

WORK2218 weekly reading

Week 2 individual attributes, personality and values

1. Gordon Allport defines 'personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psycho-physical systems that determine his unique judgement to his environment'. For our purpose, we should think personality is the sum total of ways in which an individual reacts to and interacts with others
2. The most common means of measuring personality is through self-report surveys, with which individuals evaluate themselves on a series of factors. The weaknesses are: the respondent might lie or practise impression management, that is, fake good on the test to create a good impression; the other one is accuracy, a perfectly good candidate could have been in a bad mood when the survey was taken and that will make the test score less accurate.
3. Observer-ratings surveys provide an independent assessment of personality. The result of self-report surveys and observer-ratings surveys are strongly correlated, but research suggests that observer-ratings surveys are a better predictor of success on job.
4. Personality appears to be the result of both hereditary and environmental factors. The research has tended to support the importance of hereditary over the environment. Hereditary refers to factors determined at conception. The hereditary approach argues that the ultimate explanation of an individual's personality is the molecular structure of the genes, located in the chromosomes.
Twin studies have suggested that parents do not add much to our personality development. The most important contribution our parents may make to our personalities is giving us their genes.
When someone exhibits characteristics, such as, shy, aggressive, submissive, lazy, ambitious, loyal and tired, in a large number of situations, we call them personality traits of that person. The more consistent the characteristic over time, and the one more frequently it occurs in diverse situation, the more important that traits is in describing the individual.
5. The Myer-Briggs Type Indicators (MBTI) is the most widely used personality-assessment instrument in the world. On the basis of the answers of 100-question personality test, individuals are classified as extraverted or introverted (E or I), sensing or intuitive (S or N), thinking or feeling (T or F) and judging or perceiving (J or P).
Extraverted or Introverted (E or I): extraverted individuals are outgoing, sociable and assertive; introverts are quiet and shy.
Sensing or Intuitive (S or N): sensing types are practical and prefer routine and order, they focus on details; intuitives rely on unconscious processes and look at the "big picture".
Thinking or Feeling (T or F): thinking types use reason and logic to handle problems; feeling types rely on their personal values and emotions.
Judging or Perceiving (J or P): judging types want control and prefer their world to be ordered and structured; perceiving types are flexible and spontaneous.
One problem is that the MBTI forces a person into either one type or another type. There is no in-between, though people can be both extraverted and introverted to some degree. The best way for us to say is that the MBTI can be a valuable tool for increasing self-awareness and providing career guidance. But because results tend to be unrelated to job performance, managers probably should not use it as a selection test for job candidates.
6. The Big Five Model, five basic dimensions underlie all others and encompass most of the significant variation in human personality:
Extraversion: captures our comfort level with relationships. Extraverts tend to be gregarious, assertive and sociable. Introverts tend to be reserved, timid and quiet.

Agreeableness: 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.

Conscientiousness: measure of reliability. A highly conscientious person is responsible, organised, dependable and persistent. Those who score low are easily distracted, disorganised and unreliable.

Emotional stability: 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.

Openness in experience: addresses a range of interests and a fascination with novelty.

Extreme open people are creative, curious and artistically sensitive. Those at the other end of the openness are conventional and find comfort in the familiar.

Big five traits	Why it is relevant	What it affects
Emotional stability	Less negative thinking and fewer negative emotions Less hyper-vigilant	High job and life satisfaction Lower stress level
Extroversion	Better interpersonal skills Greater social dominance More emotionally expressive	Higher performance (required interpersonal skills) Enhanced leadership High job and life satisfaction
Openness	Increased learning More creative More flexible and autonomous	Training performance Enhanced leadership More adaptable to change
Agreeableness	Better liked More compliant and conforming	Higher performance (interpersonally oriented jobs)
Conscientiousness	Greater efforts and persistence More drive and discipline Better organised and planning	Higher performance Enhanced leadership Greater longevity

7. People who have positive core self-evaluations like themselves and see themselves as effective, capable and in control of their environment. Those with negative core self-evaluations tend to dislike themselves, question their capabilities and view themselves as powerless over their environment.
8. Machiavellianism: an individual high in Machiavellianism is pragmatic, maintains emotional distance and believes that the end can justify means. High Machs manipulate more, win more, are persuaded less and persuade others more than do low Machs. They like their jobs less, are more stressed by their work and engage in more deviant work behaviours. High Mach outcomes are moderated by situational factors. High Machs flourish: 1) when they interact face to face with others rather than indirectly; 2) when emotional involvement with details irrelevant to winning distracts low Machs; and 3) when a minimal number of rules and regulations, allowing latitude for improvisation.
9. Narcissism: a person who has a grandiose sense of self-importance, requires excessive admiration, has a sense of entitlement and is arrogant. Narcissism can have pretty toxic consequences. Narcissism thought they were better leaders than their colleagues, their supervisors actually rated them as worse. The extreme narcissism in the workplace had such dysfunctional personalities that they were able to create toxic workplace. This has the potential to cause significant amounts of stress inside and outside of work.

Self-monitoring refers to an individual's ability to adjust his or her behaviour to external, situational factors. High self-monitors pay closer attention to the behaviours of others and are