

Research Paper

## Understanding Type A and Type B Personalities in Adolescents: Significance, Impact and Implications for Mental Health and Development

Shaily Gambhir<sup>1\*</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Adolescent personality development marks a key transitional phase between childhood and adulthood, driven by significant physical, cognitive, and emotional changes. This period is crucial for identity formation and personality trait emergence, which impacts psychosomatic health and life adjustment. This paper focuses on the widely studied Type A (competitive, ambitious) and Type B (relaxed, patient) personality types, examining their developmental paths and their effects on mental health, academics, and social relationships, as well as their influence on adult outcomes and the role of environmental and biological factors. Emphasizing early interventions and coping strategies, the paper highlights how adolescent personality shapes long-term psychosocial outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Adolescent, Mental health, Personality, Type A, Type B*

Adolescence is a critical phase marked by significant physiological, emotional, and cognitive changes. During this time, personality development undergoes major shifts as individuals explore identity, navigate social interactions, and gain autonomy. Personality is defined as the consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, that become more pronounced, with traits formed in adolescence influencing long-term behaviour, mental health, and life outcomes. Adolescence is a critical stage for identity formation, establishing social relationships, and developing behavioural patterns that can persist into adulthood.

This paper examines the development of key personality types—Type A and Type B—during adolescence. Type A is associated with competitiveness and urgency, while Type B is more relaxed and patient. Understanding how these traits emerge, and impact adolescents is crucial for identifying at-risk individuals and creating interventions that promote healthy coping strategies and mental well-being.

### *Influences on Personality Development in Adolescence*

- 1. Biological Factors:** The onset of puberty brings about not only physical changes but also shifts in brain development. The prefrontal cortex, responsible for decision-making, planning, and impulse control, continues to mature during adolescence,

<sup>1</sup>PhD Scholar, Department of Psychology, RTMNU University, India

\*Corresponding Author

Received: September 17, 2024; Revision Received: September 27, 2024; Accepted: September 30, 2024

## Understanding Type A and Type B Personalities in Adolescents: Significance, Impact and Implications for Mental Health and Development

influencing personality traits such as conscientiousness and emotional regulation. Additionally, hormonal changes can contribute to fluctuations in mood and behaviour.

- 2. Social and Environmental Factors:** Family, peer groups, and societal expectations play pivotal roles in shaping adolescent personalities. Adolescents often experience tension between the desire for autonomy and the need for parental guidance. Peer groups, in particular, become increasingly influential, as adolescents look to their social networks for validation, identity formation, and behavioural modelling.
- 3. Cultural Influences:** Cultural context also impacts personality development during adolescence. In collectivist cultures, adolescents may prioritize group harmony and social obligations, resulting in personalities that favour agreeableness and conscientiousness. In contrast, individualistic cultures may encourage traits such as extraversion, assertiveness, and independence.

### *Theoretical Background of Personality Types*

#### **Origins of Type A and Type B Personality Concepts**

The Type A and Type B personality theory was first introduced by cardiologists Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman in the 1950s. They hypothesized that people with Type A personalities were more prone to heart disease due to their high levels of stress and competitive nature. Type B personalities, on the other hand, were less likely to experience stress-related illnesses due to their calm and relaxed nature. This framework, although initially focused on cardiovascular health, has since been applied to various aspects of mental health, stress management, and interpersonal behaviour in both adults and adolescents.

#### **Personality Development in Adolescence**

Adolescence is a period of significant neurobiological, social, and psychological change. During this time, adolescents undergo identity exploration and consolidation, as theorized by Erik Erikson's psychosocial model. Additionally, the onset of abstract thinking and heightened emotional regulation, shaped by the maturing prefrontal cortex, plays a significant role in the crystallization of personality traits.

While personality traits can be stable over time, adolescence is a period when environmental factors, peer relationships, family dynamics, and academic pressures interact to shape an individual's personality type. The temperament established in childhood may evolve, and the personality distinctions between Type A and Type B traits become more pronounced during this critical developmental period.

