



THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

A man can be a star of the first magnitude in gifts, will power and endurance, but so well balanced that he turns with the system to which he belongs without any friction or waste of energy. Another may have the same great gifts, or even finer ones, but the axis does not pass precisely through the center and he squanders half his strength in eccentric movements which weaken him and disturb his surroundings.

Herman Hesse, The Glass Bead Game

Managers have to decode and understand employee behavior so they know what action to take. This is not a simple task because there are many different factors that influence behavior. Think for a moment about how you behave in a classroom. What causes you to behave that way? Of course, your own personal characteristics influence what you do. But so also do the other people in the class, the instructor, the physical configuration of the room, the norms of the school, the discipline you are studying, and the culture of which you are a part. In just the same way, an employee's behavior is influenced by a number of different factors. As we see in Exhibit 1, behavior is influenced by the individual, the job, the work group, the organization, and the culture. A manager trying to understand an employee's behavior needs to consider all of these. For example, at the individual level, personal characteristics such as abilities, motivation, and personality may affect behavior. The job an employee performs affects how that person behaves. For example, regardless of their personalities, hospital nurses learn to be meticulous because errors are not tolerated in their job. Work-group characteristics such as norms, size, leadership, and structure also influence individual behavior. Reward systems, performance appraisal procedures, resources, and other organizational practices further impact how employees act. And all of these are impacted by the national, regional, and local culture to which they belong. Thus, managers need to take into account *both* the nature of the person and of the situation.

In this chapter, we will focus on one aspect of the individual, personality, to provide you with some tools to help you decode individual behavior.

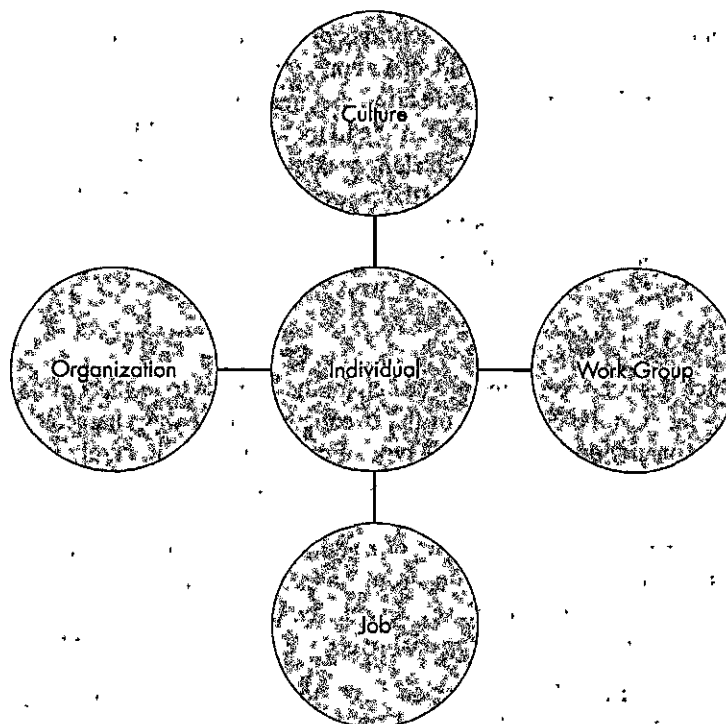


EXHIBIT 1 Major Influences on Individual Behavior in Organizations

Some managers view personality as the answer to all their dilemmas. Indeed, the personality testing business is a \$400-million-a-year industry—suggesting that these managers are hardly alone in their views.⁵ If it were possible to assess an individual's personality by asking a person to fill out a questionnaire and then predict that person's actions and thoughts with 100 percent certainty, it would truly be a gold mine for managers! It would be easy to assign people to jobs, form teams, match sales representatives with customers, and effectively handle all sorts of currently thorny organizational problems. Of course, in reality, personality has proven to be much more difficult to both identify with certainty and use in organizations. By the end of this chapter, we hope that you will have an informed view of personality and its components and understand how to apply this knowledge in organizations.

