UNIT 4 : PERSONALITY TEST

UNIT STRUCTURE

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4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- identify the needs and importance of personality test
- explain the importance of Inkblot test
- describe the role of Thematic Apperception Test in assessing personality

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Test is necessary for assessing, measuring and evaluating the performance of a person, a situation, an institution and so on. Test is a foundation on the basis of which further activities are undertaken in order to get the result regarding a system or a person. It helps to systematise a problem in order to ensure the solution to that problem. Thus, test helps to find out if the system is going in the right direction or not. In an educational institution, for assessing and evaluating reliability and validity, the course for constructing a test is a must. Test helps the individual to design and develop the items in a systematic way so that a result can be achieved. Test is a must for removing the pitfalls in an item, in a system or in a situation in order to ensure the effectiveness of the particular objects. In

an educational institution, psychological tests are conducted for projecting the personality and the behaviour of the learners. In this unit, we are going to discuss the importance of some techniques which are essential for assessing and projecting the personality of a human being.

4.3 NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF PERSONALITY TEST

The term personality has been derived from the Latin word 'Persona'. Persona means mask. According to the concept of mask, personality was thought to be the effect and influence of an individual wearing a mask. Psychologically, personality is the integrated and dynamic organisation of the physical, mental, moral, and social qualities of the individual that manifests itself to others in social life.

Personality is the reflection of the sum total of human behaviour. Personality is an area of study that deals with complex human behaviour, including emotions, actions, and cognitive (thought) processes. Psychologists study the patterns of behaviour that make individuals different from one another. Regrading personality, it was rightly opined by Allport that Personality "is the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychological systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment". This definition is very comprehensive and includes all aspects of an individual's personality. Here, the word 'dynamic' means that personality of an individual undergoes constant change but is still organised. It constitutes two types of systems: mental and physical, and these two systems interact with the internal and external environments. The word 'determine' emphasizses that it is the psychophysical system, which activates the organisms for action.

Therefore, to have a better understanding on the students, studying personality is an essential pre-requisite for an educational institution. The psychological understanding for a teacher is essential to have a better understanding of the pupil in the classroom. Psychological testing provides the knowledge to understand the personality of the students as well as learners and individuals. In psychology, there are many theories of per-

sonality which discuss the personality of human beings in terms of its varied dimensions.

Test construction is made in terms of psychological test, physiological test, and diagnostic test and so on. In an educational institution, psychological tests are mostly used. Psychological tests have been used primarily for the determination and analysis of individual differences in general intelligence, specific aptitudes, educational achievements, vocational fitness and non-intellectual personality traits and so on. Non-intellectual personality traits are associated with age, sex, racial membership, differences that might be attributed to heredity or environmental factors, differences among persons at different occupational levels and other personality traits such as the mentally gifted, the mentally retarded, the neurotic and the psychotic.

Psychologists have developed various theories of personality to study its structure and growth. We know that personality is revealed in the distinctive characteristic ways in which one reacts to everyday situations. Personality always functions as a whole. But psychologists seem to emphasise the examination of personality from different angles, such as, types, traits, nature etc., and this has made the topic a complex one. However, it will not be possible for us to describe all types of theories in this discussion. By testing personality, the psychologists and teachers can project the behaviour, the attitudes, the emotional levels, the setiments of the learners and so on. There are various techniques and procedural steps that can project the personality of the human beings. Rorschach Inkblot Test and Thematic Apperception Test are the two best and easiest ways or techniques for projecting the personality of the individuals. The Rorschach Technique and the TAT are primonent not only in psychology but also in anthropology, sociology, education and psychiatry.

4.4 INKBLOT TEST

The **Rorschach Test** is also known as the **Rorschach Inkblot Test**, **or the Rorschach Technique**, or simply the **Inkblot Test**. It is a

psychological test in which subjects' perceptions of inkblots are recorded and then analysed using psychological interpretation, complex algorithms, or both. Some psychologists use this test to examine a person's personality, characteristics and emotional functioning. It has been used to detect underlying thought disorder, especially in cases where patients are reluctant to describe their thinking processes openly. The test is named after its creator, Swiss psychologist Hermann Rorschach.

