

An Understanding of the Progressive History, Concepts and Theories of Temperament (Mizāj)

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Abstract:

Purpose: Endeavor of this article to review the history and course of temperament, in the light of philosophies and theories regarding to know the existence of temperament in human being.

Background: Curiosity in Mizāj (temperament) as an enlightenment for the nature of individual distinctiveness is very old. Ancient historians, philosophers, and scholars, first postulated temperament for behavioral patterns they had observed across humanity. Classic Greek writings often linked their behavioral observations with intriguing and primitive speculations regarding internal functions of the human body. Temperament terminology included metaphors of dispositions, humors, moods, and tempers. *Hippocrate* In (350 B.C.) described four *Humors* and influences of these represent the temperament according to particular *Khilt* i.e. *Damvi* (*Sanguine*), *Balghami* (*Phlegmatic*), *Şafrāwi* (*Choleric*), And *Saudawi* (*Melancholic*). In 150 A.D. Galen, also put forward and believed four Temperaments.

Method: Temperament is seen in different manners in different branches of science. The literature related to human temperament in different scientific fields is discussed in brief with the core meaning of temperament. Temperament in *Tibb* is a resultant of psychological, physiological, and morphological folds of human being, while other system of medicine and sciences take it only for psychological behavior. Some assumes personality is the outcome of temperament, temperament is inborn and personality develops with the time. These all will be discussed in detail in full length paper.

Conclusion: Temperament is the core of everything from which human being cannot escape. Everything which is materialistic has its particular temperament, but in other fields of sciences they deal it with only one fold that is psychology. They take help of temperament just to assess the mental health of a person.

Index words: *Temperament, Personality, Psychology, History, Unani*

Introduction: Temperament Quoting the lexis of Rudolf E. Siegri, *Azmi* states: “The Greek used to call the combination of humors as “*krasis*” which is derived from “*kerannyni*” means “to

mix". The word *kerasis* is generally translated as temperament. Temperament is derived from the Latin word "tempero" which means "to mix". This word temperament is used in the English language as a synonym of the Arabic word *Mizaj*. The theory of temperament has its extraction in the reflection and writings of ancient Greek physicians and philosophers. Hippocrates (4th century B.C) developed a theory of the humors to explain states of body (health and illness). Galen (2nd century A.D) further added to the existing theory with psychological interpretations. The ancient Greek's major input to the establishment of temperament research was that individual differences in behavior could be explained by physiology. Later on, temperament researchers extended their accepted wisdom to take in an exploration of the linkage between temperament and emotions. For example, Wilhelm Wundt conducted a laboratory researches to look at the relationship between temperamental disposition and the expression of emotions. In the 1960's, Alexander Thomas and Stella Chess conceptualized temperament as a behavioral style. Most of the researchers of temperament concur that idiosyncrasies subsist as an outcome of biological underpinnings. A review of the development of temperament theory can provide further insights into the concepts that form the fundamentals for current research and assessment instruments.

Defining Temperament: A brief historical course based on definitions of temperament along with understanding of temperament given by various esteemed scholars of different era.

The Definitions of Temperament: The physicians of *Unani medicine* had dealt temperament in detail and they defined it to the best of their concepts and knowledge. The Tibbi scholars worked on the theory of temperament tirelessly and its depiction is found in the Unani literature under the heading "*Mizaj*" (*temperament*). The views of different Unani scholars are as follows:

Jalinoos (150 AD): "Temperament is a quality produced by action and reaction of opposite qualities of body fluids (*Akhlal*). When these components interact by virtue of their respective powers (qualities) a condition is achieved which is found in equal proportions in all the components of that intermixture; this is called temperament".^[5] **Ali Ibn Abbas Majoosi (930-994**

AD): "All sorts of bodies (light or heavy), which are found in this ever-changing world are formed by four elements, after mixing in different or uniform quantities in accordance with the needs of the body. As a result of this mixing, one or two qualities become dominant, over the body, and this is called '*temperament*'. It is derived from Arabic word '*imtizaj*', meaning 'to mix with each other'.^[1] **Abu Sehal Masihi (1010 AD):** "Because there are so many primary

components of the body which are mixed together not in close proximity, it is necessary that the qualities of primary components must be mixed as a whole new qualities arise from inter-mixing of primary components which will be in between the previous qualities, called *temperament*.^[2]

