

Exploring the Functions and Attitudes in Carl Jung's Theory of Personality

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Abstract

This literature review paper provides an overview of Carl Jung's theory of personality types and the four different functions of the psyche: intuition, sensing, feeling and thinking. It also discusses the two attitudes presented, extroversion and introversion, that describe an individual's orientation towards the world, either being motivated by people or motivated by being alone. This paper examines the theoretical and historical content of Jung's work and explores the practical applications of Jung's types in current society as seen in education, career choices, well-known people, relationships, healing and personal growth. Finally, it discusses the limitations and criticisms of this theory especially with the Myers-Briggs Test that was created based on Jung's personality types and the different views of Sigmund Freud on the matter. In all, the paper highlights the influence of Carl Jung's work on psychology today and the relevance of his ideas in order to better understand human behavior, motivation and personality.

Keywords: Jung, personality types, extroverted, introverted

Today, insecurity is one of the largest issues in individuals as they compare themselves to others or think that success is morphing with the general population. However, the world is lacking when individuals do not function in the gifts and personality that they were uniquely created with. This is why self-awareness is a critical aspect of personal development and professional growth. More specifically, understanding one's personality type can be a valuable tool in gaining greater self-awareness and expanding one's potential. The effectiveness of self-awareness is likely connected to the overall confidence and security in individuals and should be studied in order to increase personal and professional success. Learning more about the difference in personality types according to Carl Jung will aid in more effective understanding and lack of confusion in why humans behave the way they do. Through an extensive breakdown of the four functions of personality and the eight different types of personality, learning how these personality types are shown in careers, and studying the criticisms of Jung's theories, there will be extensive context given on this matter.

Carl Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who lived from 1875 to 1961, and developed analytical psychology (Jones, 2013). He worked at the psychiatric hospital in Zurich, collaborating with Sigmund Freud until they had a fallout about their differing theories of the unconscious mind. Carl Jung believed that there was a collective unconscious that contained inherited experiences as well as universal experiences shared by all people (Jones, 2013). He also believed that there was a personal unconscious which led him to develop theories on individuation, archetypes, and the importance of exploring the unconscious mind in order to heal and grow. This is what led to his four functions of personality, one of his largest contributions to psychology that is still being talked about and debated today.

To begin, Mallari and Pelayo III (2017) of the Assessment, Counseling, Alumni and Placement Center shared that Jung's theory of the psychological types suggests that individuals have an instinct, or preference for their ways of thinking, behaving or feeling. This determines their personality. He defined four basic functions being thinking, sensation, intuition and feeling. Thinking involves the process of analyzing and organizing information; sensation refers to the experience of sensory information like bodily sensations; intuition involves the unconscious perception of underlying patterns; and, feeling refers to evaluating information based on emotional responses and personal values (Mallari & Pelayo III, 2017). Each individual has a dominant function and then a supporting function of these four.

In continuation, Jung also identified the idea of two attitude types, which are introverted and extroverted, to describe the ways that individuals interacted with the world. Capraro and Capraro (2002) explain extroversion as involving a person's position towards the external world, where they focus on the practical, social and material aspects; whereas, introversion refers to a person's position towards the internal world, where they focus on the thoughts, experiences and feelings. This affects their personality traits because typically, an extroverted person seeks out social situations, is motivated by being around others and enjoys being at the center of attention (Capraro & Capraro, 2002). An introverted person usually prefers quieter activities and is motivated by being alone. These functions and attitudes interplay to create the eight types which are: extraverted thinking, extraverted feeling, extraverted sensation, extraverted intuition, introverted thinking, introverted feeling, introverted sensation and introverted intuition (Mallari & Pelayo III, 2017). While everyone has a dominant and supporting function, Jung found it important to also expand and practice the other types to create balance and personal growth.

Understanding each type promotes self-awareness, healing, growth, communication skills, relationships, decision-making, and interactions.

