

CHIMPANZEE PERSONALITY ASSESSED BY OBSERVATIONAL QUANTIFICATION OF BEHAVIOUR IN THREE ZOOS

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Personality, or individual differences in behaviour and underlying psychology, has rapidly become an active field of behavioural, psychological and evolutionary research. Animal personality research can be divided into 'psychological' and 'biological' approaches, each employing a different set of questions and methods. Chimpanzee personality has mostly been studied with the psychological approach, which utilises a theoretical framework, trait selection process and evaluation methods used in human personality research. This work has described chimpanzee personality structure as largely similar to that of humans. However, we know little of chimpanzee personality at the behavioural level. We studied personality of captive chimpanzees employing the biological approach. The candidate personality traits were selected from a range of naturally occurring behaviours in ecologically meaningful categories. The data were collected by focal observations of 76 chimpanzees at three European zoos. The candidate personality traits were examined for repeatability, which tests whether within-individual variation in a trait is smaller than between-individual variation. The variables that passed this diagnostic criterion were further subjected to investigation of their inter-correlational structure. The results inform of key personality traits in chimpanzees at the behavioural level and of their structural organisation, both of which are relevant for understanding the foundations of personality. We discuss the results in the theoretical framework of integrating the behavioural and psychological approaches to animal personality.

Keywords: personality, chimpanzee, five factor model, behavioural approach