

Personality



Discipline Courses-I

Semester-I

Paper : Organization Behaviour

Unit-I

Lesson: Personality

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1. Learning Outcomes:

After you have read this lesson, you should be able to:

- understand the concept of personality,
- identify the traits of personality in an individual,
- comprehend the relevance of the study of personality in organisation behaviour,
- appreciate the theories that outline personality,
- compare the Big Five Theory with Type A and Type B theory of personality,
- predict behavior in the light of the Big Five model of personality,
- appreciate the factors that influence personality.

2. Introduction

A very important issue in organisations today is maximising the efforts put in by individuals. The behavioural scientists, along with managers, have been looking out for ways to strike a balance between an individual's personal goals and achievement of organisational goals. People play different roles in different set ups such as, at workplace, at home, in school, in college and in social gatherings. The roles change but the individual performing the role remains the same. If considerable information regarding human behaviour in different roles is available, it can help in solving problems related with human behaviour. This information can be obtained from experience and a peep into the behaviour of other individuals. Behaviour is influenced by one's attitude and values. An individual continuously tries to assert himself using his behavioural characteristics such as: intelligence, creativity, adaptability, flexibility, capability to change, ability, etc. The presence of these characteristics can be found in all individuals in varying degrees. Every individual is unique and has a unique personality. The physical traits such as height, weight, complexion, shape and size of nose, mouth, ears are hereditary in nature. The mental faculties and ability to learn are also largely inherited. However, after birth an individual starts being affected by his environment and interaction with a variety of people. The inherited characteristics then start changing and taking shape after being affected by experience. This makes the personality of an individual.

3. Concept of Personality

Have you ever wondered why some individuals are very passive, soft and quiet while some are very aggressive and loud? Why some people are more suitable for a given type of job while others are not?

In order to find answers these questions, we need to understand 'Personality'.

Psychologists refer to personality as a concept that explains the growth and development of an individual's overall psychological system. Personality looks at a person as a whole rather than in parts. It encompasses in itself the physical appearance as well as the mental makeup along with the energy it vibrates. The Personality denotes the role an individual portrays in front of others.

The Latin term *per sona* meaning 'speak through' gave birth to the word Personality. The meaning of the Latin term is a mask that was worn by actors in ancient Greece and Rome. The personality of every individual is unique and it determines one's behaviour. This is the reason why people behave differently in a given situation. It also determines to some extent the reaction of other fellow beings.

"Personality is the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychological systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment." - Gordon Allport

"Personality includes external appearance and behaviour, inner awareness of self as a permanent organising force and the particular pattern or organization of measurable traits, both inner and outer." - Floyd L. Ruch

Personality

“Personality means how a person affects others and how he understands and views himself as well as the pattern of inner and outer measurable traits, and the person-situation interaction.”
- Fred Luthans

Value Addition 1: Misconception

Personality

There are a number of misconceptions about the term personality. Some people are of the opinion that the rich people clad in expensive apparel, driving expensive vehicles have more personality than the poor who may be ill clad. Some perceive one person's personality as good and other's as bad. Some think that personality is desirable and others say it is not desirable. Some others say that personality of an individual can be evaluated. However, all these are myths. Personality is neither more or less, nor good or bad. Personality is also not a desirable or undesirable commodity that you may or may not have. Every individual has a personality. A particular type of personality may be desirable, but to say personality is not desired all together is an incorrect notion. Also personality is a dynamic phenomenon, wherein it changes and adapts constantly with the environmental interface. So, personality cannot be evaluated. A personality research was conducted on twin children and it was found that both heredity and environment contributed in shaping their personality and that the personality of even twins differ.



Source: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9d/Retos-twins.jpg>

Personality may be regarded combination of various traits that shape the behaviour of an individual. There are attitudinal, psychological and emotional dimensions of an individual that makes him respond in a particular manner. Such dimensions are dynamic in nature and keep changing as an individual interacts with people, learns and grows. That makes the study of personality important and relevant for determining the behaviour at the work place. The understanding of personality facilitates the understanding of the behaviour of different people in response to certain stimuli, and/or actions of different people in different roles, and/ or to the group dynamics within the organisation.

