

Organizational Behaviour - an Introduction
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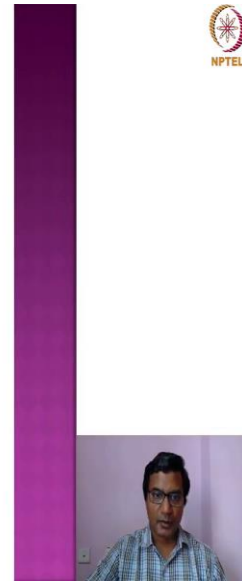
Lecture - 10
Personality – Part 1

Warm welcome to you all to this lecture series on Organizational Behaviour; this lecture series is going to be on Personality and this is our third chapter, I am Dr. M P Ganesh.



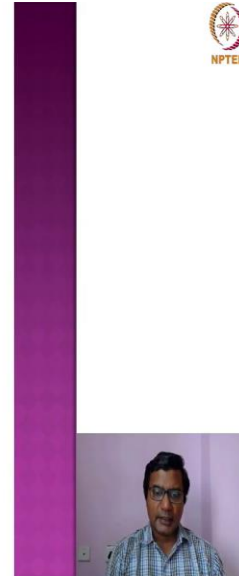
OUTLINE

- ◉ Defining personality
- ◉ History of the concept
- ◉ Key assumptions
- ◉ Determinants
- ◉ Personality theories
- ◉ Self-esteem and self-awareness
- ◉ Measures of personality
- ◉ Other sources of individuality



This is the outline of the chapter; broadly we are going to define what is personality and how the concept of personality evolved, what are the key assumptions behind this construct of personality and what are the determinants of personality.

We also going to look at some of the personality theories, which explain this concept of personality from different perspectives. We are also going to look at some of the associated concepts like self-esteem, self-awareness, etcetera; and finally, we are going to look at what are the different ways in which personality is measured.



The idea of personality is very popular among common people also; in fact, we use this word personality in our day to day conversation.

In fact, in psychology the idea of personality is the core construct behind explaining individual differences. So, psychology like we saw earlier assumes that, each individual is different; and these individual differences are stemmed from or the core of all the individual differences are personality.

So, the way a person thinks, perceives; the way he or she shows emotions, all these behaviours are caused by personality. In other words, people differ in all these behaviours; because their personalities differ.

So, in this particular image, you can see you know people for same situation their reaction varies or the way they perceive the same situation varies. If you remember in the previous chapter on perception, we saw how individual differences in perception can lead to many problems.

So, these individual differences in perception or because of differences in terms of personality. So, for example, the first person who is optimist will be an optimist in all the situations she faces; similarly, a person who, if he is a pessimist, he will be a pessimist in whatever situation he encounters in his life.



PERSONALITY



Personality has its origins in the Latin word, personare or persona; which means a mask which the you know theatre artists wear. So, personality, the idea of personality originated from this idea that, each of us wear a mask which differs from one person to the other ok.



DEFINING PERSONALITY

- Relatively stable characteristics of an individual which influences his/her behavior, attitudes, motivations and emotions.
- Dynamic and organized set of characteristics possessed by a person that uniquely influences his or her cognitions, motivations, and behaviors in various situations (Ryckman, 2004).



So, how or how do we define personality? Personality in a very general words we can define it as relatively stable characteristics of an individual which influences his or her behaviour, attitudes, motivations and emotions.

So, in very simple words psychology assumes that, there are certain inner qualities which are or inner characteristics which are stable and which differ from one person to another.

And these stable qualities or characteristics make us behave in a very consistent way in different situations and also in different aspects of our behaviour.

For example, like I mentioned, if I am an optimist, a positive person; a person who looks positivity in everything. So, whenever there is a problem, I will approach it with positive attitude; whenever I see or interact with interact with people, I will show positivity; whenever there is you know a new opportunity, I will be very hopeful in you know finding success; in emotions also, in most of the times I will show positive emotions.

So, similarly if you are a pessimist in nature or being a pessimist as your core quality, you will exhibit pessimism in all your aspects of behaviour; attitude, perception, motivation, emotion, etcetera. So, this is the whole idea of personality.

So, here we need to understand psychology believes that, there is something like these qualities and these qualities are stable in nature. In fact, this can be questioned, this idea can be questioned; the idea that is there anything called personality or are there any qualities which are inherent or which is inside every individual, those qualities will not change for ever.

