

Personality traits
what extent it affects
employees
performance
psychology essay



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There are two approaches to personality: nomothetic and idiographic. The nomothetic approach presumes that personality is inherited and environmental factors don't play a high role (Buchanan, Huczynski, (2010). pp. 174). This approach takes a number of variables into account while studying personality such as traits (Iverson Software Co., 2006). This is on the nature side of the nature-nurture debate (Buchanan, Huczynski, (2010). pp. 174). This approach is contrasted by the idiographic approach which studies the whole personality of an individual and is not compared with another individual (Iverson Software Co., 2006). It looks at the richness, uniqueness and complexity of an individual and helps understanding to get deeper (Buchanan, Huczynski, (2010). pp. 185).

There are quite a few theories and concepts related to personality. Based on psychological preferences, is Carl Jung's theory for extraversion and introversion. Extraverts are sociable and don't like to be alone. They like parties, have lots of friends, are optimistic and like change (Bainbridge, 2011). Introverts are shy, quiet, reliable, like to plan things in advance and are pessimistic. Jung made a personality type matrix with four functions that are used while people deal with things. These are thinking, sensing, intuition and feeling (Buchanan, Huczynski, (2010). pp. 172-175). Thinking makes use of decision-making and is the understanding and evaluating of information. Sensing is receiving information through the means of senses. Intuition is a natural feeling of knowing something beforehand. Feeling is similar to thinking in terms of evaluating information but it also evaluates emotional responses. Everyone possesses these functions but proportions are different (Boeree, 2006). Another influential trait theory of personality is of Hans

Jurgen Eysenck. His explanations are genetically based. He researched the key dimensions on which personality differs which is the ' E' or extraversion-introversion dimension and the ' N' or neuroticism-stability dimension. His model offers a way to link traits, types and behaviour. He claims that each person has a set of identifiable traits which leads to trait clusters and the structure of personality is hierarchical. These clusters result in a personality description which is referred to as personality types by Eysenck. These trait clusters are supported by statistical evidence from assessments of personality. If an individual takes the assessment, it will result in a personality profile for the individual showing several traits which might be helpful for the organisations in choosing a candidate for a position. The E dimension consists of two categories of people - extraverts and introverts. Eysenck states that mostly all individuals have a pair of seven personality trait clusters between these extremes. The N dimension examines personality on a scale from neuroticism to stability. Neurotics are emotional, nervous, unstable, are pessimistic, not happy with life, feel that they are failures and stay depressed. They quickly get upset, are obsessive people and are highly disciplined. Stable individuals are confident, optimistic, practical, are free from guilt and stay happy. This assessment helps individuals to know about their personality type and be aware of their characteristics which could be seen as strengths and weaknesses by others. These theories are based on the nomothetic approach (Buchanan, Huczynski, (2010). pp. 173-178).

Charles Horton Cooley developed the ' looking glass self' concept. He stated that the people we interact with are our mirrors. If people are favorable and

sweet towards us, a positive self-concept is developed. If people are rude and unfavorable towards us, a negative self-concept develops. This implies that the environment does play a role in determining the personality of the individual through interaction. Individuals learn to accept values, attitudes, beliefs and expectations of the society they are brought up in. Another concept was developed by George Herbert Mead. He said that the self consists of two components: I (the individual self) and Me (the norms and beliefs of the society that one learns). He used the word 'generalized other' to refer to the expectations one thinks people have of one. 'I' is where the thinking takes place and how one is and 'Me' is how one is supposed to behave and helps one to shape their personality and behaviour. Carl Rogers developed a similar concept to this called the 'two-sided self'. He stated that personality is not stable and perceptions change as one experiences new changes in their lives and as a result self-concept changes. An individual has perceptions about their abilities, qualities and attitudes and if these perceptions are accurate and accepted, then the self-concept is considered as successful and results in feelings of happiness and comfort. Failure to achieve the successful self-concept can result in a personality disorder. Roger stated that the desire of the human personality is to realize its full potential. To accomplish this, the correct environment is needed - one in which the person is not criticized for who he/she is and is respected, trusted and valued. As a result, the individual will become trusting, will achieve a successful self-concept and will live with peace and harmony. These concepts are based on the idiographic approach as environmental factors play a big role here. The idiographic approach is seen complex in comparison to the nomothetic approach. Its research has been influential but it has not

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been noticeable in psychometrics (Buchanan, Huczynski, (2010). pp. 186-188).

