Original Article

The Relative Worth of Personality Traits of Advocates: A Perception Study in Silchar Town of Assam

Dinesh Kumar Pandiya*, Susrut Pandiya**, Arijeet Das***, Ankita Dhar****

Author Affiliation
*Professor ***Ph. D Research Scholar
****Student of M.Com, Department of
Commerce, Assam University, Silchar,
Assam 788011, India. **Lawyer,
Silchar, Assam.

Corresponding Author
Arijeet Das,
Ph. D Research scholar, Dept. of
Commerce, Assam University,
Silchar, Assam 788011, India.
E-mail: arijeetdas.aus@gmail.com

Abstract

The study was conducted to identify the personality traits required in a person to become a successful advocate and also to study the relative worth of the select personality traits by knowing the perceptions of the sampled advocates. The study was conducted at the District Bar Association, Silchar, Assam. Survey methodology was used in the study for achieving the objectives. And statistical tools like mean score, rank and standard deviation was used in the study. The study revealed that traits viz., responsible, arguing capacity, careful, disciplined, punctual, loyal, logical, ethical, reasonable, confident, determined, patient, communication skill, analytical & oratory are the most important traits to be present in an advocate to become successful.

Keywords: Personality; Traits; Advocates; Survey Methodology; Ranking; Assam.

Introduction

In the legal profession the advocates are to understand the expectations of their clients and, to the extent possible, need to attend and fulfill these. In order to be successful in their endeavor they need to be studded with certain personality traits. Clients approach the advocates with the expectations to get their legal issues resolved to their satisfaction. If the advocate fails to resolve the issues of their clients, they will lose the cases i.e., the business/livelihood as well as the credit they might have acquired by them during the course of the time. Therefore the requisite traits that are required to be there in a successful advocate, who can fulfill the expectations of their respective clients, should be identified and known by him/her. Such traits, which are required to be there in the advocates, also need to be known by the aspirants willing to enter to the profession. This study is an attempt to identify the traits which might be required to be

there in the advocates. Also out of all these traits which are more and for that matter less important to be successful as advocate is an agenda of this study.

Statement of the Problem

Cut throat competition in every walk of life has forced professionals of all kinds to discover new ways and means with the help of which they can perform better than earlier. Till the other day it was thought that imparting better education to those who possess high I Q and are capable to command over the languages required is enough for winning over the competition. Of late it was noticed that ensuring the presence of the above requisites is not sufficient unless the persons in the profession possess the requisite personality traits and characteristics. The academicians and the experts working in the field then started looking for the requisite personality and personality traits.

The study at hand proposes to identify and select those personality traits and characteristics which may

be helpful in supporting the lawyers and advocates in performing their duties aptly.

The selection of the lawyers and advocates was made for the study keeping in mind that it is a very different profession than many others in a way that they in some cases only are the employees employed by certain employers. Once some employer is in the picture it is the managers who pay attention over the requisite qualities including personality traits which might be required in them for performing their duties. In the situations where the advocates are free lancer practitioners it is either they themselves or their clients who can better identify the required personality traits in them.

Review of Literature

Gershen, J.A. & McCreary, C.P. (1997) conducted a research with the purpose of three fold: (1) to compare personality profiles of two first-year freshman classes students, (2) to compare male and female freshman classes students' profiles to their respective norms of population, and (3) to compare male and female freshman classes student's personality traits with each other by using the tool "The Comrey Personality Scales" for gathering the data. The data for the study was selected through random sampling techniques comprised of two first-year classes' students at the University of California at Los Angeles. The method employed in the analyses of the data was mean, standard deviation, and t-test (independent) and it was found from the study that the collective personality profiles of male and female students were markedly similar to each other for both classes. These results do not reflect the differences encountered between the sexes in the norm population and it was also noted that the "average" male student differed from the male norms on Orderliness versus Lack of Compulsion, Social Conformity versus Rebelliousness, and Emotional Stability versus Neuroticism. In addition, "average" female students differed from the female norms on Masculinity versus Femininity.

