

PERSONALITY

- **Meaning**
- **Characteristics**
- **Assessment of Personality**



The literal meaning of personality is derived from the Latin word persona meaning mask which was used by actors in the Roman theatre for changing their facial make-up. After putting on the mask, audience expected the person to perform a role in a particular manner. It did not, however, mean that the person enacting the given role necessarily possessed those qualities



People tend to have a general notion that personality refers to a personal appearance with charming smile, or outlook.

So, for a layman, personality generally refers to the physical or external appearance of an individual. For example, when we find someone ‘good-looking’, we often assume that the person also has a charming personality. This notion of personality is based on superficial impressions, which may not be correct

When psychologists talk of personality, they mean a dynamic concept describing the growth and development of a persons whole psychological system.

Rather than looking at parts of the person, personality looks at some aggregate whole that is greater than the sum of the parts.

What is Personality?

- Personality is the sum total of ways in which an individual reacts and interacts with others.
- Personality combines a set of physical and mental characteristics that reflect how a person looks, thinks, acts and feels.



In psychological terms, personality refers to our characteristic ways of responding to individuals and situations. In this sense, personality refers to unique and relatively stable qualities that characterize an individual's behaviour across different situations over a period of time.

Some Definitions

- According to **K. Young**, “Personality is a patterned body of habits, traits, attitudes and ideas of an individual’s, as these are organised externally into roles and statuses and as they relate internally to motivation, goals, and various aspects of selfhood.
- As **G.W. Allport** has defined, “Personality is the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psycho-physical system that determine his unique adjustment to his environment.”
- By personality **Ogburn** means “the integration of the socio-psychological behaviour of the human being, represented by habits of action and feeling, attitudes and opinions.”

CHARACTERISTICS

- Personality is something which is unique in each individual
- Personality refers particularly to persistent qualities of an individual
- Personality represents a dynamic orientation of organism to environment
- Personality is greatly influenced by social interactions
- Personality is something which is unique in each individual.
- Consistency.
- Psychological and physiological.
- It impacts behaviors and actions.
- Multiple expressions.

DETERMINANTS OF PERSONALITY

- Heredity
- Environment
- Situation
- Culture
- Family & Social Background

Assessment of Personality

Methods of personality assessment can be categorized under three headings:

- 1. Personality Inventories**
- 2. Projective Techniques**
- 3. Observational Methods**

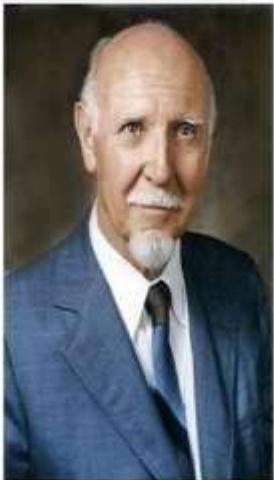
1. PERSONALITY INVENTORIES

- It is the most popular method of personality assessment. Here the statements about certain traits of personality are constructed and the testee is required to answer them as “right/wrong” or “yes/no”.
- **Example-**
 - a. **Do you have problem in sleeping? Yes/No**
 - b. **Does your parent give you adequate protection? Yes/No**
 - c. **Are you worried without reason? Yes/No**
- The need for personality inventories was first felt during the First World War, when the scrutiny of emotionally unstable soldiers had to be done. Today the number of personality inventories is countless.

In personality inventories there is no right or wrong answers. Because the person himself reports about his problems and based on what the individual provides as information the responses are interpreted. These inventories are called self report inventories as then person himself or herself responds to these questions. These are constructed according to certain norms, scientific techniques and are put through many steps of validation and standardization. Hence, these tests are also called as psychometric tests

Some Widely used Personality Inventory

Cattell's 16PF Trait Theory



- Cattell (1965) disagreed with Eysenck's view that personality can be understood by looking at only two or three dimensions of behavior.
- He argued that it is necessary to look for more traits to analyse whole personality.
- Gordon Allport identified more than 4,000 words in the English language that could be used to describe personality traits.
- Mostly were similar and difficult to distinguish. Such ambiguity also makes it difficult to study these personality traits.
- Raymond Cattell analyzed this list and whittled it down to 171 characteristics, mostly by eliminating terms that were redundant or uncommon.



Cattell's 16 PF Scale-

Cattell developed this inventory using the technique of factor analysis.

Cattell included in it three types of traits namely –
temperamental traits,
ability traits, dynamic
traits.

