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Personality

Personality means the constitution of mental as well as the physical health of an individual. Personality may be defined as the characteristic pattern of behavior that determines an individual's adjustment to the environment or situation.

In modern organisations, personality attributes of a manager are considered important, since they affect the entire behavioral pattern of the person. In common parlance, personality refers to the impression, which an individual forms on others through his personal attributes making attractive or unattractive view.

It is a fact that psychological factors of an individual are rarely known to others. An individual's personality is not a superficial fact or occurrence that can be easily understood, merely on his personal appearance. Personality is the whole aspect of an individual from general point of view. It includes a person's physical, psychological, and emotional aspects.

Personality has come from a Latin word 'Persona' meaning to speak through (mask). As in the ancient days masks were worn in Greece and Rome by actors, while enacting plays. Thus, personality is used for influencing others through external appearance. However, personality is not the external appearance alone.

Personality, which makes an individual to stand apart, is the impression of characteristic attributes. It is an aggregate of an individual's physical, psychological and behavioral aspects contributing to his 'good personality' or no personality, according to the presence or absence of the characteristic attributes. Some of these, which are of significant nature, are worth mentioning.

i. Omnibus – This personality view is the aggregate of recognizable pattern of properties-of qualities.

ii. Integration and configuration – Under this view of personality, the organization of personal attributes is stressed.

iii. Hierarchical – This aspect mainly deals with adaptation, survival and evolution of the person to the environment.

iv. Distinctiveness – the definition of this category speaks the uniqueness of each personality.

A number of definitions are given in respect of personality in order to give meaningful one. Let us extract some standard definitions.

According to Gordon Allport, personality is “the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychological systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment.”

Fred Luthans defines the term personality as, “how people affect others and how they understand and view themselves, as well as their pattern of inner and outer measurable traits and the person-situation intervention.”

Robbins defines personality as, “the sum total of ways in which an individual reacts to and interacts until others.”

Thus, personality devotes for the methods of affecting others, reacting to others’ actions and interacting with others. These methods are chosen by individuals based on several factors. Important one among these is their traits.

Personality- Nature

The nature of every individual is attributed to his personality. Generally, an individual asserts through his behavioral characteristics. Matured persons with their longstanding experience, take an objective attitude towards themselves and others. They also introspect, so as to help improve upon their nature and behavior.

i. Self-Conscious:

There is a vast difference between human being and other species. The special feature of his nature is ‘self-consciousness’, which makes him aware of his surroundings and self-identity.

ii. Adaptability to Environment:

Personality, off and on, does make adjustments according to the changes desired. Resistance to change means a conflict with tension and unpleasantness. Normally, people adapt to the changed situations and challenges. Adaptation to new situations often follows a modification in behavioral pattern leading to a smooth working condition and a conducive environment.

iii. Goal Oriented:

Persons strive for achievement of goal. Individuals do have the drive to achieve goals. Wants and needs lead to motive. The desire of an individual directs the behavior for the fulfillment of the same. Both the physiological and social motives make behavioral changes.

iv. Integration of Personality:

Personality works in consistency by integrating various activities (of mental and also experiences of the individual) together. Personality differs in the form of its integration. Persons with developed personalities are highly integrated with values and experiences. This depends on the standards of behavior, which they have acquired right from the childhood.

Personality- Characteristics

If you apply for a job you'll be asked to list your personal qualities. Employers are assuming that your personality is to an extent fixed and won't change much from one year to the next, Most of us can relate to that idea, but where does our personality come from? Is it in our genes or is it created more by the circumstances of our childhood?

Of course the answer is both. There are bound to be genes which influence our behavior simply because our brain and the chemicals that operate within it are made by genes. But trying to find any one of the hundreds of genes involved is notoriously difficult. The genetics of behavior is complex, because personalities are complex. Scientists are only just beginning to have any success in understanding how genes influence behavior.

i. Personality is organized and constant

- ii. Personality is psychological, but is used by biological needs and processes.
- iii. Personality causes behavior to happen.
- iv. Personality is displayed through thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and many other ways.

Personality- Determinants

Different theories propose different factors that determine an individual personality. The most popular research work done by Freud deals with the identification of self-concept. Self-concept include things (factor) got by nature like gene, i.e., heredity and the biological formations and by nurture, i.e., through the social and environmental factors. The major determinants of personality are heredity, environment and situation.

Determinant # 1. Heredity:

Heredity refers to those factors, which predisposes to certain physical, mental and emotional states. It sets the outer parameters of an individual. It also limits the range of development of characters. The arrangement and structure of genes that are located in the chromosomes is passed around 20% to 50% from one generation to another. The studies reveal that twins though brought up in different places exhibit similar characters.

