PART - II

ASSESSMENT AND COMPARISON OF THE SELF-CONCEPTS
OF DISCIPLINED AND INDISCIPLINED STUDENTS
CHAPTER - 6

METHOD ADOPTED FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF SELF-CONCEPT

6.1 A Review Of Methods Employed For The Assessment Of Self-Concept

Only a person himself can have immediate knowledge of his self-concept. An observer cannot directly apprehend it since he cannot take over other person's experience. Therefore, the most direct way of assessing a person's self-concept is to ask him to describe it. This self-report technique has been the basis of various tests aiming at the assessment of self-concept. One exposition of this self-report technique in the description of personality and the one which has many attractive features is that of using the language of every day life through words and phrases of common usage. The words themselves, having been taken from every day usage, are immediately meaningful to the individual. A list of such words and phrases can be used as a standard instrument for recording impressions and observations. The list can be made long enough to assume the range and scope of description. A prototype of such a list is an adjective check list.

6.1.1 Adjective Check List Technique

One of the earliest attempts to use the adjective check list technique in a systematic manner was that of Hartshorne and May (1930). They devised a check list of 160 words consisting of 80 pairs of antonyms. Words were related to four types of conduct, i.e., honesty, service,
A study by Allport and Odbert (1936) was a second important step in the history of adjective check list technique. They surveyed English language for all trait-names and words referring to personal behaviour. They prepared a list of 17,953 words inclusive of many synonyms.

The list prepared by Allport and Odbert was too long to be used as a tool for personality assessment. Cattell, in his work on personality structure (1943, 1946) undertook the task of making it manageable. Cattell’s list consisted of 160 words which, according to him, comprised “a kind of basic English for the complete description of personality”. Later, 11 words more were added to the list making a total of 171 words.

But the credit for preparing a standard adjective check list for purposes of research goes to Gough (1952). In his list, Gough had 300 common adjectives arranged alphabetically and the subject was instructed to check all those adjectives he considered to be descriptive of himself. This check list has been extensively used in the personality assessment program directed by MacKinnon at the University of California (MacKinnon 1952, 1958). Besides this, Gough’s adjective check list has been used in its original or modified form in some other studies, such as, a study by Gowan (1955-56) for the screening of teaching candidates.

Sarbin prepared his own check list of adjectives and used it in some of his studies (1952, 1955). He compared the self-concepts of males and females and neurotics and
non-neurotics on this list. On the basis of his study Sarbin (1955) demonstrated effectively that the use of every day adjectives can efficiently differentiate self-conceptions of persons classified according to a clinical variable, a sociological variable, and a social-psychological variable. The experiments included in the study attested to the empirical validity of the adjective checking method. Buss and Gerjuoy (1957), Zuckerman and Monashkin (1957) also employed adjective check list technique in their studies.

6.1.2 Adjective Rating Scales

Within the broad framework of adjective check list method there have been certain variations in eliciting the responses of subjects. Besides the common practice of asking the subjects to check the adjectives describing them, some studies have used adjective rating scales where subject is asked to describe the adjectives applicable to him along a regular continuum wherein subject indicates differing degrees of applicability of an adjective. This was done in order to introduce a measure of fineness in self-evaluation. Adjective rating scales have been used by Bills (1956), Bills, Vance and McLean (1961), as also by Phillips (1961), and Berger (1962). La Forge and Suczek (1955), using the adjective check list method, got intensity scale values for each adjective on a 1-4 scale.

6.1.3 Q-Technique

A good bit of research on the self-concept during recent years has made use of a methodology called Q-sorting.
by William Stephenson (1953), who popularized it. In this technique, the subject is given a set of cards containing statements or trait-names which he has to sort into piles ranging from "most characteristic" to "least characteristic" of himself. To ensure uniform distribution of ratings, a "forced-normal" distribution is used, the subject being instructed to place a specified number of cards in each pile. Q-sorts have been applied to study a variety of psychological problems. An individual may sort the items as they apply to himself and to other persons, such as, his father, his mother, his wife, or, his friends. Similarly, he may sort the items as they apply to himself in different ratings, such as, job, home, or social situations. Q-sorts can likewise be obtained for the individual as he believes he actually is, as he believes others see him, and as he would like to be. Rogers and Dymond (1964) were among the fervent supporters of this technique and employed it in most of their studies. Among other studies employing the Q-technique may be cited the studies conducted by Edelson and Jones (1961) and Hartley (1961). Recently, Deo and Balbir Singh (1965) also conducted a study on self-concepts of successful and unsuccessful teachers, using the Q-technique.