In the 1960s, the Rorschach Technique was the most widely used projective test. In a national survey conducted in the US, the Rorschach Technique was ranked eighth among all psychological tests used in outpatient mental health facilities. It is the second most widely used test by the members of the Society for Personality Assessment and to some extent (about 20%), it is used for forensic assessment cases. This Inkblot Test is mostly used by clinical psychologists (about 80%) for diagnosis of the patients.

Later on, the Rorschach Inkblot Tests have been becoming popular and in 1857, the inkblots inspired the German doctor Justinus Kerner who wrote a popular book of poem, each of which was inspired by an accidental inkblot. French psychologist Alfred Binet had also experimented with inkblots as a creativity test, and, after the turn of the century, psychological experiments where inkblots were utilised multiplied, with aims such as studying imagination and consciousness.

Rorschach began his experiments with inkblots as a means of stimulating and testing imagination. First time, this technique was used for content analysis, but later on Rorschach changed the emphasis from content to determinant analysis. It consists of ten cards. Rorschach developed his test and methods as a practical tool to be applied to clinical cases in the study of unconscious factors in perception and meaning and to reveal dynamic factors of behaviour and personality. In this test, it was believed that every performance of an individual is an expression of his or her total personality. In responding to inkblot, the subject is generally unaware of what he or she reveals by the reports of what he or she sees. In fact, the

perception on what he or she is telling brrigns forth the insightness of his or her personality.



Fig 1: Images of Cards

In **card I**, subjects often inquire about how they should proceed, and question on what they are allowed to do with the card. Being the first card, it can provide clues about how subjects tackle a new and stressful task. It is not, however, a card that is usually difficult for the subject to handle, having readily available for popular responses.

In **card II**, the red blots are often seen as blood, and are the most distinctive features. Responses to them can provide indications about how a subject is likely to manage feelings of anger or physical harm.

Card III is typically perceived as containing two humans involved in some interaction, and may provide information about how the subject relates with other people.

Card IV is dark in colour and is generally perceived as a big and sometimes threatening figure; compounded with the common impression of the subject being in an inferior position (“looking up”) to it, this serves

to elicit a sense of authority. The human or animal content seen in the card is almost invariably classified as male rather than female, and the qualities expressed by the subject may indicate attitudes toward men and authority. Because of this, Card IV is often called "The Father Card".

Card V is an easily elaborated card that is not usually perceived as threatening, and typically instigates a "change of pace" in the test, after the previous more challenging cards. It contains few features that generate concerns or complicate the elaboration, and it is the easiest blot to generate a good quality response.

Texture is the dominant characteristic of **card VI**, which often elicits association related to interpersonal closeness; it is specifically a "sex card".

Card VII can be associated with femininity (the human figures commonly seen in it being described as women or children), and functions as a "mother card", where difficulties in responding may be related to concerns with the female figures in the subject's life.

People often express relief about **card VIII**, which lets them relax and respond effectively. Similar to **card V**, it represents a "change of pace"; However, the card introduces difficulties in elaboration, it being complex and the first multi-coloured card in the set. Therefore, people who face complex situations or emotional distress or difficulty, may be uncomfortable with this card.

Characteristic of **card IX** is that it is indistict and creates general vagueness.

Card X is structurally similar to **card VIII**, but its uncertainty and complexity are reminiscent of card IX: people who find it difficult to deal with many concurrent stimuli may not particularly like this otherwise pleasant card. Being the last card, it may provide an opportunity for the subject to "sign out" by indicating what they feel their situation is like, or what they desire to know.

