

PERSONALITY

DEFINING PERSONALITY

The term personality derived from the Latin word “ p e r s o n a ”, which means “mask.” It refers to an individual’s distinct and relatively enduring pattern of thoughts, feelings ,needs, motives, values, attitudes and behaviors. It excludes race, gender, and physical attractiveness

- It refers to the sum total of ways in which an individual reacts and interacts with others .
- Personality refers to the distinctive and relatively enduring way of thinking, feeling, and acting for a particular individual
- The inner psychological characteristics that both determine and reflect how a person responds to his or her environment
- The nature of personality reflects individual differences and it is consistent and enduring change of behavior
- Relatively stable and distinctive patterns of behavior that characterize an individual and his or her reactions to the environment.
- Personality is a relatively stable set of characteristics that influences an individual’s behavior. It is unique, relatively consistent pattern of thinking, feeling and behaving.
- It refers to Preferences—for exp.-how to handle situations, what is the sense of humour, or your expectations of others.

Why study Personality?

An understanding of personality contributes to an understanding of organizational behavior in that we expect a predictable interplay between an individual’s personality and his or her tendency to behave in certain ways.

What determines personality?

Of all the complexities and unanswered questions in the study of human behaviour, this question may be the most difficult. People are enormously complex; their abilities and interests and attitudes are diverse. An early argument in personality research was whether an individual’s personality was the result of heredity or environment. Was the personality predetermined at birth, or was it the result of the individual's interaction with his or her environment? Personality appears to be a result of both influences. Additionally, today we recognize another factor - the situation.

Personality is an intangible concept. It is complex as it is related to the cognitive and psychological process. It is believed that a man is born with certain physical and mental qualities but the environment in which he is brought up shapes his personality. A number of factors determine the personality of individual i.e., biological factors, family factors, environmental factors and situational factors.

1. Biological Factors: Biological factors are related to human body. Three factors: heredity, brain and physical features are considered as relevant. They are explained below.

i) Heredity: Heredity refers to those qualities transmitted by the parents to the next generation. These factors are determined at conception. Certain factors of personality inherited are : physical stature, facial attractiveness, gender, colour of skin, hair and eyeballs, temperament,

muscle composition, sensitivity, skills and abilities, intelligence, energy level and biological rhythms.

ii) Brain: Brain is influenced by biological factors. Structure and composition of brain plays an important role in shaping personality. There are few empirical findings to state that the brain influences the personality.

iii) Physical Features: The physical features and rate of maturation influence personality. The rate of maturity is related to the physical stature. It is believed that an individual's external appearance has a tremendous effect on personality. For instance height, colour, facial attraction, muscle strength influences ones' self-concept.

2. Family Factors: The family factors are also important in determining personality of an individual. Three major factors: viz., the socialization process, identification process and birth order influence the personality.

i) Socialization Process: Socialization is a process of acquiring wide range of behaviour by an infant from the enormously wide range of behavioural potentialities that are open to him at birth. Those behaviour patterns are customary and acceptable according to the standards of his family and social groups. Members of the family compel the infant to conform to certain acceptable behaviour.

ii) Identification Process: Shaping of personality starts from the time the identification process commences. Identification Process occurs when a person tries to identify himself with some person whom he feels ideal in the family. Normally a child tries to behave as his father or mother.

iii) Birth Order: Birth order is another significant variable influencing the personality of an individual. For instance first born are likely to be more dependent, more rational, ambitious, hardworking, cooperative, and more prone to guilt, anxiety and are less aggressive.

Apart from these, socio-economic status of the family, child rearing practices, family norms, educational level of parents, structure of family(joint/nuclear) are the other factors related to family that influence personality

3. Environmental Factors: Environmental factors are those, which exists in and around the individual. They are social and cultural factors. Culture determines human decision-making, attitudes, independence: dependence, soberness: aggression, competition, cooperation and shyness. There are two vital aspects of culture. Firstly, conformity by the individual and secondly, acceptance by the larger group. Culture establishes norms, values and attitudes, which are enforced by different social groups. Individuals are compelled to behave in conformity to the culture established by the society. Thus, culture and society exert greater influence in shaping the personality of an individual.

