UNIT 6  THEORIES OF PERSONALITY*

Structure

6.0  Introduction
6.1  Objectives
6.2  What Do You Mean by Personality?
6.3  Theories of Personality
   6.3.1  Psychoanalytic Theories
      6.3.1.1  The Neo-Freudians: Followers of Freud
      6.3.1.1.1  Alfred Adler: Individual Psychology
      6.3.1.1.2  Carl Jung: Analytical Psychology
   6.3.2  Behavioural Approach to Personality
   6.3.3  Humanistic Approach to Personality
      6.3.3.1  Abraham Maslow: Hierarchy of Needs
      6.3.3.2  Carl Roger: Focus on Self
   6.3.4  Trait Theories of Personality
      6.3.4.1  Allport’s Trait Theory
      6.3.4.2  Cattell’s Trait Theory
      6.3.4.3  Eysenck’s Trait Theory
      6.3.4.4  McCrae and Costa’s Big-five Factor Theory
6.4  Assessment of Personality
   6.4.1  Self Report Measures
   6.4.2  Projective Technique
6.5  Let Us Sum Up
6.6  Unit End Questions
6.7  Glossary
6.8  Answers to Self Assessment Questions
6.9  References and Suggested Readings

6.0  INTRODUCTION

Fig.6.1: Identical twins Jim Springer and Jim Lewis
Source:  https://www.firsttoknow.com/jim-twins/

* Contributed by Dr. Arti Singh, IGNOU
“Jim Lewis and Jim Springer, born in 1940, the boys were adopted by separate families in Ohio and grew up within 45 miles of each other. Both were named Jim by their adoptive parents. Both married twice — first to women named Linda, and then to women named Betty. Both had children, including sons named James Allen. Both owned dogs named Toy. After reuniting in 1979, after 39 years of separation, the twins were recruited for a study, and the results of their tests were extraordinary. Their medical histories were identical, and the pair shared the same habits, including having woodworking workshops in their garages, a fondness for Chevys, and vacations on one particular beach in Florida” (The Week, 2013).

Even after separated from each other for 39 years and raised by different families, why Jim twins shared so many similarities? What do you think? To what extent we are similar to our siblings or any other individual? How different are our personalities? What determines our individual differences? In this unit, we shall see what does individual difference means with reference to personality? What makes us different from each other or similar to each other? Which factors affect our personality? And what are the prominent theories of personality?

### 6.1 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you would be able to:

- Understand the meaning and definition of personality;
- Identify the Freud’s contribution to understanding personality;
- Comprehend the views of different personality theories: trait, behavioural and humanistic; and
- Analyse the different ways to measure personality.

### 6.2 WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY PERSONALITY?

Personality has always been a topic of discussion among common people, but defining it and outlining its nature has always been a difficult task for everyone including psychologists. When we make statements like, “she is a good doctor”, or “I really like M.S. Dhoni”. Then, do we really judge the competence of the doctor’s medical knowledge or her professionalism? Do you like Dhoni because he plays very well or because he is really efficient in leading his team or due to his down-to-earth attitude? So what do we actually look for while describing someone’s personality? How do we actually define it?

The word personality has been taken from the Latin word *persona* – the mask used by actors to represent characters during a theatrical play. As the character changes, so does the mask of the actor. So, does this mean that the word personality refers to our ever changing persona? Yes, to some extent. Our behaviour is not always constant or predictable. Sometimes we behave as predicted, sometimes we behave quite differently in a familiar situation, and sometimes our behaviour becomes completely unpredictable. Due to our ever changing yet stagnant behaviour, there is a widespread confusion over the definition of personality. One can find many definitions of personality. We will start with the following definitions of personality:
“Personality is a dynamic organisation, inside the person, of psychophysical systems that create the person’s characteristic patterns of behaviour, thoughts, and feelings” (G.W. Allport, 1961).

“The various styles of behavior that different organisms habitually reflect”. (Rychlak, 1981)

“The visible aspect of one’s character as it impresses others” (Random House Webster’s College Dictionary, 1991).

According to APA, “Personality refers to individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving.” It further states that “the study of personality focuses on two broad areas: One is understanding individual differences in particular personality characteristics, such as sociability or irritability. The other is understanding how the various parts of a person come together as a whole.”

