

Psychological
Measurement

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What is
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Projective Methods

Objective Methods

Type-Based

Trait-Based

Next Week

Personality and its Assessment

PSYC3302: Psychological Measurement and Its Applications

Mark Hurlstone
Univeristy of Western Australia

Week 10

Learning Objectives

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Next Week

- What is personality?
- What is personality assessment?
- Uses and value of personality assessments
- Measurement methods:
 - 1 Projective tests
 - 2 Objective tests
 - Type-Based
 - Trait-Based

Lay Conceptions of Personality

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- For lay people, personality refers to aspects of a person that elicit positive or negative reactions from others:
 - Someone who elicits positive reactions has a "good personality"
 - Someone who elicits negative reactions has a "negative personality"
- We also hear people described with adjectives like *aggressive, warm, or cold*
- For psychologists the terms tend to be better specified and more descriptive

Definitions in the Psychology Literature

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The most adequate conceptualisation of a person's behaviour in all its detail (McClelland, 1951, p.69)

The individual as a whole ... it means all that anyone is and is trying to become (Menninger 1953, p.23)

Personality is defined by the particular empirical concepts which are a part of the theory of personality employed (Hall and Lindzey, 1970, p.9)

An individual's *unique* constellation of psychological traits—values, interests, attitudes, worldview, cognitive style—that is relatively *stable* and *enduring* over time

Personality Assessment

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Personality assessment is the measurement and evaluation of psychological traits, states, values, interests, attitudes, worldview, cognitive style and related individual characteristics

- Methods of personality assessment we will consider today include:
 - 1 Projective tests
 - 2 Objective tests
- We first consider the distinction between personality *traits*, *types*, and *states*

Personality Traits

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Any distinguishable, relatively enduring way in which one individual varies from another (Guildford, 1959, p.6)

- *Distinguishable* indicates that behaviours labelled with different trait terms are actually different from one another
- *Context* is important when applying trait terms to behaviours
- *Relatively enduring* implies that traits are relatively consistent across the lifespan but how they manifest is partly dependent on the situation
- A *trait* is a way in which one individual varies from another
- The attribution of a trait term is always a *relative* phenomenon

Personality Types

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A constellation of traits that is similar in pattern to one identified category of personality within a taxonomy of personalities

- Traits are *characteristics* possessed by people, whereas types are *descriptions* of people
- Personality typologies are common:
 - Carl Jung (1923) and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI; Myers & Briggs, 1943/1962)
 - Holland's six personality types (Holland, 1999): artistic, enterprising, investigative, social, realistic, or conventional
 - Type A personality vs. Type B personality (Freidman & Rosenman, 1974)
 - MMPI personality profiles (Dahlstrom, 1995)

Personality States

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The transitory exhibition of some personality state

- Unlike a trait—which is a relatively enduring behavioural predisposition—a state is a relatively temporary predisposition
- For example, you may be in an anxious state before an exam but that does not mean you are an anxious person
- Measuring personality states is the search for traits that are relatively transitory or situation specific
- Personality inventories—like the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)—have been developed to distinguish various states from traits

Uses of Personality Assessment

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- Basic Research
 - Determine the number and nature of dimensions that make us unique
 - Stability of personality across time
- Clinical/Counselling
 - Vocational counselling
 - Personality disorders
- Personnel Management
 - Recruitment and selection
 - Placement
- Threat Assessment
 - Judgements of dangerousness of persons of interest

Personality Assessment Methods

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- There are broadly two types of personality assessment methods
 - 1 Projective methods
 - 2 Objective methods

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- Some of the first personality tests to be used and investigated
- Usually consist of *ambiguous* stimuli
- A judgement of the assesses personality is made according to her ability to impose some *structure* on the unstructured stimuli—**projective method**
- The underlying theme is that you cannot rely upon people's conscious awareness of themselves for the purposes of understanding their true nature
- The **projective hypothesis** states that an individual supplies structure to unstructured stimuli in a manner consistent with their underlying personality

Projective Methods

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- Projective tests are *indirect* methods of personality assessment—assesses are not asked to disclose information about themselves
- Their task is to talk about something else (e.g., inkblots, pictures, sounds)
- Through such indirect responses, the assessor draws inferences about the personality of assesses
- The ability and inclination to "fake" is minimised
- So too is proficiency in the English language—increases cross-cultural utility
- Assumed to tap *conscious* as well as *unconscious* material

