



Thinking styles: A portrayal of an Individual's persona

Anjali Rana,^{1*} Raksha Rana,² Surya Rana²

¹PhD Scholar, Institute of Home Economics, University of Delhi, New Delhi-110016, India. ²B.ed Students, Maharshi Dyanand University, Rohtak, Haryana-124001, India.

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to review the existing literature on thinking styles, types of thinking styles, characteristics of thinking styles and importance of thinking styles in an individual's life. Thinking Styles are described as how people think, perceive, and retain information. It's important to remember that styles aren't the same as skills. They are the preferred methods for processing information, solving problems, and so on. Thirteen thinking styles were described by Sternberg that fall into five dimensions: functions (legislative, executive, and judicial styles), forms (hierarchical, oligarchic, monarchic, and anarchic styles), levels (global and local styles), scopes (internal and external styles), and leanings (liberal and conservative styles). These are most widely used and studied among other thinking styles. By assessing the specific styles of a person, one can determine how well they may respond to a given task. Thinking styles also give an overall reflection of individual's personality/persona.

Keywords: Thinking Styles, Types of Thinking styles, Sternberg's Theory, Characteristics of styles, Individual personality.

Introduction

Every person has a particular method of thinking and learning, which psychologists refer to as a style. Two people behave and think differently for similar situations because both of them have their own style of thinking. A person's preferred way of thinking and expressing or employing one or more abilities is referred to as their thinking style (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 1997). Sternberg's (1988, 1997) theory of mental self-government, a theory of thinking styles, is gaining attention among academicians because it incorporates all of the three classical models of styles (i.e., cognition-centered, personality-centered, and activity-centered) declared by Grigorenko and Sternberg (1995). People use their abilities in a variety of ways, according to Sternberg, just as there are numerous ways to rule a society. Thirteen thinking styles were described by Sternberg which fall within five dimensions, namely as: functions (legislative, executive, and judicial styles), forms (hierarchical, oligarchic, monarchic, and anarchic styles), levels (global and local styles), scopes (internal and external styles), and leanings (liberal and conservative styles). Zhang (2002b) divided the 13 thinking styles into three categories. The three-fold model is built on this foundation (Zhang & Sternberg, 2005). Legislative, liberal, judicial, global, and hierarchical thinking styles are among Type I intellectual styles. The executive, conservative, monarchic, and local thinking styles are all part of Type II

intellectual styles. The oligarchic, anarchic, internal, and exterior styles are all part of Type III.

Several inventories have been invented based on theory of mental self-government, namely; Thinking Styles Inventory (Sternberg & Wagner, 1992), the Set of Thinking Styles Tasks for Students (Grigorenko & Sternberg, 1993a), the Students' Thinking Styles Evaluated by Teachers (Grigorenko & Sternberg, 1993b), and the Thinking Styles in Teaching Inventory (Grigorenko & Sternberg, 1993c). Thinking styles are the interface between intelligence and personality, and they can be used in both academic and non-academic situations (Grigorenko & Sternberg, 1995).

General Characteristics of Styles

Sternberg (1997) gives some characteristics of thinking styles, which are as follows;

- Styles are preferences, not abilities.
- Styles, on average, are not "good" or "bad," –it's a question of fit.
- Styles are variables across tasks and situations.
- People differ in strengths of their preferences.
- People differ in their stylistic flexibility.
- Styles are socialized.
- Styles can change during a person's life.
- Styles are measurable.
- Styles are modifiable.
- Styles valued at one time and place may not be valued at another.

*Corresponding Author: Anjali Rana, PhD Scholar, IHE, University of Delhi, New Delhi-110016, India.
Email: anjalirana.17@gmail.com

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Theory of Mental Self –Government, Sternberg

In this theory, 13 thinking styles were described which fall under five dimensions, namely as: functions (legislative, executive, and judicial styles), forms (hierarchical, oligarchic, monarchic, and anarchic styles), levels (global and local styles), scopes (internal and external styles), and leanings (liberal and conservative styles) (Sternberg, 1988, 1997).

