PART TWO – INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIORS AND PROCESSES IN ORGANIZATIONS

Chapter Three – Individual Characteristics

Overview

Chapter 1 showed how managers strive to enhance performance behaviors, enhance commitment and engagement, promote citizenship behaviors, and minimize dysfunctional behaviors by their employees. Chapter 2 identified how various environmental factors—diversity, globalization, technology, ethics, and new employment relationships—all impact organizational behavior.

The text now turns to part two with a fundamental question underlying organizational behavior: Why do individuals do what they do? Chapter 3 identifies and discusses critical individual characteristics that affect people's behaviors in organizations. The discussion of other important individual characteristics is continued in Chapter 4. Core theories and concepts that drive employee motivation are introduced and discussed in Chapter 5. Finally, in Chapter 6 we focus on how managers can implement motivation theories and concepts.

In this chapter we explore some of the key characteristics that differentiate people from one another in organizations. We first introduce the essential nature of individual differences and how people "fit" as individuals in organizations. We then look at personality frameworks that shed considerable light on different personality profiles. Next, we examine other specific personality traits and discuss different types of intelligence. We close this chapter with an examination of different styles for processing information and learning.

Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:
1. Explain the nature of individual differences, the concept of fit, and the role of realistic job previews.
2. Define personality and describe general personality frameworks and attributes that affect behavior in organizations.
3. Identify and discuss other important personality traits that affect behavior in organizations.
4. Discuss different kinds of intelligence that affect behavior in organizations.
5. Describe different learning styles that influence how people process information and that affect behavior in organizations.

Real World Challenge: Individual Differences That Make a Difference at Southwest Airlines

Summary: Fun and friendly customer service is essential to the success of Southwest Airlines' business strategy. Southwest believes it can train new hires on whatever they need to do, but it cannot change employees' inherent nature. To support its goals of hiring fun, creative, innovative employees, Southwest Airlines looks for leadership and a sense of humor in the people it hires. The company looks for

empathetic people with other-oriented, outgoing personalities who work hard and have fun at the same time.

Real World Challenge: Southwest asks for your advice about how to better hire empathetic employees with creativity and fun-loving characteristics who fit with the company's unique culture. After reading this chapter, you should have some good ideas.

Real World Response: Job candidates do more than interview for a job; they audition—and the audition begins the moment they request an application. Managers jot down anything memorable about the initial conversation, both good and bad. Employees observe whether recruits are consistently friendly to the crew and to other passengers or if they complain. Southwest's flight attendant assessment methods not only ensure that it hires people whose personalities fit the culture, but also help it execute its customer service strategy.

Chapter Outline

I. People in Organizations

A. Individual Differences

Individual differences are personal attributes that vary from one person to another. Individual differences may be physical, psychological, and emotional.

Basic categories of individual differences include personality, intelligence, learning styles, attitudes, values and emotions, perception, and stress.

Managers should also be aware of psychological contracts that exist between the organization and its employees. In an ideal situation, then, understanding differences across people and creating effective psychological contracts can help facilitate a good fit between people and the organization.

B. The Concept of Fit

Being good at our job is important, but is not enough—we need to fit with our organization and workgroup as well. That is, there are actually different forms of fit. These different forms of fit are summarized in Table 3.1.

1. Person-Job Fit

Person-job fit is the fit between a person's abilities and the demands of the job, and the fit between a person's desires and motivations and the attributes and rewards of a job.

Because job performance is usually the most important determinant of an employee's success, person-job fit is usually the primary focus of most staffing efforts.

It is important to consider not only the fit between an individual's talents and the job requirements, but also the fit between an individual's motivations and the rewards offered by the job.

Research suggests that person-job fit leads to higher job performance, satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to stay with the company. People differ in their personality and motivations as well as their skills. Organizations must consider individual differences beyond skills when making hiring decisions.

2. **Person-Group Fit**

Good *person-group fit* (or *person-team fit*) means that an individual fits with the workgroup's work styles, skills, and goals.

Person-group fit leads to improved job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intent to stay with the company, and critical in team-oriented organizations.

3. **Person-Organization Fit**

Person-organization fit is the fit between an individual's values, beliefs, and personality and the values, norms, and culture of the organization.

The strength of this fit influences important organizational outcomes including job performance, retention, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Organizational values and norms that are important for person-organization fit include integrity, fairness, work ethic, competitiveness, cooperativeness, and compassion for fellow employees and customers.