So, that is why this definition uses the word “relatively” ok; it is stable, but under some specific conditions or special conditions these stable qualities can change. Otherwise these qualities cannot change; which means if you are an optimist, you will be optimist forever, unless or until something very important happens or something which is like very powerful happens in your life, your optimism will change. Or other way around, if you are a pessimist; you will never change, unless or until some major event or some major experience happens in your life, ok.

But there are few theorists who questioned this idea; are there any stable qualities which influence all the aspects of our life or all the aspects of behaviour, ok? So, the second definition is another elaborate definition, which uses this words dynamic and organized set of characteristics.

So, why they are dynamic? Dynamic because personalities or personality qualities are not just one, there are multiple qualities. For example, let us say there are qualities like optimism, pessimism which is you know opposites; extroversion, introversion you know

things like that; openness to experience, closed to new experience. So, these are some of the personality traits.

So, based on the combination of the traits, these traits interact with each other and depending on that our personality changes. For example, me and my friend are extroverts let us say; but I am an optimist, my friend is a pessimist. So, I will not be same as my friend, ok.

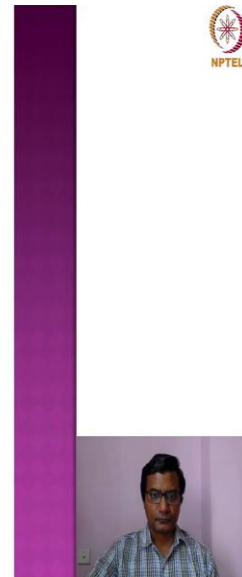
Let us say I am an optimist, extrovert, another person is also optimist, extrovert; but I am more open towards new experiences, but the other person is closed to new experiences. So, based on these combinations of traits, individuals will behave in unique ways.

So, that is why they interact with each other, that is why it is called dynamic in nature. They are organized, because combinations of these traits or qualities inner qualities; they are organized so that or they are set up in a way that, they interact with each other. So, this interaction leads to unique nature of every individual and that leads to their reactions, their cognition, their motivation, their behaviour and things like that. I hope you understood the idea of personality, ok.



HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT OF PERSONALITY

- ◉ Per + sonare (to sound through)
- ◉ Persona (mask worn in plays)
- ◉ Gordon Allport (1937) pioneer in personality theory and research.

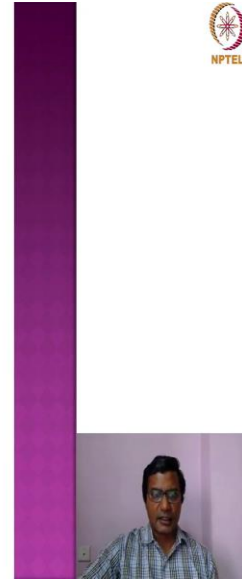


Like I mentioned earlier the origin of the word personality is from the word per sonare; which means a mask, which is a Latin word, Gordon Allport in 1937, he is a pioneer in personality theory and research.



KEY ASSUMPTIONS

- Personality is the key to understand an individual's behaviour.
- Universality versus uniqueness
- Dynamic versus stability
- Interactionist perspective



In fact, he was the one who wrote a very important book on personality. Like I mentioned earlier, personality assumes that or the concept of personality is based on the assumption that; if you want to understand someone's behaviour, you need to understand their personality. Or in other words if you know a person's personality, you can predict or you can explain a person's behaviour. In fact, that is the whole idea of doing personality tests in recruitment, in human resource functions.

So, in fact in the second chapter I was mentioning about different jobs and house; we use different questionnaires to measure personality of the people and fit them in specific jobs, is not it? So, what most of these questionnaire measure is personality of the individual.

So, for example, if I am recruiting for you know marketing job or sales job. So, what kind of person do I require? So, I require someone who was an extrovert, who is able to convince others. So, these are supposed to be qualities, personality traits.

So, if I find someone with these qualities, I am assuming that this person will be successful in this sales job, ok. So, this is the basic idea of using personality to understand or predict human behaviour or this is the application of personality in areas like human resource management.

Personality also has an idea is based on the assumption that, certain traits or certain qualities are universal; universal means, throughout the world it is same. For example,

extroversion, introversion; so this quality might be seen across the world. But there are some qualities which are unique for certain cultures.

So, certain cultures will exhibit those traits which may not be or people of certain cultures or certain societies will exhibit these those qualities which are not found in other cultures. For example, cultures like Japanese culture or even many eastern cultures being humble or humility is supposed to be a very important quality.

