

# **The Madingley ‘Personality’ Questionnaire for Captive, Group-Living Rhesus Monkeys**

**Joan Stevenson-Hinde  
University of Cambridge**

*Creating a tailor-made list of adjectives.* The first step should be to amend and extend the items listed below by making use of observers’ knowledge of their own animals within the social context in which they are living. We created a list of 33 adjectives, each with a behavioral definition. Pilot studies indicated which items did not give a good spread of ratings and which definitions needed clarifying. In this way, the list of items was tailored to fit our colony as well as our research objectives (Stevenson-Hinde and Zunz, 1978).

*Preliminary Instructions.* Although ratings must be made independently, observers should first reach agreement on:

- The behavioral definition of each item with respect to their subjects
- The period of time the ratings should cover (e.g., the past two weeks)
- The period of time to complete the ratings (e.g., the next few days)

*Inter-observer reliability.* In making subjective ratings, the observer becomes an *active* instrument — filtering, cumulating, weighing and integrating data, including rare but relevant behavior. However, because of the subjectivity involved, at least two observers should make ratings independently, so that reliability may be assessed and then the *mean rating* for each reliable item used in further analyses (Stevenson-Hinde, Stillwell-Barnes, & Zunz, 1980).

*Instructions for Rating.* Consider each item according to its definition, and independently of any other item. Rate all subjects over one item before proceeding to the next item. (This is intended to prevent raters from unconsciously adjusting their ratings to give a coherent overall view of each subject, rather than focussing on the behavior specified for each item.)

Assign the following ratings according to a normal distribution over all the animals, giving about 30% of the subjects a rating of 4:

1. Extreme antithesis to the behavior.
2. The item is weakly represented, although traces are present.
3. The item is distinctly present, but falls a little below average.

4. The individual falls just about halfway between the two extremes, or slightly above the general average.
5. The item is strong, although not outstanding.
6. The item is very strong and conspicuous, approaching the extreme.
7. Extreme manifestation of the behavior.

### *List of items*

*Active:* Moves about a lot

*Aggressive:* Causes harm or potential harm

*Apprehensive:* Is anxious about everything; fears and avoids any risk

*Confident:* Behaves in a positive, assured manner; not restrained or tentative

*Effective:* Gets own way; can control others

*Equable:* Reacts to others in an even, calm way; not easily disturbed

*Excitable:* Over-reacts to change

*Fearful:* Makes fear grins; retreats from others or from outside disturbances

*Opportunistic:* Seizes a chance as soon as it arises

*Slow:* Moves and sits in a relaxed manner; moves slowly and deliberately, not easily hurried

*Sociable:* Seeks companionship of others

*Solitary:* Spends time alone

*Subordinate:* Gives in readily to others; submits easily

### *References*

- Stevenson-Hinde J, Hinde CA, in press. Individual characteristics — Weaving psychological and ethological approaches. In Weiss A, King J, Murray L (Eds.), *Personality, Temperament, and Behavioral Syndromes in Nonhuman Primates*. New York: Springer.
- Stevenson-Hinde J, Stillwell-Barnes R, Zunz M, 1980. Subjective assessment of rhesus monkeys over four successive years. *Primates* 21:66-82.
- Stevenson-Hinde J, Zunz M, 1978. Subjective assessment of individual rhesus monkeys. *Primates* 19:473-482.