Ibne Sina (980-1037) “The temperament is a quality resulting from the interaction of opposite qualities present in elements consisting of minute particles so that most of the particles of each of the elements may touch most of the others. Thus when these particles act and react on one another with their properties, there emerges from their total properties, a uniform quality which is present in all of them. This is the temperament (*Mizaj*)”. **Ibn-e-Sina** advanced it and writes that “Since the primary properties in the aforesaid elements are four namely hotness, coldness, moistness and dryness, it is obvious that the temperaments of the integrating bodies are the products of these properties”.^[3] “When different qualities of elements acts and reacts by their powers then previous qualities become diminished and a new moderate quality is developed which is known as *temperament*.^[4] **Dawood Antaqi (1580)**: “*Temperament* is a homogeneous quality which originates by the action and reaction of four elements which are alienated into smaller particles so that the maximum particles of each can mix with each other”.^[6] **Ayyub Israili**: “Temperament is such kind of moderate quality which is originated by the action and reaction of different opposite particles. When elements mix with each other and one element affects the other then they break into small particles due to action and reaction process. This course should be of such type that the biochemical structure of each element breaks the potency of quality of other elements, resulting in creation of a moderate secondary quality. This moderate secondary quality is known as *temperament*”.^[7] **Allama Sadidi**: “*Temperament* is such type of touching quality which is formed by the property of different qualities of smaller particles of elements and the nature to implement the effects of these different qualities”. **Ibn-e-Hubal Baghdadi (1121-1213)**: “When elements get admixed, maximum of the elements mix with each other and their various qualities act and react so that heat breaks the cold and cold breaks the heat. Similarly dryness try to breaks wetness and wetness tries to break dryness. Low grade qualities mix with high grade qualities, light weight particles mix with heavy weight particles until a new quality is developed which is equally found in all the components of elements. This new and moderate quality is known as *mizaj*”.^[7] **Allama Nafees (1409-1449)**: “When elements mix with each other they act and react and this results in developing a new moderate quality between the all four previous qualities. This new quality is known as *mizaj*”.^[8] **O. C. Gruner (1935)**: Arabic word *mizaj* contains the idea of ‘mixture’. Medical translators used the word commixtio or complexion which carries the idea of mixing or blending or weaving”.^[10] **Abdul Lateef Falsafi (1972)**: “When Smaller particles of different elements mix with each other in such a way that the particles of each element mixes with the particles of other elements it results in the breakdown of qualities of all the elements due to which the qualities of each particle convert into a moderate quality and this quality is known as *mizaj*”.^[11] **Syed Ishiyaq Ahmed (1980)**: “*Mizaj* is defined as the new state of a matter having quality different from the present in the elements or

compounds before coming in to *mizaj* (inter mixture of chemical combination) and which results from the action and reaction among the contrary qualities and powers present in the minute particles (Atoms) of different elements (or molecules of different compounds) when they are combined together the result is a new quality, a uniform state or the state of equilibrium emerging after the combination of more than one elements is called *mizaj*".^[12] **Altaf Ahmad Azmi (1993)**: "Temperament means final combination or form of elements (*Ustuquussat/Anasir*). In other words formation of temperament in a compound depends on the number, ratio and atomic sequence of elements in the compound. The properties created in the compound differ from the properties of its constituents. A compound retains its properties as long as its elemental form is held together".^[13]

Temperament defined by recent philosophers:

