Nature and nurture in organizational settings essay

Psychology, Personality

Organizations today often give job applicants a personality inventory to measure certain desirable and undesirable qualities such as agreeableness, conscientiousness and emotional stability. Different organizations look for different degrees of personality characteristics based on their goals and the level of the position. However, while it may be assumed that such a test is a good indicator or how the employee will behave in the organization, it provides little information without additional information about the situational variants the person will come into contact with and how they respond to those aspects of the jobs based on their life experience up until that point.

The nature nurture hypothesis states that both physiological characteristics and environmental factors shape an individual's personality. Nature refers to our inborn, genetic characteristics while nurture People are born with physiological characteristic that determine temperament, the building blocks of personality. How the personality develops however, is based on everything a person comes into contact with as they grow and act upon their world. This is nurture. Some of the key nurturing influences include family environment, peer influences, socialization and the totality of our life experiences and interpersonal relationships. Someone who is born with a predisposition to be sociable for example may be born to a society where it is believed that children should be seen and not heard and who should show deference to others at all times. Any time the child tries to interact with others they are reprimanded until over time they become less outgoing and social, though still desiring this outlet.

The 5-Factor Theory of personality posits 5 personality characteristics which

everyone has to a certain degree. According to the theory, these are Introversion/ Extraversion, Agreeableness/Antagonism, Conscientiousness/Undirectedness, Neuroticism/Emotional Stability, Openness to Experience/Not Open to Experience. These factors interact in various ways to produce what we perceive of as personality. In the workplace the desire for certain personality characteristics often depend on the type of organizational structure that exists and the role of the employee. Extroversion for example would be more valuable in a manger position as opposed to an entry level position, however an overly extroverted individual may irritate people or make employees feel as if they are being micromanaged. Agreeableness is important for team dynamic yet when someone is too agreeable they might be taken advantage by co-workers and management alike. Conscientiousness is generally valued in any work setting but again someone can be overly conscientious, valuing perfection over timeliness such that business is lost due to missed deadlines.