As definitions suggest, personality is relatively stable in characteristic. It does not change on daily basis. You can easily predict how your parents will react after seeing your report card? Or how your friend will react after receiving compliments from you? There are numerous theories that try to resolve this question. We will focus on some of the most famous and established theories of personality in the following section.

6.3 THEORIES OF PERSONALITY

6.3.1 Psychoanalytic Theories

Sigmund Freud, a physician by profession, was the major contributor of psychoanalytic theories of personality. He developed his theory while doing clinical practice with patients. “Unconscious mental processes” is central to his theory. It refers to those desires, needs, and motivations for which we are not aware. Further, according to Freud, darker aspect of human behaviour such as aggression and sexual desires also plays important role in our personality.

In order to explain how our psyche (mind) works, Freud proposed;

A topographic model of the psyche (explains how our mind is organised)

A structural model of our personality

Psychosocial Stages of Development

A topographic model of the psyche

In the view of Sigmund Freud, our mind can be divided into three levels; conscious, preconscious and unconscious.

According to him, our conscious mind is that part which deals with the current information. That is, all the thoughts, feelings and actions of which you are aware at the very moment are part of the conscious mind. Preconscious or subconscious mind deals with all those information for which you are not currently aware but can become only if you pay attention. The last level of mind is unconscious. This part of mind stores those socially unacceptable needs, desires, motivations and feelings for which you are unaware of. According to him, this unconscious part of mind plays a vital role in influencing our actions.
Freud proposed that our personality consists of three elements: id, ego, and superego. Before explaining in details, it is important to mention here that id, ego, and superego are just concepts and they do not have any physical or physiological basis.

**Id:** This part of personality operates unconsciously. It deals with basic instincts, biological needs, and aggressive impulses. It is the most primitive part of human personality present since birth. From id, other parts of the personality (ego and superego) develop. It works on *pleasure principle*-tendency to avoid pain and seek pleasure. The aim of the id is to gratify one’s need immediately without considering the moral values of the society and the individual. *Eros* and *Thanatos* are the two driving forces of Id. *Eros* was the God of love in Greek mythology. According to Freud, in the context of id, Eros is the life force. It is responsible for our life instinct and survival, which includes sexual desire, reproduction desire, and pain avoidance. The counterpart of Eros is *Thanatos*-the death force or instinct. It is responsible for violence, aggression and hate like negative feelings. The aim of Thanatos is to balance the drive of Eros by driving us towards death and destruction. When personality is dominated by id, then individual tend to become more impulsive, such people will do what they want irrespective of time, place and situation, just like a kid.

**Ego:** Suppose a 10-year-old child wants to eat a scoop of ice-cream kept in the refrigerator. But he knows that eating ice-cream without seeking permission from parents will be punished. The part of the personality responsible for this reality check is known as Ego. So, ego works on *reality principle*-delaying id’s gratification need will be delayed until an appropriate and more realistic situation is not found. This part of personality emerges from id and its main objective is to strike a balance between id’s impulsive needs and the reality of this world. It is the decision-making component of our psyche and works on logic only. In the words of Freud, “ego is that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world” (Freud, 1923). If ego would not be able to resolve the conflict between the impulsive demands of the id and realistic demands of this world, then it would lead to the development of anxiety and stress. To ward off this anxiety, individual will be motivated to use unconscious defense mechanisms (we will talk about this in the later section).

**Superego:** It is the moral master or moral guru of our personality. Let us continue the same example referred to in the last section. Whether that 10-year-old kid will ask permission from his parents or not for eating a scoop of ice cream depends on the development of his superego. Since seeking permission is morally correct behaviour; it will indicate the presence of superego in the child. Role of the superego is to internalise the moral and ethical value of society through the process of socialisation. It controls the impulsive urges of the id and pursues ego to choose morally appropriate behaviour instead of only realistic behaviour. This part of our psyche develops between the ages of three to five years. Further, according to Freud, our superego consists of two systems: (i) conscience and (ii) ideal self. The *conscience’s* role is to punish or reward ego, through the feeling of pride or guilt, depending on its behaviour. For example, if ego allows in id’s demand and breaks the moral code of conduct, superego will make you feel guilty about your behaviour. The second system, the *ideal self*-idealised picture of your own self, also do the job of making you feel guilty or pride, depending on your behaviour.
Ego Defence Mechanisms

