

Chapter 1

Introduction to Personality Psychology

Chapter Overview

This chapter provides students with a brief overview and introduction to the field of personality psychology. The authors present a definition of personality as “the set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring and that influence their interactions with, and adaptations to, the intrapsychic, physical, and social environments.” Each aspect of this definition is examined in detail. The authors introduce three key levels of analysis in personality psychology: human nature, individual and group differences, and individual uniqueness. Next, the authors discuss the presence of a fissure in the field of personality psychology; it is the gap between the human nature level of analysis and the analysis of individual and group differences. The authors suggest that focusing on several domains of knowledge about personality can bridge this fissure. These domains of knowledge are the dispositional domain, the biological domain, the intrapsychic domain, the cognitive-experiential domain, the social and cultural domain, and the adjustment domain. Each of these domains of knowledge is discussed in the text. The authors end with a discussion of the key features of a scientific theory and address how scientific theories differ from unsubstantiated beliefs, such as the belief in astrology.

Learning Objectives

1. Define personality and understand the different elements included in its definition.
2. Describe and provide examples of the three levels of personality analysis.
3. Describe the fissure in the field of personality psychology between studies designed to investigate the human nature level of analysis and studies designed to investigate the analysis of individual and group differences.
4. Describe and understand how a focus on domains of knowledge may bridge the fissure in contemporary personality psychology.
5. Describe and be familiar with the six domains of knowledge about human nature in personality psychology.
6. Discuss the three key purposes of scientific theories, and be able to distinguish theories from beliefs.

Chapter Outline

Introduction

- Features of personality make people different from one another, and these features usually take the form of adjectives.
- *Adjectives that can be used to describe characteristics of people are called **trait-descriptive adjectives**.*

I. Personality Defined

- **Personality** is the set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring and that influence their interactions with, and adaptations to, the intrapsychic, physical, and social environments.

A. Personality is the Set of Psychological Traits ...

- **Psychological traits** are characteristics that describe ways in which people are different from each other.
- Traits describe the **average tendencies** of a person.

B. And Mechanisms ...

- **Psychological mechanisms** are like traits, except that the term *mechanisms* refers more to the processes of personality.
- Most psychological mechanisms have three essential ingredients: *inputs*, *decision rules*, and *outputs*.

C. Within the Individual ...

- **Within the individual** means that personality is something a person carries with them over time and from one situation to the next.

D. That Are Organized and Relatively Enduring ...

- **Organized** means that the psychological traits and mechanisms for a given person are not simply a random collection of elements.
- Rather, personality is organized because the mechanisms and traits are linked to one another in a coherent fashion.
- Psychological traits are relatively **enduring** over time, particularly in adulthood, and are somewhat consistent over situations.

E. And That Influence ...

- In the definition of personality, an emphasis on the **influential forces** of personality means that personality traits and mechanisms can have an effect on people's lives.

F. Their Interactions with ...

- This feature of personality is perhaps the most difficult to describe, because the nature of **person–environment interaction** is complex.
- It is sufficient to note that interactions with situations include the following:
 - *Perceptions*: It refers to how people “see,” or interpret, an environment.
 - *Selections*: It describes the manner in which people choose situations to enter—how people choose their friends, romantic partners, hobbies, college classes, and careers.
 - *Evocations*: They are the reactions people produce in others, often quite unintentionally.
 - *Manipulations*: They are the ways in which people intentionally attempt to influence others.

G. And Adaptations to ...

- An emphasis on **adaptation** conveys the notion that a central feature of personality concerns adaptive functioning—accomplishing goals, coping, adjusting, and dealing with the challenges and problems we face as we go through life.

H. The Environment

- The physical **environment** often poses challenges for people.
 - Some of these are direct threats to survival.
- Social environment also poses adaptive challenges.
- Personality partly determines the particular aspects of the environment that are important at any moment in time.
- In addition to one's physical and social environments, one has an intrapsychic—“within the mind”—environment.

II. Three Levels of Personality Analysis**A. Human Nature**

- The first level of personality analysis describes **human nature** in general—the traits and mechanisms of personality that are typical of one's species and are possessed by everyone or nearly everyone.

