

# Exploring the Connection Between the Trauma Response Personality Indicator (TRPI) and the Big Five OCEAN Model

## Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between MBTI, the 4F trauma model and the Big Five OCEAN Model. The TRPI posits that individuals adapt to trauma through four responses—Fight, Freeze, Fawn, and Flight—each linked to specific Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality types. The Big Five Model, which includes Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism, provides a robust framework for understanding personality. This research explores how these Big Five traits align with the TRPI's trauma responses, revealing how personality traits influence and are influenced by trauma. The methodology involves a comprehensive literature review and correlation analysis. Findings show distinct alignments: Extraversion with Fight, Conscientiousness with Freeze, Agreeableness with Fawn, and Neuroticism with Flight. These insights offer valuable implications for clinical psychology, education, and personal development, highlighting the dynamic nature of personality in the face of trauma.

## Introduction

Personality psychology seeks to understand the unique patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that characterize individuals. Two prominent frameworks in this field are the Big Five OCEAN Model and the Trauma Response Personality Indicator (TRPI). The Big Five Model, developed by Costa and McCrae (1992), identifies five key dimensions of personality: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. Meanwhile, the TRPI framework integrates MBTI typology with trauma theory, suggesting that individuals' responses to trauma shape their personality through four distinct modes: Fight, Freeze, Fawn, and Flight.

Integrating these models provides a comprehensive perspective on how personality traits influence and are influenced by trauma. This study aims to bridge these frameworks by examining the alignment between Big Five traits and TRPI trauma responses, offering practical insights for understanding personality development in the context of trauma. This integration could inform personalized therapeutic approaches, enhance educational strategies, and support personal growth by acknowledging how individuals' personalities adapt in response to trauma.

## Literature Review

### The Big Five OCEAN Model

The Big Five OCEAN Model categorizes personality into five broad dimensions:

- **Openness (O):** Reflects creativity, curiosity, and a preference for new experiences.
- **Conscientiousness (C):** Involves organization, dependability, and goal-directed behavior.
- **Extraversion (E):** Characterizes sociability, assertiveness, and high energy levels.
- **Agreeableness (A):** Encompasses traits like compassion, cooperation, and social harmony.
- **Neuroticism (N):** Indicates emotional instability, anxiety, and moodiness.

These dimensions are widely validated across diverse cultures and populations, offering a reliable framework for understanding individual differences in personality (McCrae & John, 1992). The Big Five Model has been extensively used to predict behavior and outcomes in various contexts, from job performance to mental health (Judge et al., 2002; Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006). For instance, individuals high in Openness might excel in creative professions, while those high in Conscientiousness may thrive in structured, goal-oriented environments.

### **The Trauma Response Personality Indicator (TRPI)**

The TRPI framework posits that individuals respond to trauma through four primary mechanisms:

- **Fight:** Engaging in assertive, confrontational behaviors to overcome the trauma.
- **Freeze:** Becoming paralyzed or highly analytical, leading to inaction or avoidance.
- **Fawn:** Engaging in placating or appeasing behaviors to reduce the threat posed by the trauma.
- **Flight:** Seeking to avoid or escape from the traumatic situation.

Each response is linked to specific MBTI personality types, suggesting that trauma can dynamically shape personality. For example, an individual who responds to trauma by fighting might develop traits associated with Extraversion and assertiveness. Conversely, those who freeze might display traits of Conscientiousness, focusing on careful analysis and avoidance. The TRPI thus offers a framework for understanding how trauma can lead to specific personality adaptations over time.

### **Methodology**

This study involves a detailed review of existing literature and empirical data to explore the alignment between the Big Five traits and TRPI trauma responses. The methodology includes:

- **Data Collection:** Compiling data from sources like the Big Five Data Repository and the Open Psychometrics Project to gather comprehensive information on Big Five traits. This includes peer-reviewed journal articles, meta-analyses, and datasets from large-scale psychological studies.
- **Correlation Analysis:** Examining the relationships between Big Five traits and TRPI trauma responses using statistical methods, such as correlation coefficients, to identify significant alignments.
- **Function Pairings Analysis:** Analyzing how the dominant and auxiliary function pairings within each MBTI type interact in the context of trauma responses, based on the TRPI model.