Jacob, B. R (2000) conducted a research on different ways of developing the skills required to be a lawyer. The objective of the study was identifying the inherent traits; describe how those traits should be nurtured and accomplished to identify the abilities and skills which the students should develop while in law school. He categorized the study in two parts i.e. identifying essential skills required to be a lawyer and the process of developing the skills while in law school. Indentifying essential skills required to be a

lawyer includes the inherent attitudes and abilities that are necessary in becoming an outstanding lawyer (i.e. courage, independent-minded, integrity, caring and good listener) and abilities and skills to be nurtured and developed while in law school (understanding the legal process and the difference between the legislative, judicial and executive). The process of developing lawyer skills while in law school includes the learning process in a typical law school (by using casebook, the trial court) and innovations in teaching and learning in law schools(e.g., Contacts, Torts or Real Property). It was found that to become an outstanding lawyer, one must be courageous, independent-minded, honest, conscientious and ethical. These traits should be nurtured and developed while in law school. Concurrently, new abilities and skills should be acquired.

Drakeley, R (2004) conducted a research with the help of Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The MBTI can also be used to measure the extroversion versus introversion and sensing (versus intuition) as well as judging versus perceiving. The poles in each pair of preferences are mutually exclusive, so someone's MBTI 'type 'is a combination of four letters that denotes the particular set of preferences – for example 'ISTJ' stands for Introvert, Sensing, Thinking, Judging type. ISTJ is the most common type among lawyers than any other type. But it is not necessary that this type makes the best lawyers. Altman Weil study says that over 82% of the successful lawyers were not ISTJs and nearly 4% were the polar opposite – ENFPs, those warm-hearted, outgoing , intuitive types who like to leave everything to the last minute. It is important to note that just because lawyers seem different from general population it doesn't necessarily mean that law firms seek this out. The research shows that lawyers need to be more conscientious and hardworking than most, so it will be no surprise to anyone that all firms will look for evidence of this at interview and the lawyers tend o have a higher incidence of alcohol and substance abuse.

Kampol Eka-Pirin (2005) conducted a research with the aim to study the relationship between personality traits and individual differences in college students' academic motivation and NEO Five Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and the Academic Motivations Inventory (AMI; Moen & Doyle, 1977) was used to be the instruments of the study. The sample of the study was selected through the use of random sampling techniques comprised of individuals 172 undergraduate students. The technique used in the analyses of the data was the Stepwise (forward) multiple regressions. The results of the study revealed a complex pattern of significant

relationships between the Big Five traits and the 16 subscales of the AMI. Stepwise (forward) multiple regressions further clarified the relationships between personality and three core factors of the AMI (engagement, achievement, and avoidance). Specifically, engagement was best explained by Openness to experience and Extraversion, achievement was best explained by Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to experience and finally, avoidance was best explained by Neuroticism, Extraversion, and by an inverse relationship with Conscientiousness and Openness to experience. Results are interpreted in terms of creating an appropriate fit between teaching modalities and individual differences in students' academic motivation due to personality traits.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the personality traits required to be there in a person to become a successful advocate.

- To study the relative worth of the select personality traits by knowing the perceptions of the sample advocates of District Bar Association, Silchar.

Research Methodology

- *Type of Research:* Descriptive

- *Selection of personality traits*: In order to attain the objectives of the study initially an extensive review of the existing literature was carried out to identify the personality traits required to be there in a person to become a successful advocate. In order to ensure the correctness of the traits identified through the said literature review an exercise of in-depth personal interview with some senior advocates was also conducted. These exercises facilitated the selection of 58 personality traits to be included in the questionnaire for finding out the relative worth of the traits required to be there in the advocates.

- *Survey instrument*: Since the study called for collection of primary data a structured questionnaire was developed to have the views of the advocates on the matter. The questionnaire included in it two sections; section one containing the questions relating to demographic factors and section two containing such questions which are capable of eliciting the perceptions of the advocates over the degree of

requirement of the select personality traits. To put it differently the data has also been collected from the advocates (who are practically engaged in practice) about the degree of requirement of the select personality traits required to be there in an advocate.