Research suggests that people may experience differing degrees of fit with the job and with the organization. Essentially, it is possible to like what you do but not where you do it, or to like where you work but not what you do there.

So how can you maximize person-organization fit? A good place to start is to identify those qualifications, competencies, and traits that relate to the organization's strategy, values, and processes and hire people with those characteristics.

Employees must be able and willing to adapt to a company by learning, negotiating, enacting, and maintaining the behaviors appropriate to the company's environment.

Of course, hiring for any type of fit does not mean simply hiring those with whom we are most comfortable, which can lead to dysfunctional stereotyping and discrimination against people who may actually contribute a great deal to the company's success.

4. **Person-Vocation Fit**

Person-vocation fit is the fit between a person's interests, abilities, values, and personality and a profession. Our adjustment and satisfaction are greater when our occupation meets our needs.

Although individuals usually choose a vocation long before applying to an organization, understanding person-vocation fit can still be useful to organizations and managers. Companies wanting to develop their own future leaders, or smaller organizations that need employees to fill multiple roles, may be able to use vocational interests in determining whether job applicants would be a good fit with the organization's future needs.

C. **Realistic Job Previews**

Realistic job previews (*RJPs*) involve the presentation of both positive and potentially negative information to job candidates.

The goal is not to deter candidates, but rather to provide accurate information about the job and organization and build trust.

If a common reason for employees leaving an organization is that the job is not what they expected, this is a good sign that the recruiting message can be improved.

Given the relatively low cost associated with their development, RJPs may be useful for organizations trying to reduce turnover rates for jobs that departing employees say were not what they expected when they accepted job offers.

II. Personality and Individual Behavior

Personality is the relatively stable set of psychological attributes that distinguish one person from another.

Managers should strive to understand basic personality attributes and how they can affect people's behavior and fit in organizational situations, not to mention their perceptions of and attitudes toward the organization.

A. The "Big Five" Framework

Researchers have identified five fundamental personality traits that are especially relevant to organizations. These traits, illustrated in Figure 3.1, are now commonly called the *"Big Five" personality traits*.

The personality of any given person can fall anywhere along each of these five traits.

Agreeableness refers to a person's ability to get along with others.

It seems likely that highly agreeable people are better at developing good working relationships with coworkers, subordinates, and higher-level managers, whereas less agreeable people are not likely to have particularly good working relationships. The same pattern might extend to relationships with customers, suppliers, and other key organizational constituents.

Conscientiousness refers to the extent to which a person can be counted on to get things done.

In general, research suggests that being strong on conscientiousness is often a good predictor of job performance for many jobs.

The third of the Big Five personality dimensions is *neuroticism*. People who are relatively more neurotic tend to experience unpleasant emotions such as anger, anxiety, depression, and feelings of vulnerability more often than do people who are relatively less neurotic.

People with less neuroticism might be expected to better handle job stress, pressure, and tension. Their stability might also lead them to be seen as being more reliable than their less stable counterparts.

Extraversion reflects a person's comfort level with relationships.

Research suggests that extroverts tend to be higher overall job performers than introverts and that they are more likely to be attracted to jobs based on personal relationships, such as sales and marketing positions.

For this particular trait, the opposite version is also given a name—***introversion.*** An introvert tends to be less comfortable in social situations.

Finally, ***openness*** reflects a person's rigidity of beliefs and range of interests.

People with more openness might be expected to be better performers due to their flexibility and the likelihood that they will be better accepted by others in the organization. Openness may also encompass a person's willingness to accept change; people with high levels of openness may be more receptive to change, whereas people with little openness may resist change.

The potential value of the Big Five framework is that it encompasses an integrated set of traits that appear to be valid predictors of certain behaviors in certain situations. Thus, managers who can both understand the framework and assess these traits in their employees are in a good position to understand how and why they behave as they do.

On the other hand, managers must be careful to not overestimate their ability to assess the Big Five traits in others. There are also times when using more specific personality traits to predict outcomes such as turnover or performance are more useful than the more general Big Five traits because the more specific trait more directly influences the intended outcome.

Another limitation of the Big Five framework is that it is primarily based on research conducted in the United States. Thus, generalizing it to other cultures (or even within the U.S.) presents unanswered questions.

