

Projective Techniques

The word projective is used in two ways in psychology. The word was first used in mental mechanism. The credit of using projection in mental mechanism is goes to Freud (1896). If seen from Freud's point of view we can say that projection is a defence system or process in which impulses, wishes and ideas are externalized because their conscious recognition would be too painful to the ego. The techniques of personality assessment described so far are known as direct techniques, because they tend to rely on information directly obtained from the person who clearly knows that her/his personality is being assessed. In these situations, people generally become self-

conscious and hesitate to share their private feelings, thoughts, and motivations. When they do so, they often do it in a socially desirable manner. According to ~~Eysy~~ Eysenck et al. (1972) "Projective techniques are a group of psychological techniques and procedures that claim to disclose the basis (underlying, hidden) personality structure and motivations of a subject by having him organize, respond to, or deal with materials or stimuli in a free, unlimited way without reference to a preconceived system of correct or incorrect answers."

The psychoanalytic theory tells us that a large part of human behaviour is governed by unconscious motives. Direct methods of personality assessment cannot uncover the unconscious part of our behaviour. Hence, they fail to provide us with a real picture of an individual's

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personality. These problems can be overcome by using indirect methods of assessment.

Projective techniques were developed to assess unconscious motives and feelings. These techniques are based on the assumption that a less structured or unstructured stimulus or situation will allow the individual to project her/his feelings, desires and needs on to that situation.

A variety of projective techniques have been developed; they use various kinds of stimulus materials and situations for assessing personality. Some of them require reporting associations with stimuli (e.g. words, inkblots), some involve story writing around pictures, some require sentence completions, some require expression through drawings, and some require choice of stimuli from a large set of stimuli. While the nature of stimuli and responses in these techniques

vary enormously, all of them do share the following features:

- ① The stimuli are relatively or fully unstructured and poorly defined.
- ② The person being assessed is usually not told about the purpose of assessment and the method of scoring, and interpretations.
- ③ The person is informed that there are no correct or incorrect responses.
- ④ Each response is considered to reveal a significant aspect of personality.
- ⑤ Scoring and interpretation are lengthy and sometimes subjective.

Projective techniques are different from the psychometric tests in many ways. They cannot be scored in any objective manner. They generally require qualitative analysis for which a rigorous training is needed.