Allport (1920's) The distinctive phenomena of an individual's nature, including his/her customary strength and speed of response, susceptibility to emotional stimulation, the quality of his prevailing mood, and all the peculiarities of fluctuation and intensity of mood, these being the phenomena regarded as dependent on constitutional make-up and therefore largely hereditary in origin.^[14] **Eysenck (1940's)** Temperament is more or less a stable enduring system of affective behavior.^[17] **Buss and Plomin (1984)** Temperament is inherited personality traits that are present in early childhood. The three personality traits include: *emotionality, activity, and sociability* as being the foundation for personality. **Goldsmith and Campos (1987)** Temperament is individual differences in emotionality including individual differences in anger, fear, interest, sadness, pleasure, etc. **Kagan and Snidman (2004)** Temperament is a reflection of features that are inherent in the individual at birth, or an inherited biology. **Rothbart (2007)** Temperament is defined as individual differences in emotional, motor, and attentional reactivity measured by intensity, latency, recovery of response, and self-regulation processes such as effortful control that modulate reactivity.^[18] **Strelau (1998)** Temperament is relatively stable across time as compared with other phenomena and is characterized by cross-situational consistency. Temperament has a biological basis and refers mainly to behavioral reactions such as energy, intensity, fluctuation, mobility, strength, speed, and tempo.^[20] **Thomas and Chess (1977)** Thomas and Chess stated one of the most popular definitions of temperament. They are known as the founders of contemporary temperament research in children and consider temperament as a behavioral style. They thought that temperament was best viewed as the 'how' of behavior. They believed it differed from ability, which is concerned with the 'what' and 'how well' of behaving, and from motivation, which accounts for why a person does what he/she is doing. They believed that temperament concerned the way in which a person behaves.^[19]

Concept and Types of Temperament

Ibn Nafis says that there are nine types of temperament; one is *mu'tadil* (equable/balanced) and eight kinds are *ghair mu'tadil* (unequable/imbalanced). Temperament had been divided by Unani Physicians into two parts that are as follows: (1) *Mizaj-e-Mu'tadil* (Equable Temperament) (2) *Mizaj-e-Ghair Mu'tadil* (Immoderate temperament).^[22]

Mizaj-e-Mu'tadil (Equable Temperament):- It is sub-divided into two parts: (1) *Mu'tadil Haqiqi* (Real equitable or equiponderant): This *Mizaj* is the one where in the contrary qualities of all the participating elements in a compound are equal, that is impossible; therefore, this type of temperament does not exist at all., (2) *Mu'tadil Tibbi* (Applied equitable or normal) In this contrary qualities and the quantities of participating elements in a compound are not equal but are just suitable and perfectly balanced according to the properties, need and functions of that compound. Hence in Unani Tibb this *Mizaj* is usually discussed.^[22]

Mizaj Mu'tadil Tibbi has the following eight types:^[20]

1. *Mu'tadil Nau'i Bi'l-Qeyas Ila-Al-Kharij (Equable temperament of one species as compared to other species):* This is a particular *Mizaj* furnished to a particular specie, it is normal and most befitting for that species but is abnormal for other species. As for example the human temperament is most befitting and normal for human being for the performance of his normal required functions, but it will not at all be normal and equable for other species of animals.

2. *Mu'tadil Nau'i Bi'l-Qeyas Ila-Al-Dakhil (Equable temperament of a member of one species as compared to other members within the species itself):* It is that equable temperament that is furnished to a member or group of a species, and is most appropriate and best among all the members of that species and has not been furnished to any other members. Owing to this particular *Mizaj* the particular individual possesses the complete potentiality and capacity for performing the required functions of species in comparison to the other members of that species. Therefore, *Ibn-e-Sina* says; "This second kind is situated in the middle of the maximum and minimum limits of first kind. This *Mizaj* is found in a member of that most *mu'tadil sinf* (equable race) who is most *mu'tadil*, and has attained the age when his growth and development has reached to its maximum limit. Although this *Mizaj* is not *mu'tadil haqiqi* as discussed earlier, and whose existence is impossible, but it is very rare and difficult to be found."

3. *Mu'tadil Sinfi Bi'l-Qeyas Ila-Al-Kharij (Equable temperament of one race as compared to other races):* It is a *Mizaj* (temperament) that is furnished to each of the race (*asnaf*) of human species, and owing to this *Mizaj* the required racial functions of each race are performed with

utmost perfection. There are maximum and minimum limits (range) for this *mizaj*. The *Mizaj* of individual members of that race fluctuates within the range. But this range is narrower than *e'tadal nau'i bi'l qeyas ila-al-kharij*. This *Mizaj* can be befitting for one race but not suitable for other races to perform their required racial functions.

4. Mu'Tadil Sinfi Bi'l-Qeyas Ila-Al-Dakhil (Equable temperament of a member of one race as compared to other members of the same race): This is *amu'tadil mizaj* (temperament) which is furnished to a member of a race and is different from other members and is better than all the members of that race. It is also rare and non-existent.

