

## Personality Traits, Shyness and Temperament in Childhood

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### Abstract

The aim of this research is to explore the relationships between shyness temperament and personality traits in childhood. We offer a developmental and clinical perspectives on shyness, temperament and personality traits, second, we describe the current status of the most prominent temperament models and shyness as personality traits.

**Key words:** Personality Traits; Shyness; Temperament; Children.

### Introduction

No other word epitomizes the core of personality as well, trait is the essential concept of this field. Yet criticisms of the trait concept are hardly new, although classic work of Allport, s personality researches outlines a number of catechisms, including that traits are only “forms of perception for an observer to use”, “that a man personality seems to vary with the expectations and prejudices of association, and that traits exist only in the context of interpersonal encounter (Allport, 1937). A recent text suggests that the controversy over traits is in fact simply a warmed-over version of a centuries-old philosophical debate (Briggs, S. 1985). The issues that divided the person camp from the situation camp are some the same issues that separated Aristotle from Plato and Leibniz from Locke. Is the person a product of forces internal or external? Should we emphasize stability or change in our scientific account of human behavior?

The new campaign against traits can be traced specifically to the publication of Michel's (1968) monography personality and assessment. The aim of this study focused on the following question: are trait notions are empirically justifiable, and shyness provide a

one example of what a trait approach has to offer. The second aim is to justify the components of temperament as an important variable in personality traits especially in childhood.

### Definition of “trait” concept

The term “trait” means different things to different authors. In fact, “most recent researchers, particularly those in empirical tradition of personality research rarely attempt to define the concept of “trait” in a formal way. Logical analysis of the trait construct has been offered by a number of authors. It is very significant to distinguish between two uses of the term (Buss, (1989).

First, trait can be used as a descriptive concept (constructive definition). The term is very rich in connotations, but everyone seems to agree that it refers to aspects of an individual that are distinctive, general and enduring. Traits describe the regularities and peculiarities that we observe in the action and expressions of others, as well as in our own actions, thoughts, and feeling (Jayakody, Gunadasa, Hosker, 2014). Traits word can serve then, as “categorical –summary” accounts. They presumably describe what has been observed empirically-behavioral regulations that are both lasting

(temporal stability) and general (cross-situational consistency). This approach for defining “traits” leads to the systematic simplifications enabling us to process and communicate vast amount of information by considerable efficiency. In social interaction, we prefer to use traits terms when describing others, particularly those who are known for us (Briggs, S. 1985).

Second, the concept of “trait” has also been used as explanatory construct. Traits are not just labels for observed patterns of behavioral regularity. They are properties of an individual that are real and that exist internally. If regularity characterizes a person, something must produce this regularity that is intrinsic to the person. The fundamental of this entity is in the brain. Regularities in behavior traced back to the properties of the brain: the structure that underlie trait behavior, and this structure is genotype while trait behavior is phenotypic. On the other hand, the underling structure need not be seen as a direct reflection of the observed regularity.

It is very significant to distinguish between trait and characteristic or property. Trait is more stable and enduring than characteristic on one hand, and trait includes many characteristics that summarized systematically. According to this view, personality defined as regularities of traits. The factor analysis is the basic statistical method for studying personality traits.

The term “trait” therefore, can be used either as a descriptive concept (categorical summary account) or as a real, and therefore explanatory construct.

### Definition of “shyness” concept

Shyness is a case in point, and is familiar. We often used it to describe actions and feeling of others, and we allied to ourselves. Shyness is psychological construct, referring to the personal characteristics that facilitate or hamper appropriate interpersonal functioning tend to be salient features of our experiences (they are observed and labeled), on one hand. On the other hand, common language terms tend to be imprecise. When translating these terms into psychological constructs, we must define them more exactly, and must identify crucial distinctions. For good understanding shyness, it is significant to acknowledge the following:

