

Personality and Metamemory Judgements in Witnessed Events

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The study examined the effects of two personality types i.e., introversion and extroversion on the two measures of metamemory judgements viz., judgement of learning and judgement of source. Twenty introvert and twenty extravert adolescents watched two video-clipped events followed by two corresponding passages. Their estimates of judgement of learning and judgement of source for central and peripheral details were tested on items of video-clipped events and written passages under low and high levels of emotional arousal. Introverts showed higher percent likelihood of judgements of learning and source for central details while the extraverts exhibited higher likelihood on these measures for peripheral details. A significant interaction effects among personality, arousal and detail type were observed for all the two measures.

Personality significantly interacts with ones various cognitive processes and functioning and thereby influencing the way one carry out various cognitive tasks in different situations of life. Personality make up of an individual has been reported to make differences in his indices of cognitive competence. The responsible factors for differences in cognitive performance of introverts and extraverts have been well documented in research literature. Eysenck (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. This differential arousability is believed to influence many observable behaviours and performance.

It has been shown in many studies that extraverts and introverts possess different cognitive patterning. This assumption has been tested in many studies showing introverts to perform better on some kind of tasks while extroverts doing the same on other kinds of task. In eyewitness situations, the major focus of researchers is to investigate the extent to which accuracy of an eyewitness is affected by different factors associated with the eyewitness situation, the eyewitness and the investigation itself. Ward and Loftus (1985) reported that the personality dimensions of introversion/extraversion and sensation/ intuition differentially shaped eyewitness performance. In their study, they reported that introverts relative to extraverts showed a difference in performance on recognition test and that they were differently susceptible to different types of post event information. They argued that introverts have a poorer initial memory because of higher basal arousal level with a reduced

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