

# ESSENCE AND CONSEQUENCE OF TYPE-A BEHAVIOR IN SALES EXECUTIVES

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**Abstract:** The Pharmaceutical sales executives generally called as medical sales representatives play an important role in the growth and development of pharmaceutical industry. The core characteristics of these executives are highly competitive, achievement-driven and target oriented. Type-A personality is a behavioral pattern that helps people to deliver their best in executing the works assigned. Theories of personality explain that Type-A individuals are ambitious, aggressive, business-like, controlling, impatient, preoccupied with one's status, time-conscious and tightly-wound. Type-B individuals are perfect contrast to those with type-A personalities. This paper examines the impact of type-A and type-B personality on job performance of the pharmaceutical sales executives in India. This makes it clear to understand the importance of type-A behavior in the Indian pharmaceutical sales. This paper critically explains the need for managing type –A behavior in the pharmaceutical companies in order to maintain and sustain the growth.

**Keywords:** Performance, type-A behavior, Sales executives, Medical sales representatives

## INTRODUCTION

The sales executives/medical sales representatives play an important role in the growth and development of pharmaceutical companies. They sell their company's products, like medicines, prescription drugs and medical equipment to doctors, hospitals and pharmacies. The core characteristics of these executives are highly competitive, achievement-driven and target oriented.

Medical sales representatives/sales executives have to convince highly qualified and intellectual people i.e. doctors from molecule to molecule for different indications and diseases. They do multitasking like meeting doctors, generating prescriptions for their products, meeting stockists and chemists, making their product widely available, submitting the required reports and data on time, conducting seminars, conferences, continue medical education programs, doctor group meetings, achieving sales targets etc. In addition to these functions, sales competition among the companies remains a challenge. In executing all these functions medical representatives may either undergo lot of pressure by themselves or it may be applied by their managers. It is believed in sales that personality of the individuals has strong influence on their job.

### Type-A Personality

Theories of personality explains that type – A individuals are ambitious, aggressive, business-like, controlling, highly competitive, impatient, time-conscious, preoccupied with their status. But type-B individuals are generally patient, relaxed, easy going and at times lacking

an overriding sense of urgency. Actually, Type-A/B personalities are a result of consistent behavioral responses to various environmental demands. People will adapt certain behavioral patterns according to the situations they face in daily lives.

Previous research says that Type A/B behavior pattern is a behavioral trait (Specter & O'Connell, 1994) how one responds to environmental challenges and threats (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1984). People with type-A personality respond in ways characterized as aggressive, achievement oriented, dynamic, hard driving, fast paced (in eating, walking, and talking), impatient, competitive, ambitious, irritated, angry, hostile, and under time pressures (Cooper, Kirkcaldy, & Brown, 1994; Friedman, 1967; Jamal, 1990; Rosenman & Chesney, 1985). Type B individuals are casual, easygoing, and never in a rush to get things done (Bortner, 1969). Type A personality people develop coronary heart disease (Friedman, 1967; Schaubroeck, Ganster, & Kemmerer, 1994) and experience more stressors and strains (Jamal, 1999; Sharpely, Dua, Reynolds, & Acosta, 1995) than Type B personality people. A majority of these studies have been done to have an understanding of the effect of type-A personality on the lives of the general population. In the present study Type –A personality scale developed by C.L. Cooper et al. is used to assess the behavioral pattern of the sales executive.

### Job performance

For examining the productivity of any company, measuring the performance of its employee's performance is crucial. The studies in the domain of performance have attracted

researcher’s attention for many years. A majority of these studies have been done to have an understanding of the effect of different independent factors on the performance of individuals and organizations. Among these independent variables we can name some such as motivation, conflict, communication, leadership, emotional intelligence and values(Vroom,1964;Luthans, Rosencratnz, and Hennessey,1985; Robertson & Gibbons,1999; Tubre and Collins,2000; Woong and Phooi-Ching,2000; Sy.Tram and O’ Hara,2006; Bipath,2007; Rieck,2008).

Following the previous studies this paper intends to have an explanation of the impact of the type-A behavior on job performance among pharmaceutical sales executives.