4. Traits of Personality

Value Addition2: Activity

Personality

Predictable and Unpredictable Traits

Identify traits of people, who behave in expected ways and people who exhibit very unpredictable behavior. Out of the not so ordinary behaviours identified by you, are there some strange ones? If yes, describe them and state the normal behavior for every strange behavior witnessed by you.

Traits of personality refer to the attributes or characteristics that describe an individual. They are established impressions of our behavior, character and psychological state. The behaviour of a person depends on one's skills, values, interests and personality traits. It is therefore important to study the personality traits of individuals. Managers in organizations need to identify the personality traits and assign jobs and tasks appropriately for effective attainment of organizational goals.

Personality Traits by Gordon Allport

In 1936, Gordon Allport a psychologist, found that there were over 4,000 words in an English dictionary that describe different traits of personality. He grouped those traits in three categories.

Figure 1: Gordon Allport



Source: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a4/Allport.gif>

Cardinal Traits: These traits dominate a person's life so much so all through his life that the person comes to be known for those traits. Their names become similar to their qualities. These traits are exceptional and develop in the later stages of life.

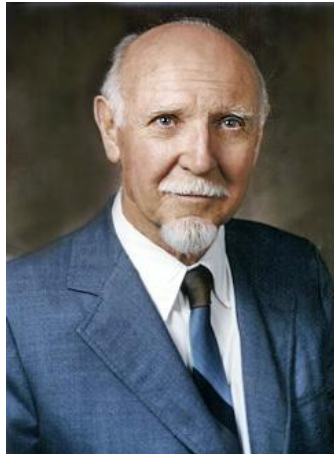
Central Traits: These traits make up the base of one's personality. They are not dominating like cardinal traits. They describe a person. Words such as shy, intelligent, anxious and honest are referred to as central traits.

Secondary Traits: These traits denote attitudes and preferences. They can be witnessed only in specific situations. For e.g. one may get anxious while speaking to a certain group or impatient when waiting.

Raymond Cattell's Sixteen Personality Factors

Figure 2: Raymond Cattell

Personality



Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fe/Raymond_Cattell.jpg

Trait theorist Raymond Cattell reduced Allport's 4,000 traits to just 171. He scrapped the traits that were not common and combined the similar ones. Eventually, he further reduced his own list of 171 traits to just 16. He says that these 16 personality traits form the basis of personality. He founded the famous assessment tool called Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF). The 16 personality traits described by him are warmth, reasoning, emotional stability, dominance, liveliness, rule consciousness, social boldness, sensitivity, vigilance, abstractedness, privateness, apprehension, openness to change, self-reliance, perfectionism and tension. He described the personality of individuals at two continuum ends for each of these dimensions. For example, with respect to warmth, individuals who score low are termed as reserved people, while those who score high on this dimension are described as outgoing people. Similarly, with respect to reasoning, people may be regarded as less intelligent or more intelligent depending on their low or high scores respectively on the said dimension.

Figure 3: Click on the link below to see an image showing Cattell's 16 Factors

Source: <http://withfriendship.com/images/g/31654/16-Personality-Factors-picture.gif>

Value Addition 3: Activity

Identification of Your Personality Type according to Raymond Cattell's Sixteen Personality Factors

Click on the link below and answer the questions in yes or no to find the description of your personality depending on your answers.

Source: <http://image.slidesharecdn.com/whatdocattells16personalitytraitssayabout-130320144428-phpapp02/95/slide-1-638.jpg?1363808956>

Value Addition4: Did You Know?

Building block for a Successful Career

Traits can be defined as characteristics that represent an individual. The development of a successful career depends on one's skills, values, interests and personality traits of a person.

Dr. Don Denham is a career counselor and has identified traits of successful people. According to him, a combination of skills, values, interest and personality traits make a person successful.

Click on the link below to know about such traits that bring success.

Source: <http://blog.timesunion.com/careers/the-10-most-important-personality->

Personality

[traits-for-career-success/633/](https://www.pearsoned.com/traits-for-career-success/633/)

Some people in organizations are found to like themselves, whereas others think of themselves negatively. The perception about self and others make up one's personality. Let us consider an example of few people with different personalities and describe the attributes of their personality in general.

