

PERSONALITY CORRELATES OF TIME MANAGEMENT: A quantitative study of time behavior of Indian executives.

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Abstract

Globalization and rapid changes in technology mark today's business environments. The business at the speed of thought is a criteria for success in this high velocity environment where "Time" is a very critical factor. The concept of time management is very interesting and an important topic for the managers of today. In an era of shorter product and business life cycles, reengineering and TQM the capacity of a manager to manage time most efficiently and effectively is very important. Time management and its relation to ones personality might enable the managerial population to understand, predict and manage the time management behavior of theirs as well as their fellow employees in organizations. The present article, attempts to bring out the relationship between personality factors (as measured using Cattell's 16 PF Personality Factors) and Time Management Behavior of senior managers in different organizations. The study did find significant correlations between certain personality factors and time management behavior of managers. The total score on time management questionnaire correlated positively and significantly with the factor outgoing, and emotional stability, indicating that outgoing nature and emotional stability are related to time management behaviors. Total score on time management correlated negatively and significantly with factor apprehensive, self sufficient, and tensed showing that a placid self assured, group dependent and relaxed personality is related to effective time management.

Key Words : Time management, personality factors, planning, controlling, organizing, delegation,

INTRODUCTION

The concept of time management is very interesting and an important topic for the managers today. In an era of shorter product and business life cycles, reengineering and TQM, the capacity of a manager to manage time most efficiently and effectively is very important. Time management or Time structuring is a technique for allocation of ones own time through setting goals, assigning priorities, identifying and eliminating time wasters and use of managerial techniques to reach goals efficiently. (Massie and Douglas, 1985). Time management and its relation to ones personality might enable the managerial population to understand, predict and manage the time management behavior of theirs as well as their fellow employees in organizations. Bill Gates the Microsoft company's CEO had his book titled as Business at The speed of thought. The practicing manager can use the results of the study to get an understanding of personality attributes related to time management behavior. A manager can use such knowledge in training and developing teams, as this information can also be used to train people in specific areas of their jobs for improvement. Time management is more of self management and hence it will be interesting to know the personality characteristics associated with the same. The literature on the concept of time management has more of practicality than researched findings.

Although there are many books related to "how to manage time effectively", (Taylor and Mackenzie, 1986; Lakein, 1973), empirical investigations into the topic are just a few. (Macan et al; 1985), Mudrack, (1997), Shahani et al (1993); Poduval and Bala subramaniom (1981), and Philip and Srinivasan, (1979) to name a few. There are many writers who have looked into the techniques of time management and have drawn steps through which individuals can manage time (Saifullah, Kleiner, Brain, 1988; Auken, 1994; Quirk, 1989).

King et all (1986) and Macan et al (1996) found almost contradictory or opposite evidence to the importance of training in time management behavior improvement. King found substantial improvement in time management behavior of his sample after training on time management was given. But Macan et al did not find any continuous improvement in the behavior. Hence it is quite clear that it is important to understand why

some people do manage time or learn to manage time while others do not. Personality factors could be one reason for enhancement of time management learning in individuals. Organisations today are moving towards self managed teams and time management is very important aspect of self management.

As a first step into a research with managerial population , the researcher analysed the possible relationship between time management behaviors and personality factors as measured using 16PF (Personality factors). As this is not a causal study it may not give any idea as to what causes what, but it will give an understanding as to the important dimensions personality related to dimensions of time management

CONCEPT OF TIME

The concept "time" has been perceived and explained in different perspectives. The first pertinent question is, " Is there something called real time or does it differ from culture to culture? Bluedorn and Denhardt (1988) call an objective concept of time as unitary (subject to only one interpretation), linear, progressing steadily from past to present to future, and mechanical, containing discrete moments subject to precise measurement.

The experience of time can be objective or subjective. The objective perspective can depend on the clock and the subjective experience would depend on inner traits and habits of an individual and how he interprets it. Researchers mainly focus on two types of time flows in organizations- the linear perspective and the cyclical flow of time.(Hassard, 1990). The era of scientific management viewed time in linear perspective where employees performed actions in the most effective and orderly manner.

Researchers focusing in cyclical flow of time (Anderson and Tushman,1990) believes that there is a cyclical flow of time in such issues as technological evolution and innovation.

