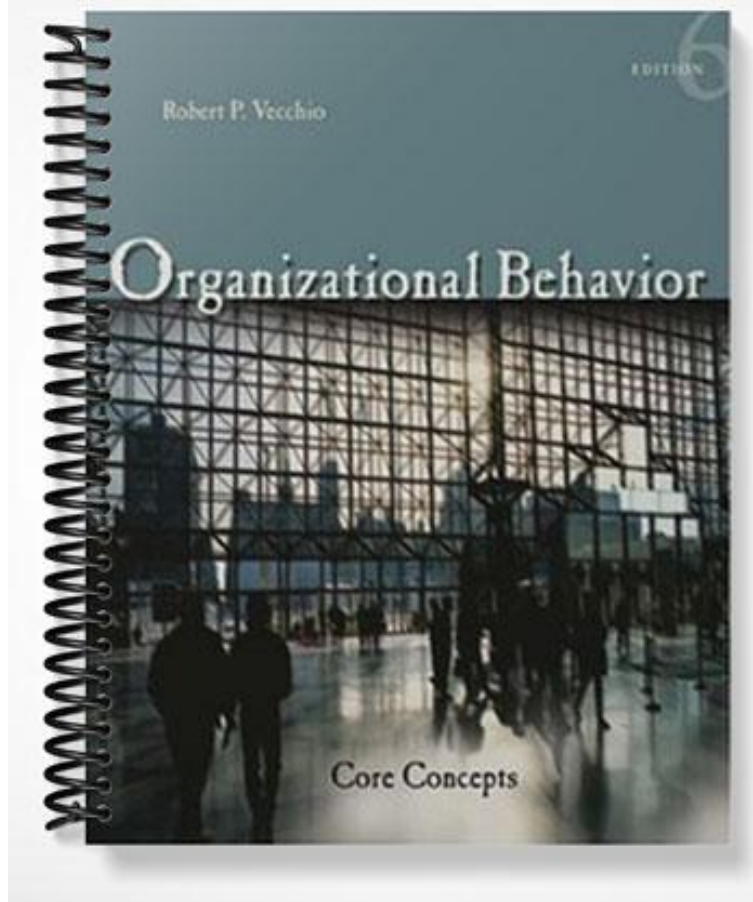


SOLUTIONS MANUAL



CHAPTER 2 Personality and Perception

Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 discusses the importance of perception in the study of human behavior, particularly in organizations. The chapter suggests ways in which one may gauge emotional states, and discusses barriers to effective perception, including perceptual distortion, stereotyping, the halo effect, and projection. The chapter concludes with an overview of personality theory, including personality traits, their measurement, and the impact of personality traits on performance.

Class Warm-ups

1. Ask students why it would be important for them, regardless of their eventual career, to study personality and perception.
2. Ask your students if they have ever completed a personality inventory or taken a personality test in order to obtain a job or admission to a particular group. What did they think about the process? Did they have reservations or objections to some of the items or questions?

Chapter Outline

I. Personality

Personality can be defined as the relatively enduring individual traits and dispositions that form a pattern distinguishing one person from all others.

- A. The determinants of personality lie in *both* heredity and environment. Heredity may predispose an individual to certain patterns of behavior, while environmental forces may precipitate more specific patterns of action.
- B. Assessing personality traits usually involves one or more of the following techniques:
 - > personality ratings
 - > situational tests (behavioral tests) involving direct observation
 - > personality inventories (most widely used assessment technique)
 - > projective techniques (e.g., storytelling and sentence completion)
- C. Important dimensions of personality
 - > locus of control
 - > the work ethic
 - > cognitive style (mode of problem solving), See Table 2.1

- > moral maturity (See Table 2.2)
- > the “Big Five” model of personality – agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional adjustment, extroversion, and inquisitiveness

II. The Perception of Others

The process of recognizing and understanding others (that is, person perception) is quite complex and anything but a passive activity. It is not merely a receptive process dictated by the attributes of the observed object. “There’s more to the issue of perception than actually meets the eye.”

