

BPCC-103

PSYCHOLOGY OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES



“शिक्षा मानव को बन्धनों से मुक्त करती है और आज के युग में तो यह लोकतंत्र की भावना का आधार भी है। जन्म तथा अन्य कारणों से उत्पन्न जाति एवं वर्गगत विषमताओं को दूर करते हुए मनुष्य को इन सबसे ऊपर उठाती है।”

— इन्दिरा गांधी



“Education is a liberating force, and in our age it is also a democratising force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances.”

— Indira Gandhi

PSYCHOLOGY OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

**School of Social Sciences
Indira Gandhi National Open University**

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

BPCC-103: PSYCHOLOGY OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES Course is of 6 credits which is in the Semester II of BA Hons. Psychology. It is a Core Course which one needs to take if one is going for Honours in Psychology. The course will provide you an understanding of the concept of individual differences in psychology. It will focus on the key aspects of individual differences such as personality, intelligence, motivation and creativity. It will also describe the Indian perspective with regard to the concept of self and highlight the differences between Indian perspective and western perspective with regard to the individual differences.

The specific objectives of the course are as follows:

Objectives

- 1) To introduce the concept of individual differences
- 2) To define and explain the concept of personality
- 3) To understand the concept and types of intelligence
- 4) To introduce the theories of intelligence
- 5) To understand Indian approach to personality
- 6) To introduce the concept of motivation and creativity

The Course consists of four Blocks and a total of ten Units which you need to study and complete during the six months duration of your second semester. You will have continuous evaluation through assignment and a Term-End examination at the end of each semester. Assignments are available on the IGNOU website. You can download the assignments on www.ignou.ac.in > student support > downloads > assignments. Refer to the instructional guidelines on the assignment for your assignment preparation and submission. You can also refer to the previous year question papers available under downloads to prepare for your term-end examination (TEE).

You will need to go through the course material in this book presented in different Blocks and Units to do your assignments and prepare successfully for the exam. Each Unit is like a chapter written in a structured way. It contains **Self Assessment Questions** (SAQs) in between the sections in the Unit so that you can check your progress and go back to the content for more clarification. This will help make your learning better. Further, there are **Unit End Questions** also at the end of the Unit that facilitates your overall understanding of the Unit. **Key Words** section highlights the key words in the Unit that will help you recall the main terms and concepts learned in the Unit. **References** section will help you refer to specific studies and articles to gain more understanding of a particular point discussed in the Unit. At the end of each Unit, you are also provided with **Suggested readings** for your further understanding of the Unit. Thus, the various aspects of this Self Learning Material (SLM) are designed to help you learn better. These features also ensure that the teacher is built into the course materials to help minimize the gap or distance between the learner and the teacher.

IGNOU follows a multi-pronged approach to teaching and learning. Thus there are **printed course materials, audio and video materials** also. The soft copies of the course materials are also available on the IGNOU website through **egyankosh**. Interaction between the teacher and learner is also facilitated through **Gyanvani** (interactive radio counseling), **Gyandarshan** (tele conference) and **Web conference**.

Gyanvani is available on FM (105.6 channel). *Gyandarshan* is a television channel, a must carry channel for all the cable operators. Information about *Gyanvani* and *Gyandarshan* monthly schedule is available on the IGNOU website. Web conferences are held by the Faculty of Discipline of Psychology and you will get the information about the same from your Regional centre. You can make use of all these features of learning at IGNOU to take your learning to a new higher level and make it a truly enriching experience.

Brief Introduction to Blocks and Units

A brief outline of each of the four Blocks and the Units contained therein is given below for your reference which you can go through before studying the Units in detail.

BLOCK 1 – Individual Differences will introduce you to the concept of individual differences. The main crux of psychology can be said to be individual differences. It answers the all important ‘why’ of human behaviour. *Block 1 consists of two Units.*

Unit 1 Personality and Individual Differences

It discusses the concept of individual differences and explains its meaning. Personality, an important indicator contributing to individual differences, is also discussed. Further, different theories regarding personality are also discussed.

Unit 2 Assessment of Personality

It focuses on the issue of how to assess the individual differences in personality. It describes the different ways of assessing personality and the advantages and limitations of the various techniques to assess personality.

BLOCK 2 – Intelligence and Aptitude focuses on two key aspects of individual differences having significance mostly in the educational and career fields. *Block 2 consists of four Units.*

Unit 3 Concept of Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence

It discusses the concept of intelligence and emotional intelligence. It defines intelligence and explains the nature-nurture debate with regard to intelligence.

Unit 4 Theories of Intelligence

The Unit focuses mainly on the various theories advocated to explain the nature of intelligence. The traditional theories, information processing approach and cognitive theories are highlighted.

Unit 5 Assessment of Intelligence

It explains the historical background of the measurement of intelligence. Various tests related to intelligence are also described.

Unit 6 Aptitude: Concept and Measurement

It explains the concept of aptitude and differentiates it from other correlates as achievement, intelligence and interest. The assessment of aptitude is also described along with their advantages and limitations.

BLOCK 3 – Indian Thoughts in Psychology elaborates the Indian approach to psychology. Psychology has mainly been dominated by the western perspective. However, India has vast and rich repertoire of knowledge related to varied aspects of

psychology. This Block will make you aware about the Indian perspective on psychology and enable you to appreciate it. *Block 3 consists of two Units.*

Unit 7 Differences between Indian and Western Psychology

The Unit highlights the difference between Indian and western psychology. You will learn the Indian world view and differentiate the western perspectives on some key aspects. Meaning and scope of Indian psychology will be explained. The role of indigenous systems like yoga and meditation will also be discussed.

Unit 8 Concept of Self in Indian Thought

In this Unit, you learn further about the concept of self, identity and self concept the way they have been considered in the Indian system. The western perspective on these is also discussed. The role of Indian traditions in the development of self is elaborated. Indian family system and culture influence in a major way the development of the self and identity.

BLOCK 4 – Motivation and Creativity focuses on two crucial elements of individual differences, that is, motivation and creativity. Without motivation and creativity, there can be no human progress and achievement of human beings and the development and advancement of the society. Hence it is important to understand these two concepts. *Block 4 consists of two Units.*

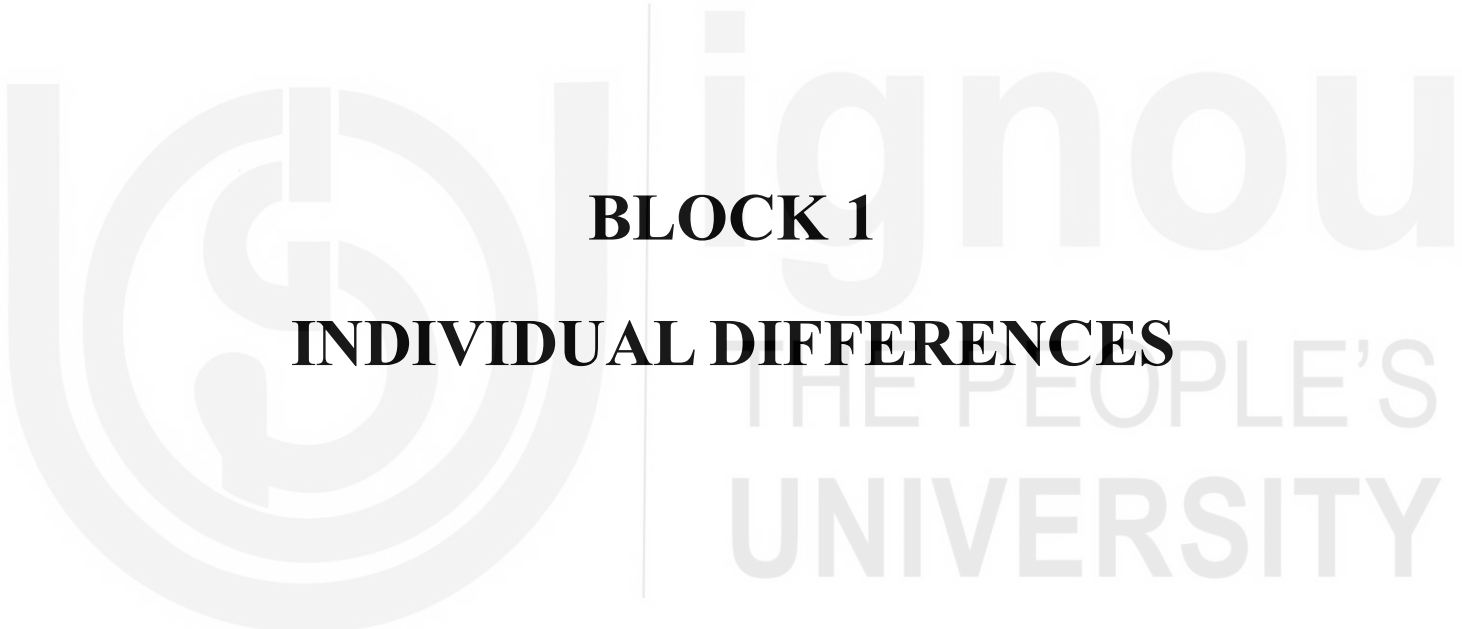
Unit 9 Motivation

This Unit focuses on the definition and types of motivation. Further, it elaborates the various strategies to increase motivation. This has implications for various aspect of our life. It also discusses the theories of motivation, and explains the concepts of self-regulation and self-enhancement.

Unit 10 Creativity

In this Unit, you will learn about the meaning of creativity and the different stages through which creative thinking progresses. Various theoretical approaches to creativity are discussed. Creativity as it relates to other concepts like intelligence and personality is also discussed. Further, you will also learn about how creativity can be assessed and enhanced through different ways.

BLOCK 5 – GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICAL provides you the details of the practical component of BPCC-103. Practical is of 2 credits which you need to carry out so that your course BPCC-103 (theory 4 credit + practical 2 credits) can be completed. The practical consists of conduction of two psychological tests related to the theory components of the course BPCC 103. You will learn about tests in the area of personality and intelligence. You will be required to conduct these tests yourself and know the process of administration, scoring and interpretation of the test findings. Finally you will write the practical notebook / record in the prescribed format.



BLOCK 1

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

UNIT 1 PERSONALITY AND INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES*

Structure

- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Individual Differences
 - 1.3.1 Factors Contributing to Individual Differences
- 1.4 Defining Personality
 - 1.4.1 Aspects of Personality
- 1.5 Theories of Personality
 - 1.5.1 Psychodynamic Theory of Personality
 - 1.5.2 Behavioural and Cognitive Theories
 - 1.5.3 Humanistic Theories
 - 1.5.4 Trait Theories of Personality
 - 1.5.4.1 Five Factor Theory
 - 1.5.4.2 Biological Trait theory
 - 1.5.5 Behavioural Approach System and Behavioural Inhibition System
 - 1.5.6 Indian Perspective on Self and Personality
- 1.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.7 Key Words
- 1.8 Answers to Self Assessment Questions
- 1.9 Unit End Questions
- 1.10 References
- 1.11 Suggested Readings

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After you go through this Unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the concept of individual differences;
- Define personality;
- Know the aspects of personality;
- Discuss the various theories of personality; and
- Explain Indian perspective on self and personality.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Personality is one of the indicators of individual differences. It is a commonly used term. However we need to understand it in a proper way as it has implications in many fields including our academic success, interpersonal relationship, social behaviour and job

performance. Personality traits also impact our physical as well as psychological health and well-being. They are strong correlates of our happiness across temporal and situational factors. Individual differences are also studied in other aspects such as intelligence, creativity, interests (educational and vocational) and leadership. Study of such individual differences contributes a lot to our understanding of who we are.