There is a third dimension of time which has emerged as a result of the rapid changes in technology and time and space compression. The best known among the literature of instantaneous nature of time and sociology works that changes in connection of time, space and technology is the work of Harvey (1989) – time space compression. The concept of global village, advance of information technology and telecommunications has changed

the time and space horizons drastically. There is more to be done in little time horizons. Hence a need to understand the personality dimensions affecting time management gains increased attention.

Literary perceptions on Time management

According to Drucker (1967), Effective executives do not start with their tasks, they start with their time. The statement is so valuable and is true in the business scenario where managers who do planning has to start with time rather than tasks first. Time management has been a problem for executives as time is the scarcest resource and unless it is managed nothing else can be managed. Time management or Time structuring is a technique for allocation of ones own time through setting goals, assigning priorities, identifying and eliminating time wasters and use of managerial techniques to reach goals efficiently. (Massie and Douglas, 1985). The area of time management is rapidly becoming more important in both the private lives and in corporate structure, especially pertaining to managers from top level to first line supervisors. Effective management of time is beneficial in terms of both cost savings for projects and also in use of organizations' most valuable resource, people. The need to learn more about the behavioral dispositions in people and how they affect temporal dimensions is very important today. The present study is conceived in this context.

According to few writers, time management is self management (Jones, 1995; Lyles, 1991; Baker and Holmberg, 1981). Some other authors who did study on sales people and insurance agents focus on the importance of time management tools like time logs, calendars etc for managing time (Mackenzie, 1991; David, 1991). According to Brunzman (1987) the center of time study is the time log. This involves writing down exactly how a person spends time. Lucco (1994) is of the opinion that as a first step in efficient time management, it is a good idea to analyze how, keeping a time log is currently using time. Once several weeks of time log has been prepared it will be easy to identify the top ten time wasters and those activities can be eliminated from then on. Time management starts with planning (Lakein, 1973). Lakein advocates the use of ABC priority system of goals to be achieved. The system consist of writing capital letter 'A' along the sides of most important goals on the list of goals prepared, "B"s along the side of goals of mediocre importance and "C" s for those of very low value to the individual. This is Lakein's ABC principle, which enables a person to understand what is the most important achievable and valuable goal to the person. Gonzalez (1987) highlights the importance of controlling one's time through carefully managing interruptions and unwanted time wasters.

The importance of delegation in time management is discussed by many authors (Sheppard, 1984; Mitchell, 1983; Buchanan, 1977). Some of the researchers in the field focused on the importance of knowing one's values before planning time schedules. Boak, George, Stephenson (1987) and Steven (1988) is of the opinion that value clarification is very important in time management. According to Gary (1989), unlike time management training, which focuses on techniques, the real focus must be on the way which people think about themselves, their colleagues and work. The process of time management is conceptual, psychological, and sociocultural and hence training should focus on all these dimensions. Conte, Gibson and Carpenter (2001) focus on the importance of individual perceptions of

deadlines on team performance. According to them time urgency and time perspective affects individual's deadline perceptions and different deadline perceptions among team members affect the ability of teams to meet their deadlines effectively.

The literature survey above clearly states the importance of certain important management functions for effective time management among managers. But not many of them highlighted the importance of personality dimensions of time management. The focus was more on time management methods like planning, setting priorities, organizing, communication, delegation and controlling. The present study focused on these areas while developing a tool for the measurement of time management behavior among managers.

Assessment of time Management Behaviors-

As mentioned at the beginning of the article very few attempts were made during the period of research to develop tools to measure time management behavior, although now one can identify many different dimensions of the concept of time related behaviors (polychronicity, time orientation etc;) and tools to measure the same.

Some of the measures related to time structuring and time management were, Time structure questionnaire of Bond and Feather (1988), Time Management behavior scale, TMBS (Macan et al, 1990); and Time management scale of Britton and Tesser (1991). The five different factors of Bond and Feather's (1988) TSQ of 26 items were sense of purpose, structured routine, present orientation, effective organization and persistence. The time management behavior scale of Macan et al (1990) consisted of four subscales- setting goals and priorities, mechanics, perceived control of time, and preference for organization. Britton and Tesser (1991) time management scale consisted of 18 items, which included three factors- short range planning, attitudes and long range planning. All the three questionnaires were developed out of studies done on student population. Macan et al; (1990) later on in 1994 did another study on employees to test a model to find out the effects of time management behavior on perceived control of time which in turn would reduce job induced tensions and stress. Research participants' reports of time-management behaviors have been found to be positively related to grade point average (GPA; Britton & Tesser, 1991; Macan et al., 1990) but not to supervisors' ratings of job performance (Macan, 1994).