Similarly, a belief towards uncertainty is supposed to be a very important quality for people of eastern culture; these qualities may not be relevant in certain cultures, like western cultures, ok. Another important assumption in personality is dynamic versus stability.

So, some, the assumption here is some qualities are stable and some qualities, personality qualities are dynamic; which means the assumption is certain qualities will not change in any situation or any condition in one's lifetime, but certain qualities can be changed or can be manipulated in the sense, you know they can be either made stronger or weaker in certain situation. So, these are some of the assumptions.

In fact, universality versus uniqueness, dynamic nature and stability; there is no clear-cut agreement between psychologists, some psychologists believe almost all traits can be found in all the culture.

So, which means all the humans in this world, certain qualities are found in all the humans in the world or certain personality traits are applicable universally. Vis a vis certain theories feel that, no it is not true, there are cultural specific personality traits; some trait which are found in certain cultures or certain societies, will not be founded some other culture or some other society.

Similarly, some psychologists feel that personality is like very stable, you cannot change personality traits or personality characteristics; some theorists believe that, no; personality has a quality they are relatively stable and most of the qualities can be changed or manipulated depending on external environment.

So, the roots of this argument is from the argument that; why humans behave in a certain way, is it genetic or is it environment. Or is it why people behave in a certain way,

because of the way they are made or because of the way they interact with the environment.

So, the interactionist perspective is based on the assumption that, personality is determined by both biological factors as well as social cultural factors or environmental factors; when I say environment, the society or these conditions, social cultural conditions outside an individual, ok.

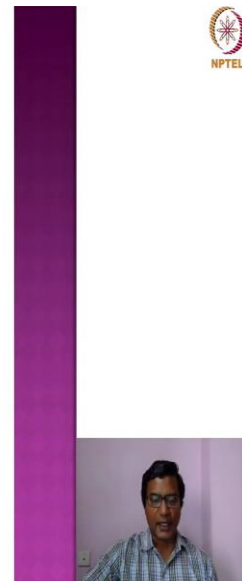
So, the assumption that, personality traits are universal and stable, stems from this idea that it is biological or it is something which is internal; which is either your genetic makeup or your physiological makeup and things like that.

Similarly, the idea that personality is unique in nature and you know it is dynamic; it can change is based on the assumption that personality is influenced by social and cultural factors.



BIOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS

- The heredity
- Brain functions
- Physical features



So, here we are going to look at the arguments for both, whether personality is determined by biological factors or social cultural factors.

In other words, why or how does personality emerge or what causes these personality qualities? For example, if I am an extrovert; why am I an extrovert? Because of my biological makeup or because of the social conditions in which I grew up.

So, let us look at both the sides; in fact the interactionist perspective says, both biology and social factors interact with each other and leads to personality differences. So, for;

which means if I am an extrovert, because there are certain biological qualities, there are certain socio cultural factors or the or the condition in which I grew up, led to my extroversion, ok.

The some of the arguments, the one side of the psychologists or the psychologists who believe that biology plays a very important role in personality, uses hereditary and brain functions and physical features; there are many arguments, but these are important arguments. So, we will look at each of those arguments in brief, ok.



GENETIC TRAITS



Genetic traits, so one important argument is genetic traits; your genes decides who you are, in terms of your body structure, your you know internal hormonal functions all those things. And these internal systems, biological systems influence the way you behave.

For example, you know some people are very positive in nature; why? Because their hormonal makeup or their biological makeup, neurotransmitters and all those chemicals are designed in a way that they react to the situation in a positive way.

For example, if you see babies, even in very very young age in two months, three months; you find individual differences in infants. So, it is not like these two, three months babies know the environment and change their behaviour, is not it. I mean they are very young to, too young to learn or adapt to the way they should react to the environment.

If you are grown up, you will know ok; I should not shout at boss, but I can shout at my children or you know my family members, because the environment has taught you that. But babies, they do not know anything; but even then there are differences across, individual differences across babies.

So, one, baby is like very cheerful baby even in 3 months; another baby might be a very irritating irritant, you know very irritative kind of mood, that baby will always be in irritative mood. So, one baby will go to everyone, which is an extrovert nature; some babies will will cling only to their parents, they will not socialize with others which is introversion.

So, this, so all these differences are because of genetic factors; I mean as an argument from the school of nature ok, that the people who believe that nature, nature means biology leads to individual differences.

