

Research reveals how personality affects susceptibility to persuasion

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Credit: Edge Hill University

Researchers at Edge Hill University in England have helped identify personality traits which make people more (or less) susceptible to persuasion than others.

Senior Lecturer in Psychology Dr. Helen Wall and colleagues Dr. Linda Kaye and Dr. Andy Levy, carried out the research with academics at Ulster University and the University of New England, Australia.

They asked 316 people to complete online questionnaires revealing their personality traits and how easily they might be persuaded.

From this they identified three main personality profiles which they named Fearful, Malevolent and Socially Apt.

They found Fearful people who are typically shy, socially inhibited and anxious were more likely to follow the crowd and be persuaded to do something by people in authority.

Those with a more extrovert, self-orientated and manipulative personality (Malevolent profile) were less likely to be influenced by authority figures, less willing to return a favour and more likely to be persuaded if something was only available for a limited time.

Lastly, they found that agreeable, extroverted and conscientiousness Socially Apt people were more likely to be persuaded to do something if it helps maintain their commitment to something they've done before.

Dr. Linda Kaye, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, said: "Rather than looking at [personality traits](#) in isolation we looked at the Big-5, Dark Triad and Type D Personality scales together, and in relation to Cialdini's model of persuasion.

"This helped us create more accurate personality profiles, so we could then predict a person's likelihood to do something and how easily they could be persuaded."

Dr. Helen Wall, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, said: "I'm very passionate about the need to encourage a proactive approach to children's mental health and wellbeing. From this research I'd like to develop a programme of research which utilises personalised persuasive approaches encouraging [young children](#) to be proactive towards their

own wellbeing. Adopting a personalised approach that 'nudges' people towards taking positive action, I believe, is very important."

Dr. Andy Levy, Reader in Psychology, said: "Our study sheds some light on how combining [personality](#) characteristics can influence human persuasion. We are now in a position to further explore how our findings can benefit the health, wellbeing and behaviour for many people across varied contexts in society."

The team are keen to explore their findings further and examine whether the results can be replicated.

More information: Helen J. Wall et al, Personality profiles and persuasion: An exploratory study investigating the role of the Big-5, Type D personality and the Dark Triad on susceptibility to persuasion, *Personality and Individual Differences* (2018). [DOI: 10.1016/j.paid.2018.11.003](#)

Provided by Edge Hill University

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