Personality can be defined as *an individual's relatively stable characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior, and the psychological mechanisms that support and drive those patterns*.⁶ Current thinking on how personality develops emphasizes both genetic and environmental origins. Heredity does seem to play a role in personality development. Parents frequently comment that their children had unique personalities from a very early age, despite their parenting efforts. Although the family setting and life circumstances play a role in shaping personality, people are not passive recipients of environmental influences.⁷ Even children are active creators of their own personalities because they can influence others' reactions and initiate their own social interactions. Adults likewise play a role in their own development by actively choosing the organizations they join, the jobs they take, the activities they participate in, and so forth. Thus, both nature (genetic) and nurture (environmental and situational aspects such as family, culture, and geographic location) factors play important roles in personality development.

Theories of personality vary in the emphasis they place on the importance of the nature of the individual and the importance of the situation or environment in determining personality and, ultimately, behavior. *Trait* theories, which emphasize the components of personality, tend to highlight the importance of individual characteristics in determining behavior and de-emphasize the role of the situation or environment. *Interactionist* theories emphasize the importance of the characteristics of the situation as well as the nature of the individual in understanding and predicting behavior.

TRAIT MODELS

Traits refer to broad, relatively regular dimensions of individual behavior.⁸ When we describe someone as extroverted, aggressive, confident, or conscientious, we are using personality traits to characterize that person. *Trait models*, or theories, assume that personality is composed of a relatively stable set of traits or dimensions. According to these theories, although all individuals have these traits, people vary in the degree to which they exhibit specific dimensions. The theories differ, however, in the traits they consider to be the core components of personality. We will consider two popular trait theories, the Big Five Model and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), as well as several other personality trait theories that have traditionally been of interest to managers.

The Big Five Model

Personality research has been compared to a search for the ultimate traits that define the human disposition. Trait research in the early part of the twentieth century was characterized by an ever-growing list of personality dimensions. This type of research typically involved asking people to complete questionnaires that measured various traits. The usefulness of this approach, however, was questioned when research failed to demonstrate strong linkages between traits and behavior such as job performance.⁹ In the last few decades, additional research and more sophisticated analytical techniques have been used to support an emerging consensus among advocates that five factors or traits are the major structural units of personality. Called the Big Five Model, or the Five-Factor Model, this approach holds that personality is comprised of the "OCEAN" dimensions:¹⁰

- **Openness to experience:** This dimension refers to the extent that people actively seek out new and varied experiences and the extent to which they are aware of their thoughts, feelings, and impulses and are able to be attentive to many of them simultaneously.¹¹

- **Conscientiousness:** People who are conscientious tend to be dependable and trustworthy and conform to social norms.¹²
- **Extroversion:** Extroversion refers to how outgoing, sociable, and assertive people are. Extroverts may also be very active and energetic, having many interests and hobbies.¹³
- **Agreeableness:** This dimension captures the extent to which people are likable, cooperative, and considerate.¹⁴
- **Neuroticism:** Neuroticism, also called emotional stability, in the Big Five approach refers to the tendency to experience chronic negative emotions such as worry, insecurity, self-pity, poor self-image, and mood swings.¹⁵

Of these five dimensions, conscientiousness appears to have the strongest relation to overall job performance across a wide variety of jobs.¹⁶ People who score high on the conscientiousness dimension also may set higher goals for themselves, have higher performance expectations for other people, have greater motivation, be more satisfied in their jobs, and have higher occupational status than people who score low on this dimension.¹⁷ There is some evidence that neuroticism or emotional stability is negatively related to performance.¹⁸ Other personality dimensions appear to relate to performance in specific types of jobs. Extroversion may be related to performance in a sales job, where there is a high competitive and social component. Agreeableness may be related to performance in jobs where cooperation is necessary.¹⁹ Openness to experience has not been a predictor of job performance,²⁰ although it may be a good selection criteria for international work. It is important to note that the effect of personality on these types of behavior is moderate rather than very strong.²¹

The Five-Factor Model has both its merits and its limitations. The questionnaire used to assess an individual is easy to administer and is of relatively low cost to be some stability in the dimensions for North Americans and Western Europeans. However, this model may not apply to all cultures. For example, studies of Italians show three rather than five dimensions. Research conducted in other cultures shows six, seven, and even nine dimensions.²² Moreover, the same dimensions can have different meanings in different cultures.²³ The five-factor approach has also been criticized because it sometimes produces results that are not consistent across time or situations. In addition, the factors may exert only weak influences on behavior, which lessens the model's predictive ability.²⁴

