

Personality & Personality Assessment

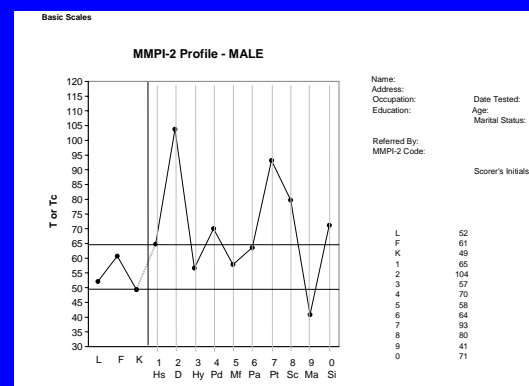
Psych 454
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Personality Testing

- Objective Tests
 - MMPI-2
 - MCMI-III
- Projective Tests
 - TAT
 - Rorschach

Objective Personality Tests

- Statistically-based
- Low face validity?
- High validity & reliability.
- Profiles of scores used for diagnostic purposes



Projective Personality Tests

- Higher face validity?
- Validity & Reliability lower although better with standardized scoring.

The TAT

- TAT - Thematic Apperception Test (Murray, 1943; Morgan & Murray, 1935)
- Thematic
 - content of the story
- Apperception
 - perceiving more than is actually present in a stimulus object.

The TAT

- By analyzing what the respondent *adds* to the picture, we can uncover their social needs.
 - Achievement
 - Affiliation
 - Intimacy
 - Power

Criticisms of the TAT

- Reliability?
 - Does the TAT produce the same evaluation of an individual's social needs on more than one occasion?
- Validity?
 - How “real” are the themes expressed in TAT stories to the subjects who provide them?
- Cultural-specificity / sensitivity?
- Difficult to administer & score.

Personality Type Survey

1. a. I would like a job that requires a lot of traveling.
b. I would prefer a job in one location.
2. a. I am invigorated by a brisk, cold day.
b. I can't wait to get indoors on a cold day.
3. a. I get bored seeing the same old faces.
b. I like the comfortable familiarity of everyday friends.

Personality Type Survey

4. a. I would prefer living in an ideal society in which everyone is safe, secure, and happy.
b. I would have preferred living in the unsettled days of our history.
5. a. I sometimes like to do things that are a little frightening.
b. A sensible person avoids activities that are dangerous.

Personality Type Survey

6. a. I would not like to be hypnotized.
b. I would like to have the experience of being hypnotized.
7. a. The most important goal of life is to live it to the fullest and experience as much as possible.
b. The most important goal of life is to find peace and happiness.

Personality Type Survey

8. a. I would like to try parachute-jumping.
b. I would never want to try jumping out of a plane, with or without a parachute.
9. a. I enter cold water gradually, giving myself time to get used to it.
b. I like to dive or jump right into the ocean or a cold pool.

Personality Type Survey

10. a. When I go on a vacation, I prefer the comfort of a good room and bed.
b. When I go on a vacation, I prefer the change of camping out.
11. a. I prefer people who are emotionally expressive even if they are a bit unstable.
b. I prefer people who are calm and even-tempered.

Personality Type Survey

12. a. A good painting should shock or jolt the senses.
b. A good painting should give one a feeling of peace and security.
13. a. People who ride motorcycles must have some kind of unconscious need to hurt themselves.
b. I would like to drive or ride a motorcycle.

Personality Type Survey

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|---|
| 1) | A | 8) | A |
| 2) | A | 9) | B |
| 3) | A | 10) | B |
| 4) | B | 11) | A |
| 5) | A | 12) | A |
| 6) | B | 13) | B |
| 7) | A | | |

Personality Characteristics

- Why do some people like “thrills?”
- Why do other people like serenity?

- What makes people shy?
- What makes people outgoing?

