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Relations of the Empathy subscale within the IPIP repository and dimensions of personality from the Big Five Plus Two questionnaire (VP+2)

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Abstract

Empathy plays an important role in the development of prosocial behaviour, however, the relation between empathy and personality dimensions has not yet been fully clarified. Previous research shows that there is a connection between empathy and sociability, positive affect and cordiality, so according to these findings empathy would have considerable positive relations with Extraversion. Relations with the dimension of Neuroticism are not unambiguous. People who are less prone to hostile and aggressive reactions usually have more empathy for others. The main goal of our research was to look into the relation between the Empathy scale from the IPIP (International Personality Item Pool) repository and the dimensions of personality from the Big Five Plus Two model (VP+2). This model includes following personality dimensions: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Aggressiveness, Positive Valence, and Negative Valence. The research sample consists of 100 examinees (57 females and 43 males), with the average age of 26. The IPIP Empathic concern scale (a similar version of the original Barhard' scale from 2001) as well as a short version of the VP+2 questionnaire were used. The results of the multiple regression analysis indicate a significant connection between empathy and the dimensions of the VP+2 questionnaire ($R=.277$ $p<.001$). Only Aggression ($\beta= -.341$ $p<.01$) and Extraversion ($\beta=.254$ $p<.05$) were singled out as significant predictors of empathy. The findings show that those persons who like more social interactions, who are more interested for others and are not hostile, have better emotional understanding of the interpersonal relationships. This leads to a more successful dealing with conflicts and better understanding of other people's feelings and positions, i.e. compassion with others. Practical implications of these findings are also pointed out.

Keywords: Empathy, Big Five Plus Two model, IPIP repostory
