

TOPIC: TRAIT THEORIES

History of Trait Research

- ◆ **Trait:** Characteristics of an individual; a habitual way of thinking, behaving, & feeling.
 - Should be fairly _____ across contexts.

Gordon Allport: Early trait theorist.

- ◆ Each person has a few defining traits and some secondary traits.
 - **Central Traits:** Make up our _____ personality; stable across contexts.
 - **Secondary Traits:** Situational or _____-dependent traits.

Raymond Cattell: Identified _____ personality traits using *factor analysis*.

- **Factor Analysis:** Statistical analysis that aims to find _____ patterns.

I prefer to make my own decisions.

I dislike relying on others.

I prefer working along.

}

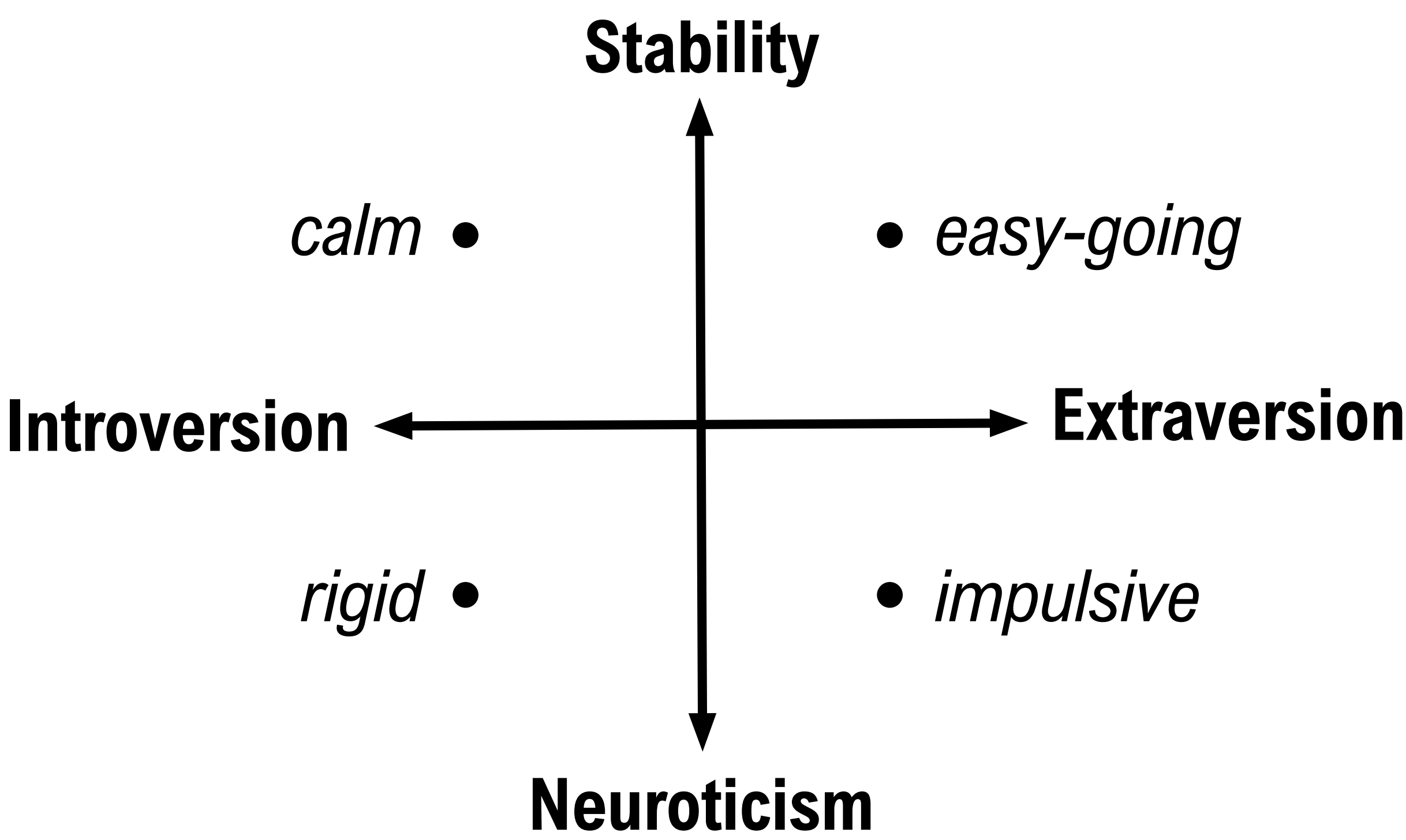
Underlying _____

=

Independence

Sybil & Hans Eysenck: Identified _____ personality dimensions.

- _____ version – Extraversion
- Neuroticism – _____



- ◆ These theories were critiqued for describing too many and too few traits.

EXAMPLE

In two sentences or less, describe what a “trait” is in the context of personality research.

TOPIC: TRAIT THEORIES

PRACTICE

Which trait theorist identified 16 personality dimensions?

-
- a) Maslow. b) Eysenck. c) Allport. d) Cattell.

PRACTICE

Which of the following was a critique of Hans and Sybil Eysenck's work on traits?

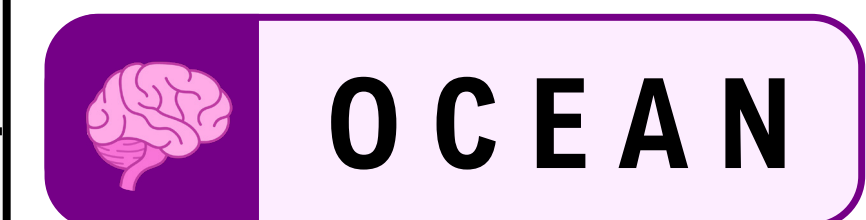
-
- a) Their theory on traits was not replicable.
b) Their theory is too simplistic and has too few dimensions.
c) Their theory used factor analysis, which is not statistically rigorous.
d) Their theory on secondary traits does not account for differences across the lifespan.

TOPIC: TRAIT THEORIES

The Big Five Factor Model

