Study Note

PERSONALITY

MGT213: Management Practices and Organizational Behavior

Personality
Topic 12 | Week 12

Instructor
Nadia Afroze Disha (NAR)
Lecturer
BRAC Business School
BRAC University

BBA Program
Summer 2025

PERSONALITY
Topic 12 | Week 12

■ ■ ■

CONTENTS

Why are some people quiet and passive, while others are loud and aggressive? Are certain personality types better adapted than others for certain job types? Before we can answer these questions, we need to address a more basic one: What is personality?

WHAT IS PERSONALITY?

When we speak of someone's personality, we don't mean the person has charm or is constantly smiling. As organizational behaviorists, we are describing a dynamic concept of the growth and development of a person's personality.

Defining Personality

The definition of personality we most frequently use was produced by Gordon Allport nearly 70 years ago. Allport said **personality** is "the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment." For our purposes, you should think of personality as the sum total of ways in which an individual reacts to and interacts with others. We most often describe it in terms of the measurable traits a person exhibits.

Measuring Personality

The most important reason managers need to know how to measure personality is that research has shown **personality tests are useful in hiring decisions and help managers forecast who is best for a job**.

The most common means of measuring personality is through **self-report surveys** in which individuals evaluate themselves on a series of factors, such as ***"I worry a lot about the future."*** Self-report surveys have a few issues though.

- ⊕ Though self-report measures work when well constructed, the respondent might lie or practice ***impression management*** to create a good impression. When people know their personality scores are going to be used for hiring decisions, they rate themselves as about half a standard deviation more conscientious and emotionally stable than if they are taking the test to learn more about themselves.
- ⊕ Another problem is accuracy; a candidate who is in a bad mood when taking the survey may have inaccurate scores.

Observer-ratings surveys provide an independent assessment of personality. Here, a co-worker or another observer does the rating (sometimes with the subject's knowledge and sometimes not).

Though the results of self-report surveys and observer-ratings surveys are strongly correlated, research suggests observer-ratings surveys better predict success on the job. However, each can tell us something unique about an individual's behavior. An analysis of a large number of observer-reported personality studies shows that a combination of self-reports and observer-reports predicts performance better than any one type of information.

The implication is clear: **Use both observer ratings and self-report ratings of personality when making important employment decisions**.

Personality Determinants

An early debate in personality research centered on **whether an individual's personality is the result of heredity or environment**. **Personality appears to be a result of both**; however, research tends to support the importance of heredity over the environment.

Heredity refers to factors determined at conception. Physical stature, facial features, gender, temperament, muscle composition and reflexes, energy level, and biological rhythms are

generally considered to be either completely or substantially influenced by parentage — by your biological parents' biological, physiological, and inherent psychological makeup. The heredity approach argues that the ultimate explanation of an individual's personality is the molecular structure of the genes, located in the chromosomes.

Personality Studies on Identical Twins

Researchers in many different countries have studied thousands of sets of identical twins who were separated at birth and raised apart. If heredity played little or no part in determining personality, you would expect to find few similarities between separated twins.

Researchers have found, however, that genetics accounts for about 50 percent of the personality similarities between twins and more than 30 percent of the similarities in occupational and leisure interests. One set of twins separated for 39 years and raised 45 miles apart were found to drive the same model and color car. They chain-smoked the same brand of cigarette, owned dogs with the same name, and regularly vacationed within three blocks of each other in a beach community 1,500 miles away.

Interestingly, twin studies have suggested parents don't add much to our personality development. The personalities of identical twins raised in different households are more similar to each other than to the personalities of siblings with whom the twins were raised. Ironically, the most important contribution our parents may make to our personalities is giving us their genes!

This is not to suggest that personality never changes. People's scores on dependability tend to increase over time, as when young adults start families and establish careers. However, strong individual differences in dependability remain; everyone tends to change by about the same amount, so their rank order stays roughly the same. An analogy to intelligence may make this clearer. Children become smarter as they age, so nearly everyone is smarter at age 20 than at age 10. Still, if Keisha is smarter than Blake at age 10, she is likely to be smarter at age 20, too.

Research has shown that personality is more changeable in adolescence and more stable among adults.

THE BIG FIVE PERSONALITY MODEL

An impressive body of research supports **the Big Five Model** — that five basic dimensions underlie all others and encompass most of the significant variation in human personality. Moreover, test scores of these traits do a very good job of predicting how people behave in a variety of real-life situations. These are the Big Five factors.

