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Chapter 3: Individual differences

Fincham & Rhodes 2005: Principles of
Organizational Behaviour
HRM &OB module 2017/2018



Personality - Basic assumptions

1. Definition

- A tendentially stable reaction to external environment and stimuli.

2. The assumption of stability

- A combination of traits that make individuals unique but also make their thought & behaviour consistent over time

3. The assumption of broad underlying dimensions

- Common dimensions to explain IDs
- Factor analysis

4. IDs are normally distributed

Theories about personality: The big five (1)

- 5 factors:
 - a framework to understand individual differences
- Normally distributed:
 - most people are in the middle
- The big five provides an account of the structure of personality

Theories about personality: The big five (2), extraversion – introversion

Traits defining extraversion:

- Venturesomeness: socially confident
 - Affiliativeness: more warm & friendly
 - Energy: prefer more than too little
 - Ascendance: more assertive
- Better at jobs with high levels of stimulus, novelty, variety

Theories about personality: The big five (3), neuroticism – stability

- Neuroticism: a high level of negative affect
- Traits correlating to this factor:
 - Anxiety
 - Tenseness
 - Low self-esteem
 - Guilt-proneness
 - Emotional control
 - Irrationality
 - Shyness
 - Moodiness

Theories about personality: The big five (4), conscientious – expedient

- Conscientious:
 - strong sense of obligation & duty,
- At work: punctual, systematic, order & predictable environments
- Expedient:
 - individualistic
- At work: overlook rules & procedures, pragmatic, responsive, adaptable
- The best predictor of performance

Theories about personality: The big five (5), open – closed to experience

- Open: actively seek new experience
 - aesthetic interests, analytical, intellectual, imaginative, abstract, diversity of interests
- At work:
 - creative problem-solvers, abstract thinkers
- Closed: practical, down to earth
- At work: focus on accomplishing tasks

Theories about personality: The big five (6), agreeable – hostile

- Agreeable:
 - maintain good relationships & serve others
- At work: natural 'team players', adaptive
- Hostile: mistrustful, irritable, headstrong
- At work: not easily fooled, lower performers
- *Highly consistent from childhood onwards*

The theories about personality: Freud & the dynamics of personality (1)

Personality is the outcome of dynamic processes

The conscious:

thoughts & perceptions

The pre-conscious:

memories & stored information

The unconscious:

phobias, traumas, sexual urges, anxieties

The theories about personality: Freud & the dynamics of personality (2)

Tripartite structure of personality

- The id: pleasure principle
- The ego: reality principle
- The superego: values & morals

The id (pleasure) & the superego (morality) struggle for control over the ego (reality)

The theories about personality: Freud & the dynamics of personality (3)

Defense mechanisms

- Repression: motivated forgetting
- Projection: externalizing difficult/ positive feelings
 - distortions of reality, alienation
- Reaction formation: reflecting opposite feelings
 - denial, regression, displacement

The theories about personality: Social learning – locus of control

- Internal: 'I make things happen'
- External: 'Things happen to me'
- At work:
 - internals perform better
 - have better perception of their work, effort and working conditions
 - externals: feel less connection between their effort & the outcome/ under-valuation
- LoC may change through new experiences

The theories about personality: McClelland (1)

- Personal traits develop through social learning in childhood & adolescence
- The Family is the learning mechanism
- Three basic motivating/stimulating factors:
 - Need for Achievement (N-Ach): the need for success & accomplishment
 - Need for Affiliation (N-Aff): Social need to be accepted and being part of a group
 - Need for Power (N-Pw): Need to be in charge and dominating others and situation
- High N-Ach + high N-Pw + low N-Aff = effective managers

The theories about personality: McClelland (2)

Dominant Motivator	Characteristics of This Person
Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Has a strong need to set and accomplish challenging goals.•Takes calculated risks to accomplish their goals.•Likes to receive regular feedback on their progress and achievements.•Often likes to work alone.
Affiliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Wants to belong to the group.•Wants to be liked, and will often go along with whatever the rest of the group wants to do.•Favors collaboration over competition.•Doesn't like high risk or uncertainty.
Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Wants to control and influence others.•Likes to win arguments.•Enjoys competition and winning.•Enjoys status and recognition.

Source: Mindtools/theory of need McClelland

The theories about personality: McClelland (3)

1. N-Ach People motivated by achievement need challenging, but not impossible, projects. They thrive on overcoming difficult problems or situations, so make sure you keep them engaged this way. People motivated by achievement work very effectively either alone or with other high achievers.
 - When providing feedback, give achievers a fair and balanced appraisal. They want to know what they're doing right – and wrong – so that they can improve.

The theories about personality: McClelland (4)

1. People motivated by affiliation work best in a group environment, so try to integrate them with a team (versus working alone) whenever possible. They also don't like uncertainty and risk. Therefore, when assigning projects or tasks, save the risky ones for other people.
 - When providing feedback to these people, be personal. It's still important to give balanced feedback, but if you start your appraisal by emphasizing their good working relationship and your trust in them, they'll likely be more open to what you say. Remember that these people often don't want to stand out, so it might be best to praise them in private rather than in front of others.