Now a days performance measurement is modified from person-oriented to being behavior oriented. According to Milkovich and Boudreau (1997) “Organizations are replacing the notion of ‘jobs’ with considering what ‘roles’ or ‘competencies’ will be required for the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. This trend has led to renewed interest in the person. In particular, organizations have begun to develop appraisal systems based on competency models, which focus on the skills people need to be effective in their jobs (Lawler, 1994).

In the present study performance of the pharmaceutical sales executives is assessed on their ‘role’ accomplishments by using the role based job performance scale (Theresa M Welbourn, 1997).

**METHODOLOGY**

1. Objective: To assess the impact of type-A behavior on job performance among pharmaceutical sales executives.
2. Hypothesis: There would be significant impact of type-A behavior on job performance among pharmaceutical sales executives.

**SAMPLE**

The sample for the present study is consisted of 480 medical / pharmaceutical sales executives working in national and multinational companies (240 national and 240 multinational) located in different cities of southern parts of India like Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Bangalore, Chennai, Coimbatore and Thiruvananthapuram were selected by using systematic random sampling method. The sample is divided in to two groups Type-A behavior and Type-B behavior.

**PROCEDURE**

Initially all the participants were contacted directly during meetings and explained the purpose of the study

and taken permission from their concern leadership. In the second stage the researcher have collected list of mobile numbers and e mail IDs of the participants from their leadership to conduct the web based survey (All the 4 questionnaires and personal data sheet were made available online). Later, the researcher followed up with the participants to complete the survey by offering incentives. Out of 2500 people contacted, the sample further divided based on their scores obtained as highest and lowest (top scorers 25% and lowest scorers 25%) groups in personality type (A & B). The study has included only 480 male participants. Further, data were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods i.e., Mean, SDs and t- tests.

**MATERIAL**

1. Type-A behavior scale developed by C.L.Cooper et al (1998).
2. The role based job performance scale developed by Theresa M Welbourne (1996.)

In this study, Type-A personality is independent variable and Job Performance is dependent variable. The Type-A behavior scale developed by Cooper et al (1998) is used to measure the type of personality of the sales executives. This is a 6 point rating scale consists of 22 items. The respondents were asked to indicate their answer on a scale of 1 to 6 (i.e.1.very strongly disagree 2.strongly disagree 3.disagree 4.agree 5.strongly agree 6.very strongly agree).High score indicates type-A behavior and low score indicates type-B behavior. To measure the job performance of the sales executives, the role based job performance scale constructed by Theresa M Welbourne, (1996) is used. This is a self report tool consists of 20 items using a 5-point rating scale, where 1 represents ‘Needs much improvement’, 2 represents ‘Need some improvement’, 3 represents ‘Satisfactory’, 4 represents ‘Good’, and 5 represents ‘Excellent’. The high scores indicate the sales executives’ high job performance low score indicates low job performance.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

After obtaining data from the sales executives, it was subjected to an appropriate statistical methods i.e. mean, standard deviation and t test.

*Table1:Shows the Mean scores for personality types.*

Person ality	perfor mance	Job	Care er	Inno vati on	Tea m	Orga nizat io	Tota l.Jp
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type A	Mean	15.8	12.8	12.9	13.6	18.7	74.0
	N	8	7	1	9	7	
type B	Mean	14.6	11.1	13.0	13.3	18.3	70.6
	N	9	8	2	1	7	0
Total	Mean	15.2	11.9	13.0	13.4	18.5	72.3
	N	8	9	0	6	8	3

Table I presents the results of the impact of type of personality on job performance dimension wise. The executives with type-A personality found to be better in job role (mean, 15.88), career role (12.8), team player role (13.61), and organization role (18.69). But in the role of innovator executives with type-B personality are better performed (mean, 13.02), as per as dimensions are concern. The study also reveals that the executives with type-A personality have obtained higher mean (74.07) score than the executives with type-B personality with regard to their total job performance.

To know the exact differences and impact, t-test is performed and the results are tabulated in table II.

