



## Torgerson Personality Typology and its Social Survey among Students of Fars Farhangian University

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### ABSTRACT

Types divide individuals into groups based on a combination of distinguishing features that can be described in everyday language. An old dispute always existed between the approaches experts to preferred personality traits and types. However, personality traits introduced more features that are not obvious. This study aimed to introduce the Torgerson typology and social survey of its type among students of Fars Farhangian university. This is a post- event and cross-sectional study. The population of study included all new- coming teacher students in academic year 2011. In this study, stratified sampling was used; the sample size was 1,500 teachers. Subjects (750 boys and 750 girls) were selected and questionnaires were distributed among them; 400 subjects were removed due to return or incompleteness of the questionnaire and the number of sample groups was decreased 1,100 subjects (550 females and 550 males), respectively. The tool used in this study to extract Torgerson personality types was NEO personality inventory that three actions based on its combinations of high and low neuroticism, conscientiousness and extraversion, eight personality types including spectator, insecure, brooder, hedonist, impulsive, entrepreneur and complicated were obtained. The results showed that the highest frequency type belonged to entrepreneur personality type and then insecure, and the lowest frequency type to hedonistic and impulsive. In frequencies, it was also observed that the lowest frequency type among girls and boys belonged to hedonist, and impulsive types based on sex respectively.

**Keywords:** Personality typology, social surveys

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### INTRODUCTION

Eysenck and Eysenck (1985; quoted by Dijkstra & Bareldz, 2009) defined the personality as a relatively stable and continuous entity growing out of personal characteristics, temperament, intellectual and physical faculties that determines the specific adaptation of a person to the environment. Also, the personality is defined as a "spectrum of individual characteristics that distinguish individuals without contradiction in terms of their basic tendencies in certain ways of thinking, feeling and action (Ones, Viswesvarn and Dilchert, 2005, p. 390). The personality is also defined as psychological dynamic structures and harmonic mental processes that determine individual's behavioral and emotional adaptations with their environment (James & Mazerolle, 2002, p. 1; quoted in Clark, 2007). Funder (2001; quoted from Clark, 2007) described personality as "individual pattern of thought, emotion and behavior as well as hidden or revealed psychological mechanisms behind these patterns" (p. 2). In general, the personality has been studied to predict its behavior or understanding (Cullen & Sackett, 2003; quoted in Clark, 2007). Different approaches have been used to measure personality. One of the first approaches was to measure different types of

traits in individuals and determines the effects of these traits on the behavior (John and Srivastava, 1999; quoted in Clark, 2007). Despite the popularity of trait approach, there were some weaknesses in this area (Clark, 2007). Over many years, there has been debate as is the personality fixed? Epstein (1979) argues that, as the behavior is mostly in average spectrum, stability is also increased. He also showed that the observable behavior can be reliably linked to self-report scales included standard personality questionnaires. After reviewing existing research, Boss (1991) concluded that the personality is "reasonably stabilized over time" (p. 478). It is supposed that in adulthood, personality is fixed (Ryan & Kristof- Brown, 2003; quoted in Clark, 2007). This stability may be due to that personality is at least partly genetic. After reviewing the relevant research on the genetic influences on personality and job attitudes, Bouchard (1997; quoted in Clark, 2007) claimed that 40% of the measured variance in personality is genetic. A long-standing debate among researchers is that which one has a greater impact on a person's behavior: environment or personality?

Today, most researchers believe that both factors play a role (Epstein, 1979; George, 1992). Similarly, Boss (1991) explained that "all observable behaviors resulting from mechanisms living in the organism which act in combination with environmental inputs and the organism inside these mechanisms" (p. 0.461). McCrea and Costa (2003) defined traits extensively as