6.1.4 Adjective Check List Versus Q-technique

The use of adjective checking technique, as opposed to Q-sorting, is simpler. Some statistical precision is lost in this way, but the gain in providing the respondent with a method of reporting his reactions much as he would in ordinary discourse, or, in an interview, seems to justify the check
list procedure. Besides, on account of its simplicity the check list technique lends itself readily to a variety of analyses. Gough observes that response forms such as Q-sorts have been tried with adjective lists in the assessment programs at the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research at California. No superiorities sufficient to outweigh the virtues of the simple check list method have yet been discovered (Gough, 1960).

6.1.5 Social Desirability Aspect Of Self-description

Doubts have often been raised regarding the accuracy of self-descriptions. It is said that a person can deliberately or even unconsciously overestimate himself on socially desirable traits and underrate himself on socially undesirable characteristics. This has been observed to be a common tendency. However, in a study Brandt (1958) observed that self-concept is an organized dynamic within the personality structure and whether an individual is accurate or inaccurate in his self-concept seems to depend more on his self-structure than on the specific nature of the perceived characteristics. According to him, it is almost as if the incoming self-percepts regarding a particular characteristic are not associated directly with past percepts of the same characteristic; rather they are related to an organized whole, a perceptual framework, into which past perceptions of all sorts have been integrated. If the total framework is biased in one direction or another, then specific percepts would tend to be biased in the same direction. Hoffman (1923) concluded in his study that individuals tend to show consistency in their degree of
overestimation of the desirable and underestimation of the undesirable traits.

6.2 Technique Adopted For The Assessment Of Self-Concept In The Present Study

After going through the above considerations, the author ultimately decided to employ adjective checking technique for assessing the self-concepts of disciplined and indisciplined students. This was chosen especially in view of the large sample studied. Moreover, it was felt that on account of the nature of this technique students would find the process of checking the self-descriptive adjectives sufficiently interesting and absorbing. Consequently, better co-operation could be got out of the problem-students, since it is difficult to make such students sit on an otherwise serious-natured test. This supposition of the investigator came out to be true in the course of data collection. All categories of students found the test very interesting and they made many enthusiastic queries after the test was over. To compensate for certain weaknesses of the adjective check list method safeguards of anonymity and spontaneity were observed in the administration of the list. These aspects would be dealt in detail in last part of this chapter.

Besides the consideration that adjective checking technique renders things simple for the subjects, there is statistical evidence to justify its use in research. As reported earlier, this technique has been used successfully in very many studies and has yielded striking results in many
cases. Sarbin reported high validity for his list of 200 adjectives which he used to study the self-concepts of males and females, neurotics and non-neurotics (1955) as already mentioned. On the basis of results of this study, Sarbin concluded that "the adjective checking method does distinguish the self-perceptions of persons who are grouped according to meaningful social and psychological variables." He also established the reliability by split-half technique which ranged between .80 and .90. While applying the test-retest technique it was observed that the list showed a satisfactory consistency over a period of 30 days when over 66% of the subjects checked more than 70% of the same words. Gough (1962) has likewise reported a significant reliability co-efficient for his check list of 300 adjectives. He, however, observes (1960) that adjective check list method poses certain problems with respect to reliability because of the stylistic variations in response. That is, subjects tend to employ different descriptive elements in arriving at similar descriptive outcomes. Reliability, in the sense of logical coherence and dependability of the estimates made, would appear to be adequate, but this fact would tend to be concealed by conventional methods of calculating reliability from units of test behaviour. According to Gough, this aspect of the reliability problem could perhaps be brought under control by requiring an intensive rating on each adjective, by requiring a comparison of adjectives, or by other alterations of the response procedure. The objection here, of course, is that the gain in reliability would be attained at the cost of the simplicity and naturalness of use.
which are two of the technique's greatest values (Gough, 1960).