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

The *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (MBTI) is a personality profile partially based on psychologist Carl Jung's theory of personality. According to *Workforce Management*, the MBTI is administered over 2.5 million times a year.²⁵ The test is available in 19 different languages²⁶ and is used for a variety of organizational purposes including team building, management and leadership development, career counseling, hiring decisions, and performance effectiveness training.²⁷ For example, Dow Chemical's Polyolefin and Elastomers unit uses the MBTI to assign employees to tasks on various stages of the product development cycle.²⁸

The MBTI suggests that there are four important components to personality:

- Extroversion/Introversion (E/I)** This refers to how the individual interacts socially. Extroverts are outgoing and sociable, whereas introverts are shy and prefer to be alone.
- Sensing/Intuiting (S/N)** This factor measures how people prefer to collect information. Those who score toward the sensing end of the dimension prefer to use their five senses to systematically obtain factual information. Intuitive individuals use instinct and subjective perception.
- Thinking/Feeling (T/F)** This dimension captures how people evaluate information. Thinking types prefer to rely on logic and analysis, whereas feeling types rely more on their own and other people's reactions.
- Judging/Perceiving (J/P)** This dimension refers to how people like to make decisions. Individuals who score on the judging end of the dimension are planners and like to control the decision-making process. Perceivers are more flexible, spontaneous, and adaptive in their decision style.

The MBTI is scored by combining all four pairs of traits into a matrix of 16 personality types. Individuals are categorized into one of the types based on how they respond on the test. The personality type represents the individual's preferences in the four separate categories, with each category composed of two opposite poles. According to the MBTI, each personality type has its preferred way of responding to the environment and its own set of strengths and weaknesses. For example, people whose personality type is ESTJ are focused on getting things done smoothly and efficiently. As an SJ, they have a core need for seeking the good of the community, a sense of belonging, and learning from the past. Conversely, an ENTJ focuses on implementing new ideas and challenges and is concerned primarily with competence and intellectual resourcefulness.²⁹

Despite its popularity, there is little evidence supporting the MBTI as a valid personality measure. As such, managers are wise to be cautious in their use and interpretation of the MBTI.³⁰ Some researchers are attempting to construct more valid measures of the personality types by developing questionnaires that assess how people respond in different situations. For example, the Singer-Loomis Type Development Inventory asks people to indicate how they would respond in twenty different situations.³¹

Other Personality Traits

Self-esteem is the degree of regard people have for themselves.³² Individuals high in self-esteem tend to be more satisfied in their jobs than those who are low in self-esteem. High self-esteem individuals also tend to be more resistant to influence.

Machiavellianism takes its name from Niccolo Machiavelli, author of a sixteenth-century treatise on power. People who are high in Machiavellianism believe that the ends justify the means and that manipulation is an acceptable way to influence other people. They also tend to be emotionally distant.³³

Locus of control (see Setting the Global Stage) refers to the beliefs people have about why things happen to them. People with an internal locus of control tend to believe that they control their own fate and destiny. In contrast, people with an external locus of control tend to think that luck, chance, or other environmental factors control what happens to them.³⁴

Summary of the Trait Approach

As we have seen, the trait approach is extremely popular in organizations. However, this perspective should be used with caution and with a clear understanding of just what the results can and cannot reliably tell managers. It is important to note that many of the relationships between personality traits and behavior are of moderate strength, at best. Moreover, most of the research studies have been correlational or observational in nature and are unable to determine whether personality causes behavior or vice versa. For example, we noted that neuroticism/emotional instability was associated with low performance. But we cannot tell if emotional instability caused low performance or if low performance caused the individual to report emotional instability. Managers should also carefully consider the legality of any personality tests that they may use. Some tests have been challenged on the basis of invasion of privacy and on discrimination of minorities. Another important point to remember is that labeling people according to their personality profile or type can result in self-fulfilling prophecy. For example, one company actually required employees to wear badges revealing how they scored on a personality test.³⁵ We can easily see how a manager might perceive employees differently based on their badge type and that this, in turn, might result in employees responding in ways that confirm the manager's expectations. Simply knowing a person's score on a test can impact how others' perceive that

individual and, in turn, how that person behaves. This highlights yet another critical issue: The nature of the situation can exert powerful influences on behavior. The interactionist models of personality discussed in the next section explicitly take this factor into account.

