

**Personality and Individual Differences: Big 5 insights to workplace stress and coping during COVID 19**

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** The prime objective of the research is to determine the impact of five personality traits on susceptibility to workplace stress, across age, sex, and education, in times when the world economies such as India face public health concerns i.e., COVID 19.

**Approach:** Evaluate the psychometric properties of the five-factor model utilizing NEO-FFI-3 on millennial employees born in the year 1981 to 2000 aged 21 to 40 working in the Indian organizational context. By ranking individuals on each of the five traits, it is possible to effectively measure individual differences in personality.

**Findings:** Employees with higher conscientiousness and agreeableness personalities are less susceptible to workplace stress as found amongst higher educates (i.e., Ph.D. and Post-Graduates), besides also assessed by older millennials (age 31-40) during the beginning period of COVID 19. Contrariwise extraversion and openness to experience cope more with adapting engagement with new millennials (age 21-30). Besides, we also found professionals with Post-Graduates and Ph.D. qualifications connected more to the openness trait. Women reported more neuroticism, indicating inclined to harp on disengagement and frequently experience stressors at work; nevertheless, agreeableness was also reported higher by them; thus, countering social support often buffers the impacts of distressing occasions.

**Originality:** The personality influences individual responses to cope under stressful situations, determining individual differences in big five personality at the workplace situation at times of COVID 19 deemed significant.

**Keywords:** five-factor model, personality traits, workplace, stress, coping, COVID 19, engagement, disengagement, millennials.

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## INTRODUCTION

**Background:** The Five-Factor Model (FFM) is a settled worldview for the conceptualization of human personality, portrayed as far as Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Personality operation predicts the recurrence of the presentation to different sorts of stressors as it influences the examination of occasions just as the impression of one's coping resources at times. This research study intended to explore the connection of personality during the beginning of COVID 19, with millennials working in the Indian organizational regime, i.e., generation of people born between 1980-2000 (e.g., Caraher, 2015; Taylor, 2014). The particular group of people, dependent on age, share regular authentic foundation, encounters, convictions, and components impacting conduct. A generation is about 20 years long (Howe & Strauss, 2003). The makeup of the worldwide workforce is experiencing a seismic shift - 3 generations are working together, namely baby boomers (1946-1960), Gen X (1961-1979), Gen Y/millennials (1981-2000) (Howe & Strauss, 2009). The study assessment is important as to the notion that millennials are the next major wave hitting the corporate sector. Moreover, because of their growing demand to deal with unfortunate events such as the economic downturn, the depressed stock market, mass layoffs, and the struggling global markets, Indian employees desperately need an ethical, effective, and optimal approach. Personality attributes are unavoidable styles of reasoning, feeling, and acting. As such, they are probably going to influence professional interests and decisions, work styles (Hoekstra, 1993), work fulfillment, and the adequacy of occupation execution. The logical assessment of personality is driven by the objective of recognizing, anticipating patterns for the workplace expectations. Practices that millennial employees experience and execute during the beginning of COVID 19. To review a set of behavioral and cognitive strategies that help individuals construct their environment, establish self-motivation, and facilitate behaviors appropriate for obtaining performance standards, help employees attain their desired performance in the long run.

Personality psychology is halfway about what makes everybody the equivalent and somewhat about what causes individuals to vary from one another. That is, personality hypotheses are somehow articulations about human instinct: affirmations that individuals are necessarily (for instance) biological beings, social beings, self-defensive, self-completing, or learning people. To comprehend the individual, one needs to embrace some perspective on the quintessence of human instinct. Personality additionally concerns singular contrasts. Singular contrasts can be found in any measurement possible; however, the supposed five-factor model (e.g., Digman 1990, McCrae & Costa 2003) has generally received a consensual system. The five variables are most normally named extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. In this view, these wide measurements are critical determinants of conduct. The collection of information resulting from an individual's arrangement on these measurements gives a sensibly decent depiction of what they resemble. Every vast attribute comprises various features, which provide a more subtle picture.

### **Stress and Coping**

It is recognizable that stress exists when individuals stand up to circumstances that burden or surpass their capacity to oversee them (Lazarus, 1999). At whatever point an individual cannot manage some snag or obstacle or approaching danger, the experience is upsetting. It isn't surprising to consider stress being an extraordinary class of encounters. In any case, it might be that stress is not much (and nothing not precisely) the experience of undergoing or foreseeing difficulty in one's objective related endeavors. To some degree, a distinctive perspective on stress utilizes a financial illustration (Hobfoll, 1998), holding that individuals have assets that they attempt to secure, safeguard, and moderate. Resources are anything the individual qualities. Further, the resources can take many forms like physical (e.g., house, vehicle), states of life (e.g., having companions and family members, stable business and employment), individual characteristics (e.g., a positive world view, work abilities), or different resources (e.g., cash, knowledge or information). From this view, stress happens when

resources are compromised or lost. In interpreting affliction to stress, the threat is one of the looming events of an occasion that is relied upon to have terrible outcomes, hurt is the discernment that the awful consequences as of now exist, and misfortune is the recognition that something meant has been removed. These unfavorable encounters are, on the whole, upsetting, yet they fluctuate in their persuasive and motivational underpinnings. Individuals react to the impression of danger, threat, mischief, harm, loss, and misfortune in various ways, a significant number of which get the name "coping." Some like to restrict the idea of coping with intentional reactions (Compaset *al.* 2001); others incorporate involuntary and automatic reactions inside the coping dimension (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007).

An especially significant differentiation is between engagement or approach coping, which is planned for managing the stressor or related feelings, and disengagement or avoidance coping, which is planned for getting away from the danger, or related feelings (e.g., Moos & Schaefer 1993; Skinner *et al.* 2003). Engagement coping incorporates issue centered coping and a few types of feeling centered coping: support seeking, emotion regulation, acknowledgment, and intellectual rebuilding. Disengagement coping incorporates reactions, for example, avoidance, disavowal, and unrealistic reasoning. Disengagement coping is regularly feeling centered, on the grounds that it includes an endeavor to get away from sentiments of pain and distress. At times disengagement coping is actually pushed to go about like the stressor does not exist, so it doesn't need to be responded to, behaviorally or emotionally. Hopeful thinking, unrealistic reasoning, and dream separate the individual from the stressor, in any event temporarily, and rejection creates a boundary between reality and the person's experience. Regardless of the aim of eluding distress, disengagement coping is commonly insufficient in decreasing pain and distress over the long haul, as it fails to address the danger's presence and its ultimate effect. In case you are experiencing a genuine danger in your life and react by going out to see the films, shopping, and so forth, the danger will remain when the film or the shopping is finished. Eventually, it must be dealt with. Undoubtedly, for many stresses, the more one abstains from managing the issue, the more obstinate

it gets, and the less time is accessible to manage it when one, at last, goes to it. Another problem is that avoidance and refusal can advance a staggering increment in interfering contemplations (thoughts) about the stressor and an expansion in negative temperament and tension (Najmi& Wegner, 2008).

