

JUNGIAN PERSONALITY TYPES AND CUSTOMER ORIENTATION

H. C. Rathnasiri

ABSTRACT

This paper investigated the relationship between personality types of customer service employees and the degree of customer-orientation displayed by them. The customer orientation level was tested in relation to various demographic characteristics of the sample. Personality was assessed using the Jungian dimensions of Introversion, Extroversion, Sensing, Feeling, Thinking, and Intuition. Two sets of questionnaires to test personality types and customer orientation were circulated among one hundred (100) employees of Sri Lanka Telecom Ltd. It was hypothesized that Extroverts are more customer-oriented than Introverts; Sensing-Feeling (SF) and Intuition-Feeling (NF) types are more customer-oriented than Sensing-Thinking (ST) and Intuition-Thinking (NT) types. It was found that the customer orientation level was higher among males rather than among females. It was also found that there was no statistically significant difference between customer orientation levels and demographic characteristics of employees. A new personality type with equal Extroversion and Introversion (EN) emerged and there is statistically significant evidence to assert that EN type is more customer-oriented than Extroverts and Introverts. The paper concludes by setting out certain guidelines with respect to selection and training of employees in order to make organizations more customer-oriented.

H C Rathnasiri is a lecturer attached to the Department of Marketing Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. This study is based on a research paper submitted by the writer in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the MBA degree for the Postgraduate Institute of Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

Introduction

The rationale behind the existence of any form of organization is to offer some benefit to individuals. This is essentially a two-way process. This process of exchange creates value for both parties and there is a value engineering mechanism that determines the strength of the relationship between the two parties. Modern business entities are oriented towards the management of relationships, which is interpreted as customer loyalty. The importance of customer loyalty is stressed by the notion that customer retention is less costly than customer getting, and that a loyal customer is difficult to be won over by a competitor. **Therefore, customer satisfaction is the key to customer retention and improved profits for companies.**

Customer service is not synonymous with customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is customer-defined while the customer service is seller defined. A competitive customer service level can be ensured with innovative, state of the art and efficient customer service systems. Customer service systems alone cannot ensure a high level of customer satisfaction. The dynamism of customer service employees is of paramount importance for achieving a high level of customer satisfaction. The other important element in this regard is customer service strategy. However good may be one's customer satisfaction strategy, poor implementation by incompetent staff can render it ineffective. On the other hand, most of the customer service systems are not self-operating. For their effectiveness, the contribution of competent customer service staff is vital. This shows the primacy of customer service staff over customer service systems in operationalizing customer satisfaction strategies.

Customer service staff should be customer oriented and should modify their behaviour for ensuring greater customer care and satisfaction. It is against this background that this paper addresses the orientation of customer service employees.

For any type of business, a customer orientation to service delivery is essential. In order to ensure a higher rate of customer satisfaction, the customer service staff have to be attuned to better customer care. In fact, training and development programs have been introduced to change the attitudes of the employees to suit the competitive business culture. It is said that these employees should do some un-learning first. This is perhaps the most difficult of all types of learning!

The degree of unlearning and learning capabilities directly relates to the individual differences of the employees. Since behaviour of a person is greatly affected by his or her attitudes, the customer service employees' attitudes towards the customer and the systems also affect the degree of customer orientation in their conduct. The personality characteristics to a great extent determine the individual differences in work behaviour (Harrell and Harrell (1984), Anderson (1977), Hinrichs (1978), and Brousseau (1978)). Therefore, identification of typical personality factors that influence the level of customer orientation in employees should direct the managers in recruitment, selection, training and development, and promotion of employees to achieve higher level of customer care. This paper attempts to investigate the role of personality characteristics in determining customer orientation in employees.

Most businesses expend much effort in introducing new systems to ensure greater customer satisfaction. However good these systems may be, their effectiveness is dependent on the people element. This paper attempts to focus on the customer orientation of employees and the place of personality characteristics in determining the level of customer orientation of those employees.

Customer service can be divided into two elements, viz. primary service and secondary service. Primary service refers to the physical good or service that is offered to the customer by marketers. Technically, competing products might exhibit little difference in the eyes of the beholder-the customer. What differentiates one's product from a competitor's product is the secondary service, which refers to the personalized service offered with the products. This may be in the form of quick response to customer inquiries, customer complaints, friendly sales staff etc. All these factors are related to the "*people dimension*" of customer service. The people element is the outward manifestation of behaviour of customer service employees. This behaviour is strongly influenced by customer-oriented attitudes, which in turn is a function of personality characteristics of employees.

The degree of customer orientation is assumed to be dependent on the individual differences in employee behaviour. Of the characteristics that determine individual differences in work behaviour, personality factors of employees are predominant. Therefore, it is worthwhile investigating into the association between the personality characteristics of employees and the degree of commitment to customer orientation. There have been several studies done on the area of personality characteristics affecting work behaviour of employees and the validity of personality characteristics in predicting work behaviour of employees.

Nature and Importance of Customer Orientation

The three great pillars on which customer satisfaction rest are customer satisfaction strategy, customer satisfaction *systems* and customer satisfaction *staff*. Of these three factors "staff" stands as the most dynamic element that determines the efficacy of strategy and systems and ultimately the level of customer satisfaction. The concept of customer orientation is very simple in outlook but very subtle in operation as it involves a great deal of innate attitudinal and behavioural dimensions of employees. As elaborated by Kotler, customer orientation relates to effective and efficient sensing, serving and satisfying a defined set of needs of a defined group of customers (Kotler, 1996). The act of sensing connotes a deliberate psychological preparedness for the identification of customer needs and satisfaction. Customer-oriented behaviour tends to incorporate the following components (Naver & Slater, 1990).

- a) Customer commitment
- b) Creation of customer value
- c) Understanding customer needs
- d) Setting customer satisfaction objectives
- e) Measurement of customer satisfaction

The effective and efficient performance of after-sales services also shows the tendency towards customer orientation (Chee & Peng, 1996:102).

Customer orientation is based on a set of beliefs initiating an attitude of mind that is characterized by the innate tendency of an employee to give primacy to customer requirements over his personal and work situation requirements. This attitude generates behavioural intentions that manifest in the outward behaviour of employees. It is not within the purview of this study to establish causality between attitudes and behaviour, as this issue has been researched in other studies. In this study, it is believed that attitudes spark behaviour. Therefore, customer orientation in terms of attitudes is believed to generate customer-oriented behaviour in employees.

Binter, Booms, and Tetreault (1990) showed that ability, willingness, and competence of customer-contact employees to solve customer problems increased customer satisfaction. They also found that an employee's ability to adapt to special

needs and requests of customers enhances the customers' perceptions of the service encounter. Friendliness, enthusiasm, and attentiveness of contact employees positively affect customers' perceptions of service quality (Bowen and Schneider 1985; Rafaeli 1993).

As stated before, customer orientation is characterized by various aspects of employee behaviour. *Customer orientation is based on a set of beliefs initiating an attitude of mind that is characterized by the innate tendency of an employee to give primacy to customer requirements over his personal and work situation requirements.* Customer orientation in the attitudes of employees is expected to be measured by taking several variables from various aspects of customer orientation defined by various writers including the author's own constructs. The concept of customer orientation has been grasped by using eleven variables that have been derived from the findings of various researchers. They are:

- i. Willingness to solve customer problems
- ii. Willingness to adapt to special needs and requirements of customers
- iii. Attentiveness to customer requirements
- iv. Enthusiasm to attend to customer requirements
- v. Friendliness of employees
- vi. High employee adaptability to the interpersonal demands of the situation
- vii. Strong belief in his or her ability to perform job-related tasks (self efficacy)
- viii. Willingness to perform additional tasks to solve a customer problem
- ix. Commitment to customer
- x. Understanding customer needs
- xi. Arrangement of customer service systems for the betterment of customers

Dru Scott (1991) explains the nature of being a person with high commitment for customer satisfaction.

