

FACTOR O: APPREHENSION

FACTOR O IS A PRIMARY CONTRIBUTOR TO THE GLOBAL SCALE ANXIETY WITH HIGH SCORERS EXHIBITING QUALITIES FOUND IN WORRIERS. THIS SCALE SHOWS GENDER DIFFERENCES WITH WOMEN SCORING HIGHER ON AVERAGE THAN MEN

High scorers:

Individuals with high Factor O scores carry a strong sense of self-doubt and are very attentive to the consequences of their actions. They think about what can go wrong and try to prepare for what they feel is the “inevitable”.

They are especially aware of the effect they have on others and how others react to them. This causes them to take criticism seriously and be highly self-critical. A strong sense of obligation causes them to readily accept blame when things do go wrong. In fact, they will agonize over what they could have done differently to avoid the situation.

There are some benefits to a high O score; including a commitment to fairness and willingness to make personal sacrifices and work hard.

Extremely high scorers (9-10):

Individuals with extremely high Factor O scores can feel so inadequate that they have a poor self-presentation; exhibiting their insecurities in such a way that it is apparent to others. They doubt their own judgment and are easily discouraged. They may not feel accepted in group situations and are prone to feelings of guilt and loneliness.

Their readiness to accept blame regardless of whether or not they had control over a situation makes them a target for being manipulated by others.

Low scorers:

People with Low Factor O scores are confident and do not doubt themselves or question their decisions and actions. They think very positively about themselves. This strong sense of self-worth makes them feel they deserve to be loved and respected. They exude a presence that makes them successful in social settings.

Low scorers may have trouble empathizing with others and may ignore the effects of their behavior on others. They are unconcerned with other people’s opinions of them and ignore criticism thrown their way. Because they may only participate in areas that showcase their talents and feed their self-opinion, they will often miss opportunities for self-improvement through constructive feedback.

Extremely low scorers (1-2):

People with extremely low scores do not experience remorse and are unwilling to accept blame or responsibility due to their inability to accurately self-appraise. They will also avoid situations that reveal inadequacies so as to maintain their positive self-image.

DESCRIPTORS FOR FACTOR O (APPREHENSION)

LOW	HIGH
Self-assured, unworried	Apprehensive, worried
Self-confident, self-satisfied	Self-doubting, nervous
Untroubled by guilt or remorse	Insecure, lacks confidence
Insensitive to criticism	Sensitive to criticism
Little empathy for others’ insecurities	Concerned for others, feels obligations

How the Other 16PF Factors (Primary Scales) Impact Factor O

When considering any factor on the 16PF Questionnaire, it is important to remember that correlations exist between factors. These correlations contribute to an individual's rule consciousness and help us gain a true or clearer view of the individual.

Factors that correlate with a high Factor O are a negative Factor C (emotional stability), and a positive Factor L (vigilance), and Factor Q4 (tension).

It is important to note that a high Factor O score could be a reaction to a recent life event that is transitory such as death, illness, loss of job, failure to achieve, etc. and the score may lower after processing the effects of the traumatic life event. This strengthens the need to understand the correlations between factors and their contribution to an individual's overall personality.

Occupational Impact

A low O score is considered desirable in occupations that require a positive self-image and confidence in actions and decision-making such as executives, managers, lawyers and salespersons. A low O score is also beneficial to police officers, athletes, firefighters, engineers, scientists and other no-nonsense occupations.

High scorers can be found in the helping professions such as nurse, social worker, therapist, teacher and nun. This would support the finding that on average women tend to score higher on this dimension than men.

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