Some attempts have been made by researchers to identify the personality correlates of time use. Wessman (1973) devised a temporal experience questionnaire of 80 items including 4 factors- immediate time pressure (harassed lack of control vs. relaxed mastery and adaptive flexibility), long-term personal direction (continuity and steady purpose vs. discontinuity and lack of direction), time utilization (efficient scheduling vs. procrastination and inefficiency) and personal consistency (inconsistency and changeability vs. consistency and dependability). Wessman found reliable correlations between these factors and a variety of personality variables from MMPI and 16 PF. The study was done on Harvard undergraduates. In an earlier research Calabressi and Cohen (1968) administered a 46 item questionnaire concerned with time experience and time attitudes to a total of 508 psychiatric patients and college students and found that Time anxiety (discomfort and anxiety about time and need to control it) and Time submissiveness (a dutiful and conforming attitude towards time, emphasizing appointments and

schedules) were related to some of the personality factors. According to Janus and Jones (1989) in order to become an effective time manager it is important to understand whether one is task oriented or people oriented. Individual differences would affect how people perceive their work, some would like to work for long periods undisturbed others would get bored in such an environment. According to the authors time management further touches upon factors like one's sense of purpose, structured routine, present orientation, effective organization and persistence. Feather and Bond (1988) found that unemployed youth tested in their study reported less time structure than employed group.

Verma and Sekhon (1995) studied the effect of personality and time structure on time use by college students. Eysenk's personality inventory was used to measure the personality dimensions and Bond and feather (1988) TSQ was used to measure the time use of the students. They found that students high on time structure spent less time with friends and more time alone when compared to students of low time structure.

Orlikowski and Jaonne (2002) suggest that through their everyday action actors produce and reproduce temporal structures which in turn become temporal rhythms of their ongoing practices. Research also points out the fact that it is very difficult to change the time urgency behavior of individuals as it becomes relatively stable over time (Landy et al, 1991, Macan, 1994; Shahani, Weiener and Strait, 1993). Time management behavior can thus have an important relationship with the personality trait of an individual.

From the literature the following hypothesis can be formulated

Personality of an individual is related to time management behavior.

The present study is an exploratory research on the senior managers to identify the important personality factors that are related to time management. An attempt was done to correlate the personality factors with the 5 time management factors (planning, organizing, decision making, communication and controlling) to identify the important personality factors that explains any variation in the dimensions of time management.

METHODOLOGY

Sample:

The sample of the present study was 114 senior level managers of different organizations from a single state of India, Kerala. The age of the sample varied from 26 to 60 years. All the subjects had higher educational qualifications including masters in their relevant area of specialization and 57 managers had a degree in business administration.

Tools- The data for the present investigation was obtained using the following tools.

1. Personal data sheet
2. Time Management questionnaire
3. Cattell's 16 PF (16 Personality Factors)

The questionnaire on time management was developed by the investigator for the present study (Saji and Thomas, 1999). The questionnaire has incorporated six important managerial func-

tions, which are routinely carried out by senior managers of an organization. These dimensions were identified on the basis of review of literature and also consultations with experts (academicians) and in the field of practicing managers and consultants. A draft questionnaire was prepared with 71 questions, which were again given to the experts, and several items were eliminated and finally a scale of 51 items was administered on 100 managers. The results were subjected to item analysis using Likert method (Edwards, 1969). Items having t -values above 2 were retained in the final draft of the questionnaire. The final time management questionnaire consisted of 31 items, which showed discriminating power between good and bad time managers. The questionnaire has 20 positive and 11 negative items. Eight items in the questionnaire belonged to the planning dimension, five items belonged to the delegation dimension, three items to communication dimension, five items to organizing dimension, four items fell into decision making dimension, and six items in controlling dimension. The options given for response were, "Yes" or "No" to each item. The Guttman split half reliability of the test is .67 and Chronbach alpha is .73. These values indicate that the tool has moderate to high reliability. All the steps in the item preparation were carefully done with consultation with experts in the field and hence the test can claim content validity.