The inventory measures 16 bipolar traits which are presented in the table:

Sl. No	High Score	Letter Symbol	Low Score
1	Outgoing	A	Reserved
2	More Intelligent	B	Less Intelligent
3	Stable	C	Emotional
4	Assertive	E	Humble
5	Happy-go-lucky	F	Sober
6	Conspicuous	G	Expedient
7	Tender minded	H	Shy
8	Suspicious	I	Tough minded
9	Bold	L	Trusting
10	Imaginative	M	Practical
11	Shrewd	N	Forthright
12	Apprehensive	O	Placid
13	Experimenting	Q1	Traditional
14	Self-sufficient	Q2	Group tied
15	Controlled	Q3	Casual
16	Tense	Q4	Relaxed

These 16 factors are called first-order-factors on the basis of median of these factors. Assessment of Personality in addition to these 16 factors Cattell also identified 11 second order factors which were equally important as personality traits. These included anxiety, extroversion, independence, neuroticism, leadership, marital adjustment, subjectivity, altruism, self discipline, deliberation and conscientiousness.

Bell Adjustment Inventory

- This test was developed by Bell in 1934 to diagnose adjustment problems of the individual. It measures 4 areas of adjustment – home, health, social, emotional separately as well as composite scores.
- It has two forms – student form and occupational form. It contains 140 items which are answered in “Yes” or “No” form.

Sample-

- **Is your mother the dominant member of the family/**
 - **Have you ever felt that someone was hypnotizing you and making you act against your will?**
 - **Do you feel embarrassed when you have to enter a public assembly after everyone else has been seated?**
 - **Do you feel there is a lack of real affection and love in your home?**
-
- It is highly reliable and valid and it has been adapted in various Indian languages.

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)

It was originally developed by Hathaway and McKinley in 1940. It contains 550 items answered “Yes”, “No” and “Cant say”.

It has two forms – individual card form and group card form.

It is the most researched personality test(over 12,000 articles translated into 150 languages)

It was revised and standardized in 1989

- Clinical scales of MMPI are:
- **Hypochondriasis** – it measures a person's tendency for excessive anxiety about physical health and functioning.
- **Depression** – It measures affective disorders like sadness, decrease in proficiency, interest, and energy etc.
- **Conversion hysteria** – measures a person's tendency to develop symptoms of physical ailments in order to get rid of mental struggle and conflict and anxiety.
- **Psychopathic deviates** – measures a person's tendency for violation of social and moral norms.

- **Masculinity-Femininity** – it detects a person's tendency to perform extreme sex roles.
- **Paranoia** – delusional and persecutory tendency is diagnosed.
- **Psychastenia** – measures a person's tendency for obsession and compulsion and phobia.
- **Schizophrenia** – measures a person's tendency for abnormal behavior and anxiety.
- **Hypomania** – measures emotional excitability, over activity and flight of ideas.
- **Social Introversion** – it measures characteristics like shyness, avoidance of other people and feelings of insecurity

Validity Scales of MMPI are as:

- **Lie scale** – it measures a person's tendency to lie or project himself in a wrong manner.
- **Frequency or Infrequency** – measures person's tendency to exaggerate symptoms.
- **K(correction)** – it detects a person's defensive outlook or his tendency to exaggerate things about himself.

2. PROJECTIVE METHODS FOR ASSESSING PERSONALITY

- These methods are based on the principle of projection (a defense mechanism) in which a person projects his her own desires, needs and feelings onto other person or object.
- In projective tests personality is measured in indirect manner by presenting the person with an unstructured, vague stimulus or situation. It is believed that when a person reacts to such vague or unstructured stimulus or situation, he projects his unconscious desires, mental conflicts and unethical wants without knowing that he is doing so.

Types of Projective Tests

Projective tests are categorised under five headings:

- i) Association tests.
- ii) Construction tests.
- iii) Completion tests.
- iv) Choice or ordering tests and
- v) Expressive tests.