- At a psychological level, all humans possess fundamental psychological mechanisms.

B. Individual and Group Differences

- The second level of personality analysis pertains to individual and group differences.
- **Individual differences** refer to ways in which each person is like *some* other people (e.g., extraverts, sensation seekers) and unlike others.
- **Differences among groups** refers to ways in which people in one group may have certain personality features in common, and these common features make that group of people different from other groups (e.g., cultural differences, different age groups, different political parties, and groups from different socioeconomic backgrounds).

C. Individual Uniqueness

- Every individual has personal qualities not shared by any other person in the world.
- Individuals can be studied either *nomothetically* or *ideographically*.
 - **Nomothetic** research typically involves statistical comparisons of individuals or groups, requiring samples of participants on which to conduct research.
 - It is typically applied to identify universal human characteristics and dimensions of individual or group differences.
 - **Ideographic** research typically focuses on a single person, trying to observe general principles that are manifest in a single life over time.
 - Often, idiographic research results in case studies or the psychological biography of a single person (Runyon, 1983).

III.A Fissure in the Field

- There is a gap within the field that has not yet been successfully bridged.
 - It is the gap between the human nature level of analysis and the analysis of group and individual differences.
- As a consequence, there is a fissure or gap between the grand theories of personality and contemporary research in personality.

A. Grand Theories of Personality

- Grand theories attempt to provide a universal account of the fundamental psychological processes and characteristics of the species.
- Statements about the universal core of human nature lie at the center of grand theories of personality.

B. Contemporary Research in Personality

- Most of the empirical research in contemporary personality addresses the ways in which individuals and groups differ.
- One way to examine personality psychology would be to pick a dozen or so current research topics and explore what psychologists have learned about each.

IV. Six Domains of Knowledge About Human Nature

- A **domain of knowledge** is a specialty area of science and scholarship in which psychologists have focused on learning about some specific and limited aspects of human nature.
- A domain of knowledge delineates the boundaries of researchers' knowledge, expertise, and interests.
- For personality, each part is a domain of knowledge representing a collection of knowledge about certain aspects of personality.
- The field of personality can be cleaved into the following six distinct domains of knowledge about human nature: *dispositional*, *biological*, *intrapsychic*, *cognitive experiential*, *social and cultural*, and *adjustment*.
- Within each of the six domains of personality, focus is laid on the following two key elements:
 - The *theories* that have been proposed within each domain, including the basic assumptions about human nature.
 - The *empirical research* that has been accumulating within each of these domains.

A. Dispositional Domain

- The **dispositional domain** deals centrally with the ways in which individuals differ from one another.
- The dispositional domain cuts across all the other domains.
- The distinguishing factor of this domain is an interest in the number, nature, and consequences of fundamental dispositions.
- The central goal of personality psychologists working in the dispositional domain is to identify and measure the most important ways in which individuals differ from one another.
- Researchers in this domain are also interested in the origins of the important individual differences and in how they develop and are maintained.

B. Biological Domain

- The core assumption within the **biological domain** is that humans are, first and foremost, collections of biological systems, and these systems provide the building blocks for behavior, thought, and emotion.

- The first area of research in the biological approach consists of the genetics of personality.
- The second biological approach is best described as the psychophysiology of personality.
- The third component of the biological approach concerns how evolution may have shaped human psychological functioning.

C. Intrapsychic Domain

- The **intrapsychic domain** deals with mental mechanisms of personality, many of which operate outside of conscious awareness.
- The dominant theory in this domain is Freud's theory of psychoanalysis.
- The intrapsychic domain also includes defense mechanisms, such as repression, denial, and projection.

D. Cognitive-Experiential Domain

- The **cognitive-experiential domain** focuses on thought processes and subjective experience, such as conscious ideas, feelings, beliefs, and desires about oneself and others.
- One important element of people's experience entails the self and self-concept.
- A somewhat different aspect of the domain pertains to the goals individuals strive for.
- Another important aspect of subjective experience entails people's emotions.