5. Mu'Tadil Shakhsi Bi'l-Qeyas Ila-Al-Kharij (Equable temperament of one man as compared to other men): This is a particular *Mizaj* (temperament) of a person which is most befitting for that particular person to perform his normal functions but is not suitable for any other person. *Ibn-e-Sina* says; "Its extent is very narrow in comparison to first and second types of temperaments." It is that temperament which is furnished to a particular person, due to which he is surviving and healthy. This *Mizaj* has also extensibility (range) of maximum and minimum limits, between which *Mizaj* of a person remains fluctuating within normal limits. It should be known that each and every person has got a specific *Mizaj* (temperament) which is not shared by any other person. (It is why no two persons are alike).

6. Mu'Tadil Shakhsi Bi'l-Qeyas Ila-Al-Dakhil (Equable temperament of a person as compared to his own temperaments in different states): This is a particular *Mizaj* (temperament) which is furnished to a person is most befitting for a particular period or state in his life. For example that *Mizaj* which is furnished to a man in his young age is better for him than old age or which is furnished to him in *rabi'* is better than other seasons. The *Mizaj* of a person remains fluctuating under different conditions. Therefore, the *Mizaj* of a person is most befitting for him which is furnished to him at best of his health, best of age, and best of the seasons.

7. Mu'tadil Uzwi Bi'l-Qeyas Ila-Al-Kharij (Equable temperament of an organ as compared to other organs of the body): *Ibn-e-Sina* says; this is the *mizaj* (temperament) which must be furnished to each and every organ of the body. This *mizaj* is specific for each organ, and owing to this, one organ or one tissue differs from that of another organ or tissue (the protein of one tissue differs from that of another tissue). For example each of the bones (bony tissue), muscles (muscular tissue), fats (adipose tissue) and *a'sab* (nervous tissue) are furnished with specific *mizaj* which differs from one tissue to another. Furthermore, the *mizaj* of muscles is not suitable for a bone and vice versa.

8. Mu'tadil Uzwi Bil Qayas Ila-Al-Dakhil (Equable temperament of an organ as compared to his own temperaments in different states): *Ibn-e-Sina* says; specific pattern of an organ is the one which lies midway between the limits of the seventh pattern and is most suitable for that organ under its special circumstances. ^[20]

MIZAJ-E-GHAIR MU'TADIL OR SUE-MIZAJ (IMMODERATE TEMPERAMENT): Deviation of the temperamental equilibrium is produced due to upset equilibrium of *Mizaj* by preponderance of one or more natural properties (Hotness, Coldness, Moistness and Dryness) or *Akhlal* (*Dam, Balgham, Safra* and *Sauda*). The maintenance of balanced internal environment results in health i.e. a balance, normal temperament. Any deviation from this dynamically balanced internal environment leads to develop an imbalance, in equable, and thus abnormal body functions i.e. diseases. This abnormal imbalanced temperament is known as *Sue-Mizaj* or *Mizaj-e-Ghair Mu'tadil*. *Azmi* states that a temperament which deviates to a certain degree from the moderation (*Etedal*) in the natural temperament is known as immoderate temperament or *mizaj-e-Ghair Mu'tadil*". ^[11]

THE TEMPERAMENT OF HUMAN BEING The human body is an aggregate of about 100 trillion cells organized into different functional structures that work together as a single unit. Each cell, tissue, organ and the entire body is bestowed upon with an innate power called *Tabi'at*. This *Tabi'at* maintains the *Etedal-e-Mizaj* (homeostasis) through thousands of mechanisms for the preservation of the individual as well his species. These mechanisms operate under the influence of *Quwa-e-Haiwaniyah*, *Quwa-e-Tabiyah* and *Quwa-e-Nafsaniyah*. Many of these mechanisms operate in the individual cells and organs while they operate on entire body to control the inter-relationship among different organs. Thus each functional structure under the guidance of *Tabi'at* provides its share in the homeostasis in the internal environment of the body. As long as this equilibrium in the *Kamiyat* (quantity) and *Kaifiyat* (quality) of the constituents is maintained, the cell of the body will continue to live and function properly. Each cell is kept in homeostasis and in turn contributes its share in the maintenance of homeostasis. This harmonious relationship is controlled by the *Tabi'at* until one or more functional system loses their ability. ^[12]

