

What is personality? assignment

[Philosophy](#)



What is personality? Everyday people meet new people and sometimes they try to figure them out in order to see what kind of personality they have. People do this subconsciously or unconsciously. Personality isn't easily defined because it's a broad topic that is still being researched.

A brief definition of personality would be that personality is made up of characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that make a person unique – that means that the personality of an individual rarely changes and someone's personality will not completely be the same as the person next to him/her because they are individuals and they are unique in their own way. The purpose of this review is to determine whether a person's personality traits can be a factor in an employee's productivity in the workplace.

Personality as stated above is a broad topic and to try explaining the whole topic in this literature review in its entirety would be impossible. Personality has fundamental characteristics that in the end form the personality of one person, some scientists believe that the personality an individual possesses can be attributed to the genes that they are born with but there are some that dispute that theory because they believe that your personality is developed with time and life experience. What are personality traits?

Personality traits are distinguishing characteristics that make a person who they are – they are unique to that person alone. Even though a lot of people might have similar personality traits each person combines these traits on a different way to create one unique irreplaceable assortment of traits that make up their individual personality. The Big Five trait theory is the most

commonly used theory to determine a person's personality. They are also referred to as the "Five Factor Model" or FFM (Costa & McCrae, 1992), and as the Global Factors of personality (Russell & Karol, 1994).

Openness is the first personality trait that forms the base of the big five theory, basically it refers to how open a person is to new things. This trait differentiates creative people from people that aren't creative. People that tend to have a high score in openness are more in tune with their feelings on the other hand people that have low scores in openness are less open to trying new things, they are more traditional and they are straight forward. Conscientious is the second trait that forms part of the big five theory, this basically refers to the dedication and discipline the person shows in terms of the things that they are passionate about and whether they actually finish what they start. This specific trait refers to people that shy away from spontaneous behaviour and impulsive behaviour – i. e. they prefer to have a plan and be in control. Extraversion is the third trait, it refers to whether the person is comfortable being in the company of others whether they are strangers or acquaintances.

If the person has a high score then they can be considered an extrovert because they can easily adapt to any situation and they can be the 'life of the party' whereas if the person has a low score then the person can be considered an introvert meaning that they tend to be more shy amongst people that they know or don't know they are not very social and most times prefer to be by themselves. Agreeableness is the fourth trait, it refers to how a person gets along with the people around them whether they are strangers or not- i. e. the person is confrontational or not. If a person has a high score

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on this trait then they tend to be more generous, friendly, and compassionate and their willingness to compromise with others - they tend to shy away from confrontation. However if a person has a low score then they are deemed to be highly confrontational and unfriendly - they are the complete opposite of agreeable individuals. Neuroticism is the final and fifth trait and it refers to how emotionally stable a person is.

This trait determines the how emotionally stable a person is therefore people with a high score in neuroticism are emotionally reactive and they are more vulnerable to stress because they view minor stresses as very difficult to deal with. People that have a low score are less emotionally reactive meaning that they are calmer and emotionally stable. There is an abbreviation for all five traits OCEAN. Work performance isn't easily defined because it's still being researched till today, what it basically is, is how a person does their job and whether they do it well or not.

Personality traits can't be completely attributed to a person's work performance i. e. their productivity - it is dependent on the type of job. An example of this would be a sales person, a person that would have a low score on trait extraversion would have a low performance in terms of them achieving their sales targets because they are considered introverts and being a salesperson would require them to be more social then what they are comfortable with. Job absence is also a part of job performance because if an employee isn't at work that reflects negatively on their productivity at the workplace.

Employees that score low levels on the extraversion trait are less likely to skip work because they are high on conscientiousness whereas the opposite is true for extroverts. Neuroticism isn't extremely associated with absence (Judge, Martocchio, & Thoresen, 1997). A study done by Judge, Martocchio & Thoresen (1997) on the link between the five factor model and job satisfaction highlighted that employees that are considered extroverts are generally happy at their jobs because the environment gives them an opportunity to interact with their fellow employees on a social level whilst that isn't true for introverted individuals.

In regards to determining the trait that can be held responsible as to an employee's absence at the workplace is the conscientiousness trait. Another factor that could be considered as a factor in the absence of an employee at the workplace would be that introverts simply go to work because they simply have no reason not to and they don't have any friends encouraging them to skip work in order to have some fun to go shopping or just hang out with their friends whereas extroverts have people urging them to do that.

This is still debatable but further research is being done in order to give us more answers in the future. Team work is an essential component in the workplace today. More and more organizations are making employees to work in teams in order for them to know the people that they are working with and to have employees tackle bigger projects and get more things done because of the saying 'two heads are better than one'.

The latest research has indicated that conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness can be directly linked to an employee's cooperative behaviour

within a team. Although this fortifies the case that job performance is related to the five-factor model via increased cooperativeness among co-workers, it lays siege to the role of personality by implying that actual job performance (task performance) is related to cognitive ability and not to personality (LePine & Dyne, 2001).

