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OVERVIEW: The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the relevant literature available on individual accountability and its relationship with personality dimensions.

Literature available on individual accountability uses individual accountability and personal accountability interchangeably. As mentioned earlier there is limited literature available on the said subject.

Individual accountability is defined as a state in which an individual feels a sense of obligation to a situation or event (Cummings & Anton, 1990; Dose & Klimoski, 1995). Behaviors performed due to individual accountability are performed for internal as opposed to external reasons. Such behaviors are considered self-directed in the behavior management literature (Watson & Tharp, 1993).

For example, considering two hypothetical employees, Employee A and Employee B. Both employees have perfect attendance at their respective organisations. However, their reasons for perfect attendance are different. Employee A reports to work everyday because she/he knows perfect attendance is rewarded at the end of each year with a substantial monetary bonus. In contrast, while no such reward is available at Employee B’s Organisation, this individual feels that consistent work attendance is simply the right thing to do. In the scenario just described, Employee A is being influenced by the external contingencies put into place by management. In contrast, Employee B is attending regularly because of feelings of individual accountability.

Individual accountability behaviors are self-directed and not driven by an external accountability system (Geller, 1998a). Self directed behaviours are
proposed to be more reliable (Cummings & Anton, 1990). In other words, it is expected that employees who feel individual accountability for Organisational processes will perform behaviors to facilitate the process in the absence of external motivators or directives. In addition, research indicates employees who feel personal accountability for Organisational processes are also more concerned about output quality (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Redding (2004) writes about the need to hold oneself accountable. Although suggesting the relational aspects of accountability, he focuses on the individualized, internal aspects of accountability. Lebow and Spitzer (2002) define accountability as ‘taking personal responsibility for one’s own choices and for the results of those choices to oneself and to others. Their emphasis, as with Koestenbaum and Block (2001), is on freedom and responsibility.

Given the definition of individual accountability and its accompanying benefits, the identification of variables that can potentially facilitate such feelings is a meaningful endeavor (Cummings & Anton, 1990; Dose & Klimoski, 1995).

All complex Organisations incorporate some sort of control system for the purpose of providing guidelines for employees as well as for managing performance (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Kerr & Slocum, 1981; Lawler, 1976; Tannenbaum, 1962). More recently, self-management and other programs that encourage internal, personal control are being promoted to allow Organisations to react more favorably to an increasingly dynamic environment and to provide employees with the greater discretion they desire. Even when Organisations encourage employees to utilize self management techniques, however, fiduciary, legal, and practical concerns dictate that external control remains a major feature of Organisational life. Thus, while in many ways internal and external forces are at odds, both are
important for effective Organisational outcomes (Lawler, 1976; Manz & Sims, 1980). The question remains as to what Organisational practices will allow both internal control and external control to fruitfully coexist. The research is based on an understanding that accountable individual can strengthen Organisational outputs. External accountability systems may facilitate and reinforce Organisational culture by enhancing individual’s feeling of responsibility. (Brook, 2003)

Empirical investigation of the individual accountability construct, however, has not been extensive. Thus, many questions remain regarding the determinants of individual accountability. For example, research has not addressed the role of individual characteristics in the development of individual accountability. It may be that some employees, due to a personality characteristic, are more likely to feel individual accountability for their work processes and become self-directed in their work assignments. The identification of individual factors related to individual accountability could lead to a better understanding of individual’s underlying psychological mechanisms. In addition, increased understanding of personality factors contributing to personal accountability could suggest ways to develop, increase, or support this desirable state. The identification of environmental variables related to feelings of individual accountability could also be useful. For example, given that some form of accountability or control system must be present in any complex Organisation, what steps can be taken to maximize employees’ feelings of personal responsibility? Many accountability systems do not increase individual accountability for completing a work process. Instead, they focus employee attention on external reasons for task performance. In these situations behaviors are performed essentially to gain a reward or avoid a penalty, not because of internal feelings of personal obligation or responsibility.
Non-Mandated Work Processes

The need to facilitate feelings of individual accountability to participate in Organisational processes may be even more critical when one considers behaviors not mandated by the Organisation, or work processes comprised of voluntary behaviors. Such behaviors have been studied in Organisational settings under a variety of labels. For example, Organ (1988) called this class of behaviors Organisational citizenship behavior (OCB). Borman and Motowidlo (1993) referred to such activities as contextual performance. Other names used to identify this type of behavior include Organisational spontaneity (George & Brief, 1992), pro-social Organisational behavior (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986), discretionary Organisational behaviors (Katz & Kahn, 1978), and actively caring (Geller, 1996). Each conceptual label generally denotes behavior that goes beyond specified role requirements. These are typically behaviors employees are not formally required to perform, nor do they necessarily expect to receive tangible rewards for engaging in them.

Specific examples of this type of behavior could include volunteering to do extra-work assignments, helping coworkers with personal problems, suggesting procedural or administrative improvements, completing a “near miss” incident report, following rules and procedures even when inconvenient and unsupervised, and openly espousing and defending an Organisation’s objectives. Often performance of these behaviors is hypothesized to be integral to effective Organisational functioning (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; Katz, 1964; Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Support for the separation of this class of behaviors from task performance can be found in the research literature (e.g., Borman, White, & Dorsey, 1995; Conway, 1999; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). In a study performed by Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994), supervisors at an U.S. Air
Force base were asked to rate 421 mechanics on their task performance, contextual performance, and overall performance. The findings obtained from this investigation indicated that task performance and contextual performance contributed independently to overall performance. Moreover experience was more correlated with task than contextual performance, and personality variables were more highly correlated with contextual than task performance. These results were interpreted by the authors as support for a distinction between task performance and contextual performance.

A meta-analysis across 14 studies conducted by Conway (1999) also supports the notion that contextual performance contributes uniquely to performance ratings. Unlike the Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994) investigation this study focused on the impact of contextual performance on job evaluations for individuals in managerial jobs. It was found that job dedication (a facet of contextual performance) contributed uniquely to evaluations of overall performance. Also, the job dedication - performance evaluation was stronger when peers were doing the performance ratings. Supervisors paid more attention to task performance.