You shortchange both yourself and your customers if you are content to simply provide customer service. To do a superior job it will be necessary for you to go beyond service to customer satisfaction. Customer service is defined by the supplier. Customer satisfaction is defined by the customer. This important but subtle difference once understood will build motivation, creativity, and commitment. By establishing specific targets-and achieving them- you will forge the way for motivated customer satisfaction. A practical system for negotiating mutually agreed upon targets begins with identifying what you and your customers want and need. Then determine how well you can supply them. Concentrating on satisfaction and learning how to deliver it, will prevent burn out, build confidence and stimulate more satisfaction for both you and your customers (Dru Scott, 1991, 45).

Theodore Levitt's famous definition of what business is all about: "to create and keep customers" is of significance in describing the concept of marketing orientation of employees. Dominique in his article "Japanese approaches to customer satisfaction: some best practices" introduced seven golden rules for improving customer service. They are,

- i. Define the corporate mission in terms of customer benefits
- ii. Gain the long term commitment of the senior management
- iii. Select the right people**
- iv. Train and re-train**
- v. Measure and communicate quality standards
- vi. Use technology to enhance customer satisfaction
- vii. Creatively exceed customers' expectations

The third and the fourth items above relate to the people factor. Selecting right people means that there are certain *personalities* who are ideal for ensuring customer satisfaction. Training and re-training implies that people can be made more customer-oriented by shaping and re-shaping their attitudes and beliefs. These factors suggest that customer oriented behaviour of employees are of paramount importance to enhance customer satisfaction. For this, right kinds of people have to be placed in appropriate positions in the organizations. Japanese companies tend to put

much effort in recruiting people with the right customer approach. In many businesses, real action takes place within the first 60 seconds of interaction with customers. It is important for the employees to know what role they are expected to play and to be aware of what customers expect. Customers are also more likely to form an image of a company through personal interactions with the company employees rather than through an expensive corporate advertising campaign. Therefore, customer orientation in employees is vital in projecting a favourable image of the company to its customers. According to Dominique, the customer satisfaction process in Japan (in line with Kaizen-continuous improvement) is a spiral that starts with training. (See figure 1).

FIGURE 1: Spiral Process of Customer Satisfaction



Source: Dominique V. Turpin, "Japanese approaches to customer satisfaction: Some best practices", *Long Range Planning*, Vol. 28, No. 3, (1995), pp. 87.

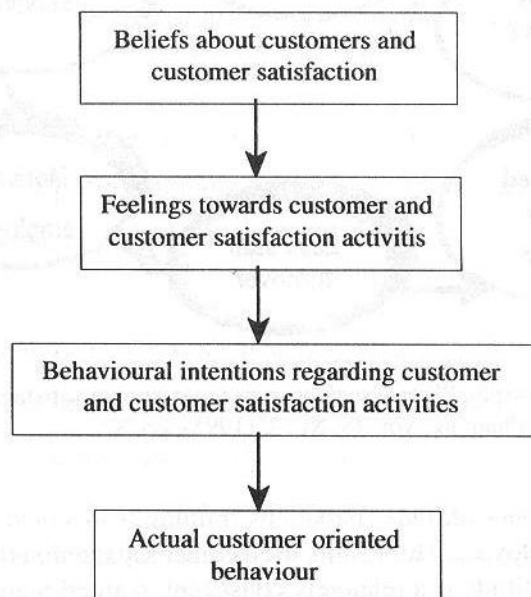
The positive service attitude sparked by training is identical to customer oriented attitudes in employees. This results in customer satisfaction through improved service quality. An attitude is a relatively consistent, learned predisposition to behave in a certain way in response to a given object. Attitudes energize behavioural intentions. Since attitudes are learned, they can be changed in a desired fashion. Allport defines an attitude as a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. Therefore, customer oriented

attitudes in customer service employees are a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the employee's response to customers and customer contact situations.

The level of experience depends on various factors in which personality factors play an important role. Attitudes are broken down into three main components, viz (a) Cognitive or informational (b) Affective or emotional (c) Behavioural or conative.

In understanding the causes and effects of attitudes a valuable insight can be obtained from a model of job attitudes presented by Fishbein and Ajzen (Figure 2). It is understood that a certain level of customer orientation in the attitudes of employees is a pre-requisite for ensuring a higher level of customer satisfaction.

Figure 2: A Model of Job Attitudes



Adapted from Martin Fishbein and I. Ajzen, *Beliefs, Attitudes, Intentions and Behaviour: An introduction to theory and research.*

Employee beliefs significantly influence their attitudes. Employees learn attitudes from experiences, co-workers, group membership, family, and friends (Luthans, 1989:172). Personality characteristics of a person tend to influence his or her cognitive and affective and behavioural components of attitudes. Therefore, a study of relationships between personality characteristics and attitudes of employees seems to be supported by rational arguments.

Personality as an Individual Difference Variable

Though in general people are alike, people possess unique characteristics that make them distinct from each other. This individual difference has been highlighted by Professor H.J. Eysenck. Writing a foreword to Adrian Furnham's book-*Personality at Work*, Eysenck writes,

Despite all similarities, all human beings are unique: they differ in intelligence, personality and special abilities, as well as in height, weight, beauty, and all sorts of other mental and physical variables. They also differ, in their ability to do satisfactory work in any of the many jobs, professions and callings that are provided in our society. Some are good at jobs, some are not; taking quite simple occupations, it is usually found that the good do twice as much work as the bad...as a consequence, people have always tried to select those likely to succeed, and to reject those likely to fail...perhaps one of the oldest examples is to be found in the Bible, where Gideon is reported to have used a two stage selection procedure in his war against the Midianites

Prior to this, the ancient Chinese used tests in the selection of clerks and civil servants. Although some argue that selections based on individual differences do not have a firm basis, the French put much stress on astrology and graphology for the selection of high-level businessmen (Furnham, 1992). Individual differences have been taken in to consideration in assigning particular tasks to people. Most of the tests highlight individual differences and personality factors. Psychologists have made a significant contribution towards perfecting tests of ability and personality, which have been found to make much predictions than are possible in any other way. Ability tests measure general intelligence, as well as special abilities, such as verbal,

numerical, visual-spatial, memory and other types of ability. Personality tests measure different traits as well as higher order concepts like introversion, extraversion, emotional stability Vs instability etc. (Furnham, 1992). Personality has become the most frequently tested independent variable of individual differences in work behaviour.

Theories of Personality

The abstract nature of this concept raises several problems of definition. Nevertheless, one cannot overlook the importance of personality in understanding human behaviour. The personality of an individual is made up of all of his qualities. These qualities or traits of personality are abstracted from his behaviour. The word "personality" can be traced to the Latin words *per sona*, which means, "to speak through". This Latin term was used to identify the masks worn by actors in ancient Greece and Rome. The Latin meaning is related to the contemporary analysis of personality since the word emphasizes the role, which the person displays to the public (Luthans, 1989:117). According to Luthans, personality is how people affect others and how they understand and view themselves, as well as their pattern of inner and outer measurable traits, and the person-situation interaction. A layman understands personality as a means of social attractiveness. The person with a "good" personality is one who impresses others with his or her ability to get along well with people.

