

# Definition and related theories of personality psychology essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In this chapter, our research begins with an in-depth discussion on the definition and related theories of personality found in other articles or past research on antecedents. It is to propose and study a wide range of theoretical knowledge or terminologies of related literature in the key terms such as emotional stability, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness. This section allows a group of authors to define their view of point toward these factors that affect the job performance in private higher education institution.

Other than that, there are five types of hypothesis to indicate that whether there is a significant or no significant relationship between each of the factors that affect the job performance in private higher education institution. Moreover, the theoretical framework also included which shows independent and dependent variables of this research project.

## **2. 1 Definition of Personality**

To understand personality, there are many definitions that must be looked at. First, the precise definition of personality has been a point of discussion amongst many different theorists within many different disciplines since the beginning of civilization. Personality can be defined as " the distinctive and characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior that define an individual's personal style and influence his or her interactions with the environment" (Atkinson, Atkinson, Smith & Bem, 1993: 525). Also, personality is that pattern of characteristic thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that distinguishes one person from another and that persists over time and situation'(Phares, 1991).

Besides, Larsen and Buss define personality as " the set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring and that influence his or her interactions with, and adaptations to, the environment (including the intrapsychic, physical and social environment)." Furthermore, personality can also be defined as " the relatively stable set of psychological characteristics that influences the way an individual interacts with his or her environment" (Johns , 1996: 75). In addition, a basic premise of personality theory is that people have inherent characteristics or traits that can be identified by the consistency or stability of their behavior across time and situations.

Personal characteristics mainly describe and predict human behavior, not behavioral changes or development. Personal characteristics also indicate different characteristics that can contribute to inferences about behavioral results. The systemic classification of personal characteristics suggested by McDougall (1932) asserts that personality consists of five factors: intellect, character, temperament, disposition, and temper. Cattell (1943) proposed a more complicated classification with 16 main factors and 8 secondary factors. In their analysis of Cattell's approach, Tupes and Christal (1961) find that five factors (extroversion, neuroticism [emotional stability], agreeableness, conscientiousness, and culture) explain the classification, and their proposed factors match McDougall's views.

What determines an individual's personality? Most experts now agree that personality is shaped by both nature and nurture, although the relative importance of each continues to be debated and studied. Nature refers to our genetic or hereditary origins the genes that we inherit from our parents.

<https://assignbuster.com/definition-and-related-theories-of-personality-psychology-essay/>

Studies of identical twins, particularly those separated at birth; reveal that heredity has a very large effect on personality, up to 50percent of variation in behavior and 30percent of temperament preferences can be attributed to a person's genetic characteristics. In other words, genetic code not only determines our eye color, skin tone, and physical shape but also has a significant effect on our attitudes, decision, and behavior.

Although personality is heavily influenced by heredity, it is also affected to some degree by nurture-the person's socialization, life experiences, and other forms of interaction with the environment. Studies have found that the stability of an individual's personality increases up to at least age 30 and possibly to age 50, indicating that some personality development and change occurs when people are young. The main explanation of why personality becomes more stable over time is that people form clearer and more rigid self-concepts as they get older.

## **2. 2 Big Five model of Personality**

Personality researchers have proposed that there are five basic dimensions of personality. To scientifically prove the existence of five personality factors, it begins with the research of D. W. Fiske (1949) and later expanded upon by other researchers including Norman (1967), Smith (1967), Goldberg (1981), and McCrae & Costa (1987). More recently, Barrick and Mount's (1991) meta-analysis confirms the five factors that most researchers continue to use today: neuroticism (emotional stability), extroversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

These five factors have come to be known as the Big Five (Goldberg, 1990). They represent the most significant personal viewpoints across measurements, cultures, and evaluations (McCrae & John, 1992). The Big Five appear also in various psychological fields, especially those pertaining to job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991). McCrae and Costa (1991) suggest further applications to consultations, education, forensic science, and health psychology. Three of the Big Five dimensions- neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness, appear to be most relevant to career success (job performance). Thus, we discuss these constructs in somewhat more detail.

This study investigates the relationship between each personality dimension and job performance progressively, because the Big Five provide the best representation of a person's personality. In addition, because this classification is conscientious and includes extensive items, as proven by powerful real-world examples (Goldberg, 1993; O'Connor, 2002), the Big Five personality dimensions serve as the analysis variables for this research.