Personality is a basic indicator of culpability. Caspi *et al.* (1994) discovered more prominent cooperation in deficient exercises – regardless of whether separated by nation, sex, and race and whether self-report or official records measured delinquency. It was associated with young persons who showed greater negative emotional expression (defined by greater aggression, greater alienation, and more significant stress reactions) and weak constraint (i.e., low traditionalism, low harm avoidance, and a lack of control). Individual differences in personality interact with social influences; impulsivity is a more reliable predictor of antisocial behavior in poorer communities (Lynam *et al.*, 2000). Personality characteristics have demonstrated to be hearty predictors of behavioral problems. This study's assessment can help identify which personality traits are likely to influence employees' coping strategies, which could aid in stressful situations like the world economies are currently facing due to public health concerns aptly COVID-19. Therefore, we set out to evaluate the psychometric properties of the five-factor model utilizing NEO-FFI-3 on millennial employees born in the year 1981 to 2000 aged 21 to 40 working in the Indian organizational context. They were further linked to their demographics as sex, age, and educational levels, adding insights into workplace expectations and practices. The Big Five Model, otherwise called the Five-Factor Model, is the best universally acknowledged personality concept and premise held by psychologists today. The method expresses that personality can break down to five center variables, known by the abbreviation CANOE or OCEAN: By ranking individuals on each of these traits, it is possible to measure individual differences in personality effectively.

**Openness:** Individuals with high openness to experience show intellectual interest, originality, and compliance in thinking (Digman,1990). Personalities who have high openness are also portrayed as innovative, free

intuition, lenient toward vagueness, and amiable to new thoughts, encounters, and points of view (Costa & McCrae, 2002). Openness separates individuals who lean toward curiosity, novelty, assortment, and extreme experience vs. individuals who favor the comfortable, daily schedule, and customary (McCrae, 1996). In like way, in the organizational setting, employees who have high openness to experience will, by and large, invite the advantages of better methodologies for completing things and are generally more willing and prepared to create new reflections that improve or change the standard. On the contrary, employees with low openness are progressively moderate and slope toward reflections and conventional things rather than novel and one of a kind (Digman, 1990). Employees with higher levels of openness are expected to perform better when they work in an environment where adaptation to change is needed, especially when the efficient adaptation involves developing different and possibly counterintuitive ways of doing things (Tett *et al.*, 1991). This is because openness to experience is associated with such characteristics as creativity and broadmindedness, prerequisites of efficient adaptation to change, which contribute to the focus of attention on areas that others may not consider (LePine *et al.*, 2000). Judge *et al.* (1999) also identified that openness was positively related to manager's ability to cope with various organizational transitions because Openness-oriented individual's preferences for novel stimuli increased their ability to think flexibly. Accordingly, openness is expected to positively influence performance when employees are in a transitional stage, such as at the start of a new job (Thoresen *et al.*, 2004).

**Conscientiousness:** refers to individual differences in impulse control, conformity, organization, and determination (Digman, 1990). People with high conscientiousness are achievement-oriented (i.e., hardworking, and persistent), dependable (i.e., responsible and careful), and orderly (i.e., planned and organized) (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Meta-analytic research has consistently supported generalizable validity across occupations and job situations for conscientiousness as a personality predictor (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991; Barrick *et al.*, 2001). Due to their high task-specific self-efficacy, highly conscientious individuals tend to ignore minor criticisms, discount small failures, and avoid negative thoughts. As a result, they maintain positive thinking

during challenging learning processes and are more likely to achieve a higher learning level in competitive learning situations (Martocchio & Judge, 1997). Empirical research has shown positive relationships between the facets of conscientiousness and personal goal choice (Yukl & Latham, 2006), perceived probability and importance of goal attainment, goal commitment (Hollenbeck *et al.*, 1989), and outcome measures such as effort level and task performance (Matsui *et al.*, 1982). In sum, conscientiousness has been found to influence job performance by inspiring individuals to —get things done, as conscientious employees' strong desire to fulfill their obligations is often reflected in their task accomplishment (Barrick *et al.*, 2001). Conscientious individuals often rely on problem-solving coping, such as taking steps to remove the stressors or diminishing their negative impact if the stressors cannot be evaded (Carver & Connor Smith, 2010). Generally, a high level of conscientiousness contributes to the higher level of performance among new hires but more so in veteran employees through the close linkage between conscientiousness and self-management (Gerhardt *et al.*, 2007). Self-management consists of a set of behavioral and cognitive strategies that help individuals construct their environment, establish self-motivation, and facilitate behaviors appropriate for obtaining performance standards and help employees attain their desired performance in the long run (Frayne & Geringer, 2000).

**Extraversion** is described by an inclination to act naturally sure, predominant, dynamic, excitement-seeking, and optimistic (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Accordingly, extraverts show a higher frequency and intensity of personal interactions and positive emotions, as well as a distinct focus on the positive aspects of experiences. Extraversion is primarily related to job performance in occupations, where a significant portion of the job requires interactions with others (Vinchure *et al.*, 1998). One prevalent explanation of such a relationship is that highly extraverted employees can initiate contact and get along with others (e.g., customers, coworkers, and supervisors). Therefore, extraverts usually perform efficiently in working contexts involving intensive social interactions. For example, research overwhelmingly suggests that extraverts do well in sales jobs (Vinchure *et al.*, 1998) and training programs involving social interactions, e.g., such as assessment center, on-the-job training

salesperson (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Extraversion is particularly helpful in achieving higher performance levels among new hires. Given the social nature of work, extraverts, who tend to approach their work with vigor, initiative, and energy, are more likely to establish positive and productive social relationships, which should result in higher job performance (Day & Schleicher, 2006). Specifically, an effective work relationship with colleagues and supervisors often helps newcomers learn behavioral patterns, tasks, and challenges. Also, obtain feedback on their function concerning role requirements (Jokisaari & Nurmi, 2009) and understand the jobs' responsibilities and goals, i.e., role clarity (Seibert *et al.*, 2001). Building up and keeping up successful work connections considers task coordination, information stream, and other work forms vital for achieving an organization's objectives and goals (Day & Schleicher, 2006). Work would not be skilled, cultivated, and accomplished (at least not viably) without establishing arranged connections in an organization, especially for newcomers.

