Facet5

Description of Factor: **Emotionality** (Tension, Apprehension)

Please Note: This document is a subset of ‘Description of Facet5 Factors’ and therefore the page numbers are not sequential

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The Facet5 Model

This section gives a description of the factors in The Facet5 Model. The elements in the model consist of four ‘personality’ factors and two others that can be seen as ‘interpreting’ variables. The personality factors are: Will, Energy, Affection and Control and the two ‘interpreting’ factors are: Emotionality and Intelligence. Note that we are not saying that Emotionality is not a personality factor. It is. But it also can affect the interpretation of the other factors.

For convenience we will use the shorthand outlined in the introduction and refer to the factors as W, E, A, C and Em. Each personality factor has a cluster of expected behaviours, motivations, attitudes and interests that are associated with it – the ‘domains’. This description includes:

Description of factor

The ‘domain’ of a personality factor means the range of behaviours that can be grouped together to form the factor. This initial definition is critical when models are being put together. Different theorists may define the domain slightly differently and there one domain may be slightly different from another theorist’s definition.

An example is Emotionality (often called Neuroticism). Many define this domain very broadly to include a range of issues such as personal perception, confidence, self-efficacy, optimism and anxiety. This is the approach Facet5 takes. The RPQ on the other hand defines it very narrowly as ‘Confidence’. This is not wrong but it gives a different flavour to the interpretation.

Adjectives that describe the factors

Facet5 is a ‘natural language’ model and therefore the factors can be described using common English adjectives. This reflects the usual way that people describe others. One person is ‘friendly’ while another is ‘hostile’. One is ‘selfish’ while another is ‘giving’. For each positive adjective there is probably an opposite negative or critical one. These are referred to as ‘semantic differentials’ (pairs of words or phrases which tend to be opposite in meaning).

For each domain, there is a balanced list of positive and negative adjectives for both high and low scores in the domain. In Facet5 we refer to these as Benefits and Risks. In general a person is unlikely to have all the benefits of a high score without at least some of the risks. A core part of feedback with Facet5 is to get people to recognise this. One person’s ‘assertiveness’ is another’s ‘argumentativeness’. One person’s ‘interest’ is another’s ‘interference’.
Sub-Factors that make up each factor

Although there is considerable agreement over the number of main factors (five), some people argue that they need more than five factors to get a good picture of the behavioural dispositions of people. Some use this argument to deny the utility of the five-factor model while others suggest that in fact the five main factors can be broken down into a more complex model. The five Facet5 factors are known to contain thirteen sub-factors. These sub-factors are described more fully below and the process for extracting them is covered in Section 3 – Technical Summary.

This guide gives the description of the sub-factor (both the high and low end) and some sample items that go to make up the sub-factor.

Work preferences of the factor

It has been shown for many years that people with particular personality characteristics are attracted to particular roles. We use the term ‘role’ rather than ‘job’ because the labels given to jobs can be very misleading. Take two sales jobs. One is selling tourist articles in a shop in an airport. The other sells aircraft. Both are technically ‘sales’ but the ‘role’ is very different. One is short selling cycle, high volume, low value, limited repeat business. The other is long selling cycle, very high value with hopes of a long term customer relationship. Same job but very different roles.

Research with Facet5 has identified ‘role elements’ that are associated with each of the factors. These are listed in this section. A more comprehensive description is found in Facet5 – Work Preferences.

What other people see

A critical part of any psychometric review is it ‘validity’. Validity can be defined in a number of ways (see Facet5 – Reliability and Validity for a detailed analysis of the validity of Facet5). However one of the most relevant ones is the simple question:

Does this score match what other people see?

In other words, if a person has a high score on Will does the observed behaviour match what is inferred from the Facet5 score.

In this section we describe, for each factor, the key behaviours that other people report seeing. These are taken from a comprehensive analysis of over 2500 360 feedback reviews. A more detailed analysis of this can be found in Doors of Perception available from the Facet5 website.
Facet5 factor – Emotionality

In some ways this is the most important single factor within the *Facet5* model. Frequently called Neuroticism, Anxiety, Stability or Stress Tolerance, it not only covers a wide range of elements itself but it also affects how the other factors work. For example, as Em increases so performance becomes harder to predict and the more negative aspects are more noticeable. It is therefore very important to get a good measure of it. Many questionnaires ask very obvious questions about it resulting in biased answers. *Facet5* looks at Emotionality in a more subtle way by addressing the known but less obvious correlates of Emotionality. For example:

- **Concentration**: People with high Emotionality are more easily distracted by events around them and can have difficulty maintaining concentration.

- **Confidence**: High Emotionality leads to an underlying self doubt which can damage confidence.

- **Defence mechanisms**: People with high Emotionality look for external reasons to explain failures and difficulties e.g. rationalisation, denial and avoidance.

- **Habits and phobias**: Emotional people get stuck in superstitious habits e.g., favourite socks, Friday the 13th etc.

- **Mental conflict / hypochondriasis**: Some Emotional people suffer a genuine confusion by having so many things going on with seemingly no solution – it’s all too complicated.

- **Mood Swings**: People with high Emotionality vary in more their mood for no obvious reason – there are just good days and bad days.

- **Nostalgia / reminiscence**: more Emotional people think back to past times when things ‘were better’. This may be linked to a present feeling of failure.

- **Objectivity and balance**: Personal sensitivity can make it difficult for emotional people to be completely objective – things matter too much.

- **Obsessional memory and absent-mindedness**: For emotional people some things just seem to be a constant worry, even when they are not so important in the cold light of day.