In the present Unit we will mainly discuss about the concept of individual differences and the factors that contribute to individual differences. Further, the term personality will also be defined and its theories will be explained in detail, including psychodynamic theory of personality, behavioural and cognitive theories, humanistic theories and trait theories of personality (five factor theory and biological trait theory). The Unit will also cover behavioural approach system and behavioural inhibition system besides the Indian perspective on self and personality.

1.3 INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Individual differences, as the term suggests, refers to how individuals differ from each other. Different people have different interests; and their behaviour is influenced by these interests, likings, dislikings, values and beliefs etc. Even if we are of the same age group or gender, we are aware of how we differ from others and, others are also aware of these differences. For instance, you may like dancing and gossiping with friends, but your friend may not like these, she may prefer painting and interacting with a few friends only. Further, your friend may be good in playing football, but you may not be that skilled in football. If you take note of people around you, you will find many such differences. One student is good in language whereas another student in the same class may be good in science. Thus we find individual differences in personality, intelligence, interest, motivation and so on.

Psychology tries to address these individual differences and studies the nature of the differences, factors affecting it and the aspects of individual differences. You may be wondering here that, on the one hand, we say there are similarities among individuals, as we have the stages of development that have similar characteristic features, developmental tasks and needs; and on the other hand, we say there are individuals differences. But this is not at all contradictory. Though individuals of a particular developmental stage share similar needs and demands, they also differ from each other owing to their hereditary and environment related factors.

Psychology of individual differences, thus, is the scientific study of the observable differences between individuals. It is also called as the ‘**Differential Psychology**’, which studies these differences as observed by the self and others and their underlying psychological determinants. The study of individual differences enables us to understand, explain and predict the likelihood of an individual behaving in a particular way. It studies such aspects of the individual as personality, intelligence, motivation, creativity and problem solving. It focuses on what makes the individual unique. As put by Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic (2015), the goal of individual difference researchers is to identify the most general aspects underlying individuality and conceptualize a theoretical classification for predicting differences and similarities in human thought, emotionality, and behaviour. Thus the study of individual differences tries to explain the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of the human behaviour by focusing on the underlying psychological determinants.

1.3.1 Factors Contributing to Individual Differences

The individual differences that we will be focusing on are related to the psychological characteristics. People also differ in their physical characteristics. Generally we are

more similar to our parents/ siblings than individuals from outside the family. These physical similarities are more obvious as compared to the psychological characteristics. The role of heredity is mostly important when we talk of physical features such as black eyes or fair complexion and other such aspects. However, when we talk of psychological characteristics such as intelligence or personality, are we similar to our parents or are we different? Whether genetics has a role to play here or the environmental factors including the child rearing practices, early stimulating environment, good school environment etc. have an impact on the development of these psychological characteristics? This nature (heredity) vs. nurture (environment) debate is central to the study of individual differences. A relatively new area of study related to this is the **behavioural genetics**, which refers to the study of biological basis of individual differences. Differential psychology has used various research methods ranging from brain imaging to studying the impact of early childhood experiences. It has studied the role of genes as well as the influence of cultural practices on the human behaviour.

Self Assessment Questions I

- 1) Individual differences studies differences between individuals: True or False
- 2) Psychology of individual differences is also known as
- 3) Two main factors that affect individual differences are and

1.4 DEFINING PERSONALITY

The term 'personality' is used so commonly that we need to differentiate the lay connotations of personality from the scientific way of defining personality. We usually say, 'that person has a great personality', 'she has a charming personality', 'the two brothers have very different personalities', 'my grand father had a very strong personality' or 'he does not have a personality'. So what do we mean by personality? What does it include? The term 'personality' comes from the Latin 'persona' which means 'mask'. You are showing some aspect of yourself, but you may actually be different within, behind the mask. When we refer to a person as being shy or clever, we mean personality. In other words, it refers to characteristic ways of behaving. But personality is not so simple as we function in a complex and ever-changing world. Thus, the everyday use of the term personality refers to the outer roles or characters played by the person and relates to nice or charming ways of behaving.

If we define personality in terms of individuality or having individual differences, it may not fully convey the meaning. Individuals differ in physical characteristics, age, gender, nationality, language and so many other aspects that may not be exactly relevant from a personality viewpoint. Hence, we need to emphasize individual differences in psychological characteristics such as thinking, mental ability, problem solving, emotion, motivation and interests. However, here again, it may be noted that mental abilities or intellectual abilities are not covered under personality. Psychologists usually deal with individual differences in personality and intelligence separately. Thus, personality consists of non-intellectual abilities. The issue here is when we consider emotions and moods, or attitudes and habits, which are all non-intellectual aspects, can they be part of personality? One is angry or sad, one is short-tempered, or one prefers studying late night, or one has strong attitude against reservation policy for specific groups of society. In all these cases, it is a fleeting emotion and may not be enduring or stable over time. Even though attitude and habit are lasting, still they relate to some specific responses or actions. Whereas, personality needs to be stable as well as broad.

Thus, personality (Haslam, Smillie & Song, 2017) refers to those individual differences that (1) are psychological in nature, (2) fall outside the intellectual domain, (3) are enduring dispositions rather than transient states, and (4) form relatively broad or generalized patterns. Further, it also studies the underlying psychological mechanisms (Funder, 1997) that explain the individual's characteristic patterns of thought, emotion and behaviour.

As we see by now, personality has more to it than we thought. Now let us see some definitions of personality as given by various psychologists. It was Gordon Allport who published the first major textbook of personality psychology in 1937. Initially he defined personality as “the sum total of all the biological innate dispositions, impulses, tendencies, appetites, and instincts of the individual, and the acquired dispositions and tendencies acquired by experience.” Later on he revised it (1961, p.28) and defined personality as “the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine the individual's characteristic behaviour and thought”. This definition emphasizes on the following main aspects:

- **Organization:** refers to the idea that personality is whole. It is the individual in totality, not a few aspects of the individual. Thus, personality is specific and unique for each and every individual.
- **Dynamic:** indicates that personality is not static but dynamic in nature. It is adaptive and sensitive to the context and the environment. Personality of an individual keeps adjusting itself to the environment on a continuous basis. A fine balance is maintained between the environmental and the inner forces.
- **Psychophysical systems:** includes both the physical or biological as well as psychological or mental aspects of the personality.
- **Characteristic behaviour and thought:** refers to traits which indicate relatively stable and consistent ways of thoughts, emotional responses and behaviour.

In a similar way, Walter Mischel (1973) states, personality consists of the distinctive patterns of behaviour including thoughts and emotions that characterize each individual's adaption to the situations of his or her life.

Here let us know a little more about personality traits and states. These can be said to mark the difference between the dispositional and situational approaches to personality. **Traits** underlie an internal disposition or preference to act. Thus, it focuses on differences between individuals – why different individuals differ in their thoughts, feelings or behaviour. Whereas, **State** approach refers to differences within the individual – why the same individual thinks, feels or behaves differently in different situations. Your behaviour in a party scenario definitely differs from your behaviour in the workplace. Thus, while traits reflect how you generally act or your typical behaviour, it may not indicate how you will act in a particular situation.

Research has generated evidence for the biological basis of personality traits (e.g. Turkheimer, Pettersson & Horn, 2014). Genetic factors, brain structures and neurochemistry have been found to play important role in personality. Neuropsychology which studies how the brain relates to specific psychological processes and behavioural genetics, studying the biological basis of our behaviour have enhanced our understanding of human personality. In fact, Yamagata et al. (2006) have found evidence for the genetic basis of personality traits across cultures. Of course, the environment also plays a role as the expression of the genes in the individual is affected by it. Hence personality is a complex interplay between the genetic make up and the factors related to one's environment.

Genes are also responsible for producing biological differences in personality. These differences are called **temperaments** which refer to general tendencies to feel or act in particular ways. These are broader than personality traits and are more stable (Rothbart, 2011) as they have biological roots. Three main types of temperament as described by Buss & Plomin (1984) are activity level, emotionality and sociability.

1.4.1 Aspects of Personality

Thus, from the above discussion, it can be said that personality includes the physical, biological, psychological as well as social aspects.

Biological aspects include:

- physical appearance of an individual.
- physiological processes and hormones which have an effect on the personality and behaviour of the individual.
- temperament also plays an important role in shaping one's personality.

Psychosocial aspects include:

- Interests of the individual. These interest are acquired and may be influenced by parents, peer group and other situational factors.
- Abilities of the individual also have an impact on his personality.
- Sociability of the individual, which refers to relating and interacting with others in a social environment.
- Emotional characteristics of the individual shape the personality of the individual.
- Typical behavioural responses.

It may be noted here that consistency in the above psychological characteristics is important to be considered as personality traits.

Self Assessment Questions II

1) When individual differences are transient in nature, can it be called as a part of personality? Yes or No

2) Analyze the definition of personality given by Allport.

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3) What is temperament?

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4) Differentiate between state and trait.

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1.5 THEORIES OF PERSONALITY

The trait approach has been the dominant model to explain personality. However, personality has also been explained and understood from the viewpoint of major psychological theories such as psychoanalytic, behavioural and humanistic theories. We will now consider the various theories of personality including the contemporary trait theories and biological theories of personality.

1.5.1 Psychodynamic Theories of Personality

Freud was the pioneer in psychodynamic theories of personality which includes theories mainly by Freud, Erikson and Adler. Freud's original theory was called psychoanalysis. The psychodynamic theories including psychoanalysis emphasize the role of unconscious motives, desires and forces in shaping the personality of an individual. It is called dynamic as there is a constant tussle or conflict between the unconscious and conscious psychological forces. According to Freud, our behaviour and personality is determined by unconscious needs, memories and motivation. Our thoughts, feelings and motives underlying behaviour are mostly unconscious. Freud represents the unconscious part as the greater portion of an iceberg lying under water whereas the smaller portion of it above water represents the conscious awareness. The unconscious contains those mental processes that are not easily available to the individual.

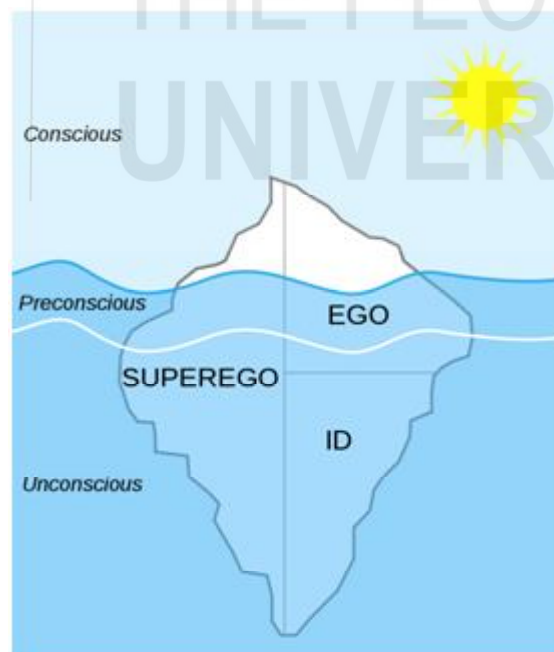


Figure 1aF : Freud's Theory

(Source: commons.wikimedia.org)

When one is governed by these unconscious forces about which one is not aware, it leads to conflict between the three structures of personality such as *the id*, *the ego* and *the superego*. Thus, Freud proposes three basic structures of personality, and interaction between these determine the nature of the individual's personality. The id resides in the

unconscious level, refers to the unconscious desires and is governed by the pleasure principle, i.e., you want to satisfy or fulfill your desires instantly disregarding the situational factors or societal norms and rules. The superego refers to the moral side which is governed by the rules and standards of conduct of the society. Parental regulations and societal expectations influence the development of superego. It acts as a keeper of morality and prevents the undesirable wishes of the id. The ego which operates on the reality principle tries to balance between the unwanted desires of the id and the moral dictates of the superego. It employs rational thinking and problem solving. In the process, the ego uses *defense mechanisms* to handle the conflict and reduce the anxiety caused due to the conflict. Defense mechanisms are mental mechanisms that protect the person from breaking down in the conflict between the id and the superego. These operate at the unconscious level. Examples of some common defense mechanisms are given below.

