Self-Awareness and Goal Setting

Students Name

Professor’s Name

Institutional Affiliation

Date

Introduction

Every individual needs to make a personal development plan to match the skills of people working on an international level. Self-awareness is a vital component of personal development, and for me, this includes being aware of my thoughts, feelings, and actions and the effect these things have on other people. When concepts are taken from a theoretical framework and applied to practical settings, this is known as "theory application." The combination of increased self-awareness with the practical application of theoretical frameworks makes reflective goal-setting a potent instrument for my personal and professional development.

I can attest that it is easy to go through life on autopilot without genuinely taking the time to understand oneself and one's motives because I have never actively worked on the features of self-awareness, theory application, and thoughtful goal planning in the past. The opportunity to reflect on me and increase my self-awareness has been provided to me through the course. I recently realized that reflective goal setting entails establishing objectives congruent with one's values and motivations and then employing self-awareness to reflect on one's progress toward achieving those objectives. Reflecting on my self-awareness helped me realize how the objectives I set for myself are related to my thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, and it also helped me recognize any patterns that might be inhibiting me from accomplishing the goals I set for myself.

In terms of time management, this characteristic manifest itself in my habit of giving a problem more consideration than is warranted before taking action. This can be both beneficial and detrimental as it allows me to make better, more educated choices, but it can also cause me to procrastinate or become overwhelmed by the weight of the options (Kaur, 2015).

To better understand myself from the personality perspective, I have taken the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) test, which reveals that I have an Introversion-Intuition-Thinking-Perceiving (INTP) personality, standing for Introverted, Intuitive, Thinking, and Perceiving.

As an INTP personality, I am reflective, analytical, and independent. I am curious to understand how the world works and enjoy exploring complex theoretical and abstract concepts, as well as being able to see connections and patterns in a variety of different fields. I also have a strong sense of logic and reasoning skills, enabling me to come to logical conclusions based on my information.

One of the ways that I have confirmed that my desire to help others is a fundamental part of my personality and affects my time management is through feedback from those around me. For example, colleagues have commented that I tend to think through problems too much before deciding and have suggested that I try to be more decisive in my approach. Friends and family members have also observed that I sometimes take on too many responsibilities and have advised me to set boundaries to manage my time more effectively.

All of this feedback has helped me understand that my desire to help others and my tendency to think through problems thoroughly is a fundamental part of my personality and plays a significant role in managing my time (Kaur, 2015). By being mindful of this trait and balancing it with a more efficient approach, I can be more productive and more effective in my endeavors; this is something I have learned through self-reflection and feedback from others.

While a valuable tool for understanding personality, the MBTI test has its limitations. One of those limitations is that it is based on the assumption that individuals have fixed personalities and preferences. However, my preferences and behavior can change depending on the situation and context. This is why I identify as an ambivert who is equally comfortable with introversion and extroversion.

This is evident in the results of my self-monitoring questionnaire, which measures how much a person adapts their behavior to different social situations. The questionnaire results indicate that I can adapt my behavior to different situations and that my preferences are not fixed.

Several academics have criticized the MBTI for having some serious flaws. Some aspects of a person's character can't be captured by using discrete variables like attitude and personality, according to Barbuto (1997). Others, like Harvey and Murry (1994), have argued that a two-category typology like the MBTI is inadequate for describing people's personalities.

According to the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire II (AAQ-II) results, I have a high degree of psychological inflexibility, suggesting that I have trouble accepting and embracing various aspects of my own personality. This could mean that I have difficulty letting go of negative or counterproductive thoughts and behaviors or dislike being in situations where I feel powerless.

My high Managerial Resilience Quotient score only reinforces my rigid way of thinking and acting (MRQ). This indicates that I may have difficulty adapting to new situations, as my ability to deal with the unexpected consistently, rationally, and effectively may be compromised. This could mean that I have trouble dealing with ambiguity and uncertainty and that I have trouble adjusting to novel circumstances.

