

Personality Matters: Personality Characteristics that Impact Workplace Behavior

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Personality: Definition

- Personality refers to consistencies in values, attitudes, and behaviors exhibited by an individual across situations.
- Personality is important because it provides us with a valuable means of predicting a person's behavior in some future situation.

What determines personality?

- Nature vs. Nurture debate
- Historically, most personality theorists have considered nurture the primary determinant of personality.
- Recently, however, there seems to be a shift toward the nature side of the argument among personality theorists.

What determines an individual's behavior in a situation?

- Personality does provide a valuable means of predicting a person's behavior in some future situation.
- However, it should be noted that both personality and the environment interact to determine a person's behavior. A viewpoint known as interactionism.

Strong vs. Weak Situations

- It must be noted that personality will be influential in some situations but not in others.
- Some situations are so strong that they overwhelm the effects of personality.
- Strong situations are interpreted in the same way by different individuals, evoke agreement on the appropriate behavior in the situation, and provide clues and rewards to/for the appropriate behavior.
- Personality will have its greatest effect on behavior in weak situations.

Personality Characteristics

- Locus of Control
- Self-Monitoring
- Machiavellianism
- Positive/Negative Affectivity

Locus of Control

- Locus of control refers to the extent to which an individual believes that he/she can control the outcomes he/she receives.
- Internals, individuals who feel that their outcomes stem mainly from internal factors (e.g., their own ability, effort, and decisions) and are directly under their control.
- Externals, individuals who believe that their outcomes are determined largely by external causes (e.g., fate, luck, and the actions of others).

Locus of Control

Research Findings

- Internals tend to have higher $E \rightarrow P$ and $P \rightarrow O$ expectancies than externals.
- Internals tend to be more successful than externals: they hold higher level jobs, advance more quickly, and earn more money than externals.
- Internals have a behavior pattern that makes them a better performer: they search more actively for information before making a decision; are more motivated to achieve; and make a greater attempt to control their environment.

Locus of Control

Research Findings

- Internals are more satisfied with their jobs; are more job-involved; and are less alienated than externals.
- Internals cope with controllable stressors better than externals.
- Externals cope with uncontrollable stressors better than internals.
- External employees prefer a more directive, highly structured leadership style whereas internals prefer a more democratic, participative leadership style.

Self-Monitoring

- Self-monitoring reflects a person's ability to adjust his/her behavior to external, situational factors.
- Self-monitoring involves 3 major tendencies:
 - A willingness to be the center of attention
 - A sensitivity to the reactions of others
 - An ability and willingness to adjust one's behavior to induce positive reactions in others

Research Findings for High Self-Monitors

- High self-monitors are adaptive to their external environment.
- High self-monitors respond more readily to work group norms, organizational culture, and supervisory feedback.
- High self-monitors conform quite readily.
- High self-monitors are more likely to be successful in managerial positions and are more likely to emerge as a leader in a group.

Research Findings for High Self-Monitors

- High self-monitors are also successful in the following occupations: teaching, public relations, and marketing/sales. They are well-suited for tasks that require clear communication.
- High self-monitors are more likely to use impression management techniques.
- High self-monitors are likely to resolve conflicts with others through collaboration or compromise. They are less likely to use avoidance or competition.

Research Findings for Low Self-Monitors

- Low self-monitors tend to display their true dispositions and attitudes in every situation. They have a “what you see is what you get” mentality.
- Low self-monitors are not as vigilant to situational cues and act on their internal states rather than paying attention to the situation.
- Low self-monitors are behaviorally consistent from one situation to the next.
- Low self-monitors are less likely to make snap judgments and are more self-aware.

Machiavellianism

- This personality characteristic refers to an individual's propensity to manipulate others for self-gain.
- This term comes from the Italian philosopher, Niccolo Machiavelli. In 1513 he published *The Prince*.
 - In it he outlined a ruthless strategy for seizing and holding power.