Rationalization: giving a justification or logical reason for behaviour that otherwise would be considered as inappropriate or wrong, *e.g., the student copies in an exam because other students also did it in the brief absence of the examiner.*

Denial: refuse to accept the fact as it will lead to anxiety and cause distress, *e.g., parents refusing to accept that their child has failed the class test (as it will reflect badly on them).*

Sublimation: channeling undesirable impulses into socially acceptable and constructive behaviour, *e.g., channelizing aggression into excelling in football or gardening etc.*

Regression: going back to an earlier stage of development and, behaviour and mannerisms characteristic of that stage, *e.g., the adolescent starts bed wetting when parents put pressure for high academic performance.*

Repression: repressing or removing the source of distress and anxiety from the awareness, thus, it is not available in the conscious *e.g., person forgets the abuse incident of the childhood.*

Reaction Formation: avoids an unacceptable, uncomfortable and distressful thought (that are actual) about the self by overemphasizing the opposite of it, *e.g., being excessively generous to avoid thoughts about one being miser.*

Projection: projecting or attributing one's unacceptable thoughts and qualities to someone else, *e.g., attributing one's angry feelings to the traffic situation/the other person.*

Displacement: shifting the emotional reaction from one person/ object to another, *e.g., anger at the boss in the workplace is expressed on your spouse or child at home.*

Freud has emphasized that early childhood experiences play an important role in personality. According to him, the development of personality occurs in five stages which he has termed as *psychosexual stages of development*, marked by the unconscious desire of children to satisfy their libidinal urges. These are the Oral stage (birth to 18 months), Anal stage (18 months – 3 years), Phallic stage (3 – 6 years), Latency stage (6 – 12 years), and Genital stage (12 - 20 years). In each of these stages, the child's source of pleasure is focused on one of the erogenous zones such as the mouth, the anus, and the genitals. Infants in the oral stage satisfy their hunger by being breast-fed; so they associate pleasure with mouth. In the anal stage, they are toilet trained, and hence the focus is on anus. This is followed by the phallic stage where the children become curious about their genitals. In the latency stage, the libidinal urges

are suppressed. Finally, the genital stage is marked by a mature and healthy interest and attitude towards sexuality, intimate relationships and reproduction. Progression through these stages marks the development of personality. Children need to move from one stage to the next successfully by not getting fixated in a particular stage. Fixation may happen by the way children are raised and the disciplinary methods used by the parents. For example, if the parents follow strict toilet training, it may affect the child in a different way than the use of proper discipline. Similarly, excessive indulgence in the oral stage makes the child fixated at that stage and the child as an adult seeks to derive pleasure through the mouth, such as smoking. Thus, how the child makes progress through these psychosexual stages affects the development of a mature adult personality.

Freud's theory has been criticized a lot, especially his emphasis on sexual urges. However, the influence of Freud has been seminal, and it has resulted in neo-Freudians who, while rejecting some aspects of Freud's thinking, has accepted the notions of unconscious forces, and have brought into focus many other influences such as the self and the social interactions.

1.5.2 Behavioural and Cognitive Theories

Freud's emphasis on internal processes have been criticized by the behaviourists such as **Skinner** who focused on behaviour as being a learned response through *reinforcement*. Thus behaviourists proposed that personality is influenced by learning and, learning occurs through patterns of reinforcement. According to Skinner's operant conditioning theory, personality is influenced by the reinforcing consequences of the individual's behaviour. He talks about operant behaviour versus respondent behaviour. Behaviour which is elicited by stimuli in the environment are called respondent behaviour. These are involuntary and the behaviour occurs automatically in response to the particular stimulus. However, operant behaviour/responses operate on the environment which causes changes in the environment. These changes have reinforcing consequences on future response of the individual with regard to the particular stimulus. Thus, the operant behaviour is also known as instrumental behaviour. It is voluntary. The reinforcement in operant behaviour is associated with the response, not the stimulus.

According to Skinner, our behaviour is shaped by reinforcement. He has proposed the method of successive approximations or shaping to influence behaviour and personality. It talks about rewarding the desired behaviour in gradual steps, first starting with related behaviour and then gradually proceeding to the actual behaviour. Let us now briefly discuss the types of reinforcement as given by Skinner and the schedules of reinforcement. A reinforcer is a stimulus that increases the strength of a particular response/behaviour when given after the occurrence of that response. The reinforcer can be positive or negative. *Positive reinforcement* is when you add something pleasant or desirable, e.g., when you get a medal or cash prize after winning a debate, it acts as a reinforcement for you. *Negative reinforcement* is when you take away or remove something unpleasant or undesirable, e.g., Sonu agreed to his mother that if he would give the garbage to the person who comes to collect it thrice a week, he can get to play games on the mobile (restriction on playing mobile games removed).

Skinner's *reinforcement schedule* is based on the intermittent reinforcement which refers to getting reinforcement not every time the individual shows the particular behaviour. For example, when the rat in Skinner's experiment did not get the reinforcement every time it pressed the bar in the rat cage (called Skinner box), it is called intermittent reinforcement. Whereas, continuous reinforcement refers to getting the reinforcement every time the response is displayed. Intermittent reinforcement schedule is further divided into four types: fixed ratio, fixed interval, variable ratio and

variable interval schedule. Ratio refers to number of responses and interval refers to time period. Thus, fixed ratio involves giving the reinforcement after a fixed number of responses, may be after every 3rd or 5th response. Fixed interval indicates that the reinforcement is given after a fixed time period, say after every five minutes. In variable ratio and variable interval, the number of responses and the time period after which reinforcement is given, does not stay constant. It changes, e.g., you may get the reinforcement after 3rd response, then after 2nd response, next after 7th response and so on. The variable schedule of reinforcement has more impact on our behaviour.

Learning theories were limited in their explanation of personality and gradually the role of social context and cognition was recognized in the understanding of personality.

Social learning theories of **Bandura** advocated that observation and imitation in the social situation also affects our behaviour and has an impact in shaping our personality. Earlier learning theories while explaining behaviour in terms of the learning principles, did not take into account the social context. Bandura's book on Social Learning and Personality Development (Bandura & Walters, 1963) and other works focused on the interaction of the individual with the environment. Later on Bandura renamed his social learning theory as social cognitive theory, to emphasize the role of human cognition in determining personality. Behaviour of other people, the social context, the environmental factors, and one's own thought processes all interact together. Thus, there is reciprocal determinism among the factors which may vary in strength and in the degree of causation.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory Diagram as indicated by P-B-E (Person – Behaviour – Environment) is given below in Figure 1bF. The diagram shows that there is a reciprocal or two-way interaction among the factors related to the person, the environment and the behaviour itself that affects the behaviour and shapes the personality. Sometimes the environmental factors are more important in determining personality whereas at other times, it may be the person's cognitive factors related to the person are more influencing factors.

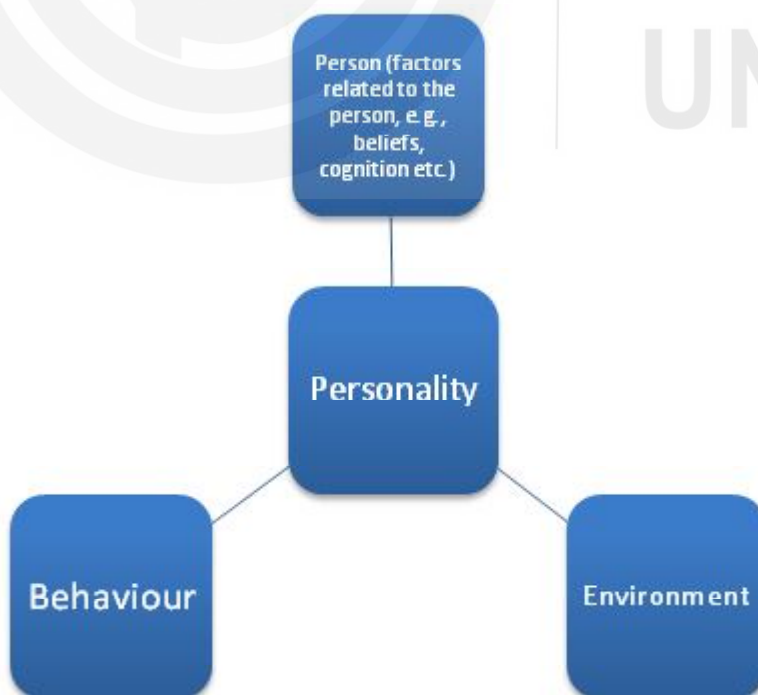


Figure 1bF: Bandura's Reciprocal Determinism

Other psychologists have also explained personality in terms of the cognitive factors. **Rotter** (1954) has proposed the concept of *locus of control* which refers to the

assumption held by people whether they have control or not over situations/events in their lives. When they assume that their responses and actions can directly influence the consequences, they have control over it – this is called internal locus of control. External locus of control assumes that the control is outside the individual and lies in other individuals/situation/luck/fate etc. Rotter further said that internal or external locus of control depend on the person's 'expectancies' for reinforcement and the 'values' the person ascribes to particular reinforcers. Thus, if you expect that study will lead to good grades and you value getting good grades, you will devote more time and hard work for study, indicating an internal locus of control.

Further, cognitive theorists also emphasize the personal beliefs, self-efficacy and interpretations of social situations and the world that influence the behaviour and the personality of the individual.

The CAPS (*Cognitive-Affective Personality System*) model of **Walter Mischel and Shoda** (1995) also highlights the cognitive- affective influences on the behaviour of the individual. They state that our behaviour and consequently our personality is affected by four things: perception of the situation, affective or emotional responses to the situation, skills of the person to deal with the situation and anticipation of the outcome of their behaviour.

Self Assessment Questions III

- 1) What are the three basic structures of personality according to Freud?

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- 2) Name the four types of intermittent reinforcement schedule.

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- 3) Explain social learning theory.

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- 4) What is external locus of control?

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1.5.3 Humanistic Theories

Humanistic approaches to personality contested the deterministic views of personality, that is, personality as being determined by the influences of the unconscious and the reinforcement patterns, both of which are not under the individual's control. Humanistic theorists believe that human beings are basically good. They aim at greater self-understanding and strive for self-actualization. **Maslow's hierarchy of needs** puts self-actualization as the highest motive. It starts from the basic biological needs, and proceeds to psychological needs, ultimately aiming to fulfill one's potential.

