

PERSONALITY IN NONHUMAN PRIMATES: A REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF PAST RESEARCH

Hani D. Freeman, Samuel Gosling

University of Texas at Austin, TX, USA

Presenter's Email: hdfreeman@mail.utexas.edu

Scientific reports of personality in nonhuman primates are currently appearing across a wide range of disciplines. To identify general patterns of research and summarize the major findings to date, we present a comprehensive review of the literature, allowing us to pinpoint the major gaps in our knowledge and determine what research challenges lay ahead. An exhaustive search of five scientific databases identified 210 relevant research reports. Our analyses of the literature on primate personality suggest that some domains (e.g., sex, age, rearing conditions) are more evenly represented in the literature than are others (e.g., species, research location); these findings point to areas where additional research is needed. Analyses of structural studies reveal that the traits examined can be divided into 14 broad categories, with sociability, confidence/aggression, and fearfulness receiving the most research attention. Summaries of the findings pertaining to inter-rater agreement, internal consistency, test-retest reliability and convergent and discriminant validity generally support the reliability of primate personality ratings scales but also suggest the need for more studies and greater consistency in reporting the analysis, particularly for discriminant validity. Reliability findings indicate that the dimensions of Extroversion and Dominance show the highest reliability across studies reporting reliability. In addition, the traits of excitability and dominance were found to show the strongest validity in relation to behaviors related to those traits. Discussion focuses on delineating major theoretical and empirical questions facing research in this domain.

Keywords: Personality, Temperament, Review, Primates