

INTERPRETING HPI SUBSCALES

The Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI) is a measure of normal personality. It provides detailed information regarding the bright side of personality: characteristics that facilitate or inhibit a person’s ability to get along with others and to achieve his or her educational and occupational goals.

SCORING

Based on the five-factor model of personality, the HPI contains seven primary scales, 42 subscales, and 206 items. These items are short statements to which respondents answer “True” if the statement describes them or “False” if it does not. Results for primary scales are often presented and interpreted using percentiles, indicating a person’s score on that scale in relation to the general workforce. Raw scores on subscales, however, can contribute richness to interpretation above and beyond main scale scores. These subscales are valuable to strategic self-awareness, particularly when delivered by a certified feedback provider or coach. Below is a review, including definitions and descriptions of high and low scores, of each HPI subscale.

ADJUSTMENT

SUBSCALE	DEFINITION	LOW SCORE	HIGH SCORE
Empathy	Absence of irritability	Irritated by others’ faults	Empathic
Not Anxious*	Absence of anxiety	Anxious or tense	Relaxed
No Guilt*	Absence of regret	Prone to worry about past mistakes	Does not worry about past mistakes
Calmness	Lack of emotionality	Emotional at times	Calm
Even-tempered	Not moody or irritable	Temperamental/ moody	Even-tempered
No Complaints*	Upbeat and does not often complain	Complains about many issues	Does not complain
Trusting	Not suspicious of others	Questions others’ intentions	Trusts other
Good Attachment	Good relationships with others	Hostile toward authority	Positive attitude toward authority

**Note the negative description of the subscale, such that a higher rate of endorsement means the absence of that characteristic. Example: A high rate of endorsement of the Not Anxious subscale would indicate someone who seems calm and relaxed.*

The Adjustment scale measures the degree to which someone seems calm and self-accepting, or conversely, anxious and tense. Subscales are particularly useful when a person has a low or average score on Adjustment. We collectively refer to the first three subscales, Empathy, Not Anxious, and No Guilt, as inner churn. They reflect a concern for others, an absence of worry, and an absence of regret. High endorsement rates on these subscales often indicate that a person is self-forgiving, allows him or herself

to make mistakes and does not spend time in worry and regret. Low endorsement rates often indicate that a person worries a lot about past relationships, interactions, and mistakes. Such individuals may be hard on themselves, often serving as their own worst critic. The next three subscales, Calmness, Even-tempered, and No Complaints, reflect outer churn, defined as not volatile, patient, and upbeat. Individuals with high endorsement rates on these subscales are often described by others as calm and even-tempered. Those with low endorsement rates are often described as temperamental and tense, and will tend to exhibit more stress than higher scorers. The final two subscales are Trusting and Good Attachment, which reflect a lack of suspiciousness and positive attitudes toward authority. Low scorers for Trusting tend to be skeptical of others’ motives. Low scorers on Good Attachment may have a difficult time with their authority figures and leaders.

AMBITION

SUBSCALE	DEFINITION	LOW SCORE	HIGH SCORE
Competitive	Competitive, ambitious, and persistent	Laid back	Enjoys competition and works to get ahead
Self-confident	Confidence in oneself	Lacks confidence	Confident
Accomplishment	Goal attainment	Unhappy with accomplishments	Enjoys self and work
Leadership	Capacity for leadership	Reluctant to assume leadership roles	Willing to assume authority positions
Identity	Satisfaction with one’s life tasks	Lacks career direction	Focused career direction
No Social Anxiety*	Social self-confidence	Socially retiring	Confident in social settings

**Note the negative description of the subscale, such that a higher rate of endorsement means the absence of that characteristic.*

The Ambition scale measures to degree to which someone seems leaderlike, confident, and driven. Ambition subscales are most useful when trying to interpret an average or low score. The Competitive and Self-confident subscales reflect an orientation toward goal achievement and self-assurance. Low scorers might seem indifferent to goals and lack self-confidence. The next two subscales are Accomplishment and Leadership. Lower endorsement rates might indicate dissatisfaction with career accomplishments and a hesitancy to assume roles with increased leadership responsibilities. The final two subscales are Identity and No Social Anxiety. Participants who endorse many of the Identity items will be satisfied with their career trajectory and have clear ideas about their future. Low scorers may lack clarity about the direction of their career. No Social Anxiety indicates the extent to which someone is confident in social situations.

SOCIABILITY

SUBSCALE	DEFINITION	LOW SCORE	HIGH SCORE
Likes Parties	Enjoys Parties	Does not enjoy social gatherings	Enjoys social gatherings
Likes Crowds	Finds large crowds exciting	Prefers smaller groups	Enjoys larger groups
Experience Seeking	Preference for variety and challenge	Unadventurous and prefers little variety	Adventurous, actively seeks out experiences
Exhibitionistic	Exhibitionistic tendencies	Avoids the limelight	Wants attention
Entertaining	Is witty and entertaining	Not particularly entertaining	Charming, amusing, good sense of humor

Sociability measures the degree to which a person needs and enjoys interacting with others. The first two subscales are Likes Parties and Likes Crowds. High scorers generally enjoy putting themselves in social situations and large groups and are perceived by others as socially adept. Experience Seeking indicates a preference for adventure and new experiences. Low scorers often prefer little variety in their experiences. The final two subscales, Exhibitionistic and Entertaining, refer to how an individual interacts with others in social settings. High Exhibitionistic scores indicate a person who prefers to be the focus of attention while individuals with high Entertaining scores are often funny, witty, and amusing. Low scorers on either subscale often avoid the limelight and are less likely to come across as lively, fun, or charming.