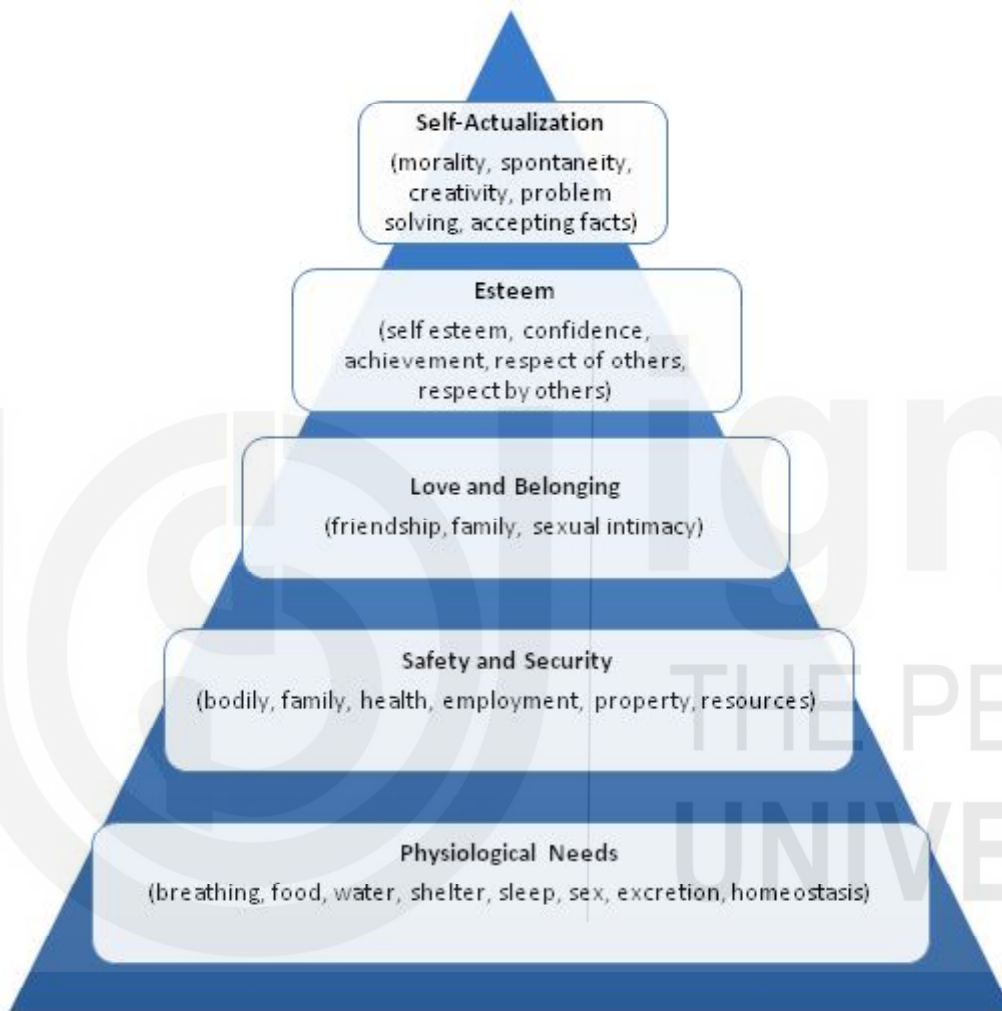


Figure 1cF: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The lower needs need to be satisfied, then only the person proceeds to the fulfillment of the higher-order needs. Thus, basic needs of food, sleep etc. need to be fulfilled, then only the person thinks of safety and security. All other needs become secondary to the basic physiological needs.

The first four levels are called deficiency or deprivation needs or "D-needs". If these needs are not met, deficiency or deprivation is created, and the individual is motivated to meet these needs. The last level of needs is called the being needs or "B-needs". This operates on growth motivation in contrast to the deficit motivation for the D-needs. Maslow uses the homeostatic principles to explain the deficiency needs. Homeostasis is the principle by which bodily system operates. Like a thermostat, it switches the heat on when it is too cold and switches it off when it is too hot. When the individual lacks something, s/he wants it; and when s/he gets it, the need is fulfilled and s/he moves on to next things. When you have experienced neglect or abuse in childhood, your need for

love, care, security may continue unless otherwise fulfilled and it may characterize your behaviour and personality.

Humanistic theorists focus on the individual and their growth and development, enhancement of the potential, well-being and quality of life of the individual. Thus, personal well-being, growth, openness, experiences, personal responsibility, perceived reality by the individual are discussed here. Humanistic theories have drawn the attention from the negative side of human behaviour, i.e., the mental illness to the positive side of human behaviour focusing on the possibilities of a better life, inherent goodness and optimal mental health. Positive psychology which is a dominant field now within psychology, can be traced back to the humanistic theories. It has emerged in a big way in the last two decades when Martin Seligman made it popular by declaring it as the theme of American Psychological Association (APA) in 1998.

Maslow has significantly contributed to the field by focusing on the person and the meaning in life and self actualization. However, his theory has also been criticized on the ground that we have instances of creative and great people actualizing their potential despite poverty or deprivation or ill health. Thus, these needs can be seen as overlapping in nature. Further, Maslow, in later years, added another dimension of 'transcendence' going beyond self-actualization (Maslow, 1996; Koltko-Rivera, 2006). It relates to altruism and spirituality, in the quest of reaching the infinite. According to Maslow (1971, p. 269), "Transcendence refers to the very highest and most inclusive or holistic levels of human consciousness, behaving and relating, as ends rather than means, to oneself, to significant others, to human beings in general, to other species, to nature, and to the cosmos".

Carl Rogers, another humanistic theorist, emphasizes the need for providing unconditional love to the children by the parents for positive personality development. The child when accepted without any conditions will develop into a fully functioning person and develop a healthy personality. Two famous books of Rogers are 'On Becoming a Person' (1961) and 'Person to Person' (1967). The theory focuses on the person and their subjective understanding of their self. Unconditional positive regard, genuineness and empathy are three hallmarks of the person-centered therapy developed by Rogers. Also termed as the self-theory, it focuses on the person – their experiences, feelings, values and beliefs, thus following a phenomenological approach.

The self or self-concept is the central tenet of Rogers theory. He defines self as the organized, consistent, conceptual gestalt composed of perceptions of the characteristics of the "I" or "me", and the perception of the relationship "I" or "me" in interaction with various aspects of life, together with the values attached to those perceptions. Thus, the self develops through interaction with others and the consequent social evaluations influence the development of the self concept to a great extent.

Rogers talks about personality in terms of the real self and the ideal self and the extent to which there is congruence between the two. Real self refers to the actual you at present and what you can become by self actualization. The ideal self refers to who you would like to be ideally; it reflects the society's expectations and demands of what you should be. Congruence between the two would make for a healthy personality. However, since perfect congruence may not be possible, the relative degree of congruence is important. As a boy, if you have developed the self concept that boys do not cry, you will face difficulty in situations where you may feel like crying, e.g., in the event of death of your parent. If there is greater discrepancy between our self and our experiences, it leads to maladjustment and eventually may even lead to personality disorganization and mental illness.

Thus, humanistic theories emphasize on the individual as a whole, takes into account their integrated personal experience, understanding the individual in the totality, aiming at realizing the full potential and functioning as a whole. It focuses on the development of the self and the congruence of the self with the experiences as important for a well adjusted and healthy personality.

1.5.4 Trait Theories of Personality

Theories prior to the trait approaches, especially the psychodynamic theories focused on the internal unconscious mental processes, early childhood experiences, emotional attachment of children with the parents. Behavioural contingencies were emphasized in the learning theories, whereas, social learning theories proposed that personal beliefs, expectations, values, and the social context influence personality. The humanistic theories talked about the inherent goodness, self-understanding, subjective experience, personal growth and fulfilling the potential.

In contrast to all these theories, the trait theories describe personality in terms of different traits which refer to dispositions or patterns of thought, emotion and behaviour. Thus, people differ in their personality dispositions. Traits are relatively stable and consistent over time and across situations. The trait approach highlights how individuals differ in various traits, e.g., you may be very sociable while your sister is shy. Your close friend may always be anxious, whereas, you are calm. Traits vary on a continuum from one extreme to the other. However, majority of the people fall in the middle of the continuum of the trait. **Allport** posits traits as central to understanding of personality. He has divided traits into three groups such as *cardinal, central and secondary traits* depending on the degree of their pervasiveness in an individual's personality. Cardinal traits are the most pervasive ones, including many other traits. Many aspects of one's behaviour and personality can be explained through cardinal traits. Central traits are less pervasive than the cardinal ones, but still refer to generalized dispositions of the individual. These traits can be directly observed in the individual. Secondary traits are less generalised and cannot be directly or publicly observed. These are also less relevant for the personality of the individual. When we know and interact with another person frequently and at an intimate level, we become aware of the secondary traits, e.g., one's interests, eating habits etc.

Allport and Odbert (1936) initially have prepared a list of nearly 18000 words from the dictionary that could be described as personality traits. Later on, **Cattell** (1965) reduced these words by grouping, and then used a statistical technique called factor analysis to finally come up with 16 personality factors. These factors are: warmth, reasoning, emotional stability, dominance, liveliness, rule consciousness, social boldness, sensitivity, vigilance, abstractness, privateness, apprehension, openness to change, self reliance, perfectionism, and tension. He termed these as *source traits* which refer to the underlying basic factors which can explain one's personality. The source traits exist at a deeper level in contrast to the surface traits that are observable from outside. A *surface trait* includes a set of behavioural characteristics that together describe the particular trait, e.g., extraversion is described together by certain characteristics such as friendliness, socially mixing, openness etc.

Cattell proposes that personality is a function of the situation and the person. The traits interact with the situational factors and influence the personality. He denotes it with the formula: $R = f(S, P)$ where R refers to the person's response, f is function, S is the stimulus situation and P is the personality structure of the individual. Further, Cattell has considered the relative contribution of heredity and environment in the development of personality traits. This is reflected in his categorization of source traits into constitutional

traits that are derived from the biological and physiological conditions of the person, and environmental-mold traits that are influenced by the physical and social environment of the person.

1.5.4.1 Five Factor Theory

Later on another major theory called *The Five-factor theory or the Big Five* (**McCrae & Costa, 1999**) focussed on five basic personality traits described by the acronym OCEAN (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism). Openness includes traits related to intellect, imagination, insightful, artistic and creative. Conscientiousness includes being careful, thoughtful and organized. It includes paying attention to details, planning, goal-directed behaviour and impulse control. Extraversion includes traits like sociability, energetic, excitability, gregarious and assertive. There is high emotional expressiveness. Agreeableness refers to trustfulness, being helpful, kind, affection, prosocial and altruistic behaviour. Neuroticism refers to traits like being anxious, moody and irritability. There is lack of emotional stability. Each of these five traits are thus higher-order traits that consists of several inter-related lower-order traits (refer to Figure 1dF).