Recently, Deo and Gupta (1963) modified Sarbin's Personality Word List and got a comparative picture of the self-concepts of arts, science, and professional college students. Reliability of this list was found to be .89 which is very high. The author further modified Deo's Self-Concept Word List and used it in an experiment to investigate the influence of praise and blame on change in self-concept (Deo & Bhalla, 1964). This list consisted of 304 adjectives having double set of synonyms and antonyms in it, i.e., there were 76 adjectives with equal number of synonyms and then 76 antonyms with 76 synonyms for these antonyms, thus making a total of 304 adjectives. This was done specifically to make the list applicable to split-half technique. Reliability for this list was as high as .91.

This list was, however, found to be very lengthy and subjects showed some resistance for checking the similar adjectives again and again. So, Deo undertook further revision of the list and ultimately prepared a Personality Word List which was more comprehensive and short as well. It is this revised word list by Deo (1963) which is being used in the present study.

6.3 Deo's Personality Word Lists Instrument Used For The Assessment Of The Self-Concepts Of Disciplined & Indisciplined Students

This Personality Word List is the outcome of a series of attempts cited above to evolve a suitable word list. It consists of 210 adjectives in all including antonyms for most
of the adjectives in the list. These adjectives are supposed to cover all the traits of personality. Adjectives are printed in columns of two on each side of a Card (Appendix C). Brief instructions are given in the centre of one side of the card, while on the other side of the card subject writes down his particulars. Opposite every adjective there is a square in which the subject puts a cross in case he feels that the adjective describes him. This arrangement of adjectives simplifies the task of scoring considerably. Spontaneity and anonymity, as described below, are the other appeals of this word list.

Since the list is of very recent origin, not much work has been done on its standardization. There are, however, a couple of studies in which it has been used. For example, Deo administered this word list for studying the self-concepts of Panjab University students (Deo, 1964) and later in finding out the sex differences in the self-concepts of these students (Deo, 1965). This list was given to nearly 600 subjects in each of the two studies. Deo also carried out a study (1966) on the Omissions and Contradictions in the Self-concepts of Panjab University engineering students. The aim of this study was to find out the consistency in the self-concepts of these students as revealed by the patterns of omissions and contradictions of the adjectives, which is a new approach for judging the consistency in self-concept from adjectives checked.
6.3.1 Reliability Of The Deo's Personality

Wylie (1961), while critically reviewing the reliability studies of self-concept measures, complains that most of the instruments measuring self-concept report only the split-half type of reliability. But research workers agree upon the fact that split-half co-efficients which may be obtained from long lists of items will over-estimate the total reliability of a test over time. Dudek (1952) has demonstrated empirically that this is the case under specified conditions of test length and difficulty. Gulliksen (1950) has cited several studies which also demonstrated empirically that corrected odd-even co-efficients overestimate both test-retest and parallel forms of correlations. Such overestimation is partly due to the fact that split-half co-efficient is free from errors associated with time.

Wylie (1961) states that the co-efficient of stability is the only appropriate estimate when testing an hypothesis which assumes a relationship over time between self-concept and some alleged influence upon the self-concept. Split-half co-efficient is not an adequate substitute for direct empirical exploration of the stability of an instrument over time. On the basis of this evidence Wylie (1961) concludes that so far as empirical work is concerned relatively few test-retest r's are available on the self-concept measures. In fact, stability of self-concept measures remains a major theoretical and empirical problem.
Certain other authors define reliability in terms of consistency of scores on the test. Cronbach (1961) observes that 'reliability always refers to consistency throughout a series of measurements. Dubois (1965) also defines the reliability of a test as 'the degree to which the test yields consistent results either from time to time or through alternate measurements.'