**Need for Organisational Control:**
Modern work Organisations are human creations—social systems "anchored in behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, motivations, habits, and expectations of human beings" (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Fashioned by human design, Organisations are subject not only to the innovation and creativity inherent in individuals, but also to human imperfection, variability, and the resulting synchronization loss. In response, Organisations must be proactive, dealing not only with internal change as individual members enter and exit in the Organisational system, but also with members' creative solutions to Organisational tasks and challenges. Also, it can be argued that an optimum level of variability in human behavior exists for any Organisation. Too little
variability, and only the most mundane solutions will be brought to bear on Organisational problems; too much, and the Organisation risks disharmony and disintegration. Thus, variability must be encouraged at a manageable level. To achieve optimal variability, Organisations coordinate group effort by assigning different functions to different individuals and by specifying rules and sanctions in cases where the functions performed are not directly related to the needs of Organisational members (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Organisations also inculcate shared values and expectations (through careful selection and socialization) where common goals and a common understanding of the process to achieve those goals will reduce variability and increase cooperation (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

On another level, the existence of multiple stakeholders (Freeman, 1984; Griesinger, 1990; Marcus & Goodman, 1991) dictates the need for Organisational control as well. Owners, managers, investors, suppliers, and customers each may have a vested interest in the performance of the Organisation. However, these interests often do not coincide with what may be preferred by employees. These constituencies tend to focus on different outcomes of structured Organisational activity.

For example, intrinsic satisfaction for interesting work performed might be the goal and the focus of employees, while an extrinsic outcome such as return on investment would be the focus of a stockholder group. The existence of internal and external constituencies necessitates control systems to ensure that all parties are following a coordinated agenda. Need for control is also embedded in social, legal, and fiduciary responsibilities and requirements (Folger & Bies, 1989; Osigweh, 1991). Organisations need to defend their business practices to outside parties; therefore, they need predictability.
This requirement usually results in internal regulation. Employees, with their diversity of values and subtasks, may not consistently meet such responsibilities without induced control. For example, mandated programs such as affirmative action require hiring and promotion plans that abide by certain rules. Environmental issues are yet another example. If behavior is not managed by the Organisation, sanctions may be imposed by the external legal system (Steiber, 1989; Werhane, 1985).

These considerations reinforce the need for Organisational control. In addition, the current business environment has exacerbated calls for external control. If we look at the recent examples in India, the recent increase in business failures, scandals and in public agencies — Satyam, Security Scams of 1992 and 2000 in India (Harshad Mehta and Ketan Parekh), Bhopal Gas Leakage, etc are just tip of the iceberg. Society has an expectation that Organisations will be bound by certain social obligations and the legal system has the power to enforce adherence to the rules which society has deemed important (Osigweh, 1991). These considerations reinforce the need for Organisational control.

**Dysfunctions of External Control Systems**

Having established the need for control in order to reduce inconsistency; while dealing with multiple stakeholders; and to respond to social, legal, and fiduciary requirements, how can this best be accomplished? Traditional views of Organisational control have stressed mechanisms such as rules, hierarchy, and sanctions, making use of what has been called (employees) behaviour process control and output control strategies (Bacharach & Aiken, 1976; Lawler, 1976; Lawler & Rhode, 1976; Ouchi, 1977; Ouchi & Maguire, 1975; Weber, 1947; Williamson, 1979). In a traditional bureaucratic Organisation, each Organisational activity is delineated in terms of the appropriate procedures to follow, permitting only modest
deviation; special cases must be approved by a higher-level employee (Lawler, 1976).

Administration of the system falls largely on the supervisor (Camman & Nadler, 1976). This traditional practice often produces dysfunctional effects. Argyris (1973), for example, made the observation that the more the Organisation engages in bureaucratic control, the more it inculcates "infant like" dimensions in its employees. A bureaucratic Organisation expects employees to exhibit childlike dependency--- reliance on the Organisation and its control systems for appropriate guidance.

In actuality, however, if an employee needs and abilities are unrecognized and underutilized she/he might have a tendency to display frustration and conflict. Lack of control over outcomes results in a state of learned helplessness (Martinko & Gardner, 1982; Seligman, 1975).

Lawler (1976) has noted the dysfunctional effects of control systems as well. Individuals may use "strategic" behaviors which enable them to be evaluated favorably in terms of control system requirements, but which do not promote the welfare of the Organisation. If employees feel that standards are set unreasonably high, they may engage in false reporting. Control systems may evoke resistance in employees, especially when these systems reduce autonomy, power, and satisfaction. Compliance (Kelman, 1958), a rather superficial form of conformity, is often a consequence of the operation of traditional Organisational control systems. Compliant behavior tends to produce defensive strategies and motivation to avoid punishment. Individuals do not perform the desired behavior because they agree with Organisational priorities, but rather because their behavior is being monitored. Confortuity also leads to rationalization and "saving face" in light of poor results or performance (Schlenker & Weigold, 1989).
The conventional or traditional view of accountability has been to treat it as a form of external control (as mentioned in Fig. 1). Accountability, as it has been traditionally conceived, implies having to make an account (Cummings and Anton, 1990), usually in the form of a reporting requirement. In this research, the researcher’s point of view is that, this view of accountability will only produce the same dysfunctions of traditional external control. Brooks (1995), in a popular press book, provides the following definition of traditional accountability: ‘Accountability is a
mechanism to ensure that individuals can be called to account for their actions, and that sanctions are incurred if the account is unsatisfactory. Brooks emphasizes the following words in his definition: mechanism as a procedural activity; individuals because the activity focuses on individuals while also noting the collective aspect of the term as reasonable and essential; sanctions being seen as essential to performance. Unsatisfactory, as an element of accountability, brings in the personal element of holding offenders to account.