One of the role of ego is to protect the person from anxiety and stress. So when the anxiety and stress from the forbidden desires and motives become overwhelming, we tend to use some psychological strategies, known as ego defence mechanisms. According to Freud, the sole aim of employing these ego defence mechanisms is to protect our psyche from anxiety. A brief description of eight important defence mechanisms has been described below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repression</td>
<td>Excluding from conscious awareness those impulses or memories that are too frightening or painful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationalization</td>
<td>Assigning logical or socially desirable motives to what we have done, so that we seem to have acted rationally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction formation</td>
<td>Concealing a motive from ourselves by giving strong expression to the opposite motive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projection</td>
<td>Assigning our own undesirable qualities to others in exaggerated amounts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectualization</td>
<td>Attempting to gain detachment from a stressful situation by dealing with it in abstract, intellectual terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>Denying that an unpleasant reality exists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>Directing a motive that cannot be gratified in one form into another channel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Atkinson & Hilgard (2009), pp. 469

Freud’s Psychosexual Stages of Development

Freud proposed a five-stage model of development of personality. According to him, the core aspects of one’s personality’s developed by the age of five and remains unchanged throughout. Further, he stated that in order to move from one stage to another, a child needs to resolve conflicts of each stage successfully. Unless, it will lead to fixation - a continuation of an early mode of satisfaction in later life (The Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology, 2009). For example, individual fixated at an oral stage may have drinking or smoking habits. In the following section, we will talk about five stages of psychosexual development in brief:
Theories of Personality

Stage I: Oral Stage (birth to 18 months)

Mouth is the source of pleasure during this stage. Children completely depend on their caregivers, especially mother. They drive pleasure and understand the world around them through sucking and swallowing. Over gratification or under gratification may lead to the fixation at this early oral stage resulting in the development of overeating behaviour, drinking or smoking in adulthood. Freud called these people as oral-incorporative or oral-ingestive. Later during this stage, children experience pleasure from chewing and biting. If an individual is unable to resolve the psychological conflict of this stage, then he/she may develop the habit of nail biting and object chewing in adulthood. Freud further pointed out that these people are more critical and sarcastic in nature. He referred to such people as oral-aggressive or oral-sadistic.

Stage II: Anal Stage (18 months to three years)

During this stage, children face the demand of their society for the first time to control and delay the expulsion of urine and faeces. Children experience pleasure in this stage from their bowel and bladder movement. Freud believed that too harsh or too lenient toilet training may cause fixation at this stage. Resulting into either being messy, lesser self-control but generous (called as anal-expulsive characters by Freud) or being tidy, orderly but mean (called as anal retentive characters by Freud).

Stage III: Phallic Stage (three to five years)

Genitals become the erogenous region during this stage. Children knowingly or unknowingly touch their genitals for pleasure. During this stage, they understand the difference between males and females. Freud proposed that male child experience Oedipus complex – which involves sexual feeling towards their mother, feeling of rivalry for the father, as well as a threat of getting punished by the father for having a desire for mother. The counterpart of the Oedipus complex is Electra complex: experienced by the female child. It involves the sexual attraction for father, feeling of rivalry for mother and a threat of getting punished by the mother for having this feeling towards father. Successful resolution of this complex develops a mature sexual identity. According to Freud, by the end of this stage personality is formed completely.

Stage IV: Latency Stage (six to twelve years)

The sexual energy during this stage is channelised towards educational, sports and social activities. This leads to no or little interest for the opposite gender.

Stage V: Genital Stage (thirteen years to adulthood)

The sexual energy returns again in this stage. Successful completion of previous stages will help in developing a mature intimate relationship with the opposite sex. Whereas, unresolved issues of previous psychosexual stages will start exhibiting during adulthood; leading to difficulty in establishing a healthy intimate relationship with the opposite sex.

6.3.1.1 The Neo-Freudians: Followers of Freud

A number of theorists followed Freud’s work. Some theorists who initially worked with him moved on later to develop their own theories. To differentiate their work from Freud and to get due recognition, they called themselves as neo-
Freudian or post-Freudian, neo-analytic or psychodynamic. Some of the prominent names include Adler, Horney, Erik Fromm, Jung, and Erikson. Since it is not possible to cover all the theorists; the focus will be given to the theories of Adler and Jung only.