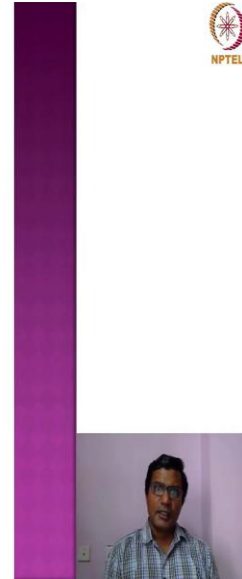
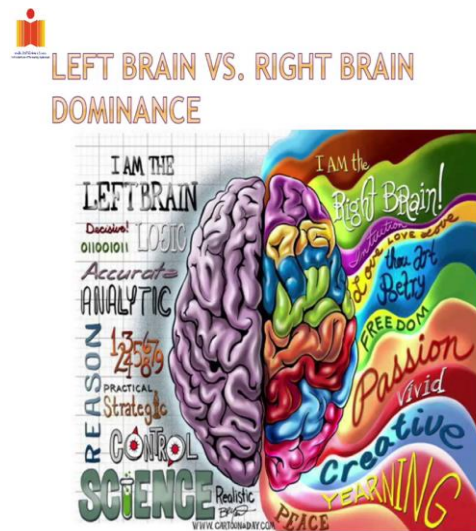
So, what do you think? Do you think or this argument is it right? For example, the argument which I use there are individual differences in babies, because it is because of biological differences; which is some extent true, but the other argument which I said babies will not know how to react and adapt themselves to situations, social situations which is not true.

In fact, the researches say that, even at a very very young age babies or infants know what is expected out of them. Let us say if you get positive reinforcement, if you smile as a baby; you know your parents say wow very good, nice, you know such a cute baby and things like that if you smile.

Even at 3 year, 3 month old baby will know that, you know it has been appreciated for that behaviour and an exhibit that behaviour frequently, ok.

May not necessarily in this scale, but even at a very young age, they can understand to some extent what is happening around them and thus change their behaviour.

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Another important argument people use or the school which argues for nature as a important determinant of personality is brain, you know your brain structure.

So, which says brain structure varies from one individual to individual, one individual to another and these differences are their main cause for individual differences. So, you know you would have heard of this left brain, right brain; you know depending on which brain, which side of the brain is dominant for you, you will be exhibiting certain kind of behaviour consistently. Again, you know again this is based on the assumption that brain structure would not change. So, many research have shown plasticity of the brain; which means depending on the.

So, it is not like depending on your brain structure you behave in a certain way; depending on the environment, depending on your reaction to the environment your brain structure also change. In other words, the brain structures changes depending on the environment in which we live, or the kind of reactions we get from environment.

In let us say if I want to explain in simple words, depending on brain structure, your interests will vary. For example, if you are you know left brain orientor and you will be very good in mathematics; if you are right brain orientor, you will be good in arts and all those fields.

Which to some extent is true, but let us say my left brain is or my right brain is dominant by nature; but let us say if I put myself in situations where I do lot of mathematics or I create interests in mathematics, I try out you know new things in analytics or mathematics or science, slowly my left brain also becomes dominant, it can be other way around also, ok. So, a training also plays a very important role in shaping our brain. So, this argument is also not completely true, ok.

Physical features, so earlier research in organizational behaviour try to correlate physical features with leadership. For example, leaders have certain physiological qualities; they are tall, you know they have straight hair, they have some charismatic eyes and things like that. Even if you see in your classrooms; many of the class leaders are tall people; why? Maybe not because you know their physical features led to leadership qualities; because they showed leadership qualities, they are perceived as tall people.

So, perception of whether somebody is tall or short is also you know subjective in nature. So, people who are leaders, conducted themselves or behaved in a way that they are perceived as tall people or you know people with certain physical qualities. And also it can be other way around; you know these people are picked up and given leadership roles, because they show some physiological features. So, in class, in school days you find all the tall students are picked up as leaders by teachers and made them as leaders.

So, this is like Pygmalion effect; you treat them as leaders, they become leaders. So, you picked up a tall person, treat that person as a leader and that person believes he or she is a leader, and over a period of time he or she become a leader. So, the idea of biology as a strong determinant of personality or individual qualities can be questioned.

So, I will stop here, in the next class we will look at what are the social factors or the arguments from nurture. So, this is called nature nurture argument; why or what causes personality qualities or what causes individual differences? One group says nature, which is your biological factors; another group says nurture, which is environmental factors. So, we looked at the arguments from nature side; in the next lecture we will look at the arguments from the nurture side. So, I will stop here, see you in the next lecture, take care.