



# Background information - personality research

## Personality

Personality defines in what ways people differ. Genetic disposition and life experience, especially in childhood and adolescence, result in an individual brain function that is relatively stable until the end of life. It determines how we perceive, decide and behave. It defines our personality.

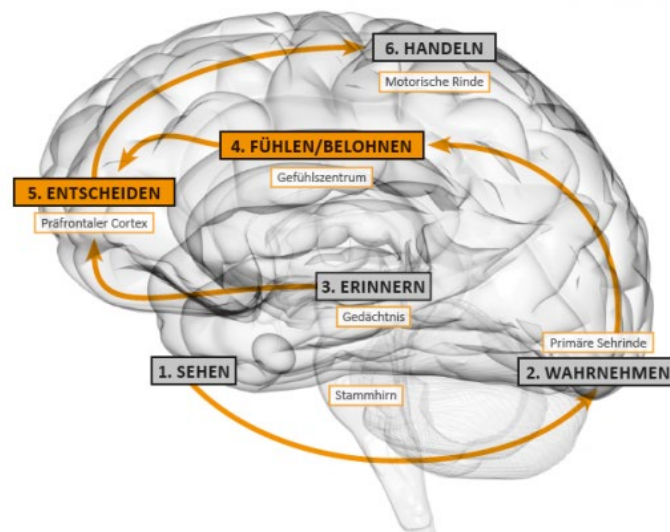
Depending on the individual brain function, personality manifests itself in a variety of psychological aspects. The well-founded tests that we use in our Applied Assessment of Personality (AAP), reveal the characteristics essential for professional life:

- basic personality traits due to the central brain systems' characteristics
- self-management skills
- conscious and unconscious motives
- cognitive skills.

By comparing these characteristics with the requirements of a job profile, the ideal fit between an applicant's personality and a position can be determined.

## Conscious and unconscious

Only about 5-15% of all processes in the brain take place in the regions that enable consciousness. Personality, which results from the entire brain structure, thus must remain unconscious to a large extent, too.





Daniel Kahneman was awarded the Nobel Prize for his current research into the dominance of the unconscious. In his bestseller "Thinking, Fast and Slow," he explains the impressive dominance of the unconscious in almost all areas of life - including business - in a variety of examples. Today, there is a consensus in research that up to 95% of a decision-making process - also in case of a personnel or purchase decision - takes place in the unconscious.

The significant advantage of the AAP (Applied Assessment of Personality) lies in its sophisticated tests, which focus on visualizing unconscious personality components. In addition, they enable a comparison between a person's conscious self-image and their unconscious mechanisms. **Overall, this results in a much more comprehensive understanding of personality than other common tests.**

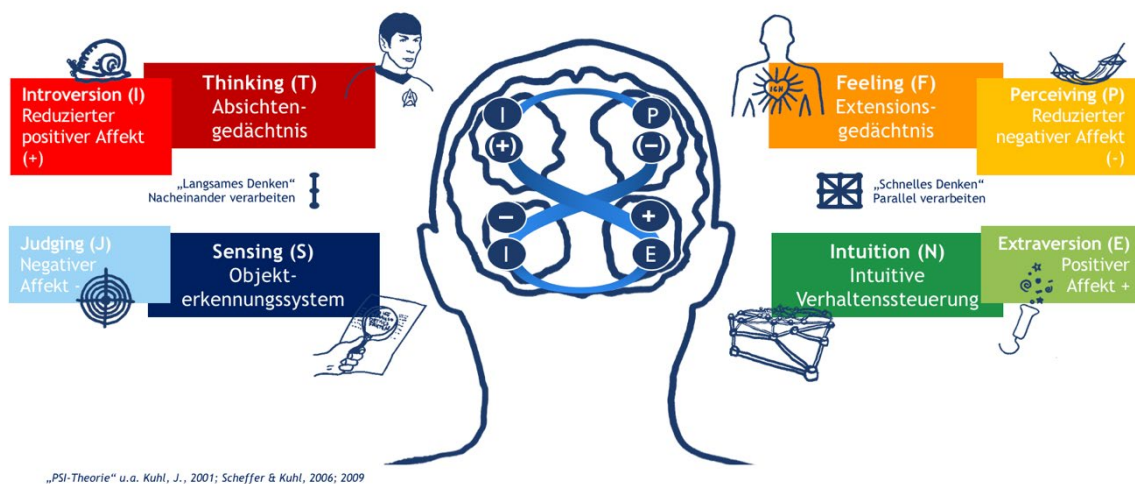
All the tests used are based on our own decades of research, on the extensive, world-leading personality theory of Prof. Dr. Julius Kuhl and on further central findings in psychology such as the System 1 and 2 thinking of Daniel Kahneman.