### **2. 2. 1 Neuroticism**

As Costa and McCrae (1988) note, neuroticism is the most pervasive trait across personality measures; it is prominent in nearly every measure of personality. Neuroticism refers generally to a lack of positive psychological adjustment and emotional stability. Neuroticism pertains specifically to a tendency to experience negative mood states (Bolger and Zuckerman, 1995; Suls et al., 1998) and has been defined as a tendency to experience distressing emotions (Costa and McCrae, 1980). Neuroticism has been linked to many maladaptive outcomes, including psychological distress (Suls et al., <https://assignbuster.com/definition-and-related-theories-of-personality-psychology-essay/>

1998) and increased susceptibility to anxiety and depression (Clark et al., 1994). Watson (2000) stated that neuroticism is the tendency to have a negativistic outlook and to focus on negative aspects of the self.

Individuals who score high levels of neuroticism are more sensitive to experimentally induced feelings of disgust, as evidenced by their inability to return to their baseline levels of secretory immunoglobulin (Hennig et al., 1996). They more frequently become unstable, anxiety, depression, anger, insecurity, and worried (Barrick and Mount, 1991), which tend to create negative opinions. Evidence even indicates that neurotic individuals are likely to be especially affected by negative life events, and to have bad moods linger (Suls, Green, & Hills, 1988). Those with high neuroticism are less emotionally resilient than those with low neuroticism. Individuals who score low level of neuroticism indicate emotional stability. McCrae and Costa (1991) noted that neuroticism is related to lower well-being because individuals who score high on neuroticism are predisposed to experience negative effects. Negative effect, in turn, is negatively related to job satisfaction (Brief, 1998; Spector, 1997).

A neurotic employee probably does not have positive attitudes toward work and may lack of confidence and optimism, which should result in less ambition and less focus on career goals. Therefore, a negative relationship likely exists between neuroticism and goal direction (Malouff et al., 1990), such that low goal trends should be due to low work efficiency. Neurotic employees also are more likely to be distracted easily, which increases their behavioral risks. In addition, when a person possesses high neuroticism, he

or she likely considers feedback a type of threat that produces anxiety and overly intense stimuli (Smither, London and Richmond, 2005).

Smithikrai (2007) indicates that neuroticism has a significant negative correlation with career success (job performance), in the future. Neurotic employees may be even less productive at work as globalization and technological advances induce changes in organizational life. Niehoff (2006) notes also that neuroticism appears consistently negatively correlated with leadership emergence and effectiveness. Thus, the neuroticism dimension should be able to predict task-based criteria, such as quantity and quality of work. According to deductive reasoning then, neuroticism should correlate negatively with job performance.

## **2. 2. 2 Extraversion**

Extraversion is a prominent factor in personality psychology, as evidenced by its appearance in most personality measures and its important role in the major taxonomies of personality (Judge et al., 1999). Typically extraversion is thought to consist of sociability. As Watson and Clark (1997) note, "extraverts are more sociable, but are also described as being more active and impulsive, less introspective and self-preoccupied than introverts. Thus, extroverts tends to be socially oriented (outgoing and gregarious), but also are surgent (dominant and ambitious) and active (adventuresome and assertive). Overall, an extroverted personality tends to be sociable, assertive, gregarious, talkative, and ambitious (Cooper, 2003), so such people often use their working environment to represent a key facet of their lives that enables them to meet their aspirations and exhibit their talents (Hurley, 1998).

<https://assignbuster.com/definition-and-related-theories-of-personality-psychology-essay/>

Highly extroverted employees likely use their stable, cool-headed, optimistic, and aggressive manner to react to customers' requests, which results in work completion and customer satisfaction. Varca (2004) predicts that when a person is highly extroverted, he or she usually provides services ahead of time. Smithikrai (2007) finds a positive relationship between extraversion and job success, especially in jobs that require interpersonal contacts.

Other than that, another explanation for the relationship between extraversion and job performance posits that extroverted employees make better use of their competencies, which enables them to increase their self-performance, which in turn leads to better work performance (Berg and Feij, 2003). Considering these results and recent analyses of work performance of an organization, an extroverted disposition appears recommended as critical for improving job performance. Furthermore, extraversion is related to the experience of positive of emotions, and extraverts are more likely to take on leadership roles and to have a greater number of good friends (Watson and Clark, 1997). Hogan and Holland's (2003) meta-analysis supported a relationship between extraversion and performance on specific job criteria

### **2. 2. 3 Openness to experience**

Openness to experience has been described as an employee's desire to be intellectually curious, imaginative, and open to possibilities. We often hear of business coveting employees who can "think outside the box" or can adapt and change to solve complex problems in a continuously evolving work environment (Burke and Witt, 2002). It appears that the research on the Openness to experience-performance relationship has reinforced the idea

that dynamic work environments in which learning and adaptation are  
<https://assignbuster.com/definition-and-related-theories-of-personality-psychology-essay/>



required tend to enhance the Openness-performance link. Bing and Lounsbury (2000) found that Openness predicted variance in job performance above and beyond all of the other dimensions of the Big Five.