Despite the fact that there are a large number of definitions attempting to grasp the exact nature of personality, there is a basic agreement among investigators that personality is a hypothetical construct (Rackman, 1982:4). This state encompasses the person's unique learning history and biological propensities and the ways in which these organized complexes of events influence his or her responses to certain stimuli in the environment (Rackman, 1982:4). Thus, personality of a person encompasses the total set of responses to environmental stimuli by that person. These responses emanate as a result of complex psycho-biological interactions in the person.

Jung's Analytical Psychology

The two fundamental attitudes in Jung's typology are extroversion and introversion. Jung's typology is based on his conceptualization of the flow of libido within the psyche. He introduced four psychological functions (sensing, thinking, feeling and intuiting). These are the ways that people make sense of their experiences. Sensation is our initial experience of phenomena, without evaluation. Thinking proceeds from this point and is the interpretation of events through the use of reason and logic. A feeling or an affective aspect is related to this process. The use of minimum interpretation and logic is related to intuition. According to Jung, thinking and feeling functions are rational and sensation and intuition functions are irrational. These basic attitudes and functions are used to derive a typology consisting of various combinations. Jung developed eight combinations.

Jung's personality types have been made useful for marketers by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (a personality inventory) that measures the following pairs of Jungian psychological dimensions (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1994:133).

- i. Sensing-Intuition
- ii. Thinking-Feeling
- iii. Extroversion-Introversion
- iv. Judging-Perceiving

These combinations can be combined and used to classify people according to their problem solving orientations (Myers and Briggs, 1962). The dimensions mentioned above can be combined in various ways. One basic combination is a mixture of the Sensation-Intuition and Thinking-Feeling dimensions. In figure 3, these dimensions and associated individual characteristics are shown.

FIGURE 3: Combination of dimensions and associated personal characteristics

Feeling	Sensing and Feeling (SF) ❖ Sociable, friendly ❖ Approach facts with human concern ❖ Believe in orderly organizations to meet people needs ❖ Like human contract jobs	Intuition and Feeling (NF) ❖ Enthusiastic, insightful ❖ Like new projects, broad themes ❖ Interest in human welfare ❖ Prefer decentralized, loose organizations ❖ Like jobs that affect people
	Sensing and Thinking (ST) ❖ Practical, logical, decisive ❖ Lack interpersonal skills ❖ Prefer bureaucratic organizations ❖ Like technical, analytical jobs like accounting, computer work, production	Intuition and Thinking (NT) ❖ Logical, ingenious ❖ Like changes, new possibilities abstract thinking ❖ Prefer theoretical, technical problems ❖ Like impersonal, conceptual organizations ❖ Like jobs that affect people
Thinking	Sensing	Intuition

Table 1 shows summary characteristics of selected Jungian Personality Types. Hirsh and Kummerow (1989) have given a work style preference interpretation to these four dimensions (see Table 2)

TABLE 1: Summary characteristics of selected Jungian personality types

Sensing-Thinking
☐ Rational in decision making ☐ Logical and empirical in view points ☐ Makes decision following an "objective" orientation ☐ Heavily weighs economic considerations-most price sensitive ☐ Will extend considerable effort to search for decision-making information ☐ Risk avoider ☐ Materialism reflects personal or private motives (i.e., identifies with material objects or "things") ☐ Short-Time horizon in making decisions

Jungain Personality Types and Customer Orientation

Sensing-Feeling

- ☐ Empirical view point
- ☐ Propelled by personal values rather than logic
- ☐ Makes decisions following a "subjective" orientation
- ☐ Likely to consider others when making a decision
- ☐ Shares risk with others
- ☐ Materialism reflects how objects will impact on others
- ☐ Short-time horizon in making decisions

Intuition-Thinking

- ☐ Takes a broader view of personal situations or world
- ☐ Relies heavily on imagination yet uses logic in approaching decisions
- ☐ Weighs options mentally
- ☐ Willing to take risk or be speculative in decisions
- ☐ Long-time horizon in making decisions

Intuition-Feeling

- ☐ Takes a broad view of personal situations or world
- ☐ Imagines a wide range of options in making a decision
- ☐ Highly people oriented
- ☐ Makes decisions following a subjective orientation
- ☐ Least price sensitive
- ☐ Risk seeking
- ☐ Indefinite time horizon in making decisions

Source: Adapted from Schiffman and Kanuk, Consumer Behaviour, 1996: p. 135

Table 2: Work Style Preference Interpretation to Some Jungian Personality Types

Extroverts	☐ They copy a work setting that is actively oriented and allows for frequent interactions with others. ☐ Frequently choose occupations that encourage activity and interaction with others on a regular and frequent basis.
Introverts	☐ They enjoy a work setting that is quiet and private, and that allows for concentration on the task. ☐ Frequently choose occupations that encourage reflection and in-depth concentration on concepts and ideas.
Sensors	☐ Some sensors generally choose a work setting that produces practical, useful products or services for people or organizations. ☐ They use their sensing preferences to work carefully with people, things and data. ☐ They tend to favour work settings that allow them to learn a skill and practice to the point of mastery. ☐ Frequently choose occupations that require more hands on and direct experience dealing with problems. They enjoy attending to and mastering detail.
Intuitors	☐ They are likely to choose a work setting that produces new products or services. ☐ They want to use their intuition preference to meet future needs or to find new possibilities for people, things and data. ☐ They want to learn new things in their work setting. ☐ They frequently choose jobs that call for seeing relationships and patterns and dealing with them. Intuitors enjoy jobs with underlying meanings and anticipating future possibilities and needs.
Thinkers	☐ They choose a work setting that is more impersonal and governed by logic. ☐ Frequently choose occupations that encourage the use of logical and impersonal analysis.

Feelers	☐ Feelers tend to prefer a work setting that is more personal, focusing on relationships between people and meeting peoples' personal needs.
Judgers	☐ Judges like a work setting that is structured and organized, with plans in place. ☐ Frequently choose occupations that have requirements for organization and closure.
Perceptives	☐ They prefer a work setting that is spontaneous, flexible and open to change. They like gathering information as part of their job. ☐ They frequently choose occupations in which they can define their own schedules, be flexible, and remain open to new information.

Source: Adapted from Adrian Furnham's Personality at work, 1992: p. 63.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

Based on the original works of Carl Jung, Myers-Briggs developed an indicator to measure personality. This test is called **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)** which is a paper and pencil personality inventory targeted at the general population and which is widely used in organizational settings.

This test has been widely applied for the personality measures in the work place (Devito, 1985). Nutt (1986) related the MBTI scores of 137 top executives to the way in which they evaluated hypothetical capital-expansion scenarios with strategic importance. The MBTI score was once found to be a significant factor in explaining the adaptability and perceived risk for strategic decisions. Executives with SF profiles were found to be action oriented, ST executive action was adverse, with NT's and NF's taking nearly identical and neutral positions (Furnham, 1992:67). Haley and Stumpf (1989) have pointed out that the popularity of the MBTI in executive circles affords researchers tremendous opportunities for research. Moor (1987) noted that most companies use the MBTI to help managers better understand how they come across others who may see things differently. Other applications include team building, **improving customer service**, smoothing out group differences, working on projects, adapting to change, analyzing problems, behaviour between employees, and between employees and their jobs, and facilitating competitive strate-

gic thinking (Furnham, 1992:69). It is evident that MBTI has been used extensively in profiling personality types with a view to associate personality types with various work-related aspects of employees. Therefore, the adoption of the MBTI version of personality profiling in the area of marketing to test the Jungian personality types is useful.

