CHAPTER V

SPECIFIC PROBLEM AND PROCEDURE IN THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION

Introduction: A personality questionnaire is sensitive
to some manipulable variables. Different testers,
instructions, social desirability, surroundings, response
sets, acquiescence, response catagories, language, forms of
the questionnaire are found to elicit different test
taking attitudes, varying response tendencies and different
personality patterns of the subject.

Social desirability: It is extremely easy to falsify the
answers in such a way as to convey a picture of 'good
personality', and subjects will always tend to do this if
there is any incentive. For example, if tests are used for
selection, or if they are to be seen by a lecturer upon
whom students wish to make a good impression testees will
be set to convey much favourable picture. Similarly,

many more unpleasant symptoms' are admitted when tests are answered anonymously, or are to be used for counselling purposes where the subject is motivated to be candid.

More subjects answer 'No' to an unpleasant item than say 'Yes' to the same item reversed. This suggests that most subjects are defensive, and that personality questionnaries generally show quite high reliability or consistency of response, more because of this pervasive attitude rather than because the subjects are really consistent in their neurotic, introverted on other behaviour. This explains too why there is always considerable overlapping between tests of different traits, why the correlations are about as high as between different tests of nominally the same trait. This phenomenon is the same as the halo effect in ratings. Even when the test attempts to describe subjective behaviour symptoms, subjects answer it very largerly in terms of their self-halos.

Quite apart from intentional faking, people do not know themselves well enough to answer factually. They are likely to produce rationalizations. However, not everyone aims merely to display a favourable self picture. Some are more suggestible, and they tend to exaggerate their defects e.g. neurotic

patients or highly educated persons such as students are
very often self-analytic and introspective, more self
depreciatory then non-academics are.

In any test where a range of answer is provided, e.g.
from strongly agree through agree and doubtful to strongly
disagree, some subjects give many more extreme responses, fewer
middle ones, than others. Similarly in interest tests such
as strong's, where the responses are like, indifferent,
or dislike, some people are universal 'likers', others
more guarded.

Some of the sources influencing test performance
are noted below:

Influence of test-taking attitudes:

Sarson (1950) suggests that the predictive value of
personality (and ability) tests has been disappointing
because they have neglected many factors that influence
the subject over and above the actual content of the test -
the nature of the instructions, his idea of the purpose
of the test, time of day, the personality of the tester,
what he has learnt from previous testing, etc. etc.

Cronbach makes the useful distinction between
'maximal performance' and 'typical performance' tests, the
former being employed in testing aptitudes and achievements,
the latter in personality and attitude testing. Neither

term is really satisfactory because subjects who are
trying too hard in ability tests find to perform somewhat
erratically. But 'typical' or 'normal' is still more
ambiguous since the 'normal' response of any person is
to 'put-across' a 'suitable' personality and not to display
his 'real' self if he can possibly help it. Cronbach
goes on to say that the tester must give the subjects the
full possible instructions in ability testing as to what
he wants, but in personality testing he must conceal his
aims. Thus he should in general avoid performance tests
which constitute direct samples of a trait, such as May and
Hartshorne used in studying honesty. But the tester who
conceals his object is in danger of becoming so deceptive
as to transgress ethical principles, or his evasions may
merely encourage the subjects to build up more distorted
myths.

Response Sets:

This is Chronbach's term for another type of
extraneous influence on test scores, namely stylistic
consistencies, stimulated by the form of response.
Frederiksen and Messick (1959) classify some of the
commonly occuring sets as follows:

1. Acquiescence: tendency to accept any personality statement as applying to oneself, or alternatively to reject all items. This may or may not be the same as preference for 'Trues', or for 'Falses', in the true-false achievement test.

2. Evasiveness: giving many doubtful or indifferent responses.

3. Extremeness: giving a preponderance of strongly agree or disagree rather than intermediate responses.

4. Inclusiveness: when the number of responses is unspecified, giving a large proportion of these. Its opposite may be criticalness in accepting words, phrases etc., as adequate or as equivalent.

5. Answering in terms of social desirability.

6. Other tendencies to fake or distort, wittingly or not.

7. Cautiousness: e.g. omitting difficult items in an ability tests VS guessing.

8. Preference for working at speed, or slowly.

9. Tendency to be consistent or inconsistent where two or more responses in the same tests have practically the same content.

Here, however, we are concerned with sets that affect
personality test responses and these appear to depend to
varying degrees upon (a) significant personality traits,
(b) uninteresting stylistic or expressive habits, (c)
temporary moods or reactions to the test content or
instructions.

