

# ***International Journal of Social Sciences***

## ***Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi***

### **Enneagram as a Personality Determination Method**

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#### **Abstract**

Various character determination methods have been developed to date. Some of these methods are considered scientific and some are unscientific. The enneagram, famous in the last century, is one of the character determination methods. The enneagram has three groups and nine characters. These; physics, emotion and mind groups. The characters are represented by numbers from one to nine. The reason for this is that the characters are neutral, not to be called with a name that will cause misunderstanding. In this study, we will focus on how enneagram is used as character determination method.

**Keywords:** Enneagram, character, temperament, Gurdiyev.

#### **Introduction**

The words personality and temperament are used to explain human psychology and behavior. Of these, temperament refers to a person's innate traits, and personality refers to traits acquired later. However, when it comes to personality in general use, it refers to both innate and acquired features.

Numerous different methods have been developed over time to determine the human character. In the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh, people were classified as brave, arrogant and rebellious. In the 4th century BC, Hippocrates divided people into four classes; cheerful, cold-blooded, angry and melancholic, according to the color of their body fluids.

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## *Enneagram as a Personality Determination Method*

Many theories have been developed to define and explain personality. Each theory takes personality from a different perspective. Freud's theory of psychoanalytic personality is based on the determination of personality of childhood experiences and traumas. According to this theory, personality consists of three main parts: id (sub-self), ego (self) and super ego (upper self). Id is the biological side of personality and focuses on the innate impulses that human beings have. Sexuality and aggression are two inherent impulses of man. Ego is the regulatory and balancing part of personality. The ego tries to balance the lower self and the upper self. Super ego is the moral aspect of personality and determines the right or wrong of the individual's behavior (Çiftçioğlu, Polat and Eren, 2016, 167).

According to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, psychosocial factors are given importance in the development of personality. Personality develops according to the relationship of the person with other people. Elements like mother, father, teacher, and friend play important roles in the development of personality (Çiftçioğlu, Polat and Eren, 2016, 168).

According to Eric Fromm, personality is formed by life experiences as a result of social effects. Permanent personality is the common product of social and cultural influences with the physical structure and temperament of the individual and hereditary aspects.

According to Jung, the individual is an entity that tries to renew itself and is in continuous development. Jung divides individuals into introverted and extraverted. These two trends exist in each individual. However, one of them usually prevails. The four main functions of personality are thinking, feeling, intuition, and sensation. Based on this, Jung has identified eight types of personality. These are; introverted-thinking, extraverted-thinking, introverted-feeling, extraverted-feeling, introverted-intuition, extraverted-intuition, introverted-sensation and extraverted-sensation (Koçyiğit, 2014, 12).

A model used since the ancient Greek philosophers classifies people according to three basic emotions and abilities. These are anger, lust, and mental abilities. These three abilities are in every person, but one is always more dominant. Many Islamic scholars from Ibn Sina to Bediuzzaman also used this method in their works. This method also forms the basis of the Enneagram. According to the five-factor model, which is one of the accepted models today, there are five people who are extroverted, harmonious, responsible, emotionally balanced and open to innovation.

## **History of Enneagram**

Enneagram, which is the main subject of our article, is a personality identification and examination method. Enneagram is an ancient esoteric teaching and a personality examination method which is based on a 9-types system (Daniels and Price, 2004: 13). Each type is named differently according to its characteristics and usually identified by use of numbers (Fiely, 2002; Murali, 2003; Colina, 1998; Palmer, 1989).

The history of Enneagram, dates to ancient religions and civilizations, as far back as the Epic of Gilgamesh some 4500 years ago. Enneagram has originated in the Middle East in the Kingdoms of Babylon and the Sarmoun Brotherhood. In the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century, Islamic mathematicians and Sufis obtained the Enneagram from Afghanistan (Armstrong, 2001).

Born in Kars, George Ivanovich Gurdjief (1877-1949) is an Orthodox Ottoman citizen whose mother was a Greek and father an Armenian. Gurdjief, who devoted his life to the search for human truth, has conducted a lot of research in Central Asia, Bukhara and Tashkent spanning many years (Palmer, 1988).