**Agreeableness:** Highly agreeable individuals will, in general, be more cheerful and garrulous, amiable, pleasant, cooperative, and for the most part, more adaptable, mindful, and respectful (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Simultaneously, people low in Agreeableness are more manipulative, critical, and self-serving (Costa & McCrae, 1995). The attributes of Agreeableness mirror people's powerful urge to coexist with others. In particular, through a progression of lab contemplates, analysts found that agreeable people experienced increased feeling in circumstances fundamental to the development of connections (Tobin *et al.*, 2000). Moreover, when stood up to with strife, agreeable people will, in general, produce constructive observation and attributions to otherwise. Provocative behaviour and select more productive, rather than destructive, tactics to handle disagreement (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). Accordingly, agreeable individuals are often strongly motivated to maintain interpersonal harmony and acceptance as well as minimize the harmful effects of interpersonal conflict (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). As a result, due to their emphasis on interpersonal

relationships and strive for communion, agreeable employees often have more friends and establish positive relationships with co-workers or team members (Graziano *et al.*, 2007).

**Neuroticism:** alludes to the condition of being commonly apprehensive, on edge, shaky, touchy, and discouraged, rather than sharp, sure, secure, guaranteed, and stable (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1985; Digman, 1990). People high in neuroticism are inclined to encounter antagonistic affectivity, significant mental pain levels, and embrace contrary focal points to decipher their condition (Hollenbeck *et al.*, 2002). Reliable finding is an antagonistic connection among neuroticism and logical execution measurements of occupation commitment and relational assistance (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000). Kaplan *et al.*, 2009 further recognized that neurotics are less inclined to go well beyond their proper expected set of responsibilities to participate in relevant practices. As neurotics people, who are inclined to harp on negatives and frequently experience stressors at work, are more reluctant (less likely) to feel that they have the adequate time, enthusiastic vitality, or capacity to add to the unimportant assignment. Research recommends that employees with elevated neuroticism levels expected to display a descending curve of adequacy and, in due course, lower future execution (Kaplan *et al.*, 2009). Scientists clarified that employees high in negative affectivity (i.e., neuroticism), who show tireless self-question and respond unequivocally to negative incitements (Barsky *et al.*, 2004), not just experience issues in initiating assignment exercises or defining fittingly ambitious objectives yet in addition experience difficulty accomplishing high levels of job performance in the long haul (Cook *et al.*, 2000).

## MATERIALS & METHOD

### Purpose of the Study

The prime objective of the research is to determine the impact of five personality traits on susceptibility to workplace stress, across age, sex, and education, in times when the world economies such as India face public

health concerns, i.e., COVID 19. It was asserted that individual differences in personality would throw light on to cope under stressful situations employees experiencing at the workplace. Various research previously done reports on how singular contrasts in big five help in engagement in coping with stressors, thus making the situation less susceptible to workplace stress while working for organizations. Likewise, big five personality, such as high neuroticism, leads to disengagement. Professionals with such a trait abstain from managing the issue, the more obstinate it gets, and the less time is accessible to handle it when one, at last, go to it. One has to deal with threatening situations, ultimately. Less coping in the form of negative emotional expression would unnecessarily multiply the impacts of high pressure and stressors. Reviewing the remedies to moderate such situations can help the organizations accounting for differences in personalities to adopt, stimulate suitable strategies while deciding at the structure, functioning, and create a working environment that minimizes occurrences of misfortunate proceedings.

### **Participants**

This study's participants were employees from various companies operating in the Indian regime, who enrolled as Millennials born in India from 1981 to 2000 aged 21 to 40. Measuring the assessment was well-timed in light of the present economic downturn facing several countries worldwide, which has resulted in part from publicized health concern (Covid-19). The study participants examined in their work environments with demographic information studied as age, sex, and educational level for insights. The data was obtained from 500 millennials, comprising 230 (46%) Female employees and 270 (54%) Male employees during the period mid of May to the mid of August 2020. The mean age of employees reported to be  $M=30.50$  with  $SD=5.84$ ; further, the respondents comprised found from various educational levels as Higher Secondary 76 (15.2%), Graduates 134 (26.8%), Postgraduates - MBA/M.com/Finance 193 (38.6%), and Ph.D. 97 (19.4%). Individuals are represented by various organizations with regional, cultural, and environmental differences. Our evaluators were working in six Indian based companies namely HDFC ( $n = 84, 16.8 \%$ ), Axis ( $n = 72, 14.4 \%$ ), ICICI ( $n = 94, 18.8 \%$ ),

Infosys (n = 79, 15.8 %), TCS (n = 77, 15.4 %) and Adobe (n = 94, 18.8 %) comprising banking and Information Technology sectors. The sampling method selected is purposive, with personnel based out of Pune, Bangalore, Delhi-NCR, Hyderabad, Chennai embodying India's Banking and IT hub under study. In general, it was ensured that individual participation depends on availability, confidentiality, interest, and proper consent. All the participants were thoroughly informed about the purpose of the study and were enrolled utilizing self-deciding criteria. The questionnaires were administered using an online survey procedure.

### **Measure**

The Neuroticism Extraversion Openness-Five Factor Inventory-3 (NEO-FFI-3) was used to assess personality. The NEO-FFI-3 (McCrae and Costa, 2007), which is a revision of the NEO-FFI, aimed at better readability, a settled 60-item questionnaire based on the Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality, gives a significant structure to the interdisciplinary way to deal with personality research. Participants rate the items on a five-point scale, ranging “strongly disagree = 0” to “strongly agree = 4”. The reported reliability coefficient of responses on the five scales ranged from alpha .86 to .95. The NEO-FFI-3 measures the five personality traits (the Big Five model) namely agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness. There are, a total of 60 items, 12 items per dimension of the five-factor model, and participants were asked to rate their personalities on five-point scales for each item, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The NEO-FFI-3 was developed from the original NEO-PI, a 240-item inventory that measures the five personality traits of the Big Five model and six facet scales for each of the five major traits (Costa & McCrae, 1992c). Following the development of the NEO-PI, the NEO-FFI was created as a shortened version of the NEO-PI, measuring only the five major factors. Thus, the NEO-FFI has only 60 items and does not contain the facets scales for any five factors. However, the original NEO-FFI required revision after the stability of the Extraversion and Openness factors was questioned (Egan *et al.*, 2000), leading to the development of the Neuroticism Extraversion Openness Five-Factor Inventory-R (NEO-FFI-R; McCrae & Costa, 2004). Finally, the current NEO-FFI-3 is a revised version of the

NEO-FFI-R. It is mainly identical to the NEOFFI-R, except for one item was being replaced to improve psychometrics and comprehension (McCrae & Costa, 2007).