4. Situational Factors: In recent years, the influence of situational factors on personality is increasingly recognized. Generally an individual's personality is stable and consistent, it changes in different situations. Situation exerts an important influence on the individual. It exercises constraints and may provide push to the individual.

5. Cultural Factors: Among the factors that exert pressures on our personality formation are the culture in which we are raised, our early conditioning, the norms among our family, friends and social groups and other influences we experience. Traditionally, cultural factors are usually considered to make a more significant contribution to personality than biological factors. The culture largely determines attributes toward independence, aggression, competition, and cooperation. Thus, it is clear from the above discussion that hosts of factors exert influence in

shaping the personality of an individual. Therefore, one has to understand personality as a holistic system.

Theories of Personality

Trait Theory

Trait Theory is an approach to the study of human personality. A trait is something which is competently and repeatedly manifested in a variety of situation and is an enduring attribute of individual .Trait theorists are primarily interested in the measurement of *traits*, which can be defined as habitual patterns of behavior, thought, and emotion. According to this perspective, traits are relatively stable over time, differ across individuals (e.g. some people are outgoing whereas others are shy), and influence behavior. The trait approach to personality is focused on identifying the differences between individuals. The combination and interaction of various traits form a personality that is unique to each individual. Trait theory is focused on identifying and measuring these individual personality characteristics.(Some important trait theories;e.g.Gordon Allport's Trait Theory, Raymond Cattell's Sixteen Personality Traits)

Psychoanalytic Theory

Sigmund Freud developed psychoanalytic theory. According to him human mind consists of three elements that are responsible for shaping the personality. Freud developed a structure of human mind in order to explain personality. It consists of three elements known as : Id, Ego and Super ego. They are described below:

- i) **The Id:** Id is the totality of instincts oriented towards increasing pleasure, avoiding pains and striving for immediate satisfaction of desires. The personality characteristics of an individual are built on the foundation of the Id.
- ii) **The Ego:** Ego is the executive part of the personality. It selects the features of the environment and stores them. It is rational and logical. It is the conscious mediator between realities of world and the Id's demands.
- iii) **The Super Ego:** Super ego is a moralistic segment of human personality consisting of noblest thoughts, ideals, feelings developed through absorption of cultural values and attitudes.

Self Theory

Carl Rogers contributed the self-theory. Self-concept, strictly defined, is the totality of our beliefs, preferences, opinions and attitudes organized in a systematic manner, towards our personal existence. This is defined as "the organized, consistent set of perceptions and beliefs about oneself". A person's self-concept have the following elements

-  Real self-The way an individual views himself or herself
-  Looking-glass self-The way an individual thinks others see him or her.
-  Ideal Self-It serves as a personal set of objectives because it is the image to which the individual aspires

THE BIG FIVE PERSONALITY MODEL

Many contemporary personality psychologists believe that there are five basic dimensions of personality, often referred to as the "**Big 5**" **personality traits**. The five broad personality traits described by the theory are extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness and neuroticism.

1. EXTRAVERSION

This category measures your comfort level with your relationships. This trait includes characteristics and qualities such as, sociability, talkativeness, assertiveness and emotional expressiveness

2. AGREEABILITY

This category measures your propensity to agree or defer to other people. This trait includes characteristics such as kindness, affection, trust, co-operation and being warm with other people.

3. CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

This category measures your level of reliability and responsibility. This trait includes the qualities such as, responsibility, reliability, dependability, persistency, goal-directed behavior and being organized and structured.

4. EMOTIONAL STABILITY / NEUROTICISM

This category which measures your emotional stability is often known 'Neuroticism'. People, who tend to be high in the negative scores, are most likely to be, emotionally insecure, anxious, depressed, not being confident and sad. While people, who score more positive ones in this trait, are most likely to be, calm, self-confident, emotionally stable, secure and happy.

5. OPENNESS

This category measures your range of interests and fascination with novelty. People who score 'High' in this trait are often creative, curious and artistically sensitive and also may have a broad range of interests. While people who score less in this trait, are more likely to be conventional and find comfort in the familiar and traditional patterns. They do not really like to think 'out of the box'