There are factors that affect personality differences between individuals. These are the physical environment, the social environment, the cultural environment, the biological environment and role playing. Physical environment refers to the location an individual was born and brought up in. (Nurture) For example, an individual who was born and brought up in a small village will have a different personality compared to an individual who was brought up in a city. The social environment refers to the society an individual is brought up in affecting their personality. For example, an individual learns different aspects of their personality from their friends, family and parents. The individual's personality is a combination of these social factors. The cultural environment refers to tangible and intangible aspects of society affecting the individual. This is due to different views being accepted by different cultures leads to different personalities between individuals. For example, every culture has different norms, clothing style, life style and food. The biological environment refers to the nature of an individual. The individual's genetic make-up that influences their personality. Role playing refers to roles that have been assigned to individuals, which affects the differences between individual's personalities

The trait clusters has eventually resulted to be known as the big five and this approach is widely accepted. This informs us a lot about an individual's personality (Myers, (2005). pp. 618). These traits were advocated by Costa and McRae and they identified six traits under each heading. The super traits describe the elements common among the sub-factors that cluster together. <https://assignbuster.com/personality-traits-what-extent-it-affects-employees-performance-psychology-essay/>

There are six traits related to openness which are aesthetic, fantasy, ideas, feelings, actions and values. These traits run on a scale from 'explorer' to 'preserver'. People with explorer traits are open-minded, creative and intellectual. These traits are useful for architects, entrepreneurs, artists, scientists and agents. People with preserver traits are narrow minded. These traits are useful for stage performers, project managers and finance managers. Moderates come in the middle of the spectrum and are interested in novelty when demanded. Traits relating to conscientiousness are competition, achievement, order, dutifulness, striving, deliberation and self discipline. These traits run on a scale from 'focused' to 'flexible'. People with focused traits are organised and ambitious. These are useful for senior executives and leaders. People with flexible traits are irresponsible and disorganised and are useful for detectives, management consultants and researchers. Those that lie in the middle are balanced and find it simple to shift on the scale from one end to another. The six traits relating to extraversion are positivity, warmth, sociable, boldness, activity and excitement. These run on a scale from extravert to introvert. The extravert traits are useful to people in politics, sales and arts. Introvert traits are useful to people in natural sciences and production management. Those that lie in the middle are known as ambiverts who can easily move from being isolated to being sociable. Traits in agreeableness include straightforwardness, trust, unselfishness, obedience and tender-mindedness. These run on a scale from 'adapter' to 'challenger'. People with adapter traits are good in nature and sympathetic and these traits are useful for people who are teachers, psychologists and social workers. People with challenger traits are uncooperative and irritable and are useful for people in advertising and

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military leadership. In the middle of the spectrum lie the negotiators who can move from leadership to followership as the situation demands. Traits relating to neuroticism include anger, worry, discouragement, self-consciousness and weakness. It runs on a scale from 'reactive' to 'resilient'. People with reactive traits are depressed and anxious. These traits are useful for social scientists, customer service professionals and academics. People with resilient traits are self-assured and calm and are useful for air-traffic controllers, pilots and engineers. Those in the middle are known as responsives who use their levels of emotionality according to the circumstances (Buchanan, Huczynski, (2010). pp. 178-179).

Employee performance sets goals for the employees and encourages involvement with the company, which would lead to higher motivation and increased job performance (Walden University, 2010). Many studies have been carried out to find the relationship between personality and employee performance. These studies show that there is a small correlation between these two factors. Previous studies depicted that personality is not a good tool for increasing employee performance but recently there has been an increase in the use of personality assessments in order to manipulate and increase employee performance. Barrick, Mount and Tett et al (1991) gave evidence that the Big Five can be a useful tool for the selection of employees and were the main personality framework. Out of the Big Five, conscientiousness is seen as the most valid predictor for assessing performance for most jobs as all the factors included in conscientiousness lead to good job performance and are needed by the company. The Big Five has a large impact on contextual and task performance (Hurtz, Donovan,

(2000). pp. 869). Neuroticism relates negatively to job performance as employees are prone to negativity which leads to low job performance and satisfaction. Extraversion links positively to job performance as employees are positive and mingle around with people quickly which leads to high task performance and job satisfaction. Agreeableness also proved to be a valid predictor for training (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, Barrick, (1999). and will lead to high performance as employees with these traits get along with people quickly. The openness and the agreeableness traits also have some drawbacks such as open people may skip jobs often and good natured people might give up their success in pleasing other people. There are three motivational variables that affect the Big Five which in turn affects job performance. They are striving for communion (getting along with people in the company), accomplishment (being task oriented) and status (being ahead of people in the company). Although, research shows that status striving is strongly linked to performance. These three variables motivate an employee to work harder which increases employee performance (Barrick, Stewart, (2002). pp. 2-3).