The theories about personality: McClelland (5)

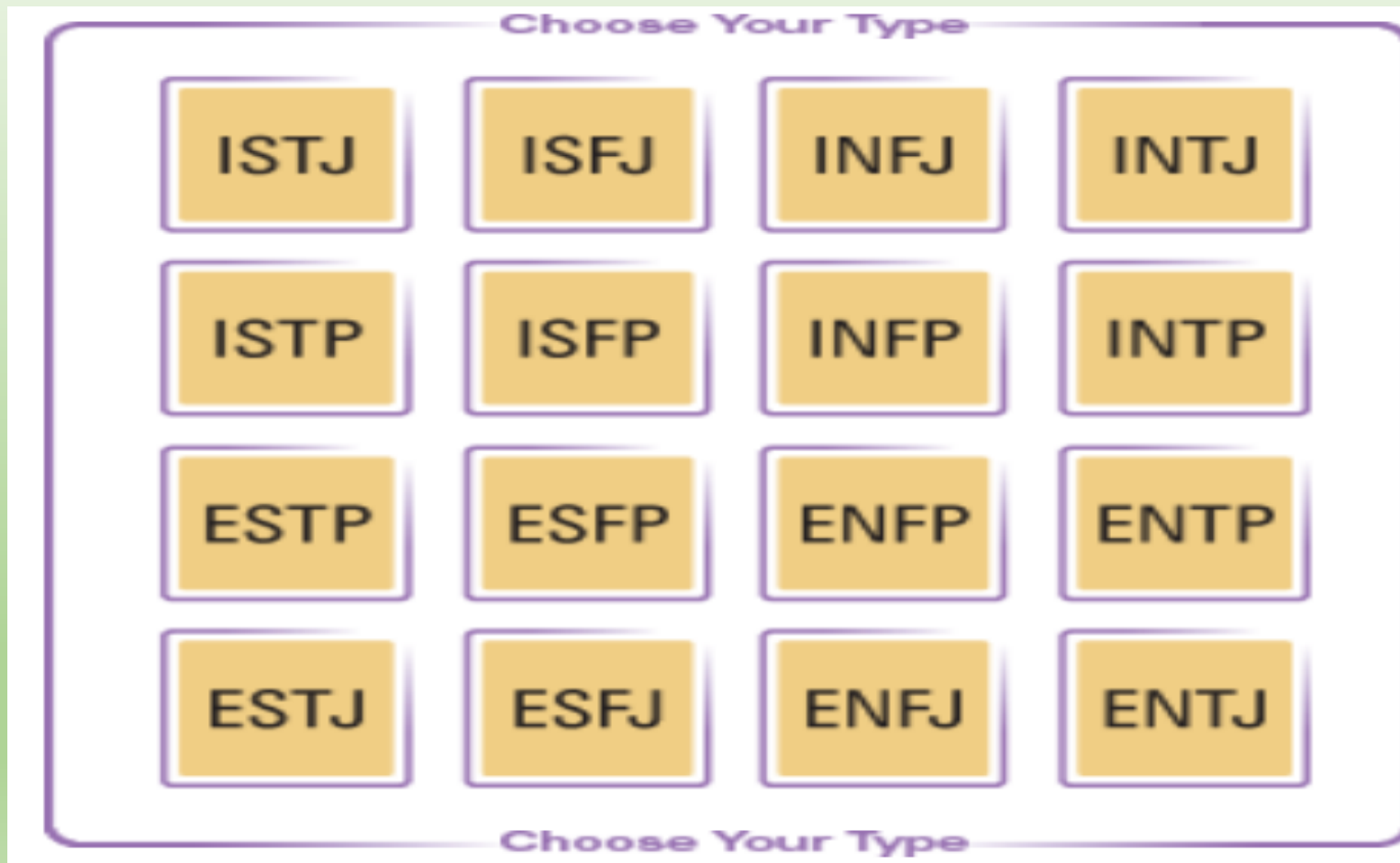
1. Those with a high need for power work best when they're in charge. Because they enjoy competition, they do well with goal-oriented projects or tasks. They may also be very effective in negotiations or in situations in which another party must be convinced of an idea or goal.
 - When providing feedback, be direct with these team members. And keep them motivated by helping them further their career goals .

The theories about personality: Myers-Briggs (1)

In developing the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the aim was to make the insights of type theory accessible to individuals and group based on Jung psychological theory.

- Favorite world: Do you prefer to focus on the outer world or on your own inner world? This is called [Extraversion \(E\) or Introversion \(I\)](#).
- Information: Do you prefer to focus on the basic information you take in or do you prefer to interpret and add meaning? This is called [Sensing \(S\) or Intuition \(N\)](#).
- Decisions: When making decisions, do you prefer to first look at logic and consistency or first look at the people and special circumstances? This is called [Thinking \(T\) or Feeling \(F\)](#).
- Structure: In dealing with the outside world, do you prefer to get things decided or do you prefer to stay open to new information and options? This is called [Judging \(J\) or Perceiving \(P\)](#).

The theories about personality: Myers-Briggs (2)



Personality – tests

1. BIG FIVE

<https://www.123test.com/personality-test/index.php>

2. Myers-Briggs

<https://www.16personalities.com>