



[Academic Script]

Personality

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Academic Script

1. Introduction

- Personality and different factors shaping personality
- Measuring Personality
- Personality traits relevant to Organizational Behaviour

Personality

Personality refers to a wide range of individual attributes that distinguish people from one another. Personalities shape our behaviours. So if we want to better understand behaviour of someone, it helps if we know something about his or her personality.

Understanding personality is useful both, to the individual as well as to the organizations. Personality is useful concept for organisation as it helps managers make hiring decisions, team selection and promotions. Individuals benefit from understanding their own personality by increasing their self-awareness, being better able to understand others, and interpersonal relationships.

Personality

Personality is a dynamic concept describing the growth and development of a person's whole psychological system.

The definition of personality we most frequently use was produced by Gordon Allport nearly 70 years ago. He said personality is "the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment. Personality is the sum total of ways in which an individual reacts to and interacts with others.

We most often describe it in terms of the measurable traits a person exhibits.

2. Factors Shaping Personality

An early debate in personality research centered on whether an individual's personality was the result of heredity or of environment. Clearly, there's no simple black-and-white answer. Personality appears to be a result of both hereditary and environmental factors. However, it might surprise you that research has tended to support the importance of heredity over the environment.

Heredity refers to factors determined at conception. Physical stature, facial attractiveness, gender temperament, muscle composition and reflexes, energy level, and biological rhythms are generally considered to be either completely or substantially influenced by who your parents are—that is, by their biological, physiological, and inherent psychological makeup. The heredity approach argues that the ultimate explanation of an individual's personality is the molecular structure of the genes, located in the chromosomes.

The effects of heredity and environment on within-individual human development are so intertwined that we cannot separate the two. Genetic effects are also environmental because they emerge in an environment, and environmental effects are also genetic because they are mediated by biological processes.

Researchers in many different countries have studied thousands of sets of identical twins who were separated at birth and raised separately. If heredity played little or no part in determining personality, you would expect to find few similarities between

the separated twins. But twins raised apart have much in common.

For almost every behavioural trait, a significant part of the similarity between them turns out to be associated with genetic factors. One set of twins separated for 39 years and raised 45 miles apart were found to drive the same model and colour car. They chain-smoked the same brand of cigarette, owned dogs with the same name, and regularly vacationed within three blocks of each other in a beach community 1,500 miles away. Researchers have found that genetics accounts for about 50 percent of the personality similarities between twins and more than 30 percent of the similarities in occupational and leisure interests.

This is not to suggest that personality never changes. An analogy to intelligence may make this clearer. Children become smarter as they age, so nearly everyone is smarter at age 20 than at age 10. Still, if Amita is smarter than Rajesh at age 10, she is likely to be so at age 20, too.

3. Measurement of Personality

We can visualize personality as a set of patterns created by interactions between the genetic, biological, psychological and cultural influences. Personality characteristics can help top managers successfully differentiate their organizations from competitors through innovation, job and life satisfaction. This highlights the importance of understanding the different dimensions of personality and their measurement.

1. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is the most widely used personality assessment instrument in the world. It is a 100-question personality test that asks people how they usually feel or act in particular situations. On the basis of their answers, individuals are classified as:

Extravert or Introverted (E or I)

Sensing or Intuitive (S or N)

Thinking or Feeling, (T or F)

Judging or Perceiving (J or P)

These terms are defined as follows:

- Extraverted (E) versus Introverted (I): Extraverted individuals are outgoing, sociable, and assertive. Introverts are quiet and shy.
- Sensing (S) versus Intuitive (I). Sensing types are practical and prefer routine and order. They focus on details. Intuitive rely on unconscious processes and look at the "big picture."
- Thinking (T) versus Feeling (F). Thinking types use reason and logic to handle problems. Feeling types rely on their personal values and emotions.
- Judging (J) versus Perceiving (P). Judging types want control and prefer their world to be ordered and structured. Perceiving q/pes are flexible and spontaneous.

These classifications together describe 16 personality types, with every person identified with one of the items in each of the four pairs. Let's explore several examples.

- Introverted /Intuitive/Thinking/Judging people (INTJs) are visionaries. They usually have original minds and great drive

for their own ideas and purposes. They are skeptical, critical, independent, determined, and often stubborn.

- ESTJs are organizers. They are realistic, logical, analytical, and decisive and have a natural head for business or mechanics. They like to organize and run activities.
- The ENTP type is a conceptualizer, innovative, individualistic, versatile, and attracted to entrepreneurial ideas. This person tends to be resourceful in solving challenging problems but may neglect routine assignments.

The MBTI is widely used by organizations including Apple Computer, AT&T, Citigroup, GE, 3M Co., many hospitals and Educational institutions, and even the US Armed Forces. In spite of its popularity evidence is mixed about the MBTI's validity as a measure of personality-with most of the evidence suggesting it isn't.