INTERACTIONIST MODELS

Like trait models, *interactionist models* hypothesize that personality is an important factor in determining an individual's behavior. They go a step further, however, and argue that situational factors can powerfully shape how that individual responds. We will consider two such models, the conditional reasoning approach and the cognitive-affective processing system.

The Conditional Reasoning Approach

The *conditional reasoning* approach suggests that individuals interpret what happens in their social environment based on their individual dispositions. These dispositions are a type of mental map. Individuals differ in their motives, in how they frame the world, and the assumptions that they make regarding events. In turn, these differences result in different types of behavior because people use different justification mechanisms to decide how best to adjust to their environment.³⁶

Let's consider how two people with different dispositional motives might react. Ana is high in achievement motivation, which means she is motivated to succeed.³⁷ She very much believes that personal factors are important causes of performance and values hard work, learning, and experience. For Ana, a challenge is something to be met with confidence and even excitement. She is predisposed, according to the conditional reasoning approach, to believe that she is personally accountable for her success or failure and that she should take initiative to overcome the challenge. In contrast, Jay is high in fear of failure. Jay might also believe that his failure is due to external factors that are outside his control (e.g., a poor manager, irresponsible coworkers, etc.). For Jay, demanding tasks are a source of stress and anxiety. Instead of an opportunity to show what he can do, Jay believes a challenge will be a sure-fire way to demonstrate just how incompetent he really is. Thus, unlike Ana, Jay's primary reaction to a challenge would be avoidance. He might even reason that those who take a more relaxed approach are less likely to show signs of burnout or fatigue.

The conditional reasoning approach is a *contingency* model because it assumes that responses to situations depend on the personality of the individual faced with the situation. Individuals who are high in achievement motivation will react more positively to the idea of starting their own businesses than will individuals who are high in fear of failure. They will also more likely be drawn to some types of situations (e.g., situations where they can demonstrate exceptional performance) and to avoid other types of situations (e.g., ones where performance measurement is ambiguous). Indeed, according to the attraction-selection-attrition framework, different individuals will be attracted to different situations or organizations, will be selected by and become successful in different organizations, and will avoid or leave various types of organizations and situations depending on their preferences.³⁸

As with all models, the conditional reasoning approach has both its strengths and its weaknesses. By taking into account how individuals make sense of their social environment, it underscores the importance of understanding individual motives and needs. However, it does not allow us to fully understand how the same individual might act differently in similar situations nor how dispositions change over time. Because little research has been conducted on this theory, it remains a promising direction for future development.

The Cognitive-Affective Processing System of Personality

The *cognitive-affective processing system* (CAPS) is depicted in Exhibit 2.³⁹ According to this model, the personality system is comprised of mental representations called cognitive-affective units (CAUs), which are defined as interpretations of people and situations, goals, expectancies, memories, and feelings. People differ in the content of these representations, in how accessible they are, and in how they are related to one another. These representations are affected by a rich array of factors, which include genetic, cultural, societal, and developmental components.

As an individual experiences various situations, different representations or CAUs become activated and are expressed in different behavioral responses. In other words, individuals act according to if-then types of relations, depending on the particular CAUs activated by the situation. Because individuals have different mental if-then relations, they also have differing patterns of behavior.⁴⁰

According to the model, people will also interpret situations differently—even the same situation might be construed quite differently by people with different mental representations and different emotions. Thus, various people will pay attention to different features of the situation, interpret them both cognitively and affectively (emotionally) in different ways, and ultimately behave differently. This means that the relevant features of situations must be understood from the individual's point of view. Different cues will activate different patterns of behavior. Consider the example of Scott and how he reacts to criticism. In one instance, Scott reacts very aggressively—questioning the criticizer's motives and intelligence. In another case, Scott reacts quite passively—easily accepting the criticism and even offering suggestions for how to do things differently. What's going on here? In the first instance, Scott was criticized by peers and reacted quite defensively. Thus, the if-then relationship Scott used was, "If I am criticized by my peers, I have no reason to defer to them because they have no authority over me and have no right to criticize me." In the second instance, Scott was criticized by his manager. Here, his if-then profile might have been, "If I am criticized by my manager, I should accept what she says and try to improve." Clearly, other people might have different if-then rules for the same situations, prompting different behavioral reactions and judgments of that behavior by observers. This is one reason we often hear people commenting, "I never would have acted like that in his or her place."