1. **Extraversion.** The **extraversion** dimension captures our comfort level with relationships. Extraverts tend to be gregarious, assertive, and sociable. Introverts tend to be reserved, timid, and quiet.

2. **Agreeableness.** The **agreeableness** dimension refers to an individual's propensity to defer to others. Highly agreeable people are cooperative, warm, and trusting. People who score low on agreeableness are cold, disagreeable, and antagonistic.

3. **Conscientiousness.** The **conscientiousness** dimension is a measure of reliability. A highly conscientious person is responsible, organized, dependable, and persistent. Those who score low on this dimension are easily distracted, disorganized, and unreliable.

4. **Emotional Stability.** The **emotional stability** dimension — often labeled by its converse, neuroticism — taps a person's ability to withstand stress. People with positive emotional stability tend to be calm, self-confident, and secure. Those with high negative scores tend to be nervous, anxious, depressed, and insecure.

5. **Openness to Experience.** The **openness to experience** dimension addresses range of interests and fascination with novelty. Extremely open people are creative, curious, and artistically sensitive. Those at the other end of the category are conventional and find comfort in the familiar.

The Cambridge Analytica Scandal and the Big Five Model of Personality

Cambridge Analytica was a data analytics firm that gained widespread attention due to its involvement in political campaigns, including the 2016 United States presidential election and the Brexit referendum. The company specialized in classifying voters based on their personality traits, behaviors, and preferences, using advanced psychographic modeling techniques.

During the 2016 United States presidential election, Cambridge Analytica obtained the data of 50 million Facebook users, constructed 30 million personality profiles, and sold the data to US politicians seeking election to influence voters, without the users' consent. By analyzing those vast amounts of data, the firm aimed to influence voter behavior and opinions through targeted advertising and messaging.

However, the firm faced criticism and controversy over its data practices, including allegations of unauthorized data harvesting from millions of Facebook users. These revelations led to investigations by authorities in multiple countries and sparked a global debate about data privacy, ethics in data analytics, and the influence of technology on democracy. Ultimately, Cambridge Analytica shut down its operations in 2018 amidst mounting legal and regulatory scrutiny, but its legacy continues to shape discussions surrounding data protection and digital rights.

How Do the Big Five Traits Predict Behavior at Work?
Research has found relationships between these personality dimensions and job performance. As the authors of the most-cited review observed, **"The preponderance of evidence shows that individuals who are dependable, reliable, careful, thorough, able to plan, organized, hardworking, persistent, and achievement-oriented tend to have higher job performance in most if not all occupations."**

⊕ **Conscientiousness**
Employees who score higher in conscientiousness develop higher levels of job knowledge, probably because highly conscientious people learn more (a review of 138 studies revealed conscientiousness was related to GPA). **Higher levels of job knowledge contribute to higher levels of job performance.** Conscientious individuals who are more interested in learning than in just performing on the job are also exceptionally good at maintaining performance in the face of negative feedback. There can be "too much of a good

thing," however, as extremely conscientious individuals typically do not perform better than those who are simply above average in conscientiousness.

Interestingly, conscientious people live longer; they take better care of themselves and engage in fewer risky behaviors like smoking, drinking and drugs, and risky sexual or driving behavior. They don't adapt as well to changing contexts, however. They are generally performance oriented and may have trouble learning complex skills early in the training process because their focus is on performing well rather than on learning. Finally, they are often less creative than less conscientious people, especially artistically.

Although **conscientiousness is most consistently related to job performance**, the other Big Five traits also have some bearing. Let's look at them one at a time. Exhibit 5-2 summarizes.