Functions of Mental Self Government (Sternberg, 2012)

Legislative, Executive, and Judicial tasks are carried out by the intellect in the same way that they are carried out by governments.

Legislative Style

These people like to come up with their own ways of doing things and prefer to decide for themselves what they will do and how they will do it. They prefer challenges that are not pre-structured or manufactured, and they enjoy making their own laws.

Executive Style

These people like to follow rules and prefer problems that are pre-structured or prefabricated. They prefer to fill in the gaps within existing structures rather than build new ones.

Judicial Style

These people like to evaluate rules and procedures, and prefer problems in which one analyses and evaluates existing things and ideas.

Forms of Mental Self – Government (Sternberg, 2012)

The theory of mental self –government has four forms: monarchic, hierarchical, oligarchic and anarchic. Each form has a different way of approaching the world and its problems.

Monarchic Style

These individuals like to focus on one task or aspect of that task until it is completed. People who have a monarchic personality tend to concentrate on a single goal or need at a time.

Hierarchical Style

The hierarchical individual has a hierarchy of goals and understands the importance of prioritization, as all goals cannot be met, or at least not equally well. These people tend to be more accepting of complexities than is the monarchic person, and recognizes the need to view problems from a number of angles so as to set priorities correctly.

Oligarchic Style

The oligarchic person is like the hierarchical person in having desire to do more than one thing within the same time frame. They don't always know what to accomplish first or how much time to devote to each of the activities at hand. They can, however, become as productive as or even more effective than those with other styles if given even modest advice about the priorities of the organization in which they are working.

Anarchic Style

The anarchic person gets motivated by a various needs and goals that can be difficult for him or her, as well as for others to sort out. Anarchic people take what seems like a random approach to problems. They tend to pick up a little from here, a little from there, they often put together diverse bits of information and ideas in a creative way.

Levels of mental self-government (Sternberg, 2012)

There are two levels of mental self-government. The Local and Global Style.

Local Style

These individuals prefer tasks that require engagement with specific, concrete details and that often require considerable precision in execution.

Global Style

These individuals prefer problems that are more general in nature and that require abstract thinking.

Scopes of mental self-government (Sternberg, 2012)

Internal Style

These people prefer tasks that allow them to work alone, independently of others.

External Style

These individuals prefer tasks that allow them to work with other people through interaction.

Leanings of mental self-government (Sternberg, 2012)

Liberal Style

Liberals enjoy going beyond established rules and processes, maximizing change, and seeking out confusing circumstances.

Conservative Style

The conservative person prefers to follow established norms and procedures, to minimize change, and to avoid uncertain circumstances as much as possible.

Review of Literature

Sternberg (1995) claims an individual's thinking is comprised of varying levels of each style with some being highly utilized, while others not. By assessing the specific styles of a person, one can determine how well they may respond to a given task. Sternberg (1997) argues how essential this is to learning, since students of equal ability will perform differently based on how information is delivered to them. According to Sternberg (1997), if your thinking style profile is a good match for a setting, you will thrive, whereas if it is not, you will suffer.

Some researchers claimed that styles are subservient to personality (e.g., Jackson & Lawty-Jones, 1996; von Wittich & Antonakis, 2011), while others claimed that personality and styles are separate constructs and they each contribute something different to the knowledge of individual differences (e.g., Li & Armstrong, 2015; Zhang, 2006). Thinking style can

be defined as the combination of personality traits that create the human (Belousava, 2014).

Zhang (2017) shown that socialization can modify intellectual types, including thinking styles. Theorists said that every individual may have special, distinct method of encoding, storing, and information processing in his/her mind, and it seems that a person whose thinking styles comply with social expectations in certain circumstances can show more success (Safari et al, 2015).

According to Herbst and Maree (2008), empathy is linked to thinking styles. Individuals' thinking styles are significant in both the educational process and their daily lives (Ozbas & Sagir, 2014).

Fang (2000) examined the relationship between teaching approaches and thinking styles in teaching and concluded that teaching approaches and thinking styles are two overlapping constructs.