Procedure of the Test:

The Rorschach Test is used from nursery school level through adulthood. It consists of ten cards approximately 18x24 cm in size. Each of the blots has near-perfect bilateral symmetry; five are in black and white with differently shaded areas; two contain black, white, and colour in varying amounts (e.g. red); three are in various colour or multicoloured on a white background. After the test, subject has seen and responded to all of the inkblots (*free association* phase), the tester then presents them again one at a time in a set sequence for the subject to study: the subject is asked to note where he or she sees what he or she originally saw and what makes it look like that inquiry phase. It means the instructions are very simple; the subject is asked by showing the cards, according to Rorschach's own formula: what does it look like? what could this be? etc. and the specialists and clinicians should draw out the fullest possible responses of the subject or patients in each card for making a better diagnosis in their treatment.

In this test, Rorschach did not impose time limit. Hence, there is no fixed time restictions in terms of the number of responses for each card. The examiner makes note of the various aspects of the subject's behaviour: namely a verbatim record of the response; time passed between presentation of each card and the reaction time, length of time in long pauses between response; total time required for each card, position in which card is held for each response and so on. The three recordings of time are useful in determining emotional resistance to what the individual might be perceiving in a particular inkblot.

After all ten cards have been presented for responses, a second phase i.e. the ***inquiry*** follows. There are two main purposes of the inquiry. The first is to learn which aspects of the blot initiated and sustained the association process: response to wholes, parts, small details location, colour, shading- all of which are essential items of information for scoring purposes. Second, the inquiry gives the subject an opportunity to add to,or clarify his original response.

After inquiry, the ***scoring*** part is necessary in Rorschach's method. Scoring is based on four categories i.e. location, determinants, content

and interpretation. The interpretation of a Rorschach record is a complex process. It requires a wealth of knowledge concerning personality dynamics in general and a considerable experience with the Rorschach method in particular. Proficiency as a Rorschach *administrator* can be gained within a few months. However, even those who are able and qualified to become Rorschach *interpreters* usually remain in a "learning stage" for a number of years.

The interpretation of the Rorschach test is not based primarily on the contents of the response, i.e., *what* the individual sees in the inkblot (the *content*). In fact, the contents of the response are only a comparatively small portion of a broader cluster of variables that are used to interpret the Rorschach data: for instance, information is provided by the time taken before providing a response for a card can be significant. In particular, information about *determinants* (the aspects of the inkblots that triggered the response, such as form and color) and *location* (which details of the inkblots triggered the response) is often considered more important than content, although there is contrasting evidence. "Popularity" and "originality" of responses can also be considered basic dimensions in the analysis.

Content: Content is classified in terms of "human", "nature", "animal", "abstract", etc. More than any other features in the test, content response can be controlled consciously by the subject.

Location: This section requires expansion. The basis for the response is usually the whole inkblot, a large portion, a small protion, a minute detail, or part of the white background. The area may be well defined, or merely vague and blurred. Analysis of the responses in respect to location is revealed to the extent of the subject's perceptual organisation or disorganisation, and is measured in terms of agreement with norms of perception and ability to analyse the whole and synthesise the parts.

Determinants: Determinants are also known as characteristics. It includes the determinants or characteristics of the inkblot as perceived by the subject. The determinants are those aspects or qualities of the blot that have produced the responses to it. These may be form, colour, shading, perspective, motion or the combinations of them. Form is the most

common determinant, and is related to intellectual processes; colour responses often provide direct insight into emotional life. Shading and movement have been considered more ambiguously, both in definition and interpretation.

Interpretation: After getting the score in each response and then tabulating the results, the next and significant step is to analyse the relationships existing between the frequencies in several categories. For example, to analyse the relationship between the ratio of wholes to larger details and to minute details; relationship between colour and movement etc. From this part, the personality of the individual or the subject can be drawn. *Rorschach Comprehensive System* (RCS) is the standard method for interpreting the Rorschach test.