Determinant # 2. Environment:

Environment refers to the surroundings in which the individuals are brought up. The environmental factors relating to the formation of personality includes culture, family, society upbringing, and experiences. Experiences relate to the confrontation with that of family members, relatives, and friends and to the social groups, which they belong. Culture helps to find the similarity and difference in behavior.

Determinant # 3. Situation:

Situation has an effect both on environment and heredity. Situation demands certain behavior. Various psychologists have discovered what personality trait matters to an individual in his or her career. Being successful or unsuccessful depends upon how the individuals control their behavior in various situations. For example, a candidate attending an interview may exhibit limited traits. The other trait or behavior is concealed or not exhibited.

Stages Involved in the Personality Formation

Personality formation can mainly be divided into four stages, as given below:

1. Primary attachment
2. Family role and identification
3. Entering of a child into social world
4. Adolescent stage.

1. Primary Attachment:

It is a natural phenomenon that a child gets attached to a person(s) taking adequate care of the child. In this stage, the child after a few weeks starts responding with 'a smile' to which it is attached. It also requires nourishment for proper growth. Normally, it resorts to crying for satisfaction of needs. During this period, a child is relatively passive and needs utmost care by those around.

2. Family Role and Identification:

This stage is between 2 and 6 years, during which the child understands the family interactions and some social normal, etc. It acquires sufficient knowledge to differentiate between father and mother (male and female). This is the stage of life, when child needs care, affection, and recognition coupled with response to growth of personality.

3. Entering of Child into the Social World:

During this stage child starts adhering to the social norms by actively taking part in school life. He tries to be independent, as the major part of the day is spent outside home. The child imitates and adopts the qualities from friends, teachers, and others.

4. Adolescent Stage:

The child's personality may show much flexibility. During this period, certain traits are set aside and adoption of new traits takes place. This is the time, when bodily and sexual developments do occur.

A child normally has logical thinking between 7 and 8 years of age. When he attains the age of 13, there is every possibility of an 'Abstract thinking' and the process of 'Reasoning' are evident. From this stage, a child enters into the 'Adult', the prime stage of life.

Major Personality Attributes that Govern Organizational Behavior

The major personality attributes that govern OB are as follows:

Highlights of major personality attribute (SRI LASTMIA)

- i. Locus of control.
- ii. Self esteem
- iii. Self-monitoring
- iv. Risk taking
- v. Type-A personality
- vi. Introversion or Extroversion
- vii. Authoritarianism
- viii. Machiavellianism, and
- ix. Achievement orientation.

The attributes in details:

Attribute # i. Locus of Control:

It may be defined as the degree to which people believe that they are the master of their own fate. In simple term, it can be described as the extent to which he believes that he knows everything.

There are two types of locus of control:

a. Internal locus of control which implies that the degree to which an individual controls himself without other's assistance. In this case individual believes that he controls his destinies. Here the individual believe that his behavior determines many of the events in his life. For example – individual with moderately strong internal locus of control is successful in his job career and lives. He performs his job better, copes better in stressful situation and is satisfied with challenging job and performance based rewards.

b. On the other hand External locus of control may be defined as the degree to which an individual is controlled by the help of other people. In this case individual believes that his life is controlled by outside forces. Here he believes that his behavior determines chance, luck and fate. What happens to him is due to his luck or fate. For example – the individual with moderately strong external locus of control may not be successful in his jobs, career and lives.

Out of these two, internal locus of control is preferred more.

Attribute # ii. Self Esteem:

It signifies the degree of liking or disliking towards a particular object. In simple term, the extent to which an individual likes or dislikes him, it defers from individual to individual. Some individual may have high self-esteem and some have low self-esteem.

The individual with high self-esteem believes the challenging job. But on the other hand the individual with /ore self-esteem depends on the receipt of positive evaluation from other. He is less likely to take unpopular stands.

Out of the two, high esteem individual is more satisfied with his job.

Attribute # iii. Self-Monitoring:

It connotes that the ability of an individual to adjust his behavior with respect to external situation. In simple sense it is the sensitivity of an individual to adopt to the situational demand.

A high self-monitoring individual changes his behavior easily based on the situational requirements than low self-monitoring individual. In this case, the behavior of the individual plays a vital role from the organizational point of view.

Attribute # iv. Risk Taking:

It refers to the propensity to take risk. It is an integral part of decision taking in organization.

An individual with high risk taking makes more rapid decision and use less information in making his choice than the low risk taking individual.