B. The Myers-Briggs Framework

The Myers-Briggs framework is also a popular framework that some people use to characterize personality. Many people know of this framework through a widely-used questionnaire called the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, or MBTI.

The MBTI was based on Carl Jung's work and first developed by Isabel Briggs Myers (1897–1979) and her mother, Katharine Cook Briggs, to help people understand themselves and each other so that they could find work that matches their personality.

The MBTI uses four scales with opposite poles to assess four sets of preferences. The four scales are:
1. *Extroversion (E)/Introversion (I)*: Extroverts are energized by things and people. Their motto is, "ready, fire, aim." Introverts find energy in ideas, concepts, and abstractions. They are reflective thinkers whose motto is, "ready, aim, aim."
2. *Sensing (S)/Intuition (N)*: Sensing people are detail oriented. They want and trust facts. Intuitive people seek out patterns and relationships among the facts they have learned. They trust their intuition and look for the "big picture."
3. *Thinking (T)/Feeling (F)*: Thinkers value fairness, and decide things impersonally based on objective criteria and logic. Feelers value harmony, and focus on human values and needs as they make decisions or judgments.
4. *Judging (J)/Perceiving (P)*: Judging people are decisive and tend to plan. They develop plans and follow them, adhering to deadlines. Perceptive people are adaptable, spontaneous, and curious. They start many tasks, and often find it difficult to complete them. Deadlines are meant to be stretched.

The possible combinations of these preferences result in sixteen personality types, which are identified by the four letters that represent one's tendencies on the four scales. For example, ENTJ reflects extraversion, intuition, thinking, and judging.

Although the framework and Myers-Briggs instrument were not developed or intended to be used to identify personality profiles and label people, too often this is what is done with the results. This is problematic as it can lead to discrimination and poor career counseling.

The classification of individuals means nothing, nothing at all. Nonetheless, the MBTI has become so popular that it is likely that you will encounter it during your career.

It can be a fun team-building tool for illustrating some of the ways that people differ, but it should not be used in making organizational decisions including hiring and promotions.

III. Other Important Personality Traits

A. Locus of Control

Locus of control is the extent to which people believe that their behavior has a real effect on what happens to them.

Some people, for example, believe that if they work hard they will succeed. They may also believe that people who fail do so because they lack ability or motivation. People who believe that individuals are in control of their lives are said to have an internal locus of control.

Other people think that fate, chance, luck, or other people's behavior determines what happens to them. People who think that forces beyond their control dictate what happens to them are said to have an external locus of control.

B. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is our confidence in our ability to cope, perform, and be successful on a specific task. It is possible to have high self-esteem but low self-efficacy for certain tasks.

Self-efficacy is a key factor influencing motivation and engagement in an activity.

General self-efficacy reflects a generalized belief that we will be successful at whatever challenges or tasks we might face.

Because self-efficacy and general self-efficacy are related to setting higher goals, persisting in the face of obstacles, and performing better, it is important for you to maintain a positive sense of self-efficacy.

C. Self-Esteem

Self-esteem refers to our feelings of self-worth and our liking or disliking of ourselves. Self-esteem is positively related to job performance and learning.

D. Authoritarianism

Another important personality characteristic is *authoritarianism*, the extent to which a person believes that power and status differences are appropriate within hierarchical social systems such as organizations.

A person who is highly authoritarian may accept directives or orders from someone with more authority purely because the other person is "the boss."

On the other hand, a person who is not highly authoritarian, although she or he may still carry out reasonable directives from the boss, is more likely to question things, express disagreement with the boss, and even refuse to carry out orders if they are for some reason objectionable.

E. Machiavellianism

Machiavellianism is another important personality trait.

The term "Machiavellianism" is used to describe behavior directed at gaining power and controlling the behavior of others.

More Machiavellian individuals tend to be rational and unemotional, may be willing to lie to attain their personal goals, put little emphasis on loyalty and friendship, and enjoy manipulating others' behavior.

Less Machiavellian individuals are more emotional, less willing to lie to succeed, value loyalty and friendship highly, and get little personal pleasure from manipulating others.

F. Tolerance for Risk and Ambiguity

Two other closely related traits are tolerance for risk and tolerance for ambiguity.

Tolerance for risk (also called **risk propensity**) is the degree to which a person is comfortable accepting risk, willing to take chances and to make risky decisions.

A manager with a high tolerance for risk might lead the organization in new and different directions.