WEAKNESS OF BIG 5

There are other techniques as well which are used to predict employee performance such as personality assessments. There are many personality assessments and a famous one is Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) based on Jung's theory. This assessment is used by a lot of companies and has lots of uses such as decision-making and problem solving. Another widely used assessment is TAT for high-stress jobs and psychological research. It also measures the strength of need for achievement for individuals. Candidates
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are shown photographs and pictures of people and are asked to write a story by what they see in the pictures. This is known as a projective test and by this the company comes to know about the candidate's personality. Due to this test the company is given a hint of the individual's personality through their story. But personality assessments are not good predictors of employee performance as the candidate can provide false answers to get the job (Buchanan, Huczynski, (2010). pp. 173-189). Personality assessments should be used along with other reliable assessments and only helps to an extent in selecting employees for the job. General mental ability test is an additional way of predicting performance and is the most positive predictor but there is not much evidence that these two factors link (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, Barrick, (1999). pp. 628-629).

Personality and job performance do relate, but this depends on the person's cognitive ability to some extent. If the person has high need for achievement and high cognitive ability, then he/she will perform better in their job (Lowery, Beadles, Krilowicz, Thomas, (2004). pp. 1-3) . Personality does predict employee performance but only to a certain extent and is not a very good tool for predicting performance. Research shows that these methods have drawbacks as well and there are many other suitable ways of predicting employee performance. The benefits a company can gain by using personality to predict employee performance is that it helps to choose the right candidate for the job which will result in profits for the company and the employee will be motivated to work hard and enjoy their job as it will match their personality; resulting in positive behaviour which is beneficial to the company (Buchanan, Huczynski, (2010). Pp. 189).

Career success is the achievement an individual gets through his/her work. Personality traits can be translated positively into an individual's professional career. A relationship exists between the Big Five Traits and career success. The facets of Big Five do relate to some jobs out of which conscientiousness and extraversion are strongly related to career success. People who are organized and disciplined will choose careers such as hotel management, banks and businesspeople. People with agreeableness traits come in use in customer service and are needed in any company as they are helpful, trustful and good in nature and certainly relate to career success. Openness traits are useful for people who are in customer service or who are painters or in the business of event management as they are creative. People with extraversion traits are talkative and sociable and would be good leaders and have careers such as event management, insurance, radio jockeys and sales. The behaviours that traits reflect in the five factor model (FFM) predict career success for a long time. This links to the concept of gravitational hypothesis which states that over time people select their careers according to their interests, desires and values. Regression and correlation based analyses were carried out to investigate if a relationship existed between FFM and RIASEC model of gravitation effect. Findings showed that general mental ability positively correlated with gravitation to jobs linked to investigation and extraversion positively correlated with gravitation to sociable jobs and negatively correlated with gravitation to investigative jobs. Results of regression slightly differed. Extraversion did not have gravitation for sociable jobs but for realistic jobs and conscientiousness and neuroticism did not contain gravitation to any of the jobs listed in RIASEC model.

Career success relies on two things - intrinsic success (job satisfaction) and extrinsic success (income and status). Research has shown that conscientiousness and extraversion positively linked to extrinsic career success while neuroticism linked negatively and this also affects performance in a negative way. General mental ability related positively to extrinsic success but there was no link found with intrinsic success. Smart people have higher positions and earn high salaries which would lead to job satisfaction. Measures of personality of FFM were taken from childhood and adulthood and were utilized to explain about the extrinsic and intrinsic facets of career success. Knowledge about personality of people in childhood was successful in predicting the person's career success in future. Results of a study found that shy children negatively related to occupational status later in the future whereas social and organizational skills positively linked to promotions.

Career success also relates to demographic factors and other factors such as education, training and work experience. Career success also relies on organizational success. It will be beneficial for the company if employees perform well and demonstrate organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). Nowadays organisations have to be competitive, innovative and respond quickly and for this they need hard-working staff. OCB promotes behaviour such as helping others at work, suggesting improvements and putting in extra time and effort to complete work and meet deadlines. Leader-member exchange quality improves job satisfaction and aids in demonstrating OCB. For organisations to demonstrate OCB, they have to hire people who have conscientiousness traits as they demonstrate OCB behaviour often which

leads to promotions and job satisfaction. The employees in return gain respect for their work from the management which increases motivation and further will encourage OCB. Employees with conscientiousness traits have high LMX quality relationships with their seniors. They receive high levels of job satisfaction by showing OCB and are given more responsibility and freedom. This attracts career opportunities for them. OCB not only benefits the organisation but also the employees. Employees demonstrate OCB when they know they are going to be rewarded for the work done which consequently encourages positive behaviour and career success for the individual. A meta-analysis by Borman et al (2001) showed that conscientiousness was the strongest trait that related to OCB (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, Barrick, (1999). pp. 621-648 ; Lapierre, Hackett (2007). pp. 539-544).

To conclude, personality does predict employee performance but only to a certain extent - other valid assessments should be used when selecting employees for a job. These assessments can be helpful both for the employee and the organisation to understand what kind of a personality one has and how it can aid in their careers which can lead to high job satisfaction and performance and success of the organisation.