Acquiescence: Messick and Jackson (1958) have brought out
the important influence of acquiescence on such personality
inventories as the MMPI. Here the score for the various
scales, hysteria, schizophrenia, etc., involve both
positive and negative items i.e. the subject has to
answer 'Yes' to some, 'No' to others, to score highly
on most scales. But it happens that a great many items
are keyed 'Yes' in some scales, fewer in others and
Messick shows that the same scales that have the largest
proportions of yes's, i.e. those most likely to involve
acquiescence, are also the scales that load most highly
with the first, general factor, obtained by intercorrelating
and factorising. In other words, a strongly acquiescent
subject who accepts both positively and negatively worded
items is likely to score highly on all scales and so to
appear generally abnormal or psychotic. The second factor
appears to be closely connected with social desirability.

Since it loads most highly these scales with many
items keyed 'No', i.e. it involves the rejection of
socially unacceptable items.

Further light on the personality correlates of
acquiescence is thrown by the common finding that the
F scale and other tests of dogmatism and conformity tend
to give considerable negative correlations with academic
achievement. On the basis of a factorial study with
neurotic patients, Eysenck (1962) claims that acquiescence
and extremeness VS. indecisiveness affect scores on social
attitude tests like the F scale but not those on
personality inventories.

This has been a complex discussion, and it has failed
to lead a satisfactory outcome. It implies that self-report
test scores are seriously distorted in two main directions,
and yet at the same time we cannot get rid of these
distortions without impovershing the scores. The situation
is similar to that with 'halo' in ratings.

The above mentioned points are some of the main
problems in personality assessment. Thus, as in any scientific
endeavour if something is to be studied and investigated,
means must be developed for observing and measuring the thing
of interest. Procedures for observing and measuring

personality variables have been described in several
books (Eysenck, 1952, Ferguson, 1951, Vernon, 1953)
devoted primarily to this subject. Hardly a few of these
books give serious consideration as to what the real
satisfactory factors affect in personality measurement. It
was at this point that the investigator felt the need
to study some of the problems that affect, the
performance, especially in questionnaire method of
personality measurement.

The purpose of this study was to compare the
personality questionnaire items of Bernreuter personality
inventory when they were presented to high school
students in different forms of instructions at different
times to study the effect of instructions. Secondly,
to study the effect of forms of the questionnaire, this inventory
was presented in the question form as well as in the statement
form. Thirdly, the effect of different response
catagories was also studied when response catagories
were presented in two and three catagoreis. It was
aimed to find out whether these changes brought
about a predisposing effect on the responses of the
subject.

Hypotheses:

Three different hypotheses were studied:

1) To test the effect of wo types of instructions.

2) To find out if there is any difference in test performance on different forms of test items, viz. question form and statement form.

3) To test the effect of different catagories of responses.

The inclusion of both boys and girls in the sample enabled the investigator to study also the sex differences as far as above mentioned influences were cocemned.

Test Materials:

Bernreuter Personality Inventory was used. There are 125 questions which can be answered in yes, no or in ?. This inventory has been validated against other inventories supposedly measuring the same traits and it yields separate scores for:

B1 - N: a measure of neubotic tendency tend to persons scorin high on this scale tend to be emotionally unstable. Those scoring low tend to be very well balanced emotionally.

B2 - S :   a measure of self-sufficiency.

Persons scoring high on this scale prefer to be
alone, rarely ask for sympathy and tend to ignore
advice of others. Those scoring low are extravert.

B3 - I :   a measure introversion-extraversion.

Persons scoring high on this scale tend to be introve
ed; that is, they are imaginative andtend to
live within themselves. Those scoring low are
extraverted; that is, they rarely worry, seldom suffer
emotional upsets, and rarely substitute daydreaming f
action.

B4 - D :   a measure of dominance-submission.

Persons scoring high on this scale tend to dominate
others in face to face situations. Those scoring
low tend to be submissive.

F1 - C :   a measure of confidence in oneself.

Persons scoring high on this tend to be self-conscious
and havefeelings of inferiority. Those scoring
low tend to be wholesomely self-confident and to
be very well-adjusted to their environment.

F2 - S :   a measure of Sociability.

Persons scoring high on this scale tend to be
non-social, solitary, independent; those scoring
low tend to be sociable and gregarious.

This inventory has separate norms for male and
females at high school, college and adult level.

Administering the Inventory:

1.   The inventory was self-administering. No
      instructions were necessary except those
      appearing on the blank. To insure the
      careful reading of instructions, the investigator
      read them aloud, while the individual being tested
      read silently.

2.   Each person was left to interpret questions for
      himself. The investigator did not explain how
      he thinks a question should be interpreted.