- *Data Analysis*: The data so collected with the help of questionnaires was fed into computational software i.e., M S Excel for preparing master sheet. The master sheet facilitated the preparation of required number of tables and charts.

- *Population and sample*: The population of the study comprised of registered advocates under Silchar lawyer's Bar Association and have experience of not less than 10years. The population of such advocates was 118. The sample so calculated keeping the confidence level 95% and confidence interval 10% was 53.

- *Tools and techniques of analysis*: Statistical tools such as mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. In addition to that, mean scores were also used for comparing the relative capabilities of the personality traits.

- *Scope of the study:* The study is confined to the advocates of Silchar Bar Association only.

- *Limitations of the Study:*
  a. The study is devoted to select personality traits largely applicable to advocates only.

  b. The possibility of sampling error(s) cannot be ruled out; hence the findings of the study may not reflect accurately the opinion of the population concerned.

- Depiction of the groups of the personality traits:
  1. Skills and abilities largely innate
  2. Behavioral traits
  3. Attitudinal traits
  4. Psychological traits
  5. Skills and abilities largely acquired
  6. Relative worth of the select personality traits

Key findings from Table 1, out of the 11 traits under the group 'skills & abilities largely innate' the traits 'Responsible' ranked 1st with mean score of 4.55, 'Arguing capacity' ranked 2nd with mean score of 4.47 and 'Careful' ranked 3rd with mean score of 4.43 and 'Sincere' ranked 1st with standard deviation score of 0.484 and 'Responsible' ranked 2nd with standard deviation score of 0.539 and 'Hardworking' ranked 3rd with standard deviation score of 0.570.

Key findings from Table 2, out of the 17 traits under the group 'Behavioral traits' the traits 'Disciplined' ranked 1st with mean score of 4.40, 'Punctual' ranked 2nd with mean score of 4.36 and 'Loyal' ranked 3rd with mean score of 4.28 and 'Disciplined' ranked 1st with standard deviation score of 0.689 and 'Well-mannered' ranked 2nd with standard deviation score of 0.718 and 'Punctual' ranked 3rd with standard deviation score of 0.736.

Key findings from Table 3, out of the 11 traits under the group 'Attitudinal traits' the traits 'Logical' ranked 1st with mean score of 4.51, 'Ethical' ranked 2nd with mean score of 4.42 and 'Reasonable' ranked 3rd with mean score of 4.40 and 'Logical' ranked 1st with standard deviation score of 0.639 and 'Reasonable' ranked 2nd with standard deviation score of 0.789 and 'Ethical' ranked 3rd with standard deviation score of 0.770.

Key findings from table 4, out of the 9 traits under the group 'psychological traits' the traits 'Confident' ranked 1st with mean score of 4.42, 'Determined' ranked 2nd with mean score of 4.40 and 'Patient' ranked 3rd with mean score of 4.30 and 'Determined' ranked 1st with standard deviation score of 0.660 and 'Patient' ranked 2nd with standard deviation score of 0.723 and 'Vigilant' ranked 3rd with standard deviation score of 0.731.

Key findings from Table 5, out of the 10 traits under the group 'skills and abilities largely acquired' the traits 'Communication skill' ranked 1st with mean score of 4.42, 'Drafting skill' ranked 2nd with mean score of 4.40 and; 'Analytical' and 'Oratory' ranked 3.5th with a common mean score of 4.32 and 'Drafting skill' ranked 1st with standard deviation score of 0.631 and 'Communication skill' ranked 2nd with standard deviation score of 0.633 and 'Knowledgeable' ranked 3rd with standard deviation score of 0.684.