In effect, employees are closely supervised, with short time intervals between reporting. Information on performance (compliance) is distributed only to the supervisor. Additionally, (often hidden) monitoring systems which produce constant vigilance for the purpose of control over production yield the resistance behaviors discussed earlier (e.g., Chalykoff & Kochan, 1989; Grant, Higgins, & Irving, 1988). Moreover, if accountability is used for monitoring purposes, and if individuals know the views of the one to whom they are accountable, they will typically accept those views without engaging in complex information processing (Tetlock, 1983), producing blind conformity (compliance) at best. Finally, with such external control, employees come to be motivated by external sanctions and rewards rather than by the task itself. Thus, their behavior is aimed at gaining rewards and avoiding sanctions to the detriment of work involvement and acceptance of responsibility. This leads to the first proposition.

Therefore Conventional accountability (merely implementing a reporting requirement) will produce reduced levels of felt responsibility and therefore lower level of individual accountability.

It is hardly surprising that current societal, Organisational, and market forces have had the effect of calling even more attention to the dysfunctions of
conventional control approaches. In fact, many authors see the need for a degree of flexibility not easily found under bureaucratic control (Schneider, Wheeler, & Cox, 1992; Walton, 1985). To illustrate, corporate downsizing requires that employees operate under decreased managerial supervision. Similarly, job descriptions are being written to greater levels of generality; employees are expected to take on new duties on an ad hoc basis, exhibiting flexibility in response to changing market conditions. Likewise, an increased emphasis on service and customer satisfaction and retention means that employees must have expanded discretion in order to meet the diverse and demanding needs of customers. Control systems that emphasize "following procedures" are not appropriate when customers are more interested in the final result than in the procedures that led to it. The objective of customer satisfaction calls for requisite variety and differential responses (Schneider & Bowen, 1985; Schneider et al., 1992).

Thus, current societal and market forces, as well as a recognition of the potential dysfunctions of external control, have resulted in a change in thinking regarding the balance of employee rights and responsibilities. That is to say, Organisations must give employees more discretion and autonomy in order to succeed. At the same time, prevailing trends require more accountability and responsibility of employees as they seek to meet the needs of a diverse customer pool. This issue raises the question of whether employee rights and increased autonomy can result in desired Organisational outcomes, or if external control must still be applied.

Individual Accountability, as per this research, can and will work toward promoting this balance. As will be discussed in detail below, successful accountability dynamics depend on the relationship between the two parties and the extent to which the task or behavior is made personally relevant. This requires the need to discuss the nature of Individual accountability.
Responsibility and Internal Control

The increasing volatility of external business conditions and diversity of the work force, coupled with the continuing need for Organisational control, have stimulated writers' interest in how individual accountability can be fostered in individual employees (Cummings & Anton, 1990, 1992; Manz & Sims, 1980; Osigweh, 1989). Personal, or felt, responsibility means that an individual perceives or accepts an obligation for a particular situation or event (Cummings & Anton, 1990; Manz & Sims, 1980). Cummings and Anton (1990) have made an important distinction between objective responsibility (based on one's role, group membership, or causal influence) for an event and one's perceptions or "felt" responsibility. As Cummings and Anton have argued, felt responsibility is the key for understanding and predicting behavior. Responsibility does not always create felt responsibility: such things as the significance, uniqueness, and irreversibility of the act, individuals' maturity and integrity, as well as the clarity of expectations and individuals' resistance to them will all make a difference (Cummings & Anton, 1990). Further, social psychologists have cited behavioral involvement, identifiability of a contribution, and the making of a unique contribution as factors influencing personal, felt responsibility (Harkins & Petty, 1982; Williams, Harkins, & Latane, 1981).

Undoubtedly, there are many circumstances that affect whether or not individuals will perceive or accept the full responsibility that they have been given. The limited literature available on individual accountability however, discusses that the majority of circumstances fall into three main areas: proper structuring of expectations, fostering personal control, and establishing the significance of action.
Structuring of Expectations

There is an optimal degree of structuring for work roles and individuals (Cummings & Anton, 1990, 1992; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Pearce, 1981). *Ambiguity and lack of structure can result in low job satisfaction and high tension* (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). On the other hand, while some degree of structuring and feedback is desirable, excessive specification is constricting, often producing dysfunctions such as invalid reporting, resistance, or rigid bureaucratic behavior (Lawler, 1976). **Thus, control systems built around highly structured role obligations are often regarded with ambivalence by many employees.**

Motivation theory is relevant here as well (Kanfer, 1993). An excess of formalization is not appropriate for individuals with high intrinsic motivation for their jobs. The latter prefer fewer explicit expectations, relying instead on their own conceptions of the role and commitment to objectives. Adequate clarity of structure, from whatever source, allows appropriate linkages between expectancies and outcomes. Thus, the nature of expectations and their clarity set the stage for felt responsibility.

Additionally, optimal structuring varies for each employee. Individuals may desire and expect more or less structure depending on their task experience, tenure with the Organisation, maturity, motivation, and the ambiguity of the situation. Thus, a contingency approach (Fiedler, 1965; Yukl, 1989) is most appropriate, in which each employee is provided with the level of structure that they expect. Such a strategy will enable employees to demonstrate the highest levels of felt responsibility.

**Personal Control**

Even if expectations are appropriately structured, individuals must feel that they have enough control over the situation to achieve the specific end result.
in order to assume individual accountability. Acting out of a sense of personal control (de Charms, 1968; Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989; Fisher, 1978) is likely to create internal motivation. Thus, when employees have the freedom to choose what behaviors to carry out, this self-determination provides feelings of competence (Fisher, 1978).

Any behavior undertaken in accordance with job requirements comes to be attributed to valued qualities of the job itself and the employees' interests in the job rather than to external rewards or threat of sanctions. All this promotes ownership and a sense of responsibility. On the other hand, excess external control can undermine intrinsic motivation. More operationally, individuals must feel a sense of self-efficacy or personal competence regarding the task (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, Adams, & Beyer, 1977; Brief & Aldag, 1981). That is, employees are constrained by the limits of their perceived capacity to perform (Bandura, 1977). Schlenker and Weigold (1989) have also noted that perceived talents and personal traits influence these outcome expectancies.

Those individuals with low outcome expectancies will expend less effort or fail to continue a difficult activity. Thus, if individuals' perceived competence for an activity is low, they will be unwilling to accept responsibility, especially for challenging work.