Nachmias and Shany (2002), examined students learning in virtual courses and the relationship between their performance and thinking styles, and found that learners with liberal or internal thinking styles outperformed the other students in the course.

Sternberg and Grigorenko (1995) discovered that a teacher's thinking style is highly influenced by grade level, teacher age, subject area, and ideals. Their study also revealed that teachers are more legislative and less executive in lower grades than they are in upper grades.

Fan & Ye (2007), found that older teachers tend to be more executive, local, and conservative than younger teachers.

Zhang and Zhou (2011) have examined the relationship between creativity and thinking styles and found that people who got higher score on legislative, liberal, internal and external thinking styles were more creative.

Nateghian (2008) in relation to the thinking styles and creativity showed that legislative, judicial, holistic, hierarchical and liberal thinking styles can predict higher creativity scores.

Sood (2014) investigated the link between thinking style and creativity and academic streams. The study's findings revealed that stream had a significant impact on Monarchic and external Thinking styles, with arts students scoring higher on Monarchic than scientific students.

In 1995, Sternberg and Grigorenko conducted a study to find out the thinking styles of students between the ages of 12 and 16. The results revealed that socio-economic level related negatively to the judicial, local, conservative and oligarchic thinking styles. Later born siblings were more legislative and a significant match between students and teachers thinking styles was also found.

Douglas (1991) compared business communication students' thinking styles with the process and products of collaborative writing groups and found that students with identical thinking styles do not naturally team up in forming groups and thinking style is more important than academic major in influencing group success.

Zhang (2002) examined the relationship between thinking styles and academic performance and modes of thinking among U.S. university students. According to the findings, more complex and creative thinking styles are strongly associated to a holistic mode of thinking, whereas more norm-conforming

and basic thinking styles are considerably related to an analytical mode of thinking.

Albaili (2007) examined the differences in thinking styles among low-, average-, and high- achieving United Arab Emirate College students. Students' thinking styles were assessed using the Thinking Styles Inventory. Results indicated that low-achieving students scored significantly lower on executive, hierarchic, anarchic, local, conservative, and internal styles and higher on legislative, oligarchic and liberal styles. According to a discriminant analysis, executive and conservative styles were the biggest distinguishing features between low- and high-achieving students.

Saricoban and Kirmizi (2020) conducted a study on the correlation between metacognitive awareness and thinking styles of pre-service EFL teachers. The results revealed that the participants had a moderate level of metacognition, the most prominent thinking styles were legislative, judicial, monarchic and anarchic thinking style and legislative, executive, monarchic, and internal thinking styles predicted metacognition.

Zhang (2008) conducted a study on relationship between emotions and thinking styles of students. The results revealed that: (a) thinking styles were associated with emotions and also thinking styles had predictive power for emotions beyond age; (b) there was a significant association with the ability to deal with emotions and thinking styles; and (c) depression was positively predicted by hierarchical style and negatively predicted by anarchic style.

Zhang (2006) conducted a study on relationship between thinking styles and personality. The finding of the study revealed a significant relationship between individual style and personality.

Conclusion

People use different thinking styles in order to resolve the problems they face. Every person has a particular method of thinking and learning, which psychologists refer to as a style. Under the correct circumstances, all styles are adaptable. Styles are preferences not fixed modes of behavior. It is not possible to locate a standardized thinking style for an individual because the same individual uses different thinking styles for each problem he/she encounters (Sternberg, 1997). People use various thinking styles while making inferences. These inferences are influenced by other person's feelings and thoughts. . Styles can help us understand why some people thrive and others fail in their chosen careers. People need to find careers that match not only their abilities but their styles as well. Thinking Styles help us understand why with given equal abilities, one person chooses one career and another person chooses another career. People with different styles like to use their abilities in different ways and so respond differently well to the kinds of thinking required in different occupations. Individuals may capitalise on their strengths, correct for their flaws, learn to adapt, make accurate decisions, be motivated, and achieve success by identifying their preferred styles.

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