

Zhou Jingli

Master degree student on specialty «Psychology», al-Farabi Kazakh National University,
Kazakhstan, Almaty, e-mail: 1095167289@qq.com

THE BIG FIVE FACTORS AND PERSONALITY TRAITS

The article researches is devoted to five core personality traits. Evidence of this theory has been growing for many years, beginning 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). The «Big five» are broad categories of personality traits. While there is a significant body of literature supporting this five-traits model of personality, researchers don't always agree on the exact labels for each dimension. It is important to note that each of the five personality traits represents a range between two extremes. For example, extraversion represents a continuum between extreme extraversion and extreme introversion. In the real world, most people lie somewhere in between the two polar ends of each dimension. In the world of psychology research, personality is a little more complicated. The definition of personality can be complex, and the way it is defined can influence how it is understood and measured. According to the researchers at the Personality Project, personality is: «the coherent pattern of affect, cognition, and desires (goals) as they lead to behavior» (Revelle, 2013). In the words of the American Psychological Association (APA), personality is: «individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving» (APA, 2017).

Key words: the «Big five» questionnaire, personality, personality traits.

Чжоу Цзинли

1 курс магистранты, әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті,
Қазақстан, Алматы қ., e-mail: 1095167289@qq.com

Үлкен бестіктің факторлары және тұлға қасиеттері

Мақалада жеке тұлғаның құрылымының негізгі жеке бес қасиеттері қарастырылды. Көптеген жылдар бойы DW Fiske (1949), Norman (1967), Smith (1967), Goldberg (1981) және McCrae & Costa (1987) зерттеулері осы мәселені дәлелдеді. «Үлкен бестік» – тұлғалық қасиеттердің кең категориясы. Бүгінгі күнге дейін бұл бес ерекшелікті көрсететін тұлғалық моделді қолдайтын біршама жұмыстар болса да, әрбір өлшемнің нақты атауларымен зерттеушілер келіспейді. Тұлғаның бес қасиетінің әрқайсысы екі шеттің арасындағы диапазонды көрсететінін атап өту маңызды. Мысалы, экстраверсия – экстремалды экстраверсия мен экстремалды интроверсия арасындағы континуумды көрсетеді. Шынайы өмірде адамдардың көбісі әр өлшемнің екі полярлы шетінің арасында орналасады. Психологиялық зерттеулер әлемінде тұлға құрылымы әлдеқайда күрделі. Тұлғаның анықтамасы күрделі, оның анықталуы оны түсінуге және өлшеуге әсер етуі мүмкін. Көптеген авторлардың пікірі бойынша, тұлға – бұл «... мінез-құлықтың құрамдас бөлігі болғандықтан, аффекттің, танымның және қалаудың (мақсаттарының) континуумы» (Revelle, 2013). Америкалық психологиялық қауымдастық (APA) бойынша, тұлға – бұл «ойлау, сезім және мінез-құлықтың жеке ерекшеліктері» (APA, 2017).

Түйін сөздер: «Үлкен бестік» сауалнамасы, тұлға, тұлғалық қасиеттер.

Чжоу Цзинли

магистрант 1 курса, Казахский национальный университет имени аль-Фараби, Казахстан,
г. Алматы, e-mail: 1095167289@qq.com

Факторы большой пятерки и черты личности

Статья исследованием посвящена исследованию структуры личности в виде пяти основных черт личности. В течение многих лет преобладают исследования, которые доказывают данное

положение, начиная с исследований DW Fiske (1949), включая Norman (1967), Smith (1967), Goldberg (1981), and McCrae & Costa (1987). «Большая пятерка» – это широкие категории личностных черт. Несмотря на то, что на сегодняшний день данной проблеме посвящено значительное количество работ, которые поддерживают эту модель личности с пятью чертами, исследователи не всегда согласны с точными названиями каждого измерения. Важно отметить, что каждая из пяти черт личности представляет собой диапазон между двумя крайностями. Например, экстраверсия представляет собой континуум между экстремальной экстраверсией и экстремальной интроверсией. В реальном мире большинство людей лежат где-то между двумя полярными краями каждого измерения. В мире психологических исследований структура личности намного сложнее. Определение личности может быть сложным, и способ, которым она определяется, может влиять на ее понимание и измерение. Согласно многим авторам, личность – это «...континуум аффекта, познания и желаний (целей), поскольку они являются составляющими поведения» (Revelle, 2013). Согласно Американской психологической ассоциации (APA), личность – это «индивидуальные различия в характерных образцах мышления, чувства и поведения» (APA, 2017).