In his book, *Meeting with Remarkable Men*, Gurdjieff states that he lived in Central Asia for 20-25 years and met with Sufi elders. Gurdjieff explains that he learned his Enneagram knowledge from the Order of Saourmoni, a secret sect in ancient Babylon. Afterwards, Gurdjief came back to Istanbul with his students and established an institute called *The Harmonic Development of Spirit*. However, due to turmoil in the late Ottoman period, he could not stay long in Istanbul and later moved and settled in France (Riso and Hudson, 2000, 23-24).

Enneagram, as it is today, has developed through a lot of contributions from various researchers, and attempts have been made in applying it to various fields. One of the researchers, a Bolivian psychologist Oscar Ichazo, categorized Enneagram according to different personality types. Ichazo talked about the characteristics of the 9-person type system and placed them correctly on the Enneagram symbol (Ichazo, 1982). Ichazo later moved to America where he founded *The Arica Institute* (Randall, 18).

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Claudio Naranjo, who worked with Ichazo in Chile, applied Enneagram to psychology (Naranjo, 1990). Many researchers such as Don Riso, Russ Hudson, Helen Palmer, Richard Rohr and Elizabeth Wagele continued to develop Enneagram in various fields. Enneagram's development-friendly structure facilitates the work of these researchers and encourages them to work in this field (Almaas, 1998).

### **Enneagram types**

Enneagram has 9 basic types that are numbered by numbers from 1 to 9 accordingly (Daniels and Price, 117) and are also named according to their predominant characteristics (Riso and Hudson, 2000, 32): 1- The Perfectionist, 2- The Helper, 3- The Achiever, 4- The Individualist, 5- The Researcher, 6- The Loyalist, 7- The Enthusiast, 8- The Challenger, 9- The Peacemaker.

Enneagram is demonstrated with a circle as a symbol that has the nine different points, connected with lines. The circle represents wholeness, the lines signify the energy movement within the whole of the Enneagram framework (Rhodes, 2009, 12).



1. The Perfectionist: The aim in life of this type is to achieve perfection in every subject. He/She makes a lot of effort to obey laid down rules and make up to others. This type works like a bee and

actually enjoys working. He/She is usually found doing the hardest work with pleasure and in the most perfect way.

2. The Helper: Helping people and expecting them to show appreciation is the most basic feature in this type. The need for gratitude and the desire to help is quite important for the Type 2. They look everywhere for someone to help.

3. The Achiever: The most basic feature of this type is to be very successful in life. They want to be the first in every field and it is important for them to be seen as such. The Type 3 usually works very hard to succeed.

4. The Individualist: The aim of the Type 4 is to be an original person in life and to do original works. They hate mediocrity and being ordinary. Original artists usually come out from this type.

5. The Researcher: This type always aims to continue his life with knowledge. Type 5s are usually very curious and they can be seen always trying to learn more and more. This is because they feel more powerful as they learn. Thinkers, philosophers, scientists are usually from this type.

6. The Loyalist: This type always aims to have full security in all areas of life. They tailor their life decisions in such a way as to avoid risk and danger. Therefore, they focus on hazards, errors and imperfections in a bid to easily recognize and avoid them.

7. The Enthusiast: The aim of Type 7 in life is to constantly experience new things and to achieve happiness in this way. They are impatient, hyperactive, knowledgeable in every field.

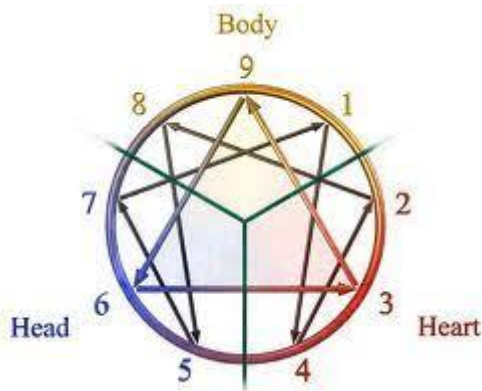
8. The Challenger: The type 8s usually possess strong leadership qualities. Being independent, physical and exhibiting good leadership abilities are their main characteristics. Great leaders usually emerge from this type.