Furthermore, these psychological types created by Carl Jung have proven effective in professional settings, such as education. Markham (2000) studied the impact these psychological types have on teaching and learning and he shares that Jung's theory gives a foundation for understanding individual differences in how people feel, think, perceive and interact with everything around them. This literature suggests that by recognizing the diverse learning preferences and styles, educators can create curriculums and learning methods that are accomodating to the range of needs of each student (Markham, 2000). There have been educational programs and professional opportunities that have incorporated Jung's theory as a tool for educators and this helps to create a more inclusive learning environment. Another work of literature by Waters (1997) further studies this idea of the impact Jung's theory has on education. This literature also informs that it is important for individuals to be aware of not only their own type, but their peers' types too, in order to interact better and have an open mind (Waters, 1997). It also suggests that students partaking in other learning methods based off of the other psychological types expands their learning and accustoms them to different communication styles to be a more balanced learner (Waters, 1997).

In addition to education, Carl Jung's theory has been proven to show up in career choices that individuals thrive in, depending on their type. For example, Malari and Pelayo III (2017) suggest that an individual with a dominant thinking style might succeed in the field of engineering or mathematics where they can use logic and analytics. Whereas an individual with a dominant feeling function may thrive in counseling or social work where they can help others (Mallari & Pelayoo III, 2017). Also, an individual with a dominant intuition type might succeed

in art or writing to use their creativity. On the contrary, an individual with a dominant sensation function might be skilled in construction or cooking that includes something hands-on. The different attitudes also impact behaviors where an extroverted person may choose to work in a fast-paced work environment surrounded by coworkers, and indulging in all of the “after-work” activities. This could look like a busy office environment in the heart of New York City, a professional athletic career, or any physical career. On the other hand, an introverted person may be very overwhelmed by this and prefer a more calm, contemplative environment like working-from-home or having their own office and hurrying home to have their alone time after work. This may look like working in a technical or scientific career. There are many famous people that give insight to how the types affect their contribution to the world such as Mother Teresa being an extraverted feeling type or Steve Jobs and Albert Einstein being an introverted intuition type (Malari & Pelayo III, 2017).

This theory of psychological types has faced controversy and criticism since its formation. One criticism is that Jung's concept is based mainly on his personal experiences and his observations. According to McCrae and Costa (1987), Carl Jung's theory of personality was an early model of behavior, making it influential, but it has not had pragmatic or experiential support like other theories of personality. Many theorists see this as a lack of validity. Secondly, Carl Jung overemphasizes the unconscious processes that really cannot be measured in a tangible way, lacking environmental and conscious processes (Doran, 2017). There was no method to test the personality types theory leaving it almost ‘too abstract’ to be scientific. Third, critics found that his concepts are often difficult to define, like the term archetype being a broad and vague term (Jones, 2013). Markham (2000) stated that there are some criticisms that Jung's personality theory has cultural bias. Jung lived in a western, Eurocentric society and his theories were not

applicable to other cultures and perspectives (Markham, 2000). And the last major critique is that Carl Jung's theory of the four functions of personality simplifies human behavior and fails to account for how diverse it truly is, beyond four functions and two attitudes (Doran, 2017).

In addition to these general criticisms of Jung's work, there are more specific critiques in the fact that Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung worked closely together until they disagreed on their theories of the unconscious and split. Doran (2017) shares how the split led Jung to create these personality types which has led many psychology learners to question the validity since it is a contradiction to Freud, who is considered to be the modern father of psychology. Freud's theories of personality had more measurable and tangible observations since his idea of the unconscious included the role of the culture, society and experiences in dealing with trauma and repressed parts of oneself that leaks into personality development (Jones, 2013). On the contrary, Jung combined all repressed and conscious memories, known as a collective unconscious and did not study external factors.