Ключевые слова: опросник «Большая пятерка», личность, личностные черты.

Introduction

Personality is an easy concept to grasp for most of us. It's what makes you «you». It encompasses all the traits, characteristics, and quirks that set you apart from everyone else.

In the world of psychology research, personality is a little more complicated. The definition of personality can be complex, and the way it is defined can influence how it is understood and measured.

According to the researchers at the Personality Project, personality is: «the coherent pattern of affect, cognition, and desires (goals) as they lead to behavior» (Revelle, 2013). In the words of the American Psychological Association (APA), personality is: «individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving» (APA, 2017).

However you describe personality, it's clear that personality has a big impact on life. In fact, personality has been found to correlate strongly with life satisfaction (Boyce, Wood, & Powdthavee, 2013). With such a large potential impact on life, it's important to have a reliable way to conceptualize and measure personality.

The most prevalent personality framework is the «Big Five,» or the five-factor model of personality. Not only does this theory of personality apply in multiple countries and cultures around the world (Schmitt et al., 2007), there is a valid and reliable assessment scale for measuring the five factors.

But to understand how we got to the Big Five, we have to go back to the beginning of personality research.

Personality Research: A Brief Review

The history of personality research can be roughly divided into six periods, characterized by different prevailing theories and underlying philosophies.

Ancient Greece

It seems that as long as there have been humans with personalities, there have been personality theories, classifications, and systems.

Hippocrates (the father of the Hippocratic Oath, which health workers still recite to this day) hypothesized two poles on which temperament could vary: hot vs. cold and moist vs. dry. This idea results in four possible combinations (hot/moist, hot/dry, cold/moist, cold/dry) called «humors» that were thought to be the key factors in both health issues and personality peculiarities.

Later, Plato suggested a classification of four personality types or factors: artistic, sensible, intuitive, and reasoning. His renowned student, **Aristotle**, proposed a similar set of factors that could explain personality: iconic (or artistic), pistic (or common sense), noetic (intuition) and dianoetic (or logic).

While Aristotle mused on a possible connection between the **physical body** and personality, this connection was not a widespread belief until the rise of phrenology and the shocking case of Phineas Gage.

Phrenology and Phineas Gage

Phrenology is a pseudoscience, or «science» that is not based on any actual, verifiable evidence, that was promoted by a neuroanatomist named Franz Gall in the late 18th century. This pseudoscience hypothesizes a direct relationship between the physical properties of different areas of the **brain** (such as size, shape, and density) and opinions, attitudes, and behaviors.

While this pseudoscience was debunked relatively quickly, it marked one of the first attempts to tether the physical brain to the individual's traits and characteristics. The disappointment of phrenology's failure to provide solid evidence of this connection did not last long.

Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud is best known as the father of psychoanalysis, an intensive form of therapy that digs deep into an individual's life, especially their childhood, to understand and treat their psychological ailments.

However, he also did extensive work on personality, some of which is probably familiar to you. One of his most fleshed out theories held that the human mind consists of three parts: the id, the ego, and the superego.

The id is the primal part of the human mind that runs on instinct and aims for survival at all costs. The ego bridges the gap between the id and our day-to-day experiences, providing realistic ways to achieve the wants and needs of the id and coming up with justifications and rationalizations for these desires. The superego is the portion that represents humans' higher qualities, providing the moral framework that humans use to regulate their baser behavior.

While there has not been much evidence found to support Freud's idea of a three-part mind, this theory did bring awareness to the fact that at least some thoughts, behaviors, and **motivations** are unconscious. We began to believe that a person's behavior was truly the tip of the iceberg when assessing their attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and unique personality.

Carl Jung

Jung was influenced by his mentor Freud, but ultimately came up with a much different system of personality. Jung believed that there were some overarching «types» of personality that each person could be classified into based on dichotomous variables.

For example, Jung believed that individuals were firmly within one of two camps:

1) **Introverts** – gain energy from the «internal world» or from solitude with the self

2) **Extroverts** – gain energy from the «external world» or interactions with others

This idea is still extremely prevalent today, and research has shown that this is a useful differentiator between two relatively distinct types of people. However, many of today's psychologists see the spectrum between introvert and extrovert as one that individuals can regularly traverse, rather than one in which individuals permanently plant their roots at a certain point.