Inkblots as Projective Stimuli

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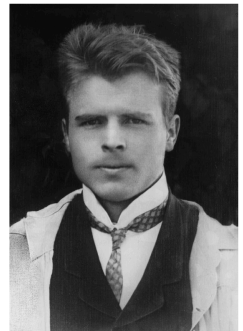
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- Hermann Rorschach (1921) developed what he called a "form interpretation test"
- It has since come to be known as **The Rorschach Test**
- 10 bilaterally symmetrical inkblots printed on white cards
 - Five are achromatic
 - Two are black, white, and red
 - Three are multicoloured
- Inkblots used to incite the testtaker to free-associate
- Responses are then coded according to guidelines



Inkblots as Projective Stimuli

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Stage 1

- The cards are presented in numbered order from 1–10
- Testtaker initially asked "What might this be?"
- Examiner records testtaker's verbatim responses, nonverbal gestures, first response time, position of card etc.
- Examiner does not engage in any discussion at this stage
- Focus is on allowing testtaker to *project*, free from distraction



Inkblots as Projective Stimuli

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Stage 2

- The cards are re-administered in a second stage known as the **inquiry**
- Examiner attempts to determine what features of the inkblot played a role in the formulation of the testtaker's percept
- Examiner asks questions such as "What made it look like [whatever]?" to clarify what was seen
- Goal is to identify which aspects of the inkblot were most influential in forming the perception
- Provides opportunity to detect whether any new responses are perceived



Inkblots as Projective Stimuli

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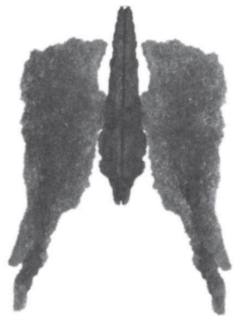
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Stage 3

- In a final stage, known as **testing the limits** the examiner asks specific questions
- Testtaker asked to elaborate on aspects of the inkblot
- The examiner might say "sometimes people use a part of the blot to see something" or "what does this look like?"
- Goal is to obtain additional information concerning personality functioning



Rorschach Scoring Protocols

- Responses scored according to several categories:
 - 1 **Location**
 - part of the inkblot used to form the percept
 - 2 **Determinants**
 - qualities of the inkblot (form, colour, movement) important to a testtaker's percept
 - 3 **Content**
 - content category (human, animal, anatomical figures) of responses
 - 4 **Popularity**
 - frequency with which a response to part of an inkblot has been observed
 - 5 **Form**
 - how well the individuals percept matches the corresponding part of the inkblot

Scoring Categories and Personality

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- The number of whole responses (using the entire inkblot) is associated with *conceptual thought processes*
- Form level is associated with *reality testing*
- Accordingly, psychotic patients are expected to achieve low scores for form level
- Human movement has been associated with *creative imagination*
- Colour responses have been associated with *emotional reactivity*

Rorschach Test: Reliability

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Next Week

- Very difficult to calculate internal consistency reliability
- Test-retest reliability has been observed to be high
- Inter-rater reliability is fairly high (.80)
- So far so good ...

Rorschach Test: Validity

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Next Week

- Accuracy of predictions of future behaviour based on Rorschach scores has been found to be low
- Some of the research has tried to find correlations with self-report personality questionnaires
 - Correlations are very low
 - But is the Rorschach trying to measure conventional personality?
- Criterion group validity studies would be especially useful
 - For example, compare responses from clinically depressed and non-depressed individuals
 - Are there any differences in typical responses?

Rorschach Test: Criticisms

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Next Week

- Sensitive to rater's beliefs
- Suffers from lack of objectivity in scoring
- Absence of adequate norms
- Relation between responses and personality is as ambiguous as the inkblots themselves
- Poor predictive validity

The rate of scientific progress in clinical psychology might well be measured by the speed and thoroughness with which it gets over the Rorschach (Jensen, 1965, p.509)

Other Types of Projective Tests

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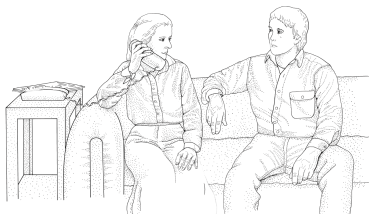
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Next Week