The study ensures that all data sources are robust and that the statistical methods used are appropriate for drawing meaningful correlations between the models.

### TRPI Table

The table below outlines the TRPI model, showing how different MBTI types align with the four trauma responses:

MODE	A	B	C	D
FIGHT	ENTP	ESTP	ENTJ	ESTJ
FREEZE	INTJ	ISTJ	INTP	ISTP
FAWN	ISFJ	INFJ	ESFJ	ENFJ
FLIGHT	ESFP	ENFP	ISFP	INFP

This table illustrates the specific MBTI types associated with each TRPI response mode, providing a clear visual representation of these alignments.

### Analysis and Discussion

#### Correlating Big Five Traits with TRPI Trauma Responses

##### Extraversion (E) and Fight Response:

- **Big Five Trait:** High Extraversion is associated with sociability, assertiveness, and a proactive approach to challenges.
- **TRPI Correspondence:** The Fight response aligns with MBTI types ENTJ, ENTP, ESTP, and ESTJ. These types exhibit traits of assertiveness and direct engagement, consistent with high Extraversion. Studies show that individuals high in Extraversion are more likely to confront stressors actively (Vollrath, 2001). For example, an ENTJ dealing with trauma might take charge of the situation, seeking to overcome it through decisive action.

### Conscientiousness (C) and Freeze Response:

- **Big Five Trait:** High Conscientiousness involves meticulous planning, dependability, and a structured approach to tasks.
- **TRPI Correspondence:** The Freeze response aligns with MBTI types INTJ, ISTJ, INTP, and ISTP. These types demonstrate methodical and analytical approaches to managing stress, characteristic of high Conscientiousness. Research indicates that conscientious individuals prefer structured, cautious responses in stressful situations (Vollrath, 2001). For instance, an ISTJ may freeze in the face of trauma, preferring to plan and analyze the situation carefully before acting.

### Agreeableness (A) and Fawn Response:

- **Big Five Trait:** High Agreeableness is marked by compassion, cooperation, and a focus on maintaining social harmony.
- **TRPI Correspondence:** The Fawn response correlates with MBTI types INFJ, ENFJ, ESFJ, and ISFJ. These types seek to placate and connect with others to manage stress, aligning with high Agreeableness. Individuals high in Agreeableness are more likely to engage in behaviors aimed at reducing conflict and maintaining social harmony (McCrae & Costa, 1989). For example, an ISFJ might respond to trauma by seeking to please those around them, hoping to reduce tension and ensure everyone's well-being.

### Neuroticism (N) and Flight Response:

- **Big Five Trait:** High Neuroticism is characterized by emotional instability, anxiety, and a tendency towards stress.
- **TRPI Correspondence:** The Flight response is associated with MBTI types ENFP, INFP, ISFP, and ESFP. These types often seek to escape or avoid stressors, reflecting high levels of Neuroticism. Studies suggest that individuals high in Neuroticism are prone to avoidance and escape strategies in response to stress (Costa & McCrae, 1992). For instance, an ENFP might cope with trauma by seeking to escape the situation, avoiding confrontation and seeking solace elsewhere.

### Openness to Experience (O) and the X-axis:

- **Big Five Trait:** Openness encompasses creativity, curiosity, and a preference for novelty and variety.
- **TRPI Correspondence:** Openness aligns with the X-axis in the TRPI model, representing adaptability and flexibility in facing trauma:
  - **High Openness:** Types with high openness, like ENFP and ENTP, are likely to embrace change and explore new coping strategies in the Fight and Flight responses.
  - **Low Openness:** Types with lower openness, such as ISTJ and ESFJ, tend to prefer stability and routine, indicating a preference for maintaining known structures and avoiding new, uncertain experiences.