⊕ **Emotional Stability**
Of the Big Five traits, **emotional stability is most strongly related to life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and low stress levels**. High scorers are more likely to be positive and optimistic and experience fewer negative emotions; they are generally happier than low scorers. Low scorers are hypervigilant (looking for problems or impending signs of danger) and are vulnerable to the physical and psychological effects of stress.
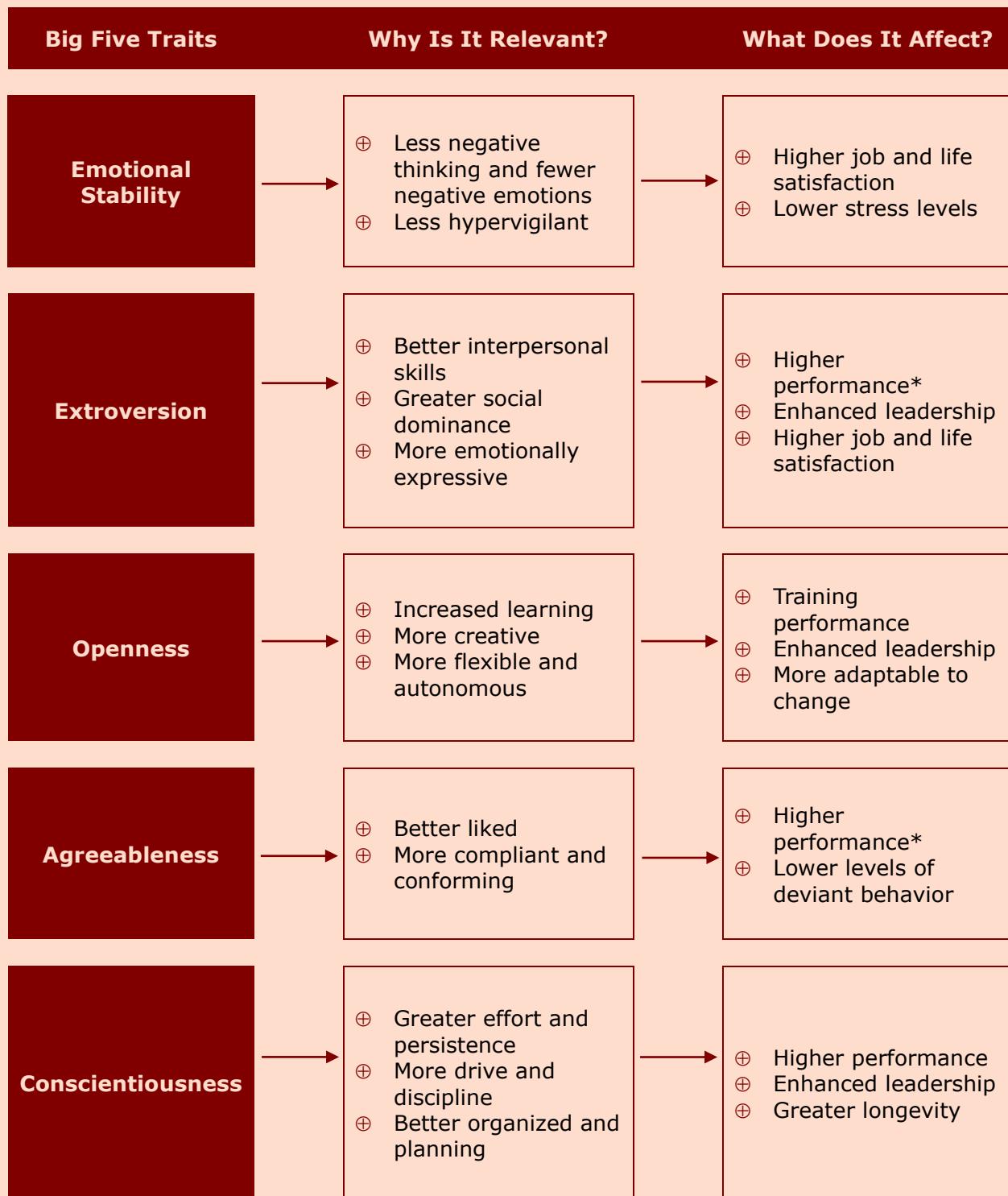
⊕ **Extraversion**
Extraverts tend to be happier in their jobs and in their lives. They experience more positive emotions than do introverts, and they express these feelings. Extraverts also tend to perform better in jobs with significant interpersonal interaction: They usually have more social skills and friends. Finally, **extraversion is a relatively strong predictor of leadership emergence in groups**; extraverts are more socially dominant, "take charge" people, usually more assertive than introverts. Extraverts are more impulsive than introverts; they are more likely to be absent from work and engage in risky behavior such as unprotected sex, drinking, and other sensation-seeking acts. One study also found extraverts were more likely than introverts to lie during job interviews.

⊕ **Openness to Experience**
High scorers for openness to experience are more creative in science and art than low scorers. Because **creativity is important to leadership, open people are more likely to be effective leaders** — and more comfortable with ambiguity. They cope better with organizational change and are more adaptable in varying contexts. Recent evidence suggests they are susceptible to workplace accidents.