Suppose I'm too set in my ways. In that case, it'll hinder my professional and personal growth by limiting my exposure to new ideas and experiences and my resilience in the face of adversity. However, it is essential to remember that these test results are merely an indication and do not define me entirely; I can develop and alter my characteristics with time. Being mindful of these tendencies and engaging in cognitive-behavioral therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, or acceptance and mindfulness meditation helps me be more adaptable and resilient. Furthermore, I will be better prepared to deal with the challenges that come my way, both personally and professionally, if I develop resilience and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Goal Setting

To achieve success, setting goals is essential, and self-regulation is a crucial factor in this. An individual's ability to evaluate their progress toward a goal and adjust their actions in light of that evaluation is greatly enhanced by setting a specific and challenging goal (Locke & Latham, 1990). Defining what constitutes an effective level of performance for the individual is a crucial part of Travers' (2013) Goal Setting Theory.

The three motivational mechanisms of effort, persistence, and direction are powered up when working toward a specific and difficult objective (Locke & Latham, 1990). The person is driven to put in the time and effort required, to keep going even when things get tough, and to keep moving in the right direction. Individuals who can self-regulate can keep tabs on their progress toward a goal and adjust their actions as necessary to keep moving in the right direction.

In addition, it has been shown that setting goals is crucial to both personal growth and professional achievement (Locke & Latham, 1990). Individuals are more likely to accomplish their goals if they are well-defined and motivating. Motive and the drive to succeed in one's personal and professional endeavors are greatly aided by setting and working toward goals. It's useful for focusing one's efforts and increasing one's output.

As the data collected from my assessments suggests, I have identified a specific challenge in my time management skills. Specifically, I sometimes focus too much on details that are not necessary for completing a task, which leads to delays in finishing tasks. This can result from my analytical and reflective nature as an INTP, which can cause me to get lost in the details and lose sight of the bigger picture.

Additionally, I tend to procrastinate and push work to the last minute, which creates a lot of stress as I try to meet my deadlines on time. This can be a result of my natural tendency to think things through carefully before making a decision, but it can also be caused by my tendency to get overwhelmed by the weight of the options when I have a lot of work on my plate.

These challenges can cause difficulties in my personal and professional life, as they can prevent me from being efficient and productive. However, I am aware of these tendencies and am motivated to improve my time management skills. I plan to overcome these challenges by setting specific and measurable goals, breaking down my tasks into smaller chunks, and setting priorities. To address this, I intend to use the Reflective Goal Setting (RGS) portfolio as a tool to improve my time management abilities. The RGS portfolio, as described by Fook (2016), involves five stages in which each stage helps to close the gap between the identified challenge and the goal. The third and fifth stages, which involve visualizing successful goal behavior and putting it into practice, will be particularly important for me in overcoming my time management challenges.

Goal Setting

My goal is to improve my time management skills, specifically in the academic aspects of my life. Every year, I struggle with staying on track with my deadlines for coursework and exams because I tend to procrastinate and sometimes set unrealistic deadlines for myself. As a result, I end up trying to cram much information quickly, which increases pressure and leads to feelings of stress and anxiety.

I chose this goal because it interferes with my ability to succeed academically and negatively impacts other aspects of my life, such as my mental and physical well-being. Improving my time management skills will help me build a routine for myself, which will positively impact other aspects of my life, such as my productivity, stress levels, and overall well-being, both now and in the future as I progress in my career.

To achieve this goal, I will take several steps: I will start by breaking down my tasks into smaller chunks, planning my day for tasks to do today, and then planning my weeks. I will monitor my progress and keep room for flexibility in my schedule for unexpected changes. I will restrict my phone usage till the end of the day to avoid getting distracted by social media and use apps to block out social media for some time to focus better. I will use a planner to track my progress and a ticking pattern to see how many boxes I tick at the end of the day or use some apps to plan my day out on my phone or OneNote. I will use positive reinforcement, such as watching Netflix at the end of the day or going out with friends on the weekend, as a reward for meeting my goals.

