Assignment:
Personality Assessment and Dialogue
`wayne.smith@csun.edu`
[updated: Wednesday, July 20, 2022]

Course: *MGT 360*
Title: *Management and Organizational Behavior* (3 units)

"He who looks outward sleeps; he who looks inward wakes."
---Carl Jung (1875-1961)

"Each person's life is lived as a series of conversations."
---Deborah Tannen (1945-)

Goal:
The goal of this assignment is to learn about the world of personality assessments and related management dialogues by taking one of the leading and most widely accepted inventories—the "Big Five." Another such assessment is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which business students likely took in the BUS302 "Gateway" course. The working assumption is that personality is a factor that influences work performance.

Instructions:
Go to the web site below and take the online assessment. The assessment consists of 120 items. First, you will need to check two boxes (look carefully on the screen) to indicate that you understand there is a slight chance the program might crash (don't worry—it won't crash) and that you understand the limitations of the test (which I will also explain in class). Second, go to the bottom of the page, click "Send" to begin answering the questions. I estimate that completing the entire assessment (the 120 questions are split into two sections of 60 questions each) will take between 15 and 45 minutes, depending on a number of factors. The profile works by comparing your answers to others' answers in similar (but broad) demographic groups.

http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/j/5/j5j/IPIP/ipipneo120.htm

Take your time and answer each question as honestly as you can. *There are no right or wrong answers.* Answer the questions as you really *are* (social identity) as opposed to how you would *like to be* (social desirability)—otherwise you will not get a true assessment of your personality. This is very important.

Confidentiality:
To obtain general feedback, you may share the results of the profile with anyone you like (even a close friend) *except* another student in class.

Due Date:
This work is due at the date and time listed on the "Course Outline."

Deliverable:

After you finish the assessment, you will receive a printout (approximately 8 pages) of your results. Save your output to your computer.

The assessment will measure your personality along five dimensions ("OCEAN") – <u>O</u>penness to experience, <u>C</u>onscientiousness, <u>E</u>xtraversion, <u>A</u>greeableness, and <u>N</u>euroticism, and. The vocabulary of the report is important but occasionally opaque, so make sure you read the entire report, definitely more than once. You need to look up words for which you don't know the meaning in a college dictionary (printed or online).

Narrative structure:

After reading your results and reflecting on them thoroughly, prepare a short essay in the format of a management-oriented dialogue. That is, create an organizational situation that might involve the role or examination of personality, including (but not limited to) "new hire interview", "performance evaluation", "disciplinary action", "promotion interview", "customer relationship review", "new project", or "information gathering", etc. The dialogue relationships will probably include a "supervisor and a subordinate", an "executive and a manager", or "two peer managers", etc. The major criterion is that the dialogue involves at least two individuals, one of whom is you. In general, the dialogue should traverse the 1), *reliability and validity* of the personality profile results, 2), the opportunity and possible strategies to leverage the *strengths* identified in the personality profile results, and 3), the challenges and possible interventions to overcome the *weaknesses* identified in the personality profile results. Naturally, the relative importance of any high score, moderate, or low score is also a function of the "fit" needed for a particular position, organization, or industry. Ensure that your dialogue incorporates *at least three* of the five personality profile dimensions and *at least two* of the six facets for *each* of the three dimensions from the profile results. <u>Underline</u> each of the six facets as they are used for the first time. You do not need to use the specific results of the personality profile that you obtained (you can if you wish). Just remember to use at least two facets for at least three dimensions. Finally, use quotes for specific dialogue elements as needed.

As long as you address the three areas above, the thesis(es) and argumentation/logic of the management dialogue is not fixed in any way. In some ways, the dialogue is a "screen-play" with the emphasis on the *discourse* (discussion) of the *actors* (individuals). I want you to choose a possible (real or imagined) business/management conversation that you feel is important. The first paragraph of the essay should describe the management (organizational) situation in a clear and compelling manner. It should answer the question: Why is this organizational situation, of all the situations that could occur, particularly important? Similarly, the final paragraph of the essay might be a general conclusion or other narrative comments that don't fit neatly in a dialogue format.

Turn in the dialogue. Do not turn in your individual personality profile results.

Length:

This essay is to be no less than two and one-half pages in length and no more than four full pages in length.