- Pictures as projective stimuli
 - Thematic Apperception Test
- Words as projective stimuli
 - Word Association Test
 - Sentence Completion Test
- Sounds as projective stimuli
 - Like auditory inkblots (Skinner, 1979)
 - Rarely used and little supporting evidence



I like to _____
Someday, I will _____
I will always remember the time _____
I worry about _____
I am most frightened when _____
My feelings are hurt _____
My mother _____
I wish my parents _____

Projective Tests Today

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Next Week

- Though controversial, they are still used in clinical and forensic settings
- There are many contemporary publications advocating the use of the Rorschach
- Responses on the Rorschach are accepted by the courts
- "The rate of scientific progress in clinical psychology" has evidently been a crawl

Personality Assessment Methods

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Next Week

- Objective methods of personality assessment contain short-answer items
- Individuals respond to items, usually on a scale (e.g., agree / disagree)
- May also be complemented with acquaintance-report
- They are objective in the sense that they employ short answer (typically multiple choice) format—provides no room for discretion in scoring
- The most common method of personality assessment by far

Type-Based vs. Trait-Based Approaches

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Next Week

Type-Based

- People can be sorted into categories
- More popular in commercial settings

Trait-Based

- People differ based on stable attributes
- Characteristics lie on a continuum
- Very popular in research settings

Type-Based Approach

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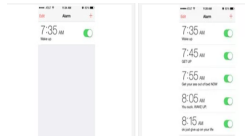
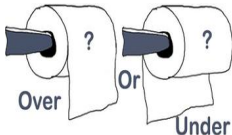
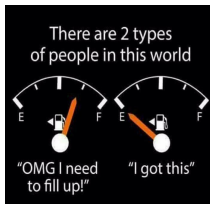
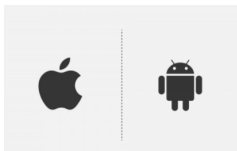
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Next Week

- Group people according to a combination of personality characteristics
- Places emphasis on similarities between people to categorise them
 - e.g., I'm an ENFP, therefore I am similar to other ENFP's

Type-Based Approach

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Next Week

- The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI; Myers & Briggs, 1943/1962)
- Based on the idea that people exhibit *stable* preferences in the way they take in information and make decisions
- Widely popular:
 - Taken by more than 2.5million people a year
 - Used by 89 of Fortune 100 companies

ISTJ Responsible, sincere, analytical, reserved, realistic, systematic. Hardworking and trustworthy with sound practical judgment.	ISFJ Warm, considerate, gentle, responsible, pragmatic, thorough. Devoted caretakers who enjoy being helpful to others.	INFJ Idealistic, organized, insightful, dependable, compassionate, gentle. Seek harmony and cooperation, enjoy intellectual stimulation.	INTJ Innovative, independent, strategic, logical, reserved, insightful. Driven by their own original ideas to achieve improvements.
ISTP Action-oriented, logical, analytical, spontaneous, reserved, independent. Enjoy adventure, skilled at understanding how mechanical things work.	ISFP Gentle, sensitive, nurturing, helpful, flexible, realistic. Seek to create a personal environment that is both beautiful and practical.	INFP Sensitive, creative, idealistic, perceptive, caring, loyal. Value inner harmony and personal growth, focus on dreams and possibilities.	INTP Intellectual, logical, precise, reserved, flexible, imaginative. Original thinkers who enjoy speculation and creative problem solving.
ESTP Outgoing, realistic, action-oriented, curious, versatile, spontaneous. Pragmatic problem solvers and skillful negotiators.	ESFP Playful, enthusiastic, friendly, spontaneous, tactful, flexible. Have strong common sense, enjoy helping people in tangible ways.	ENFP Enthusiastic, creative, spontaneous, optimistic, supportive, playful. Value inspiration, enjoy starting new projects, see potential in others.	ENTP Inventive, enthusiastic, strategic, enterprising, inquisitive, versatile. Enjoy new ideas and challenges, value inspiration.
ESTJ Efficient, outgoing, analytical, systematic, dependable, realistic. Like to run the show and get things done in an orderly fashion.	ESFJ Friendly, outgoing, reliable, conscientious, organized, practical. Seek to be helpful and please others, enjoy being active and productive.	ENFJ Caring, enthusiastic, idealistic, organized, diplomatic, responsible. Skilled communicators who value connection with people.	ENTJ Strategic, logical, efficient, outgoing, ambitious, independent. Effective organizers of people and long-range planners.

