

# This Week's Citation Classic®

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Eysenck H J & Eysenck S B G. *The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975.

The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire is the latest of a series of personality inventories designed to measure the major dimensions of personality, namely, extraversion-introversion, neuroticism-stability, and psychoticism-super-ego control. This system of personality description is linked with a general theory of personality and has given rise to many experimental attempts to verify predictions from that theory.<sup>1</sup> Many of these predictions relate behaviour to physiological and hormonal causes and postulate genetic predispositions. [The *SCI*® and *SSCI*® indicate that this book has been cited in over 770 publications.]

## An Improvement on Personality Inventory

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I started work on personality during the war, working at the Mill Hill Emergency Hospital for psychiatric war casualties. As an experimental psychologist, I was very suspicious of personality inventories, because of their apparent subjectivity, the contradictory results that had been reported, and the poor methodology that characterized their use. However, when I constructed the Maudsley Medical Questionnaire<sup>2</sup> after my transfer to the Maudsley Hospital, as a measure of neuroticism (N), I found it so useful, practically and theoretically, that I became convinced of the usefulness of such instruments as long as they were developed by the experimental testing of deductions

from a theoretical framework and were constructed in line with the best traditions of psychometrics. The original inventory was never published independently, but later on I published the Maudsley Personality Inventory,<sup>3</sup> which added an extraversion scale to the N scale.

This inventory was successful, but it needed improvement, and together with my wife, Sybil, I set about to produce the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI), which added a lie (dissimulation) scale and appeared in two forms, A and B, to allow easier comparisons and retests. There was a third major dimension of personality that I had originally postulated,<sup>2</sup> but I did not think that this would be accessible through questionnaires. Sybil disagreed and was proved right; together we produced the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), which added a psychoticism (P) scale and completed my original plan. This scale had some psychometric weaknesses and has since been improved<sup>4</sup> to produce the EPQ-R, which will presently be commercially available.

The EPQ has been used in translation in 35 countries all over the world, from Uganda to the USSR, from mainland China to the US, and has been found to give practically identical factor solutions when analysed. Its use has grown with the increasing support given to the underlying theory by many experimental studies; also useful were demonstrations of its predictive power in relation to education, criminality, accident proneness, mental disease, and many other applied fields. Its development owes much to Sybil, who has been mainly responsible for the successful transition from EPI to EPQ. It is unique in being part of a hard-nosed, testable theory; as Kurt Lewin said: "There is nothing as practical as a good theory!" Maybe that is why these inventories have been cited and used so frequently.

1. Eysenck H J & Eysenck M W. *Personality and individual differences—a natural science approach*. New York: Plenum Press, 1985. 424 p. (Cited 125 times.)
2. Eysenck H J. *The scientific study of personality*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952. 320 p. (Cited 365 times.)
3. ———. *The Maudsley Personality Inventory*. London: University of London Press, 1959. (Cited 675 times.)
4. Eysenck S B G, Eysenck H J & Barratt P. A revised version of the psychoticism scale. *Pers. Individ. Differ.* 6:21-9, 1985. (Cited 40 times.)

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