

The defining concept
personality
psychology essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Allport defined personality as a dynamic organization, inside the person, of psychophysical systems that create the person's characteristic patterns of behaviour, thoughts, and feelings (as cited in Carver & Scheier, 2004, pp. 5). There are seven perspectives on personality, i. e., dispositional, biological, psychoanalytic, neoanalytic, learning, phenomenological, and cognitive self-regulation (Carver & Scheier, 2004). The Big Five is conceptualised based on trait theory under dispositional perspective.

According to dispositional perspective, people have dispositions or qualities that are observable, stable over times, and displayed consistently in different contexts (Carver & Scheier, 2004). Some theorists simply acknowledge that the dispositions exist and individual differences come from various amounts of various dispositions people have in their personality (trait theory). Whilst, the other theorists believe that dispositions are related to motive forces (need theory) (Carver & Scheier, 2004).

The Big Five: Conceptual Foundation

The Big Five is an empirically derived taxonomy of personality traits, in which relatively narrow and specific traits are organized into five broad and relatively independent factors, i. e. Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism (or Emotional Stability), and Openness (or Culture, Intellect, Autonomy) (John & Robins, 1993; McCrae & John, 1992; McCrae & Allik, 2002). It originated from the analyses of the natural language terms used to describe one's traits (John & Srivasta, 1999), referred as the lexical approach. The basic reasoning of the lexical approach, often called lexical hypothesis, states that all salient individual differences

have become encoded in the natural language (De Raad, 1998; Pennington, 2003; McCrae, 2005).

Moreover, as described by McCrae and John (1992), according to the lexical approach, laypersons can make accurate inferences regarding one's traits based on their daily experiences. The traits themselves are those that influence one's interaction with other people, thus, they are recognized widely and encoded in every language. This approach is also based on premise that " individual traits covary along a fairly limited set of basic dimensions" (McCrae & John, 1992; p 200). With regard to the last premise, according to the Big Five framework, individual traits can be grouped into five factors or dimensions.

John, Donahue, and Kentle (1991) conceptualized each of the five factors as the followings. First factor, extraversion, entails enthusiasm towards social interaction and the material world, in which covers traits such as sociability, activity, assertiveness, and positive emotionality. Secondly, agreeableness, it reflects one's tendency to engage in prosocial and collective orientation behaviour such as altruism, tender-mindedness, trust, and modesty. Thirdly, conscientiousness, among the traits under this factor are thinking before acting, delaying gratification, following norms and rules, planning, organizing, and prioritizing tasks. The fourth factor, neuroticism, on the opposite end of neuroticism, – which is characterized as feeling anxious, nervous, sad, and tense, – lies emotional stability and even-temperedness. Lastly, openness can be described as the breadth, depth, originality, and complexity of mental and experiential life of an individual (as cited in John, Naumann & Soto, 2008).

The Big Five: History and Empirical Foundations

Beginning with the pioneering work of Allport and Odbert (1936), in which they extracted all personality-relevant terms in an unabridged English dictionary, an immense number of studies were conducted to identify all important and distinguishable traits of personality. In 1943, Cattell reduced the 4,500 trait terms in the Allport and Odbert list into a mere 35 variables, using both semantic and empirical clustering procedure (John & Robins, 1993). Cattell employed several oblique factor analyses to analyze the 35 variables and concluded that the 35 variables can be summarized in 12 factors, which eventually became part of his 16-Personality Factors (16-PF) questionnaire (De Raad, 1998; John & Robins, 1993; John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008).

However, re-analyses of Cattell's data sets by Digman and Takemoto-Chock (1981) showed that the scales comprised only five broad factors which resemble the factors found in subsequent studies. Digman and Takemoto-Chock (1981) went on to state that Cattell's "original model, based on the unfortunate clerical errors noted here, cannot have been correct" (p. 168). Nevertheless, limitation aside, Cattell's work can be deemed as a monumental work as it stimulated and became the starting point for a lot of research afterwards, e. g., Fiske's study.

Fiske replicated the early rating studies of Cattell by analyzing 22 of Cattell's rating scales using graphical rotation and oblique solution (Digman, 1997). Fiske was not able to find evidence for anything more complex than five factor solution and his interpretations of the factors are much similar to the mark of contemporary views (Digman, 1990).