1. **State V Trait:** Trait term probably “were coined to express the law like relations that have been observed between certain kinds of human actions and particular classes of social outcomes”. Shyness can be used to describe an individual’s behavior in particular relation. “The girl glanced at him and looked away shyly”. In this description the shyness concept characterizes the boy’s momentary behavior or current state “he looked away shyly not definably, nonchalantly or angrily, but does not characterize the boy himself. On the other hand, the term can describe the individual “the shy boy stood off by himself”. The concept implies a typified way of responding, a trait of shyness. Many people who occasionally experience the state of shyness would not be well characterized by the trait of shyness (Aşçı Lindwall, Altıntaş, Edepli Gürsel Gender, 2014).
2. **Shyness V Related Constructs:** The understanding of shyness concept has been come from the researches of introversion/extroversion, assertiveness, social skills and social anxiety. Shyness is not introversion and the two terms overlap statistically and conceptually as psychological constructs. Shyness does not necessary include the inward focus and intellectual orientation of the Jungian introvert, nor is it as heterogeneous as Eysenck’s dimension of introversion-extroversion which include disparate elements such as sociability, impulsivity and sensation-seeking. The distinction between introversion and shyness include two type: first introverted social shyness (person who prefer to be alone but has little difficulty interacting with others when it is necessary), and neurotic social shyness (person who is self-conscious, lonely and feel inadequate with superiors). Shyness may be as closely linked Eysenck’s superfactor of neuroticism as to his extraversion dimension (Eysenck (1970).
3. **Social anxiety:** Shyness is not synonymous with social anxiety. Depending on how the terms are defined, either shyness can be one type of social anxiety or social anxiety can be an aspect of shyness (Jayakody, Gunadasa, Hosker, 2014). Social anxiety may be an element of one’s shyness but always result in behavioral indicants, (Abdullah, 2019).

**There are three kinds of data are germane to investigate of traits:** First, R data-observers rating of individual that typically take the form of global assessment of personality, the second, T data- information derived from standardized, objective laboratory tests where the emphasis is on the discrete behaviors that can be counted, third, S data-self-observation of behaviors, feelings, and

mental functions or cognitive processes that are assessed at a global level (Courneya, Hellsten 1998).

### Temperament and personality traits in childhood

Investigating of temperament approach the topic from three different views; first, emphasizing the study of infant behavior, second focusing on the clinical aspects, third focusing on emotions. Temperament differ from personality traits in their initial appearance during the first year of life on one hand, and the combination of inheritance and early appearance suggests that they are building the basis of personality. The temperaments are the subclass of personality traits that are inherited, and they are subject to modification through socialization and experiences.

**Three components of temperament:** Evidence has been indicated three components of temperament: activity, emotionality and sociability (AES).

**Activity:** energy is expended faster when the pace of movement is rapid, and major component of activity is tempo. Higher active children often gallop instead of walking, skip and hop frequently, run up and down stairs, talk faster and move quicker pace than those who are low in activity. Activity is mainly a stylistic trait. The another characteristic is endurance, the active children tend to have more endurance (Janssen, Kolacz, Shanahan, Gangel, Calkins, Keane, Wideman, 2017).

**Emotionality:** fear and anger are the most components of emotionality. Child is affective, though there is a strong autonomic arousal, specifically activation of sympathetic division of autonomic nervous system. Socialization has only just begun when children are young, and they express their emotion freely especially in the face. The expressive component of the fear and instrumental or motor components among some children, can be salient and other can hardly be observed. Anger is primarily an affect as with fear. Like the fear, the anger includes expressive and cognitive component that comprise the reaction of labeled hostility (Courneya, Hellsten ,1998).

**Sociability:** sociable children strongly prefer to ply with other rather than blaying by themselves, they don't want to eat alone, and when with other they want to play interactive games. The major component here is instrumental. The another component is responsiveness to social situations. Sociable children are happy to be engaged in interpersonal pursuits and reveal it by facial expressions (Allen, Walter (2017, Buss, 1989).

The following table represent the components of temperament in personality.

Temperament	Components
Activity (A)	Tempo
	Vigor
	Endurance (minor component)
	Sympathic activation,
Emotionality (E):	Apprehension, worry,
	Fear face
	Escape, avoidance
Fear	Sympathic activation,
	Transient hostility
Anger	Angry face
	Angry aggression
	Tendency to affiliate
Sociability(S)	Responsivity when with others

(Buss, 1989)

### Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis and investigating the relationship of personality traits with shyness and temperament is very interest theoretically and empirically for clinicians. There is evidence that the components of temperament (AES) inherited (Buss, 1989), but the same behavioral genetics research that demonstrate heritability also shows that environment is influential. Habituation and socialization play an important mainly in emotionality and sociability. Many children become wary of social novelty in the first years of life, but this stranger anxiety gradually wanes as emotional reaction to neural stimulus that is the essence of habituation. Fear and shyness are especially affected by classical conditioning, there are only a few innate fear and most of stimulus that frighten children must be learned. On the other hand, instrumental conditioning affect sociability that determine which of stimulation rewards will be pursued.

The questions asked and answered in this study provide a deeper and more detailed understanding of the temperament and its relationship with shyness and personality traits. The issues discussed here recommend researchers and clinicians to investigate the correlation of theses variables of personality using multi-methodologies of researching such as correlational, survey, experimental and developmental approaches.

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