How might this be used in organizations? The important point would be to identify features of the situations that are relevant to the employees in the organization and which trigger different

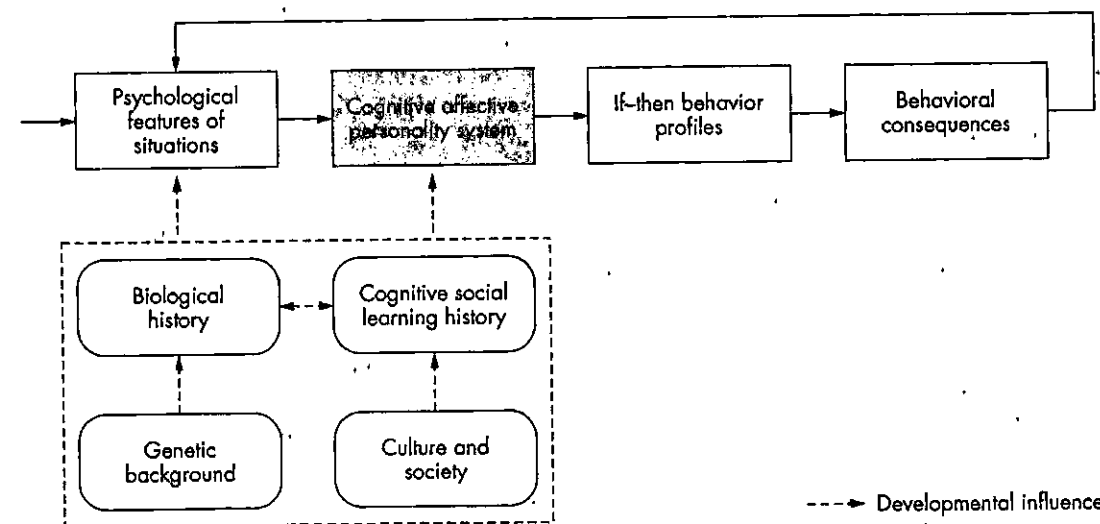


EXHIBIT 2 The Cognitive-Affective Personality System

Adapted from W. Mischel and Y. Shoda, "A Cognitive-Affective System Theory of Personality: Reconceptualizing Situations, Dispositions, Dynamics, and Invariance in Personality Structure," *Psychological Review* 102 (2) (1995): 246-68.

patterns of if-then relations and behavior. Of course, this means that managers must understand how their employees view the particular situation and the organization—a process that can be quite labor intensive and time consuming.

Like other models of personality, this perspective has both its strengths and its weaknesses. The model is relatively comprehensive in its attempt to develop a model of personality that draws on individual, situational, and cultural influences. Although some research findings support the model,⁴¹ much more work is needed to fully test it. Moreover, its application to organizational settings needs to be examined.

Summary of the Interactionist Approach

The interactionist models we discussed above explicitly look at how the nature of the individual's environment might interact with the individual's personality to influence behavior. These models emphasize the complex relationship between the individual and the setting. It is important to remember that they also emphasize that it is the individual's interpretation of key features of the situation that affects their behavior and that individual interpretations may have little or nothing in common. Indeed, individuals often interpret the same situation quite differently. These models suggest that managers must pay attention to how their employees interpret key features of their environments and understand what behaviors the employees feel are justified or appropriate in those situations.

Let's reconsider the opening vignette and our story of Peri. Taking the interactionist approach, Chris, her manager, might first look at Peri's interpretation of the situation as well as Peri's personality. Is Peri's prickly personality coming into play here? Is she simply overreacting to what she sees as less-than-perfect work? Or is the situation itself truly what is driving Peri's reactions? Are there problems that really need to be addressed? Clearly, a manager would need to do some detective work to discern the underlying causes of employee behavior. In reality, most behavior will be affected by multiple factors. Expert managers pay attention to the critical cues in each situation. Suppose you are Peri's manager. What cues would you pay attention to, and what action scripts would you employ?

This type of analysis helps managers develop an understanding of the rich complexity of human behavior, a skill that is especially critical in dealing with "difficult" people. One advice book gives examples of how to handle 30 different categories of difficult people in the workplace.⁴² Hopefully, we're only plagued with a few of them.