Employees must also perceive that they have control in other ways. Specifically, they must sense control over enough resources, including information about their performance, and feel they have the discretion to make choices in the execution of their responsibilities (Ashforth, 1989; Deci et al., 1989; Fisher, 1978; Tiffany & Tiffany, 1973). Even if individuals feel they have the personal capacity to perform, these aspects of the situation decrease position outcome expectancies, and hence, motivation.
Thus, if individuals perceive that autonomy or freedom of action is limited, a natural response is to deny accountability and engage in the behaviour of passing the buck. If challenged or pressed by their supervisor, making this denial unwise, they would tend to reevaluate their options and to choose expedient, and nominally less appropriate, paths of action. Further, reactance (Brehm, 1966), a motivation to restore freedom (Greenberger & Strasser, 1986; Manz & Angle, 1987; Mitchell & Ferris, 1992), may produce behavior at odds with responsible action. In sum, if personal control and efficacy do not exist, individuals are not likely to accept responsibility.

Significance

Individuals who perceive their actions as having significance (Cummings & Anton, 1990, 1992) are more likely to perceive felt responsibility. Significance may be induced for a variety of reasons falling primarily into two categories: meaningfulness and hedonic relevance. Meaningful and hedonically relevant actions have the potential to provide positively value adding outcomes and enhance internal motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Turning first to meaningfulness, the degree to which a situation entails a moral obligation or a decision has ethical implications (Gatewood & Carroll, 1991; Jones, 1991) is a cue that an action or decision has consequence.

Seeing how one's behavior fits into the "big picture" is another—whether one's input adds value to the product or service. Decisions with major ramifications (McAulister, Mitchell, & Beach, 1979) are considered to be significant as well. Finally, if employees have a genuine interest in task outcomes, they will also feel accountable for task performance.

Similarly, activities that have hedonic relevance, providing pleasure, generate a feeling of significance for the actor (Sivacek & Crano, 1982).
Task that are intrinsically pleasurable or motivating will be typically completed in the absence of external demands. If the task and the guidelines for performance are consistent with employees' values, there will be little resistance (Trevino, 1986).

Individuals also will consider their actions be significant to the extent that these actions are relevant to the self or their own identity (Schlenker & Weigold, 1989). All these reasons imply that actions that are internally motivated assume greater significance in the eyes of individuals. Individuals are more willing to undertake tasks or activities and persist at them under such conditions. Thus, promoting the perceived significance of a task or activity will also create individual accountability.

**Functional Behavior**

In contrast to the Organisational and personal dysfunctions brought about by conventional accountability and bureaucratic external control, individual accountability as felt responsibility (as a form of internal control) encourages behaviors that usually benefit both the Organisation and individual employees. Rather than engaging in strategic behaviors in order to bias an external control system, responsible employee behavior is authentic and therefore reliable (Cummings & Anton, 1990). Constant, possibly hidden monitoring can be replaced by self-monitoring (Mills, 1983). *Rather than helplessness and dependence on the Organisation, employees display initiative (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Instead of merely complying With Organisational directives, employees internalize them as standards (Schlenker & Weigold, 1989).*

**Self-Management**

Paralleling the recent theoretical work on accountability, certain practices have been promoted as an alternative to the use of external control systems.
The phrase that is often used here is self-management. Self-management is a practice in which responsibility for setting, accomplishing, and rewarding the accomplishment of personally or organisationally set goals are placed in the hands of the individual rather than a supervisor (Manz & Sims, 1980; Mills, 1983; Thoresen & Mahoney, 1974). For example, an individual may be expected to determine what changes in activities (nature or amount) are needed to provide better customer service. Self-managed or self-regulated behavior may involve such things as diagnosing organisational needs, generating personal goals, developing a plan toward achieving goals, self-evaluation of progress, and self-administered consequences based on progress toward goal attainment (Manz, 1986; Manz & Sims, 1980; Mills, 1983).

According to the perspective of self-management writers, each individual has the potential for self-control. Also implicit in this approach is the idea that individuals do not perform all behaviors for their intrinsic properties, but perform some only due to necessity or for a particular external reward (Manz, 1986). Thus, the concept allows for forms of self-control to achieve externally set and rewarded outcomes.

Although self-management practices are relevant at both the individual and group levels, it should be noted that the focus of present research is on individual accountability and self-management at the individual level. Individual involved in behaviours such as prioritizing work and being proactive, goal setting and following on it, brainstorming potential solutions, being open and feedback seeking, self-evaluation, and the self-administration of incentives are appropriate for a variety of organisational titles and types of behaviors. Though self-management efforts are thought to have their greatest effects when employees are high in feelings of self-efficacy (Gist, 1987), the increased personal control and intrinsic interest in
the job are felt to have beneficial consequences for most employees (Fisher, 1978; Freedman & Phillips, 1985). It is interesting to note that these are the conditions that are implemented in promoting individual accountability behaviour.

Accountability
As noted, traditional view on accountability presumes an external perspective (Cummings & Anton, 1990, Dose, 1992). Individuals are answerable to external parties for behaving in accordance with a particular rule or performance standard (Mitchell & Ferris, 1992). Often this is operationalized as a reporting requirement in which individuals must justify their views to another party (Klimoski, 1972; Tetlock, 1983). A party or principal can be any type of social entity, such as a co-worker, work group, supervisor, or customer.

Thus, accountability is a motivational state in which there is an increased sense of self-relevance for a certain situation (Klimoski, 1992). *This means that individuals come to see their actions or behaviors as salient, important, or consequential. Accountability increases self-awareness relative to a task, role, or a decision to be made.*

*Individuals who are accountable, then, are more likely to act in a considered and motivated manner. More recently, accountability has been described in terms of identity dynamics (Klimoski, 1992; Schlenker & Weigold, 1989).*

**Lessons from Identity Theory**
Identity theory can help us reframe our notions of accountability. Most simply, identity theory can be considered "a theory of self that is formed and maintained through actual or imagined interpersonal agreement about what
the self is like" (Schlenker, 1986, p. 23). Identity theory discusses three elements. These are: events, identity, and prescriptions. These elements have been combined to provide an explanation for the impact of accountability on the individual (Klimoski, 1992; Schlenker & Weigold, 1989).