⊕ **Agreeableness**
You might expect agreeable people to be happier than disagreeable people. They are, but only slightly. When people choose romantic partners, friends, or organizational team members, agreeable individuals are usually first choice. **Agreeable individuals are better liked than disagreeable people; they tend to do better in interpersonally oriented jobs such as customer service.** Agreeable people also are more compliant and rule abiding, less likely to get into accidents, and more satisfied in their jobs. They contribute to organizational performance by engaging in citizenship behavior and are less likely to engage in organizational deviance. Agreeableness is associated with lower levels of career success (especially earnings).

Big Five Traits	Why Is It Relevant?	What Does It Affect?
Emotional Stability	⊕ Less negative thinking and fewer negative emotions ⊕ Less hypervigilant	⊕ Higher job and life satisfaction ⊕ Lower stress levels
Extroversion	⊕ Better interpersonal skills ⊕ Greater social dominance ⊕ More emotionally expressive	⊕ Higher performance* ⊕ Enhanced leadership ⊕ Higher job and life satisfaction
Openness	⊕ Increased learning ⊕ More creative ⊕ More flexible and autonomous	⊕ Training performance ⊕ Enhanced leadership ⊕ More adaptable to change
Agreeableness	⊕ Better liked ⊕ More compliant and conforming	⊕ Higher performance* ⊕ Lower levels of deviant behavior
Conscientiousness	⊕ Greater effort and persistence ⊕ More drive and discipline ⊕ Better organized and planning	⊕ Higher performance ⊕ Enhanced leadership ⊕ Greater longevity

In jobs requiring significant teamwork or frequent interpersonal interactions.

Exhibit 5-2. Model of How Big Five Traits Influence OB Criteria

HOFSTEDE'S FIVE VALUE DIMENSIONS OF NATIONAL CULTURE

One of the most widely referenced approaches for analyzing variations among cultures was done in the late 1970s by Geert Hofstede. Hofstede surveyed more than 116,000 IBM employees in 40 countries about their work-related values and found that managers and employees vary on five value dimensions of national culture.

Five Value Dimensions	Interpretation	Example
POWER DISTANCE **Power distance** describes the degree to which people in a country accept that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally.	A **high rating on power distance** means that large inequalities of power and wealth exist and are tolerated in the culture, as in a class or caste system that discourages upward mobility.	Power distance is higher in **Malaysia** than in any other country. **Poorer countries such as India, Mexico and the Philippines** as well as **Saudia Arabia** tend to be higher on power distance.
	A **low power distance rating** characterizes societies that stress equality and opportunity.	The **United States**, **Denmark**, and **Sweden** tend to be low in power distance (people in these countries tend not to accept built-in class differences between people).
INDIVIDUALISM VERSUS COLLECTIVISM **Individualism-collectivism** is the degree to which a society emphasizes an individual's accomplishments and self-interest, versus the accomplishments and interests of groups.	**Individualism** is the degree to which people prefer to act as individuals rather than as members of groups and believe in individual rights above all else.	The **United States** is very individualistic; in fact, it's the most individualistic nation of all (closely followed by **Australia** and **Great Britain**). **Western and northern nations such as Canada and the Netherlands** tend to be more individualistic.
	Collectivism emphasizes a tight social framework in which people expect others in groups of which they are a part to look after them and protect them.	**Asian countries such as Japan, China, and South Korea** are highly collectivist.

