

# Is Women's Personality Different From Men's Personality- Big Five Personality Traits And Gender Roles

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## Abstract

Are men and women really from different planets, in literal sense, are they really different? What makes them so different from each other? Research and discussions on this topic seem endless, but, if men and women at times seem to be from different planets, can this difference be attributed to their personality traits? It needs an understanding of how men and women have unique thinking patterns, how their feelings given the same situation are distinct and why do they behave differently. The study of personality traits can be particularly helpful in understanding the differences between genders. This study enlightens the role of gender in the big five personality traits. It provides a valuable insight in understanding how men and women exhibit the different personality traits. This literature review study concludes by streamlining the differences among general patterns of personality in men and women.

**Keywords:** Personality Traits, Big Five Model, Gender Roles.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A very popular book titled 'Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus' is about providing an approach to improving relationships and communication between men and women by recognizing, understanding, and appreciating the differences between them. Are men and women really from different planets, in literal sense, are they really different? What makes them so different from each other? Research and discussions on this topic seem endless, but, if men and women at times seem to be from different planets, can this difference be attributed to their personalities?

There is no denial when it comes to the biological roles played by men and women, they do have different biological roles in relation to the creation of human species, but how much are they different in their personality is an intriguing topic to research. It needs an understanding of how men and women have unique thinking patterns, how their feelings given the same situation are distinct and how do they behave in a different way. The insight and knowledge of personality traits can be beneficial in knowing the peculiarities amongst genders. Personality of an individual is the magnitude to which that individual displays a specific personality trait. This display could be of superior or inferior intensity of a specific trait. Traits are defined as the consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings and behavior which an individual exhibits when the situations change. It can be understood as a definite way in which an individual will react, behave, or feel in certain situation. Therefore, if an individual scores high on a particular trait, then that individual will showcase to a greater extent thoughts, feelings and behaviour related to that trait. Personality traits exhibited due to gender differences can be indicated by finding which gender has higher scores on a particular trait, on average. For example, women are often believed to have high scores on agreeableness as compared to men. This indicates that women, on average, are more caring, less confronting, and selfless, more often than men. However, such a finding by no means strictly imply that only women are agreeable, in fact, some men could score even higher than some women, while analyzing this trait. Therefore, the objective is to streamline the differences on an average, these differences will help to relate to personality traits, while acknowledging the fact that some men and some women can show traits on extremes of the personality traits continuum (Weisberg et al., 2011)

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study enlightens the role of gender in the big five personality traits. It provides a valuable insight in understanding how men and women exhibit the different personality traits. The objectives of the study are:

1. To provide a thorough review on gender roles in big five personality traits and how different genders can be categorized under various personality traits.
2. To understand differences in behaviour and thoughts of genders and relate it to the big five personality traits.

There is much scope to explore and research on the big five personality traits and find its relationship to the gender roles as the information and knowledge available on this topic is still in a premature stage. This gap in research gives a lot of room for an in-depth examination and prudent conduct of this study.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This literature review paper is meant to collect, summarize, and analyze existing knowledge on the topic of big five personality traits and gender roles. An extensive review of literature on the selected topic has been carried out for this research paper. The information and details for this paper are collected across secondary sources like- books, magazines, published research papers, articles, and online resources.

## 4. LITERATURE REVIEW

In modern psychology, the Big Five personality traits are the five categories in which human personality can be defined and it reasons the differences in individual personality. The Big Five personality traits can be classified into five domains - Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience. These five personality traits represent a range between two extreme points. For instance, a personality trait known as agreeableness, when defined, will be presented on a continuum with two extreme limits viz. extreme agreeableness on one end and extreme repulsiveness on the other. In fact, most of the people will be placed somewhere in between the extreme ends of each trait. (Edwin Van Thiel, 2022)

Openness to experience is linked to an individual's creativity and understanding. People who score high in this trait are interested to know more about the people around them, they are also willing and excited to learn new things. They like to appreciate new experiences in life. Conscientiousness can be stated as being more organized in life and work. High conscientiousness trait persuades an individual to be more thoughtful and goal oriented. Highly conscientious people are more organized and like to stay within the defined limits. Extraversion is portrayed as greater sociability, assertiveness, and talkativeness. People who score high in extraversion personality trait, are outgoing and they feel energized when they are a part of a social gathering. Agreeableness is related to kindness, trust, co-operation and affection. People high in agreeableness are more cooperative. Neuroticism is about unhappiness and emotional instability. People high on neuroticism experience greater mood swings and anxiety (Kendra Cherry, 2021).