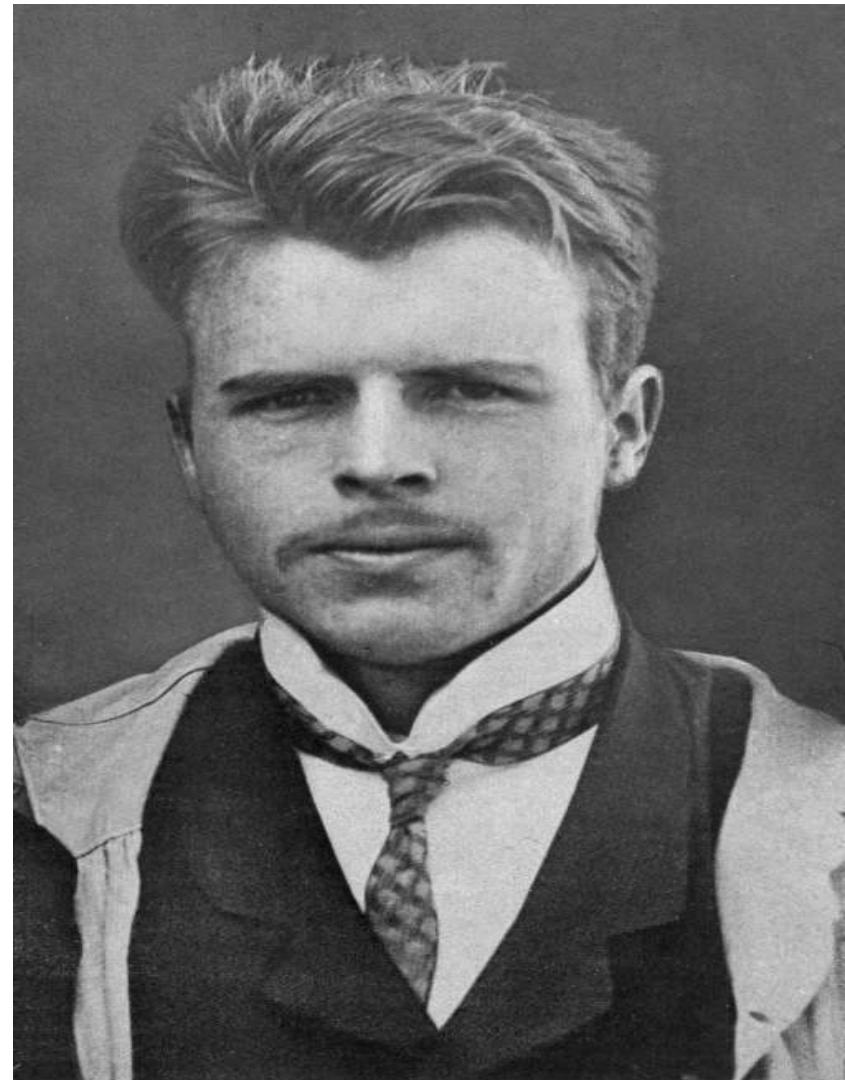
i. Association tests

It involve presentation of vague and unstructured stimulus and the person is required to respond what he sees and with what he associates that stimulus. Word association test and Rorschach test are the two main types of this type.

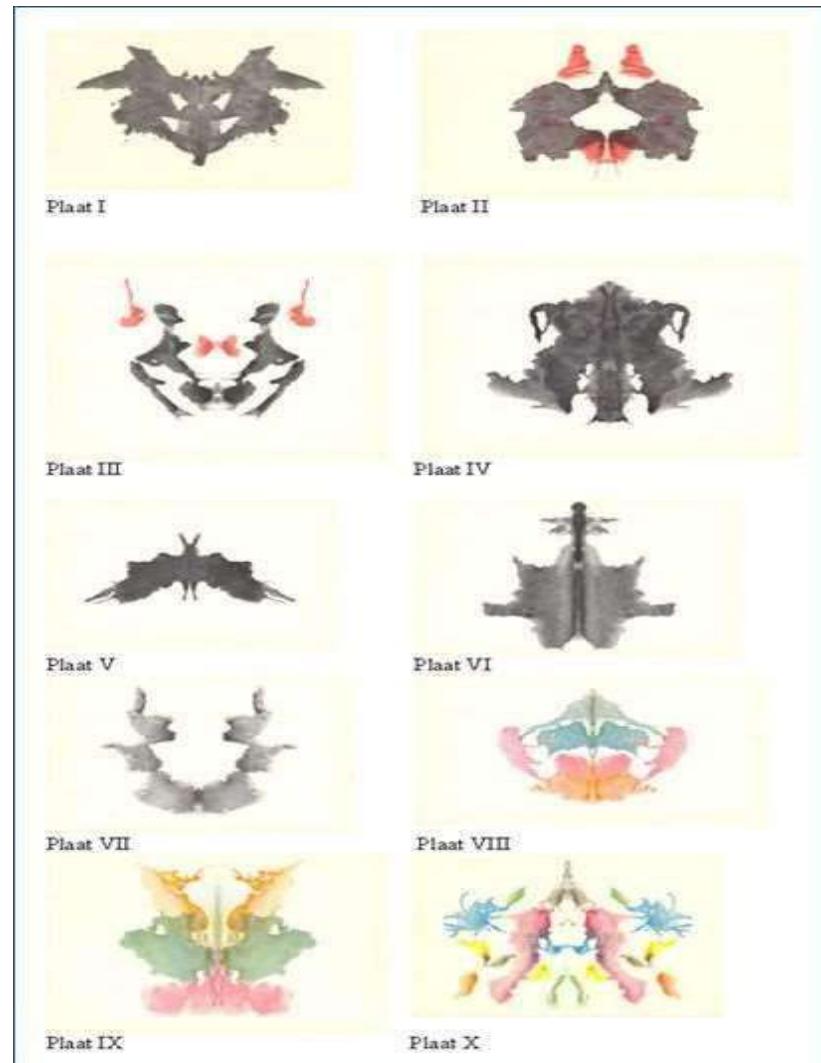
- **Word association tests:** In this, test some predecided stimuli are presented one by one to the subject and the subject is required to say the first word that comes to mind after hearing the stimulus word. **For example**, when the word “**chair**” is pronounced the subject is supposed to say the first word coming into his mind on hearing this. Freud and Jung are credited with the use of this technique for personality assessment. Response given by the person are analysed in terms of the symbolic meaning of the response and the time taken to respond. Such tests were successfully used by Jung to study emotional conflict of the individuals