The first element is the event, which can include the individual's behavior, performance, or resulting outcomes. Accountability dynamics exist in relationship to an event. The second element is identity, which refers to a component of one's self-concept. Accountability is presumed to have potency as it pertains to more central or important facets of the individual's self-concept. The third element, prescriptions, involves the standards for behavior associated with an event. Prescriptions represent a set of rules for how things should occur. They are also criteria for performance that are used to guide and evaluate behavior. At times, these standards for behavior become elevated as "principles."

The linkages between the three elements, events, identity, and prescriptions, appear to be the key to predicting accountability effects. The stronger the linkages, the greater the impact for the individual, thus determining the potency of accountability forces. The "identity-event" linkage refers to the extent to which the individual is seen as having responsibility for the event. To the extent an event is tied to or concerns a fundamental aspect of identity (e.g. an aspect of the self-concept), accountability will be enhanced. The "prescription-event" linkage denotes the extent to which there are clear rules or standards for conduct in the situation. This is analogous to the structuring of expectations, as outlined earlier. The "prescription-identity" linkage dictates the extent to which individuals are (or can be) bound or committed to the rules or standards associated with the event. This would be affected by the extent to which the individual is socialized to hold the same rules as the Organisation. Taken together, these linkages determine the strength of
accountability forces. *Thus, high levels of potential accountability exist when an individual feels identified with an event and when there are clear standards for good or poor performance* (Klimoski, 1992).

But there are dynamic processes involved. Over time, experiences of being accountable and the resulting judgments have implications for one's self-concept or identity (Schlenker & Weigold, 1989). *An important point to note is that the concept of identity includes both public and private aspects of the self. Therefore, accountability has implications for internal motivation (private self) and for external motivation via the potential judgments of the accountability agent (public self). According to Schlenker and Weigold (1989, p. 22), "Accountability makes self-regulation possible." Individuals look (retrospectively) at their actions in light of relevant prescriptions for identity.*

*As focused in this research, individual accountability, then, as it affects one's identity, has implications for responsible behavior. It enhances self-relevance and internal motivation by linking appropriate behavior to identity. External control thus, somewhat paradoxically, strengthens internal control.*

The current study proposes that individual's ability to trust will also play a critical role in facilitating individual accountability for participation in a Organisational processes. The concept of trust refers to the extent that a person ascribes good intentions to others and has confidence in their competence (Cook & Wall, 1980). Little research has examined the direct impact of interpersonal trust on performance (McAllister, 1995). However, researchers have long recognized trust as a hallmark of favorable or high-quality relationships (Hart, 1988; Zand, 1972). And a positive influence of trust on coordination and personal control has been show at the institutional
(Shapiro, 1987) and interpersonal (Granovetter, 1985) levels of an Organisation. In fact, trust between individuals and groups within an Organisation is a critical ingredient in the long-term stability of an Organisation and the well being of its members (Cook & Wall, 1980). In other words, it is generally agreed that high levels of interpersonal trust are beneficial for effective Organisational functioning.

There seems to be a casual relationship between trust and individual accountability. For example, Dose and Klimoski (1995) assert that if an interpersonal relationship does not include trust, or if an employee perceives management or a coworker acting only for personal gain, no external accountability system is likely to produce personal responsibility for participating in the process. In other words, it is more likely an individual will feel personally responsible to participate in Organisational processes if a trusting relationship exists among the individuals involved (Dose & Klimoski, 1995).

Yamagishi and Cook (1993) performed two studies to investigate the impact of interpersonal trust on individual participation in exchange relationships. In both experiments, support was found for the notion that interpersonal trust elevates an individual’s level of participation in a group situation. In fact, several studies point to the beneficial impact of interpersonal trust on frequency and quality of group member interaction as well as participation in decision-making events (Samuelson, Messick, Rutte, & Henk, 1984; Sato, 1988).

Self-Construal
Self-construal is conceptualized as a constellation of thoughts, feeling, and actions concerning one’s relationship to others and the self as distinct from others (Singelis, 1994). Researchers in cross-cultural psychology have long
maintained that one's view of the self in relation to others is critical to understanding individual perceptions, evaluations, and behaviors (Gardner, Gabriel, & Lee, 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1989). Specifically, how we perceive ourselves in relation to others can have a tremendous impact on how we interact with colleagues or coworkers (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Plus, the extent to which people value individual versus collective goals in human life has important consequences for their lifestyle, interpersonal relationships, and psychological well-being (Hui & Villareal, 1989).

Traditionally, cross-cultural research has focused efforts on examining differences between societies with an interdependent (e.g., Japan and other far-eastern countries) versus independent (e.g., United Kingdom, United States) culture. Recently however, evidence supports the assertion that there is a coexistence of independent and interdependent selves within a cultural group (Singelis & Brown, 1995; Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991).

An interdependent self-construal is defined as a self that emphasizes relationships, belonging and fitting in, as well as occupying one’s proper place in a group. In other words, fitting in and connecting with others are primary motivating factors for people with an interdependent self-construal. Harmonious interpersonal relationships and the ability to adjust to various situations are sources of self-esteem (Singelis, 1994). Contrary to the independent self, the interdependent self depends on relations with others and contextual factors to regulate behavior (Singelis & Brown, 1995).

In contrast, individuals who possess a more independent self-construal place a greater emphasis on their own internal thoughts and abilities, promoting their personal goals, being unique and expressing themselves (Singelis &
Brown, 1995). When thinking about the self, individuals with an independent self-construal are more likely to use their own skills, abilities, and goals as a referent than they are to take into account the thoughts feelings and actions of others (Singelis, 1994).

**Individual accountability Behaviour:**

Knowing the fact that there is a need for external control mechanism to moderate employee accountability in Organisation, the research is based on an argument that in spite of external controls and Organisational systems, processes and procedures be available there is no guaranty of individuals being accountable for their actions. Individual accountability behaviour is an outcome of various internal (self related) factors that are responsible self regulating behaviour.