Five Value Dimensions	Interpretation	Example
MASCULINITY VERSUS FEMININITY Hofstede's construct of **masculinity** is the degree to which the culture favors traditional masculine roles such as achievement, power, and control, as opposed to viewing men and women as equals.	A **high masculinity rating** indicates the culture has separate roles for men and women, with men dominating the society.	The **United States**, **Japan**, **Austria**, **Venezuela**, and **Italy** score relatively high on masculinity; most people emphasize traditional gender roles.
	A **high femininity rating** means the culture sees little differentiation between male and female roles and treats women as the equals of men in all respects.	In low masculine cultures, such as **Denmark**, **Norway**, **Netherlands**, and **Sweden**, women are treated more equally in their social systems.
UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE The degree to which people in a country prefer structured over unstructured situations defines their **uncertainty avoidance**.	In cultures that score **high on uncertainty avoidance**, people have an increased level of anxiety about uncertainty and ambiguity and use laws and controls to reduce uncertainty.	**South American nations**, **Greece**, **Japan**, and **France** tend to be higher than other countries on uncertainty avoidance.
	People in cultures **low on uncertainty avoidance** are more accepting of ambiguity, are less rule oriented, take more risks, and more readily accept change.	The **United States**, **Singapore**, **Denmark**, and **Sweden** are relatively low on uncertainty avoidance, meaning most adults are relatively tolerant of uncertainty and ambiguity.
LONG-TERM VERSUS SHORT-TERM ORIENTATION This newest addition to Hofstede's typology measures a society's devotion to traditional values.	People in a culture with **long-term orientation** look to the future and value thrift, persistence, and tradition.	**Asian countries such as Japan, China, and South Korea** tend to have a long-term orientation.
	In a **short-term orientation**, people value the here and now; they accept change more readily and don't see commitments as impediments to change.	The **United States**, **United Kingdom**, and **Canada** tend to be short term in orientation.

Bangladesh and Hofstede's Five Value Dimensions of National Culture

Power Distance
In Bangladesh, there is a relatively high power distance where large inequalities of power and wealth exist and are often tolerated. This is evident in the hierarchical structure of organizations and society, where authority figures are highly respected and decisions are often made by those in power without much consultation with subordinates. For example, in traditional family structures, elders hold significant authority and decisions are typically made by them without much input from younger members.

Individualism Versus Collectivism
Bangladeshi culture tends to emphasize collectivism, where people prefer to act as members of groups rather than as individuals. This is reflected in the strong sense of community and interconnectedness among family members, neighbors, and colleagues. For instance, during festivals like Eid, people come together to celebrate as a community, sharing food and gifts with each other and prioritizing the well-being of the group over individual interests.

Masculinity Versus Femininity
Bangladesh exhibits a relatively high level of masculinity, where traditional gender roles are emphasized, and men are often seen as the primary breadwinners and decision-makers in families and society. This is evident in the dominance of men in leadership positions in both public and private sectors, and the expectation for women to prioritize family and household responsibilities over career ambitions.

Uncertainty Avoidance
Bangladesh tends to have a high uncertainty avoidance culture, where people have a strong preference for structured situations and seek to minimize uncertainty and ambiguity. This is reflected in the reliance on established norms, traditions, and religious beliefs to guide behavior and decision-making. For example, in business settings, there is a preference for clear rules and procedures, and individuals may feel uncomfortable with ambiguity or rapid changes in plans.

Long-Term Versus Short-Term Orientation
Bangladesh traditionally has a long-term orientation, where values such as thrift, persistence, and respect for tradition are highly valued. This is evident in practices such as saving money for future generations, respecting elders and ancestors, and upholding cultural traditions and rituals. However, with globalization and modernization, there is also a growing acceptance of short-term orientation values, particularly among the younger generation, who may prioritize immediate gratification and adaptability to change over long-term planning and tradition.
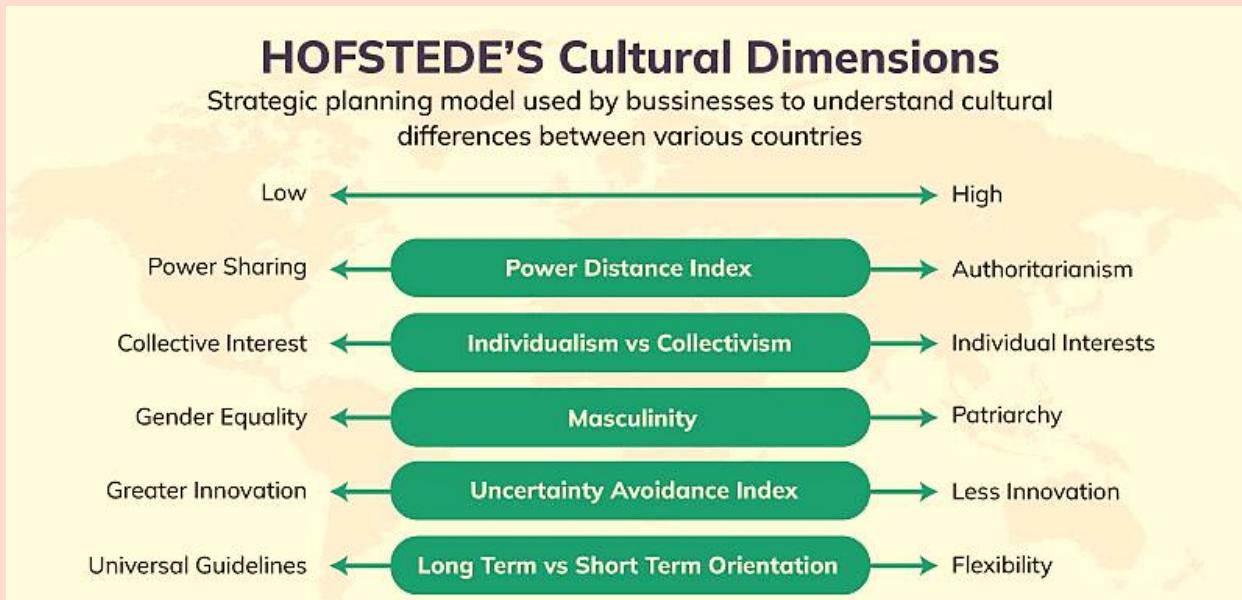
Influence of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions on OB
Hofstede's culture dimensions have been enormously influential on OB researchers and managers. Nevertheless, his research has been criticized.