- Gauravis a sales and marketing executive of a leading telecommunication company,. His work involves convincing people in buying his product. He is very confident about himself and his convincing skills. He beats his targets most of the times.
- Akshay is a Regional Sales Manager in Delhi. He has had 4 promotions in the last 5 years. He has used many aggressive strategies to move up in his career. He has no regrets about it.
- Kabir always wants people's attention. He looks in the mirror a lot. His dreams are way too big and he believes that he has many talents.
- Hitesh finds himself in some or the other problem at work. Although he is very hard-working, capable and productive, yet he is always rated not more than average. He is inept and clumsy and irritates his boss. He finds it difficult adapt his behaviour to match altering situations. He is true to himself and does not do things to please others.
- Suresh loves to handle challenges. He shows enthusiasm and energy in risky adventurous situations. Without any apprehensions, he is easily able to take decisions based on quick analysis and interpretation of facts of a given situation.

Some specific attributes of personality have been found to be relevant in the study of Organizational Behaviour that help tounderstand and predict behaviour of individuals in organisations. The attributes of individuals described above can be categorized in the following traits:

1. Core self-evaluation
2. Machiavellianism
3. Narcissism
4. Self-monitoring
5. Risk taking

Core self-evaluation:Core self-evaluation is how one perceives himself. People with positive core self-evaluation believe that they are effective, capable and can control their environment. People with negative core self-evaluation doubt their capabilities, don't like themselves and think that they have no control over their environment. Gaurav, in the above example, may be described to demonstrate positive core self evaluation.

A study that involved life insurance agents revealed that core self-evaluation is an important determinant of performance. Insurance agents have to face rejections most of the time while making sales. If an agent is confident about himself/herself, he/she succeeds. Another outcome of this study was that salesmen who are successful have positive Core self-evaluation. Negative core self-evaluation leads to lower job performance.

Value Addition5: Did You Know?

Core Self Evaluation

Former U. S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, is a person of positive core self-evaluation. It helped her to meet the challenges of her job. She believed in herself, was skilled in matters of diplomacy and possessed a determined work ethic. Hence she was very successful in shaping U.S. foreign policy. She took charge as a global leader to spread democracy and created a peaceful climate internationally.

Source:

Personality

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Condoleezza_Rice%27s_tenure_as_Secretary_of_State

Machiavellianism: Akshay, in the above example, can be termed as Machiavellian. People with high Mach get and use power very easily. They are less emotional as compared to others. Ends justify means for them and they are pragmatic. "If it works, use it", is their common practise. They are very manipulative and win quite often. It is difficult for others to persuade them but they persuade others very easily as against people with low Mach. People with high Mach are successful where interaction with people is involved or where there are very less rules to follow.

Narcissism: Kabir, in the above example, may be described as a Narcissist. Such people think that they are very important, want others to admire them all the time, expect entitlement and are stubborn. They think they are great leaders and supervisors, while in reality they may be worst leaders or supervisors. They are full of appreciation for themselves. For e.g. an employee of Oracle company said the following thing about the company's CEO Larry Ellison: "The difference between God and Larry is that God does not believe he is Larry."

Narcissists are not helpful people; they talk others down and turn down people who are threats to them. They may even exploit others since they are very selfish.

Self-monitoring: Hitesh, in the above example, is a low self-monitor. On the contrary, high self-monitors adjust more and have higher probability of becoming leaders. There is a great difference between their true identity and their public persona.

Risk-taking: Not all people have the courage to take risks and challenges. Suresh, in the above example, is a risk-taker. The time and information sought by managers to take decisions reflects upon their ability to take or avoid risks. High risk-taking managers take less time and information to make decisions.

Value Addition6: Did You Know?

Risk Taking Trait

Real estate developer, Donald Trump, is known all over the world to take risks. He began working in the 1960s with almost nothing. He became very successful by mid 1980s and made lots of money by betting in the real estate market in New York. But he had a huge negative net worth of \$850 million in 1994 while trying to exploit his opportunities and success. Not deterred by his failure, he took advantage and made gains out of his left over assets from real estate ventures. By 2007, Donald's net worth was estimated to be \$2.9 billion.