Further, Jung identified what he found to be four essential psychological functions:

1. Thinking 2. Feeling 3. Sensation 4. Intuition

He believed that each of these functions could be experienced in an introverted or extroverted fashion,

and that one of these functions is more dominant than the others in each person.

Jung's work on personality had a huge impact on the field of personality research, an impact that is still being felt today. In fact, the popular Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test is based in part on Jung's theories of personality.

Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers

Abraham Maslow built on the idea that Freud brought into the mainstream, that at least some aspects or drivers of personality are buried deep within the unconscious mind.

Maslow hypothesized that personality is driven by a set of needs that each human has. He organized these needs into a hierarchy, with each level generally requiring fulfillment before a higher level can be fulfilled.

The pyramid is organized from bottom to top here, beginning with the most basic need (McLeod, 2007):

Physiological needs (food, water, warmth, rest)

Safety needs (security, safety)

Belongingness and love needs (intimate relationships, friends)

Esteem needs (prestige and feelings of accomplishment)

Self-actualization needs (achieving one's full potential, self-fulfillment)

Maslow believed that all humans aimed to fulfill these needs, usually in order from most basic to most transcendent, and that these motivations result in the behaviors that make up a personality.

Carl Rogers built off of Maslow's work, agreeing that all humans strive to fulfill needs, but disagreeing that there is a one-way relationship between striving towards need **fulfillment** and personality. Rogers believed that the many different ways humans utilize in trying to meet these needs spring from personality, rather than the other way around.

Rogers' contributions to the field of personality research signaled a shift in thinking about personality. Personality was starting to be seen as a collection of traits and characteristics that were not necessarily permanent rather than a single, succinct construct that can be easily described.

Multiple Personality Traits

In the 1940s, psychologist Hans Eysenck built off of Jung's dichotomy of introversion versus extraversion. He hypothesized that there were only two defining personality traits: extraversion and neuroticism. Individuals could be high or low on each of these traits, leading to four key types of personalities.

Eysenck also connected personality to the physical body in a much more extensive way than most previous personality researchers and philosophers. He posited that differences in the limbic system resulted in differences in hormones and hormonal activation. Those who were already highly stimulated (introverts) would naturally seek out less stimulation while those on the lower end (extroverts) would search for greater stimulation.

Eysenck's thoroughness in connecting the body to the mind, or personality, pushed the field toward a more scientific exploration of personality based on objective evidence rather than solely philosophical musings.

Lewis Goldberg may be the most prominent researcher in the field of personality psychology. His groundbreaking work whittled down Raymond Cattell's 16 «fundamental factors» of personality into five primary factors, similar to the five factors found by fellow psychology **researchers** in the 1960s.

This five factor model caught the attention of two other renowned personality researchers, Paul Costa and Robert McCrae, who confirmed the validity of this model. This model was termed the «Big Five» and launched thousands of explorations of personality within its framework, across multiple continents and cultures and with a wide variety of populations.

The Big Five brings us up to about the current era in personality research. The Big Five theory still holds sway as the prevailing theory of personality, but some of the salient aspects of current personality research include:

Conceptualizing traits on a spectrum instead of as dichotomous variables

Contextual personality traits (exploring how personality shifts based on environment and time)

Emphasis on the biological bases of personality and behavior

OCEAN: The Five Factors

These five factors do not provide completely exhaustive explanations of personality, but they are known as the «Big Five» because they encompass a large portion of personality-related terms. The five factors are not necessarily traits in and of themselves, but factors in which many related traits and characteristics fit.

A popular acronym for the Big Five is «OCEAN.» The five factors are laid out in that order here.

Openness to Experience

Openness to experience has been described as the depth and complexity of an individual's mental life and experiences (John & Srivastava, 1999). It

is also sometimes called intellect or imagination. Openness to experience concerns an individual's willingness to try to new things, to be vulnerable, and the ability to think outside the box.

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is a trait that can be described as the tendency to control impulses and act in socially acceptable ways, behaviors that facilitate goal-directed behavior (John&Srivastava, 1999). Conscientious people excel in their ability to delay gratification, work within the rules, and plan and organize effectively.