Personality and Work behaviour

There have been noteworthy studies about the personality and its influence on human behaviour in work. Most researchers are of the view that well designed and executed longitudinal studies of personality are the best type of research as they provide much direction to establish causality and correlation. One study by Harrel and Harrel (1984) showed that general managers were more socially extraverted than accountants were. Anderson (1977) concluded that those with a more healthy and adaptive locus of control tended to experience low stress and employed more task-centered and less emotion-centered coping behaviours than externals. Hinrichs (1978) after an eight year period of study found that ratings of aggressiveness, persuasiveness, oral communication and self-confidence, and test ratings on ascendancy and self-assurance were most strongly related to performance. Brousseau (1978) found that active orientation (extraversion) and freedom from depression (non-neuroticism) were related to task identity, task significance, and job summary. Moreover, the results supported the overall theory that proposes that an individual's life orientation and level of emotional well being were influenced by the stimulus complexity of the job experience. Furthermore, they concluded that an individual's sense of identity and values are largely formed by the end of adolescence. These studies show that personality traits do not change over time and that they relate directly and systematically to occupational, behavioural, variables. Therefore, it is evident that personality factors play a major role in explaining work behaviour of employees.

Personality Testing in the Work Place

Psychological tests, attempting to measure individual differences related to occupational behaviours, have been used for over 60 years, and there now exist nearly 80,000 occupational related tests (Furnham, 1992:37). Personality tests are frequently used for selection and appraisal of employees due to following reasons (Furnham, 1992:40).

- i. High number of applicants
- ii. The high costs of interviewing
- iii. The poor reliability of interviewing
- iv. The necessity for objective, comparative data (chosen Vs not chosen)
- v. Allegation about nepotism and favouritism

Gaudet and Carli (1957) have estimated that seven times as many executives fail due to personality problems than for lack of technical competence. Ghiselli and Barthol (1953) concluded that under certain circumstances, scores on personality inventories correlate better with proficiency on a wide variety of jobs than might have been expected. The authors recognized the potential value of personality testing in industry and the need for a vast increase and improvement in research and development. Ghiselli and Barthol (1953) and Ghiselli and Brown (1955) examined intelligence, interests and personality, and looked at how these related to job performance in a variety of occupations. According to a study conducted by Dominique V. Turpin, Japanese companies thoroughly examine attitudes through personal interviews. He adds:

*Through extensive recruiting interviews, the best companies make sure that their new employees emphasize courtesy and humility in their contact with customers. This is particularly true for students who major in social sciences, humanities or law and who are heading for careers in sales, personnel, planning, administration etc. Aspiring candidates are then asked to appear for a series of interviews... the basic criteria for hiring-besides an employee's potential or ability-are a **balanced personality and moderate views** (italic & emphasis mine)*

The applicability of personality tests in selecting customer oriented employees are a "feed forward" type of control. It prevents the "misfits" to the organization in handling customer contact assignments. Testing personality for the identification of potential areas for further improvement in employees for better customer care is "concurrent" control, which identifies the deviations in employees.

Derivation of Hypotheses

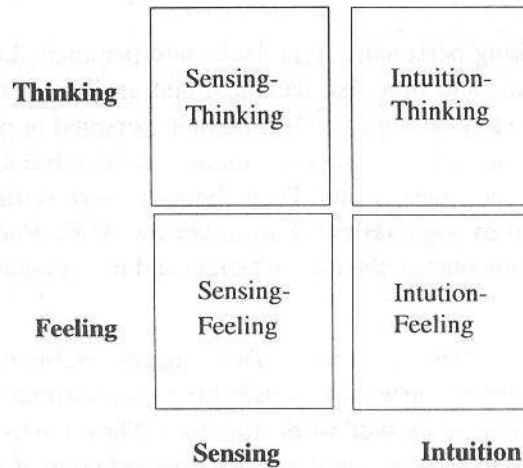
A person who interacts with people as a source of energy tends to be an extrovert. They, with their need for sociability, appear to be energized by people. Hirsh and Kummerow (1989) have explained the work style preference of extroverts and introverts. According to that, extroverts as opposed to introverts are outward and people oriented. Tosi et al (1986) and Schiffman & Kanuk (1996) have shown that extroverts are suitable for people-oriented jobs than are introverts.

Extroverts copy a work setting that is actively oriented and allows for frequent interactions with others. They select occupations that encourage activity and interactions with others on a regular basis. Introverts tend to enjoy a work setting that is private and quiet. They concentrate much on the task. The customer orientation requires attentiveness, enthusiasm, friendliness etc. in the employees (Bowen & Schneider 1985; Rafaeli 1993). Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

H₁: Extrovert employees are more customer-oriented in their attitudes than introvert employees.

The most cited combination of Thinking-Feeling and Sensing-Intuition types (as explained in the literature survey) topology is used to develop the other hypotheses.

Figure 4: Topology Showing Four Personality Types of Thinking-Feeling & Sensing-Intuition Combination



Sensing-Feeling type people are sociable, friendly, approach facts with human concern, believe in orderly organizations to meet people's needs and they like human contact jobs. Hirsh and Kummerow (1989) showed that they care for people and their needs. Sensing type use their sensing preferences to work carefully with people, things and data. Feeling type tend to prefer a work setting that is more personal, focusing on relationships between people and meeting peoples' personal needs. They tend to choose occupations that have a value basis and involve people to them relating personally. This sensing-feeling type offers a unique integrative type that is highly people oriented. This is in line with the main parameters of customer oriented attitudes in employees. The people element constitutes a bigger part of customer orientation in employees.

Intuition-Feeling type is interested in human welfare and they like jobs that affect people. They prefer decentralized, loose organizations. Their intuition aspect encourages them to select a work setting that produces new products or services and to find new possibilities for people, things and data (Hirsh & Kummerow, 1989). Intuition-Feeling type takes a broad view of personal situation or world and imagines wide range of options in making a decision. In addition, they are highly people oriented. Binter, Booms and Tetreault (1990) were of the view that ability, willingness and competence of customer contact employees to solve customer problems should be an integral part of customer oriented behaviour. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H₂: Sensing-Feeling personality type employees are more customer-oriented than the Intuition-Feeling personality type.

The Sensing-Thinking personality type lacks interpersonal skills and prefers bureaucratic organizations and they like technical and analytical jobs (Tosi et al, 1986). Materialism is the key driving force behind their personal or private motives. They tend to avoid risk and heavily weigh economic considerations. They are very logical and empirical in their viewpoints. They choose a work setting that is more impersonal and governed by logic (Hirsh & Kummerow, 1986). Furthermore, they choose occupations that encourage the use of logical and impersonal analysis.

According to Tosi et al (1989), Intuition-Thinking personality types are logical and ingenious. They prefer changes, new possibilities and abstract thinking. They enjoy theoretical and technical oriented work situations. They like to work in impersonal settings. They seem to be deficient in people-oriented interactions. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

H₃: Employees of Intuition-Thinking personality types and Sensing-Thinking types are less customer-oriented in their attitudes than Sensing-Feeling and Intuition-Feeling types.

