

PERSONALITY AND PROBLEM SOLVING¹

H. J. EYSENCK

Institute of Psychiatry, University of London

The typical intelligence test may be regarded as an instance of massed practice, and we would consequently expect such phenomena as reactive inhibition to occur (Eysenck, 1957). In view of the relationship between inhibition and extraversion (Eysenck, in press), it seemed reasonable to predict that in the process of solving the 60 problems of the Morrisby Compound Series Test (Morrisby, 1955), a non-verbal intelligence test, extraverts would show greater reactive inhibition, and consequently a falling off in performance during the last quarter of the test as compared with the first three quarters. From 137 adult male and female neurotics, who were given the Maudsley Personality Inventory (Eysenck, 1959), were then chosen an introverted group (E score of 16 or below) and an extraverted group (E score of 30 or above). Nineteen extraverts and 28 introverts were available for testing. They were administered the test individually, without time limit, and each item was separately timed.

There were no differences in the total number of items correctly solved, or in the speed with which all items were finished. There was, however, a significant difference in the speed with which *correct* solutions were produced. On the first 45 problems, introverts were insignificantly slower than extraverts; on the last 15 problems, extraverts were significantly slower than introverts. When we turn to the speed with which items were abandoned unsolved, we find that there were no significant differences on the first 45 problems, but that on the last 15 problems extraverts gave up significantly more quickly. (A one-tail test was used for this comparison because the outcome had been predicted.) It is concluded that extraverts show greater work decrement on an intelligence test by taking longer to obtain correct solutions toward the end of the test, as compared with introverts, and by giving up more easily toward the end.

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