9. The Peacemaker: Type 9s are peacekeepers and mediators who work well with everyone in order to prevent any chaos or disharmony in their lives.

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### **Regions in Enneagram**

Enneagram types are grouped into three regions which are the centers of intelligence and perception. These are: The Body region (8-9-1), The Heart region (2-3-4) and The Head region (5-6-7) (Riso and Hudson, 2000, p. 47). Each region has three personality types. Everyone experiences all three, but each personality type has a particular strength or ‘home base’ in one of them. Thus, the home base of each type is the region it belongs to. These three regions (i.e. body, heart and head) influences our way of being in the world and is an important key in overcoming our weaknesses and developing our potential (Hampson, 2005, p 14).



These three regions coincide with the anger, lust and mental forces in people as used by Islamic scholars. While man uses the force of lust to get useful things, he uses the force of anger to remove harmful things. Similarly, one uses the force of reason to distinguish between good and evil. Every force has a balanced state and an extreme state. One of the extremes is positive excess (ifrat), and the other is negative (tefrit). The negative excess of the lust force is not desirable as it may lead to haram. The positive excess of the lust force on the other hand can lead to having unlimited demands. The mediocre degree or balanced state of the lust force is chastity, that is, desire for halal and reluctance to haram. The negative excess of the anger force is cowardice and even fear of things that should not be feared. The positive excess of the anger force is cruel dictatorship. The

mediocre degree or balanced state of anger is to show courage and gratitude for legitimate purposes. The negative excess of the mental force is foolishness. The positive excess of the mental force is demagogy. The mediocre degree or balanced state of mental strength is to be able to distinguish right and wrong.

Each person has these three forces, but one of these forces usually becomes dominant. The other two forces are effective in the second and third degree. If one of these three forces becomes too dominant, it neutralizes the others completely. In this case, the very dominant force is in the positive degree of excess in that person, and if it is not balanced by spiritual education, diseased people appear. For example, if the anger force is very dominant, the dictatorial tendencies of a person will manifest. If the lust force is so strong, a person's chastity and morality will become very weak. If the mental force is so dominant, demagogues appear.

If a character has developed himself spiritually, then he is said to be healthy. Conversely, if a person lives at the ego level, it can be found at an average or unhealthy level.

A person who truly believes in God does not trust anyone else in the true sense. In other words, that person cannot truly trust and endure any mortal being, especially himself. Because they have no power in reality. The ego of man is not a real thing, and has no real power. As will be explained below, ego is a virtual reality and it is a tool used by man to get to know God. If a person uses his ego for this purpose, he learns to trust Allah, who has real power and might. Indeed real power and real might belongs to Allah, the supreme and great.

In Enneagram, characters in the Body region act according to the pleasure-pain dilemma, characters in the Heart region act according to the love-hate dilemma and characters in the Head region act according to the right-wrong (good-bad) dilemma.

The main characteristics of Body-centered characters are being natural leaders, their anger and their enjoyment is with the body. The main feature of Heart-centered characters is their potential leadership and emotionality qualities. The main feature of Mind-centered characters is that they have potential leadership features, as well as a life centered on knowledge and learning.

Balancing these 3 regions or centers is important in achieving a more balanced life. The Body region characters (8-9-1) lead with the body for movement, sensate awareness and gut-level

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knowing. Their focus is on personal security, control, social belonging and taking the right actions. The Body region is also known as the instinctual region.

The Heart region characters (2-3-4) emphasize the heart for positive and negative feelings, empathy and care for others, romance and devotion. Their focus is on achieving success, building relationships and performing up to expectation. The Heart region is also known as the emotional region.

The Head region characters (5-6-7) are the thinking/rational types. They lead with ideas, information, figuring things out through rational decision making before acting. Their focus is on creating certainty and safety, or finding multiple options. The Head region is also known as the intellectual region.