Methodology of the Study

Both primary sources and secondary sources are used in the study. The primary data are predominantly in the form of responses by employees of Sri Lanka Telecom Ltd. on the aspects of customer orientation and their personality. Secondary data were collected by reviewing relevant literature, articles and journals. The research approach used to collect primary data is that of a sample survey. The main research instrument was the Questionnaire. The questions have been arranged in a Likert Scale ranging from one (1) to five (5). The questionnaire consists of two parts. Customer orientation in the attitudes of employees is tested in the first part and the second part has been designed to test the Jungian personality types. For the purpose of measuring personality types a standard questionnaire based on Myers Brigg Type Indicator (MBTI) has been used. The questionnaire consists of altogether 98 questions. Eleven variables that determine customer orientation have been

measured by using 28 questions in the first part. These questions have been designed to test different variables determining customer orientation. These variables have been isolated from various empirical findings. The sample consisted of employees who have been selected for customer care training by Sri Lanka Telecom Ltd. at their training centre at Welisara. Their daily tasks involved interacting with customers. The questionnaires were distributed before the training program in order to avoid any bias. The employees are from various Telecom centres in the country.

One hundred questionnaires were circulated and 78 of them were received. Of the 78 questionnaires, 12 were rejected due to incomplete responses. Thus sixty-six (66) respondents have been taken for the analysis. Of this number 52 were females.

Twenty-eight questions measuring customer orientation were arranged in a Likert scale. The maximum score for the total customer orientation for each respondent is 140 (28×5). There are 66 responses for each parameter in customer orientation section. Therefore, the maximum score for each parameter is 330 (66×5). These parameters have been amalgamated to form the eleven variables designed to measure customer orientation. These total scores have been taken to analyze the level of customer orientation in the attitudes of employees.

The second section of the questionnaire consists of seventy questions measuring the personality types: Introversion, Extroversion, Thinking, Feeling, Sensing, Intuition, Judging and perceiving. The maximum score for Introversion and Extroversion is ten (10). The maximum score for each other parameter is twenty (20). Based on the scores of these types the four pairs have been identified (sensing-Feeling, sensing-Thinking, Intuition -thinking, and Intuition-Feeling). Then a statistical software package called *Statistica* was used to assess various important relationships and to test the study hypotheses.

Non-parametric statistical measure called *Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA and median test* were used to ascertain whether there is significant difference between different groups of employees (Introvert, extrovert, Sensing-Feeling...etc.) in their customer orientation. The rationale behind using this special test is that the distribution of data is of a non-parametric nature.

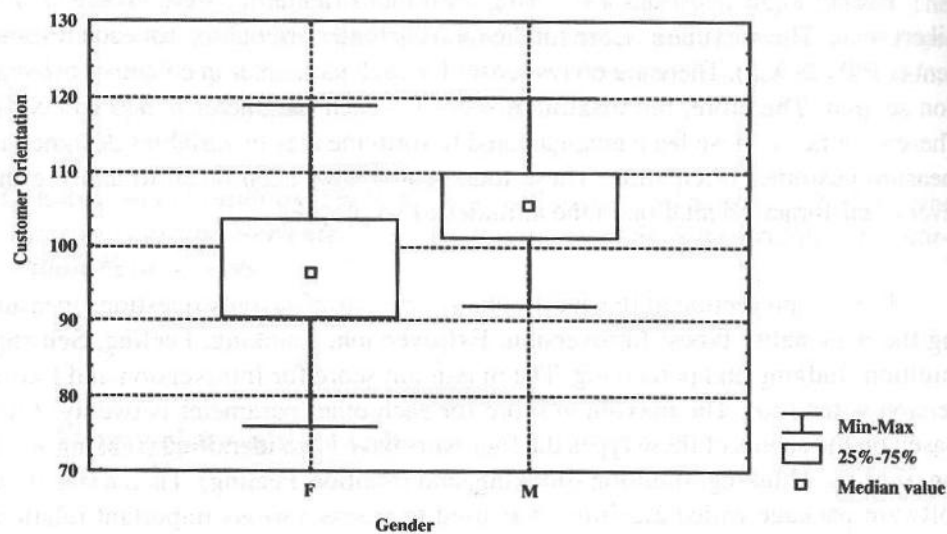
Findings

Customer orientation level by demographics

(a) Customer orientation by gender

The level of customer orientation by gender was tested by using a non-parametric statistical measure called Kruskal Wallis test. Through this test it has been revealed that there is a significant difference between the level of customer orientation of females and males. Since the P value is less than

Figure 5: Customer Orientation by Gender



0.05 confidence level, it can be deduced that there is a statistically significant difference between males and females in their customer orientation (see Table 4 & Figure 5).

Table 4: Kruskal Wallis ANOVA Tests Result

Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA by Ranks			
Independent (grouping) variable: Gender			
Kruskal-Wallis test: H (1, N=66) = 6.995506 p =.0082			
	Code	Valid N	Sum of Ranks
F	100	52	1573.5
M	101	14	637.5

Source: Survey data

(b) Customer orientation by marital status

There is no statistically significant difference (P value is greater than 0.05) between the level of customer orientation and marital status (Table 5 & Figure 5).

Table 5: CUSTOMER ORIENTATION BY MARITAL STATUS

Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA by Ranks			
Independent (grouping) variable Marital Status			
Kruskal-Wallis test: H (2, N=66) =1.455834 p =.4829			
	Code	Valid N	Sum of Ranks
Married		50	1753
Single	101	15	435
Widowed	102	1	23

Source: Survey Data

(c) Customer Orientation by Age Group

There is no statistically significant difference (P value is greater than 0.05) between age and the customer orientation of employees.

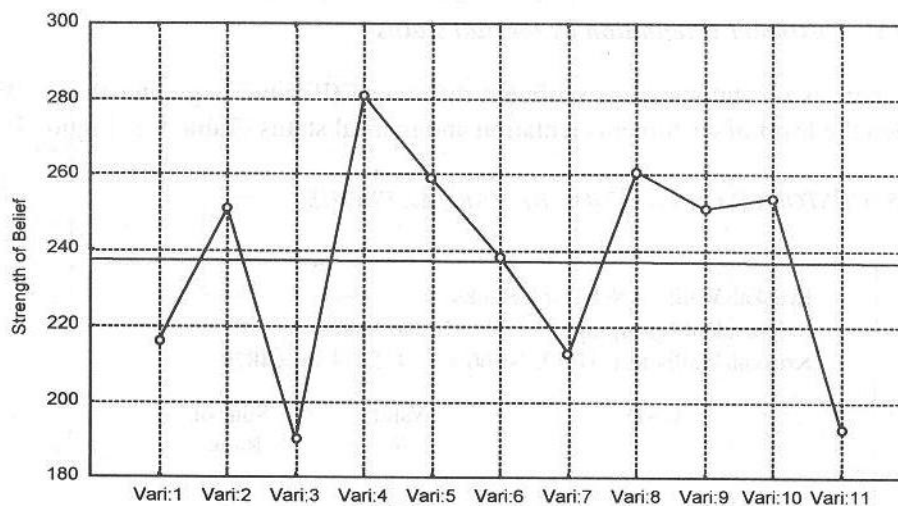
(d) Customer orientation by years of service

There is no statistically significant difference (P value is greater than 0.05) between years of service and the customer orientation of employees.

Analysis of the Importance of various dimensions in customer orientation

The customer orientation in the attitudes of employees has been measured by using eleven variables. The individual scores have been aggregated and plotted on a graph.