As noted by Frink and Ferris (1998), the knowledge base regarding accountability is remarkably scant. Therefore based on the literature available and discussion with experts (details mentioned in Chapter-3 Titled research methodology- Pre Pilot Study) in this experimental research, the researcher has tried to connect concepts that seems to correlate with individual accountability behaviour. With few assumptions based on discussion with various subject experts the research is based on the earlier argument that- ability to be open, internally motivated, to confront, trust in self and others, being authentic, proactive, interdependent and experimenting, ability to deal with fear of failure, feeling of identity with the Organisation, and ability to manage self are variables that have been linked positively to individual accountability behaviour. The theory proposed here is that these variables may be incorporated in the process of scale construction and items may be designed on them for experts' opinion as part of the scale development process. Majority of variables and items were selected from studies on psychometric
scales available for these variables, where conceptual clarity, validity and reliability of these were already being established.

**Figure 2: Components of Individual Accountability Behaviour:**
Structure of expectations, Feeling of responsibility and Individual accountability behaviour. The nature of the relationship between the principal and the agent who allows accountability demands to influence felt responsibility in a positive manner (Cvetkovich, 1978; Dose, 1992).

Structuring of Expectations
The structuring of expectations (as mentioned in Fig. 2), are based on pressures from external environment. The Organisation or principal/manager or supervisor as representative of the Organisation and an agent-employee whose is expected to deliver a task and perform within the boundary of expected role structures the expectations. These expectations interactions provide a means for establishing behavior requirements and work rules.

In fact, these standards may be established in several ways. Expectations may be communicated directly by the principal, negotiated, or derived in a consultative manner. Use of a directive management style creates problems due to lack of personal control, as discussed in the next session. Employees may feel that their input is not valued or welcome. Therefore, negotiated or consultative techniques are preferable.

Use of a negotiated method of structuring expectations, such as Management by Objectives, allows the two parties to have regular discussions and to each contribute to the standards that are established. Opportunities to report task progress or decisions can be situations where the agent receives reinforcement that he or she is fulfilling expectations (Mills, 1983). Evaluation of work requirements (e.g. performance appraisal and feedback [Kavanaugh, 1982, 1989]) are positively influenced by participative development. Feedback is beneficial, particularly when it is used for problem solving (Nadler, Mirvis, & Cammann, 1976).
A consultative management style is of the most benefit in structuring expectations so as to induce accountability. If information is ambiguous and the task conditions are uncertain, a consultative management style helps clarify expectations (Mills, 1983). Similarly, setting task or role boundaries within which discretion is given to self-managed employees (Slocum & Sims, 1980), nominally exerting accountability pressures, is also functional for self-control.

No matter what method of structuring expectations is used, theorists concerned with enhancing felt responsibility (Manz & Angle, 1987) cite the coordination and efficiency advantages of accountability: regular (although not necessarily frequent) meetings with supervisors and coworkers provide opportunities to discuss work issues and the expectations that affect them. Moreover, once developed, the nature and clarity of these expectations, perhaps in the form of general principles, provide the conditions for taking felt responsibility.

After the expectations are set, it is based upon the various variables that will moderate individual accountability behaviour. The individual outcomes in form of accountable or non-accountable behaviour therefore will also be responsible for Organisational outcomes.

**New Workplace Realities**

Current economic and market conditions are not without their potential impact on accountability dynamics. Corporate downsizing means that there are fewer layers of management and that employees receive less direct supervision. The impetus toward self-management and individual accountability thus is accelerated as employees would be expected to manifest greater involvement and self-control. A streamlined Organisational
structure may also allow individuals a clearer view of where they fit into the big picture, thus enhancing the opportunity to see the significance of their actions. Finally, the extent to which the employee and the manager have an extended working relationship (all the more likely because those who are left after Organisation will have been there for some time) can also promote responsibility. This would be consistent with theorized principal-agent dynamics noted earlier.

Increased technology is another workplace reality that can serve to potentially increase personal responsibility. Technological advances in information collection and distribution allow for prompt, direct performance feedback to the individual.

This can both promote and demand increased responsibility. Availability of data and ease of retrieval also allow for greater personal control over the resources needed to accomplish job duties (Lawler & Rhode, 1976). Thus, the availability of timely data facilitates feedback seeking, self-monitoring, and, ultimately, self-management.

Cases such as those of IBM and General Motors demonstrate how current workplace trends can serve to enhance personal responsibility, even in face of employee layoffs and shutdowns. Downsizing has resulted in reengineering initiatives and streamlining of Organisational structure (Bennet, 1994; "I.B.M", 1994). At IBM's benefits service center, for example, benefits administration staff has been trimmed from 270 to less than 100, yet employee satisfaction is high ("I.B.M.",1994). In part, this is because technology has enabled development and implementation of a national database to be used by these individuals to better answer employees' most common questions. Moreover, these benefits administrators have received more extensive training; thus, each becomes a
subject matter expert. Similarly, at General Motors, turbulent economic conditions have motivated changes in the Organisational culture in order to improve productivity (Bennet, 1994). Workers have begun to make more production decisions such as efficient placement of machines and inventory. These conditions promote both self-efficacy and felt responsibility.

**Personality Factors and Individual Accountability Behaviour:**

The second aim of the present research was to identify factors that facilitate Employee’s individual accountability behaviour to participate in Organisational processes. The underlying assumption is that a feeling of accountability is a very powerful determinant of actual performance. Several variables have demonstrated the ability to predict this class of behavior. Noteworthy among such variables is Personality dimension of individuals.

**BIG FIVE:** Psychologists have long been interested in issues of the number and nature of personality traits. Cattell's pioneering work, and the availability of a relatively short list of variables, stimulated other researchers to examine the dimensional structure of trait ratings. Several investigators were involved in the discovery and clarification of the Big Five dimensions. First, Fiske (1949) constructed much simplified descriptions from 22 of Cattell's variables; the factor structures derived from self-ratings, ratings by peers, and ratings by psychological staff members were highly similar and resembled what would be later known as the Big Five. To clarify these factors, Tupes and Christal (1961) reanalyzed correlation matrices from eight different samples, ranging from airmen with no more than high-school education to first-year graduate students, and included ratings by peers, supervisors, teachers, or experienced clinicians in settings as diverse as military training courses and sorority houses. In all the analyses, Tupes and
Christal found “five relatively strong and recurrent factors and nothing more of any consequence” (1961,).