#### **Characteristics of Type A Personality in Adolescents**

<u><b>TYPE A</b></u>	<u><b>TYPE B</b></u>
➤ <b>Competitive</b>	<b>Relaxed</b>
➤ <b>Time Urgent</b>	<b>Patient</b>
➤ <b>Hostile and Aggressive</b>	<b>Easy Going and Adaptable</b>
➤ <b>Ambitious</b>	<b>Laid Back</b>

#### *Characteristics of Type A Personality in Adolescents:*

##### **Behavioural Traits**

Adolescents exhibiting Type A personality traits tend to be highly competitive, achievement-oriented, and ambitious. They display a strong desire for control over their

## **Understanding Type A and Type B Personalities in Adolescents: Significance, Impact and Implications for Mental Health and Development**

environment and have a sense of urgency about time, often engaging in multitasking. These adolescents are more likely to internalize stress and frustration, particularly when faced with failure or obstacles in academic or social settings. Characteristics such as impatience and hostility can manifest in their interactions with peers and authority figures, sometimes leading to strained relationships.

### ***Impact on Mental Health***

The high levels of stress experienced by Type A adolescents can result in negative psychological outcomes. Research has shown that Type A adolescents are at a higher risk for anxiety, depression, and stress-related disorders, especially when they struggle to meet their own expectations. Perfectionism, a common trait associated with Type A personality, often exacerbates these mental health challenges. Studies have demonstrated a strong correlation between Type A traits and burnout, particularly in high-achieving adolescents.

### ***Academic Performance***

While Type A adolescents are often high achievers, their approach to academics can be double-edged. On one hand, their drive for success and ambition can lead to exceptional academic performance. On the other hand, the pressure they place on themselves to excel can lead to stress-related issues, including burnout, test anxiety, and psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches and fatigue. Research suggests that while Type A students may excel in structured environments that reward performance, they may struggle in settings that emphasize creativity and collaboration over competition.

### ***Characteristics of Type B Personality in Adolescents: Behavioural Traits***

In contrast, Type B adolescents exhibit a more laid-back, relaxed attitude toward life. They are more patient, less competitive, and less preoccupied with deadlines and time pressures. These adolescents are more likely to approach tasks with a calm and methodical mindset, enjoying the process rather than focusing solely on the outcome. Type B adolescents also tend to be more adaptable to change and are less prone to conflict in social settings, displaying greater emotional stability and resilience.

### ***Impact on Mental Health***

The more relaxed nature of Type B adolescents generally leads to lower levels of stress and anxiety compared to their Type A counterparts. They are more likely to adopt effective coping mechanisms and are less susceptible to mental health issues related to stress. However, Type B adolescents may face challenges in environments that reward high levels of achievement and competitiveness, potentially leading to feelings of inadequacy or underperformance in such settings.

### ***Academic Performance***

Type B adolescents may not demonstrate the same drive for academic success as Type A students, but they often perform well in environments that emphasize collaborative learning, creativity, and emotional intelligence. Their more balanced approach to academics allows them to maintain good mental health, even under pressure. However, in highly competitive environments, they may be at a disadvantage due to their lack of urgency and need for constant stimulation or challenge.

## Understanding Type A and Type B Personalities in Adolescents: Significance, Impact and Implications for Mental Health and Development

### *Environmental and Biological Influences on Personality Types:*

#### **Role of Genetics and Temperament**

Research suggests that temperament, which is closely linked to personality development, has a genetic component. Type A traits such as high arousal levels, impulsivity, and sensitivity to environmental stimuli may be influenced by an individual's biological makeup. Similarly, Type B traits like emotional stability and low reactivity to stressors are also believed to have genetic underpinnings. Neurobiological factors, such as the functioning of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and serotonin levels, are also thought to play a role in determining an individual's propensity for either personality type.

#### **Influence of Environment and Socialization**

While genetic predispositions provide a foundation, environmental factors significantly shape whether an adolescent will exhibit Type A or Type B personality traits. Family dynamics, parenting styles, peer relationships, and academic pressures are critical factors. For example, adolescents raised in highly competitive environments, where success is prioritized, may be more likely to develop Type A traits. Conversely, adolescents raised in nurturing and emotionally supportive environments may be more inclined to develop Type B traits.