INTERPERSONAL SENSITIVITY

SUBSCALE	DEFINITION	LOW SCORE	HIGH SCORE
Easy to Live With	Tolerant and easygoing	Not always tolerant and kind hearted	Perceived as easygoing by others
Sensitive	Tends to be kind, considerate	Not very tactful	Tactful
Caring	Interpersonal sensitivity	Does not appreciate others' needs	Perceptive and understanding
Likes People	Enjoys social interaction	Socially withdrawn	Enjoys others' company
No Hostility*	Lack of hostility	Critical of others	Generally accepting

**Note the negative description of the subscale, such that a higher rate of endorsement means the absence of that characteristic.*

Interpersonal Sensitivity indicates the degree to which a person seems tactful, socially sensitive, and perceptive of others' emotions and social cues. The first subscale, Easy to Live With, indicates the degree to which someone is laid back and easygoing. Low scorers will seem intolerant and tough. Sensitive reflects kind and considerate ways of interacting with others, and Caring reflects appreciating the needs of others. Likes People indicates the degree to which someone enjoys interacting with others. Low scorers may appear socially withdrawn. Finally, high endorsement rates on No Hostility indicate that a person is likely accepting of others. Low scorers are often more critical of others' faults. Because Interpersonal Sensitivity has only five subscales, small changes in endorsement rates may result in large shifts in percentile scores. Be cautious not to lend too much interpretive power to small shifts in subscale scores.

PRUDENCE

SUBSCALE	DEFINITION	LOW SCORE	HIGH SCORE
Moralistic	Adhering strictly to conventional values	Prefers to set his/ her own rules	Willing to follow rules
Mastery	Being hardworking	Relaxed attitude about his/ her work	Concerned with doing a good job
Virtuous	Being perfectionistic	Willing to admit minor faults	Diligent and precise
Not Autonomous*	Concern about others' opinion of oneself	Seems independent and feedback resistant	Concerned about how others view him/her
Not Spontaneous*	Preference for predictability	Spontaneous	Planful in his/her approach
Impulse Control	Lack of impulsivity	Enjoys being impulsive	Likes to play it safe
Avoids Trouble	Professed troublemaker	Takes unnecessary and negative risks	Considers actions and their consequences

**Note the negative description of the subscale, such that a higher rate of endorsement means the absence of that characteristic.*

The Prudence scale measures the degree to which a person seems conscientious, conforming, and dependable. Subscale scores help bring color to low and average scores on Prudence. The first three subscales are Moralistic, Mastery, and Virtuous. Respectively, they indicate a tendency to adhere to strict conventional values, work hard, and be perfectionistic. Individuals who endorse at least 12 of the 14 possible responses on these three subscales are likely presenting themselves in a socially desirable manner and attempting to manage impressions. Not Autonomous indicates a concern about how individuals are perceived by others. Not Spontaneous indicates a preference for predictability and structure. High scorers on Impulse Control and Avoids Trouble often play it safe and carefully consider the consequences of their actions. Low scorers tend to be impulsive and take unnecessary risks.

INQUISITIVE

SUBSCALE	DEFINITION	LOW SCORE	HIGH SCORE
Science Ability	Interest in science	Shows little interest in why things happen	Takes an interest in why things happen
Curiosity	Curiosity about the world	Low degree of curiosity	High degree of curiosity
Thrill Seeking	Enjoyment of adventure and excitement	Not interested in stimulation/ excitement	Wants challenge, stimulation, and excitement
Intellectual Games	Enjoys intellectual games	Not interested in intellectual games	Interested in riddles and puzzles
Generates Ideas	Ideation fluency	Does not see himself/herself as an idea generator	Good at generating ideas
Culture	Interest in culture	Narrow interests	Wide variety of activities

Inquisitive measures the degree to which someone seems bright, creative, and interested in intellectual matters and concerns. Although the subscales help to interpret the overall score, do not overemphasize a particular subscale unless the context of the job/role calls for it. Science Ability and Curiosity indicate an interest in scientific matters and in how things work. Thrill Seeking indicates a desire for excitement and stimulation. High scorers on Intellectual Games tend to enjoy the process of problem solving. High scorers on Generates Ideas enjoy idea creation. Finally, high scorers on Culture will likely have a wide variety of interests. Low scorers have more narrow interests.

LEARNING APPROACH

SUBSCALE	DEFINITION	LOW SCORE	HIGH SCORE
Education	Is a good student	Negative experiences with education	Positive attitude about education
Math Ability	Is good with numbers	Does not work well with numbers	Works well with numbers
Good Memory	Has a good memory	Somewhat forgetful	Can remember things easily
Reading	Enjoys reading	Does not keep up to date	Keeps up to date

The final HPI scale is Learning Approach. It measures the degree to which someone enjoys academic activities and provides insight into how an individual prefers to take in information. Much like the subscales for Inquisitive, the items on this scale may sound unrelated to work (i.e., “As a child, school was easy for me.”). During interpretation, consider how these subscales fit into a professional context. The Education and Math Ability subscales respectively indicate positive attitudes and experiences about formal education and working with numbers. Good Memory and Reading indicate an ease of recall and interest in keeping up-to-date through reading. Together, these scales reflect a preference for formal learning on the high end, and on the low end a preference for a more hands-on approach.

CONCLUSION

The HPI subscales are valuable tools for coaches and feedback providers. They provide an abundance of nuance for interpreting results. Subscales allow the interpreter to find distinctions among average scores and identify differences among individual with similar scale scores. Although main scale score interpretation is valuable alone, users will find that supplementing that interpretation with subscales increases the power of the instrument across applications.