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/books/first/t/trump-comeback.html>

5. Theories of Personality

Based on the type of traits of individuals, personalities may be described and behaviours may be reasoned. Later, by identifying personalities, behaviour may be predicted. There are two important theories of personality that are relevant to be studied by managers in organizations.

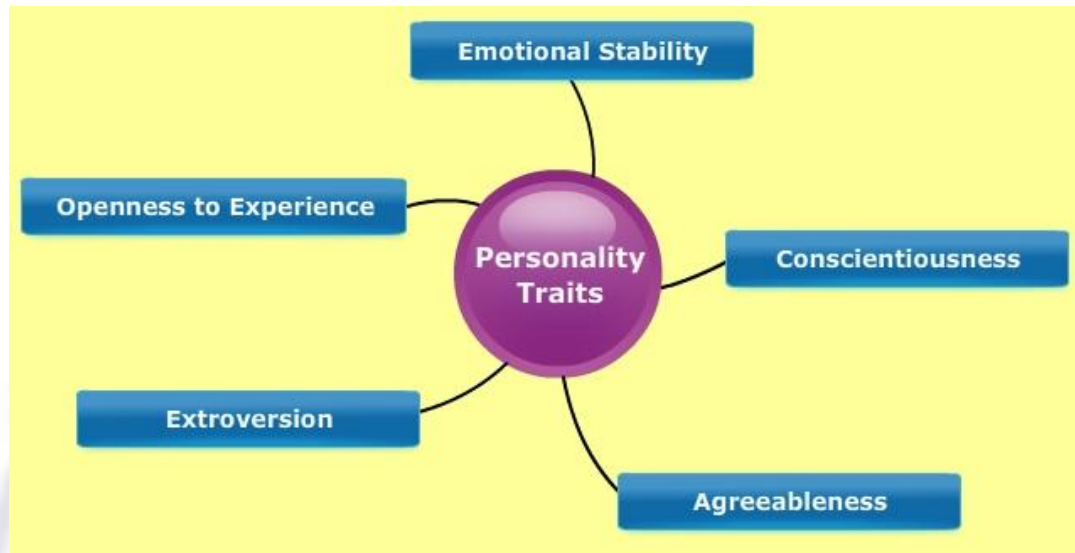
5.1 Big Five Theory

The personality of an individual is a combination of inherited & learned characteristics. Personality of an individual is the sum total of the different traits, characteristics, habits, motives, attitudes & beliefs. The 'Big five' is a commonly used term for the model of personality. This framework lays the foundation of five fundamental factors of the personality of an individual. The big five personality trait model basically depicts the

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integrated set of traits that serves as valid predictors of certain behaviors of the individuals working in the environment. The five basic dimensions of personality in Big five theory are independent of each other. Different people have varying degree of these traits ranging from high to low. This model is very easy & useful in gaining a rapid overview of the personality of an individual.

Figure 4: Five factors of Big Five Theory



1. **Conscientiousness:** This dimension of personality is a measure of reliability. People who have high degree of conscientiousness are generally very organized and systematic. They are dependable and responsible. They are also careful and self-disciplined. These people are achievement oriented. But on the other side, people who have low degree of conscientiousness tend to focus on many goals at a single point of time. They can easily be distracted. They turn out to be irresponsible and careless.
2. **Emotional Stability:** This trait refers to the ability of the individual to control his/her emotions. It is the ability of an individual to cope with stress and in times of crisis. It basically depicts the level of calmness and tranquility. It is argued that an individual with positive emotional stability tends to be very energetic, enthusiastic, calm, happy & unworried. People with positive score can handle the job stress, pressure and tension in a better way and they are more stable and reliable in nature. Contrary to this, those individuals who have negative score on emotional stability, tend to be nervous, depressed, and insecure.
3. **Agreeableness:** This trait refers to the behaviour of an individual towards others while interacting with them. It is the ability of the individual to get along with others. Agreeableness of personality helps in developing understanding about the situation and thereby individuals become gentle and extend cooperation to others. Highly agreeable people value harmony, cooperation and forgiveness. These people are good in developing strong working relationship with their superior, subordinates as well as peers. People who score low on this trait focus on their own needs than of the others. Agreeableness is indicative of the level of friendliness & kindness of an individual.
4. **Extroversion:** It shows the level of comfort with the relationships. It is the ability of an individual to feel comfortable in relation with others. It shows the level of sociability & enthusiasm. Extroverts are gregarious, assertive, and open to establishing new relationships. Introverts, on the other hand, are less social,

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less talkative and they are very reluctant in establishing new relationships. These people are very quiet & reserved in nature.