Dimensi ons of JP	Personal ity Type	Mean	Std Dev	Std.Erro	t-value	P value
JOB	Type-A	15.88	2.4739	0.159	7.43630	0.000
	Type-B	14.69	2.4908	0.16078		
CAREER	Type-A	12.8	2.2224	0.14345	10.2714	0.000
	Type-B	11.18	2.6544	0.17134		
INNOVA TOR	Type-A	12.97	2.7549	0.17782	0.20662	0.836
	Type-B	13.02	5.3726	0.3468		
TEAM	Type-A	13.61	2.6121	0.16861	1.54971	0.122
	Type-B	13.31	3.3859	0.21855		
ORGANIZ ATION	Type-A	18.79	2.2677	0.14637	2.38456	0.178
	Type-B	18.37	3.1454	0.20303		
TOTAL JP	Type-A	74.07	9.395	0.60644	5.17534	0.000
	Type-B	70.60	11.3589	0.73321		

It is observed from the above table -II, that there is significant impact of type-A personality on the roles of JOB and CAREER. It also reveals that the type-A personality does not have any significant impact on the roles of INNOVATOR, TEAM and ORGANIZATION. But on total job performance type-A personality has significant impact.

**DISCUSSION**

The present study provides valuable insights with respect to perception of type-A behavior and the role of pharmaceutical companies in promoting type-A behavior among sales executives.

It is observed from the statistical analysis of the study, that the sales executives with type-A personality have significant impact on the roles of Job and Career. But in the dimensions of Innovator, Team and Organization type-A personality does not have any significant impact. However, the type-A personality is contributing to the overall performance of the sales executives.

The pharmaceutical sales executives with type-A behavior give more importance to their job functions and to grow in their careers whereas the sales executives with type-B behavior work innovatively with teams and taking other colleagues in to confidence for the overall good of the company. Sales executives with Type-A behavior are *successful much faster* than the executives with type-B behavior. They do whatever it takes to get the success; they do not bother about the consequences that the organization will have to face as a result of it. Sales executives with type-B behavior are *effective human resources* for the overall good of the company.

The sales executives who have Type-A personality are found to be more productive in their Total Job Performance in terms of getting the immediate results. Since the individuals with type-A behavior possess the following behavior characteristics as their strengths such as highly independent, taking charge, being decisive & direct, business-like, ambitious, efficient, self motivated & high achieving, persistent, focused, risk taking, practical solution oriented, multitasking, deadline driven, they best suits the pharmaceutical sales jobs. But existing studies described that type-A personality people have more chances of developing coronary artery disease (Friedman & Rosenman, 1959.) Because of the behavioral characteristics like aggressive, controlling, too competitive, impatient, status conscious, high strong, workaholic, insensitive, easily upset with small things, blunt, rushed and time starved, type-A personality people often become victims to hypertension and heart disease.



Sales executives in Indian pharmaceutical industry are forced to adopt Type-A behavior in order to perform and keep their jobs. Persistent use of Type-A behavior leads to social isolation, severe stress in their personal and professional lives, and burn out. This leads to non focused functioning and increased attrition.

Many researchers believe that type-A behavior is a reaction to environmental factors and are influenced by work culture and job structure. But for some people this behavior may be naturally intense, but this tendency is increased by environmental stress. By learning social skills, empathy, and organizational approach and stress management techniques, pharmaceutical sales executives can combat the negative consequences of Type-A personality and enjoy the quality life like type-B people. Assertiveness training & Emotional intelligence training may help manage stress levels in their daily routine lives. If provided these essential skills training pharmaceutical sales executives with type-A behavior can become the real assets to the organizations.

### IMPLICATIONS

This study serves as an addition to the increasing interest in pharmaceutical company's roles and responsibilities in the Indian context in developing and promoting people in their organizations.

The findings of the present study support that type-A behavior may harm the interest of the organizations in long run if not managed. This study has implications for team building and organizational citizenship behavior programs. The findings may serve as a valuable resource in developing need-based training programs for sales executives with type-A behavior to create a better understanding of the organization's interests when going for higher responsibilities. This study is beneficial for the organizations why to show real empathy and support to their employees in improving their well-being and quality of both professional and personal lives.

### LIMITATIONS

The study is limited to the front line male executives only. Since the pharmaceutical sales industry is a type of virtual organization, results cannot be generalized for other organizations.

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