

Traits are powerful predictors of behavior psychology essay



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The essay of traits are powerful predictors of behavior has indicated both point and counterpoint. Simple say, for the point, it indicted that people’s traits are consistent in different situations so that their traits can be predicted their behavior; while for the counterpoint, it indicated that people’s traits will change in response to organization situation. In my point of view, I tend to support the point, which traits are powerful predictors of behavior, it is because it can apply in generally cases.

Why it is important to know whether traits can predict behavior? In general speaking, the main element of organization is human resources, and employee behavior will affect not only individual performances but also the group performances so that affect overall organization performances. Therefore, if traits do predict behavior, it would provide a manager one more way or consideration to improve individual, group, and overall organization performances. Why this can improve performances? It is because by understanding employees’ traits, we can predict their behavior which is highly associated to their working performances. For example, Robbins et al. (2011) identified that the reason why organizations like to hire agreeable employee is because they do not haggle over every ounce, and they are

pleasant to help others no matter is it related to their job or not, thus although agreeable employee might not have excellent performances, they could facilitate others performances.

Before starting to explain the traits are powerful predictors of behavior, it is vital to understand the important terminologies and theories, which include trait and behavior, and the Big Five Personality Model (Big Five) and The Mygers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI):

Trait

Broadly speaking, personality traits refer to consistent patterns in the way individuals behave, feel, and think' (Cervone & Pervin 2009). The key points of the trait are, for example, using “ unkind” to describe an individual, then the individual tends to act unkind over time and across situations.

Behavior

Behavior refers to an individual's conducts, which is the exhibition of the individual's traits. The conducts that show the individual's preliminary behavior is instinct, or without thinking, otherwise it is call individual's performance.

Big Five Personality Model

The Big Five include five major trait categories which are Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness to Experience. Mondak (2010) stated that the Big Five Personality Model are

seen as broad domains, which collectively representing a hierarchy that organizes and summarizes the vast majority of subsidiary traits.

Mygers-Briggs Type Indicator

MBTI identifies 16 types of personality based on individuals' extraversion or introversion and their cognitive functions of thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition (Mullins & Christy 2011).

After the definition part, the next part will be to prove the argument, which is "the traits are powerful predictors of behavior". There are 2 points to support, and 1 point is against it.

The outcome of the prediction is consistent every time.

If trait can predict individual's behavior, the outcomes of the prediction should be consistent every time, which mean, for a simple example, an individual who is kind (trait), he/she tends to help others without any repay (behavior), while another individual who is also kind (trait), he/she will also tend to help others without any repay (behavior). Therefore, if the assumption is true, then the argument will be right.

However, the premise to prove the assumption is true is that the trait of an individual should be proved to be near unchanged, or hard to change in generally (There must be some exception cases). Here will be several cases to show that traits are near unchanged. Nick Vujicic who does not have limbs is the best example, his innate traits are extroversion, agreeable, optimistic, etc.. Yet his traits remain unchanged over time and he even organizes many talks in different places, in different situations, yet his traits are still

unchanged (Leadership With You 2013). For another example, David Maraniss (2012), who wrote a book of detail profiles of Barack Obama, describes that Obama possesses confidence, citizenship, respect, etc., for instance Obama has addressed that “ Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin the work of remaking America”, He certainly voice out his sentences so that public are full of confidence by his confidence speak, this make public to believe on his scheme of alleviation of the recession. David Maraniss (2012) indicated that the traits of young Barack Obama were already possessed such traits of now Barack Obama. In view of that, the above examples have shown that the traits are near unchanged in generally, which can then further prove the next part of the assumption.

The next is to prove the outcomes of the prediction are consistent every time. In common sense, the trait must be consistent to behavior, otherwise it is performance. For example, if an individual is lazy, it must be impossible to expect that the individual will do more than the requirement at any time and in any general situation. Besides the common sense, Pervin L. A., Cervone D. & John O. P. (2005) identified that traits are stable and general action pattern, in other words, it means general behavior of an individual are generated by their stable traits. This also can support that the outcomes of the prediction are consistent every time.

All in all, the assumption, which “ If trait can predict individual’s behavior, the outcomes of the prediction should be consistent every time”, is proved to be true in general case, and so the argument is right, which trait can predict behavior.

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Using traits to predict behavior is accurate

The book “ Personality Psychology in the Workplace” (2001) included the research of validity in predicting criteria, which was to find out whether there are correlation between traits and behavior, and finally the result is positive, which means they are correlative.

However, there are 2 big groups of researcher believe in 2 different aspects. One of them believes that using broad personality traits are not good prediction of complex criteria, while another group advocates the opposite view. Yet the latter one seems to be more efficient and more feasible in the work place.

Why the broad personality traits are relatively more suitable to predict an individual’s behavior in work place? Roberts B. W. & Hogan R. (2001) stated that construct-valid measures of unidimensional personality traits are preferred in the prediction of work and other criteria, for example, the Big Five Personality Model and the Mygers-Briggs Type Indicator, the advantages of these tools include more accuracy in criterion prediction and a better understanding of work behavior. Simple say, the Big Five can be acted as the first-order test, while the MBTI can be acted as a reinforcement of the Big Five; both are detail enough for testing individual in work place. Moreover, although using specific personality traits can predict the specific behavior of an individual, it is relatively complicated and time consuming than broad personality tests and so it is not economic.

All in all, the above research finding and the further study of applying the prediction in work place have proved that traits are powerful predictors of behavior.

Traits cannot predict behavior at strong situation

Although there are lots of evidences supports traits are powerful predictors of behavior, there are still some expectation cases. The effect of traits in explaining behavior is likely to be weakest in strong situations (Robbins S. P. 2012), which means traits cannot predict behavior at such situation. The parties which can apply the above inference mostly are disciplined services, such as army, police, fire fighter etc.

It is very easy to understand that why behavior of disciplined services will not be predicted by their traits. It is because of strong situation. Yet what is strong situation? It means there are formal regulations / rules that clearly define which behavior is acceptable especially when they are on duty, and there are also punishments for deviant behavior. For instance, a policeman who are unorganized usually in their daily life, but he must be organized when he is on duty, otherwise the data of the police force will be messy which lead to overall efficiency decease.

All in all, traits cannot predict behavior at strong situation. The purpose of such practice in disciplined services is to minimize the impact of different personality traits so as to create positive atmosphere in working environment, and to establish professional image to general public.

Here is the summary of the entire essay in to one paragraph. The main argument of this essay is that “ traits are powerful predictors of behavior”, <https://assignbuster.com/traits-are-powerful-predictors-of-behavior-psychology-essay/>

and the purpose of conducting this essay is to show out and explain the argument is right, finally the outcomes have proved why traits can predict behavior; there are 2 reasons to support the argument which are (1) the outcome of the prediction is consistent every time, and (2) using traits to predict behavior is accurate, yet there are exception case which is (3) traits cannot predict behavior at strong situation. Moreover, this essay has also explained why knowing traits can predict behavior is important and how it influence organization.

Last but not least, based on the entire essay, here are several general suggests for organizations. As the above statement have mentioned, to be more efficient and more feasible to predict employees, the suitable way is to use broad personality measurement, such as Big Five and MBTI. Moreover, to prevent employee to get personality disorder, an organization have to put more effort in 2 aspects which are recruitment and selection, and training and development. To do well in those 2 aspects, an organization can apply the Big Five and MBTI to understand the employee so as to decrease personality conflict and to create a comfortable working environment.