E. Social and Cultural Domain

- **Social and cultural domain** assumes that personality affects, and is affected by, the social and cultural context.
- Different cultures may bring out different facets of people's personalities in manifest behavior.
- At the level of individual differences within cultures, personality plays itself out in the social sphere.
- At the level of differences between the genders, personality may operate differently for men than for women.

F. Adjustment Domain

- The **adjustment domain** refers to the fact that personality plays a key role in how people cope, adapt, and adjust to the ebb and flow of events in their day-to-day lives.
- Research evidence shows that personality is linked with important health outcomes, such as heart disease.

- Personality is also linked with health-related behaviors, such as smoking, drinking, illegal drug-taking, and risk-taking.

V. The Role of Personality Theory

- Theories are essential in all scientific endeavors, and they serve several useful purposes.
- A **good theory** is one that fulfills the following three purposes in science:
 - Provides a guide for researchers
 - Organizes and explains known findings
 - Makes predictions
- It is important to distinguish between scientific **theories** and **beliefs**.

VI. Standards for Evaluating Personality Theories

- While exploring each of the six domains discussed in the chapter, it will be useful to bear in mind the following five **scientific standards for evaluating personality theories**:
 - **Comprehensiveness**—does the theory do a good job of explaining all of the facts and observations within its domain?
 - **Heuristic value**—does the theory provide a guide to important new discoveries about personality that were not known before?
 - **Testability**—does the theory provide precise predictions that can be tested empirically?
 - **Parsimony**—does the theory contain few premises and assumptions (parsimony) or many premises and assumptions (lack of parsimony)?
 - **Compatibility and integration across domains and levels**—a personality theory in one domain that violated well-established principles in another domain would be judged highly **problematic**.

VII. Is There a Grand Ultimate and True Theory of Personality?

- From the authors viewpoint, an ultimate grand theory of personality psychology should meet the following criteria:
 - It will have to unify all six domains.
 - It will have to explain personality characteristics and how they develop over time (dispositional domain).
 - It will have to explain evolutionary, genetic, and physiological underpinnings of personality (biological domain).
 - It will have to explain deeply rooted motives and dynamic intrapsychic processes (intrapsychic domain).

- It will have to explain how people experience the world and process information about it (cognitive-experiential domain).
- It will have to explain how personality affects, and is affected by, the social and cultural context in which people conduct their lives (social and cultural domains).
- It will have to explain how people cope and function—as well as how adjustment fails—as they encounter the numerous adaptive challenges they face over the sometimes bumpy course of their lives (the adjustment domain).

Key Terms

Trait-descriptive adjectives	Dispositional domain
Personality	Biological domain
Psychological traits	Intrapsychic domain
Average tendencies	Cognitive-experiential domain
Psychological mechanisms	Social and cultural domain
Within the individual	Adjustment domain
Organized	Good theory
Enduring	Theories
Influential forces	Beliefs
Person–environment interaction	Scientific standards for evaluating personality theories
Adaptation	Comprehensiveness
Environment	Heuristic value
Human nature	Testability
Individual differences	Parsimony
Differences among groups	Compatibility and integration across domains and levels
Nomothetic	
Idiographic	
Domain of knowledge	

Lecture Topics and Lecture Suggestions

1. Desirable Features of a Personality Theory

Students are often interested in learning more about what makes a good personality theory (in addition to what makes a good theory, more generally, as addressed in Larsen and Buss). Introducing students to the desirable features of a personality theory early in the term provides students with the opportunity to reflect on these features and assess the new theories they have learned in this course. Many of the theories include several of these features but not all of them. Students can be asked to refer back to the presentation on the desirable features of a personality theory when the instructor addresses different theories throughout this course.

