PYSC 333
Psychology of Personality

Session 8.2 – Personality Assessment
Part 2

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In addition to objective tests, there are other assessment techniques that are used to determine an individual's personality.

These techniques include assessments that are very subjective. They comprise the projective techniques, behavioural techniques, clinical interviews and psychophysiological techniques.

This session discusses these various personality assessment techniques, their use, as well as their strengths and weaknesses.

This session will end our discussion on Psychology of Personality.
Session Goals and Objectives

At the end of this session, you should be able to

• Describe the projective technique and its various forms
• Outline the strengths and weaknesses of the projective assessment technique
• Describe the behavioural technique of personality assessment and its various forms
• Outline the strengths and limitations of the behavioural assessment technique
• Discuss the use of clinical interviews in personality assessment
• List the forms of psychophysiological technique for personality assessment
The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

• Projective tests
• Behavioural techniques
• Clinical interview
• Psychophysiological techniques
Reading List

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

PROJECTIVE TESTS
2. Projective Tests

• Involves showing a person an ambiguous test stimuli and asking the person to say something about it

• These tests stimuli can be understood or interpreted in many different ways when individuals are asked to describe them
2. Projective Tests

- The meaning projected indicates a person’s unconscious feelings, needs, desires, attitudes, motives and other core aspects of personality (Frank, 1939)

- Information is revealed without one realizing (Murphy & Davidshofer, 2005)

- Abstract nature of stimuli reduces likelihood of guessing what the test is about (Carducci, 2009)
Characteristics of Projective Tests

1. Uses ambiguous stimuli – E.g. responding to inkblot stimuli or completing some sentence such as “If I were a President ………………

2. Uses an indirect approach to personality assessment

3. There is no right or wrong answer, thus giving more freedom to response to the stimuli

4. Scoring is largely subjective
Types of Projective Tests

- Two popular projective tests:
  - a. Rorschach Inkblot Technique and
  - b. Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)
- Others are a) Sentence completion and b) Word association
- a. Rorschach Inkblot Technique
- Developed in 1921 by the Swiss psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach (1884–1922)
Types of Projective Tests

- Rorschach created the inkblots by dropping blots of ink on blank paper and folding the paper in half
- He tried numerous patterns and settled on 10 blots
- He wrote about his work with inkblots, but the publication was a failure
Types of Projective Tests
Types of Projective Tests

- a. **Thematic Apperception Test**
  - Developed by Henry Murray & Christiana Morgan
  - Consists of 19 cards with black and white pictures of an individual(s) in ambiguous situations
  - In addition, there is one blank card
  - During testing a person is presented with a card and asked to make up a story about it
2. Projective Tests

**Strengths**

- 1. Responses can be made freely
- 2. The ambiguous stimuli minimizes any attempt to modify responses

**Limitations**

- Due to the free responses, scoring can become complex which can result in subjective decisions by the scorer
Topic Two

BEHAVIOURAL TECHNIQUES
3. Behavioural Techniques

- Systematic observation of behaviour in a given situation to assess personality
- Personality characteristics (e.g. shyness) are studied as well as
- Effects of the environment (approaching strangers),
- Thoughts and feelings that influence behaviour (Carducci, 2009) etc.
Types of behaviour assessment techniques

1. Direct observation technique
   - Observing the behaviour of the individual(s) being assessed
     a) Naturalistic observation
     b) Controlled observation
Types of behaviour assessment techniques

2. **Self-Monitoring technique**

- The individual **maintain (maintains)** observational records of his/her behaviours (e.g. when anxiety is experienced)
- It is convenient and flexible because it can be done almost anywhere and at any time
- Can be used to assess behaviours such as eating, sleeping, anxiety etc.
Behaviour assessment techniques

Strengths of Behavioural Assessment

• 1. Observer may have access to information that other sources may not be able to attain
• E.g. the impression a person makes of others, interactions with others etc.
• 2. Multiple observers can be used and the degree of agreement assessed
Limitations

1. No standardized guidelines are available to indicate which behaviours are worth observing and which are not.
2. Biases in an individual’s ability to assess their own thoughts and behaviours in a reliable and valid way.
3. Observer effect
4. Observer bias
5. Multiple observers may view the same behaviour differently
Topic Three

CLINICAL INTERVIEW
4. Clinical Interviews

- Interviewing about the problem for which one is seeking psychological help
- Also to obtain one’s past and present life experiences, social and family relationships etc.
- Behaviours, thoughts and feelings are assessed
Topic Four

PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGICAL TECHNIQUES
5. Psychophysiologica\al Techniques

- Certain aspects of personality (aggression, risk taking, anxiety) are related to various bodily processes
- E.g. hormonal levels, blood, heart rate, brain activation etc. (Carducci, 2009)
Types of psychophysiological Assessment Techniques

- a. Electrophysiological measures - Electrocardiogram (ECG), Electromyography (EMG), Electrodermal activity (EDA)
- b. Cortical measures - Electroencephalograph (EEG), Positron Emission Tornography (PET), Functional magnetic resonance imaging (FMRI)
- Biochemical assessment - examining blood samples, measuring hormones (testosterone & cortisol) and analysing genetic makeup
END OF SESSION 8 PART 2
References


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