How Do High Machs Operate

- True pragmatists who believe the ends justify the means; they're willing to lie, cheat, or play dirty tricks to get what they want.
- They're very persuasive. They are confident, competent, and eloquent.
- They choose situations in which their favorite tactics work: face-to-face, emotionally charged, and few firm rules about how to behave.
- They are skilled at forming coalitions that work to their advantage. They play both sides against the middle.

How to Protect Oneself from a High Mach

- Expose them to others.
- Pay attention to what they do, not just what they say.
- Avoid situations that give them an edge. Don't act or make decisions when you're emotional.
- Beware of one-sided alliances. Be suspicious of offers involving threats or other types of pressure.

Positive and Negative Affectivity

- Individuals show consistent differences in their predispositions toward experiencing positive or negative moods at work.
- Positive affectivity: people high on this trait tend to have an overall sense of well being, see people and things in a positive light, and tend to experience positive emotional states.
- Negative affectivity: people high on this trait tend to hold negative views of themselves and others, interpret ambiguous situations negatively, and experience negative emotional states.

Research Findings for Positive and Negative Affectivity

- There is a general bias that positive emotions are better than negative emotions.
- However, both positive and negative emotions can be productively applied in the workplace.

Conditions Under Which Positive Affectivity is Beneficial

- When you want to lead others or want to inspire others.
- When you're brainstorming.
- When you are in an achievement situation (carrying out a project, selling a product).
- When you are concerned about how you or others will feel (keeping up morale, customer service).

Conditions Under Which Negative Affectivity is Beneficial

- When checking for errors or accuracy.
- When evaluating the effectiveness of a decision/course of action.
- When planning for a risky and uncertain future.
- When safety is a primary concern.

Words of Caution Concerning Personality Testing

- First, many personality tests are of dubious reliability and validity. A manager can not legally base important personnel decisions on such personality measures with low reliability and validity.
- Second, there is a tendency when using information about personality to view people as just a bundle of traits. There is a tendency to overlook situational factors and how they impact behavior.
- Third, some individuals may view personality testing as an invasion of privacy.

Is Attitude Everything? The Role Attitudes Play at Work

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Attitude: A Definition

- An attitude may be defined as a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable way to an object or person in one's environment.

Three Components of an Attitude

- Cognitive: this component (antecedent) deals with the beliefs and ideas a person has about the person/object.
- Affective: this evaluative component (actual attitude) of the attitude deals with the person's feelings toward the person/object.
- Behavioral Intention: this component (consequence) deals with the behavioral intentions a person has toward the person/object as a result of the affective response.

Job Satisfaction

- The most heavily researched work-related attitude.
- Job satisfaction may be defined as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experience.”

Locke's Value Theory of Job Satisfaction

- According to this theory, the more people receive outcomes they value from their jobs, the more satisfied they will be.
- Job satisfaction exists to the extent that the job outcomes an individual receives match or exceed those outcomes that are desired.
- The level of job satisfaction a person reports is the result of the discrepancy between what the individual wants and has.

Locke's Value Theory of Job Satisfaction

- The level of job satisfaction a person reports is the result of the discrepancy between what the individual wants and has.
- This theory also suggests that those aspects of the job that are important may not be the same for all individuals.
- Thus, job satisfaction is not uni-dimensional rather it's multi-dimensional.

How Satisfied is the Work Force?

- Over the last 25 years or so, there has been a major downward shift in overall job satisfaction levels.
 - 1995 Conference Board Report on Job Satisfaction revealed a 60% job satisfaction level.
 - 2010 and 2015 Conference Board Reports indicated job satisfaction levels at 45% and 48%, respectively.
 - 2019 Conference Board Report indicated a job satisfaction level (56%) that cracked the 50% mark for the first time since 2005.

