

PERSONALITY AND RECALL ACCURACY OF WITNESSED EVENTS

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The study endeavored to investigate the effects of personality dimension of introversion-extraversion, emotional arousal and types of detail on the recall accuracy of witnessed events. Two video-clipped events followed by two corresponding passages aimed at inducing two levels of emotional arousal were presented to twenty introvert and twenty extravert adolescents age range 15 years 06 mo to 17 yrs 06 mo (M = 16 yrs 06 mo). Their accuracy of recall for central and peripheral details were assessed by multiple choice tests containing the details of video-clipped events and written passages. Introverts showed higher accuracy of recall for central details under both the levels of arousal and the extraverts obtained higher scores for peripheral details under the same experimental conditions. Significant interactions were observed between personality, emotional arousal and types of detail. The results are explained in terms of Eysenck's arousal theory and cognitive patterning theory.

Personality traits a person possesses significantly account for the variations in the nature and the ways his/her cognitive processes are regulated and function in variety of situations. Personality has been conceptualized as a unique way of looking and conceiving the world around. The most popular dimension of personality i.e., introversion and extraversion has been well studied in relation to the performance of various types. Eysenck argued that introverts and extraverts differ in their nature and course of cortical arousability and this difference in their arousability may be assumed to cause variations in their behaviour and various indices of performance. Ward and Loftus (1985) reported that the personality dimensions of introversion/extraversion and sensation/intuition differentially shaped eyewitness performance. In terms of Eysenck's theory, introverts relative to extraverts, showed a difference in performance on recognition test and were more susceptible to different types of post event information. The major theoretical focus by Ward and Loftus was

on the difference in arousal levels of introverts and extraverts such that the former have a poorer initial memory because of higher basal arousal level with a reduced level of confidence in their memory than do extraverts. However no attempt was made by Ward and Loftus (1985) to manipulate arousal. Craig, Humphreys, Rocklin and Revelle (1979) and Craig Lynch (1982) have argued that without manipulating arousal it is difficult to decide whether the performance effect is due to arousal or due to some other processes that are correlated with the individual differences. Eysenck (1957, 1967) argued that the personality dimension of extraversion - introversion is based on differential arousability of cortico-reticular circuit, which includes the cerebral cortex, the thalamus and the ascending reticular activating system. He further argued that this system is more readily aroused in introverts than in extraverts. That is the reason why introverts become more easily aroused and show a higher level of cortical arousal. A person

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