

# Research in individual differences



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Decision making is the selection between several options . we make many decisions a day(e. g. when we go to the grocery store and choose a bottle of milk , when we select a tv channel, when we decide what to prepare and eat for breakfast, whether we buy a new DVD player or save the money for our next holiday trip.) most of our decisions might occur unconsciously, but often we have to consciously decide among several options.

If you go into any job no matter where you are in the world you will come across a multitude of different personalities and behaviors. An individual's personality doesn't just affect the individual, but everyone around them.

Managers are responsible for recognizing and treating employees as individuals and not as groups. There is no way an individual can be treated the same way as the next person because everyone is different. We observe one another's actions and try to understand what we see, this is known as "reading a person" which may or may not be accurate (Robbins, & Judge, 2010). Individual behavior is determined by many factors such as environment, culture, beliefs and the quality of life. Attitude is expressed in either satisfaction or dissatisfaction and the interaction between them. If a person has a feeling of unhappiness on the job, it can have an affect in other areas as well such as personal life. An individual may have discontent on the job due to stress, frustration or feeling alienated.

There are many different types of personalities. Personality is the sum total of ways in which an individual reacts to and interacts with others (2010).

Managers need to be able to measure personalities in order to make useful hiring decisions and they can do this by giving personality test and

evaluating the results. Some strategies that managers use to measure an individual's personality is allowing them to rate themselves in a survey. The weakness in using this method to measure individual personality is that a person may lie on the survey. Another type of method used is an observer rating survey. This method is more accurate than the self report survey because another person will observe and rate an individual's personality.

Individual differences psychology focuses on this second level of study. It is also sometimes called Differential Psychology because researchers in this area study the ways in which individual people differ in their behavior. This is distinguished from other aspects of psychology in that although psychology is ostensibly a study of individuals, modern psychologists often study groups or biological underpinnings of cognition.

For example, in evaluating the effectiveness of a new therapy, the mean performance of the therapy in one group might be compared to the mean effectiveness of a placebo (or a well-known therapy) in a second, control group. In this context, differences between individuals in their reaction to the experimental and control manipulations are actually treated as errors rather than as interesting phenomena to study.

This is because psychological research depends upon statistical controls that are only defined upon groups of people. Individual difference psychologists usually express their interest in individuals while studying groups by seeking dimensions shared by all individuals but upon which individuals differ.

That people differ from each other is obvious. How and why they differ is less clear and is the subject of the study of Individual differences (IDs). Although

to study individual differences seems to be to study variance, how are people different, it is also to study central tendency, how well can a person be described in terms of an overall within-person average. Indeed, perhaps the most important question of individual differences is whether people are more similar to themselves over time and across situations than they are to others, and whether the variation within a single person across time and situation is less than the variation between people. A related question is that of similarity, for people differ in their similarities to each other. Questions of whether particular groups (e. g., groupings by sex, culture, age, or ethnicity) are more similar within than between groups are also questions of individual differences.

Personality psychology addresses the questions of shared human nature, dimensions of individual differences and unique patterns of individuals. Research in IDs ranges from analyses of genetic codes to the study of sexual, social, ethnic, and cultural differences and includes research on cognitive abilities, interpersonal styles, and emotional reactivity. Methods range from laboratory experiments to longitudinal field studies and include data reduction techniques such as Factor Analysis and Principal Components Analysis, as well as Structural Modeling and Multi-Level Modeling procedures. Measurement issues of most importance are those of reliability and stability of Individual Differences.

Research in Individual Differences addresses three broad questions: 1) developing an adequate descriptive taxonomy of how people differ; 2) applying differences in one situation to predict differences in other

situations; and 3) testing theoretical explanations of the structure and dynamics of individual differences.

## **Sources of individual differences**

The taxonomic and predictive studies of individual differences are descriptive organizations of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that go together and how they relate to other outcomes. But this categorization is descriptive rather than causal and is analogous to grouping rocks in terms of density and hardness rather than atomic or molecular structure. Causal theories of individual differences are being developed but are in a much earlier stage than are the descriptive taxonomies.

Descriptive taxonomies are used to organize the results of studies that examine genetic bases of individual differences. By applying structural modeling techniques to the variances and covariances associated with various family constellations it is possible to decompose phenotypic trait variance into separate sources of genetic and environmental variance. The most common family configurations that are used are comparisons of identical (monozygotic) with fraternal (dizygotic) twins. Additional designs include twins reared together or apart, and biological versus adoptive parents, children and siblings. Conclusions from behavioral genetics for most personality traits tend to be similar: Across different designs, with different samples from different countries, roughly 40-60% of the phenotypic variance seems to be under genetic control with only a very small part of the remaining environmental variance associated with shared family environmental effects. Additional results suggest that genetic sources of individual differences remain important across the lifespan. However, this

<https://assignbuster.com/research-in-individual-differences/>

should not be taken to mean that people do not change as they mature but rather that the paths one takes through life are similar to those taken by genetically similar individuals.

Genes do not code for thoughts, feelings or behavior but rather code for proteins that regulate and modulate biological systems. Although promising work has been done searching for the biological bases of individual differences it is possible to sketch out these bases only in the broadest of terms. Specific neurotransmitters and brain structures can be associated with a broad class of approach behaviors and positive affects while other neurotransmitters and structures can be associated with a similarly broad class of avoidance behaviors and negative affects. Reports relating specific alleles to specific personality traits emphasize that the broad personality traits are most likely under polygenic influence and are moderated by environmental experience.

Subtle differences in neurotransmitter availability and re-uptake vary the sensitivity of individuals to cues about their environment that predict future resource availability and external rewards and punishments. It is the way these cues are detected, attended to, stored, and integrated with previous experiences that makes each individual unique. Current work on the bases of individual differences is concerned with understanding this delicate interplay of biological propensities with environmental opportunities and constraints as they are ultimately represented in an individual's information processing system. With time we can expect to increase our taxonomic and predictive power by using these causal bio-social theories of individual differences.