If one of these 3 regions is too dominant, it neutralizes the others. In this case, the dominant feature is in the degree of unhealthiness in that person and if it is not balanced with education, diseased people will appear. For example, if anger, which is a Body region based feeling, is very dominant, cruel and dictatorial tendencies emerge in a person. The same applies where any of the other regions is too dominant in a person.

### **The Wings**

Each Enneagram type has two wings. In the Enneagram symbol, the neighbors of a type are its wings. (Palmer, 1991). For example, the wings of a type 1 are 9 and 2.

### **The Levels of Development**

In Enneagram, each character has three levels of development: the healthy, average and unhealthy levels. While a person shows the characteristics of his/her type in an average state, he/she behaves like other types in healthy and unhealthy states (Riso & Hudson, 2000). For example, the type 5 of the Head region show the characteristics of their own type on an average level. In contrast, the



type 5, when in a happy and relaxed state, behave like a healthy level type 7. Again, type 5, when stressed, acts like an unhealthy type 8.

### **Stress and Comfortable Situations**

In Enneagram, when a person is stressed, he/she exhibits unhealthy attributes of another type and shows the negative characteristics of that other type. On the other hand, when a person is relaxed and comfortable, he/she exhibits the healthy attributes of another type and shows the positive characteristics of that type (Palmer, 1991). The interesting thing is that when a person is stressed, he/she turns into to the type he/she dislikes the most. In other words, when a person is stressed, he/she acts at the level of unhealthiness of the type which is the most distant or opposite to his/her original type. For example, when type 1 are stressed, they get pulled into a shell like a type 4 experiencing depression. On the other hand, when they are comfortable, they move to and exhibits attributes of a healthy type 7, and thus, they become an energetic and free-spirited type that experiences freely.

### **Principles and dynamics of the Enneagram personality system**

In Enneagram, the basic personality does not change, but one can develop or weaken this personality. Enneagram types are expressed in numbers as numbers have neutral value, they do not have positive or negative value judgments. There is no advantage or disadvantage in the ordering of the characters from one to nine. There is no superiority of any character over another. Each character has its own strengths and weaknesses.

According to Enneagram, the character is actually the person's prison. A person is happy when he gets rid of the prison. In fact, the type 2 character for example cannot give something he cherishes or values to a person he does not like. But when the type 2 does this, he gets rid of his character's prison and becomes happy. Similarly, Type 6 can't actually work with a person they can't trust. However, when they do, they get out of their character's prison and become happy. When a type

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4 does an ordinary job or meet with an ordinary person, he/she gets out of prison. When a type 5 meets with people in an environment of love, he is freed from prison. Type 7 get out of prison when he/she learns to be patient. Type 8 goes out of prison when he/she shows love and compassion, even if he/she doesn't get obeyed. Type 9 is out of prison when he follows the rules.

## **Conclusions**

Today, Enneagram is developed with new researches in almost every country, it is taught as a course in many universities, it is used to increase productivity in companies, and it is applied as a method of personality identification in many disciplines. Enneagram is actually a discipline on its own like logic, mathematics, psychology, sociology etc. and cannot be directly related to any religion. People with different religions and opinions use Enneagram and benefit from it. Because Enneagram is a method that determines human personality most clearly.

Although Enneagram identifies the human personality very clearly, the development of the personality and its spiritual upgrading are carried out according to the person's own religion and views. In other words, he can use his Enneagram as Muslim, Jewish, Christian or Hindu and develop his spiritual education according to his own belief after determining his personality with this method.

For this reason, people of all religions and societies that aim to educate people use Enneagram. Enneagram makes the job of the trainers extremely easy and illuminates their path. When a person's character is well identified, it is easier to train him and big mistakes can be prevented. Since the characters are different, the words and behavior that benefit one person can be very harmful to another person. For this reason, after determining the characters using Enneagram, it is more useful to give education accordingly.

Enneagram is used in every field where people are, such as education, psychology, human resources, law, commerce, business world, family life, communication. Since it is a dynamic system, the Enneagram system continues to develop. Many researchers all over the world continue to work on it.

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