Thus, disease is an expression of the imbalance of its constituents. *Brock* quoting the views of *Hippocrates* regarding the causes of disease asserts "Health exists when these humours are present in the body in proper mixture or crisis of the body fluids. When one or other happens to be in excess a dyscrasia or abnormal mixture results". ^[23]

Historical Perspectives of Temperament

The earliest known writings on temperament date to the work of Hippocrates (460–370 B.C.) and Plato (427–347 B.C.). The influence of this concept is again an evident several years later in the orations of Plato's student, Aristotle (384–322 B.C.). As philosophers who melded their

viewpoints from the science, literature, early medicine, and politics of their era. The father of medicine, Hippocrates developed the theory of humors to explain the states of human body, and Galen, a Greek physician, built ahead this theory with psychological interpretations. A major contribution of the ancient Greeks to the theory of temperament was that they believed individual differences in behavior could be explained by physiological, anatomical, and morphological mechanisms. The diversity of behaviors that individuals could reveal was therefore reduced to a concise way of temperament categories. [23]

Hippocrates conceptualized the body having four akhlat (fluids i.e., phlegm, blood, yellow bile, and black bile) that moderated health and wellness. The four akhlat (humours) could result in both positive and negative effects. However, this was reliant on maintaining the suitable balance within the human body. Hippocrates perceived an imbalance, excess or shortage of one of the four fluids would result in a multiplicity of physical and/or behavioral symptoms. Nearly 500 years later, **Galen (130–200 A.D.)**, also a physician, further delineated Hippocrates' concept of four humors as physical and emotional characteristics of four temperaments, he called choleric, phlegmatic, melancholic, and sanguine. Individuals were considered fools and choleric if they were irascible exhibiting irritability, quick tempered, easily angered, and readily changed moods. The phlegmatic any of these factors separately also can be identified as personality variables common to many persons. It is the distinctive combination and extent of expressions of personality traits which is specific to the individual rather than the concrete traits. The temperament mechanisms of personality are well thought-out predispositions with a stronger biological basis than personality traits, are developmentally evident earlier, and are less mediated by environmental influences. However, theory of temperament does admit the mutual nature of biological and environmental influences as well as the brain's plasticity in generating or supporting neural associations that can shift temperament qualities over time. Temperament may be conceptualized as an introductory substrate for the consequent development of personality through its effect on response instincts and thus the self-selection of environmental experiences (e.g., personal interactions, activities) that will further strengthen or diminish predispositions. Temperament was denoted as slow, lethargic, pale, weak, mild-mannered, and prone to fantasy as well as somatic complaints (e.g., gas, epilepsy). Extreme happiness, malaise, sadness or depression was deemed a melancholic temperament. The fourth temperament, sanguine, was described as being optimistic, hairy, loving, and gracious speaker.

Interest in theory of temperament again put out at the beginning of the 20th century with the beginning of psychiatry as a profession. In 1921, some influential psychiatrists, from the psychoanalytic tradition, they described theories of temperament based on their interpretations of behavioral patterns and clinical observations of patients. [15,16,24,25]

1887 Wilhelm Wundt studied reaction time and emotions in his lab with the aim of establishing general laws of psychic characteristics and discovered individual differences in reactions that led him to conclude that individuals differed in temperament. Wundt also distinguished four types of temperament: sanguines, phlegmatics, choleric, and melancholics. He believed that sanguines and phlegmatics had weak emotions, choleric and melancholics had strong emotions. He also believed that phlegmatics and melancholics experienced slow emotional changes whereas choleric and sanguines experienced rapid emotional changes.

1905 Gerard Heyman undertook a large study with the seeking of recounting the basic dimensions of temperament and determining to what extent heredity and environment contributed to the development of temperamental traits. Three basic temperament dimensions were distinguished: activity, emotionality, and primary-secondary function (e.g. perseveration). In due course eight temperament types emerged, identified as '*Heymans cube*'. These eight types were: *amorphous, apathetic, nervous, sentimental, sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and passionate*. [24,25]

1910 Ivan Pavlov conducted the first empirical study on types of nervous system (TNS). Pavlov underlined the functioning importance of temperament, and the role of the Conceptual Nervous System (CNS) in an individual's adaptation to his/her environment. Pavlov was able to demonstrate the link between temperament characteristics and the CNS through his laboratory studies. Pavlov illustrated the concepts of arousal and protective inhibition to explain performance under highly stimulating conditions. [15,16]

1912 Immanuel Kant built ahead Pavlov's theory of temperament in his publication, *Anthropology*. Kant believed that temperament is a psychological phenomenon that consisted of psychic traits determined by the composition of an individual's blood.