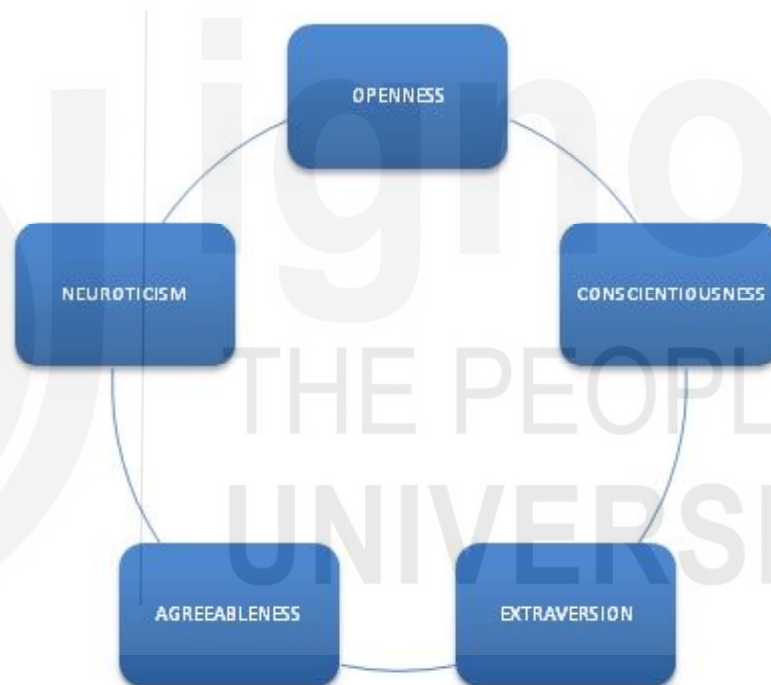


Figure 1dF: The Big Five of Personality

According to the five factor theory, personality traits reflect the basic tendencies of the individual, thus, highlighting a genetic or biological base for personality. Interaction of these basic tendencies with the environmental factors influences the development of our personality. The Big Five theory have been studied widely across cultures and evidence point out its effectiveness in predicting a wide array of behaviours (Paunonen & Ashton, 2001; Heller, Watson & Ilies, 2004).

1.5.4.2 Biological Trait Theory

Eysenck (1967) proposed the biological trait theory, which places a great emphasis on a biological basis for our personality. His theory proposes that personality consists of three dimensions or *super-traits*, also called types, that can explain personality in contrast to the 16 traits as given by Cattell. These traits are introversion-extraversion, emotional stability-neuroticism, and low constraint-high constraint (refer to Figure 1eF). The last dimension was earlier known as psychoticism. However, the term was renamed, as

psychosis refers to psychological disorder which Eysenck did not mean. When Eysenck talks about types, he does not mean discontinuity. Rather, these three dimensions/traits range from one extreme to another extreme. Introversion refers to being shy and reserved whereas extraversion refers to the sociableness and outgoing nature of the person. This trait is similar to the extraversion trait in the Big Five theory. Emotional stability refers to consistency in one's moods and emotions. On the other hand, neuroticism dimension which is also there in the Big Five, refers to being more emotional, tense, anxious and moody. Constraint trait refers to the ability to control impulses, and this is similar to the conscientiousness trait of the Big Five. In the Figure 1eF, the constraint trait ranges from low constraint/high psychoticism (the neurotic-extraversion segment) to high constraint/low psychoticism (the introversion-emotionally stable segment).

Neurotic (Unstable)

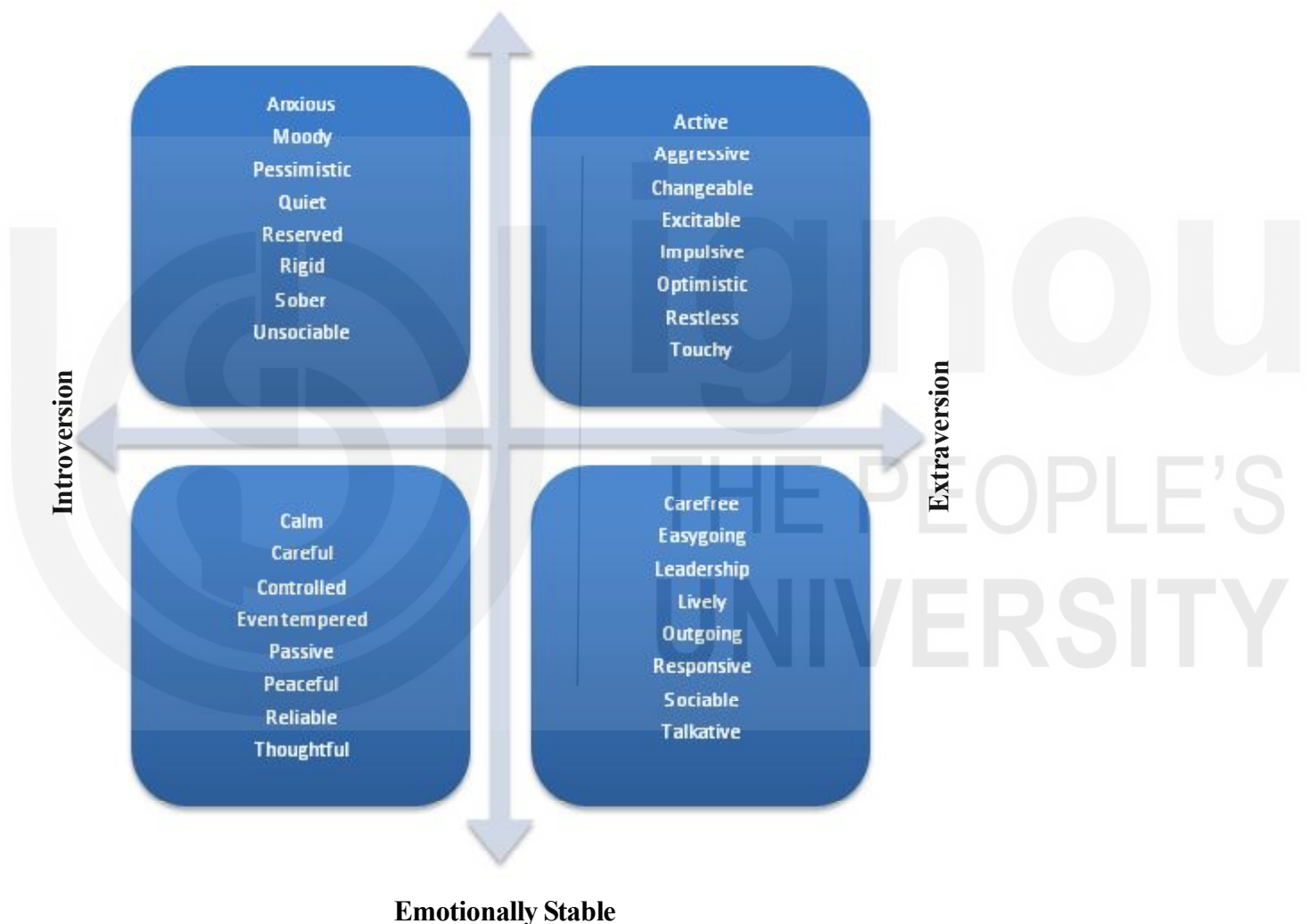


Figure 1eF: Eysenck's Trait Theory of Personality

According to Eysenck, these personality traits such as introversion or extraversion are affected by the biological processes. For example, arousal which is governed by the Reticular Activating System (RAS), leads to differences between introversion and extraversion. Arousal refers to the level of excitation ranging from low arousal (e.g., sleep) to high arousal (e.g., being panic). Each individual has an optimal level of arousal that helps him to function effectively. Introverts have high arousal level, so they are very sensitive to any stimulus. They avoid situations/stimulus that will create further arousal and overwhelm them, for instance, facing an interview, public speaking etc. Since they usually operate above their optimal arousal level, they do not want any additional arousal.

They prefer few stimuli, calm environment. On the other hand, extroverts have low arousal level and thus they are not very sensitive. They need to have more arousal to function effectively. So they seek out such stimulus or situation that lead to excitation. Similarly, neuroticism is explained in terms of the sympathetic nervous system or visceral brain. It talks about lower thresholds for activation in the visceral brain in case of neuroticism. So they get easily upset, anxious and irritable. In contrast, higher thresholds for activation leads to more emotional stability.

Thus, the biological factor affect our thought, emotions and behaviour. However, Eysenck also recognizes the contributing role of the environment in addition to the biological factors.

1.5.5 Behavioural Approach System and Behavioural Inhibition System

One of the recent theories emphasizing the biological base of personality is the model advocated by **Jeffrey Gray** (1982). It talks about the *Behavioural approach system* (BAS) and the *Behavioural inhibition system* (BIS) influencing behaviour and personality. BAS is the 'go system' that is characterized by stimulus seeking, and reward orientation. Whereas, the BIS is the 'stop' system of the brain that inhibits behaviour as it may lead to anxiety. The individual here wants to avoid punishment, while BAS is more influenced by rewards. Thus BIS can be linked to neuroticism and BAS can be related to extraversion. BAS and BIS involve different brain regions linked to emotion and reward (DeYoung & Gray, 2009).

1.5.6 Indian Perspective on Self and Personality

The mainstream psychology mainly reflects the western notion of self and personality. It advocates an individualistic orientation to self and emphasizes the independence and uniqueness of the self. In contrast, the Indian cultural tradition views self as inter-relational and contextual. The Indian perspective highlights the interdependent self in the two types of self-construal: independent and interdependent self as proposed by Markus and Kitayama (1991). The interdependent self focuses more on the family, the social context, and the attributes of self and personality are more plural and fluid (Ciccarelli & White, 2018).

Bhagwad Gita, the Indian scripture, mentions that there are three types of personality such as Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. In Hindu philosophy, these are called the 'trigunas' or the three 'gunas' (tendencies/qualities).

Sattva refers to the spiritual aspect – good nature, peaceful and balanced personality.

Rajas refers to the energetic, active, ambitious, fiery type and action-oriented personality.

Tamas refers to the negative aspects of our personality – anger, fear, laziness, the negative emotions

All these three aspects of personality are there in each individual, however, one type may predominate than the other. The interplay of these three 'gunas' determines the nature, characteristics and type of personality of the individual.

Ayurveda talks about the three '**doshas**', the combination of which makes each individual unique in his/her nature and personality. These are 'vata', 'pitta', and 'kapha'. These three mind-body types reflect the qualities of the elements they represent. Vata relates to space and air, pitta relates to fire and water, and kapha relates to water and earth

element. Each individual will have a predominant dosha, reflecting the properties of those elements in his/her personality. For example, vata dominant person will be typically more active, whereas pitta dominant personality will be of fiery type. When all the three doshas are in proper proportions in the individual, it results in a balanced personality.

Further, Taaittiriya Upanishad, similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, views the self as consisting of five aspects (refer Table 1aT).

Table 1aT: Five Aspects of the Self according to Taaittiriya Upanishad

Annamaya Kosh	Refers to the physical body
Pranamaya Kosh	Refers to the life inside the body which keeps the body functional through breathing and other internal processes
Manomaya Kosh	Refers to mind and includes processing of thoughts and emotions based on the inputs received from the sense organs
Vinanamaya Kosh	Refers to the intellect/cognition that helps in knowing the world
Anandmaya Kosh	The innermost layer which refers to attainment of the eternal joy or bliss

The vedantic tradition of India conceptualizes personality in terms of '**karma**' or the doings of a person. As the person's actions/responses/behaviour will be, so will be the 'karma phala' or the consequences in life. The ultimate goal of life is to have no more 'karma' and achieve liberation from the cycle of birth and death. This can be achieved by practicing detachment in one's life.

Self Assessment Questions IV

1) Describe Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

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2) Unconditional positive regard is associated with which theory?

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3) Differentiate between the real self and the ideal self.

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4) What does OCEAN stand for?