This five-factor structure has been replicated by Norman (1963), Borgatta (1964), and Digman and Takemoto-Chock (1981) in lists derived from Cattell's 35 variables. Following Norman (1963), the factors were initially labeled:

(I) Extraversion or Surgency (talkative, assertive, energetic)
(II) Agreeableness (good-natured, cooperative, trustful)
(III) Conscientiousness (orderly, responsible, dependable)
(IV) Emotional Stability versus Neuroticism (calm, not neurotic, not easily upset)
(V) Culture lately labeled as openness (intellectual, polished, independent-minded)

These factors eventually became known as the “Big Five” (Goldberg, 1981)—a title chosen not to reflect their intrinsic greatness but to emphasize that each of these factors is extremely broad. Thus, the Big Five structure does not imply that personality differences can be reduced to only five traits. Rather, these five dimensions represent personality at the broadest level of abstraction, and each dimension summarizes a large number of distinct, more specific personality characteristics.

The big five or five factor model

(1) Neuroticism encompasses characteristics that include excessive worry, pessimism, low self-confidence, and tendencies to experience negative emotions. Because of their tendency to interpret experiences under negative light, individuals who score high on neuroticism are less likely to develop positive attitudes towards their work. Furthermore, due to lack of confidence and optimism, those who score high on this factor are less likely to develop ambitions regarding their careers and to set performance and career goals. Indeed, empirical evidences suggests that neuroticism
is negatively related to the tendency to be goal-oriented (Malouff et al, 1990). Recent meta-analytical research suggests that neuroticism is negatively related to work performance motivation (Judge Ilies, 2002). **Individuals who score high on neuroticism tend to value hygiene related features of jobs, like security and working conditions, instead of intrinsically motivating features, like the nature of work and opportunities for achievement (Furnham et al, 1999). This will negatively correlate with Individual accountability behaviour.** Neurotics are likely to lack self confidence in their ability to effectively perform the tasks required by accountable individuals. Therefore, employees who scores low on emotional stability will be likely to have low scores on Individual accountability behaviour.

(2) Extroversion is characterized by sociability, assertiveness, social dominance, ambition, tendencies towards action, sensation – seeking, and the experience of positive affect. Therefore those who report high scores on extroversion are likely to possess the need to occupy a central position in their work and get involved completely. **Assertiveness allows them to prioritize their plan of action as well as make them learn from their mistakes.** Extroversion positively relates to a preference for intrinsically motivating job features (Furnham et al, 1999) and to work performance motivation (Judge and Ilies, 2002).

(3) Openness includes multiplicity of interests, receptivity of new ideas, flexibility of though, inventiveness, and the tendency to develop idealistic ideas and goals. Therefore, individuals who scores high on openness are more likely to report involvement in their work, as their work can serve as an arena to entertain their curiosity, their appetite for exploring new perspectives, and their tendency to develop genuine interests for any activities they are involved in. **Empirical research (Lounsby et al, 2003) reports a positive relationship between scores on openness and scores on work drive, a construct that partly overlaps with work**
involvement (Lounsbury and Gibson, 1998). In addition, quantitative research suggests that openness relates positively to motivation towards the accomplishment of self-set work goals (Judge and Ilies, 2002).

Agreeableness is associated with altruism, friendliness, and modesty, while low agreeableness includes antagonism, impression management and selfishness. Individuals tend to be involved in their work when they view work and career achievement as means for the maintenance and enhancement of their feelings of personal worth and self esteem (Jans, 1982; Rabinowitz and Hall, 1977). Hence, individuals who score low on agreeableness must be more involved in their work because of their antagonistic and impression seeking nature, which must direct them towards seeking advancement and acknowledgement in their work environment. On the other hand, because of their altruism, modesty and good nature individuals who score high on agreeableness must prioritize relationships with others over work and career success (Judge et al, 1999), hence, they must be less likely to report high involvement in their work. In line with this logic, Judge et al, (1999) identified a negative relationship between agreeableness and extrinsic career success, which refers to objective accomplishment of individuals in their work lives.

Wellins et al (1991) proposes that effective performers in Organisation ask for ideas, offer help, accept suggestions, consider the needs, motivations and skills of other team members; work with other’s ideas. Hogan et al (1994) suggests that Agreeableness is related not only with communication, but team trust and morale as well.

Conscientiousness is associated with industriousness, perseverance and sense of duty. Meta-analytical studies suggest that conscientiousness is the most potent and consistent correlate of job performance across all types of jobs and occupations (Barrik and Mount, 1991; Mount and
Barrik 1995; Salgado, 1997). Hence, individuals who report high scores on conscientiousness are likely to report more involvement in their work due to their sense of duty towards every role they assume. Brown (1996), in his Meta-analytical review on job involvement, identified a positive relationship between job involvement and extent to which individuals endorse the work ethic. Endorsement of the work ethic reflects the belief that work is a virtuous and necessary activity, and is a value that is conceptually similar to the dutifulness, meaning owing up responsibility, facet of conscientiousness.

Literature suggests that Conscientiousness (Concept closely related with Individual accountability behaviour), predicted not only Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, but has also been consistently related to job performance across a wide variety of occupational groups (Crant, 1995). Broadly defined, conscientiousness is a trait described as a stable tendency to be organized, efficient, goal oriented, and persistent (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1992).