### The central brain systems

Based on the PSI theory, a comprehensive systemic personality theory by Julius Kuhl in the tradition of C.G. Jung, we fundamentally assume four basic systems in the brain. Their individual expression and activation provide the central dimensions for a valid and sustainable personality profile.

### The action control model according to J.Kuhl

#### PSI-Theorie nach J. Kuhl als fundamentale Basis





## Feeling - the Extension Memory

The extension memory is a finely branched neuronal network in the anterior region of the brain's right hemisphere. Here, our life experiences are made accessible holistically, combined with associated feelings. It compares what we are currently experiencing with our past experiences, evaluates it emotionally and thus helps us form goals that correspond to us. Jung called this function **FEELING**.

## Thinking - the Intention Memory

The task of the intention memory in the anterior region of the left hemisphere is mainly to form concrete intentions and develop plans to help achieve the goals from the extension memory. Its function is comparatively sequential and linear. It ensures logical thinking and concentration and is thus a prerequisite for slow System 2 thinking in the sense of Kahneman: Jung's **THINKING**.

## Intuition - Intuitive Behavior Control

Intuitive Behavior Control (IBC) in the rear section of the right hemisphere ensures the conversion of plans into action. It is responsible for rapid action and unconscious routines. Jung called the system **INTUITION**.

## Sensing - Object Recognition System

The object recognition system (ORS) is located in the posterior region of the left hemisphere. As its name suggests, its basic function is object recognition. It focuses on details, detects errors and thus checks the results of action. Jung calls this system **SENSING**.

## Das Modell nach C. G. Jung



u.a. Jung, C. G. (2008). Typologie. München: dtv.  
u.a. Briggs Myers, I. & Myers, P.B. (1995). Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Type. Boston: Davies-Black Publishing.



## The VIST – the Visual, Implicit Skillster Test

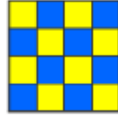
One instrument these systems can be measured with is the VIST. It is based on visual items and thus measures the predominantly unconscious structure of personality.

By far the most data reaches the brain via the visual sense: 10,000,000 bits/ second. Only a small fraction of it, namely 40 bits/ second, penetrate to consciousness. That's 0.0004%.

		bewusst	unbewusst
	Tastsinn	5 Bits/sec.	1.000.000 Bits/sec.
	Ohr	30 Bits/sec.	100.000 Bits/sec.
	Auge	40 Bits/sec.	10.000.000 Bits/sec.

A visual personality test cannot be deceived. If you choose the image you like better, it gives a safe indication of your - unconscious - individual level of development of the central brain systems.

What you like better is a question of personality. The fact that people have different preferences for the perception of visual stimuli depending on their personality is not news: taste is individual. The choice of simple images based on specific personality traits allows conclusions to be drawn about the individual brain structure.



The advantage over a test with linguistic questions is obvious. In contrast to image perception, linguistic expression predominantly occurs consciously. A linguistic test first and foremost recalls how we think we are. Often, however, this corresponds to more wishful thinking or supposed expectations that others have of us - and less to our predominantly unconscious personality.

What the VIST cannot measure, however, is the connection between different cognitive systems and thus also not self-control. We also use various instruments from Julius Kuhl's work to measure important unconscious and conscious motives.

### **Self-control**

Self-control describes the ability to change one's thoughts, feelings and moods according to the situation. The actual implementation of a goal is largely dependent on the ability to control oneself.

Whether someone remains able to act and make decisions in complex or difficult situations, for example, or actively tackles new tasks even after failures, are essential factors for professional success. Concentration and target management also depend on good self-control mechanisms.

### **Motives**

Motives are a central element of personality. They are the drivers that motivate us to act and determine the way we act: They tell us, for example, whether we primarily want to be close to other people, attach great importance to power and influence, or whether it is the striving for achievement that drives us.