### **Statistics**

Expressive insight was assessed by summarizing the total scores of each big-five personality construct so obtained from the targeted millennial employees (n=500) representing the population under study, is concluding their remarks, thus determining the levels of personality behaviors and identifying the susceptibility to workplace stress. To measure employees' personality structure working in the Indian organizational regime, the descriptive analysis, and their internal consistency were assessed utilizing the Cronbach's alpha wherein it was realized that all reported values are  $> .700$ . Applying this system confirms that the items do not just fulfill the psychometric rules yet that their substance is similar to the hypothetical constructs that are supposed to be measured. Further, to study the impact of demographic information amongst the respondents, various analytical algorithms are performed. Gender differences were reported utilizing the independent sample t-test, also supported by internal consistencies for each group of participants to get dependable assessments and generalize the findings. Systematic variations were assessed using investigational condition comparison, mean ( $\bar{x}$ ), and corresponding difference evaluated at a 1% significance. Further to support the significance of such comparisons, the effect size is duly reported for every experimental phase evaluation using  $r$  (Rosenthal, 1991; Rosnow & Rosenthal, 2005). Age-related impacts were reported in two ways. They are firstly analyzed utilizing the correlational approach with big-five personalities. The relationship investigated, established between the five-factor model structure and age, was analyzed using the Pearson Correlation examination. And in a likewise manner secondly by converting the age category into two independent groups, namely new millennials (age 21-30 with less of expertise, knowledge, experience) and older millennials (age 31-40 with more of expertise, knowledge, experience). The mean differences reported by utilizing the independent sample t-test applied to new millennials and old millennials. Assessment for the psychosomatic excursions of educational levels on personality outcomes was evaluated using Between Group Analysis of Variance [ANOVA]. Systematic

variations were assessed using type III sum of squares; improvements in the studied parameters were noticed with the corresponding magnitude of such an effect in the population of interest. Systematic multiple comparisons were made using Bonferroni adjustment; furthermore, to support the significance of such comparisons, the effect size was duly reported for every investigational evaluation.

## RESULTS

The Five-Factor Model (FFM) examination underlying the personality with meaningful insights is mentioned in Table 1. The assessment made by the millennials during COVID 19 reported in order of their mean scores being Conscientiousness (M=33.12, SD=6.85,  $\alpha = .795$ ), Openness to experience (M=31.26, SD=6.84,  $\alpha = .758$ ), Extraversion (M=29.70, SD=7.50,  $\alpha = .773$ ), Agreeableness (M=27.73, SD=8.80,  $\alpha = .865$ ) and Neuroticism (M=21.60, SD=8.30,  $\alpha = .734$ ).

*Table 1. Assessment of Big 5 personality, of n=500 millennial employees*

|          | <b>M</b> | <b>SD</b> | <b>Cronbach's Alpha</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> |
|----------|----------|-----------|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| <b>O</b> | 31.26    | 6.84      | .758                    | 10         | 48         |
| <b>C</b> | 33.12    | 6.85      | .795                    | 10         | 47         |
| <b>E</b> | 29.70    | 7.50      | .773                    | 8          | 46         |
| <b>A</b> | 27.73    | 8.80      | .865                    | 5          | 45         |
| <b>N</b> | 21.60    | 8.30      | .734                    | 3          | 41         |

Note. O = Openness to experience, C = Conscientiousness, E = Extraversion, A = Agreeableness, N = Neuroticism

Conscientiousness is the most grounded and most robust indicator of all the five traits for work execution, reported being the highest predominant personality trait by millennials. A high score of conscientiousness appears to identify with high work execution across all measurements. High conscientiousness is closely linked to firm task-specific self-efficacy beliefs. Generally speaking, individuals with high self-efficacy set incredibly challenging goals and exert more considerable effort to master those challenges. Due to their high task-specific

self-efficacy, highly conscientious individuals tend to ignore minor criticisms, discount small failures, and avoid negative thoughts. Conscientious individuals, who tend to possess a stronger desire for the continuous pursuit of performance improvement, are expected to demonstrate higher job performance levels than their colleagues low in conscientiousness (e.g., Thoresen *et al.*, 2004; Tracey *et al.*, 2010).

By and large, openness was found to be assessed the 2nd most prevalent personality trait at current times amongst millennials in India, with regards to the workplace environment. To highlight openness to experience is positively related to individual proactivity but negatively associated with team efficiency. These people are bound to be happy to take part in learning encounters and advantage from training (Costa & McCrae, 1985). The openness personality is likewise expected to impact learning and connection to higher performance execution from intrinsic motivation. Due to their resilience to uncertainty and vigor about new thoughts and encounters, people high in openness are bound to take part in the learning condition for the experience of learning (i.e., high intrinsic motivation) (George & Zhou, 2001). As a result, they maintain positive thinking during challenging learning processes and are more likely to achieve a higher learning level in competitive learning situations (Martocchio & Judge, 1997).

The results outline (see table 2) that the big five personality factors are significantly related to age. We found that conscientiousness and agreeableness are positively associated with the age. Conversely, the millennial employees inversely describe openness to experience, extraversion, and neuroticism to age during COVID 19 assessment. Demeanor may influence coping reactions more emphatically in grown-ups than youngsters, who are likely more gifted at coordinating coping techniques to situational requests (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck 2007). Our study reported age-related decreases in neuroticism ( $r = -.183$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and increments in agreeableness ( $r = .250$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and conscientiousness ( $r = .318$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) may lead more established grown-ups to encounter less misery, distress and, in this manner, less fluctuation in coping (McCrae *et al.* 2000,

Roberts & Del Vecchio 2000). Without a doubt, the way that a great part of the control happens for critical thinking and psychological rebuilding proposes the likelihood that the majority obtain more expertise with these reactions to difficulty as they age. Effective emotion-focused coping diminishes negative distress, making it possible to consider the problem more calmly, perhaps yielding better problem-focused coping. We observe decreasing levels of Openness to experience ( $r = -.204, p < 0.01$ ) and Extraversion ( $r = -.305, p < 0.01$ ) with the working employees age. Both the type of personality traits facilitates problem-solving and cognitive restructuring amongst youngsters while in comparison to grown-ups. Additionally, extraverts relate more to social support but are unrelated to acceptance or emotional regulation. Effective problem-focused coping diminishes the threat, but thereby also diminishes the distress generated by that threat.