Figure 7: Relative Importance of Various dimensions of Customer Orientation

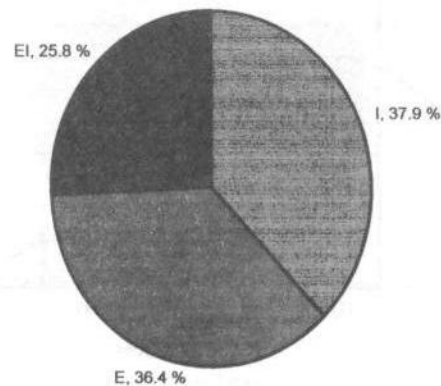


According to figure 7, the aspects of customer orientation reflected by the variables 3 and 11 have been very weak in the employees. That is arrangement of customer service systems for serving customers and the attentiveness to customer requirements seem to be very poor. Apart from these, willingness to solve customer problems is very low among the employees.

Distribution of Jungian personality types in the sample

Figure 8: Distribution of Extrovert and Introvert Types in the Sample

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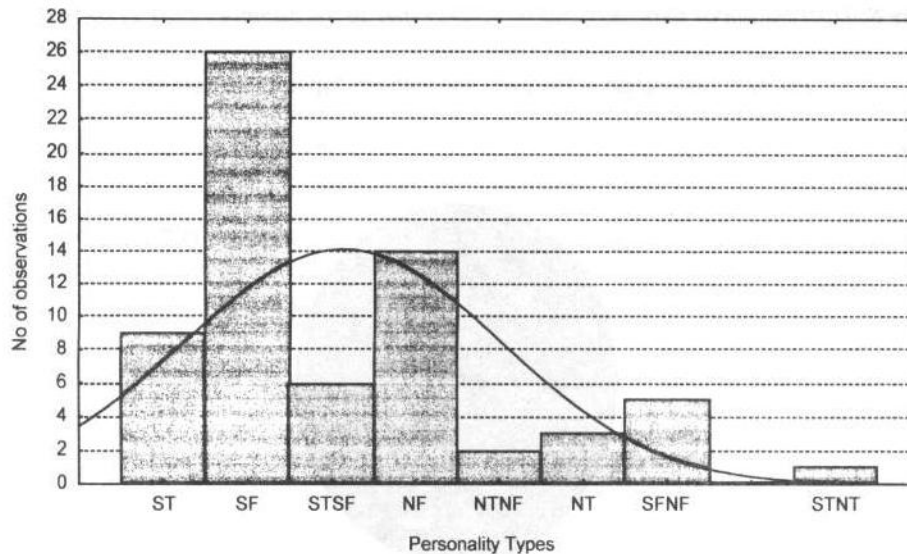


E(Extroversion): I(Introversion): EI(Extrovert & Introvert)

The extrovert and introvert personality type distribution in the sample is around 36% and 38% respectively. This is more or less equally poised and the most interesting observation is that equally extrovert and extrovert type of personality is around 26%.

The distribution of other Jungian personality types in the sample is shown in Figure 9 & 10. The Sensing-Feeling type is the most common (Around 39%) and the second most common type is Intuition-Feeling (Around 21%). Sensing-Thinking type is about 13.6% of the sample.

Figure 9: Distribution of Personality Types in the Sample



Personality types and customer orientation

(a) Extroversion, Introversion and customer orientation

Even though the median test for extroversion and Introversion shows statistical significance (P value is less than 0.05) the ANOVA test shows that the difference between customer orientation of extroverts and Introverts is not statistically significant (P value is greater than 0.05). However, the t- test for these in table 7 shows that there is a statistically significant difference (P value is less than 0.05) between customer-orientation of Introverts and Extrovert \ Introverts. Furthermore, figure 11 elaborates that extroverts are more customer-oriented than introverts are and employees of both extroversion and introversion are more customer oriented than extroverts

Figure 10: Distribution of Personality Types in the Sample

Figure 10: Distribution of Personality Types in the Sample

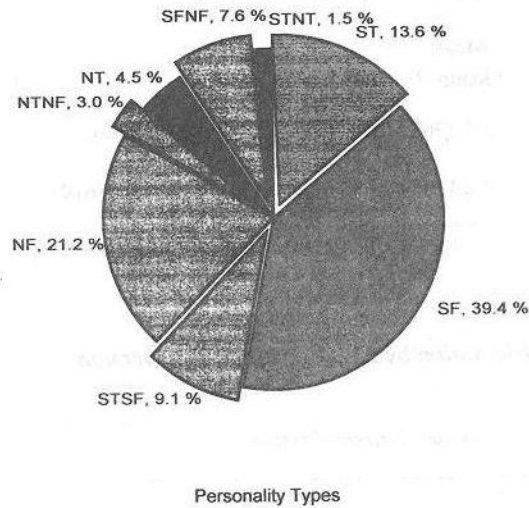


Table 6: MEDIAN TEST FOR CUSTOMER ORIENTATION & EXTROVERSION AND INTROVERSION

Median Test, Overall Median = 98.50000				
Independent (grouping) variable: Extroversion\Introversion				
Chi-Square=6.289020, df=2, p=.0431				
	I	E	EI	Total
<=Median:	17	11	5	33
expected	12.5	12	8.5	
obs.-exp.	4.5	-1	-3.5	
> Median	8	13	12	33
expected	12.5	12	8.5	
obs.-exp.	-4.5	1	3.5	
Total: obs	25	24	17	66

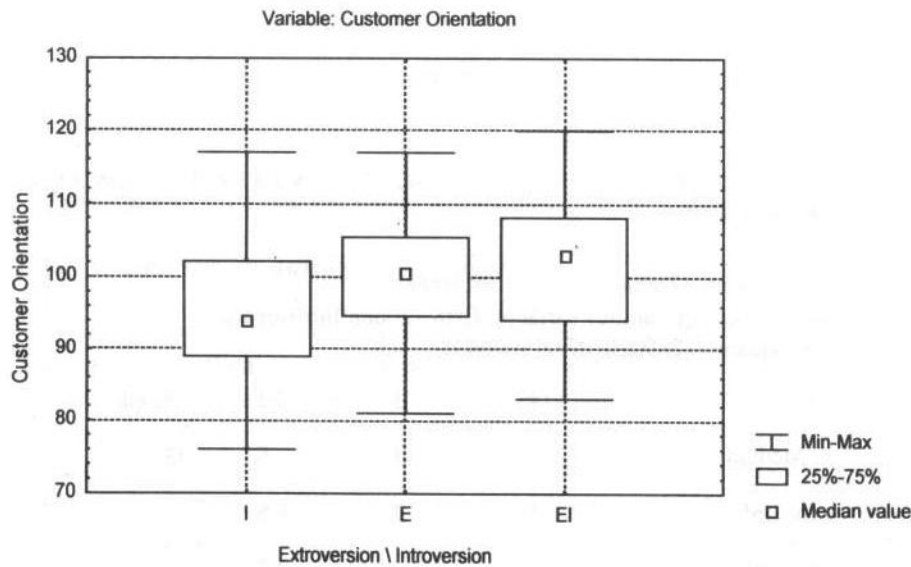
Source: Survey data

Table 7: T- TEST FOR INTROVERT AND EXTROVERT\INTROVERT FOR CUSTOMER ORIENTATION

T-test for Independent Samples							
Note: Variables were treated as independent samples							
	Mean Group 1	Mean Group 2	t-value	df	p	Valid N Group 1	Valid N Group 2
E vs EI	99.66667	102.1765	-0.846731	39	0.402311	24	1
In vs EI	95.04348	102.1765	-2.171646	38	0.036192	23	1

Source: Survey data

Figure 11: Customer Orientation by Extroversion & Introversion



Therefore, there is no statistically significant evidence to accept the first hypotheses, which says that Extroverts are more customer oriented than Introverts. However, employees of both Extroversion and Introversion are more customer - oriented than Introverts. There is statistically significant evidence to support this position.