- Personality theories specify what motivates people (what gets them out of bed in the morning and toward what goals they direct their energy). Instructors should mention the following motives:
 - Universal motives, if any
 - Sex-differentiated motives, if any
 - Individually differentiated motives, if any
 - Culturally differentiated motives, if any
- Personality theories articulate why people are motivated in certain ways. Instructors should ask students if personality theories are responsible for answering the following questions:
 - Why do the sexes differ in the ways that they do?
 - Why do individuals differ in the ways that they do?
- Personality theories specify what units will be employed, as well as provide a rationale for those units (these could include traits, motives, psychological mechanisms, needs, internal states, schemas, constructs, strategies, tactics, goals, acts, personal projects, personal constructs, and emotions).
- Personality theories identify the major ways in which individuals differ (including sex differences, cultural differences, and individual differences within a sex and within a culture).
- Personality theories provide an account of why individuals differ in the major ways that they do (including an account of sex differences, cultural differences, and individual differences within sex and culture).
- Personality theories provide an account of personality development (i.e., what changes over time, how people differ in development over time, and why).
- Personality theories provide an account of the major forms of contextual and social inputs into the basic psychological mechanisms of individuals. Given that social, contextual, and cultural environments differ in many ways, what are the major inputs?
- Personality theories account for known empirical phenomena (e.g., replicable trait structures such as the “Big Five”; known sex differences in personality, such as in aggression and sexuality; and known age differences, such as a decrease in sensation seeking and risk-taking with age).
- Personality theories have heuristic value. They provide a powerful guide to empirical phenomena and to important domains of inquiry.

- Personality theories have predictive value. They can generate precise predictions of an array of phenomena, which are then confirmed by rigorous empirical tests.
- Personality theories are consistent with what is known about the causal forces that govern all other forms of organic life and physical matter. They are consistent with the laws of gravity and evolution by natural selection.
- Personality theories provide a comprehensive explanation of an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors at any given time, as well as over time.
- Personality theories provide links to everyday concerns and actions of people.

2. Stages of Scientific Development (Kuhn, 1970)

The history of personality psychology, like the history of any other branch of psychology or science, more generally, is one of an ebb and flow of dominant and challenging paradigms and theories. Students will appreciate a brief introduction to the stages of scientific development as presented by Kuhn (1970). Alert students early in the course to the fact that personality psychology is not different from other areas of psychology or other areas of science. It is characterized by shifts in paradigms and challenges to current theories that lead to the development of new paradigms and new theories. If students are introduced to this topic early in the course, they will be better situated to appreciate the ebb and flow of theories in personality psychology. The following sections highlight the different stages of scientific development.

- Developmental Stage
 - This stage is characterized by continual competition between a number of distinct schools and views of nature.
 - Each school believes it functions according to the dictates of scientific method and observation.
 - What differentiates competing schools is not a commitment to the scientific method but differing views of the world.
 - At this stage of development, there is no common body of data and belief, so each school builds the field of study from its own foundation and chooses its own supporting observations.
 - Fact gathering has a random quality—no systematic accumulation of knowledge exists.
 - During this stage, the field is without a commonly accepted model or paradigm that defines the field of observations and research methods.
- Normal Science Stage

- This stage begins with the acceptance of a paradigm and is based on scientific achievement.
- During this stage, there is acceptance of and commitment to a model that defines the problems that are legitimate areas of research and points out the appropriate research methods.
- A more rigid definition of the field of study occurs, research is more focused, observations are more restricted, and knowledge is more cumulative during this stage.
- During this stage, scientists are somewhat tradition bound and committed to the accepted model.
- Instead of many competing schools, there are few, and frequently just one.
- Scientific Revolution Stage
 - Some observations during the period of normal science do not fit the accepted model.
 - The observations create a crisis in which tradition is shattered, and after a period of turmoil, a new paradigm is eventually accepted (Copernicus, Newton, and Einstein).
 - The new theory is incompatible with the old one and offers explanations of critical observations that could not be explained with the earlier paradigm.
 - Acceptance of a new paradigm occurs after a period of intense struggle among competing views and a period of wide-open research—this period shares features with the early developmental stage.
 - What differentiates this stage from the early developmental stage is that it follows a period of articulation of the paradigm and is a response to particular observations that presented problems for that paradigm.
 - The new paradigm is accepted because it offers solutions to critical issues in the field.
 - The new paradigm replaces the old paradigm and involves the reevaluation of prior facts.
 - Once accepted, the new paradigm is accompanied by a period of normal science until new observations arise and set the stage for another scientific revolution.
- Conclusion: Successive transitions from one paradigm to another via revolutions are usually a developmental pattern in mature science, including personality psychology.