> **First,** although the data have since been updated, the original work is more than 30 years old and was based on a single company (IBM). A lot has happened on the world scene since then. Some of the most obvious changes include the fall of the Soviet

Union, the transformation of central and eastern Europe, the end of apartheid in South Africa, the rise of China as a global power, and the advent of a worldwide recession.

Second, few researchers have read the details of Hofstede's methodology closely and are therefore unaware of the many decisions and judgment calls he had to make (for example, reducing the number of cultural values to just five). Despite these concerns, Hofstede has been one of the most widely cited social scientists ever, and his framework has left a lasting mark on OB.

Recent research across 598 studies with more than 200,000 respondents has investigated the relationship of Hofstede's cultural values and a variety of organizational criteria at both the individual and national level of analysis. Overall, the five original culture dimensions were equally strong predictors of relevant outcomes, meaning researchers and practicing managers need to think about culture holistically and not just focus on one or two dimensions.

The researchers also found that measuring individual scores resulted in much better predictions of most outcomes than assigning all people in a country the same cultural values. In sum, this research suggests that Hofstede's value framework may be a valuable way of thinking about differences among people, but we should be cautious about assuming all people from a country have the same values.

Exhibit 5-7 — Hofstede's Cultural Values by Nation

Country	Power Distance		Individualism versus Collectivism		Masculinity versus Femininity		Uncertainty Avoidance		Long- versus Short-Term Orientation	
	Index	Rank	Index	Rank	Index	Rank	Index	Rank	Index	Rank
Argentina	49	35–36	46	22–23	56	20–21	86	10–15		
Australia	36	41	90	2	61	16	51	37	31	22–24
Austria	11	53	55	18	79	2	70	24–25	31	22–24
Belgium	65	20	75	8	54	22	94	5–6	38	18
Brazil	69	14	38	26–27	49	27	76	21–22	65	6
Canada	39	39	80	4–5	52	24	48	41–42	23	30
Chile	63	24–25	23	38	28	46	86	10–15		
Colombia	67	17	13	49	64	11–12	80	20		
Costa Rica	35	42–44	15	46	21	48–49	86	10–15		
Denmark	18	51	74	9	16	50	23	51	46	10
Ecuador	78	8–9	8	52	63	13–14	67	28		
El Salvador	66	18–19	19	42	40	40	94	5–6		
Finland	33	46	63	17	26	47	59	31–32	41	14
France	68	15–16	71	10–11	43	35–36	86	10–15	39	17
Germany	35	42–44	67	15	66	9–10	65	29	31	22–24
Great Britain	35	42–44	89	3	66	9–10	35	47–48	25	28–29
Greece	60	27–28	35	30	57	18–19	112	1		
Guatemala	95	2–3	6	53	37	43	101	3		
Hong Kong	68	15–16	25	37	57	18–19	29	49–50	96	2
India	77	10–11	48	21	56	20–21	40	45	61	7
Indonesia	78	8–9	14	47–48	46	30–31	48	41–42		
Iran	58	29–30	41	24	43	35–36	59	31–32		
Ireland	28	49	70	12	68	7–8	35	47–48	43	13
Israel	13	52	54	19	47	29	81	19		
Italy	50	34	76	7	70	4–5	75	23	34	19
Jamaica	45	37	39	25	68	7–8	13	52		
Japan	54	33	46	22–23	95	1	92	7	80	4
Korea (South)	60	27–28	18	43	39	41	85	16–17	75	5
Malaysia	104	1	26	36	50	25–26	36	46		
Mexico	81	5–6	30	32	69	6	82	18		
The Netherlands	38	40	80	4–5	14	51	53	35	44	11–12
New Zealand	22	50	79	6	58	17	49	39–40	30	25–26
Norway	31	47–48	69	13	8	52	50	38	44	11–12
Pakistan	55	32	14	47–48	50	25–26	70	24–25	0	34
Panama	95	2–3	11	51	44	34	86	10–15		
Peru	64	21–23	16	45	42	37–38	87	9		
Philippines	94	4	32	31	64	11–12	44	44	19	31–32
Portugal	63	24–25	27	33–35	31	45	104	2	30	25–26
Singapore	74	13	20	39–41	48	28	8	53	48	9
South Africa	49	35–36	65	16	63	13–14	49	39–40		
Spain	57	31	51	20	42	37–38	86	10–15	19	31–32
Sweden	31	47–48	71	10–11	5	53	29	49–50	33	20
Switzerland	34	45	68	14	70	4–5	58	33	40	15–16
Taiwan	58	29–30	17	44	45	32–33	69	26	87	3
Thailand	64	21–23	20	39–41	34	44	64	30	56	8
Turkey	66	18–19	37	28	45	32–33	85	16–17		
United States	40	38	91	1	62	15	46	43	29	27
Uruguay	61	26	36	29	38	42	100	4		
Venezuela	81	5–6	12	50	73	3	76	21–22		
Yugoslavia	76	12	27	33–35	21	48–49	88	8		
Regions:										
Arab countries	80	7	38	26–27	53	23	68	27		
East Africa	64	21–23	27	33–35	41	39	52	36	25	28–29
West Africa	77	10–11	20	39–41	46	30–31	54	34	16	33

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