Job Satisfaction Drivers

■ Challenging Work

- A curvilinear relationship (inverted U) exists between challenge and job satisfaction.
- Satisfaction is increased when there's a good selection and training processes, leading to an appropriate match between an employee's KSAs and the requirements of a job.

Job Satisfaction Drivers

■ Personally Interesting Work

- Personally interesting work is more satisfying.
- Satisfaction is also increased when employees understand the importance of what they're doing.
 - Employees want to know that their input matters and that they're helping the organization succeed.
 - When employees are working hard but they don't understand or see how their work drives the business, this creates dissatisfaction.

Job Satisfaction Drivers

■ Empowerment

- Empowerment occurs when managers consult/collaborate with employees on decisions or delegate these decisions to employees that are important to the team, unit or organization, they demonstrate that the employees are indeed valued.
- This creates a feeling of “being in on things.”
- It creates trust and a culture where employees want to take ownership of problems and their solutions.

Job Satisfaction Drivers

■ Autonomy

- Autonomy occurs when a manager defines the outcome that's desired in the job and allow the employee to use his/her talents to find the quickest and easiest way to reach it.
- This autonomy allows employees the opportunity to think, to take responsibility for their actions and learn from their mistakes.
- It also creates a sense of urgency that provides a significant boost to motivation.

Job Satisfaction Drivers

■ Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict

- Role ambiguity occurs when there is uncertainty regarding what's expected of the person on the job.
- Role conflict occurs when there are conflicting demands made on the job such that if you comply with one set of demands you cannot comply with the other.
- Individuals who experience role ambiguity and/or role conflict will experience job dissatisfaction.

Job Satisfaction Drivers

■ Supervision

– Entity Relationship

- Individuals will be satisfied with supervisors who see things the same way they do. This relationship is based upon interpersonal attraction due to similar values and attitudes.

– Functional Relationship

- Individuals will be satisfied with supervisors who help them attain rewards. In this relationship, the supervisor helps the employee satisfy values that are important to the employee.

– Employees disengage (i.e., quit and stay or quit and leave) from managers rather than companies.

Job Satisfaction Drivers

■ Personality-Job Fit

- High agreement between an employee's personality and the job results in a more satisfied individual.
- People with personality types that are consistent with their chosen vocations find it is easier to meet the demands of the job and are more likely to be successful on the job and because of this success have greater probability of achieving high job satisfaction from their work.

Job Satisfaction Drivers

- Research on monozygotic twins has revealed that a significant portion of job satisfaction may be inherited. There may be a genetic predisposition to like or dislike one's job.
- Researchers studied monozygotic twins (same nature) that were separated at an early age and raised apart (different nurture). They found that at least 30% of job satisfaction was genetically determined.
- The implication of this research is that there is a “genetic ceiling” to job satisfaction. It may be that managers cannot raise job satisfaction above a certain level for some employees.

Job Satisfaction Drivers

- The strongest driver of job satisfaction is the belief that one is treated fairly/unfairly.
- There are three types of justice that are relevant here: 1) distributive, 2) procedural, and 3) interactional.

Job Satisfaction Drivers

- Distributive justice refers to the fairness of the outcomes one receives.
- Procedural justice refers to the fairness of how the decision was made.
- Interactional justice is concerned with the interpersonal treatment received from the decision-maker.
- All three types of justice increase job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust, OCBs and decrease intention to quit.

Procedural Justice

- A procedurally just process is:
 - 1) consistent in applying standards across people and across time
 - 2) unbiased by self-interest, favoritism, or nepotism
 - 3) accurate with decisions based on reliable information
 - 4) correctable, in terms of allowing challenge or appeal of the decision
 - 5) representative of the concerns of all involved

Research on Procedural Justice

- One study revealed that people laid off from a variety of industries were more likely to speak positively about their former companies when the layoffs were procedurally fair.
- In another study, salaried employees reacted less negatively to a pay freeze when it was implemented in a procedurally fair manner.