5. **Openness To Experience:** It shows the range of interest of an individual. It refers to the ability of individuals to entertain new ideas and information and to adapt them accordingly, so that they can perform their task in the best possible way. Extremely open people get fascinated with new ideas; they are more curious, imaginative & innovative in nature. They are always willing to listen to new ideas. Such people generally perform better & are easily acceptable by others in the organization. On the other hand, people with low level of openness to change, tend to be less receptive also less willing to change their minds. They also have fewer interests, and tend to be less curious and creative in nature.

Value Addition 7: Video

Personality Dimensions according to Big Five Theory

Click on the link below to watch a video on Personality, the contribution of Gordon Allport and Raymond Cattell to the concept of personality traits, and the five dimensions of personality according to Big Five Theory.

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aNvMOE0CfE>

Figure 5: Five Personality Types with their Descriptive Characteristics



Value Addition 8: Activity

Discover Your Personality Using Big Five Personality Quiz

Take this psychology test to find out your personality!!!!

This test helps to analyse the personality of an individual considering the different five aspects of the BIG FIVE PERSONALITY theory.

To start this test, click on the link given below.

Source: <http://www.outofservice.com/bigfive/>

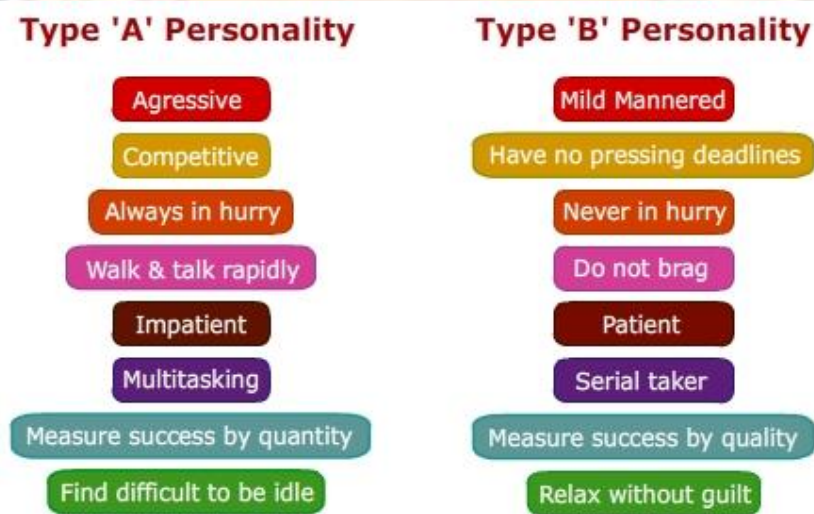
5.2 Type A and Type B Personality

This theory describes two most common & contrasting personality types. The following are the characteristics that describe both the types of personality.

Type A Personality: People belonging to Type A personality are impatient, very much conscious about time, insecure about their status, highly competitive in nature, hostile and aggressive. They are always moving, walking, & eating rapidly. They do two or more things simultaneously. They simply cannot cope with idle time. People of this personality are very obsessive about the numbers. They measure their success in terms of how many or how much of everything they acquire. Such people work under moderate to high levels of stress. They try to expose themselves to the time pressure. They always prefer quantity to quality. These people can work for long hours and possess a creative side to them.

Type B Personality: People of this type of personality are rarely hurried by the desire to achieve a lot of things or do a number of activities simultaneously. They prioritize and participate in only those activities that are very demanding. They never suffer from time urgency. They never show any sort of impatience in completing the tasks unless it is demanded by the situation. These people relax without having any guilt.