16 PF Form C (1973), which was used in the present study consisted of 105 items. The questionnaire yield scores on 16 personality factors. Test retest reliability of the test for all the 16 factors are .82, .76, .83, .77, .80, .83, .86, .83, .75, .68, .67, .79, .75, .68, .77 and .82.

Statistical techniques

The statistical techniques used in the study were t tests for item analysis and pearson r ' correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As noted in the methodology section, the time management questionnaire provided separate scores on six dimensions of time management, viz; planning, organizing, communication, decision making, delegation and controlling. In addition to this a total score on the time management questionnaire could be taken as one single dimension. All the six variables of time management questionnaire plus the seventh variable the over all time management behavior score is correlated with the 16 personality factors. The correlations obtained are given in table 1. The variable planning is found to correlate positively and significantly with factor C (affected by feelings vs. emotionally stable; $r = .20$, $P < .05$) and negatively with factor F (sober vs. happy go lucky, $r = -.018$, $P < .05$), Factor O (Placid vs. Apprehensive; $r = -.018$; $P < .05$), Factor Q 2 (Group dependent vs. self sufficient ($r = -.018$, $P < .05$). The findings do show that emotionally stable, sober, and placid and group dependent people manage time better than emotionally unstable, apprehensive, happy go lucky and self-sufficient managers. Planning requires a very calm and sober attitude towards issues. Group dependent individuals manage time better as they include others in their decision making and planning processes and thereby manage their valuable time.

Factor B (less intelligent vs. more intelligent; $r = 0.19$; $P < .05$), and Factor C (affected by feelings vs. emotionally stable, $r = 0.18$; $P < .05$) correlated significantly and positively with time management variable delegation. Delegation correlated negatively with Factor M (Practical Vs. Imaginative; $r = -0.18$; $P < .05$).

05) Factor N (Forthright Vs. Shrewd; $r = -0.23$; $P < .05$), Factor O (Placid vs. Apprehensive; $r = -0.18$; $P < .05$), factor Q2 (Group dependent Vs. Self sufficient, $r = -.21$; $P < .05$), and Factor Q4 (Relaxed Vs. Tensed, $r = -0.21$; $P < .05$). This shows that an intelligent, emotionally stable, practical, forthright, placid, self sufficient and relaxed manager would be good in deciding as to what work should be delegated and to whom and how, and thereby would manage his time better than his counterpart who will not know how to delegate.

The variable communication correlated positively and significantly with the personality factor C (affected by feelings vs. emotional stability; $r = .20$, $P < .05$), factor H (Shy vs. Venturesome; $r = .23$, $P < .01$) and factor I (Tough Minded Vs. Tender minded; $r = .22$, $P < .05$). The results implies that an emotionally stable, venturesome or bold, and tender minded manager does better communication and thereby saves himself from wasting his time. The variable tender mindedness makes the manager more approachable and empathic listener. This is a very important variable in communication and hence the correlation is really adding to the existing knowledge.

The variable "organizing" did not correlate significantly with any of the 16 personality factors. This maybe due to the fact that organizing is usually done by the senior manager's secretaries and hence the managers would have scored on the variable in the same direction.

Scores on the factor decision-making is found to be significantly and positively correlated with the personality factor A (reserved vs. outgoing, $r = .28$; $P < .01$), and Factor C (Affected by feelings Vs. emotionally stable, $r = .38$; $P < .001$). Factor H (Shy vs. Venturesome, $r = -.20$; $P < .05$), Factor L (Trusting Vs. Suspicious; $r = .32$; $P < .001$), Factor O (Placid vs. apprehensive; $r = -.35$; $P < .001$), Factor Q2 (group dependent vs. self sufficient; $r = -.27$; $P < .01$) and factor Q4 (relaxed vs. tensed; $r = -.25$; $P < .01$). The results points that an outgoing, emotionally stable, venturesome, trusting, placid, group dependent and relaxed person will be able to manage decision making within time constrained situations.

The variable "Controlling", correlated significantly and positively with factor C (emotionally stable, $r = .22$; $P < .05$) and negatively with factor Q2 (group dependent vs. self sufficient, $r = -.24$, $P < .01$). The results show that controlling of interruptions, handling of meetings, and interruptions require emotional stability and group dependence.