Criticisms of The MBTI

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- Very serious concerns have been raised about the psychometric soundness of the MBTI
- The test lacks reliability—specifically test-retest reliability
- It also lacks predictive validity
- Regardless of such criticism, the test (regrettably) remains very popular

Trait-Based Approach

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Next Week

- Examines individual characteristics, each measured separately and more precisely
- Emphasis placed on differences between people
- Subtle differences may be important
- Each person comprises a unique constellation of traits

Trait-Based Approach: How Many Traits?

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- There are thousands of personality descriptive adjectives in the English dictionary (e.g., *affable, agreeable, charming, polite, likeable, arrogant, self-centred, cynical, boastful, pompous, patronising*)
- Often there are too many to use, and there is a lot of overlap
- Thus, there is a need to categorise these traits into a smaller number of groups
- This can be done using data reduction methods like factor analysis or cluster analysis
- Permits identification of the minimum number of variables or factors that account for the inter-correlations in observed phenomena

Trait-Based Approach: The Big Five

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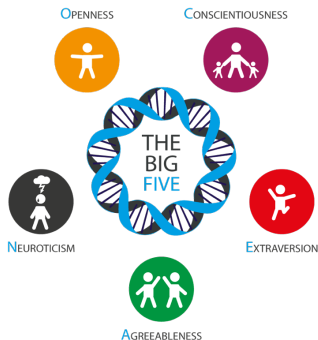
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- Based on a five-dimension (or factor) model of personality
- The NEO PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992) is a measure of five major dimensions (or "domains") of personality and a total of 30 elements or *facets* that define each domain
- It is easily the most dominant model of personality (especially in research)
- **Lexical Approach:** Based on a factor analysis of adjectives in the English dictionary



Trait-Based Approach: The Big Five

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- 1 **O**penness to experience
 - preference for variety, intellectual curiosity
- 2 **C**onscientiousness
 - planning, organising, and following through
- 3 **E**xtraversion
 - assertiveness and proactivity in seeking out others
- 4 **A**greeableness
 - altruism, friendliness, sympathy toward others
- 5 **N**euroticism
 - emotional stability, coping in times of emotional turmoil

Big Five Facts (NEO PI-R)

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NEUROTICISM

- Anxiety
- Angry Hostility
- Depression
- Self-Consciousness
- Impulsiveness
- Vulnerability

EXTRAVERSION

- Warmth
- Gregariousness
- Assertiveness
- Activity
- Excitement-Seeking
- Positive Emotions

OPENNESS

- Fantasy
- Aesthetics
- Feelings
- Actions
- Ideas
- Values

AGREEABLENESS

- Trust
- Straightforwardness
- Altruism
- Compliance
- Modesty
- Tender-Mindedness

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

- Competence
- Order
- Dutifulness
- Achievement Striving
- Self-Discipline
- Deliberation

NEO PI-R Characteristics

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What is
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Projective Methods
Objective Methods
Type-Based
Trait-Based

Next Week

- 5 traits \times 6 facets \times 8 items = 240 items total
- Items are all very face valid
- Anchored by *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5)
- Norms provided for adults (21 and up) and college age individuals (17-20)
- Norms come from 500 men and 500 women (U.S.)

Big Five Validity: Job Performance

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Next Week

- There is a lot of validity for the Big Five personality factors
- Barrick and Mount (1991) examined whether the Big Five could predict job performance across a range of occupations (professional, police, managers, sales, skilled, semi-skilled)
 - **O**penness to experience = .04
 - **C**onscientiousness = .22
 - **E**xtraversion = .13
 - **A**greeableness = .07
 - **N**euroticism = .08

Big Five Validity: Academic Performance

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Next Week

Correlations Between FFM Scales, Intelligence, and Academic Performance

Variable	<i>k</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>r</i>	ρ	<i>d</i>	Grade diff.	ρ , 95% credibility interval		Q^2	f^2	ρ_g
							Lower	Upper			
FFM scale											
Agreeableness	109	58,522	.07	.07	0.14	0.10	-.16	.30	921.7	88.3%	.07
Conscientiousness	138	70,926	.19	.22	0.46	0.31	-.09	.54	1,990.4	93.1%	.24
Emotional Stability	114	59,554	.01	.02	0.03	0.02	-.29	.32	1,563.3	92.8%	.01
Extraversion	113	59,986	-.01	-.01	-0.02	-0.01	-.32	.30	1,599.5	93.0%	-.01
Openness	113	60,442	.10	.12	0.24	0.16	.09	.17	1,028.4	89.1%	.09
Intelligence	47	31,955	.23	.25	0.52	0.35	-.18	.68	1,606.5	97.1%	