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1.6 LET US SUM UP

In the present Unit, we learned about the concept of individual differences and mainly focussed on discussing personality, a significant aspect of individual differences. Psychologists have tried to understand and explain personality by a variety of approaches including dispositional and non-dispositional theories. Though the dispositional or trait theories have dominated research in the field of personality, other theories have also contributed to the understanding of personality. Among these, psychodynamic theories have focused on the dynamic conflict between unconscious and conscious psychological forces. In contrast, behaviourist approach emphasized on learning, reinforcement and observation in place of unobservable internal processes and subjective evaluation. Social cognitive theories advocated the role of cognition including perception, thinking, memory and language on our behaviour and personality. The humanistic approach or phenomenological approach talked about individuality, subjective experiences and self actualization. Biological approaches to personality explains personality in terms of the underlying biological correlates. Psychological traits are linked to physical and physiological aspects, nervous system and brain systems. Behavioural genetics attempts to study the impact of the genetics and non-genetic or environmental factors on personality. Finally, the Indian notion of self and personality emphasizes a collectivistic orientation with an interdependent and relational view of the self.

1.7 KEY WORDS

Differential Psychology	: is the scientific study of the observable differences between individuals and their underlying psychological determinants.
Behavioural genetics	: refers to the study of biological basis of individual differences.
Temperaments	: refer to general tendencies to feel or act in particular ways.
Traits	: refer to an internal disposition or preference to act.
Defense mechanisms	: are mental mechanisms that protect the person from breaking down in the conflict between the id and the superego.

- Locus of control** : refers to the assumption held by people whether they have control or not over situations/events in their lives.
- Big Five** : refers to five basic personality traits given by McCrae & Costa (1999), and is described by the acronym OCEAN (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism).

1.8 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Self Assessment Questions I

- 1) True
- 2) Differential psychology
- 3) Heredity, Environment

Self Assessment Questions II

- 1) No
- 2) Allport defined personality as “the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine the individual’s characteristic behaviour and thought”.
- 3) Temperament refers to general tendencies to feel or act in particular ways.
- 4) Traits underlie an internal disposition or preference to act. Thus it focuses on differences between individuals. Whereas States refer to differences within the individual.

Self Assessment Questions III

- 1) The three basic structures of personality according to Freud are the id, ego and super ego.
- 2) The four types of intermittent reinforcement schedule are fixed ratio, fixed interval, variable ratio and variable interval schedule.
- 3) Social learning theory advocates that observation and imitation in the social situation affects our behaviour and has an impact in shaping our personality.
- 4) External locus of control assumes that the control is outside the individual and lies in other individuals/situation/luck/fate etc.

Self Assessment Questions IV

- 1) Maslow’s hierarchy of needs consists of physiological needs at the bottom, then safety needs, love and belongingness needs, self esteem needs and finally self actualization needs.
- 2) Roger’s person centred theory
- 3) Real self refers to the actual you at present and what you can become by self actualization. The ideal self refers to who you would like to be ideally; it reflects the society’s expectations and demands of what you should be.
- 4) OCEAN refers to openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism.

1.9 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) How do behavioural theory explain personality? Provide a critical description.
- 2) Compare Freud's psychoanalytic theory with Maslow's approach to personality.
- 3) Discuss the nature and nurture debate with regard to personality development.
- 4) Discuss Allport's trait theory of personality.
- 5) Explain the Big Five and evaluate the Five Factor theory.
- 6) Explain the BAS and BIS model of personality.

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UNIT 2 ASSESSMENT OF PERSONALITY*

Structure

- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Introduction
- 2.3 Concept of Psychological Assessment
 - 2.3.1 Properties of a Good Test
 - 2.3.2 Ethics of Psychological Assessment
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2.1 OBJECTIVES

After you go through this Unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the concept of psychological assessment;
- Describe personality assessment;
- Know the importance and uses of personality assessment; and
- Describe various methods of personality assessment.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Unit, you learned about personality and the different theories explaining personality. In this Unit, we will learn about the assessment of personality. Our behaviour, social interactions and relationships are to a great extent influenced by our personality. Hence it is crucial to know and assess our personality to understand its implications in different aspects of our life.

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This will enable us to develop, modify and improve our personality for greater effectiveness in our functioning. Assessment of personality is a major area of research and different theories have influenced the development of personality assessment. The way personality is conceptualized by various theories has an implication on the way personality is assessed. For instance, the trait theorists focus more on finding out the specific traits in the individual, whereas the psychoanalysts will use projective techniques to assess one's personality. However, in the practical situation of measuring or assessing one's personality, you will find that psychologists follow a comprehensive approach combining the different assessment techniques.

Why do we need to assess personality? How is it going to help us? In what areas/aspects will it be required? In the present Unit, we will discuss the meaning and importance of personality assessment. The concept of psychological assessment will also be discussed along with the ethical issues involved in assessment. Thereafter, various methods of assessing personality including observation, interviews, personality inventories, rating scales, behavioural data, situational tests and projective techniques will be discussed.

2.3 CONCEPT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Think about a few aspects or features of an individual which you relate to specific behaviour in that individual. For instance, color of the cornea is often related to the smartness of the individual. You must have come across so many assumptions like this which have no scientific support for validation, and thus are mostly myths. So, how do we know about the personality characteristics of people? How do we measure individual differences? As we know, individuals differ in their interests, aptitude, achievement as well as intelligence, moods, motives and personality. In order to find out individual differences in these aspects, psychologists use psychological assessment. This psychological assessment or measurement of individual differences follows a systematic procedure. It is carried out in a scientific manner and fulfills the essential criteria of being a reliable and valid measure.

Why psychological assessment is important? As we mentioned earlier, it aims at measuring various aspects of human development and behaviour. Mainly, it helps to *describe, explain and predict* human behaviour. It helps in decision-making, and also providing guidance and counseling. Further, psychological assessment is used by psychologists in various fields such as education, career, clinical and organizational set up. It also has relevance in the area of social psychology, neuropsychology, forensic psychology and practically every other branch of psychology, as measuring human behaviour is the basic step for studying human beings.

There are some principles of psychological assessment which need to be followed while making use of various assessments. Psychological assessment needs to be,

- a) Comprehensive and holistic: All the relevant aspects need to be taken into account, integrating all aspects of the individual's life. The socio-cultural context of the individual needs to be considered.
- b) Systematic: Assessment is a systematic process, it involves planning as to what, how and why to assess. The steps in the assessment process involve deciding the objectives or goals of assessment; identifying the assessment methods or techniques to achieve the identified objectives; administering the assessment tools/ collecting the data; scoring and interpreting the assessment data/findings; integrating data

from different sources to get a holistic picture; and formulating the implication of the assessment information/data for various areas of the client's life.

- c) On-going: Psychological assessment is not a one time activity. It needs to be an on-going assessment to capture the dynamic nature of human behaviour. Episodic assessment may not reflect the true nature of the individual.
- d) Accurate: Assessment should be accurate in terms of assessing what it intends to measure. Reliability and validity should be ensured.
- e) Confidential: Findings of assessment should be kept confidential. The individual/client needs to be ensured about it.

Thus, psychological assessment is a scientific and standardized method of drawing conclusions about aspects of an individual such as motives, social traits, attitude, adjustment and interest.

Here we need to differentiate between psychological assessment and psychological test.

According to Anastasi, *"a psychological test is essentially an objective and standardized measure of a sample of behaviour"* (Anastasi & Urbina, 2017, p. 6)

Thus, a psychological test is an objective tool of assessment. It is a standardized measure or tool. That is, it provides uniform ways of administration, test instruction and scoring. Based on a pre-defined correct and incorrect responses, the scoring is done, so that there is no chance of subjectivity influencing the scoring procedure. After scoring the correct and incorrect responses, a psychologist comes to a conclusion whether the respondent/client on whom the test is conducted fits into the fixed criterion based on the scores or not. Thus, the interpretation of the scores is also standardized. The psychological tests are majorly self-report, objective type paper-and-pencil tests. It helps ensure easy administration and scoring.

Although the terms testing and assessment are used interchangeably, assessment refers to a broad evaluation of the individual which may include psychological testing, surveys, observation, interview, history and demographic information of the client etc. to have a complete and comprehensive evaluation of the aspect/behaviour under study. For example, a counseling psychologist, apart from understanding the basic adjustment issues of the client using any of the adjustment tools/questionnaire, will also interact and interview the client to understand their issue.

Thus, psychological assessment is used by psychologists for assessing the behaviour, attitude, personality etc. of the individual and drawing conclusions about it. It also enables quantification of observations thus making it easy to make comparisons across population.

2.3.1 Properties of a Good Test

Psychological tests and instruments are constructed after systematic research which enables the test constructor to standardize the test constructed by them and further establish the validity and reliability of the test. Any assessment technique must meet the following criteria to be considered as a proper and effective tool.

- Standardization
- Norms

- Reliability
- Validity

These are the characteristic features of a good test that needs to be ensured in the psychological assessment tools.

Standardization refers to uniformity in administration of the test and, scoring and interpretation of the test responses. It ensures that there is no variation even if it is administered by different researchers/individuals. So, the respondents get the same instruction regarding how to take the test and answer it.

Norms refer to the scores obtained by the representative sample on which the test was developed initially. These test norms provide information about high, low and average performance. The scores of an individual taking the test later on are compared with these norms or standards to identify the relative standing of the individual as compared to the standardized sample.

Reliability and validity are two other important criteria of a psychological tool or assessment. **Reliability** refers to the consistency of the scores obtained by an individual on a test. It ensures that the responses of the individual on the test do not vary on repeated administration, indicating that the test is a reliable measure. There are different methods to test the reliability of a tool. **Validity** refers to how well a test measures what it intends to measure. Content validity is whether the contents, i.e., the test items are representative of the entire domain of what it is supposed to measure. Like reliability, there are different types of validity also. You will study about reliability and validity in BPCC-105: Psychological Research in your Semester III.

2.3.2 Ethics of Psychological Assessment

Any discussion on psychological assessment should include knowledge and understanding about the ethics in it. Psychological assessment requires some ethical guidelines to be followed that are aimed at guarding the rights of the clients/respondents. American Psychological Association (APA) has put the following guidelines which needs to be observed by the psychologists/researchers.

- 1) Psychological assessment should be done by trained psychologists only. It is similar to the fact that you would not want a person without a training in medical degree to interpret your blood report.
- 2) It is unethical to use a psychological test without having a formal degree and training of the same. The psychologist should know about the test, its administration, scoring and interpretation procedure. S/he also should be familiar with the test items, how it was developed and the norms for the test. It is important that the psychologist selects proper tests for psychological assessment keeping in mind the age group, the conditions and the objective of testing the individual/client.
- 3) The client should be briefed about the intent and use of the test before conduction of any psychological test. This is called informed consent. Thus, it requires that the client be informed about the purpose of testing and consent obtained for administering the test.
- 4) The client is also informed about the confidentiality of test findings.
- 5) As a psychologist/researcher, you are also required to provide and report the findings in an unbiased way. Communicating test results in a proper way is an important aspect of psychological assessment.

- 6) As a psychologist, you need to ensure confidentiality of the client. It is unethical to use or share the psychological test report of the client without their consent. However, there are exceptions to it when there is risk to the life of the client or to the society.
- 7) It is also important to be aware of the test taking situation, and the ethnic and cultural background of the test takers/clients as these may affect the test results.

You can refer to the website of American Psychological Association (www.apa.org) for further details of ethical guidelines.

Self Assessment Questions I

State whether the following statements are **True/False**.

- 1) Psychological assessment is a broader term as compared to psychological testing.
- 2) Reliability refers to how well a test measures what it intends to measure.
- 3) Psychological tests are easy to use and can be administered by any one.
- 4) Informed consent is an important part of psychological testing.

2.4 PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT: ITS USES

Personality assessment aims at measuring the personality traits and characteristics of individuals. Personality defines us and constitutes an integral part of us. Hence we need to know about our personality as it has implications in several aspects of our life – for improving our own self, for effective social relationships and interactions, for better health, efficient work performance and so on. Personality has been found to be associated with outcomes in many areas such as education, career, counseling and clinical. We can briefly discuss the uses/applications of personality assessment in these areas.