“individual difference dimensions in the tendencies to show consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings and actions” (p. 25). People possess all the characteristics to varying degrees. More tendencies towards some traits probably resulting from that those individuals will reveal more traits related to their behaviors (McCrea & Costa, 2003). They emphasized that the term “tendencies” makes clear that the traits are really inclinations rather than the absolute behavior determinants. Multiple contextual influences control behavior, and despite the overall stability of personality traits, they are under the influence of external factors (Wilson & Soga, 2009). Therefore, personality includes a stable and durable trait that appears in different situations. Generally, studies have examined the distinct effects for each of these personality factors. In comparison with other models of personality, five factors model includes the main personality dimensions (Costa and McCrea, 1992). However, due to the classification of types or kinds of specific individuals, typology-based approaches have been more attracted the attention of researchers (Vollrath & Torgersen, 2000)

Therefore, Torgersen (1995; quoted in Vollrath & Torgersen, 2000) found that in order to predict individual adaptation, recognizing the distinct effects of each of these factors will not be adequate, because the special effects and their combination will be neglected. Therefore, due to higher stability of validity and reliability coefficients in three dimensions of neuroticism (N), extraversion (E), and conscientiousness (C) of the five-factor model, a typology approach was proposed by taking into account all the possible combinations of these three factors. For this purpose, he combined the scores above and below each factor and presented eight unique types. These types included: spectator type (or viewer) (N Low, E Low, C Low) is less responsive than people and social situations, less vulnerable to emotional stress; insecure type (N high, E low, C low) is highly vulnerable to stress and very sensitive to emotional and physical experiences and resort to avoidance; sceptic type (or analyst or critic) (N Low, E low, C high) has relatively closed and limited communication with others, emotional stability and is effective in managing life; brooder type (or distracted thinking, busy mind, self-inhibition) (N-high, E low, C high) is reticent, ambivalent and prone to negative emotions; hedonist type (N Low, E high, C low) is skillful and strong in terms of emotional and physical aspect, and resistant to stress; impulsive type (N-high, E-high, C-low) is very vulnerable to stress, requires social approval and a passive coping style; entrepreneur type (N Low, E high, C high) is socially secure, independent-minded, and leadership initiative and goal-oriented and complicated type (N-high, E high, C high) is sensitive, dependent on others, conscientiousness and regular and somewhat vulnerable to stress yet also flexible and effective in confrontation (Vollrath & Torgersen, 2000 ; (Vollrath & Torgersen, 2000; Lau et al., 2006). According to research done in this area, and the importance of personality in the form of a typology approach that measures its special effects and combination beyond the distinct impacts of factors, this study employed Torgersen typology approach based on five-factor dimension. It was obtained by combining all possible states of these three factors: neuroticism, extroversion and high , low conscientiousness, eight personality types 1) spectator, 2) insecure, 3) sceptic, 4) brooder, 5) hedonist, 6) impulsive, 7) entrepreneur and 8) complicated, with emphasized features. Then this study not only aimed to introduce this typology approach and its survey in the target population but also determines its demographic distribution in Iranian society and culture.

## METHODOLOGY

The study population is included all male and female students in academic year 2011. In this study, ratio stratified sampling was used. For this purpose, in the first phase, 1500 subjects (750 female, 750 male) were considered for this study, and the questionnaires were distributed among them, 400 subjects were removed due to the returned or incomplete questionnaires and the number of the sample were reduced to 1,100 subjects (550 female and 550), respectively.

### Research Tools

To prepare eight personality types, the scales of neuroticism, extraversion and conscientiousness and NEO Five-Factor Inventory NEO- FFI) (Costa and McGraw, 1992) were used. NEO Five-Factor Inventory is a small scale to measure five basic normal personality factors and has been prepared as a short tool for assessing factors and mainly for exploratory research (McGraw and Costa, 2004). In 1985, Costa and Mac Lyra developed personality questionnaire NEO- PI where for each of neuroticism, extraversion and empiricism factors, six aspects were taken into account. In 1992, Costa and Mac Lyra reported Revised Personality Inventory (NEO- PI-R) with 240 statements in which agreeableness and conscientiousness aspects were also taken into account. NEO- PI-R was long for most of research applications. To create a shorter scale, Costa and Mac Lyra (1992) prepared NEO- FFI that included 60 statements. This short form was prepared based on NEO- PI items factor analysis. NEO- FFI scales of 12 items included items with the highest load factor on each of the five factors in the analysis (John and Srivastava, 1999).