*Table 2. Correlation examination of Big 5 personality with age of n=500 millennial employees*

|                 | <b>O</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>N</b> |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>Age</b>      | -.204    | .318     | -.305    | .250     | -.183    |
| <b>p- value</b> | .000     | .000     | .000     | .000     | .000     |

Note. O = Openness to experience, C = Conscientiousness, E = Extraversion, A = Agreeableness, N = Neuroticism

Older millennials report higher on the Big Five personality traits (see table 3) agreeableness and conscientiousness while comparing to the New ones. Agreeableness was found to be for older ( $M = 29.61, SD = 7.60, \alpha = .825$ ) millennials presenting statistically significant,  $t(498) = 4.92, p = .000, r = 21.53\%$ , while for New ( $M = 25.82, SD = 9.52, \alpha = .881$ ) millennials; facilitate higher coping engagement. A profoundly agreeable individual will show supportive of social types of conduct. They are more sociable, plan to satisfy others, and are happy to help those out of luck. Accordingly, agreeable individuals will, in general, function admirably as a component of a group. During contentions or conflict times, they will try to determine and resolve, instead of delayed encounters. Amongst all personality traits, agreeableness stays liquid all through an individual's life.

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Exploration has discovered that we will, in general, become more agreeable as we become more established and grow older (Donnellan & Lucas, 2008).

Table 3. Assessment of Big 5 personalities by age group

|          | New Millennials |              |                  | Older Millennials |              |                  | p – value |
|----------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------|
|          | N               | M (SD)       | Cronbach's Alpha | n                 | M (SD)       | Cronbach's Alpha |           |
| <b>O</b> | 248             | 32.52 (6.63) | .767             | 252               | 30.02 (6.83) | .735             | .000      |
| <b>C</b> | 248             | 31.15 (6.74) | .754             | 252               | 35.06 (6.41) | .802             | .000      |
| <b>E</b> | 248             | 32.09 (6.94) | .764             | 252               | 27.34 (7.29) | .735             | .000      |
| <b>A</b> | 248             | 25.82 (9.52) | .881             | 252               | 29.61 (7.60) | .825             | .000      |
| <b>N</b> | 248             | 22.27 (8.07) | .714             | 252               | 20.94 (8.48) | .751             | .074      |

Note. New Millennials (age; 21-30), Older Millennials (age; 31-40), O = Openness to experience, C = Conscientiousness, E = Extraversion, A = Agreeableness, N = Neuroticism

Likewise conscientiousness was found to be for older ( $M = 35.06$ ,  $SD = 6.41$ ,  $\alpha = .802$ ) millennials demonstrating statistically significant,  $t(498) = 6.64$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $r = 28.53\%$ , while for New ( $M = 31.15$ ,  $SD = 6.74$ ,  $\alpha = .754$ ) millennials; facilitate higher coping engagement. Conscientiousness is often associated with job dedication and career success, such as performance-based promotions. As the behavioral expressions of conscientiousness, such as being hard-working and taking initiatives to solve work problems, often covary with the level of job dedication, the deliberate intention to promote the organization's best interests over time, as well as the supervisors' judgment of overall performance (e.g., Dudley *et al.*, 2006; Van Scotter&Motowidlo, 1996).

New millennials report higher on the Big Five personality traits openness and extraversion while in comparison to Older Millennials. Openness to experience was found to be for new ( $M = 32.52$ ,  $SD = 6.63$ ,  $\alpha = .767$ ) millennials exhibiting statistically significant,  $t(498) = 4.15$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $r = 18.32\%$ , while for older ( $M = 30.02$ ,

SD = 6.83,  $\alpha = .735$ ) millennials. Likewise extraversion was found to be for new (M = 32.09, SD = 6.94,  $\alpha = .764$ ) millennials presenting statistically significant,  $t(498) = 7.45$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $r = 31.67\%$  while for older (M = 27.34, SD = 7.29,  $\alpha = .735$ ) millennials. Both of these personality traits facilitate problem-solving and cognitive restructuring, thus higher coping engagement. As employees need to learn a lot when they are new to a job, the personality trait that facilitates both the motivation to learn and the ability to learn expected to exert a positive effect on job performance among new hires. Research has shown the critical role of learning and knowledge acquisition in a newcomer, making sense of and successfully transition to a new situation (Bauer *et al.*, 2007).

New millennials reported higher mean ( $p > .05$ ), though insignificant in comparison to older ones. Neuroticism might be particularly detrimental to new hires' performance concerning its association with stress perceptions and stress handling. Specifically, newcomers are troubled with ambiguity concerning their roles in the organization, uncertainty about their abilities to cope with organizational demands, and the reality shocks due to unrealistic corporate life expectations. These stressors have identified as particularly troublesome for neurotic newcomers (Saks & Ashforth, 2000).

Gender differences in the Big Five personality traits have been reported (see table 4) by women to be higher in Neuroticism and Agreeableness. Women report statistically higher neuroticism,  $t(498) = 7.99$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $r = 33.70\%$  with (M = 24.63, SD = 8.06,  $\alpha = .716$ ) while comparing the Men with (M = 19.02, SD = 7.61,  $\alpha = .689$ ). Neuroticism is reported to be associated with the production of task-irrelevant thoughts and cognitive interference. Specifically, neurotic people tend to be frequently distracted by aversive emotions such as fear, anxiety, embarrassment, disappointment, and unnecessary worrying, which divert their attention from performing their job functions and regulating the distractor. The efforts to regulate negative affective experiences often interfere with the attentional resources available for task performance (e.g., Howell & Conway, 1992; Koy & Yeo, 2008). The distress associated with high neuroticism may interfere with successful

problem-solving. Indeed, persons high in neuroticism appear to experience fewer short-term benefits of engagement coping; conversely, more short-term benefits of disengagement than those low in neuroticism (Connor-Smith & Compas 2004; Dunkley *et al.* 2003). This explains why neuroticism relates to tendencies to disengage despite long-term adverse effects of doing so. Neuroticism is also linked to less flexibility in coping across situations (Lee-Baggley *et al.* 2005), perhaps because distress interferes with selecting optimal strategies. Neuroticism connects to less problem solving, cognitive restructuring, and acceptance, but more seeking emotional support and distraction.

