

# The Arabic Big Five Personality Inventory (ABFPI): Setting the Stage



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## Abstract

The objective of this study was to elucidate the first stage in developing the Arabic Big Five Personality Inventory (ABFPI). Based on several sources, the item pool was constructed. It contained 455 items for the five factors: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness and Conscientiousness. Each set of items assessing one of the five factors was administered to a separate sample (total N =1,161) of college students. For each factor, the item-remainder correlations were computed. The 20 items with the highest correlations with the remaining items for each factor were retained. Using another sample (total N =450), the correlations between these 20 items and the total score on the same factor of the NEO-FFI were computed. One sample was tested for each factor. The six items with the highest correlations were retained for each one of the five factors. Therefore, the final inventory consisted of 30 short statements with acceptable to high alpha reliabilities.

**Keywords:** Personality; Big five model; Neuroticism; Extraversion; Agreeableness; Openness; Conscientiousness; Arabic scale

## Introduction

An Arabic project under the title “The Big Five Personality Model and its Correlates” is running under the supervision of the present researcher. This research note summarizes the first study in this project, that is, the selection of items for the Arabic Big Five Personality Inventory (ABFPI) and the estimation of their reliability. The Big Five Model (BFM) is a representation of the structure of personality dimensions that has recently gained widespread acceptance among personality psychologists. Costa and Mc Crae [1] summarized evidence on the model’s comprehensiveness, universality, and longitudinal stability. They stated that the “BFM has provided a unified framework for trait research, it is the Christmas tree on which the findings of stability, heritability, consensual validation, cross-cultural invariance and predictive utility are hung like ornaments” [2].

The BFM has acquired the status of a reference model as its five main constructs capture so much of the subject matter of personality psychology: De Raad & Perugini [3]. This model has generated substantial interest among psychologists. It assesses the high-order personality traits of Extraversion (E), Neuroticism (N), Agreeableness (A), Openness (O) and Conscientiousness (C). Costa & Mc Crae [4] explained these big factors considering their six facets: Neuroticism (N) is the most pervasive domain of personality scales. It is the opposite of adjustment and emotional stability. The N factor has six facets: anxiety, anger

hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness and vulnerability. Extraversion’s (E) facets are as follows: warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement seeking, and positive emotions. The six facets of the Agreeableness (A) factor are: trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty and tender-mindedness. The Openness (O) factor also has six facets: fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas and values. As for Conscientiousness (C), its facets are: competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline and deliberation.

A wealth of questionnaires and inventories to assess the Big Five Factors of Personality is available: Buchanan [5]; De Raad & Perugini [3], Donnellan [6]. The aim of the present research note was to introduce the first stage in the development of the ABFPI, i.e., the selection of items and the estimation of their reliability. The Arabic studies in the psychology of personality are in a great need of a short scale to assess the BFM.

## Material and Method

### Participants

A sample of 1,161 undergraduates was recruited to estimate the inter correlations between the BF items for every factor. Five separate samples took part in this study. Their sizes were as follows: 220, 208, 231, 289 and 213 for the N, E, A, O,

and C factors, respectively. Furthermore, another sample of undergraduate men and women (N =450) was used to select the final items and to estimate their criterion-related validity.

**The psychometric inventory**

The item pool was constructed based on the following sources: The International Personality Item Pool: [7,8]; Penn State University, Public Services by John A. Johnson Ph D: [9]; Test Master Inc: [10,11], Buchanan [5], Donnellan [6]. The total item pool consisted of 455 items, i.e., 90, 107, 85, 87, and 86 items for each of the factors (N,E,A,O and C) respectively. It is important to note that the item pool of the Neuroticism factor included the 20 items of the Factorial Arabic Neuroticism Scale Abdel Khalek [12]. It is based on the Neuroticism scales of Eysenck, Cattell and Guilford’s personality questionnaires. Likewise, the Extraversion item pool included the 20 items of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ); Eysenck & Eysenck [13] in its Arabic form Abdel-Khalek & Eysenck [14].