The total score on time management questionnaire correlated positively and significantly with the factor A (outgoing, $r = .18$; $P < .05$) and factor C (emotional stability, $r = .33$; $P < .001$) indicating that outgoing nature and emotional stability are related to time management behaviors. Outgoing nature and sociability along with stability and consistency will enable senior managers to maintain an effective relationship with their subordinates as well as an effective task orientation thereby helping them to manage their time properly for the effective achievement of goals. This can also lead to a new proposition that extroverted people can be good time managers. Total score on time management correlated negatively and significantly with factor O (placid, $r = -.28$, $P < .001$), Q2 (group dependent , $r = -.26$; $P < .001$) and Q4 (relaxed, $r = -.17$, $P < .01$) showing that a placid self assured, group dependent and relaxed personality is

good for effective time management.

SUMMARY

The present research has proved that there exist a relationship between various personality factors of 16 PF and time management behavior among the respondents taken for the study. The variable planning correlated positively and significantly with emotional stability. But it correlated negatively with three factors, which highlighted the importance of soberness, placid and group dependence variables. Delegation , the second factor correlated negatively with five factors- implying its relationship with personality factors- practical, forthright, placid, group dependent and relaxed .The variable communication correlated positively with emotional stability and venturesome, and negatively with tough mindedness,.Decisionmaking correlated with personality factors emotional stability, outgoing, venturesome, trusting, apprehensive, self sufficiency and relaxed. Controlling correlated positively with factor emotional stability and self sufficiency . The correlations with variables decision making and controlling is opposite for the factor, group dependency. In both the cases it is negatively correlated whereas it is positively correlated with delegation, and planning.. Placid Vs Apprehensive is found to be negatively correlated with planning and delegation , while for decision making it is positively correlated. Emotional stability is a factor which has positive correlation with all the four variables of time management . There is quite a lot of research in the area of time, time perceptions, deadline perceptions, diversity and temporal dimensions, etc; but very few efforts are made to do a comprehensive study into the personality dimensions and time management in managerial population. This study has a major implication to time management, and training related to time management in organizations. Human resource management experts can benefit from these findings. Personality is relatively permanent; hence any training on time management behavior has to take individual differences into consideration.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The study was done on a small sample in a specific geographical area. No attempt was made to understand the basic temporal horizons and effects of organizational temporal horizons on the time management behavior of the population as the study focused on individual dimension alone. Comparative research can be done using different biographical variables, like age, gender, marital status and tenure in the organization. The researcher cannot argue that the measurement tool and dimensions used for time management may be used for future research in a different population. The measurement tool can be used only on managerial population. Future researchers can attempt to do a factor analysis and come out with the factors of time management behavior.

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Table-1 showing the results of correlation

No:	Correlation	Planning	Delegation	Communication	organization	Decision-making	Controlling	TM
1	A- reserved Vs. outgoing	.17	.05	.11	.02	.28**	.05	.18*
2	B- less intelligent vs. more	-.01	.19*	-.01	0	.04	-.12	0
3	C-affected by feelings vs. emotionally stable	.2*	.18*	.2*	.15	.38**	.22*	.33**
4	E- submissive vs. dominant	-.06	0	-.05	-.03	-.05	-.02	-.06
5	F- Serious vs. happy go lucky	-.18*	.05	.07	0	.09	-.11	-.06
6	G- expedient vs. conscientiousness	.14	-.06	-.02	0	-.04	0	.04
7	H-Timid vs. venturesome	-.01	.07	.23*	.15	.2*	.13	.17
8	I- tough minded vs. sensitive	-.04	.09	.22*	0	.12	.02	.07
9	L- trusting vs. suspicious	-.12	-.13	-.14	.05	-.32**	0	-.15
10	M-practical vs. imaginative	-.02	-.18*	0	-.05	.12	-.05	-.05
11	N-forthright vs. shrewd	-.02	-.23*	-.07	-.07	-.1	-.15	-.15
12	O-self assured vs. apprehensive	-.18*	-.18*	-.14	-.06	-.35**	-.17	-.28**
13	Q1-conservative vs. experimenting	.03	-.07	.08	-.01	.16	.03	.02
14	Q2- group dependent vs. self-sufficient	-.18*	-.21*	-.12	.05	-.27**	-.24**	-.26**
15	Q3-uncontrolled vs. controlled	.08	.11	.17	.12	.06	.14	.17
16	Q4-relaxed vs. tensed	-.03	-.21*	-.14	0	-.25**	-.14	-.17*

• *significant at .05 level

• ** significant at .01 level

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