3.   There was no time-limit. Very few subjects
      required more than 40 minutes to complete
      the inventory.

4.   The investigator was careful to point out to
      the subjects that the value of the results was
      dependent upon their own sincerity and further
      the examiner had guaranteed the confidential
      treatment of the findings.

5.   The exact nature of the traits being measured was
      not revealed before the subjects had finished test.

Sample :

    For the present investigation, a sample of 100
students studying in grade 'X' was taken. The 'purposive
incidental sample' i.e. the unselected groups of different
high school students in Baroda City as mentioned below
were chosen for this study.

1. Uni Exp. High School

2. Sayaji Boys' High School

3. Sayaji Girls' High School

4. Jeevan Sadhana

5. New Era High School

6. Shikshan Sadhana

7. Wadi High School

8. Bharati High School etc.

Most of them belonged to the middle class status. The students were between the ages of 14 to 16 with a mean of 15. The method of random sampling was adopted.

Experimental Design:

These subjects were administered different forms of the test (condition) in different orders or sequences which formed a sort of counterbalanced design. Whenever the subjects are exposed to two or more conditions,there is a possibility that order effects will influence the results, that is, the impact of a particular condition may depend on whether it is administered first or second. In view of this, a counter-balancing procedure was used to ensure certain additional information from the data.

<u>Realiability of test Material</u>:

For the present investigation, this inventory was
translated in Gujarati version. To see the reliability
of inventory, it was administered on the same individuals
on two different occasions at the time interval of 20
days. Retest reliability was found to be 0.9. To see
whether the subjects understand the same thing in the
same sense, this inventory was given in original form
(English version). After an interval of 20 days it was
again administered in Gujarati version on the same
population. Reliability was found to be .91.

<u>Procedure</u>:

     Three types of forms or conditions were investigated:

1. The effect of two types of instructions

2. The effect of Question form and Statement form

3. The effect of two response categories and
    three response categories.

To examine the first condition i.e. to study the effect
of two types of instructions, the Bernreuter Personality
Inventory in Gujarati version was administered to students
studying in X grade. This inventory was applied in question
form both the times, but quite different instructions were
given at different times. First, all the subjects were
required to answer the questions very honestly and frankly
and after a time-interval of 20 days instructions were

changed. At the second time, they were required to answer the
questions in such a way as to convey a picture of good
personality, i.e. they were required to answer the questions
strictly in a socially desirable way. (as understood from the
forms given in Appendix 4 (a) and (b))

The counter-balanced design stood thus:

One Group	:	Honest response	: 20 days (time interval)	Social Desirabl response
Second Group	:	Socially desira- ble response	: 20 days (time interval)	Honest response

To study the second condition i.e. to study the effect
of question form and statement form the same method was used.
First of all this inventory was applied in question form and
after an interval of 20 days the same inventory was
administered in the statement form (as understood from the
forms given in appendix 4 (c) and (d).

To give an example:

Do you daydream frequently?   (Question form)

I daydream frequently.   (Statement form)

A counter-balanced design was taken to control the
effect of instructions or form. Two groups were taken.
To one group, the inventory was administered first in
question form and after a time interval of 20 days, it
was administered in the statement form. To another group,
this inventory was administered in first statement form and

after a time interval of 20 days it was then administered

in question form. This counter-balanced design can be

represented thus:

| One Group | : | Questions form 20 days (Time interval) | Statement form |
| Second Group | : | Statement form 20 days (Time interval) | Question form |

To study the third condition i.e. to examine the

effects of different categories of responses the same method

was used. The same inventory was applied in question form first

with two response categories and after a time-interval of 20

days, they were required to answer questions in three response

categories. (As understood from the form given in appendix

4 (e) and (f).

To give an example:

Do you daydream frequently? Yes No   (Two category responses)

Do you daydream frequently? Yes No Doubtful   (Three category responses)

Again, the counter-balanced design was used as shown

below:

| One Group | : | Two Categories | : 20 days time interval | : Three categories |
| Second Group | : | Three Categories | : 20 days time interval | : Two categories |

Scoring:

Six separate scoring keys as given in standardized procedure,

by test authors were used in scoring, one for each of the

traits tested. In the preparations of these keys, the diagnostic value of each response to each question was determined for each of the traits. Weights from - 7 to - 7 were assigned in accordance with these diagnostic values. The total score for a trait was the algebraic sum of the weights which corresponded to the responses made by the individual, as given on the key for that particular trait. If an individual failed to answer a question, it was scored as though he had encircled the question mark (doubtful). A summation was done of each subject's score of 125 questions.

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