**Procedure**

The item pool was collected by Abdel-Rahman [15] and Khamees [16] in their master’s Theses in Psychology under the supervision of the present researcher. The items of the five factors were translated from English into Arabic and the Arabic translation was carefully revised. The repeated items were deleted and the negatively worded items were changed to affirmative statements. The factorial Arabic Neuroticism Scale and the Extraversion subscale of the EPQ already had Arabic versions. Each set of items for each of the five personality factors was administered to a separate sample. The total sample of 1,161 participants was divided into groups of 30-40 students. For each of the five factors, the correlation coefficients between the items were computed as well as the item-rest-of-test (item-remainder) correlations. Then, the 20 items with the highest correlations with the remaining items (remainders) were retained. Using another sample (N =450), the correlation coefficients between the 20 items for each factor and the total score on the same factor of the NEO-FFI Costa & Mc Crae [4] were computed, one sample for each factor.

**Results**

**Table 1:** Alpha reliabilities of the five factors.

Factor	Men	Women	All
Neuroticism (N)	.744	.920	.904
Extraversion (E)	.871	.825	.848
Agreeableness (A)	.658	.602	.629
Openness (O)	.745	.766	.752
Conscientiousness (C)	.762	.770	.766

The correlation coefficients between each item and the total score on the relevant factor of the NEO-FFI were computed. Since the aim was to develop a short inventory, it was decided to choose the six items with the highest correlations with the criterion, namely the (NEO-FFI). Therefore, the final inventory

consisted of 30 items; six items for each factor. Table 1 sets out Cronbach’s alphas. Reference to Table 1 indicates that the alpha reliabilities ranged from .63 to .90, i.e., between acceptable to high.

**Discussion**

The Big Five Model (BFM) of personality factors is one of the most comprehensive models in personality psychology. It enjoys widespread acceptance around the globe, including Arab countries. However, there is ample need to develop a short form of the Big Five Personality Inventory in the Arabic language. The Arabic project entitled: “The Big Five Personality Model and its Correlates” has begun to fulfill its first step, that is, the development of the inventory items and the estimation of their reliabilities. The Arabic Big Five Personality Inventory (ABFPI) consists of 30 short items. Each item consisting of 3 to 5 words. It is believed that short scales have many advantages. They require a short period of time for administration. This time reduction could be considered an advantage as it enhances the cost-effectiveness of any given scale. Short scales save participants’ time and effort and avoid boredom and carelessness in responding to them. Another advantage of short scales is that they can be appended to large scale projects loaded with long test batteries. Some psychologists investigated the length of personality inventories Abdel-Khalek [17]. For examples, Merrens & Richards [18] concluded that the short form was more favorably evaluated. Burisch [19] maintained that short scales were as valid on the average, as long scales. More recently, Burisch [20] concluded that lengthening a scale beyond some point can weaken its validity.

Regarding the reliability of the ABFPI, four out of the five factors have alpha coefficients ranging between .75 and .90 in the combined sample of men and women. Kline [21] and Nunnally [22] suggested that reliabilities approaching .70 or higher are acceptable for research. The present results are higher than this suggested limit, except for the Agreeableness factor (.66 for men and .60 for women). Considering the small number of items in each factor (6 items), the alpha reliabilities are considered acceptable to high, indicating internal consistency.

**Limitations**

The present research note reports the first step in an extended project. Therefore, many further steps are badly needed, i.e., the computation of test-retest reliability, criterion-related validity of the final version, descriptive statistics, and correlations with other personality constructs and psychopathological disorders, etc. These are questions for further investigation.

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## Conclusion

The ABFPI depends on an extended item pool and used the NEO-FFI, a very important BFM scale, as a criterion to retain the final items. The present scale has specific advantages, such as brevity (30 items), short and simple statements (three to five words), no use of negatively worded items and acceptable to high internal consistency.

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