6.3.1.1.1 Alfred Adler: Individual Psychology

Adler’s theory is known as theory of individual psychology. He believed that experiences of early childhood shape one’s personality. If encouraged during childhood, it would motivate the child to feel capable and acts in a cooperative way throughout their life. Whereas, if discouraged the child may misbehave and indulge in unhealthy competition or withdrawal behaviour. He proposed that there is a need to understand one’s personality psychology within their social context. According to Adler, instead of any instinct (as proposed by Freud), an innate force motivates us to perform the behaviour. He named this force as the striving for the perfection-an innate desire that motivates individuals to achieve their full potential.

Inferiority and Superiority Complex

As a child, Adler explained that we feel weak, dependent, less capable and thus inferior to others (older siblings, parents, and caregivers). This feeling of inferiority is innate and natural. If a child decides to overcome this feeling of inferiority, then s/he would strive for achievement or success. Thus, overcoming of this feeling of inferiority is essential for optimal development. If this feeling is not compensated, then it would lead to inferiority complex and when overcompensated, it would lead to a superiority complex.

Sibling rivalry and birth order

Adler introduced the term-sibling rivalry to explain how competition for parents’ love and affection between siblings lead to rivalry and thus shaping their personalities. According to Adler, arrival of a newborn might lead to a feeling of dethronement and sibling rivalry. Here dethronement refers to the feeling of being replaced from the focus of attention and love by the new sibling.

He has also proposed that your birth order also affects your personality. Later, numerous studies have confirmed his proposition about birth order. According to him, firstborn children are usually responsible, obedient and intelligent individuals. The second born master their skill in social adjustment. They are generally trusting, accepting and other-centered. And, the third order children exhibit strong security, high self-esteem but less competitiveness. Since they are never dethroned; they remain the baby of the family throughout their life.

6.3.1.1.2 Carl Jung: Analytical Psychology

Carl Gustav Jung (pronounce as “yooung”), was a Swiss psychiatrist and a close friend of Sigmund Freud. He emphasised the idea that we need to study different cultures as it will provide the essence of humanity. Jung’s personality theory is known as the analytic theory or analytical psychology.

Jung extended Freud’s idea of the unconscious. Freud considered unconscious as an essential part of one’s personality. It is a storehouse of repressed memories, aggressive motives, and sexual desires. Even though the basic characteristic of the Freud’s unconscious is similar across different individuals but its content is
highly personal in nature. Jung deviated from this view and proposed the idea of **collective unconscious** — the unconscious shared by all humans. According to him, due to the evolutionary process and common ancestors we all carry some common past. Collection of this ancestral past is part of our unconscious known as the collective unconscious. The elements of our collective unconscious have been termed by Jung as **archetypes** — which is shared by all human beings and have some overarching qualities. He described various types of archetypes, some of these are as follows:

- **The self**- knowing about the wholeness of one’s own identity
- **The persona**- the phony self that we show to others
- **The anima**- feminine side of the men
- **The animus**- masculine side of the female
- **The shadow**- the darker side of our personality, consisting of aggressive urges, biological instincts, and feeling of inferiority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self Assessment Questions (SAQ I)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fill in the blanks:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) .................................................. proposed that our personality consists of three elements: id, ego, and superego.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) .................................................. is the moral master or moral guru of our personality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Jung’s personality theory is known as the ..................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) .................................................. explains how competition for parents’ love and affection between siblings lead to rivalry and thus shaping their personalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) The sexual energy during the .................................................. stage is channelised towards educational, sports and social activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**6.3.2 Behavioural Approach to Personality**

Behaviourist psychologists were the main critics of psychoanalytical theory of personality. They were against the idea that human personality can be understood using psyche and unconscious contents. John B. Watson was the founder of behavioural approach but B. F. Skinner was the most influential behaviourist.

According to behaviourist theorists, personality is an abstract and hypothetical concept. Describing it with reference to internal mental processes are grossly incorrect. Stimulus-response (S-R) relationship and role of reinforcement in the behaviour process have always been the focus of study among behaviourists. According to them to understand personality, one needs to understand the S-R relationship and role of reinforcement first. So, according to them, personality is a collection of reinforced responses performed for different stimulus. You may recall that there are basically three major theories of learning proposed by behaviourists: classical conditioning, instrumental conditioning and observational learning. One of the most important tenants of the behaviourism is that ‘what we are is the result of our learning’ and this learning occurs through reinforcement.
and observation. Since every human being has different life conditions, therefore their S-R learning pattern is also different from each other. Due to this reason, we differ from each other in personality.