Performance Measurement:
The maximum number of points for content is 10. The scoring rubric is as follows:

1   -   description of a realistic management (organizational) situation
3   -   *breadth* of the dialogue (chiefly, effective use of multiple dimensions)
3   -   *depth* of the dialogue (chiefly, effective use of detailed facets)
3   -   rigorous and relevant *application* of personality facets in dialogue context

Tips/Suggestions:
Many students will choose to write about an actual conversation involving personality from their work experience or perhaps the manner in which a conversation might proceed for a future job interview. Additional situations include past experiences, storytelling, cases, workplace drama, negotiation, and cross-cultural exchanges. In a nutshell, you want a situation where the stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions run strong.

The following situations and topics are some ideas related to important management conversations regarding "performance." Personality, of course, can influence performance, although reasonable individuals may differ on the particular impact of personality in any given context. One or more of the following ideas may spark your creativity and thought for this assignment. These were excerpted and adapted from the following book—Green, M. (2013), *Painless Performance Conversations*, Wiley.

- Clarifying or Sharing Expectations
- Linking Attitudes and Actions
- Increasing the use of Objective Evidence over Subjective Judgment
- Expanding Curiosity, Possibilities, and Opportunities
- Creating a Culture of Ownership
- Improving Confidence without Hubris

The following situations and topics are some ideas related to the "most difficult conversations" that occur often in organizations. Personality, of course, is one part of such conversations, although, again, reasonable individuals may differ on any given aspect of personality and its overall explanatory or predictive role in the situation. These were excerpted and adapted from the following book—Stone, D., Patton, B., and Heen, S. (ed.s) (2010), *Difficult Conversations 2nd. ed.*, Penguin Books.

- Exploring Each Other's Stories
- Separating Intent from Impact
- Reducing and Eliminating Blame; Focus the Conversation on Contributions
- Learning to Manage Your Feelings (or Else They Will Manage You)
- Articulating Your Identity and Purpose
- Improving Your Active Listening Skills
- Speaking with Clarity and Power; Learning to Lead and Problem-Solve

Conversations regarding organizational performance, either reviewing recent activities ("looking backward") or agreeing on expectations ("looking forward"), consume a large fraction of a manager's time, even if it's only a 1-minute discussion. At the level of conversation among individuals, organizational performance is chiefly about the following seven aspects of work: *attitude*, *efficiency*, *human relations*, *judgment*, *knowledge*, *reliability*, and *communication skills*. Before you turn in your personality paper, ask yourself: Does your dialogue touch upon one or more of those seven work aspects either as part of the dialogue's thesis or as part of the dialogue's discourse?

Students should also read and comprehend the details in Chapter 15 "Individual Behavior" of our Schermerhorn textbook even though this chapter comes later in our class outline. This chapter contains key ideas that can improve the rigor and relevance of your personality essay. In addition to discussing the "Big 5" personality profile, some key ideas regarding personality and performance from this chapter are as follows:

- What is a *psychological contract* at work? How can this "contract" be *perceived* differently by different individuals?

- What is meant by the psychological terms *fundamental attribution error* and *self-serving bias*? How might one or both of these occur in a workplace setting?

- How do individuals lose sight of important individual differences, perhaps subconsciously, through distortions due to: *stereotypes, halo effects, selective perception, and projection*? How can even well-educated individuals succumb to these tendencies?

- How do individuals adjust their emotional attributes? Do you understand and how might you use—properly, of course—one or more of the following ideas in your personality essay: *locus of control, authoritarianism, Machiavellianism, self-monitoring, and "Type A" Personality*? How can even well-meaning individuals misunderstand, misrepresent, or misuse one or more of these attributes?

- What is the relationship between *attitude* and *job satisfaction, job trends, and job outcomes*? How can even well-experienced, genuine, and reasonable professionals, managers, and executives view these relationships very differently in an organizational context?

- What is meant by the terms *withdrawal behavior, employee engagement, job involvement, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship, job satisfaction, and job performance*? How can they measured and managed? Which of these might be important but hard to measure and/or hard to manage? For these factors, is personality a <u>cause</u> or an <u>effect</u>, or something else altogether?

- How are *emotions, moods, stress, and strain* similar? How are they different? How do they impact performance at work? Can *stress* ever be positive? How so?