◆ Big Five Factor Model: Trait model that describes personality using _____ dimensions:

	Definitions	Low ←————→ High
Openness	Tendency towards trying new experiences.	Closed-minded ←————→ Creative
Conscientiousness	Tendency towards being responsible & _____.	Impulsive ←————→ Disciplined
Extraversion	Tendency towards being outgoing and sociable.	Reserved ←————→ Friendly
Agreeableness	Tendency to be cooperative & compassionate.	Stubborn ←————→ Trusting
Neuroticism	Tendency towards _____ emotions.	Calm ←————→ Anxious



◆ Confirmed by _____ analysis; replicated across cultures & generations.

◆ Mostly _____ throughout life, but some predictable changes may occur:

- Agreeableness & conscientiousness _____ during adulthood.
- Neuroticism _____ with age.

EXAMPLE

What is a key assumption of the Big Five Factor Model?

- a) Personality traits tend to fluctuate quite a bit throughout the lifespan.
- b) Personality traits cannot be measured quantitatively.
- c) Personality traits are relatively stable across time and situations.
- d) There are approximately 16 core personality traits, and 4 secondary traits that all people have.

TOPIC: TRAIT THEORIES

PRACTICE

Janet is an older woman who is very involved in her community. Last year, she fell for a phone scam and lost a significant amount of her retirement. Based on this story, which big five personality trait is Janet likely high in?

- a) Openness. b) Neuroticism. c) Extraversion. d) Agreeableness.

PRACTICE

Research on the Big Five Factor Model suggests that people who are high in neuroticism most likely to:

- a) Be highly reserved and quiet.
b) Be highly conscientious of other's needs.
c) Experience frequent negative emotions.
d) Be optimistic about life.