Interactional Justice

- This is known as the “Churchill effect”:
 - “if you have to kill a man, it costs you nothing to be polite.”
- An Interactionally Just process should be:
 - 1) socially sensitive, in that one should treat those involved with dignity and respect.
 - 2) justified, in that the explanations of procedures and outcomes should be adequately reasoned and sincerely communicated.
 - 3) considerate, in that one should listen to the concerns of those involved.
 - 4) empathic, in that one should demonstrate empathy for the other person’s plight.

Research on Interactional Justice

- Research has demonstrated that interactional justice (social treatment) was the strongest predictor of laid-off employees interest in seeking legal damages.
- Among those treated disrespectfully, 66% thought about suing whereas those treated respectfully only 16% considered suing.

Research on Interactional Justice

- 2 sister plants received 15% pay cuts. In neither case were the employees given any say in the matter.
- The employees were told only that the cuts were due to the loss of 2 major contracts.

Research on Interactional Justice

- In one plant, the plant manager expressed remorse, clearly described the basis for the decision and alternatives considered, and fielded employee questions.
- In the other plant, the plant manager warned that the pay cuts would begin next week and last for ten weeks.

Research on Interactional Justice

- Employee theft increased at both plants but in the plant where interactional justice wasn't respected the theft rate was double that of the other plant.
- Also, people at the plant treated in a disrespectful manner often stole objects that had no value to themselves but had value to their employer.

The Impact of Job Satisfaction

- Job satisfaction affects a number of organizational behaviors such as tardiness, absenteeism, turnover, job performance, and teamwork.
- When morale is low, it can negatively affect an organization's bottom line.

The Impact of Job Satisfaction

- Job satisfaction doesn't affect every organizational behavior to the same degree.
- Below is a list of organizational behaviors, beginning with the ones that are marginally impacted and progressing to those that are strongly impacted by job satisfaction.
 - Absenteeism
 - Turnover
 - Job Performance
 - Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (going above and beyond job expectations)

Improving Job Satisfaction with Realistic Job Previews

- A realistic job preview (RJP) gives prospective employees as much pertinent information, good and bad, about the job as possible, and without distortion.
 - Such previews communicate organizational realities and help keep the job candidate's expectations as reasonable as possible.
- RJP's increase job satisfaction and reduce voluntary turnover by 10%.

Improving Job Satisfaction with Attitude Surveys

- These are useful for identifying problems and developing action plans to remedy these problems.
- Research has shown that attitude surveys, if properly designed and implemented effectively, can increase employee job satisfaction.

Problems Associated with Attitude Surveys

- The fact that you're conducting an attitude survey can raise expectations and lower job satisfaction.
 - If you conduct a survey, gather data, conduct focus groups and do nothing with the recommendations, job satisfaction can take a serious hit.
- Improving job satisfaction levels should not be the primary goal.
 - Job dissatisfaction is like a sick person's temperature. It tells you that something is wrong. Doctors don't just treat the patient's symptoms. They treat the cause of the symptoms.
- Be careful making the results of job satisfaction surveys part of a manager's performance appraisal.
 - This could lead to the attitude survey becoming a numbers game rather than being a tool for positive change.

Employee Motivation

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Myths About Motivation

- Myth #1: “I can motivate people”
 - Not really. People have to motivate themselves. One can set up an environment where motivation produces positive results for the employee.
- Myth #2: “Fear is a damn good motivator”
 - Fear can be a great motivator for a short period of time.
- Myth #3: “I know what motivate me, so I know what motivates my employees.”
 - Different people are motivated by different things.

McClelland's Learned Needs Theory

- McClelland identified three learned needs that could motivate an individual at work.
- The three needs were:
 - Need for power (nPow)
 - Need for affiliation (nAff)
 - Need for achievement (nAch)

McClelland's Need for Power

- Individuals who have a high nPow derive satisfaction from their ability to control or influence others.
- Individuals who are high in nPow tend to be superior performers, have good attendance records, and are more likely to occupy managerial positions.