Subsequent research reported the identification of the five factors was conducted by Tupes and Christal in 1961. They factor analyzed 30 of Cattell's bipolar scales and found consistent results with Fiske's studies stated that five factors appeared to account for the observations remarkably well. Reanalyzing Cattell's earlier work and Fiske's correlation, Tupes and Christal found the results in fairly good agreement in terms of five factors, namely Surgency, Agreeableness, Dependability, Emotional Stability, and Culture. Unfortunately, Tupes and Christal's studies were published as Air Force Technical Reports, thus, only a few researchers could access them (Digman, 1990).

However, Norman was aware of Tupes and Christal's report. In 1963, he used four scales that best represented each of the five factors in the Tupes and Christal's data and replicated the five factors structure, offering the trait dimensions later known as the "Norman Five": Extraversion or Surgency, Agreeableness, Emotional Stability vs. Neuroticism, Culture, and Conscientiousness (McCrae & Costa, 1985).

In 1970s, Goldberg joined in the Big Five tradition and started to investigate the personality structure based on thorough and detailed examinations of personality-relevant terms in the natural language (De Raad, 1998).

Generally, Goldberg's studies provided more evidence of the existence of the "Norman Five", the structure that Goldberg referred as the "Big Five" (Goldberg, 1990) - a title chosen to imply that the five factors are extremely broad and represent personality at a very broad level of abstraction as well (John et al., 2008).

The five-factor personality structure gained more attention among personality researchers when Costa and McCrae were developing the NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI) in the early 1980s (Digman, 1996). NEO-PI was initially designed to measure three personality dimensions, i. e., Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Openness to experience, as well as some of the specific traits that comprised them, based on cluster analyses of the 16 PF (Digman, 1996). In 1983, realizing that their model did not cover Agreeableness and Conscientiousness factors despite the resemblance between its dimensions with the other three of the Big Five factors, McCrae and Costa extended their model with Agreeableness and Conscientiousness dimensions (Digman, 1996; John & Robins, 1993; McCrae&Costa, 1985) and revised their inventory later known as the NEO-PI-R. Their model eventually became known as the Five-Factor Model (FFM).

Despite its rising popularity thanks to McCrae and Costa, as noted by John et al. (2008), initially, there were some opposition towards the Big Five structure of personality. John (1989) noticed that this was probably due to “the perception that there is no single Big Five” (as cited in John et al., 2008; p. 125). Although the Big Five researchers agreed upon the structure of personality that comprises of five factors, there is no consensus among the researchers about the label and the facets covered in each factors (John et al., 2008).

In order to abstract the similarities of the findings of the Big Five research, John (1990) applied a prototype approach. To begin with, John had 10 judges reviewed findings including factor solutions and interpretations of the most important Big Five related articles published by 1988 such as Fiske (1949), <https://assignbuster.com/the-defining-concept-personality-psychology-essay/>

Tupes and Christal (1961), Norman (1963), Digman and Takemoto-Chock (1981), Goldberg (1981, 1989), and McCrae and Costa (1985) (as cited in John, 1990). Each of the 10 judges then sorted each of the 300 traits in the Adjective Check List (ACL; Gough & Heilbrun, 1965, 1983) that is served as the standard descriptive language in the research (as cited in John, 1990). The ACL itself was constructed at the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research (IPAR), Berkeley, as a procedure done by the staff members to record the personality evaluations of individuals who are examined in their assessment programs (Gough & Heilbrun, 1983; as cited in John, 1990).

The sorted list, which comprises only those traits that appeared consistently across studies, then, was validated using factor analysis approach. The results yield a convincing confirmation of the initial prototypes (John, 1990). The factors, eventually, were labelled as extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness. Extraversion factor covers five components that are resembled to five of the six facets of McCrae and Costa's NEO-PI-R. In the prototypes definitions, the sixth facet of extraversion in the NEO-PI-R, warmth, is deemed as a component of agreeableness factor instead of extraversion. The last factor is more difficult to be interpreted than the rest, and eventually labelled as Openness. It includes items that represent "open" characteristics emphasized by McCrae and Costa (1985) and the "intellectual" characteristics highlighted by Digman and Inouye (1981) and Peabody and Goldberg (1989) (as cited in John et al., 2008). Overall, the factors are found to be similar to those found in earlier major studies (John, 1990).

Finally, in 1991, John, Donahue, and Kentle constructed the 44-item Big Five Inventory (BFI) based on the prototype definitions in order to provide a short instrument that assesses the prototypical components of the Big Five common across researchers (John et al., 2008).