A. Theoretical/Conceptual Questions

1. What is personality?
2. How do we typically measure personality?
3. What factors determine personality?
4. Explain the Big Five Personality Model with examples.
5. How does the situation or environment affect the degree to which personality predicts behavior?

B. Situational/Contextual Questions

6. A highly innovative tech company is looking to hire new employees. What personality traits, particularly related to openness to experience, would be desirable for this role?
7. A conservative financial institution is experiencing low levels of creativity and innovation. How might the personality traits of employees, specifically their openness to experience, be contributing to this issue?
8. A project manager is struggling to keep a team focused and on task. What personality traits, particularly related to conscientiousness, might be lacking in the team?
9. A highly conscientious employee is consistently promoted but is struggling to develop leadership skills. How might their personality trait be hindering their career progression?
10. A sales role requires strong interpersonal skills and the ability to build relationships. What personality traits, particularly related to extraversion, would be beneficial for this position?
11. An introverted individual is struggling to adapt to a highly social work environment. How might their personality influence their job satisfaction and performance?
12. A customer service role requires empathy and the ability to handle difficult customers. What personality traits, particularly related to agreeableness, would be desirable for this position?
13. A highly agreeable individual is often taken advantage of by coworkers. How might this personality trait affect their career advancement?
14. An employee is experiencing high levels of stress and is struggling to cope with work demands. What personality traits, particularly related to neuroticism, might be contributing to this issue?
15. A highly neurotic individual is being considered for a leadership role. What challenges might they face, and how can the organization support their development?
16. A multinational corporation is considering implementing a decentralized decision-making structure. How might the power distance index of the countries in which the company operates influence the success of this initiative?
17. A company is experiencing high levels of employee dissatisfaction due to perceived inequities in the distribution of power. How can Hofstede's power distance dimension help to explain this issue and suggest potential solutions?
18. A project team composed of members from individualistic and collectivist cultures is struggling to reach a consensus. How might these cultural differences influence the team's dynamics and productivity?
19. A company is considering implementing a performance-based reward system. How might the prevailing cultural values of individualism or collectivism affect the acceptance and effectiveness of this system?
20. A company is introducing a new, innovative product to the market. How might the level of uncertainty avoidance in the target market influence the product's acceptance and success?
21. A multinational company is experiencing difficulties in transferring knowledge between employees from different cultural backgrounds. How might uncertainty avoidance influence knowledge sharing and innovation?
22. A company is considering offering parental leave benefits. How might the prevailing cultural values of masculinity or femininity influence employees' attitudes toward and utilization of these benefits?
23. A leadership development program is being designed for a global workforce. How can the concept of masculinity and femininity be incorporated to tailor the program to different cultural contexts?
24. A company is planning a long-term investment in research and development. How might the cultural orientation toward long-term or short-term perspectives influence the decision-making process?
25. A company is experiencing challenges in building customer loyalty. How might the cultural emphasis on long-term or short-term relationships impact customer retention efforts?