The role of socialization cannot be understated. Gender norms and cultural expectations also influence the development of these personality types. In some cultures, assertiveness and competitiveness (Type A traits) may be encouraged, particularly in male adolescents, while patience and emotional regulation (Type B traits) may be more valued in female adolescents.

### *Long-Term Implications of Type A and B Personality in Adolescents*

#### **Adult Outcomes**

The personality traits established in adolescence often carry into adulthood. Individuals with Type A traits may achieve high levels of success in their careers but may also be at greater risk for chronic stress, cardiovascular diseases, and burnout. On the other hand, individuals with Type B traits may enjoy more stable mental health outcomes but may struggle to reach the same level of success in highly competitive professional environments.

#### **Interventions and Coping Strategies**

Given the potential negative outcomes associated with both personality types, particularly for Type A adolescents, early intervention is essential. Stress management techniques, such as mindfulness, cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), and relaxation training, can be effective in helping Type A adolescents cope with stress.

For Type B adolescents, fostering goal-setting skills and encouraging healthy competition may help them achieve greater academic and personal success without compromising their mental well-being.

## **CONCLUSION**

The development of Type A and Type B personality traits in adolescence results from a complex interaction of genetic, environmental, and social factors. Type A adolescents, while driven and goal-oriented, face higher risks of anxiety and burnout, whereas Type B adolescents, though more relaxed, may struggle in competitive settings. Identifying these traits early is crucial for designing interventions that promote mental well-being and adaptive coping skills. Understanding personality diversity during this critical phase allows

## Understanding Type A and Type B Personalities in Adolescents: Significance, Impact and Implications for Mental Health and Development

for more effective guidance and tailored support from educators, parents, and professionals. Early identification and targeted interventions can foster resilience and shape healthier, well-adjusted adults, highlighting the importance of addressing personality development in adolescence.

### REFERENCES

- Carver, C., & Connor-Smith, J. (2010). Personality and Coping. *Annual Review of Psychology*. Palo Alto, Vol. 61 pg. 679.
- Chinaveh, M. (2014). A comparison of Type-A and Type-B Learners in the perception of stress level and use of coping responses in the Campus. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 143: 384 – 388.
- Erikson, E. H. (1959). *Identity and the Life Cycle*. International Universities Press.
- Ferguson, E. (2001). Personality and coping traits: A Joint factor analysis. *British Journal of Health psychology*; 6: 311-325.
- Friedman, M., & Rosenman, R. H. (1974). *Type A Behaviour and Your Heart*. Knopf.
- Lateef, A., Dahar, A. M. , Yousuf, M. I. , (Spring 2019) , *Global Social Sciences Review (GSSR)*, Vol. IV, No. II | Page: 80 – 8
- Matthews, K. A., & Haynes, S. G. (1986). Type A behaviour pattern and coronary disease risk: Update and critical evaluation. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 123(6), 923-960.
- McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (1997). Personality trait structure as a human universal. *American Psychologist*, 52(5), 509-516.
- Mcleod, S. (2021). *Type A and Type B Personality Theory*. Simply Psychology. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/personality-a.html>
- Samaras, A. & Galanakis, M, (2022). Type A and Type B Personality Types: An Evaluation in the Modern Organizational Psychology Scope. *Psychology Research*, Vol.12, No.12, 951-956
- Steinberg, L. (2014). *Age of Opportunity: Lessons from the New Science of Adolescence*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Thomas, A., & Chess, S. (1977). *Temperament and Development*. Brunner/Mazel.
- What Are Type A and Type B Personalities?* (2020, January 2). MedicineNet; MedicineNet. [https://www.medicinenet.com/type\\_a/article.htm](https://www.medicinenet.com/type_a/article.htm)

### Acknowledgment

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** Gambhir, S. (2024). Understanding Type A and Type B Personalities in Adolescents: Significance, Impact and Implications for Mental Health and Development. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(3), 3380-3384. DIP:18.01.329.20241203, DOI:10.25215/1203.329