To measure my success, I will keep track of my progress by regularly self-evaluating my performance. If I fail to meet my goals, I will identify the cause of the failure and take appropriate steps to fix it.

To ensure that I stick to my goal long-term, I will reward myself with a trip after exams as a form of relaxation and positive reinforcement. I will also continue to use positive reinforcement techniques, such as watching Netflix or going out with friends, to keep myself motivated. Addressing this challenge may also impact my emotions, as the journey toward my goal may involve facing obstacles and difficulties. However, I am confident that the positive outcome of improving my time management skills will be worth the effort and that it will change the perception of others who believe that I am incapable of overcoming this issue.

My secondary goal is to learn how to deal with stress more effectively by identifying its causes and developing defenses against them. It's also worth noting that my personality type, as determined by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), is INTP (Introverted, Intuitive, Thinking, Perceiving), characterized by a strong inclination toward critical analysis and problem-solving. This personality trait can be a strength and a weakness in stress management. On the one hand, my analytical and problem-solving skills can help me identify the root cause of my stress and develop effective solutions. On the other hand, my tendency to overthink and overanalyze situations can sometimes exacerbate my stress levels. By keeping this in mind, I plan to actively work on balancing my analytical skills with more practical, action-oriented strategies for managing stress.

Based on the results of various tests and self-evaluation, I have identified stress management as an area I would like to improve upon. The results of these tests have shown that I have difficulty handling stress and finding solutions when faced with challenges. To overcome this, I plan to use the goal-setting theory (GST), principle, which states that setting specific and measurable goals is more effective than setting unclear goals. This means that to manage my stress effectively, I need to have clarity in my goals, be fully committed to achieving them, and have a feedback mechanism to track my progress.

Additionally, I plan to incorporate stress management techniques such as regular exercise, spending time with friends and loved ones, and seeking the advice of well-being advisors to help me build a solid routine. To measure my success, I plan to use mood scales to track my progress weekly and record my achievements and goals. If I fail to meet my goals, I take a step back, break down my daily tasks, and identify the days when I am in a better mood to try new things and when I may be feeling overwhelmed. Speaking to my friends and family about my feelings and sticking to my routine patterns will also help me work around any challenges I may face. To ensure that I stick to my goal in the long term, I plan to incorporate positive reinforcement, such as rewarding myself with a trip or a relaxing weekend with friends after exams. I will also remind myself of the benefits of effective stress management on other aspects of my life, such as my relationships, career, and overall well-being.

Reflection

The process of working on my goal of stress management was a learning journey for me. By utilizing theories such as the goal-setting theory and techniques like self-evaluation, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of my stressors and develop effective strategies to manage them. Additionally, understanding my personality type through the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) helped me identify and address specific challenges I may face as an INTP. This self-awareness allowed me to approach my goal more systematically and methodically and helped me to stay on track.

However, it wasn't an easy journey and had its ups and downs. At some point, I had moments where I felt incapable of achieving the goal, but I also had moments where I felt like I was on the right path and could achieve it with proper guidance and concentration. This back and forth made me realize that achieving a goal is not a straight line and is full of detours, but it's important to stay on the course.

The key takeaway from this process is the importance of self-awareness, understanding one's personality type, and using the right theories, techniques, and tools to achieve specific goals. It helped me see that the initial phase of overcoming both identified issues is the same, but in the later stage, the learning path is completely different. It requires different tracks and processes to overcome them, and one size doesn't fit all. I believe this realization will also be useful in achieving my future goals.

However, I believe that because I just intended to master the skill and not the concept involved in learning, I could not fully utilize all the tools available to me to get through the difficulties. I noticed right away that learning was difficult for me, but with strong encouragement and support, I persisted and overcame all the obstacles, which allowed me to ultimately learn as per my requirement. This completion process also made evident that the entire learning experience had a significant impact on me as it helped increase my knowledge, and at the same time, it helped me to reduce my fear of handling multiple stuff at the same time. The impact of the process can also be illustrated in my reflective diary, where I mentioned that I changed my mind at the end of the week 2 lesson and that I would quit this learning session and turn back toward this lesson. Along with this, I started feeling depressed about myself, which is the opposite of what I should do after initiation of taking lessons. As commented by Trafimow and Earp (2016), it is human nature to get irritated and depressed when they are unable to get their success as per their desire.