Big Five model is often used to examine the differences in personality of genders. For example, women generally score high on Neuroticism, Agreeableness and are considered open to feelings, while men on the other hand, are often high on assertiveness (Costa et al., 2001).

A study concluded that conditions in which there are poor resources, can be the starting point to the gender differences, while the conditions which have rich resources accelerate them. This could be explained by adding that men need more resources than women to reach their full personality potential of being less neurotic, less conscientious and less agreeable. It was mentioned, that gender differences could be due to the different evolutionary pressures that were faced by both men and women. Men, due to this impact may have changed to be more risk taking and socially assertive. Women on the other side, evolved to be extra prudent and caring (Schmit et al., 2008). This could be one of the interpretations of the results, while there could be other possible interpretations also. Gender differences do not propose that women and men are on the opposite ends of the given

personality trait scale. These considerable differences in gender can exist alongside with a high degree of overlap between the distributions of women and men (Hyde, 2005).

Gender differences are present for a greater number of personality traits. Some studies propose that socio and cultural influences define the layout of the gender norms. The men and women in a society are expected to serve different roles. Therefore, they got groomed to behave differently from one another. It is possible that both evolutionary and socio-cultural influences have contributed to the gender differences (Weisberg et al., 2011).

Gender differences in personality were studied by conducting four meta-analyses. The results revealed that men tend to be more assertive and had slightly higher self-esteem. Women were found to be less aggressive. Conversely, personality trait of extraversion and anxiety were higher in women in contrast to men. Neuroticism score was higher in women, at the same time, they showed more agreeableness and affection, women were kind and more emotional, whereas men were higher in aggressiveness and were more open to new ideas. There could be different sources for gender differences in personality traits. The study described that there could be three models responsible for gender differences. The first model being the biological model, this emphasizes on biological bases for gender differences in personality. The second model is the socio-cultural model, which states that gender differences could be result of different social and cultural factors. Lastly, the third model is the biosocial model which suggests that both socio-cultural factors and the biological factors can bring about gender distinctions in personality traits (Feingold, A., 1994).

## 5. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The gender differences are important while defining the personality traits. When neuroticism as a trait was studied, most of the research showed that women have higher levels of anxiety and depression. On the other hand, men showed minor traits related to anxiety and depression. This interpretation matches the fact that women are more often clinically diagnosed for anxiety and depression than men. Men scored higher on traits such as Anger and Aggression. With regards to Agreeableness as a trait, a significant gender difference was found. Women tend to score higher than men, on compassion and are more altruistic. Women showed greater warmth and empathy while dealing with other people. Also, they were more cooperative while negotiating with others. Women have greater interconnection and are more affiliated to social groups. In contrast, men are less motivated to maintain social and emotional connections and thus show less agreeableness. Conscientiousness as a trait, when examined, did not show a considerable gender difference. Men and women were found to be equally conscientious. Although, women had a higher score in orderliness and men scored much lower. Orderliness is associated to being a perfectionist and more organized in one's life. Extraversion aspect showed that women are more enthusiastic, sociable, and more gregarious. Men were found to be more fun loving but less sociable. Both were found to be equally enthusiastic. Men were more assertive, as compared to women and were found to be more excitement and adventure seeking. Openness to experience as a trait did not show a significant gender difference. Even though, women's score is higher in openness to experience as compared to men, the men's score is much higher in intellect. However, a greater intellect score by no means should be considered as a sign of higher intelligence for men in comparison to women. It perhaps could mean that men had more confidence in their intellectual capabilities.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The influence of gender differences on personality traits have been researched for past few years. The studies have discovered that personality traits can be defined in terms of gender differences as well. Men were observed to be more assertive and had higher self-esteem than women. On the other hand, extraversion, anxiety and nurturing attitude was higher in women. In general, women scored higher in being more agreeable, they were high in neuroticism and openness to experience, whereas, men were found to be having high scores in extraversion, openness to experience and assertiveness. Both, men and women were similar in conscientiousness trait, they showed similar levels of dedication and organization. Individuals showing high scores on this personality trait were found to be less extraverted. So, the more conscientiousness an individual is, the greater the chances of being an introvert. To conclude, on an average, the personalities of men and women are substantially distinct. This could be attributed to the personality traits. However, the role of cultural and societal norms cannot be underplayed.

Future research could be undertaken in this field to study and find gender differences in personality traits in diverse societies and different cultures.

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