The Influence of Work on Personality Development and Change through Life: Implications for Thriving at Work

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Keynote Address to the BPS Division of Occupational Psychology Conference, January 2019
To observe personality change and development effects, work demands and traits must be viewed as *dynamic*.

What we know about personality development and change at work: the evidence base.

Understanding the mechanisms of change and development requires new models and theory: *the Demands-Affordances Transactional (DATA) Model*.

A dynamic view of personality traits at work: implications for practice and thriving at work.
Dynamic and personal – within-person, over time

From individual *differences* to individual *growth*
Personality (the relatively enduring pattern of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that distinguish from one another)

Personality is often assumed to be stable and static, yet studies have shown that personality can change, even in adulthood

- (Lodi-Smith & Roberts, 2007; Roberts & Mroczek, 2008; Roberts, Walton, & Viechtbauer, 2005)

Studying the impact of work requires a fundamental change in how we treat personality and work variables in research
The validity question

- Trait $x$, predicting outcome $y$
THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF JOB DEMANDS

Section 1

TRAIT ACTIVATION THEORY

Tett & Burnett (2003)
The Dynamic Developmental Model (Woods et al., 2013)

Personality traits are more or less salient over time based on short-term dynamics of job demands and long-term career stages.
A DYNAMIC DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS

- **Situation**
- **Trait Development**
- **Trait Activation**
- **Behaviour**
**SECTION 2**

**WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR PERSONALITY CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT**

Allan, Leeson, De Fruyt, & Martin (2018).

Bleidorn, Klimstra, Denissen, Rentfrow, Potter, & Gosling (2013).


Hudson & Roberts (2016).


Hudson & Fraley (2016).


Sutin & Costa (2010).

Wille, Beyers & De Fruyt (2012).

Wille & De Fruyt (2014).


Wrzus & Roberts (2017).

Wu (2016).


Roberts & DelVecchio (2000).


Chapman, Hampson & Clarkin (2014).


**INTERVENTION STUDIES**

*Roberts, Luo, Briley, Chow, Su & Hill (2017). Meta analyses of 207 clinical intervention samples*

**NORMATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

KEY STUDIES: JOB DEMANDS

- The corresponsive pathway describes how the traits that select people into environments are subsequently developed by experiences in those environments

Le, Donnelan & Conger (2011)

Wu (2016)
- Job demands-control: effects on development of the Big Five
KEY STUDIES: VOCATIONAL DEMANDS

Willie, Beyers & De Fruyt (2012) / Wille & De Fruyt (2014)
- Investment and participation in career roles
- Holland’s RIASEC vocational environments

Woods, Hampson, Edmonds & Lievens (2019)
- Vocational environments and personality development from childhood to middle age
THE LONGITUDINAL INTERPLAY OF TRAITS & WORK

Section 2
SECTION 3

THE DEMANDS - AFFORDANCES TRANSACTIONAL (DATA) MODEL

DEMANDS
- Vocational (e.g. Occupational Environments)
- Job (e.g. Job Features, Work Activities)
- Organizational (e.g. Organizational Culture)
- Group (e.g. Team Interpersonal and Functional Composition)

DEMANDS-AFFORDANCE TRANSACTIONS
- Activation
- Fit
- Adjustment

AFFORDANCES
- Traits
  - Big Five
  - Facet-level Traits

Work Behaviour

Reward Motives
- D

Personal Goals
- E
- G

Section 3
DEMANDS & AFFORDANCES

Demands represent micro and macro features of the work environment
- Job, vocation, group, organization

Affordances
- Demands call upon personality traits as personal resources – what traits do work demands call for?
- Demand-salience of traits (Judge & Zapatta, 2015; Bartram, 2005; Hogan & Holland, 2003)
Psychological exchange between perceptions of the demands of the work situation and the deployment of resources

Guiding mechanism: Person-Environment Fit
Development flows from an interaction of person - environment – behavior (Social Learning Theory)

Consistency of Demands and Affordances determines the development mechanism
DEVELOPMENT MECHANISMS

Trait Behaviour Expressed

Reinforcement, Deepening Strengthening

Trait Activation

Fit

Demand-Affordance Transaction

Misfit

Behaviour Moderated

Demand-Consistent Behaviour Expressed

Adjustment and Change

Section 3
Behaviour change serves to enable development

Hudson, Briley, Chopik, Derringer (2018)
SECTION 4

IMPLICATIONS FOR THRIVING

People who are thriving experience...“growth and momentum marked by both a sense of feeling energized and alive (vitality) and a sense that they are continually improving and getting better at what they do (learning)” (Porath, Spreitzer, Gibson and Garnett (2012)).

Selection, learning & development and identifying the signs of thriving
Selection and person-job fit

How do our assumptions change when aspects of both are treated dynamically?

Socialization and adjustment – ensuring people thrive once recruited
Passive versus active development: role of intervention

What are the effective development strategies for work adjustment
  - Coaching, goal-setting, behavioural strategies

What about the volition?
  - Aspiration to change

Is development an adaptive process
  - Impact on well-being over time
Vitality and learning

Adjustment and personal growth

Impact on well-being, engagement and performance

Might personality trait change and development, like other forms of personal growth, be seen as a sign of thriving at work?
SELECT, ASSESS, MEASURE, RESEARCH AND DEVELOP
Thank you
Questions?

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Google Scholar: https://tinyurl.com/y8n9l8q2

Article on DATA Model in JVB: https://tinyurl.com/y9ufn7kp

See also Researchgate or email for advance copy

Symposium: Studying People at Work Dynamically:
Exploring the Longitudinal Development and Interplay of Person
and Work Criteria

Thursday 10th January, 11:05, Cornwall Room