DEALING WITH "DIFFICULT" PEOPLE

When asked which work activities made them most uncomfortable, 73 percent of managers said that building relationships with people they dislike was their most worrying and troublesome chore.⁴³ Yet we have seen that effectively managing relationships with superiors, peers, and subordinates is one of the most critical tasks that managers face.

What can you do when you are confronted with a "difficult" person? Nigel Nicholson notes that managers are tempted to "sell" their viewpoint to that person or just give up.⁴⁴ Neither of these strategies is likely to be effective. Instead, he suggests trying the following steps:

1. **Create a rich picture of the problem person** Remember that we tend to think that people cause their own behavior, and we tend to downplay other causes. Think about the following when trying to analyze the causes of the behavior.
 - **The problem person** What motivates this person? What drives her? What obstacles are preventing him from achieving what he wants? What would happen if those obstacles were removed? In addition, you might consider how often this behavior has occurred. Has it occurred in similar situations?⁴⁵
 - **Yourself** What might you be doing to encourage the problem behavior? Are you unknowingly rewarding some behaviors and punishing others? Is there something that you do that sets the person on the wrong track?

- **The situation** What might be causing both you and the problem person to behave poorly? Is there something happening in the organization that might have an impact? Has the company recently gone through layoffs? Is competition increasing? Have you gotten a new boss? Was there something that triggered this behavior?
- 2. **Reframe your goals** Try to think flexibly about what you want to happen. For example, consider a situation in which an employee is dealing with a large amount of email requests from a low-priority customer group. The employee is becoming more and more frustrated with the workload. He wants to stop answering these email messages and insists that he can't handle them any more. Instead of simply demanding that the employee complete the tasks, you might think about what you really want to accomplish. You might decide that you want the employee to have less work but also meet the needs of the customers. By framing your goals in this way, you can open up possibilities that you might have ignored. For example, perhaps there are routine questions that could be answered in a Web page with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
- 3. **Stage the encounter** Schedule a face-to-face meeting to discuss the issues. Acknowledge the person's value and then describe the problem behavior as you see it in factual terms. Avoid saying things like, "You are so rude!" Instead, you might say, "I noticed in the last staff meeting that you interrupted other people five times in the first 15 minutes of the meeting." Clearly indicate that the problem behavior cannot continue and suggest that you would like to work together to find a solution that is acceptable to both of you. Then, begin to discuss possible solutions.
- 4. **Follow Up** Set aside time to monitor and reward progress or take corrective action.



CLASS ACTIVITY: THE DONOR SERVICES CASE: WHAT TO DO ABOUT JUANA?

The purpose of this exercise is to help you develop your skills in handling situations with difficult people (Time allotted: 55–70 minutes).

- STEP 1. Role-Play Preparation (20–25 minutes)**
- a. Form into groups of six members (preferably your learning groups).
 - b. Select one person to play the role of Juana and one person to play the role of Joanna in the Donor Services Department at the end of the book. The remainder of the group will act first as advisors during the preparation stage and then as observers during the role-play. Two people should volunteer to help Juana prepare for the role-play, and two others will help Joanna.
 - c. In your subgroup, discuss your answers to the case questions that you prepared before class. Discuss how Joanna or Juana should behave in the role-play. You can assume that Joanna has asked to meet with Juana privately in her office. Be sure to read the "Guidelines for Role-Plays" for tips on conducting the role-play and using the Observer Worksheet.

Guidelines for Role Plays

Participation Tips

- Read the case and pay careful attention to the character's actions, feelings, and thoughts. Why does this character act, think, and feel this way?
- During your preparation, imagine how the characters in the role-play might act in different circumstances. Try to plan how you would respond.
- During the role-play, let the assumptions that you made about the character guide your reactions. If you are confronted with an unexpected development, simply react as you think the character might react. Use your imagination!
- Avoid looking at the instructions during the role-play. Once you start, just let yourself take over the role.
- If you are assigned the manager role, use the role-play as an opportunity to practice your managerial skills. Assume that the situation is real and that the characters are really experiencing the situation.
- In this case, if you are the difficult person, don't "ham it up" and exaggerate your role so much that it is impossible to deal with you.
- Talk loudly enough so observers can hear.