Although there is clearly some variation between managers in terms of, say, their excitability or susceptibility to stress, that variability tends to be far less wide-ranging than it is among the general population. Extremely emotional individuals tend not to show the consistent application that would lead to their entrance to and promotion through management grades.
There is still, however, likely to be some variation within this dimension, and in many cases the benefits of richer emotional experience far outweigh the negative aspects of unpredictability. Those who are too predictable can be at just as much of a disadvantage as those who are extremely unpredictable when it comes to managing other people.

Other questionnaires derived from more of a psychiatric or psychopathological background stress only the positive aspects of low Emotionality and the negative aspects of high Emotionality. From a strictly psychological point of view this is probably correct but a management perspective can be quite different. Although the excitement and mercurial nature of Emotionality can cause difficulties due to the unpredictable and inconsistent behaviour, it can also act as a spur to creativity and can add colour and interest to a team. Similarly, the unflustered and consistent behaviour typical of low Emotionality can be seen as dull, complacent and overconfident. This comfort with self can make it hard to convince such people that there is any benefit in changing their behaviour.

Emotionality affects the individual in two general ways; those which affect the view of self (confidence, depression, moods etc) and those that relate to the way of processing information. People with high Emotionality tend to handle data in a less procedural and analytical way. There is more of a tendency to make judgements on an emotional level and to react rapidly to events around them. This may lead to difficulties maintaining focus on the key issues, prioritising, becoming distracted. Emotionality sub-factors are as follows:

### Adjectives that generally describe Emotionality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risks of High Emotionality</th>
<th>Benefits of High Emotionality</th>
<th>Risks of Low Emotionality</th>
<th>Benefits of Low Emotionality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volatile</td>
<td>Vigilant</td>
<td>Complacent</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpredictable</td>
<td>Vibrant</td>
<td>Unmoved</td>
<td>Stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moody</td>
<td>Passionate</td>
<td>Dull</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People with higher Emotionality:

- are better able to sense impending dangers. Unemotional people tend to deny threats and be cavalier about dangers. Emotional people can sound early warning signs
- can often add the sharp focus, preparation and attention to detail required to make a professional shine
- can recall past events vividly and some have suggested this provides a spur to learning from past mistakes.
- are less self assured and therefore more modest
- are seen as passionate as their emotional intensity comes to the fore
may improve performance more than their stable counterparts in environments that facilitate more intense work engagement

- are more vigilant and attend to potential threat. They are more cautious, have greater impulse control, and avoid errors

- are an asset to a team or project where their awareness of drawbacks can see them acting as the voice of ‘reason’.

**Sub-factor Em1 – Tension**

At the high end this is a general predisposition to feel tense and anxious, especially as important events get closer. People who score high on this tend to worry more, to feel a general sense of unease and tension. They are more likely to lose sleep over issues and to feel stress and pressure.

People at the low end of the scale people are more relaxed and carefree. They don’t feel stress to any great degree and tend not to worry but can seem to some to be rather unconcerned and oblivious to the stresses that others live by.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Tension items include</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I just take things as they come</td>
<td>As an important event gets closer I tend to worry more about it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am generally relaxed and carefree</td>
<td>I sometimes feel restless and ill at ease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm quite contented with the way I am</td>
<td>There are a lot of things I would like to change about myself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sub-factor Em2 – Apprehension**

High scores tend to be less optimistic, to trust less to luck and to be less confident that things will go right. They do not assume that things will work out and tend to double check more. They are less satisfied with their life and see things as rather uncertain. If given their life over again they can think of a lot of things they would like to do differently.

People who score low have a confident way of going about things, are assured and relaxed. They are optimists and believe that things will usually work out for the best. They are happy with themselves and the way they are and can’t see much that they would want to change. The take things day by day and don’t worry too much about the future. In extreme cases they can seem blasé and overconfident, blind to risk and casual in their approach.
**Typical Apprehension items include**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once I’ve mastered a situation I like to move</td>
<td>I like to stick to what I know I’m good at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on to something new</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not really a nostalgic person</td>
<td>I often get quite nostalgic about the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a clear idea of what I want</td>
<td>I find my views of what I want can change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>from day to day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work preferences of Emotionality**

Research with Facet5 suggests that Emotionality does have an influence on work preferences but in a somewhat unusual way. Rather than suggesting specific activities that are appealing, Emotionality seems to be associated with the conditions under which work or even life is lived. When asked, people with high Emotionality chose the following elements as important:

- To be able to spend without worrying
- To be an expert in my field
- To work with people I like
- Ample possessions.

The elements that seem to run through these are predominantly negative rather than positive. People seem to be asking to be released from stress and pressure and to be able to do what they want. From this it would appear that what Emotionality adds to work preferences is a need for comfort with themselves. For more detail on this see Facet5 – Work Preferences.

**What other people see with Emotionality**

People with high Emotionality tend give themselves lower ratings. This is not surprising since a core of Emotionality is a tendency towards self-doubt and reduced self-confidence. However this negative view is not shared by independent observers. When asked other people see high Emotionality in the following ways:

- Quickly lets people know if there’s a problem
- Has good grasp of the detail
- Is very quick to see logical errors and difficulties
- Is sensitive to people’s feelings
- Is quick to identify variations from the plan.
However they also note that people with high Emotionality tend not to do the following:

- Makes people see performance reviews positively
- Reviews performance at appropriate intervals
- People know how they will be measured
- Shows how individual goals link to corporate goals
- Ensures people know how performance will be evaluated.
References and notes