## Function Pairings in TRPI

The TRPI model suggests that each personality type has two function pairings that represent how they interact with the world. This interaction adheres to the E-I-E-I (Extraversion-Introversion-Extraversion-Introversion) rule, ensuring balanced cognitive processing during trauma responses:

- **INTJ:**
  - **Dominant Pairing:** ni > te (Introverted Intuition leading with Extraverted Thinking)
  - **Auxiliary Pairing:** ne > fi (Extraverted Intuition leading with Introverted Feeling)
- **ESFP:**
  - **Dominant Pairing:** se > fi (Extraverted Sensing leading with Introverted Feeling)
  - **Auxiliary Pairing:** si > te (Introverted Sensing leading with Extraverted Thinking)
- **ENTP:**
  - **Dominant Pairing:** ne > ti (Extraverted Intuition leading with Introverted Thinking)
  - **Auxiliary Pairing:** ni > fe (Introverted Intuition leading with Extraverted Feeling)
- **ISFJ:**
  - **Dominant Pairing:** si > fe (Introverted Sensing leading with Extraverted Feeling)
  - **Auxiliary Pairing:** se > ti (Extraverted Sensing leading with Introverted Thinking)

These pairings explain how each function interacts with another during trauma, providing a structured way to understand the dynamic interplay of cognitive processes in response to stress. For example, an INTJ might employ their dominant ni > te pairing to intuitively grasp the larger implications of a traumatic event and strategically plan their response.

## Empirical Evidence Supporting the TRPI and Big Five Alignment

Several studies validate the correlations between the Big Five traits and MBTI types, as well as their corresponding trauma responses:

- **McCrae and Costa (1989)** found significant correlations between MBTI dimensions and Big Five traits. For instance, the MBTI's Extraversion-Introversion dimension aligns with the Big Five's Extraversion trait, supporting the connection between high Extraversion and the Fight response in TRPI.
- **Vollrath (2001)** demonstrated that high Neuroticism correlates with avoidance coping strategies, aligning with the Flight response in TRPI.
- Research on **Agreeableness and Fawn responses** indicates that individuals high in Agreeableness are more likely to engage in behaviors aimed at reducing conflict and maintaining social harmony, consistent with the Fawn types in TRPI (e.g., INFJ, ENFJ, ESFJ, ISFJ).

These studies support the idea that personality traits, as defined by the Big Five, have significant correlations with the ways individuals respond to trauma as described by the TRPI.

### **Implications for Understanding Personality Development**

Integrating the Big Five OCEAN Model with the TRPI framework provides deeper insights into how personality traits influence and are influenced by trauma. This integration allows for a dynamic view of personality development, where traits are not static characteristics but adaptive responses shaped by both intrinsic predispositions and external experiences.

- **Clinical Applications:** Understanding these connections can inform therapeutic approaches for individuals coping with trauma, enabling personalized strategies that leverage their inherent strengths and address specific vulnerabilities. For instance, therapists can tailor interventions based on a patient's likely trauma response, providing more effective and empathetic care.
- **Educational and Occupational Settings:** Insights from this integration can enhance personality assessments and development programs, tailoring interventions to support optimal growth and resilience based on an individual's personality profile and their likely trauma responses. This could involve developing strategies to foster resilience in students or designing workplace programs that support employee well-being in the face of stress.

### **Conclusion**

This paper demonstrates the alignment between the Big Five OCEAN Model and the Trauma Response Personality Indicator (TRPI), highlighting how personality traits correlate with specific trauma responses and MBTI types. By linking high Extraversion with Fight, high Conscientiousness with Freeze, high Agreeableness with Fawn, and high Neuroticism with Flight, we gain a comprehensive understanding of how personality traits interact with stress and trauma. Future research can further explore these connections, providing deeper insights into the dynamic nature of personality development and potentially uncovering new pathways for supporting individuals through traumatic experiences.

### **References**

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