This study aims to examine a personality theory known as the Enneagram and evaluate its potential in developing interpersonal communication in organisational context. For this, an action-oriented case study is conducted.

The Enneagram theory is a typology of nine personality types. The types focus on core motivation, which is suggested to determine how different people direct their attention and resources, how they interpret and process information, and consequently, how they communicate. Since the Enneagram in its present form is a relatively new system, it has been only partially, yet not conclusively validated. Such being the case, there are no operational tools available for measuring or testing hypothesis regarding the types. It thus follows that this study is subjectivist in nature (as opposed to objectivist or nomothetic), i.e. aims to produce data that helps to understand, describe and evaluate the suggested advantage of using the Enneagram as a communication tool.

The case study setting is conducted by focusing on two aspects: communicational style of each subject, as well as communicational relationships within the team. Both aspects are examined in the framework of the Enneagram theory to evaluate whether the propositions of the nine personality types offer a constructive tool for understanding and working with different communication styles. The main method for examining the two key aspects is conducting pair interviews.

In the light of the case study evidence, the results suggest that the Enneagram has potential in developing interpersonal communication. This notion is supported by the case study subjects' own views on the merits of the Enneagram application. However, due to the nature of both the holistic Enneagram theory and the subsequent methods, the possibility of making scientifically legitimate generalisations is very limited. As a conclusive note, it is then suggested that there is "weak evidence" to support the proposition of Enneagram advantage in developing interpersonal communication in organisations, while the need for further studies is also clearly acknowledged.

Avainsanat: personality, communication, Enneagram, action-oriented approach, organisations

Muita tietoja: Where deposited