

Five Factor Model of Personality

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson will cover the Big Five trait theory of personality. Our discussion breaks down as follows:

1. The Five Factor Model
 - a. Openness to Experience
 - b. Conscientiousness
 - c. Extroversion
 - d. Agreeableness
 - e. Neuroticism/Emotional Stability
2. The Five Factors

1. The Five Factor Model

The **Five Factor Model (or Big Five Theory)** is one model in trait theory of personality. Personality is the basic, stable, and consistent quality that people show over time and in different kinds of situations. Personality traits are the building blocks of a person's sense of self, or who they are.

Gordon Allport was one of the first major figures in trait theory, and he identified a list of over 4,500 different traits. However, it proved difficult to identify and keep track of this many traits. Another psychologist named Raymond Cattell removed some of those uncommon traits from Allport's list and combined related ones. He, in the end, identified 16 factors. This led to the creation of the 16 personality factor questionnaire, or the 16 PF, which is a very commonly used personality test.

The most widely accepted of the trait theories, especially today, is the Big Five. This theory was first developed by Costa and McCrae in 1992, and has been developed by other personality theorists over time. The purpose of this theory is to try to identify the basic important dimensions of personality. This is done by putting certain areas of personality within a scale from low to high.

Where a person falls on this scale in the five areas would indicate what type of traits they display. There is not necessarily a good side or a bad side to the Big Five scales, but it is important to know that there are definitely some aspects that are a bit more favorable than others. The five main areas are:

- Openness to experience

- Conscientiousness
- Extroversion
- Agreeableness
- Neuroticism



You can remember these different areas using an acronym like O.C.E.A.N. or C.A.N.O.E.



Five Factor Model of Personality (or Big Five Theory)

Based on collection of researchers data on hundreds of personality descriptions. Most can be grouped into five main categories.

1a. Openness to experience

Openness to experience refers to how intellectually curious a person might be, or how appreciative they are of art, emotions, or fantasies. In addition, it refers to how adventurous a person might be, and how outgoing they are in terms of new experiences.

On the low side of openness, a person might be very down to earth, very routine, or very conventional.

Someone very high in openness to experience, such as thrill seekers, might be very creative, imaginative, or prefer new experiences.



Openness to Experience

Imaginative, likes variety, and independent

1b. Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness refers to how organized, disciplined, or methodical someone might be. This scale also looks at how responsible someone is and how driven they are to succeed.

On the low side of conscientiousness, people are very disorganized, careless, easygoing, or relaxed. On the high end are people that are very efficient, well organized, and hard working. A perfectionist is someone high in conscientiousness.



Conscientiousness

Organized, careful, and disciplined

1c. Extroversion

Extroversion refers to how socially outgoing a person might be, as well as how expressive and talkative a

person is. On the low end of extroversion, a person might be very quiet, reserved, or passive. They may tend to sit back and to not express themselves very much.

Someone high in extroversion is very outgoing, very talkative, energetic, and affectionate. This person would be the social butterfly or the "life of the party." It is important to note, however, that simply because someone is high in extroversion, it does not mean they are high in openness to experience as well.



TERM TO KNOW

Extroversion

Sociable, fun-loving, and affectionate

1d. Agreeableness

Agreeableness refers to how friendly, accepting, kind, and caring a person might be. This measures how positive someone is towards other people.

On the low end is somebody who's very cold, withdrawn, suspicious, critical, or antagonistic towards other people. They are not just necessarily withdrawing from others, but are actively opposing them.

Someone high in agreeableness is very trusting and compassionate, and tends to be very cooperative. A person who tries to sacrifice themselves for good causes, for instance, would be high in agreeableness.



TERM TO KNOW

Agreeableness

Softhearted, trusting, and helpful

1e. Neuroticism/Emotional Stability

Neuroticism/emotional stability refers to how emotionally stable a person is and how likely a person is to experience negative or unpleasant emotions.

On the low end, a person who is low in neuroticism is very calm, secure, confident, and even-tempered. They generally stay the same in terms of emotions.

Somebody high in neuroticism is very sensitive to comments or to emotions. They are very self-conscious, temperamental, nervous and irritable. For instance, someone who is neurotic may be nervous and constantly worried about other people's opinions.



TERM TO KNOW

Neuroticism/Emotional Stability

Calm, secure, self-satisfied



SUMMARY

The Five Factor Model is a model in trait theory of personality. This is the most widely accepted of the trait theories, and was developed by Costa and McCrae. It has five areas of personality on a scale

from high to low. **The Five Factors** are: openness to new experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

Good luck!

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia Author Erick Taggart.



TERMS TO KNOW

Agreeableness

Softhearted, trusting, and helpful

Conscientiousness

Organized, careful, and disciplined.

Extraversion

Sociable, fun-loving, and affectionate

Five Factor Model of Personality(or Big Five Theory)

Based on collection of researchers data on hundreds of personality descriptions Most can be grouped into five main categories:

Neuroticism/Emotional stability

Calm, secure, self-satisfied

Openness to Experience

Imaginative, likes variety, and independent