### 6.3.3 Humanistic Approach to Personality

Also known as the “third force” or “third approach” in psychology, humanistic approach came into existence as a reaction against the pessimistic approach of psychoanalysts and behaviourists towards human behaviour. Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers are the two leading theorists of humanistic approach. Now we will briefly examine their theories.

#### 6.3.3.1 Abraham Maslow: Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow proposed many interesting ideas of human behaviour. Hierarchy of needs is one of the most frequently cited works of him. He proposed that we humans have an innate drive to achieve our highest level of capability. He called this state of achievement ‘self-actualization’. Therefore, in his pursuit to understand human personality, he studied many self-actualisers. The people, according to Maslow, who have achieved the state of fulfillment by reaching their highest level of capability. Some of the famous names, Maslow studied, include Albert Einstein, Eleanor Roosevelt, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln. According to him, since early theorists have focused their attention on the darker aspects of human personality, therefore the true nature of human cannot be understood. He emphasised that in order to understand human in its true colour we need to shift our focus to healthy individuals.

His hierarchy of needs consists of five types of needs, as shown in Figure 3. In order to achieve a higher order of need, one needs to fulfil her/his lower needs first.

![Fig.6.3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](https://courses.lumenlearning.com)

#### 6.3.3.2 Carl Roger: Focus on Self

Carl Roger was a counselling psychologist and Maslow’s colleague, who extended the humanistic approach to personality. Like Maslow, he also viewed humans as good and their behaviour is goal-directed. He developed his theory by observing the behaviour of his clients. He noticed that the idea of “self” always plays an
important role in his client’s life. Therefore, his theory revolves around the concept of self. According to him, there are basically two types of self; one is an ideal self and other real self. Ideal self is one’s concept of self that s/he wants or desires to become. Whereas, real self is one’s inner concept of what we really are. Roger proposed that if there is congruence between one’s ideal and real self, then it will lead to help her/him to achieve a state of self-actualisation, which is state of highest potential a person can achieve. He called such people as a fully functioning person. On the contrary, if there is no congruence between these two versions of self, then it will lead to a state of anxiety and stress. Carl Roger also mentioned in his theory about the importance of the external environment in achieving congruence in self-concepts. If an individual is getting unconditional positive regard, only then, he will be able to value his true worth and can achieve self-actualisation. Unconditional positive regard refers to the warm acceptance of one’s self by significant others without any condition.

6.3.4 Trait Theories of Personality

A group of theorists believed that our personality is a combination of traits that determine our behaviour. By identifying and studying them, we can predict the personality of other people. Before moving forward, one needs to understand the concept of trait-labels used to identify the characteristic way of behaving. Often traits are viewed as continuous dimension such as the trait of ‘extroversion-introversion’. Individuals who are extrovert in nature tend to be friendly, outgoing, talkative and often adventurous. Whereas, those who are high on introversion tend to be less friendly, reserved and less adventurous. As shown in Figure 4, an individual may fall along any point on the continuum and his/her behaviour will be in accord with that location.

![Extroversion - Ambiversion - Introversion](https://commons.wikimedia.org)

Fig.6.4: Extrovert-Introvert Spectrum

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org

History of defining personality by trait can be traced down to the times of Hippocrates; however, in recent times, some of the famous names of the trait theorists include Gordon Allport, Raymond Cattell, Hans Eysenck, Robert McCrae, and Paul Costa.

6.3.4.1 Allport’s Trait Theory

After examining Webster’s (1925) New International Dictionary, Gordon Allport and his colleague Henry Odbert come with 4,500 words used in the English language that could describe people. Based on their investigation, they proposed a trait theory of personality. According to their theory, three types of traits govern our personality. They have named these three categories of traits as cardinal traits, central traits, and secondary traits. They organised these traits in a hierarchy.
Cardinal Traits: These are the dominant traits of one’s personality. They stand at the top of Allport’s trait hierarchy and are the master controller of one’s personality. These traits may dominate personality to such an extent that the person may become known for those traits only. Such as Mother Teresa for altruism and M.K. Gandhi for his honesty. According to Allport, these traits are rare i.e., very few people have personalities dominated by cardinal traits, a majority of the people have personality composed of multiple traits.

Central Traits: They come second in the hierarchy. According to Allport, every person possesses 5-10 central traits in varying degrees. They can easily be noticed and are responsible for shaping our personality. Traits such as intelligent, loyal, dependable, aggressive etc.

