

Personality is a pattern of stable states and characteristics of a person that influences his or her behaviour toward goal achievement. Each person has unique ways of protecting these states.

Personality is the fundamental and foremost determinant of individual behaviour. It seeks to integrate the **physiological and psychological facets** of an individual to put them into action. Personality consists of an individual's characteristics and distinctive ways of behaviour.

Probably the most meaningful approach would be to include both the person and the role as Floyd L Ruch does in his definition. He states that:

Human personality includes:

- External appearance and behaviour or social stimulus value.
- Inner awareness of self as a permanent organising force.
- The particular pattern or organisation of measurable traits, both "inner and "outer".

Personality Definition

Personality Definition by Authors: No common definition of personality has so far been arrived at. Every individual defines personality in a different way which includes trait factors and physical appearance.

"The dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment." - Gordon Allport

"Personality is a broad, amorphous designation relating to fundamental approaches of persons to others and themselves. To most psychologists and students of behaviour, this term refers to the study of the characteristic traits of an individual, relationships between these traits and the way in which a person adjusts to other people and situations." - J.B Kolasa

"Personality is a very diverse and complex psychological concept. The word 'personality' may mean something like outgoing, invigorating interpersonal abilities ... but we must also recognize and explain the fact that development results in man acquiring a distinctiveness or uniqueness which gives him identity which enables him and us to recognize him as apart from others. These distinguishing characteristics are summarized by the term 'personality'." - James D Thompson and Donald Van Houten

"Personality is how people affect others and how they understand and view themselves, as well as their pattern of inner and outer measurable traits and the person situation interaction." - Fred Luthans

Personality in Organisational Behavior (OB)

Personality in **Organisational Behavior** of an individual plays an extremely important role in assessing the behaviour of a person at an organization.

In case an individual who is holding a senior position in an organization has a wrong type of personality, it may lead to a very bad impact on the relationship and ultimately it may lead to protests and unrest at the workplace.

Sometimes the personality difficulties are the root cause of labour strikes. No matter how good the superior is in technical knowledge or other behavioural characteristics, it is the 'temperament' of the superior that is crucial in ensuring a cordial interaction with subordinates. Many businesses have realized the **importance of leadership in an organization** in shaping the personality of employees.

Determinants of Personality

The **determinants of personality** can be grouped in five broad categories:

1. **Biological Factors**
2. **Cultural Factors**
3. **Family Factors**
4. **Social Factors**
5. **Situational Factors**

Biological Factors

The study of the biological contributions to personality may be studied under three heads:

Heredity

Heredity refers to those **factors that were determined at conception**. Physical stature, facial attractiveness, sex, temperament, muscle composition and reflexes, energy level, and biological rhythms are characteristics that are considered to be inherent from one's parents.

The heredity approach argues that the ultimate explanation of an individual's personality is the molecular structure of the genes, located in the chromosomes.

Brain

The second biological approach is to concentrate on the role that the brain plays in personality. The psychologists are unable to prove empirically the contribution of the human brain in influencing personality.

Preliminary results from the **electrical stimulation of the brain (ESB)** research give an **indication that a better understanding of human personality** and behaviour might come from the study of the brain.

Biofeedback

Until recently, physiologists and psychologists felt that certain biological functions such as brainwave patterns, gastric and hormonal secretions, and fluctuations in blood pressure and skin temperature were beyond conscious control.

Now some scientists believe that these **involuntary functions can be consciously controlled through biofeedback techniques**. In BFT, the individual learns the internal rhythms of a particular body process through electronic signals that are feedback from equipment that is wired to the body.

Physical Features

A vital ingredient of the personality, an individual's external appearance, is biologically determined. The **fact that a person is tall or short, fat or skinny, black or white will influence the person's effect on others** and this in turn, will **affect the self-concept**.

Cultural Factors

Among the factors that influence personality formation is the culture in which **we are raised, early conditioning, norms prevailing within** the family, friends and social groups and other miscellaneous experiences that impact us.

The **culture largely determines attitudes towards** independence, aggression, competition, cooperation and a host of other human responses.

Family Factors

Whereas the culture generally prescribes and limits what a person can be taught, it is the family, and later the social group, which selects, interprets and dispenses the culture. Thus, the family probably has the most significant impact on early personality development.

A substantial amount of empirical evidence indicates that the **overall home environment created by the parents**, in addition to their direct influence, is **critical to personality development**.

The parents play an especially important part in the identification process, which is important to the person's early development.

Social Factors

There is increasing recognition given to the role of other relevant persons, groups and especially organisations, which greatly influence an individual's personality. This is commonly called the socialization process.

Socialization involves the **process by which a person acquires, from the enormously wide range of behavioural potentialities** that are open to him or her, those that are ultimately synthesized and absorbed.

Socialization starts with the initial contact between a mother and her new infant. After infancy, other members of the immediate family – father, brothers, sisters and close relatives or friends, then the social group: peers, school friends and members of the work group – play influential roles.

Socialization process is especially relevant to organisational behaviour because the process is not confined to early childhood, taking place rather throughout one's life. In particular, the evidence is accumulating that **socialization may be one of the best explanations for why employees behave the way they do in today's organisations**.

Situational Factors

Human personality is also influenced by situational factors. The effect of the environment is quite strong. **Knowledge, skill and language** are obviously acquired and **represent important modifications of behavior**.

An individual's personality, while generally stable and consistent, does change in different situations. The varying demands of different situations call forth different aspects of one's personality.

Personality Characteristics/ Personality Factors that Influence OB

Managers should learn as much as possible about personality in order to understand their employees. Hundreds of personality characteristics have been identified.

7 personality characteristics that influence individual are:

1. Locus of Control
2. Self-Efficacy
3. Self-Esteem
4. Self-Monitoring
5. Positive/Negative Affect
6. Risk-Taking

Locus of Control

The degree to which individuals perceive control over a situation being internal or external is called locus of control.

Locus of control refers to the range of beliefs that individuals hold in terms of being controlled by self (**internal locus**) or controlled by others or the situation (**external locus**).

Self-Efficacy

Generalized self-efficacy refers to a belief about one's own ability to deal with events and challenges.

High self-efficacy results in greater confidence in one's job-related abilities to function effectively on the job. Success in previous situations leads to increased self-efficacy for present and future challenges.

Self-Esteem

An individual's self-worth is referred to as self-esteem. Individuals with **high self-esteem** have positive feelings about themselves.

Low self-esteem individuals are strongly affected by what others think of them, and view themselves negatively.

Self-Monitoring

The extent to which people base their behavior on cues from other people and situations is self-monitoring.

Individuals high in self-monitoring pay attention to what behavior is appropriate in

certain situations by watching others and behaving accordingly.

Low self-monitoring individuals prefer that their behavior reflects their attitudes, and are not as flexible in adapting their behavior to situational cues.

Positive/Negative Affect

Individuals exhibit attitudes about situations in a positive or negative fashion.

An individual's tendency to accentuate the positive aspects of situations is referred to as positive affect, while those accentuating less optimistic views are referred to as having **negative affect**.

Employees with **positive affect** are absent from work less often. Negative affect individuals report higher levels of job stress.

Risk-Taking

People differ in their willingness to take chances. **High-risk-taking** managers made more rapid decisions and used less information in making their choices than low risk-taking managers.

Type A and Type B Personality

Type A personality individual is aggressively involved in a chronic, struggle to achieve more and more in less and less time, and if required to do so, against the opposing efforts of other things or other persons.

Type B personalities are rarely harried by the desire to obtain a wildly increasing number of things or participate in an endless growing series of events in an ever decreasing amount of time.