One problem is that it forces a person into either one type or another (that is, you're either introverted or extraverted). There is no in-between, though people can be both extraverted and introverted to some degree. The best we can say is that the MBTI can be a valuable tool for increasing self-awareness and providing career guidance.

2. The Big Five personality Model

The MBTI may lack strong supporting evidence, but the same can't be said for the Big Five Model. An impressive body of research supports its thesis that five basic dimensions underlie all others and encompass most of the significant variation in human personality. The following are the Big Five factors:

1. Extraversion: The extraversion dimension captures our comfort level with relationships. Extraverts tend to be gregarious, assertive, and sociable. Introverts tend to be reserved, timid, and quiet.

2. Agreeableness: The agreeableness dimension refers to an individual's propensity to defer to others. Highly agreeable people are cooperative, warm, and trusting.

People who score low on agreeableness are cold, disagreeable, and antagonistic.

3. Conscientiousness: The conscientiousness dimension is a measure of reliability. A highly conscientious person is responsible, organized, dependable, and persistent. Those who score low on this dimension are easily distracted, disorganized, and unreliable.

4. Emotional stability: The emotional stability dimension-often labelled by its converse, neuroticism-taps a person's ability to withstand stress. People with positive emotional stability tend to be calm, self-confident, and secure. Those with high negative scores tend to be nervous, anxious, depressed, and insecure.

5. Openness to experience: The openness to experience dimension addresses range of interests and fascination with novelty. Extremely open people are creative, curious, and artistically sensitive. Those at the other end of the openness category are conventional and find comfort in the familiar.

4. Important personality traits relevant to Organizational Behaviour

Now we'll look at other, more specific, attributes that are powerful predictors of behaviour in organizations. The first relates to our core self-evaluation. The others are

Machiavellianism, narcissism, self-monitoring, propensity for risk taking, and the Type A and proactive personalities.

1. Core Self-evaluation:

People who have positive core self-evaluations like themselves and see themselves as effective, capable, and in control their environment. Those with negative core self-evaluations tend to dislike themselves, question- their capabilities, and view themselves as powerless over their environment.

People with positive core self-evaluations perform better than other because they set more ambitious goals, are more committed to their goals, and persist longer in attempting to reach these goals. One study of life insurance agents found core self-evaluations were critical predictors of performance. Ninety percent of life insurance sales calls end in rejection, so an agent has to believe in him or herself to persist. In fact, this study showed the majority of successful salespersons did have positive core self-evaluation. Such people also provide better customer service, are more popular co-workers, and have careers that both begin on better footing and ascend more rapidly over time.

2. Machiavellianism :

Kuzi is a young bank manager in Taiwan. He's had three promotions in the past 4 years and makes no apologies for the aggressive tactics he's used to propel his career upward. "I'm prepared to do whatever I have to do to get ahead" he says. Kuzi would properly be called Machiavellian.

Priyanka led her Mumbai-based company last year in sales performance. She's assertive and persuasive, and she's effective at manipulating Customers to buy her product line. Many of her colleagues, including her boss, consider Priyanka Machiavellian.

The personality characteristic of Machiavellianism (often abbreviated Mach) is named after Niccolo Machiavelli, who wrote in the sixteenth century on how to gain and use power. An individual high in Machiavellianism is pragmatic, maintains emotional distance, and believes ends can justify means. "If it works, use it" is consistent with a high-Mach perspective. A considerable amount of research has related high- and low-Mach personalities to behavioural outcomes.

High Machs flourish,

1. When they interact face to face with others rather than indirectly.
2. When the situation has a minimal number of rules and regulations, allowing latitude for improvisation.
3. When emotional involvement with details irrelevant to winning distracts Low Machs.

Thus, whether high Machs make good employees depends on the type of job.

3. Narcissism

Sunil likes to be the centre of attention. He looks at himself in the mirror a lot, has extravagant dreams, and considers himself a person of many talents. Sunil is a narcissist. The term is from the Greek myth of Narcissus, a man so vain and proud he fell in love with his own image. In psychology, narcissism describes a person who has a grandiose sense of self-importance, requires excessive admiration, has a sense of entitlement, and is arrogant.

Narcissists often want to gain the admiration of others and receive affirmation of their superiority, they tend to "talk down"

to those who threaten them, treating others as if they were inferior. Narcissists also tend to be selfish and exploitive and believe others exist for their benefit. Their bosses rate them as less effective at their jobs than others, particularly when it comes to helping other people.

