

## **Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)**

Thematic apperception test, more commonly known as TAT, was devised by Morgan and Murray in 1935 in the course of a research programme at the Harvard psychological clinic. TAT is used to discover unconscious and inhibited tendencies. The assumption is that subjects are unaware that they are talking about themselves and thereby the defenses are bypassed. The test material consists of 31 cards, 30 depicting various scenes and one blank card. The pictures are marked in such a way as to indicate four overlapping sets of 20 each, one for boys, one for girls, one for males over 14 years of age and one for females over 14. The TAT pictures depict various situations in which the individual normally moves. It is called a test of imagination.

The experimenter first establishes perfect rapport with the subject and does not disclose the purpose of the test. The subject is asked to sit comfortably in a chair free from external distraction of any kind. Then he is presented one card and the following instructions are given:

“This is a story-telling test. I am going to show you some pictures, one at a time and your task will be to make up as dramatic a story as you can for each. Tell, what has led up to the event shown in the pictures, describe what is happening at the moment, what the characters are feeling and thinking and then give the outcome. Speak your thoughts as they come to your mind. Do you understand?”

Generally the pictures are given in two sessions. The number of pictures depends on age, sex and type of the problem. TAT pictures are administered individually as well as collectively to groups of subjects. The behaviour of the subject as regards his emotional expression, time and turning of test cards is recorded. After the administration of the test cards, an inquiry is made from the

subject to determine the sources of the stories. The total time for each card is recorded.

*Interpretation.* There are many techniques to interpret the TAT stories. None of the techniques is perfectly correct.

General practice to approach the stories is with a background of general knowledge about the person which helps orient the investigator to what is relevant and helps him to rule out various obviously inappropriate hypotheses that otherwise waste his time.

Second, as the skilled interpreter makes himself more and more thoroughly familiar with the stories, he begins to notice divergences which are unusual, rare or repetitive or very intensely stated or accompanied by signs of strong emotions.

Whatever the procedures the investigator follows, he uses the account to generalizing from particulars. He translates the test responses as raw data into statements about aspects of personality. The two rational assumptions that guided Murray's initial work with TAT were that the attributes of the hero or main character in the story represent tendencies in the respondent's own personality and second the characteristics of heroes' environment represent significant aspects of the respondent's own environment.

The stories of TAT are scored in the following manner:

1. Hero of the story.
2. Needs and conflicts of the hero.
3. Unusual responses.
4. Deletion and addition in the pictures.
5. Emotional expression.

*Validity of TAT.* How useful or valid is TAT as a personality assessment procedure? There are two different views: one held by clinical psychologists who are of the opinion that it has a high index of validity and it is a very useful instrument to diagnose mental abnormalities but psychometricians hold the view that validity of TAT is very low because there is lack of standardized procedures and final normative data, low reliabilities, over-enthusiastic and under-critical acceptance of intuitive hunches about the supposed meanings of certain responses.

One problem with TAT is the difficulty of determining whether an indicated need or personality characteristic will be present in the subject's overt behaviour in real life situation as opposed to existing only on the fantasy or unconscious level.

Murstein (1963) summarized the research pertaining the relationship between the judged aggressiveness of the heroes in TAT stories and overt aggressive behaviour of the subject. He concluded that generally the relationship was positive.

## Rorschach Ink Blot Test

Rorschach ink blot projective test is one of the most popular and widely used test. This test was developed by a Swiss psychiatrist named Herman Rorschach in 1921. He conducted research on hundreds of ink blots and finally selected ten ink blots for the test. The test material consists of ten bilaterally symmetrical ink blots on ten separate cards of 11 × 9 inches. Five of the ink blots are black and grey and some are red, black and grey and others are multicoloured.

*Administration.* Before administration of the test cards, perfect rapport with the subject is established. The purpose of the test is not disclosed to the subject. The subject is asked to sit comfortably in a chair free from external distraction. The cards are presented one by one along with a blank on which the subject locates his responses. Then the subject is given instructions. He is asked to look at the ink blot and to say everything that the ink blot looks like or resembles. After the completion of the responses on the cards, the examiner generally conducts an inquiry into the details of the subject's responses on individual cards. The behaviour of the subject during the test is observed and recorded.

*Interpretation of the responses.* To score and interpret Rorschach test records is an exceedingly complicated task which cannot be accomplished without special training. The experimenter first analyses a Rorschach test record by scoring each response in terms of four features as given below:

1. *Location.* The responses of the subject may be:

- (i) W = whole blot.
- (ii) D = major detail.
- (iii) d = Small usual detail.
- (iv) Dd = Unusual detail.
- (v) S = White space.

2. *Determinant.* Form (F), colour (C) or combination of the two (FC, CF), texture and shading, movement in progress of the cards.

3. *Content.* Animal (A), human being (H) and inanimate objects seen by the subject in the cards.

4. *Originality.* Original responses (O) and popular responses (P).

None of the above four categories should be interpreted singly. However, each must be considered in relation to the others. Customarily the interpretations of a Rorschach record are expressed not in concise or statistical manner but in rich descriptive prose. Rorschach test can be used individually and collectively to a group of subjects. A figure resembling Rorschach test is given below to acquaint the readers with the test.

*Reliability of the test.* There are two contradictory views as regards the reliability of the test—one held by clinicians and the other held by psychometricians.