Fact is there has to be a leader in a team to resolve any conflict amongst fellow team members and to make sure that the team is doing what they are supposed to do and that their work is done on time – simply put there can be followers and leaders. It has been proven that an employee that is considered an extrovert is more likely to have the leadership ability that is needed to lead a team efficiently and effectively. The opposite is true for an employee that is seen as non confrontational i. e. n employee with a high score in agreeableness because when put in a leadership role that employee will just want to please all his/her co-workers and they will not confront any confrontational situations because they are peaceful and calm individuals – they are considered more as followers. But there is a debate that agreeableness might not be a popular personality trait that a leader should possess but it is an essential trait that all leaders should have i. e. they should be the calming force in the team or organisation.

Various researchers and authors have greatly criticised the five factor model as a means to determine which personality traits will ensure that you employee people that are going to yield high levels of productivity. There is a general consensus that not merely personality traits are going to be deciding factors on the productivity of an employee that the cognitive ability

of an employee is going to better determine a productive employee from a non productive employee.

Simply put an intelligent employee that is disciplined will complete their tasks better than an employee that isn't intelligent but is the social butterfly at work. Different people interact on a day to day basis whether they are strangers or merely just acquaintances; the same is true for the workplace. Managers and employers need to be aware that the people they hire have different personality traits and they merely aren't going to be the same. Employees are expected to work in teams and it's inevitable that they are going to have certain differences.

The question is, is it a good or bad thing for employees that have different personalities working together? Best way to answer that is it depends on every team formed, because you might find that a team has members that actually complement each other and the different team members add strengths to the weaknesses that might be present in another team member. An example of that would be that there is a team of an introvert and an extrovert, naturally the extrovert member would be useful in social settings and the introvert might be good in helping the extrovert follow protocol and make sure that they arrive on time. The benefits of people with different personality traits working together would be that the one person (or team member) can add to what the other team member lacks. Personality and creativity can be linked to some extent but it has been proven that creative people have a high score on the openness trait therefore making them more open to trying new things thereby making them more creative than a person with a low score on openness. Conclusion

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The purpose of this literature review was to investigate whether there is a link between job performance and a personality. This review has presented facts from research that has proven that there is a link between the two, in terms of the social aspect of a working environment. The five factors from the big five model are more focused on the employees enjoyment at the workplace and whether they are overall satisfied with the job they are working – remember that for an employee to stay at his/her job long term is determined by how satisfied and happy they are with the job that they have.

The studies that this research was based on, was on people that have to be very social in their jobs i. e. salespeople, this might have distorted the results because it might be possible that people that don't have to interact with people as often as salespeople might yield different results.

Conscientiousness and extraversion are the two personality traits from the big five factor model that are related to positive job performance whilst agreeableness is said to be a negative thing in terms of an employee taking a leadership role.

Openness is linked to creative employees and that could be a good thing for an organisation because they know how to solve a problem in a different way as compared to an individual that isn't as creative. Neuroticism is believed to have a negative influence on an employee in terms of job performance because an employee that isn't emotionally stable would be bad for the organisation especially if the individual has to work in a team. It has been proven that there is a link between motivation and personality traits but it hasn't been researched in this review.

It has been stated above that the big five personality traits can't merely be the only thing that determines an employee's productivity because an employee's cognitive ability plays a major role in their productivity.

Regardless of the contrasting views on the role of personality traits in an employee's job performance, there is a consensus that personality plays a major role in how an employee interacts in the workplace and it is impossible not to consider it when hiring someone. Reflective review The big five personality theory states that depending in how a high score one gets in the five traits i. . openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism, it will determine your productivity. On a personal note a I believe that this theory does predict this effectively, personally am an introvert that means that I shy away from being in social situations and I honestly not having to work in groups. Even though I haven't had any professional work experience in an organisation, I have had the experience of working in groups for assignments and presentations – and I have had to work alone for assignments such as this.

I have high scores in agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness whilst I had a low score in extraversion and neuroticism, because of these scores according to the Big Five theory I should be an introvert that likes to follow the rules and prefers to be punctual and un-spontaneous but I don't completely agree with the answer to the scores. First of all I might be an introvert but I am spontaneous at times, but I can be very focused and straight laced at the same time.

According to the scores I should be a non confrontational person that prefers peace rather than fights and on that I will agree, I prefer not to have fights

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but at the same time if something is bothering me I will speak up and sort out whatever issue I have. In terms of my low score in extraversion I completely agree with the fact that I am an introvert but there seems to be room for error because even though I'm an introvert I will prefer to take up the leadership role in the group or team or at home to make sure that things are done the way that they are supposed to be done – that would explain my high score in conscientiousness.

I am productive when I have to be but I do get lazy at times because it's simply tiring to be productive the 24 hours a day. I am creative and I'm in touch with my emotions and I'm open to trying new things because they say variety is the spice of life. The Big Five theory is the most commonly used theory to determine a person's personality determined by the degree of the different traits they possess. I believe that this theory can accurately determine the productivity of an individual but I still believe that a person's cognitive ability plays a role in how productive you may be whether it be in school or the workplace.

This theory has described me perfectly and shown that I have traits of both an introvert and extrovert but I have things that make me unique for example I'm an introvert that can be spontaneous at the same time – believe me that is rare and that's me. References Burke, R. J. , Matthiesen, S. B. , & Pallesen, S. (2006). Personality correlates of workaholism. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 40, 1223-1233. Cattell, H. E. (1996). The original big five: A historical perspective. *European Review of Applied Psychology*, 46, 5-14. Costa, P. T. , Jr. & McCrae, R. R. (1992).

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