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JERRY M. BURGER

FOURTH EDITION



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Personality

Jerry M. Burger

Santa Clara University



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Preface

 One evening several years ago, I presented a drawing I had labored over to the instructor of my art class. He eyed the work for a few minutes and told me to draw two more lines he outlined with his finger and nothing else. I followed the advice and discovered to my amazement that the artwork I thought was close to perfection indeed could be significantly improved with only a few small changes. Having now gone through three revisions of this book, I have come to see that a similar approach can be taken to writing textbooks. Most of the changes in this edition are more like refinements than overhauls. Throughout the book I've rewritten sentences and expanded points. As with earlier revisions, I've also updated references. There are more than 280 new references in this edition, and more the 800 since the first edition. But those familiar with the earlier editions also will find a few big changes. Briefly, let me outline what's new and what's the same this time around.

What's New?

I've added four new research topics to this edition. I selected these topics because each reflects current interests of personality researchers and because I've found a keen interest in these topics among my undergraduate students. Thus, the neo-Freudian research chapter now includes a section on attachment style and adult relationships. I begin with attachment theory and its roots in object relations theory, followed by a presentation of research on adult attachment styles and how they affect our romantic relationships. There are two new topics in the trait research chapter. The first is trait approaches to understanding emotions. I examine three ways emotions can be studied as a trait concept: emotional affectivity, emotional intensity, and emotional expressiveness. I've also added a section on optimism and pessimism. I review research on dispositional optimism and its relation to coping and well-being and research on defensive pessimists who

strategically use pessimism to deal with threatening situations. Finally, in the humanistic research chapter I cover research on need for privacy and solitude. I begin with Maslow's observations about need for privacy, followed by theory and research on the connection between solitude and well-being.

Another important change in the fourth edition is an increased emphasis on cultural influences. This change reflects a growing awareness within the field that many of the concepts we study are culture-bound. At several places in the book I point out to students some of the ways culture influences what we study and how we interpret our findings in personality psychology. Students are introduced to these ideas in the first chapter and relevant research on cultural differences is covered in appropriate chapters.

There are two other changes worth mentioning. First, the applications section for the trait approach now includes a discussion of how researchers use scores on Big Five scales to predict behavior in the workplace and how each of the Big Five dimensions relates to job performance. Second, I've replaced the traditional boxes with a new feature. At several points in the book, "In the News" boxes discuss a relevant topic that recently has been covered in the news media. Examples include the use of repressed memories in court, personality testing to screen potential police officers, reaction to *The Bell Curve*, and the ongoing debate about whether to regulate violence on television.

What's the Same?

The philosophy that guided the organization and writing of the first three editions remains. I wrote this book to organize within one textbook the two approaches typically taken by instructors of an undergraduate personality course. On the one hand, many instructors focus on the great theories and theorists—Freud, Jung, Rogers, Skinner, and so on. Students in these classes gain insight into the structure of the mind and issues of human nature, as well as a background for understanding psychological disorders and psychotherapy. However, they are likely to be puzzled when they pick up a current journal of personality research only to find they recognize few, if any, of the topics. On the other hand, some instructors emphasize personality research. Students learn about current research on individual differences and personality processes. But they probably see little relationship between the abstract theories they may touch upon in class and the research topics that are the focus of the course.

But these two approaches to teaching the course do not represent separate disciplines that happen to share the word *personality* in their titles. Indeed, the structure of this book is designed to demonstrate that the classic theories stimulate research and that the research findings often shape the development and acceptance of the theories. Limiting a student's attention to either theory or research provides an unfortunately narrow view of the field.

Something else that remains from the earlier editions is my belief that students learn about research best by seeing *programs* of research, rather than a few

isolated examples. Twenty-seven research programs are covered in the seven research chapters in this edition. In each case I have tried to illustrate how the questions being investigated are connected to a larger theory, how early researchers developed their initial hypotheses and investigations, and how experimental findings led to new questions, refined hypotheses, and ultimately a greater understanding of the topic. Through this process, students are exposed to some of the problems researchers encounter, the fact that experimental results often are equivocal, and a realistic picture of researchers who don't always agree on how to interpret findings.

Finally, I have retained and expanded many of the features of the previous edition in this fourth edition. Each of the theory chapters contains a section on application and a section on assessment. These sections demonstrate how the sometimes abstract theories relate to everyday concerns and issues and how each approach to understanding personality brings with it unique assumptions and problems when measuring relevant personality variables. I've also retained the personality tests students can take and score themselves. There are now 13 "Assessing Your Own Personality" boxes scattered throughout the book. I've discovered in my own teaching that, for example, discussions about locus of control research mean a lot more to students when they know how they scored on a locus of control test. This hands-on experience not only gives students a better idea of how personality assessment works, but often brings out a little bit of healthy skepticism about relying too heavily on such measures. I've also retained the biographies of the prominent personality theorists in this edition. Feedback from students indicates that knowing something about the person behind the theory makes the theory come alive a little more. They also enjoy speculating about how the theorist's life affected the development of the theory.

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Jerry M. Burger is professor of psychology at Santa Clara University. He is the author of dozens of journal articles and book chapters and the 1992 book *Desire for Control: Personality, Social and Clinical Perspectives*. He has been on the editorial board of the *Journal of Personality* and the *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* and has served as an associate editor for the Personality Processes and Individual Difference section of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. In his spare, time he likes to run, read, write, and coach Little League. You can send comments about the book to him via e-mail at JBURGER@SCUACC.SCU.EDU.



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