*Table 4. Assessment of Big 5 personalities by gender*

|          | Female |              |                  | Male |              |                  | p - value |
|----------|--------|--------------|------------------|------|--------------|------------------|-----------|
|          | N      | M (SD)       | Cronbach's Alpha | n    | M (SD)       | Cronbach's Alpha |           |
| <b>O</b> | 230    | 31.76 (6.46) | .736             | 270  | 30.83 (7.12) | .774             | .126      |
| <b>C</b> | 230    | 33.69 (6.33) | .776             | 270  | 32.64 (7.25) | .806             | .084      |
| <b>E</b> | 230    | 29.31 (6.91) | .735             | 270  | 30.02 (7.97) | .799             | .282      |
| <b>A</b> | 230    | 30.73 (7.36) | .813             | 270  | 25.17 (9.12) | .873             | .000      |
| <b>N</b> | 230    | 24.63 (8.06) | .716             | 270  | 19.02 (7.61) | .689             | .000      |

Note. O = Openness to experience, C = Conscientiousness, E = Extraversion, A = Agreeableness, N = Neuroticism

Women (M = 30.73, SD = 7.36,  $\alpha = .813$ ) report statistically higher agreeableness,  $t(498) = 7.41$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $r = 31.51\%$  comparing to men (M = 25.17, SD = 9.12,  $\alpha = .873$ ). Due to women's nature, they tend to provide social support either in affective support (e.g., friendliness) or instrumental support (e.g., task-directed helping). As social support often buffers the impacts of distressing occasions, they are consequently diminishing the unfriendly impacts of stressors on one's job attitudes (e.g., Morrison, 2004; Simon *et al.*, 2010). All these leads

to increased job satisfaction, which prompts higher employment execution. Research has consistently shown the high predictive validity of agreeableness in teamwork (e.g., Barrick *et al.*, 2003; Peeters *et al.*, 2006). It is considered the single best personality predictor for performance under team situations when the individual-level teamwork criterion includes cooperativeness with coworkers and team members. One benefit of having positive interpersonal relationships with coworkers is social support (Cunningham & Barbee, 2000).

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the employees' big five personality traits to assess the effect of education on personality outcomes. There was a significant effect of education levels on three personalities' vis.conscientiousness, openness, and agreeableness. However, the two personality traits vis. extraversion and neuroticism do not seem to be explained (results insignificant,  $p > .01$ ) by the level of education assessed by millennials working professionals (see figure 1).

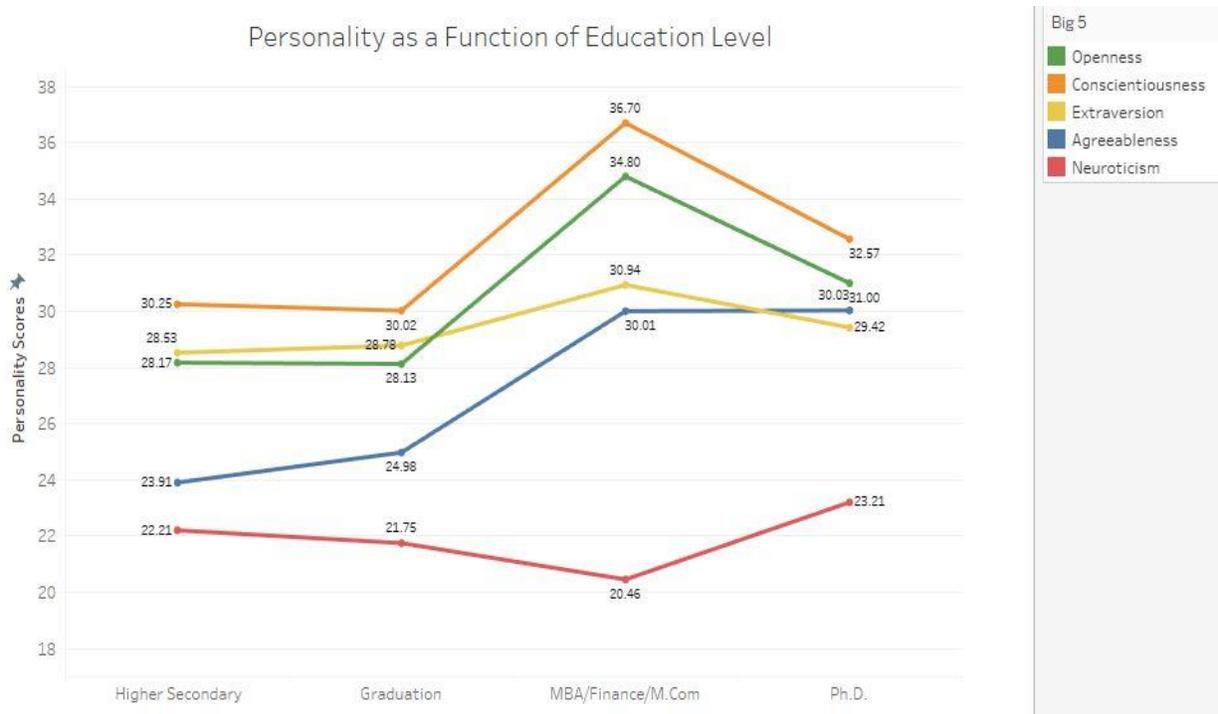


Figure 1. Graphical representation of the effects of education on personality dimensions

Conscientiousness depicts an individual's capacity to manage their motor control to participate in objective coordinated practices (Grohol, 2019). It estimates components, for example, control, restraint, and persistence of conduct. This study depicts a significant effect of educational levels on conscientiousness state at the  $p < .01$  level for the three conditions [ $F(3, 496) = 38.31, p = 0.000, \eta^2 = 18.8\%$  effect size]. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni correction test indicated that the conscientiousness score increases significantly as education levels go up (all comparisons Post Graduation > Ph.D. > Graduation  $\approx$  Higher secondary;  $p < .01$ ), for instance mean and standard deviations of the respective groups reported to be Higher Secondary ( $M = 30.25, SD = 7.57$ ), Graduation ( $M = 30.02, SD = 6.28$ ), MBA/M.com/Finance ( $M = 36.69, SD = 6.11$ ) and Ph.D. ( $M = 32.56, SD = 4.90$ ). Post-graduate and Ph.D. millennials scored high on conscientiousness that describes these working individuals are composed, restrained, thorough, kind, and cautious. They additionally have excellent drive control, which permits them to finish errands and accomplish objectives. Higher secondary and Graduate employees scored low on conscientiousness; thus, they may battle with motivation control, prompting trouble in finishing errands and satisfying goals. They will, in general, be more disarranged and may loathe an excess of structure. They may likewise take part in more imprudent and indiscreet conduct.