We use tests to measure implicit and explicit motives. This also ensures a comparison between a person's conscious and unconscious motivations.

### **Cognitive performance**

Overall, a person's cognitive performance and thinking power is an important predictor of professional success.



### **Further information about VIST and frequently asked questions:**

The VIST is a culture-neutral, largely language-free test (only the test instructions must be understood) which validly represents the basic personality structure from adolescence onwards.

As a visual test, the VIST also enables the measurement of unconscious aspects of personality. Linguistic tests, in contrast, only measure conscious self-perception.

It is difficult for test persons to guess what the ViQ ® images measure. This makes the VIST unpredictable and more objective than a linguistic test.

The VIST allows valid statements to be made about a person's perception, decision-making and action preferences and only takes a maximum of 10 minutes, making it significantly faster and more efficient than most common tests.

Compared to conventional questionnaires and sociodemographic variables, the VIST explains up to three times more variance in the behaviour of people in different areas (shopping behaviour, work behaviour, assessment centre, etc., see Scheffer & Manke, 2009). The VIST provides valuable additional information that test participants are only partially aware of.

The VIST is the result of 17 years of research. It meets all common quality criteria and has representative norm samples. The VIST has been an integral part of the various assessment centers of the Nordakademie Elmshorn for 16 years. Further research projects were carried out with TU Berlin, Helmut Schmidt University of the Federal Armed Forces Hamburg, the University of Trier and the University of Applied Sciences HTW Chur.

In more than 450 professional projects, the VIST produced valid results from individual and group evaluations. Renowned consulting institutes such as the cantonal Swiss career guidance agencies or the human resources consultancy Rochus Mummert Excellent Human Resources use the test. OTTO, Tchibo, Swisscom, Swiss Post, Vodafone, DATEV and others used the VIST for insights into the core personality of their target groups. A total of more than 1 million people worldwide have already completed the VIST.

Due to its simplicity and playful use of images, the VIST enjoys great popularity. The appreciative and well-founded type descriptions in the evaluation are well-received. Since the test is both appealing and also meets high scientific standards, it is used in a wide variety of fields: in personnel selection and development, in group settings (schools, teams, sports teams), as a pleasant introduction to coaching and consulting, and as a personality-oriented target group insight in marketing, communication and customer experience.



## Psychometric Quality Criteria of the VIST

The stability (retest reliability) of the dimensions of the VIST after 12 months is between  $r = .70$  and  $.91$ . This means that a person who is tested again after one year is very likely to have the same result. The character of a person can thus be measured in a stable way. At the same time, the result also shows that personality is not 100% rigid, but can be changed or specifically developed through certain life events.

Internal consistency measures the extent to which different questions, which are to measure the same topic, also have a high correlation among them. For example, if six questions are asked about the need for security, a person with a high need for security should achieve a high score on all six questions. The internal consistencies of the VIST are between Cronbach's Alpha  $= .70$  and  $.86$ , depending on the sample. These are very good values.

Validity examines whether a test measures what it should measure. In order to determine whether the VIST measures validly as an implicit test, it was compared with explicit, i.e. linguistic tests that measure similar personality traits: with the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, the California Personality Inventory (Gough) and the NEO Five Factor Inventory (Costa & McCree). The correlations lie between  $r = .30$  and  $.50$ . A conclusive result when comparing an implicit with an explicit procedure.

The VIST is based on the personality system interaction theory (PSI theory) of the personality psychologist Prof. Dr. Julius Kuhl (2001; see also Scheffer & Kuhl, 2006; 2009) and the type theory of C.G. Jung. Four cognitive systems and two affect systems result in six scales or dimensions for the VIST. The construct validity could be demonstrated by high correlations with the SCAN scales of Julius Kuhl.

The independence of the six dimensions of the VIST could be confirmed in explorative factor analyses in different samples - also in other western countries (USA, France, Italy, Spain, England, Russia and Turkey) and in China. This means intercultural proof that the different dimensions also measure different things.

### What does the ViQ measure?

The VIST measures six different personality dimensions that provide information about which type of absorption and processing of information a person prefers. All in all, a picture emerges of individual strengths and weaknesses as well as perceptual preferences.