Validity and Reliability of the Test: Through this method, the experienced, skilled and expert clinicians are able to draw remarkably acute and sound inferences from Rorschach protocols; but this is a subjective matter. Ideally, the test should draw out the reliability and validity of the inkblot test objectively. There are several problems and principles that should be kept in mind in evaluating studies on the reliability and validity of the Rorschach test. First, while certain part-scores are significant, interpretation is essentially global in character, but there are no satisfactory statistical methods to deal with universal patterns of responses as yet. Secondly, rating and scoring of responses introduce a greater subjective element. In fact, the scoring method of *Rorschach Comprehensive System* (RCS) is very subjective.

4.4 THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TEST

The **Thematic Apperception Test** (**TAT**) is a projective psychological test and develops the imaginative capacity of the person. Proponents of this technique assert that a person's responses reveal underlying motives, concerns, and the way they see the social world through the stories they make up about ambiguous pictures of people. Historically, it has been among the most widely researched, taught, and used of such tests.

The TAT was developed during the 1930s by the American psychologist Henry A. Murray and the psychoanalyst Christiana D. Morgan at the Harvard Clinic at Harvard University. Anecdotally, the idea for the TAT emerged from a question asked by one of Murray's undergraduate students, Cecilia Roberts. She reported that when her son was ill, he spent the day making up stories about images in magazines and she asked Murray if pictures could be employed in a clinical setting to explore the underlying dynamics of personality.

Murray wanted to use a measure that would reveal information about the whole person but found that the contemporary tests of his time lacked so many things. Therefore, he created the TAT. The rationale behind the technique is that people tend to interpret ambiguous situations in accordance with their own past experiences and current motivations, which may be conscious or unconscious. After World War II, the TAT was adopted more broadly by psychoanalysts and clinicians to evaluate emotionally disturbed patients. Later, in the 1970s, the Human Potential Movement encouraged psychologists to use the TAT to help their clients understand themselves better and stimulate personal growth.



Fig 2: Picture for T.A.T.

Procedure of the Test: TAT is a projective method that consists of thirty pictures card. The person being examined is told that there is a test of imagination, that he or she is to make up stories to suit himself or herself,

and there is no right or wrong responses. The pictures are shown at a time. The subject is informed that each card shows a scene. The questions, which are to be asked to the subjects should be: *to tell what he thinks led up to the scene; to say how it came about; to give an account of what is happening and how are the feelings of the characters in the pictures; and to tell what the outcome will be*. The cards are used in various combinations, depending upon age and sex. Some of the cards show male figures, some female figures, some both male and female figures, some figures of ambiguous gender, some adults, some children, and some showing no human figures at all. One card is completely blank and is used to elicit both a scene and a story about the given scene from the storyteller. Although the cards were originally designed to be matched to the subject in terms of age and gender, any card may be used with any subject. There is no time limit, but it is good if the subject is encouraged to continue for as long as five minutes on a picture. It is recommended that testing be followed by an interview to learn the origins of the stories, seeking associations to places, name of persons, dates and specific information. This helps the examiner to clarify the meaning of the stories and to evaluate their significance more reliably. Through this test, the personality of the subjects can be projected and also the examiners or the testers are able to understand the mental level, intelligence, sentiments, creativity of the persons as well as the impact of the environment upon the minds' of the person etc. Thus, the subject's accounts are not only a product of his or her personality traits but may be a superficial reflection of the cultural forces (e.g. radio, television, movies, comics, current events, reading materials, internet etc.)

Validity and Reliability of the Test: Thematic Apperception Tests are meant to evoke an involuntary display of one's subconscious. There is no standardisation for evaluating one's TAT responses; each evaluation is completely subjective because each response is unique. Validity and reliability are, consequently, the largest question marks of the TAT. There are trends and patterns, which help identify psychological traits, but there are no distinct responses to indicate different conditions of a patient may

or may not have. Medical professionals most commonly use it in the early stages of the patient's treatment. The TAT helps the professionals to identify a broad range of issues that their patients may suffer from. Even when individual scoring procedures are examined, the absence of standardisation or norms makes it difficult to compare the results of validity and reliability research across studies. Specifically, even studies using the same scoring system often use different cards, or a different number of cards. Standardisation is also absent amongst clinicians, who often alter the instructions and procedures. In fact, this test is very subjective and it produces varied interpretations.