- A. Accuracy in perceiving others is of great value in assessing their emotions and personality characteristics. We all try to “read” other people using such clues as facial expressions, shifts in tone or pitch of voice, body language and posture, eye contact (very important), appearance, and physical attractiveness.
- B. The perception of personality traits has been plagued by the difficulty of determining a specific, unquestionable criterion against which to compare an evaluator’s judgment. However, those who are good judges of others typically possess:
- high intelligence
 - esthetic and dramatic interests
 - good emotional adjustment
 - a specialization in the physical, rather than the social, sciences

When people attempt to predict others’ behavior from subjective assessments of personality, they are not particularly successful.

- C. Some obstacles to accurate perception include:
- stereotyping – judgments of others that are based on group membership
 - halo effect – using a general impression of favorableness or unfavorableness as the basis for judgments about specific traits
 - projection – ascribing our own feelings and attributes to others
 - perceptual distortion – denial or distortion of reality
 - subliminal influences – factors of which we are not fully aware
 - selective perception – allowing our own interests to affect our judgment
- D. Understanding attributions involves describing the process that people use to explain the causes of the behavior of others. *Attribution theory*, initially popularized by Fritz Heider, examines the influence process used to deduce others’ dispositions or traits from observations of their behavior.

H.H. Kelley's *theory of causal attribution* asserts that judgments of another's behavior are influenced by three sources of information: agreement, consistency, and distinctiveness.

Critical Incident Teaching Notes

A Questionable "Fit"

1. *What are the major difficulties Irene and Wayne have in trying to develop a working relationship?*

Each one wants the other to be just like him/her. Irene becomes upset because Wayne pushes to get things done and feels she should show more initiative. Wayne is upset with Irene because she isn't assertive enough and is too laid back.

2. *What are the major issues each should consider in trying to work together?*

Irene should realize that Wayne has a difficult time understanding people who are more introverted and not as "take-charge" as he is. She must become more open about her feelings and expectations.

Wayne should realize that Irene is more reserved than he is, and that Irene will never be the "take-charge" type of person he wants her to be. She could become a more effective manager with more support and direction. Also, she is much more sensitive to criticism, a possible weakness.

3. *Using the Myers-Briggs information, what strategy would you propose for resolving the difficulties between Irene and Wayne?*

Irene should:

- a. explain to Wayne the type of help she needs from him to enable her to become a better manager,
- b. become more organized so she is on top of what's going on in her department, and
- c. reassess her career goals and objectives to ensure that she really wants to be a manager.

Wayne should:

- a. spend more time with Irene discussing the job expectations and demands (he needs to really listen to her responses),
- b. discuss Irene's career goals with her to help her sort out her options, and

- c. realize that not everyone possesses his drive and initiative.

Experiential Exercise Teaching Notes

Sherlock Holmes Visits Dr. Watson's Office

This exercise provides a good way for encouraging students to “come up and see me sometime.” You really don't bite and it might be interesting for them to visit the professor in a non-classroom environment. You might want to set a time limit for the visits, especially if you have a large class. Students should visit you individually, not in groups. They will probably compare notes and talk about their visits among themselves anyway, but the emphasis should be on individual observation and analysis, if practical (another issue related to class size).

Note: you may want to straighten up your office to the point where the students can find a chair to sit in. However, it is important to present as “natural” an office as possible.

Different students will show different levels of skilled observation (a Sherlock Holmes forte) and probably vary considerably in their interpretation of what they observed. Raise the issue in class with them in terms of what they *expected* to see in your office and what they *actually* saw. How do they believe their expectations may have affected their observations?

Personality Insights Via the Internet

Students tend to be very internet-oriented and should find this exercise fascinating. If they were surprised by the results, they might want to discuss the reasons why they were surprised. However, some may feel reluctant to do so in a classroom setting.