Attribute # v. Type – A Personality and Type-B Personality:

This indicates that the aggressive involvement in the organizational process to achieve more and more objectives. That means the type-A personality is based on active participation towards the organizational system. This type of personality is treated as positive personality.

The behaviors of type-A personality are:

- a. Always moving, walking rapidly, talking, and eating rapidly.
- b. Impatient.
- c. Does two things at the same time
- d. Cannot cope up with leisure time.
- e. Measures success with quantity
- f. Aggressive and competitive
- g. Always under time pressure
- h. High competitiveness.

Type-B personality indicates the individual who is relaxed & incompetent. He is not serious about the objective of organization to a great extent. This type of personality is rarely participating in an endless growing series of event in a decreasing amount of time.

The behavior of Type-B personalities are:

- a. Not concerned about time
- b. Plays for fun not to win.
- c. Relaxes without guilt
- d. Has no pressing deadlines

e. Can reach higher position and promotion.

Attribute # vi. Introversion and Extroversion:

There two terms are normally associated with an individual's sociability and interpersonal orientation.

The introversion is defined as those type of individuals who are shy and reserved, timid and quiet.

On the other hand extroversion refers to those type of individuals who are sociable, gregarious and assertive. This dimension deals with relationships with others.

Out of these two, extroversion individuals contribute more to organizational success.

Attribute # vii. Machiavellianism:

This is another attribute influencing OB. It refers to the extent to which an individual maintains emotional distance and believes that ends can justify means. This type of attribute is named after Niccolo Machiavellian who found out how people gain and manipulate power. This type of attribute is earmarked under two i.e. High Machiavellianism and Low Machiavellianism.

The individual with High Machiavellianism manipulates more & win more. This type of trait is exhibited in order to flourish more outcomes.

The high outcomes are obtained when he focuses on the following points:

- a. When he interacts face to face with other indirectly.
- b. To allow latitude for impoverishing when the situation is not structured nor has a minimum rules & regulation.

Attribute # viii. Achievement Orientation:

This is also another personality attribute which influences OB. This is the type it individual who is highly need to achieve and continuously strive to do things better. This type of individual may be high achiever or low achiever.

The high achiever individual looks for challenges having 50-50 chance of success.

To sum up, the above attributes are essential for building up healthy environment in the organization provided due attention is given.

Personalities-Theories

Innumerable theories have been evolved on personality. Each theory exhibits one type of unique personality of an individual. However, following theories are considered to be more prominent among several theories.

These five theories are briefly explained in the following paragraphs:

1. Type Theory:

According to type theories, people are grouped into identifiable categories. One basis for classifying personalities is based on the physique. Sheldon proposed type theories and he feels that a relationship is sought to be established between features of body and personality. Thus, a short plump person (endomorph) is said to be sociable, relaxed and even-tempered; a tall, thin person (ectomorph) is characterized as restrained, self-conscious and fond of solitude; a heavy-set muscular individual (mesomorph) is described as noisy, callous, and fond of physical activity. Classification of personalities on a physical basis is subjective.

i. Alfred Adler's Psychological Types:

Alfred Adler postulates a single “drive” or motivating force behind all our behavior and experience. By the time his theory had gelled into its most mature form, he called that motivating force the striving for perfection. It is the desire we all have to fulfill our potentials, to come closer and closer to our ideal. It is, as many of you will already see, very similar to the more popular idea of self-actualization.

Striving for perfection was not the first phrase. Adler used to refer to his single motivating force. His earliest phrase was the aggression drive, referring to the reaction we have when other drives, such as our need to eat, be sexually satisfied, get things done, or be loved, are frustrated. It might be better called the assertiveness drive, since we tend to think of aggression as physical and negative. But it was Adler's idea of the aggression drive that first caused friction between him and Freud.

Freud was afraid that it would detract from the crucial position of the sex drive in psychoanalytic theory. Despite Freud's dislike for the idea, he himself introduced something very similar much later in his life – the death instinct. Thus he came out with the following psychological types in his theory based on the energy level of the individuals.

ii. Henry Murray's Psychogenic Needs:

American psychologist Henry Murray developed a theory of personality that was organized in terms of motives, presses, and needs. Murray described needs as a, “potentiality or readiness to respond in a certain way under certain given circumstances.”

Theories of personality based upon needs and motives suggest that our personalities are a reflection of behaviors controlled by needs. While some needs are temporary and changing, other

needs are more deeply seated in our nature. According to Murray, these psychogenic needs function mostly on the unconscious level, but play a major role in our personality.