Observation Tips:

- Pay attention to both **content** (what is being discussed) and **process** (how the participants behave and how the role-play progresses).
- Use the observer worksheet to help guide what you pay attention to in the role-play. Observe both **what** the participants do and **how often** the participants act that way.
- When the role-play is over, you may be asked to give the participants feedback. If so, try to use the following guidelines for giving constructive feedback:
 - Start by discussing what went well during the role-play.
 - Before giving your own ideas about how the role-play might have been better, ask the participants what they would do differently if they had the chance to "do it over."
 - Focus on actual behaviors and be specific rather than evaluative. For example, "You abruptly contradicted her three times" rather than "You were demeaning!"
 - If possible, give specific recommendations about how the role-play could have been improved.
 - Ask for feedback about how you gave feedback!

Facilitation Tips for the Instructor Leader:

- Do everything you can to make the role-play seem real and help the participants become involved. Introduce the participants by their characters' names. Describe the setting discussed in the instructions as vividly and faithfully as you can.
- Remind the participants that the instructions are the starting point; they should use those as a springboard for what happens in the role-play.
- Minimize distractions so that the participants and observers can focus on the role-play.

Adapted from D. Johnson and F. Johnson, *Joining Together*, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003).

Observer Worksheet

a. Use the scale below to evaluate Joanna and Juana's role play performance: answer the numbered questions by writing the number corresponding to your evaluation of each participant in the appropriate boxes. Write out answers to the lettered questions in the appropriate columns. Write other observations in the Comments column.

	1 Needs work	2	3 Satisfactory	4	5 Excellent
To what extent did the participants:			Joanna	Juana	Comments
1. Create a rich picture of the other person?					
a. What motivates the person? What role does personality play? What if-then rules does the person use?					
b. What obstacles does the person face?					
c. What are the other person's real goals?					
2. Acknowledge how the participant's own character contributed to the problem?					
a. Did the character unknowingly reward some behaviors and punish others? Is there something that character did that set the person on the wrong track?					
b. Are there other ways that the character is contributing to the problem?					
3. Acknowledge the role of the situation?					
a. What might be causing both characters to behave poorly? Is there something happening in the organization that might have an impact?					
b. Was there something that triggered this behavior?					
4. Discuss the other person's behavior rather than focusing on personal traits or attributes?					

b. Answer the following questions.

What went well in this interaction?

What needed improvement?

Did you notice anything else that seems significant?

DECODING HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND PERSONALITY

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STEP 2. Role-Play (15 minutes)

- a. In this step, Juana will go to Joanna's "office" and they will enact the meeting. All other group members should observe the role-play and critique it using the Observer Worksheet.

STEP 3. Debriefing the Role-Play (20-30 minutes)

- a. What role did personality play in Joanna and Juana's analysis of each other's behavior? What about the role of the situation? What theories of personality did each person seem to be using to make sense of the situation?
- b. To what extent did Joanna and Juana try to follow the guidelines for dealing with difficult people? Did they:
1. Create a rich picture of the other person?
 2. Understand what the other person's real goals were?
 3. Discuss the other person's behavior rather than focusing on personal traits or attributes?
- c. Did you observe anything that seemed to trigger a positive reaction by Juana or Joanna?
- d. Did you observe anything that seemed trigger a negative reaction by Juana or Joanna? How could that have been avoided?
- e. Was there anything else that could be improved? On Joanna's part? On Juana's part?
- f. Did Joanna and Juana arrive at an agreement? Do you think they solved the problem? Why or why not?
- g. What else did you learn from the role-play?



LEARNING POINTS

1. An individual's behavior is influenced by characteristics of the individual, the job, the work group, the organization, and the culture. A manager trying to understand an employee's behavior needs to consider all of these.
2. Personality can be defined as an individual's relatively stable characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior, and the psychological mechanisms that support and drive those patterns.
3. Both nature (genetic) and nurture (environmental and situational aspects such as family, culture, and geographic location) factors likely play important roles in personality development.
4. Trait theories of personality emphasize the components of personality, highlight the importance of individual characteristics in determining behavior, and de-emphasize the role of the situation or environment.
5. Interactionist theories emphasize the importance of the characteristics of the situation as well as the nature of the individual in understanding and predicting behavior.
6. The Five-Factor Model holds that personality is comprised of the "OCEAN" dimensions:
 - Openness to experience actively seeking out new and varied experiences; awareness of one's thoughts, feelings, and impulses and able to be attentive to many of them simultaneously.
 - Conscientiousness dependable and trustworthy; conform to social norms.
 - Extroversion outgoing, sociable, and assertive.⁴⁶
 - Agreeableness likable, cooperative, and considerate.
 - Neuroticism (also called emotional stability) chronic negative emotions such as worry, insecurity, self-pity, poor self-image, and mood swings.
7. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a personality profile partially based on psychologist Carl Jung's theory of personality. The MBTI suggests that there are four important components to personality that range along the following continua:

- Extroversion/Introversion (E/I) how the individual interacts socially.
 - Sensing/Intuiting (S/N) how people prefer to collect information.
 - Thinking/Feeling (T/F) how people evaluate information.
 - Judging/Perceiving (J/P) how people like to make decisions.
8. The conditional reasoning approach suggests that individuals interpret what happens in their social environment differently based on their individual dispositions. These differences result in different types of behavior because people use different justification mechanisms to decide how best to adjust to their environment.
 9. The cognitive-affective processing system (CAPS) holds that personality is comprised of mental representations called cognitive-affective units (CAUs), defined as interpretations of people and situations, goals, expectancies, memories, and feelings. People differ in the content of these representations, in how accessible they are, and in how they are related to one another. These representations are affected by genetic, cultural, societal, and developmental factors.
 10. When dealing with a "difficult" person, avoid trying to "sell" your viewpoint. Instead, use the following guidelines to diagnose and manage the situation:
 - Create a rich picture of the problem person, yourself, and the situation.
 - Reframe your goals to focus on what you really want to accomplish.
 - Schedule and carefully manage a face-to-face meeting to acknowledge the person's value, describe the problem behavior in factual terms, and discuss possible solutions.
 - Follow up by setting aside time to monitor and reward progress or take corrective action.



ACTION SCRIPTS

FOR EMPLOYEES

- Employees who are skilled at decoding behavior recognize that it is a complex phenomenon that is a function of both the person and the situation. They understand that this applies to their managers as well as their peers.
- When they try to understand why a person is acting in a particular way, they remember that we often overlook causes outside the individuals that influence their behavior. They always ask themselves, "What other things could be causing this behavior?"
- They try to discern what if-then rules their peers and their managers are using to make sense of situations. They should be especially sensitive when people react differently in seemingly similar situations (e.g., criticism is accepted from managers but rejected from peers).
- They recognize the influences on their own behavior. They try to understand how their personality, situations, and the way they interpret situations affect how they behave.

FOR MANAGERS

- Expert managers create a rich picture of *all* their employees. They try to understand their personalities and the if-then rules they use to respond to situations.
- They systematically analyze the causes of employee behavior. They remember to pay attention to other characteristics of the individual, such as abilities and motivation. They check to be sure that the job, group, and organizational characteristics are exerting the intended consequences on behavior.
- They utilize their knowledge of cultural differences to understand behavior.

FOR ORGANIZATIONAL ARCHITECTS

- Organizational architects who understand personality design their employee selection system wisely.
- They use personality tests cautiously when assessing employees.
- They set up training programs in dealing with difficult employees for employees and managers.
- They also provide training programs in cultural differences to help employees decode behavior.



PERSONAL APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT

The topic of this assignment is to think back on a personality-related experience that was significant for you. Choose an experience that intrigues you and that you want to learn more about.

A. Concrete Experience

1. Objectively describe the experience (who, what, when, where, how) (2 points)

2. Subjectively describe your feelings, perceptions, and thoughts that occurred during (not after) the experience. What did others seem to be feeling? (2 points)

B. Reflective Observation

1. Looking back at the experience, what were the perspectives of the key actors (including you)? (2 points)

2. Why did the people involved (including you) behave as they did? (2 points)

C. Abstract Conceptualization

1. Relate concepts or theories from the assigned readings or the lecture to the experience. Explain thoroughly how they apply to your experience. Please apply at least two concepts or theories and cite them correctly. (4 points)

D. Active Experimentation

1. What did you learn about motivation from this experience? (1 point)
2. What did you learn about yourself? (1 point)
3. What action steps will you take to be more effective in the future? (2 points)

E. Integration, Synthesis, and Writing

1. Did you integrate and synthesize the four sections? (1 point)
2. Was the Personal Application Assignment well written and easy to understand? (1 point)
3. Was it free of spelling and grammar errors? (2 points)

ENDNOTES

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