Table 1: Relative worth of the select personality traits under 'skills and abilities largely innate'

Traits	Mean	Rank	SD	Rank
Responsible	4.55	1st	0.539	2nd
Sincere	4.36	5th	0.484	1st
Trustworthy	4.25	7th	0.705	7th
Impressive	3.74	11th	1.041	11th
Self control	3.81	10th	1.020	10th
Honest	4.34	6th	0.618	5th
Active	3.98	8th	0.772	8th
Intelligent	3.96	9th	0.919	9th
Arguing capacity	4.47	2nd	0.639	6th
Hard working	4.42	4th	0.570	3rd
Careful	4.43	3rd	0.605	4th

Source: Field Survey
Note: Higher the mean higher the rank and lower the SD higher the rank

Table 2: Relative worth of the select personality traits under 'Behavioral traits'

Traits	Mean	Rank	SD	Rank
Loyal	4.28	3rd	0.863	7th
Helpful	4.15	6.5th	0.818	5th
Approachable	3.83	10th	0.995	10th
Systematic	3.92	8th	0.958	8th
Dedicated	4.23	5th	0.824	6th
Receptive	3.68	14.5th	1.034	12th
Disciplined	4.40	1st	0.689	1st
Sociable	3.30	17th	1.295	17th
Well-mannered	4.15	6.5th	0.718	2nd
Tolerant	3.91	9th	1.061	14th
Calm	3.72	13th	1.099	15th
Polite	4.26	4th	0.763	4th
Punctual	4.36	2nd	0.736	3rd
Interactive	3.64	16th	1.002	11th
Smart	3.77	11th	1.103	16th
Understanding	3.75	12th	0.959	9th
Co-operative	3.68	14.5th	1.052	13th

Source: Field Survey
Note: Higher the mean higher the rank and lower the SD higher the rank

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Table 3: Relative worth of the select personality traits under 'Attitudinal traits'

Traits	Mean	Rank	SD	Rank
Reasonable	4.40	3rd	0.689	2nd
Logical	4.51	1st	0.639	1st
Risk taking	3.21	11th	1.261	11th
Pragmatic	3.75	5.5th	0.875	4th
Target oriented	3.45	9th	1.136	9th
Motivated	3.64	7.5th	1.094	7.5th
Problem solver	3.98	4th	1.028	5th
Adaptable	3.64	7.5th	1.094	7.5th
Ambitious	3.40	10th	1.062	6th
Competitive	3.75	5.5th	1.254	10th
Ethical	4.42	2nd	0.770	3rd

Source: Field Survey
Note: Higher the mean higher the rank and lower the SD higher the rank

Table 4: Relative worth of the select personality traits under 'psychological traits'

Traits	Mean	Rank	SD	Rank
Patient	4.30	3rd	0.723	2nd
Vigilant	4.25	4th	0.731	3rd
Conscious	4.09	5.5th	0.838	5th
Determined	4.40	2nd	0.660	1st
Focused	4.09	5.5th	0.925	6th
Passionate	3.62	7th	1.113	7th
Inquisitive	3.32	8th	1.156	9th
Aspiring	3.30	9th	1.153	8th
Confident	4.42	1st	0.819	4th

Source: Field Survey
Note: Higher the mean higher the rank and lower the SD higher the rank

Table 5: Relative worth of the select personality traits under 'Skills and abilities largely acquired'

Traits	Mean	Rank	SD	Rank
Analytical	4.32	3.5th	0.803	4th
Efficient	4.25	6th	0.806	5th
Experienced	3.68	9th	0.936	7th
Knowledgeable	4.26	5th	0.684	3rd
Flexible	3.09	10th	1.148	9th
Drafting skill	4.40	2nd	0.631	1st
Oratory	4.32	3.5th	0.850	6th
General Awareness	3.89	8th	1.171	10th
Professional	4.15	7th	1.008	8th
Communication skill	4.42	1st	0.633	2nd

Source: Field Survey

Source: Field Survey
Note: Higher the mean higher the rank and lower the SD higher the rank

Summary of the findings

The study was aimed to identify the personality traits required to be there in a person to become a successful advocate and also to study the relative worth of the select personality traits. The study was conducted on the advocates of District Bar Association, Silchar, Assam. It was reveled in the study that traits viz., responsible, arguing capacity, careful, disciplined, punctual, loyal, logical, ethical, reasonable, confident, determined, patient, communication skill, analytical & oratory are the most important traits to be present in an advocate to become successful.

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