The first dimension considers where persons get their energy from. If they are extroverted, they can be stimulated more from outside (by other people or stimuli like nature, art, books), if they are introverted, they draw their energy more from within (reflection, self-reflection).





The second dimension considers preference in perception. Sensing types prefer a lot of information, can perceive details well, quickly detect discrepancies. Intuitive types have an eye for the big picture, can infer a lot from less information, form creative ideas.

The third dimension captures the preference for decision making. If the thinking dominates, people make their decisions more on the basis of logic and analysis and acts systematically and goal-oriented. If the feeling dominates, they decide experience-oriented and act rather flexibly and imaginatively.

The last dimension describes the interaction with the environment. Judging types prefer a structured and rule-oriented approach. They make decisions easily, are persistent and persevere. Perceiving types live process-oriented, flexibly integrate new information and can adapt.

The combination of these dimensions results in type profiles which, depending on their characteristics, lead to certain behaviour patterns. The VIST thus enables a good approach to a person's preferences such as professional inclinations, character strengths and weaknesses, leadership, stress, team, conflict, learning and communication behaviour.

### **Nearly all agree with their result**

Almost all investigations show that approx. 90% agree strongly with their result.

### **What does it mean if the test result only seems to fit in part?**

There is either a discrepancy between the conscious self-image and the implicit personality, or the opposite dimensions are similarly high, so that a clear assignment to a type is difficult. In this case, it is easy for a person to switch between the characteristics of two dimensions.

Darüber hinaus misst der visuelle Test Ihre unbewusste Persönlichkeit. Dadurch ist er unter Umständen objektiver als Sie selbst es sind. Wenn Sie sich selbst beschreiben sollen, kann Ihre Einschätzung getrübt sein von eigenen Wunschvorstellungen oder den vermeintlichen Erwartungen, die andere oder die Gesellschaft an Sie haben. Vielleicht fragen Sie einmal Freunde oder Familie, wie passend sie Ihr implizites Testergebnis einschätzen. Wenn Sie eine Zeit lang über sich reflektieren, kann das Ergebnis an Plausibilität gewinnen.

In addition, the visual test measures your unconscious personality. This may make him more objective than you are yourself. If you are to describe yourself, your assessment may be clouded by your own aspirations or the supposed expectations that others or society have of you. Maybe you could ask friends or family how appropriate they deem





your implicit test result. If you reflect about yourself for a while, the result may become more plausible.

Finally, of course, a personality test does not measure your individuality in all its facets. The more you pay attention not only to the type, but also to the characteristics of the individual dimensions, the more differentiated your reading of the VIST result will be. A trained VIST profiler can give you good feedback on this.

### **How can my test result help me in everyday life?**

The test helps you to learn more about yourself, your strengths and development potential. You may also learn something about why you behave differently in certain situations from other people and vice versa.

Above all, the test result can help you create a fit between the conscious self-concept and implicit personality. This is very important for emotional well-being and success in private and professional life. Activities that do not correspond to the unconscious self rob energy and generate demotivation, whereas activities that correspond to one's own inclinations are fun! The probability of doing a job that one likes well is much higher.

### **What is more important in everyday life - conscious self-assessment or implicit personality?**

Both are important. The conscious self-concept allows us to express how we see ourselves, how we want to be. Of course, this has many consequences. The unconscious mechanisms of personality, however, form the deep core from which our being-so originates. It has a decisive influence on our feelings, thoughts and actions. This is where a large part of our self is located.

### **Does the test result pigeonhole people?**

Each person is unique regarding his or her individual dynamics. The VIST result says something about the core of our implicit personality - about our unique brain's preferred systems for data processing and behavioral coordination in the above-mentioned six dimensions. Thus, the result is a kind of appropriate simplification.

### **How can personality be captured through images?**

This is based on 17 years of research by a team of psychologists and designers led by Prof. Dr. David Scheffer, Partner at fbtk Global. They have discovered that simple images can be constructed that allow conclusions to be drawn about implicit personality. The fact that people have different preferences for the perception of visual stimuli depending on their personality is not news: taste is individual. Up to 95% of the processing of visual data takes place in the areas of the brain that lie "in the unconscious". Therefore, the



individual brain structure can be inferred from the choice of a simple image conceived on the basis of individual personality traits.

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