A manager with low tolerance for risk might lead an organization to stagnation and excessive conservatism, or might help the organization successfully weather turbulent and unpredictable times by maintaining stability and calm.

Tolerance for ambiguity reflects the tendency to view ambiguous situations as either threatening or desirable.

Intolerance for ambiguity reflects a tendency to perceive or interpret vague, incomplete, or fragmented information or information with multiple, inconsistent, or contradictory meanings as an actual or potential source of psychological discomfort or threat.

Being tolerant of ambiguity is related to creativity, positive attitudes toward risk, and orientation to diversity.

The best managerial strategy is to place individuals with a low tolerance for ambiguity in well-defined and regulated tasks.

G. Type A and B Traits

The *Type A personality* is impatient, competitive, ambitious, and uptight. The *Type B personality* is more relaxed and easygoing and less overtly competitive than Type A.

Although Type As often have higher job performance than Type Bs, Type As are also more prone to stress and coronary heart disease.

As shown in Figure 3.2, Type A and B profiles reflect extremes with most people simply tending toward one or the other.

Understanding the personality type of your coworkers and boss can help you to better understand and manage this potential source of work conflicts. Recognizing your personality type can help you to identify work situations that are good fits for you.

H. The Bullying Personality

Workplace bullying is a repeated mistreatment of another employee through verbal abuse; conduct that is threatening, humiliating, or intimidating; or sabotage that interferes with the other person's work.

Bullying costs employers through higher turnover, greater absenteeism, higher workers' compensation costs, and higher disability insurance rates, not to mention a diminished reputation as a desirable place to work.

It is four times more common than harassment.

Who tends to become a bully? Bullying is complex and comes in a variety of forms, but common to all types is the abuse of authority and power, stemming from the bully's need to control another person.

High Machiavellians manipulate and exploit others to advance their personal agendas, which is the foundation of bullying.

Although there is no clear personality profile that predicts who will be targeted, people who are more introverted, less agreeable, less conscientious, less open to experience, and more emotionally unstable seem to be more likely to be bullied.

I. Role of the Situation

The relationship between personality and behavior changes depending on the strength of the situation we are in.

Strong organizational cultures might decrease the influence of personality on employee behaviors by creating clear guidelines for employee behavior. Weaker organizational cultures might allow greater individual employee expression, resulting in a wider variety of employee behaviors.

Global Issues: How Others See Americans

Summary: This chapter's Global Issues feature is from a *Newsweek* survey reporting the characteristics foreigners most and least often associate with them. It may give you some insight into how you might be perceived differently in different parts of the world.

IV. Intelligence

There are many types of intelligence, or mental abilities, including general mental ability, information processing capacity, verbal ability, and emotional intelligence.

A. General Mental Ability

General mental ability is the capacity to rapidly and fluidly acquire, process, and apply information.

It involves reasoning, remembering, understanding, and problem solving. It is associated with the increased ability to acquire, process, and synthesize information and has been defined simply as the ability to learn.

The strong association between measures of general mental ability and performance in a wide variety of task domains is one of the most consistent findings in the field of organizational behavior.

Information processing capacity involves the manner in which individuals process and organize information.

Information processing capacity also helps explain differences between experts and novices on task learning and performance, as experts process and organize information more efficiently and accurately than novices. General mental ability influences information processing capacity. Age also explains differences in information processing capacity.

Mental ability tests typically use computerized or paper-and-pencil test formats to assess general mental abilities, including verbal or mathematical reasoning, logic, and perceptual abilities.

Despite being easy to use and one of the most valid selection methods for all jobs, mental ability tests produce racial differences that are three to five times larger than other methods that are also valid predictors of job performance such as structured interviews.

Because hiring discrimination can be legally problematic when using mental ability tests, it is best to evaluate the effect of mental ability tests on protected groups before using them on job candidates.

Research has supported the idea that mental ability is most important in complex jobs, when individuals are new to the job, and when there are changes in the workplace that require workers to learn new ways of performing their jobs.

B. Multiple Intelligences

Increasingly, researchers and scholars are realizing that there is more than one way to be smart.