(b) SF, NF, NT, ST Types and Customer Orientation

Apart from the above hypothesized personality types, there are four new types that have emerged from the test. They are,

- i) STSF
- ii) NTNF
- iii) SFNF
- iv) STNT

Therefore, altogether there are eight personality types that have been dealt with in this study.

Table 8: Means of Customer Orientation Scores of Personality Types

Summary Table of Means N=66 (No missing data in dep. var. list)			
	Customer Orientation Means	Customer Orientation N	Customer Orientation Sum
ST	96.33333	9	867
SF	101.0385	26	2627
STSF	97.33333		
NF	96.42857	14	1350
NTNF	96	2	192
NT	99		297
SFNF	101		
STNT	103		103
All Groups	98.86364	66	

Source: Survey data

Figure 12: Customer Orientation and Personality Types

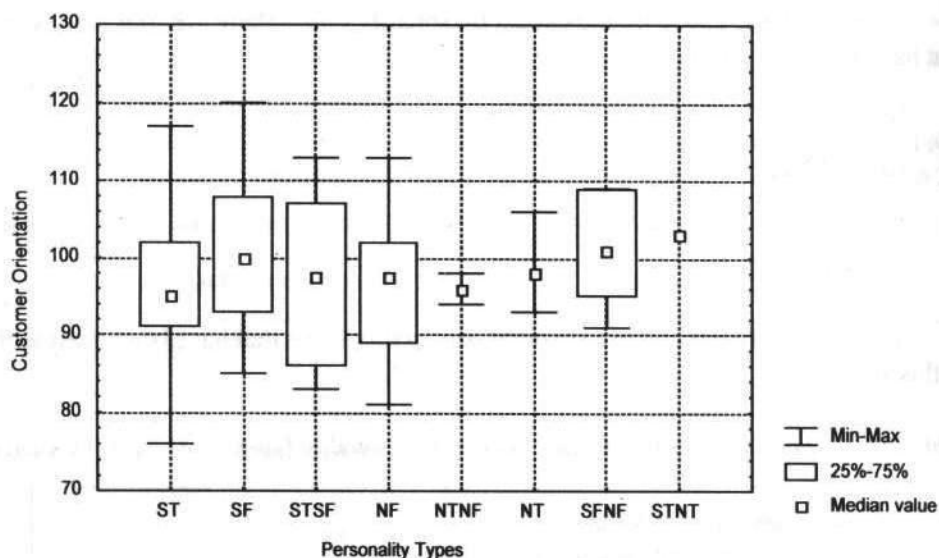


Table 8 shows the mean customer orientation scores of each personality group. SF type has the highest mean value and ST & NTNF types have lower mean scores. Therefore, it can be deduced that sensing-feeling type is more customer-oriented than the sensing-thinking type. Figure 12 shows the median scores of customer orientation and figure 13 shows the mean value and the standard deviation of customer orientation scores of various personality types.

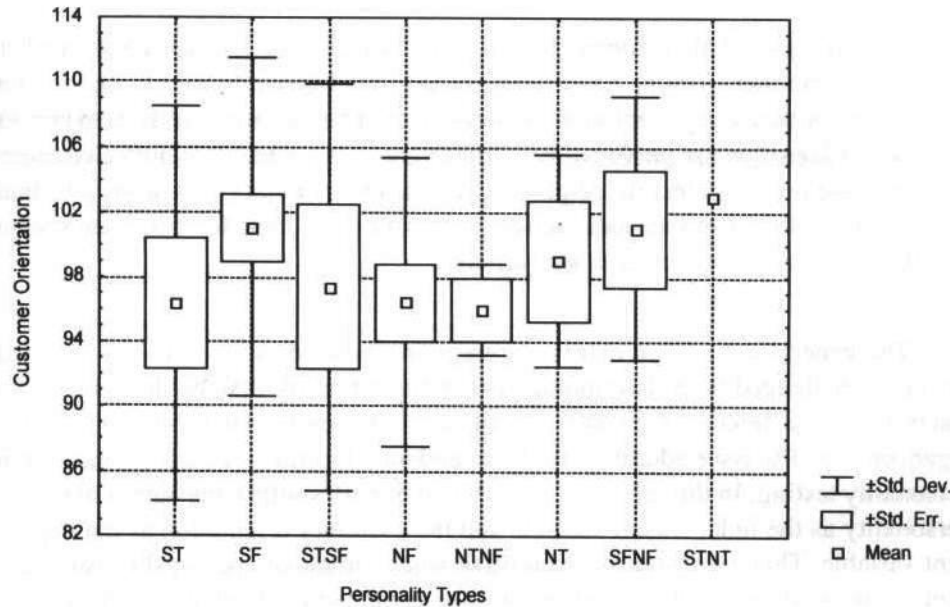
From figure 12 it is evident that 50% of SF type has a customer orientation score of more than 100 and 50% of ST type has a customer orientation score of about 94. The maximum total score for the customer orientation is 140. The customer orientation scores of each personality type as a percentage of total score are,

□ ST	68.8%	□ NTNF	68.8%
□ SF	72.16%	□ NT	70.7%
□ STSF	69.5%	□ SFNF	72%
□ NF	68%	□ STNT	73.5%

The STNT type consists of only one employee. Therefore, this can be treated as an exceptional case to be considered separately from other types.

There is no statistically significant evidence (P value is more than 0.05) to establish that customer-orientation varies with the different personality types identified in the study.

Figure 13: Mean Value & Standard Deviation for Customer Orientation by Personali



Discussion of findings

(a) Emergence of EI type and its significant level of customer orientation

One of the study objectives is to explain the relationship between some personality dimensions and the level of customer orientation in employees. Three hypotheses have been formulated and tested for this purpose. The conceptualization included only Extroversion and Introversion. But an equal mixture (hybrid) of both Extroversion and Introversion (EI) has emerged as a dominant type in the sample.

There is no statistically significant difference between Extroversion and Introversion with regard to customer orientation. However, the difference between introversion and EI type with regard to their customer orientation is statistically significant. **From this it can be deduced that employees of a hybrid of extroversion and introversion are more customer-oriented than the introverted type.** Though the graphical illustration has shown a higher level of customer orientation in EI type when compared with extroverts, there is no statistically significant evidence of this. About 25% of the sample consists of EI type. Rest of the sample consists of equal amount of introverts and extroverts.

The higher level of customer orientation associated with EI type needs further explanation. Neither extreme Extroverts nor extreme Introverts tend to maintain a higher level of customer orientation. **A balance of Introversion and Extroversion is required for superior performance.** Therefore, it is evident that both characteristics are essential. In selecting employees for customer contact jobs or for jobs that directly affect the customer satisfaction, selectors must look for candidates with equally poised Extroversion and Introversion.

