



19th International Conference Enterprise and Competitive Environment 2016, ECE 2016, 10–11  
March 2016, Brno, Czech Republic

## Competitive vs. cooperative personality, what is the difference? Implications for the personnel selections.

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### Abstract

In this paper we analyze the difference between the competitive and cooperative personality type in terms of most relevant individual personality traits stemming from the Neo-Big 5 personality inventory. The results provide better understanding of behavioral tendencies of these two antagonistic personality types. Data comprise 177 respondents (41% females), in the economically active age. We have used two types of analysis: structural equation modeling (SEM) and correlation analysis (non-parametric coefficient). Both methods bring similar results and mutually support the final conclusions. For illustrative reasons we included three-dimensional surface graphs for better understanding of results. Results provide interesting implications for HR management, especially personnel selection.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of ECE 2016

*Keywords:* personality traits; cooperative; competitive; behavior; HR; personnel selection

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### 1. Introduction

Research of cooperation vs. competitive behavioral tendencies uses different perspectives and research methods. One group of research approaches focuses on social constructs and gender stereotypes and their relation to the competitive vs. cooperative behavior (Von Doorn et al., 2012). Balas (2015) showed that people use facial expression to predict the type of social behavior. Nowicki (1982) studied the relation between the locus of control

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and cooperative vs. competitive strategies. Leszczynski & Strough (2008) showed that the gender stereotypes have influence on the cooperative vs. competitive behavior.

A special chapter of this type of research focuses on the impact of personality traits. Simmons et al. (1986) found that the choice between the cooperative or competitive strategy was moderated by the personality traits and not so much by the gender. Brand (1994) found that it is Agreeableness (based on the Five factor personality model) that differentiates between the cooperative and competitive behavior. However we must note that the research in this field is not extensive. This is the line we will follow in our paper.

Each organization creates specific inner environment with a specific system of values, relations and forms of application of power. These aspects closely determine the specific requirements on the qualities and traits of employees. (Ambrozová & Pokorný, 2015) Subsequently, in this respect, it is highly advisable for managers and recruiters to understand the nature of different personality types and their corresponding behavioral tendencies, as it might be crucial for an efficient working atmosphere. The objective of the paper is to analyze which personality traits are connected to the competitive and cooperative personality, which are usually considered as antagonists.

In the theoretical part of the paper we shortly describe models of professional competencies based on personality inventories, especially on the Neo-Big 5. In the analytical we use three independent analytical tools to analyze the differences between cooperative and competitive personality: structural equation modeling, non-parametric correlation analysis and a graphical analysis based on three-dimensional surface graphs.

The findings have practical implications for HR managers, team leaders and all those who are in charge of building efficient teams and selecting the right people for the right places in organizations.

## 2. Theoretical framework

A model of work competencies can be defined as a collections of knowledge, skills, abilities, experience and other characteristics that are needed for effective performance in the jobs in question (Campion, 2011). The model of competencies can be perceived as a talent-based interpretation of business needs. This perspective defines competencies as demonstrable characteristics of a person, including knowledge, skills and behaviors that enable performance (Ledford, 1995). The main purpose of the competencies is to communicate both, inside and outside of the company, what people must know and master in order to efficiently contribute to the business (Zingheim & Ledford & Schuster, 1996). The competence-based model of the organizational growth is important in learning organizations which wish to outperform its competition thanks to increased ability of gaining knowledge and skills of its employees. This concerns the knowledge-based organizations, where the increase in productivity is realized thanks to the new added value of the employees (Quinn et al. 1987). On the other hand, Collins and Porras (1994) declare some competencies and values as universal for all visionary companies, such as innovation, product quality and customer services, individual initiative and growth, integrity, continuous improvement and self-renewal and technical superiority.

In this research, we use the model of competencies (Table 1) used as a standard in a wide scope of organizations. Core principles and definitions stems from the personality model defined by the Neo-Big Five personality inventory.

Table 1. Model of competencies / personality traits

Competence	Definition
Influence	Capacity to influence the others, obtain understanding, approval and support
Social self-esteem	Understands his or her own value in the society, good predispositions for networking
Sociable	Open for communication, extroverted, enjoys social events
Cooperative	Prefers cooperative solutions
Result-oriented	Focused on solutions and activities with clear and well accomplished results
Systematic	Prefers to plan, is organized and prefers clear structures and well-

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