Extraversion

This factor has two familiar ends of the spectrum: extraversion and introversion. It concerns where an individual draws their energy and how they interact with others. In general, extroverts draw energy or «recharge» from interacting with others, while introverts get tired from interacting with others and replenish their energy from solitude.

Agreeableness

This factor concerns how well people get along with others. While extraversion concerns sources of energy and the pursuit of interactions with others, agreeableness concerns your orientation to others. It is a construct that rests on how you generally interact with others.

Neuroticism

Neuroticism is the one Big Five factor in which a high score indicates more negative traits. Neuroticism is not a factor of meanness or incompetence, but one of confidence and being comfortable in one's own skin. It encompasses one's emotional stability and general temper.

Assessing the Big Five

There have been a few attempts to measure the five factors of the Big Five framework, but the most reliable and valid measurements come from the Big Five Inventory (BFI) and the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R).

Big Five Inventory

This inventory was developed by Goldberg in 1993 to measure the five dimensions of the Big Five personality framework. It contains 44 items and measures each factor through its corresponding facets.

The responses to items concerning these facets are combined and summarized to produce a score on each factor. This inventory has been used extensively in psychology research and is still quite popular, although the NEO PI-R has also gained much attention in recent years.

NEO PI-R

The original NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI) was created by personality researchers Paul

Costa, Jr. and Robert McCrae in 1978. It was later revised to keep up with the changing times, once in 1990, once in 2005, and again in 2010. Initially, the NEO PI was named for the three main domains as the researchers understood them at the time: neuroticism, extraversion, and openness.

This scale is also based on the six facets of each factor, and includes 240 items rated on a 5-point scale. For a shorter scale, Costa and McCrae also offer the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO FFI), which contains only 60 items and measures just the overall domains instead of all facets.

The NEO PI-R requires only a 6th grade reading level and can be self-administered (taken as an individual without a scoring professional).

Access to the NEO PI-R is kept on a stricter lockdown than the BFI, but you can learn more about the scale or purchase it for your own use.

Discussion

Personality is a complex topic of research in psychology, with a long history of shifting philosophies and theories. While it's easy to conceptualize personality on a day-to-day level, conducting valid scientific research on personality can be much more complex.

The Big Five can help you to learn more about your unique personality and help you decide where to focus your energy and attention. The first step to effectively leveraging your strengths is to learn what your strengths are.

References

- Armstrong, D. (Eds.). *Organization in the mind*. The Tavistock clinic series. London: Karnac, 2005.
- Avolio, B.J., Gardner, W.L., Walumbwa, F.O., Luthans, F. & May, D.R. Unlocking the mask: A look at the process by which authentic leaders impact follower attitudes and behaviours // *The Leadership Quarterly*, 2005.- 15(6).- pp. 801-823.
- Baard, P.P., Deci, E.L. & Ryan, R.M. Intrinsic need satisfaction: A motivational basis of performance and well-being in two work settings // *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 2004. – 34(10). – pp. 2045-2068.
- Bacon, S. V. Does the global assessment of functioning assess functioning? // *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 2002. – 24(3). – pp. 202.
- Baer, M. & Frese, M. Innovation is not enough: Climates for initiative and psychological safety// *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 2003. – 24(1). – pp. 45-68.
- Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Lucas, R. E. Personality, culture, and subjective well-being: Emotional and cognitive evaluations of life. // *Annual review of psychology*, 2003. – 54(1). – pp. 403-425.
- Furnham, A., & Cheng, H. Lay theories of happiness // *Journal of happiness studies*, 2002. – 1(2). – pp. 227-246.
- Guite, H. F., Clark, C., & Ackrill, G. The impact of the physical and urban environment on mental well-being. *Public health*, 2002. – 120(12). – pp. 1117-1126.
- Lucas, R. E., & Fujita, F. Factors influencing the relation between extraversion and pleasant affect. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 2002. – 79(6). – pp.1039.
- Makikangas, A., & Kinnunen, U. Psychosocial work stressors and well-being: Self-esteem and optimism as moderators in a one year longitudinal sample. *Personality and individual differences*, 2003. – 35. – pp. 537-557.
- Mann, M. M., Hosman, C. M., Schaalma, H. P., & de Vries, N. K. Self-esteem in a broad-spectrum approach for mental health promotion // *Health Education Research*, 2004. – 19(4).
- World Health Organization *Mental Health Declaration for Europe. Facing the Challenges, Building Solutions*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2005. (<http://www.euro.who.int/Document/MNH/edoc07.pdf>, accessed 22 May 2008).
- World Health Organization *Social Cohesion for Mental Well Being among adolescents*. WHO/HBSC FORUM, 2007. – Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2007.
- Zigler, E. F., & Glick, M. *A developmental approach to adult psychopathology*. John Wiley & Sons, 2001.
- Zimmerman, B. Self-efficacy: An Essential motive to Learn. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 2000. – 25. – pp. 82–91.
- Natalie Rob. *Promoting organizational well-being*. Executive MA Thesis Wave, 2013. – 12. – Pp. 1-72.
- Ryff, C. Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1989. – 57. – pp. 1069–1081.
- Ryff, C., & Keyes, C. The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1995. – 69. – pp. 719–727.
- Hofstee, W. K. B., de Raad, B., & Goldberg, L. R. Integration of the big five and circumplex approaches to trait structure // *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1992. – 63. – pp. 146-163.
- McAdams, D. P. The five factor model in personality: A critical appraisal. *Journal of Personality*, 1992. – 60. – pp. 329-361.
- McMartin, J. *Personality psychology: A student centered approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995.