Gardner's theory of *multiple intelligences* suggests that there are a number of distinct forms of intelligence that each individual possesses in varying degrees:

1. Linguistic: words and language
2. Logical-mathematical: logic and numbers
3. Musical: music, rhythm, and sound
4. Bodily-kinesthetic: body movement and control
5. Spatial-visual: images and space
6. Interpersonal: other people's feelings
7. Intrapersonal: self-awareness

The different intelligences represent not only different content domains but also learning preferences. The theory suggests that assessment of abilities should measure all forms of intelligence, not just linguistic and logical-mathematical, as is commonly done.

According to this theory, learning and teaching should focus on the particular intelligences of each person.

The theory also emphasizes the cultural context of multiple intelligences.

Knowing your strongest areas of intelligence can guide you to the most appropriate job and learning environments to enable you to achieve your potential.

As a manager, it is possible to develop the same skills in different ways for different subordinates. Using a person's preferred learning style helps to make learning easy and enjoyable.

C. Emotional Intelligence

***Emotional intelligence* (*EI*)** is an interpersonal capability that includes the ability to perceive and express emotions, to understand and use them, and to manage emotions in oneself and other people.

Expert Daniel Goleman describes five dimensions of EI that include three personal competencies (self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation) and two social competencies (empathy and social skills).

Emotional intelligence involves using emotional regulatory processes to control anxiety and other negative emotional reactions and to generate positive emotional reactions.

The five dimensions comprising emotional intelligence are:

1. Self-awareness: being aware of what you are feeling
2. Self-motivation: persisting in the face of obstacles, setbacks, and failures
3. Self-management: managing your own emotions and impulses
4. Empathy: sensing how others are feeling
5. Social skills: effectively handling the emotions of others

People differ in the degree to which they are able to recognize the emotional meaning of others' facial expressions, although seven universal emotions are expressed in the face in exactly the same way regardless of race, culture, ethnicity, age, gender, or religion. These emotions are joy, sadness, fear, surprise, anger, contempt, and disgust.

There is some evidence that components of EI are malleable skills that can be developed, including facial expression recognition.

The ability to understand what others think and feel, knowing how to appropriately persuade and motivate them, and knowing how to resolve conflicts and forge cooperation are some of the most important skills of successful managers.

There is also controversy associated with the concepts of EI.

Some have argued that its overly inclusive, lacks specificity, and it is not clear if it is simply a learned skill or an innate capability.

Several researchers have also argued that EI is simply a surrogate for general intelligence and well-established personality traits.

However, a number of studies have supported the usefulness of EI.

EI has been found to be related to, and yet distinct from, personality dimensions; and various measures of EI provided incremental predictive power regarding life satisfaction and job performance, even after controlling for Big Five personality dimensions.

CASE STUDY: Emotional Intelligence at FedEx

Summary: Global shipping company FedEx has a "people first philosophy and believes that for the company to deliver world class customer service its managers must also have an attitude of service in managing their associates. FedEx recognizes that leadership has grown more complex, and wants to develop leadership capabilities in its managers to manage its changing workforce. FedEx decided to increase its focus on emotional intelligence in its leadership development training. The emotional intelligence training and coaching program focused on showing managers how to manage themselves first and take charge of their own emotions and behaviors so that they can be effective influencers and role models.

1. **Do you think that emotional intelligence would be important for a manager at FedEx to have? Explain your answer.**

    The definition for emotional intelligence (EI) in the text is an interpersonal capability that includes the ability to perceive and express emotions, to understand and use them, and to manage emotions in oneself and other people. FedEx increased its focus on EI in its leadership development training because the company has a "people first" philosophy and believes to deliver world-class customer service, its managers must also have an attitude of service in managing their associates. EI would be an important skill for success as a manager at FedEx.

2. **How does FedEx develop its new leaders' emotional intelligence?**

    FedEx keeps a running measurement of leadership performance with an annual survey where all employees provide feedback about their managers. The survey's themes include fairness, respect, listening, and trust. FedEx increased its focus on EI in its leadership development training. The training consists of a five-day course and six-month follow up coaching process which identifies new managers' strengths and gives them specific EI competencies to improve on.

3. **What else do you think that FedEx can do to enhance its managers' emotional intelligence?**

    The majority of leaders receiving the leadership development training showed large improvements in relationships, influence, and decision making as a result of their improved empathy, emotional literacy, and ability to navigate emotions. FedEx has been extremely pleased with the success of the EI development program, training over 100 facilitators to run the program and coach new leaders worldwide. The program's success could be enhanced by offering the same content in different learning styles.