According to Barrick and Mount (1991), individuals with higher levels of openness to experience have broad interests, are liberal and like novelty. Besides, they are also have more positive attitudes towards learning new things and are more likely to engage in learning experiences. The preservers with low openness to experience are conventional, conservative and prefer familiarity (Howard & Howard, 1995).

Openness to experience has not been shown to correlate significantly with job performance. This may seem counterintuitive, because openness to experience is sometimes also referred to intellect, and cognitive ability and intellect are presumably related. Openness would also then tie into working with other people. For example, a person who is more open to experience would be willing to try out new and different ideas presented by coworkers. Openness may not relate to job performance due to limitations in the methodology of past research, lack of a high enough correlation to reach statistical significance, or even perhaps because there really is no direct relation between openness to experience and overall job performance.

## **2. 2. 4 Agreeableness**

The agreeableness personality dimension suggests a courteous, flexible, trusting, good-natured, cooperative, forgiving, soft-hearted, tolerant person (Cooper, 2003). Agreeable employees consider personal interactions carefully, such that they offer more constructive responses to customers and

to their work. In addition, agreeableness can push staff members to work together, which should result in effective working behaviors (Barrick and Mount, 1991). In turn, a highly agreeable employee likely develops positive perceptions of work efficiency and work performance.

Because they tend to regard work and career achievement as in keeping with their desire to improve their personal value and earn respect, agreeable employees should be more involved in their jobs. When interacting and cooperating with others, agreeable employees also achieve better effects (Barrick and Mount, 1991), which likely increases job performance. Finally, agreeable employees are cooperative and forgiving, tend to follow rules, and act courteously to get ahead. High agreeableness therefore has critical implications for understanding service-based productive behavior and efficiency. In this sense, agreeableness provides a valid predictor of criteria that pertain to customer (Mount and Ilies, 2006), because agreeable persons are more concerned with others' welfare (Ashton and Lee, 2001). Consequently, agreeableness should be positively related to job performance.

The relationship between the personality dimension of agreeableness and performance has also received some recent support. Agreeableness may lead to enhanced customer contact and interactions, and improved relationships and communication with managers. Agreeable employees may be viewed as more trustworthy, and as possessing higher levels of integrity, which can aid them in customer relationships and in access to valued information (Costa and McCrae, 1995; Sackett and DeVote, 2001). Hogan

and Holland (2003) report the meta-analytic validity of agreeableness to specific job criteria performance outcomes to be significant.

## **2. 2. 5 Conscientiousness**

Conscientiousness, which has emerged as the Big Five construct most consistently related to performance across jobs (Barrick & Mount; 1991, Salgado 1997), is manifested in three related facets- achievement orientation (hardworking and persistent), dependability (responsible and careful), orderliness (planful and organized). Thus, conscientiousness is related to an individual's degree self-control, as well as need for achievement, order, and persistence (Costa, McCrae & Dye 1991), as one examine these hallmarks of conscientiousness. It is not surprising that the construct is a valid predictor of success at work. Two recent meta-analyses provide strong linkages between Conscientiousness and employee outcomes. Salgado (2003) found that, of the Big Five dimensions, Conscientiousness was the strongest predictor of job performance. Judge and Ilies (2002) also found that Conscientiousness was a strong and consistent predictor of performance motivation.

Conscientious people are individuals who are described as being careful, responsible, dependable, persistent, self-motivated and task-oriented (Barry & Stewart, 1997). Individuals who are high in conscientiousness are organized, and purposeful, which leads to setting goals (choice to expend effort). Furthermore, conscientious individuals are achievement oriented, hardworking, and have high expectations of themselves, which leads to them setting more difficult goals, (choice of level of effort to expend).

Conscientious individuals are also likely to accomplish or try to accomplish  
<https://assignbuster.com/definition-and-related-theories-of-personality-psychology-essay/>

what is expected of them, which leads to higher commitment to their goals (choice to persist in that level of effort). In short, conscientious individuals could be expected to perform better because they set goals, they exert more effort to achieve challenging goals, and they are more committed to exert effort to pursue those goals for a longer time period.

Individuals who are low in conscientiousness instead suggests the employee tries to meet only immediate demands, does not care about prospective results, lacks a sense of goals, mistakenly observes rules (Arthur and Doverspike, 2001) or standards, and performs tasks poorly (Wallace and Vodanovich, 2003). Smithikrai (2007) posits a positive relationship between conscientiousness and job success, because conscientious persons tend to work toward their goals in an industrious manner. These employees are more likely to believe that their work has special meaning, and thus, they experience greater psychological attachment to their jobs (Li, Lin & Chen, 2007). They also regulate their work behavior more effectively (Wallace & Chen, 2006). Judge and Ilies (2002) reveal that conscientiousness is instrumental to people's work success, as well as their motivation to get along and their desire to be productive. Those high in conscientiousness exhibit the capacity to function or develop in generally productive ways and can accomplish more work more quickly. Thus, a conscientious orientation should correlate positively with job performance.