References

- Armstrong, D. (Eds.). *Organization in the mind*. The Tavistock clinic series. London: Karnac, 2005.
- Avolio, B.J., Gardner, W.L., Walumbwa, F.O., Luthans, F. & May, D.R. Unlocking the mask: A look at the process by which authentic leaders impact follower attitudes and behaviours // *The Leadership Quarterly*, 2005.- 15(6).- pp. 801-823.
- Baard, P.P., Deci, E.L. & Ryan, R.M. Intrinsic need satisfaction: A motivational basis of performance and well-being in two work settings // *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 2004. – 34(10). – pp. 2045-2068.
- Bacon, S. V. Does the global assessment of functioning assess functioning? // *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 2002. – 24(3). – pp. 202.
- Baer, M. & Frese, M. Innovation is not enough: Climates for initiative and psychological safety// *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 2003. – 24(1). – pp. 45-68.
- Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Lucas, R. E. Personality, culture, and subjective well-being: Emotional and cognitive evaluations of life. // *Annual review of psychology*, 2003. – 54(1). – pp. 403-425.
- Furnham, A., & Cheng, H. Lay theories of happiness // *Journal of happiness studies*, 2002. – 1(2). – pp. 227-246.
- Guite, H. F., Clark, C., & Ackrill, G. The impact of the physical and urban environment on mental well-being. *Public health*, 2002. – 120(12). – pp. 1117-1126.
- Lucas, R. E., & Fujita, F. Factors influencing the relation between extraversion and pleasant affect. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 2002. – 79(6). – pp.1039.
- Makikangas, A., & Kinnunen, U. Psychosocial work stressors and well-being: Self-esteem and optimism as moderators in a one year longitudinal sample. *Personality and individual differences*, 2003. – 35. – pp. 537-557.
- Mann, M. M., Hosman, C. M., Schaalma, H. P., & de Vries, N. K. Self-esteem in a broad-spectrum approach for mental health promotion // *Health Education Research*, 2004. – 19(4).
- World Health Organization Mental Health Declaration for Europe. Facing the Challenges, Building Solutions. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2005. (<http://www.euro.who.int/Document/MNH/edoc07.pdf>, accessed 22 May 2008).
- World Health Organization Social Cohesion for Mental Well Being among adolescents. WHO/HBSC FORUM, 2007. – Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2007.
- Zigler, E. F., & Glick, M. A developmental approach to adult psychopathology. John Wiley & Sons, 2001.
- Zimmerman, B. Self-efficacy: An Essential motive to Learn. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 2000. – 25. – pp. 82–91.
- Natalie Rob. Promoting organizational well-being. Executive MA Thesis Wave, 2013. – 12. – Pp. 1-72.
- Ryff, C. Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1989. – 57. – pp. 1069–1081.
- Ryff, C., & Keyes, C. The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1995. – 69. – pp. 719–727.
- Hofstee, W. K. B., de Raad, B., & Goldberg, L. R. Integration of the big five and circumplex approaches to trait structure // *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1992. – 63. – pp. 146-163.
- McAdams, D. P. The five factor model in personality: A critical appraisal. *Journal of Personality*, 1992. – 60. – pp. 329-361.
- McMartin, J. *Personality psychology: A student centered approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995.