In view of the observations made above, reliability of Deo's Personality Word List was determined in terms of scores on the test over certain specified lengths of time, and consistency of scores of subjects was found out between various administrations of the test. Komal Singh (1966-67) administered Deo's Personality Word List to same subjects four times with time intervals varying between 15 days and 2 months. Reliability co-efficients obtained for these time intervals were in the range of .62 to .86. Highest test-retest co-efficient of .86 was obtained for time interval of one month. Correlations between total scores on the test on different administrations and consistency scores came out to be between .83 and .97. These results suggest that change in the self-concept of subjects with the passage of time did not break the consistency in their self-estimates. Thus, this study establishes a high degree of temporal stability in the self-concept of subjects, as measured by Deo's Personality Word List. The study also establishes a high degree of consistency in the self-concept of subjects on the list over certain specified periods of time.

6.3.2 Validity Of The Deo's Personality Word List

Wylie (1961) states that the type of validity most
needed in the case of self-concept measures is the construct validity. This is necessary because self-concept theories explicitly require that we measure a stated class of variables, S's conscious processes, and by definition S's phenomenal fields are private and beyond direct observation. It is not sufficient, says Wylie, to demonstrate that one's self-concept measures have predictive or concurrent validity. Cronbach and Meehl (1955) also hold the view that the problems of measuring the phenomenal field may be essentially those of establishing construct validity. Garner, Hake, and Eriksen (1956), and Campbell and Fiske (1959) have dealt in detail with the procedures and specifications concerning the establishment of construct or trait-validity. Campbell (1960) emphasizes that the validity of a proposed trait or construct (such as self-concept) should be carefully studied to see if the trait is distinguishable from other traits and whether two or more measures of the trait (by independent methods) tend to agree.

Adams (1964) describes at length various steps to determine the construct validity of a test. Adams goes on to say that the construct validity of a test (as a measure of a hypothesized trait) requires evidence of both convergent and discriminant validity. Correlations between independent measures of the same trait provide evidence of convergent validity, while evidence in support of discriminant validity is provided by the relationships involving different traits measured by the same method (Adams, 1964). Following this approach the construct validity of Deo's Personality Word List was established. For the purpose of determining convergent
validity scores on various traits in Deo's List, such as, Intelligence, Emotional Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Character, and Aesthetic sense, were correlated against the scores on similar traits in the case of another self-concept list evolved by Deo and Walia (1965). The methodology of the two tests was quite different from each other, though both these tests measured the same construct i.e., self-concept. The correlations on the traits common to both the tests were obtained as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait 1</th>
<th>Trait 2</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Adjustment</td>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>Aesthetic Sense</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic Sense</td>
<td>Emotional Adjustment</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Adjustment</td>
<td>Character</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall validity co-efficient of scores on Deo's Personality Word List and Self-concept list of Deo and Walia (1965) was .56.

Discriminant validity of Deo's Personality Word List was determined by means of intercorrelations between various traits measured by Deo's Personality Word List. These intercorrelations within the traits are being reported below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait 1</th>
<th>Trait 2</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence &amp; Social Adjustment</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Adjustment &amp; Aesthetic Sense</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character &amp; Aesthetic Sense</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character &amp; Social Adjustment</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Adjustment &amp; Emotional Adjustment</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence &amp; Emotional Adjustment</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic Sense &amp; Emotional Adjustment</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character &amp; Emotional Adjustment</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence &amp; Aesthetic Sense</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic Sense &amp; Emotional Adjustment</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Campbell and Fiske (1969) write that independent measures of the same trait should correlate higher with each other than with measures of different traits involving the
same construct. In other words, convergent validity coefficients representing correlations between independent measures of the same construct should be higher than the discriminant validity coefficients between different traits measured by same construct. The convergent and discriminant validity coefficients of Deo's Personality Word List, as reported above, fall in line with the specifications made by Campbell and Fiske (1959). On the whole, inter-trait correlations of Personality Word List are much lower than the correlations obtained on convergent validity of the list - but for three or four correlations. Convergent validity coefficients, on the other hand, are fairly high. Thus Deo's Personality Word List satisfies some of the requirements laid down by Campbell and Fiske (1959), and therefore it has a fairly adequate construct validity.