Figure 6: Comparison of Type A and Type B Personalities



Value Addition 9: Activity

Discover Your Personality Using Type a and Type B Personality Test

Click on the link below. Enter your name and take the questions that follow to get a score for your personality. Compare your score with that of your peers.

Source: <http://www.outofservice.com/bigfive/>

Value Addition 10: Discussion Forum

Personality-Job Fit

On the basis of the Type A and Type B Theory of Personality, identify the type of personality best suited for the following jobs:

- Sales Person
- Marketing Manager
- Financial Advisor

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- Financial Analyst
- Floor Supervisor
- Hr Executive
- Production Head
- Quality Control Inspector
- Creative Head Of Advertising Department
- Vice President Finance

You may also identify the type of personality suited for the above jobs based on Big Five Theory or simply identify basic traits required to perform these jobs effectively. Discuss your opinion with your peers.

6. Factors Influencing Personality

Personality shapes and explains who and what we are. Our whole life is influenced by it. The way we interact, what we choose to earn a living, the people we pick to make friends with, and the choice of our life partner, our personality influences all. Heredity and other factors in the environment such as, culture, society, family, education, training etc. shape an individual's personality. Some of the factors that influence personality are described below.

Heredity: It refers to passing on of qualities from one generation to another. It takes place because of chromosomes of the germ cell. Heredity cultivates physical, mental and emotional states. This has been proved by research on animals.

Brain: It is yet another biological factor that determines personality. Brain plays an important part in formation of personality. A sharp brain comprehends the situation better and takes quick decisions. The sharp and alert brain improves personality.

Family Background: A child's personality is influenced by his parents and other members in the family. Out of these two influential factors, parents have a stronger impact on the development of a child's personality. The influence of a family's impact can be seen in the initial stages.

Social Groups: Apart from a person's family and environment prevailing in the home, social groups such as school friends, other friends, fellow workers, reference groups and other groups to which a person belongs affect the development of his personality.

Situation: Situations have an important role to play in shaping personality. The situation in which a person finds himself moulds his behaviour. A hard working employee who always excels, may get lazy if put in an unfavourable position.

Culture: Culture shapes the attitudes and decision making ability of an individual. The culture of a place expects people to behave in a certain manner that is acceptable to the group. The attitude towards eating, dressing, working etc. gets determined by the prevalent culture of a place.

Physical Features: The physical features of person strongly influence his personality. Physical features include height, weight and such other physical aspects. A person's self perception, his/her level of confidence and suitability for certain types of jobs are dependant to a large extent on physical attributes.

Summary

- Personality explains the growth and development of an individual's overall psychological system.
- Personality looks at a person as a whole rather than in parts.

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- Personality may be regarded as a combination of traits such as attitudinal, psychological and emotional dimensions that shape the behaviour of an individual.
- Managers in organizations need to identify the personality traits and assign jobs and tasks appropriately for effective attainment of organizational goals.
- Gordon Allport a psychologist found that there were over 4,000 words that described traits. He classified them into as cardinal, central and secondary.
- Trait theorist Raymond Cattell reduced Allport's 4,000 traits to just 171 and further to just 16. He found the famous assessment tool called Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF).
- Some specific attributes of personality have been found to be relevant in the study of Organizational Behaviour that help to understand and predict behaviour of individuals in organizations.
- People with positive core self-evaluation believe that they are effective, capable and can control their environment. People with negative core self-evaluation doubt their capabilities.
- People with high Mach are successful where interaction with people is involved or where there are very less rules to follow.
- Narcissists are not helpful people; they talk others down and turn down people who are threats to them. They may even exploit others since they are very selfish.
- High self-monitors adjust more and have higher probability of becoming leaders.
- The time and information sought by managers to take decisions reflects upon their ability to take or avoid risks. High risk-taking managers take less time and information to make decisions.
- The big five personality trait model basically depicts the integrated set of traits that serves as valid predictors of certain behaviors of the individuals working in the environment.
- People belonging to Type A personality are impatient, very much conscious about time, insecure about their status, highly competitive in nature, hostile and aggressive.
- People of Type B personality are rarely hurried by the desire to achieve a lot of things or do a number of activities simultaneously. They prioritize and participate in only those activities that are very demanding.
- Heredity and various factors in the environment such as culture, society, family, education, training etc. shape personality.