The Two Faces of Need for Power

- Personal power is self-serving power. Leaders who exhibit personal power seek personal gain through the manipulation and control of others.
- Social power is organization-minded power. Leaders who exhibit social power will sacrifice their self-interest for the good of the organization.

Research on High nPow

- Managers high in social power had more productive and satisfied work groups than managers high in personal power.
- Managers high in social power were also more likely to rise to the top of the organization.
- Managers high in the need for power have a high risk of high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease.

McClelland's Need for Affiliation

- Individuals who score high on need for affiliation derive satisfaction from social and interpersonal activities.
- Individuals who are high nAff seek social support and approval from others. They will behave in ways that win them others' approval.

Research on High nAff

- High nAff individuals have good attendance records, work best in cooperative environments, and prefer to work as part of a team.
- High nAff respond better to personally supportive feedback rather than task-related feedback.
- High nAff managers tend to be indecisive in decision-making and may play favorites. They tend to select team members based on friendship rather than competence.

McClelland's Need for Achievement

- Individuals high in the need for achievement compete against a standard of excellence.
- The feeling of successful task completion is important to the high nAch person.

High Need for Achievement Profile

- They're moderate risk-takers.
- They like immediate and precise feedback.
- They're intrinsically motivated.
- They're preoccupied with task completion.
- They prefer to work independently.
- They avoid gambling situations.

Equity Theory

- This motivation theory is concerned with fairness in the workplace.
- Specifically, it's concerned with what individuals define as fair and how they react to being treated unfairly.

Equity Theory

- Individuals think about what they contribute (inputs) to the organization and what they receive in return (outcomes).
- They then compare their input-outcome ratio to the input-outcome ratio of relevant others to determine if they've been treated fairly.

Two Types of Unfairness in Equity Theory

- In equity theory, there are two types of unfairness: unfavorable inequity (unfairness that hurts the individual) and favorable inequity (unfairness that benefits the individual).
- Out of the two types of inequity, unfavorable inequity is more problematic for organizations.

Employee Reactions to Unfavorable Inequity (Under-Reward)

- Reduced quantity/quality performance.
- Unauthorized work breaks and lunch breaks.
- Increased tardiness, absenteeism and turnover.
- Increased theft of merchandise/cash.

Employee Reactions to Favorable Inequity (Over-Reward)

- Don't experience guilt.
- Don't increase their productivity.
- Rationalize the over-reward as actually being deserved.
- May make it more difficult for the individual to accept constructive feedback in the future.

New Research in Equity Theory

- There are three types of individuals, each with a different perception of what is fair.
 - Entitleds: perceive over-reward as fair.
 - Equity Sensitives: perceive equitable reward as fair.
 - Benevolents: perceive under-reward as fair.

Expectancy Theory of Motivation

- According to this theory, individuals will expend the most effort on activities that they **expect** will bring them the most in return.
- Motivation in this theory is determined by:
1) expectancies and 2) valence.

Expectancy Theory Framework

- **E→P**: An individual's subjective belief regarding the link between his/her efforts and performance on the job. This is expressed in terms of a probability (from 0-1.0).
- **P→O**: An individual's subjective belief regarding the link between performance on the job and a particular outcome (e.g., reward). This is expressed in terms of a probability (from 0-1.0).
- **Valence**: The anticipated satisfaction of a particular outcome. It can be +, -, or 0.

Factors Affecting $E \rightarrow P$

- Personnel Selection
- Training
- Work Area Set-Up
- Goal Difficulty
- Role Conflict and Ambiguity

Factors Affecting $P \rightarrow 0$

- Validity of Performance Appraisal System
- Fairness in Reward Distribution
- Piece-Rate Pay Systems

Motivation to perform is maximized

- when $E \rightarrow P$ is high.
- when $P \rightarrow O$ is high.
- when valence is positive.