Note. All estimates of *r*, ρ , and Q are significant at $p < .001$. FFM = five-factor model; *k* = number of samples; *N* = aggregate sample; *r* = sample-weighted correlation; ρ = sample-weighted correlation corrected for scale reliability; *d* = Cohen's *d*; Grade diff. = *d* expressed as grade difference; Q = Cochran's measure of homogeneity; f^2 = Higgins and Thompson's (2002) measure of heterogeneity; ρ_g = ρ as partial correlation, controlled for intelligence.

Source: Poropat (2009)

Big Five Validity: Academic Performance

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Source: Poropat (2009)

Rater-Report: Reliability Validity

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Next Week

- Multiple raters of the same person tend to provide similar ratings for the same person
- Inter-rater reliabilities for the Big Five dimensions range from .69 to .81
- Consensual validity: correlation between self-report ratings and rater-report ratings for the Big Five dimensions range from .46 to .62

Are Five Factors Enough?

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Next Week

- According to Ashton and Lee (2012) lexical studies got it wrong when they chose five factors
- They found 6 factors → HEXACO
 - **H**onesty-Humility
 - **E**motionality
 - **eX**traversion
 - **A**greeableness
 - **C**onscientiousness
 - **O**penness to experience

The H Factor of Personality

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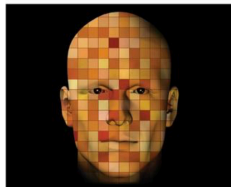
Next Week

- The "H" in the H factor stands for "Honesty-Humility"
- Includes the facets: *Sincerity, Fairness, Greed Avoidance, Modesty*
- People who have high levels of H are sincere and modest
- People who have low levels of H are deceitful and pretentious

KIRRON LEE and MICHAEL C. ASHTON

THE H FACTOR
of PERSONALITY

WHY SOME PEOPLE ARE MANIPULATIVE,
SELF-ENTITLED, MATERIALISTIC, AND EXPLOITIVE—
AND WHY IT MATTERS FOR EVERYONE



The H Factor of Personality

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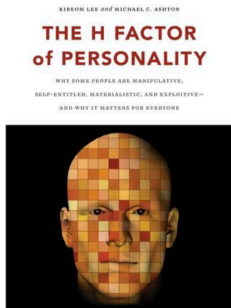
Objective Methods

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Next Week

- H factors shows predictive validity for:
 - Anti-social behaviour at work
 - Academic dishonest behaviour
 - Likelihood to sexually harass women
 - Delinquency and unethical decisions
 - "Dark Triad" personality (narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy)
 - Bullying and aggression
 - Selfish behaviour in games of cooperation



Low Honesty-Humility: A Paradescase?

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Next Week



Summary: Type-Based vs Trait-Based

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Next Week

- Type-Based:
 - Credits: Simple, attractive
 - Debits: Poor predictors, questionable validity, unreliable
 - Example: MBTI
- Trait-Based:
 - Credits: Comprehensive, valid descriptions, valid predictions, reliable
 - Debits: Complex
 - Example: NEO PI-R, HEXACO

Self-Report Caveats

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Next Week

- Social desirability bias
- Faking
- Careless responding
- Can be time-consuming

Remember ...

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Next Week

- Validity is *arguably* the most important issue in evaluating a test's psychometric quality
- We need to be very careful of what we are trying to measure or ascertain when administering a personality test
- For example, the MBTI does not have strong predictive validity in relation to workplace performance, therefore it should not be administered as a recruitment tool
- By contrast, the **O**penness to experience dimension of the Big Five could justifiably be used for such purposes

Extra Resources

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Next Week

- Take the HEXACO here:
 - <http://hexaco.org/hexaco-online>
- Get someone to rate you on the Big Five here:
 - <http://www.outofservice.com/bigfive/>

Next Week ...

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Next Week

- SPSS Lab Exam (yikes ...)
- Final Exam revision