There have been alternative theories of personality like the social cognitive theory or the Big Five theory, also known as the Five-Factor Model, that had actual empirical evidence and had challenged the theories of Jung. The Big Five theory was created by several theorists, including Gordon Allport, and breaks down the personality traits that every individual resembles through an acronym called O-C-E-A-N. John and Soto (2017) show that unlike Jung's four functions and two attitudes, Allport and associates theory views personality traits on the spectrum of more or less for the five characteristics: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. For example, Allport shares that every individual has the characteristic of openness but that trait varies between individuals, ranging on the lower

spectrum of openness with practical, routine, and self-sufficient to the higher spectrum of openness with imaginative, spontaneous and accommodating (John & Soto, 2017).

The Five-Factor Model theory of personality has had empirical support. Johnson, Turkheimer, Gottesman and Bouchard (2010) give evidence to major research found in support of this personality theory: that there is genetic research through the twin studies. Twin studies have been used as research to support many psychological theories as it is one way to learn about why people act and feel the way they do. Identical twins share the exact same genes, where fraternal twins share only half of their genes (Johnson, Turkheimer, Gottesman, & Bouchard, 2010). In knowing this to be fact, psychologists have compared their personalities to find identical twins to have similar personalities, proving that parts of personality are in fact inherited through our genes (Johnson, Turkheimer, Gottesman, & Bouchard, 2010). This also supports the belief that these five specific traits do run in families, and has been evident throughout history within human lives. There is also a validity to this theory as it does not simplify the human personality but instead suggests that everyone is on the spectrum of each trait, being very inclusive (John & Soto, 2017). In summary, studies show that these five traits are heritable to a degree and have been consistent over time (Johnson, Turkheimer, Gottesman, & Bouchard, 2010). Allport's theory has since been seen as an alternative theory to Jung's that has been more widely accepted. However, Jung's theory has been relevant in fields beyond psychology like literature, spirituality, and art. Many modern theorists will incorporate Jung's concepts into their work to show individual differences.

Moreover, the main controversy with Carl Jung's functions and attitudes of personality is with the very well-known personality assessment, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Created from the roots of Jung's theory, there is a huge lack of reliability and validity because

most of the evidence is based on case studies or unscientific (McCrae & Costa, 1987). Capraro and Capraro (2002) note that the MBTI applies Jung's ideas of personality types and makes it seem as if all humans can be condensed into either eight categories, four functions, or two attitudes, which many theorists believe to be a marketing controversy rather than real, raw psychology. Much of the culture tries to hand people the answers of who they are, what their purpose is, and what characteristics they have. Often the commercialization of personality tests like the MBTI can give individuals the satisfaction of fitting in with a group, however they can be false to who they truly are (Capraro & Capraro, 2002). On the contrary, users of these tests can receive their results and think that they are less capable if they are a certain personality type. For example, although introverted thinking types have brought amazing inventions to the world, it can seem like the less desirable type and associated with someone having no friends, being a nerd, or being a know-it-all and they can also be stereotyped and judged based on their results from these tests. This can affect one's confidence in decision making, one's assurance in going after goals, and one's interactions with others.

In conclusion, Carl Jung's theory of psychological types suggest that each individual possesses unique characteristics and patterns in cognitive and behavioral functioning. These patterns are based on the functions of thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition, along with the two attitudes of extroversion and introversion. Jung held the belief that understanding one's type could promote self-awareness, personal growth, relationships, academics, and career success. On a personal level, knowledge of one's type and the types of those one interacts with could aid in communication, conflict resolution, and empathy. And on the professional level, recognizing the psychological types can inform team work, career choice, learning methods, and job performance. It is clear there has been much criticism and controversy with Jung's theory of

personality, most notably for his functions, attitudes and psychological types because they were based on personal experiences and observations. However, there have arguably been multiple theories on personality traits being scientific, and that Jung's concepts have greatly influenced many fields including psychology, art, and spirituality. These influences have led other theorists to further explore his theory, expanding upon his original findings. Overall, learning the psychological types according to Jung can truly give insight into the dynamics of human thinking and behavior, individual differences and personal and professional development.

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