Rorschach Ink-blot Test

This test was developed by Swiss psychiatrist Herman Rorschach.



- It contains 10 cards bearing inkblots of varied shapes on them. Five of the ten cards are in black and white, while the remaining five are coloured.
- All the cards are presented to the subject one by one. Subject is free to hold, move and twist the card in the manner he likes. Subject is asked to tell what he sees in the card, whether it is part of the card or whole of the card.



All the responses are recorded and analysed according to letter symbols which are as :

Location: It tells if the response of the subject is determined by the part or whole of the blot, W is used to denote the whole of card, D is used to denote if the response is determined by half of the blot and more, and Dd is used for response determined by some small details and out of the small portion of the card. S is used to denote for response determined responding to certain spaces in between the figures etc.

- **Determinants:** It tells which feature of the card is responsible for response. For example, the subject responds “butterfly”. Now it has to be decided which feature of the card i.e. form, color, or movement is responsible for the response. 24 letter symbols are used for this purpose. F for instance is used for form, C for color, M for human movement and FM animal movement

- **Content:** It tells about the content of the response. If the content is human then H is used and A is used for animal content.
- **Original response and organisation:** Original response means a response frequently given by people to that card and is called popular response denoted by the letter P.

Once this process of letter assigning is complete, the symbols are analysed and interpreted. For example, prominence of W responses indicates that the person has high intelligence and power for abstract reasoning. D is indicative of ability to see and understand things in a clear manner. Dd should not be more than five percent of the total responses. A Dd higher than this is indicative of symptoms of schizophrenia (a psychological disease)

ii) Construction test

- These are tests which involve presentation of stimulus upon which the subject is required to construct some story or construct some other thing.
- Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) developed by Morgan & Murray is the best example of this category.

TAT Cards



- TAT test has 31 cards out of which one card is blank while the other 30 cards bear some picture on it. However, in any case not more than 20 cards are shown to a person.
- The test is administered in two sessions. In the first session 10 cards are shown and in the second session another 10 cards are shown including the blank one. Blank card is shown at the last.
- The subject is asked to write a story on each card. As for the blank card the subject is at liberty to imagine a picture on it and write a story on it.
- In the end respondent is subjected to an interview to ascertain whether the source of the story lies in the picture shown or somewhere else.
- After this process is complete the analysis and interpretation starts.

- Analysis and interpretation of TAT is done on the following basis:
- **Hero:** It is believed that the central character of the story is hero or heroine. Further that the respondent identifies him or herself with the central character and projects his or her personality traits onto the central character.
- **Needs:** Each story reflects certain needs of the central character. Murray identified 28 human needs like need for affiliation, approval, achievement etc.
- **Press:** This means environmental forces operating on the hero by rejecting his need fulfillment or by helping the needs to be fulfilled.

