

For June 2025: Who We Are

Most of us like to read about ourselves. So when a scientific report titled "Intermediate Level Traits in the Personality of Bridge Players" popped up on the computer screen, it seemed like a good topic for the June Question of the Month. Why would scientists study such a topic? And what did they find out?

To summarize the study's introduction: The strategies that humans use when they play games is often studied, especially in the field of economics. The scientists conducting this study note that bridge is different from other games:

"First and foremost, the game of Bridge is a real-life game where players have already learned the economic as well as social consequences of their choices. This social aspect is often absent in traditional economic games, but it plays a crucial role in real-life social interactions. Second, the game of Bridge exemplifies a social, cooperative, competitive, and uncertain environment, making it highly reflective of real-life interactions. Indeed, the game of Bridge is 1) an incomplete information game (as opposed to Chess and Go), 2) a competitive and cooperative game (Chess, Go and Poker are competitive games only), and 3) a game that leaves room for communication between players. Thus, due to its real-life nature and its ability to replicate features of actual social interactions, the game of Bridge is well-suited for revealing a general and coherent structure of personality traits that are relevant for game-like interactions."

The study starts by identifying five game-related traits "that cover crucial aspects of the game: how players react to adversity (Emotionality), their inclination to negatively impact opponents (Aggressiveness), the importance given to the improvement of their abilities (Experience), their reliance on established norms and conformism (Discipline), and their reliance on creativity and intuition (Creativity)."

While all of these traits play a role, the study found that two of the traits, Discipline and Creativity, seem to have the most impact on the type of player one is. "...some players are both conformist and creative (Measured players), while others are biased towards Creativity (Subversive players) or Discipline (Conventional players)."

So which type are you? How about your partner? And how do these “traits” affect your outcomes?

For those who are even more nerdy than your webmaster (who skipped a lot of the analytical tables in the article), you can find the full article here: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11340889/#abstract1>.