: New understanding of concepts filter into general use (EG: Types of memory, information processing).
 - Context: Cultural values impact the shape, content and function of implicit theories to reflect what is valued because intelligence has inherent status.
 - Age: Sophistication and the recognition that there are kinds of intelligence.

- Evaluating implicit theories:

<u>Positives</u>	<u>Negatives</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can reflect experiences. - Largely automatic = efficient, requires no effortful processing. - Self-maintaining. - Contribute to academic and scientific research and theory. - Have real world meaning and consequences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our experience is biased by our expectations. - Lead to confirmation biases which can bite us and others via self-fulfilling prophecy. - Often very incorrect. - Lead to own and other missed opportunities.

- Sternberg and his colleagues found three dimensions of intelligence:
 - Practical problem solving.
 - Verbal ability.
 - Social competence.
- Cultural Views:
 - Western Cultures: There is an emphasis on the speed of mental processing and the ability to gather, assimilate and sort information quickly and efficiently.
 - Eastern Cultures: These ideas extend to social, historical and spiritual aspects of everyday interactions, knowledge and problem solving.
 - Non-Western Cultures: The ability to show skills in problem solving, verbal ability and social competence would not just extend to the individual, but rather to their ability to solve a problem within the context of their family and friends.
- Perceptions of intelligence change across the lifespan.:
 - To look at how people, perceive intelligence at different stages of life.
 - To examine how individuals at different ages perceive intelligent behaviour.
- Intelligence qualities:
 - Adaptation to environment
 - Basic mental processes
 - Aspects of higher order thinking
 - Reasoning
 - Problem solving
 - Decision making

Further Debates and Applications in Individual Differences:

- Cooper suggests that it is important to note that individual differences approaches are not simply about being different, instead, they seek to establish psychological dimensions that apply to everyone, but at the same time allow for differences.
- To contribute fully to other psychological frameworks, individual differences researchers attempt to understand the nature of individual differences by addressing two issues:
 - Structural Model: Considers the nature of individual different, asking questions such as how do individual differ?
 - Process Model: Considers the questions of why and when do people differ and give depth to understanding the how.
- A scientific approach to personality and intelligence is taken
 - Observation of the relevant behaviours.
 - Definition of constructs
 - Measurement of constructs including reliability and validity issues.
 - Identification of causes.
 - Identification of consequences.
 - Specification of moderators and limits.