Furthermore, the reflective diary mentions that at the end of week 3, I was completely sure that stress management was not built for me as every time I made some achievements, a practical evaluation destroyed all my achievements so far. In the meantime, when my performance was drowning, I got special support from my mentor, and the the lessons they gave me finally helped me realize how to learn and implement the lesson. From that point in time, I never looked back and aimed to reach the summit of stress management to achieve my goal. The ideas and methods I used to study stress management lessons are also useful for learning other courses in the future since they offer a clear understanding of how to stay focused on one specific goal at one time. Using these theories to learn if difficulties cannot be overcome without knowledge of various lesson styles is advised.

In the same way, in the later stage of learning time management, I used RGS theory to overcome the challenge because it consists of a different type of test, which is necessary to know where I failed to manage my time. Exploring this goal, in turn, I can say that almost everything was useful, including tests, theories, and techniques during the completion of the challenge. However, I think I cannot take advantage of all available resources to overcome the challenges because I intend to just learn the skill rather than understand the concept associated with learning. When I started learning, I observed that it was difficult for me to learn, but due to strong support and guidance, I stayed there and faced all the challenges, which ultimately helped me achieve what I wanted to learn.

This discussion also made clear that the entire learning process strongly impacted me and provided additional benefits during the learning session. I think the process made a strong impact on me because it was a perfect blend of theoretical and practical lessons required to achieve my goal. As Farmer *et al.* (2022) commented, learning lessons usually include both theoretical and practical lessons, and they both are important for individuals, and ignoring any lesson will lead to a gap in learning. My diary clearly illustrates the process's impact and describes how it made changes in me and led me to overcome the challenges. I have mentioned in my diary that at the end of week 4 of learning, all theoretical lessons were given, and still, I am unable to manage the time effectively. I thought it might be due to a lack of attentiveness during the lesson. It ultimately reduced my confidence, and I started thinking I would never learn how to manage time while working for a fixed time tenure. However, the moment practical lessons in time management started, my confidence started increasing, and at an average pace, I understood everything related to time management and the practical technique required for completing time management. From this reflective diary example, it can be stated that practical and theoretical are equally important for the completion of a lesson. The theories and techniques I used for learning time management lessons are also effective in other future lessons because these theories and techniques provide the perfect balance between theories and practical lessons. It is suggested to use this theory in learning where challenges cannot be overcome without having different types of lessons.

From the above information discussion, it can be concluded that the result of the personality test may not exactly match the individual characters, but it gives rough information about the individual's different personality traits. Evaluating my personality from the perspective of different themes, I can say that I have good communication skills, and I love to help other people. Being logical, I generally start overthinking, which causes a delay in completing work, but I complete my work effectively. I came to know about myself using different theories and tools, but it is difficult to believe blindly in obtained results as some of their results do not match my personality. Using tools and techniques, I learned that I am currently facing two issues: inability to manage time and stress.

From the section on goal setting, it can be concluded that stress management and time management is selected as a required area because evidence collected from test result and reflective diary mention that I am unable to determine a solution in any case of trouble and I am unable to manage how to manage problems within a given duration of time. Furthermore, this section concludes during the initiation of the learning lesson, I was nervous as well as excited, but the goal is achievable because it will help me in my personal development. From the section on reflection, it can be concluded that I was incapable of overcoming the challenges; on the other side, there were phases in the journey I thought I could achieve with proper guidance and concentration. Apart from this, it is concluded that the impact of the process is illustrated in my reflective diary, and it was hard to continue taking lessons and overcoming challenges in the initial phase, but with continued guidance and support, I finally completed my lesson.

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