The general notion that extroverts are more inclined to be customer oriented has been challenged with this finding. This unique finding may be due to the fact that in Sri Lanka Telecom there still prevails a culture common to most public sector organizations. The issue addresses the independent - dependent variable construct in personality testing. In this study, as in most personality studies, the author assumed personality as the independent variable and the customer orientation as the dependent variable. This may work in the reverse where employee personality is dependent on the work place situational factors like organizational culture, work culture, technology etc. Moreover, this area paves the way for further research on these aspects.

(b) Gender specific nature of customer orientation

The study findings have shown a statistically significant relationship between gender and the level of customer orientation. **Men are more customer-oriented than women.** This finding also questions many research findings in this area. For example, male and female employees can become socialized and behave similarly in their roles as police officers, psychologists, professors, chefs, and so on, rather than as men or women (Chao et al, 1994). The work role and its prescriptive attachments often override behavioural or attitudinal differences attributable to gender (Barry & Boles, 1996). These study findings by various researchers tend to establish

the fact that gender differences are overridden by work roles. However, this study establishes something to the contrary. Nevertheless, there are instances in which sex roles override work roles, which suggests different reactions and behaviour between men and women. Differences arise on the basis of male tendencies toward high assertiveness, task mastery, and individualism, and female tendencies toward concern for people, devotion, and acquiescence (Barry & James, 1996). In order to be consistent with these findings, females should be more customer-oriented than males. But the reverse case has been established. Therefore, in customer care training programmes, females may be given more exposure.

(c) Customer-orientation variables

The eleven variables used to ascertain the level of customer-orientation in the employee attitudes can be grouped in to three categories based on the employee response level.

High response level	→	variable 4
Medium response level	→	variable 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10
Low response level	→	variable 1, 3, 7, 11

The employees have shown the lack of,

- 1) Willingness to solve customer problems
- 2) Attentiveness to customer requirements
- 3) Self efficacy
- 4) Arrangement of customer service systems for the betterment of customers.

Therefore, when training employees, these aspects should be given high priority. Next, the following factors should be considered for improvement.

- 1) Employees willingness to solve customer problems
- 2) Friendliness of employees
- 3) Employee adaptability to interpersonal demands of the situation

- 4) Willingness to perform additional tasks
- 5) Commitment to customer
- 6) Understanding customer needs

(d) Relationship between employee personality types and customer-orientation

The primary objective of this study is to test the nature of the relationship between Jungian personality types and the level of customer orientation in the attitudes of employees. Therefore, based on Jungian personality, four most popular type combinations applied in marketing have been used. It has been hypothesized that sensing-feeling and Intuition-feeling types are associated with a higher level of customer-orientation and that ST and NT types are associated with a lower level of customer-orientation. According to these hypotheses, there should be statistically significant difference between the level of customer-orientation and the respective personality types. **The study results have shown that there is no statistically significant difference between the level of customer-orientations associated with these personality types.** This outcome again poses a challenge to the existing notion that SF and NF types are customer-oriented and ST & NT types are not customer-oriented. The other predominant factor is that out of the sample about 39% are SF types and about 21% are of NF type. Overall, about 60% of the sample consists of employees who have the potential for higher customer-orientation than other types. However, other types also have been found to be equally customer-oriented. This phenomenon may be explained as follows:

Explanation 1

The customer-oriented behaviour may not emerge spontaneously in the attitudes of employees. It may require some sort of intervention in the form of training and coaching. The present level of customer-orientation in the employees may be the common level in the absence of any training. Since Sri Lanka Telecom has been a government monopoly, customer training has been rare. If proper training in customer-orientation had been given there would have been significant difference between personality types and customer-orientation. Since around 60% of the sample consists of SF and NF types, there is high potential for improvement in customer-orientation in the attitudes of employees. **Therefore, there is an area for further research to ascertain whether employees are naturally customer-oriented or whether they have to be trained for that.** This may have distorted the generally

expected outcome of this research. Still there is insufficient evidence to say that there is no relationship between personality types and the customer-orientation level of employees. This requires further research.

Explanation 2

The major assumption that personality is an independent variable and customer-orientation is a dependent variable may not be valid. Organizational work situation and the culture that have prevailed for a long time may have caused a critical shaping of the personality of employees. This is further substantiated by the following excerpt from Adrian Furnham.

This possibility would assume that there is no systematic relationship between any major personality factor and any dimension of organizational behaviour. This may only appear to be so because the relationship, which actually exists, is too subtle to be measured, too unstable, or is frequently 'washed out' or moderated by other more powerful and salient variables...this more unusual position assumes that personality traits are, in some sense, a function of organizational behaviour variables. In a sense this position could be seen as a manifestation of the structuralist-determinist position...precisely how this occurs, or which aspects of personality are shaped by which features of organizational structures and processes, is not clear.

As indicated above, personality may be a function of organizational factors. In this scenario, personality factors of employees and their relationship to any organizational behaviour variable may be too complicated for easy understanding. **The impact of organizational characteristics on personality has to be further researched.**

Therefore, organization culture and the work setting may be a potential factor causing critical patterns in employee personality. Here, personality is determined by organizational factors not the other way around. The type of culture that has prevailed in Sri Lanka Telecom for a considerable period of time may have significantly affected the personality of employees. This is further supported by the fact that more than 65% of the sample consists of employees whose service in the present employment is more than 10 years. From this it is evident that there should be an appropri-

ate organization culture and work setting to enable the employees' individual differences to emerge.

Recommendations

Policy level directional advice on customer-orientation for Sri Lanka Telecom in particular and for similar firms in general based on this study findings:

Selection for customer-orientation training

Since customer-orientation appears to be relatively low for females when compared with males, females should be given priority in training.

Selection for customer contact jobs

Rather than selecting employees with higher extroversion than introversion, select employees with equally poised extroversion and introversion (the standard personality inventory can be used for this purpose).

Training needs

The study has shown that employees lack the following areas of customer-orientation. These areas can be divided into two sections (first priority items Versus second priority items) based on the level of deficiency. Therefore, these areas should be highlighted in designing training programs.

First priority items

- i. Employees should have willingness to solve customer problems
- ii. Employees should develop attentiveness to customer requirements
- iii. Employees should have self efficacy (belief that they have the ability to perform tasks excellently)

- iv. Employees should be made aware that arrangements of customer service systems should be made for the betterment of customers not for themselves.

Second priority items

- i. Creating willingness to solve customer problems
- ii. Develop friendliness of employees towards the customer
- iii. Develop employee adaptability to interpersonal demands of the situation
- iv. Develop employee willingness to perform additional tasks
- v. Develop employee commitment to customers
- vi. Develop ability to understand customer needs

Other general work environment factors

- i. The organization may create an appropriate work culture to create a conducive environment for employees' individual differences to emerge. Otherwise, even though employees are trained in customer service, they may not be able to behave accordingly.
- ii. Employees may not naturally be customer-oriented. The organization may have to train them to behave in that way.

Personality types with high potential for customer-orientation may become more customer-oriented than other types after training on customer-orientation

Areas for further research

From this study, several leads for further research have emerged. They are:

- i. Research is needed to test whether there is a significant impact of organization culture and work setting on the employees' personality types. Further evidence is required to ascertain how employee personality is moulded by organizational factors.

- ii. Research is needed to test whether employees are naturally customer-oriented or whether they should be trained in customer-orientation
- iii. Research is needed to ascertain whether there should be an appropriate environment for customer-oriented employees to behave in the desired manner.
- iv. Research evidence is required to confirm whether the level of customer-orientation in employees is gender-specific

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