

"After all else, there's more yet, but I don't know what":

Personality and Intolerance of Uncertainty

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Introduction

- Intolerance of uncertainty (IU) is a dispositional characteristic resulting from negative beliefs about uncertainty over future events (i.e., prospective IU) and behavioral responses to uncertainty (i.e., inhibitory IU).
 - IU has been associated with a tendency to interpret ambiguous situations as threatening.
- IU has been widely studied as a risk factor for psychological disorders (e.g., generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, social anxiety, major depressive disorder).
- Comparatively, little research has investigated the relationship between IU and dimensions of personality.
 - One study found associations between the original 27-item IU scale and the Big 5 dimensions of personality. However, relationships between the two constructs were only assessed through simple correlations.
 - Further, the relationship between the 12-item IU scale and the HEXACO dimensions of personality has yet to be explored.
- The present study addressed this gap by examining the contribution of HEXACO dimensions of personality to both prospective IU and inhibitory IU.
- Clarifying the relationship between personality and IU will help further understand processes by which personality dimensions may come to influence information processing and decision-making.

Methods

- North American participants ($n = 286$; 74% women; $M_{age} = 30.47$ years; $SD = 13.85$) completed measures online as part of a larger study investigating anxiety and its disorders.
- Measures
 - Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale-Short Form (IUS-12).** A 12-item questionnaire assessing an individual's tendency to consider the possibility of a negative event occurring as unacceptable.
 - Prospective subscale (Prospective IU):** A 7-item subscale assessing an individual's negative beliefs about uncertainty.
 - Inhibitory subscale (Inhibitory IU):** A 5-item subscale assessing an individual's response in the face of uncertainty.
 - HEXACO-PI-R (HEXACO).** A 60-item scale assessing the six personality dimensions identified in the HEXACO model (i.e., Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience).
- Analyses
 - Linear regression analyses were performed to assess the contribution of variance by HEXACO personality dimensions in IU.
 - Separate analyses were run with prospective IU and inhibitory IU as dependent variables.

Results

- The majority of participants were students (39.2%), white/Caucasian (77.3%), and single (56.6%), and had a partial college/university education (31.1%).
- Descriptive statistics were as follows:
 - IUS-12 Total score ($M = 36.58$; $SD = 12.15$); IUS-12 Prospective IU ($M = 21.98$; $SD = 7.21$) and Inhibitory IU ($M = 14.60$; $SD = 5.74$) subscale scores.
 - HEXACO Honesty-Humility ($M = 27.25$; $SD = 4.35$), Emotionality ($M = 29.95$; $SD = 3.77$), Extraversion ($M = 28.88$; $SD = 3.67$), Agreeableness ($M = 30.62$; $SD = 7.00$), Conscientiousness ($M = 35.42$; $SD = 6.23$), and Openness to Experience ($M = 36.55$; $SD = 7.30$) subscale scores.
- The HEXACO dimensions of personality accounted for 21% of variance in prospective IU scores ($f^2 = .27$).
 - Emotionality ($p < .000$, part $r = .27$), Extraversion ($p = .03$, part $r = -.12$), Agreeableness ($p < .000$, part $r = -.25$), Conscientiousness ($p = .001$, part $r = .18$), and Openness to Experience ($p = .01$, part $r = -.14$) accounted for significant variance in prospective IU.
- The HEXACO dimensions of personality accounted for 15% of variance in inhibitory IU scores ($f^2 = .18$).
 - Emotionality ($p < .000$, part $r = .27$), Extraversion ($p < .001$, part $r = -.21$), and Openness to Experience ($p = .01$, part $r = -.14$) accounted for significant variance in inhibitory IU.

Discussion

- The current study is the first to identify that HEXACO personality dimensions make a significant contribution to IU.
- Emotionality was positively associated with both prospective and inhibitory IU and conscientiousness was positively associated with prospective IU.
 - Emotionally may increase sensitivity to negative events, making individuals high on emotionality more fearful of and reactive to the possibility of negative future events.
 - Conscientiousness may increase awareness of the possibility of a negative outcome; however, conscientious individuals may be more likely to respond to uncertainty objectively and rationally.
- Extraversion and openness to experience were negatively associated with both prospective and inhibitory IU and agreeableness was negatively associated with prospective IU.
 - Extraversion may foster an optimistic interpretation of uncertain future events and increase confidence in one's abilities to cope with negative events.
 - Openness to experience may be associated with more present focused emotions, cognitions, and behaviors.
- The positive feelings about the self, others, and the world associated with agreeableness may result in positive perceptions of uncertain future events.
- Future research should examine the relationship between HEXACO personality dimensions and decision-making on a risk taking task involving uncertainty.

Table 1: Correlations

Measures	IUS12-T	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2. IUS12-P	.95**	-						
3. IUS12-I	.92**	.76**	-					
4. HEX-HH	.08	.09	.07	-				
5. HEX-EM	.27**	.25**	.24**	.27**	-			
6. HEX-EX	-.12	-.08	-.15*	.27**	.29**	-		
7. HEX-AG	-.24**	-.28**	-.16**	-.11	.02	.15*	-	
8. HEX-CO	.06	.12*	-.03	-.18**	-.09	-.05	.06	-
9. HEX-OE	-.18**	-.17**	-.17**	.03	-.06	.02	.12	.13*

Note: IUS12-T = Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale-Short Form Total score; IUS12-P = Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale - Short Form Prospective subscale score; IUS12-I = Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale-Short Form Inhibitory subscale score; HEX-HH = HEXACO Honesty-Humility subscale score; HEX-EM = HEXACO Emotionality subscale score; HEX-EX = HEXACO Extraversion subscale score; HEX-AG = HEXACO Agreeableness subscale score; HEX-CO = HEXACO Conscientiousness subscale score; HEX-OE = HEXACO Openness to Experience subscale score; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Table 2: Linear regression – IUS-12 Prospective subscale dependent variable

Predictor	β	r	part r	R^2
HEX-HH	.05	.09	.05	.21
HEX-EM	.29**	.25	.27	
HEX-EX	-.13*	-.08	-.12	
HEX-AG	-.25**	-.28	-.25	
HEX-CO	.19**	.12	.18	
HEX-OE	-.15**	-.17	-.14	

Note: IUS-12 = Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale-Short Form; HEX-HH = HEXACO Honesty-Humility subscale score; HEX-EM = HEXACO Emotionality subscale score; HEX-EX = HEXACO Extraversion subscale score; HEX-AG = HEXACO Agreeableness subscale score; HEX-CO = HEXACO Conscientiousness subscale score; HEX-OE = HEXACO Openness to Experience subscale score; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Table 3: Linear regression – IUS-12 Inhibitory subscale dependent variable

Predictor	β	r	part r	R^2
HEX-HH	.05	.07	.04	.15
HEX-EM	.29**	.24	.27	
HEX-EX	-.22**	-.15	-.21	
HEX-AG	-.11	-.16	-.11	
HEX-CO	.02	-.03	.01	
HEX-OE	-.14*	-.17	-.14	

Note: IUS-12 = Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale-Short Form; HEX-HH = HEXACO Honesty-Humility subscale score; HEX-EM = HEXACO Emotionality subscale score; HEX-EX = HEXACO Extraversion subscale score; HEX-AG = HEXACO Agreeableness subscale score; HEX-CO = HEXACO Conscientiousness subscale score; HEX-OE = HEXACO Openness to Experience subscale score; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

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