4. Self-Monitoring

Smita Nair is always in trouble at work. Though she's competent, hardworking, and productive, in performance reviews she is rated no better than average, and she seems to have made a career of irritating bosses. Smita's problem is that she's politically inept. She's unable to adjust her behaviour to fit changing situations. As she puts it, "I'm true to myself. I don't remake myself to please others." We would describe Smita as a low self-monitor.

Self-monitoring refers to an individual's ability to adjust his or her behaviour to external, situational factors. Individuals high in self-monitoring show considerable adaptability in adjusting their behaviour to external situational factors. They are highly sensitive to external cues and can behave differently in different situations. High self-monitors are capable of presenting striking contradictions between their public persona and their private self. Low self-monitors, like Smita, can't disguise themselves in that way. They tend to display their true dispositions and attitudes in every situation; hence, there is high behavioural consistency between who they are and what they do.

Evidence indicates high self-monitors pay closer attention to the behaviour of others and are more capable of conforming than are low self-monitors. They also receive better performance ratings, are more likely to emerge as leaders, and show less

commitment to their organizations. In addition, high self-monitoring managers tend to be more mobile in their careers, receive more promotions (both internal and cross-organizational), and are more likely to occupy central positions in an organization

5. Risk Taking

Dhirubhai Ambani, the founder of the Reliance Group, was the second son of a school teacher and started his entrepreneurial career by selling pakoras to pilgrims in Mount Girnar. At the age of 17, Dhirubhai went to Aden (now part of Yemen) and worked for A. Besse & Co. Ltd., the sole selling distributor of Shell products. In 1958, Dhirubhai Ambani started his first company, Reliance Commercial Corporation (involved in trading and export), in Mumbai in a 350-sq. ft. office. He started his own company in 1965, and in

1966, he set up a textile mill in Ahmedabad. The rest is history. As they say, Dhirubhai Ambani was successful because of his phenomenal risk-taking ability and his belief in taking on and managing calculated risks. When he ventured into the backward integration project of setting up a plant to produce fiber intermediate, purified terephthalic acid (PTA), in the mid-1980s, he was taking on established businesses and businessmen. In the 1980s and 1990s, all capital intensive projects were very risky but he never shied from taking such risks and inspiring his people to move forward.

A high risk-taking propensity may lead to more effective performance for a stock trader in a brokerage firm because that type of job demands rapid decision making. On the other hand,

a willingness to take risks might prove a major obstacle to an accountant who performs auditing activities. The latter job might be better filled by someone with a low risk-taking propensity.

6. Type A Personality

Do you know people who are excessively competitive and always seem to be experiencing a sense of time urgency? If you do, it's a good bet those people have Type A personalities. A person with a Type A personality is "aggressively involved in a chronic, incessant struggle to achieve more and more in less and less time, and, if required to do so, against the opposing efforts of other things or other persons. In today's competitive times, such characteristics tend to be highly prized and positively associated with ambition and the successful acquisition of material goods. Type A's exhibit the following characteristics:

- Are always moving, walking, and eating rapidly
- Feel impatient with the rate at which most events take place.
- Strive to think or do two or more things at once.
- Cannot cope with leisure time.
- Are obsessed with numbers, measuring their success in terms of how many or how much of everything they acquire

The Type B is exactly the opposite, "rarely worried by the desire to obtain a wildly increasing number of things or participate in an endless growing series of events in an ever-decreasing amount of time. Type B's never suffer from a sense of time urgency with its accompanying impatience, can relax without guilt, and so on.

7. Proactive Personality

Did you ever notice that some people actively take the initiative to improve their current circumstances or create new ones? These are proactive personalities. Those with a proactive personality identifies opportunities, show initiative, take action, and persevere until meaningful change occurs, compared to others who passively react to situations.

Proactiver creates positive change in their environment, regardless of, or even in spite of, constraints or obstacles. Not surprisingly, they, have many desirable behaviours that organizations covet. They are more likely than others to be seen as leaders and to act as change agents within an organization. Other actions of proactives can be positive or negative, depending on the organization and the situation. Proactives are more likely to challenge the status quo or voice their displeasure when situations aren't to their liking.

As individuals, proactives are more likely than others to achieve career success. They select, create, and influence work situations in their favour. They seek out job and organizational information, develop contacts in high places, engage in career planning, and demonstrate persistence in the face of career obstacles.

5. Summary

Personality refers to a wide range of individual attributes that distinguish people from one another. Understanding personality is useful both, to the individual as well as to the organizations. Personality is useful concept for organisation as it helps managers make hiring decisions, team selection and promotions. Individuals benefit from understanding their own personality by increasing their self-awareness, being better able to understand others, and interpersonal relationships,

The factors that shape personality are Heredity and Environment. Measurement of Personality is done through the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Big Five personality Model. Personality is closely related to the special types of beliefs called values and their order in terms of relative importance called the value system.