Reference:

Kuhn, T. S. (1970). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (2nd Ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Classroom Activities and Demonstrations

1. At the beginning of the first class, ask the students to write their definition of “personality” on a sheet of paper. Give students about five minutes to do this, and then ask them to fold the paper in half to conceal their responses and hand the paper to you. Do not ask them to put their names on the paper. Ask a few students to volunteer their definitions of personality. Then, read through a few of the responses submitted by the students. Highlight the student definitions that are similar to the definition provided by Larsen and Buss. Use this as a launching point to introduce the definition of personality provided by Larsen and Buss.
2. At the beginning of the first class (perhaps after, before, or instead of the first exercise in the Exercise Box of this chapter), ask the students to create two columns—one column that describes themselves and a second column that describes a close friend—of terms or phrases on a sheet of paper. Give students about five minutes to do this, and then ask them to fold the paper in half to conceal their responses and hand the paper to you. Do not ask them to put their names on the paper. Ask a few students to volunteer a few of the characteristics they reported for themselves. Then, ask the same students (one at a time) to report a few of the characteristics they reported for their close friends that are similar to the characteristics they reported for themselves. Finally, ask the same students (one at a time) to report a few of the characteristics they reported for themselves that are different from the characteristics they reported for their close friends. Highlight to students the fact that this is an informal exercise in personality psychology. Personality psychology, in part, addresses how and why people are the same and how and why people are different. Also, point out to students that the focus on characteristics or “trait-descriptive adjectives” is the primary focus of one group of personality psychologists known as “trait psychologists.”
3. Distribute Activity Handout 1-1 (“What Are Your Goals?”) to students. Have students take about five minutes to complete the handout during class. Ask for volunteers to share their responses. Use these responses as a springboard for discussing how our social environment—the challenges we encounter in our struggles for belongingness, love, and esteem from others—is central to an understanding of personality.
4. Following the second Exercise Box in this chapter, ask students to write and hand in at the next class session a one-page essay about a good friend, someone they know well. Students should describe what is characteristic, enduring, and functional about the person in their essay. Ask them to include in this description those elements of the ways in which the person they are writing about interacts with, or adapts to, the physical, social, and intrapsychic environments. Collect these essays prior to the next class session. Ask students to volunteer their responses, and use this as a springboard for discussing the key elements of personality as defined by Larsen and Buss.

5. According to Larsen and Buss, the field of personality psychology can be cleaved into six distinct domains of knowledge about human nature. Personality is influenced by the following: biological events (the biological domain); conflicts within the person's own mind (the intrapsychic domain); traits the person is born with or develops (the dispositional domain); personal and private thoughts, feelings, desires, beliefs, and other subjective experiences (the cognitive-experiential domain); social, cultural, and gendered positions in the world (the social and cultural domain); and the adaptations and adjustments that people must make to the inevitable challenges of life (the adjustment domain). Ask the students to count off in sixes (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc.). Have the students arrange themselves by number into six different groups. Point out to the students that a person may be very shy, experiencing great anxiety in the presence of others, particularly in a social setting in which they are expected to interact with others. Instruct each group of students to discuss and generate three possible causes for this person's shyness. Assign the "1s" the biological domain. These students will discuss and generate three possible biological causes for this person's shyness. Assign the "2s" the intrapsychic domain. These students will discuss and generate three possible conflicts within the person's own mind that might cause their shyness. Do the same for group 3 (the dispositional domain), 4 (the cognitive-experiential domain), 5 (the social and cultural domain), and 6 (the adjustment domain). Close the discussion by highlighting to students the fact that each of these domains is needed for generating a comprehensive understanding of shyness and all other aspects of personality variation. Point out how one domain often generates only a part of the picture and that these six domains usually generate complementary and not competing insights into personality.
6. Distribute Activity Handout 1-2 ("Levels of Analysis in Personality") to the class. Have students take about five minutes to complete the handout during class. Ask for volunteers to share their responses to each of the questions. Use these responses as a springboard for discussing the three levels of personality analysis presented by Larsen and Buss. Help students notice that the same phenomena—for example, emotional stability or agreeableness—can be studied at each of these three levels of analysis.