Secondary Traits: These are less relevant traits of personality. These are basically situational or circumstantial traits. For instance, an aggressive child may not speak much in front of his/her teacher. These can be numerous in number and are responsible for behaviours incongruent to individual’s usual behaviour. According to Allport, these traits are “aroused by a narrower range of equivalent stimuli and they issue into a narrower range of equivalent responses”

6.3.4.2 Cattell’s Trait Theory

Using factor analysis-a statistical procedure, Cattell factor analysed the Allport’s list of 4,500 English adjectives. He came up with the following sixteen trait dimensions of human personality:

Reserved ................................................................. Outgoing
Less intelligent ........................................................... More intelligent
Stable, ego strength .................................................... Emotionality/neuroticism
Humble ................................................................................ Assertive
Sober ............................................................................... Happy-go-lucky
Expeditious ........................................................................ Conscientious
Shy ........................................................................................ Venturesome
Tough-minded ............................................................. Tender-minded
Trusty .................................................................................... Suspicious
Practical ............................................................................... Imaginative
Forthright ............................................................................... Shrewd
Placid .................................................................................. Apprehensive
Conservative ......................................................................... Experimenting
Group-dependent ........................................................ Self-sufficient
Undisciplined ........................................................................ Controlled
Relaxed .................................................................................... Tense

In order to measure these trait dimensions, along with his colleagues (Cattell, Eber & Tastuoka, 1977) he developed a questionnaire later known as the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF).
6.3.4.3 Eysenck’s Trait Theory

Hans Eysenck was a contemporary psychologist of Cattell. Even though he was a behaviourist, he believed that our personality is largely innate and genetically based. He also used factor analysis to understand the underlying personality traits. Initially, he proposed that our personality is comprised of two major personality dimensions: extroversion vs. introversion and neuroticism vs. stability. According to his theory, different combinations of these dimensions lead to the development of different personalities. Later, he added the third dimension to his model and named it as psychoticism vs. socialisation.

Extroversion-introversion dimension refers to the degree to which one seeks external or internal stimulation. People who are extroverts are social, seek adventurous and prefer company when in stress. Whereas, people who are introverts are shy, enjoy their own company and turns inward when in stress. Neuroticism vs. stability refers to a dimension that describes people in the context of their emotionality and maladjusted behaviour. Individuals who are high on neuroticism, tend to be emotionally unstable, moody and maladjusted. Whereas, people at the opposite end of the neuroticism dimension, tend to be calm. In the last dimension: psychoticism vs. Socialisation, people who are high on psychoticism tend to be aggressive, egocentric, anti-social and impulsive. Whereas, people who lie on the socialisation end, they are altruistic, empathetic and conventional.

6.3.4.4 McCrae and Costa’s Big-five Factor Theory

McCrae and Costa believed that all human personality traits can be reduced to five factors only: Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. Acronym as OCEAN, these factors or dimensions were the results of factor analysis (a statistical procedure) of Cattell’s original list by McCrae and Costa. Brief descriptions of these factors are given below:

*Openness to experience*: such people love novelty and creativity. They have a curious mind and have an appreciation for art. They are an independent thinker and prefer to do a variety of things instead of routine activities.

*Conscientiousness*: these people are more goal-directed, self-disciplined, hard-working, honest and competent. They prefer planned activity instead of spontaneous behaviour.

*Extraversion*: similar to the description of Eysenck’s theory.

*Agreeableness*: people who score high on agreeableness have a tendency to be cooperative and compassionate. Such people are generally helpful and trustworthy.

*Neuroticism*: these are worried, insecure and self-pitying people. Whereas, people who score low on neuroticism are self-satisfied and secure.

6.4 ASSESSMENT OF PERSONALITY

Just like the assessment of intelligence (as discussed in the last unit), personality assessment is also a vital task of psychologists. According to APA, “personality assessment is a proficiency in professional psychology that involves the administration, scoring, and interpretation of empirically supported measures of personality traits and styles in order to: 
Refine clinical diagnoses;
- Structure and inform psychological interventions; and
- Increase the accuracy of behavioral prediction in a variety of contexts and settings (e.g., clinical, forensic, organizational, educational).