Openness to experience alludes to one's eagerness to attempt new things to participate in creative and intellectual exercises. It incorporates the capacity to think outside about the issue. We found a significant effect of educational levels on openness state at the  $p < .01$  level for the three conditions [ $F(3, 496) = 39.04, p = 0.000, \eta^2 = 19.1\%$  effect size]. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni correction test indicated that the openness score increases significantly as education levels go up (all comparisons **Post Graduation > Ph.D.** > Graduation  $\approx$  Higher secondary;  $p < .01$ ), for instance, mean and standard deviations of the respective groups reported to be Higher Secondary ( $M=28.17, SD=7.06$ ), Graduation ( $M=28.12, SD=6.79$ ), MBA/M.COM/FINANCE ( $M=34.79, SD=5.95$ ) and Ph.D. ( $M=31.00, SD=4.78$ ). MBA/M.COM/FINANCE post-graduates perceived as

creative and artistic reported the highest score on openness to experience, followed by Ph.D. Such individuals incline toward assortment and worth freedom. They are interested in their environmental factors and appreciate voyaging and learning new things. Contrarily, Graduates and Higher secondary employees scored low on openness to experience; thus, one can state that such people prefer a regular every-day routine. They are uneasy with change and trying new things, so they choose the comfortable over the unfamiliar. As they are pragmatic individuals, they frequently find it hard to think inventively or conceptually.

Agreeableness alludes to how individuals will, in general, treat relationships with others. The individuals with this trait focus on people's orientation and interactions with others (Ackerman, 2017). We found a significant effect of educational levels on agreeableness state at the  $p < .01$  level for the three conditions [ $F(3, 496) = 17.16$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $\eta^2 = 9.4\%$  effect size]. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni correction test indicated that the agreeableness score increases significantly as education levels go up (all comparisons **Ph.D.  $\approx$  Post Graduation** **>** Graduation  $\approx$  Higher secondary;  $p < .01$ ), for instance, mean and standard deviations of the respective groups reported to be Higher Secondary ( $M=23.90$ ,  $SD=9.12$ ), Graduation ( $M=24.97$ ,  $SD = 8.74$ ), MBA/M.COM/FINANCE ( $M=30.00$ ,  $SD=8.07$ ) and Ph.D. ( $M=30.03$ ,  $SD=7.97$ ). Those high in agreeableness, i.e., Ph.D. and Post-Graduates, can be portrayed as considerate, trusting, and popular. They are touchy to the necessities of others and are useful and helpful. Individuals see them as reliable and selfless. Those low in agreeableness i.e., Graduates and Higher Secondary, might be dubious, manipulative, and uncooperative. They might be adversarial while communicating with others, making them more averse to be popular and trusted.

### DISCUSSION

Personality psychology tends to address perspectives on human instinct and individual contrasts. Natural and aim based perspectives on human nature give a particularly valuable premise to interpreting coping; the five-factor model of characteristics includes a suitable arrangement of individual contrasts. Coping reactions to

affliction and to the distress that results are arranged from numerous points of view. Investigation portrays personality traits conscientiousness and agreeableness to greater commitment and coping for grown-ups and higher educates during the beginning stages of COVID 19. Contrariwise extraversion and openness to experience cope more with adapting engagement with new employees. Women millennials report higher neuroticism while in comparison to men, thus experiencing more disengagement coping when viewed in the organizational behavior and conduct. Relations of characteristics to explicit adapting reactions at workplace practices i.e., coping, uncover a more subtle picture. A few facilitators of these affiliations likewise emerge as age, sex, and education levels. Further the assessment saw stressor, seriousness, and authentic closeness between the coping action and the counter conduct report. Personality and coping play both autonomous and intelligent roles in impacting physical and emotional well-being.

This study depicts, working employees with higher conscientiousness and agreeableness personalities are less susceptible to workplace stress as found amongst higher educates (i.e., Ph.D. and Post-Graduates), besides also assessed by older millennials (age 31-40) during the beginning period of COVID 19. Their vast knowledge of the work system and their familiarity with the working environment in terms of the job requirements, procedures, and coworkers relieve them from the negative impacts of stressors, most of which come with a new environment (Chatman, 1991). To notice millennials exhibited the number of uncertainties and the accompanying stresses experienced by old employees are greatly reduced compared with their new colleagues. In general, research agrees that establishing and maintaining effective work relationships allows for task coordination, information flow, and other work processes necessary for accomplishing the goals and objectives of an organization (Day & Schleicher, 2006). For instance, due to its facilitation of learning from both the perspective of maintaining positive thinking during challenging learning processes and staying motivated to learn, conscientiousness is expected to have a strong relationship with performance. Conscientiousness has been treated as a characteristic personal resource in that it affects how individuals spend resources and handle the loss

of resources (Hobfoll&Shirom, 2001). Conscientious individuals tend to engage in active problem-solving to lower their vulnerability to stress, one form of resource loss (e.g., Vollrath & Torgersen, 2000; Witt & Carlson, 2006). In a related vein, research suggests that the strong attention-regulation capacity underpinning conscientiousness enables conscientious individuals to disengage from powerful negative thoughts on stressors and to restructure their cognition of the stressors (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). Agreeableness includes elevated levels of trust and worry for other people (Caspi *et al.*2005). In our study, women professionals assessed high in agreeableness will, in general, anticipate social support coping due to their tendency to show and have stable interpersonal networks (Bowling *et al.* 2005). These inclinations may encourage engagement coping methodologies that require thinking about new viewpoints, such as intellectual rebuilding and critical thinking, yet may likewise encourage utilization of disengagement systems, such as hopeful thinking.