V.   **Learning Styles**

Learning style refers to individual differences and preferences in how we process information when problem solving, learning, or engaging in similar activities.

There are numerous typologies, measures, and models that capture these differences and preferences

A. Sensory Modalities

One approach addresses our preference for sensory modality. A *sensory modality* is a system that interacts with the environment through one of the basic senses.

The most important sensory modalities are:

* Visual: learning by seeing
* Auditory: learning by hearing
* Tactile: learning by touching
* Kinesthetic: learning by doing

According to researchers, about 20 to 30 percent of American students are auditory; about 40 percent are visual; and the remaining 30 to 40 percent are either tactile/kinesthetic, visual/tactile, or some combinations of the above major senses.

B. Learning Style Inventory

A second approach to understanding learning styles, the Kolb Learning Style Inventory, is one of the more dominant approaches to categorizing cognitive styles.

Kolb suggests that there are four basic learning styles:

1. Convergers: depend primarily on active experimentation and abstract conceptualization to learn. People with this style are superior in technical tasks and problems and inferior in interpersonal learning settings.
2. Divergers: depend primarily on concrete experience and reflective observation. People with this style tend to organize concrete situations from different perspectives and structure their relationships into a meaningful whole. They are superior in generating alternative hypotheses and ideas, and tend to be imaginative and people or feeling-oriented.
3. Assimilators: depend on abstract conceptualization and reflective observation. These individuals tend to be more concerned about abstract concepts and ideas than about people. They also tend to focus on the logical soundness and preciseness of ideas, rather than the ideas' practical values; they tend to work in research and planning units.
4. Accommodators: rely mainly on active experimentation and concrete experience, and focus on risk taking, opportunity seeking, and action. Accommodators tend to deal with people easily and specialize in action-oriented jobs, such as marketing and sales.

There are many differences in how styles are conceptualized, and there have been numerous criticisms of Kolb's measures and the underlying theory.

These measures are subject to a variety of statistical and inferential problems, and many show low reliability.

Most of the research has also focused on children—less work has focused on how the styles influence adult learning.

Despite these limitations, evidence suggests that cognitive and learning styles may be important for understanding human behavior and performance in a variety of contexts.

C. Learning Style Orientations

Finally, Annette Towler and Robert Dipboye102 developed a learning style orientation measure to address some of the limitations of the Kolb inventory and identify key styles and preferences for learning.

They identified five key factors:

1. Discovery learning: an inclination for exploration during learning. Discovery learners prefer subjective assessments, interactional activities, informational methods, and active-reflective activities.
2. Experiential learning: a desire for hands-on approaches to instruction. Experiential learning is positively related to a preference for action activities.
3. Observational learning: a preference for external stimuli such as demonstrations and diagrams to help facilitate learning. Observational learning is positively related to preference for informational methods and active-reflective methods.
4. Structured learning: a preference for processing strategies such as taking notes, writing down task steps, and so forth. Structured learning is related to preferences for subjective assessments.
5. Group learning: a preference to work with others while learning. Group learning is related to preferences for action and interactional learning.

Summary and Application

Understanding individuals in organizations is important for all managers. A basic framework for facilitating this understanding is the psychological contract—people's expectations regarding what they will contribute to the organization and what they will get in return. Organizations strive to achieve an optimal person-job fit, but this process is complicated by the existence of individual differences.

Personalities are the relatively stable sets of psychological and behavioral attributes that distinguish one person from another. The Big Five personality traits are agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, extraversion, and openness. Myers-Briggs dimensions and emotional intelligence also offer insights into personalities in organizations. Other important traits are locus of control, self-efficacy, self-esteem, authoritarianism, Machiavellianism, tolerance for risk and ambiguity, Type A and Type B traits, and tendencies to bully. The role of the situation is also important. Learning styles, or individual differences and preferences in how we process information when problem solving, learning, or engaging in similar activities, are also important individual differences and preferences, and there are numerous typologies, measures, and models that capture them.

Everyone is different. We each have different personalities, demographics, and intelligences. By understanding the characteristics of your coworkers, managers, and subordinates, you will be best able to choose the OB tool or management style that will be most effective. Remember, flexibility is the key to effective management. We next continue our discussion of other important individual differences that affect organizational behavior in Chapter 4. Among the major topics we will cover in that chapter are attitudes, values, emotions, perception, and stress.