GLOSSARY:

- **Creativity:** it is the ability to create something new and generating value to something. It can be defined as a phenomenon through which one can have the ability to alter the conventional rules, regulations, and methods and provide a completely new dimension to it.
- **Attitudes:** it reflects the feelings, inclination, and thinking, of a person. It describes the tendency of an individual to respond to a particular situation either in a positive way or negative.
- **Job Stress:** stress that involves work is known as job stress or organizational stress. A stress can be defined as a strain that can occur because of the pressure from the workplace or any other demand placed on an individual at work. Stress is not a condition of illness but the excessive amount of stress can lead to illness and thus hamper the productivity mechanism of an individual.
- **Attributes:** these are mainly the different and distinguishing characteristics, qualities an individual or a group possess.
- **Values:** values represent a fixed or firm belief that an individual holds. These values direct the behavior & perception framework of an individual. Values are more concerned with what 'SHOULD' be there & what is desirable in nature.

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- **Skills:** it represents the ability of an individual that generally arises because of their knowledge base. In other words it refers to the proficiency factor of an individual that he/she earns after strengthening their individual knowledge base.
- **Behaviour:** It is basically a reaction of an individual to any of the situation or circumstance. It refers to the aspect of conducting oneself in front of the external world. This is the only mechanism through which one can gauge the values, belief of an individual. It helps in bringing the clear understanding of an individual by the external world.

Exercises

Objective type questions:

1. Do as directed:
 - a. Match the theorist/ theory/type with the traits:

Match the following	
A. Gordon Allport	1. 16 PF
B. Raymond Cattell	2. Impatient, aggressive
C. Heredity	3. Cardinal, central and secondary traits
D. Type A	4. Physical, mental and emotional states
E. Type B	5. Prioritize, relax

- b. Match Five Factors with their traits:

Match the following	
A. Conscientiousness	1. Ability to cope with stress
B. Emotional stability	2. Ability to get along with people
C. Agreeableness	3. Measure of reliability
D. Extroversion	4. Level of comfort with relationships
E. Openness to experience	5. Range of interest of an individual

2. Fill in the blanks

a. The _____ of person strongly influence his personality. It includes height, weight and such other aspects.

b. The situation in which a person finds himself in will mould his _____.

Answers to objective type questions:

Correct Answer 1a	A. 3 B. 1 C. 4 D. 2 E. 5
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Correct Answer 1 b.	A. 3 B. 1 C. 2 D. 4 E. 5
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Correct Answer 2 a	Physical features
Correct Answer 2 b	Situation

Short Questions:

1. What is Personality?
2. Define traits.
3. What are the different traits of personality?
4. How does an understanding of personality help in managing people at work?
5. What factors determine personality?
6. Does personality have an influence on the employees?
7. Do you think personality traits are consistent with respect to time and age or they can change?

Long Questions:

1. Elaborate upon the different theories of personality.
2. Explain the personality dimensions mentioned in big five model?
3. Discuss the importance of personality in making the hiring process easy?
4. How would you describe yourself in lieu of the type A & type B personality?
5. Discuss how personality of an individual can affect others?
6. Differentiate between extroversion & introversion?
7. Develop arguments in favor and against the statement that heredity is the major determinant of personality.

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- <http://www.managebuddy.com/notes/human-behaviour-organization/determinants-factors-affecting-personality/>
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- F. Luthans, "Organizational Behaviour", 11th ed., (Tata Mc Graw Hill)

2. Web Links:

- Visit the link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWpRKJPCI7M> to watch a video on personality traits as given by Big Five Theory of Personality.
- Visit the link <http://drphil.com/shows/bigfivepersonalityquiz> to take a personality test.
- Visit the link <http://www.managebuddy.com/notes/human-behaviour-organization/determinants-factors-affecting-personality/> to read about the factors that influence personality.
- Visit the link <http://psychology.about.com/od/personalitydevelopment/tp/facs-about-personality.htm> to read more on factors affecting personality.