The above definition of personality assessment by APA suggests that it is a specialized knowledge which requires an assessor to have knowledge related to psychometric properties of the test instruments, theories of personality, knowledge of administration and interpretation. There are various techniques to assess personality and these techniques can be broadly categorized into the following:

Self-Report Measures and,

Projective Techniques

**Self-Report Measures**

As the name suggests, in this method, a participant is directly asked various questions about her/him and based on the answers an assessment of her/his personality is made. The questions (called as an item in the language of psychometrics) are based on some theory and are structured in nature. Responses on each item are recorded quantitatively using a rating scale. The total obtained score is then interpreted using a norm table developed for the test. Examples of some of the famous self-report measures are the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 PF). However, few limitations are also associated with this method. It has been found that participants tend to choose a socially desirable response, which is known as social desirability bias. Acquiescence bias is another limitation of this method. It refers to the respondent ‘tendency to select ‘yes’ as a response to all the items regardless of their content.

**Projective Techniques**

Based on psychoanalytical theory, this is an indirect way to measure personality. As we know that according to the psychoanalytical theory the majority of our personality is shaped by unconscious processes therefore to measure it, we should resort to an indirect measure of personality only. All projective tests are based on the principle of projection — a defense mechanism proposed by Sigmund Freud. The basic assumption of this technique is that the ambiguous or unstructured stimuli or situation may prompt an individual to project his or her feelings, emotions and desires on them. Some of the famous projective tests include; Rorschach test, Holtzman Inkblot test, Thematic Apperception Test, Draw-A-Person test, Sentence completion test and, Word Association test. These tests produce a response in the qualitative form which is content analysed by the expert of these tests. However, these tests are also not short of limitations. One of the biggest drawbacks of these tests is that they do not have any statistical validity or reliability. Secondly, since the interpretation of the responses is highly subjective therefore it can differ dramatically from one examiner to another.

### Self Assessment Questions (SAQ II)

State whether the following are ‘True’ or ‘False’:

1) People who are extroverts are social, seek adventurous and prefer company when in stress. (  )
2) Central traits are the dominant traits of one’s personality and stand at the top of Allport’s trait hierarchy. ( )

3) According to behaviourist theorists, personality is an abstract and hypothetical concept. ( )

4) Projective tests are based on trait theories of personality. ( )

5) McCrae and Costa believed that all human personality traits can be reduced to five factors only. ( )

6.5 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we learned about individual difference with reference to personality. The Unit started with the concept and meaning of personality. Then, various theories of personality were also explained with special emphasis on Freud’s contribution, Trait theories, behavioural and humanistic viewpoint on personality. Lastly, different methods to measure personality were also discussed.

6.6 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1) What do you understand by personality?

2) Discuss Freud’s view of the mind as an iceberg and explain how he used this image to represent the conscious and unconscious region of the mind?

3) Why is the unconscious so important in Freud’s theory of personality?

4) Describe and explain any five defense mechanisms given by the psychoanalytical theory of personality.

5) Write a note on Alfred Adler’s theory of personality.

6) Describe the humanistic approach to personality and explain Maslow’s and Roger’s theory to support your view.

7) How are self-report measures different from projective techniques in assessing personality?

6.7 GLOSSARY

**Personality**: Refers to individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving.

**Cardinal Traits**: These are the dominant traits of one’s personality. They stand at the top of Allport’s trait hierarchy and are the master controller of one’s personality. These traits may dominate personality to such an extent that the person may become known for those traits only.

**Central Traits**: They come second in the hierarchy. According to Allport, every person possesses 5-10 central traits in varying degrees. They can easily be noticed and are responsible for shaping our personality. Traits such as intelligent, loyal, dependable, aggressive etc.
Secondary Traits: These are less relevant traits of personality. These are basically situational or circumstantial traits. For instance, an aggressive child may not speak much in front of his/her teacher. These can be numerous in number and are responsible for behaviours incongruent to individual’s usual behaviour. According to Allport, these traits are “aroused by a narrower range

Id: This part of personality operates unconsciously. It deals with basic instincts, biological needs, and aggressive impulses. It is the most primitive part of human personality present since birth.

Preconscious or subconscious mind: Deals with all those information for which you are not currently aware but can become only if you pay attention.

Fixation: A concept proposed by Sigmund Freud. It refers to a continuation of an early mode of satisfaction in later life.

Collective unconscious: It refers to the unconscious shared by all humans.

6.8 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Self Assessment Questions I
1) Freud
2) Superego
3) analytic theory or analytical psychology
4) sibling rivalry
5) latency

Self Assessment Questions II
1) True
2) False
3) True
4) False
5) True

6.9 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READING


Theories of Personality


### 6.10 REFERENCES FOR IMAGES