1920's Gordon In determining the significance of temperament for emotion-oriented researchers Allport's conception of temperament was very influential. Allport is recognized as the founder of trait-oriented personality psychology. According to him temperament referred to individual differences in emotions and that these dispositions were constant from infancy throughout life. He also assumed that the behavioral manifestations of temperament were present from early infancy. Allport believed that two aspects of temperament could be characterized by dimensions: strong emotions – weak emotions (the intensity of feelings evoked by objects and situations), and Broad emotions – narrow emotions (the range of objects and situations an individual reacts to emotionally).

1923 Carl Jung anticipated that people are either introverted or extroverted. He believed that these two attitudes were anchored in biology and influenced the direction the libido expressed itself. He thought that these two attitudes expressed themselves through sensation, thinking,

feeling, and intuition. Jung's theory resulted in the construction of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

1928 Arnold Gesell developed normative growth tables for infants and young children. He focused on the biological aspects of psychological development. Gesell observed significant differences in infants' behaviors and believed they were innate and separate from the environment. ^[15,16]

1930's – 1950's Two of Pavlov's students attempted to adapt Pavlov's theory on TNS to children in the middle of the 20th century. Ivanov-Smolensky distinguished four types of higher nervous activity in children: the mobile type (positive and inhibitory reflexes are formed easily and quickly), the slow type (both kinds of reflexes are formed slowly, with difficulty), the excitable type (positive reflexes are formed easily and quickly, and inhibitory reflexes slowly with difficulty), and the inhibited type (positive reflexes are formed slowly, inhibitory reflexes easily and quickly). Krasnogorsky, Pavlov's second student investigated the inhibitory reaction in children and distinguished two nervous systems: the normal and the inert (slow). He was also one of the first Pavlovian typologists to recognize that temperament changed due to environmental factors. ^[15,16,24,25]

1950's Freud certified differences in the excitability of the nervous system and amount of energy in the libido to temperamental differences.

In New York Longitudinal Study (NYLS) 1970's the formal study of temperament was chiefly initiated and conducted by **Thomas and Chess in 1977**. Thomas and Chess composed detailed parent reports of infant behaviors and concluded that nine different dimensions of temperament are responsible for individual differences, which are *rhythmicity, activity level, adaptability, threshold, approach withdrawal, intensity, distractibility, span-persistence and attention*. Thomas and Chess believed that temperament referred to a general overarching style of responding rather than motivation to respond in a particular way. ^[19]

Thomas and Chess grouped children into three distinct temperament types: *difficult, slow to warm up, and easy*. They described difficult children as *Easy children* were regular, adaptable, approaching, mild, and positive. *Irregular*, low in adaptability, withdrawing, intense, and negative. *Slow to warm up children* were low in activity level, withdrawing, low in adaptability, and moderately negative in mood. Thomas and Chess emphasized that temperament must be differentiated from motivations, abilities, and personality; and is always expressed as a response to an external stimulus, opportunity, expectation, or demand; and is an attribute of the child that influences the environment. ^[19]

1980's Albert Mehrabian stated an emotion based theory of temperament in which temperament was viewed as a emotional characteristic state. **Goldsmith** and **Campos** centered

their temperament research on infants, and led them to conclude that motoric, facial, and vocal behaviors of infants are all expressions of the affective systems. They concluded that infant temperament was observed by individual differences in tendencies to express primary emotions. [15,16,24,25]

Discussion: Most theories show that temperament refers to biologically based traits which are relatively stable over time. However, researchers tend to have unique ideas about the diverse dimensions of temperament and how they are articulated early on. Some researchers give emphasis to the emotionality aspects, where others focus more on the biological differences seen with children having different temperaments. The behaviors observed are a product of temperament interacting with the environment and therefore it is important to examine context when studying temperament.

Conclusion: Temperament is the core of everything from which human being cannot escape. Everything which is materialistic has its particular temperament, but in other fields of sciences they deal it with only one fold that is psychology. They take help of temperament just to assess the mental health of a person. Temperament concerns the normal range of variability.

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