## RESULTS

### 1. Absolute frequency distribution of personality types

As shown in Table 1, the distribution of each type in the sample (n = 1100), is as follows respectively: entrepreneur type (with low neuroticism, high extraversion and conscientiousness) with 1.24% has the highest sample in the total study population; insecure type (with high neuroticism and low extraversion and conscientiousness) is in the second place with 17.1 percent, the third frequency of sample belonged to complicated type (with high neuroticism, extraversion and conscientiousness) constitutes 14% of the total population. The sceptic personality type (with low neuroticism and extraversion and high conscientiousness) is in the fourth place with 10.9 percent of the sample group. Other frequencies were respectively belonged to: spectator personality type (with low neuroticism, extraversion and conscientiousness) brooder personality type (with high neuroticism and extroversion and low conscientiousness); impulsive personality (high neuroticism and extraversion and low conscientiousness) and finally the least frequency among people with type a hedonist personality (low neuroticism and conscientiousness and high extraversion) were observed.

**Table 1. Absolute frequency distribution of personality types**

Row	Personality type	Frequency	Percent
1	Spectator	105	9/8
2	Insecure	367	17/1
3	Sceptic	279	10/9
4	Brooder	146	9/6
5	Hedonist	102	6/8
6	Impulsive	115	7/5
7	Entrepreneur	547	24/1
8	Complicated	364	14/4
	Total	1100	100/0

**2. Frequency Ranking distribution of Personality Types according to Sex:**

Ranking distribution of each of the eight types and their frequency in the sample according to sex are given in Table 2. As can be seen from the above table, both entrepreneur personality types for the boy (n= 364 and 21/98 percent) and girl (n=302 and 26/22 percent) had taken the highest place in

terms of frequency in the sample, although the distribution shows that in the population of the study, the frequency of boys with this type of personality was higher than girls. Second place belonged to insecure distribution of personality types, both for girls and boys, with the difference that the frequency of this type for girls (n= 281 and 18/33%) is higher than boys (n=242 and 78 / 78 percent).

**Table 2. Frequency ranking distribution of personality types according to sex**

Frequency		Boy	Girl		Type
Relative	Absolute	Type	Relative	Absolute	
26/22	302	Entrepreneur	21/98	364	Entrepreneur
15/78	242	Insecure	18.33	281	Insecure
12/58	193	Complicated	16/11	237	Complicated
12/06	185	Sceptic	10/63	146	Brooder
10/04	154	Spectator	9/65	109	Sceptic
8/48	130	Brooder	9/45	105	Spectator
8/48	130	Hedonist	8/74	95	Impulsive
6/32	97	Impulsive	5/08	78	Hedonist

However, the bottom two places for boys and girls are reversed, so that the seventh place among girls belongs to the impulsive personality type with a frequency of n= 95 (8/74 per cent) and for boys to hedonist type with n=130 (8/48 percent); It should

be noted that among boys, frequency of brooder is the same as hedonist type (n=130). And the last place in the table is for girls with hedonist type (n=80, and 5/08) and for boys impulsive type (n=97 and 6.32 percent), respectively.

**3. The classification of types based on the combination of two factors:**

**Table 4.5. The classification of types based on dual combination of factors**

Class	Types	Number on sex		Number on Type	Total frequency	
		Boy	Girl			
High neuroticism low extraversion	Insecure	242	281	523	799	1
	Brooder	130	146	276		
Low neuroticism high extraversion	Hedonist	130	78	208	874	2
	Entrepreneur	302	364	666		
High neuroticism Low conscientiousness	Insecure	242	281	523	715	3
	Impulsive	97	95	192		
Low neuroticism High conscientiousness	Sceptic	185	109	294	960	4
	Entrepreneur	302	364	666		
High neuroticism Low conscientiousness	Impulsive	97	95	192	671	5
	Complicated	193	247	440		
high neuroticism  low extraversion	Spectator	154	105	259	553	6
	Sceptic	185	109	294		
High neuroticism Low conscientiousness	Brooder	130	163		723	7
	Complicated	193	237			