C. Case Study

Case Study 1: Personal Values and Ethics in the Workplace

Sipho Dlamini was born in a small rural village in Swaziland. He spent his childhood years looking after his family's livestock. The community upheld high values, such as honesty and respect, but the people were desperately poor. He realized that he would have to go to South Africa and apply for a job at a gold mine.

As a young man Sipho left his village in the mountains and took on the difficult job of getting to South Africa. He went in search of one of his distant family members who was working for a gold mine near Johannesburg. He managed to find his relative, who was engaged as a personnel assistant. Sipho's relative managed to find him a job as a general mine worker and accommodation in one of the mine hostels. Sipho was dedicated to his work, and time passed quickly. Every month, he forwarded most of his wages to his family in Swaziland.

One day Sipho's family member called him into his office and informed him that he was due for promotion. He also told Sipho that he would be required to pay him R500.00 (about $60) for his "efforts." This arrangement seemed strange to Sipho since he knew that it was not in line with company procedures. When Sipho asked about this, the personnel assistant replied that he had the authority to do so and that Sipho would not be promoted if he did not pay the R500.00. Sipho returned to his room and wrestled in his mind that night with the options before him. He had grown up with strong personal values that included honesty and hard work, but his family needed the extra income. What was he to do?

After a restless night, he returned the next day to the personnel assistant's office and handed him the R500.00. He was immediately promoted, but he returned to his room with a troubled mind. A few weeks later, the personnel assistant was reported and investigated for fraudulent behavior. He was suspended from work, and the investigation revealed all his corrupt activities. The record he had kept on all employees who paid bribes to him was also found. All employees on this list were called in and charged with fraud. Sipho's name was on the list, and he was found guilty and dismissed from the service of the company along with all the others.

Questions
1. What should Sipho have done differently?
2. In what way could the mine management have provided support to him prior to his wrongful act?
3. How would you have acted had you been in a similar situation?

Case Study 2: On the Costs of Being Nice

Agreeable people tend to be kinder and more accommodating in social situations, which you might think could add to their success in life. However, one downside of agreeableness is potentially lower earnings. Research has shown the answer to this and other puzzles; some of them may surprise you.

First, and perhaps most obvious, agreeable individuals are less adept at a type of negotiation called distributive bargaining. As we discuss in Chapter 14, distributive bargaining is less about creating win–win solutions and more about claiming as large a share of the pie as possible. Because salary negotiations are generally distributive, agreeable individuals often negotiate lower salaries for themselves than they might otherwise get.

Second, agreeable individuals may choose to work in industries or occupations that earn lower salaries, such as the "caring" industries of education and health care. Agreeable individuals are also attracted to jobs both in the public sector and in nonprofit organizations. Third, the earnings of agreeable individuals also may be reduced by their lower drive to emerge as leaders and by their tendency to engage in lower degrees of proactive task behaviors, such as coming up with ways to increase organizational effectiveness.

While being agreeable certainly doesn't appear to help your paycheck, it does provide other benefits. Agreeable individuals are better liked at work, more likely to help others at work, and generally happier at work and in life.

Nice guys and gals may finish last in terms of earnings, but wages do not define a happy life, and on that front, agreeable individuals have the advantage.

Questions

1. Do you think employers must choose between agreeable employees and top performers? Why or why not?
2. Research seems to suggest that agreeable individuals make fairly poor managers and decision makers. Why might this be the case? What are the implications for organizations? How does this affect their earning potential?
3. Agreeable individuals tend to be attracted to specific types of occupations and follow different career paths. What has research indicated in this respect? What are the implications and where are you more likely to find agreeable employees?