4.6 LET US SUM UP

- Test is necessary for assessing, measuring and evaluating the performance of a person, a situation, an institution and so on.
- The term personality has been derived from the Latin word 'Persona'. Persona means mask. According to the concept of mask, personality was thought to be the effect and influence of an individual wearing a mask.
- Psychologically, personality is the integrated and dynamic organisation of the physical, mental, moral, and social qualities of the individual that manifests itself to others in social life.
- Personality is the reflection of the sum total of human behaviour. Personality is an area of study that deals with complex human behaviour, including emotions, actions, and cognitive (thought) processes.
- There are various techniques and procedural steps that can project the personality of the human beings. Rorschach Inkblot Test and Thematic Apperception Test are the two best and easiest ways or techniques for projecting the personality of the individuals.
- The Rorschach Technique and the TAT are priminent not only in psychology but also in anthropology, sociology, education and psychiatry.

- The **Rorschach Test** is also known as the **Rorschach Inkblot Test**, **or the Rorschach Technique**, or simply the **Inkblot Test**.
- The **Rorschach Test** is a psychological test in which subjects' perceptions of inkblots are recorded and then analysed using psychological interpretation, complex algorithms, or both.
- Some psychologists use this test to examine a person's personality, characteristics and emotional functioning. It has been used to detect underlying thought disorder, especially in cases where patients are reluctant to describe their thinking processes openly. The Inkblot Test is named after its creator, the Swiss psychologist Hermann Rorschach.
- Rorschach began his experimentation with inkblots as a means of stimulating and testing imagination.
- First time, this technique was used for content analysis but later on Rorschach changed the emphasis from content to determinant analysis.
- The **Rorschach Test** consists of ten cards.
- Rorschach developed his test and methods as a practical tool to be applied to clinical cases in the study of unconscious factors in perception and meaning and to reveal dynamic factors of behaviour and personality. In this test, it was believed that every performance of an individual is an expression of his or her total personality.
- In the inkblot method, the experienced, skilled and expert clinicians are able to draw remarkably acute and sound inferences from Rorschach protocols; but this is a subjective matter.
- The **Thematic Apperception Test** (**TAT**) is a projective psychological test and develops the imaginative capacity of the person.
- Proponents of the TAT assert that a person's responses reveal underlying motives, concerns, and the ways they see the social world through the stories they make up about ambiguous pictures of people. Historically, it has been among the most widely researched, taught, and used of such tests.
- The TAT was developed during the 1930s by the American psychologist Henry A. Murray and lay psychoanalyst Christiana D. Morgan at the Harvard Clinic at Harvard University.

- TAT is a projective method that consists of thirty pictures card.
- The person being examined is told that there is a test of imagination, that he or she is to make up stories to suit himself or herself, and there is no right or wrong responses.
- The pictures are shown at a time. The subject is informed that each card shows a scene.
- There is no standardisation for evaluating one's TAT responses; each evaluation is completely subjective because each response is unique. Validity and reliability are, consequently, the largest question marks of the TAT.



4.7 FURTHER READING

1) Freeman, Frank S (1965): Theory and Practice of Psychological Testing, Oxford & IBH Publishing Co.Pvt.Ltd
2) en.wikipedia.org/wiki/**Rorschach**_test
3) en.wikipedia.org/wiki/**Thematic_Apperception_Test**
4) www.wikimedia. org images



4.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Experiments:

Q 1: What are the procedures of Rorschach Inkblot Test for projecting the personlaity? discuss.

Q 2: What are the procedures of Thematic Apperception Test for projecting the personlaity? discuss.

Q 3: Do you think that Rorschach Inkblot Test and TAT are not valid and reliable? Disucss.

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