Moreover, recent empirical evident supports the importance of conscientiousness at work, linking the construct to counter productive work behavior (Hogan & ones, 1997), effective job seeking behavior (Wanberg, Watt & Rumsey, 1996), retention (Barrick, Mount & Strauss, 1994), and <https://assignbuster.com/definition-and-related-theories-of-personality-psychology-essay/>

attendance at work (Judge, Martocchio & Thoresen, 1997), in addition to its link with job performance.

## **2.3 Job performance**

Organizations need highly performing individuals in order to meet their goals, to deliver the products and services they specialized in, and finally to achieve competitive advantage. Performance is also important for the individual to accomplishing tasks and performing at a high level can be a source of satisfaction, with feelings of mastery and pride. Low performance and not achieving the goals might be experienced as dissatisfying or even as a personal failure. Moreover, if performance is recognized by others within the organization, is often rewarded by financial and other benefits.

Performance is a major or prerequisite for future career development and success in the labor market. Although there might be exceptions, high performers get promoted more easily within an organization and generally have better career opportunities than low performers (VanScotter, Motowidlo, & Cross, 2000).

Organizational psychologists are still debating on the definition on the performance. However, there are several efforts outlining general models of job performance and the determinants of job performance. Among the notable ones are proposed by Campbell et. al (1993) where they build performance as a multi-dimensional phenomena comprised of various latent factors. These include factors such as declarative knowledge, procedural I knowledge, skill and motivation. Other researches that proposed similar view on organizational performance are McLoy et. al (1994) and Waldman & Spangler (1989). In a nutshell, performance can be viewed from two <https://assignbuster.com/definition-and-related-theories-of-personality-psychology-essay/>

perspective, task performance and contextual performance. Task performance is the competency level of employees in performance various tasks and duties inherent in fixed jobs and work roles (Arvery, R. D, 1998) while contextual performance is defined as extra task proficiency that contributes more to the organizational, social, and psychological environment that help accomplish organizational goals. In this study job performance of the employees is examined from the contextual perspective.

To pinpoint of poor performance, use the equation: Ability x Motivation x Environment = Performance.

Ability: Do the employees have the knowledge, skills and ability to complete the work? If employees have done the work correctly before, chances are employees do. If employees have not correctly completed the work before or completed it to researcher likes, evaluate and determine if researcher have set the standard too high. If only one person has achieved meeting researcher standards before, determine what knowledge, skills and ability that person had that other employees lack.

Motivation: if an individual has the knowledge, skills and ability, and has performed the work satisfactory before, a motivation issue may exist. Evaluate the motivators set by the researcher on the work. Ensure researcher offer positive rewards for good behavior and negative consequences for poor behavior. Be careful to not dole out negative consequences for good behavior like giving more and more work to top performers.

Environment: As hard as this pill may be to swallow, realize every employee is only partly responsible for the performance. If an employee's knowledge, skills, ability and motivation are acceptable, the environment might be helping foster employee's poor performance (Brecher and Natalie, 2007).

## **2. 4 Hypotheses Development**

### **Hypothesis 1:**

H01: There is no significant relationship between neuroticism and job performance.

H11: There is a significant relationship between neuroticism and job performance.

### **Hypothesis 2:**

H02: There is no significant relationship between extroversion and job performance.

H12: There is a significant relationship between extroversion and job performance.

### **Hypothesis 3:**

H03: There is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and job performance.

H13: There is a significant relationship between conscientiousness and job performance.

**Hypothesis 4:**

H04: There is no significant relationship between openness to experience and high job performance.

H14: There is a significant relationship between openness to experience and high job performance.

**Hypothesis 5:**

H05: There is no significant relationship between agreeableness and job performance.

H15: There is a significant relationship between agreeableness and job performance.

**2. 5 Theoretical Framework**

Figure 1: Research Framework

**Neuroticism**

**Extraversion**

**Conscientiousness**

**Openness to experience**

**Agreeableness**

Job performance

Dependent Variable

Independent Variables



## **2. 6 Conclusion**

The past research provides many justifications for this study. The literature review serves as the foundation for the hypotheses to be tested or propositions to be investigated. However, it just merely provides the empirical evidences and historical data support to this research. Therefore, hypotheses have been developed and will be tested by using the appropriate data analysis techniques and will be discussed in chapter three.