Questions for In-Class Discussion

1. Once students have had a chance to read the first chapter (or once you have provided a brief overview of the first chapter), ask students to discuss what Larsen and Buss mean when they note that we are all "amateur personality psychologists to some extent." Ask students to discuss this question and provide examples of how they have behaved like amateur personality psychologists.
2. Adjectives that can be used to describe characteristics of people are called "trait-descriptive adjectives." Larsen and Buss note that there are more than 20,000 trait-descriptive adjectives in the English language. According to Larsen and Buss, "This astonishing fact alone tells us

that, in everyday life, there are compelling reasons for trying to understand and describe those we interact with, as well as ourselves.” Ask students to discuss what some of these reasons might be. Are the reasons for trying to understand and describe others likely to be the same or different from the reasons for trying to understand and describe ourselves?

3. Following your presentation of the six domains of knowledge of human nature, ask students to provide initial reactions to each of these domains. Which domains do they think are the most important, and why? Which domains do they think are the least important, and why? Encourage contrary views among students. End this discussion on an important point—one that will become clear after students have completed the course—that each of the six domains of knowledge is important for a complete and comprehensive understanding of human nature.
4. According to Larsen and Buss, personality is a set of psychological traits and mechanisms. To initiate discussion in class, ask students the following questions: What do Larsen and Buss mean by “traits”? What do Larsen and Buss mean by “mechanisms”? How are traits and mechanisms similar? How are they different? Also, ask students to provide a few examples of personality traits and personality mechanisms.
5. There are two broad classes of personality research: nomothetic research and ideographic research. Ask students to provide brief definitions for each class of research. Then, ask students to provide examples of each class of research. Next, ask students to select a class of research that they feel is more useful in studying personality. They should provide valid reasons for their selection. Encourage differing opinions among students. End the discussion by helping students recognize that both classes of research are important for understanding personality. These classes of research are, in general, complementary and do not compete against each other. That is, one can learn much about personality from an ideographic approach that cannot be gleaned from a nomothetic approach. Similarly, one can learn much about personality from a nomothetic approach that cannot be gleaned from an ideographic approach.
6. According to Larsen and Buss, scientific theories in personality psychology and in any area of science have several important functions. What are these? Allow students to discuss this question and answer it in their own words. Guide students to include the following functions in their answers: (1) theories serve as a guide for researchers, directing them to important questions within some area of research; (2) theories organize known findings; and (3) theories make predictions about phenomena that no one has yet observed or documented. Next, ask students to discuss what makes scientific theories different from beliefs. Conclude this discussion by highlighting the fact that scientific theories are based on systematic observations that can be repeated by others and that yield similar conclusions. Ask students to generate several beliefs that are not scientific theories.

Critical Thinking Essays

1. Based on your experience, how many fundamental trait dimensions are needed to fully account for the range of individual differences in personality? Identify and briefly define these basic trait dimensions. You might identify between two and twelve such dimensions. There is no right or wrong answer, as your response is based on your personal experience and your personal interactions in life.
2. How consistent or stable is personality? Use your personal experience with friends and family members and your knowledge about yourself to respond to this question. Is personality basically consistent or stable over time, or is personality subjected to change over time?
3. Larsen and Buss note that personality interacts with the situation to produce behavior and that this interaction includes perceptions, selections, evocations, and manipulations. Begin by defining, in your own words, what Larsen and Buss mean by each of these four terms. Then, select one individual difference, such as emotionality, anger-proneness, or happiness. Discuss how this individual difference can interact with a situation through perception, selection, evocation, and manipulation to produce individual differences in behaviors, thoughts, or feelings.

