

Cattell's Surface and Source Trait

The main traits or original traits regarding person's personality were separated by Cattell on the basis of laboratory studies, personality inventories, ratings and behavioural observations. On the basis of these traits such as questions can be described as why various individuals have various responses? Why a person behaves in a consistent way? etc. Raymond Cattell believed that there is a common structure on which people differ from each other. This structure could be determined empirically. According to Cattell these traits are the fundamentals of personality. They are those components of personality as molecules are of substance. Cattell (1946) describes 171 traits out of the 17953 traits described by Allport and Edward. He tried to identify

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the primary traits from a huge array of descriptive adjectives found in language. He applied a statistical technique, called factor analysis, to discover the common structures. On the basis of statistical method he gives only 35 Trait clusters in place of 171 traits. According to him 35 trait clusters can be described and defined. Cattell describes two types of traits. He found 16 primary or source traits. The source traits are stable, and are considered as the building blocks of personality. Besides these, there are also a number of surface traits that result out of the interaction of source traits. Cattell described the source traits in terms of opposing tendencies. He considered the importance of these personality factors in individual differences. He also considers these as the causes of person's uniqueness.

Cattell's trait theory is criticized on many grounds. Cattell does not verify that children possess source trait. Without verification the doubt arises that these traits original traits of behaviour? He does not take the help of statistical analysis in describing 171 traits out of the 17953 traits described by Allport. Although his further studies are based on high statistical methods but their theoretical base are his 171 selected traits.