Murray's Types of Needs:

- a. Primary Needs – Primary needs are based upon biological demands, such as the need for oxygen, food, and water.
- b. Secondary Needs – Secondary Needs are generally psychological, such as the need for nurturing, independence, and achievement.

Attributes or Needs which Influence Personality:

There are several attributes suggested by psychologists as parameters to identify a personality. All the people have these needs and on the basis of degree of these needs an individual's personality can be identified.

Influences on Psychogenic Needs:

Each need is important of itself. But Murray believed that needs can be interrelated, can support other needs, and can conflict with other needs. For example, the need for dominance may conflict with the need for affiliation when overly controlling behavior drives away friends, family, and romantic partners. Murray also believed that environmental factors play a role in how these psychogenesis needs are displayed in behavior. Murray called these environmental forces, "presses."

Thus, type theory focuses on needs, health, and physical features to identify personality.

2. Trait Theory:

Another interesting approach to understand personality is the trait approach. A personality trait is understood as being an enduring attribute of a person that appears consistently in different situations. Each individual trait differs from the other individual in a unique way.

Psychologists working in the area of trait theory are concerned with two processes:

- (i) Determining the basic traits that provide a meaningful description of personality and
- (ii) Finding some way to measure them.

There are two ways of assessing personality traits – (a) the person describes himself by answering questions about this attitudes, feelings, and behaviors and (b) someone else evaluates the person's traits either from what he knows about – the individual/or from direct observations of behavior. For this, personality inventory or a rating scale is generally used.

3. Psychoanalytic Theory:

Sigmund Freud developed the first comprehensive personality theory, called psychoanalytic theory.

Freud saw personality as being- composed of three elements — id, ego, and super ego.

i. The Id:

The word 'id' is the Latin word for 'it' and refers exclusively to the innate component of personality. The id is the mental agency containing everything inherited, present at birth, and fixed in the individual's constitution, especially instincts. The id, as the original personality system, expresses the primary principle of all human life — the immediate discharge of psychic scenery (libido) produced by animal drives.

Immediate tension reduction is called pleasure principle, and the id obeys it, manifesting itself in an impulsive and irrational manner, regardless of the consequences of its actions for others or its own self-preservation. Thus, "Id" is the primitive and unconscious part of the personality that contains instincts.

ii. The Ego:

Mental images do not satisfy needs. A man who is starving cannot satisfy his hunger by eating pictures. Reality should be considered. The ego develops out of the id because of the necessity for dealing with the real world. The hungry man must have food if the tension of hungry is to be reduced. Therefore, "The Ego" is the "executive" of the personality that is partly conscious and that meditates between the impulses of the Id, the prohibitions of the super ego and dictates of the reality.

iii. The Super Ego:

The super ego is the third part of the personality. It represents the internalized representation of the values and morals or society as taught to the child by and others. The super ego judges whether an action is right or wrong according to the standards of society. Superego is the moral arm of the personality that internalizes the standards and values of society and serves as the person's conscience. These three elements, according to Freud, help an assessor to assess the personality.

4. Social Learning Theory:

Many activities of human behavior is either learnt or modified by learning.

There are two ways of learning. Learning through reinforcement of direct experience, and learning by observing others. An individual can learn by observing the actions of others and this is called social learning theory. An interesting story is given in Box to have a deep understanding of what is social learning theory.

An individual's action in a given situation depends upon the specific characteristics of a situation, the individual's understanding of the situation, and past behavior in similar situations.

The social learning theory focuses on behavior patterns and cognitive activities like:

- (a) Competencies;
- (b) Developing cognitive Strategies;

- (c) Outcome expectations; and
- (d) Subjective value outcomes.

It also focuses on self-regulatory systems and plans, where the individual differences have self-imposed goals, rules guiding the individual's behavior.

5. The Humanistic Approach:

The humanistic approach shares a common emphasis on man's potential for self-direction and freedom of choice. They are concerned with the 'self and the individual's subjective experiences.

Carl Rogers Self Theory:

Carl Roger's approach to personality is described as phenomenological. Phenomenology is the study of the individual's subjective experience, feelings and private concepts as well as his views of the world and self. According to Roger, behavior is dependent upon how one perceives the world. The theory emphasizes the self and its characteristics.

Thus in Rogers' personality theory, there are two concepts – self and self-actualization. The self consist of all the ideas, perceptions, and values that characterized "I" or "me." It includes the awareness 'what I am'? Self-actualization is the basic motivating force presenting the inherent tendency of the organism to develop all its capabilities in ways which serve to maintain or enhance the individual.