Another classification based on the attributes defined for each type and difference or the personality similarity can be seen in the Table 4-5. This classification is based on dual combination of psychological traits including neuroticism, extraversion and conscientiousness, a combination of the types that are very similar to each other. The sample frequency for each of these types is shown according to sex and class in Table 4-5. The above table shows that the most frequency in the target population belongs to the fourth class, a group of entrepreneur and sceptic couples, so that, 960 of the subjects have two efficient types with low neuroticism and high conscientiousness. The lowest frequency in the sample belongs to the eighth class, i.e. spectator and hedonist couples, i.e. 126 subjects of the sample have low neuroticism and conscientiousness.

**CONCLUSION**

The aim of this study was to identify Torgersn typology and its social survey among student teachers in Fars Farhangian university in 2011. As the results showed, the highest absolute frequency of personality types belonged to entrepreneur type with 24.1 percent of the total sample. Type of entrepreneur based on three underlying factors including low neuroticism, high extraversion and conscientiousness and with features such as socially skilled, goal-oriented, organized, energetic and perseverance, independent thinking and leadership talent, adaptability and excitement stability that directly influenced by its fundamental factors, is the healthiest personality type. The

second frequency belongs to the insecure personality type with 1/17 percent of the total sample. This type also with high neuroticism and low extroversion and conscientiousness is the most vulnerable personality type. This type is identified with features such as high vulnerability to stress and stressful events, very sensitive to physical and emotional experiences and resort to avoidance, shyness and reticence, dependent on others and weak organization. It is both interesting and thoughtful that close to half of the sample group is in two types at both ends of the spectrum. That people may be substituted in the most or least vulnerable personality types, i.e. polarized state can be indicative of the spectral traits of personality in the society. Also, it can be said that the feedback people receiving from the early formation of personality to each aspect of their positive or negative traits should enhance and reinforce the features and result in the formation of types that are at both ends of the spectrum. On the other hand, perhaps the coordination and consistency of these types of infrastructure classify more people among these two types.

After these two types, the highest frequency belongs to the complicated personality. In a combination of contradictory properties such as sensitive, dependent on others, conscientious and regular, but somewhat vulnerable to stress as well as flexible and effective on the confrontation, this type accounted for 14/4% of the sample group. The lowest frequency in the general population belongs to hedonist type with 8.6 percent of the total sample. Hedonist type is also determined with the emotional and physical features such as skill and strength and resistant to stress and society. Perhaps the

findings could be attributed to cultural characteristics of the study population, and a vast difference between cultural factors that affects the student's moods with different cultures.

This type distribution among men and women was also remarkable. The highest frequency in both sexes belongs to the same three types obtained for the general population, i.e. entrepreneur, insecure and complicated types. Yet the subsequent types of female and male student's teachers show different positions. The fourth frequency for girls belongs to brooder type with features such as reticence, ambivalence and tendency to the negative emotions.

The fourth frequency belongs to sceptic type with features such as closed relationship with others, emotional stability and effective management of their lives. These findings may be justified probably because of some prevailing gender stereotypes in culture, rumination and the less problem solving power.

The fifth place for girls belongs to the sceptic personality types with the above characteristics and for boys to spectator type with features such as reticence and, calm, quiet and tend to be alone, vulnerability to stress, sensitive to the emotional and physical experiences and resorting to the avoidance. This difference was not statistically significant. Subsequent places for women belong to different types of spectator, impulsive and hedonistic; and men to the brooder, hedonistic and impulsive types, respectively.

Another interesting point is about the difference in the lowest frequency for teacher students (girls and boys), while it seems that female sexual characteristics make them more to experience pleasure and positive emotions, yet hedonist type of girls had the lowest frequency; although it seems that impulsive type is more common among the boys due to gender characteristics, it had the lowest frequency among the girls. These findings also may be attributed to cultural factors, so that it can be said that female teacher students are less likely to experience the joy in their life, and social and behavioral inhibition in male teacher students prevent their tendency toward impulsive behaviors.

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