- **Thema:** This represents the interaction between the needs and the environmental forces. Thema tells about the continuity in the personality of the individual.
- **Outcome:** This tells how the story has been ended whether the end of the story is decisive or undecisive, positive or negative etc. Decisive end is indicative of maturity and realistic attitude of the person.

iii) Completion tests

- In this type of test the subject is usually shown a part of the stimulus (usually a sentence) and other part of the stimulus is blank which is to be completed by the subject as he thinks fit. The underlying assumption is that the way subject completes the sentence will reflect his personality. It was first developed by Rohde & Hidreth in 1940.
- **Example:**
 - 1) I often think that.....
 - 2) I wish that.....
 - 3) Very often my parents.....

The given sentences have to be completed by the subject with whatever comes to his mind first on reading the incomplete sentence. There are a large number of incomplete sentences blank , of which the more popular one is of Rotter's Incomplete Sentences Blank. Based on the matter used by the subject to complete the sentence, the analysis is carried out and the responses interpreted.

iv) Choice or Ordering test

This type of test requires the subject to arrange stimuli in a particular order or he is asked to select stimulus form amongst the given stimuli on the basis of some dimension or according to his likes and dislikes.

The underlying assumption in it is that the choice made or order of arrangement will reflect the individual's personality traits.

Szondi test is the most widely used test of this type. It requires the subject to choose two photographs that he likes the most and two photographs that he dislikes the most out of six packs of photographs. Thus photos selected reveal the personality of the person.

v) Expressive tests

Such tests allow the person to express himself through some drawing.

- Machover, 1949 is credited with the construction of this test. It has two formats – **Draw-a- person test and House-Tree-Person test**.
- From the drawings made by the person the drawings are analysed and the personality traits are delineated.
- A slightly different version of this test is the Kinetic Drawing Test in which the subject is asked to draw what is going on in the family and later on the subject is asked to tell in imagination or otherwise what exactly is happening in the drawing or the picture.
- **For instance, if the subject has drawn a dining hall scenario, the subject is asked to tell who is saying what and what is happening at the dining table, who is interacting with whom and how the subject himself is being treated there etc.**
- From the responses the psychologist is able to interpret what is going on and in turn the personality of the individual and the conflicts that the person is facing within the family.

3. Observation Technique for Assessment of Personality

It involves the observation and recording of the activities of a person by the observer in a controlled or natural situation. These recordings are then analysed and an inference about the personality of the individual is drawn. Observational methods are categorised under two headings:

- **(i) Rating scales and**
- **(ii) Interview.**

i. Rating Scales

Rating scales involve recording judgement about the personality traits in some categories. It is used to assess where an individual stands in terms of other people's opinion of some of his personality traits.

These categories may be numerical or graphic. Each category has a specific meaning and the rater expresses his reaction about the traits of the person being assessed through these categories.

These ratings are then statistically analysed and a conclusion about the personality of the person is reached.

Example of Rating Scale

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	No Opinion	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I am easygoing.	<input type="radio"/>				
I have high standards.	<input type="radio"/>				
I enjoy time alone.	<input type="radio"/>				
I work well with others.	<input type="radio"/>				
I dislike confrontation.	<input type="radio"/>				
I prefer crowds over intimacy.	<input type="radio"/>				

Assessment of personality through rating scales depends on the following factors:

- a) Rating scale being used should be sound and each category included in it should be defined clearly besides the rater should have exact knowledge of it.
- b) Rater should know the person being assessed or rated.
- c) Rater should have the ability to avoid halo effect and other sorts of biases which sway the judgement in one direction (positive or negative).

ii. Interview

Of all the techniques of personality assessment interview is the most widely used techniques. Interview involves recording of reactions to the questions asked by the interviewee in a face to face situation. Interviews are usually of two types:

- a) Structured interview, and**
- b) Unstructured interview.**



Structured Interview



In **structured interview** the questions asked by the interviewer are predecided. Even the order of presentation of questions, their language and the manner in which they are to be put to the subject are decided a priori. Thus structured interviews follow a standardized pattern.

Biggest advantage of structured interview is that it allows comparative study of personality of different individuals since all of them are asked the same questions and in the same order. However this merit of structured interview turns into demerit when intensive drilling and analysis of personality is required. Since the language, order and number of questions are predecided it does not allow interviewer to ask supplementary questions aimed at deeper probing.

Unstructured Interview



Unstructured Interview allows interviewer to ask questions as he thinks fit depending on how the interview progresses. Language of questions, their number and the manner of asking questions all depend on the understanding of the interviewer.

- Unstructured interviews are mostly used for clinical purposes to diagnose the problems or abnormality in the personality of the individual as these are free of the constraints of structured interviews

THANK YOU