Personality & Temperament

- Temperament
 - psychological qualities that are *inherited* from physiological potentials
- Personality
 - differences in physiology that produce stable psychological traits over time

Differences in Temperament

- Largely due to differences in physiology
- Inherited / genetic
- Due (?) to different thresholds of neural reactivity in the limbic system
 - hypothalamus, amygdala

Aspects of Temperaments

- Emotionality, Activity, Sociability (EAS)
- Arousal
- Introversion/Extraversion
- Sensation-Seeking
- Affect Intensity

Arousal

- Theory - there is a set point for individuals' arousal levels.
 - When underaroused, we seek arousal.
 - When overaroused, we seek calmness.
- Optimal levels of arousal produce optimal
 - performance efficiency and
 - affect.
 - Yerkes-Dodson (1936), Hebb (1955): U-Shaped curves

Arousal - Evidence

- Insufficient stimulation leads to underarousal.
- Individuals find lack of stimulation (sensory deprivation) aversive.
- Brain will “make up” arousal to reach optimal levels.
 - Hallucinations
 - “Amplified stimulation”
 - Wandering thoughts

Arousal - Evidence

- What about “too much” arousal?
- Evidence to support arousal decrease?
 - Not really.
 - Hyperarousal is accompanied by
 - negative affect
 - inability to concentrate
 - susceptibility to headache & other psychogenic pain

Introversion / Extraversion

- Introversion
 - social inhibition
 - “shy”
- Extraversion
 - social disinhibition
 - “outgoing”
- Neuropsychological basis
- Genetically determined

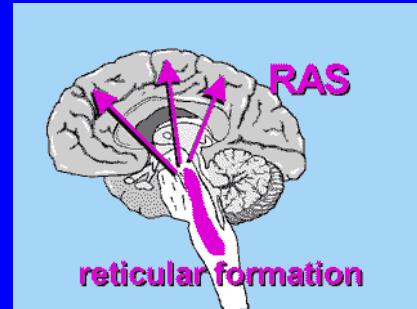
Inhibited & Disinhibited Children

- Inhibited children have:
 - lower heart rate variability
 - larger pupil diameters
 - greater muscle tone / tension
 - higher levels of stress hormones (cortisol)
- Disinhibited children have:
 - greater heart rate variability
 - smaller pupil diameters
 - decreased muscle tone / tension
 - lower levels of stress hormones (cortisol)

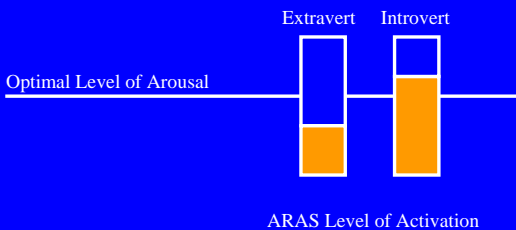
Eysenck's Neuropsychological Basis for Introversion / Extraversion

- Genetic differences in levels of activation in the ascending reticular activating system (ARAS) produce different "baseline" levels of neural arousal.
- Introverts are "chronically hyperaroused."
- Extraverts are "chronically hypoaroused."

Reticular Activating System



Introverts/Extraverts & Arousal



Evidence: Arousal model for inhibition

- Introverts tend to show more cortical (EEG) activity than extroverts in some situations.
- Introverts tend to show greater electrodermal (GSR) activity than extroverts in some situations.

Sensation Seeking

- Thrill & Adventure Seeking
 - Skydiving
- Experience Seeking
 - Seeking new experiences
- Disinhibition
 - Disinhibit one's self in social situations
- Boredom susceptibility
 - Aversion for the routine / monotonous

Biological Basis of Sensation Seeking?

- Do not appear to be chronically underaroused (like extraverts).
- Rather, seeks out & is excited by "jolts" of arousal.
- ORIENTS to this arousal, rather than avoids this kind of arousal.
- Low levels of monoamine oxidase (MAO)

Affect Intensity

- Strength in which individual's experience their own emotions.
- Correlated well with extraversion.
- Not correlated with sensation seeking.
- Affect intense individuals experience emotions strongly but show variability in emotional responses.
- Affect stable individuals experience little variability in emotional responses.

Arousal and Experience

- Underarousal and affect intensity?
 - Do not appear to be underaroused.
 - Rather, experience their emotions more intensely.
 - Psychologically more aware of their own emotions.

Am I pathological?

- The vast majority of individuals are not
 - overly aroused / under aroused
 - overly inhibited / disinhibited
 - overly emotional / unemotional
- If they were, we wouldn't call it "pathological."
- Better to think of these characteristics as falling along a continuum.

