

CHAPTER 13 – THE NATURE OF PERSONALITY AND FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS IN PERSONALITY STUDY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter you should be able to:

- describe the nature of personality study
- outline the various approaches or paradigms to explain personality
- discuss the cultural context of personality study
- construct and explain a definition of personality
- give examples to identify life events and other factors that influence personality
- use examples to explain the dimensions of personality study
- comment on the underlying assumptions in personality study
- use examples to indicate the practical use of personality concepts in the work context
- explain research approaches in the study of work-related concepts of personality.

KEY CONCEPTS

personality – consistent attributes and behaviour

personology – the study of personality

criteria – principles or standards of judgement

individual differences – differences in characteristics between people

culture – beliefs and values shared by a group

epistemology – fundamental views on knowledge

African – native of the African continent, from Africa

approaches – perspectives (for example, the psychodynamic approach)

psychodynamic approach – the approach that studies the influence of the unconscious on behaviour

behaviourist approach – the approach associated with studying the impact of the environment on observable behaviour

humanistic approach – the approach that studies how personality relates to each person's unique experiences and how people find meaning in life

trait approach – the approach that studies how personality is formed by enduring traits across different situations

cognitive approach – the approach that studies how personality is related to information processing and thinking

biological – related to genetic and neuro-physical structures

evolutionary – the transfer of personality traits from generation to generation as a result of the changing history of the human race

psychosocial – where personality is formed through the context of social influences

occupational – relating to a career

fundamental view – basic assumptions

structure – organised framework

motivation – desire or drive to achieve a goal

development – stage of growth

adjustment – emotional balance, state of coping

physical – relating to the body

psychological – relating to feelings and emotions

idiographic – relating to the individual as a unique being

nomothetic – emphasising the general nature of behaviour

assumptions – fundamental beliefs

determinants – influential factors

deterministic – relating to definite, dominant causes or influences

heredity – genetic origin

environment – the influences from various surroundings

research – systematic investigation

CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

This chapter focuses on personality. Specific attention is given to how personality is used in the work context, and to how work-related personality factors are used in research approaches.