

FACTOR M: ABSTRACTEDNESS

FACTOR M IS A PRIMARY CONTRIBUTOR TO THE GLOBAL SCALES TOUGH-MINDEDNESS AND SELF-CONTROL

A high M (M+) with a low score on Tough Mindedness demonstrates an openness to abstract ideas and an active imagination. A low M (M-) with a high score on Tough Mindedness presents a focus on the more practical. Likewise, a high Self-Control score with a low M will also contribute to an ability to focus attention on practical matters. In the reverse, the low Self-Control score with a high M adds a creative quality.

High scorers:

Individuals with high Factor M scores are imaginative and contemplative with an emphasis on creative thinking and abstract ideas. They integrate information into their existing base of knowledge to try and gain understanding; connecting thoughts and memories and making associative leaps that can result in generating unique ideas. They arrive at novel solutions to problems and for this reason are often underestimated or undervalued.

High scorers are well-suited to roles that require innovation and vision because they are able to step back and take a “big picture” look at situations. They are introspective and can visualize the possibilities. This type of creative thinking tends to be unconventional and therefore, high scorers can be seen as out of step with everyday practicality. This becomes especially true when a high M individual develops ideas that don’t take into account the practical realities of people, processes or situations.

Extremely high scorers (9-10):

Individuals with extremely high Factor M scores may be so absorbed in abstract ideas that they cannot turn their attention to practical matters and are oblivious to the need to do so. Often seen as “absent-minded”, they lose track of time and forget appointments or obligations. They are not good at actions that require sustained attention and focus since they are often inattentive and easily distracted. This lack of focus can make an extremely high scorer accident prone as well. Especially if they are also Factor F+ (fun loving/impulsive), Factor H+ (thrill seeking), and Factor Q3- (disorderly).

Low scorers:

People with Low Factor M scores operate in the “here” and “now” functioning in a practical way with a focus on day to day matters. They deal in concrete and observable realities; getting their information from their senses. They tend to have excellent memories and notice the smallest details. This attribute makes them good at maintaining operations and following procedures. They prefer situations that are predictable and do not deal well with ambiguity. They can get lost in the minutia and fail to see the “forest” for the “trees”. They may not always “think outside the box” especially if Factor I- (tough minded) and Factor Q1- (resists change) are present.

Their dependability and practicality are valued both at work and at home. They will respond to most situations in a consistent and standard way; they will not often surprise anyone.

Extremely low scorers (1-2):

People with extremely low scores do not easily focus on the big picture. Conceptualizing and flexibility is difficult for them. They tend to lack imagination and cannot organize information into a meaningful whole. They would not be good candidates for roles that require innovation, creativity or a sense of vision.

DESCRIPTORS FOR FACTOR M (ABSTRACTEDNESS)

LOW	HIGH
Grounded, practical	Abstracted, imaginative
Solution oriented	Idea-oriented
Down-to-Earth, realistic, pragmatic	Absorbed in ideas
Concerned with concrete issues	Creative, contemplative
Literal	Interested in theory, philosophy
Unimaginative	Absentminded, impractical

How the Other 16PF Factors (Primary Scales) Impact Factor M

When considering any factor on the 16PF Questionnaire, it is important to remember that correlations exist between factors. These correlations contribute to an individual's rule consciousness and help us gain a true or clearer view of the individual.

Factors that correlate with a low Factor M are a positive Factor Q3+ (perfectionism), Factor G+ (rule-consciousness), and Factor C+ (emotional stability).

Occupational Impact

A high M score is a strong predictor of creative potential. These individuals are happiest in occupations that utilize their creativity and imagination such as writer, sculptor, musician, photographer and architect. They are also strong in scientific professions that deal with theoretical ideas including physicist, biologist, chemist, and mathematician.

Individuals with a low M score are best suited to occupations that require attention to practical issues, maintenance of systems, orderly procedures, and are detail oriented. A low M score will succeed in professions such as bookkeeper, payroll clerk, credit manager, bank manager, electrician, police officer, firefighter, and airline pilot.

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