PYSC 333
Psychology of Personality

Session 8– Personality Assessment- Part 1

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Session Overview

- Theorists have not only studied personality development but have also studied how personality can be assessed.
- Personality assessment is conducted to measure different aspects of an individual’s personality.
- This among other things, helps us to learn about people in a precise manner, communicate this information to personality psychologists and other professionals and enable one predict future behavior.
- There are various settings in which personality assessments may be required such as the workplace, in hospitals, in the court of law etc. and there are several techniques for assessing personality.
At the end of this session, you should be able to

- Define what personality assessment is
- Identify the use of personality assessment
- Outline the settings in which personality assessment may be used
- List the various personality assessment techniques
- Discuss the objective self-report technique
- Outline the strengths and weaknesses of objective self-report technique
Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

• What is Personality Assessment
• Settings for Personality Assessment
• Objective Self-Report
Reading List

• *The Psychology of personality* (2nd ed.).
• *Theories of personality*. Belmont: Wadsworth. Chapter 1
Topic One

WHAT IS PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT
Personality Assessment

- Personality assessment involves systematic measures of the different aspects of personality such as:
  - Personality traits (introversion, aggression etc.)
  - Personality disorders / pathology (depression etc.)
Personality Assessment

- Motivation (achievement striving), personality dynamic (reaction to anxiety, stress)
- Personality development (style of aging etc.) (Carducci, 2009)
Personality Assessment

- A variety of techniques are applied in the assessment of personality
- E.g.- are paper and pencil inventories
- Computerized inventories
- Direct observations of people’s behaviour
- Verbal responses
- Physiological recordings
Personality Assessment

- Personality is assessed to:
- Learn about people in a precise manner,
- Communicate this information to personality psychologists and other professionals and
- To enable one predict future behaviour
Topic Two

**SETTINGS FOR PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT**
Settings for Personality Assessment

- Personality assessments may be required in several settings by
- Clinical psychologists, Psychiatrists,
- Personnel managers, Social workers,
- Counsellors, Law enforcement officials,
- Consumer markets, School authorities and
- Personality researchers
Settings for Personality Assessment

- Personality can be assessed in six major areas (Carducci (2009))
  - 1. Clinical settings
  - 2. Counselling settings
  - 3. Legal settings
  - 4. Educational and vocation settings
  - 5. Corporate settings
  - 6. Research settings
1. **Clinical settings**

- Psychiatric hospitals, mental health centres, psychotherapist’s consultancy etc.
- Personality is assessed to understand patient’s symptoms and
- Help diagnose and classify their emotional and behavioural problems
2. **Legal settings**
   - Courtrooms, prisons, law enforcement agencies (DOVVSU)
   - Personality assessments as evidence in court proceedings to determine the sanity of an offender
Settings for Personality Assessment

- For prospective jurors to assist in their selection
- In law enforcement agencies (local police, secret service agencies etc.)
- To help solve or prevent crime - E.g. creating (creating) use of personality profile of a serial killer
3. Educational and vocation settings

- Such as schools, colleges, guidance centres
- To help individuals make decision (decisions) about their education and vocation
- In educational settings/ schools to help with learning and adjustments problems
4. **Counselling settings**

- Such as rehabilitation centres
- Also in other settings to help individuals adjust to problems in their daily life
Settings for Personality Assessment

5. **Corporate settings**

- Used in organisations for personnel selection and placement
- E.g. a new employee with high accident proneness score may be placed in low-risk jobs (Carducci, 2009)
Settings of Personality Assessment

6. Research settings

- All the above mentioned settings have the potential to be used in research settings
- May be used to account for behaviour in experiments
- Correlate individuals’ personality traits with other measures
- Evaluate treatments outcome
- Test theories
- Develop new assessment techniques etc.
Evaluating Personality Assessment Techniques

- All personality assessment techniques should have a certain standard of quality
- Two of such important standards are:
  - **Reliability** – how consistent the test is in assessing the said construct
  - **Validity** – the extent to which the personality technique measures what it says it is measuring
Personality Assessment Techniques

- These include
- 1. Objective self-report techniques
- 2. Projective techniques
- 3. Behavioural techniques
- 4. Clinical Interviews
- 5. Psychophysiological techniques
Topic Three

OBJECTIVE SELF-REPORT TECHNIQUES
1. Objective self-report techniques

- Individuals respond to standardized questions about their behaviour, thoughts and feelings in various situations (Schultz & Schultz, 2005)

- These questions may include items related to symptoms, attitudes, interests, fears and values (Schultz & Schultz, 2005), perception etc.
1. Objective self-report techniques

- They come in two forms (Carducci, 2009)
- **1. Single-dimension personality tests** – measures only one personality dimension at a time.
- E.g. the California F Scale (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson & Sanford, 1950)
- Measures authoritarianism with 29 items on a 6 point Likert scale
1. Objective self-report techniques

- 2. Multiple-dimension personality tests – contains a large number of items and measures more than one personality dimension
- Two widely used multiple-dimension inventories are:
1. Objective self-report techniques

a. The California Psychological Inventory (CPI)
   - Developed in 1957 by Gough with 462 True/False response items
   - For normal people aged 13 years and older
   - Revised in 1987 (Gough, 1987) to remove sexists and other biases
1. Objective self-report techniques

- Presently, the third version
- Has 434 items with 20 subscales
- Three independent themes (based on factor-analysis)
  - 1. Interpersonal orientation
  - 2. Normal orientation and
  - 3. Realization
1. Objective self-report techniques

- b. Minnesota Multiphase Personality Inventory (MMPI)
- The most frequently and widely used personality inventory by clinical psychologists
- Has been involved in over 10,000 empirical studies
- Has been translated into 140 languages
  (Schultz & Schultz, 2005)
1. Objective self-report techniques

- Originally designed to help clinicians classify psychological disorders such as paranoia, schizophrenia, depression etc.
- First published in 1943 by
  - Hathaway, a psychologist and
  - Mckinley a psychiatrist/ neurologist and
- Revised in 1989 to become the MMPI-2
  (Butcher, Dahlstrom, Graham, Tellegen & Kaemmer)
1. Objective self-report techniques

- The MMPI has 567 statement with true/false responses (60-90mins)
- These items cover physical, psychological, health, political and social attitudes;
- Also, educational, occupational, family and marital factors; and neurotic and psychotic behaviour tendencies
1. Objective self-report techniques

- The MMPI & MMPI-2 assess the following personality dimensions
- Hypochondriasis, Depression, Hysteira,
- Paranoia, Schizophrenia, Masculinity-Femininity,
- Psychopathic, Deviant,
- Psychasthenia, Hypomania, Social interaction
1. Objective self-report techniques

- MMPI-2 also contains 12 supplementary scales (Butcher et al., 1989)
- Both inventories contain a set of validity scales designed to assess the validity of responses
1. Objective self-report techniques

- MMPI-2 has been used with adults in personality research, as a diagnostic tool to assess personality problems and for personal and vocational counselling (Schultz & Schultz, 2005)

- In 1992, the MMPI-A was developed with 478 statements for use with adolescents (Butcher et al., 1992)
1. Objective self-report techniques

**Strengths**

- The most objective approach to personality assessment
- They are standardized measures, designed to be scored objectively
1. Objective self-report techniques

Limitations

• 1. People are not always honest with their responses
• 2. Response set- The tendency of individuals to answer the questions in a particular way
• Rely heavily on the test takers’ honest and unbiased responses
• 4. Rarely assess the reason behind the statements
END OF SESSION 8 PART 1
References

• Carducci, B. J. (2009). The Psychology of personality (2nd ed.). Chichester: John Riley & Sons Ltd.