Research Papers

1. Larsen and Buss introduce the following three levels of personality analysis: the level of human nature (how we are like all others), the level of individual and group differences (how we are like some others), and the level of individual uniqueness (how we are like no others). Conduct research on the internet or use other resources, such as psychological research literature, and identify three research papers published in the last five years that highlight each of these three levels of personality analysis. Thus, you will identify a total of nine recent research papers, three each focusing on human nature, individual and group differences, and individual uniqueness. Discuss how each paper focuses on the respective level of personality analysis.
2. There are two broad classes of research in personality: nomothetic research and ideographic research. Nomothetic research involves statistical comparisons of individuals or groups, requiring samples of participants for collecting data for the research. Nomothetic research is designed to identify universal human characteristics and dimensions of individual or group differences. Ideographic research, in contrast, focuses on a single person, often attempting to identify general principles that are displayed in a single life over time. Ideographic research is often presented in the form of case studies or as the psychological biography of a single person. Conduct research on the internet or use other resources, such as psychological

research literature, and identify six research articles published in the last five years. Select articles such that three of them are based on a nomothetic approach and the remaining three are based on an ideographic approach. Discuss how each article is an example of the respective class of research.

3. Larsen and Buss note that of all our personality traits and mechanisms, only a few are activated at any given time. Larsen and Buss provide the example of “courageousness.” This trait is activated only under certain conditions, such as when people face serious danger. Identify another personality trait that is activated only under certain conditions. Then, conduct research on the internet or use other resources, such as psychological research literature, and identify three papers published in the past five years that address the personality trait. For each article, discuss how the evidence suggests that the trait is activated only under certain circumstances or more in some circumstances than in others.

Recent Research Articles and Other Scholarly Readings

- Baumeister, R. F., & Tice, D. M. (1996). Rethinking and Reclaiming the Interdisciplinary Role of Personality Psychology: The Science of Human Nature Should Be the Center of the Social Sciences and Humanities. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 30, 363–373.
- Carver, C. S. (1996). Emergent Integration in Contemporary Personality Psychology. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 30, 319–334.
- Diener, E. (1996). Traits Can Be Powerful, but Are Not Enough: Lessons from Subjective Well-Being. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 30, 389–399.
- Dweck, C. S. (1996). Capturing the Dynamic Nature of Personality. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 30, 348–362.
- Epstein, S. (1996). *Recommendations for the Future Development of Personality Psychology*. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 30, 435–446.
- Funder, D. C. (2001). Personality. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 197–221.
- Hogan, R., Johnson, J., & Briggs, S. (Eds.). (1997). *Handbook of Personality Psychology*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- McAdams, D. P. (1995). What Do We Know When We Know a Person? *Journal of Personality*, 63, 365–396.
- McClelland, D. C. (1996). Does the Field of Personality Have a Future? *Journal of Research in Personality*, 30, 429–434.

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McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T., Jr. (1995). Trait Explanations in Personality Psychology. *European Journal of Personality*, 9, 231–252

Pervin, L. A. (1985). Personality: Current Controversies, Issues, and Directions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 36, 83–114.

Pervin, L. A., John, O. P., and Robins, R. W. (2008). *Handbook of Personality* (3rd Ed.). New York: Guilford.

Revelle, W. (1995). Personality Processes. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 46, 295–328.

Sarason, I. G., Sarason, B. R., & Pierce, G. R. (1996). Views of the Future. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 30, 447–453.

Wiggins, J. S., & Pincus, A. L. (1992). Personality: Structure and Assessment. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 43, 473–504.

Activity Handout 1-1: What Are Your Goals?

People have goals that they want to achieve in life; some of them are short term, and some of them are long term. What are some of your goals? These might include particular dreams or desires that you want to achieve or challenges that you want to overcome. Write some of these goals in the spaces provided below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

Activity Handout 1-2: Levels of Analysis in Personality

Some people are highly agreeable—they get along well with other people most of the time. Others are less agreeable—they do not get along well with other people most of the time. Larsen and Buss present three levels of analysis in personality psychology: human nature, individual and group differences, and individual uniqueness. In the spaces provided below, note how one might study the personality trait of “agreeableness” at each of these levels of analysis.

Human Nature

Individual and Group Differences

Individual Uniqueness