Personality assessment has a broad scope in schools and *educational setups*. Personality has been related to the child's performance. Research studies (Stevens and Slavin, 1995) have found that the trait agreeableness can have an impact on educational achievement. Similarly, other personality traits like conscientiousness which refers to being systematic and thoughtful may also influence academic success. Personality traits have also been linked to bullying, a most commonly occurring phenomenon at school. Studies (Slee & Rigby, 1993; Connolly & O'Moore, 2003) have examined the personality traits of those engaged in bullying and found bullies to be high on psychoticism. This has significant implication for early identification of potential bullies and the prevention of bullying.

Personality assessment has also been widely used in *career decision* and finding out the fit between career requirements and personality traits. Can you think of personality traits needed for different careers such as teacher, doctor, manager, fashion designer, politician and soldier? While it may not be that much crucial to have typical traits for success in some careers, possessing certain personality traits is necessary for some other careers. Think of the careers where it is essential to possess certain specific personality traits. These traits are required for such careers without which one will not be able to do well in those careers. Hence personality assessment has a significant role in career selection and career counseling.

The *clinical use* of personality assessment is reflected in the use of the personality tests for diagnosis of personality disorders. It has implication for *counseling* also. We know

that Type A personality are more competitive, ambitious, restless, has compulsive tendencies, lack introspection, aggressive in nature and have the urgency of time always. Individuals having such personality have been found to be more prone to heart related problems (e.g., Williams et al., 2000). Thus personality can have an impact on our health and knowing one's personality can help us to modify our health behaviours and practices.

Personality has a bearing on our *health and well-being*. It influences our health practices. Studies have found relationship between personality traits and our health. A study by Booth-Kewley and Vickers (1994) reported that the OCEAN (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) factors are related to both good and bad health practices. For example, they found extraversion and conscientiousness to be related to healthier lifestyles; and openness to experiences was found to be related to more risky behaviours like taking drugs etc.

Personality assessment has an important role in the *industrial and organizational context*. We need to know how our personality affects us as well as others in the workplace. This also becomes crucial as we spend a major chunk of our time in the workplace along with our colleagues, juniors, seniors and peers. It becomes essential to have people managing skills, adaptability, perseverance, managing emotions, leadership qualities etc. to function effectively. It is required to work in team, motivate and encourage others and communicate effectively. In fact, personality traits contribute more to job performance, job satisfaction and success in the organization than the academic degrees only.

Application of personality assessment can also be seen in many other fields such as *sports and military setting*. Defense services require a person to work in typical conditions and with a typical work structure and hierarchy. Hence, the person needs to have specific personality traits.

Thus, personality assessment has relevance and applications in varied settings. As personality is an integral part of us, it has implications for everything we do and hence, the importance of personality assessment cannot be denied. Now let us know about the various methods used for assessing personality.

2.5 METHODS OF PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT

Multiple methods are used to assess personality. Broadly they can be grouped under two: **Direct Methods** and **Indirect Methods**. Direct methods include Observation, Interviews, Personality Inventories/Questionnaires, Rating scales, Behavioural data and Situational tests. Indirect methods include Projective techniques. Let us now discuss each of these.

2.5.1 Observation

Observation is a direct method where the person is directly observed in different situations. It is obvious that if I want to know about the personality of an individual, I would be able to know it if I observe that person in various situations. However, this method has practical difficulty as it is not feasible to move around and constantly observe the person in different situations. Nevertheless, direct observation as a method offers a rich source of information about the individual.

During observation, a psychologist has an objective to view a pattern in the behaviour which explains cause and effect specifically. While observing the client, a psychologist will make notes which are further used to draw conclusions about the client based on

the observations made. During observation the psychologist makes an effort not to disturb the natural conditions of the client.

Observation is of two types based on the involvement of the psychologist. Depending on the case, a psychologist may decide whether she or he should choose a participant observation method or a non-participant observation method.

A participant observation method is where the psychologist becomes a part of the group under observation. For example, during “Kumbh festival”, a religious festival of the Hindus in India, a psychologist may plan to be a part of a monk group and will thus participate in all activities of that group and will make careful notes of the observations. In such a case the self-experience may help the psychologist understand personality and patterns of behaviour in a much better way. On the other hand, his/her own experience may color the perception of the group of monks.

Another method of observation is non-participant; it is also known as naturalistic observation method. In this psychologist does not seek to participate as a group member rather observes the client or group from a distance to note down the observations about the client. This is considered as a good method of observation as the client is behaving and interacting in a natural environment without any interference from the psychologist. The only drawback of this method is that it is very time consuming. At times a psychologist may sit the entire day observing the client and may not be able to make notes of any significant observation that he/she decided to observe.

Observation method is useful in specific situations, for example, observing the child's behaviour in a home setting or the teacher observing the child in the school setting or the psychologist observing the client in a clinical setting. Observation needs to be done systematically and record needs to be maintained properly. It can contain information such as time of observation, duration of observation, context of observation and frequency of observation in a day.

Advantages: It offers firsthand information when the individual is actually engaging in a behaviour. So it may be more accurate.

Limitations: Two limitations of observation method are the (a) *observer bias* – the person who is observing have his own biases, beliefs and value system which may affect the observation process and interpretation of the observation data and, (b) *observer effect* – refers to the effect on the person because of the fact of being observed. The person may become conscious and may not show the natural response or behaviour.

2.5.2 Interview

Interview as you know, consists of asking questions to the person/interviewee about his/her behaviour. But it is not like the job interview which is more formal. Here, the interview may be semi-structured or even unstructured without having any specific questions and it starts flowing as the dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee proceeds. Whether it is semi-structured or unstructured, the goal of interview as a method of personality assessment is to collect information about the behaviour, and personality patterns of the individual.

Thus, an interview allows you to directly ask questions to the client. Interview questions are pre defined based on which the interview can be structured, semi structured or unstructured.

Structured interview is where the psychologist has a pre-defined set of questions which

has an expectation of one word or a single sentence answers from the client or the participant. This type of interview is conducted to verify facts from the client and is usually when the psychologist has already drawn conclusions and is only verifying facts or looking forward to fill small gaps in information. This type of interview is not time consuming but fetches very limited information. Here, the psychologist has full control during the interview.

Semi structured interview is the best form of an interview as it allows the psychologist to ask specific and detailed questions as and when required based on the need. Such interviews also have pre-defined questions. Here psychologist has control during the interview. Semi structured interviews allows the psychologist to focus on information which is specific and at the same time allows to explore the possible grey areas of information which they have not explored.

In an unstructured interview one question leads to another and a larger pool of information can be collected from the client. In this type of interview, the aim or objective of the session is just to explore the information about the client. This method is highly time consuming and may or may not fetch relevant information.

So, interview is a technique of self-report. It can provide a rich source of data as the interviewer can take various facets of the individual into consideration such as the verbal response, as well as the non-verbal aspects of facial expression, the tone of voice, the body language, mannerisms etc. All these can provide lot more information than only observing the individual or having the responses to the personality inventories (discussed next). Further, one can obtain in-depth information also from the interview.

Advantages: A lot of relevant and in-depth information, both verbal and non-verbal, can be collected with the help of interview method. Interview offers greater flexibility than other methods of psychological assessment.

Limitations

- Bias of interpretation – Interviewer may be biased and his/her beliefs and prejudices may colour the interpretation of the responses of the interviewee/client.
- The ‘halo effect’ – which may create a positive or negative first impression of the client in the beginning of the interview. This accordingly may affect the subsequent interactions with the client.
- Interviewer subjectivity – As the interviewer plays a crucial role in interviewing and interpreting the responses of the individual, the subjectivity of the interviewer may affect the result.
- Lacks reliability and validity – As we discussed earlier, reliability and validity are two of the properties of a good psychological test. In case of unstructured and semi-structured interview, the reliability and validity will be less because of the subjective nature of the interview. On the other hand, if the interview is structured, it may not provide much useful information.
- Time consuming – Interview will require more time and energy if it has to give really in-depth and useful information.
- Not easy to take the interview – Interview is not just asking questions. It is a skill and it takes trained interviewers to really get relevant and pertinent information about the measured aspect.

2.5.3 Personality Inventories

Personality inventories are questionnaires or scales that consist of questions/statements and the individual or test taker needs to answer these in a specific standardized format. Thus, these are called paper-and-pencil tests. It can also be in the form of computerized test. Inventories are the most widely used method of personality assessment.

It is also called self-reports as the individual himself/herself reports/answers the questions unlike in direct observation where the researcher observes the individual and gathers the data/report. Unlike interview where the person can give the interviewer elaborate answers and detail descriptions, personality inventories have a standardized list of items/questions and requires answers only in a particular format such as, 'agree', 'disagree', or 'yes', 'no'. Thus, there are no open ended questions here as in interview.

Examples of some of the widely used personality inventories are Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), Sixteen Personality Factor (16 PF), NEO-PI, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), California Psychological Inventory (CPI), Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), and Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS). The personality inventories usually assess a number of traits.

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)

Developed in the 1930s, the MMPI has been researched a lot and revised. The latest version of it consists of MMPI-2 (Butcher, Dahlstrom, Graham, Tellegen, & Kaemmer, 1989) and the MMPI-Adolescent (MMPI-A, Butcher & Williams, 1992). MMPI-2 consists of 567 true/false items. It has ten scales and four validity scales. The test aims at assessing the likelihood of psychological disorders in the individual. The MMPI-2 has also been modified and is called the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2-Restructured Form (MMPI-2-RF). It was developed in 2008 and consists of 338 true/false items.

The MMPI-A has been developed specifically for the adolescents with 478 items and the provision of age-appropriate norms.

Though MMPI was developed for assessing psychopathology, it has been used widely both for clinical and normal population. MMPI has also been adapted on Indian population, known as the Multi-phasic questionnaire (Chattopadhyay, Som & Biswas, 1993).

California Psychological Inventory (CPI)

Unlike MMPI, California Psychological Inventory (CPI) has been specifically developed for normal adult population. Several of the items of CPI are drawn from MMPI. Recent version of CPI is the 3rd edition, consisting of 434 true/false items and 20 scales (Gough & Bradley, 1996). A short form of CPI, having 260 items is also available (Gough, 2002).

Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness- Personality Inventory-Revised (NEOPI-R): This test is a widely used assessment of personality developed by Costa and McCrae (1995). It is based on Five-Factor Model of Personality which you have read in Unit 1. The NEOPI-R is used with normal population, both adults as well as adolescents. The scale assesses the five factors of personality such as Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Openness to Experience, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. There are six subscales, called facets under each of the five dimensions. The scale has a total of 240 items.

Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 PF): This test developed by the British psychologist Cattell is based on 16 source traits of personality. Originally developed in 1949, the 5th revision (Cattell, Cattell & Cattell, 1993) of the scale is being used at present. It is used for the age group of 16 years and above. Cattell has used factor analysis to arrive at the 16 factors/dimensions of personality. These 16 primary traits are on a continuum, ranging from one end to the other end of the continuum. For example the factor of 'warmth' ranges from being warm and out-going at one end to reserved, cool and detached at the other end of the continuum.

Cattell and his colleagues have also developed scales for assessing personality of younger age groups such as Adolescent Personality Questionnaire (APQ) for age group 12 to 18 years (Schuerger, 2001). APQ was earlier known as High School Personality Questionnaire or HSPQ. Then we have the Children's Personality Questionnaire, CPQ (Porter & Cattell, 1985), the Early School Personality Questionnaire, ESPQ (Coan & Cattell, 1959), and the Preschool Personality Questionnaire, PSPQ (Lichtenstein, Dreger, & Cattell, 1986).