The conscientious variable is particularly noteworthy for two reasons. For one, as mentioned above, conscientiousness has predicted OCB in previous research. For example, Hogan, Rybicki, Motowidlo, and Borman (1998) had 214 job applicants complete the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI). Subsequently, employees were rated by their supervisors for OCB performance. Results indicated that conscientiousness, as measured by the HPI Prudence score, was significantly related to supervisory ratings of employee OCB. In addition, it might be argued that personal responsibility is nothing more than a factor subsumed by conscientiousness. In fact, The Jackson Personality Inventory (JPI)-includes a responsibility factor in its conscientiousness dimension. If personal responsibility is subsumed by conscientiousness, it would seem unnecessary for an Organisation to be
concerned with structuring an environment that breeds feelings of personal responsibility. It would probably be much easier to employ individuals high on the conscientiousness trait.

As defined in the current study, individual accountability is proposed to be distinct from conscientiousness. Several arguments support this perspective. First, with regard to the JPI, Paunonen and Jackson (1996) report on findings indicating the responsibility scale had its chief loading on the agreeableness factor rather than the conscientiousness factor (Costa & McCrae, 1998). Barrack and Mount (1993) found significant relationship between Conscientiousness and supervisor related job performance which were moderated by job autonomy. The validity of Conscientiousness was greater for managers in high autonomy positions, which allowed considerable individual latitude in determining which behaviour to undertake, than those in low autonomy positions, which severely restricted the range of behaviours an individual could elect to exhibit.

As noted in some research articles published in ISHN, That Conscientiousness component, is most aligned with acquiring a self-accountability perspective. There is also a possibility that Neuroticism to be related with accountability, as some degree of ongoing anxiety contributes to the self-motivation needed to keep a person doing the right thing to prove one’s action when an external accountability system is evaluating. This does not include extreme neuroticism, but a level somewhere between “completely calm, relaxed, and unemotional” and “nervous, emotional, insecure, and distressed” about safety issues.

Another evidence related to higher job performance and personality trait is provided in Barrik and Mount’s (1991) meta analysis of research relating personality to job performance. This heralded a new ear in selection research
Hogan & Ones 1997). Their conclusion that conscientiousness, is ‘a consistently valid predictor for all occupational groups and for all criterion types’ led to a proliferation of studies supporting the utility of using personality to predict performance. Although some debate exists over the best predictor of job performance in terms of personality constructs (Hough & Schneider 1996), research generally identifies conscientiousness as having a robust relationship with performance at work (e.g. Judge, Higgins & Thoresen 1999; Mount & Barrick 1995; Robie & Ryan 1999; Salgado & Rumbo 1997).

Such results are not entirely surprising considering that an individual scoring high in conscientiousness is described as being committed to work, persistent, motivated in goal-directed behaviours, morally scrupulous and competent (Costa, McCrae & Dye 1991; Robie & Ryan 1999). However, there is a growing concern that this impressive profile might not be advantageous in all work situations (Robertson, Baron, Gibbons, MacIver & Nyfield 2000; Tett, Jackson, Rothstein & Reddon 1999). Murphy (1996) suggests that highly conscientious workers could also be ‘conventional and rule-bound’, perhaps making it difficult for them to function in a rapidly changing work environment. Today’s fluid, dynamic Organisations increasingly require an adaptable workforce (Pulakos, Arad, Donovan & Plamondon 2000) and it is therefore important to examine how conscientiousness relates to measures of individual accountability and to ascertain whether the predictive validity of conscientiousness will generalise to those situations demanding adaptive job performance.

However, despite the fact that several researchers have noted that the five-factor model is too broad and heterogeneous to have predictive usefulness (e.g. Hough 1992; McCrae 1995) and greater information could be obtained by analysing it at a facet level (Schneider, Hough & Dunnette 1996).
McAdams 1992; Tett, Jackson & Rothstein 1991), most of the attention has remained at the overall domain level to the neglect of the facets within each domain.

Recognizing that the domain of conscientiousness includes both a proactive component (seen in need for achievement and commitment to work) and an inhibitive component (seen in cautiousness), Costa, McCrae and Dye (1991) proposed six facets of conscientiousness: Competence describes a person who is capable and sensible; self-discipline refers to the ability to continue a task without yielding to frustration or procrastination despite boredom or distractions; achievement striving is the desire to strive for excellence; order is the tendency to be well-organised and tidy; while dutifulness is the strict adherence to a set of standards; and, finally, deliberation describes a person who is cautious, thoughtful and planful. The latter three are the cautiousness or dependability facets, while achievement striving, competence and self-discipline belong to the achievement aspect of conscientiousness.

Costa and McCrae (1995) believe that scatter within a domain (i.e. among its facets) is a normal occurrence and reflects individual differences on related but distinct traits. They add that facet scores are more useful in predicting specific criteria, as they are more concretely linked to particular behaviours and experiences.

In the present research, the endeavour is to understand the role of Personality Traits with respect to Individual accountability behaviour and develop a scientific instrument that helps in measuring individual accountability behaviour. Specifically, the hypothesis,

H1: There exists a relationship between Personality factors and individual accountability behaviour.

H2: Counseling as a technique can help improve non-accountability behaviour of an employee.
CONCLUSION:
Research recognizes that accountability processes determined by Organisation will not always produce individual accountability behavior. For example, Organisational rules, systems, policies and procedures designed as means to control will not enhance individual accountability. Further, it is most likely that the individual must feel some initial level of responsibility in order for accountability requirements to have an impact (Dose, 1992; Klimoski, 1992; Schlenker & Weigold, 1989). In this case, the Organisation must rely on selection procedures to assemble a work force with the potential to assume responsibility. Accountability is a built attitude of an individual towards doing or accepting duty, responsibility or work given by Organisation, society or self and displaying it by acting upon or through behaviour pattern. The exposition of such actions or behavioural pattern is different from person to person. Most individuals follow their own patterns. When appropriately instituted, type of external control system can have many potentially positive effects on supporting individual accountability behaviour. Through the dynamics described, variables like openness, ability to confront, authenticity, proactiveness, trust, autonomy, interdependence, experimentation, feeling of Organisational commitment, learned helplessness, motivation like locus of control, self disclosure, perception of job security, achievement, fear of failure, reaction to others and work involvement may determine Individual accountability behaviour. Big Five Personality factors shows correlation with various performance related employee behaviours and in particular with individual accountability behaviour.
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