Chapter LII
Eysenck Personality Questionnaire

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BACKGROUND

We describe a newly developed 12-item short form version of the self-report Eysenck personality questionnaire (EPQ), originally developed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1975) and most recently revised by Eysenck, Eysenck, and Barrett (EPQ-R; 1985). The original EPQ consists of 90 items, while the EPQ-R involves 36 items. Both instruments were designed to assess three dimensions of personality: extraversion, neuroticism, psychoticism.

An understanding of the hierarchical model for personality envisaged by Eysenck (1947) facilitates our explication of these personality dimensions. Eysenck’s system involved four levels. At the lowest level of this system are singly occurring acts or cognitions. Habitual acts or cognitions are at the second level. The third level is composed of traits, defined in terms of significant intercorrelations between different habitual behaviors. The final level is that of personality types or dimensions, defined in terms of substantial intercorrelations between traits.

Against this backdrop, Eysenck (see Eysenck, 1990; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985) defined extraversion by the observed correlations between the traits sociable, lively, active, assertive, sensation-seeking, carefree, dominant, and venturesome. Neuroticism was defined by the traits anxious, depressed, guilt feelings, low self-esteem, tense, irrational, shy, moody, and emotional. Finally, psychoticism was defined by the traits aggressive, cold, egocentric, impersonal, impulsive, antisocial, unempathic, and tough-minded.

Weaver and his colleagues (see Richendoller & Weaver, 1994; Weaver, 1991) identified two psychometric aspects of both the original EPQ version and the revised EPQ-R that were potentially problematic. First, in their original design, the instruments solicited dichotomous (i.e., yes, no) responses, thus substantially suppressing variance and raising the question of skewness and kurtosis in the distributions of each personality type subscale. Second, several of the original inventory items involved nomenclature that was not well received by contemporary respondents. Consequently, Weaver and his colleagues modified
the wording of some EPQ-R items in a progressive series of investigation, so to enhance the meaning for respondents and to permit Likert-type scale responses.

**RELIABILITY**

Historically, the extraversion (E), neuroticism (N), and psychoticism (P) subscales of the EPQ-R have displayed acceptable levels of internal consistency reliability (i.e., Cronbach’s Alpha). In their initial presentation of the EPQ-R, Eysenck, Eysenck, and Barrett (1985) reported reliability estimates ranging from .85 to .90 for extraversion, from .85 to .88 for neuroticism, and from .73 to .81 for psychoticism. These initial estimates have proven consistent across a series of more recent investigations using the Weaver modification of the EPQ-R. Five studies employing large samples (n ranging from 635 to 2,466), for example, have yielded reliability estimates ranging from .89 to .91 for E, from .84 to .86 for N, and from .67 to .68 for P (Richendoller & Weaver, 1994; Weaver, 2003; Weaver, 2005; Weaver, Walker, McCord, & Bellamy, 1996; Weaver, Watson, & Barker, 1995).

**VALIDITY**

Extensive arguments concerning the validity of extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism as fundamental dimensions of personality are presented elsewhere (Eysenck, 1990; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985; Zuckerman, Kuhlman, & Camac, 1988; Zuckerman, Kuhlman, Joireman, Teta, & Kraft, 1993). Considerable evidence is provided in these works establishing the distinctiveness of each personality dimension; highlighting unique interrelationships between these personality measures and various cognitive, behavioral, physiological indices; and demonstrating the intercultural applicability of the Eysenck personality questionnaire.

**RESULTS**

In order to develop a personality assessment tool more appropriate for electronic-based research, we derived a short-form version of the EPQ (EPQ-SF) from the Weaver modification of the EPQ-R. Specifically, using a very large sample (males, n = 2,317; females, n = 1,863), responses to the 36-item EPQ-R were solicited on a scale ranging from “Never” (1) to “Always” (5). Factor analysis was then employed to identify 12 items that provided psychometric properties consistent with the longer version.

The resulting EPQ-SF incorporated four items for each of the three personality dimensions. For extraversion, the items included “Are you a talkative person?” “Do you take the initiative in making new friends?” “Are you quiet when you are with other people?” (reversed) and “Do other people think of you as outgoing?” For the neuroticism personality dimension, the items included “Do you ever feel “just miserable” for no reason?” “Are your feelings easily hurt?” “Are you a worrier?” and “Do you feel lonely?” And, for psychoticism, the items included “Do you prefer to go your own way rather than act by the rules?” “Do you enjoy co-operating with others? (reversed)” “Do you try not to be rude to people? (reversed)” and “Would you like other people to be afraid of you?” Responses can be recorded on a Likert-type scale, such as the 5-point scale used in the example.

The reliability estimates for the subscales of the EPQ-SF emerged as consistent with, but weaker than, those typically observed for the EPQ-R. Specifically, for E ($M = 3.5$, $SD = .73$) the reliability estimate was .81, for N ($M = 2.8$, $SD = .72$) it was .69, and for P ($M = 2.1$, $SD = .55$) it was .60. The acceptability of these coefficients must be judged in light of the fact that only four items
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