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

It is based on four personality dimensions such as (a) sensing/intuition, (b) thinking/feeling, (c) introversion/extraversion, and (d) perceiving/judging. These dimensions together provide 16 possible personality types. It is often used in career selection purpose.

A salient feature of personality inventories is the *lie scale or the validity scale*. It contains statements to check if the respondent is giving honest answers or faking.

Human beings usually want to show their desirable aspects to the public or sometimes even fake desirability. Inventories are highly susceptible to it as it is the individual himself/herself who answers the questions and have the scope to answer in the way he desires. Interview method takes care of this aspect by probing and going in-depth. But personality inventories are susceptible to various *response biases*: social desirability (to present oneself in a socially desirable way, what the society approves of), faking good (presenting oneself in a positive light), faking bad (presenting oneself in a negative way), yea-saying (giving agreeing responses irrespective of the content in the test item), nay-saying (giving disagreed responses irrespective of the content in the test item).

These biases are usually taken care of while constructing the test items. It may be noted here that in case of inventories/self reports, the biases are from the participant/clients side, whereas in case of interview, observation and projective techniques, the bias is from the interviewer/researcher side.

Advantages: Personality inventories are easy to take, easy to administer, easy to score and interpret. They are less time consuming and can be administered in group setting. Since there is standardized way of administering the inventory, anyone can administer it following the given instruction. Thus, no intensive training is required to administer a personality inventory as in case of projective techniques. However, as we have mentioned in ethics, it needs to be administered only by those who have studied it.

Further, inventories/questionnaires have validity scales to check if the respondent is giving honest answers or faking.

Limitations

- participants may give socially appropriate answers instead of honest answers
- their responses may vary because of the cultural influences

- respondent/ participant may not respond/answer in a responsible way or sincerely. May give random answers without really understanding the question. This may be due to the reason that the respondent is not interested or has simply got bored. Thus the mood and the emotional-motivational aspects are important factors to be considered.

Self Assessment Questions II

- 1) What are the areas in which personality assessment is used?

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- 2) What is observer effect?

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- 3) What is unstructured interview?

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- 4) Explain the 'halo effect'.

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2.5.4 Rating Scales

Rating scales consist of standardized items that are to be rated on a fixed parameter. For example, the teacher can rate the student with regard to sociability or initiative quality. Thus, rating scales involve assigning of ratings by the concerned individual himself/ herself or by another individual/assessor (e.g., parents, teacher, supervisor etc.) with regard to different aspects of personality of the individual. In both the cases, there are

advantages as well as limitations. You know yourself better than anyone else, so you can rate yourself better and more accurately. However, there is also a possibility that you may give good ratings even when it is not correct as it will reflect good on you. This is called *social desirability effect* which means that one acts according to what is desirable by the society. The social desirability effect may also operate in case of personality inventories and even in interview. Further when the rating is done by another individual, it may give a biased response.

Advantages

Rating by oneself will give a better picture of the behaviour/trait being assessed. Moreover, rating by significant others also will provide a more accurate picture of the personality of the individual as they know the individual in a significant way.

Limitations

If rating is not done honestly, it may result in biased responses and also socially desirable responses. People always want to project their self in a better way, which may affect their responses/ratings to the test items.

2.5.5 Behavioural Data

As we have seen in direct observation mentioned earlier, similarly behavioural data also includes observation of the behaviour of the individual. The difference is that it does not require a researcher/psychologist to be present to observe the behaviour, rather the job is done by a device. Mehl, Pennebaker, Crow, Dabbs & Price (2001) created the electronically activated record (EAR) which is worn by the individual and it unobtrusively monitors his/her real world moment-to-moment interactions. This device picks up the auditory information and relates it to their personality traits. For example, studies (Mehl, Gosling, & Pennebaker, 2006) found that the happiest people have the most social interactions in their daily life.

Thus, the EAR device helps in having an objective assessment of personality as reflected in the day-to-day life.

Advantages

It provides an objective measurement in natural or real world setting. The person wearing the device goes on with his/her daily interactions and these are audio recorded for analysis. Thus, it offers a valuable source of real life information.

Limitations

The person may become conscious of the device and may not behave naturally.

2.5.6 Situational Tests

Situational tests, as the name suggests, involves assessing the individual in carefully designed situations. Here, the behaviour of the individual is observed in a purposefully designed situation.

Situational tests of personality were first used for selection of military personnel for critical overseas assignments during World War II. One of the variants of this test is Situational Stress Test in which the individual has to react to various stressful, frustrating, or emotionally disruptive situations where his helpers are obstructive and uncooperative.

Hartshorne, May, and their associates (1928, 1929, 1930) used situational tests for the Character Education Enquiry (CEE). It involved testing children in natural situations

like playing in the school ground or as part of homework or class exam etc. where the child is not aware of being tested. This test measures traits like altruism, honesty and self-control.

Advantages

Situational tests have the advantage of assessing personality in real life situations. In fact, it has the twin advantage of natural setting as well as controlled way of assessing through well designed observations.

Limitations

Situational tests are time consuming, require more energy and planning. It also has the problem of whether the observer will be participating or be a non-participant as we have discussed in the earlier section. Further, there is also the issue of 'what to observe' during the situational test.

2.5.7 Projective Techniques

Projective measures of personality are widely used personality assessment tools. Unlike the self-report measures where the individual is provided with structured test stimuli, in projective tests the individual has to respond to unstructured or ambiguous stimuli. The basic assumption behind using unstructured test stimuli in projective tests are that the individual projects his/her latent or unconscious feelings, needs, emotions, motives etc. on to the ambiguous stimulus. The responses of the individual in the form of projection reflect the nature of his/her personality.

Projective techniques are based on the psychoanalytic viewpoint of personality which says that the real nature of personality lies deep in the unconscious. Hence responses to the questions asked in the inventories or the interview may not reflect the true personality characteristics of the individual. According to the projective techniques, direct methods are not capable to assess one's personality and it can be revealed only through indirect methods. Further, when the person is on guard and knows what is being asked, social desirability may operate, and sometimes, the person may not even be aware of his true personality to answer correctly. Hence, indirect measures like projective techniques are more effective in assessing the real personality of the individual.

While projective tests tap the unconscious and reveals the personality of the subject through interpretation of their responses, an in depth training is required to interpret such responses.

Projective techniques involve making up a story based on some pictures or drawing. The unconscious feelings, emotions or thoughts are projected onto these drawings, pictures or stories which are then analyzed to find out the personality of the individual.

Some widely used projective techniques are discussed below.

Rorschach Inkblot Test (Rorschach, 1921) consists of 10 inkblots showing ambiguous visual stimuli. These are shown to the client one by one and asked to simply say whatever comes to their mind. The scoring is based on different elements of the response such as the content, reference to shape, colour, part or whole of the image etc. Scoring and interpretation of the responses is extensive and detail; one needs to be really trained in administering and scoring the Rorschach test.

Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) developed by Murray and Morgan (1930) consists of 20 picture cards in black and white colour. The client is asked to see each

picture which are structured and meaningful unlike the ink-blot in Rorschach, and then tell a story about it. The test aims at measuring the motivational traits of the individual as reflected through the stories.

Indian adaptation of TAT has been developed by Uma Choudhary in 1960. It consists of 14 cards as modified for the Indian population.

Children Apperception Test (CAT), developed by Bellak and Bellak (1949), is based on the TAT which is meant for adults. The CAT cards use animal figures instead of human figures as it is meant for children between 3 to 10 years.

Sentence Completion Test consists of statements that are required to be completed by the respondent.

Some other projective tests are Draw-a-Person (DAP) test, and the Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study.

Projective tests have been widely used for clinical purposes.

Advantages: The hidden aspects of personality such as unconscious motives, wishes and conflicts come to the fore. Hence it can reflect the true nature of one's personality.

Limitations

- Projective techniques are subjective in nature, though predetermined categories are used for scoring and details are specified for interpreting. Exner (1986) method of scoring provides a more standardized way for scoring responses.
- Low reliability and validity
- Time consuming
- Requires skill and expertise in administration and scoring and interpretation of the projective tests.

Thus, in the above sections, we learned about various methods of assessing personality and also some example of the tests under these methods. As personality is not a uni-dimensional characteristic, assessment of personality also cannot be a single technique based. We need to combine the various methods of assessing personality if we want to have a comprehensive, better and truer understanding of individual's personality. The various methods of personality assessment discussed above are guided by different approaches to personality. For example, personality inventories are influenced by the trait theories. The behavioural assessments including direct observation, interview and rating scales are guided by the behavioural and social learning approach to personality. Psychoanalytic approach is the underlying factor for projective techniques of personality assessment. However, in the practical context of assessing personality, there is a fluidity of the approaches and various methods are used as per the requirement of the situation.

Self Assessment Questions III

1) What is social desirability effect?

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2) Projective techniques are based on which approach to personality?

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3) Give examples of two projective tests.

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2.6 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, you learned about the concept of psychological assessment, and in particular, the assessment of personality. In any kind of assessment, two main things that need to be considered are the properties of a good test (such as standardization, norms, reliability and validity) and the ethical guidelines for administering, scoring and interpreting the test results. Personality assessment is a field having several uses ranging from education, career to counseling and clinical setting. Various methods of personality assessment were then described including the direct and indirect techniques of personality assessment. Advantages and limitations of each of the methods were highlighted.

2.7 KEY WORDS

Psychological assessment	: aims at measuring various aspects of human development and behaviour and helps to describe, explain and predict human behaviour.
Psychological test	: as defined by Anastasi, is essentially an objective and standardized measure of a sample of behaviour.
Standardization	: refers to uniformity in administration of the test and, scoring and interpretation of the test responses.
Informed consent	: involves informing the client about the purpose of testing and obtaining consent for administering the test.
Personality inventories	: are questionnaires or scales that consist of questions/statements and the individual or test taker needs to answer these in a specific standardized format.
Rating scale	: consists of standardized items that are to be rated on a fixed parameter.
Halo effect	: refers to a positive or negative first impression of the client in the beginning of the interview.
Social desirability effect	: means that one acts according to what is desirable by the society.

Projective techniques

: are indirect methods of assessing personality through drawings, pictures or stories which may reflect the unconscious feelings, emotions or thoughts of the individual.

Assessment of Personality

2.8 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Self Assessment Questions I

1) T; 2) F; 3) F; 4) T

Self Assessment Questions II

- 1) Personality assessment is used mostly for education, career, counseling and clinical purpose.
- 2) Observer effect refers to the effect on the person because of the fact of being observed.
- 3) Unstructured interview refers to the interview where there are no fixed or standard questions guiding the interview.
- 4) The 'halo effect' refers to creation of a positive or negative first impression of the client in the beginning of the interview which then biases the interviewer's subsequent interaction with the client.

Self Assessment Questions III

- 1) Social desirability effect means that one acts according to what is desirable by the society.
- 2) Projective techniques are based on the psychoanalytic approach to personality.
- 3) Rorschach Inkblot Test and Thematic Apperception Test (TAT).

2.9 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Enumerate the advantages and limitations of interview as a technique of personality assessment.
- 2) Analyze the usefulness of projective tests for assessing personality.
- 3) Discuss the ethical guidelines for psychological assessment.
- 4) Discuss observation as a method for personality assessment and point out their advantages.

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