Additionally, we noticed that working employees with higher extraversion and openness personalities are less susceptible to workplace stress, assessed by new millennials (age 21-30). We also found professionals with MBA/M.COM/FINANCE and Ph.D. qualifications connected more to openness trait at COVID 19 times. The positive impact of extraversion among newcomers was expected by millennials employees, given extraverts strong approach tendencies when dealing with job stresses (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). Extraversion is often associated with rational, problem-solving coping strategies such as positive reappraisal and social support seeking. That is, whenever confronted with stressful situations, extraverts not only focus on the positive aspects of such experiences but also resort to social support seeking (Watson & Hubbard, 1996). Open individuals counter stress coping due to their tendency to engage in the continuous modification of work context elements to improve their job environment incessantly; they are more likely to adopt a flexible, imaginative, and intellectually curious approach when dealing with stressful situations (Watson & Hubbard, 1996). The work context elements that have been changed for the better by creative minds include task objectives, working methods and procedures, and the allocation, coordination, and assignment of tasks. Through these changes

(e.g., developing useful and new ideas on work procedures), influencing and creating the situations in which they and fellow employees work allow open employees to experience job satisfaction along with control over and identification with their jobs and with the activities going on around them. Moreover, the perception of an insider status, which is, in part, a function of the extent to which someone perceives that they are making positive contributions to the workplace, is often enhanced. That is, a demonstration of creative skills and abilities usually positively influences individual's feelings as valuable members of the organization and indirectly contributes to their job performance. In sum, research has directly or indirectly suggested the importance of extraversion and openness concerning its favorable influences on job performance. Especially in the early years of employment, as it helps individuals adapt to change, learn, and cope with stresses to meet the requirements of a new job (e.g., Gerhardt *et al.*, 2009; Gruman *et al.*, 2006).

Women employees showed higher neuroticism, but we also demonstrated that it decreases with age owing to the reason that grown-ups may confront less misery, distress, and, as such, less variability in coping. Neurotics, who hold negative self-concept tend to dwell on the negative aspects of stimuli and often report stress (Burke *et al.*, 1993). Moreover, neurotics are also less capable than emotionally stable colleagues of adapting to a wide range of situational demands (Erickson *et al.*, 2009). Previous research found that neuroticism has been associated with the use of ineffective stress coping strategies. For instance, avoiding and distracting strategies rather than approaching processes, e.g., such as denial, wishful thinking, and self-criticism, further exhibit less problem-solving and proactive behavior (Bolger, 1990; Heppner *et al.*, 1995). In general, a negative connection among age and prize situated inspiration to accomplish, to such an extent that people begin tolerating what is accessible to them and diminish their desires for enormity or yearning for remunerations after a particular age (e.g., Ebner *et al.*, 2006). In particular, Ebner *et al.*, 2006 found that more established people will, in general, casing their objective direction around keeping up business as usual or forestalling misfortune instead of making progress

toward gains. Thus, neuroticism, which firmly connects with how well people see and can deal with worries in another condition, turns out to be less fundamental in foreseeing work execution for old representatives.

### **Implication**

Personality does influence coping from multiple points of view, in any case, some of which happen before coping. Indeed, even preceding coping, personality impacts the recurrence of exposure to stressors, the sort of stressors experienced, and evaluations (Vollrath 2001). Conscientiousness predicts low-stress exposure (Lee-Baggeley *et al.* 2005, Vollrath 2001), most likely because conscientious people plan for anticipated stressors and stay away from rash activities that can prompt money related health, wellbeing, or relational issues. Agreeableness is connected to low relational clash, conflicts, and along these lines, less social pressure and stress (Asendorpf 1998). Conscientiousness and agreeableness appear to share an important property. Both suggest a breadth of perspective. Many manifestations of conscientiousness imply a broad time perspective: taking future contingencies into account. Agreeableness implies a broad social perspective: taking the needs of others into account. It has been suggested that both of these traits have origins in the effortful control temperament (Caspi & Shiner 2006). Veteran professionals high in conscientious are more likely to maintain a strong desire (1) to continuously pursue improvement in performance, (2) to persist in goal-directed behavior, and (3) to apply self-control to fulfill their obligations, which, in combination, contribute to strong long-term job performance (Costa & McCrae, 2002). Thus, conscientiousness is expected to serve as a better predictor of job performance as individuals gain job tenure. Conscientious individual's persistence and self-discipline often guide them throughout tasks and help them accomplish things in the long run (Deary *et al.*, 2000). In support of our study, agreeableness exhibits a high willingness to cooperate and facilitate other's work, especially at the late stage of one's career, when the professionals have successfully secured their positions. Moreover, established reputations in the organization often reflect their high level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The link between agreeableness and job performance among new employees usually not expected

to be as strong as that in the early stage of employment because establishing positive relationships and receiving social support are particularly influential on new hires' performance. Extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness relate to perceiving events as challenges rather than threats and positive appraisals of coping resources (Vollrath 2001). Extraversion contributes to new hires' performance, partially due to its tendency to drive individuals to seek supervisors' support in stressful situations actively. Open individuals' characteristics, such as their continuous motivation and ability to learn, might facilitate new hires adaptation to their working environments. Openness is argued not only as a measurement of motivation to learn but also the ability to learn because openness to experience, of the five personality dimensions, shows the highest correlation with cognitive ability (McCrae & Costa 1987). Neuroticism predicts exposure to relational stress, and propensities to assess occasions as profoundly undermining, threatening, and coping resources as low (Grant & Langan-Fox 2007). People with low emotional stability, i.e., high neuroticism, who tend to be self-conscious, have low confidence and self-esteem (Judge & Ilies, 2002), regularly surrender (easily) while managing upsetting circumstances and stressful situations, The negative link between neuroticism and workplace behaviors seems to have been mostly mediated by perceived or actual job stress (Kaplan *et al.*, 2009). Neurotics not only are predisposed to negative feelings, focus on the negative aspects of a situation, and expose themselves to stressors, but they are also less capable than their emotionally stable colleagues of adapting to a wide range of situational demands (e.g., Swider & Zimmerman, 2010; Erickson *et al.*, 2009; Saks & Ashforth, 2000). Perceptibly, an individual with personality combination, i.e., high neuroticism in addition to low conscientiousness, predicts exceptionally high pressure, stress exposure, and threat appraisals.

Contrarily individuals with personality combinations, i.e., low neuroticism + high extraversion or low neuroticism + high conscientiousness, predict particularly low pressure, stress exposure, and threat appraisals (Grant & Langan-Fox 2006). For instance, when experiencing stress on the job, extraverts, as well as emotionally competent individuals, often seek feedback about expectations from their supervisors. Supervisory feedback-seeking usually helps employees understand their organization's rules and their supervisors'

expectations (Kim *et al.*, 2009). The information acquired from supervisors on norms, expectations, and standards often serves as an expert guide to employees' behavior, enhancing employees' organizational integration and helping relieve their stress (Morrison, 1993).

### **Conflicts of Interest**

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Self

### **Ethical Clearance**

An informed consent was obtained from each participant for this study.

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